

---

## SOCIOLOGICAL SURVEYS

---

# The Migration Experience of the Population of Russian Regional Centers, Based on a Sociological Survey in 10 cities

Zh. A. Zaionchkovskaya and N. N. Nozdrina

**Abstract**—Using a sociological survey of the population in 10 regional centers of the Russian Federation as a case study, the article studies the migration experience of Russians (birthplace, moving rate, length of residence at the site of survey, regions or countries of origin). The results are compared in great detail with the 2002 All-Russia Census.

**DOI:** 10.1134/S1075700708040096

At present, the population of Russia is characterized by a low level of geographic mobility. After the Soviet Union disintegration, it dropped more than 2 times and this process is still under way. In 2005, 1.9 million people, or 1.3% of the country's population, changed their habitual place of residence inside Russia. It could reasonably be assumed that the number of internal migrants has been underestimated by about 30% due to faulty reporting. However, even under this assumption, the mobility level rises only up to 1.7% whereas in 1989 it was 3.3% (4.9 million people). The population mobility in Russia is somewhat similar to that before the First World War. The low population mobility aggravates the demographic situation, is adverse to the interests of market economy, hinders a more efficient utilization of labor force, and ultimately leads to poverty conservation.

In order to determine the level, factors, and regional differentiation of migrational mobility of the Russian population, a survey of 3200 respondents aged from 18 to 49 was conducted in early 2006 in 10 cities of Russia (320 persons in each of the cities). The enquiry itself was conducted by Levada-Center using three-stage stratified sampling (at the first stage survey sites were selected, at the second stage households were chosen and at the third stage respondents were picked out by the quota method).

At the preparatory stage of the enquiry, special attention had been paid to the choice of regions. It was assumed that migrational mobility was directly related to the level of socio-economic development of the region: depressive regions should more intensively "oust" population than relatively well-developed territories with less mobile residents.

The regions were selected according to the comprehensive socio-economic typology, which is actually a synthesis of the migration situation typologization and two typologies of socio-economic development (of the Independent Institute for Social Policy and worked out by the Institute for the Economy in Transition). The first of them is based on qualitative grouping and differ-

entiates the regions with respect to statistical indicators as well as with respect to the development level and character. The second one, based on cluster analysis, adds an important component of investment behavior to the socioeconomic characteristics of the regions.

This resulted in 10 selected regions located in different federal districts and varying in the level of socioeconomic potential and the degree of migration attraction. Within the regions, the survey covered their central cities (St. Petersburg, Belgorod, Nalchik, Nizhni Novgorod, Novosibirsk, Kazan, Vladivostok, Krasnodar, Smolensk, Orenburg).

Studying the migration experience of the population—so-called "migration biographies"—is an integral component of the investigation of migration mobility. The information provided by migration history contains no less data on migration mobility than migration attitudes. Migration biographies reflect events that had already occurred in the lives of migrants whereas migration attitudes only show the migrants' verbal behavior. The study of attitudes is really important but one can never rely on the actualization of the verbal behavior; at the same time migration history may prove a key to the insight into the future behavior of the population. The project program included a rather detailed study of the both migration experience of the respondents and their migration attitudes. The combination of those gives a sufficient idea of general migrational population mobility both actual and potential.

Let us consider the key characteristics describing the migration experience of the population.

**Birthplace.** On the average, 92.8% of the respondents were born in Russia, 6.7%—in one of the republics of the former Soviet Union, and 0.5%—outside the Soviet Union. This distribution practically coincides with that obtained by the Population Census of 2002 for the entire RUSSIAN population: 92.6%, 7.1%, and 0.3% respectively, which positively confirms the representativeness of the survey with respect to one of the primary indicators of mobility.

**Table 1.** Respondents' birthplace by country, %

Birthplace	St. Petersburg	Belgorod	Nalchik	Nizhni Novgorod	Novosibirsk	Kazan	Vladivostok	Krasnodar	Smolensk	Orenburg	Array average
Russia	92.1	86.3	93.5	96.0	92.8	96.0	96.9	90.3	93.5	91.0	92.8
Including:											
Survey city	68.7	57.2	63.8	79.4	71.3	75.5	61.6	55.0	64.4	60.7	65.8
Another locality	23.4	29.1	29.7	16.6	21.5	20.5	35.3	35.3	29.1	30.3	27.0
Outside Russia	7.9	13.7	6.5	4.0	7.2	4.0	3.1	9.7	6.5	9.0	7.2
Including:											
FSU republics	7.3	12.8	5.6	3.8	7.2	3.1	3.1	9.7	5.3	9.0	6.7
Outside the former Soviet Union	0.6	0.9	0.9	0.2	—	0.9	—	—	1.2	—	0.5

