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Specifics of USSR era migrants' adaptation in the modern Russian Federation

Abstract: The task of this paper is a quantitative assessment of the possible fact and speed of assimilation of Ukrainian migrants in the modern Russian Federation according to the data of all-Russian censuses of 2002 and 2010. In all regions of the Russian Federation, and even in regions where the absolute number of the population has increased, we note the decrease in the number of Ukrainians significantly exceeded the overall rate of depopulation. The share of the decrease in the number of Ukrainians, which goes beyond the general rate of depopulation in a relevant region, can characterize the rate of assimilation of Ukrainian migrants in Russia. Thus, the annual rate of assimilation of Ukrainian migrants in the Russian Federation varies in different regions from 2.38% to 6.25%. The average rate of Ukrainian migrants' assimilation is estimated for regions of the Russian Federa-

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tion as 3.78% per year. Some assumptions are made about the main factors of such an unexpectedly rapid rate of peaceful assimilation of Ukrainians. Related factors include the tradition of Russians' scornful attitude towards foreigners and "younger brothers" (a terms used to refer to Ukrainians); the Russian Federation's disregard towards the cultural and educational needs of national minorities that do not have their territorial administrative formations on the territory of the Russian Federation; as well as a disregard of Ukrainian society and the Ukrainian state towards Ukrainians living on the territory of the Russian Federation.

Key words: Ukrainians assimilation in Russia, contemporary Russian Federation, Ukrainian migrants.

Introduction

This paper aims to study some of the peculiarities of adaptation regarding national identification of the Soviet Union era migrants who remained in the Russian Federation (RF) at the beginning of the 21st century. The migrants from Ukraine who stayed in the Russian Federation after the collapse of the USSR were considered for the purpose of this research. Quantitative assessments were carried out on the basis of the RF population census in 2002 and 2010^{1, 2}.

Features of migration at the post-USSR space in the 1990th

The 1990s were characterized by significant and fairly chaotic migration processes within the republics of the former USSR. In particular, there were also movements of people of separate nationalities from the Russian Federation to the territory of republics that corresponded to their nationality.

¹ http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/croc/perepis_itogi1612.htm.

² <http://www.perepis2002.ru/index.html?id=17>.

According to the All-Union in the USSR census of 1989, nearly 25.3 million Russians (21.1%) remained in the new countries outside of Russia's historic homeland. If we count it together with other indigenous peoples, it is approximately 28 million. In the meantime, 6.8 million Ukrainians (15.4% of all Ukrainians lived in the USSR), 2.1 million Belarusians (21%), 1.6 million Kazakhs (20%), and 1.5 million Armenians (32.6%) remained outside of their historic homelands, respectively³.

This may explain the fact that in all the years of independent existence of the former union republics, migration exchange with an ethnic dominant was carried out with varying intensity between them. The largest scale of this exchange is in Russia and Ukraine. In the total migration turnover of Russia, from 1989 to 2003, Ukraine's share was approximately 30%. The same number accounted for Ukraine and the migration turnover of Russians. Among the arrivals and departures from Russia for the new foreign countries, Ukraine's share exceeded 50%. Kazakhstan accounted for about 23-24% of migration with Russia, Central Asia – 20%, Transcaucasia – 12%, and Belarus – 6%⁴.

The largest group of migrants in the CIS by 1996 – 4.2 million people – comprised repatriates, defined as persons who voluntarily moved to their country of citizenship or origin for permanent residence. Strictly speaking, repatriation, motivated by economic, social or personal reasons, is not a completely new phenomenon for the post-Soviet space. Since the end of the 1970s, the Russian-speaking population constantly returned home to their former residence. The overwhelming majority of Russian-speaking repatriates were Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusian, and they naturally went to the Russian Federation, Belarus and Ukraine in the 1990s. The flow of repatriation and refugees was significant from the Baltic States as well⁵. Additional migration flows have arisen because of a late return of migrants of eight nations previously deported in the USSR from their historical homeland. They were resettled during the Second World War in the Siberian and Central Asian steppes. Many of them,

