

Emigration in Modern Russia

¹Valentina A. Sushko, ¹Gennadi B. Pronchev,

²Nadezhda G. Proncheva and ³Ekaterina V. Shisharina

¹Department of Sociology, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia

²Department of Physics and Mathematics,

Keldysh Institute of Applied Mathematics Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia

³Department of Pedagogical Sciences, Moscow State Pedagogical University, Moscow, Russia

Abstract: The study studies emigration patterns from the Russian Federation at the present time. It shows that since the middle of the 1990s emigration from Russia has no longer been only an ethnical phenomenon and now it is becoming a part of cultural and intellectual capital exchange which is typical of advanced countries. Difference in labour rates, lack of opportunities to perform experimental studies, inadequate working conditions are the main reasons behind intellectual emigration of scientists from Russia over the last decade. Migration is a worldwide phenomenon of multiple dimensions. Now that Russia has faced a fully fledged social crisis with unclear outlook for development and uncertain values, it is vital to assess the effect of migration on the wellbeing and sustainable development of the society and implementation of sound policies. Various, sometimes huge, tiers of society are involved in migration, which can effect the composition of the society and provoke either genuine or latent crises, international friction or social tensions.

Key words: Population movement, migration policy, modern Russia, world wide, multiple dimensions

INTRODUCTION

The process of emigration is one of the most common in modern population development. Emigration history is the history of mankind. The picture of modern world would be absolutely different, if there were no territorial resettlement. With wars, transition periods in development of different countries, public dissatisfaction with political regime, environmental disasters, emigration intensifies. There are plenty of motives forcing people to leave home country and seek a better life somewhere else. It is psychologically difficult for the majority of people to change the place and way of living completely. And subsequently the situation seldom changes. Emigrants feel out of place in the foreign country which leads to inability to accept traditions and culture of the new country. Attitude towards emigration can be considered not only in the context of interregional and international relations but also as an individual aspect of social and economic tensions, directly associated with the perception of “completely different” and revealing the opinion on the social hierarchy, mobility, etc. Perception of a “stranger”, a person from outside, allows to reconstruct the beliefs of community about itself, its features, origin, prospects for further development and to mark the points of the highest potential for conflict and relations uncertainty.

As a result of the transition to a market economy, the collapse of the USSR, a change of territorial borders, the integration of the country into the international division of labour, Russia took a place in international labour migration at the turn of the 21st century (Sushko, 2015).

Russia has seen rather complicated emigration patterns. It has a huge territory, neighbouring many developing countries. Moreover, it is vital to keep in mind the historical aspects. Russia has experienced numerous revolutions, wars, much civil unrest and other complicated transition periods throughout its development. That is why there are so many emigrants from Russia.

Today people leave the country for different reasons. As before, the main motive is to improve the living standard. However, it is typical not only of people on the edge of poverty but also of the middle class that is far from being in need. Many people wish to achieve certain professional goals, some have environmental concerns while others are overcome with unwillingness to live in their current conditions.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The emigration itself is a natural process. However, for Russia it has become a fateful phenomenon which has changed the Russian civilization. Escape from Russia as a social and political phenomenon was forming

gradually. Before the revolution of 1917 the Russian emigration was mostly of the labour type (driven by economic motives), in the Soviet era it was predominantly political, whereas today the so called fourth wave of emigration combines the full variety features.

Emigration research in the Soviet time was occasional and the topic itself was not a priority. The lack of interest in emigration research was attributable to the fact that departure from the country was restrained and was of political nature. The intensity of research into this problem was increasing in proportion to the growing number of emigrants and emigration policy easing.

For a long time studies of emigration from Russia and the USSR were prohibited. Only in the late 1980s scientists finally had an opportunity to start the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Migration policy of a country (immigration being part of it) has become a factor which largely shaped the development of some countries and the whole regions during the 20th century. The United States of America, the population of which amounted to 67 million people at the beginning of the 20th century, saw its population double by 1940. It doubled again between 1940 and 1955 from 132 million to 265 million citizens. The marked population increase was the result of several migration waves and implementation of active immigration policy in the USA, though one should not underestimate a high birth rate in America in the first three decades of the twentieth century. US population census in 2000 demonstrated an increase in population by 12% during the inter-census period. This increase mostly occurred due to migrants.

The number of citizens in Russia which was comparable to the population of the USA at the beginning of the century, had doubled by the late 1950s and further increased by 20%, comprising 147.5 million people by the end of the 1990s. Low rates of population growth in the second half of the 20th century stemmed from the decreasing birth rate and a growing number of the elderly, as well as insignificant progress in raising the average life expectancy after the 1960s and relatively low immigration in that period. The combination of these trends determined the rates of population reproduction, which are in place today.

