

## Social and Labor Sphere in the Russian Federation: Trends and Risks in the Formation of the Quality of Working Life



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**Abstract.** The relevance of studying the social and labor sphere from the position of its tendencies and risks for the formation of the quality of working life is due to the search of determinants causing its low estimates. It is important to address the issues concerning the quality of working life because the quality of life in general becomes today the main criterion of social progress, indicating the turn of the economy toward human needs and its humanization. The article analyzes trends in the social and labor sphere (employment, unemployment, working conditions). It shows changes taking place inside the socio-demographic groups of the employed population (growth of educational level, growth of highly educated population in the composition of the unemployed, etc.). We highlight the causes of economic losses related to the unsatisfactory condition of workplaces, the maintenance of a high share of workers in industries with harmful and hazardous working conditions, and workplace injuries. We provide index assessments of the quality of working life of the employed population and assess workers' low satisfaction with working conditions. The information base is represented by the data of a sociological survey of employable population of the region, conducted by RAS Vologda Research Center in 2018 and 2020. The article uses the method of subjective evaluation of quality of working life by the indicators that characterize people's assessment of wages, working conditions, organizational and economic characteristics, and socio-psychological conditions. Scientific novelty of the research consists in substantiating the influence of social and labor sphere on the formation of the quality of working life of the working population. Practical significance lies in the development of proposals to improve the quality of working life, which

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helps to obtain positive results in terms of improving the efficiency of working activity. Various social innovations (organizational, environmental, aesthetic, etc.) in the workplace that influence employees' work efficiency (for example, the introduction of health saving programs at enterprises and organizations, which will reduce losses from disability) can be such tools. They can also include surveys of employees about their satisfaction with the quality of working life in a special assessment of working conditions.

**Key words:** social and labor sphere, quality of working life, working potential, employment, workplace.

### Relevance

Nowadays, in the context of geopolitical, economic and humanitarian threats, Russia's economy is faced with the need to find new sources of growth. The most effective option in this case, and most likely the only one, is technological shifts<sup>1</sup>. Their implementation needs human capital, the quality of which meets the challenges facing the country. It is impossible to solve the problem related to the reproduction of such human capital without determining all its parameters, factors and indicators, with the help of which it is possible to manage the process of its formation and use. Such a broad and important parameter is the quality of working life of the population, which is formed in the social and labor sphere.

The relevance of the study of the quality of working life (QWL) is due to a number of significant circumstances. Among them, first of all, it is necessary to note the need to significantly improve the quality of life in modern Russia, including the quality of working life. These categories are now becoming the main criteria of social progress, indicating the turn of the economy to human needs and its humanization. The importance of providing decent work is mentioned among the priority national goals of the Russian Federation until 2030<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Problems of coordination of economic policy at the federal and regional levels: A public lecture by Doctor of Economics, Corresponding Member of RAS, Director of IEF RAS A.A. Shirov within the International Environmental Forum "Ecology and society: Balance of interests". April 22, 2022, Vologda. Available at: <http://www.vsecc.ac.ru/activity/view?id=7670>

<sup>2</sup> On the National development goals of the Russian Federation for the period until 2030: Presidential Decree dated July 21, 2020. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/63728> (accessed: June 15, 2022).

and is included in the list of tasks of the national projects<sup>3</sup>, which are being implemented in Russia at the present time. Among the tasks is also the focus on increasing labor productivity, one of the most urgent problems in the social and labor sphere of Russia. High indicators of occupational injuries, despite the positive dynamics of the number of injured at work, also focus attention on the problem of the quality of work life and the factors that determine it.

The purpose of the study is to analyze trends and risks in the social and labor sphere, affecting the formation of the quality of working life of the employed population. The goal is to be achieved by solving the following tasks: theoretical understanding of the category "social and labor sphere" and its relationship to the formation of the quality of working life; analyzing the trends in the social and labor sphere and identifying the most problematic points that have a negative impact on the QWL; characterizing the index estimates of satisfaction with the QWL by the working population of the region.

### *Social and labor sphere as an environment of forming the quality of labor life*

The transformation of employment forms, changes in the nature of interaction between the employee and the employer, the means of labor (digitalization, automation), in the system of state guarantees in the labor sphere, the unconditional importance of smoothing the contradictions arising in the social and labor sphere, determine the

<sup>3</sup> National projects. Available at: <http://government.ru/rugovclassifier/section/2641/> (accessed: June 15, 2022).

attention of researchers to its analysis (Karpushkina, Baldina, 2013; Isaykina, Lipatova, 2019; Soboleva, Sobolev, 2021).

The theoretical aspects of the social and labor sphere are most fully reflected in the works of national and foreign researchers in the field of labor economics. Among the Russian authors the works of V.N. Bobkov, N.A. Volgin, V.A. Kamenetsky, Y.G. Odegov, I.V. Soboleva are of particular interest for our study. Among foreign scientists-noninstitutionalists who consider the norms, rules, mechanisms regulating relations of employees and employers, it is possible to highlight D. North (North, 1990), T. Veblen (Veblen, 1919).

The social and labor sphere is a “multilevel integral category” and “reflects all phases of labor force reproduction and its social support” (Labor Economics..., 2003; Yusov, 2009). The core and skeleton of the labor sphere is “labor, providing effective labor activity, which includes the components of the labor sphere and derivatives of labor as a process” (Volgin, 2017). The social and labor sphere consists of such components as “labor market, employment and unemployment, motivation of productive work (motives, interests, incentives, wages); social partnership; training, retraining and skills development; social and cultural complex (health care, public education, science, culture); social protection; social security; social insurance” (Kamenetsky, 2001). A number of researchers believe that the “social and labor sphere” is an area of action of various relations concerning the joint labor (production) process; employment; distribution and consumption of the produced national income (Kolmakova, 2011; Labor Economics..., 2003, 249) and, first of all, social and labor relations.