³ <http://rybakovsky.ru/stat1a12.html>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ О. Д. Воробьева and И. Ш. Мажинов, *Трансформация миграционных процессов на постсоветском пространстве. РАН. Ин-т соц.—полит.исслед.*, ed. Л.Л.Рыбаковского, Academia Москва, 2009 (in Russian), <http://rybakovsky.ru/migracia3b4.html>.

especially the Crimean Tatars, the Meskhetians and the Germans of the Volga region, experienced obstacles to return to their homeland until the end of the 1980s. In the late 1980s, new times changed the situation. For example, 183,400 Crimean Tatars returned from Central Asia to Crimea between 1989 and 1996. Also, 850,000 Germans of the Volga region have emigrated to Germany since 1992, and only a few thousand preferred to return to their historical homeland in the Russian Federation. More than 60,000 of the Meskhetians, who lived in the Ferghana Valley in the summer of 1989, were forced to move, mainly to the Russian Federation and Azerbaijan⁶.

With the collapse of the USSR and the ensuing political and military conflicts, forced resettlement resulted in the emergence of a large number of refugees and persons in situations similar to those of refugees, involuntary resettled persons and internally displaced persons. Natural and human-made disasters and environmental degradation have led to the emergence of hundreds of thousands of environmental migrants. Between 1989 and 1996 there were about 870,000 refugees and persons in the CIS countries in a situation of refugees or similar to that of refugees. For example, the armed conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh resulted in the emergence of almost 220,000 refugees in Armenia and 185,000 in Azerbaijan. In 1992 Ukraine took over 60,000 people because of the conflict in Transnistria (Moldova). Thousands of refugees sought asylum in the Russian Federation, Ukraine and other CIS countries because of the Abkhaz conflict in Georgia. The civil war that erupted in Tajikistan in 1992 and 1993 forced about 60,000 people to flee to Afghanistan and another 200,000 to resettle to neighboring states of Central Asia, the Russian Federation and other CIS countries. In addition, in the first half of the 1990s, about 47,000 refugees and asylum-seekers came from countries of Africa, Southeast Asia and the Middle East⁷.

2.2 million Russians returned to Russia from abroad during 1991–1995, and 486,000 people returned backwards. In the next five years (1996–2000) 4.6 million Russians returned to Russia and left over 1.4 million⁸. Thus, the

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ *Миграционные процессы в России*, ed. В.В. Локосова and Л.Л. Рыбаковского, М.: Эконинформ, 2014, pp. 170–171.

number of Russians increased by 2006 (from 1989 to 2006 inclusive) by 5.6 million migrants who arrived in Russia from abroad after the collapse of the USSR. In addition, the number of Russians has increased by no fewer than 1.5 million people from the representatives of those Ukrainians, Belarusians and some other peoples who have Russian "blood". During the 2002 all-Russian census, they of course identified themselves as Russians⁹.

According to L.L. Rybakovsky, from 1989 to 2003 the migration turnover of Russia with the countries of the new foreign countries amounted to 13.7 million people, 4.2 million of whom fell to Ukraine, i.e. more than 30%. Ukraine was and remains the main migration partner of Russia¹⁰. All the above-mentioned processes make it difficult to make an adequate assessment of the presence and possible intensity of national minorities' assimilation processes in the Russian Federation in the 1990s.

At the same time, there was an era of decisive prosperity growth in the republics of the former USSR. Russia in the 2000s almost stopped the flow of titular nationalities' representatives of the former union republics to their historical homelands. Consequently, the number of migrants from Ukraine remaining on the territory of the Russian Federation in the 2000s may be estimated quite precisely on the basis of the Russia-wide census in 2002.

