YOUNG RESEARCHERS

The Study of Permanent Migration of Economically Depressed Regions

Konstantin Anatol'evich
CHERNYSHEV
Department for Public and Municipal Administration
Vyatka State University
Kirov, Russian Federation, 36, Moskovskaya Street, 610000,
E-mail: ochern@rambler.ru

Abstract. Russia's development in the post-Soviet period is characterized by enhanced interregional socio-economic disparities, emergence of different kinds of troubled territories including depressed areas. The group of depressed regions includes ten constituent entities of the Russian Federation where economic recession is accompanied by reduction in the number of residents and the population outflow as a result of permanent migration. The purpose for this research is to identify the specific features of migration processes in economically depressed regions and elaborate proposals to optimize migration policy. The information base of the research is represented by official data of Rosstat. The article analyzes the processes of permanent migration in depressed areas, proposes periodization of migration process in the post-Soviet period and defines the reasons for the occurred changes. The author identifies net migration indicators and population decline in depressed Russian regions by flows of permanent migration: interregional and international between neighboring and distant countries. Analysis of migration exchange with foreign countries was conducted with the help of migration intensity indices previously used only in studies of domestic migration. The formation of the territorial structure of permanent migration flows was mostly based on proximity to specific countries and traditional ties between regions. The author identifies the peculiarities of migration in economically depressed regions. Population loss is the result of interregional migration. International migration is characterized by

migration gain due to CIS countries. The study indicates positive consequences of migration flows from countries of the former USSR: restoration of population losses as a result of natural decline, interregional migration and emigration to developed far abroad countries. The immigration flow to depressed regions slows down the process of resident population ageing reducing gender disparity. The author point to a better migration situation in regions of the Central Federal district attractive to migrants from the neighboring countries. The current immigration situation is the result of economic and social issues in depressed regions. The solution to the problem of migration requires joint effort of federal and regional authorities.

Key words: Russia, economically depressed areas, permanent migration, migration outflow, migration intensity index, post-Soviet period.

Introduction. The development of Russia in the post-Soviet period was characterized by significant transformational processes caused by rapid transition to market economy and its subsequent development. One of the consequence of radical transformations which affected almost all spheres of the society was the strengthening of interregional socio-economic differentiation, the emergence of different kinds of problematic regions.

One of the types of such regions is depressed regions which, during the process of transition from planned to market economy were characterized by relatively low economic performance, although these regions was developed in the past leading in a number of industries in the country. The main criterion of depression is usually production decline especially in industry [5; 15]. Often entire constituent entities have clear signs of depression.

The emergence of centers of regional economic depression in the post-Soviet period is due to issues of regions' adaptation to new economic conditions and declining competitiveness of "old" industries. Negative changes in regional economy determined the social consequences as "total territorial depression in the Russian version always has an extremely powerful social "lopsidedness": the destruction of economic potential is followed by a rapid breakdown of social potential, with these processes driving each other" [4, pp. 252–253]. Production decline was accompanied by rising unemployment, declining living standards, spread of negative social phenomena, as well as various demographic issues (increasing mortality, reducing fertility, migration loss), etc.

Some authors propose that negative net migration is considered as one of the criteria of depression [7]. From our point of view, the use of net migration loss (as well as population's reproduction record) does not fully reflect the nature of regional depression as a primarily economic phenomenon. The level and pace of regional development influence migration processes [20]; however,

out-migration may be explained by long-term negative changes in the economy of specific regions and the influence of other factors (environment, local conflicts, proximity of attractive regions, etc.). However, the extent, course and results of migration processes are important indicators of regions' socio-economic issues, as informative as GRP volume and performance, investment activity, etc.

Identification of depressed regions. Researchers propose different criteria to classify a certain area as depressed. The most requested indicators for allocating depressed regions are a decline in industrial production, level of unemployment, and GRP per capita. In order to determine the list of depressed constituent entities of the Russian Federation and further study their migration situation we use the following criteria.

1. Decline in industrial production. The criterion reflects the idea of depressed regions as industrially developed but having experienced production decline. From our point of view, a decline in industrial production to a 70% level compared to 1991 is significant.

2. GRP per capita is significantly below the national average. The process of industrial decline during the Soviet period was not always accompanied by a decrease in GRP per capita. It refers to regions where the decline in industrial production was combined with the development of other economic sectors

(primarily Moscow, Saint Petersburg) or occurred on the background of significant population reduction (Kamchatka Krai). It is incorrect to include in the list of depressed regions a region with GRP per capita equaling or exceeding than the national average. The category of depressed regions includes constituent entities with GDP per capita less than 70% of the national average.

