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experience**

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Migrants' location choice: the role of migration experience¹

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This paper studies how the previous destination choices by household members might affect current choice by labor migrants from Tajikistan in Russia. We use 2007 and 2009 waves of Tajikistan Living Standards Survey combined with Rosstat regional statistics to analyze the effect of 2007 household migration experience and receiving regions' characteristics on 2008-2009 migrants' location choice within Russia. Our results suggest that there exists inertia in migrants' choices: previously chosen destinations largely define future ones. This inertia results in quickly weakening effect of labor market conditions on migrants' choice with migration experience.

Keywords: labor migration, international migration, destination choice, location choice, Tajikistan, Russia

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1. Introduction

Economic literature on migrants' location choice points to two major factors determining migration destination: economic characteristics of receiving regions and co-ethnics concentration. Dependence of current migrants' choice on co-ethnics concentration (that is, previous migrants' choices) has been extensively explored in literature. In case of repeated migrants personal migration history should play an important role. With accumulation of experience at the receiving country's labor market migrants can rely on their own knowledge and connections to find employment. This process might undermine the effect of receiving regions' economic conditions due to costs associated with destination change for a repeated migrant.

In this paper we aim to identify history dependence that might exist in migrants' destination choice within regions of a single receiving country. We also try to show how this history dependence affects the importance of regions' labor market characteristics: average wage and unemployment rate. To do this we employ 2007 and 2009 rounds of Tajikistan Living Standards Survey. Panel structure of the dataset allows us to distinguish between new and repeated migrants and to control for households' migration experience in 2007 while analyzing 2008-2009 migrants' location choices. We find considerable path dependence in destination choices by Tajik migrants. We also show, how the effect of receiving regions' economic characteristics on location choice depends on personal migration experience. In particular, after controlling for the migration history, wages and unemployment rate at the destination turn out to have less or no effect on the repeated migrants' location choice. We also find that the effect of regional economic characteristics on the destination choices for new migrants is higher than for repeated.

Path dependence in location choice arises because migrants have higher expected returns and lower costs at the familiar destinations. This might happen for two major reasons: either migrants assimilate in the receiving regions or they build into the existing ethnic network. On the one hand, returns from migration must increase for temporary migrants with experience at the receiving's country labor market (Dustmann 1992). First, migrants make investments into receiving country's specific human capital (e.g. language, knowledge of local laws, etc.). Second, experience facilitates building migrant's personal networks that might be quite complex and are not necessarily ethnically based (e.g., see Damm 2014 who's investigation of the effect of neighbors quality on immigrants' performance shows that the effect of non-ethnically similar neighbors increases over years of residence). Part of investments in human and social capital is location-specific and creates opportunity costs for changing destination². On the other hand, there exist ethnic networks that help migrants with job search, accommodation, ethnic goods provision. Conditional on self-selection, earnings and probability of employment turn out to be higher for those who reside within their ethnic group (Damm 2009b, Edin, Fredriksson, Åslund 2003).

Our paper contributes to the literature on migrants' location choice. Most of previous research focused on single migration episodes; locational choices of repeated migrants seem to be understudied. To our knowledge, our paper is of the few that studies together the effects of migration experiences and regional economic characteristics on the migrants' behavior.

Our paper also contributes to the literature that studies international labor migration in Russia. To our knowledge, it is the first paper that empirically investigates the determinants of location choice of temporary migrants in Russia using micro-level data.

Our results might be of an interest to policymakers. Temporary migrants are often considered to be the most mobile and ready to relocate part of the workforce. Our results show that previous migration experiences affect the current choices and reduce responsiveness of migration streams to the changing economic environment in the receiving regions or countries. In the absence of direct estimates of migrants' flows sensitivity, our results might help to predict how flows of migrants to Russia will react macro-economic shocks.

The paper is organized as follows. First, we discuss relevant literature. Further we describe Tajik-Russian migration patterns. Then we present data description and descriptive statistics. We discuss theoretical foundations of our empirical model and present it in the next part of the paper. Finally, empirical result and their robustness are discussed.

2. Literature review

² This argument contradicts spatial assimilation theory that suggests that migrants would change initial location (with high ethnic concentration) after acquiring new information, skills or legal status.

It has been long noticed that migrants' distribution over the receiving country does not replicate the one of natives (Chiswick and Miller 2004). Migrants often concentrate in particular locations. Understanding the reasons of the observed settlement patterns is important because of the impact that migrants might have on natives' labor market outcomes (Longhi, Nijkamp and Poot 2008, Kerr and Kerr 2011) and settlement decisions (Borjas 2006, Mocetti and Porello 2010) and also because future migrants' success in the receiving country considerably depends on settlement decision (Damm 2009b, Edin, Fredriksson, Åslund 2003, Chiswick and Miller 2005).

