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**AWO HEIMATGARTEN FOUNDATION**

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**Ukrainian Labour Migration Processes in Russia:  
Social and Gender Aspects**

**Процессы украинской трудовой миграции  
в России: социальный и гендерный аспекты**

**Materials of a Comprehensive Sociological Study**

**Материалы комплексного  
социологического исследования**



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law enforcement, sometimes bordering on restriction of human rights (for example, the right for free movement); bureaucratisation of the procedures and growing number of officials; flourishing corruption.

In the area of migration, Russian legislators are inclined to maximise tight control and attract many authorities from other spheres of state governance to this system of control. But migration is a very changeable phenomenon, which slips through your fingers like water. The divergence of expert estimates from official figures on number of immigrants perfectly demonstrates this. The difference may reach a factor of ten. If only 10% of the immigrants work legally, this shows that the system of control actually controls nothing.

An analysis of Russian migration law immediately shows the uneven, explosive character of changes into it. In the last ten years, a wave of changes in the migration legislation can be seen clearly in 2002, then there are many changes in 2006, the next wave in 2009. These waves can be explained by adoption of new programme documents. For example, adoption of FL “On the Legal Status of Foreign Citizens in the RF” in 2002, or signing of international readmission agreements with neighbouring countries in 2004-2006. Reaction of Russian legislators to such events is informative. After the legal status of foreign citizens was set by law, a new government body, the Federal Migration Service, was founded. After the readmission treaties were signed, a complicated system of migration registration for foreign citizens was created. A detailed analysis of this dynamics of changes in Russian migration law needs separate research.

We should emphasise that Russian migration legislation is highly structured, and the competences in the area of migration clearly separated between authorities. The experience of our North-Eastern neighbours could be very useful for regulation of migration processes in the Ukraine.

### **1.3. Labour migration processes in Russian media space**

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#### **Methodology of the study**

Monitoring of the Russian information space within the framework of the general research subject was conducted from 30 June to 6 October 2010. During this period, all the information messages on the subject “labour migration” registered by search system were chosen, systematised, structured and analysed under the universal content characteristics system. The total number of the information units found and analysed is 90; seventy of those are news articles, and the rest is information in expanded news genres. Analytics was also a subject of our analysis, but there was very little analytics in Russian information space in the indicated timeframe.

Search was made via Google and Yandex with the help of system of keywords and phrases (“migration,” “labour migration,” “Ukrainian migrants in Russia,” “female migration in Russia,” or “labour migration, analytics”).

The main objective of the monitoring system suggested by our team is establishment and analysis of the fundamentally new correlations, interrelations and meanings in the whole information flow related to the subject “migration in Russia” over a specific time period. The objective of such analysis is not only to follow the main messages, topics, discussions, problems, stereotypes, challenges, and contrary views on labour migrants of the government and society on the Russian internet, but also to reveal latent ties in these areas and to create cause and effect models allowing to penetrate deeper into the very substance of migration processes in Russia – on the level of the real situation and process, not just primary functional media possibilities as reflecting the reality. Information flow monitoring is also interesting for us because among its key objectives, we formulate first of all such that would not lose against clearly formulated scientific tasks. That is, the analysis of media flows is interesting not only on the level of analysis and comparing contents, as is mostly usual for media monitorings, but also on the level of finding a ”second” and a “third” semantic levels. It is all about registering and analysing the tendencies, factors, and ideas that are never written in the text directly, but become visible only upon immersion into its discursive fields.

At the same time, we suggest that every piece of information may represent a multi-level semantic structure, both on the level of content and its organisation structure.

Another important objective of our analysis of information flows is the qualitative change from registering “what is written about” to “why about this” and “how.” For us, it is more interesting to see the new factors in the global information space, not so much to register new messages. The new factors can be the reason (or lead to it) some kind of dynamics of meanings in the information field. Very important for us hereby is monitoring of changes in the institutional environment, where new meanings and content phenomena continue to appear, leaders and their influence on specific information flows change. In other words, this is an attempt to answer the question: why this or that topic or information acquires dynamic characteristics defining this process, latent and visible, as well as objective and subjective reasons that follow and/or define it.

The system of content characteristics and their meanings developed by us allows to reveal partially these levels of meaning and to see new correlations in news articles and analytical texts around Russian labour migration found over the course of a little more than three months.

