

Sociological interpretations of data on the aggregate capital of regional population (work experience abroad, relation to labour migration, factors of life success)

VLADIMIR MENSHIKOV

Institute of Social Research of the Daugavpils University, Latvia
E-mail: vladimirs.mensikovs@du.lv

EDUARDS VANAGS

Department of Economics of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Daugavpils University, Latvia
E-mail: eduardsvanags@inbox.lv

OLGA VOLKOVA

Department of Economics of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Daugavpils University, Latvia
E-mail: olga.volkova@du.lv

In the present article, the authors continue their sociological interpretations of the empiric data obtained in the research project “Aggregate Capital, Its Structure and Relation to Labour Migration” (2012). The following hypothesis has been proved: a higher predisposition for the labour migration is more typical for economically active region’s inhabitants with fairly high amounts of some indicators of the aggregate capital, especially physical capital, but with a comparatively lower amount of cultural capital, which could transform into human capital and further into economic capital in Latgale or Latvia. An in-depth analysis of the factors of life success has revealed that, in general, our respondents tend to assign the lead role not to the personal competitive characteristics (resources) but rather to the specificity of the social environment: an explanation of life success by means of a set of variables that, on the whole, describe it as a socio-political innovation with criminal tendencies (political corruption) is the most spread one.

Key words: aggregate capital, resource capitalization, labour migration, life success

In the framework of the project conducted in 2012 and entitled “Aggregate Capital, Its Structure and Relation to Labour Migration”, at first, it was of great significance to identify the volume of the aggregate capital and its structure presented by the Latgalian population, the strategies of resource capitalization and conversion used to increase the economic capital (Menshikov, Vanags, Volkova 2013). However, the tasks of the research project were to identify the specificity of the aggregate capital of this part of the population, that has work experience abroad, and that is why they relate their life success to labour migration.

WORK EXPERIENCE ABROAD, RELATION TO LABOUR MIGRATION

At the moment of the sociological investigation, every fifth respondent (159 people) had his work experience abroad, but in this group only one out of four (39 people) was planning to work abroad next year. The other 55 respondents (7%) did not have any work experience abroad, but they were planning to go abroad next year. Thus, 12% of the adult population of the region had their work abroad. Those people, who are oriented to labour migration, indicated the following circumstances that make work abroad more attractive than that one in Latvia (in %):

- 1) There are better work conditions abroad (wages, working environment, etc.) – 77;
- 2) It is faster and easier to find a highly paid job abroad – 49;
- 3) Possibility to learn foreign languages – 47;
- 4) Possibility to find new friends – 28;
- 5) Possibility to learn a new profession – 14.

Table 1. Distribution of the answers to the question “What is your experience of work abroad?” Latgale, May 2012, n = 800 people, in %

Possible answers	Entire array	Including					
		Gender		Education			
		Masc.	Fem.	Lower middle	Middle	Incomplete higher	Higher
I do not have any experience and I am not planning to work abroad next year (“non-migrants”)	73	67	78	72	74	68	74
I have an experience, but I am not planning to work abroad next year (“return migrants”)	15	21	10	14	13	16	19
I do not have any experience, but I am planning to work abroad next year (“potential migrants”)	7	6	8	8	6	14	5
I have such an experience and I am planning to work abroad next year (“repeat migrants”)	5	6	4	6	7	2	2
Total:	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Sociological investigation conducted by the Institute of Sociological Investigations at Daugavpils University, “Aggregate Capital, its Structure and Relation to Labour Migration”, 2012, n = 800 people (population of Latgale).

Among the potential labour migrants there are young women without higher education (there were 34 (68%) women out of 55 people), people without higher education – 45 (82%) and people below 29 years – 40 (73%).

As it can be seen in Table 2, there is no great disagreement in the views on work abroad demonstrated by those, who do have such work experience, and by those, who have never had such an experience. Better working conditions and, first of all, wages are dominating in the evaluations. The respondents were more restrained stating possibilities to learn a new profession abroad.