**Table 2.** Population growth in the survey cities (1959 = 100%), %

City	1959, thou- sand people	1970	1979	1989	2002	2006	Growth rate rank
St. Petersburg	3003	118.3	135.6	147.7	155.6	152.5	9
Belgorod	72	209.7	333.3	414.2	468.9	478.1	1
Nalchik	88	165.9	235.2	262.1	311.3	308.5	2
Nizhni Novgorod	942	124.2	142.7	152.3	139.2	136.3	10
Novosibirsk	886	131.0	148.0	162.0	160.8	157.6	8
Kazan	667	130.3	148.9	162.7	165.7	166.8	7
Vladivostok	291	151.8	189.3	217.1	203.6	200.8	5
Krasnodar	313	146.9	178.9	197.8	205.9	226.9	3
Smolensk	147	157.1	203.4	230.3	221.4	216.3	4
Orenburg	267	128.7	171.3	203.6	205.3	199.7	6

Let us analyze similar indicators for the surveyed cities subdividing the Russian-born respondents into those born in the survey city and those born in another place within the country (Table 1).

Population structure differentiation with respect to cities proved to be rather significant. The share of native-born individuals in the total population varies from 79.4% in Nizhni Novgorod (the highest one) to 55% in Krasnodar (the lowest one).

Could the above-presented data provide a basis for conclusions about the differences in the population mobility? Since this is a fundamental question for the present study, let us consider it in greater detail.

The share of the native-born largely depends on the growth rate in the population of the cities (Table 2, Fig. 1), which in the conditions of about the same level of the natural increase can be associated with the migrants inflow. The greater inflow of migrants into a city the lower the share of the native-born. Belgorod is a typical city in this respect. Its population soared in the 1960s–1980s increasing over 4 times and continued to

grow in later years. Therefore, the low share of the native-born here (57.2%) is quite understandable.

Situation in Krasnodar differs from Belgorod; here the population grew much slower than in Belgorod (the increase from the level of 1959 was 2.3 and 4.8 times respectively). However, the share of the native-born in Krasnodar is even less. This means that Krasnodar-born citizens are themselves participants in migration and are being replaced by newcomers. The natural conclusion would be that residents of Krasnodar demonstrated higher mobility than Belgorod population.

The greatest uniformity characterizes the population of the largest cities such as St. Petersburg, Novosibirsk, Nizhni Novgorod, Kazan—from 70% to 80% in round figures are the native-born. The growth rates and trends in these four cities are similar. Their population also grew significantly, the increase since 1959 was about 1.5 times. At the same time, a high share of the native-born in the population of these cities indicates that not only “autochthonic” native-borns are unwilling to leave the cities but also children of migrants born there. In

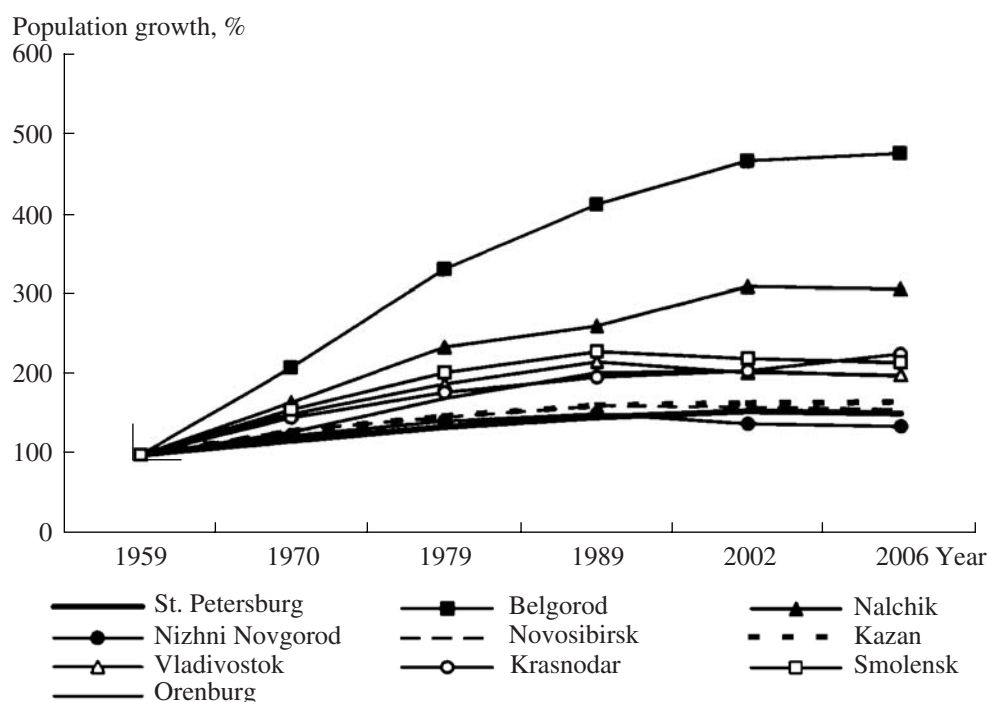


Fig. 1. Population growth in the survey cities as compared with 1959.

other words, the population of the largest cities in the country are more than anywhere else “attached” to their home cities, it is monolithic and not dynamic.

