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Region as a Field of Social Security for Russians

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The paper compares opinions of the inhabitants of Russian regions concerning the degree of their social security. Social security shows not just the effectiveness of social policy measures, but also the level of social safety, achieved by the society. Being a comprehensive, multi-faceted, economic, legal and socio-psychological category, social safety contains not only the objective component, but also the subjective one. The subjective component is based on the internal subjective sense, experienced by people who evaluate safety as a field of social security. The research revealed that people in all the studied regions are mostly concerned about their vulnerability to crime, poverty and tyranny of the officials. Citizens are less concerned about discrimination by gender, age, ethnicity and religious beliefs. At the same time, each of the Russian regions differs from the others in the level of protection against a variety of risks; each region of the country has its own specific socio-cultural and psychological features.

Keywords: social security, risks, regional distinctions, subjective assessments, social tension.

Introduction

Last two decades have been the most active time of the formation and development of the social protection system in Russia. The lever and engine of this process in many ways was a transition to a market economy. The reforms demanded radical changes in social policy sphere. Beginning of the 1990s in Russia was characterized by the lack of a comprehensive system of social protection of the population, the gradual formation of the first steps to develop this sphere led to its fragmentary character and lack of system interconnections. Moreover, even after twenty years, this process is still not fully

formed, as evidenced by the analysis of the legislative acts and subjective assessments of the population regarding their social security.

Sources of social security are divided into two groups: absolute and relative. The first group of these sources contains those who in any direction of their dynamics have an unambiguous impact on the population security – unemployment, inflation, militarization of the economy, military conflicts, and environmental problems. The second group includes those that following the deterioration of their dynamics become sources of insecurity – inequitable distribution of income, decline in private consumption, reduction in the volume or

quality of health services, degradation of social services and social assistance, aggravation of the housing problem (Serebrennikov).

Social security shows the effectiveness of social protection measures, the level of the society in terms of securing social rights for its members, and the feeling of guaranteed obtaining social services (Morozova). In the analysis of social security there must be taken into account that it is a comprehensive, multilateral, economic, legal and socio-psychological category, and contains not only the objective component, but also the subjective one. The last is based on the internal subjective feelings of people living in a particular area, who assess security as a personal space of security, often having nothing to do with statistics, government reports or data of international organizations (Poliushkevich). Thus, our method of measurement of social protection is based on the data of sociological surveys conducted by the author in Vologda Oblast. And also it is based on the survey data obtained by researchers from other regions of Russia with the application

of the method developed by N.I. Lapin and L.A. Belyaeva (Lapin, Belyaeva).

Results of the study

An indicator of the level of self-assessment of security is a response to the question: “To what extent do you feel today personally protected from any dangers?” The question, listed 10 dangerous problems, was asked during the all-Russian monitoring (Lapin, Belyaeva. The program and standard research features). The calculated coefficient of social security ($C_{security}$) shows the degree of community resilience (measuring range from 0 to 1), values greater than 0.51 can be considered as sufficient level of security, and less than 0.5 – insufficient. Over the analyzed period from 2006 to 2012, coefficients of social security in different regions of the country were sufficiently distant from each other and lied in the range of 0.56-0.67 (Fig. 1). The maximum value was observed in the Chuvash Republic (2006), and the minimum – in Smolensk Oblast (2007).

