

9 REGIONAL DIMENSIONS OF GENDER EQUALITY

Russia is a multi-ethnic country with a huge territory, which predetermines considerable social and economic differences and regional diversity. In terms of gender, one cannot ignore regional differences in the status of men and women,⁶² most notable of them are as follows.

Regional disparities in expected life-span are huge, amounting to 16–19 years in 2003: from 49 to 68 years among men, and from 60 to 76 years among women. At that, Tuva and Dagestan are poles apart. Demographers for a long time have called into question extra-high indicators for Ingushetia due to low quality of registration, and it would be correct to disregard them in the analysis.

The lowest life span for men (56 years and less) is common for two regions:

1) European part and the Northwest of Russia notable for high depopulation and public degradation (Vladimirskaya, Ivanovskaya, Smolenskaya, Tverskaya, Tulsckaya, Novgorodskaya and Pskovskaya Oblasts);

2) South of Siberia and the Far East, typical for industries with heavy physical labour, and several undeveloped regions (Altay, Tyva, Irkutskaya and Chitinskaya oblasts, Jewish Autonomous District and some autonomous regions).

In addition to heavy living conditions, most prominent are behavioural factors (like alcohol addiction) and low educational level. The latter is most common for Black Earth regions which elderly population, and for south of Siberia with less educated people than in the North of Siberia, populated by former migrants.

For women, the minimal expected life-span zone is south of Siberia and the Far East (Tuva — 60 years, Kemerovskaya, Irkutskaya, Chitinskaya and Amurskaya Oblasts and Jewish Autonomous District — 68–69 years), several regions of European Russia with high depopulation and nearly all North-West (Pskovskaya, Kostromskaya, Smolenskaya and Tverskaya Oblasts) — 69–70 years. Several regions of European Russia are radically different as far as expected life span of men and women (15 years). These regions are also notable for low level of incomes and education, radical gender differences and alcohol addiction.

During the last 10–15 years geographic disparities have undergone considerable changes. During the Soviet times, expected life span reduced from Southwest to Northwest due to unfavourable climatic conditions. During the transition period, this so-called «Northwest gradient» became less pronounced, with the exception of Northern Caucasus — the zone of maximum indicators. In other regions, the differentiating role of such factors as the level of life and structure of the population has risen.

Regional disparities in employment preserve the features inherited from Soviet times, which testifies to high stability of basic factors in charge of labour activity levels. Similar to past decades, major differences in women's labour activity remain common for two types of regions:

1) Northern Caucasus republics with traditional family values and high birth rate, which links women to the household; thus, in Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria women's level of labour activity (between 15 and 72 y.o.) does not exceed 50%;

2) Polar North regions retain the highest level of women's labour activity, also inherited from the Soviet times (over 67%), though this indicator is also predetermined by a younger population.

Men prevail in the labour force in 77% of regions; the largest misbalance is registered in newly developed territories — Russian North, oil and gas districts of Tyumenskaya, Tomskaya and Kemerovskaya Oblasts, as well as the Far East (44–46% of women workers). This disparity is related to hard working conditions and the structure of local economy, namely, prevalence of «male» mining enterprises. In the agrarian South the share of women in the labour force is slightly smaller, which is predetermined by heavy workload in semi-productive individual farms, or, in Dagestan and Ingushetia (46–47%) — by excess male labour and women's exit from the labour market.

Gender equality is typical for depopulated regions of Central Russia and the Northwest. There is prevalence of women in older age groups, also among employees. Visible misbalance in favour of women (52%) is common only for the least developed regions (Tuva Republic, Agynsky, Buryatsky and Komi-Permyatsky Autonomous District). Gender roles there are quite specific: due to wide spread of anti-social lifestyles and high level of male unemployment women become leaders in the low competitive labour market and primary «bread-winners» in families. Such gender peculiarities in employment across these regions, reflected in statistical data, are to a certain extent predetermined by prevalence of «title» ethnic groups, but similar processes are also common for «title» population of the Altay Republic. Blatant feminisation of employment due to similar reasons is typical for regions populated by indigenous people of the North: the share of women in the labour force amounts to 57%, and in non-agrarian spheres (mostly funded from the budget) — to 68%. Both in these republics and in rural areas of Black Earth region women more often become heads of families and replace degrading men. Such gender «equality» can be hardly called positive.

