

Russia and modern migration crisis: on the rural labor migration

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Abstract. The article is devoted to the analysis of the migration nature and specifics as a socio-economic phenomenon in the context of the current state and prospects of development of the agrarian economy of the Russian Federation in the conditions of a new social reality. The research objectives: analysis of international rules for the migration policy implementation in the context of the current migration and food crises; assessment of rural labor migration in the Russian Federation; determination of the nature and prospects for regional rural labor migration development. The authors reveal the contradictions and factors of international migration policy and the advantages of Russia in the field of its implementation. The idea is formulated about the need to implement a policy on creation of new jobs, increase of employment in the agricultural sector of the Russian economy, and development of transport infrastructure to support the "labor commutation" characteristic of the old industrial region.

1 Introduction

In the current crisis state of the world economy, people from many countries are looking for employment opportunities abroad. The Russian Federation is among the most favorable states with a consistently high employment level and employment opportunities for migrants. International regulatory documents recognize the relevance and even the need for more than just labor migration. Namely, rural migration, which opens up opportunities for people from other countries to work in the agricultural economy. Not only a threat of global hunger contributes to this, which is openly spoken about in the UN and other international institutions, but also by the ever-growing food demand, due to the growth of the world's population. Even "in countries at an intermediate level of development, where urbanization has spread beyond the capitals and demographic indicators have changed due to a birth rate decrease, it is likely that it will be necessary to continue implementing the job creation policies proposed in the previous subsection. Nevertheless, as the income level of these countries increases, they should also strive to increase mobility in the labor market, including by encouraging migration alternatives, such as commutation, and strengthening ties between rural and urban areas using a territorial approach" [1, p.111].

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These circumstances, as well as the multiculturalism policy crisis [2] in Western European countries, allow to assert a certain change in rural migration vector towards the Russian Federation. If we talk about China or India, where the food demand is growing from year to year, then there is enough labor force there due to the high population in these countries. As for Russia, the vast majority of its population is concentrated in cities, and there is a shortage of personnel in the countryside. Especially in the "high season of" harvesting.

Actually, the crisis of multiculturalism was the direct result of the migration crisis, which, in turn, is an obvious characteristic of the entire modern global crisis. Steady growth of mass migration and contradictions between industrially developed countries and countries of the so-called "Third World" showed the inconsistency of such optimistic expectations, which put on the agenda the question of the essence of the modern migration crisis, its causes and its consequences as one of the most urgent.

The purpose of the study is to analyze the state of rural labor migration in the context of current state and prospects for the development of the agrarian economy of the Russian Federation in the context of new social reality.

2 Materials and Methods

Inductive-deductive, program-targeted, structural-functional, expert-analytical, and historical-retrospective methods were used in the paper. The subject of the research is rural labor migration. The object of the research is the modern migration content, which is being formed in the conditions of new social reality.

3 Results and Discussion

It is known that in any country, the market as a whole, and industry markets in particular, are affected by numerous endogenous and exogenous factors. The labor market (labor force) is no exception in this regard. Internal factors such as the aging of the population or its decline force the state to look for ways to overcome the labor market imbalance. Sometimes such (exogenous) methods are outside the country.

Economists consider such a situation as a market dynamic equilibrium, which persists precisely due of various circumstances that are constantly changing and change the nature of the market as such. Specific ways and methods of restoring balance and dynamic equilibrium in the markets are called "built-in stabilizers". Most often, such stabilizers are spoken of in relation to the state budgetary and financial policy, when expenditures and revenues are automatically changed with each economic cycle phase. But with regard to labor and migration policy, it is also legitimate to recall such stabilizers (quotas, patents, unemployment benefits, legal regulations, etc.). Moreover, some economic ideas (theories, concepts) turned out to be of little use in modern conditions.

In the conditions of growing macroeconomic and socio-political instability and turbulence, for example, the well-known idea of free labor migration turned out to be questionable. The thesis that "in connection with the growth and diversification of labor markets and the expansion of employment opportunities, the elimination of restrictions for people wishing to migrate and use the prospects opening up in other places is becoming an increasingly important development factor" [1, p. 111], it has become extremely controversial for many reasons. Firstly, because such unregulated migration leads to an excess of labor supply over its demand in local (regional and spot) labor markets. Second, because it is a trigger for various kinds of conflicts on ethnic grounds. Third, because it preserves the share of manual labor and the low level of mechanization, automation, and

robotization in a particular industry. Fourth, because it exerts excessive pressure on the existing economic infrastructure. The situation is further complicated by such factors as the deterioration of the ecological situation, man-made consequences of industrial development, etc.

In fact, to be blunt, free migration, as well as free market economy, is an abstract concept. In reality, there has never been a completely free market economy, much less absolutely free labor migration. The state has always sought to regulate both the market and the movement of labor. The latter was stipulated by obtaining special work permits (employment). The largest migration waves were no exception, for example, migration from Western Europe to the United States after the First World War or the current migration there from Asia and Latin America. The problem of migration regulation has traditionally been complicated by the fact that labor migration was carried out illegally. Same as it is carried out illegally today from the countries of Africa and the Middle East to Western Europe.

