



Geographical Aspects of Population Migration in Russia in the 1990s

Sluka N. A., Inga Vasilenko
"Lomonosov V." University, Moscow
Russia



Modern characteristics of population migration in Russia are closely connected with the fundamental transformation of socio-political and economic development in the country. Realization of global reform programme, transition to market relation in the absence of adequate social and economic gears have given new quality to migration process.

Since the end of the 1980s radical changes have taken place not only in dynamics, scale and directions of migration flows but also in push or pull factors, in the structure of migrants, in the character of migratory movements, etc. For this reason complete estimation of rural mobility becomes possible only in the context of analysis of migration evolution in Russia.

One of the main features of current migration processes in Russia in the 1990s is a sharp downfall of migration activity that may be considered as a response to the deep socio-economic crisis. Migration turnover in the period 1989-1993 has

reduced its level nearly twice—from 12 million to 7.5 million people /2/. Both internal and external migration has changed.

There are two types of external migration exchange for Russia—with two groups of countries (see the table). The migration exchange with foreign countries is rather stable, and emigration prevails. On the whole in the 1990s entire emigration dominates in the external outflow from Russia (more than one half constitute Germans, 12% - Jews). Main sending areas are primarily the largest cities and the main receiving countries are Germany, Israel and the USA. Recently emigration from Russia has had "brain drain" character (more than 1/5 of all emigrants have higher education). The overwhelming majority of immigrants from foreign countries is from Asia and Africa. The liberalization of the frontier control in Russia has created a completely new problem for our country: plenty of unregistered foreign citizens stay in Russia, trying to find a job or to penetrate further into Western Europe /2/.

Table 1. Dynamics of external permanent migration in the Russian Federation in the 1980s - 1990s (thousands)

Directions of migration flows	1986	1989	1993	1996
Total arrivals, from	957.5	913.2	923.3	643.4
foreign countries	957.0	912.0	920.0	640.9
former soviet republics	0.5	1.2	2.4	2.5
Total Departures, to	721.9	729.5	483.0	293.9
foreign countries	719.1	692.7	369.2	196.4
former soviet republics	2.8	46.6	113.8	97.5
Total net-migration	235.6	183.7	440.3	349.5
foreign countries	236.9	286.2	551.7	444.5
former soviet republics	-2.3	-102.5	-111.4	-95.0

Sources: /1/, /4/.

As it can be seen from the table, foreign countries play the most significant role in the external migration. At present they account for nearly 90% of all external migration turnover. As a result of political and economic policy of new independent states the migration movement in the post-soviet space seems to be a one-sided process: there are 10 emigrants for 33 immigrants /3/. On the one hand Russia attracts migrants because of its better economic situation and on the other - because of some facts of discrimination in the neighboring countries. That is why Russian repatriates constitute more than 2/3 of immigrants. Russia receives population from all the former USSR republics. In the mid 1990s the most active senders were Kazakhstan (31.2% of total net-migration), Uzbekistan (15.9%) and Ukraine sends big numbers of permanent migrants and "working guests" (gastarbeiters, especially not registered officially) /2/.

Despite all the significance of external migration and its activation in the 1990s general migration situation in Russia has been mainly determined by internal migration. In recent years the number of people changing residence within the country has varied from 70% to 85% /3/. At the same time, while market relations gradually develop, the character of migration activity also transforms. The important recent trends include the following: economic motivation gains more weight; permanent migration tends to be replaced by temporary one; migration processes are hardly controlled and are caused mainly by spontaneous factors; refugee movement remains rather high - in 1995 it more that 30% of all immigration to Russia. In such conditions, when demographic situation is steadily getting worse, the migration factor becomes particularly important and often determines population dynamics in regions.

There are several major shifts in the internal migration balance in the 1990s. First, it is a sharp decrease in overall migration; second, emergence of completely new direction in inter-regional population exchange - from regions of "recent economic development" to regions of "old economic development" (Central European parts); third, emergence of positive net - migration in rural space and, on the contrary, the negative one in urban centers /5/. The main migration direction in Russia is oriented from the northeast to the southwest. Because of significant migrant outflow, active population loss takes place in the Far East, East-Siberian and the North Regions. A dramatic population decrease is typical for the whole Far North (especially Chukchi autonomous district, Magadan and Kamchatka regions) /3/. The most intensive migrant inflows are in the NorthWest, Central, Volga-Vyatka (except Republic of Moldova), Central-European Russia, Volga (except Republic of Kalmykia), Ural (except

Kurgan region) Regions, Krasnodar, Stavropol territories and Rostov region /6/.

The analysis of urban migration indicates that during the 1990s its geographical aspects have transformed. In the 1980s average annual migration growth was close to 6 per 1,000 people, in the mid 1990s it constituted 4-5 per 1,000 people.

The picture of migration connections has significantly changed due to space polarization. The central and southern European parts, the Ural Region and the southern part of West Siberia have formed a zone of migrant intensive inflow while urban settlements of northern and Far-Eastern areas turned to be a zone of population exodus.

However, rural migration tends to be quite different. Up to the end of the 1980s almost all the regions experienced the outflow from rural space. This affirms the incompleteness of urbanization process. Between 1979-1988 rural space lost 9.1 million people (or almost 1% on average annually). Since 1991 rural space receives a significant migration inflow. In 1991-1994 it constituted 855,000 people or 0.6% annually which was considerably more than the inflow into urban space (650,000 people). However, after 1992 former tendencies renewed and urban migration began to prevail again. Though temporary, such inversion in inter-settlement migration underlines once again the depth of socio-economic crisis in Russia /2/.

There are several sources forming positive balance of rural migration in the 1990s. Mass migrant inflows from abroad go on the first place, inter-regional migration (within Russia) - on the second, and migratory movements within regions are the third-large source. According to the data of Goskomstat (Russian Federation State Committee on Statistics) in 1994-1995 inter-state migration reached 85-90%, migration between economic regions constituted 7-11% and migration within regions accounted for just 3-4%. On the contrary, net-migration between oblasts is steadily negative. As a result rural space accumulates mainly distant migrants and at the same time loses its own population /5/, /7/.

Similarly to the urban migration situation the territory of Russia may be divided into two macroregions: the North and the East, rapidly losing rural population, the West and the South, accumulating it. Among the first group of the regions the most intensive in-migration is observed in Republic of Comi, Evenki, Chukchi, Koryak autonomous districts, Khabarovsk territory, among the second one the most intensive out-migration is in Bryansk region, Republic of North Ossetia, Ingush republic and Khanty-Mansi autonomous district.

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On the whole the influence of migration inflow is considered to be positive as it compensates natural negative population growth, keeps demographic potential from the more rapid reduction, contributes to age structure rejuvenation of rural population, reinforces labor resources. In general it contributes to the revival of rural space since migrants are more oriented towards intensive work than local residents. However, migrants may cause a range of problems connected with housing, socio-psychological adaptation, etc.

Outflow from rural space leads to opposite consequences: it contributes to the decrease of demographic potential, to aging process because out-migrants are primarily the people of working age which reduces labor resources.

Migration process is the most dynamic economic indicator that reflects the population reaction to reforms. It is expected that with transition to market relations and with stabilization of the socio-economic situation, traditional socio-economic factors such as labor market and urbanization, which help to stabilize migration process, and not stress factors, will play the primary role in migration process.

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