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# Regions with a tense labour market situation as indicator of regional depressiveness

Regiones con una situación tensa del mercado laboral como indicador de depresión regional

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#### **Abstract**

The relevance of the study is determined by the need to analyse the indicators of the labour market tension that are factors of increased instability and depressiveness in regional labour markets. The purpose of the article is to study the indicators of tension and justify measures to reduce depressiveness in the labour market. It was revealed the specific problems inherent to depressive regions. The results can be used in the design and implementation of employment policies in regional labour markets.

Key words: depressive regions, labour market tension, employment, total unemployment rate

### Resumen

La relevancia del estudio está determinada por la necesidad de analizar los indicadores de la tensión del mercado laboral que son factores de mayor inestabilidad y depresión en los mercados laborales regionales. El propósito del artículo es estudiar los indicadores de tensión y justificar medidas para reducir la depresión en el mercado laboral. Se revelaron los problemas específicos inherentes a las regiones depresivas. Los resultados pueden usarse en el diseño e implementación de políticas de empleo en los mercados laborales regionales.

Palabras clave: regiones depresivas, tensión en el mercado laboral, empleo, tasa de desempleo total

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## 1. Introduction

Historically, the asymmetry in Russian socio-economic areas has a significant impact on the development processes of both the state as a whole and its particular regions.

The territorial diversity of natural, geopolitical, socio-economic, demographic, national, and other conditions has led to inter-regional differentiation of the country that has significantly enhanced with the increase of crisis phenomena in the transition economy. As a result, in modern Russia, there is a significant differentiation of regions by levels of employment, unemployment, and labour market tension. In Russia, there are regions both with relative excess and with a significant relative shortage of labour force. The imbalance between supply and demand in the labour market is reflected in excessively low or too high unemployment and tension coefficient.

Growing tensions in depressive regions have led to a deterioration of the socio-economic situation and investment attractiveness of the territories, and, if critical, may be a factor in destabilizing the political situation in the region.

The current level of unsustainable use of labour capacity poses a serious threat to the socio-economic security of the country and its regions. Thus, it is particularly important to identify the most effective, scientifically and methodically justified forms and methods of employment in the region, taking into account the territorial conditions and factors of economic development and the functioning of the labour market.

## 1.1. Literature review

The economic and financial crisis in 2008 led to a deterioration of the labour market in many European countries (Clancy, 2009). A study by Carla Valadas carried out a statistical analysis of unemployment in Portugal over the past 17 years that showed that the effects of the economic and financial crisis, accompanied by a lack of public funding, had the worst impact on the Portuguese labour market since 2010 (Valadas, 2016). Difficulties in attracting foreign investment, along with the privatization of Portuguese public companies and the reduction of public funding for employment programs (Berrigan, 2014), contributed to the elimination of many jobs and the emergence of additional obstacles to the creation of new jobs and enterprises. The economic and political decisions of the Portuguese government were largely limited by the Maastricht criterion imposing increased control to the country over fiscal deficits, inflation rates, and public debt (Berrigan, 2014).

Another negative factor contributing to the depression in Portugal's labour market was the reduction of public programs to promote the employment of socially vulnerable groups (young people, unskilled workers, immigrants, persons with disabilities). Meanwhile, the share of government spending related to social benefits for unemployment and temporary incapacity to work increased (Valadas, 2016). Thus, the deterioration of the economic situation, the increase in dependence on investment, and external borrowing determine the depression of Portugal's national labour market that is revealed in a decline of employment rate and a surge of mass unemployment.

Leading theories of unemployment suggest that there are key variables affecting depressive regional labour markets, including:

- Expectations of increased sales (demand) and economic growth (Boeri, 2001);
- Providing low-cost loans and credit lines to manufacturing and commercial enterprises;
- Tax burden reduction, tax incentives and preferences (William, 1978);

- Increasing real private and public investment;
- Advanced training and reeducation of employees (Bewley, 1995);
- Widespread use of digital technologies in the labour market and employment field;
- Reducing economic and financial risks (Hotchkiss, 2017);
- Health-care and investment in human capital spendings;
- Increase of labour productivity, modernization of production and introduction of advanced technologies;
- Informing employees and employers about the labour market.