In the study of reproductive and other processes of labor resources an active role belongs to social and labor relations as “a system of interrelations and interactions, which are formed on the inclusion, participation and “exclusion” of a person from the

labor activity” (Yanchenko, 2010). An important component of social and labor relations is the mechanism of their development and regulation. It includes economic and social policy of the state, enterprises, social partnership, corporate social responsibility (Fauser et al., 2010, 16). The content of social and labor relations under the influence of scientific and technological progress is filled with new elements related, for example, to distance forms of work, innovation of jobs, employment volatility, etc. (Leonidova, 2020).

“System elements of the labor sphere” are labor organization, which “directly and tangibly affects the state and prospective parameters of rationing, productivity, wages, the final results of teams” (Volgin, 2021, 5), and also other “elements of the working situation” (Yadov Sociology ..., 2019, 141): socio-psychological (labor satisfaction, its conditions, wages, motivation, working environment), economic (wage level, employment stability, quality of the workplace, unemployment), social and cultural (professional calling, creative activity, social aspirations) (Leonidova, 2020). All listed elements of social and labor sphere, somehow, influence the formation of the quality of the worker’s labor life.

#### ***Quality of working life***

Within the framework of the social and labor sphere the employees’ attitude toward conditions and organization of work, in other words, the set of forms of organization of production process, protection and working conditions, which provide full satisfaction of current and future social and labor needs, realization of labor and creative potential of hired employees and satisfaction of the owner’s interests, is formed. All of what can be called a capacious concept “quality of working life”.

It should be noted that the term itself is quite young, so its content, structure and assessment methods are actively discussed on the pages of scientific publications and conferences of various levels. The theory of the QWL is developing dynamically.

Referring to the origins of the concept of QWL, we should note that its formation took place within the framework of the prevailing socio-economic relations. It is possible to identify a number of approaches, within the framework of which the outlines of the concept were formed: political economy, technocratic, humanistic, motivational. Thus, in the theory of factors of production we can see one of the aspects of the future theoretical foundations of the quality of working life.

According to A. Smith's labor theory of value (Smith, 2009), labor efficiency depends on a number of conditions, including, for example, mechanization of labor, the need for constant training. It means that classics of economic thought foresaw an important role of certain factors related to the quality of working life according to modern concepts.

Representatives of the technocratic approach (the classical stage of development of the QWL theory (the 1890s)) considered a person as a part of the organization, without which it cannot function. The problems and needs of the workers in the organization were not paid proper attention, it was assumed that they "only economically interested in labor" (Safina et al., 2019).

The humanistic approach (post-classical period – from the 1920s – 1930s) was characterized by views on the individual as a person with a wide range of needs and capable to develop creatively. At the same time, management methods remain mainly economic ("school of human relations" (E. Mayo), model (theory) of working characteristics (J. Hackman; R. Oldham), doctrine of "production democracy" (J. Cole, P. Drucker), school of scientific management (G. Emerson, F. Taylor, G. Gantt), concept of social and labor basis of production management, scientific management of labor (N.A. Vitke), etc. (Burganova, Savkina, 2007; Drucker, 2004; Cole, 2004; Lapteva, Ostroumova, 2020; Hackman, Oldham, 1975).

Researchers' interest in various parameters of social and labor relations caused the emergence of motivational theories, the substantive essence of which was based on the study and explanation of what stimulates an employee and what are the motives of their labor actions. The motivation theories of A. Maslow, D. McClelland, F. Herzberg's motivation two-factor theory, J.S. Adams' equity theory, E. Locke's goal setting theory, the main role was given to needs, which determine human behavior aimed at achieving goals.

Currently the concept of decent work is being implemented, which was originally represented by four parameters – "gender equality", "free labor", "social security" and "social protection", later expanded by new characteristics: "productive work"; "safe work environment"; "rights at work"; "work in which the employee is provided the opportunity to participate in decision-making"; "adequate earnings"; "work-life balance"<sup>4</sup>.

The category "quality of working life" is considered by researchers from two sides: objective (using statistical indicators) and subjective, based on people's assessments population surveys (sociological data). In foreign studies, QWL is generally associated with the well-being of personnel and includes the employee's satisfaction with the physical and psychological factors associated with work and daily life (Almarshad, 2015). In other words, QWL is defined as a subjective category, that is, "the quality of the relationship between the employee and the overall work environment", related to the climate at work and its impact on both the work process and people, as well as the effectiveness of the organization<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Decent work indicators: guidelines for producers and users of statistical and legal framework indicators: ILO manual: Second version. (2013). International Labor Office. Geneva: ILO.

<sup>5</sup> Overview of quality of work life (a cross Developed Nations and India). Available at: [http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/17421/9/09\\_chapter%203.pdf](http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/17421/9/09_chapter%203.pdf) (accessed: April 15, 2022).

An example of an objective assessment of QWL is the concept of quality of life (Bobkov, Bobkov, 2014), in which this construct is characterized by indicators of *labor quality* (nature of employment, skill level of employees, labor productivity, etc.) and *quality of work environment* [type of work (physical or mental), opportunities to manifest creativity and independence in labor process, change of activities and promotion, observance of workers interests, safety and security of labor)]. As we can notice, the concept lacks the evaluation position of the highlighted components from the employees' side. Another example of highlighting QWL as part of a different, more general concept is the model of circular consumption considered in the works of the researchers of the Institute of Economics, the Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Belkin et al., 2021).

The analysis of theoretical sources shows that QWL is related to the conditions, nature and content of work, the quality of the relationship between the employee and his environment at work (Butkalyuk, 2010), the level of wages, job satisfaction, work-life balance (Belekhova, Ivanovskaya, 2022), and other factors. Based on these facts, we can conclude that this category cannot be evaluated with the help of only one indicator. It is a multidimensional construct, which includes a large number of components forming it. Therefore, the quality of labor life depends on the state and development trends of the social and labor sphere, the importance of which for its formation is considered above.

