

**WELLSO 2017**  
**IV International Scientific Symposium Lifelong Wellbeing in  
the World**

**SOCIAL WELL-BEING AND PERCEPTION OF THE FUTURE BY  
MIGRANTS**

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*Abstract*

The paper explores the problems of perceiving the future and building its image by migrants. The problem is considered at the example of a Russian metropolis from the standpoint of social anthropology. The authors discover a correlation between the migrants' perception and ethnic situation in a region, determine socio-psychological factors of personal measurement of migrants and elaborate on the relationship "migrant–local population" in terms of inter-ethnic relationships and perception of the future. The paper reviews indicators for evaluating moods of masses in societies concerning perception of the future, which are applied both in Russian and foreign practice. The research is based on the results of monitoring of identity among migrants from Central Asia countries and Russians in conditions of a metropolis. The state of social well-being is characterized in terms of the three components: actual status of a migrant in various spheres of society; perception, evaluation and attitude to the social status (emotional factor linked with satisfaction); perception and assessment of objective living conditions in society (situation in a country in the present and the future). These parameters were examined in the key spheres in the context of the problems of daily living: labour, social security, healthcare, education, housing, family, politics, migration. As a result, the prevailing state of migrants' social well-being in 2016 was determined, and their perception of the future was described. In addition, the paper looked at the specifics of perception and realization of the present by migrants in relation to their images of future.

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**Keywords:** Perception of the future, identity, migrant, social well-being.

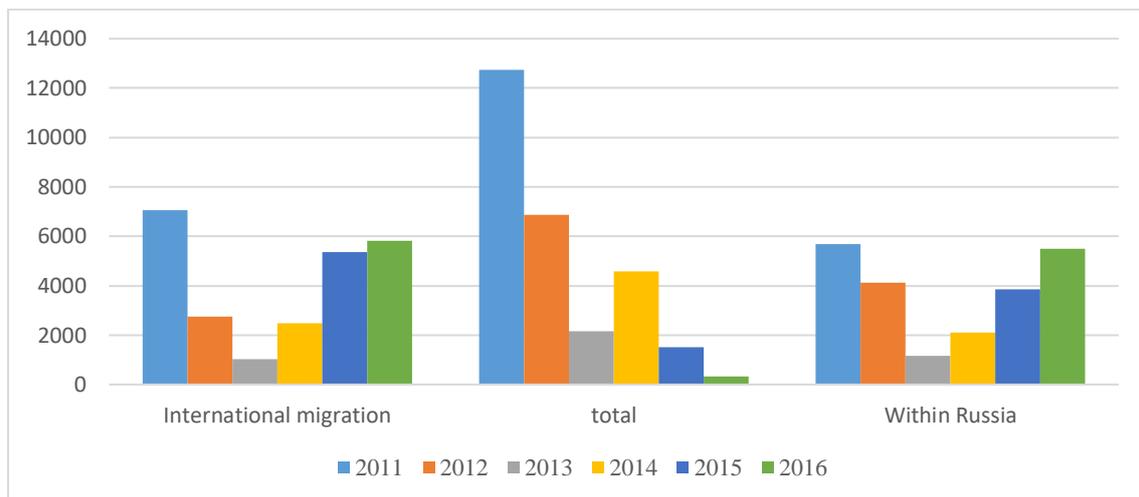


## 1. Introduction

Migration has become a landmark phenomenon in the modern world, spilling over to various social strata and groups, the spheres of social life. The scale and lots of reasons for migration characterizes the complexity and depth of migration processes. It is connected to social and personal changes caused both by problems of people migrating to a new society and their perception of the future.

In modern world, the attention of science and practice is increasingly being drawn to the problem of labor migration, which is caused by a number of trends appeared in the society. In particular these are the reduction of the local working age population, when migrants can replace the labor force, introduction of jobs that are unattractive for local residents, growth in enterprises operating with the participation of foreign capital, etc. Perception of the future by labor migrants reflects the general tone of mood of this social group through the comparisons of the possibilities to meet their needs in the new sociocultural conditions of the megalopolis into which they contribute their "human resource" (Aisati, Plume & Moed 2012).