With respect to the issue on the resources that are demanded to work abroad, our respondents often indicated such a resource as physical strength, endurance (56%), then an ability to communicate and negotiate with people was noted (45%), and such a resource as

Table 2. Views on the attractiveness of work abroad in comparison to the one in Latvia, Latgale, May 2012, n = 800 people

Views of the respondents	All who are planning to work abroad, n = 94 people		Including			
			Those who have work experience abroad, n = 39 people		Those who do not have work experience abroad, n = 55 people	
	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank
There are better work conditions abroad (wages, working environment, etc.)	77	1	80	1	73	1
It is faster and easier to find a highly paid job abroad	49	2	51	2	45	3
Possibility to learn foreign languages	47	3	44	3	47	2
Possibility to find new friends	28	4	26	4	29	4
Possibility to learn a new profession	14	5	15	5	13	5

Source: Sociological investigation conducted by the Institute of Sociological Investigations at Daugavpils University, "Aggregate Capital, its Structure and Relation to Labour Migration", 2012, n = 800 people (population of Latgale).

Table 3. Distribution of the answers to the question: "Which from your resources (you have right now or you will have in the nearest future) are the most demanded abroad (several answers are possible)?" Latgale, May 2012, n = 800 people

Resources	All who are planning to work abroad, n = 94 people		Including			
			Those who have work experience abroad, n = 39 people		Those who do not have work experience abroad, n = 55 people	
	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank
Physical strength, endurance	56	1	59	1	54	1
Ability to communicate and negotiate with people	45	2	39	2	49	2
Professionalism, creative talents (innovativity)	39	3	32	3	44	3

Source: Sociological investigation conducted by the Institute of Sociological Investigations at Daugavpils University, "Aggregate Capital, its Structure and Relation to Labour Migration", 2012, n = 800 people (population of Latgale).

professionalism, creative talents was rarely noted (39%). Those, who have work experience abroad, considerably rarely indicated the relevance of their communicative skills and professional qualities.

As a rule, those, who are planning to work abroad, do not rely on a possibility to find a job that demands high qualification. 15.6% out of those 64 respondents, who indicated a desirable qualification, would like to have high-qualified job, 65.6% – a qualified job, 18.8% – a non-qualified or a low-qualified job. 58 respondents indicated the country, where they are / will be looking for a job: Great Britain – 43.1%, Germany – 20.7%, Ireland – 15.5%, other countries – 20.7%.

83 respondents indicated a desirable salary per month they would like to have abroad. According to the answers of all these respondents an average salary should be 1,301.18 Ls (minimum – 174 Ls, maximum – 5,000 Ls, median – 1,050 Ls, mode – 700 Ls).

89 respondents indicated their desirable salary in Latvia that would satisfy them and, probably, would prevent them from their quest to find work abroad. In this case, an average

salary should be 571.69 Ls (minimum – 200 Ls, maximum – 2,610 Ls, median – 500 Ls, mode – 400 Ls).

Therefore, according to the respondents an average desirable salary abroad should be about 2.3 times higher in comparison to the desirable salary in Latvia.

Table 4. Planned goals of money sending to Latvia, Latgale, May 2012, n = 800 people

Planned goals	The 1st most important goal		The 2nd most important goal		The 3rd most important goal	
	Absolute	%	Absolute	%	Absolute	%
Family support	15	30.6	3	7.5	4	16.0
Acquisition of property	19	38.8	11	27.5	2	8.0
Payment of credit	2	4.1	6	15.0	3	12.0
Education	4	8.2	2	5.0	1	4.0
Household expenditures	7	14.3	15	37.5	5	20.0
Savings	–	–	2	5.0	2	8.0
Medical purposes	2	4.1	–	–	1	4.0
Business starting	–	–	1	2.5	2	8.0
Vacation	–	–	–	–	5	20.0
Total	49	100	40	100	25	100

Source: Sociological investigation conducted by the Institute of Sociological Investigations at Daugavpils University, “Aggregate Capital, its Structure and Relation to Labour Migration”, 2012, n = 800 people (population of Latgale).

58% respondents indicated that they are planning to send a part of their earned money to Latvia. On average, it is planned to send to Latvia 400 Ls (average of men is 529 Ls, average of women is 254 Ls). Table 9 displays the main goals why the money, earned by migrants, is sent to their homeland.