In structuring information units, we also distinguish different levels of meaning:

1. “Alpha” level: registering the obvious idea written directly by the author, or the re-transmitter of the key realised idea, which is synonymous to the event content.

2. “Beta” level: the substance of event, i.e. what is in the foundation of the content of the first-level event, or what is its immediate reason, or even a

concealed precondition. The “beta” level is often what is not formulated with words in the article, but becomes visible through a deeper analysis of the event’s context.

3. Finally, we can speak about the third, “gamma” level: a potential development of meanings we can only subjectively foresee in the following flows of information field dynamics.

Our analytical monitoring was basically conducted on two separate horizontal levels:

1. formally, via continuous creation of a system of content characteristics and constant expansion of their range of meanings, assuming constant dynamics of this system over this whole period of time;

2. on a qualitative level, through “decoding” and gradually separating concealed trends and correlations in the complete substance of the information field on a specific topic.

The qualitative level of our monitoring, after creating the system of content characteristics, is direct registration of the content flows on the “alpha,” “beta,” and “gamma” levels.

As a result, in our information space about “Labour migration in Russia,” we register, in particular, the message and information blocks listed below, united by the common features, and will try to see what content fields they represent. At the same time, what is a second-level content field? It is the information spectrum that opens, immediately or gradually, to the recipient as a news message is, in their imagination, introduced into the political, social, economic, or historical development context of the society, and re-read through these macro levels.

### **Analysis of news information flow**

The first level of our monitoring of Russian information flows on labour migration was, as indicated above, creating a universal system of content characteristics and their meanings, the elements of which, in our opinion, directly point to the real and objectively existing structures of information flows on the internet space. In other words, none of the content characteristics on the list was invented by us: each one appeared as a result of a message, event, comment, piece of news, or a vector of meaning emerging in the information space. Therefore, the system itself performs an analytical function showing major concepts in the Russian migration-related media space.

So this is the tree of characteristics we have:

1. legal regulation vector (legalisation of migrants, quota policy);
2. legislative reform;
3. legal initiatives concerning Ukrainians;
4. violation of migrants’ rights;
5. ways to protect the migrants’ rights;

6. ways of crossing the border illegally;
7. ways of migration control;
8. actions of authorities;
9. position of authorities towards migration;
10. alternatives in the Russian migration policy;
11. reasons for migration;
12. tendencies in migration environment;
13. crimes committed by officials related to migration;
14. criminality;
15. principally new strategies in Russian laws;
16. tendencies among native Russian citizens with regard to migrants.

In this structure, the meanings of content characteristics are also representative. For example, among violations of the migrants' rights Russian media register not only mass violations of human rights, but also threats to their lives. Interestingly enough, they even mention the FMS' actions as a factor of danger; during their inspections, some employers "get rid" of their workers, well knowing that these have no legal residence or work permits for Russia. Such spontaneous inspections are generally organised when the time comes to pay labour migrants their salaries.

It is interesting to compare the texts that show the position of the authorities, on the one hand, and their real actions on the other. On the one hand, many Russian high officials talk about the necessity to restrict the flow of migrants from different countries; and at the same time they are creating a system of programmes and incentives for highly qualified foreign workers. Some standpoints seem mutually exclusive, but with deeper analysis we see a connection between them. Basically, this conclusion is made on the "beta" level mentioned above.

Some trends in the area of migration (by content of information field) can be seen as a number of peculiar characteristics: the generally lower number of migrants over the last year, an increasing number of illegal migrants, fines for absence of patents, failure to go to the police in case the migrants' rights are violated, moving to Russia with whole families, as well as the ubiquitous practice of forging medical test results. From this, we can clearly see that the dynamics of events in migration on the macro time level, as reflected by Russian media under different topics concerning these events according to the information field content, shows clearly how Russia is further diving into migration, in spite of the allegedly lower number of migrants caused by the crisis. It also demonstrates an implacable change to the social and communicative space of the Russian society from inside, by means of migration.