⁶² These issues are examined in more detail in: Zubarevich N.V. Social inequality in Russian regions: gender analysis // Gender inequality in modern Russia through the prism of statistics. M.: Editorial URSS, 2004, pp. 229–25.

In reality, gender aspects of unemployment are far-fetched from stereotyped assumptions about «women's face of unemployment», based on statistics of registered unemployed. RF Goskomstat survey, conducted in line with the ILO methodology (accounting both for registered and unregistered unemployed) revealed that the share of women among unemployed is less than half (45–48% in 1992–2003), similar to their share in economically active population. Women's prevalence among registered unemployed (63–72%) is accounted for the fact that it is more difficult for women to use active job search strategies; they more often apply to state employment agencies for assistance in job placement or for meagre unemployment allowances. Situation with registered female unemployment changes in conformity with regional labour markets. In regions with low unemployment rate the share of women among registered unemployed may exceed 80%. Deteriorating economic situation in the region and increasing tension in the labour market results in reduction of the share of women among registered unemployed.

Analysis of regional data on the scope unemployment (by ILO methodology) in 2002–2003 revealed that in 60–80% of regions male unemployment was higher than female. As stated above, women are less demanding to the type of job and the level of wages. Gender differences in unemployment on the regional level do not always have evident explanations, as they are predetermined by a variety of factors. Still, certain regional differences may be highlighted.

Women's higher or lower level of unemployment as compared to men is typical for different regions:

1. Most prosperous RF subjects with the lowest level of unemployment (federal cities, Belgorodskaya, Moskovskaya and Samarskaya Oblasts). Despite a better situation in the labour market, women's competitiveness is lower than men's, especially among women with no professional training or older women.

2. Largest agrarian regions in the South of Russia with best climatic conditions (Krasnodarsky and Altaysky Krays and Rostovskaya Oblast) and most republics of the Northern Caucasus. This phenomenon may be accounted for by survival strategies chosen by women: when the situation in the labour market is tense and competition for jobs is high, women survive at the expense of individual farms, though they do not lose the hope of finding a paid job and do not join the category of economically passive citizens.

3. Northern and Eastern regions of Russia with predominantly mining industry and male employment (autonomous regions of Tyumenskaya Oblast, Arkhangelskaya, Murmanskaya, Kemerovskaya, Irkutskaya, Magadanskaya and Sakhalinskaya Oblasts, Komi Republic and Yakutia). Still, the impact of economic structure on gender aspects of unemployment is not manifested in all the mining regions.

Almost all oblasts of the European Russia and the Northwest (well-developed and densely populated) are marked with low or reduced share of women among unemployed, which reveals women's stronger adaptiveness and low demands.

Research of incomes and wages allows for identifying four factors of gender disparities in wages linked to regional differences:

- Industrial employment structure
- Economic development level and incomes level
- Educational level
- Age structure

The summary impact of these factors is as follows: in «older» regions with low rate of employment in industry, and in undeveloped and agrarian regions with low educational level wage differences between men and women are smoothed out. In regions with predominantly mining industries, industrial and age factors and higher levels of income and education increase gender disparities.

Analysis of statistical data on male and female wages in 2002–2003 on the whole reiterates the above assumptions (Table 31).

Situation in Moscow is peculiar: due to forestalling modernisation of gender roles, high educational level acts as a factor reducing gender inequality in wages, thus, gender disparities in wages (71%) are much smaller than the average. Moscow, where 42% of workers have university education, is a shining example of the value of education as a tool for levelling gender statuses, though this tool does not work well across the whole country. In depressed, agrarian and undeveloped regions with low incomes women's wages are close to men's, but this is equality in poverty.

Regional differentiation of the ratio of male and female pensions is not always distinct. Two factors contribute to this differentiation — «southern-agrarian» and «ethnic». In southern areas with lowest pensions (Northern Caucasus, Black Earth regions and the south of the Volga Region), in nearly all republic of the Volga-Vyatsky region, in Tatarstan, Bashkortostan and the Altay Republic women's pensions amount to 90% of men's pensions. In majority of regions of Central Russia, Northwest and especially in the Polar North and the Far East the levelling effect manifest itself more distinctly. Still, these factors do not fully account for regional differences. Thus, two poles apart are Chitinskaya Oblast (78%) and Tyva (129%). Most likely this phenomenon is predetermined by reduced male employment, social degradation and lower men's pensions.

