



Migration and Tourism in Contemporary Russia: Social and Ethnic-Cultural Approaches

Olga Chistyakova^(✉) and Denis Chistyakov

Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University), 6 Miklukho-Maklaya Street,
Moscow 117198, Russian Federation
chistyakova-ov@rudn.ru

Abstract. The article deals with migration processes in connection with the current situation in the tourism and hospitality industry in Russia in social and anthropological contexts. The ethno-cultural specificity of tourism and migration processes at the current stage is highlighted. Tourism is justified as a significant social and cultural stabilizing factor, contributing to the establishment of a tolerant environment in the subjects of the Russian Federation and the integration of external migrants into the host society. The article analyzes the relationship between the development of domestic tourism in Russia and the progressive regulated process of foreign labor migration. Particular attention is paid to the justification of creating new tourist and recreational clusters in the subjects of the Russian Federation and the use of legal labor migration flows for their development.

Keywords: Philosophy of tourism · Tourism and labor migration · Social factors of Russian domestic tourism · Tourist-cultural clusters · Interethnic relations in Russia

1 Introduction

The state of the tourism and hospitality sector in Russia correlates with the migration situation both in the country as a whole and in its regions. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted communications and caused negative consequences for the development of tourism in Russia and the world. Because of the complicated situation for the improvement of established forms of tourism and the formation of its types gaining popularity (religious and pilgrimage, medical, spa, etc.) domestic academic and conceptual understanding of tourism in the past two years is closely linked to the formation of the actual model of domestic tourism in the Russian Federation with its application in the regions of the country. Ethno-cultural and migration factors (in this case we mean tourism as a form of migration) of international tourism, which two years ago played a significant role in the formation of new types of foreign travel and routes, today are purposefully

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reoriented to the domestic market of tourist products to support the general Russian tourism and hospitality industry.

The most important role in the development of domestic tourism is played by socio-cultural and religious factors and the educational and communication traits of certain territories. However, of no less importance are migration processes associated with internal and external movements of the labor force, as well as the perception of incoming people by the autochthonous population and the interaction of arriving and receiving population in multi-ethnic regions of the Russian Federation. The attractiveness of tourist destinations is directly related to a qualitatively stable, tolerant, and peaceful situation in relations among migrant workers and the indigenous population (especially in territories with ethnic-enclave settlements of migrants), as well as in the sphere of interethnic and interreligious relations.

2 Tourism and Migration: Ethno-Cultural Specifics of the Relationship

Tourism is a social phenomenon that effectively relieves inter-ethnic and interreligious tensions and acute situations. It is aimed at preventing conflicts on ethnic grounds and overcoming threats to human existence. Social science has established a rule to define and explain ethnicity through the prism of the contradictory opposition of one people (or ethnic group) to another, the so-called principle of “ours/not ours”, “us and others”. Tourism, travels to get to know another culture, religion, and everyday life partially eliminates this contradiction (in the author’s opinion of the article, methodologically erroneous), levels out, and smoothes this “ours/not ours” formula. Let us agree with the Russian academic S.A. Sharakshane, who comprehends the role of tourism from the position of humanism: “This worldview attitude (‘ours/not ours’ – *the authors* O.C., D.C.), denying ‘not ours’ the status of ‘human’, was the basis of mass murders in wars. If I have ‘not ours’ in front of me, i.e., not a human being, I do not need permission to kill him. Tourism, to a large extent, removes this blindness, illustrates that the Other is just like You, there are no ‘not ours’, there are only ‘ours’ on the entire planet. This, of course, raises considerably the level of the humanistic outlook on the planet” [11]^{p.49}.