Emigration from Russia for most of the 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st century was of a forced nature and departure of its citizens during the periods of political and military disturbances resembled an exodus and was not always accurately recorded in official statistics.

During the first years of drastic reforms Russia became the main source of people, leaving for far abroad. According to estimates in that period 10-12% of emigrants from Russia originated from the independent countries of the former USSR which emerged after its collapse. Moreover, the majority of them were not registered as residents of Russia. Among them were people, who left the areas of ethnic conflict, for example, Armenians, Azerbaijanians and those of mixed families who used Russia as a transit country.

A big number of emigrants from the former USSR, forecast in the West in the early 1990s which predicted the departure of several million people from Russia only, as well as the "brain drain" expectations among some Russian scientists, did not materialize. Having achieved a record high of 100 thousand people per year in 1995, the number of emigrants from Russia began to decline in 1996. A total of slightly more than 1 million people, <1% of the Russian Federation population, left Russia for far away countries for a permanent place of residence over the last decade.

The total number of emigrants from Russia over the last decade, including illegal emigration, comprised about 1.2-1.7 million people. Considering emigration as a component of migration, we should note that with regard to the general flow of migrants, leaving within and for the territory of Russia, including the flow to the Baltic and CIS countries, the figure is small and does not exceed three percent of the total number. In 1999 the number of emigrants was slightly higher at 3.3%.

Due to stabilizing factors inside the country, the economic motives for departure have become more balanced in comparison with the periods, when escape from economic chaos was one of the main reasons for emigration. The period was regarded as disastrous and forced people to leave, lasted no longer than 2 year (1990-1992). Subsequently, the number of emigrants was determined by ethnical factors, better access to information and broader emigration opportunities with better prospects in receiving countries. Expansion of scientific contacts contributed to the increasing number of specialists, leaving for abroad but not necessarily emigrating.

In the early 1990s public-opinion polls on emigration intentions revealed that the economic crisis in Russia was the main emigration factor whereas today economic considerations are still the main factors in view of differences in labour rates and living standards among countries (Allakhverdyan and Agamova, 1992). At the turn of the 21st century CIS countries could be classified into 3 groups by the relative number of emigrants: countries with a relatively low number <4%, e.g., the Republic of Belarus, Russia, Moldova; moderate number

5%; Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine were close to 6% and Uzbekistan was slightly over 4%; the only country with a rather high number >10% was Kazakhstan (Ahiezer, 1993).

Today the majority of emigrants from Russia are accepted by Germany (more than half of the total number), Israel (15%), the USA (11%), other countries (16%). Until recently, i.e., in the early 1990s the emigration flow from the USSR was distributed in a remarkably different way. The main part left for Israel (45%) and Germany (42%), contribution of the USA (6%) and Greece (5%) was rather low and only 2% of emigrants left for other countries.

By 2005 the proportion of Russians in the total number of emigrants had increased up to 40% (Dolmatov, 1992), the proportion of Jews did not exceed 5-7% and the proportion of Germans had decreased to 15-20%. Given that the current emigration potential of the majority of nationalities living in Russia, except for the above-mentioned, is relatively low, expansion of the ethnic composition of emigrants will depend on the migration policy of Russia as well as that of receiving countries. For example, in 2001 Germany saw a dramatic decline in the number of immigrants arriving from CIS countries as a result of halving its immigration quota. Besides in 2000 this country imposed a restriction on the number of tourists from Kyrgyzstan, the majority of whom dealt with car export.

The national composition of emigrants from Russia in general which seems to be homogeneous, turns out to be far more varied upon analysis focused on Moscow. Though the proportions of Moscow and St. Petersburg in the total emigration are gradually declining, by the example of the capital we can see how one nationality is replaced by another in the emigration flow.

Over time emigration extends to more and more of the Russian territories. Since, the middle of the 1990s not only the capitals but also the population of Siberia and Ural big cities has been involved in this process. We should note that the proportion of rural population is high only within the group leaving for Germany. Geographical expansion of emigration intending for European countries and the USA is attributed to individuals leaving big cities of central Russian Regions, Siberia, Far East, Orenburg, Kemerovo and Novosibirsk Regions for Germany. In the late 1980s and early 1990s >40% of emigrants from Russia were the residents of Moscow and Moscow Region or St. Petersburg. The same situation was typical of other CIS countries. Every second emigrant from Ukraine was a resident of Kiev or Odessa and neighbouring regions. The same was typical of the population in Belarus and Kazakhstan where in the early of 1990s every third emigrant was from Minsk and every fifth was from Almaty. Currently, the residents of these cities tend to be involved

in active international exchange of scientists, students and other specialists. Access to participation in different exchange programmes in these cities has improved due to information distribution via social networks.

