

Social professional portrait of the middle class: regional aspect (Case Study: the City of Omsk-Russia)

Retrato social profesional de la clase media: aspecto regional (Estudio de caso: la ciudad de Omsk-Rusia)

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Abstract

The study analyzes the regional features of the social-professional characteristics of the middle class and the migration attitudes of the middle-class youth (for example, in the city of Omsk). The empirical basis of the study is the data of a sociological survey conducted at the Department of Sociology of Dostoevsky Omsk State University in 2021. The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). It is concluded that the position of the middle class and factors of migration relations are associated with the social-economic conditions for the development of creative environment in the city.

Key words: middle class, social stratification, creative city, migration

Resumen

El estudio analiza las características socioprofesionales de la clase media y las actitudes migratorias de los jóvenes de clase media (por ejemplo, en la ciudad de Omsk). La base empírica del estudio son los datos de una encuesta sociológica realizada en el Departamento de Sociología de la Universidad Estatal Dostoievski Omsk en 2021, cuyos datos recopilados se analizaron mediante el Paquete Estadístico de Ciencias Sociales (SPSS). Se concluye que la posición de la clase media y los factores de las relaciones migratorias están asociados con las condiciones socioeconómicas para el desarrollo del entorno creativo en la ciudad.

Palabras clave: clase media, estratificación social, ciudad creativa, migración

1. Introduction

Modern cities, concentrating high-tech resources, attract the main flows of financial investments and labor resources, provoking many economic, legal, social and political risks for the surrounding regions. These risks, first of all, include the growth of poverty, unemployment, criminality, the migration of the young, most active, highly educated and able-bodied population from all settlements that cannot compete with modern cities. The greatest

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danger for lagging cities is the migration of representatives of the middle class - carriers of creative capital. The problem of dying cities is considered by Florida in his recent monograph, which analyzes the competition between urban centers (Florida, R, 2017) and provides confirmation that cities with a higher population density are more effective for establishing a creative environment.

The creative city promotes the integration of culture into other spheres of public life, primarily into the economy, which corresponds to the logic of the historical transition of cities from an industrial economy to a knowledge economy. Well-measured features of a creative urban space are the number, diversity and accessibility of educational institutions, science, culture, creative platforms, as well as the effectiveness of political mechanisms to promote creative business. The theoretical model of a creative city is closely related to the development of civil society; an important difference of a creative city is that the initiation of development projects is carried out not by the authorities, but by the urban population, characterized by cultural diversity, openness to acceptance of something else, and tolerance. The city authorities are expected to support civil initiatives for the development of urban space, as well as attract the business investments required for this support. In such a situation, the basic interest of social development is to increase the comfort of life for people in a creative city to retain human capital through the creation of creative clusters, research centers, vocational training centers, and the development of programs for financial, legal and tax support. It is the middle class that is able to realize the potential of the creative city (Florida, R, 2002; Florida, R, 2005; Landry, Ch., 2006).

The connection between the middle class and the creative urban environment is clearly visible in Russia. One of the characteristic features of the Russian middle class is heterogeneity, which is especially noticeable in settlements of different sizes. The middle class in Russia is mainly concentrated in rapidly growing regional centers with a population of more than a million people (Yekaterinburg, Kazan, Krasnodar, Novosibirsk). In cities with a population of less than 500 thousand, the share of the middle class is significantly lower. Ufa, Perm, Omsk, Chelyabinsk and Volgograd occupy an intermediate position between large cities of the post-industrial type and smaller settlements, in which industrial production continues to dominate and many stratification features formed during the Soviet period remain.

Cities that are lagging behind in the development of the knowledge economy are losing their population, especially of a young age, mainly with a higher education. The main reason for the significant loss of middle class youth is active migration processes, which are associated with the peculiarities of the conditions for self-realization in the region. Young people of the middle class often do not see their future in a city that lacks legal, administrative and infrastructural conditions for realizing their potential.

In Russia, in 2019, experts from the Calvert 22-Foundation and the PwC-group of consulting companies published the results of a study of twenty Russian cities for the severity of about two hundred indicators of creative and innovative development (PWC Russia, 2019). The indicators belonged to five basic blocks: the city itself, its inhabitants, business, government, brands, i.e. everything that clearly enough describes the state of urban infrastructure, human capital, business environment, urban policy, city image. The ten cities that realize the creative potential to the greatest extent were compiled in descending order as follows: Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kazan, Yekaterinburg, Vladivostok, Novosibirsk, Tyumen, Krasnodar, Kaliningrad, Veliky Novgorod. Omsk is the ninth most populous Russian city, one of the fifteen million-plus cities in Russia, and has closed the twenty creative cities. However, according to Rosstat, in the first four months of 2021, the population of the Omsk region decreased by 3,902 people, as a result, the Omsk region is in first place in terms of migration loss among 85 regions of Russia (FSSS/Omsk, 2021).

