Migration as a Social Problem

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Abstract

This article analyzes psychological problems of migrants and migration as a process. Using the method of the survey revealed some features of the attitude of Muscovites and residents of Moscow region towards migrants. The study which purpose was to identify the views of the indigenous population about the migratory situation in the city of Moscow and the Moscow region is described. The study involved 235 people aged 24 to 60 who were asked to answer 56 questions of socio-psychological questionnaire. Results of the study demonstrate the collective frustration and inner tension of the Muscovites and residents of the Moscow region, which shows the prevalence of intolerance among indigenous population to visitors from other countries, expressed in rejection of "foreigners".

Negative attitude towards migrants reflects pendency of many social and economic problems of the inhabitants of the host country (region, city), the solution of which will help to reduce the migration phobia and formation of acceptance, respect and tolerance for each other among the indigenous population and migrants, that will allow them to live together within a single living space.

Keywords: migrant, tolerance, psychological problems of migration and migrants, adaptability/ne-adaptability, social stress, migrant-phobia

1. Introduction

21th century is the era of unprecedented human migrations at the international level, leading to significant changes at the global landscape and on the composition of the population over all countries and continents. These changes will inevitably have the most serious challenges to the existing order of things.

The key role of migration in the ongoing and expected changes makes us to talk about migration challenge as an important independent part of this broader, multi level challenge.

According to the report of the International Organization for Migration, the number of international migrants in 2010 was 214 million people (3.1% of the world population). If the growth of this indicator would remain at the same rate, it will reach 405 million in the 2050s (Rerkins, Palmer, & García-Ramírez, 2011).

In situation of migration each migrant is faced with various problems: problems of social and domestic arrangement, employment opportunities; need of learning the language, legal, moral, social and cultural norms. Difficulties occur in adopting values and behaviors inherent in the new environment. There are certain difficulties in establishing the interaction with others, both in business and interpersonal contact (Efremova, Nesterova, Suslova, & Pavlova, 2015).

Social and psychological adaptation of migrants is a complex, multifaceted, long-term process. Its success depends on many factors. Foremost is formation of the ability to actively change personality traits, skills, self-transformation, self-correction and self-development.

To understand the character of the social integration of migrants, it is important to research the system of relations between migrants and indigenous (host) population. Attitude towards migrants, the ratio of different cultural attitudes and the ability to take foreign mentality cause many problems.

Many studies argue that attitudes toward migrants depend on the number of people arriving to the country or region (Chandler & Tsai, 2001; Demidova & Paas, 2014; Espenshade & Hempstead, 1996; Kehrberg, 2007; McLaren, 2003; Mayda, 2006; Nesterova & Suslova, 2014; O'Rourke & Sinnott, 2006; Paas & Halapuu, 2012).

Attitudes towards migrants affect the size of migration flows, arriving in the region or country. Also the nature of personal contact with migrants is important. A large number of migrants in the region increases the perception of the danger of the indigenous population, so a casual meeting with immigrants increases the negative attitude towards them. But on the other hand, personal contact with migrants increases tolerance (people are becoming to better know each other, it reduces the illusion of "social threat").

Migration of population (lat. migratio - relocation) − means movement of people from one region (of country, continent) to another one, in some cases by large groups and over long distances. A Russian scientist O. D. Vorobyova in her writings defines migration of the population − as "any territorial movement of population associated with the intersection of both external and internal boundaries of administrative-territorial units in order to change a permanent residence or long term residence for study or work" (Vorobyova O. D).

There are several classifications of migration processes. One of them was suggested by V. I. Moiseenko, whose taxonomy was based on the duration of stay:

1) Total migration: migration from one country to another, most often associated with the change of citizenship;

2) Permanent migration: migration for a long period of time;

3) Short-term migration: departure or arrival to another country for up to 1 year (according to the UN classification) or a period to be determined by national legislation;

4) Seasonal migration: temporary labour migration of workers depending on regularly reproducing tasks;

5) Commuting migration: temporary labour migration related to short-term (daily or weekly) transfers;

6) Episodic migration involves the temporary transfer to another country for either business or touristic interests (Moiseenko, 2004).