These variables indicate that governments can play an important role in increasing employment and economic independence of a territory. For example, according to Adil H. Mouhamed, the U.S. Federal Government can reallocate half of the wasteful military spending to the civilian sector, providing more funds for education, social infrastructure, and training centers to upgrade employees' skills. The government can spend funds for colleges and universities to innovate in the development of new products and technologies (Adil, 2011).

The U.S. Federal Government can actually lower production costs by ending wars that have significantly contributed to rising oil prices from 25 USD per barrel in 2000 to 140 USD in 2008. These high oil prices have negatively impacted many industries and consumers. Ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is, therefore, an easy way to solve the energy problem in the U.S. economy. The government should use various ways to reduce the trade deficit with China that has led to a decline in aggregate U.S. demand and employment levels for many years (Adil, 2011).

Adil H. Mouhamed (2011) believes the U.S. Federal Government can provide financial assistance to State Governments to balance their budgets and boost employment. In turn, State governments would have the opportunity to cut taxes and fees levied from domestic investors in real economic activities such as real estate and manufacturing sectors. Reducing the tax burden on the wages fund, in particular, lowering the social security tax rate, is becoming a crucial task as this cut encourages firms to hire more employees and stimulate employees to spend on consumption and investment.

The Federal Government can reduce health-care and standard costs expenditure in order to reduce the costs of business and increase its profitability, contributing to new job creation. In addition, the Federal Government, by reducing monopolistic and oligopolistic components of the economy, can make it more competitive for small and medium-sized businesses, thereby contributing to lower unemployment (Adil, 2011). Thus, these areas of reduction of public expenditure will increase the labour capacity and employment rate of the population.

# 2. Methodology

The methodology applied makes it possible to monitor regional labour markets tensions and to use appropriate state regulation measures. Labour market regulation is one of the key problems of modern social and economic policy. The issues of raising the retirement age, promoting the employment of women with children and persons with disabilities, stimulating the labour migration from labour-excessive to labour-scarce regions, etc., are being actively discussed. That is why there is an increasing need to study the indicators of the labour market tension, to determine the relations between tension and depressiveness of the regions, the endowment of regional budgets and the effectiveness of employment policy implemented. Particularly important is the analysis of the statistical indicators that determine the regional labour market specificity.

Labour market tension means a wide range of negative phenomena related to the imbalance (gap, imbalance) between demand and supply of labour, according to experts. Two types of tension are identified: one is inherent to economies (and territories) where there is an excess of demand oversupply of labour, the other is reverse.

Among the indicators describing the labour market tension, it is proposed to use the following: values of registered and total unemployment; duration of job search; workload of the unemployed population per declared vacancy; under-utilization of labour force and working hours due to the forced idle time and leaves of absence of employees at the initiative of the administration; strike movement in enterprises; wage arrears; spread of shadow and informal labour markets outside the legislative space; gender and ethnic asymmetries of the labour market [Corel L.V., Corel I.I., 2001].

Russian specialists offer various approaches to the study of labour market tensions. For example, empirical aspects of the study of large statistical arrays are considered from the position of Data Mining in the sociology of labour market [Maltseva A.V., Shilkina N.E., Makhnytkina O.V., 2016], the impact of environmental aspects on the formation of favorable jobs and the reduction of labour outflow [Pyrozhenko E.A., 2015]. A number of scientists, studying the specific features of the labour market of agricultural territories, propose to use the following 8 indicators of the rural labour market tension: official unemployment rate, %; workload of unemployed population per declared vacancy, units; average monthly wage, rub; long-term unemployment rate, %; share of youth in the total number of unemployed, %; non-worked time in connection with work in the reduced working day (week) mode and leaves of absence at the initiative of the administration, hour/person; the proportion of women in a total number of unemployed, %; overdue wage arrears, rub/person [Rodionova L.V., De Graaf O.E., Sundeeva M.A., 2016].