The socio-theoretical understanding of tourism helps to find the ultimate grounds for eliminating the opposition of one ethnic group to another, the host population, and the arriving flows of people often perceived not only as foreign ethnic but also as foreigners, alien to “Us”, sustainable and habitual, way of life. The stereotype of *foreignness* associated with invasion often prevails in the minds of autochthonous peoples and is a “trigger” that provokes conflicts on ethnic grounds. Although a different (“not ours”) ethnicity per se is not the cause of conflict situations or alarmist attitudes of the host community. There is confusion or identification of the concepts of foreign ethnicity and foreignness. After all, the idea of *foreignness* a priori brings into contradiction the relationship between newcomers and natives. Myths of “ours/not ours,” “foreignness” and “otherness,” spread quickly at the everyday level and become an obstacle to the free integration into society of those migrants who aim at it, and create an unfavorable environment for successful economic activity, intercultural relations and the sustainable development of the tourism industry.

However, a kind of “salvation” here can also be seen in tourism and the creation of appropriate infrastructure, which will employ for many of the people entering. Tourism, based on the knowledge of different cultures, establishes peaceful and moral principles of activity and communication among people of different civil and religious identities. The latter is ultimately expressed in the formation of diverse worldviews of people belonging to different ethnic groups.

Tourism per se is also a form of migration [3]. However, tourism is very sensitive to any social and economic changes in the country and the world. The sphere of tourism largely depends on labor migration flows and, of course, on outbursts of unfavorable migration situations resulting from the mass movement of people (often illegal) from one country to another to obtain work or at least temporary earnings. It is hardly possible to see the perspective in the development of tourism in a country or region where there are mass accumulations of illegally arriving people, tent refugee camps, rejection of the indigenous population, or other obstacles to the integration of external labor migrants. The Italian island of Lampedusa, which became a jumping-off point for constant migrant traffic from North Africa (especially after the “Arab Spring” in 2011), or the Polish-Belarusian border in the winter of 2021–2022, could only arouse interest among extreme tourism enthusiasts. Moreover, such outbursts of unfavorable migration situations only alienate the traveling public and aggravate the economic situation of the surrounding areas.

Migration processes at the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries embraced the global space, expanding quantitatively not only in terms of growth of human flows but also in terms of serious problems causing waves of legal and illegal migration all over the world. Global movements of people rushing to other countries, and regions, and often into the unknown, are a kind of mirror of modern states, phenomenally reflecting their internal socio-economic and international problems. “Population migration is not just a mechanical movement of people, but also a complex social process that affects many aspects of the socio-economic and cultural life of entire nations” - says Russian researcher I.A. Vasilyeva [1]^{P.100}. Migration processes are a criterion of the economic and cultural well-being of society, and the forms of solving migration and immigration problems represent the reputation of the state as a geopolitical actor in the international arena.

3 Labor Migration and Tourism, and Prospects for Tourist and Recreational Clusters in Russia

Labor migration flows are expanding with the deepening of globalization, and the world tourism industry is also subject to mass movements of migrants, the carriers of labor. This fact is largely related to the internal economic and socio-cultural conditions of this or that country, as well as to the changing international situation in the world. E. V. Judina notes in this context: “It is impossible to ignore the fact that development of the world tourism industry is accompanied by international labor migrations, which are explained by the uneven development of national tourism markets and simplification of immigration legislation in several regions. At present, practically all countries of the world regulate the export and import of the labor force. This is aimed at protecting the

national labor market from the spontaneous inflow of foreign workers and mitigating the problem of unemployment among the local population, on the one hand, and ensuring the rational use of foreign workers, on the other hand” [13]^{P.29}.

The positive results of labor migration in tourism are expressed both in countries importing labor and in countries exporting it. Migration flows used in tourism and hospitality (as well as in other spheres of activity) are classified according to the level of qualification of specialists: low-skilled, medium-skilled, and skilled. Migrants employed in the Russian tourism industry belong to the categories of unskilled and medium-skilled workers (the main criterion of the latter is the availability of secondary and secondary vocational education). [8]^{P.107–108}.