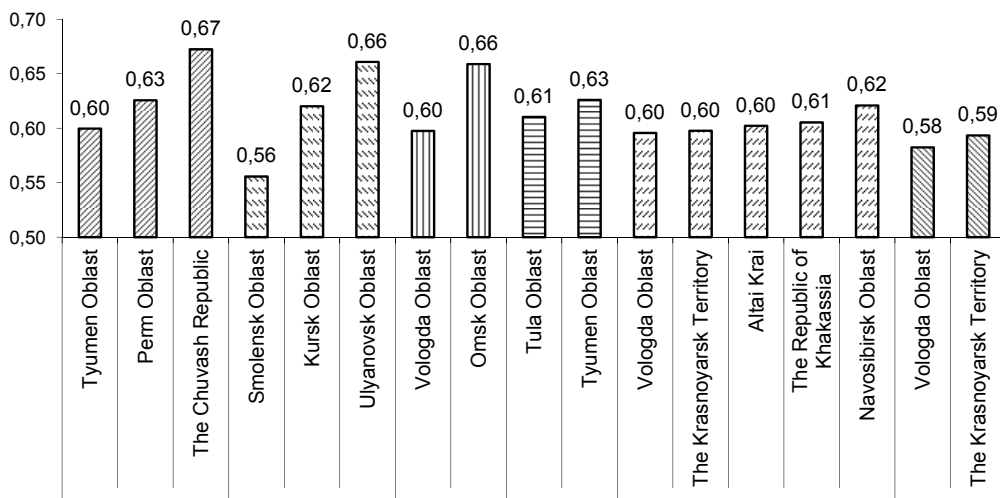


Fig. 1. $C_{security}$ (Coefficients of security) in different regions of Russia

Source: Results of the fifth wave of the all-Russian monitoring “Values and interests of the population of Russia”, received by CNNIC IF RAS (Center for the Study of Social and Cultural Changes of the Institute of Philosophy of RAS in Moscow) in 2006. The results of regional studies “Socio-cultural portrait of a region” (Lapin, Belyaeva, Mosin et al., Nemirovsky, Nemirovskaya, Shabunova, Lastochkina).

A detailed analysis of the problems – risks found that in Smolensk Oblast the most acute is a problem with crime: 62 % of the population consider themselves to be unprotected (rather unprotected) from crime, and only 6 % – fully protected or rather protected. To complete the list, two more indicators of social insecurity are poverty (59 % experience a sense of insecurity) and environmental threat (55 %). The least Smolensk inhabitants are concerned about discrimination based on nationality and religious beliefs (11 % and 13 %, respectively). The Chuvash people, as well as Smolensk inhabitants expressed maximum concern about crime, but the

extent of their anxiety is significantly less – 51 % of respondents consider themselves unprotected. Similarly, discriminatory harassment worries only 4-6 % of the population of the Chuvash Republic. As it can be seen, in Smolensk Oblast the situation observed is more acute than the average for Russia, which is not connected with the sharp contrast of exposure to certain risks, but happens due to the fact that the people in the region have expressed greater anxiety concerning entire spectrum of the analyzed problems.

As it can be seen from Table 1 in 13 analyzed regions there were observed lower levels of protection from crime, only the Chuvash Republic

Table 1. Level of protection from the risks of the population in 9 regions of Russia

Kinds of risks	Insufficient (0.5 and less)	Sufficient (0.51–0.7)	High (0.71 and higher)
1	2	3	4
The most acute social risks			
Crime	Smolensk Oblast Kursk Oblast Perm Oblast Tula Oblast Novosibirsk Oblast Ulyanovsk Oblast The Republic of Khakassia Altai Krai The Krasnoyarsk Territory Tyumen Oblast Vologda Oblast	The Chuvash Republic Omsk Oblast	–
Poverty	The Republic of Khakassia Altai Krai The Krasnoyarsk Territory Smolensk Oblast Tula Oblast Kursk Oblast Perm Oblast Tyumen Oblast (2006) Vologda Oblast (2010, 2012)	The Chuvash Republic Novosibirsk Oblast Omsk Oblast Ulyanovsk Oblast Tyumen Oblast (2009) Vologda Oblast (2008)	–
Arbitrariness of officials	The Republic of Khakassia Kursk Oblast Smolensk Oblast Perm Oblast Altai Krai The Krasnoyarsk Territory Tyumen Oblast (2006) Tula Oblast	The Chuvash Republic Omsk Oblast Ulyanovsk Oblast Novosibirsk Oblast Tyumen Oblast (2009) Vologda Oblast	–

