

YOUNG PEOPLE ATTITUDE TO NON-TITULAR ETHNIC GROUPS AS A RESOURCE TO THE REPRODUCTION OF HUMAN CAPITAL

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Abstract

The reproduction of human capital is an important issue for many world regions. The northern regions of Russia with the developed manufacturing industry require both to retain their own human resources and to attract the new workforce. The issue of the region security is one of the most important factors that can make the region attractive. The authors of the paper analyze the attitude of the young people in Nizhnevartovsk (Russia) to the non-titular ethnic groups as the part of regional security enhancement. The young people survey results showed that this demographic group is generally comfortable in the multi-cultural environment of the given territory. However, there are several factors that can destabilize the situation in the city: the negative attitude of the young people aged 14–19 to the non-titular ethnic groups; the ineffective policy of the local authorities, diasporas, public associations and educational institutions with respect to the adaptation of the newcomers; non-intentional and intentional provocative behavior of some individuals and extremist organizations.

The minimization of these risks can enhance the attractiveness of Russian northern regions both for the young residents and labour migration.

Key words: non-titular ethnic groups, young people, human capital, security, survey

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Introduction

For the majority of countries and regions reproduction and improvement of the human capital is a vital issue. Migrations (internal and external; interregional and cross-border) are among the key factors which determine this process. Regions need to retain their human capital and at the same time to attract more workforce, which can be achieved by providing favourable economic and social conditions. One of the factors which make an area socially attractive is its security, which includes the attitude of local inhabitants, especially young ones, towards non-titular ethnic groups. Young people tend to demonstrate a higher level of intolerance than

other age groups; they are also more prone to extremism and protest behaviour. If young adults are able to establish effective social interactions, it will improve the characteristics of the human capital of this area and increase its potential. Thus, the attitude of local young people towards non-titular ethnic groups plays an important role in the regional development.

1 Literature review

Human capital is a crucial factor of economic growth. The modern approach to this question, however, goes beyond its economic aspect. Jane Jacobs analysed American cities and found a correlation between their prosperity and social diversity: she points out that a high concentration of people with different social characteristics was an important positive factor (Jacobs, 2011). For regional development individuals and the whole community should be provided with a wider choice of alternatives (Gradirovsky, 2009). Mussarat Khadija Khan observes that one of the key factors of economic growth is enhancement of the population's health and education. He also proposes to take into account the gender characteristics of the human capital (Khan, 2016). Nimesh Salike puts forward the following indicators to be considered when analyzing the structure of human capital: endowment; utilization; demography; productivity; support; and health (Salike, 2016). Daniel Stevens and Nick Vaughan-Williams believe that public perception of threats to security is formed on the following four levels: global, national, social, and individual. In relation to migrants this perception is mostly based on the social and individual levels (Stevens & Vaughan-Williams, 2016). Ferenczi and Marshall point out that in Europe young people from diverse ethnic groups prioritize orientation towards the global mass culture over their own cultural heritage despite the pressure of their ethnic communities (Ferenczi & Marshall, 2016). Furthermore, some studies have shown that young people from non-titular ethnic groups can combine untypical practices with ethnic and religious traditions characteristic of their group (Anonymous, 2016). Russian scholars focus on various aspects of Russian population's attitudes to migrants (Britvina, 2006). For instance, Olga Komornikova has identified types of tolerance demonstrated by young people in Russian regions by taking into account the gender aspect of this problem (Komornikova, 2010). It is also essential to study the ways in which interethnic tolerance develops in regions inhabited by groups of various ethnic origins and cultural traditions (Afanacieva & etc, 2013). If communication between titular and non-titular ethnic groups is exercised on the basis of commonly accepted norms of behaviour, then the risk of conflict is minimized.

2 Method

In November 2015 these authors surveyed 205 young inhabitants of Nizhnevartovsk (Russia) aged between 14 and 29 and 30 experts (heads of educational institutions and ethno-cultural public organizations; law enforcement officials; and representatives of municipal administration). The survey was targeted at assessing the level of young people's inter-ethnic tolerance. The results of the questionnaire survey were processed by applying SPSS Statistics software and analyzed by using such methods as descriptive statistical analysis and analysis based on grouping variables.