In this view, it is important to determine special features of migrants' state, determined by the cultural conditions of the megalopolis. Yekaterinburg is one of such megalopolises, which is traditionally subject to the high migration. In recent years, this has been due to the influx of labor migrants from Central Asia, the number of which is about 65% of the total flow of migrants, entering the megalopolis. If in previous years migration gain consisted of interregional migration within Russia and international migration, then in 2015 and 2016 the level of interregional migration within Russia decreased (Figure 01). This means that more people left the region than moved here, and the migration gain in 2015 and in 2016 was due to arrival of migrants from foreign countries (Lizunkov et al., 2016).



**Figure 01.** Migration growth in the population of Sverdlovsk region, people

Migration processes in Yekaterinburg are accompanied by a significant share of international migration in it, mainly from the countries of Central Asia, unskilled level of foreign workers and the predominance of migrant women. However, the real share of migrants, considering the unregulated or illegal aspect of migration, is 7-9%. This index is close to the corresponding proportion in many receiving countries in Europe, such as Italy, Great Britain or Germany. Reasonable economic necessity in migration

increase is a serious challenge for the policy of the near future, but at the present time there is no political will, and it is not expected in the near future, since politicians are targeted the position of voter, and the majority of the population does not support the migration policy. If the government focuses on the growth of migration, this will cause aggravating of number of problems that appeared in recent years. This is primarily a problem of increase in the number of migrants with the other cultures and increase of the cultural distance between migrants and the local population. Just on that cultural ground the so-called "new" xenophobia towards the citizens of the countries of Central Asia is based, in contrast to, for example, the "old" xenophobia towards people from the Caucasus and the Jewish people, involving money, inequality and corruption. Other estimates suggest that perhaps as many as half of all migrate to urban areas, particularly to capital cities, where they blend into the population of urban poor (Salaff et al, 2003).

Yekaterinburg as a sociocultural reception area with its historical migration traditions is characterized as multi ethnic, multi-religious and multicultural city with about 120 nationalities, integrated in a unified community. Despite this, the presence of migrants in it often causes problems of intercultural collaboration, conflicts of social interests and adaptation and does not find support of local population and government agencies in their decisions. All this problems impede the life activity of the migrant and adversely affects the emotional-value state and activity of the person. As a result, self-identification is violated, motives of behavior and perception of the future are distorted and the opportunity to discover the cultural potential of labor migration and development of the community as a host megalopolis is lost.

Comprehensive study of a social well-being and perception of the future by labor migrants in a megalopolis allows working out reasonable scope of measures aimed at forming of adequate perception of personal and social changes, stabilization of the social well-being of migrants among the local population, as well as more positive perception of future (Lizunkov et al., 2015).

## **2. Problem Statement**

The scale and lots of reasons for migration characterizes the complexity and depth of migration processes. It is connected to social and personal changes caused both by problems of people migrating to a new society and their perception of the future. The problem is, that the relationships between social well-being assessment and perception of the future by labor migrants and mechanisms of inclusion in this or other segment of migration flows and parameters of the receiving environment are still theoretically poorly reasoned and not experimentally specified. In the article, this problem is limited to the search for and justification of links with the adaptation of labor migrants and their life plans for the future in the context of a modern metropolis (Malushko et al., 2016).

### **2.1. The urgency of the social well-being assessment and perception of the future by labor migrants**

In modern world, the attention of science and practice is increasingly being drawn to the problem of labor migration, which is caused by a number of trends appeared in the society. In particular these are the reduction of the local working age population, when migrants can replace the labor force, introduction

of jobs that are unattractive for local residents, growth in enterprises operating with the participation of foreign capital, etc. In these conditions, the problem of natives and migrants turns into a search for constructive results of labor migration, reflecting the interests of both the society and the migrant.