In Russia, there is a very high demand for low-skilled and seasonal foreign labor force (FLF) in various economic spheres, because it is “<...> designed to meet the country’s need for the most needed categories of workers, which cannot be obtained through free and semi-free movement <...> of other categories of migrant workers”. [8]^{P.107–108} Studies of migration flows from Central Asia conducted by scientists of the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences during the coronavirus pandemic showed that “the bulk of Central Asian migrant workers have medium qualifications (84.3%), the share of highly qualified migrants - 12.1%, low qualified - only 3.6%”. [8]^{P.189} Waves of the pandemic have further increased the need to hire low-skilled labor. The crisis state of the economy objectively creates conditions for the hiring of this category of workers. “Because of the COVID-19 crisis, there is a shortage of low and medium-skilled workers in construction, trade, transport, and warehousing, as well as medium and high-skilled workers in household assistance, personal services - types of economic activity in which the share of labor costs is the highest and where migrant labor is especially noticeable” [4]^{P.80}.

Although today there is a tendency to redistribute some “migrant” jobs in the labor market in favor of the local population or intra-Russian labor migration, nevertheless very many specialists who left Russia (or those who planned to come to earn money but could not due to transportation restrictions) plan to return with economic goals for different periods. According to a 2020 study of the employment situation of migrant workers, their financial situation in connection with the pandemic, and their plans to return home, researchers at the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Higher School of Economics have concluded the difficult economic situation of migrants staying in Russia during the first and second waves of the coronavirus pandemic. The reduction of jobs due to the crisis occurred primarily in those spheres where external labor is widely used. First, we are talking about the hotel and restaurant business, which is closely connected to the tourism industry. Here, in April 2020, the employment of migrants was recorded, as a percentage was only 23.3% of those who worked in February [4]^{P.75}. Forced unemployment made “<...> foreign citizens one of the most vulnerable social groups. <...> It was the citizens of Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan who had the hardest time: in April, the citizens of Kyrgyzstan employed 47.1% of those who worked in February, the citizens of Uzbekistan - 52.2%, citizens of Tajikistan - 69.1%. <...> a similar picture was recorded among less qualified migrants: according to the CATI survey in April only 52.8% of citizens of Central Asia who worked in February worked” [4]^{P.77–78}.

Despite the crisis, foreign specialists do not consider the prospect of returning home, hoping to find employment on their own in Russian megacities or regions. According to the survey of migrants outside Russia, most of them associate their hope for employment with the possibility of coming to Russia. "For the majority of the respondents, the prospects of improving their financial situation are in one way or another related to work in Russia. Among the respondents who worked or studied in Russia, 54% intend to come to Russia for 3 months or more, 11.4% - for less than 3 months, and the rest have not decided at the time of the survey" [4]^{P.80}.

A partial solution to the problem with the employment of foreign labor specialists and the creation of conditions for improving the skills of low-paid low-skilled workers, in our view, is in the expansion of new areas for the application of migrant labor potential. One such area is the creation of new and development of existing tourist and recreational clusters in Russian regions, each of which has unique geographical, natural, and cultural features. This is especially relevant in the current epidemiological situation, which has caused an objective need for the development of domestic tourism. Government agencies and the tourism industry are now in search of adaptive models of tourism development, which could help in the short term to make the transition from the prevailing before the pandemic international tourism to domestic tourism. This kind of goal is caused by the objective factors of declining volumes of inbound tourism in our country and the planned National Project "Tourism and the hospitality industry" (approved on May 7, 2018, by the Decree of the President of Russia "On national goals and strategic objectives for the development of the Russian Federation until 2024") a change of vector to the effective and progressive development of domestic tourism. One of the significant ways to solve this problem is to increase the competitiveness of Russian regions, including through the creation of unique tourist clusters.

The formation of such clusters directly correlates with the cultures of the peoples living in this territory, revealing as much as possible the ethnic and religious features of these ethnic groups. By attracting travelers from other regions and countries in this way, tourism and cultural clusters will help to increase significantly the economic efficiency of the regions. After all, despite the change of attitude to tourism on the federal level and the beginning of reorientation of tourism from international to domestic, "the influence of tourism on the economy of the country is still insignificant. It is due to the lack of mature competitive tourism and recreational clusters in Russian regions that our country, with its high tourism and recreational potential, currently occupies far from the leading place in the world market" [1]^{P.104}.