The complexity and ambiguity of regional development in Russian conditions poses a number of tasks for researchers, one of the most important of which is to identify the main characteristics of the middle class of a typical Russian large city, since the sustainable socio-economic development of the region largely depends on a

conscious policy towards the middle class, namely the middle class broadcasts innovative social practices to the rest of the population.

This task is all the more urgent, since in Russian sociology, due to the specific conditions of social stratification in the Soviet and post-Soviet periods, the concept of the middle class is still debatable. A number of Russian sociologists insist on the absence of such a social group as the "middle class" in the structure of Russian society. However, most researchers agree that the destruction of the established structure of Soviet society and the subsequent high social and professional mobility led to the formation of a new structure of society, characteristic of a market economy, where the middle class plays a significant role.

2. Methodology

One of the most elaborated approaches to identifying the middle class in Russia was proposed by the research team of the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences under the leadership of M.K. Gorshkov and N.E. Tikhonova (ISRAS, 2014). This approach distinguishes the middle class on the basis of a set of quantifiable criteria. According to this approach, attribution to the middle class is carried out on the basis of the following characteristics:

- education not lower than secondary specialized;
- per capita monthly income is not lower than the median for the region;
- non-physical nature of labor;
- self-identification (an individual's integral self-assessment of his social status is not lower than "4" on a ten-point scale of status).

The authors note that the middle class in Russia is about 40-42% of the population. Despite a fairly large share of the middle class in Russia, researchers from the RAS Institute of Science indicate that its composition is not homogeneous: only 16% of the population are carriers of stable and pronounced characteristics of the middle class. A significant part of the population belongs to the potential middle class, since it does not meet one of the selected criteria. For example, higher education and the non-physical nature of labor in modern Russia do not guarantee its owner's entry into the middle class, since the availability and predominantly state funding of education and health systems, inherited from Soviet times, determine the low level of income of professionals working in these spheres.

This article presents the experience of forming a social and professional portrait of the middle class in Omsk.

Omsk is one of the largest cities in Russia with a population of 1,139,897 people (2021). The second most populous city in Siberia and the ninth in Russia. Omsk ranks fifth in terms of production among Russian industrial centers, there are 28 higher educational institutions in the city.

2.1. Materials and methods

The social-professional portrait of the middle class in Omsk within the framework of the present study was formed on the basis of four indicators: education, professional activity, income level, self-identification. Migration attitudes of young people were tested separately.

In the course of the research, research hypotheses were formulated:

1. The professional structure of the middle class in Omsk is dominated by workers in the secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy and the budgetary sector: officials, managers and specialists from the public sector.

2. Young people of the middle class demonstrate a high level of migration intentions, the main directions of migration are large creative cities of Russia.

To test the hypothesis 1, in April 2021, a street survey was conducted on a quota sample (gender and age) in crowded places, the sample totaled 384 people of working age - women aged 20-59 and men aged 20-64 living in the city of Omsk, meeting the criteria for the allocation of the middle class.

To test the hypothesis 2, a street survey was conducted on a quota sample (gender and age) in crowded places, the sample population was 384 people aged 18-30 years old, living in the city of Omsk, who met the criteria for identifying the middle class.