## **2.2. Perception of the future by labor migrants in sociocultural conditions of metropolis**

High heuristicity of attempts in this respect is demonstrated by the understanding of the phenomenon of social well-being as a generalized emotional-value reaction of migrants to the social and cultural changes in their environment, that allows to assess the shifts in the public consciousness and social environment, to identify hotspots of social tension, to study concepts of public life through group and individual perception of social changes. Perception of the future by labor migrants reflects the general tone of mood of this social group through the comparisons of the possibilities to meet their needs in the new sociocultural conditions of the metropolis into which they contribute their "human resource".

## **3. Research Questions**

The research characterizes the specific features of the modern phenomenon of migration not as one of the possible solutions to some social and economic or personal problems, but as somewhat of institutionalized in a metropolis, with a particular emphasis on the assessment of migrants' well-being in the receiving environment and their perception of the future (Loshchilova, Lizunkov & Zavjyalova, 2015).

### **3.1. Study of features of self-organization and assessment of migrants' well-being in receiving environment.**

Specific features of migrants' self-organization, depending on the conditions of the receiving environment, are described and analyzed in the studies devoted to the problems of markets segmentation, ethnic stratification, migration networks and the formation of ethnic enclaves (Tukhtarova, 2016). Especially valuable for us information is contained in the studies that attempt to consider the act of migration systematically - from the analysis of the situation in the place of exit of migrants to the variants of their arrangement and assessment of well-being in the receiving environment.

Works on the theory and practice of acculturation and multiculturalism play an important role in understanding the mechanisms for migrants' arrangement in a new place and their perception of the situation.

Research of perception of the future by migrants.

In studying the perception of the future by labor migrants, particular importance is given to:

- Works of Western sociologists on the possibility of combining quantitative and qualitative methodology in a specific empirical study (Di Maria & Lazarova, 2012).
- The idea of using weighting factors of importance in the study of subjective quality of life, which makes it possible to take into account individual differences in assessing the significance of a particular aspect of life (Hsieh, 2004).

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The aim of the article is to investigate the features of the migrants' social well-being, their reaction to social and cultural changes in the environment of their life activity in a megalopolis, allowing to assess the shifts in the perception of the migrants' life through group and individual perception of social changes and their future.

## **5. Research Methods**

Working procedures and empirical base of research is defined on the basis of the works, summarizing the experience of researching the features of social well-being in a megalopolis and their perception of the future in various directions and concepts.

### **5.1. Working procedure.**

Working procedures include: analysis of statistic data of Federal State Statistics Service, secondary analysis of data of sociological inquiries of migrants in Yekaterinburg, social surveys of migrants (sociological survey, expert interview, focus groups; content analysis of printed and electronic media, analysis of literary sources.

### **5.2. Empirical base of research.**

The empirical base of research is the results of a sociological study "Building of identity of migrants from the countries of Central Asia and Russians as a problem of mutual adaptation in the conditions of Yekaterinburg", conducted using tools and conceptual approaches, developed with the participation of authors in the framework of:

- survey of 200 migrants from the countries of Central Asia, conducted by structured interview with proportional representation of 4 countries,
- survey of 450 citizens of Yekaterinburg, living in all districts of megalopolis,
- survey of 10 experts,
- 4 series of focus group survey of students of Ural Federal University.

## **6. Findings**

The study identified the main trends of migration processes in one of the megalopolis of Russia - Yekaterinburg, and also assessed the quality of life felt by migrant respondents from Central Asia as a subjective integral assessment of the individual's own life as a whole, as well as its individual subjectively significant aspects. Conclusions about perception of the future by migrants were made.

The analysis of the structure of labor migration to Yekaterinburg by the countries of origin indicates an increase in migration from the countries of Asia: if in the middle of 2000s the aggregate share of three countries of Central Asia (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan) was about 1/3, then by 2016 it exceeded 60% of the total labor flow. The indicated shifts in the migration structure require changes in the priorities of the migration policy. According to the sample surveys of labor migrants

conducted in the framework of study, a little more than 50% of migrants had a labor permit, i.e. worked legally, and only slightly more than 1/3 received officially declared salary (according to a salary slip with a personal signature or to a card). According to surveys, the salary of migrants working illegally (who do not have a labor permit) are only 5% lower than those who work legally, which is almost completely level off by differences in the sectoral and skill structure.