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The above analysis allows for asserting that regional dimensions of gender inequality do not manifest themselves as simply as they are seen across the whole country. On the regional level in Russia there is no inequality in education, but there is evident occupational discrimination and barriers on the

Table 31. Types of regional gender disparities in wages

Ratio of female wages to male wages (%)	Regional type as per combination of gender disparity factors	Regions
Strongest disparities (56–64)	a) Northern and Eastern regions, prevalence of export-oriented mining industry and relatively young population	Nenetsky, Yamalo–Nenetsky, Khanty–Mansiisky Autonomous Districts, Kemerovskaya, Murmanskaya, Tomskaya Tyumenskaya Oblasts, Krasnoyarsky Krai, Komi Republic, Khakassia
	b) European Russia, prevalence of export-oriented industries, higher income level and average educational level	Astrakhanskaya, Belgorodskaya, Volgodskaya, Lipetskaya, Samarskaya, Sverdlovskaya and Orenburgskaya Oblasts, Tatarstan, Bashkortostan
Close to average across Russia (64–69)	Predominantly average with regard to level of development, different educational levels and age structure	Over 30 regions
Less stronger disparities (69–80)	a) most developed, with highest educational level	Moscow
	b) below average by level of income, older age structure and lower educational level	Bryanskaya, Vladimirskaya, Voronezhskaya, Ivanovskaya, Kaluzhskaya, Kostromskaya, Kirovskaya, Penzenskaya, Novgorodskaya, Orlovskaya, Pskovskaya, Tambovskaya, Tverskaya Oblasts
	c) semi-agrarian with lower educational level and the level of incomes	Krasnodarsky, Stavropolsky, Altaysky Krays, Kurganskaya Oblasts
	d) Eastern regions with incomes below the average and younger age structure	Taimyrsky, Evenkiysky Autonomous Districts, Chitinskaya Oblast, Buryatia Republic and most Far East regions
	e) undeveloped semi-agrarian republics with younger age structure	Adygeya, Ingushetia, Kabardino–Balkaria, Karachaevo–Cherkessia, Northern Ossetia, Kalmykia, Mari El, Mordovia, Chuvashia
Gender equality or gender disparity in favour of women (82–113)	Least developed	Altay Republic, Tuva, Komi–Permyatsky, Agynsky Buryatsky, Ust–Ordynsky Autonomous Districts

way to politics. Other constituents of gender imbalance build quite a heterogeneous picture with the following peculiarities:

1. Non-Black–Earth region outside the largest agglomerations (Centre and Northwest): biggest gaps in life-span, low expected male life-span, gender equality in employment, lowest share of women among unemployed, less pronounced wage differences and levelling of pensions. On the whole, general poverty and low male competitiveness accounted for «compulsory» levelling in the labour market and in product distribution.

2. Raw-extracting regions: reduced or lowest (in the south of Eastern Siberia) expected male and female life-span, women's high economic activity in the Far North, stable male dominance in employment, different, but nearly equal ratio of men and women among unemployed, highest wage differences and

levelling of pensions, especially in the Far East. This situation reproduces disparities of the Soviet times and makes them stronger (like inequality in wages) and visible (like women's vulnerability in the labour market with its «male» employment structure).

3. Agrarian krays and oblasts of the south of Russia (Russian-speaking regions of agrarian South): more or less high indicators of expected life-span for both genders, women's low employment (due to indicated survival patterns) and focus on individual farms, equal share of men and women among unemployed, slight disparities in wages (due to their small size) and levelling of pensions. Natural survival strategies resulted in the levelling of gender disparities by most parameters, but this levelling is linked to high share of physical labour and low educational potential, and for this reason does not look promising.

4. Republics of the Northern Caucasus and Kalmykia differ from agrarian Russian regions by lowest labour activity of women, who are pushed out of the labour market due to excess supply of labour force, and by considerable levelling of legal wages and pensions (which size is minimal). Given the scope of informal employment and the size of incomes received mostly by men, also traditional socio-cultural changes, one may speak about strong patriarchal gender roles.