2. Migration Processes in Russia

The issue of migration for Russia is a top issue compatibly with other countries. Migration processes in Russia take a huge scale today. As noted by T. N. Yudina "Russia takes the second place in terms of migration flows (after the United States). Russia has become a center of attraction for migrants from the republics of former Soviet Union" (Yudina, 2004, p. 201).

Researchers note that migration in Russia starts to play an increasingly important role in the economic, social and cultural life of the country, in the formation of ethnic composition, the development of the socio-cultural space of Russia. The results of the migration are interethnic contacts at the social level, when migrants engage in a more or less long-term cross-cultural interaction with the dominant culture, and this interaction is not always positive, and often leads to conflicts, tensions, and negative manifestations, both on the part of the receiving environment and on the part of migrants.

It should be noted that currently Russia is experiencing great difficulties in coping with the matters typical to the most types of migrants. According to psychologists, sociologists and demographers, case of "migrants with no adaptation" causes problems for hosting societies.

A migrant with insufficient level of adaptation contributes ethnic tension, negative emotional states (depression, stress, etc.), and deviant behavior. Generally, migrants are unprepared for the conditions of the receiving environment, it increases social stress, mental stress, arising from human hardship of everyday life. Specialists in different fields of science and practice note that social stress conditions (situations) can be caused by various factors related to the complexity of social, economic and cultural life of modern society, the speed and frequency of social and cultural change. Such factors include the scientific and technical progress, changes in forms of employment, the deformation of the demographic structure, environmental changes of such social processes as migration.

In order to analyze the specifics of the migration processes and the nature of the adaptation of migrants to living conditions of the host country, it is also important to study the features of the receiving environment, namely the legislation on migration politics, the activities of national associations, communities, federations of migrants,

charities, etc., their interaction with the State Migration Service and other organizations and institutions; and most importantly, the characteristics of the dominant ethnic group, its moods, attitudes, relationships. We conducted a study aiming to identify the views of the indigenous population of the migratory situation in Moscow and Moscow region. The study involved 235 respondents, 24-60 years old; the survey included 56 questions constructing various social and psychological profiles of the attitudes towards migration. The answers were analysed dividing the respondents into four groups: the first – 24-30 years; the second – 31-40 years; the third – 41-50 years; the fourth – 51-60 years. This article does not attempt to fully illuminate all the results of the study, it will focus only on four of them, consistent with the purpose of this article.

So answering the question: "How do you feel about migrants?", 74.0% of respondents chose to answer negatively, 16.1% said that they felt indifferent to them, 7.3% found it difficult to answer, and only 2.6% (6 persons) chose to answer positively.

Answers to the question "Can you name characteristics of migrants that annoy you personally?" (respondents were asked to choose more than one answer) were the following: the majority of respondents, 231 persons (98.2%) noted "Behavior"; 209 persons (88.9%) named "The attitude towards us, indigenous population"; a sufficiently large number of survey participants identified such answers as "Appearance" – 194 persons (82.5%); "Peculiarities of communication" - 177 persons (75.3%); "Language" – 151 persons (64.2%).

Various views were expressed in response to the following question: "Please, answer, do migrants interfere or not in the implementation of your life plans?". Almost equal share of respondents said "no" and "yes, to some extent" – respectively, 86 respondents (36.5%) and 94 respondents (40.0%). However, 42 respondents (17.8%) believe that "migrants interfere with implementation of their life plans" and the other 13 persons (5.5%) found it difficult to answer this question.

The next question was: "What kind of life plans do you mean?", it specified the respondents' answers to the previous question. Respondents were able to mention a few possible answers. In answering this question, respondents demonstrated a unanimous opinion, highlighting three possible answers: "Work" (179 respondents – 76.1%); "Housing" (137 respondents – 58.3%); "Rest" (154 respondents – 65.3%). As can be seen from the results, most of the participants are concerned about competition for jobs, their own safety and the safety of their own families.

