

**NEW MIGRANT COMMUNITIES IN RUSSIA:
WHAT DOES STATISTICS REVEAL?**

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This paper attempts to characterize forming of the new migrant communities in post-Soviet Russia both on the basis of 2010 All-Russian Census first results and foreign labour force current statistics. A term “new” used in this paper is conditional and refers mainly to the migrants from post-Soviet Central Asia, China and Viet Nam.

Characterizing the migrant communities on the basis of censuses and current foreign labour force statistics is rather complicated task. Essentially, it presumes assessing the structural changes of fuzzy sets on the base of evidently incomplete data. The different schools disagree in their definitions of an ethnos and a diaspora, the vital concepts in the considered field. Some definitions rather bring any statistical calculation into the question than favour it. Diaspora, for example, is defined as “the life stile, not the rigid demographic and all the more not the ethnic reality” (Tishkov, 2003, p.446), “practice, project, claim and stance, rather than...bounded group” (Brubaker, 2005, p.13). No wonder that the definitions of the various migrant communities can be hardly related to statistical categories of the resident and the temporary populations, ethnical composition, etc.

On the other hand, statistical information, which can be used to characterize migrant communities is far from being impeccable. Incompleteness of All-Russian censuses data on ethnical composition of population is caused by the fact that these data were partly extracted from administrative sources which do not contain information about ethnicity; in addition a certain number of respondents refused to answer the question o ethnicity.¹ In addition, such statistical categories as a resident and a temporary population do not allow distinguishing quasi-resident population, the group of the migrants which lived in Russia during the major part of the year but regularly visited their families in the countries of origin. Current statistics of foreign labour force is incomplete and at the same time includes double counting. In spite of these difficulties, statistical data show reveal certain tendencies in development of the new migrant communities in post-Soviet Russia considered below.

¹According Rosstat, in the course of 2010 Census ethnicity of 5.6 million respondents or 4.0 per cent of total (in 2002 Census, correspondingly, 1,5 million or 1 per cent) was not defined because the data about 3.6 million people were extracted from administrative sources and 2 million respondents did not define their ethnicity.
– http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/croc/perepis_itogi1612.htm

Structural peculiarities of new migrant communities

Combining the censuses data with the current labour force statistics allow to estimate the structure of migrant community by duration and permanency of sojourn in Russia. These characteristics are of prime importance due to positive correlation between duration of a migrant's residence in the host country and migrant's social status. Due to acquired social and economic ties those migrants who live in the host county for the long time provide the newcomers with jobs, reconcile the conflicts with local authorities or communities and so on. To understand more clearly which of the migrants' groups are comprehended by the different statistical sources, expert and mass-media estimations (table 1) the following groups inside a migrant community should be subdivided.

1. *Rooted migrants*, those who live in the host country together with the spouse and the minors (if they have any) permanently and during some years. Normally, the members of this group are most closely included in social and economic activities of the host society.
2. *Quasi-permanent migrants*, those who reside in the host country during major part of the year separately from their families which reside in the countries of migrants' origin. Family relations in this case are usually based on the regular and more or less long migrants' visits to the country of origin. Normally, the members of this group are included in the social and economic activities of the host society weaker than in the previous case.
3. *Temporary migrants*, those labour migrants and/or the members of their families who reside in the host countries sporadically, usually during some month in the year. They are integrated in the host society weaker than those migrants who belong to the first or to the second group.
4. *Undocumented migrants*, those who reside and/or work in the host country illegally. These migrants may belong to each of the any previous groups but are represented minimally in the first and maximally in the last one.
5. *Fictitious migrants*. This category designates the information phantom² which is made up of fictitious persons and arises from the interest groups' drive to exaggerate the number of migrants. Internet sites abounds with the figures which exceed manifold the expert estimations which are dominant in the scientific community. This information phantom mainly feed on the fears and unsolved problems associated with migration and in a way by the shortcomings of statistics and methodological standards. Methodology which underlies the expert judgments is usually omitted even in the serious research publications because of (or on the pretext of) lack of

² Information phantom is "a set of reliable, unreliable and/or deliberately incomplete information used as a tool of forming the required social and political attitudes. Generally saying, deliberately understated estimations of the number of migrants may be an information phantom as well (Mesenzev, 2002, p.28).

readers' interest to the technicalities. It makes the border between information phantoms and expert judgments permeable because in both cases the results obtained are given without proofs.

Table 1

**Coverage of the different groups inside migrant communities
by data sources and estimations**

Groups of migrants	Data sources and estimations			
	Censuses	Current foreign labour force statistics	Expert estimations	Mass media estimations
Rooted				
Quasi-permanent				
Temporary				
Undocumented				
Fictitious				

Note: black cells – significant coverage; grey cells – less significant coverage; white cells – insignificant coverage or no coverage.