AGGREGATE CAPITAL AND ITS STRUCTURE DISPLAYED BY THOSE WHO ARE PLANNING TO WORK ABROAD

The data of the sociological investigation show that the aggregate capital of those, who are planning their work abroad, does not differ from the one attributed to the group of the

Table 5. Distribution of the answers to the question “Why are you working / studying in Latvia and not abroad?” (several answers are possible), Latgale, May 2012, n = 800 people

Reasons of the preferred choice	Entire array		“Traditionalists” n = 586 people		“Returnees” n = 39 people	
	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank
My family (friends, acquaintances) lives in Latvia	72.1	1	72.2	1	71.7	1
My working qualities	24.9	2	23.9	2	28.3	2
I can develop myself in Latvia (to make a career, to get good education, etc.)	22.1	3	21.7	3	23.3	3
I am a patriot of Latvia	14.1	4	14.7	4	11.7	4
Latvia has a rich cultural inheritance (language, traditions, art, architecture, etc.)	6.8	5	7.5	5	2.5	5

Source: Sociological investigation conducted by the Institute of Sociological Investigations at Daugavpils University, “Aggregate Capital, its Structure and Relation to Labour Migration”, 2012, n = 800 people (population of Latgale).

Latgalian population that is not planning to work abroad in the nearest future (15.7 and 15.3). The group of those, who have their work experience abroad and are planning it next year, shows some differences.

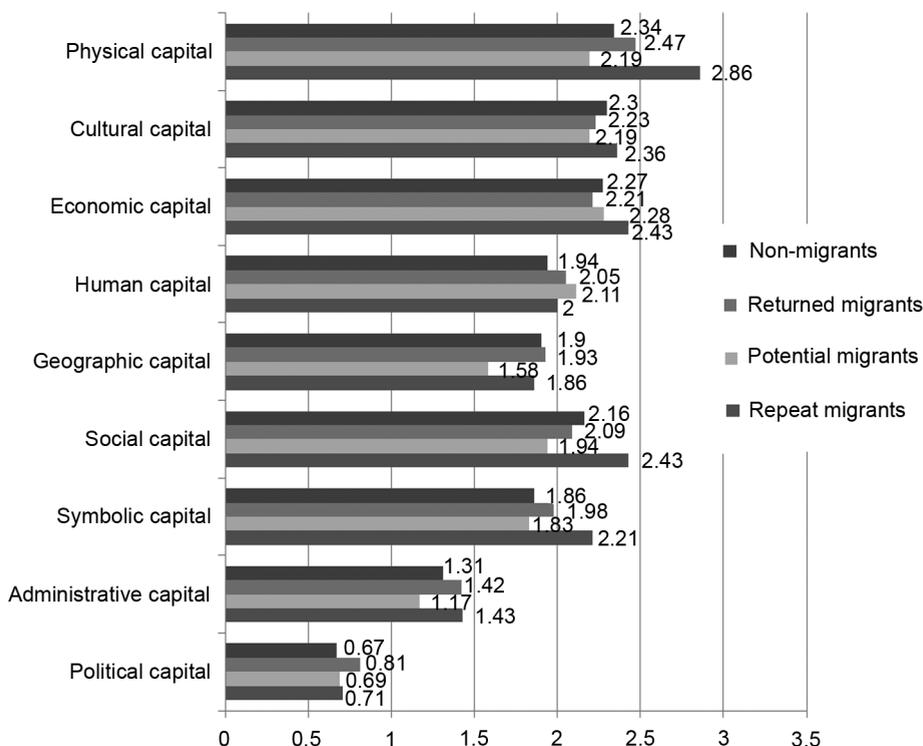


Fig. 1. Distribution of capital depending on experience that is connected with work abroad, age group 15–29 years, Latgale, May 2012, n = 273 people, in points

Source: Sociological investigation conducted by the Institute of Sociological Investigations at Daugavpils University, “Aggregate Capital, its Structure and Relation to Labour Migration”, 2012, n = 800 people (population of Latgale).

In comparison to the group of “non-migrants” the aggregate capital of the group of “repeat migrants” is not much bigger (16.6 and 15.1). But there is a significant difference in the structure of the aggregate capital. In comparison to those, who do not have experience and are not planning to go abroad, the age group below 29 years displays:

- the physical capital being more for 22%;
- the symbolic capital being more for 19%;
- the social capital being more for 12%;
- the economic capital being more for 7%.

The age group 15–29 that does not have the experience, but is planning to leave for a work abroad, “potential migrants”, is of interest as well. All over again, in comparison to the group of those, who do not have experience and are not planning to work abroad, i. e. “non-migrants”, the geographical capital of its representatives is smaller for 17%, the administrative capital – for 11%, the social capital – for 10%, physical capital – for 6%, and the cultural capital – for 5%. And it is only the human capital that is bigger for 9%.