#### **Information base and methods of analysis**

As the information base for the analysis of trends in the social and labor sphere the materials of the Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation (Rosstat) and its territorial office in the Vologda Oblast (Vologdastat), the open data of Rosstat surveys on socio-demographic problems and quality of life of the Russian regions were used.

The study used general scientific methods: analysis, comparison, generalization, abstraction. During the processing and analysis of the

accumulated data, statistical and sociological methods with the use of tabular and graphical methods of visualizing the results were used.

The assessment of QWL by subjective indicators was carried out taking into account the results of sociological surveys conducted by RAS Vologda Research Center in the Vologda Oblast (monitoring of labor potential). The surveys are conducted in the cities of Vologda, Cherepovets and eight districts: Babaevsky District, Velikoustyugsky District, Vozhegodsky District, Gryazovetsky District, Kirillovsky District, Nikolsky District, Tarnogsky District, Sheksninsky District. Respondents are selected according to the set quotas by gender and age. The sample size is 1,500 people. The magnitude of sampling error does not exceed 3% with a confidence interval of 4–5%.

The QWL was assessed by analyzing the answers to the question about the satisfaction of the working population with various aspects of working life (“Please tell us, how satisfied are you with various aspects of your working life...?”) using a scale with an odd number of answers: “not satisfied”, “rather not satisfied”, “cannot say whether satisfied or not”, “rather satisfied”, “satisfied” (Belekhova, Ivanovskaya, 2022). In the analysis, the extreme response options were combined.

Thus, the calculation of satisfaction indices of QWL is based on the aggregation of indicators of subjective evaluation of satisfaction with aspects of working life (*Tab. 1*).

There are three levels as a result of the index integral assessment of QWL. The average level is neutral, expressed by the response “Difficult to answer”, respondents cannot definitely determine whether they are satisfied or not; it is assigned a value of zero. The highest level of satisfaction (the answer “Satisfied”) has a score of +2 points, and the lowest (answer “Not satisfied”) has a score of -2 points. On the basis of the above indicators, partial indices (arithmetic mean) are determined, which correspond to different aspects of QWL.

All calculations were made in the SPSS software package.

Table 1. Subjective indicators of QWL evaluation

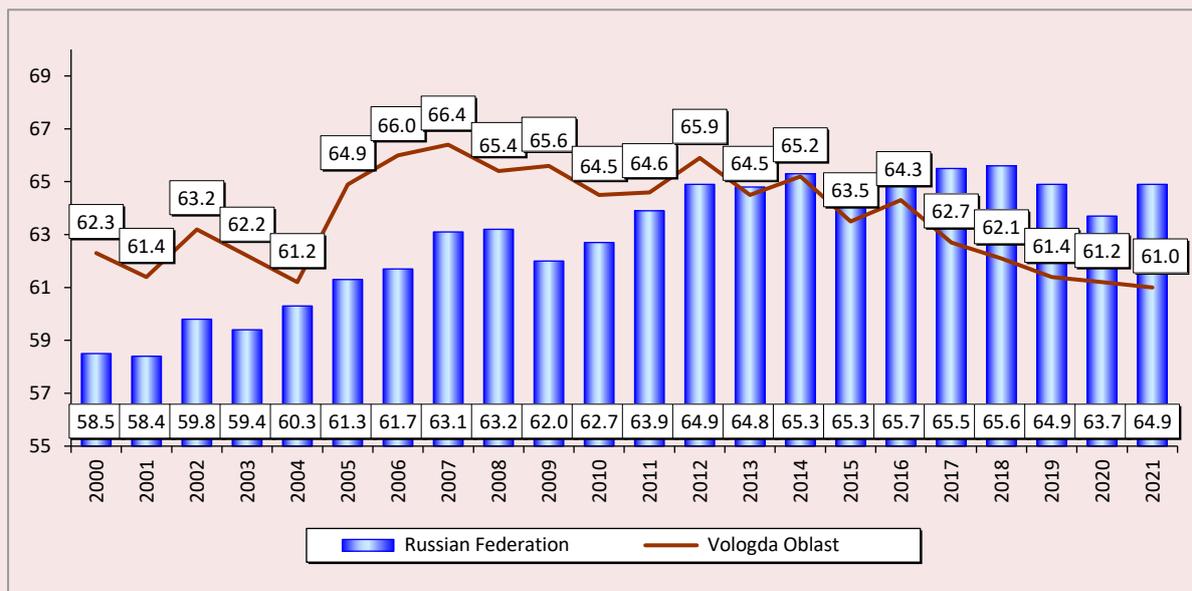
Block of indicators	Satisfaction of...
Material well-being	Wage
	System of material incentives for employees
	Completeness of the social package (provision of basic and additional social guarantees)
Economic well-being of the employee	Stability of the organization's position on the market
	The significance of the organization for the territory
	The reliability of your position in the organization
Conditions and safety of work	Sanitary and hygienic environment and work safety
	Technical equipment at the workplace
	Operation of a trade union or other labor organization
	Observance of labour legislation in the organization
	Working conditions in general
Realization and development of labor potential	Opportunities to study, improve qualifications
	Recognition of work results, achievements (intangible incentives)
	Correspondence of qualifications, knowledge and skills to the work performed
	Opportunities for career growth
Social well-being of an employee	Relationship with the organization's management (trust, openness)
	Relationships in the work team (with colleagues)
	Ability to participate in management decision making
	Ability to combine work and family/personal responsibilities

**Trends in the social and labor sphere**

The quantitative and at the same time qualitative characteristic of the social and labor sphere are indicators of employment of the population. In Russia as a whole in 2000–2021 the employment

remained at a fairly high level (from 60 to 65%; Fig. 1). In the Vologda Oblast the values of the indicator over the last decade have varied within the range of average Russian values (from 62 to 66%).