Continuation table 1

1	2	3	4
Environmental threat	The Republic of Khakassia Kursk Oblast Smolensk Oblast Altai Krai The Krasnoyarsk Territory	The Chuvash Republic Novosibirsk Oblast Omsk Oblast Ulyanovsk Oblast Perm Oblast Tyumen Oblast Tula Oblast Vologda Oblast	–
Arbitrariness of law enforcement agencies	Smolensk Oblast	The Chuvash Republic The Republic of Khakassia Omsk Oblast Ulyanovsk Oblast Novosibirsk Oblast Kursk Oblast Perm Oblast Tula Oblast Altai Krai The Krasnoyarsk Territory Tyumen Oblast Vologda Oblast	–
The least acute social problems			
Loneliness and abandonment	–	All 13 regions	–
Prosecution for political beliefs	–	The Republic of Khakassia Smolensk Oblast Novosibirsk Oblast Altai Krai The Krasnoyarsk Territory Tyumen Oblast Вологодская область	The Chuvash Republic Omsk Oblast Ulyanovsk Oblast Kursk Oblast Perm Oblast Tula Oblast
Age or gender discrimination	–	The Republic of Khakassia Smolensk Oblast Altai Krai The Krasnoyarsk Territory Tyumen Oblast (2006) Vologda Oblast	The Chuvash Republic Novosibirsk Oblast Omsk Oblast Ulyanovsk Oblast Kursk Oblast Perm Oblast Tula Oblast Tyumen Oblast (2009)
Discrimination because of nationality	–	–	All 9 regions
Discrimination because of religious beliefs	–	–	All 9 regions

Source: data from the sociological survey of the population of different regions of Russia (The Chuvash Republic (2006), Perm Oblast (2006), Kursk Oblast (2007), Smolensk Oblast (2007), Ulyanovsk Oblast (2007), Omsk Oblast (2008), Tula Oblast (2009), Novosibirsk Oblast (2010), Altai Krai (2010), The Republic of Khakassia (2010), Tyumen Oblast (2006, 2009) Красноярский край (2010, 2012), Vologda Oblast (2008, 2010, 2012) (Lapin, Belyaeva, Mosin et al., Nemirovsky, Nemirovskaya, Shabunova, Lastochkina).

and Omsk Oblast were marked by adequate security. These data show that in Russia there is no stability and a sense of security concerning criminal offenses, the hope for protection from law enforcement agencies is low as well. This is evidenced by the current threat of arbitrariness on the part of law enforcement agencies; this issue closes the list of the most acute problems. That is, the Russian society is marked by social dislocation and uncertainty about the future and relationships with people.

Second place goes to the fear of poverty. Most of all it is felt in Smolensk and Tula Oblasts and in the Krasnoyarsk Territory. After three years (2006-2009) inhabitants of Tyumen Oblast started fear poverty less and the level of security increased. In Vologda Oblast the trend is the opposite – the post-crisis period is characterized by a decrease of public sense of security concerning financial problems; this fact is naturally interconnected with the deterioration of the social and economic situation in the region, falling incomes and living standards.

In third place there is the problem of arbitrariness of officials – most of the inhabitants of the analyzed regions experienced insufficient level of protection. The low value of this indicator shows a lack of hope for the representatives of government and distrust of administrative structures. Distrust occurs mainly in relation to the police and the regional offices of political parties, as well as to the media.

Environmental threat ranked fourth. This problem is especially alarming for the residents of Kursk and Smolensk Oblasts, Altai Krai, the Krasnoyarsk Territory, and the Republic of Khakassia. The threat to the safety and comfort of human existence comes from the adverse industrial impact on the natural environment. Pollution and depletion of natural resources continues to grow and has a negative impact on public health, ecological safety and

economic stability. Therefore, this problem in the foreseeable future will be increasingly relevant, and its solution depends on the steps taken to reduce human pressure on the environment and on the enhancement of ecological culture of people, their environmental education.

Insecurity from the tyranny of law enforcement agencies is the last (fifth) in the list of the most pressing social problems. All the considered regions with the exception of Smolensk Oblast (private $C_{\text{security}} = 0.49$) have sufficient level of protection, the better situation in this case is in the Chuvash Republic (private $C_{\text{security}} = 0.62$). Distrust of law enforcement agencies is primarily connected with the problems of lawlessness and arbitrariness of them. The heyday of corruption in the bodies of Internal Affairs of Russia has ceased to be a mystery and is now covered in detail by the media. Moreover, against the background of the developing market economy officially asserted authority of money causes representatives of law enforcement agencies take a commercial approach to their duties (Kolesnikova et al.).