3 Results

Nizhnevartovsk is a town located in Khanty-Mansiisk autonomous district, one of the subjects of the Russian Federation. This region is characterized by extensive ethnic diversity. For a long time, especially since the resources of oil and gas started to be developed, this region has attracted representatives of various nationalities, religions, and cultures. Nowadays, the influx of migrants from less prosperous areas of Russia and former Soviet republics creates a risk of national and religious conflicts. The tension in social and inter-ethnic relations stems from the local population's reluctance to accept migrants and from the heightened expectations of the newcomers.

Nizhnevartovsk is one of the most ethnically diverse towns in Khanty-Mansiisk autonomous district: its population includes representatives of 111 nationalities, most of whom are Russian (63.6 %) and Tatars (7.1 %). Such ethnic groups as the Bashkirs, Belarusians, Azerbaijanis, and Khanty account for over 1 % of the population. Economic and political transformations of the post-Soviet space brought to this region an influx of migrants from the Caucasus, Central Asia and Ukraine.

As the previous surveys have shown, there were no registered cases of blatant infringement of ethnic minorities' rights on the territory of Nizhnevartovsk. Nevertheless, a number of conflict-inducing factors are likely to aggravate the situation. On the one hand, the survey conducted by these authors has shown that young people of Nizhnevartovsk feel quite comfortable in the multi-cultural environment of the town, which is proven by the fact that local adolescents and young adults keep a short social distance with representatives of ethnic minorities. The points of closest approach on this scale are friendship and marital relations. 76.6 % of the respondents answered that they never pay attention to nationality in their choice of friends. Young people aged between 25 and 29 turned out to be the most willing to

maintain close contacts with representatives of other ethnic groups. It can also be noted that the closest social distance with other nationalities is characteristic of the representatives of non-titular ethnic groups, which is explained by the integrative strategies of their adaptation.

On the other hand, our results demonstrate that a part of the young population (about 20–25 %) try to socially distance themselves from other ethnic groups: for example, one fifth of all the respondents pointed out that they prefer to socialize with representatives of their own nationality. Although a half of the respondents consider it possible to marry a person from another ethnic group, more than a fourth of all the respondents (26.8 %) find it inconceivable. Another interesting fact is that over 11.2 % of young people are concerned that people of other nationalities might behave violently towards them, which shows inter-ethnic tension among young people in Nizhnevartovsk.

In comparison to 2014, in 2015 the share of ethnically tolerant young people (Tolerance Index) increased from 43.6 % to 50.2 %. Only 4.9 % observed that they sometimes encounter negative attitude because of their nationality while 59.5 % said that there was no infringement on the interests of their ethnic groups. At the same time 46.3 % of the respondents admitted that in Nizhnevartovsk situations associated with the expression of nationalist sentiments occur frequently or on a regular basis. 23.4 % reported that in the last two or three years relations in the inter-ethnic sphere became worse.

Male respondents are traditionally more prone to intolerance. The percentage of men who are unprejudiced towards other ethnic groups is significantly smaller than that of women (40.4 % and 59.4 % respectively). On the contrary, the percentage of women who dislike other ethnic groups is smaller than that of men (16 % and 24.2 % respectively).

Tab. 1: Gender differences in ethnic and racial tolerance (%)

Gender	Representatives of which national or ethnic groups do you dislike or find irritating				
	Some groups are irritating	None of the groups are irritating	Cannot say	No answer	Total
Male	24,2	40,4	27,3	8,1	100,0
Female	16,0	59,4	20,8	3,8	100,0
Total	20,0	50,2	23,9	5,9	100,0

Source: author's own data.

There is a difference between the answers of Russian and non-Russian respondents: for example, answering the question whether they have ever faced manifestations of nationalism, 43.7 % of Russian and 54 % of non-Russian respondents replied that in Nizhnevartovsk it happens frequently or occasionally.

Tab. 2: Personal experience of encountering nationalism in different national groups (%)

Have you ever encountered nationalism?	Nationality				
	Russian	Non-Russian	Mixed	No answer	Total
Yes, it often happens in our town	14,3	15,9	0,0	16,7	14,6
Yes, it sometimes happens in our town	29,4	38,1	50,0	16,7	31,7
No, never	38,9	33,3	25,0	41,7	37,1
Cannot say	15,9	12,7	25,0	25,0	15,6
No answer	1,6	0,0	0,0	0,0	1,0
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Source: author's own data.