The above-presented examples show that although the share of the native-born in the city’s population is a very reliable mobility indicator, its interpretation requires the allowance for the specifics in the formation of the population composition in the particular territory.

The population of all the cities considered increased mostly at the expense of the people born in Russia whose quantity is significantly greater than that of the people born in the republics of the former Soviet Union. In Belgorod only this share is two times greater (29.1% of people born in other parts of Russia 12.8% were born in former Soviet republics), and in all the rest of the cases there are 3–5 times (in Vladivostok even 10 times) more Russian-born people (except Belgorod). The share of people born in former Soviet republics is relatively high in other cities bordering with CIS countries such as Krasnodar and Orenburg (9.7 and 9%) whereas in Kazan, Nizhni Novgorod, and Vladivostok there are few such people (from 3.1 to 3.8%). Therefore, the survey data as the data of the national Census clearly show that the image of “migrant-flooded” Russia after the Soviet Union disintegration is a great exaggeration. The share of people borne outside the Soviet Union is even less significant.

Compare the data of Table 1 with the data of the last Census of population. The Census publications do not give data for individual cities but contain information about the population structure with respect to the birth-

places of working-age urban population broken down into regions. It seems reasonable to compare the results of the survey and the Census because regional centers are typical “images” of the region’s urban population often determining its parameters. In addition, active working age only slightly differs from the age range of the survey respondents (18–49).

As follows from Table 3, the data on the share of those born outside Russia according to the Census and the survey generally coincide, which is one more confirmation of the sample reliability. The only exception is Vladivostok where the results differed greatly: the survey underestimated the mobility in this city.

The similarity in indicators distribution was confirmed by the high coefficient of pair correlation ( $R^2 = 0.77$ ) between the first and the second columns (see Table 3). If Vladivostok (the data for which were significantly difficult in the Census and the survey) is excluded from this series the value of the pair correlation coefficient will increase up to 0.88.

Strictly speaking, the fact that at the survey time the respondent lived in his native city does not mean that he had never left it to live elsewhere. Many people leave their home towns for various reasons (e.g. deployment after college, army service, taking a job, for family or other reasons) but then come back home. Table 4 provides information about the mobility of the native-born.

The overwhelming majority of the native-born in regional centers (82–93%) permanently live in their native city from the time of their birth. The share of the native-born with migration experience is small and on

**Table 3.** Share of residents born outside Russia, % (according to the data obtained by the survey and the 2002 Census)

City	Survey	Census*	Region**
A	1	2	B
St. Petersburg	7.9	9.4***	St. Petersburg
Belgorod	13.7	14.1	Belgorod oblast
Nalchik	6.5	5.5	Kabardino-Balkar Republic
Nizhni Novgorod	4.0	4.0	Nizhni Novgorod oblast
Novosibirsk	7.2	7.7	Novosibirsk oblast
Kazan	4.0	4.7	Republic of Tatarstan
Vladivostok	3.1	9.4	Primorskii krai
Krasnodar	9.7	14.5	Krasnodar krai
Smolensk	6.5	9.9	Smolensk oblast
Orenburg	9.0	9.6	Orenburg oblast

Notes: \* Urban population in active working age (Census 2002 results. V. 10, Table 3).

\*\* Regions of Census data.

\*\*\* Respondents failing to give their birthplace (8.4%) were excluded because their taking into account could considerably undermine data comparability.

**Table 4.** Mobility of the native-born, %

Mobility indicators	St. Petersburg	Belgorod	Nalchik	Nizhni Novgorod	Novosibirsk	Kazan	Vladivostok	Krasnodar	Smolensk	Orenburg	Array average
Share of the native-born in the total population	68.7	57.2	63.8	79.4	71.3	75.5	61.6	55.0	64.4	60.7	65.8
Including											
those who have never moved	58.1	53.1	59.4	66.9	62.0	62.1	56.9	48.8	54.5	56.0	57.8
those who have moved	10.6	4.1	4.4	12.5	9.3	13.4	4.7	6.2	9.9	4.7	8.0
The share of those who have moved in the total number of the native-born	15.5	7.1	6.9	15.7	13.1	17.8	7.6	11.4	15.5	7.7	12.2

the average is 12.2%. The maximum value of this indicator is in Kazan (17.8%), St. Petersburg, Nizhni Novgorod, and Smolensk (over 15%) and in some cities comes down to 7–8% (Nalchik, Belgorod, Vladivostok, Orenburg).

It is difficult to give an unambiguous interpretation of the data presented in Table 4. Is it good or bad (both for an individual and for the society) that over a half (and sometimes, as in Nizhni Novgorod, two thirds) of the large cities population at the active age permanently live in the same city? On the one hand, this limits the life experience and opportunities for showing initiative and self-fulfillment, on the other hand it allows a person to establish strong social ties he can rely on and feel stronger confidence. The population stability stabilizes the entire situation but involves the risk of stagnation. At the same time we deem that the strong attachment of

the Russian population to their home places can largely be attributed to significant difficulties facing them in the case of moving to a new place and settling there.

