

Employment Risks for Households with Children: Expert Assessments in the New Conditions of Russia's Development



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Abstract. The work investigates employment risks for households with children in the new conditions of Russia's development amid the special military operation, unprecedented external sanctions pressure at the stage of transition to the country's sovereign development. The study is based on the findings obtained during a specially organized expert survey in 2023, the data of which were supplemented by an analysis of the results of monitoring state and non-state surveys and other sources. The work reveals and ranks, taking into account their importance, groups of risks in the field of employment, identified from the point of view of the "contour" of their conditioning (internal risks, related to the ongoing special military operation, and external risks). We name specific risks in the field of employment that can lead to a decrease in the level and quality of employment (including a decrease in income) in households with children and, as a result, a decline in their standard of living; these risks are ranked in terms of relevance. The obtained research results may be in demand for the development of state policy in relation to families with children, employment policy, and improving the standard of living, including within the framework of the national project "Family" and other long-term program-targeted and integrated management tools. Directions for further research are related to supplementing the list of identified risks and in-depth studies of their "carriers" (socio-demographic and other features) in households with children, the impact of risks, taking into account the concentration of risks and the number of their "carriers" on the employment situation and standard of living in various types of households.

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Key words: households with children, employment risks, employment level, quality of employment, income from employment, standard of living.

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Introduction

In 2024 in Russia in accordance with Presidential Decree 875, dated November 22, 2023, the activities within the framework of the Year of the Family¹ are being implemented. It was announced about the launch of new national projects in 2024–2025, which affect the interests of families with children in general and their different generational groups: “Family”, “Youth of Russia”, “Long and Active Life” and “Personnel”². President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin in his Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation emphasized: “Supporting families with children is our fundamental moral choice. A large family with many children should become the norm of society’s philosophy of life, the benchmark of the entire state strategy”³. This strategic course will have to be implemented in the context of new challenges for Russia after the beginning of 2022, associated with the aggravation of external sanctions pressure, geopolitical confrontation, special military operation (SMO), transition to economic sovereignty. Its successful implementation will be determined, among other

things, by an objective assessment of current problems, risks of negative dynamics, which should be overcome with the help of various tools of governmental policy.

We focus our attention on the risks associated with employment, which are considered in relation to the target group – households with children. Risks in the sphere of employment can be characterized by different “probability” (prevalence of this or that problem in the labor market and employment) at the macro level, and have their own characteristics for different participants in the social and labor sphere. The micro-level perspective (on households with children) allows us to highlight this agenda through the prism of risk concentration, taking into account their “accumulation” in specific “carriers” – household members and their number in households, which determines the presence and “degree” of vulnerability of the households’ situation.

The aim of the work is to identify employment risks for households with children, significant and relevant in the context of new challenges for the country after the beginning of 2022.

The hypothesis of the research consisted in the assumption about the change in the structure of risks in the field of employment in the new conditions of Russia’s development after 2022, the inclusion of risks caused by the strengthening of external sanctions pressure and the implementation of the SMO in the number of significant and relevant risks (in terms of impact on the level and quality of employment, situation of households with children).

¹ On holding the Year of the Family in the Russian Federation: Presidential Decree 875, dated November 22, 2023. Available at: <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/document/0001202311220013>

² New national projects in Russia. Infographics. Available at: <https://iz.ru/1658742/2024-03-02/novye-natcproekty-v-rossii-infografika>; Golikova announced the launch of four new national projects in 2025. Available at: <https://digital.gov.ru/ru/events/49755/>

³ Putin said that a large family with many children should become the norm in Russia. Available at: <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/20115005>

Scientific novelty of the work consists in supplementing the scientific discourse with assessments of risks that are significant and relevant at the current stage of Russia's development, mainly risks in the field of employment, considered in the context of the impact on the situation of households with children and obtained on the basis of a specially organized expert survey.

Significance of the study is associated with identifying "vulnerable areas" in the situation of households with children. The results of the study may be in demand for the development of state policy in relation to families with children, employment policy and raising living standards.

Theoretical and methodological foundations of the study

Foreign and Russian practice offers various theoretical and methodological solutions that may be in demand for identifying "problem areas" in the labor market and employment in various aspects, including:

- employment security, considered through labor-related forms and indices of security (safety): security in the labor market, job security, labor income, etc.⁴;

- decent work, defined on the basis of a set of indicators on various aspects: employment opportunities, adequate earnings and productive employment, decent working hours, life–work balance, etc.⁵;

- quality of employment, identified through a system of indicators that take into account security and compliance with labor standards, employment income and benefits, job security, social security

⁴ Economic Security for a Better World. International Labour Office, Geneva, 2004. Available at: https://www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/Media.action;jsessionid=0xui1Mp2T5YLwJzOqg6_7Q-7_MHu8baGap8j-XIO2go9jJ_WMYPM!-765179005?id=8536

⁵ Decent work indicators: Guidelines for producers and users of statistical and legal framework indicators: ILO manual: Second version. International Labour Office. Geneva: ILO, 2013.

and other dimensions⁶; considered by identifying deprivations based on the assessment of income, job stability, job security and employment conditions (González et al., 2021), by identifying signs (indicators) of precarious employment and their concentration⁷ (Bobkov, 2019; Precarious Employment..., 2021; García-Pérez et al., 2017; Padrosa et al., 2021; and others); and others.