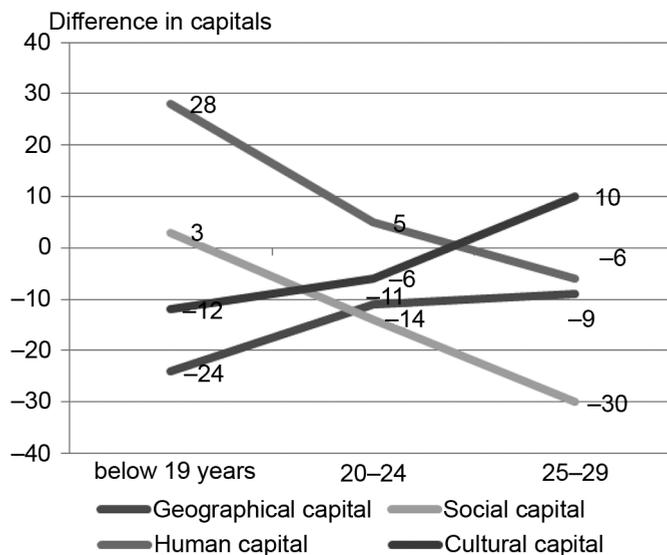


Fig. 2. Difference of some types of capital young potential migrants have, in comparison to non-migrants, Latgale, May 2012, in %

Source: Sociological investigation conducted by the Institute of Sociological Investigations at Daugavpils University, "Aggregate Capital, its Structure and Relation to Labour Migration", 2012, n = 800 people (population of Latgale).

However, as it can be seen from Fig. 2, the self-evaluation of the human capital lowers with age. The same can be observed considering the volumes of the social capital. There is a clearly observable stable positive dynamics only in relation to the geographical and the cultural capitals. Perhaps, with age a more objective evaluation of the resources of the territory of Latgale region (geographical capital) comes. As to the cultural capital, in the opinion of the respondents, who are planning to work abroad, there is no positive interconnection with the human capital, hence, with professional growth and possible progress in labour migration.

"TRADITIONALISTS" AND "RETURNEES"

73% of the respondents indicated that they do not have work experience abroad and they are not planning to work abroad next year (let them be called "traditionalists"), whereas 15% even though having such an experience are not planning to work abroad in the nearest future ("returnees").

The preference to work / study in Latvia but not abroad both in the opinion of "traditionalists" and "returnees" is caused by approximately the same reasons (see Table 5).

What attracts the respondents to work and to study in Latvia is a presence of a family, friends. The commitment to Latvia is significantly rare related to the professional characteristics of the respondents ("my working qualities") and to the possibilities to make a career. Here, "returned migrants" differ greatly as they give rather reserved estimations to their patriotism and especially the Latvian cultural heritage (language, traditions, art, architecture, etc.)

The data in Table 5 stand in good conformity with the answers given by the respondents about the resources that are the most demanded in Latvia. According to the evaluation of the respondents, their physical resource (my physical strength, endurance) is the most demanded

Table 6. Distribution of the answers to the question “Which of your resources (you have right now or will have in the nearest future) are the most demanded in Latvia?” Latgale, May 2012, n = 800 people

Resources	Entire array		“Traditionalists” n = 586 people		“Returnees” n = 39 people	
	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank
My physical strength, endurance	40.2	1	31.7	3	51.7	1
My ability to communicate and negotiate with people	39.7	2	40.1	1	37.5	3
My professionalism, creative talents (innovativity)	39.1	3	39.2	2	38.3	2

Source: Sociological investigation conducted by the Institute of Sociological Investigations at Daugavpils University, “Aggregate Capital, its Structure and Relation to Labour Migration”, 2012, n = 800 people (population of Latgale).

in the agricultural life of our country (see Table 6). It was categorically stated by the “returnees”, among whom 51.7% indicated the greatest demand for the physical resource. The demand for a capability of successful communication (“my ability to communicate and negotiate with people”) and the human capital (“my professionalism, creative talents (innovativity)”) are evaluated significantly lower.