Figure 1. Employment rate of those aged 15–72 years, %



Source: Rosstat. Available at: [https://rosstat.gov.ru/labor\\_market\\_employment\\_salaries](https://rosstat.gov.ru/labor_market_employment_salaries)

Table 2. Employment rate in the context of territories\*, %

Region	Year						Rank by 2021
	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2021	
Chukotka Autonomous Okrug	68.2	75.5	77.7	78.5	76.9	77.4	1
Nenets Autonomous Okrug	73.6	70.8	73.0	72.6	72.9	74.5	2
Magadan Oblast	65.6	65.9	73.8	74.3	72.4	74.5	3
Saint Petersburg	61.5	68.0	70.3	72.2	72.5	73.9	4
Moscow	63.9	68.0	69.0	73.4	73.4	73.8	5
Vologda Oblast	62.3	64.9	64.5	63.5	61.2	61.0	63
Karachay-Cherkess Republic	46.5	54.3	58.8	53.5	50.1	53.4	81
Republic of North Ossetia – Alania	47.3	56.8	64.3	58.4	47.4	53.4	82
Republic of Dagestan	43.8	50.3	53.2	55.0	48.6	51.5	83
Republic of Ingushetia	32.7	22.5	32.2	50.2	52.1	51.1	84
Republic of Tuva	43.2	48.8	46.3	49.2	50.6	50.4	85

\* Data are given for the five regions with the best and five worst values, and for the Vologda Oblast.  
Source: Rosstat. Available at: [https://rosstat.gov.ru/labor\\_market\\_employment\\_salaries](https://rosstat.gov.ru/labor_market_employment_salaries); *Regions of Russia. Socio-economic indicators: Stat. collection. 2022.*

The republics of Ingushetia and Tyva are among the most problematic regions in terms of employment (*Tab. 2*). The maximum level of employment is in Chukotka Autonomous Okrug (77%)<sup>6</sup>.

Today, the employed population is dominated by people with higher education (35%; for reference: in 1992 – 17.6%) and secondary vocational education (25%). The share of the employed with secondary general and basic general education (20%), the work of which is often characterized by difficult working conditions, exposure to harmful factors in the working environment and involves hazards, is gradually decreasing (in 1992 – 47.9%). Labor is becoming more skilled, complex and increasingly less involved in traumatic types of work and equipment.

<sup>6</sup> The most important direction of improvement of the spatial structure of the economy of Chukotka Autonomous Okrug was the allocation and development of advanced development zones which are two “growth points” that have the potential of accelerated development relative to the surrounding territory. Since Chukotka has a considerable mineral and raw material potential, the emphasis was placed on its effective use. In Chukotka AO the leading role is played by the gold mining industry, its share in the industrial production of the region is about 44%, respectively, at the enterprises of this industry a considerable amount of labor resources is concentrated.

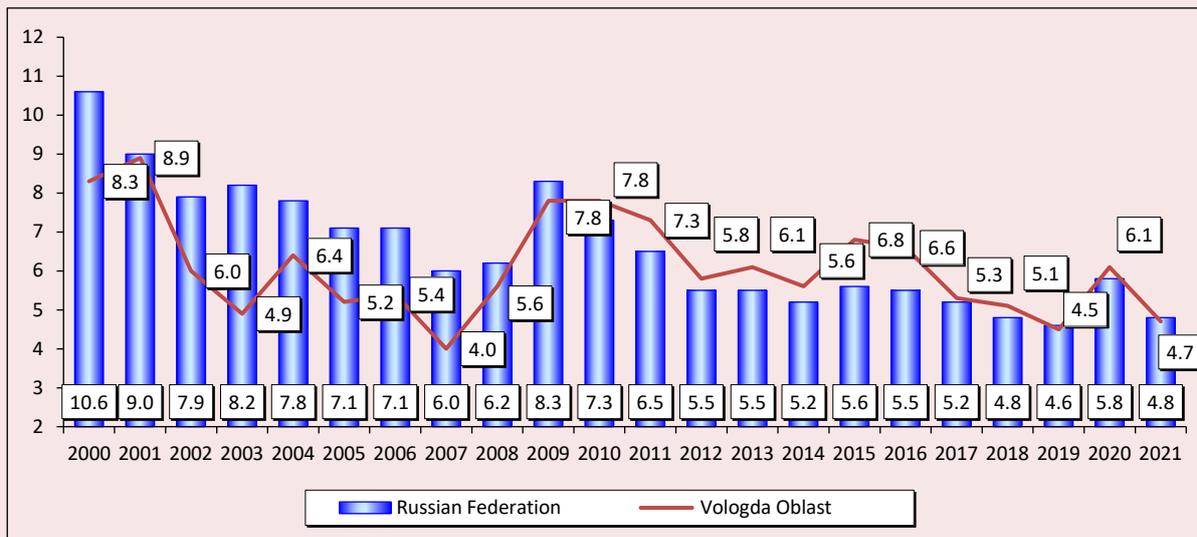
Today almost every third worker (about 27%) is over 50 years old (20.7% in 1992). The social and labor sphere is faced with the need to take into account the physiological characteristics of the older generation of workers. This situation has become especially urgent in light of the increase in the retirement age in 2019.

A statistical measure of well-being in the labor sphere is the unemployment rate. According to Rosstat, this indicator peaked in the crisis years or following them. Recently, the greatest rise was observed in 2020 (6.1%). In the Vologda Oblast, the trends of total unemployment were practically the same as in the Russian average (*Fig. 2*).

The republics of Ingushetia and Tuva have high levels of unemployment and the best indicators are observed in Saint Petersburg and Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug<sup>7</sup>, where unemployment rate is the lowest (*Tab. 3*).