Meanwhile, clusters accumulate all the opportunities for the growth of the regional economy - solving the problem of employment of the population, including foreign migrant workers, developing transport logistics, hotel and restaurant business, and health resorts, improving public safety, and formation of civilizational relations between representatives of different ethnic cultures and religious denominations. The significance of tourist clusters is not limited to the above factors. Optimism in their creation gives an inexpressible natural landscape of Russia and the uniqueness of ethnic cultures of indigenous peoples. After all, traveling people come to touch something original, learn the depth of religious and everyday life of different peoples, and not to see the unified

artifacts of the global economy as McDonald's or supermarkets, which do not differ around the world.

The formation of tourist and recreational clusters in Russia has already begun, and it is taking place considering specific criteria that allow to classify them: skiing, resorts, ethno-cultural, religious and pilgrimage, and medical. For example, the Southern Federal and the North Caucasus Federal Districts have such diverse natural, climatic, historical, and cultural attractions that the creation of several clusters is envisaged here. The clusters formed in these districts cover the territories of Adygea, Ingushetia, Karachay-Cherkessia, the Krasnodar region, the Astrakhan region, and other subjects. Multistructural clusters are assumed in these districts, which include: “<...> ski cluster (a network of tourist complexes in the foothills of the North Caucasus mountain range), resort cluster (climatic-balneo-mud resorts of the Caucasian Mineral Waters - Pyatigorsk, Zheleznovodsk, Kislovodsk, Essentuki <...>), the cluster of non-traditional and gerontological medicine (<...> medical centers of the Caucasian Mineral Waters, Kabardino-Balkaria, North Ossetia). <...> According to preliminary estimates, after the project reaches its full capacity, the tourist flow will reach 10 million people. The project will serve as a serious basis for the socio-economic development of the entire North Caucasus region [1]^{P.107}.

It seems that the potential clusters based on the cognitive type of tourism, including places of religious cults and worship of various ethnic groups can be especially attractive. The Caspian region of the Russian Federation can be considered as one of such tourism clusters. Covering the territory of Astrakhan Oblast, Kalmykia, and Dagestan with numerous ethnocultural groups, the Caspian cluster can attract the interest of travelers in terms of learning about the religious culture of these peoples. Historically, the Caspian and adjacent territories have been known both for their pre-Islamic cults and for the development of trends in traditional Islam, as well as for the existence of special cults outside of the orthodox branch of this religion. In the territory of the Russian Caspian region, there are many sacral places connected with ancestor cults (for example, the village of Yango-Asker, Astrakhan region), ritually connected with the pre-Islamic period. There are ritual places of Sufism and Zoroastrianism followers [15]^{P.1345}. Such regions preserving history, culture, traditions, and customs may enjoy special popularity among those tourists who would like to touch the secrets of the past.

Tourism and recreation clusters can use large flows of labor migration (both external and internal) and provide high employment for both arriving and the local population. The influx of tourists means the need to create new jobs, expand the labor market, and create a certain system of training for migrant workers. The increase in the number of travelers and the extensiveness of the labor market contributes to the improvement of the clusters themselves, the development of appropriate infrastructure, improvement of services. This is only one of the ways of effective interdependence between the tourism industry and migrant labor flows.

4 Conclusion

In conclusion, it should be noted that tourism and migration, even in pandemic conditions, act as the most important social factors of the modern Russian state, influencing the

intercultural relations of the entering ethnic communities and the local population. To some extent, they stabilize the economic decline of the regions through the transition to the model of domestic tourism with prospects for the development of appropriate infrastructure and tourist and recreational clusters. Integration of external labor migrants into Russian society and effective use of their labor force in the tourism and hospitality industry will give stability to the establishment of new trends in tourism and will promote rapprochement and dialogue of ethnic cultures.

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