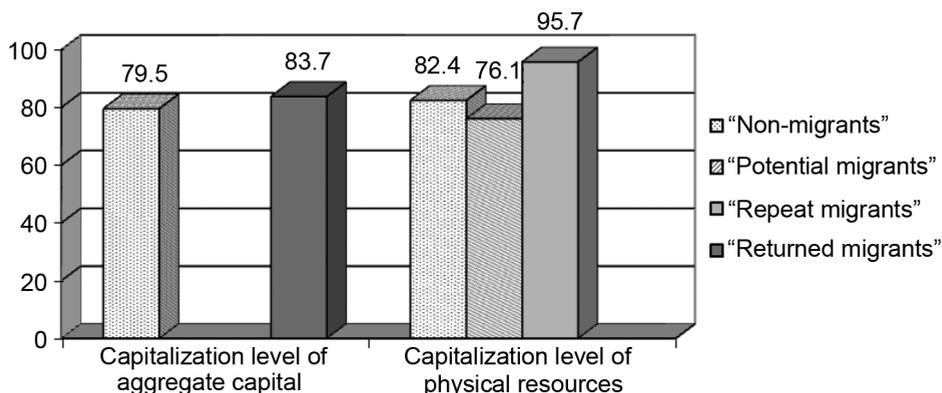


Fig. 3. Statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) differences in the level of resources capitalization, observable in different typological groups in relation to migration, Latgale, May 2012, n = 800 people

Source: Sociological investigation conducted by the Institute of Sociological Investigations at Daugavpils University, “Aggregate Capital, its Structure and Relation to Labour Migration”, 2012, n = 800 people (population of Latgale).

However, it is much harder to successfully capitalize their physical resources in Latvia than in Great Britain or Ireland. The capitalization level of the aggregate resources demonstrated by the “returned migrants” is higher than the one demonstrated by the “non-migrants”; but they reached this effect by means of the capitalization of their physical resources (see Fig. 3).

SUCCESS FACTORS IN LIFE

At first glance, the majority of the Latgalian population approves the traditional, conformist (according to Merton) ways to achieve success in life: hard work, good education (see Table 7). A big role of success strategy (“to have ambition”) and material and cultural level reached by

a family are less commonly recognized. Family is considered primarily as an institution of moral and psychological support in solving life problems (conductive environment within a family brings moral satisfaction to 82.1% of the respondents, 15.8% of the respondents consider it influencing social status, and only 6.8% noted its positive impact on their money income).

Table 7. Success factors in life, displayed by the Latgalian population, May 2012, n = 800 people

Success factors	Entire array				People with work experience abroad		People without work experience abroad	
	Average score	Rank	Proportion of the answers "it is the most important", %	Proportion of the respondents who evaluated the given factor, %	Average score	Rank	Average score	Rank
To work hard	2.11	1	33.3	97	2.20	1	2.08	1
To have good education	2.22	2	27.6	98	2.46	2	2.16	2
To be acquainted with right people	2.67	3	17.4	96	2.67	3	2.67	3
To have ambitions	2.73	4	19.2	93	2.72	4	2.73	4
To have educated parents	3.09	5	7.4	95	3.06	5	3.09	5
To come from a well-to-do family	3.12	6	10.3	94	3.15	6	3.12	6
Political relations	3.67	7	7.8	87	3.51	7	3.72	7
To pay bribes	4.30	8	5.1	77	4.11	8	4.35	8
How much the race / ethnicity of a person is important	4.34	9	1.8	88	4.28	9	4.36	9
To be born a man or a woman	4.54	10	2.3	82	4.47	10	4.55	10
Religion of a person	4.67	11	1.3	89	4.58	11	4.69	11
Average score on the scale, where 1 is the most important, 2 – not important, 3 – rather important, 4 – not very important, 5 – not at all important								

Source: Sociological investigation conducted by the Institute of Sociological Investigations at Daugavpils University, "Aggregate Capital, its Structure and Relation to Labour Migration", 2012, n = 800 people (population of Latgale).

The factors, rooted in the biography of a person, the specificity of his socialization, culture (race / ethnicity, gender, religion) were given the lowest score.

However, having applied the factor analysis, when a bigger number of variables (11 in our case) were reduced to a smaller number of independent variables, called factors, absolutely another picture connected with the estimation of the success factors in life given by our respondents was observed. What is more, the variables that highly correlate with each other merge into one factor. In our case, on the basis of factor analysis 11 variables that determine success in life to any degree can be merged into 4 factors (see Table 8):

Factor 1 – socio-political innovation with criminal tendencies (political relations, to be acquainted with right people, to pay bribes);

Factor 2 – culturally mobilized (religion of a person, race / ethnicity of a person, to be born a man or a woman);

Factor 3 – education, persistence implementing a success strategy (to work hard, to have ambitions, to have good education);

Factor 4 – oriented to success by the families (to have educated parents, to come from a well-to-do family).