However, among these confirmed trends, we also come across openly unqualified exaggerations made by Russian officials. E.g., statistics published in

the media that causes great doubts: 99% of the homeless are arguably children of migrants. And next, there's the message: "one third of all Russian newly-born are born in migrant families." These facts receive no confirmation or explanations from Russian officials, on the contrary: the information from certain officials that "50% of crimes in Russia are committed by migrants" was disproved by Romodanovsky, Director of the Russian FMS.<sup>31</sup>

Among the areas where officials commit crimes related to migration, Russian media cite violations of the law by the FMS or police officials. These crimes most often consist in forgery, bribes or acting as intermediary.

We believe it is useful to distinguish the following vectors ("alpha" level) during monitoring:

### **1. Russia's new migration policy: what to do with migrants?**

Russian Federation inevitably faces this problem today. According to the country's leaders, Dmitry Medvedev and Vladimir Putin, finding a solution to the migration problem is the basis for further development of the country, starting from creating a positive demographic level in Russia and up to growing global potential. Therefore, it would be logical to assume that models of such policy should, by all laws of political development, have already been actively discussed in Russian media. Analysis of Russian media space could have been continuous. But, studying Russian media, we can observe a complete absence of public debate. Analytics, publications, contradictory interviews, political appeals, round tables, journalistic interpretations of specific migration policy-related events and their importance – all that is always a priori present in democratic mass media, and really influences political models – is practically absent in Russia. "State-controlled media keep producing cheap-looking TV series on the life in a Russian village, where the same glossy Russian types cover the emptiness, but behind the studio set there's a Russian village ruined by drinking, with a Tajik milk-man working in the dairy farm."<sup>32</sup>

During the three and a half months of monitoring, the events of the first content level ("alpha" level) concerning the further development of migration policy was marked by only a few official messages from the "Olympus of power": from the introduction of labour patent, because of the necessity articulated by Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev to create convenient and clear conditions of legalisation for labour migrants, so that "the people who come here were comfortable doing it" (D. Medvedev), to K. Romodanovsky's open statements that Russia won't be able to survive without migrants. However, this entire information was carried exclusively through official messages, appeals, or commentaries from the top officials, without any consideration of the questions "how?", "why?" and "what for?" It is typical that not only the analytical press publications are lacking, but also messages from other Russian politicians about a future migration policy. In fact, if we compare the reflection of this topic in the Russian information flows with the growing

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<sup>31</sup> <http://www.islamnews.ru/news-26926.html>

<sup>32</sup> Gleb Ivanov//Tolerant suicide, <http://www.rosbalt.ru/print/768397.html>

discussion on migration in the Russian society, we can see a “twisted mirror” effect – a metaphor which we use to define the different meaning vectors in reality and its negative interpretation in the media. While hundreds of thousands of migrants already live in the central Russian cities such as Moscow and St. Petersburg, the authorities, in particular in the information dimension, are just starting to speak of the necessity to “pay attention to labour migrants.”<sup>33</sup>

Finally, even the question of how many migrants Russia can receive and what this will change in its future, is only asked sporadically.<sup>34</sup>

However, let’s try to define the main meaning flows of the second, or “beta,” level even in this narrow coverage spectrum of the government’s efforts to create a common migration policy:

1. Russia is currently focusing on qualified foreign manpower. It is even prepared to create special professional education centres in the CIS countries. For such specialists, a number of preferences have been created (the key metaphor here is “the *limitchiks* of the 21<sup>st</sup> century,” or people falling under the Soviet-style propiska quota). In this flow, the new phenomenon of “virtual migration” is very important. This is when a professional physically located in their own country has an employer in another country. This mostly concerns programmers and engineers.

2. Putin’s position is to “concretise” migration, Medvedev’s policy is that “demand for migrants must be satisfied with the job supply”; “it is necessary to solve the problems of migration and create simple and easy rules for migrants which it would be unprofitable to break.”<sup>35</sup>

3. Another meaning flow transferred to media from Russian politics is the opposite stance of Yury Luzhkov, ex-mayor of Moscow. He said the Russian capital needs no more than 100,000 migrants, and called the migrants themselves the “filth” of Russian economy.<sup>36</sup>

4. Hopes are being placed on a new census to determine the structure of migration in Russia.<sup>37</sup>

5. Konstantin Romodanovsky, Head of the Federal Migration service of Russia, thinks that labour migration can improve the demographic situation in Russia.

