

Happiness and Gender: Evidence from Transition Countries

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Abstract

Since 1999, rapid growth in transition countries of Europe and Central Asia Region (ECA), driven primarily by productivity gains, has led to a dramatic increase in living standards and a sharp reduction in poverty. Out of a total regional population of about 475 million, about 50 million have moved out of poverty over 1998-99 and 2005-06. Gender issues related to these economic outcomes have not been widely studied in the transition countries of the ECA Region though some important pieces of research have indeed been undertaken in recent years.

In this paper we use the Life in Transition Survey (LITS) dataset, a joint initiative of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the World Bank, covering all the transition countries in the ECA Region. Using a multivariate regression method, we find that men are on average happier than women. Self-employed women are happier than wage earning women and having a child last year for a wage earning woman seems to reduce happiness. Also working in the same field where formal training is received increases happiness for both men and women.

JEL classification: I31, I32, J16.

Keywords: Happiness; Job satisfaction; Gender; Europe and Central Asia.

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