- quality of jobs, assessed on the basis of indicators of income, labor market security, quality of the working environment⁸, based on an index calculated on indicators of wages, forms and guarantees of employment, work conditions, etc.⁹

These developments make it possible to highlight certain "problem areas" in the sphere of the level and quality of employment, both general trends and specifics for different population groups (Bobkov et al., 2017; Koksharov et al., 2020; Leonidova, 2022; Soboleva, 2023; Syupova, 2023; Orfao et al., 2021; Han, Zhang, 2022; Cao, 2022, etc.), respectively, determining the probability of certain risks. They have been elaborated by researchers for different categories of the population – young people entering the labor market for the first time (Varshavskaya, 2016; Dudyrev et al., 2019; Eckelt, Schmidt, 2014, etc.), middle and older generations (Popov, 2022; Jetha et al., 2020, etc.), women with children (Dorofeeva, 2019, etc.; Pishnyak, Nadezhkina, 2020; Chernykh et al., 2023), and others. The peculiarities of the labor market and

⁶ Handbook on Measuring Quality of Employment: A Statistical Framework, prepared by the Expert Group on Measuring Quality of Employment. UNECE. United Nations, New York & Geneva, 2015.

⁷ It's More than Poverty. Employment Precarity and Household Well-being. Toronto: PEPSO, McMaster University, United Way Toronto, 2013.

⁸ Cazes S., Hijzen A., Saint-Martin A. (2015). Measuring and Assessing Job Quality: The OECD Job Quality Framework. OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers, No. 174. OECD Publishing, Paris.

⁹ Piasna A. (2017). 'Bad jobs' recovery? European Job Quality Index 2005–2015. Working Paper 2017.06. European Trade Union Institute. Brussels: ETUI aisbl.

employment situation at the household level have been analyzed in (Odintsova et al., 2023b; Russian labor market..., 2020, etc.), its impact on the formation of different models of living standards has been studied in (Grishina, 2024; Bobkov, Odintsova, 2023; Korchagina, Prokofieva, 2023; Maleva et al., 2015; Franco et al., 2011, etc.).

The labor market and employment sphere, which evolved in recent years under the impact of various “shocks”¹⁰ (Kapelyushnikov, 2022; Kapelyushnikov, 2023; Laykam, 2021; Soboleva, Sobolev, 2021; etc.), under fundamentally new conditions of the country’s development after 2022 are going through another stage of adaptation. It requires comprehension in terms of changes in the structure of employment risks, their prioritization in order to actualize public policy measures to minimize these risks and support vulnerable population groups. This paper makes such an attempt, and its “starting point” is contained in the results of an expert survey conducted with the participation of the author.

Generalization of expert assessments of the current situation has already been reflected in analytical publications, but they focus on the macro level (economy as a whole¹¹, labor market and employment¹²), on enterprises¹³ (Kuvalin et al.,

¹⁰ Bobkov V.N., Guliugina A.A. (Eds.). (2023). Monitoring of incomes and living standards of Russian population (Monitoring of incomes and living standards of Russian population – 2022 (2023): Yearbook. Vol. 1(202). Moscow: IE RAS. 166 p.

¹¹ See, for example: Sovereignty as a path to prosperity. Analytical report. VTCOM, Roscongress. Available at: https://wciom.ru/fileadmin/user_upload/VCIOM_Analiticheskaja_zapiska_RBK.pdf; Simachev Yu.V., Fedyunina A.A., Kuzyk M.G. et al. (2024). The world in the labyrinth of sanctions: Industrial policy at a crossroads. Report of the Higher School of Economics. Moscow: Publishing House of the Higher School of Economics. 162 p.

¹² See, for example: Economists of the Russian Academy of Sciences named the risks to the labor market due to sanctions. Available at: <https://www.rbc.ru/economics/03/05/2022/626b9ef89a7947d7f6c09da8>

¹³ Imports have become more friendly. Available at: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/6350248?ysclid=lp82puimhe991890300>

2024). In our paper, the focus is on the micro level – we analyze experts’ assessments of employment risks in the context of the impact on the social and labor status (labor status and standard of living) of households with children.

Data and research methods

The paper is based on the results obtained within the framework of a survey of experts specially organized with the author’s participation; during the survey, current risks to the social and labor status of households with children, including employment risks, were discussed (by means of a questionnaire).

Households with children were considered as a whole, without differentiation by type in terms of their composition, including the number of children. Since at this stage the focus was on risks, their specifics for different types of households can be the subject of further research.

Employment risks were understood as risks that may lead to a decrease in the level and quality of employment (including a decrease in income from employment) of members of households with children, as well as indicators of their standard of living, determined by the specifics of involvement in employment (taking into account the ratio of working and non-working members of households with children, reasons for unemployment, etc.).

The expert survey¹⁴ was conducted in the fall of 2023 with the help of in absentia questionnaires. It was attended by 32 experts: 1) specialists representing research organizations and leading universities (21 people), whose scientific interests focus on the problems of employment and its quality (including specialists in the field of labor law), living standards, social security, population and family and demographic policy; 2) specialists representing state and municipal government,

¹⁴ The author of the publication and the participants of the scientific project express their sincere gratitude to all the experts who took part in the survey.

business community and trade unions¹⁵ (11 people). The experts represent different regions of the country: city of Moscow, Moscow, Voronezh, Yaroslavl, Samara, Nizhny Novgorod and Sverdlovsk regions, republics of Tatarstan, Mari El, Mordovia and Sakha (Yakutia). The experts are characterized by high qualification level: 23 experts have academic degrees of candidate/doctor of sciences (economics, sociology, law, etc.); the composition of experts includes heads of organizations and their structural subdivisions, skilled (senior, leading, chief) specialists and researchers.