Destinations' economic conditions and migrants' concentration are the two factors that received most attention in economic literature that tries to explain migrants' choices. Starting from Bartel (1989) the main question of this literature might be formulated as "economics or ethnic networks?". The prevailing methodology is to use micro-level data to model individual migrants' choice conditional on the receiving regions' characteristics. Researches achieve conflicting results that vary considerably depending on group under analysis and data source. Studies by Bartel 1989, Kaushal and Kaestner 2010 show that the level of immigrants' concentration is important while economic factors have little or no effect. The authors of these papers use census data, that is, they analyze spatial distribution of migrant stock. Immigrants' concentration proved to be a significant factor in many other studies and survives even control for locations fixed effects (Jaeger 2008). Other studies (Zavodny 1999, Jaeger 2000, Jaeger 2008), along with importance of ethnic concentration, find considerable effects of economic factors. These papers used data on migration flows, in particular, admission data from the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Studies of immigrants' relocations show that migrants tend to stay at destinations where their ethnic group is concentrated (Bartel and Koch 1991, Kritz and Nogle 1994, Kritz, Gurak and Lee 2011). But results concerning economic factors are also mixed: Kritz and Nogle 1994, Gurak and Kritz 2000, find significant effect of economic factors, while Kaushal and Kaestner 2010 and Bartel and Koch 1991 do not. Many papers show that relative importance of the analyzed factors depend on various personal characteristics: education, age, gender, marital status, and previous occupation, country of origin, visa type, legal status (Scott D. M., Coomes P. A., Izyumov A. I. 2005, Pena 2009, Jaeger 2000, Jaeger 2008, Bartel 1989, Kaushal and Kaestner 2010). In general, for employment-based migrants, better educated, more qualified and legal migrants economic factors turn out to be more important, while the effect of ethnic concentration is higher for the low-skilled. All papers cited above studied the US case, still there exist papers on other countries. The, probably incomplete, list would be Denmark (Damm 2009), Sweden (Åslund 2005), Australia (Chiswick, Lee and Miller 2001), Canada (McDonald 2004), Netherlands (Zorlu and Mulder 2008). A different methodology was used to address the same questions for Switzerland (Jayet and Ukrayinchuk 2011), France (Jayet and Ukrayinchuk 2007) and Italy (Jayet, Ukrayinchuk and Arcangelis 2010).

Our study is close in spirit and methodology to the series of papers by Bauer, Epstein and Gang 2002, 2005, 2007. First, we are also using micro data from the sending country. Thus, migrants in the sample are temporary migrants, both legal and illegal. The latter are not captured by official statistics. Second, we distinguish experienced and new migrants. Bauer, Epstein and Gang 2002, 2005, 2007 show their results separately for the first and the last trip. In Bauer, Epstein and Gang 2002 they find that unemployment rate in US has statistically significant effect only for the first trip. In Bauer, Epstein and Gang 2006 they show that the effect of previous migrants' stock and contemporaneous migrants' flow are "slightly more important" for repeated migrants. In their papers they are documenting and explaining migrants' concentration over space, while our aim is to underline inertia that exists in individual migration decisions over time.

3. Tajikistan - Russia migration facts and 2008-2009 financial crisis.

Over 95% of Tajik migrants go to Russia (TLSS2007, TLSS2009). According to official data the stock of labor migrants from Tajikistan in Russia constituted 15-16% of all labor migration in 2007-2009 and was the 2nd largest among all sending countries (Tyuryukanova et.al. 2011). Tajik migrants predominantly are young males with secondary education from large rural households. In Russia, Tajik migrants work in construction, retail trade and some other sectors. Most often, Tajik migrants engaged in circular and seasonal migration. In pre-crisis 2007, average stay of migrants in Russia was about 12 months. The geography of Tajik labor migration comprises the economic and industrial centers across the country with up to 60% of flow going to Moscow (Chernina, Lokshin 2013). Permanent ethnic Tajik population in Russia is relatively small, about 200 thousands (0.15% of population)³, and dispersed over the country. Many ethnic Tajiks come to Russia from Uzbekistan.

³ Census 2010 data http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/croc/perepis_itogi1612.htm

Russia experienced one of the world largest shocks during 2008 – 2009 and the fall of its GDP in 2009 was as high as 7.8%⁴. Industries that suffered the most were manufacturing (-13.9% in 2009), construction (-16.4% in 2009) and retail trade (-8.3% in 2009),⁵ the last two being the top employers of migrant labor. Immediate reduction of migration quotas for 2009 could not considerably affect largely informal migration stream. The number of issued work permits fell only slightly in 2009 - by 8%⁶ (see **Error! Reference source not found.**). Migrants also faced more abuse by employers and higher risk of deportation (Marat 2010).

Tajikistan's economy is highly dependent on remittances. Tajikistan has the world's highest ratio of remittances to GDP reaching almost 50% in 2008⁷. The 2008-2009 world economic crisis heavily hit Tajik economy through the slump in prices of its exports (cotton and aluminum) and drying of the remittances stream. These two factors resulted in reduction of GDP growth rates from 21% in 2008 to 4% in 2009⁸. Reduction in remittances was first registered by Tajik banks in the fourth quarter of 2008 (Marat 2010).

TLSS2009 data analyzed by Danzer and Ivashenko 2010 show that remittances per migrant decreased by 30% in 2009 in comparison with 2007, the share of remitted income also fell from 80% to 50% (although share of households receiving in-kind remittances slightly increased – from 7% to 12%). Previous authors (Danzer and Ivashenko 2010, Marat 2010) document that migration was widely used as a shock coping strategy. More households were engaged in migration in 2009 and additional migrants had been sent to sustain the stream of remittances.

4. Data

In our study we use 2007⁹ and 2009¹⁰ waves of the Tajikistan Living Standard Survey (TLSS). The surveys were prepared by the World Bank together with UNICEF and carried out by the National Committee for Statistics (Goskomstat). The sample is representative on national, regional and rural/urban levels. During the 2007 survey 4,500 households and 32,000 individuals were interviewed between September and November. The 2009 wave of survey was held in October and November using a random subsample comprising 1,503 households and 7,000 individuals.

The household questionnaire includes migration block that provides information on each member's (both who are in the household at the moment and who are away) migration experience with detailed information on the last trip. That information includes earnings, destination, legal status and questions on the way the trip was organized. The questions are answered by migrants themselves if they are currently in the household or household head if migrants are away.