A group of researchers proposed their methodology for determining labour market tensions, based on a comprehensive integrated assessment of labour market tensions, using the following indicators: unemployment rate according to ILO methodology (%); average job search time by unemployed (months); long-term unemployment rate (%); the demographic load on working-age population (‰); the number of unemployed citizens registered in employment service per declared vacancy (person); share of unemployed graduates of institutions of primary, secondary and higher professional education registered in employment service (%). As a result, the regions are classified into 4 groups: crisis, medium-stressed, low-stressed, prosperous. In 2000, the following regions were classified as crisis ones: Bryansk Region, Kalmykia Republic, Penza Region, Buryatia Republic, Dagestan Republic, Tyva Republic, Ingushetia Republic, Karachay-Cherkessia Republic, North Ossetia-Alania Republic, Ingushetia Republic, Tyva Republic, Tyva Republic, Tyva Republic, Tupikina E.N., Kocheva E.V., Matev N.A., 2013].

Let's consider in more detail the situation in regions with a tense labour market, information about them provided by the Federal State Statistics Service to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Russian Federation annually until March 15th, [Russian Federal State Statistics Service] statistical data for previous two years covers the following indicators:

- 1. Employment rate;
- 2. Total unemployment rate;
- 3. Registered unemployment rate;
- 4. Long-term unemployment rate;
- 5. Labour market tension coefficient.

If the total indicator for some region exceeds the total indicator for Russian Federation as a whole by more than 1.5 times, this region is considered a territory with the tense labour market situation [Resolution of Russian Government, November 21, 2000, № 875, 2010]. In a further analysis of the subject under study, we will follow the official methodology for determining labour market tensions described earlier.

## 3. Results and discussion

Thus, one of the indicators that characterize the tense labour market situation of a region is the employment rate. Regions with the lowest employment rate include the Ingushetia Republic, although between 2010 and 2017 the employment rate this region increased from 32.2% to 56.3%, Chechen Republic (from 38.3% to 58.8% in the same period), Tyva Republic (from 46.3% to 50.3%), etc. Regions-outsiders, in our opinion, can be conventionally divided into three groups: the first one comprises regions with the employment rate remaining approximately at the same level in 2010–2017 (for example, Adygea Republic (55.3% (2010) – 54.9% (2017), Dagestan Republic (53.2% and 55.5%), Altai Krai (59.4% and 58.4%), Buryatia Republic (58.2% and 56.4%), Kurgan Region (56.7% and 58.0%)); the second includes regions where the employment rate is decreasing (Karachay-Cherkessia Republic (58.8% and 52.8%), North Ossetia-Alania Republic (64.3% and 58.0%)); the third includes regions that fix an increase in employment (Ingushetia Republic (32.2% and 56.3%), Chechen Republic (38.3% and 58.8%), Tyva Republic (46.3% and 50.3%) [Rosstat].

Total and registered unemployment rates are important indicators of labour market tensions. Let's consider the indicator of total unemployment (according to the ILO methodology), according to which Russian regions are significantly differentiated. Among the regions with a difficult situation on the labour market are Ingushetia Republic (27% – in 2017), where almost every third person was unemployed in 2017 (in 2010 this indicator was 49.7%). Regions with high unemployment rates can also be divided into three groups: first includes regions with rising unemployment rate – Karachay-Cherkessia Republic (10.3% (2010), 13.5% (2017) North Ossetia-Alania Republic (9.7% and 11.8%); second includes regions with relatively stable high unemployment (Adygea Republic – 9.3% and 8.8%, Altai Republic – 12.2% and 12.0%, Karelia Republic – 9.3% and 8.6%,); and third includes regions with a significant and slight decrease of this indicator (Chechen Republic – 43.3% and 14%, Dagestan Republic – 14.8% and 12%, Kabardino-Balkaria Republic – 12.7% and 10.5%, Buryatia Republic – 10.4% and 9.6%, Republic of Komi – 10.1% and 7.8%).