3. Unemployment rate is above the national average. Production decline in industrial regions is accompanied by rising unemployment. Since last few years were characterized by crisis phenomena in the economy accompanied by changes on the labor market, the unemployment rate was calculated on average for 2008—2015

4. Industrial production per capita. The threshold value was taken to be equal more than 30% compared to the average level of industrial production per capita in Russia. This indicator is necessary to separate the regions without the industrial focus of the economy neither in the past, nor now which traditionally belong to underdeveloped regions from the list of all constituent entities of the Russian Federation (republics of the North Caucasus, Altai, Kalmykia, the Jewish Autonomous oblast).

According to the proposed methodology, the category of depressed regions in 2011—2015 includes ten constituent entities of the Russian Federation (*Tab. 1*). Depressed regions do not form large adjacent areas

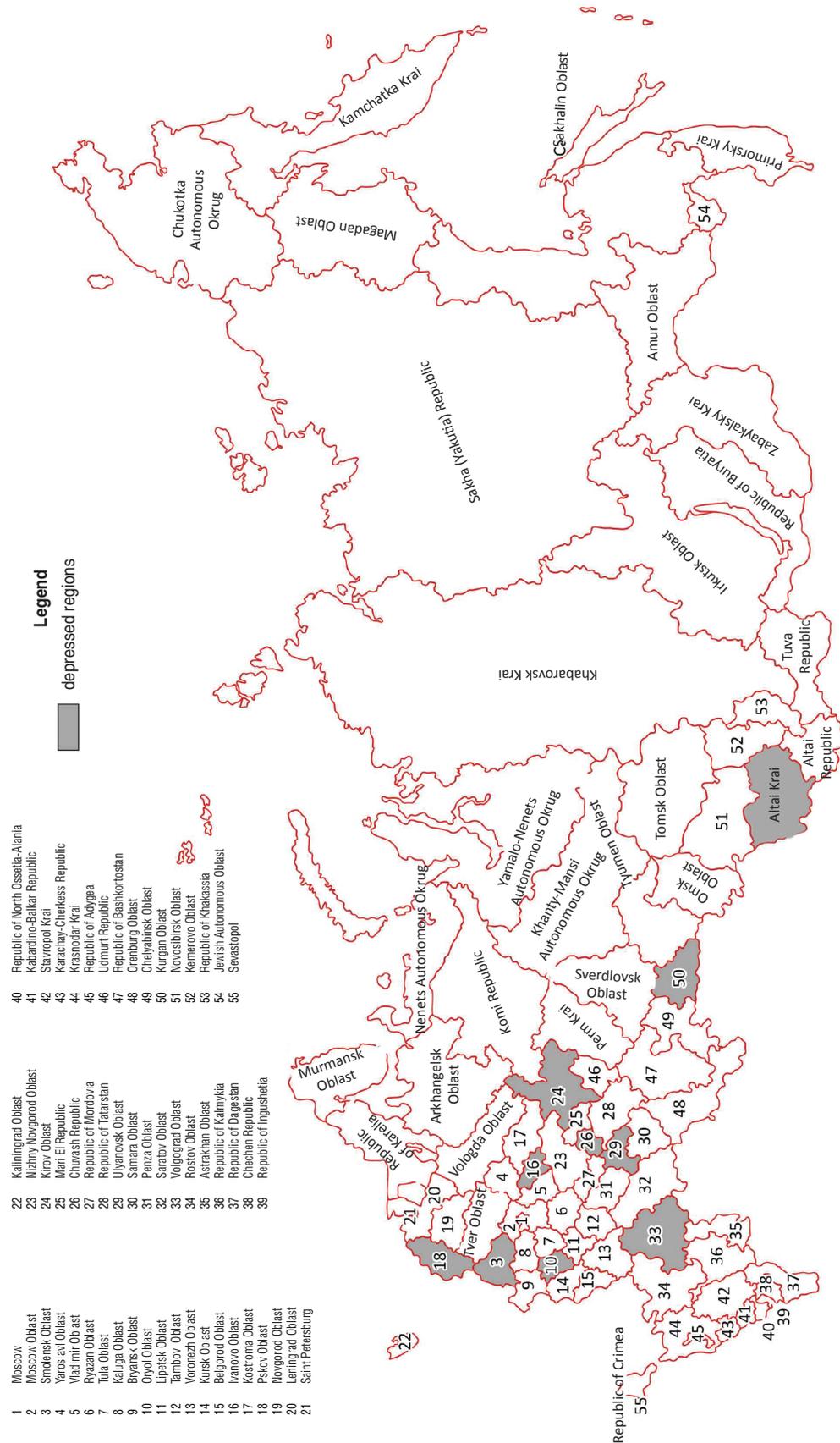Table 1. Economic and social status of depressed Russian regions*