From our viewpoint, the persons who identified themselves in the course of 2010 Census as the members of ethnic groups which are titular for any post-Soviet Central Asian State, Viet Nam and China belong mainly to the first or to the second group. Participation in Russian censuses is voluntary; in addition the respondents had a right not to answer a question of ethnicity. The latter in its turn is defined on the basis of respondent's self-identification. With a glance of it the persons who defined themselves as the members of mentioned ethnic groups were presumably those who saw no the reasons for avoiding the contacts with the registrars or concealing ethnicity since they resided in Russia legally and more or less permanently.

In contrast to census data, current statistics of foreign labour force in Russia characterizes mainly quazi-permanent and temporary migrants³. Comparison of Census data with current foreign labour force statistics (table 2) reveals that the permanent nucleus of the new migrant communities is much smaller than massive temporary periphery. Labour migrants from Uzbekistan, Tadjikistan and Kirgizia outnumber essentially the persons of corresponding ethnicities according to Census data. This gap is even much bigger in the case of Chinese and Vietnamese communities.

³ According to Rosstat, by 2010 Census data in Russia temporarily (less than 1 year) resided 489 thousand permanent foreign residents as compared with 239 thousand in 2002. By estimation of Head of Russian Federal Migration Service, "the total number of foreigners in Russia is nine and a half million, 1.3 million are working legally, 3.7 are conventionally visiting Russia as the guests. The rest is the category of risk which makes up 4.5 million persons including near 3.2 migrants who reside in Russia more than 3 month." *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, 22 March 2012.

Nucleus-periphery ratio in Armenian diaspora, one of the oldest diasporas in Russia, is opposite. The temporary workers from Armenia make up only 5.1 per cent of the total number of Russian Armenian by 2010 Census data. The value of this indicator among Azerbaijani (14.9 per cent) is also relatively small, that is partly explained by fact that many Azerbaijani reside for a long time in Russian Dagestan and other regions of Russia. In addition, according to results of sample surveys (Moukomel, 2006, p.54) among Azerbaijani a share of those labour migrants who work in Russia 10 months or more is higher than among the labour migrants from other states.

Table 2

Certain characteristics of the migrant communities in Russia

Ethnicity	Number of foreign workers according to current labour force statistics in 2010*, thousand	Number by 2010 Census data, thousand	Column 2 as percentage of column 3*	Growth rates (2010 to 2002)	
				Number according to Census	Number of foreign workers according to current labour force statistics *
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>
Chinese	186.5	28.9	645.3	0.84	4.82
Vietnamese	46.0	13.9	330.9	0.53	1.72
Uzbeks	511.5	289.9	176.4	2.36	33.00
Tajiks	268.6	200.3	134.1	1.68	15.99
Kirghizes	117.7	103.4	113.8	3.25	18.39
Moldavians	72.2	156.4	46.1	0.91	1.78
Azerbaijani	40.3	603.1	14.9	0.96	2.69
Armenians	59.8	1182.4	5.1	1.05	4.75

Sources: Russian statistical yearbook 2011. Rosstat, Moscow, 2011, p.129 (in Russian)

All-Russian Census. Ethnical composition. (In Russian)

http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/croc/perepis_itogi1612.htm

*Current labour statistics refer to the citizens of corresponding states, not to persons of certain ethnicity. Nevertheless, since the migrants from these states belong mainly to the titular ethnicities the data of censuses and current foreign labour force statistics are comparable.

Perspectives of integration: comparative analysis

2010 Census data allow presuming growth in numbers of those Kirghiz, Uzbeks and Tajiks, who reside in Russia permanently or nearly permanently. Nevertheless the pace of this growth is significantly lower than that of temporary migrants (table 2). This gap is even greater in the case of Chinese and Vietnamese. Below we employ comparative analysis to scrutinize the feasible pace of including the new migrant communities into Russian society.

Notwithstanding the relatively long history of immigrant minorities from developing countries in the West (two or three generations or even more) integration of these minorities in the western societies is far from being completed. While economic advancement of some minorities, for example Asian Indian and Chinese in U.S. and U.K. is evident, many minorities are still underprivileged. Unemployment rate among second generation of migrants from these minorities is often not lower than among the first one. In France unemployment rate in the second generation is lower than in the first one only among women in certain minorities (Trajectoires, 2009, p.56).

Hispanic Americans are overrepresented among blue collars; percentage of Hispanics among workers in industry and transport is one and a half times, in construction and extraction two times percentage of Hispanics among all employed.⁴ In addition, it should be taken into account that economic advancement is not equal to deep social integration. For example, American Chinese are notable for high educational attainment and low unemployment rate. So, in 2009 unemployment rate among Chinese was by 2.5 percentage points lower than U.S. average (US... 2009). At the same time it should be taken into consideration that such low unemployment rate is partly caused by the high involvement in Chinese ethnic economy which according to empirical studies (Fong, Ooka, 2002) hampers participation in the social activities of wider society.

On the other hand, the essential changes in interpreting of integration processes by western theorists should be noted. Early theories based on experience of Europeans' assimilation in the New World presumed that assimilation lead to disappearing of economic and sociocultural gap between immigrants and wider pending the period limited by few generations. New theories take into consideration the experience of integrating the migrants from developing countries and are based on different premises. In accordance with these theories, integration of minorities is segmented and does not comprehend equally the different social groups as well as the different domains of economic, social and cultural activity (Portes, Min Zhou, 1993).