<sup>7</sup> Both the low level of unemployment and the high demand for jobs are connected with the structure of the economy of Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug: the region is a resource-producing region and in the future, it will develop in two directions: infrastructure projects and energy projects.

Figure 2. Total unemployment rate of those aged 15–72 years, %



Source: Rosstat. Available at: [https://rosstat.gov.ru/labor\\_market\\_employment\\_salaries](https://rosstat.gov.ru/labor_market_employment_salaries)

Table 3. The level of total unemployment in the context of territories\*, %

Territory	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2021	Rank by 2021
Saint Petersburg	6.2	2.2	2.6	2.1	2.9	2.0	1
Nenets Autonomous Okrug	8.6	7.2	4.3	3.6	2.4	2.1	2
Moscow	3.9	0.8	1.8	1.8	2.6	2.6	3
Republic of Tatarstan	8.4	6.7	6.2	4.0	3.6	2.6	4
Chukotka Autonomous Okrug	10.3	4.2	4.5	4.0	4.4	2.6	5
...							
Vologda Oblast	8.3	5.2	7.8	6.8	6.1	4.7	43
...							
Republic of North Ossetia – Alania	28.5	8.8	9.7	9.3	15.5	13.5	82
Chechen Republic	...	...	43.3	17.1	18.5	14.5	83
Republic of Dagestan	26.5	22.1	14.8	10.8	15.7	15.1	84
Republic of Tuva	23.6	21.9	21.7	18.6	18.0	15.1	85
Republic of Ingushetia	30.3	63.1	49.7	30.5	30.0	31.1	86

\* Data are given for the five regions with the best and five worst values, and for the Vologda Oblast.

Source: Rosstat. Available at: [https://rosstat.gov.ru/labor\\_market\\_employment\\_salaries](https://rosstat.gov.ru/labor_market_employment_salaries); *Regions of Russia. Socio-economic indicators: Stat. collection. 2022.*

For 30 years, the category of the unemployed has consisted mostly of young people from 20 to 34 years old (in 2020 – 47.4%; in 1992 – 44.2%), but the educational level of this group has changed a bit. Among the unemployed population, as before, people with secondary general and basic general education also prevail, but their share has decreased 1.5-fold (38.2%; in 1992 – 56.7%). The number

of people with secondary vocational education in this category decreased significantly (27.3% vs 40% in 1992). The number of holders of diplomas of higher education increased twice (20.6% vs 10% in 1992). It shows, on the one hand, the growth of the employed population with higher professional education, on the other hand, the deficit of high-performance jobs (HPJ). Speaking about HPJ,

it is necessary to take into account their three components: technical and technological, which can be considered as a potential, determining the productivity of equipment; labor, connected with the quality of human capital of the employee; and organizational, determining the conditions of production (usually, more comfortable).

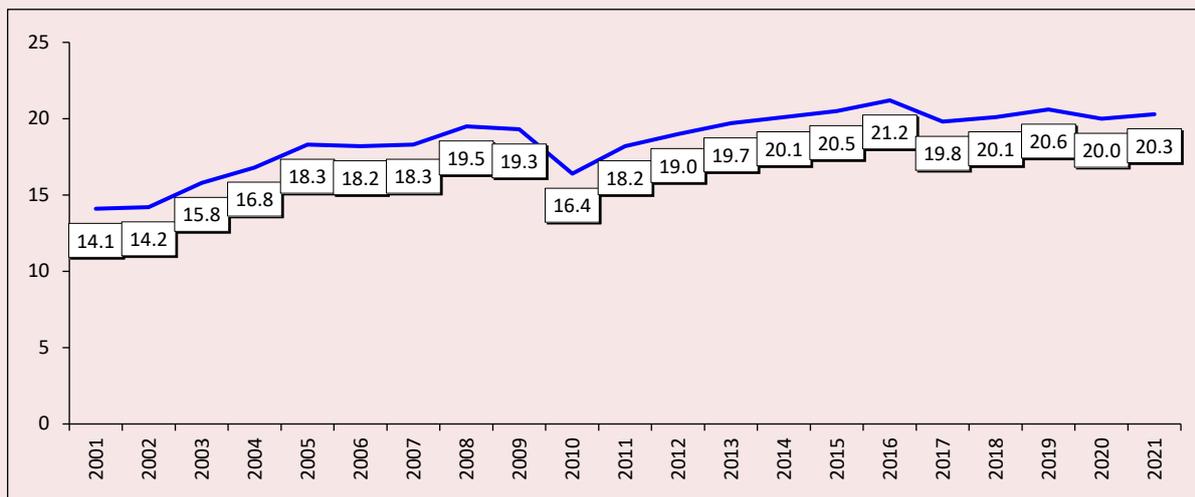
An analysis of the ratio of labor supply and labor demand shows that both the national and most regional and local labor markets, even if unemployment is high, the need of enterprises for workers is not fully satisfied. This is caused by the fact that many unemployed citizens for various reasons are not attracted to vacant jobs, and employers, in turn, are not always satisfied with the professional and qualification characteristics and personal qualities of job seekers (Akhapkin et al., 2018). Thus, in 2021, with 3.6 million unemployed in the country (4.8% of the labor force), the need for workers to fill vacant jobs in the total number of workers is 3.7% (1.02 million people).

A statistical indicator characterizing the quality of employment in Russia is “employment in the informal sector”<sup>8</sup>. From 2001 to 2021 its level increased from 14 to 20% (from 14 to 22% for men and from 14 to 18% for women; *Fig. 3*).

Informal labor conditions (off-the-book wages, lack of social guarantees, precarious employment, etc.) can be harmful to human development, which is expressed in health deterioration, social insecurity, reduced material well-being, limited access to education (Bobkov et al., 2019; Popov, 2019), etc. The results of our research confirm this situation: calculations show that the more signs of precarious employment workers have, the lower their production indicators, the quality of their working life and financial situation (Leonidova et al., 2018).