The questions concern the most recent migration experience if it took place in the last 4 years. For our purposes we limit this term in the 2009 sample by 2 years, while when identifying households' migration experience all migration episodes reported in 2007 survey are considered. The 2009 sample contains 780 individuals from 560 (37%) households who are reported to spend some time abroad for work purposes in 2008 – 2009. After excluding households with undetermined history¹¹ and unknown destination in 2009, we are left with a sample of 530 individuals from 421 (28%) households.

Forty four percent of the households did not report having migrants in 2007 survey. Migrants, who come from these households are considered "new"¹². All migrants from households with migration experience in 2007 are considered "repeated" even if their 2009 trip was their first one. Thus experience of migration to a particular destination in 2007 is household experience.

⁴ Rosstat

⁵ World Bank report on Russian economics № 20

⁶ Denisenko, Choudinovskikh 2013

⁷ Migration and Development Brief 3, 8, 10. World Bank

<http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTDECPROSPECTS/0,,contentMDK:21125572~pagePK:64165401~piPK:64165026~theSitePK:476883,00.html>

⁸ <http://data.worldbank.org/country/tajikistan>

⁹ <http://microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/72>

¹⁰ <http://microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/73>

¹¹ We exclude migrants and their households, who did not report having migration experience in 2007 survey, but reported in 2009 survey that their migration has begun before the date of 2007 survey or reported more than 2 years of migration experience.

¹² For the "new" migrants episode reported in the 2009 survey is not necessarily first one, migrants are "new" with respect to the 2007 survey.

We combine TLSS dataset with macroeconomic data taken from ROSSTAT sources. We use statistics on Russian regions for 2009 and 2008 including, population size, unemployment, the share of informally employed native workers, average wages. Information on migration quotas was taken from the orders issued by the Russian Ministry of Health and Social Development. We use data on permanent Tajik population from 2010 population census.

5. Characteristics of migrants and their experience

Table 1 shows the differences in characteristics of the new migrants and their households from repeated migrants. The new migrants are increasingly coming from urban and smaller households. Not surprisingly, repeated migrants know Russian better, earn more money, find better occupation and more frequently have legal status despite having nearly the same sex-age profile and being less educated.

Table 1 Migrants' and migrant households' characteristics

	All migrants	St.err	New migrants	St.err	Repeated migrants	St.err
Migrants household characteristics						
Urban household	14.1	0.02	16.6	0.04	12.9	0.02
Household size	9.3	3.4	8.3	2.7	9.9	3.6
Number of migrants	1.9	1.1	1.4	0.7	2.1	1.2
Share of women	0.31	0.11	0.30	0.13	0.31	0.10
Share of pensioners	0.05	0.08	0.06	0.09	0.05	0.08
Shar of children	0.30	0.16	0.32	0.17	0.28	0.15
Migrant characteristics						
Male	93.46	0.01	91.67	0.03	94.35	0.02
Age	29.8	8.5	30.0	8.6	29.7	8.4
Education						
Primary	13.6	0.02	13.2	0.03	13.8	0.03
Secondary	60.1	0.03	56.2	0.05	62.1	0.04
Specialized secondary	13.9	0.02	16.3	0.04	12.7	0.02
Higher or doctoral	12.4	0.02	14.3	0.04	11.4	0.02
Occupation in Russia						
Elementary occupations	34.4	0.03	44.7	0.05	29.3	0.03
Stall and market salespersons (ISCO 523)	3.2	0.01	1.5	0.01	4.1	0.01
Building frame, building finishers and related traders (ISCO 712, 713)	38.0	0.03	29.4	0.05	42.2	0.04
Speaks russian	83.1	0.02	73.6	0.05	87.8	0.02
Has work permit	30.4	0.03	25.5	0.05	32.7	0.04
Earnings, USD	352.1	256.8	310.2	262.4	371.9	251.7

Note: Observations are weighted with population weights

Did the migrants successfully find employment in Russia? In TLSS2009 sample, 86% of respondents are registered as being employed in 2009 with 85.5% of the sample reporting earnings information comparable to 90% in 2007. Twenty eight percent of migrants had pre-arranged job before leaving Tajikistan for Russia compared to 38% in 2007. In 2009 70% of respondents returned home by the time of survey, while in 2007 this number was only 25%. Average length of stay contracted from 12 to 7 months between 2007 and 2009. The share noneconomic reasons of coming back - family circumstances and being homesick - went down from 22% to 18% and from 27% to 12% respectively (see Table 2). The reasons of seasonal work and inability to get a work permit became important in 2009, especially for the new migrants (although residence permit became less of a problem). Overall, in 2009 migrants were participating in more costly and riskier venture.

Table 2 Return reasons

	2009						2007	
	All migrants	St. err.	Repeated migrants	St. err.	New migrants	St. err.	All migrants	
Could not get residence permit	3.1	0.01	2.8*	0.02	3.6	0.02	9.1	0.05
Could not get work permit	10.9	0.02	8.2*	0.03	14.7	0.04	4.1	0.03
Permit expired	3.3	0.01	3.7*	0.02	2.8	0.02	3.1	0.03
No intention to stay	8.8	0.02	7.6*	0.02	10.5	0.03	7.2	0.04
Accumulated enough money	2.8	0.01	3.6*	0.02	1.8	0.01	5.3	0.04
Seasonal work	8.5	0.02	7.6*	0.02	9.7	0.03	3.5	0.03
Was expelled	0.3	0.00	0.6*	0.01		0.00	2.6	0.03
Family reasons	17.5	0.03	19.1*	0.04	15.3	0.04	21.8	0.07
Homesick	12.4	0.02	13.6*	0.03	10.6	0.03	26.7	0.07
Other	32.3	0.03	33.2*	0.04	30.9	0.05	16.7	0.06

Note: Answered by return migrants; Calculated using population weights; *Differences between new and repeated migrants are statistically significant at 1% level

Answers to the survey questions show the crucial role that networks play in Tajik migration. About 55% of the sample report connection with relatives, friends or acquaintances to be the main reason of choosing the destination country (see Table 3). Repeated migrants use the help of relatives more frequently, while new slightly more often refer to friends and acquaintances. Not surprisingly, repeated migrants choose the country they have been before.

