

CHALLENGES OF FOREIGN LABOUR MIGRATION IN RUSSIA

MARINA PITUKHINA

Petrozavodsk State University, Russia

Contact: pitukhina@petsu.ru

SVETLANA SIGOVA

Petrozavodsk State University, Russia

Contact: sigova@onego.ru

Nowadays in Russia, the upgrading of the human capital of migrants is highly problematic. It should be possible to create a more innovative economy by means of vast efforts in labour force development, including the development migrants. Furthermore, in order to contribute to sustainable development, it is essential to constantly update human capital, where “life-long learning” is a core idea. This article scrutinizes three global challenges that are negatively affecting human capital in Russia in terms of foreign labour migration; they are: low-skilled migrants; contradictions in the present-day migration processes; and the failure to apply a competence-based approach towards foreign labour migrants.

- Low-skilled migrants. Russian foreign labour migrants mostly obtain primary or secondary vocational education (Table 1).

Table 1. Native workers and foreign labour migrants redistribution by vocational education (%.), 2011 [Parikova, Sigova 2012, p.64-69; Statistics Russia 2010]

Vocational education	Native workers in Russia	Foreign labour migration
Tertiary vocational education	55,5%	15,7%
Secondary vocational education	24%	27%
Primary vocational education	20,5%	57,3%

At the same time, the goal of creating an innovative economy would demand higher levels of both migrants' vocational education and vocational training. Low-skilled migrants will be disadvantaged. Better skill-migrants are more mobile across occupations, industries and regions than their unskilled counterparts. They face a lower risk of lay-off and, when they lose their job, they have a relatively good chance of obtaining new employment [dell'Aringa 2009, 23-29]. Currently in Russia low-skilled and undereducated migrants aggravate the general shortage of human capital. It is getting highly important to upgrade human capital by means of the development of high skills and competences and through job matching. These are widely perceived in the EU and Russia. Thus, the modernization of migration policy in Germany implies inviting migrants who have education, profession, qualification, and intelligence. In Finland, the economy's demand for labour is high, especially the demand for skilled migrants in healthcare, social services, some business occupations [Information for migrants. www.inforpankki.fi, www.mol.fi, www.ely-keskus.fi]. Present-day foreign labour migrants in Russia are low-skilled and speak bad Russian. In most cases, they possess only primary vocational education (Table 1).

- Contradictions in the present-day migration processes. Foreign labour migration is a contradictory phenomenon. Much depends upon institutional differences, history of migration policy, cultural links, economic structure and other factors. On one side, demand for foreign labour migration both in the EU and Russia is very high. In Italy the famous politician Michele Pisano, member of Il Popolo della Libertà, claimed that if Italians would like to continue living with their present-day living standards, it would have been necessary to attract 2400 immigrants annually. In Germany the Chamber for trade and industry stated that the country is short of 400,000 skilled workers and the gap costs €25bln per year, which is equivalent to 1% of economic growth annually [Zhigalina 2011, 115-121]. In Russia in accordance with the population census 2010, migration inflow during 1992-2010 exceeded 7 million people and 60 % balanced natural population loss (of 13,1 m. people). Without this large-scale migration from the ex-USSR republics, the population in Russia would amount to 135,4 m instead of 142,9 m people [Statistics Russia 2010]. Another sharp contradiction is migrants' unwillingness to integrate into society. Scholars claim that «recipient society nucleus value is not accepted by migrants» [Zhigalina 2011, 115-121], moreover, migrants' contribution to sustainable and economic development of a recipient country is almost nothing compared to the huge costs and expenditures spent on their residence. This problem is reflected in the EU political discourse. A.Merkel in October 2010 emphasized: «It had been an illusion to think that Germans and foreign workers could "live happily side by side"» [Connolly K. 2010].

In Russia migration policy is increasingly losing its attractiveness; anti-migrant moods are highly visible in society, and migrants themselves lack motivation for drastic changes. It is mentioned in the Final Report on topical problems of socio-economic strategy in Russia till 2020 [Final Report till 2020, 2012], that migration policy in Russia doesn't include the adaptation of migrants or their integration into new society.

- Non-application of competence-based approach towards foreign labour migrants. In Russia, foreign labour migrants are not participating in vocational training programmes. Vocational training is the main tool for the constant upgrading of human capital where the important concepts are «life-long learning» and competence-based approach. . In Sweden and Finland more than 60% of population participate in vocational training annually [OECD “Education at glance”, 2011], while in the OECD member-states – less than 40%. This results in less than 6 months unemployment duration in Northern Europe [OECD “Education at glance”, 2011], while in the OECD member-states it endures 0.7 -1.2. years. In the OECD materials “Education at glance” there's no data on the percentage of migrants engaged in vocational training. Would be highly interesting to know the figures relevant to Northern Europe, for example. In Russia only 15.8% of native workers attend vocational training programmes [Statistics Russia 2010]. Since some migrants speak Russian badly, they may find it more difficult to participate in vocational training. Nowadays, the Russian labour market possesses favourable conditions for unqualified and low-skilled personnel. However, the President's Decree on providing intra-national agreement on 07.05.2012 introduced «mandatory exams in Russian language, Russian history, Russian legislature for foreign labour migrants unless they are highly-qualified» [The Russian President's Decree, 07.05.2012]. Thus, finally, a new opportunity for human capital upgrading is appearing in Russia. While scrutinizing competences and skills in economics, it is getting obvious that high skills and high competences are being acquired during vocational training. Skills and competences obtained through vocational education programmes are basic in most cases and still require additional specialization when the worker arrives at a specific working place. It is essential to teach migrants, to try to combat their lack of skills, and thus to invest in human capital.

In conclusion, in terms of innovative economic development, it is required to invest in the labour force and in the “human capital” of both native workers and migrants. It is highly desirable to make efforts towards the modernization of migration policy in order that migrants would interact with native workers and contribute to the comprehensive development of the state. Nowadays, the EU migration policy is constantly upgrading. Russia is interested in adaptation of effective migration policy tools from Europe: «Despite the development scenario, the economy's demand for migrants of various categories will grow. Large-scale migration flows assume the creation of favourable conditions for both adaptation and integration of various migrant categories» [Final Report till 2020, 2012]. The President's Decree on providing intra-national agreement on 07.05.2012 and a number of other tools would contribute to the country's human capital upgrading including ones of migrants.

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