Let us consider Table 4 once again. It actually accounts for not all the native-born who had left the town but only for those who had left it and came back. The share of home-comers in the total number of respondents is more likely to be the evidence of the population attachment to their native city than of the population mobility. For better understanding the latter aspect one should know the total number of people who had left the city, which would enable us to estimate how actively the people born in these cities participate in migration processes. The published data of the Census provide us the approximate estimate for St. Petersburg only. According to the Census, in 2002, in other regions of Russia there lived 12.3% of people born in St. Peters-



**Table 5.** Share of population permanently residing in a locality since birth, % (results of the survey and the 2002 Census)

City	Survey	Census*	Region**
A	1	2	B
St. Petersburg	58.1	58.9	St. Petersburg
Belgorod	53.1	48.2	Belgorod oblast
Nalchik	59.4	62.1	Kabardino-Balkar Republic
Nizhni Novgorod	66.9	65.4	Nizhni Novgorod oblast
Novosibirsk	62.0	55.1	Novosibirsk oblast
Kazan	62.1	52.5	Republic of Tatarstan
Vladivostok	56.9	49.5	Primorskii krai
Krasnodar	48.8	46.6	Krasnodar krai
Smolensk	54.5	51.5	Smolensk oblast
Orenburg	56.0	54.8	Orenburg oblast

Notes: \* Urban population in active working age. Respondents failing to give their birthplace were excluded (Census 2002 results. V. 10, Table 3).

\*\* Regions of Census data.

burg at the age of 15 and older. It is about the same figure as the number of people who had moved but came back. Therefore, only one in four or one in five native-borns of St. Petersburg has a migration experience<sup>1</sup>. Such population can hardly be called mobile as it is the migration experience accumulated by the city residents in their entire lifetime.

The survey data about the share of the native-born permanently residing in their home places also show a good correlation with the Census (Table 5). The pair correlation coefficient between the first and the second columns of Table 5 is high and equal 0.78.

The data obtained by the survey are mostly noticeably higher than the Census data in all the cities except Nalchik. This deviation can be attributed to the older age composition of the employable population as compared with the general respondent group. For some cities, however, such as Kazan, Novosibirsk, Vladivostok, deviations are too significant that points to a lower migration activity of the regional “capitals” as compared with the general urban population of the regions.

**Moving rate.** It is well known that people who have changed their place of residence, even if only once, are more likely to move again. They more often use migration as a means of solving their life problems. Therefore, the greater share of migrants in the population, the greater its mobility. We would like to emphasize once more: this is true when uniform objects are considered. The surveyed cities meet this requirement; both func-

tionally and migrationally they are of the same typological class.

42.2% of the general set of respondents had migrational experience. According to Census 2002, 46.6% of the RUSSIAN urban population in active working age had this kind of experience. The difference is insignificant, especially with the allowance made for discrepancy in the age bracket of the compared groups.

The greatest migration experience characterizes the population of Krasnodar, which noticeably leaves behind all other cities with respect to the share of respondents who had changed their place of residence (Table 6). This seems strange as the traditional image of Krasnodar in Russia is somewhat of “earthly paradise”. It proved, however, that the city’s population was highly mobile, and in the composition of its most active and capable part (aged 18–50) migrants dominate over “homebodies”—nothing of the kind was true of any other city.

The share of people with resettlement experience close to Krasnodar (although noticeably falling behind it) is relatively smaller in Belgorod, Smolensk, and Orenburg, whereas in the cities with population over a million the mobile part is the smallest. Migrants mostly have an experience of merely one resettlement. People with a considerable migrational experience (who changed their place of residence 3 and more times) account in the population of the cities for about 8% on the average, in some cities their share rises to 10–12% (St. Petersburg, Vladivostok, Krasnodar, and Smolensk).

The differences between the cities are the most obvious on considering the structure of migrants with respect to the number of relocations (Table 7). As can be seen, more migrants moved once (54.6% array average); the number of people who had moved twice is two

<sup>1</sup> The estimate can be only approximate because the age bracket of the survey and Census data in the case considered are too different. The Census data cover the older generations too and this naturally increases the accumulated moving rate. In addition, a certain part of native resident of St. Petersburg left for CIS and Baltic countries and further abroad. The Census does not take such people into account.