Table 3 Reason of choosing destination country

	2009						2007	
	All migrants	St. err.	Repeated migrants	St. err.	New migrants	St. err.	All migrants	
Have been to the country before	20.4	0.03	25.7*	0.04	13.3	0.03	26.4	0.07
Had contacts-relatives	22.6	0.03	24.3*	0.04	20.2	0.04	15.3	0.06
Had contacts-friends	14.4	0.02	12.2*	0.03	17.4	0.04	13.9	0.06
Contacts, acquaintances	18.4	0.03	15.8*	0.03	22.0	0.04	14.5	0.06
Close distance, easy to reach	0.6	0.01	0.6	0.01	0.6	0.01	0.8	0.02
Studies	0.3	0.00	0.1*	0.00	0.4	0.01	0.5	0.01
To join household member	1.1	0.01	0.9*	0.01	1.5	0.01		
Grabbed opportunity	3.7	0.01	3.3*	0.02	4.1	0.02	3.4	0.03
Had work/job arranged	18.1	0.03	16.5*	0.03	20.1	0.04	21.9	0.07
Other	0.5	0.00	0.5*	0.01	0.4	0.01	2.8	0.03

Note: Answered by return migrants; Calculated using population weights; *Differences between new and repeated migrants are statistically significant at 1% level

The question about means of job search reveals why networks are so important. Over 50% received information about job opportunities from friends and relatives abroad, another 37% from friends, relatives and neighbors in Tajikistan. Surprisingly, repeated migrants rely more on family and friends in Tajikistan, while new migrants – on family and friends in Russia.

Table 4 Main source of information about job opportunity

	2009	2007
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	All migrants	St. err.	Repeated migrants	St. err.	New migrants	St. err.	All migrants	
Family/relatives in Tajikistan	18.3	0.03	22.0*	0.04	13.2	0.04	21.0	0.07
Family/relatives abroad	27.4	0.03	26.8*	0.04	28.2	0.05	17.1	0.06
Friends in tajikistan	12.6	0.02	8.1*	0.03	18.8	0.04	21.3	0.07
Friends abroad	25.3	0.03	19.1*	0.04	34.0	0.05	19.6	0.07
Previous personal experience	9.1	0.02	12.6*	0.03	4.3	0.02	9.8	0.05
Neighbours	6.5	0.02	10.8*	0.03	0.6	0.01	5.1	0.04
Migration specialist	0.4	0.00		0.00	0.9	0.01	2.9	0.03
Other	0.4	0.00	0.6		1.2	0.01	1.2	0.02

Note: Answered by return migrants; Calculated using population weights;*Differences between new and repeated migrants are statistically significant at 1% level

6. Migrant destinations within Russia

Table 5 shows that the stock of migrants is distributed between 34 cities in 29 regions of Russia (in 2007 there were 17 cities). New migrants are found in 16 cities of 11 regions, while repeated - in 24 cities of 18 regions. The distribution between destinations is highly concentrated: top 3 destinations attract over 70% of migrants.

Table 5 Migrant destinations, 2009

City	Region	Federal district	All migrants, %	Repeated migrants, %	New migrants, %
Moscow	Moscow	Central	64.0	63.4	65.2
Ekaterinburg	Sverdlovskaya	Ural	5.9	6.9	3.8
St. Petersburg	St Peterburg	NorthWestern	3.6	3.1	4.4
Tyumen	Tyumenskaya	Ural	2.9	3.5	1.5
Samara	Samarskaya	Volga	2.7	3.5	1.1
Novosibirsk	Novosibirskaya obl	Siberian	1.6	2.0	0.8
Volgograd	Volgogradskaya	Southern	1.5		4.4
Irkutsk	Irkutskaya obl	Siberian	1.2	1.8	
Chelyabinsk	Chelyabinskaya	Ural	1.1	0.7	1.9
Kaluga	Kaluzhskaya	Central	1.1	0.8	1.6
Krasnodar	Krasnodarsky kray	Southern	1.0		3.0
Nizhnevartovsk	Tyumenskaya	Ural	0.8	0.9	0.7
Yaroslavl	Yaroslavsky krai	Central	0.8	0.2	2.0
Tver	Tverskaya	Central	0.7	1.1	
Novokuznetsk	Kemerovskaya	Siberian	0.7	0.4	1.3
Magnitogorsk	Chelyabinskaya	Ural	0.6	0.9	
Rostov	Rostovskaya obl	Southern	0.6	0.8	
Saratov	Saratovskaya	Volga	0.5	0.8	
Orsk	Orenburgskaya obl	Volga	0.4	0.6	
Tomsk	Tomskaya	Siberian	0.3	0.5	
Talyatti	Samarskaya	Volga	0.2	0.4	
Arkhangelsk	Arkhangelsk	NorthWestern	0.2	0.3	
Ryazan	Ryazanskaya obl	Central	0.2	0.3	
Ramenskoe	Moscovskaya obl	Central	0.2		0.5
Ufa	Bashkortostan	Volga	0.2		0.5

Orenburg	Orenburgskaya obl	Volga	0.1	0.2	
Mozhaisk	Moscovskaya obl	Central	0.1		0.3
Perm	Permsky kray	Ural	0.1	0.2	
Tambov	Tambovskaya	Central	0.1		0.3
Kazan	Tatarstan	Volga	0.1	0.1	
Blagoveshchensk	Amurskaya obl	Far Eastern	0.1	0.1	
Klin	Moscovskaya obl	Central	0.1	0.1	
Smolensk	Smolenskaya	Central	0.0		0.1
Omsk	Omskaya obl	Siberian	0.0	0.1	
Other city			6.5	6.5	6.5

Note: Calculated using population weights;

In Table 6 descriptive characteristics of migrant destination regions (weighted by the number of migrants) are presented. Due to high variability there are no statistical significant differences between repeated and new migrants.