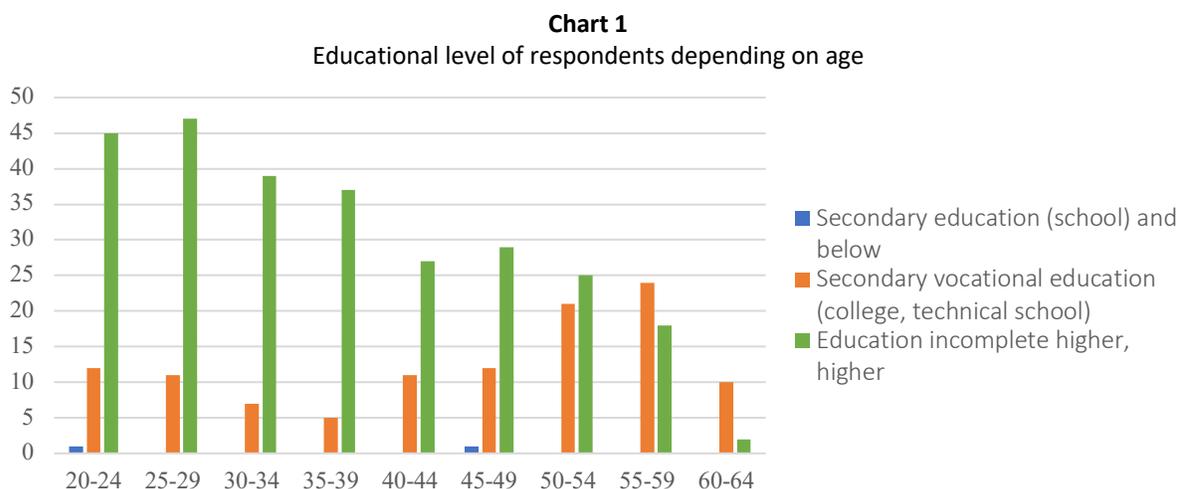
The collected empirical data were analyzed in SPSS with a frequency analysis based on the Chi-square test and the Cramer's V Coefficient.

3. Results

Based on the database collected in April-May 2021. Within the framework of the research carried out by the Department of Sociology of Dostoevsky Omsk State University, the social-professional portrait of the representatives of the Omsk middle class was described and the level of migration intentions of the middle class youth was determined.

3.1. Education

The overwhelming majority of representatives of the middle class, 70.1% have higher or incomplete higher education, 29.4% of respondents have secondary vocational education. On average in Russia, 60% of the middle class have a higher or incomplete higher education and 40% have a secondary vocational education. At the same time, there are more women with higher or incomplete higher education than men (37.7% versus 32.3%). The situation is different with secondary vocational education (15.1% of men and 14.3% of women). Among the respondents with incomplete higher or higher education, the most numerous is the group of 20-29 years old - 24%, the second largest is the age group 30-39 years old - 19.8%. In age groups over 50, the number of respondents with secondary vocational education is sharply increasing - 14.3% of the middle class.

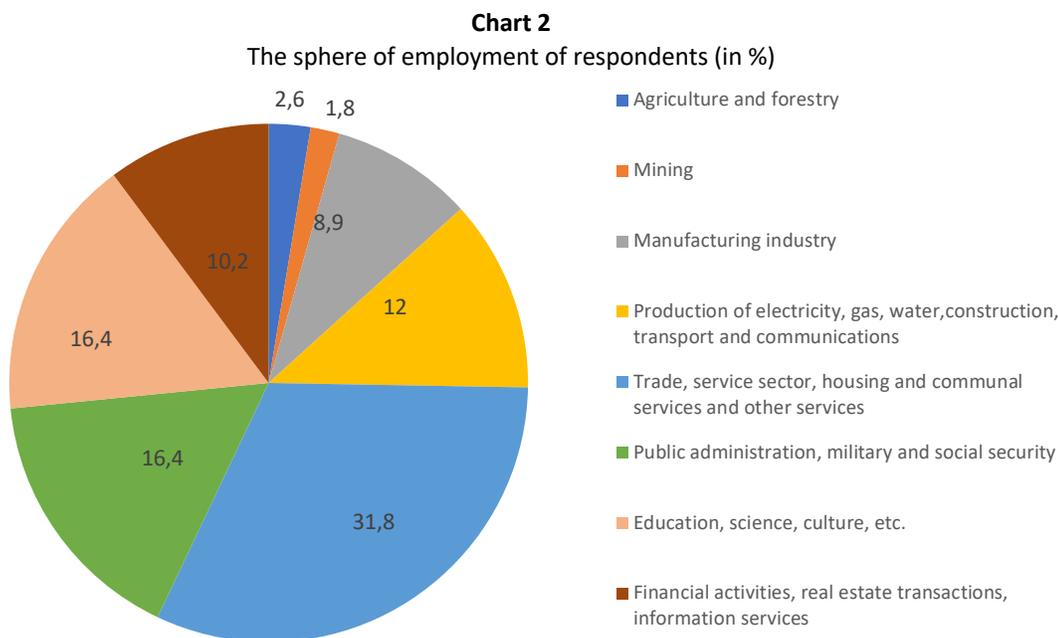


Source: data base of the Department of Sociology, OMSU (2021)

3.2. Professional activity

Among the surveyed representatives of the middle class of Omsk, 13% are managers and entrepreneurs, 6.3% are self-employed, 42.4% are specialists whose work involves the use of higher education, and 38.3% are other non-physical workers (office staff, workers in the field of trade and consumer services, etc.).