The registered unemployment rate (annual average) is highest in 2017 in the Ingushetia Republic (10.4%), in Chechen Republic (9.2%), Tyva Republic (4.1%), Amur Region (2.8%), Altai Krai (2.7%), Alania Republic (2.6%), Nenets Autonomous Okrug (2.6%), etc. The rates of registered unemployment are significantly lower because the employment services cannot offer jobs for skilled workers, they have actually become providers of low-wage and unattractive job offers. The level of unemployment benefits also cannot be an incentive to obtain unemployment status, so this indicator does not reflect the real situation.

One of the negative phenomena in the social and labour sphere is the presence of unemployed persons searching for a job for 12 months or longer. This group of unemployed often needs professional retraining, psychological support, special programs of adaptation to the labour market. Regions with a steady increase in unemployment include Ingushetia Republic – from 33.2% (2010) to 71.3% (2017), Karachay-Cherkessia Republic – from 74.7% to 61.8%, Tyva Republic – from 59.5% to 53.9%; North Ossetia-Alania Republic – from 34.8% to 51.6%, Kalmykia Republic – from 47.2% to 50.7%, Zabaykalsky Krai – from 40.4% to 48.6%, Altai Krai – from 36.1% to 48%, Jewish Autonomous Region – from 31.3% to 47.8%, Kabardino-Balkaria Republic – from 42.4% to 44.7%, Bryansk Region – from 34.4% to 43.4%, etc. Regions, where this indicator is decreasing, include Karachay-Cherkessia Republic – from 74.7% to 61.8%, Chechen Republic – from 58.5% to 40.5%, Buryatia Republic – from 44.7% to 43.4%,

Dagestan Republic – from 36.9% to 32.4%, and others. It should be noted the decline in this indicator does not have a tangible impact on the reduction of labour markets tensions of these regions. The long-term unemployment rate characterizes severe, chronic unemployment determined by the structure of the economy. Without substantial government measures, with their own resources, these regions are unlikely to be able to strike a balance between the quality of the labour force and jobs.

The next indicator of the labour market is the tension coefficient. It is calculated as a ratio of unemployed registered in employment centers to a number of vacancies.

According to official statistics, the highest tension coefficient was seen in the Dagestan Republic (408.8 units in 2010 and 189.4 units in 2017), Ingushetia Republic – 70.9 and 168.1, Chechen Republic – 384.9 and 44.6, North Ossetia-Alania Republic – 27.4 and 35.9, Karachay-Cherkessia Republic – 27.3 and 17.3, Tyva Republic – 22.5 and 12.1, Kabardino-Balkaria Republic – 19.9 and 11.7, Kalmykia Republic – 49.1 and 7.3, etc. respectively. The reduction (in some cases sharp) of tension coefficient is seen in Dagestan Republic, Kalmykia Republic, Chechen Republic, Mari El Republic, Kurgan Region, etc. In some cases, this indicator tends to increase – North Ossetia-Alania Republic, Ingushetia Republic.

However, experts do not agree with this method of counting, as "suitable jobs" for applicants are not taken into account and it is not possible to judge whether there are real prospects for employment due to the fact that the level of education, professional and qualification characteristics, state of health, etc., are not taken into account. Another disadvantage of this indicator is the possibility of manipulating it to fill low-demand vacancies by unemployed persons. The researcher proposes to take into account three professional groups – skilled workers, low-skilled and unskilled workers; specialists, and employees [Kolesnikov O.A., 2013]. This approach is certainly interesting, but throughout the country, such accounting is almost impossible due to labour intensity and impracticability.

Every year, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection issues the relevant Resolutions with an approved list of Russian regions classified as territories with labour market tension. Table 1 shows the list of regions with a labour market tension from 2010 to 2017, compiled on the basis of official documents.