The least acute social risks include the problem of loneliness and abandonment. However, throughout the regions in question there is none, wherever was a high level of security. These issues are complex and imply not only a moral dimension, but also a social one. To a greater extent the problem is related to the crisis in not only traditional family relations, but also in the institution of the family as a whole. The people feel lonely when they understand that their relationships with other people, significant to them, are insufficient, and when they experience the lack of communication. Thus, we can conclude that in the Russian society there is a certain “stratum of isolated people” (not physically). Social isolation increases the fragmentation of society, leads to uncertainty of traditional social boundaries and to the loss of social positions.

In sixth place there is the prosecution for political beliefs. Feeling of insecurity concerning prosecution for political beliefs was more pronounced among the residents of Vologda Oblast, and we need to state that the ratings of security over the past two years became lower – they decreased from 38 % – in 2010 to 31 % – in 2012 (in Russia as a whole – 47 % in 2010). In the Chuvash Republic 61 % of the population felt secure in this relation.

Discrimination because of age and gender occupies the seventh position. In Tyumen Oblast and the Krasnoyarsk Territory during the analyzed periods the trends were positive and people began to feel more secure (private coefficient of security rose by 5 percentage points and 2 percentage points respectively). A similar thing cannot be said about Vologda Oblast, private coefficient of security in the region fell by 2 percentage points.

A detailed analysis of the problems-risks showed that the residents of these regions are least concerned about discrimination because of nationality and religious beliefs. This is caused primarily by the fact that the population of the regions in question does not have significant ethnic and religious diversity, and the predominant majority of the population in these regions is Russian-speaking. However, analyzing the coefficients in their dynamics (in Tyumen and Vologda Oblasts and the Krasnoyarsk Territory), we should note a decrease in the level of security. The emergence of this tendency is associated with an annual growth in Russia of labor migrants, from CIS countries mainly (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan), their ethnic and socio-cultural identity is weaker than that of the natives.

Conclusions

Considered subjects of the Russian Federation differ in the level of security against

a variety of risks, both among themselves and in comparison with Russia as a whole. That is, every region of the country has its own socio-cultural and psychological specificity. The similarity lies in the fact that in all of these regions population experiences greater insecurity concerning the external objective conditions (crime, poverty, environmental threat, arbitrariness of officials and law enforcement agencies), these conditions make people want to change them for the better and they, in general, may be eliminated. The internal subjective characteristics of the individual belong to the least acute social risks (loneliness and abandonment, prosecution for political beliefs, discrimination because of age or gender, because of religious beliefs or nationality). Naturally, a person cannot change many of these characteristics, and their rejection could ruin people's socio-cultural identity and self-consciousness. As we can see, the existing type of society can be called as a threatening to social life of the individual. In such a society the population is not sufficiently protected from the external objective risks and threats.

In short, we should conclude that social security is the generalized characteristic of efficiency of the following: the system of social protection measures, the activity of the government bodies in implementation of social policy, effective and enforceable legislated guarantees of social security (Blagodatin et al.). Because of the dynamic social and economic development, current transformations and challenges of modernization, the problem of social security cannot be completely solved. However, international experience suggests the existence of sufficiently effective measures of social protection (social, economic, legal, political) that would contribute to the reduction of social tensions in the society.

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Регион как поле социальной защищенности россиян

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В статье приводится сравнение представлений населения регионов России об уровне их социальной защищенности. Социальная защищенность показывает не только эффективность мер по социальной защите, но и уровень, на котором находится общество по обеспечению социальными правами своих граждан. Являясь комплексной, многосторонней как экономико-правовой, так и социально-психологической категорией, она содержит не только объективную составляющую, но и субъективную. Последняя из них основывается на внутреннем субъективном чувстве людей, оценивающих безопасность как личностное пространство безопасности. В ходе исследования установлено, что жители всех рассматриваемых регионов наиболее сильно ощущают незащищенность от преступности, бедности и произвола чиновников. В наименьшей степени обеспокоены дискриминацией по полу, возрасту, национальному признаку и религиозным убеждениям. При этом субъекты Российской Федерации различаются по уровню защищенности от различных опасностей, в каждом регионе страны существует своя социокультурная и психологическая специфика.

Ключевые слова: социальная защищенность, опасности, региональные различия, субъективные оценки, социальная напряженность общества.