By the way, the journalist Sergey Rasov came to an interesting conclusion concerning creation of a migration policy model. In his article “Shadow Migrants” he points out, in particular: “As far as Russia still sees itself as the major geopolitical player in Central Asia, the large number of migrants allows it to reach a certain loyalty from the presidents of Asian states. Therefore, for the time being a considerable part of the workers’ income will go abroad and not

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<sup>33</sup> <http://www.rosbalt.ru/2010/01/26/707270.html>

<sup>34</sup> [http://www.stoletie.ru/rossiya\\_i\\_mir/skolko\\_migrantov\\_perevarit\\_rossija\\_2010-09-21.htm](http://www.stoletie.ru/rossiya_i_mir/skolko_migrantov_perevarit_rossija_2010-09-21.htm)

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.rian.ru/society/20100703/251931784.html>

<sup>36</sup> [http://www.gazeta.ru/news/lenta/2010/06/27/n\\_1512945.shtml](http://www.gazeta.ru/news/lenta/2010/06/27/n_1512945.shtml)

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.argumenti.ru/society/n257/78479/>

work for the Russian economy, while Konstantin Romodanovsky, head of the FMS, will cheerfully report to the country's leaders: 'We control the situation and implement tasks to differentiate approaches to labour.'<sup>38</sup>

## **2. Reform of migration law: Introduction of labour patent**

"Beta" meaning levels:

1) statements by officials on a possibility to take 4 million migrants out of the shadow economy;

2) budget revenue (by some expert estimates, with the number of migrants working in the private sector reaching 3-3.5 million people, the taxes for patents may reach 3-3.5 billion roubles monthly);

3) moving to migration control on the local level;

4) popularity of the patent idea among migrants (according to Gavhar Djuraeva, head of the "Migration and Law" Centre);

5) less corruption and xenophobia growing on both sides – from Russian society on the one hand and from the migrants, on the other;

6) according to experts, "the patent is a considerable step forward" compared to the quota system;

7) "The idea of issuing patents to labour migrants is correct, but it should not replace the lacking migration policy in Russia" (Mikhail Solomentsev, head of Moscow Committee on interregional relations and national policy, and Nikolay Gladkov, secretary of Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia);

8) "The existing system of quotas on foreign manpower does not help Russian citizens in any way, but only humiliates and exploits them";

9) the patent will only solve the problems of 20-30% illegal migrants (Evgeny Gontmakher, Deputy Director of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations of Russian Academy of Sciences);

10) the demand for foreign manpower in Russia is 5 million people. At the same time, only 15% of immigrants in Moscow are legally registered;

11) contradictory official data on declining demand for labour migrants in Russia, judging by the number of quotas requested;

12) a completely new correlation in two content characteristics: declining quotas in the regions and Russian officials tending to toughen the regulation of migration.<sup>39</sup>

## **3. Problem of corruption in federal institutions in the migration area**

This aspect is another interesting concept dimension of our monitoring. Here is statistics provided officially by the Bashkir regional Migration Service Department: "*In 2010, the number of violations of law by the officials of Bashkir*

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<sup>38</sup> <http://www.politcom.ru/10704.html>

<sup>39</sup> [http://lenta.ru/news/2010/08/25/guests/\\_Printed.htm](http://lenta.ru/news/2010/08/25/guests/_Printed.htm)

*Migration Service Department increased by 37%; the number of offences related to violation of law, increased by 35%; and the number of crimes in public office increased by 100%.”<sup>40</sup>*

It is very significant, however, that in the course of our study only two (!) articles appeared in Russian media on abuse of power or criminal proceedings against an official of the regional FMS or militia. And this, although not just corruption, but its record scale is stressed even by government officials.

And further news, during the whole period of monitoring:

*“Kirill Tolkachev, former inspector of Kronshtadt Department of the Federal Migration Service Administration, received two years and six months of suspended sentence in St. Petersburg. According to the press service of the city investigation department of the investigation committee at the Office of Public Prosecutor, the court found him guilty under Art. 322.1 p. 1 Criminal code (organisation of illegal migration) and Art. 285 p. 1 Criminal code (abuse of official powers). Alexander Solokhov, an accomplice, was sentenced to one year suspended.... All in all, the convicts organised illegal stay in Russia for 33 foreigners (25 citizens of Tajikistan and 7 citizens of Uzbekistan), receiving about 150,000 roubles from them.”<sup>41</sup>*

#### **4. Analytical texts**

At the same time, we have reasons to speak about a system of analytical publications in the Russian media space with regard to Russia’s evolving migration policy, although its dynamics only becomes visible through systematic search of information over the course of the last year.