**Table 1**List of Russian Regions With Labour Market Tension in 2010–2017

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Adygea Republic	_	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Altai Krai	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Karelia Republic	_	-	-	-	+	+	+	+
Buryatia Republic	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Dagestan Republic	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Ingushetia Republic	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Kabardino-Balkaria Republic	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Karachay-Cherkessia Republic	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Kalmykia Republic	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
North Ossetia-Alania Republic	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Tyva Republic	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Chechen Republic	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Zabaykalsky Krai	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Kurgan Region	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Khakassia Republic	_	_	_	+	+	+	+	-
Mari El Republic	_	+	+	+	_	_	_	+
Irkutsk Region	_	_	-	-	+	+	+	+
Tomsk Region	_	_	_	+	_	_	_	+
Jewish Autonomous Region	_	_	-	+	+	+	+	+
Kemerovo Region	_	_	_	_	+	+	+	+
Total	13	15	15	18	19	19	19	20

Source: Consultant.ru

They generally refer to depressive regions with the complex socio-economic situation. These regions refer to donors because they are, to one degree or another, subsidized.

Currently in Russia the state program "Assistance to the Employment of Population" adopted on April 15, 2014 is being implemented. In 2017, according to the Resolution of Russian Government, March 30th, 2017 No. 364 "On a modification of state program of the Russian Federation "Assistance to the Employment of Population" the state program and its subprograms [The Resolution of Russian Government of 30.03.2017 No. 364] was corrected. In 2013, 46.3 billion rubles were planned to be allocated for the subprogram "Active Employment Policy", and 39.8 billion rubles were actually allocated (a deviation of 14%). In 2017 the volume of budget allocations already reached 48 billion rubles, but in 2018 it is planned to reduce the allocated funds to 43,1 billion rubles, the increase in funding is expected by 2020 and will amount to 45,1 billion rubles, that is 6% lower than the amount of allocations in 2017. Mostly financing of this program is an implementation of the main part "Social Benefits to Unemployed Citizens and Optimization of the Criteria for Appointment and Amount of Unemployment Benefits". In 2017, 47 billion rubles were allocated from the budget, but for 2018 and 2019 it is planned to reduce funding to 42.7 and 43.4 billion rubles respectively.

The state program sets out rules for allocation of subsidies from the Russian Federal Budget in order to co-finance programs of labour migration increase in regions within the framework of subprogram "Active Employment Policy and Social Support of Unemployed Citizens". Among the constituent entities for which co-financing from the Federal Budget for 2017 will be provided 16 regions are represented. Comprehensive support to increase labour migration of the population is provided for both workers wishing to migrate and employers. Information support of the program for increasing labour migration is provided by the all-Russian database of vacancies "Work in Russia" [https://trudvsem.ru]. In terms of vacancies, the leaders are Magadan Region (14.8%), Khabarovsk Krai (13.8%), and Primorsky Krai (12.7%). The lowest number of vacancies is in such regions as Kaluga (0.5%), Murmansk (1.1%), and Vologda (1.1%).

1.6 1,1 1,1 14,8 13,8 12,7 9,5 7,9 Magadan Region Khabarovsk Krai Primorsky Krai 🛚 Sakhalin Region Lipetsk Region Arkhangelsk Region → Krasn oyarsk Krai Kamchatka Krai ■ Perm Krai Amur Region ■ Novosibirsk Region Ulyanovsk Region

Graph 1 The Share of Vacancies With Support During Resettlement, August-September 2017, %.

Source: https://trudvsem.ru

According to official data relates to the implementation of programs in labour migration of 15.06.2017 published by Federal Service for Labour and Employment, the low activity of replacement of the available jobs is seen [https://trudvsem.ru]. The planned number of participants in 2017 is to be 1,183 people, the majority of which is to be employed in Primorsky Krai (15.8%), Perm Krai (13.1%), Khabarovsk Krai (12.6%), Lipetsk Region (10.7%), Krasnoyarsk Krai (8.8%).

