

Migration Processes among the Youth of the Far Eastern Region of the Russian Federation

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ABSTRACT

Due to the priority Russian development mainly through the use of natural resources, the Far Eastern Region's role in forming the economic basis of the country increases considerably. In this connection, an objective necessity is to study conditions for increasing the Far East potential and improving the effectiveness of its use, including its youth component. The reviving economy requires new qualified human resources, highly professional experts capable of working with new technologies under the conditions of growing competition and high production requirements. With the development of market relations the social structure of the society is dominated by sharp social polarization trends. Differentiation of young people takes place, and various substructures of youth potential are formed on the basis of specific social youth groups that have different starting opportunities determined by the material level of well-being, access to education, health, and quality of family life. The Jewish Autonomous Region as a subject of the Russian Far East experiences to a lesser extent than other far eastern territories all the consequences of a large population outflow. At the same time the prospects of its development are directly associated, among other things, with the availability of a highly skilled manpower of working age that will develop the economy of the region. This article deals with issues of migration of young people living in the Russia's Far East. The article identifies and analyzes migration wishes and intentions of young residents of the Far East. The information of the article is of practical value for public administration professionals, social workers, university students, and all those interested in youth issues.

Keywords: migration, youth, migration processes, region, the Far East, social structure

INTRODUCTION

The issues of the Russia's Far East development have been topical at all times. At present the general socio-economic situation in the east of Russia remains complicated, with a set of acute institutional problems requiring a systemic solution.

The main problem is a long-term massive population outflow from the region, associated with a low standard of living and general instability of the socio-economic situation. As a consequence, more than 2 million people have left the region for the last decades. With the start of the third decade of post-soviet reforms, the Far Eastern vector began to intensify again, and the idea of developing these territories was again brought into focus and included into four main strategic priorities of state policy [1]. The main reason for the population outflow is the decline in the living standards of the Far East residents for the last two decades and the loss of former considerable income advantages over the European regions of Russia. Combined with severe climate and remoteness from the central

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regions of the country, this causes a systematic loss of human resources, reduces population density, and increases the deficit of qualified workers and professionals.

In this connection, it is very important to make a sociological evaluation of the state [2], conditions and factors influencing the migration behavior of population, primarily of young people graduating from higher educational institutions in the Far East region, their focus on the possibility of living in it and working in the speciality acquired at the university [3].

The relevance of the research of the migration processes in the Russian Far East in the context of solving the problems of population retention in its territories is determined by a dramatic decrease in population size in the last two decades, high migration potential of the population, outflow of the most professional and intellectual part of it, and low effectiveness of public policy measures.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Analysis of the scientific literature of the subsequent period shows that as changes were taking place, the views of scientists on migration issues were also changing [4]. At the same time a tendency for continuity in understanding the specifics of migration processes was kept; however, the reasons for people's relocation were scientifically reconsidered and the state, speed and depth of migration flows were analyzed [5].

The issues of migration and labour market, of the migration situation in contemporary Russia and its regions are actualized in scientific works [6]. Scientific papers discuss an important aspect in the study of a migration potential represented by theoretical approaches to the analysis of factors influencing social situation and the professional mobility of youth [7].

A number of research works describe migration in the aspect of international security and conflict resolution [8]. Issues of the Far East population of Russia, sociological research on migration, the study of labour and migration motivation of the Far East graduates, and the labour market functioning in the Far East are considered in the works by the Far East researchers. The regional authors are of the common opinion that the state must radically change the policy in relation to the Far East development, as well as the social and economic conditions for the population retention.

The term 'migration' (from the Latin 'migratio') means relocation or resettlement [9]. It is a complex public phenomenon of great scale and diversity [10]. It is one of the best indicators of a socio-economic condition of society [11]. In studying migration it is possible to identify three lines of people's movement: first, migration is seen as a diversity of spatial relocation of population irrespective of its character and purposes; second, these are spatial relocations between localities, constant or temporary change of the place of living and work; third, population migration leads to a territorial distribution [12]. At present only the third type of migration, as a rule, generates the situation when residents from a very densely populated country move to another country where there is a lower population density and an excess of workplaces [13]. Thus, any territorial relocation between different localities or states regardless of its duration, regularity and focus is migration [14].

Contemporary migration is relocation of employable population caused by economic reasons [15]. Depending on whether state borders are crossed over or not, two types of migration are distinguished: internal and international.

RESEARCH METHODS

The scientific novelty consists in analyzing the current trends in the region's population reproduction and the nature of the change of the migration flows vector, identifying consequences of the natural loss and migration outflow of the population.