The middle class is predominantly employed in the sphere of trade and services - 31.77%. The second most in demand is the sphere of public administration, ensuring military and social security - 16.41%, as well as the sphere of science, education and culture - 16.4%, 12% work in the production and distribution of electricity, gas, water, construction, transport and communications, 10.2% in financial activities, real estate transactions, information services, industry - 8.9%, agriculture and forestry - 2.6%, in the field of mining - 1.8%.



Source: data base of the Department of Sociology, OMSU (2021)

The data obtained allow us to assert that the representatives of the middle class of Omsk are employed mainly in the sectors of the tertiary sector of the economy, there is a significant share of workers (25.3%) in the primary and secondary sectors of the economy, and only 16.4% of respondents are among the workers in the creative industries, which testifies to the late industrial stage in the development of society in the city of Omsk.

This conclusion is also confirmed by the respondents' assessment of the creative nature of their work, one of the most important characteristics of the economy's creativity - only 9.6% of the respondents noted that their work is unregulated and creative, while 50.3% indicated that their work is regulated completely, 40.1% consider their work to be largely regulated.

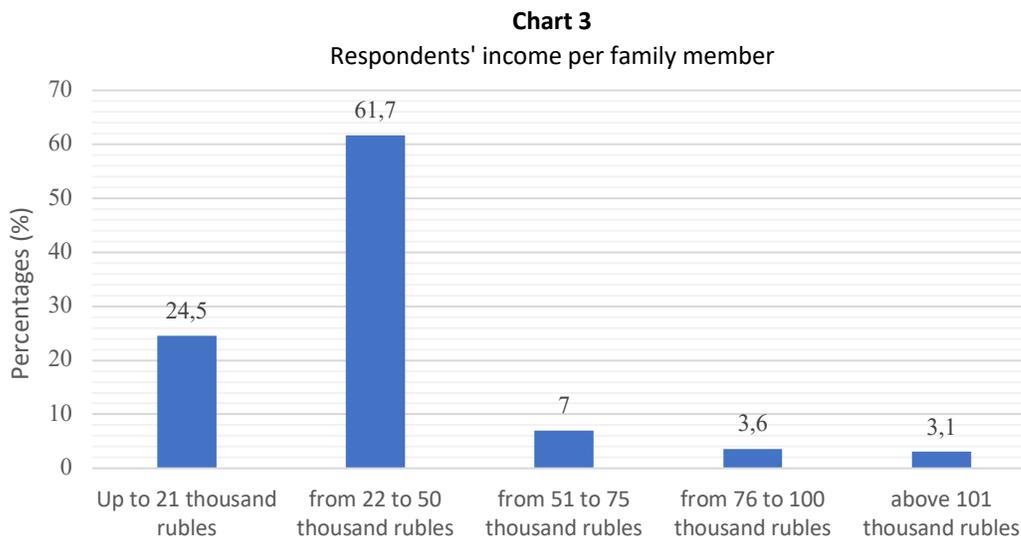
Most of the respondents work in private organizations 64.1%, in budgetary organizations 35.9% are employed, which does not confirm the hypothesis about the predominance of representatives of the public sector in the middle class of Omsk, but in the creative sphere (education, science, culture, etc.) 71.4% of respondents work in budgetary institutions, which largely indicates its underdevelopment and dependence on state support.

3.3. Income level

According to the methodology of the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the indicators of the average monthly per capita income of the middle class should not be lower than their median values for this

type of settlement. For the Omsk region, the median value of the average monthly per capita income in 2019 was 21,117.9 rubles (FSSS, 2019).

The majority of respondents (61.72%) have an average monthly income per family member from 22 to 50 thousand rubles.



Source: data base of the Department of Sociology, OMSU (2021)

3.4. Self-identification

Assessing their social status in comparison with their parental family, the majority of respondents describe their social status as unchanged or improved. The respondents also more often declare that their social status has improved over the past 5 years. Thus, 59.4% stated that their social situation had improved over the past 5 years, 30.5% felt that their situation had not changed, and only 10.2% stated that their situation had worsened.

The analysis revealed the features of the social and professional portrait of the middle class of the city of Omsk:

- it is based on specialists with higher education, and their work involves its use in the process of work;
- they are employed in the sphere of trade, service and various services, in the sphere of public administration, ensuring military and social security, as well as in the sphere of science, education and culture;
- on average have an income per family member from 22 to 50 thousand rubles, work in a private organization in a fully or partially regulated job;
- assess their social status no lower than the social status of the parental family, and also note the improvement in their social status over the past 5 years.