A part of dispersion that is not explained by the identified 4 factors makes up 35%.

The factor analysis showed that our respondents most commonly explain life success in terms of a set of variables that, in our interpretation, summarily describe it as a socio-cultural innovation with criminal tendencies (political corruption). Nevertheless, the variables that were given the highest score in the frequency analysis (to work hard, to have good education) accompanied by an enlarged factor “education, persistence implementing a success strategy” are less expressed.

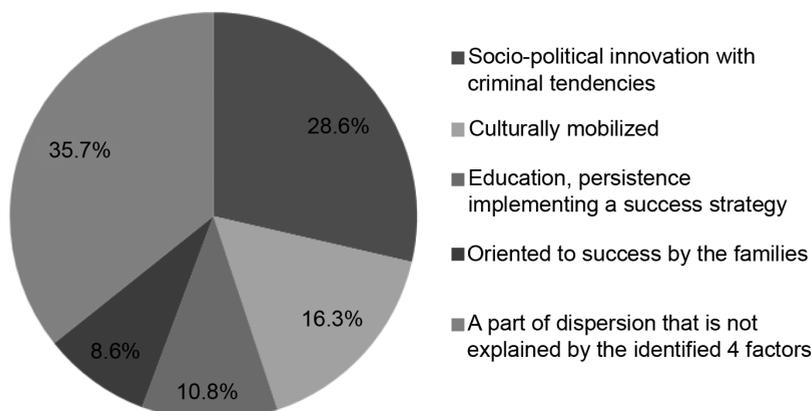


Fig. 4. Importance of some success factors in the opinion of the Latgalian population (ideally successful resident in the opinion of the respondents makes up 100%); n = 800 people, 2012

Source: Sociological investigation conducted by the Institute of Sociological Investigations at Daugavpils University, “Aggregate Capital, its Structure and Relation to Labour Migration”, 2012, n = 800 people (population of Latgale).

So, what do the respondents, who have their experience of labour migration, who have implemented (or are still implementing) their search for life success in other political and socio-economic conditions that do not exist in Latvia, demonstrate to us? In our opinion, the actors (respondents) are inclined to adapt to the existing circumstances and to implement the strategies that are realistic and achievable under specific conditions. Thus, in terms of a set of the resources that ensure life success best, those, who have their work experience abroad, in our case, predominantly in Great Britain or Ireland, make up a significantly different typological group (if compared with those, who do not have experience of labour migration). A set of the resources that merge into an enlarged factor “culturally mobilized” (religion, race / ethnicity, gender), which is most rooted in the biography of the actor and the history of the country into which he tried (or is still trying) to integrate to a certain degree, is a dominant feature of life success.

Table 8. Importance of some success factors in the opinion of the Latgalian population (ideally successful resident in the opinion of the respondents makes up 100%); n = 800 people

Entire array			People without work experience abroad			People with work experience abroad		
Factors, their verbalised explanation, % of dispersion	Variables	Factor loading	Factors, their verbalised explanation, % of dispersion	Variables	Factor loading	Factors, their verbalised explanation, % of dispersion	Variables	Factor loading
Socio-political innovation with criminal tendencies (28.6%)	Political relations	0.788	Socio-political innovation with criminal tendencies (28.4%)	Political relations	0.758	Culturally mobilized (29.9%)	Religion of a person	0.842
	To know right people	0.686		To know right people	0.691		Race / ethnicity of a person	0.775
	To pay bribes	0.684		To pay bribes	0.690		To be born a man or a woman	0.742
Culturally mobilized (16.3%)	Religion of a person	0.841	Culturally mobilized (16.3%)	Religion of a person	0.846	Oriented to success by the families, with a high estimation of their own good education (17.7%)	To have educated parents	0.856
	Race / ethnicity of a person	0.771		Race / ethnicity of a person	0.773		To come from a well-to-do family	0.729
	To be born a man or a woman	0.605		To be born a man or a woman	0.533		To have good education	0.631
Education, persistence implementing a success strategy (10.8%)	To work hard	0.809	Education, persistence implementing a success strategy (15.9%)	To work hard	0.803	Persistence implementing a success strategy with a high estimation to the role of social capital (11.9%)	To work hard	0.850
	To have ambitions	0.710		To have good education	0.721		To have ambitions	0.752
	To have good education	0.655		To have ambitions	0.674		To know right people	0.440
Oriented to success by the families (8.6%)	To have educated parents	0.765	Oriented to success by the families (8.6%)	To come from a well-to-do family	0.759	Socio-political innovation with criminal tendencies with a low estimation to the role of social capital (9.0%)	Political relations	0.832
	To come from a well-to-do family	0.728		To have educated parents	0.717		To pay bribes	0.681