**Table 6.** Migration activity of the population, %

Participation in migration	St. Petersburg	Belgorod	Nalchik	Nizhni Novgorod	Novosibirsk	Kazan	Vladivostok	Krasnodar	Smolensk	Orenburg	Array average
Were born here and never moved	58.1	53.1	59.4	66.9	62.0	62.1	56.9	48.8	54.5	56.0	57.8
Moved	41.9	46.9	40.6	33.1	38.0	37.9	43.1	51.2	45.5	44.0	42.2
including											
once	16.4	27.2	30.6	13.8	21.5	18.7	24.1	29.7	19.4	29.4	23.0
twice	13.7	13.1	5.0	12.8	11.2	14.7	9.1	10.0	14.7	9.3	11.4
thrice	5.8	5.3	1.9	5.0	2.5	2.8	5.0	5.0	3.4	3.1	4.0
four and more times	6.1	1.3	3.1	1.6	2.8	1.8	5.0	6.6	8.1	2.2	3.8

**Table 7.** Migrants distribution by number of relocations\*, %

Number of relocations	St. Petersburg	Belgorod	Nalchik	Nizhni Novgorod	Novosibirsk	Kazan	Vladivostok	Krasnodar	Smolensk	Orenburg	Array average
Once	39.1	58.0	75.4	41.5	56.6	49.2	55.8	57.9	42.5	66.9	54.6
Twice	32.6	28.0	12.3	38.7	29.5	38.7	21.0	19.5	32.2	21.1	26.9
Three and more times	28.3	14.0	12.3	19.8	14.0	12.1	23.2	22.6	25.3	11.9	18.5

\* Including native-borns with migration experience.

times lower (26.9%). The share of people who resettle more frequently is rather significant too making 18.5% of their total quantity.

The spread in the moving rate for the cities points to different patterns of migration. Thus, three quarters of migrants residing in Nalchik, changed their place of residence only once in 50 years of their life. Once moved to the desired city they settled there. The mobile part of the population of the largest cities looks totally different. While the share of migrants in the general population here is lower their moving rate distribution is more uniform (except Novosibirsk). This is particularly characteristic of St. Petersburg where only 39.1% migrants had moved only once, 32.6% had moved 2 times, and 28.3%—3 and more times. Almost the same distribution is observed in Smolensk where there are also many experienced migrants.

Under the general low mobility of the urban population the increased share of experienced migrants can be associated with the difficulties of settling in this particular city when the attainment of the desired objectives can be in several stages. This refers to St. Petersburg and, possibly, Krasnodar. In Vladivostok there share could have been increased on account with those moving from the northern part of the Far East driven by the economic degradation in this territory. It is difficult to explain the situation in Smolensk. Perhaps, those are

people coming back after the unsuccessful attempt to settle in other places.

**Period of residence.** Every other migrant had moved to the city in the Soviet period before 1992 (Table 8). By that time, the oldest of respondents were 35 and the youngest were 4. Therefore, about a half (to be more exact, 48.9%) of migrants in the cities managed to move there over 35 years. The second half moved there over only 14 subsequent years. In our survey, the latter period is subdivided into two 7-year segments. The first of them includes the years of the largest-scale forced migration (1992–1998) and the second one covers the time of migration drop in Russia (1999–2005). In spite of the descending migration trend, the share of migrants coming over the recent years in most cases exceeds the indicators of the previous 7-year period. This happens despite the slow-down in the cities development and even the stagnation in some of them.

The values of indicators are generally similar for various cities that eliminates the probability of serious sampling errors. Therefore, it follows from the distribution of migrants over the period of moving in is being constantly replaced. This turnover is especially intensive in Vladivostok, Krasnodar, and St. Petersburg. According to the Soviet-time investigations, over the first year of resettlement new place of residents was left

**Table 8.** Migrants distribution by the time of arrival in town, %

Years of arrival	St. Petersburg	Belgorod	Nalchik	Nizhni Novgorod	Novosibirsk	Kazan	Vladivostok	Krasnodar	Smolensk	Orenburg	Array average
Before 1992	45.6	48.6	49.3	50.9	43.4	58.0	40.6	44.2	57.6	51.7	48.9
1992–1998	18.4	28.7	20.0	18.9	23.7	20.2	21.0	18.4	17.1	23.4	21.0
1999–2005	36.0	22.7	30.7	30.2	32.9	21.8	38.4	37.4	25.3	24.9	30.1

**Table 9.** Birthplace of respondents: cities and villages, %

Birthplace	St. Petersburg	Belgorod	Nalchik	Nizhni Novgorod	Novosibirsk	Kazan	Vladivostok	Krasnodar	Smolensk	Orenburg	Array average
City, total	92.4	84.4	82.2	91.9	91.6	92.4	87.2	85.0	87.5	80.5	87.5
non-native-born	23.7	27.2	18.4	12.5	20.3	16.9	25.6	30.0	23.1	19.8	21.7
Countryside	7.6	15.6	17.8	8.1	8.4	7.6	12.8	15.0	12.5	19.5	12.5

by 30% of the newcomers, and over three years—by 50–70%. The situation has not changed much.

At the same time, the migration attraction of regional centers has a visible effect. Thus, according to the Census data, people who moved in 1992–2002 account for 31.5% working-age cohort migrants in the country's urban population<sup>2</sup>, which is much lower than the level observed in the considered cities (even corrected for the incomplete data comparability).