In order to study migration processes among the Russia's Far East youth, the following tasks were set:

- to study migration moods among young people;
- to analyze socio-economic position of young people;

During 2015-2016, in the framework of the sociological survey conducted by the laboratory of sociological research of Sholom-Aleihem Priamurskiy State University on the topic *Socio-economic potential of the youth of The Jewish Autonomous Region*, the sample of respondents made up 550 people aged 18-32 living in The Jewish Autonomous Region. The interview texts were processed by the method of multidimensional content analysis. Processing of the obtained data was carried out using a special package of applied programs SPSS 13.0 that is an international standard for processing sociological information. Graphical and textual representation of the data was carried out using Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Word software programs. The subtype of the research was a one-off social survey, as the information about an object was gathered at the moment of its study. The type of the survey was a face-to-face questionnaire, an interview. The variety was a mass survey. The research was descriptive, as the

object of study was a large community of people differing in various characteristics. The interviewed were young people, married and single living in The Jewish Autonomous Region and having, in the most part, a higher education.

In the given paper the following methods of research were used: content analysis of documents, a method of qualitative and quantitative analysis of document content in order to identify or measure various facts and trends reflected in the documents; a synthesis method, the content of which is a set of techniques and regularities for connecting separate parts of a subject into a single whole; a questionnaire method; and a generalization method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Migration processes are an integral part of modern socio-economic processes [16]. In the Russian society, there is no unambiguous attitude to this phenomenon, since, being a complex, multifaceted phenomenon, it also has certain social consequences and challenges for society along with positive economic effects.

The reason for migration is acute contradiction between the development level of an individual or his/her needs [17] and conditions for their satisfaction in the location considered. The ground for the migration may be social discontent of the population, and the migration itself is seen as a way of solving problems that cause negative mood. Social discontent can be manifested in relation to socio-economic, infrastructural, ecological, and culture and leisure conditions [18], as well as in relation to the institutional arrangement of the territory.

Investigating controllability of regional migration, it is necessary to take into account the interdisciplinary nature of the issue itself. Here it is impossible to do without relying on significant classical sociological studies by migration control theorists.

The great scale of migration processes in the contemporary society and the significance of the social changes [19] that are caused by them in economic, political and socio-cultural life of countries and nations require an increased focus on their comprehensive research.

The place and role of the Far East in the system of socio-economic relations is determined by the participation of its population in the social division of labor, specialization and cooperation of production, economic potential, etc.

The Far East is an important geopolitical and strategic region of the Russian Federation ensuring realization of its interests in the Asia-Pacific Region. Today one of the strategic goals of the development of the Far East is the fulfillment of the task of the population retention [20]. In the Russian state the Far East has always been of great importance. Since the settlement of Russian people on this vast territory, its special strategic role was determined by a number of factors. In political sphere, essentially significant was its geopolitical position [21] that created conditions for Russia to realize its interests in the Asia-Pacific Region (APR). Advantageous geographical and strategic location of the Far East, the unfreezing ports of the south coast provide favourable conditions for cooperation with the countries of the APR. Economically, it is the country's richest source of natural resources.

The Far Eastern Federal District, though taking the first place among the federal districts by area, is quickly losing its positions in the demographic field of the country. At present the population decreases not only due to the natural loss, but owing to migration outflows too.

In the pre-reform period there were special programs for attracting and retaining the working force in the Far East region. In market conditions the benefits provided by them were cut; this dramatically increased the population outflow. In the years of social transformations, the Far East lost 1780 thousand people or 22.1% of its own population (more than every fifth resident), including 225.5 thousand people (12.7%) due to natural loss, and 1554.5 (87.3%) owing to migration outflow. A maximum population size, 8064 thousand, was observed in 1191; and at the beginning of 2011, 6284 thousand people lived in the Far East [22]. Of the Far East territories, the greatest losses were observed in the northern subjects of RF: the Chukotka Autonomous District, Kamchatskiy Krai (Territory), the Magadan and Sakhalin Regions.

The population size in the region continues to decline. During 2010 it reduced by 31.1 thousand people (in Russia as a whole, by 48 thousand), including the reduction due to the natural loss by 3.6 thousand people (11.6%) and owing to migration by 27.5 thousand (88.4%); and in 2011, due to migration by 17.8 thousand.

The demographic situation in the Far East continues to be determined by a low birth rate, high mortality rate, natural loss of population, fast population aging, shorter than in Russia as a whole life expectancy. To ensure at least ordinary reproduction of the population and replacement of labor resources in the future, the current level of its natural movement is insufficient. The reason for this (словарь) is not only the low birth rate, but high mortality rate as well.