The logic of the expert survey included addressing the following tasks in terms of employment risks for the situation of households with children: identifying the degree of significance of groups of risks in terms of negative consequences for the level and quality of employment in households with children; ranking specific risks in terms of their relevance.

In the course of the work we also used data from the Federal State Statistics Service, Russian Longitudinal Monitoring Survey – Higher School of Economics¹⁶ (RLMS–HSE), Federal Tax

¹⁵ Experts were selected taking into account the experience of research and practical work in areas of interest for the purposes of the survey (clarifying the risks to the social and labor situation of households with children (employment status, standard of living, including the role of social security)). The availability of an academic degree, scientific publications on the subject under consideration (for group 1 of experts), official status and specialized field of activity (group 2), the availability of recommendations from specialists on inclusion in the experts were taken into account. The willingness and experience of participating in expert surveys were also taken into account (some experts were involved in earlier surveys conducted with the participation of the author on employment and living standards).

¹⁶ The Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey – Higher School of Economics (RLMS-HSE), carried out by the National Research University – Higher School of Economics and Demoscope LLC, with participation of the North Carolina Population Center of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the Institute of Sociology of the Federal Research Sociological Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RLMS HSE surveys websites: <http://www.hse.ru/rhms> and <https://rlms-hse.cpc.unc.edu>).

Service, as well as data from other studies, including those based on expert surveys on the issues under consideration (Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM), etc.). The dynamics of the employment sphere were considered (taking into account the availability of data) in the “watershed” period of Russia’s development:

- modern (from 2022 to the present) stage, associated with the strengthening of external sanctions pressure after the beginning of the SMO to protect the population of Donbass, accession of the Donetsk and Lugansk people’s republics, and Zaporozhye and Kherson regions to Russia after the referendums, Russia’s transition to sovereign development in the conditions of aggravated geopolitical confrontation with unfriendly countries of the West;

- the period from 2014 to 2021, associated with the strengthening of external sanctions pressure on Russia after the response to protect the population of Crimea and the return of the Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol to Russia after the referendum, as well as socio-economic impact of the COVID-2019 pandemic.

This allowed us to interpret the obtained results of the expert survey in the context of employment sphere dynamics, to clarify risks in the employment sphere in terms of their significance and relevance for the current stage.

Results and discussion

Assessing the risks in the sphere of employment was preceded by identifying the position of experts regarding the presence of risks that can negatively affect the situation of households with children. The majority of experts confirmed (fully – 75%, partially – 16%) the existence of these risks. These experts were further asked to assess the risks by determining (on the basis of scores) their significance and relevance.

Some (6%) experts noted that they did not agree with the point of view that there were employment risks relevant at the time of the survey for the

situation of households with children. However, in fact, they did not deny the existence of risks. Commenting on their position, the experts specified: *“These risks existed earlier, exist today and will exist in the future. They are mostly conditioned by the economic situation in our country. Mobilization and the SMO have a direct negative impact on employment only in those regions where hostilities are taking place. In other constituent entities of the Russian Federation these processes stimulated demand in the labor market after February 2022. Today employers are ready to attract all socially vulnerable categories of citizens (student youth, women with many children, single moms, etc.) to fill vacancies”*. They also specified: *“The system of social protection for families with children works quite effectively and is constantly being improved”*, which may make it possible to compensate for possible negative consequences for the situation of households with children in the event of any employment risks.

The currently actively developing system of social support, including for SMO participants and their families, as well as families with children in general, and its status as a national project, reflects, on the one hand, the systems work of the state to level and mitigate various risks for households with children, and, on the other hand, indicates that these risks are complex and long-term, which requires constant monitoring of the situation in order to actualize the implemented state policy.

Significance of risk groups in the sphere of employment

The significance¹⁷ of risks (negative consequences for the level and quality of employment in households with children) was assessed by experts for the proposed groups of risks: external, internal and those caused by the implementation of the SMO. The processes occurring after February

2022 on the “external” (impact on the Russian economy) and “internal” (response of the Russian economy) contours affect the employment sphere and cause corresponding risks for households with children, leading to a decrease in the involvement of household members in the employment sphere (due to a decrease in the number of employed persons in households, an increase in the share of persons outside the employment sphere for various reasons) and/or a decrease in the quality of their employment, which, ultimately, may lead to a negative impact on the level and quality of employment in households with children.

The SMO is a kind of “trigger” that sets the dynamics of processes on the “external” and “internal” circuits and, accordingly, determines employment risks. On the one hand, the strengthening of external sanctions pressure on the country is associated with the SMO, which in turn determines external risks in the employment sphere. The implementation of the SMO also caused changes in the labor market and employment (redistribution of labor resources between the civilian and military-industrial (MIC) sectors, changes in the need for personnel in industries related to the MIC, in import-dependent industries, etc.). This complements (amplifies) the internal risks that took place in connection with the active transformation of the labor market due to existing trends and problems (changes in the organizational-technical and socio-economic nature of modern employment (Bobkov, 2019, etc.), changes in the labor market and employment during the pandemic and corona crisis¹⁸ (see for example: Topilin, Vorobyeva, 2023; Kapelyushnikov, 2022; Kapelyushnikov, 2023; Soboleva, Sobolev, 2021; Laykam, 2021), etc.).

¹⁷ The experts were asked to reflect their point of view using a scale from 0 (no risk) up to 5 (high risk) points.

¹⁸ Morozov A., Porshakov A., Chernyadyev D., Yakovleva K. How the corona crisis affected the labor market. Available at: <https://econs.online/articles/ekonomika/kak-koronakrizis-povliyal-na-rynok-truda/>

The majority (80%) of experts¹⁹ assessed the proposed grouping of risks as sufficient, indicating that there is no need to supplement it. The most significant, according to experts, are risks belonging to *the group of internal risks* (3.9 points), less significant (3.4 points) are *risks caused by the implementation of the SMO*. The lowest degree of significance (3.3 points) in relation to the two groups of risks identified above corresponds, in the experts' opinion, to external risks.