Nevertheless, rural labor migration has been and remains one of the most "open" areas of such migration. This is due to the fact that there is an understanding in the world that "agriculture remains the main source of the rural population existence, even in incredibly difficult conditions, it should be in focus when carrying out measures to meet the urgent and long-term needs of forcibly displaced persons and their host communities. Maintaining food production and restoring the agricultural sector are fundamental conditions for stabilization and recovery in the interests of people living in conditions of instability or getting clear of them" [1, p. 111]. Accordingly, it is necessary to regulate migration processes, since "with effective regulation, the influx of migrants and relocated persons to rural areas can have a positive impact on their economy. Their arrival makes it possible to fill the labor shortage, increase the efficiency of knowledge dissemination, and increase GDP" [1, p. 111].

A general analysis of the latest UN documents on international labor migration leads to the idea that they do not have a single view on the migration problems, on the one hand, that "it is extremely important to eliminate legal and administrative barriers that hinder the movement of people within countries, including through the development of social protection programs that can be used in any territory, to avoid their transformation into a deterrent factor" [1, p. 112], and, on the other hand, that "due to the continued outflow of population from rural areas because of the expansion of opportunities in urban areas and increased mobility of people, rural areas are threatened by a rapid population decline" [1, p. 112]. The authorities of different countries have different attitudes to labor migration issues. Rapid industrial growth in Western European countries, for example, stimulated the authorities to ease the migration regime. In the USA, the liberalization of migration policy took place back in 1965. Nevertheless, the "historical pendulum", starting from the first decades of the XXI century, swung in the opposite direction: migration rules began to be tightened almost everywhere. This was facilitated by the creation of transnational institutions and supranational bureaucracy, which turned out to be far from the real needs of the indigenous population of specific countries. When the European Union was created, no one could have imagined that the migration situation would reach such a crisis state. But it is what it is.

As a matter of fact, such contradictory approaches have become one of the causes of crisis phenomena in migration processes. But the fact that they exist can be judged at least by the events on the border of Belarus and Poland, when in the spring of 2021 labor migrants from Iraq and Syria, who found themselves in transit on Belarus territory, were unable to travel to European countries for employment despite having the necessary documents. It came to direct collisions and shootouts.

The calls of a number of countries for the implementation of close coordination of their services dealing with labor migration of the population in recent years have increasingly remained declarations and no more. As long as states "retain the right to determine the number of workers employed, as well as to reject applications if there are appropriate employees" [1, p. 112], these issues are resolved based primarily on political considerations. In the context of the geopolitical crisis and the growing confrontation between the "collective West" and the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus, such close coordination in fact becomes impossible.

If we characterize rural migration from the Russian Federation and to the Russian Federation, then in recent decades it has acquired a so-called frontier character. In other words, it began to be either limited to the border regions where labor migrants left for some time, or, at the best, limited to the space of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The exception is the growing migration between Russia and China.

A general analysis of its nature indicates a decrease in the number of rural migrants, which is due to many reasons. But the first of them is the low level of payment for agricultural labor and the underdevelopment of rural infrastructure. For our country, these circumstances are of primary importance, since the natural and climatic conditions in Russian agriculture are far from favorable. Thus, "rural migration in Russia is experiencing a steady migration outflow of the population," which is the main reason for the decline in the rural population. At the same time, the nature of the processes characterizing rural migration in the Russian Federation has fundamental differences in rural and semi-rural municipalities [3, pp. 39, 44]. As well as in the flows of intra-regional, interregional, and international migration of rural population [4]. There are also common characteristics between rural (agrarian) migration in the Russian Federation and other countries, for example, a high proportion of the young population in migration processes [5].

One thing is clear, if there is a demand for foreign labor in the domestic labor market, then "policy makers should strive to protect the rights of immigrants and take measures to integrate them into society. The positive impact of immigration on destination countries can be increased with the help of public policy measures that simplify the integration of immigrants and make it inclusive" [1, p. 112]. Two forms of migration are known in international practice: dominant and egalitarian [6, p. 66]. Both of them, to one degree or another, involve the integration of migrants into the political, economic, and cultural space of the host country. But, as the practice of recent years has shown, such integration took place with great difficulties, and in some countries it did not take place at all. Definitely, we are talking about long-term migration, but short-term migration can also create great difficulties for the host country.

About 11.9 million migrants live in the Russian Federation on a permanent basis [7, p.70]. Migration rates are quite high: only in the second quarter of 2022, 3.12 million migrants entered the country, which is a third more than the previous period. According to the UN International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Russian Federation ranks third in the world in terms of the number of migrants. According to the UN Report published in early 2016, about 11.9 million migrants live in Russia. The leader in the number of visitors is the USA with 46.6 million migrants" [7, p. 70].

The most numerous diasporas in the Russian Federation are Uzbek, Ukrainian, Tajik, and Kyrgyz [8, p. 73]. A feature of migration in the current conditions has become the "anti-war" emigration, which originates from the SMO zone.

