

# МАССОВЫЕ ОПРОСЫ, ЭКСПЕРИМЕНТЫ, КЕЙС-СТАДИ

## MIGRATION POLICIES OF MOSCOW AUTHORITIES, AND MUSCOVITES' PUBLIC OPINION

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The article considers basic directions of the migration policies in the Moscow Region as the main attractive area for international labor migrants in the Russian Federation. Based on the statistical and sociological data (the results of public opinion survey and interviews with experts) the authors describe the current situation with the migration in the city of Moscow and in the Moscow Region in general focusing on the multidimensional characteristics of the Muscovites' attitudes towards foreign labor migrants. The article shows that it the Muscovites' perception of migrants there are three relatively independent vectors: cultural, economic, and social-political. The article also considers the Russian population's assessments of the positive and negative contribution of labor migrants in the social and cultural dynamics of the Moscow Region on specific thematic lines. Within the framework of the existing scientific approaches to the study of labor migration, the authors analyze the current migration processes, identify future trends of their development and indicate positive and negative impacts of these processes on social stability at the regional and national levels. The article highlights perspectives for resolving major problems related to labor migration with the special attention to the issues of adaptation and integration of migrants into the metropolitan society. The authors indicate main vectors and frameworks of the Moscow authorities' migration policies, and emphasize the need to design the differentiated policy of integration that takes into account peculiar characteristics of different categories of migrants.

**Key words:** labor migration; migration policies; migration processes; foreign workers; public opinion; Muscovites; the Moscow Region; attitudes towards foreign labor migrants

The Moscow authorities' migration policy is guided by specific features of the Moscow metropolis which is a centre of attraction for internal and international migrants. The Moscow authorities' primary target within controlling migration processes under current conditions is to get the maximum positive economic and social effect from migration [3]. To meet this target, it is necessary to implement a system of measures to resist illegal migration, on the one hand, and create most favorable conditions for social adaptation and integration of legal migrants arriving in Russia's capital, on the other hand.

The Moscow region's labor market has been and, most likely, will stay for a long time especially attractive not only for residents of the Russian Federation's territorial

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entities, but also for foreigners. Currently the State Program of the City of Moscow “Stimulating Economic Activity in 2012—2016” is under way. In general, in the regulation of labor migration the government of Moscow aims to achieve the following objectives: (a) to ensure the share of foreign labor migrants at the level of 3.2% of the total workforce; (b) to limit recruiting foreign workers in the wholesale and retail trade; (c) to counter the formation of mono-ethnic labor collectives and preferences for foreign workers at the expense of Russian citizens; (d) to reduce the number of low-skilled foreign workers to 30% of the total workforce; (e) to increase responsibility of employers for compliance with immigration, labor and tax regulations [5].

The particular emphasis in the Russian Federation’s Public Safety Conception is made on the problem of illegal migration. The Conception claims that “an illegal stay in the Russian Federation of foreign nationals and their labor in the country often worsens the social situation in the places they stay in and create conditions for the formation of terrorist organizations, political and religious extremism”. Illegal migration of foreigners and stateless persons, including those coming from countries with a complex social, political, economic and sanitary epidemiological situation, produces threats to the public safety. However, the Conception mentions not only with foreigners: “unfavorable trends can be also seen in the internal migration, where the main vector is migrants’ movement from the country’s east to the centre, in particular, to the Moscow Region” [4]. As a result, we witness not only an increased disbalance in population distribution across Russia, but also the growing social tensions, which contribute to the rise of xenophobia, national, racial and religious strives, and also an increased number of ethnic organized crime groups.

From this perspective, it is necessary to consider the attitudes of the Moscow Region’s residents towards foreign labor migrants. At present, three relatively independent vectors can be distinctly identified in how Muscovites and residents of the localities near Moscow perceive migrants: these are cultural, economic, and social-political vectors [1]. Our analysis is based on the data of the sociological research “The study of the ethnization of the mass consciousness of Russians in the context of massive labor migration” conducted in 2013. The study included a survey of 1000 residents of Moscow and the Moscow Region and interviews with 25 experts, political scientists, officials, journalists and social activists (the project received the government’s support in the form of a grant for the Institute of Social Projects according to the results of the 6th competition “The problems of the development of the present-day Russian society”).