Among the features of the Omsk middle class, it is worth noting a large percentage of people with higher education - 70.1% (more than the average in Russia) and a noticeable number of people working in positions that do not require such a level of education: only 40.63% of respondents noted that their activity involves the use of higher education. The data indicate a shortage of highly skilled jobs in the labor market.

This situation serves as a source of growth in the migration intentions of the residents of Omsk, and they are most actively demonstrated by young people. When considering the migration attitudes of young people of the middle class, it was revealed that 74.5% of the respondents wish to leave Omsk. 25.5% of the respondents would

not like to move from Omsk, of which only 6.5% are firmly convinced of their desire to stay. The data obtained confirm the hypothesis of a high level of migration intentions among young people.

Young people aged 18-24 are most inclined to change their place of residence - 83.2%. Among young people aged 25 to 29, the share of respondents who want to leave Omsk is significantly lower - 67.3%.

Analyzing the Chi-square criterion, we can conclude that there is a connection between the respondent's marital status and the desire to leave. Among those wishing to stay there is a significant proportion of those who are married (46.4%), among those who are married only 16.9% who demonstrate migration moods. The Chi-square criterion also indicates that having children affects migratory moods: those surveyed who do not have children are more likely to fall into the group of those who want to leave - 78% than those who have children - 56%.

This dependence is explained by the fact that young people aged 18 to 24 have fewer social ties and obligations. They have not yet managed to get a job in Omsk, find a good job, buy housing, so they are ready to easily look for a more profitable place of residence and leave their hometown.

The main direction of the desired migration of middle class youth is another country - 30.6%. The second most popular destination were Russian dynamically developing cities - St. Petersburg - 16.8%, Moscow - 12.6%, Novosibirsk - 8.7%, Tyumen - 7.7%.

To identify the motives of migration moods specific to middle class youth, several factors were identified related to creative conditions in the city of Omsk, such as: lack of development of creative industries, undeveloped innovation environment and undeveloped small and medium-sized businesses, lack of legal and financial mechanisms to support creative industries and business projects from government agencies, insufficiently tolerant and open environment in the city.

As a result, it was revealed that the following factors have the greatest influence on the migration intentions of middle-class youth:

- the lack of legal and financial mechanisms for support of creative industries and business projects from the authorities - 40.2%, only 4.9% of respondents this factor was absolutely unimportant.
- "undeveloped innovation environment" - 35%
- "undeveloped sphere of small and medium business" - 34.6%.

Thus, it can be noted that the most inclined to move from Omsk are young people from the age group from 18 to 24 years old, as well as unmarried and without children.

Using cluster analysis, we divide the respondents into typical middle-class groups based on economic factors such as income and employment.

Table 1
Types of representatives of the middle class in Omsk

Group	In the general population of the middle class	Youth under 30 as part of a group	Organization type	Scope of employment	Income per family member, thousand roubles
1	30,21%	23%	private	Trade, service sector, housing and communal services and other services	23-50
2	15,10%	14%	state	Public administration, military and social security	23-50
3	14,86%	36%	state	Education, science, culture, etc.	23-50
4	13,01%	18%	private	Manufacturing (industry)	23-50
5	11,97%	30%	private	Production and distribution of electricity, gas, water, construction, transport and communications	23-50
6	10,16%	54%	private	Financial activities, real estate transactions, information services	51-75
7	4,69%	44%	private	Public administration, military and social security Education, science, culture, etc.	76-100

Source: data base of the Department of Sociology, OMSU (2021)

The largest percentage of middle-class youth is concentrated in groups with high levels of income or those associated with creative activities. However, the number of these groups is only 29.71% of the total number of the middle class in Omsk.

4. Conclusions

Thus, it should be noted that the under development of creative infrastructures in the city of Omsk negatively affects the position of the middle class, who are largely forced to work in positions that do not correspond to their level of qualifications in the secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy, jobs in the quaternary sector of the economy are mainly financed from the state budget, which leads to a low level of income. This position of the middle class is pushing the growth of migration intentions among young people. The main reasons forcing young representatives of the middle class to think about moving are the underdeveloped legal and financial mechanisms for supporting creative industries and business projects from government agencies, the lack of an innovative environment, small and medium-sized businesses, as well as the insufficiently tolerant and open environment in the city.

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