**Origin of the migrants.** The analysis of migrants' origin enables us to understand the composition of the population formed in regional centers and to assess its quality from the viewpoint of mobility. Who replenishes the population: city or rural dwellers, the regional native-born or newcomers from the closer or further territories? These factors largely determine the population mobility. For example, the rural population mostly tend to move to cities but once they have moved, stay in the cities for good. City dwellers are more inclined to change the place of residence. Therefore, if the population is replenished mostly by city-dwellers one may expect its greater mobility. As far as the area of attraction is concerned, the wider it is the more geographically diversified population will be, and, the more mobile it will possibly be. The respective hypotheses have been verified during the surveyed.

The overwhelming majority of the population in the surveyed regional centers aged 18–49 were city dwellers by birth. From 92.4% respondents in St. Petersburg

and Kazan to 80.5% in Orenburg were born in cities (Table 9).

If from the general number of those born in cities the number of native-borns of this particular city is deducted, even then the urban component of the population replenishment in pilot cities looks much greater than the rural one. As a whole for the array 21.7% respondents were born in different cities (other than the survey cities) and 12.5% were born in rural areas. Only in Orenburg and Nalchik both the components have an equal significance. The fact that there is no city with prevailing rural component points to the following:

—the urbanization process in the country is close to completion;

—the concentration of the urban population in large cities is continuing;

—there is strict selection of new dwellers by central cities making it difficult for rural dwellers to get there with rare exceptions.

Over the period when respondents aged 30–50 were born, cities were growing fast in Russia and there was an intensive flow from the countryside to the cities. However, regional centers, “drew out” the population from towns of smaller size and lower status creating *there* a niche for rural migrants.

The population of regional centers is now genetically uniform and can hardly be considered marginal. The older generation evidently retained some marginal features, but the most active part of the population (aged under 50) has either lost them or is going to lose them in the nearest future.

<sup>2</sup> On calculating this indicator people who did not give the year of their moving in were excluded.

**Table 10.** Share of migrants born in their region and moving in from their region, % of the total number of non-native born

Migrant category	St. Petersburg	Belgorod	Nalchik	Nizhni Novgorod	Novosibirsk	Kazan	Vladivostok	Krasnodar	Smolensk	Orenburg	Array average
Born in their region** % of the total number of those born outside	12.7	27.7	58.7	50.0	28.2	45.1	52.0	43.1	36.0	48.1	40.2
Moved in from their region*** % of the total number of those moved in	23.9	24.0	51.5	38.7	29.5	41.5	58.7	44.5	36.3	45.4	39.4

Notes: \* i.e. the home Member of Federation, for St. Petersburg it is Leningrad oblast.

\*\* Answers of respondents (1102 persons) born outside the site of the survey.

\*\*\* Answers of respondents (1360 persons) who moved in (or returned) to the survey sites.

A special indicator of the expanse of the urban marginal areal is the share of close relations covering ones “home” region (member of the Russian Federation). The less the share, the more diversified composition of incoming migrants can be expected. This “close circle” in our study is delineated using two features: (1) *those who were born* in their region and (2) *those who had come* from their region (Table 10).

On average, 40.2% of those moving to cities were born in their region and about the same number moved in from their region. With respect to individual cities, these values and their proportions differ drastically.

The comparison of data on the birthplaces and places, from which people came shows the migrants' attraction to their birthplaces. For almost all cities the share of the native-born (in their RF members) exceeds the share of migrants directly coming from it. In other words, part of the people born in “their” members of the Federation after some traveling around the country came back to their home place. The proportion of these shares could be somewhat conventionally considered a sort of the city's “attraction index”. In this respect Nizhni Novgorod has no competitors, among its newcomers the share of the oblast native-borns is 1.3 times greater than those moved out of it. Generally, some migration closedness of Nizhni Novgorod was an unexpected result of the survey. However, if we remember that for a long period of time this city had really been closed, this result will seem natural.

A rather intensive back flow of the native-born is observed also to Kazan and Nalchik. In Vladivostok the situation is opposite—here the share of coming from their krai exceeds the share of the native-born. In other words, people who moved out of the city rarely come back. This conclusion is in good correlation with the data of Table 4.

A good example of metropolitan quality is St. Petersburg. Among the residents of St. Petersburg born in other places Leningrad oblast accounts for only 12.7%. It can largely be attributed to the depopulation of the close surroundings of the city resulting from