Here is a part of that small number of analytical texts shown by the search system for the period of October, 2009 up to present day.<sup>42</sup>

However, we can’t see in these publications any general problem definition in connection with labour migration in Russia, to say nothing the ways of its resolution.

In this context, we can speak about isolated but very exact observations by analytic journalists, who, in particular, stress that we can judge whether there is a migration policy in Russia or not based on how “institutionalised” its strategic development is. In fact, we can observe the “beta”-level meaning flow in these publications, which lies in the foundation of all official publications in Russian media. However, instead of adding to the first-level meanings and deepening it, we can observe quite the opposite: disproving it. Some Russian journalists stressed that in their texts: *“Any outside observer can see well that the Russian authorities are*

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<sup>40</sup> <http://www.mk.ru:8088/regions/povolzhe/article/2010/09/08/528246-operatsiya-migratsiya.html>

<sup>41</sup> <http://spb.rbc.ru/freenews/20100909143511.shtml>

<sup>42</sup> [http://www.mosnarodsobor.ru/analytic/matrioshki\\_v\\_tiubeteijkah.htm](http://www.mosnarodsobor.ru/analytic/matrioshki_v_tiubeteijkah.htm);

<http://www.rian.ru/analytics/20100318/215084954.html>; <http://www.easttime.ru/analitic/3/8/39.html>;

[http://www.stoletie.ru/rossiya\\_i\\_mir/skolko\\_migrantov\\_perevarit\\_rossija\\_2010-09-21.htm](http://www.stoletie.ru/rossiya_i_mir/skolko_migrantov_perevarit_rossija_2010-09-21.htm);

<http://www.polit.ru/analytics/2010/01/28/migrationpolicy.html>;

<http://www.kginfo.ru/analytics/interview/ekaterina-egorova-migranty-nam-nuzhny>;

<http://www.pressito.ru/OBSHCHESTVO/9470/>; <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2010/0409/gazeta014.php>;

[http://www.ng.ru/economics/2010-01-28/1\\_demography.html](http://www.ng.ru/economics/2010-01-28/1_demography.html)

*acting by the well-known principle: a step forward and then two steps back, which means neither a restrictive, nor a promotional policy have been fully developed.”<sup>43</sup>*

Lidia Grafova, a well-known Russian journalist, stresses in one of her own publications: “We hear many promises from the authorities, but they do quite the contrary in practice. An attempt to make migration labour law more liberal was made in 2006-2007, but it ended without a result.”<sup>44</sup>

## **5. Evolution of institutional environment and representation of leaders in Russian labour migration-related media space**

This analysis is important for us because under our research hypothesis, observing the dynamics of institutional environments in parallel with context analysis allows us to more thoroughly compare different events and reveal the “beta” meaning level.

By just registering which institutions or leaders initiate or re-transmit a particular new message in the media, we can better see the causal relations in the meaning flows. Moreover, against the background of the distinct changes in the institutional environment where a process takes place, it is possible to forecast the range of its new transformation and, consequently development, first of all in the civil society dimension.

However, these theoretical hypotheses do not have any supporting facts in the Russian information space. We are witnessing the static creation of meanings, on the level of environments and societies, and this is especially clear thanks to the structure of the Russian media space. We have arrived to these conclusions in the process of analysing the subject of labour migration, which is on the list of “the most symptomatic” topics for Russia’s further development. This is stressed by researchers, including Elena Tyurukanova, Director of Migration Study Centre.

As for the leaders of the Russian media space on this subject, the frequency of each leader being mentioned or cited in the media is directly proportional to their position in the state (and, note, only state!) structure. That’s why the top places are occupied by Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev, then Konstantin Romodanovsky, head of the FMS, and then all his deputies and assistants. A similar hierarchy exists within the Ministry of Internal Affairs and other structures participating in migration regulation. Public leaders who represent a specific environment or community so also appear in the media space, but rarely; these are mostly representatives of closed migrant forums by separate regions, such as Tajik, Kazakh or other ethnic groups.