The obtained picture of the distribution of risk groups by their significance partially does not confirm the hypothesis: the experts gave priority to internal risks, considering as more significant the processes in the internal sphere. Risks associated with the SMO received a lower score from experts compared to internal risks. Probably, their action was associated with localization in a particular territory, which was explained by the assessment as of the fall 2023. Further events showed that the situation developed extensively (the territory exposed to destructive impacts expanded) and intensively (the impact became more intense). The obtained assessment (the lowest score) of external risks is generally consistent with the results of another study based on an expert survey and conducted by VCIOM together with the Roscongress Foundation with the assistance of the public organization "Business Russia" in 2023. According to the survey, the majority of experts believe that sanctions have a rather positive impact on the Russian economy (31.9%) or their impact is of a combined nature (positive and negative; 37.7%)²⁰.

In the context of the significance of risk groups, one should bear in mind their "scale" – what groups (in terms of size) they can potentially affect. In this respect they are not "equal": at the individual

¹⁹ For those experts who have spoken out in favor of the current risks in the field of employment.

²⁰ Sovereignty as a path to prosperity. Analytical report. VTCOM, Roscongress. Available at: https://wciom.ru/fileadmin/user_upload/VCIOM_Analiticheskaja_zapiska_RBK.pdf

level (participants in the social and labor sphere), external and internal risks can be considered more significant in terms of "scale" compared to the risks caused by the SMO. The latter can also have two "dimensions": risks due to changes in employment (broader) and risks related to direct participation in the SMO (narrower). At the level of specific households with children, all these risks may be presented in different combinations, given the composition of households and the number of labor market and employment actors ("carriers" of specific risks), which will determine the vulnerability of households.

Relevance of employment risks

The relevance²¹ was assessed by experts for specific employment risks, which allowed to rank them.

The *most relevant* (at the time of the survey), according to experts, were *the risks of reduction of income from employment* (4.0 points). If we consider the dynamics of indicators in absolute terms, we can conclude that the experts' fears of negative developments for employment income were not confirmed. Thus, according to official statistics, in 2022 and 2023 (relative to indicators of the previous year) at the macro level in nominal terms, there was a growth of wages in organizations (their full range) for all types of economic activities²²; wages of individual entrepreneurs and individuals grew as well²³. In addition, according to RLMS–HSE, at the end of 2022 – beginning of 2023²⁴, there was no "surge" of cases (3.8%) when employers reduced wages or working hours

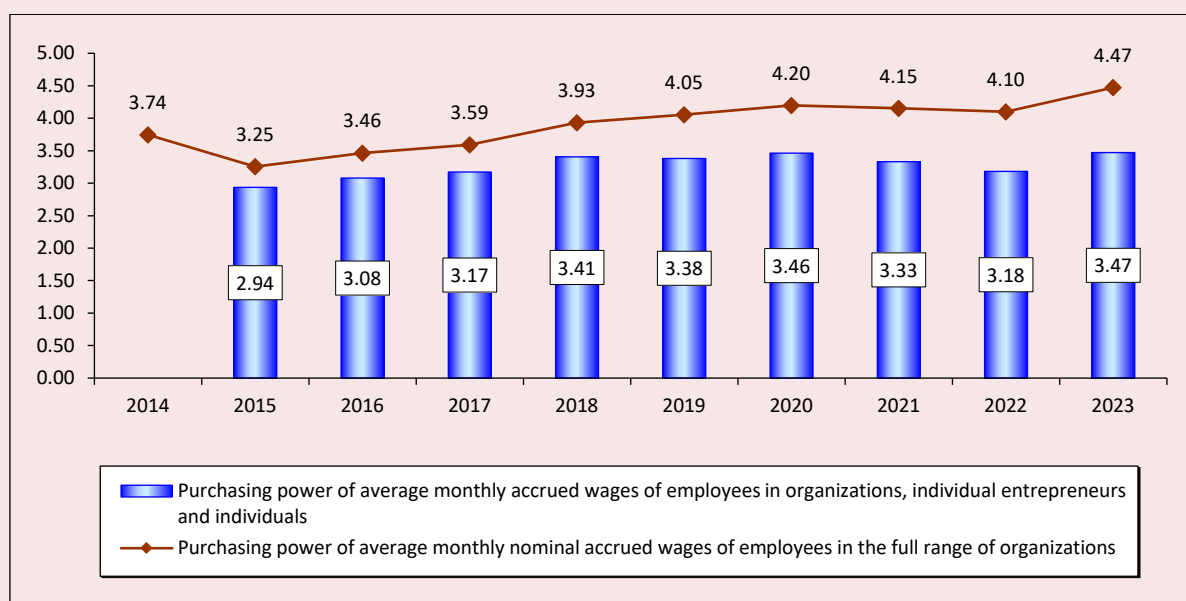
²¹ The experts were asked to reflect their point of view using a scale from 0 (risk is not relevant) to 5 (risk is most relevant).

²² Average monthly nominal accrued wages of employees of organizations by type of economic activity in the Russian Federation for 2000–2023. Rosstat. Available at: https://rosstat.gov.ru/labor_market_employment_salaries

²³ Information on the average monthly accrued wages of employees in organizations, individual entrepreneurs and individuals (average monthly income from work). Rosstat. Available at: https://rosstat.gov.ru/labor_market_employment_salaries.