The experience of the western countries shows that integration of the new migrant communities can scarcely be rapid. Transformation of temporary migrants to permanent residents is a prerequisite, not a pledge of integration. As world experience shows, the permanent residents does not obligatory identify them with the host society or divide its values. The host society, in

⁴ Calculations based on: Bureau of Labor Statistics. Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat39.pdf> ; <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.pdf>

its turn, cannot go too far in its attempts to form migrant's identity. Idea of a melting pot so popular in U.S. many years ago contrasts increasingly with present-day reality. The migrant communities which are integrating into host society slowly and incompletely are the part of social reality in Western Europe and most likely remain to be it for the nearest decades. This perspective is highly probable for Russia too.

In search of balance

New migration communities are forming in the framework of Eurasian migration system (Ivakhniouk, 2008). Referring to a *system* allows wondering about its self-control which from my viewpoint does exist. One empirical argument in favour of this conclusion is the character of the changes in the number of foreign labour force: the exponential growth over the period of economic upsurge was changed by decrease in 2009-2010; the recent recovery is accompanied by increasing in issuing of works permissions in 2011. Other important argument is the fact that percentage of those labour migrants in Russia who live separately from dependent member of their families is stably high.

The latter parameter is closely connected with other aspects of Eurasian migration system functioning. At present coming of labour migrants' families to Russia is deterred by both prevalent migrants' wage level and price discrepancy between Russia and post-Soviet Central Asia States. When the dependent members of labour migrants' families come to Russia the migrants are forced to choose between gaining the higher wage which is always problematic and tolerating the worsening living standards.

While the gradual increase in the number of those migrants who live in Russia together with dependent members of their families is most likely inevitable, the jump in the number of migrants' dependents may lead to negative consequences. The migrants and their families must be provided with public social services at least at minimal standard level, so the jump in their number will increase the load on the budgets at the various levels that in turn may strengthen the tensions between the migrants and the locals. The present structure of the new migrant community may be considered as equilibrium achieved in interacting of wide range of political, economic, social and cultural factors. Nevertheless, since the international migration to Russia is still the source of sociopolitical tensions the equilibrium in Eurasian migration system is fragile. Political decisions which influence the certain parameters of this system should take into account the side effects resulted in unforeseen changes of other parameters.

Comparing Canadian and European immigration experience is rather instructive in this context. Canadian geography allows selecting the immigrants in the territories of the countries of origin to choose those candidates who are capable of finding quickly a job. It, in turn, “minimized the dependence of newcomers on social support, providing less room for attacks on immigrants as a burden on the country” (Banting, 2010, p.814). As a result Canada continues adhering to policy of multiculturalism in the times when West European leaders announce its failure. According to results of international comparative studies, Canadians manifest more favourable attitudes towards migrants and migration than Europeans. So in Canada only 10 per cent of respondents suppose immigration to be among two most important issues facing the country while in U.K. 37 per cent, Italy 21 per cent, Germany 19 per cent and France 16 per cent (Transatlantic...2010, pp.1, 2).

Conclusion

In the nearest decades the new migrant societies will play the increasing role in economy and politics. Ideals and objectives in the field under consideration are evident and include a harmony in the relations of different ethnic groups, integration, upward socioprofessional mobility of migrants and advancement in their employment. However, the way to achieve these aims is not quite evident. Most likely, this way will be searched by cut and try method. It is important to minimize the social and economic expenses of the errors which are immanent to this process.

Migrant communities and wider society make up an integral system. In the nearest decades migrants’ integration into host society may scarcely be complete; the new migration communities do not dissolve in wider society and retain in a varying degree their specificities. This reality should be taken into account when decisions are made.

Measures which are implemented in the framework of migration policy should balance the interests of migration communities and a host society. In opposite case the backlash may lead to substantial losses for the social and political system in whole. Employment is the field where such balancing is of prime importance. Also, the adequate places of migrant community and “diaspora” in politics should be found. The model which emphasizes on the contacts between the authorities and the leaders of one or another ethnic diaspora may be effective in some cases but at the same times suffers from the grave drawbacks. Such a model rather contributes to isolation of migrant community from wider society than encourages migrants’ involvement to wider nets of social contacts. In addition, the legitimacy of diaspora’s leaders can always be questioned.

Since interrelations between the new migrant communities and a host society comprehend politics, economics education and culture, founded decision-making requires the relevant information on the occupations, citizenship, family composition, incomes and other characteristics of the migrant communities. Currently this aspect of Russian statistics lags behind the leading western countries. Also, the migrants who usually live in Russia over the major part of the year but regularly leave Russia for several months to visit their families in the countries of origin should be separated in the special statistical category to estimate their number. Elaboration of 2010 All-Russian Census data in more detail could contribute to solving of these problems. In addition, it would be reasonable to implement the large sample survey of international migrants in Russia.

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