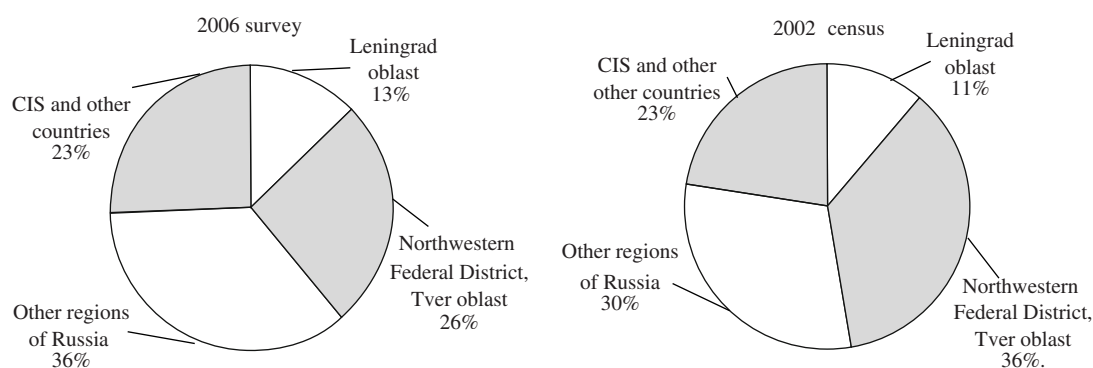
practically a century of population outflow, mainly to St. Petersburg and Moscow. The scarcity of local resources for the replenishment of the city population has been observed since 1960s. However, the attraction of St. Petersburg as a city enjoying an exceptionally high rating among the country's city enabled it to grow fast attracting the population from the entire post-Soviet space. 62% of the migrants to St. Petersburg were born in Russia (although beyond Leningrad oblast). Out of them, the Northwestern Federal District and the neighboring Tver oblast account for only 26.2%. In the total number of the adult population of St. Petersburg, as the Census 2002 showed, the share of these regions in the outflow is much higher and equals 36.4%<sup>3</sup> (Fig. 2). This figure can be even higher for older generations but unfortunately it was impossible to verify this. The decrease in the share of the nearest areal in the formation of St. Petersburg population confirms the depletion of human resources for the city population replenishment. A quarter of the local native-borns were born outside Russia, mainly in the former Soviet republics (their share in the total population of the city according to the Census data is 22.6%).

Of interest is the fact that the share of migrants from Leningrad oblast moving to St. Petersburg is almost two times as great as its share among people born elsewhere (23.9% and 12.7% respectively). No other city has demonstrated this kind of proportion and this fact is unique (see Table 10). It characterizes Leningrad oblast as an intermediate station on the way to St. Petersburg revealing the difficulties of moving in the city directly and is an additional confirmation of its exceptional attraction for Russians and the population of post-Soviet states.

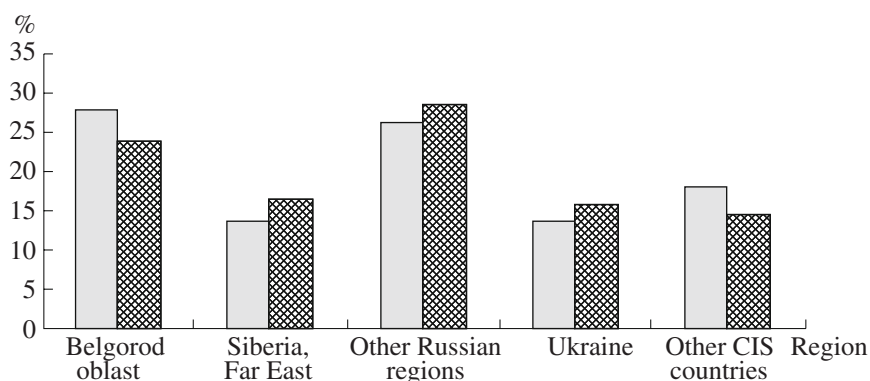
Functions of an interregional center, although much less explicit, are performed also by Novosibirsk, in the migrational connections of which the “home” region takes a very modest place.

<sup>3</sup> On calculating this indicator people who did not give the year of their moving in were excluded.





**Fig. 2.** Composition of residents born outside St. Petersburg.



**Fig. 3.** Migrant composition in Belgorod with respect to their birthplaces and the places of previous residence (based on the survey data): □ non-native-borns and their birthplaces; ▨ migrants and the regions of previous residence.

Of great interest is such an object as Belgorod, which was really born again and turned from a provincial center with a population of 72000 in 1959 to a large industrial city with a population of 344000 (by the beginning of 2006). Belgorod is an obvious growth point. Its examples helps one to understand what regions of Russia and the former SU republics secured the population of the rapidly growing cities in the European part of Russia in the 1970s–1980s.

The first thing we would like to bring to notice is the similarity of migrants composition with respect to the place of birth and the places of previous residence on moving (Fig. 3). The respective pair correlation coefficient equals 0.86. Consequently, migrants were mostly the native borns of the places of previous residence. The compared compositions are similar for other cities too.