Depressed region	Industrial production in 2015 compared to 1991 (in comparable prices), %	Industrial production per capita in 2015, in current prices		GRP per capita in 2015, in current prices		Average unemployment rate for 2008–2015		Population		
		thou-sand rubles	in % to the national average	thou-sand rubles	in % to the national average	in the region, %	how much more than the national average, %	in 1991, thousand people	in 2015, thousand people	2015 to 1991, %
Ivanovo Oblast	33.9	114.3	34.1	165.5	37.2	6.44	0.15	1293.9	1033.4	79.9
Oryol Oblast	55.3	147.4	44.0	269.9	60.6	6.69	0.40	896.7	762.5	85.0
Smolensk Oblast	67.4	228.5	68.1	267.3	60.1	6.50	0.21	1158.1	961.7	83.0
Pskov Oblast	65.8	133.9	39.9	204.8	46.0	7.95	1.66	843.5	648.7	76.9
Volgograd Oblast	59.5	285.0	85.0	288.2	64.7	7.48	1.19	2631.0	2551.7	97.0
Chuvash Republic	56.7	135.8	40.5	202.4	45.5	7.31	1.02	1338.5	1237.4	92.4
Kirov Oblast	53.2	165.9	49.5	212.5	47.8	7.28	0.99	1650.3	1300.9	78.8
Ulyanovsk Oblast	57.6	209.3	62.4	239.2	53.7	6.59	0.30	1416.1	1260.1	89.0
Kurgan Oblast	54.6	123.1	36.7	207.6	46.6	9.41	3.12	1106.1	865.9	78.3
Altai Krai	64.2	122.1	36.4	206.7	46.4	8.46	2.17	2647.1	2380.8	89.9

* Calculated according to: *Russian regions. Socio-economic indicators. 2016: statistics book.* Moscow: Rosstat, 2016. 1326 p.; *Federal State Statistics Service.* Available at: http://www.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_main/rosstat/ru/statistics/accounts/; http://www.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_main/rosstat/ru/statistics/enterprise/industrial/#

throughout the country being mainly situated in the European part of Russia. The industry in these regions was unable to shift towards market economy unharmed due to objective reasons: predominance of "old" industries, entry to the market of the country's competitors from abroad, reducing state demand, broken economic links with former Soviet republics. This was combined with absence in depressed Russian regions of explicit factors able to make the transition less harmful (export-oriented resource industries, capital status, etc.). The selected depressed regions are concentrated within the Volga and Central (3), Southern, Northwestern, Ural, Siberian (1) federal districts (*Fig. 1*).

Migration processes have their own specific features in depressed regions and require detailed consideration. There is experience of studying migration processes in the group of regions selected by similar issues of socio-economic development: border [8], earlier developed [9], oil and gas [13] etc. The consequence of the economic decline in depressed regions was population outflow resulting in permanent migration. The study of migration in depressed regions was carried out only at the level of some constituent entities [1; 2; 16]. A number of studies which review population issues associate the phenomenon of regional depression with different performance of the processes of

Figure 1. Depressed Russian regions

Legend

depressed regions

1	Moscow	22	Kaliningrad Oblast
2	Moscow Oblast	23	Nizhny Novgorod Oblast
3	Smolensk Oblast	24	Kirov Oblast
4	Yaroslavl Oblast	25	Mari El Republic
5	Vladimir Oblast	26	Chuvash Republic
6	Ryazan Oblast	27	Republic of Mordovia
7	Tula Oblast	28	Republic of Tatarstan
8	Kaluga Oblast	29	Ulyanovsk Oblast
9	Bryansk Oblast	30	Samara Oblast
10	Oryol Oblast	31	Penza Oblast
11	Lipetsk Oblast	32	Saratov Oblast
12	Tambov Oblast	33	Volgograd Oblast
13	Voronezh Oblast	34	Rostov Oblast
14	Kursk Oblast	35	Astrakhan Oblast
15	Belgorod Oblast	36	Republic of Kalmykia
16	Ivanovo Oblast	37	Republic of Dagestan
17	Kostroma Oblast	38	Chechen Republic
18	Pskov Oblast	39	Republic of Ingushetia
19	Novgorod Oblast		
20	Leningrad Oblast		
21	Saint Petersburg		