Money earned by legal and illegal migrants is almost equally divided between the Russian economy and the economy of the country of origin, usually in favor of the former. Before the crisis, the average migrant sent to home \$ 220, and spent \$ 450 in Russia, and \$ 200 and \$ 315 during the crisis correspondingly. The income of migrants during the crisis decreased by an average of \$ 150, or by 22%, if count in dollars, and by 6%, if count in rubles. If before the crisis the average migrant after residential rental payment and sending money to his home had just shy of \$ 300, then in the middle of 2009 – he had only \$ 200. However, it must be borne in mind that migrants earn this money for a working week of 60 hours, i.e. 1,5-2 times more than Russian employee works. Hourly wage of a migrant is at an average 42% lower than that of a Russian employee. A characteristic feature of today's migration is the widespread development of informal social networks. Limited access of migrants to official services, for example, to bank loans, generates a shadow market for these services, often leading to criminal debt schemes such as medieval debt bondage. Informal migrant networks reduce the capabilities for control of migration.

According to the conducted study, many migrants from the countries of Central Asia consider Yekaterinburg as a place of permanent residence and would faintly receive the status of a resident or Russian citizenship. These are about 1/4 of the total flow. Thus, the majority of respondents (40%) take the tactics of long-term (for 9-12 months) circular trips in search of a living. Tactics of short trips and visits to specific jobs (project trips) chooses less than 1/3 of respondents. Choosing the strategy of circular trips in Russia, migrants make specific rent money from their trans-border movement, using the fact that the difference in wages between the country of origin and Russia is several times higher than the difference in prices for goods and services. Making money in Russia and spending it in the country of origin, they maximize their benefit of migration.

In the conducted study, the correlation analysis showed that the closest relationship exists between the perceived quality of life, the positive perception of the future and the indicators of wealth status. But at the same time, the assessment of opportunities to meet their own needs is more associated with the perceived quality of life, and in a less degree with the income. It is difficult to find unique explanation of this phenomenon. On the one hand, it seems likely that the migrant respondents understated the real level of income, and the assessment of their own capabilities reasonably reflects their real economic situation. On the other hand, subjective quality of life can be affected by the disparity between the level of aspiration and the actual degree of satisfaction of needs, which, to some extent, is also covered by the assessment of one's own capabilities.

There is also direct correlation dependence between the level of education and the perceived quality of life: the higher the level of education, the higher the subjective quality of life. However, this connection is mediate, because the subjective quality of life is determined not so much by the educational status as by the capital, in this case the economic one, which is behind him: persons with higher education

have more chances to find a well-paid job. There is also a connection between the family status and the perceived quality of life. Actually, the presence of a spouse can be considered as a resource of material and emotional support, which, as a final result, also influences on the integral assessment of life in general.

**Table 01.** Distribution of indices of importance and satisfaction in various aspects of life

№	Aspect	Index of importance	Satisfaction index
1.	Job	0.94	0.20
2.	A family	0.03	0.47
3.	Children	0.92	0.45
4.	Living conditions	0.91	0.25
5.	Financial situation	0.90	0.09
6.	Love	0.87	0.40
7.	Stability, confidence in the future	0.86	0.04
8.	Security	0.85	-0.02
9.	Respect from other people	0.85	0.20
10.	Friends	0.84	0.42
11.	Health	0.81	0.23
12.	Leisure and free time	0.81	0.24
13.	Caring for a person by the state	0.79	-0.15
14.	Compliance with laws	0.79	-0.13
15.	Ecological situation	0.78	-0.20
16.	Education	0.77	0,29
17.	Political freedoms	0.73	-0.02