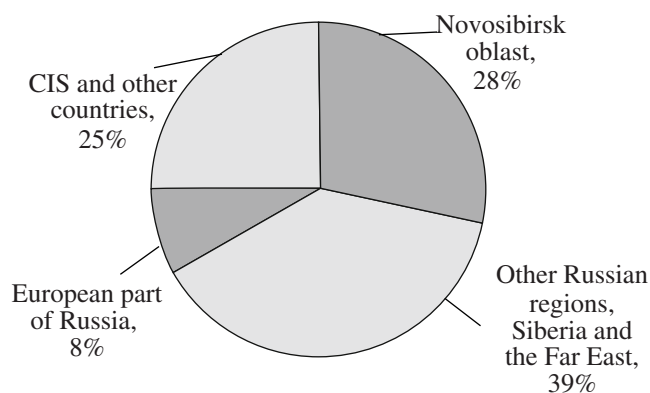
It should be admitted that on including the respective questions in our questionnaire we expected greater divergence of the migrants composition with respect to their birthplaces and the places of previous residence, i.e. a stronger influence of the previous relocations to the current composition. With respect to the population mobility assessment (the primary purpose of the present work) the fact that those compositions are almost completely identical implies that one-time

migrants prevail in the composition. The mobility of such population is relatively low.

About 40% of migrants came to Belgorod from their home oblast or neighboring Ukraine. A significant share of migrants came from the other CIS countries (18.3% by birth). Disproportionately significant was the role of the remote regions of Siberia and Far East. It is comparable with the proportion of migrants from Ukraine geographically close to Belgorod. The contribution of Eastern regions is even more pronounced if the Russian regions are considered separately excluding the home oblast. Then the contribution of Siberia and Far East to replenishment of Belgorod population rises to 36%, which is double the share of eastern regions in the country's population equal to 18.3%.

Belgorod is no exception in this respect. Siberia and the Far East made a similar-size contribution to the population growth in Krasnodar (35%) based on the inflow from Russian regions, it is a little lower in Nizhni Novgorod (30%) and Smolensk (28%)<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> The share of the native-borns of Siberia and Far East is implied in the general number of the Russian native-borns in the in-flowing population of cities (less those who moved in from the same region).



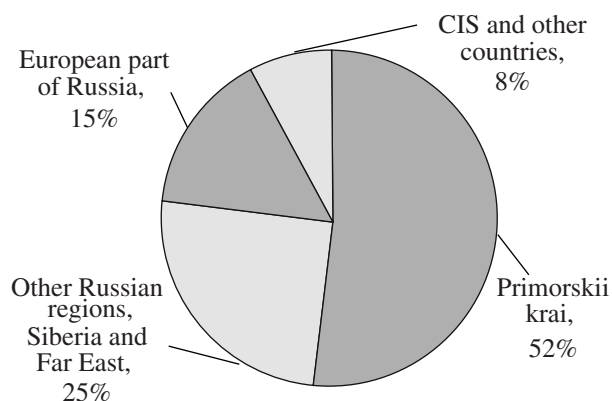
**Fig. 4.** Composition of non-native-born residents of Novosibirsk with respect to their birthplace.

The pattern of the population formation of these cities reflects the duration and stability of the western migration drift, activity of the residents of Siberia and Far East in looking for the opportunities of moving to European Russia, their competitive strength in comparison with closer migrants. Only in republican capitals—Kazan and Nalchik—the role of Siberia and Far East is proportional to their weight in the country's population.

St. Petersburg differs from the surveyed cities—evidently, it is difficult to “break” there from Siberia and Far East. Among the migrants of St. Petersburg born in Russia (except Leningrad oblast) the eastern component is quite low 10.9%, which is again in accordance with the Census data (12.1%). The figure is about the same for Moscow (11.6%, Census) that confirms the assumption about the difficulties of moving to the capitals from remote regions.

At the same time, the survey revealed the manifested weakness of the western “counterflow” within Russia. Thus, among the native-born of Russia who moved to Novosibirsk only 8% had been born in the European part of the country (Fig. 4).

Vladivostok more than other cities is replenished at the expense of the neighboring territories: its share exceeds the half of all the migrants to the city similar to that in Nalchik (see Table 10). Nalchik, however, is located in a densely populated rural area (population density in Kabardino-Balkar Republic is 71.5 persons



**Fig. 5.** Composition of non-native-born residents of Vladivostok with respect to their birthplace.

per square meter, the proportion of the rural population is 41.5%), whereas Vladivostok attracts the population from scarcely populated urbanized Primorskii krai (the population density in the krai is 12.2 persons per square meter, the proportion of the rural population is 24.6%), compensating the outflow its own population in the western direction. In the total number of the incoming population the share of people born in the European part of Russia is quite insignificant in Vladivostok too (15%) (Fig. 5).

As far as Orenburg is concerned, the survey showed it is of no special interest for the migrants from the west or east. The eastern flow only passes the city in transit leaving there only a weak trace. The Orenburg population was replenished by migrants from Orenburg oblast and Kazakhstan.

\* \* \*

Therefore, the background of the formation of regional centers population reveals, on the one hand, a long-standing and strong attraction of the western, more developed, part of the country for people in Siberia and the Far East, and on the other hand—the unwillingness of the population in western regions to move eastward. In other words, migration only aggravates the asymmetry of the country's population distribution. We believe it to be a solid argument against the attempts to organize new resettlement to the east. This initiative seems to be even less plausible in conditions of the general demographic crisis.