The issues of underutilization of available labor resources are relevant for all countries. In 2015, Russia approved a new official statistical methodology for forming a system of indicators of

Figure 3. The share of the informal sector in total employment, %



Source: Rosstat. Available at: [https://rosstat.gov.ru/labor\\_market\\_employment\\_salaries](https://rosstat.gov.ru/labor_market_employment_salaries)

<sup>8</sup> Informally employed are primarily small business units (without the formation of a legal entity).

labor activity, employment, and underutilization of labor, which is understood as “a mismatch between the labor supply and labor demand, resulting in an unmet need for jobs”<sup>9</sup>. The components of underutilization of labor force include part-time employment in terms of working hours, and unemployment. Operating with the indicators of unemployment and part-time employment does not allow assessing the qualitative side of the issue. According to the research of RAS Vologda Research Center and the developed methodology<sup>10</sup> the level of implementation of qualitative characteristics of labor potential was assessed. It turns out that together with underutilization of working time, part-time employment, etc., there is also an incomplete realization of the quality of labor potential. For example, in 2011 (the beginning of measurements of this indicator) the share of unrealized creative abilities was 51%, and attitudes to achieve success were not realized by 49%. This indicator has increased by now (*Tab. 4*). For all eight considered qualitative characteristics of the working-age population there is an increase in the share of workers using their potential to the fullest and to the limit of their abilities, while the share of those who noted that they use their qualities and skills “more or less fully” or “partially” decreased.

In other words, there is a gradual intensification of the use of labor potential (Chekmareva, 2018).

It should be noted that the increase of the realization level of physical health potential raises alarming concerns, since this resource is exhaustible. At the same time, the increase in the level of realization in the field of cognitive and creative efforts, as well as in the part of social claims indicates the growth of the creative and knowledge component in the Russian economy.

One of the most urgent problems of the social and labor sphere is labor productivity. As the 2019 statistics show, labor productivity in Russia is noticeably behind the level of many developed countries (26.7 US dollars per hour worked at PPP prices in 2015 vs 54.4 US dollars in the European Union and 63.2 US dollars in the G7)<sup>11</sup>.

According to Rosstat, the maximum value of the labor productivity index in 2020 is registered in Zabaikalsky Krai (110%) and the Penza Oblast (108.7%), the minimum value – in Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug – Yugra (93.7%) (94.7%) and the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) – 92.4%<sup>12</sup>. The factors of the regional differentiation of the index of labor productivity include the sectoral structure of the economies of the entities of the Russian Federation, the state of the material

Table 4. Dynamics of the level of unrealized quality of labor potential of the working population of the Vologda Oblast, %

Year	Physical health	Mental Health	Cognitive potential	Creative potential	Sociability	Cultural level	Moral level	Need for achievement
2011	28.4	30.7	31.9	51.0	26.4	31.4	29.8	49.3
2020	16.4	19.2	25.7	36.9	20.1	23.1	22.4	35.1

Source: Quality state monitoring of the labor potential in the Vologda Oblast, 2011–2020.

<sup>9</sup> Ponomareva S.A. Experience of the Vologda Oblast in legalizing the “shadow” economy at the regional and local levels. Analytical center under the Government of the Russian Federation. Available at: <http://ac.gov.ru/files/content/16438/opyt-vologodskoj-oblasti-po-legalizacii-tenevoj-ekonomiki-na-regionalnom-i-mestnom-urovnyah-pdf.pdf> (accessed: May 15, 2022).

<sup>10</sup> This method allows us to estimate the amount of quality of labor potential, which at the moment is not used by the employee in labor activity, the so-called unrealized potential.

<sup>11</sup> Level of GDP per capita and productivity. OECD Stat. Available at: <https://stats.oecd.org/>

<sup>12</sup> Labor productivity index in the Russian Federation, by constituent entities of the Russian Federation in 2008–2020 (in % to the previous year). Available at: <https://rosstat.gov.ru/folder/11186> (accessed: November 07, 2022).

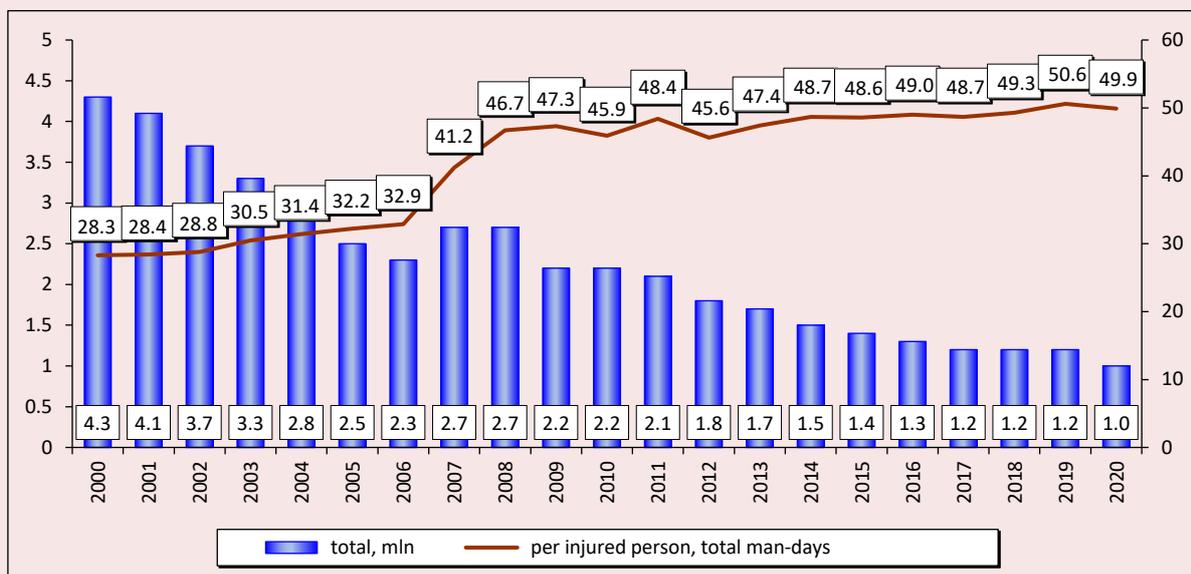
and technical base of industries (today Russian enterprises have rather high wear of fixed assets, about 40%), the availability of the labor force with the required qualifications, etc. Increasing labor productivity has been declared the main task of ensuring sustainable growth of the real sector of the economy<sup>13</sup>. The goal is to “increase labor productivity on a new technological, management and personnel basis”<sup>14</sup>.