Distribution analysis of values for importance index (I) and satisfaction index (S) showed that the five most important aspects were "work" (B = 0.94), "family" (B = 0.93), "children" (B = 0.92), "living conditions" (B = 0.91) and "wealth status" (B = 0.90). The lowest values of importance factors were shown in such spheres as "political freedoms" (B = 0.73), "education" (B = 0.77), "ecological situation" (B = 0.78), "compliance with laws" (B = 0.79) and "government protection" (B = 0.79). Although in this case the spread of the importance indexes is not so great and it can be said only about moderate priority of the first five aspects, nevertheless, just these first five aspects attract attention. The level of satisfaction of the population with its wealth status can be characterized as an average (S = 0.09). In this context, "living conditions" and "work" are a little better: the satisfaction index is 0.25 and 0.20, respectively. The value of satisfaction index for such parameters as "family" and "children" is higher: S = 0.47 and S = 0.45. Most of all respondents are satisfied with their personal life - family, children, love, friends (S = 0.47, S = 0.45, S = 0.40, S = 0.42, respectively). The least values of satisfaction indexes are in the areas that characterize the conditions of human existence in society - security, government protection, ecological situation, political freedoms, compliance with laws (S = -0.02, S = -0.15, S = -0.20, S = -0.02, S = -0.13, respectively). To measure the experience of time, a scale developed by A.S. Gottlieb: 1. I, of course, live today, but yearning for the past: it had a lot of good (easy nostalgia); 2. I have to live, but everything good for me is left in the past (deep nostalgia); 3. I live by one day and do not make any plans for the future; 4. I live by the present, but I look to the future with optimism, I make plans for the future.

To measure the experience of time the scale, developed by A.S. Gottlieb, was used: 1. I, certainly, live for the now, but dwell on the past: there was a lot of good (light nostalgia); 2. I have to live, but all the good left in the past (deep nostalgia); 3. I live for today and do not make plans for the future; 4. I live in the present, but look to the future with optimism, make plans for the future.

The first point of the scale characterizes light, the second - deep nostalgia, which A.S. Gottlieb, after G.E. Zborovskiy and E.A. Shirokova interprets as "a social feeling typical for certain social communities and associated with their rational and emotional orientation to an idealized and dead social order." The third point reflects such a type of time experience as "presentism". It is the dominance of the present to the detriment of the future. The fourth point reflects the present, in which elements of the future are present. More than half of the respondent migrants make plans for the future (64.4%). Presentism is typical for a quarter of respondents (25.9%), light nostalgia is common for 6.6%, and deep nostalgia is almost not shown: only 3.1% chooses this variant.

## 7. Conclusion

An analysis of the tendency of relationship between the experience of time and the perceived quality of life has shown that the evaluation of real life has a greater influence on the type of time experience, and not the reverse. Thus, the higher the perceived quality of life, the closer the experience of time to the variant " I live in the present, but look to the future with optimism ", and the lower the perceived quality of life - the closer to the variants of nostalgia and presentism. These results again confirmed the thesis of the non-identity of such phenomena as happiness and satisfaction with life. Correlation coefficient between these variables is 0.6. It was found that a high level of happiness excludes low satisfaction with life in general, and a low (unhappiness) – high one.

Weighing procedure showed only a small increase in the correlation coefficient between satisfaction with life in general and the index of private satisfaction: from 0.545 without weighing to 0.550 with weighing. This is due to a small variation in indexes of the significance of various spheres, which in turn can be explained either by the specifics of respondents' consciousness, or by the method of assessing the importance of various aspects of life. Therefore, it is necessary to test another way of assessing the importance - ranging of life aspects, and then compare the cognitive capabilities of both methods. During conversion from empirical distribution of index values for private satisfaction to the rank scale, the used methodology for calculation of weighing factors of importance made an adjustment of 38% and as for the scale of the perceived quality of life - in 11% of cases. Thus, it is proved that in the planning of a single logical index of the perceived quality of life and the perception of the future, one should not abandon the weighing procedure.

## Acknowledgments

The work was implemented in the frames of the project of the Russian Foundation for Basic Research "Forming the identity of migrants from Central Asia and the Russians as a problem of mutual adaptation under the conditions of a Russian big city" and supported by the grant №16-33-00010/17. We are grateful to the Institute of Public Administration and Entrepreneurship at Ural Federal University

named after the first President of Russia B. N. Yeltsin, The Ural State University of Economics for the research opportunity and assistance.

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