In the cultural dimension, the attitudes towards migrants include alertness and enmity in the perception of the majority (62%) of locals. Discomfort and annoyance shown openly or covertly are explained by everyday communications between migrants in a strange, unfamiliar in sound and unintelligible in meaning language; an unusual mode of dressing contravening the habitual visual “dressing”, especially among the female part of the migrant “wagon train”; the migrants’ largely peculiar and different style of living; their neglect of the existing and accepted rules of local communities. The experts confirm that the overwhelming majority of Muscovites are extremely discontented with a non-Russian speech being heard more and more often in the streets of the Russian capital, with Central Asian natives’ peculiar ethno-religious attires flashing before their

eyes with increasing frequency, with representatives of migrant diasporas openly practicing their traditions, and with public manifestations of certain cults and rules of behavior generally accepted for them, but unusual for the Russian society. In other words, the local residents' alertness is rooted in cultural-linguistic differences of historically co-existing ethnic groups. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that most labor migrants lack a pronounced urge to master the Russian language, to integrate into the Russian society, and to become familiar with the Russian culture. These features are emphasized by the labor migrants or guest workers' strive not to go, unless flagrantly necessary, beyond their ethnic circle of contacts and to limit their communications only to the diaspora they belong to.

It should be noted that the local residents' negative attitude towards migrants from the Central Asia was initially and largely formed under the influence of negative stereotypes associated with distinctly different migrants, natives of the North Caucasus and South Caucasian countries. The experts say that big problems constantly emerge today with Caucasian diasporas, their negative image in the local residents' public consciousness being formed by the "second-echelon" mass media and social nets in the web. The locals tend to extend it to quite innocuous groups consisting of Central Asian countries' migrants. Certainly, as the familiarity with and the recognition of peculiarities of working migrants' worldview increases, such an a priori negative attitude changes to a more tolerant and good-minded; the locals who have personal contacts with migrants, as a rule, get rid of alertness after having seen them as hard-working and peace-loving people. However, still a considerable proportion of experts (nearly 40%) estimate local residents' attitude towards labor migrants from Central-Asian countries as being initially tolerant and amiable, especially towards those workers who ensure cleanliness and good amenities in the city. Moreover, many Muscovites are thankful to migrants for their dutiful activities which Muscovites themselves would not like to fulfill; those activities as a rule are fraught with hard and menial work in the sphere of housing and public utilities. Local residents who pay special attention to migrants' work show interest to its results and largely confirm that the migrants work dutifully.

In the second, economic, dimension, Muscovites' and Moscow Region residents' attitude towards migrants is, according to experts, on the whole inimical. Migrants are blamed for narrowing the capital city's labor market taking jobs away from the locals due to the lowered wage requirements and voluntary rejection of social protection measures, that is, migrants are as a sort of "strike-breakers". Our experts confirm that migrants do take jobs which could otherwise have been taken by Muscovites. So, the authorities' reassurances that labor migrants are of a vital importance for the Russian economy are perceived by the locals with skepticism. The Muscovites cannot understand what caused such a stance of the government and attempts to find a "real" explanation for today's migration policies, which leads them to the conclusion that the government cannot control the migration processes and tries to reduce social tensions, to moderate and quiet the public which starts to rebel against spontaneous migration and an uncontrolled growth in the number of migrants. However, "economic expediency" slogans work poorly here, even given the fact that the "domination" of migrants can only be seen in those spheres where, as a rule, simple and unskilled labor is used.

Finally, in the third dimension, social-political, the local residents' attitudes towards migrants are determined by the so called "migrant phobia". This term implies both alertness and dislike, and disrespect towards migrants; the locals treat foreign workers, in the first place males, sometimes with fright, sometimes with open enmity. The 'aliens' are looked at both as "second-class citizens" who can be treated with indignity, and as the "root of all evil" when it comes to finding the culprit in a problem situation. The latter is especially wicked, because an answer to the question of "Who is to blame?" can be suggested here by the interested "well-wishers". They point their fingers and say "Here's the outsider who's occupied your position and who's the source of the conflict". It is noteworthy that society's attitude towards migrants is situational, flexible, and formed at each moment of time depending on the current mass media's emphases. If the media approach changes in content and general tonality becoming, say, more tolerant and regardful towards migrants, the population attitude towards guest workers changes respectively.

When assessing positive moments of labor migrants' presence in the region, the Muscovites and the residents of localities near Moscow, in the first place, note that owing to the guest workers a labor shortage in unprestigious jobs decreases. This is the main motive for positive assessments for 40.9% of respondents. The next by importance cause of treating immigrant workers friendly is a chance to save on apartment renovation (28.3%). Finally, the third and the last statistically significant advantage of labor migration mentioned by the residents of Moscow and the surrounding area is saturation of the local market with cheap commodities (11.3%). As a result, an advantageous side in having migrant workers is seen by every second respondent (55.8%,) with regard to a simultaneous choice from several options. On the contrary, nearly one-third (31.1%) of local residents do not see any positive effects from guest workers' participation in their region's life-sustaining activity. Another 12.7% proved undecided on the issue.