Table 6 Characteristics of destinations

	All migrants		Repeated		New	
	Weighted mean	St.de v.	Weighted mean	St.de v.	Weighted mean	St.de v.
City-level statistics						
City population, 2009, thnd people	7677	4329	7583	4379	7870	4217
Average monthly wage, 2008, in thsnd 2007 RUR	24.3	4.7	24.3	5.0	24.4	4.6
Average monthly wage, 2009, in thsnd 2007 RUR	24.1	4.9	24.1	4.7	24.0	5.1
Number of registered unemployed per 1000, 2008	2.7	1.2	2.7	1.1	2.7	1.2
Number of registered unemployed per 1000, 2009	6.7	2.6	6.8	3.0	6.7	2.4
Region-level statistics						
Region population, 2009, thnd people	8303	3389	8433	3317	8239	3422
Average monthly wage, 2008, in thsnd 2007 RUR	23.8	6.1	23.6	6.2	23.8	6.0
Average monthly wage, 2009, in thnd 2007 RUR	23.4	6.2	23.5	6.1	23.3	6.3
Unemployed, percent, 2008	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.3
Unemployed, percent, 2009	4.3	2.4	4.3	2.4	4.2	2.4
Migration quota, 2009, thsnd people	287.5	158.	284.5	160.	293.7	154.
Migraion quota per 1000 of native population, 2009	30.7	12.4	31.4	12.1	30.4	12.6
Number of Tajiks (in 2010 census), thsnd	21.3	9.1	21.3	9.4	21.3	9.0
Number of Tajiks per 1000 population	2.5	0.6	2.5	0.6	2.6	0.6
GRP growth rate (log of)	-0.2	0.1	-0.2	0.1	-0.2	0.1

7. Theoretical model

Let us assume that each period a potential migrant makes location decision. When making the migration decision, a migrant compares costs and benefits of migration to each of possible destinations and decides on the location with the highest net benefits. The benefits from migration is mostly related with the expected earnings in the particular destination. The costs of migration depend on a multitude of factors that include the direct costs of obtaining tickets, travel documents, visas and passports, costs of settling up at the destination, housing and registration costs, and others. Compared to the new migrants, some of the costs might be lower for the returnees because their experience during the previous migration spells. For example, it might be

easier for the return migrants to find housing, they already know the protocol of registration in the country, etc. The probability of finding a job can also be higher because of the arrangement with the previous employer. Thus familiar locations appear more attractive.

Formally, let individual i in period t choose between $j = 1 \dots N$ destinations that bring utility U_{ijt} . The probability of choosing destination j is then:

$$\Pr(\text{Migrate}_{ij}) = P(U_{ijt} = \max(U_{i1t}, U_{i2t}, \dots, U_{iNt})), \quad (1)$$

Individual's i utility from destination j in period t , $U_{ijt} = f(G_{ijt})$, is a function of factors that contribute to the gain from migration G_{ijt} :

$$G_{ijt} = p_{ijt} * w_{ijt} - C_{ijt}, \quad (2)$$

Where p_{ijt} – probability of employment, w_{ijt} – migrant's wage, C_{ijt} – migration costs. In their turn, each of the factors C_{ijt} , p_{ijt} and w_{ijt} depends on four components. They are destination characteristics Z_{jt} (economic characteristics, migrants concentration), migrant personal characteristics X_{it} (age, gender, education, migration experience, etc.), the interactions of characteristics of the migrant and the destination X_{ijt} (e.g. migrant's experience on the destination) and a random component u_{ijt} .

We are going to assume linear relation between utility and factors X_{it} , Z_{jt} , X_{ijt} , u_{ijt} :

$$U_{ijt} = \beta Z_{jt} + \gamma X_{ijt} + \alpha X_{it} + e_{ijt}, \quad (3)$$

where e_{ijt} is a random error. Substituting (3) into (1) we get:

$$\Pr(\text{Migrate}_{ij}) = P(\beta Z_{jt} + \gamma X_{ijt} + e_{ijt} > \beta Z_{kt} + \gamma X_{ikt} + e_{ikt}, k \neq j), \quad (4)$$

Assuming might that e_{ij} is iid with Weibull distribution (4) could be written as:

$$\Pr(\text{Migrate}_{ij}) = \frac{\exp(\beta Z_{jt} + \gamma X_{ijt})}{\sum_{j=1}^N \exp(\beta Z_{jt} + \gamma X_{ijt})} \quad (5)$$

Parameters β and γ are estimated by maximization of likelihood function that is a sum of logs of (5) for all observations.

An important property of this model is independence of irrelevant alternatives is easily seen from equality (5). The property means that relative probability of choosing two alternatives depends only on these alternatives' characteristics and does not depend on the choice set. This property allows us to ignore destinations that did not enter our sample. In case of spatial choice we might expect this assumption not to fulfill as less distant alternatives can be expected to be closer substitutes to each other. To partly eliminate this problem in empirical analysis we will include controls for larger geographical entities – Federal Districts.