40	Republic of North Ossetia-Alania		
41	Kabardino-Balkar Republic		
42	Stavropol Krai		
43	Karachay-Cherkess Republic		
44	Krasnodar Krai		
45	Republic of Adygea		
46	Udmurt Republic		
47	Republic of Bashkortostan		
48	Orenburg Oblast		
49	Chelyabinsk Oblast		
50	Kurgan Oblast		
51	Novosibirsk Oblast		
52	Kemerovo Oblast		
53	Republic of Khakassia		
54	Jewish Autonomous Oblast		
55	Sevastopol		

reproduction or migration [6], for which the use the concept of "regions, depressed relative to net migration". There are also examples of regional demographic studies where subsidized regions are considered depressed [3].

Migration flows and migration ties in depressed regions. Sources of information on permanent migration in depressed regions were data from the current record presented in statistics books and recalculated taking into account population census in depressed constituent entities. During the post-Soviet period, there were noticeable fluctuations in the recorded amounts of domestic and international permanent migration due to a change in migration flow and repeated revision of the migration registration procedure. This made useless the performance analysis of absolute values and indicators of migration intensity in regions [12]; however our research results have not been fundamentally affected since the change were related to all Russian regions and migration rates were calculated in general for a long-term period.

Population loss in depressed regions over the post-Soviet period was significant. During 1992–2015, the population of depressed Russian regions decreased from 15.0 to 13.0 million people despite net migration at the end of the 20th century. Natural population decline played a major role in the population decline during the post-Soviet period.

Performance of migration processes in depressed constituent entities in the post-Soviet period was uneven. In the 1990-s, depressed regions had higher migration rates than the national average (*Fig. 2*). During this period, most regions in European Russia experienced an unprecedented migration growth caused by forced migration from unstable regions of the former USSR, migration from the North. We believe that a significant part of migrants arriving in depressive subjects of the Russian Federation during the 1990-s were those who for decades had been leaving these regions, as well as their relatives, i.e., migration was largely return in nature. This is possible when people keep in touch with the region of departure and local residents who would help them settle. Such resettlement could occur in least economically prosperous regions. Thus, amid stress migration depressed regions which have been population donors for many years could count rely on migrant influx.

By the early 2000s, the migration potential of the Russian population was largely exhausted. There was a gradual transformation of politically motivated international migration into economically motivated migration of compatriots and representatives of the titular nations of the CIS [11]. However, depressive Russian regions having no distinct pull factors began to lose the competition for main migrant flows which as a result were channeled to other Russian

Figure 2. Migration gain (loss) per 1000 people in depressed
Russian regions during the post-Soviet period*
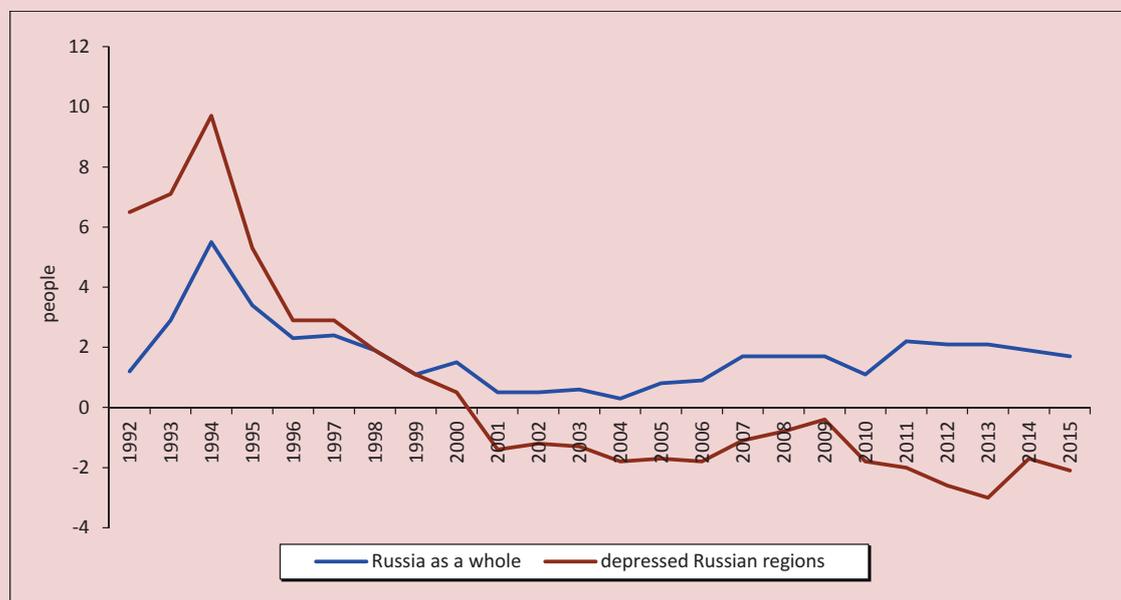
* Compiled from: *Rosstat unified interdepartmental information-statistics system*. Available at: https://www.fedstat.ru;
Russian statistics yearbook: statistical compilation. Russian State Statistical Committee. Moscow: Logos, 1996.