²⁴ Data collection period of the 31st round of the RLMS.

Purchasing power of wage earners by wage, 2014–2023,
sets of the subsistence level of able-bodied population



Compiled according to: Rosstat data (Average monthly nominal accrued wages of employees in the economy as a whole in the context of constituent entities of the Russian Federation for 2000–2023. Rosstat. Available at: https://rosstat.gov.ru/labor_market_employment_salaries; Information on average monthly accrued wages of employees in organizations, individual entrepreneurs and individuals (average monthly income from labor activity). Rosstat. Available at: https://rosstat.gov.ru/labor_market_employment_salaries; The value of the subsistence level in Russia as a whole and in constituent entities of the Russian Federation. Rosstat. Available at: <https://rosstat.gov.ru/folder/13723>); Bobkov V.N., Guliugina A.A. (Eds.). (2023). Monitoring of incomes and living standards of Russian population (Monitoring of incomes and living standards of Russian population – 2022 (2023): Yearbook. Vol. 1(202). Moscow: IE RAS. 166 p.).

of employees of organizations, which was observed after the strengthening of external sanctions pressure in connection with the return of the Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol to Russia (growth up to 8.6% in 2015), as well as in the corona crisis year 2020 (growth up to 12.9%)²⁵.

At the same time, the decline in income from employment took place in real terms, which confirms experts' estimates. In 2022, when the economy began to adapt to new "shocks", a decline in the purchasing power of wage earners relative to 2021 was recorded. It was observed both for employees of organizations (a decrease from 4.15 subsistence levels of able-bodied population (SLabp) to 4.10 SLabp), and for wage earners including

those employed by individual entrepreneurs and individuals (from 3.33 SLabp to 3.18 SLabp; *Figure*). In 2023, the purchasing power of wage earners of organizations (for their full range) and taking into account those employed by individual entrepreneurs and natural persons almost reached the values it used to have before the country entered the modern development stage (since 2022), and reached the "peak" values for the period since 2014 (4.47 SLabp and 3.47 SLabp, respectively), which may indicate a certain adaptation of the economy for further development in the new conditions.

We should also note that these trends generalize local multidirectional processes. Part of the employed in the period under consideration went through a negative "scenario": for 3.8% (end of 2022 – beginning of 2023) of employees

²⁵ The author's assessment based on the data of the 23rd–31st rounds of the RLMS.

of organizations the employer reduced wages (reduced working hours)²⁶; some employees employed at organizations or by individual entrepreneurs, and some individual entrepreneurs themselves lost income due to termination of activity (including bankruptcy). According to the Federal Tax Service, in 2022, 50.4 thousand legal entities ceased operations due to liquidation, including 6.3 thousand due to bankruptcy, in 2023 – 49.7 thousand and 5.7 thousand respectively; of individual entrepreneurs in 2022, 495.0 thousand ceased operations, including 1.3 thousand due to bankruptcy, in 2023 – 451.7 thousand and 1.6 thousand respectively²⁷. The financial situation of households with children in which these categories of employed persons found themselves deteriorated due to the decline or loss of income from employment of household members.

While another part of the employed (and their households) “gained” in income from employment during this period. This applies to those employed in areas where the new conditions after 2022 did not lead to a worsening of the situation, but rather created new opportunities. For example, at enterprises of the defense-industrial complex: more than 500 thousand people have been employed in them since the beginning of the SMO, their wages have increased by 20–60%, on average it is equal to 90 thousand rubles²⁸. This is higher than wages of workers in the full range of organizations in the economy as a whole (74.8 thousand rubles in 2023)²⁹. For contract servicemen in the SMO zone, minimum payment is 210 thousand rubles per

month³⁰, which is almost three times higher than the salary of employees in the full range of organizations in the economy as a whole (74.8 thousand rubles in 2023³¹).

Relevance above average (from 3.1 to 3.9 points), according to experts, is typical for the following risks.

I. Risks determined by employment formalization:

- disguised labor relations: involvement of self-employed, individual entrepreneurs (IE), concluding civil law contracts instead of labor contracts with employees (3.7 points);
- hidden labor relations with employees: absence of formal labor relations with employees (unofficial employment) (3.5 points);
- unofficial self-employment: unregistered self-employment, IE (3.4 points).

“Shadow” employment, concealment, substitution of real labor relations with employees can be used by unscrupulous participants of the labor market, among other things, to save on taxes, thereby reducing social security of attracted workers. In particular, during the pandemic and COVID crisis, employers often used illegal schemes to optimize tax burden by involving the self-employed and individual entrepreneurs, concluding civil law contracts instead of employment contracts³². At present, disguised labor relations and shadow employment (estimated to involve more than 660,000 people in 2022 and 790,000 people in

²⁶ The author’s assessment based on the data of the 31st round of RLMS.