5. Least developed autonomous districts and republics of Siberia: gender inequality becomes reverse, namely, extremely low expected life-span and mass alcohol addiction among men result in predominantly female employment, male unemployment and complete levelling of wages and pensions. In extreme cases (in Tuva, Komi-Permyatsky Autonomous District and the Far East regions) these factors are supplemented by extramarital births (54–69%), which allows for defining this situation as «matriarchal rule» of the transition period under extreme poverty.

6. Comparison of two federal centres is very demonstrative. Moscow is considerably ahead of St. Petersburg as far as male life-span and female labour activity, female unemployment rate is lower, the share of men and women among unemployed is nearly equal, gender disparities in wages are less

pronounced, and the share of women among members of local legislatures is nearly 6 times as high. High human potential of Moscow and high concentration of economic benefits is conducive to reduction of gender disparities in wages, employment structure, life span and health status. Higher level of life and better-developed infrastructure help working women combine work and family duties. Still, to all appearances, the capital is the only RF subject, where the gender gap is reduced due to economic growth but not due to degradation of the human potential.

In transition period regional gender disparities were different, while in early 1990s they reflected the overall reaction to radical changes in the economic environment. By late 1990s this trend changed under the pressure of conflicting trends: traditionalism, degradation and innovative social changes. At that, the widely spread opinion about growing gender inequality is not correct for all regions of Russia: the levelling of inequality occurs both in degrading local communities and in successful and modernised communities under economic growth. Another conclusion suggests itself: regional and gender inequality is inter-connected, and comprehensive analysis of gender aspects is impossible without account for specific regional development.

9. 1. GENDER PROBLEMS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF THE NORTH

During the last 10–15 years problems of indigenous people of the North have receded into the background due to other national problems of the transition period. The government's weaker influence on regional development manifested itself not only in the North, but across the whole country. Still, it affected the North much stronger due to high concentration of negative factors of spatial development, which aggravated transition to market economy and demanded significant government support.

Under the sharp reduction of state funding two key factors predetermined development of the North:

- Export of mineral resources in demand in the international market, as only mining — even at increased costs — remained profitable;

- Regional budgets, also dependent on the exported resources.

On the whole, population of the North declines due to migration and natural diminution, while the number of indigenous people increases due to high birth rate.

In most rural regions of the Far North the share of indigenous population has always been quite high: in 1989 in Yamalo-Nenetsky, Chukotsky and Taimyrsky autonomous districts is amounted to 58–62%, in Nenetsky Autonomous District and Yakutia — to 35–41% (including Yakuts). In between two censuses of 1989 and 2002 the rural population of most northern RF subjects declined by 20–30%, while in Chukotsky

Autonomous District and Magadanskaya Oblast — by 60–80%, mostly due to migration. It means that indigenous people became a dominant ethnic group in rural areas of most Northern regions. Ethnic structure of rural and urban population of Northern regions becomes more and more different.

Primary economic sphere in most regions populated by indigenous people is mining industry, and its dynamics is different in the period of economic growth. Oil producing (Sakhalinskaya and Tomskaya oblasts, Nenetsky and Khanty-Mansiysky Autonomous Districts) or oil transporting regions (Khabarovskiy Krai) demonstrated highest rates of economic growth. Industrial production in the regions devoid of raw materials, as a rule, stagnated or declined. Recession was the deepest in several districts of Komi Republic, Yakutia and Magadanskaya Oblast inhabited by indigenous people of the North.

Traditionally, economy of the North developed along other lines. When «rich» regions supported traditional branches, decline in livestock of reindeer was the lowest (Komi Republic) or else livestock was growing (Yamalo-Nenetsky Autonomous District). When financial resources were meagre (between 1996 and 2002), the livestock declined by 2–3 times (Chukotsky and Koryaksky Autonomous Districts and Magadanskaya Oblast). The resulting conditions for development of traditional branches of economy were different in various Northern regions, though