8. Empirical estimation

Our empirical model is described in details in equation (6). Dummy variable for migration of individual i to destination j in 2009 is in the left-hand side of the equation. Various factors that affect migrant choice are in the right-hand side.

$$\Pr(\text{Migrate}_{ij}) = \frac{\exp(\gamma \text{Prevchoice}_{ijt} + \beta_1 \ln \text{Popul}_{jt} + \beta_2 \text{Quota}_{jt} + \beta_3 \ln \text{Wage}_{jt} + \beta_4 \text{Unempl}_{jt} + \beta_5 \text{Stajiks}_j + \lambda_k \text{FD}_{jk})}{\sum_{j=1}^N \exp(\gamma \text{Prevchoice}_{ijt} + \beta_1 \ln \text{Popul}_{jt} + \beta_2 \text{Quota}_{jt} + \beta_3 \ln \text{Wage}_{jt} + \beta_4 \text{Unempl}_{jt} + \beta_5 \text{Stajiks}_j + \lambda_k \text{FD}_{jk})} \quad (6)$$

Where Prevchoice_{ijt} – indicator of individual's i household members going to destination j in 2007

$\ln \text{Popul}_{jt}$ – logarithm of population size of region j in period t ;

Quota_{jt} – ratio of regional migration quota size to the size of population of region j in period t ;

$\ln \text{Wage}_{jt}$ – logarithm of average monthly wage in region j in period t ;

Unempl_{jt} – share of unemployed in region j in period t ;

Stajiks_j – ratio of population who stated tajik nationality in 2010 census to region population;

FD_{jk}- dummy for k = 1...7 federal district.

The variables we are using aim to predict probability of employment, wage and migration costs that are factors that drive destination choice as was discussed in the previous section. Average monthly wage is a proxy for migrant wage. Probability of employment is predicted by regional unemployment and population size and partly by quota, to the extent that quotas reflect demand for migrant labor. As discussed before, networks are able to decrease costs of migration. We try to capture access to networks by the share of permanent Tajik population. Migration experience at the destination expands migrant network and thus is expected to, first, improve employment probability and, second, reduce costs of migration. The shock variable might affect choice both through wage, employment and migration costs.

9. Regression analysis

Our basic results are presented in Table 7. Columns (1) and (2) present results for the whole sample with and without control for previous choice of location. The effects of economic characteristics of regions - unemployment and average wage – are statistically significant. When previous choice is added to the regression, the economic characteristics retain significance, although the coefficients become smaller.

The numbers presented in tables are the odds ratios which are calculated as exponentiated regression coefficients and can be interpreted as the ratio by which the dependent variable changes for a unit change in an explanatory variable:

$$\exp(\beta) = \frac{(P(Y=j|x+1)/(1-P(Y=j|x+1)))}{(P(Y=j|x)/(1-P(Y=j|x)))} \quad (7)$$

The odds ratio for previous choice (column 2) is equal to 13 which means that the odds of choosing particular destination for a migrant who's household has migration experience in the region is 13 times higher than for the one who has not. The odds ratio for the unemployment rate is 0.8 which means that the increase of the unemployment rate results in the odds by 20%.

In case explanatory variable is in logarithm, like is average regional monthly wage, the change in odds in response to 1% change in variable is described by the formula (8):

$$1.01^\beta = \frac{(P(Y=1|\ln 1.01x)/(1-P(Y=1|\ln 1.01x)))}{(P(Y=1|\ln x)/(1-P(Y=1|\ln x)))} \quad (8)$$

That is our estimate of the effect of 1% change in the average regional wage on the relative odds of choosing destination is 1.5% without control for the previous choice and 1% with control.

Columns from (3) to (5) show how different are the results for the new and repeated migrants. For repeated migrants regional wages are significant, but its significance fades when previous choice is controlled for. Noticeably, geographic variables are also captured with previous choice. For new migrants the effect of wage is significant and larger in size than for repeated: 2.7% comparative to 2%.

Table 7 Analysis of Tajik migrants' location choice between Russian regions, 2008-2009 (Conditional logit)

	All migrants		Repeated migrants		New migrants
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	odds ratio	odds ratio	odds ratio	odds ratio	odds ratio
Share of unemployed	0.803*	0.817*	0.822	0.873	0.982
se	-0.0975	-0.0948	-0.118	-0.112	-0.226
Log average monthly wage	4.505**	2.766*	8.048**	2.641	15.25***
se	-2.787	-1.534	-6.718	-1.865	-14.72
Previous choice		12.78***		14.86***	
se		-4.725		-4.068	

Log population in population	1.932**	1.878**	1.834**	1.604	1.503
se	-0.501	-0.477	-0.518	-0.469	-0.884
Share of tajik population in region	1.145	1.196	0.998	1.099	0.633
se	-0.192	-0.191	-0.19	-0.179	-0.293
Migration quota	1.088***	1.074***	1.098***	1.064***	1.094***
se	-0.0148	-0.0146	-0.0187	-0.0204	-0.018
Federal districts (Far Eastern is omitted):					
Central	1.597	1.572	0.914	0.98	0.282
se	-1.839	-1.778	-1.143	-1.166	-0.356
NorthWestern	0.209	0.275	0.119	0.257	0.0363***
se	-0.254	-0.326	-0.158	-0.328	-0.0457
Southern	6.599*	4.921	11.27*	4.083	0.688
se	-7.522	-5.572	-15.85	-5.501	-1.014
Volga	6.343	4.549	8.664*	4.129	0.819
se	-7.416	-5.326	-10.09	-4.852	-0.826
Ural	6.51	4.81	6.651	3.616	0.606
se	-7.642	-5.589	-7.875	-4.235	-0.424
Siberian	7.358*	5.374	7.736*	3.789	
se	-8.664	-6.353	-8.86	-4.441	
Number of observations	16,430	16,430	6,808	6,808	4,680

Note: Robust standard errors are clustered by primary sampling units .01 - ***; .05 - **; .1 - *;