We wondered whether the answers to these four questions depend on the age of the respondents or not. After analysing the survey outcomes we could conclude that all four groups of survey participants were compatible in the degree of the negative attitudes to migrants; all of them highlighted the characteristics of migrants, namely, behaviour and attitude towards them, the indigenous people. However, the point of view about the negative impact of migrants on the success of the life plans, the "work" and "leisure" in particular, was noted mainly by the last oldest groups of respondents: 41-50 years and 51-60 years.

3. Discussion about the Research Results

It is clear that the results show collective frustration and inner tension of the Muscovites and the residents of the Moscow region. This provides us to talk about the prevalence of intolerance of indigenous populations to visitors from other countries.

Researchers note that the positive, negative or neutral perception of people who belong to different nationality involves many components like historic interaction (wars or alliances), old grudges for harassment and some inherent features of particular ethnic groups (high self-esteem, arrogance, conflict, familiarity, greed, pettiness, etc.), rejection of national lifestyle and national customs, music and language, as well as the threat of life prosperity, national identity, values, traditions, lifestyles, etc (Demidova & Paas, 2014; Kehrberg, 2007; McLaren, 2003; Quillian, 1995; Wilson, 1991; Zolberg, 1991).

The following quotation from A. G. Vishnevsky confirms some of the results of this study: "Now the inhabitants of many developed countries with large flow of migrants are concerned about the fact that a large influx of migrants, entailing changes in the composition of the population of host societies, is a threat to their collective identity and their value system" (Vishnevsky, 2011, p. 92). As noted by D. Coleman, if the next generation of migrants and people of mixed descent will increasingly identify themselves with the major population of the country, to which they arrived to, the change in composition of the population will not have any consequences. If, in the opposite case, they alienate themselves from the major population and feel that they are different from the natives, decreasing both in absolute numbers and relative, then the situation will be different. Such processes may be diverse and significant consequences may affect the identity of a country, on the social cohesion of its population. A situation may arise where different groups of people will want to speak different languages, it will

require applying to different legal regulations in terms of religious norms. These groups may have different orientation from the standpoint of foreign policy of the country they belong to (Coleman, 2007).

These fears are substantiated, as both the indigenous population and migrants have their own values, traditions, their own culture, language, religion, which neither of them do not want to waive. According to A.G. Vishnevsky, "their (migrants') values often do not coincide with the values of host societies, and they are sometimes hostile to them, and the clash of different value systems leads to mutual intolerance and conflict, sometimes very sharp and dangerous" (Vishnevsky, 2011, p. 92).

In addition, the values and norms, which are formed among the indigenous population and migrants are different, and this becomes an obstacle for their tolerant interaction. It is known that every nation by virtue of their social, biological, cultural, psychological and other features has a certain line of development in the history of its formation. The changes that have occurred throughout the history of any ethnic group, created a conviction of every nation particular in the rightness of its ethnic group vaccinated values and the basis for further patterns in finding the meaning of life. Perhaps this is one of the most important determinant of negative emotional attitude, as among the host population (who try as much as possible to understand and accept newcoming people) and among migrants trying to adapt to the new environment and culture. However, researches have shown that it does not always work on both sides, as people violate the habitual way of life, it destabilized the "internal Me". As a result instinct comes as a natural reaction to protect migrants' values and lives. This is manifested in the form of the negative statements about migrants, which we quoted above.

However, in many aspects, such negative attitude towards migrants reflects many unresolved social and economic problems of the residents of the hosting socities (region, city), the solution of which will help to reduce the migrant-phobia and to form mutual tolerance, acceptance and respect to live together within one space among the indigenous population and migrants. It is known that the stability of the society, the confidence in the future of its members, the quality of their lives are linked with the patience and strength in relation to the various types of socio-economic and political changes. Of course, tolerance is not a concession, condescension or indulgence moral duty. This, above all, is an active attitude prompted by recognition of universal human rights and freedoms, political and legal requirement, providing an opportunity to conflict-free cooperation between people.