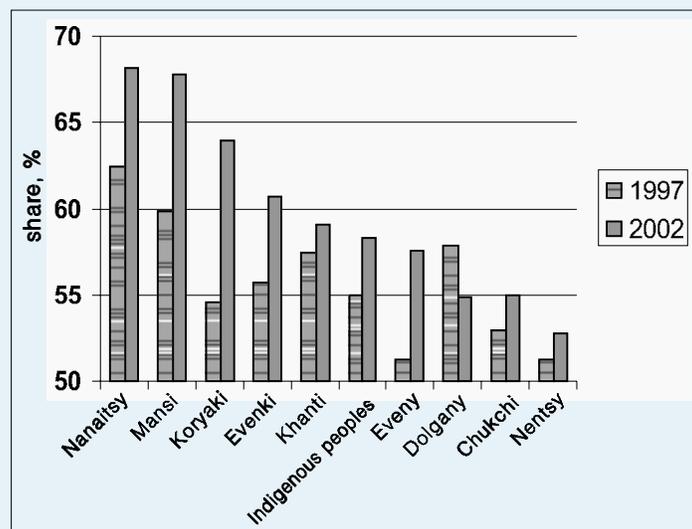


Figure 7. Share of women among employed in regions inhabited by indigenous people of the North, %

economic degradation stopped and economic growth began.

Most RF regions do not demonstrate positive developments in employment or stable economic growth as compared to regions inhabited by indigenous population: during economic upsurge in Nenetsky, Chukotsky and Yamalo–Nenetsky Autonomous Districts the growth of employment level was more substantial and stable.

Regions inhabited by indigenous population are peculiar in that a high share of people work in health care, education and culture, i.e. in «budget-funded economy» (30%). Together with public utilities and services and state governance they make up nearly half of the labour force. The aggregate employment in industry, agriculture, construction and transportation accounts for a smaller share — just 52%. Dynamics of employment during the last two years provides no ground for optimism: rate of employment grew fast in governance and budget-funded spheres, while in agriculture it was on the fall, especially in 2002 (by 10%). Regional and local budgets turn into a substantial source of income for indigenous population. The state reduced support of traditional employment of indigenous people of the North (reindeer breeding and hunting) and partially replaced it by payment of wages in the growing budget sector. One may argue about efficiency of such support, but it is not gender neutral, as these are predominantly female spheres of employment in Russia.

It resulted in the growth of employment imbalance in favour of women, typical for all regions of the North (Fig. 7). Due to wide spread of anti-social lifestyles and high level of male unemployment women become leaders in the low competitive labour market and primary «breadwinners» in their families. Feminisation of employment is typical for all regions inhabited by indigenous people of the North: the share of working women amounts to 58%, while in non-agrarian spheres (mostly budget-funded) — to 69%.

Differences in wages further promote budget employment. In agriculture, a traditional branch of economy in regions inhabited by indigenous people of the North, wages have always been and remain the lowest. In the social sphere wages are higher and grow faster, and in governance they are the highest. Increasing wages in the social sphere is undoubtedly necessary, but in the North it results in growing employment in this sphere, pushes people out of traditional branches of economy, and thus serves as a double-edged weapon.

RF Goskomstat does not collect gender statistics of wages in regions inhabited by indigenous people of the North, but one may state with confidence that the gender gap in wages is minimal. Moreover, wages of women employed in relatively stable budget spheres often exceed men's wages. At that, in all regions indigenous people receive minimal wages, while per capita income of population of the North is quite different.

Wages in the budget sector and in agriculture, employing majority of indigenous people are incompatible with wages in the mining and export industries of the Northern economy, but the latter employ extremely few indigenous people. Inequality of incomes of indigenous population and migrants, typical for the Soviet times, has sharply increased during the transition period. Another specificity of the transition period was a bigger gap in wages of people from different regions of the North along with the inter-regional «levelling in poverty» of indigenous people.