regions. In addition, the economic recovery in Russia in the 2000-s was accompanied by an increase in population outflow from depressed to more migration-attractive regions. Migration loss in depressed Russian regions in internal migration is not compensated by the inflow of migrants from neighboring countries. In the Smolensk Oblast, migration loss became apparent in 1999, in the whole group of regions of this type – since 2001. Since that time, the group of depressed regions annually loses population as a result of permanent migration, necessitating a more detailed consideration of migration

processes in 2001−2015. During this period, the population loss in depressed regions as a result of migration, according to current records, amounted to 339.3 thousand people. Net migration of the population in depressed regions formed as a result of interaction with other Russian regions and near and far-abroad countries.

The comparison of migration and regions' population helps allocate Russian regions with the highest intensity of different migration flows during 2001−2015. The intensity of migratory departure in the group of depressed regions to other Russian regions

is higher than the national average, although it significantly differs by region. In turn, almost all the regions under review are characterized by relatively low intensity of interregional migration by arrival. The exception is the Pskov Oblast where the intensity of arrival from other Russian regions is slightly higher than the national average. The lowest rate of migration loss as a result of interaction with other regions is registered in the Ivanovo, Pskov, Oryol oblasts (*Fig. 3*). These Russian regions are located near metropolitan areas — the main centers of migrant attraction. Here constant migration to Moscow and Saint

Petersburg may be partially replaced with temporary forms [17]. The most significant population loss as a result of migration to other Russia regions was in the Kurgan, Ulyanovsk, Kirov oblasts and in Altai Krai. It should be noted that the study of migration conducted on the basis of population census indicate the under-record of migration from depressed regions [19].

Compared to the rest of Russian regions, depressed regions demonstrate lower intensity of international migration. The lowest intensity of migration from abroad is marked in regions remote from the country's borders

Figure 3. Inter-regional migration intensity in depressed Russian regions in 2001–2015*
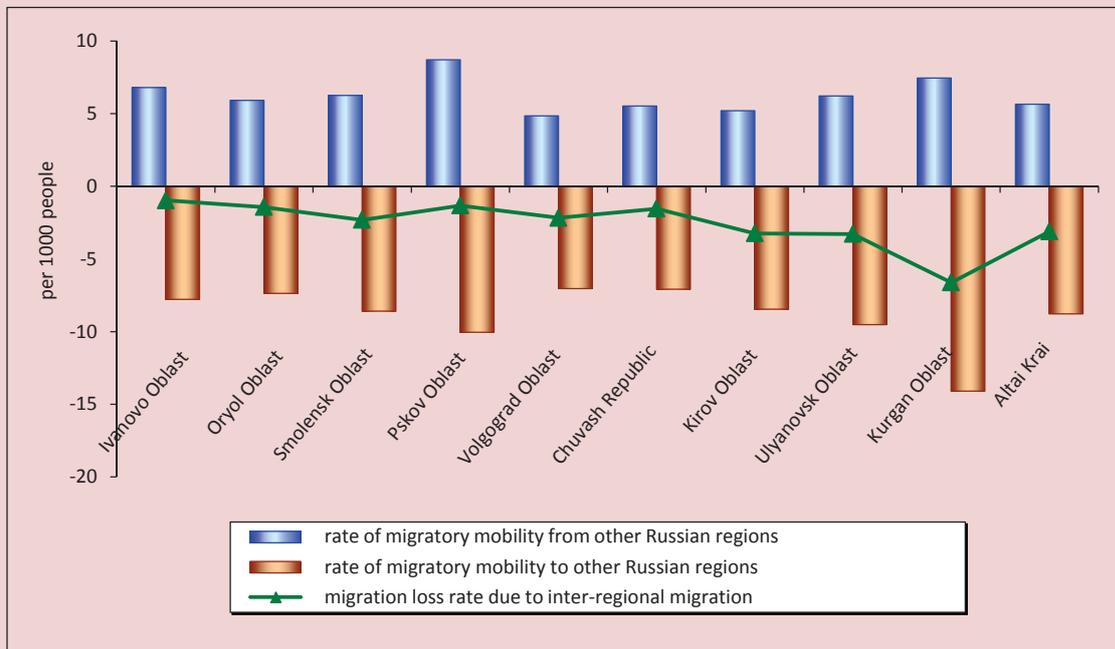
* Compiled from: *Population and migration of the Russian Federation in 2015: statistical bulletin.* Moscow: Rosstat, 2016; *Rosstat unified interdepartmental information-statistical system.* Available at: https://www.fedstat.ru