If we talk about the regional aspect of migration, then in the Chelyabinsk and Sverdlovsk regions of the Russian Federation, migrants from Tajikistan predominate among visitors from CIS countries [9]. Labor migration in the Urals is caused by the peculiarities of the old industrial region and belongs to the "commutation" category [10]. In this regard, the priority direction for the effective use of migration flows in rural areas is the

development of the transport infrastructure of the region, transport links, without which regular (daily) movements of people from the city to the village and back become extremely problematic. It can be said about the specifics of such labor migration: the most distant daily trips are made by persons aged 22-30 years; outgoing pendulum flows of migrants from areas with a low level of life quality are always more numerous than incoming ones; the total number of such migration flows is noticeably lower than the number of other migration forms.

In general, in 2019 there were 272 million migrants in the world [11, p. 124], the vast majority of whom "settled" in urban urbanizations, and only a small part went to rural areas. Thus, external migration did not make up for internal migration – the outflow of rural population to cities. The reasons for rural migration are "the lack of jobs caused by the slow diversification of the rural economy, the lack of prospects, especially among young people, which is associated with the poor quality of life in rural areas and the inability to apply the education received in the city in an undifferentiated economy conditions" [12, p. 140].

In general, the Russian Federation has good prospects for using the migration labor potential in rural areas. This is due to the huge farmland areas, which amount to 1.7 billion hectares [13, 32]. In addition, there are employment opportunities in the field of forestry: there are 770.4 million hectares of forests in the country. There are ample opportunities for employment in the water sector of the country: the value of the main type of water resources – river runoff in Russia is more than 4 thousand km³/ year (second place in the world). There are also good prospects for rural migration in the processing industry: 16% of the entire processing industry of the country is the food industry.

Obviously, an important factor in the development of labor (rural) migration is the geographical factor, the remoteness of many regions from the center, peripheral nature of the agrarian economy. This is especially true for the regions of Siberia and the Far East. Immigrants from China are much closer and easier to carry out the same seasonal migration than residents of the European part of Russia. So far, the share of immigrants from China in the total number of labor migrants who arrived in the Russian Federation is 0.3%, but it is growing markedly. The development of the vast resources of the regions of Siberia and the Far East is constrained by the relatively low labor mobility of Russians.

Interestingly, even in the West, in relatively small European countries, labor mobility is traditionally high. People in search of work constantly move around the country and do not even acquire real estate, so as not to be tied to one place. In the mentality of Russians, everything is exactly the opposite: people first acquire housing, take it on a mortgage, and then depend for their whole lives on the situation on the labor market in one locality. This conservative nature of internal migration is precisely balanced by the growing external migration. Is it bad or good – a separate question. In this regard, it is quite possible to imagine a situation when the share of migrants in the population structure in a particular region of our country will not be in favor of the indigenous people. What can happen then? The development of such a situation and forecasts can be very different, including unacceptable for the legitimate interests of Russia.

Not so when the share of migrants in the total population of the regions is quoted and controlled by the state. This ensures balanced labor migration. Then it is normal that, in general, the share of labor migrants in the total influx of foreigners to the Russian Federation is growing: from 12.5% in 2019 it rose to 26.6% in 2022. In 2022, one and a half times more migrants arrived in the Urals than in 2021. Of these, 98% are from countries with visa-free entry into the Russian Federation, about 70% are in search of work. Due to the growth of migration flows, it is necessary to expand the system of adaptation centers for migrant workers and the necessary infrastructure.

An important aspect of migration processes is remigration – the return of migrant workers to their homeland. Since the seasonal nature of the demand for the rural labor

migration potential is obvious, a special organization of mechanisms for the distribution and redistribution of foreign labor is also required.

It is known that many labor migrants do not return to the countries of departure. "In some cases, international migrants do not return because there are no opportunities for investment and employment in their countries, and in others because they do not know about existing opportunities. Policy measures are needed aimed at eliminating both causes by creating favorable conditions for doing business in origin areas, including legal mechanisms that allow migrants to be interested in returning or, at least, investing in their places of origin. For their reintegration into local labor markets, they should be provided with information about network connections at the local level, and measures in the field of rural development will create conditions for the full use of their skills" [1, p. 115].

4 Conclusions

1. There is a need for institutional modernization of migration policy, and, above all, update of the legislative framework, which would more specifically consider the growing political and socio-economic instability and uncertainty in the modern world. In particular, it seems appropriate to amend the Labor Code of the Russian Federation, which more clearly regulated the employment of migrants, the procedures for granting them certain preferences, as well as the application of sanctions in cases of illegal labor migration (both to employers and to migrants).
2. It seems useful to use patents more widely in the practice of employment of rural migrant workers. This applies primarily to citizens arriving in the Russian Federation from countries that have visa-free entry agreements with Russia. This allows migrants to apply for a patent, the procedure for granting which could be significantly simplified. The rules in force since 2014 for the acquisition of patents, unfortunately, are associated with intermediaries, who, of course, carry out their services for money and are not interested in assigning a TIN [14].
3. Considering the specifics of the region, it seems the most promising development of "labor commutation", which makes it possible to fill the labor shortage in the agricultural sector of the economy and mitigate the consequences of the modern migration crisis, one of the negative manifestations of which is the outflow of indigenous rural population to cities.

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