The Middle-aged group with higher education see benefits in migrants' presence in the capital city's community more often. The older generation including those with the lower education level, on the contrary, tends to be more skeptical towards migrants. As for the rest, the distribution of estimates among the main social-demographic groups of the national sample show somewhat flexible but on the whole steady character.

To verify and weigh up the obtained opinions about migrants' positive role, the respondents were also asked about the guest workers' negative influence on city life. The distribution of answers to this question, as compared to the previous one, shows a dramatic dissymmetry of opinions; even the number of those failing to give a meaningful answer decreased twofold. Statistically significant reasons for an unkind attitude to foreign workers turn out more in number, and they are weightier. Thus, accusations of undercutting (an overall decrease in unskilled workers' wage rate) are brought by more than two-thirds (69.2%) of respondents and somewhat more often in the age group of 30—39-year olds; among those with religious faith; on the territory of the Moscow Region rather than in the city of Moscow.

Another migrants' feature that causes discontent of virtually half of the region's residents (48.5%) is insanitary conditions and diseases accompanying migrants' everyday life and creating discomfort and immediate threat to city dwellers' health. These

concerns are expressed more often by respondents who over 60, by people who are “free from faith” and residents of the Moscow Region. The worsening crime situation in the city is noted by 40.2%. The security threats are more often mentioned by young people with moderate means, and by residents of the Moscow Region. More than one-third (36.5%) accuse immigrant neighbors for the rise of residential rental payments. Such a point of view is more typical for the youth, well-to-do people, and those living outside the capital city. Yet another negative effect of migrants’ activities is, according to the Moscow Region residents (30.2%), is selling of low-quality goods, which is fraught not only with a loss of money, but also with other harms for local consumers. This is an object of complaints from representatives of the older generations, people with moderate means, and Moscow residents. As a result, such a point of view disavows and brings to nought the respondents’ positive perception of migration as supplying the population with cheap goods, as was noted above: the misbalance of benefits and harms in this case leads to the predominance of the latter. Finally, every fourth respondent (26%) perceives migrants as their job competitors, although the “aetiology” of such a conclusion is not always clear: the “competition” is somewhat more often mentioned not only by people with a low education level (which is quite explicable), but, on the contrary, by those with higher education and an academic degree, that is, having positions which labor migrants, owing to their well-known education level, can in no way lay claims to.

To draw a general conclusion from the survey data about migrants, it is necessary to express the following fact: nowadays the Russian part of the Moscow Region’s population expresses a unanimous opinion (93.8% of respondents) that getting migrants involved in municipal services creates problems for city dwellers, i.e. the costs of “economic expediency” are considered unacceptable for the population. Indeed, when weighing up all pros and cons the region’s residents ultimately express a generalized statement about labor migrants’ benefits or harms for their city. The final “verdict” of half the sample (49.9%) of the Moscow Region’s residents states: getting migrants involved brings more harm than benefits. This is, using technical terms, is an alarm button, which one will apparently would wish to press in order to prevent the dangerous development of the situation. The opposite point of view of the benefits of migration is expressed only by 8%. Besides, a considerable proportion (41.9%) of respondents proved to be undecided; still, even this category, having hypothetically given the green light to the labor migration can, at best, balance, and not outweigh the opponents of “labor varangians”.

The distribution of answers to the relevant questions breaks along basic social-demographic features of the sample. Thus, the opponents of getting foreign workers involved make up the majority among 30—39-year-olds (56.1%), among those with an atheistic orientation (53.2%), and people with a low education level (over 50%). The perception of the role of migrants changes in a predictable manner depending on whether there are representatives of another nationality and/or labor migrants among the respondent’s friends or acquaintances (see Table 1). We consider especially significant a spike (56%) in negative assessments of labor migrants’ participation in city life given the lack of normal, friendly communication with them. The presented distribution does not have a clear-cut differentiation by other social-demographic parameters.