Figure 4. International migration intensity in depressed Russian regions in 2001–2015*
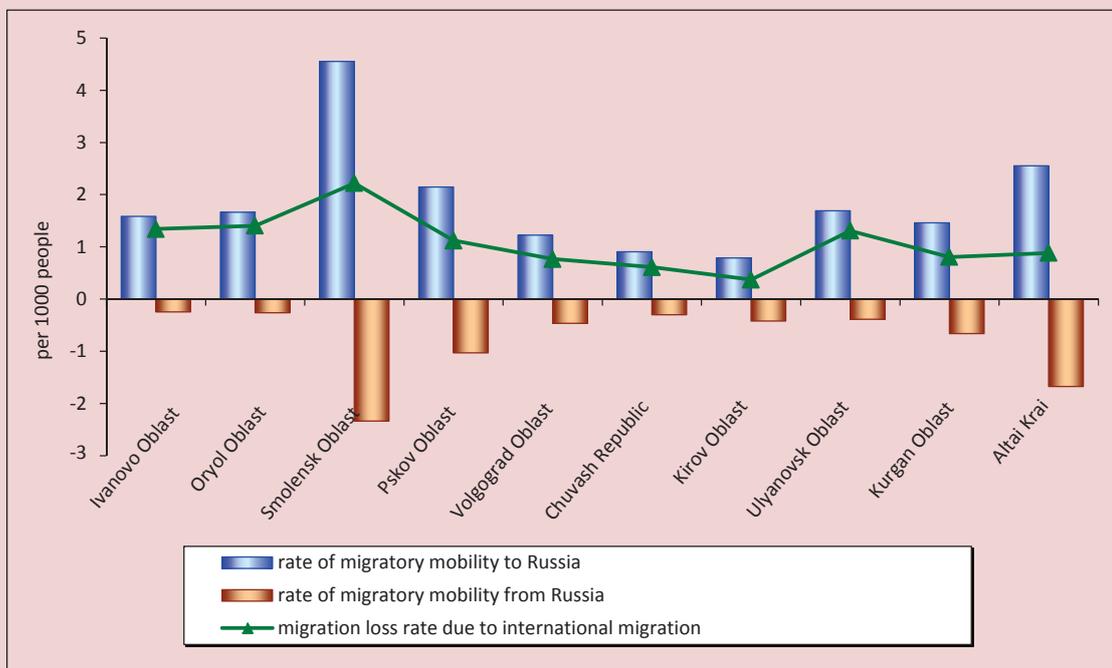
* *Population and migration in the Russian Federation in 2015: statistical bulletin.* Moscow: Rosstat, 2016; *Rosstat Unified Interdepartmental Information-statistical System.* Available at: https://www.fedstat.ru

and major centers attractive for migrants (in the Kirov Oblast and Chuvash Republic). The population of border depressed Russian regions (Smolensk and Pskov oblasts, Altai Krai) is more involved in international migration (*Fig. 4*).

The highest migration growth due to permanent international migration is marked in the regions of the Central Federal district. The extent and territorial structure of migration with foreign countries also differ significantly between Russian regions as they are determined by the geographical position and traditional regional ties.

Migratory exchange of the majority of depressed Russian regions with far-abroad countries in the 2000-s was negative. The maximum population loss in the exchange with foreign countries is recorded in Altai Krai mainly due to emigration of ethnic Germans to West Germany. Some regions, primarily the Smolensk oblast, have insignificant migration gains in the exchange with far-abroad countries (*Tab. 2*).