10. Robustness of results

10.1 Total Migration Experience

We have seen that the effect of economic variables is stronger for new migrants than for repeated. Now we want to look more closely at how the effect of regions' economic characteristics varies with migration experience. For a subsample of migrants who were at home at the moment of survey we observe the total number of years when individual performed migration trips abroad. We take this variable as a measure of experience at the receiving country's labor market. We estimate the following equation:

$$\Pr(\text{Migrate}_{ijt}) = \frac{\exp(\gamma \text{Prevchoice}_{ijt} + \beta Z_{jt} + \delta Z_{jt} * \text{MigExp}_{it} + \lambda X_{jt})}{\sum_{j=1}^J \exp(\gamma \text{Prevchoice}_{ijt} + \beta Z_{jt} + \delta Z_{jt} * \text{MigExp}_{it} + \lambda X_{jt})} \quad (9)$$

Where we add the interaction term of migration experience measure (MigExp_{it}) with one of regions' economic characteristics (Z_{jt}): average wage or unemployment. The set of control variables X_{jt} is the same as in equation (6).

Table 8 presents results of equation (9) estimation. The interactions of MigExp with wage and unemployment are significant after controlling for the previous destinations. That means that experience at the receiving country's labor market weakens sensitivity to regional wage and unemployment. The effect of variable Z_{jt} at some level of MigExp is obtained by multiplying odds ratios for the variable and the interaction term¹³. Our point estimates reveal that the effect of both economic variables is reduced to zero by the fourth year of migration experience.

Table 8 Analysis of Tajik migrants' location choice between Russian regions, 2008-2009 (Conditional logit)

All migrants

¹³ For discussion of interaction terms interpretation in logistic regressions see Buis M. L. et al. Stata tip 87: Interpretation of interactions in non-linear models //The Stata Journal. – 2010. – T. 10. – №. 2. – C. 305-308.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	odds ratio	odds ratio	odds ratio	odds ratio
Share of unemployed	0.787	0.768*	0.825	0.84
se	-0.127	-0.123	-0.128	-0.126
Log average regional monthly wage	4.050**	2.668	4.400**	4.362**
se	-2.639	-1.624	-2.948	-2.914
Share of unemployed*Years of Migration	1.037**	1.073***		
se	-0.0164	-0.0211		
Log average regional monthly wage*Years of Migration			0.901	0.687**
se			-0.134	-0.131
Previous choice		9.585***		9.092***
se		-4.278		-4.224
Control variables	yes	yes	yes	yes
Federal district dummies	yes	yes	yes	yes
Number of observations	10,478	10,478	10,478	10,478

Note: Robust standard errors are clustered by primary sampling units .01 - ***; .05 - **; .1 - *;

10.2 Violation of the Independence of Irrelevant Alternatives Assumption

Our empirical strategy relies on independence of irrelevant alternatives (IIA) assumption. Its violation results in estimates inconsistency. In case of spatial choice the assumption is most likely violated. We perform a test¹⁴ for meeting IIA assumption that shows that it is violated for a great number of alternatives. To see how seriously the problem affects reliability of our estimates we employ an alternative empirical model. We estimate multinomial probit regression model which does not rely on IIA assumption. Instead, the model assumes that the errors follows multivariate normal distribution and are correlated across choices. This assumption, although allows to relax the IIA, causes computational complexity of the model due to necessity to calculate high dimensional integrals. There are no closed form expressions for such integrals and hence for number of alternatives that are equal or exceed 3 one has to simulate them using monte carlo simulation techniques.

Our aim here is to test our main predictions which are dependence on the previous destination choice and diminishing effect of regions' characteristics with migration experience. The model allows us to estimate the effect of variables that vary by both case (individual) and alternative. Thus we include into regression dummies for previously chosen destinations and interactions of regional economic characteristics and migration experience measure. We do this for the top 4 alternatives. The result presented in Table 9 are consistent with our baseline result. The effect of previous choice is highly significant. The effect of interaction of unemployment rate and migration experience is significant and positive as in Table 8. The effect of interaction of wage and migration experience is negative but insignificant.

Table 9. Analysis of Tajik migrants' location choice between Russian regions, 2008-2009 (Multinomial probit)

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient
Previous choice	0.935***	1.754***	1.729***
se	-0.19	-0.34	-0.352
Share of unemployed*Years of Migration		0.0695***	
se		-0.0249	
Log average regional monthly wage*Years of Migration			-0.162
se			-0.249
Number of observations	1,768	1,132	1,132

Note: Robust standard errors are clustered by primary sampling units .01 - ***; .05 - **; .1 - *;

10.3 Exclusion of Moscow

¹⁴ Hausman and McFadden 1984

Great concentration of migrants in Moscow creates a concern in our results. When Moscow is excluded from the sample results do change (see Table 10). The dependence on previous choice becomes determinative. Unemployment rate stays significant and negative. Noticeably, share of permanent Tajik population becomes significant. There also arises negative and significant coefficient for average wage when previous choice is controlled for. Such results might show that outside the largest Moscow market employment opportunities become the principle pull factor. Negative effect of wage might be explained by lower attractiveness of these regions for internal migrants. Such interpretation is consistent with results of Vakulenko and Leuhin 2015 who conclude that firms' demand for migrant labor is negatively correlated with internal migration.