As of June 15, 2017, only 9.1% (108 people) of the program number of participants were employed. At the same time, from the planned number of participants of the program in the region, 15 people were employed in Primorsky Krai (8.8%), in Perm Krai – 7 people (4.4%), in Krasnoyarsk Krai – 9 people (8,5%). No employees from other regions were attracted to Lipetsk Region as of the date specified. The largest absolute number of replaced jobs was seen in Khabarovsk Krai – 31 people. (20,6 %). Planned indicators to attract citizens from other regions to work at enterprises were exceeded in Magadan Region (108%), in Chukotka Autonomous Okrug (40%), in Arkhangelsk Region and Khabarovsk Krai (21%), in other regions ranged from 4% to 9%, in a number of regions (Lipetsk Region, Ulyanovsk Region, Amur Region) no citizen was attracted.

Thus, there is some demand on the part of employers in regions with labour shortages to attract employees from other areas, but low indicators show the need to accelerate interaction with employers and to more actively inform and attract labour from regions where the number of labour force exceeds the number of jobs.

## 4. Conclusions

Recently, there has been a trend towards the transfer of powers in employment regulation to local authorities. Only the payment of unemployment benefits in the form of subvention to Russian regions is financed from the federal budget, and state co-financing of measures to reduce tensions in regional labour markets has been stopped. There is a gradual redistribution of functions and transfer of large powers to the regions, decentralization of employment regulation [Lenkina O.B., 2016].

In 2008, the Russian Government approved the "Concept of Long-term Social and Economic Development of Russian Federation for the period up to 2020", according to which the solution of labour market problems requires the creation of a legal, economic and institutional environment conducive to the development of a flexible, well-functioning labour market addressing the structural imbalance between labour demand and supply. It enables to reduce the share of illegal employment, increasing motivation for work and labour migration [Consultant.ru].

In accordance with that purpose, there are main tasks are highlighted:

- 1. Increase the flexibility of labour market and stimulating the reduction of illegal employment;
- 2. Improve the quality of labour force and develop its professional mobility on the basis of professional education reform at all levels, the development of continuous professional education system, professional training, and retraining, taking into account a state priorities for economic development;
- 3. Development of labour market institutions, enhance employment and labour efficiency, including the one through increased territorial labour migration;
- 4. Ensure working conditions enable to preserve the working capacity of labour force throughout the professional career;
- 5. Create conditions for attracting foreign workers, taking into account the actual needs of the national economy.

The representative of Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA) Doctor of Economics, Professor Mikhail Dudin, notes that depressive regions need not just assistance, but stimulation of development, a change the role of State in regulating spatial development, a transition from direct administrative influence to regulatory methods. In order to implement these measures, he proposes to change the criteria for the selection of subsidized regions, to tighten monitoring and control over the use of funds [Dudin M.N., 2015].

One of the negative effects of labour market tensions is precarious employment. A group of researchers considers precarisation to be one of the acute global problems of our time, as it leads to decrease in the protection of employees, an increase in long-term unemployment, a high risk of job loss, growth the number of employees with non-standard forms of employment, raise the labor intensity without a respective increase in wages, strengthening gender inequality in the labour market, etc. [Bobkov V.N., Kvachev V.G., Loktyukhina N.V., 2016]. In tense labour markets, precarisation is inevitable. That is why the processes of precarisation, flexibilisation, a transformation of social and labour relations have to be constantly explored, forecast, and appropriate arrangements for reducing precarious employment should be developed.

Nowadays there is a clear need to develop and implement a comprehensive public employment policy aimed at reducing depressiveness in the labour market. Public policy to promote employment could be implemented in the following clusters: economic, forecast and analytic, administrative and management, information, regulatory. That opens up wide prospects for intensification of social and economic development of Russian territories and reduction of regional labour market tension.

Finally, the problems inherent to territories with a tense situation in the labour market are usually typical for depressive regions. Employment policies aimed at reducing labour market tension should, in our view, be a priority for depressive regions.

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