*Table 1*

**How do you assess the role of migrants for the city:  
do they bring more benefit or harm (%)?**

Answer	Average	Have friends of another nationality		Have friends among migrants	
		yes	no	yes	no
More benefit	<b>8.0</b>	15.0	6.3	12.1	6.7
More harm	<b>49.9</b>	45.7	51.5	32.7	56.0
Undecided	<b>41.9</b>	39.3	42.2	55.3	37.2

Keeping in mind that in the nearest future the highest tide of migrants will be ensured by natives of the countries with different cultural values and traditions, migrants' adaptation and integration into the host society acquires special attention. Social adaptation implies migrants' integration into the host society (often rather superficial), knowledge and behaviour with regard to traditions and norms accepted by the local residents. Social integration is the process of mutual movement of the host society and migrants' cultures towards each other, and a shift in the cultural norms and values which initially functioned separately and, possibly, contradicted each other [6. P. 5]. The migrant is expected to show more activity and more effort in this convergence than the Russian society; the latter, on its part, should become more hospitable and varied. Certainly, migrants must recon with the host society's culture, values, and traditions; on the other hand, local residents too should adopt from migrants such values as "family as a key value" and "respect for the older". As a rule, the line of confrontation between migrants and the locals accumulate in the social-cultural sphere: the Russians are convinced that the migrants' cultural "innovations" erode the local host communities' cultural nucleus. The residents believe that the inflow of migrants threatens social stability, instigates conflicts between them and the locals, and that migrants do not respect traditions and codes of conduct rooted in the host society [7].

Moscow needs to develop a differentiated integration policies, which would take into account the specific characteristics of various categories of migrants. Compatriot immigrants who have a good command of the Russian language and are acquainted with the Russian culture need integration to a lesser extent [2]. Serious problems are faced by immigrants coming to Moscow from former Soviet republics to become permanent residents but having a vague idea of the host community's language and culture; this is especially true for young people who grew up in the new independent states after the breakup of the USSR. Labor migrants need, at least, to have an elementary knowledge of the language, traditions, culture and norms of the host society. It should be noted, however, that some proportion of labor migrants does revise their projects of life to integrate into the society and obtain Russian citizenship.

To improve the interethnic and interreligious situation in Moscow, the city authorities in cooperation with civil society institutions have to propagandize migration's positive influence on the city life, to create councils on ethnic issues in the districts' heads offices and administrative boards of the city, to increase the number of nonprofit organizations engaged in resolving migration issues, to work more actively with the youth, to introduce educational curricula addressing interethnic problems, and to organize joint

cultural events of the representatives of migrant communities and the host society [7]. Interethnic and interreligious tensions in Russia's large cities (primarily in Moscow) can be reduced only if the authority's activity aim to prevent migrants' spatial segregation and social and labor discrimination, to oppose xenophobia and migrant-phobia, and to overcome ethnocentrism in the social discourse including mass media, and school and university curricula [8].

Over the last decades migration issues have been the subject of debates in the Russian society, and there is every reason to believe that such a situation will persist in the future. If interpretation of migration as a threat to the society prevails, the social risks of prohibitive measures in the migration policies and practices will increase. If, however, a shift occurs towards understanding migration as a dynamic and positive factor of social development, it will encourage improvement in the social and economic situation both in the countries of migrants' origin and those hosting migrants. The further development of Moscow and the Moscow Region should include the implementation of the responsive and consolidated migration policies that would allow to use migrants' labor effectively and their educational and intellectual potential in full in the interests of the capital city's economic and social success.

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## **МИГРАЦИОННАЯ ПОЛИТИКА МОСКОВСКИХ ВЛАСТЕЙ И ЕЕ ОТРАЖЕНИЕ В ОБЩЕСТВЕННОМ МНЕНИИ СТОЛИЧНОГО РЕГИОНА**

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В статье рассматриваются основные направления миграционной политики в Московском регионе как главном российском центре притяжения внутренних и международных трудовых мигрантов. На основе статистических сведений, данных опроса общественного мнения и экспертных оценок предложена оценка нынешней миграционной ситуации в Москве и Московской области, многофакторная характеристика отношения жителей московского региона к зарубежным трудовым мигрантам. Восприятие мигрантов москвичами и жителями Подмосковья описывается в системе трех относительно независимых векторов: культурно-бытовом, экономическом и социально-политическом. В частности, рассматриваются оценки русским населением позитивного и негативного вклада трудовых мигрантов в социокультурную динамику московского региона по отдельным тематическим пунктам. В рамках существующих научных подходов к проблеме трудовой миграции проведен анализ текущих миграционных процессов, выявлены тенденции их развития, определены возможные негативные последствия этих процессов для социальной стабильности в регионе и стране. Авторы обозначают и перспективы решения основных проблем, связанных с трудовой миграцией и мигрантами, определяя специфику мегаполиса, векторы и содержание миграционной политики московских властей. В фокусе внимания авторов — вопросы адаптации и интеграции мигрантов в столичный социум. Делается вывод, что Москве необходима дифференцированная политика интеграции, которая учитывала бы специфические характеристики различных категорий мигрантов.

**Ключевые слова:** трудовая миграция; миграционная политика; миграционные процессы; иностранные работники, общественное мнение; москвичи; московский регион; отношение к иностранным трудовым мигрантам