The choice of the receiving country by an emigrant depends on the place of residence in Russia. Thus, residents of Moscow and St. Petersburg still take the lead among people leaving for the USA with half of 39-40% of emigrants being residents of the capitals over the last two years. Today these cities account for about a third of the total number of people leaving for the USA.

The example of Russia demonstrates that more and more residents of different regions of the country are being involved in emigration. The composition of people emigrating from Russia and other CIS countries is determined geographically by the information capabilities of the place of departure and emigration potential of the particular group. Predominance of the capital residents in the total emigration flow is declining as more and more territories are involved in particular via the Internet.

The structure of families staying in Russia differs from the structure of those that leave. The number of parents who stay is three times as big as the number of those who leave, especially if at least one child stays here. Cousins of emigrating members of the family leave very seldom while siblings of the parents in case of the whole family departure, including the older generation, leave more frequently.

Age and level of education also determine professional composition of emigrants. It is common knowledge that the proportion of individuals with higher education, especially Moscow residents, emigrating from Russia, is high. A third of the Russians, who emigrated to the USA, had been employed in areas, requiring a higher education. In general for the group aged 40-60 all people had a higher education and a third of them a candidate degree (eqv. to PhD).

Professional composition of emigrants differs from that in the 1980s. As before, scientists, teachers and engineers prevailed but there were fewer doctors. The employment of the majority of emigrants was determined by their occupation. Thus, slightly less than half of them worked in scientific, research and educational institutions before departure and a fifth in some new structures. We should note that only representatives of the engineering profession were employed by companies and joint ventures before departure.

People who leave the country due to professional or economic considerations, often do not initially consider their departure to a foreign country for an indefinite term as an emigration opportunity, however after a quick adaptation they think of staying in the receiving

country. The emigration mechanism in this case differs from that in case of ethnical emigration. First employment is obtained, then permanent residence is thought over and only well after that the matter of obtaining official status is thought over.

In general this emigrant group obtains employment in the first place and adapts significantly quicker than ethnical emigrants, especially those people who left the country before economic reforms took place. The pace and degree of adaptation depend on age, timing of departure and emigration motives. All economic emigrants believe that they have adapted quickly and successfully. The proportion of ethnical emigrants who also consider their pace and degree of adaptation high is a fifth of their total number.

In general >60% of the respondents said, that their relatives adapted in the receiving country fairly quickly and the adaptation took a year or a little longer. In a third of respondent's families who left due to ethnical motives, the adaptation was slow and according to them, a fourth of emigrants have not adapted at all. These are people, who left long before the beginning of reformation period.

CONCLUSION

In general it may be concluded, that since the middle of the 1990s emigration from Russia has no longer been only an ethnical phenomenon. Motivation has become more definite and less dependent on ethnical factors. A shorter lag between the desire to emigrate and execution of the plan, quicker adaptation of Russians to the environment in receiving countries, professional and

educational composition of emigrants, exceeding averages in receiving countries, for example in the USA, prove that emigration from Russia is increasingly a form of cultural and intellectual exchange, typical of developed countries. Differences in labour rates, lack of opportunities to perform experimental studies, inadequate working conditions are the main reasons behind intellectual emigration of scientists from Russia over the last decade.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research was supported by the Russian Foundation for Humanities and the Russian Foundation for Basic Research.

REFERENCES

- Ahiezer, A., 1993. Emigration from Russia: Cultural and historical aspect. *Free Thought*, 7: 70-78.
- Allakhverdyan, A. and N. Agamova, 1992. External and Internal Migration of a Personnel of the Academic Science. In: *A Brain Drain in the Conditions of Modern Russia: Internal and International Aspects*, Zemlyany, S. and V. Kuzminov (Eds.). UNESCO, Paris, France, pp: 98-113.
- Dolmatov, P., 1992. To Make Use of the International Experience. In: *A Brain Drain in the Conditions of Modern Russia: Internal and International Aspects*, Zemlyany, S. and V. Kuzminov (Eds.). UNESCO, Paris, France, pp: 122-128.
- Sushko, V., 2015. Russian labor market. *Obs.*, 6: 82-97.