

Work-Related Security in the Post-Soviet Russia: Indicators, Trends and Factors

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Abstract:

The key element of socio-economic security of individuals and households is security in the world of work. For the majority of people it is paid employment or self employment that on the one hand provides the main source of income and on the other hand constitutes a vital sphere of self-realization. The position in the world of work to a large extent determines one's social status, self-appraisal, general well-being and satisfaction with life. Increasing insecurity of work situation negatively impacts motivation and productive activity and worsens human development prospects. Moreover employed population spends at work the largest share of overall active time fund.

In Russia market reforms were accompanied by a pronounced growth of insecurity. Pre-reform situation was characterized by over-full employment ensuring stable jobs for everybody. Legally guaranteed minimum wage exceeded subsistence minimum and was supplemented with a package of free or heavily subsidized social goods in the spheres of health, education, culture, housing and transport. Thus, although real incomes of the majority of population were low their socio-economic situation was secure and predictable. In the post-Soviet Russia flimsiness of available safety nets and lack of public commitment to basic social income strengthen the dependence of household income security on employment related characteristics of its members. Thus the socio-economic security aspects linked to employment are especially important.

In the theoretical discourse socio-economic security in the world of work is interpreted as a scarce resource unevenly distributed among labor market participants. The 'security share' falling on each individual worker depends upon a complicated tangle of factors some of which fell outside individual control, while others could be to a certain extent influenced upon. Factors may also be internal to the person in question (e.g. demographic characteristics, educational attainment, health) or external, being a part of the environment, such as type of job, terms and conditions of contract, place of living.

To this day the majority of research dealing with labour and employment situation in Russia (as well as the key policy measures elaborated by the government in this sphere) is focused upon the task of combating unemployment. Meanwhile the equally pressing problem of improving quality of jobs as regards such characteristics as fair remuneration, decent work conditions, stability and career prospects and other vital aspects constituting overall socio-economic security of working population remain in the backlight.

This paper deals with measuring work-related security in Russia at different stages of reforms, trends in security/insecurity profiles for different categories of working population and factors affecting share of work-related security falling on individual worker and distribution of working population among privileged and vulnerable zones. The empirical base is formed by two rounds of People's Security Survey carried out in three Russian regions in 2002 and 2007. The research

is based upon the ILO methodology elaborated in the framework of decent work indicators (see Economic Security for a Better World (2004) Geneva: ILO for details) emphasizing seven key aspects of work-related security which are as follows:

- Labour market security - adequate employment opportunities, through state-guaranteed full employment
- Employment security - protection against arbitrary dismissal, regulations on hiring and firing, employment stability
- Job security - a niche designated as an occupation or 'career', the opportunity to develop a sense of occupation, barriers to skill dilution
- Work security - protection against accidents and illness at work, through safety and health regulations, regulated limits on working time, unsociable hours
- Skill reproduction security - widespread opportunities to gain and retain skills, through apprenticeships and employment training programs
- Income security - ensuring regular and decent wage/salary income and work-related benefits
- Representation security - protection of collective voice in the labour market, through independent trade unions and other bodies able to represent the interests of workers

Each aspect can be measured by different sets of indices on micro and macro level. It is demonstrated that macro-level indices designed by ILO experts for cross-country comparisons are good for measuring socio-economic and institutional context in which workers perform but less suited for measuring security/insecurity outcomes. Moreover, they tell us little about distribution of work-related security among different categories of population within countries and of factors impacting such distribution. Thus for the purpose of this research a set of micro level indices is constructed which allows grasping both objective base and subjective perceptions of socio-economic security among different groups of employed population. When constructing the indices the emphasis is made upon subjective indicators reflecting how people perceive the extent of their security or insecurity at the workplace.

Proposed micro-level indicators:

Labour market security

- estimated chances of finding another employment in case of job loss
- Employment security
- Type of contract
- Confidence in keeping job for next 12 months
- Protection against unfair dismissal

Job security

- Active usage of skills and competences
- Satisfaction with work contents
- Promotion/downgrading in the past 3 years
- Satisfaction with career prospects

Work security

- Overtime

- Access to regular leave
- Perception of work conditions as dangerous
- Existence of enterprise safety department or committee

Skill reproduction security

- Rate of devotion to one's profession/occupation
- Training/retraining in the past 3 years
- Access to training/retraining
- Regularity of wage-payment
- Satisfaction with wage/salary
- Satisfaction with social benefits provided by enterprise (social package)

Representation security

- TU membership
- Reliance on TU to protect workers interests

The main results obtained are as follows.

1. During the period of economic stability (in between the two survey rounds), a considerable strengthening in five out of seven aspects of work-related security was observed. The most prominent loss was in skill reproduction security reflecting opportunities to master one's profession, to gain and retain skills through professional education and training programs.
2. In both rounds men proved to be more vulnerable than women as far as work and representation security were concerned while women lacked labour market security being less sure of finding another employment in case of job loss.
3. Public sector employees experienced the largest gains in work-related security with those employed by privatized enterprises falling slightly behind and employees in the new private sector being the main losers.
4. With the help of cluster analysis five work-related security profiles characterized by different zones of vulnerability were distinguished: three clusters represent reasonably well-to-do groups while the other two are outsiders. It is demonstrated that, on the one hand, well-paid jobs not necessarily guarantee high level of socio-economic security. In many cases they provide poor opportunities for skill-development or for strengthening labor market competitiveness. On the other hand employment in poorly paid jobs in most cases leads to deskilling, worsening of health and eventually to being trapped in unattractive and insecure labor market segments.
5. The key factors determining individual work-related security profiles are sector of employment, enterprise size, age, and health. The profiles are less dependent upon place of living, gender, family size and education and not dependent upon marital status and number of children. Lastly a brief discussion of possible impact of the recent financial crises on work-related security profiles in Russia is presented. Available information from official and expert sources and some results of a labour-relations survey conducted at industrial enterprises in 2007 and 2009 point not only to labour market but also to skill reproduction security as areas being

most affected in the negative way, while work and representation security seem to be the least affected areas and the consequences for job security appear controversial. It is also argued that it is the oldest and the youngest cohorts of the workforce who are likely (for different reasons) to be most affected.