## **Conclusions**

Between 30 June and 6 October 2010, our research group analysed the full range of information units on the subject of labour migration, found via search

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<sup>43</sup> Sergey Gradirovsky // Rossiyskiye Vesti, <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2010/0409/gazeta014.php>

<sup>44</sup> <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2010/0409/gazeta013.php>

systems. The total number of the information units found and analysed is 90; seventy of those are news items, and the rest represent information in expanded genres. Analytics was also a subject of our analysis, but there was too little of it in the Russian information space in the indicated period.

Through the system of content characteristics and their meanings developed by us, we made an attempt to analyse of the news base by determining two, and in some cases, three fields of meaning: “alpha”, “beta,” and “gamma.”

The main objective of the monitoring system suggested by our team was the study and analysis of principally new correlations, interrelations and meanings in the entire information flow on the subject “migration in Russia,” in the course of a definite period of time.

In structuring information units, we distinguished the following levels of meaning:

1. “alpha” level: registering the obvious idea written directly by the author, or the re-transmitter of the key realised idea, which is synonymous to the event content;

2. “beta” level: the substance of event, i.e. what is in the foundation of the content of the first-level event, or what is its immediate reason, or even a concealed precondition. The “beta” level is often what is not formulated with words in the article, but becomes visible through a deeper analysis of the event’s context;

3. the third level of meaning, “gamma” level: a potential development of meanings we can only subjectively foresee in the following flows of information field dynamics.

Thus, we can distinguish following major migration-related processes in the Russian media space:

1. Russian media space is formed “from top to bottom,” i.e., to a great extent it is Russian authorities and their leaders who initiate and re-transmit new messages, not journalists or the society itself. The source of migration problems are not the migrants, nor the problems they face when they come to Russia to work, and not a common problem for the society which should have been analysed based on specific examples toward clarifying the typical, large-scale trends; but rather the official “media events” from the power top. 80% of the information units for the period indicated above were created by this vertical top-down model.

2. Constructive criticism of the authorities, their migration-related strategies or actions are totally absent from the realm of news. Russian media do not question the figures cited by officials (such as when Moscow’s ex-mayor Yury Luzhkov said “It is migrants who are guilty of 50% of crimes” (although representatives of Russian NGOs and journalists, including Lidia Grafova, Nadezhda Alenina and Valeriy Postavnin, former FMS deputy head, disprove this). Top officials do not even consider it necessary to explain the source of

these figures, while the journalists do not demand explanations. So absolutely unchecked and false data are discharged into the information space, and subsequently performs the same functions as information based on true facts.

3. The second and third levels of meaning often lead in the opposite direction compared with the “officially declared” first level.

4. An analysis of representation of political leaders in Russian information flows shows that the processes of creation of meaning are generally weak and static, first of all because the leaders are present in media texts only as re-transmitters of the stereotyped official “monologue” with all its clichés and without true vivid reactions. As a result, the macro text on migration in Russia is built around their speeches, and does not have any depth, dynamics, style, genre, or original meanings. We can assume this situation in media is simultaneously a reason and a consequence of certain processes taking place today in Russia, including the absence of horizontal levels of communication, or putting everybody and everything into the single concept of “vertical management.” We believe, however, that rather serious “samizdat” press or literature can exist in Russia, published by media “unpopular” with the authorities, and a common search system will not always find them.

5. The above list of content characteristics clearly shows that the horizontal communication space is not institutionalised and does not shape a change of identities in the event of communication. So opposition publications also belong to this vertically integrated space that reveals itself through the content characteristics system.

6. The content of the information, as well as explanations of particular trends via official channels, often directly contradict the real situation and true causes and consequences, which we then reveal through independent research. The reason to this is that the information on the Internet is evidently closed towards a whole spectrum of migration-related events and activities, and even more so – towards their interpretation and journalistic investigations. Except for isolated cases, there is almost no deep journalist analysis of the trends, real situations of migrants, or penetration into the reasons and reality that will be discussed further. The authorities are effectively separated from internal transformations of the socio-communicative space of the Russian society, which makes it a secondary re-transmitter of such transformations.