The task of increasing labor productivity is closely connected with such indicator of the social and labor sphere as occupational injuries, because it makes a significant contribution to the loss of GRP. One third (30.2%) of workers are injured due to unsatisfactory organization of production (failure to comply with work permit procedures and inadequate control, that is, unsettled occupational

health and safety management processes). About 7% of accidents with severe consequences are caused by technogenic factors<sup>15</sup>.

Statistics show that men’s types of economic activity are the most traumatizing. In the early 2000s, the number of men injured at work was more than three times higher than the corresponding indicator among women. It should be noted that the dynamics of the number of injured workers at work has a positive trend. By 2020 the number of male injuries has decreased 10-fold (to 14,400 people), and the number of female injuries has decreased 6-fold (to 6,000 people). The total number of days of incapacity for work has also decreased by more than four times since 2000. However, this indicator per injured person has grown almost 1.7 times (Fig. 4).

Figure 4. Number of man-days of incapacity for work among injured person in the Russian Federation



Source: Rosstat. Available at: [https://rosstat.gov.ru/labor\\_market\\_employment\\_salaries](https://rosstat.gov.ru/labor_market_employment_salaries)

<sup>13</sup> Economic Security Strategy of the Russian Federation until 2030: Presidential Decree of May 13, 2017. No. 208. Available at: <http://government.ru/docs/all/111512/> (accessed: June 15, 2022).

<sup>14</sup> President V.V. Putin’s Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, March 1, 2018.

<sup>15</sup> Report on the results of monitoring of working conditions and labor protection in the Russian Federation in 2020. Moscow: Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Russian Federation, 2021. Available at: [vcot.info/uploads/researches\\_file/....pdf](http://vcot.info/uploads/researches_file/....pdf) (accessed: May 20, 2022).

The reproduction of labor resources in Russia is associated with negative demographic processes, due to which the age structure of the population is being transformed toward a decrease in the number of working-age citizens (by 7 million people or 8% over the period 2000–2021). Moreover, together with general demographic trends, the labor force is aging: in 2000 the average age was 38.7 years; in 2020 it will be 41 years.

One of the indicators of quality employment, perhaps the main one, is salary. For 96.6% of the population, work is primarily a way to provide for the family, i.e. it is a source of livelihood. But, as the researchers rightly point out, this does not mean that this is the meaning and value of labor is all about. According to scientists, it is simply the most “accurate description of the respondents’ life situation” (Kozina, 2020). The main source of income of the working population is salary at the main place of work, in connection with which the resource opportunities of families are limited and often are scarce. Moreover, the annual growth of accrued wages is leveled by the growth of the consumer price index. Despite positive transformations in the socio-economic life of Russian society since the early 2000s, it is still characterized by excessive monetary inequality: since 2003 the R/P 10% ratio has not been fallen below 15 times, the Gini coefficient – below 0.400, and poverty rate is relatively stable since 2008 (within 11–13%). Stabilization of inequality indicators, recorded by official statistics in recent years, is ensured by a decrease in the incomes of the wealthiest groups of the population while enriching the “elite and sub-elite strata”. At the same time, the financial situation of the poorest groups of the population has not improved significantly (Leonidova, Basova, 2020).

Data from official statistics show that the growth of wages in the Vologda Oblast is significantly limited by inflationary processes in the economy.

The annual growth of accrued wages in the region since 2000 was 7–12%, but taking into account the consumer price index the dynamics of wages in some years was negative. The insufficient level of wages, limiting the purchasing power of the population, leads to the self-reproduction of poverty and reduces the level of labor motivation of the employed (Leonidova et al., 2021).

According to the results of federal statistical observation for 2018, in Russia in general only 39% of those employed in the economy are quite satisfied with their wages. At the same time, in the vast majority of regions (51 constituent entities) this indicator is below the national average level. The Vologda Oblast in the rating of satisfaction with wages among Russian regions was on the 78th place. An extremely small percentage of respondents (25%) expressed satisfaction with wages.

As European research shows, working conditions affect the working ability of one-third of all workers. According to a study by the European Foundation for the Development of Living and Working Conditions, one in four workers in Europe was absent from work in 2009 because of health problems; one in ten had an accident at work<sup>16</sup>.

According to Helloworkplace – Mieux-lemag – Malakoff 2019<sup>17</sup> research, 70% of workers complain of mental fatigue at work, 53% complain of physical fatigue, stress affects one in two workers, professional burnout affects one in eight, and musculoskeletal pain, representing 80% of all occupational diseases, is the leading cause of absence from work.

<sup>16</sup> Nasman O., Ahonen G. (2007). The DRUVAN-project: A major increase in Occupational Health Service based on the Metal Age method in a Finnish municipality improved the work ability and gave significant financial return. The Centre for Occupational Safety and The Finnish Work Environment Fund. PunaMusta, Iisalmi.