The main volume of migratory exchange in international migration in all depressed regions accounts for neighboring countries. As for individual Russian regions, almost

Table 2. Permanent migration flows in depressed Russian regions in 2001–2015, people*

Depressed region	Number of immigrants			Number of emigrants			Migration gain (loss) in relation to		
	from other regions	from CIS and Baltic countries and Georgia	from other countries	to other regions	to CIS and Baltic countries and Georgia	to other countries	other regions	CIS and Baltic countries and Georgia	other countries
Ivanovo Oblast	112 755	25 164	1 118	128 766	2 862	1 181	-16 011	22 302	-63
Oryol Oblast	72 705	20 109	330	90 352	2 485	709	-17 647	17 624	-379
Smolensk Oblast	95 911	62 882	6 846	131 377	29 668	6 078	-35 466	33 214	768
Pskov Oblast	93 381	21 849	1 168	107 529	8 986	2 027	-14 148	12 863	-859
Volgograd Oblast	192 109	46 068	2 464	278 099	8 468	9 825	-85 990	37 600	-7 361
Chuvash Republic	106 453	14 835	2 633	136 073	3 112	2 622	-29 620	11 723	11
Kirov Oblast	110 801	15 833	947	179 618	7 026	1 869	-68 817	8 807	-922
Ulyanovsk Oblast	124 748	31 298	2 630	190 573	5 173	2 533	-65 825	26 125	97
Kurgan Oblast	106 822	20 575	370	201 733	8 017	1 424	-94 911	12 558	-1 054
Altai Krai	213 025	89 189	6 966	330 109	32 620	30 341	-117 084	56 569	-23 375
All depressed regions	1 228 710	347 802	25 472	1 774 229	108 417	58 609	-545 519	239 385	-33 137

* Compiled from: *Population and migration in the Russian Federation in 2015: statistical bulletin*. Moscow: Rosstat, 2016; Rosstat Unified Interdepartmental Information-statistical System. Available at: https://www.fedstat.ru

all of them have positive net migration in the exchange between all CIS countries (with the exception of a small migration loss in the exchange of Altai Krai with Belarus). Analysis of the available data on the territorial structure of migration during 2004–2015 demonstrates that the main source of migration gain for the Ulyanovsk, Volgograd, Pskov and Ivanovo oblasts is Uzbekistan and it is typical for the whole Russia. For two depressed Russian regions – the Kurgan Oblast and Altai Krai – the main migration donor is Kazakhstan, the Chuvash Republic, for the Orel and Kirov oblasts – Ukraine, for the Smolensk oblast – Belarus. Since 2014,

Ukraine has been the main source of migrants for all depressed regions of the European Russia.

However, the share of migrants from selected countries in the total migration of each region does not fully reflect the real intensity of existing migratory flows as it depends on the population of the countries. For example, it is obvious that migration indices and the share of Uzbekistan in migration turnover will be higher than similar indicators for Moldova as the population of these countries varies considerably. To eliminate the influence of factors such as population of the territories and the absolute

Table 3. Countries with high IMTI values in exchange with depressed regions in 2004–2015*

Depressed region	IMTI by immigration higher than 10	IMTI by emigration higher than 10
Ivanovo Oblast	Armenia, Moldova	–
Oryol Oblast	Armenia, Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova	–
Smolensk Oblast	Belarus	Belarus
Pskov Oblast	Armenia, Moldova, Estonia	Estonia
Volgograd Oblast	Armenia	Armenia
Chuvash Republic	Armenia, Tajikistan	–
Kirov Oblast	Armenia	Armenia
Ulyanovsk Oblast	Armenia	–
Kurgan Oblast	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic	Kazakhstan
Altai Krai	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan	Kazakhstan
* Compiled from: *Russian demographic yearbook, 2004: statistical book.* Moscow: Rosstat, 2005; *Russian demographic yearbook 2015*: *statistical book*. Moscow: Rosstat, 2015.		

extent of migration flows on the indicator of migration intensity is possible through the use of Indices of Migrant Ties Intensity (IMTI), which are calculated by the formulas:

$$\text{IMTI em} = \frac{Bij}{\sum Bij} : \frac{Si}{\sum Si},$$

$$\text{IMTI imm} = \frac{Pij}{\sum Pij} : \frac{Si}{\sum Si},$$

where IMTI imm – index of migrant ties intensity (by immigration); IMTI em – index of migrant ties intensity (by emigration); Bij – number of emigrants from region j to country i; Pij – number of immigrants in region j from country i; Si –average population of country j for the period; $\sum Bij$ – total number of emigrants from depressed regions in the country under review; $\sum Pij$ – total number of immigrants to depressed regions from the countries under review; $\sum Sij$ – total population of the countries under review [10].