²⁷ Data on statistical tax reporting forms. Federal Tax Service. Available at: https://www.nalog.gov.ru/rn77/related_activities/statistics_and_analytics/forms/

²⁸ More than 500 thousand people have been employed by Russian defense industry enterprises since the beginning of the SMO. Available at: <https://tass.ru/ekonomika/19874813>

²⁹ Average monthly nominal accrued wages of employees in the economy as a whole in constituent entities of the Russian Federation for 2000–2023. Rosstat. Available at: https://rosstat.gov.ru/labor_market_employment_salaries

³⁰ What is the salary of a contract serviceman in the SMO zone? Available at: https://объясняем.рф/articles/military_service/sluzhba_po_kontraktu/finansy/kakaya-zarplata-u-kontraktnika-v-zone-svo/

³¹ Average monthly nominal accrued wages of employees in the economy as a whole in constituent entities of the Russian Federation for 2000–2023. Available at: https://rosstat.gov.ru/labor_market_employment_salaries

³² The Federal Tax Service described signs of illegal schemes involving the self-employed. Available at: <https://www.rbc.ru/economics/20/04/2022/625e6b059a794709de6eb40e>; The Tax Service has achieved a sharp reduction in the number of fake self-employed. Available at: <https://rg.ru/2023/09/13/zapisali-v-podelniki.html>

2023³³) can continue the previously established “trend”, as well as cover new groups of employed people involved in order to reduce the “costs” of economic entities under deteriorating conditions (including as a result of external sanctions pressure on the economy). That is, the realization of these risks can combine the features of both internal and external “contours” of risk conditioning in the sphere of employment.

For households with children, the presence of those employed under such conditions among workers who are responsible for the household’s welfare significantly increases living standard risks: instability and insecurity of labor income, as well as socio-economic insecurity in case of loss of employment.

II. Risks determined by employment conditions: risks of increasing the intensity of work (workload) (3.8 points) and increasing the duration of working hours (3.4 points). The implementation of these risks is conditioned by the actual trends of the present time (on the external “contour”, on the internal “contour”, due to the SMO): staff shortage, shrinkage and changes in the structure of labor supply as a result of mobilization, relocation, labor force transfer between the civilian sector and the MIC, etc.³⁴ They may occur for employees of

MIC enterprises (increase in output)³⁵, as well as enterprises for which new conditions have created opportunities to expand production³⁶.

An increase in the intensity of work and working hours, provided that it is appropriately formalized by employers, does not pose risks of reducing employment income and, consequently, the standard of living of households with children, but it may lead to increased risks related to employee health, which poses risks for participation in employment in the long term. Changing employment conditions in this aspect is also associated with negative consequences for the quality of employment and life related to professional burnout, violation of the work – life balance, etc.

III. Risks of “withdrawal” from employment. According to experts, the relevance of the risks of “withdrawal” from employment caused by the SMO is above average, namely, the risks of loss of employment due to destruction (damage) of enterprises in new and traditional border regions of Russia during the SMO (3.5 points). These risks have been permanent since the beginning of the SMO: infrastructure and civilian facilities are at risk of damage (destruction) as a result of air attacks, sabotage and so on³⁷. Events since the end of 2023 show that the relevance of these risks is increasing.

Average relevance (3.0 points), according to experts, is typical for the following risks:

- deterioration of employment conditions associated with unofficial (partially/completely) income from employment; these risks and their conditionality by processes on the internal and external contour” correspond both with the risks

³³ Gadzhieva M., Stroiteleva M. From black income: Ministry of Labor estimated the number of Russians employed in the shadow sector at 9.6 million. Available at: <https://iz.ru/1709349/milana-gadzhieva-mariia-stroiteleva/s-chnogo-dokhoda-mintrud-otcenil-chislo-zaniatykh-v-teni-rossiian-v-96-mln>

³⁴ How can we do without workers: The shortage of workers in 2023 amounted to 4.8 million. Available at: https://iz.ru/1624816/mariia-stroiteleva/kak-zhe-bez-ruk-deficit-rabotnikov-v-2023-godu-sostavil-48-mln?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop; RAS: Personnel shortage in Russia in 2023 amounted to 4.8 million people. Available at: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/6425588>; Personnel shortage in the industry has set a new record. Available at: <https://www.rbc.ru/economics/25/01/2024/65b122ac9a79473a6cc106e0?from=copy>; Kravchenko E. Battle for the worker: How the Russian labor market reacted to the sanctions. Available at: <https://econs.online/articles/ekonomika/bitva-za-rabotnika-kak-rossiyskiy-rynok-truda-otreagiroval-na-sanktsii/>; etc.

³⁵ Putin assessed the productivity of the Russian military-industrial complex. Available at: <https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/news/2023/09/19/21321434.shtml>

³⁶ Kravchenko E. Battle for the worker: How the Russian labor market reacted to the sanctions. Available at: <https://econs.online/articles/ekonomika/bitva-za-rabotnika-kak-rossiyskiy-rynok-truda-otreagiroval-na-sanktsii/>

³⁷ See, for example: Drone attacks and shelling of Russian territory. Map. Available at: <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/05/03/2024/625568df9a794741e114a762?from=copy>

of hidden (unregistered) labor relations with employees and unregistered self-employment, and with concealment of part of income from registered employment (“gray” wages, etc.). As follows from RLMS–HSE data, an increase in the share of those employed under such conditions took place at the beginning of the 2014–2021 period against the background of increased external sanctions pressure after the return of Crimea to Russia (growth from 12.1% in 2014 to 18.6% in 2016). At the beginning of the modern stage (2022 – present), after almost a year after the next package of sanctions, there was also an increase in the share of employment with unofficial income (15.1%), which, however, was lower than the “peak” values of the indicator (18.6% in 2016, 18.2% in 2017) that occurred in the 2014–2021 period³⁸. For households with children, informal income from employment (although there is a deceptive perception of being “guaranteed” higher actual incomes by hiding them (all or part of them) from taxation) carries risks of income instability and insecurity in the long run;

- layoffs, downsizing, liquidation of enterprises, including as a result of external sanctions; the level of relevance of these risks stated by experts generally correlates with the data characterizing the actual situation. According to the results of research based on the data of the Federal Tax Service, in 2023 the number of commercial enterprises that terminated their activities became record low for the last eight years; in a part of Russian regions (about one third) the number of newly opened enterprises prevailed over the number of those that ceased operations³⁹. According to the results of a survey of entrepreneurs conducted by the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (RUIE, 2023), the majority of Russian companies managed to adapt to sanctions and find new suppliers during

³⁸ The author’s assessment based on the data of the 23rd–31st rounds of RLMS.