By the beginning of 2014, the population of The Far Eastern Federal District was 6226.6 thousand people (as of 01.01.2013, it was 6251.5 thousand people). The intensive reduction of the population size results in the decline of the demographic and labour potential of the area: during 1991-2013 Yakutia lost every seventh resident, Primorskiy

Krai (Territory) and the Khabarovskiy Krai (Territory), every sixth, The Jewish Autonomous Region, every fifth, etc. [23].

Among the social issues, demographic ones have become particularly acute. The processes of reforming the society had a destructive impact on the formation of the Far East population. It primarily affected the dynamics of the migration processes. The decline in production, long-term, and in some areas and enterprises years-long delays in wages, a relatively low income level unable to provide for a normal reproduction of workforce – all these factors caused a considerable outflow of population.

It should be stressed that the workforce potential is decreasing.

In the migration exchange with federal districts of Russia more than one third of population leave the Far East for the central regions which are in need of labour resources and which compete with the Far East in attracting them. This situation is caused by an increasing inter-regional socio-economic differentiation, the unbalanced payment for work in some territories of the country, and by some other aspects that contribute to the comfort of living in this territory. Thus, by the beginning of 2010, in comparison with 1995 the nominal wages in the Far Eastern Federal District had grown by 25.8%. However, salary and wages remain the main source of income for the population of the Far East regions of the country; and in the Koryak and Chukotka Autonomous Districts its share in the incomes of the employable population is 80% [24].

Another significant indicator encouraging retention or outflow of population is provision of housing. By this indicator the Far East consistently ranks last among the federal districts. By 2010, 1.5 times less housing was commissioned than in 1990. About 300 people aged between 18 and 30 were interviewed. It turned out that exactly 50% of them were women and 50%, men. Of these, 4.5% were businessmen, 3% middle managers, 4.5% housewives, and 8% defined their status as “other”. The largest group appeared to be students, who actually were the main focus of interest, (50%) and office workers (30%). Our research data obtained in The Far Eastern Federal District show that 30% of the respondents intend leaving their city because of dissatisfaction with their job (level of wages and salary); 36.1% noted the high cost of living and the underdevelopment of the consumer market; 33.5% pointed out to the low level of social services (health care, housing and communal services); 32.6% emphasized the detachment from the center of Russia and high transport tariffs. In the Far East every fourth resident is a 15-29 year old person.

However, among the young people these indicators are practically two times as big: 65.71% noted dissatisfaction with the job (level of payment), 62.86% stressed a high living cost and underdeveloped consumer market, 54.29% pointed out to the low level of social services (health care, housing and communal services). It is therefore no accident that if on the whole the survey shows that 19.3% would like to live in another city and 17.2% in another country, for the age group of 18 – 24 this indicator is 42.86% and 34.29% for males and 31.58% and 26.32% for females respectively. In this connection one of the conditions for retaining youth contingent within the federal district may be raising the accessibility and quality of education, increasing employment, and providing decent wages.

According to the statistical data for 2013, 6462 people left the Jewish Autonomous Region. The outflow is observed to be mostly directed to Krasnodar, Sochi, Belgorod, St. Petersburg, etc.

The results of our sociological research show that among the youth of the Jewish autonomous Region the decisive condition for moving to a new place of residence is the search of a new job (42%), decent salary/wages (54%), housing, high quality health care and education (49%), leisure (sports and cultural activities) (37%), and climate (26%).

Young graduates of education institutions admit (31%) that they do not see any further prospects for their development, and if there is a chance, they will go to a permanent place of residence in another region. Most often, they start thinking about changing the place of residence when they compare it with other, more successful regions and cities; when their friends and acquaintances tell them about successful relocation and settlement in other locations. The concern about the future becomes one of the factors of the youth migration from the Jewish Autonomous Region, which may negatively affect the economic potential of the region.

Striving for economic prosperity remains the main cause of mass sustainable migration flows of the youth of the Jewish Autonomous Region. One third of the respondents (32%) are ready to emigrate if there is a material base from which to start a “new life”; socio-economically, the starting position of the Jewish Autonomous Region youth as a rule is approximately the same regardless of the choice of the region. These attitudes are balanced and meaningful.

An important indicator that influences the young people’s decision to move from the region is the solution of the housing problem. Despite the modernization and reforming of housing and communal services, the problems caused by aging of the housing stock and underdeveloped forms of hiring housing provoke a rise in prices and rent for housing in the region. Interest rates on mortgage loans remain inaccessible to young people [25].