Source: Sociological investigation conducted by the Institute of Sociological Investigations at Daugavpils University, "Aggregate Capital, its Structure and Relation to Labour Migration", 2012, n = 800 people (population of Latgale).

These respondents put “socio-political innovation with criminal tendencies” to a periphery of the life success strategies (see Table 8). In the opinion of the group of the respondents with labour migration experience, a set of the resources that creates a bit different factor of success in life (in our interpretation it is “oriented to success by the families, with a high estimation of their own good education”) is the most important.

CONCLUSIONS

The additional hypothesis of the sociological research has been proven as well: the greatest propensity to labour migration is experienced by these representatives of the economically active population of the region, who have sufficiently high indicators of some components of the aggregate capital, especially the physical one, but those, who do not have a sufficient volume of the cultural capital convertible into the human and the economic capitals in the places of their residence or in Latvia.

An in-depth analysis of the factors of life success has revealed that, in general, our respondents tend to assign the lead role not to the personal competitive characteristics (resources) but rather to the specificity of the social environment: an explanation of life success by means of a set of variables that, on the whole, describe it as a socio-political innovation with criminal tendencies (political corruption) is the most spread one.

Empirically, it has been found out that our respondents tend to adapt to the existing circumstances and to focus on these strategies of life success, that are real and achievable under the specific conditions of the realization of their economic goals. Thus, the group of respondents with an experience of labour migration marked the set of the resources, which, being most rooted in the biography of the actor and the history of the country into which he is still trying (or tried) to integrate to a certain degree, merges into an enlarged factor “culturally mobilized”, the dominant of their life success.

Consequently, the use of the theory of aggregate capital and the sociological interpretations of the empiric data, that are based on this theory, allow for a better and deeper understanding of the specificity of the most common strategies of the behaviour of different groups of actors in the economic sphere; what is more, it is possible to produce a thorough description of those, who chose labour migration.

Received 10 February 2013

Accepted 15 October 2013

References

1. Bourdieu, P. 1987. *Choses dites*. Paris: Minuit.
2. Burd'e, P. 2001. “Klinicheskaia sociologija polia nauki”, in *Socioanaliz P'era Burd'e*. M. : Institut eksperimental'noi sociologii, SPb.: Aleteia, 55–57. (In Russian)
3. Burdye, P. 1993. *Sociologija politiki*. M.: Socio-logos. (In Russian)
4. Gorz, A. 2003. *L'immatériel – Connaissance, valeur et capital*. Paris: Galilee.
5. Kule, M. 2007. “Zinasanu fenomena izpratne zinasanu sabiedribas mediana”, in *Kas ir zinasanu sabiedriba?* Riga: Latvijas Zinatnu akadēmijas Ekonomikas instituts, 7–19. (In Latvian)
6. LR Labklājības ministrija. 2007. *Latvijas un tas reģionu darba tirgus specifiskas problēmas. ES strukturfondū Nacionalas programmas “Darba tirgus petījumi” projekts*. Jelgava: Jelgavas tipogrāfija. (In Latvian)
7. Menshikov, V.; Vanags, E.; Volkova, O. 2013. “Aggregate Capital, Its Structure and Interaction with Labour Migration (The Case of Latgale)”, *DU SZF Socialo Zinatnu, Vestnesis* 1: 61–90.
8. Menshikov, V. 2011. “Human Capital in the Structure of Total Capital of Personality: Sociological Aspect”, *Filosofija. Sociologija* 22(2): 150–161.
9. Menshikov, V.; Vanags, E. 2011. “International Labour Migration: Searching for Methodological Bases of Empirical Research”, *Social Sciences Bulletin* 2: 45–70.