³⁹ In Russia, the “mortality rate of business” has decreased dramatically. Available at: <https://lenta.ru/news/2024/01/22/v-rossii-rekordno-snizilas-smertnost-biznesa/>

the year⁴⁰. Similar trends were revealed by a survey of Russian real sector enterprises (Kovalin et al., 2024). Individual entrepreneurs, micro- and small enterprises have also adapted, some of them have become self-employed in the conditions of declining incomes and in order to optimize tax burden⁴¹. Still, a significant number of enterprises and individual entrepreneurs had to close down during this period. According to the Federal Tax Service, in 2022–2023, more than 100,000 legal entities and about a million individual entrepreneurs ceased their activities due to liquidation⁴². Risks of loss of employment for households with children have one of the most tangible negative consequences for their situation associated with the loss of a source of income.

Experts assessed the relevance of other risks (related to the deterioration of employment conditions, “entry” into/“withdrawal” from employment) as *moderate* (from 2.3 to 2.9 points). Among them, we single out the risks that *in the 2014–2021 period did not have the “content” that they have acquired at present* in the fundamentally new conditions of the country’s development. In our opinion, they are characterized by a higher level (*not lower than average*) of relevance than defined by experts. Thus, in the context of the SMO, risks to health (including disability) and life in the performance of professional duties are particularly acute for military personnel, law enforcement officers, etc., including those taking part in the SMO, as well as for the civilian employment sector localized in the Russian regions affected by the SMO. Taking into account the number of SMO participants, employees of

⁴⁰ Imports have become more friendly. Available at: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/6350248?ysclid=lp82puimhe991890300>

⁴¹ Stroiteleva M. Income by place: Russians have started to shift from SMEs to self-employed. Available at: <https://iz.ru/1557744/mariia-stroiteleva/dokhody-po-mestu-rossiiane-nachali-perekhodit-iz-msp-v-samozaniatyie>

⁴² Data on statistical tax reporting forms. Federal Tax Service. Available at: https://www.nalog.gov.ru/rn77/related_activities/statistics_and_analytics/forms/

Systematization of risks arising in the sphere of employment,
for the social and labor status of households with children

Sphere in which risks manifest themselves	Risks and their relevance
“Entry” into employment	Problems of employment for unemployed persons due to various circumstances, in particular due to the discrepancy between qualifications and job requirements, including those caused by the needs of achieving sovereignty by the Russian economy (<i>relevance below average</i>)
Employment	The risks of increasing involvement in non-standard, precarious employment, including “disguised” (<i>above average</i>), hidden (<i>above average</i>) labor relations, unregistered self-employment (self-employment, individual entrepreneurs) (<i>above average</i>), limitation of the validity of employment contracts (<i>below average</i>). Risks of deterioration of employment conditions, including a decrease in income from employment (<i>high</i>), an increase in work intensity (workload) (<i>above average</i>), an increase in working hours (<i>above average</i>), unofficial (partially/completely) income from employment (<i>average</i>), part-time work (<i>below average</i>), unpaid leave on employer’s initiative (<i>below average</i>), wage arrears (<i>below average</i>)
“Withdrawal” from employment	Risks of unemployment (temporary unemployment), including loss of employment due to the destruction (damage) of enterprises in new and traditional border regions of Russia during the implementation of the SMO (<i>above average</i>), redundancies, downsizing, liquidation of enterprises, including as a result of external sanctions (<i>average</i>). Risks of “withdrawal” from employment for employed persons, including in connection with disability (<i>average</i>), with the need to care for family members requiring constant care (<i>average</i>)
Compiled according to the results of the expert survey.	

various security, defense and law enforcement agencies, as well as the expansion of territories that are subject to destructive impact of the enemy and their intensification from the end of 2023, these risks may be relevant for a large group of households with children, which include SMO participants, employees of the relevant agencies and/or those who reside in the relevant territories.

The risks of “withdrawal” from employment (transition from the category of the employed to the category of the economically inactive population) have also received a new “content”. In the context of the SMO, these risks are most acute for those households with SMO participants and, in general, servicemen and employees of security, defense and law enforcement agencies, who may receive injuries that are incompatible with continued labor activity or require a long period of rehabilitation. These risks affect both those who are out of employment (temporarily, long-term or permanently) and members of their households who will be caring for them and, accordingly, may be “out of employment” for this period. These risks are also relevant for households with victims of various attacks by the enemy in the territories of the

SMO and in other territories that are increasingly exposed to such attacks. In general, these risks may affect a significant proportion of households with children. The relevance of such risks and the state’s response to this “challenge” are evidenced, among other things, by the targeted development of social support for the participants of the armed conflict and their families, the creation of the state fund “Defenders of the Fatherland”, the activities of which include palliative medical care, organization of long-term care, etc.⁴³

Based on the generalization of the results of the expert survey, we systematize the risks in terms of the sphere of their manifestation (*Table*).

Conclusion

Changes in the Russian labor market and employment under the impact of the SMO and the aggravation of external sanctions pressure, which gave a new “impetus” to the dynamics of employment development after earlier “shocks” (increased external sanctions pressure after the return of the Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol to Russia, the COVID-19 pandemic, corona crisis, etc.), are

⁴³ “Defenders of the Fatherland” state foundation. Available at: <https://gosfondveteranov.gov.ru/#sAbout>

being “projected” at the micro level and cause risks for the situation of households with children. Identifying and analyzing the risks is necessary for the actualization of public policy measures to neutralize these risks and prevent the deterioration of the situation of households with children, which determines the practical significance of our work.