<sup>17</sup> Available at: <https://ru.hrmaps.eu/category/%d1%81%d1%82%d0%b0%d1%82%d0%b8%d1%81%d1%82%d0%b8%d0%ba%d0%b0/>

Figure 5. The share of workers employed in harmful and (or) hazardous working conditions in organizations (at the end of the year), %



Source: Report on the results of monitoring working conditions and labor protection in the Russian Federation in 2020. Moscow: Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Russian Federation, 2021. Available at: [vcot.info/uploads/researches\\_file/....pdf](http://vcot.info/uploads/researches_file/....pdf) (accessed: May 20, 2022)

The share of employees working in harmful and (or) hazardous working conditions remains high (Fig. 5). In 2021, 36.4% of workers were employed in harmful and (or) dangerous working conditions by types of economic activity as a whole. The largest share of such jobs is characteristic of such types of economic activity as “mining operations” (54.4%), “coal mining” (79.1%), “production of coke and petroleum products” (54.4%).

According to the mentioned circumstances, it is legitimate to emphasize that the parameters of the social and labor sphere (working conditions, quality of jobs, their compliance with the requirements of health protection, material well-being, opportunities for development and growth) should be in the constant attention of economic entities and the state as a whole.

#### ***Quality of working life in the context of current trends in the social and labor sphere***

Analysis of the calculation results of the partial and integral indices of the QWL has shown that they are in the positive zone of the population’s perception (Tab. 5). But despite the fact that the

index values are positive, nevertheless, they are quite low (at the maximum of the scale, equal to +2 units, the value, for example, of the integral (generalizing) index is -0.390, i.e. less than 1).

In 2020, there was an increase in the integral index. A downward trend emerged only for employment stability (from 0.927 to 0.901 units), which is due to the realities of the first pandemic year, associated with rising unemployment, redundancies etc. The highest values are the private indices of satisfaction with job stability (0.927 in 2018, 0.901 in 2020) and the psychological climate in the organization (0.424 in 2018, 0.577 in 2020); the lowest – private indices of satisfaction with career opportunities (0.129 in 2018, 0.190 in 2020), wages (0.111 in 2018, 0.205 in 2020), working conditions and organization (0.176 in 2018, 0.296 in 2020).

More often the population perceives the quality characteristics of working life positively with the following socio-demographic characteristics: average working age (25–49 years), the presence of formal family relationships and children.

Table 5. Values of private indices and individual indicators of the QWL of the employed population in the Vologda Oblast (2018–2020), in points

Components of the WQLI	Vologda		Cherepovets		Districts		Oblast	
	2018	2020	2018	2020	2018	2020	2018	2020
Partial indices of satisfaction with QWL								
Wage index	0.212	0.139	0.084	0.031	0.067	0.359	0.111	0.205
Index of working conditions and organization	0.198	0.332	0.139	0.223	0.187	0.316	0.176	0.296
Index of the use and development of human potential	0.256	0.400	0.262	0.433	0.210	0.307	0.238	0.369
Career opportunity Index	0.135	0.166	0.144	0.173	0.115	0.218	0.129	0.190
Employment stability index	0.938	0.822	0.941	0.784	0.910	1.029	0.927	0.901
Index of psychological climate in a work collective	0.541	0.716	0.482	0.694	0.314	0.405	0.424	0.577
Index of interaction with common life space	0.364	0.703	0.207	0.628	0.240	0.409	0.263	0.557
Social importance of labor index	0.357	0.741	0.342	0.698	0.205	0.278	0.286	0.530
Integral (summary) index of satisfaction with QWL								
<b>Index of satisfaction with the quality of working life</b>	0.311	0.425	0.252	0.372	0.220	0.375	0.254	0.390
Source: data of the sociological surveys "Quality of Labor Potential". VolRC RAS, 2018–2020.								

It should be noted that if the population classifies itself as poor during self-identification ("there is not enough money even to buy food"), the assessment of satisfaction with the quality of working life has a very low boundary – in 2018 it is negative (-0.213 units), and in 2020 – the lowest of all indices (0.100 units).

Dissatisfaction with work, as a rule, becomes a factor that increases workers' dissatisfaction with their social position. In contrast, satisfaction, according to the research of Russian sociologists<sup>18</sup>, has "a close relationship with the interest of people in productive effective activity, which generates favorable attitudes toward the whole set of social values". It is confirmed by economic effects of work of those who are satisfied with quality of working

life, which are expressed in higher level of wages and realization of qualitative properties of labor potential. The quality of labor potential of such workers is significantly higher.

As the results of the study show, there is exactly in this vein, through the prism of the quality of labor life, it is necessary to assess the dynamics of the parameters of the social and labor sphere.

### Conclusion

Taking into account the importance of the quality of working life for the economy as a whole, we consider that in the new economic realities an effective way to improve it will be the creation of high-performance jobs. Based on the definition of high-performance jobs, it can be argued that their essence is closely related to QWL. First, such a job must be well-paid. Second, it must be high-tech, automated, innovative, digital, etc.

Consideration of the QWL as a management tool helps to receive positive results from the introduction of various social practices that meet the needs of workers. These can be various social

<sup>18</sup> Dynamics of socio-economic situation of the population of modern Russia and the problems of adaptation to the changed conditions of work and employment (on the materials of the "Russian monitoring of the economic situation and health of the population 1992–2008"): Information-analytical bulletin (INAB). (2009). Moscow: RAS Institute of Sociology.

innovations (organizational, environmental, aesthetic, etc.), significantly affecting labor productivity; for example, the introduction at enterprises and organizations of health saving programs. Such corporate practices can reduce disability losses from a number of causes by almost 30%<sup>19</sup>.

The introduction and use of the subjective assessment of the QWL as one of the indicators of the special assessment of working conditions (SAWC) and appropriate monitoring of the satisfaction indicator of working conditions as an indicator of the effectiveness of employers can help to achieve this.

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<sup>19</sup> The Ministry of Health believes that corporate programs can reduce up to 30% of labor loss. Available at: <https://tass.ru/nacionalnye-proekty/6778718> (accessed: November 7, 2022).

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