It can be supposed that the situations, which the respondents referred to were the ones in which nationalism was targeted at national groups other than the respondents' own. Therefore, when answering this question, the respondents said that the interests of their own national groups were not discriminated.

The results of the expert survey showed a similar picture: about two-thirds of all the experts have never faced any manifestations of nationalism in Nizhnevartovsk while one-third have occasionally faced such situations. The experts pointed out that “aggression is more typical of young people aged between 10 and 16. As a rule, these young people form groups based on their national identity and indulge in violent behaviour targeted at other people”. According to the experts, demonstrative dances performed by representatives of Caucasian ethnic groups in public places also qualify as aggressive behaviour.

Analysis of the two age groups shows that 14-19-year-olds are more prone to demonstrating intolerance towards non-titular ethnic groups in comparison to 25-29-year-olds (since such differences do not exceed the margin of error, they can be considered as statistically significant).

Tab. 3: Comparison of two age groups (%)

Variable X:	Value:	Difference :	X/Y1: 14–19 years old	X/Y2: 25–29 years old	Delta:
Representatives of which nationalities annoy you or make you feel hostility towards them?	People of other nationalities do not make me feel annoyed or hostile.	-27,4	36,5	63,9	23,6
Representatives of which nationalities annoy you or make you feel hostility towards them?	These are such nationalities as...	22,9	31,1	8,2	17,8
Are you capable of marrying someone of different national background?	Yes, I am.	-24,7	39,2	63,9	23,7
Which of the statements below do you agree with?	I prefer to socialize with people of the same national background	27,2	33,8	6,6	17,4
Which of the statements below do you agree with?	I do not care about people's nationality when choosing friends.	-26,7	63,5	90,2	18,8

Source: author's own data.

Thus, it can be concluded that the situation in the sphere of inter-ethnic relations in Nizhnevartovsk is riddled with contradictions. Although about a fourth of the young population (23.9 %) pointed out certain improvements in this sphere, some local inhabitants and migrants do not feel inclined to establish close contacts with other ethnic groups. Moreover, 18.6 % of the surveyed young people demonstrated positive attitude towards nationalist organizations. Among male respondents the share of those who approve of such organizations is higher in comparison to women (22.2 % and 15 % respectively).

Although most of the youth in this town show a positive or indifferent attitude towards migrants coming to Nizhnevartovsk from former Soviet republics (65.3 %), one fifth of the respondents (22.5 %) expressed their disapproval of this trend. These young people consider authorities to be responsible for these problems and expect them to take measures: for example, the majority of the youth believe that the town and regional authorities should limit migration from other countries to their territory (60 %).

According to this survey, inter-ethnic tension in the town can be aggravated if migrants refuse to respect local customs and traditions and integrate in the host community. The second risk-inducing factor is intended or unintended provocative activity of certain individuals. Finally, the inertia of the leaders of ethnic communities can also contribute to escalation of ethnic conflicts and the related crimes.

Thus, the attitudes of young people to non-titular ethnic groups in Nizhnevartovsk can be influenced by the following negative factors: 1) one of the population groups (adolescent males aged 14–18) steadily demonstrate intolerance towards ethnic minorities; 2) municipal authorities put little effort into acculturating migrants; 3) certain individuals and extremist groups may intentionally or unintentionally destabilize the situation.

Thus, it can be concluded that there is no migrant phobia among young people in Nizhnevartovsk. In order to maintain social stability in the reproduction of the human capital we would recommend the following measures:

- enhance regional identity as common to all ethnic groups in the town;
- place more emphasis on age-related characteristics in the local youth policy (develop young people's creative abilities; enhance their motivation to participate in cultural and social events; use role playing and simulation games, and so on);
- use the communication means, which are the most popular among young people (social networks, blogs, and so on).

Conclusion

Nowadays, nationalist extremism and the rising international and interfaith intolerance are among the world's most common and acute problems. Therefore, even small inter-ethnic clashes can trigger large-scale national and religious conflicts, which makes prevention of ethnic problems particularly important. According to the results of our research, social preventive work should be targeted primarily at 14-19-year-olds. As this research has shown, 'urban diversity' is a controversial phenomenon and the development of the regional human

capital is heavily dependent on the ability of young people to effectively interact with ethnic minorities.

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