Taking into account the results of the study, we consider it appropriate to pay attention to the following groups of topical issues when developing appropriate policy measures in the sphere of employment, standard of living and quality of life, including the development of the national project “Family”⁴⁴.

1. Risks that affect the level of employment in households with children and, consequently, their standard of living. The new stage of Russia’s development (2022 – present) brings to the fore a number of topical risks of employment loss associated with damage (destruction) of enterprises in new and traditional border regions of Russia in the context of the SMO, as well as due to the enemy’s destructive influence in the territories not directly bordering the SMO zone. There are also risks of economic inactivity (temporary, long-term, permanent) in households due to the loss of a member’s ability to work or due to the need to take care of those who require it. These risks add to the already existing risks related to the problems of “withdrawal from” or “entering” employment and, as the events of the early 2024 show, are becoming increasingly important compared to the situation in the beginning of 2022. If these risks are implemented, this will lead to negative consequences for the standard of living of households with children, increasing the number of those who are out of employment and reducing the level of labor income (respectively, households’ self-

sufficiency); this situation is a “challenge” for the public administration system of different levels and profiles (employment policy, increased spending on social security, etc.).

2. Risks that cause a decrease in the quality of employment in households with children and, as a consequence, in their standard of living. These risks include, first of all, the risks of (nominal, real) decline in income from employment, as well as risks that have not been considered by experts – insufficient income from employment to ensure decent standards of living for households with children; this situation is typical for more than 80% of employees of organizations (Odintsova et al., 2023a). The decline in employment income in such households makes their situation even more vulnerable. Overcoming these risks, in our opinion, requires a comprehensive differentiated approach, which should be based on the following benchmarks:

- cardinal increase in the purchasing power of wages; we believe that wages (taking into account the level of qualification) should allow workers from one- to two-child families with both parents to independently ensure a decent standard of living;

- active policy aimed to support large and single-parent families with children, families with limited working capacity of parents, for whom it is difficult to reach the appropriate standards of living only at the expense of income from employment.

Attention should be paid to the situation with the risks of reducing the quality of employment by other parameters (working hours, conditions of wage payment, etc.), as well as with their multiple concentration, which causes the loss or reduction of important aspects of employment – its stability and security (availability of social guarantees and their realization). This requires improving employment policy, including raising the quality of employment of new (atypical) and traditional forms of employment, ensuring decent employment conditions and labor guarantees for the employed.

⁴⁴ Putin announced the launch of new national projects in Russia. Available at: <https://iz.ru/1657779/2024-02-29/putin-soobshchil-o-zapuske-novykh-natsionalnykh-proektov-v-rossii>

Necessary measures can be systematically and gradually implemented within the framework of the new national project “Family” aimed at improving the quality of life of families with children. Other program-strategic documents should also be oriented toward achieving the relevant goals. Effectiveness of these measures can be assessed on the basis of monitoring of the socio-economic situation of families, which is now assumed in relation to families with many children⁴⁵ and which, in our opinion, is advisable to be expanded to other types of families with children, which will increase the targeting and effectiveness of the measures (Odintsova et al., 2023b).

The hypothesis of the study was partially confirmed, which can be explained by chronological differences in the assessment of the situation (the expert survey was conducted in the fall of 2023; the situation has changed since the survey). The list of employment risks identified in the study is certainly not exhaustive. The approach to the systematization of risks we have proposed can be used in further research to supplement the list of employment risks.

The results obtained allow us to outline the contours of further applied, in-depth studies of the dynamics of the social and labor status of households with children of different types under the influence of various risks related to employment. When setting and testing hypotheses, in our opinion, it is necessary to proceed from the fact that this influence is conditioned by the following factors:

- number of risk “carriers” (employed, unemployed, persons who are not part of the labor force) in households and their characteristics determined by socio-demographic (young people, including after vocational education, women after parental leave, etc.; those living in the territories (not) affected by the SMO, etc.), socio-professional

(level and profile of education, level of qualification, employment sector (civilian, defense-industrial, military), etc.), socio-professional (level and profile of education, level of qualification, employment sector (civilian, defense-industrial, military), etc.) characteristics;

- concentration of risks in specific “carriers” – household members; the greatest negative impact on the situation of households can be caused by risks that lead to a decrease in: a) the level of employment (“entry” into / “withdrawal” from employment) in households; b) the quality of employment of working members of households, determining the level and stability of income from employment;

- achieved indicators of living standards, including availability and level of other incomes not related to employment, savings (financial reserves in case of deterioration of the situation, including employment and/or its loss).

An additional factor is the number and age of children, which will determine the situation of households in terms of dependency burden with the existing ratio of working and non-working adults, as well as limitations to the participation in employment of adult members of households (due to the need to care for young children).

A separate important direction of such research could be the study of the dynamics of the situation of households that have children and participants of the SMO; such studies will help to work out proposals for improving measures of state support for such households, including taking into account the risks of subsequent adaptation, return to the civilian employment sector, and support measures in case of disability.

The study complements the scientific and expert field of discussion on the problems of the labor market and employment in Russia at the current stage of its development, associated with ensuring sovereignty in the context of the SMO and unprecedented external sanctions, emphasizing the actual risks for the situation of households with children.

⁴⁵ On measures of social support for large families: Presidential Decree 63, dated January 23, 2024. Available at: <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/document/0001202401230001>

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