However, ethnic tensions, intolerance in Russia began to grow, not only between the indigenous population and visitors, but also between the migrants themselves. In the media we often can hear (and see) information about the various collisions, disassembly within one nation. This brings up another problem - deviant behavior of visitors to Russia from other countries.

4. Conclusion

The world witnesses the exigent social fallouts due to social fragmentation, the difference of the quality of life between the indigenous (resident) population, the first and the second generations of migrants. The prerequisites of such conflicts and problems in Russia have been already registered. The research outcomes into the causes, factors and mechanisms of evolving processes stipulating the mutual alienation between local and migrant population, the conclusions based on the analysis of the data will serve as a basis for proposals for the need to use those or other mechanisms, tools and technologies towards the integration of migrants in Russia.

Without claiming formulated completeness our proposals are the following:

- Despite the increasing attention to the issue of migrants in Russia, the evolvement of migration requires the coherent treatment with economical, legal, social, psychological and other toolkits to maintain social sustainability and reduce the risks of social fallouts;

- It is necessary to promote legal, economic, social and cultural integration of migrants in Russia, and their families into social life. Not only government agencies, service centres play an important role in this work, but also social, ethnic groups, associations, federations of migrants, etc. "A society is taking migrants and looks forward to further perspectives, openness of diasporas. They should act as a gateway, which allows a migrant to avoid the "aeroembolism" when immersed in a new environment, to freely choose his new multiple identities. This will allow a migrant, if he so wishes, at the same time stay Tajik, Muslim, Russian, to be a Muscovite and Europeans etc." (Vishnevsky, 2011, p. 96). This applies not only to migrants who move to permanent residence in Russia, but also to migrant workers, who came for employment on a temporary basis, to make money for themselves and their families left in homeland. As a rule, they are "delayed" for a long period of time, it happens that they work for five or probably ten years, later bringing their relatives;

- Tolerance should become a social norm in Russia as a civil society, which is manifested in a sustainable balance of different ethnic and other social groups, respect for the diversity of cultures, ethnics, willingness to recognise and cooperate with people who are different in appearance, language, beliefs and traditions. This attitude will prevent the growth of discontent on the part of how local people and visitors of people;

- It is important to take into account that the solution of the problems of migration requires a systematic approach. Systemacy lies in the economic, political, social, socio-psychological, socio-cultural, ethnic, environmental factors in the formation of tolerant behavior of migrants and indigenous people to make decisions, to develop national and regional programs for the harmonization of society, personality, interpersonal interaction, subjective well-being and etc. It is very important to involve all participants of the migration process in these activities: those who regulate, and those who provide various forms of assistance;

- It is necessary to create a number of programs for psychological assistance to migrants for supporting them in positive adaptation and in solving intrapersonal problems (at the first stage of adaptation it can be provided in their own language);

- Psychological prevention and intervention on a deeper level with emotions, human complexes, with their consciousness, attitudes, values and motives are necessary. In this regard, to our point of view, it can be effective to apply the constructivist approach. The possibilities of this approach for the socio-psychological work on the formation of adaptive behaviour of migrants are enormous. We believe that techniques of constructivist approach, namely the change of mental maps of migrants, environmental loads that make up the world picture of a human and determine his social behavior and his individual way of construction of social reality, will contribute to a positive integration of migrants, tolerance towards indigenous people and receiving environment, integration of migrants in Russia;

- No less important to the study are the factors of the receiving environment, characteristics of the dominant ethnic group in order to determine the success of the interaction of different ethnic groups, as well as the choice of the strategy of their interaction. It is important to shape a national identity, patriotism and tolerant attitude in Russia.

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