This index is applied in the studies of internal migration to assess the intensity of relations between Russian regions [14]. We calculated IMTIs for migratory interaction of depressed regions with the CIS and Baltic countries, Georgia, the United States, Germany, and Israel. High indicators by immigration and emigration (more than 10) are typical for migration exchange of depressed regions with individual CIS countries (*Tab. 3*), as well as the exchange of the Pskov Oblast with Latvia and Estonia. Analysis of migration relations with the CIS countries demonstrated increased IMIT values for the Chuvash Republic and Israel. In most cases, high IMTIs are explained by the geographical proximity of the regions and specific countries and a low level of socio-economic development even compared to

depressed Russian regions, as well as small population size of some foreign countries.

Main conclusions. Depressed regions are traditionally assessed as problematic compared to more successfully developing Russian regions. It is obvious that a decline in economic indicators amid depression must increase population outflow as a result of permanent migration. The main characteristic of all depressed Russian regions and at the same time one of the manifestations of economic depression is the population decline as a result of internal migration. However, during the post-Soviet period, this trend was accompanied by an increase in stress and return migration after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990-s and economic migration in the 2000-s. Being an part of the country attractive to migrants from the neighboring countries, depressed Russian regions during the post-Soviet period attracted migrants from the CIS countries. Amid reducing population in depressed Russian regions, immigrants are an important source of additional workforce for such regions, which would partially compensate, at least quantitatively, for the population decline caused by natural decline, interregional migration and emigration to developed far-abroad countries. The immigration flow to depressed regions provides significant quantitative results and slows down the process of resident population ageing reducing

gender disparity. The proximity to certain countries and traditional regional ties were of decisive importance in the formation of the territorial structure of permanent migration in the 2000-s.

It is possible to identify more favorable migration situation in the regions belonging to the Central Federal district, which, in our opinion, is due to the fact that depressed Russian regions situated close to the capital region are more attractive to migrants from neighboring countries. Immigrants may consider depressed regions as transit territories for further movement in Russia. In addition, the proximity of some depressed regions to the Moscow agglomeration makes it possible to replace permanent migration with temporary forms of labor migration.

The current situation in the sphere of migration is a consequence of problems in the economic and social sphere of depressed regions. While the existing regional disparities are preserved, part of the population of depressed Russian regions will inevitably be focused on being engaged in processes of permanent or temporary migration. For this reason, activities carried out by the authorities of depressed Russian regions aimed at reducing migration outflow of the youth and people of employment age do not always produce the expected results. The implementation of the migration policy in depressed regions should be linked to measures

of socio-economic development of these regions; the main goal should be to ensure the quality of life of the local population primarily by increasing wages, creating new jobs, and developing social infrastructure. At the same time, administrative mechanisms impeding temporary labor migration from depressed regions (restriction of registration and social services outside the region of residence, etc.) should be minimized. It is also necessary to consider the mechanisms of reallocating funds received by the budgets of the host regions from migrants' labor activity in favor of the regions providing the population of depressed regions.

A relevant aspect of the migration policy for depressed regions is the regulation of immigration from neighboring countries, primarily from the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). The obvious consequences of this migration manifested in both depressed and other Russian regions include the reduction in labor costs and requirements to the working conditions. Replacement of local workers with foreign ones leads to the degradation of labor market of depressed regions where the already high unemployment rates increase migration outflow. Workers from depressed Russian regions are in competition with foreigners on the labor market of both their "own" regions and regions which are centers of attraction of temporary and permanent migrants across the country (capital, oil and gas regions, etc.); employers prefer foreign, often illegal, migrants [18].

Addressing migration and socio-economic issues of depressed Russian region is impossible without federal authorities. Certain measures to regulate migration in the regions are informational and promotional and must be supplemented with economic and administrative measures.

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Information about the Author

Konstantin Anatol'evich Chernyshev − Ph.D. in Geography, Associate Professor, Department for Public and Municipal Administration, Vyatka State University (36, Moskovskaya Street, Kirov, 610000, Russian Federation; e-mail: ochern@rambler.ru)