Expected life span in the North is lower than the average in Russia, with the exception of Murmanskaya Oblast. Statistical agencies do not conduct surveys in regions inhabited by indigenous people of the North, but life-span of agrarian population (predominantly indigenous people) may serve as an indirect indicator (Fig 8). Situation is the worst in rural areas of Chukotsky Autonomous District, where men live on the

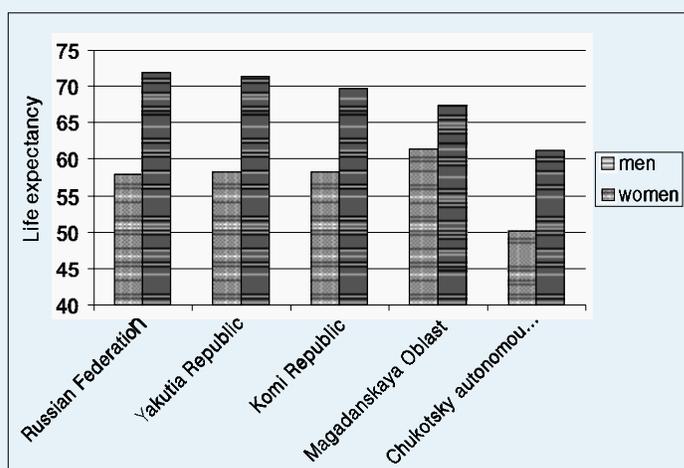


Fig 8. Expected life span of rural population in several RF subjects in 2001

average 50 years, and women — slightly longer (60 years). Field surveys conducted by specialists from the Centre of Demographic Studies and Human Ecology⁶³ rendered lower figures of expected life span of indigenous people of the North — 44–48 years.

One of key reasons of low life span is alcohol addiction, also among women, more common in the North than in Russia on the whole. Gender statistics of alcohol addiction in Northern regions does not reflect the acuteness of this problem for indigenous people. No effective remedies against this disease have been identified either in the Soviet times or in the transition period.

Another burning problem of the North is high incidence of infectious TB, which keeps spreading in overwhelming majority of regions inhabited by indigenous people, including Sakhalin and Tomskaya Oblast; it increased more than twice in 1996–2002. The growing incidence rate is predetermined by deteriorating level of life of indigenous people and degrading medical care system in the North. Only in Taimyr, Yakutia and Komi Republic the amount of newly detected cases is on the decline.

As for educational level of children and the youth, all Northern regions reveal lower rates than the average in Russia. The reason is undeveloped system of university and secondary professional education in regions with hard living conditions; even in the Soviet times it was much cheaper to teach young people from these regions in big university centres across the country. The lowest level of youth education is typical for Chukotsky Autonomous District with no single big city. Still, availability of secondary professional education in many regions inhabited by indigenous people has expanded (with a few exceptions). Thus, in

Sakhalinskaya Oblast growing profits from oil production were not directed to development of the human capital, and access of local population, also from Northern regions, to professional education is limited. In fact, support of indigenous population depends not only on how rich or poor the region is, but on political priorities of regional and local bodies of power.

The status of indigenous population in majority of Northern regions is low, and measures towards its improvement should differ from strategies applied in other parts of the country. Traditional economic approaches — the more the region produces, the richer is the population — does not work in the North. Economic growth would not bring benefits to indigenous people, which preserve traditional nature management systems and are economically «integrated» into the environment, if it destroys the environment and undermines ethnic vital activities.

Decisions may be sought in the experience of highly developed Northern countries, where wealth accumulated by the labour of all people is directed, among other things, to support of traditional life styles of indigenous people. Canadian experience demonstrates that modern economic development may be well combined with preservation of local habitats of traditional nature management, if the latter are attached to indigenous people, and with redistribution of government funds to support of indigenous people. Unfortunately, Russia does not possess either the former or the latter.

The status of indigenous people strongly depends on the state of economy on the territory of their habitat. Negative gender disparities need to be changed by way of promoting traditional economy and increasing male employment.

⁶³ Bogoyavlensky D.D., Ivanova T.D., Pika A.I. Health and mortality of indigenous people of the North (selected public survey results) // Social problems of health and life span. M., 1992; Bogoyavlensky D.D., Pika A.I. Violent deaths among people of the North (Kamchatka and Chukotka) // Geography and Economy. Regions inhabited by indigenous people of the North. L., USSR Geographic Society, 1991, Volume 4; Pika, A. Comparative Social Research among Arctic hunters and gatherers: demography, health and welfare // Hunters and Gatherers in the Modern Context. Seventh International Conference. University of Alaska, Fairbanks, 1994, V 2, p. 515–528.; Bogoyavlensky D., Pika A. Yamal peninsula: oil and gas development and problems of demography and health of indigenous populations // Arctic Anthropology, 1995, V. 32.