In the Autonomous Region a number of laws have been adopted on measures to attract and retain young professionals, but for various reasons this does not always work, and the youth are looking for ways to secure their interests, even in another region or country. We assume that youth migration may increase with time despite the measures taken to stop it. In the respondents' opinion, it is hard for the young people to find their place in the labour market in the Jewish Autonomous Region, and the young professionals are not satisfied, first of all, with the level of salaries.

The outflow from the Jewish Autonomous Region is of importance not only in a quantitative dimension, but from the viewpoint of qualitative consequences. First of all, the most able-bodied and qualified young professionals leave or plan to leave the region. Youth migration leads to the reduction of the work force among the most highly productive age group in the Autonomous Region, including people who have just received a profession or qualification.

The research data demonstrate that there are pronounced differences in potential youth mobility between the regional center and municipal regions.

In villages the respondents are on the whole more inclined to relocate than young people living in a regional center.

Much more often than the latter they are going to live in Birobidzhan or in another city of the Far East Federal District (Khabarovsk, Vladivostok). Every third of the respondents living in a regional center when asked "Which of the federal districts of Russia in your opinion is the most comfortable for life and work?" named the Central Federal District of Russia, Northwestern Federal District (administrative center, St. Petersburg), and Southern Federal District (administrative center, Rostov-on-Don).

Forty-two percent of the surveyed youth are planning to leave the city, only one third (29%) are planning to stay and the same number (29%) never thought about migrating. One fifth of the respondents (22%) who decided to go to another region of Russia took this decision independently, not relying on the opinion of their relatives or friends. Among those who are not going to leave are respondents who consider their Jewish Region as their homeland where their parents, close relatives and friends have been living. Besides every tenth of the students loyal to the area work already.

As a reason for migration, the interviewed young people report dissatisfaction with social and economic development of the Region (25%), low salaries and wages and low prestige of the profession in the region (34%), parents' transfer to another work or friends and relatives in the chosen region (12%).

The main conditions attracting young people in the region chosen for relocation is "a higher level of a region's or city's development", "the cost of payment for utility services is lower than in the Jewish Autonomous Region", "proximity to Moscow and St. Petersburg", "the cost of food is much lower than in the Jewish Autonomous Region", "one can go to European countries", etc.

It should be noted that young people also take into consideration negative aspects of the possible migration: the risk of not finding a job with a desired salary, a housing issue, possible psychological difficulties in adaptation to the new conditions. However 28% of them are sure that they can overcome all difficulties.

It is worthy of note that migration intentions depend on the education level (the higher the education, the greater the willingness to change the location) and to a very great extent on age.

The most expressed are migration intentions of the youngest group of respondents, and with age the proportion of those intending to relocate reduces. Specifically, the proportion of those intending to relocate at the age of 19-21 is 1.5 times bigger than among those with migration intentions at the age of 22-27 and compared to the age group of 28-32 it is 2.5 times as big.

One of ten respondents thinks that good conditions are in the places where the climate is more favourable. As for the climate in the Jewish Autonomous Region, it is seen by them as "severe", very cold and unpredictable.

CONCLUSION

At present an increasing attention is paid to the quality of human capital. The future of the Far East regions of the Russian Federation is largely determined by today's young generation. In this regard, it is important to continue the state policy of creating comfortable conditions for full, professionally successful and creative life of young people in each region and its municipalities.

Retention of youth potential in the Region is conditioned by providing opportunities for professional and career growth, affordable housing, places in kindergartens, employment opportunities in their speciality, conditions for children development and education, developed leisure and transport infrastructures. In the respondents' opinion all these conditions in the Jewish Autonomous Region require development so as to ensure reduction of the population loss and make the Jewish Autonomous Region attractive for the arrival of residents from other regions of Russia.

One of the factors for retaining young professionals may be the solution of their essential social problems of employment after finishing professional educational institutions, as well as provision of social housing for the first 3-5 work years with a further opportunity to buy it out at a reduced price or at a lower mortgage interest. This will make young professionals feel 'accustomed' to the established way of life, and encourage them to create families that will also need "comfortable life conditions".

Summing up, the problem of youth migration from the Region's territory is very serious. At the same time the measures taken by the authorities and business for retaining and attracting young people to the Region are insufficient in comparison with the migration scale, which does not allow reducing the danger of losing its labour potential. The results of the survey of the Jewish Autonomous Region youth lead to the conclusion that in order to retain the youth as a labour resource for the development of the region, it is important to give it a reliable guarantee of providing a comprehensive social package. This will allow the young people to really and constructively compare the prospects of either staying in the Far East region for their "protected" future or going to the West where "privileges" in achieving the goals of their self-realization are illusive.

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