

Economic Insecurity in Transition: Evidence from a Recent Survey

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This paper studies the determinants and possible consequences of economic insecurity in post-socialist countries two decades after the fall of communism. Adopting the Human Rights approach to insecurity (Osberg, 2010), it looks at 1) the affordability of primary commodities (food, clothing, medication and housing) and 2) worries about their future consumption. Empirical analysis is based on data from the UNDP/UNICEF Social Exclusion Survey, administered in 2009 in six transition economies (15,901 interviews). The ordered probit analysis suggests that low affordability of primary commodities and high worries about their future consumption are experienced by people with poor health, rural residents, and households headed by females, low-educated and unemployed persons. In addition, low affordability is reported by people with low incomes and non-Russian ethnic minorities, while high affordability is reported by remittance receivers. Worries about basic needs are more prevalent among "younger" households, big city dwellers and people receiving remittances. The paper also uncovers a significant correlation between higher levels of economic insecurity, on the one hand, and higher willingness to emigrate, more positive attitudes towards corruption, lower levels of trust and lower levels of life satisfaction, on the other.