Table 10 Analysis of Tajik migrants' location choice between Russian regions, 2008-2009 (Conditional logit), Moscow excluded

	All migrants		Repeated migrants		New migrants
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	odds ratio	odds ratio	odds ratio	odds ratio	odds ratio
Share of unemployed	0.822*	0.806*	0.898	0.899	0.926
se	-0.0909	-0.0962	-0.124	-0.136	-0.15
Log average monthly wage	0.328	0.129***	1.052	0.224	0.359
se	-0.264	-0.0955	-1.15	-0.241	-0.404
Previous choice		113.4***		99.27***	
se		-53.62		-52.38	
Log population in region	1.404	1.468	1.244	1.434	1.276
se	-0.403	-0.496	-0.45	-0.659	-0.65
Share of tajik population in region	1.795***	1.824***	1.449*	1.438*	1.326
se	-0.314	-0.334	-0.304	-0.315	-0.523
Migration quota	1.021	1.021	1.043	1.038	1.011
se	-0.0193	-0.0199	-0.0286	-0.0319	-0.0246
Federal districts (Far Eastern is ommitted):					
Central	0.649	0.513	0.587	0.451	0.654
se	-0.726	-0.579	-0.696	-0.546	-0.776
NorthWestern	1.402	1.153	0.89	0.668	2.483
se	-1.661	-1.406	-1.214	-1.002	-4.065
Southern	1.982	1.213	4.728	0.738	1.697
se	-2.393	-1.51	-7.375	-1.151	-1.996
Volga	1.355	0.759	2.97	0.995	1.08
se	-1.703	-1	-3.893	-1.426	-1.017
Ural	3.38	1.877	4.756	1.702	2.073
se	-4.078	-2.363	-5.962	-2.366	-1.635
Siberian	1.684	1.115	2.503	1.161	
se	-2.189	-1.5	-3.317	-1.693	
Number of observations	4,950	4,950	2,134	2,134	1,292

Note: Robust standard errors are clustered by primary sampling units .01 - ***; .05 - **; .1 - *;

10.4 Recent Entries

Here we keep in sample only migrants with entry dates in 2008 and 2009. This allows us to exclude those migrants who update their location decision without leaving Russia. For them costs associated with their current location are lower because of economy on transportation costs and possibly other types of costs. Probability of changing location is expected to be lower for them, thus they might boost our estimates of previous choice effect and suppress economic variables effect.

We obtain somewhat contradictory result. On the one hand, the effect of wage is still significant after control for previous choice for repeated migrants, unlike the full sample. The size of its effect is also higher. On the other hand, unemployment rate becomes insignificant and dependence on previous choice is even higher.

Table 11 Analysis of Tajik migrants' location choice between Russian regions, 2008-2009 (Conditional logit), recent entries

	All migrants		Repeated migrants		New migrants
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	odds ratio	odds ratio	odds ratio	odds ratio	odds ratio
Share of unemployed	0.923	0.912	1.03	1.008	1.062
se	-0.105	-0.103	-0.155	-0.142	-0.222
Log average monthly wage	6.862***	4.175**	15.42***	4.085**	17.47***
se	-4.258	-2.358	-11.94	-2.787	-18.71
Previous choice		13.27***		15.02***	
se		-5.541		-4.389	
Log population in region	2.037***	1.957**	2.024*	1.685	1.633
se	-0.558	-0.53	-0.744	-0.648	-0.837
Share of tajik population in region	1.128	1.176	0.945	1.069	0.621
se	-0.193	-0.194	-0.197	-0.199	-0.273
Migration quota	1.091***	1.077***	1.103***	1.066***	1.099***
se	-0.0154	-0.0156	-0.0191	-0.0216	-0.0207
Federal districts (Far Eastern is omitted):					
Central	2.003	1.886	1.299	1.184	0.349
se	-2.324	-2.159	-1.629	-1.424	-0.358
NorthWestern	0.287	0.348	0.206	0.39	0.0438***
se	-0.354	-0.421	-0.276	-0.505	-0.0452
Southern	6.847*	5.247	11.48*	4.015	0.761
se	-7.743	-5.91	-16.53	-5.605	-0.992
Volga	8.611*	6.264	15.06**	5.893	0.915
se	-10.32	-7.5	-18.47	-7.319	-0.906
Ural	5.097	3.966	4.771	2.65	0.619
se	-6.038	-4.662	-5.977	-3.322	-0.404
Siberian	5.03	4.021	4.366	2.444	
se	-6.093	-4.86	-5.626	-3.182	
Number of observations	14,280	14,280	5,302	5,302	4,700

Note: Robust standard errors are clustered by primary sampling units .01 - ***; .05 - **; .1 - *;

Robustness checks of our basic result support a considerable dependence on previous location choices. It turns out to be particularly important to those choosing destinations outside Moscow. Moreover, both introducing migration experience variable and limiting sample to recent entries show that importance of regional economic factors diminish with experience at the receiving country's labor market.

11. Conclusion

In this paper we study how previous choices of location in the receiving country affect subsequent choice by labor migrants. We were interested in the effect of experience itself and how experience affects the importance of economic characteristics of the receiving regions. Using the panel survey of Tajik households – the 2007 and 2009 rounds of Tajikistan Living Standard Survey - we study the choices of Tajik labor

migrants in Russia. Our results suggest existing inertia in the geography of migrants' concentration: previously chosen destinations largely define future ones. This inertia suppresses the reaction to receiving regions' economic characteristics: when controlled for previous destinations, the effect of regional economic factors diminish or become insignificant. We find that migration experience in general also reduces the importance of economic factors: their effect is weaker for repeated than for new migrants and it diminishes with years of experience at the receiving country's labor market.

Our results illustrate the mechanism of developing migrants' concentration in particular locations: previously chosen destinations keep attracting migrants even if the economic conditions in other regions relatively improve. On the other hand, the destinations has not been chosen randomly: economic characteristics, namely average wage, are important in generating typical migrant destinations. Moreover, we show that with the long-term changes in economic situation destinations are also going to change as migrant flow reveals sensitivity to economic factors in spite of previous choice.

12. Literature

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