Thus, we can proceed from the fact that there were no significant migrations of Ukrainians in the 2000s from the territory of the Russian Federation. Moreover, there are many cases known when Ukrainians have moved from Ukraine to the Russian Federation due to the regular flow of labor forces to places with higher salaries. Since per capita GDP in Russia in the 2000s was three times higher than the per capita GDP in Ukraine, this migration cannot be considered as something surprising. However, for the purity of further reasoning, we accept such labor migration as insignificant and equal to 0. Moreover, a certain part of these labor migrants were not ethnic Ukrainians, but ethnic Russians. Based on the analyzed sources, we also do not take into consideration the volume of seasonal migration.

⁹ <http://rybakovsky.ru/stat1a12.html>.

¹⁰ <http://rybakovsky.ru/migracia3a8.html>.

Dynamics of Ukrainians quantity in the Russian Federation according to the RF population census data

Analysis of census data for 2002 and 2010 showed that in general the number of people in the Russian Federation who indicated their nationality as "Ukrainian" had decreased by 34% within 8 years. At the same time, the average rate of depopulation throughout the Russian Federation was only 1.49%, and the rate of depopulation of the Slavic population -3.26%.

In all regions of the Russian Federation, and even in the regions where the absolute number of the population has increased, the decrease of Ukrainians had significantly exceeded the overall rate of depopulation. While the change rate of total population of the regions varied from -14.1% to +10.8%, the change rate of the number of Ukrainians was negative in all regions of the Russian Federation, and varied by regions from -19% to -50% within the same eight years.

In our opinion, the share of the decrease in the number of Ukrainians, which goes beyond the general rate of depopulation in a relevant region, can characterize the rate of assimilation of the Ukrainian diaspora in Russia. Thus, the annual rate of assimilation of the Ukrainian diaspora in the Russian Federation varies in different regions from 2.38% to 6.25%; on average for regions of the Russian Federation this number is 3.78%. Particularly remarkable are the cases of Moscow and St. Petersburg: with the growth of the total population in these cities by 10.8% and 4.7% respectively, the number of Ukrainians there over the period 2002-2010 sharply decreased by 39% and 26%, respectively.

Thus we are facing a fast assimilation of Ukrainian migrants mainly from soviet times in the modern Russian Federation. It is worth emphasizing that we consider 2002 and 2010, notably a time which was generally characterized by a favorable relationship between the Ukrainian and Russian peoples as seen from the perspective of 2014 and further years of Russian-Ukrainian war. Nevertheless, every year about 4% of Ukrainians living in the Russian Federation at the time of the 2002 census took the decision to change their national identity within the next 8 years.

Processes of Ukrainians' assimilation in the Russian Empire and the USSR in the 19th and 20th centuries are commonly perceived as purposeful and centrally managed. Russian and Soviet leadership actions concerning national assimilation, certainly, were distinct in details, the nature of justification and degree of secrecy. There are no reasons to be in doubt about goal-setting and

corresponding actions. As per the leadership of the Russian Federation of the 2000s, a lot of statements were made, but never, apparently, were they caught in purposeful assimilatory attempts.

For the purposes of comparison, we can take the situation with the self-identification of Ukrainians, Belarusians and Russians in Poland. There were two censuses in Poland – in 2002 and 2010. We can see in Poland 30,000 Ukrainians (0.081% of the whole population) by the 2002 census, and 49,000 (0.13% from all population) by the 2010 census. There were 37,000 Ukrainians by the “first identification” and 12,000 Ukrainians by the “second identification”. These terms – first and second identification – were the innovation of the 2010 census. As for Russians in Poland, we can see the same picture of growth: there were 6,100 Russians by the 2002 census, and 13,000 by the 2010 census. Also, we can see 48,700 and 46,000 Belarusians in Poland in 2002 and 2010, respectively. There was no increase in quantity but there also was not a large drop. Thus, in the Russian Federation we are dealing with a completely different self-identification behavior.

Presumed factors of the fast assimilation of Ukrainians in RF

The unexpectedly rapid rate of Ukrainians' change of national identification (i.e. peaceful assimilation) in the Russian Federation can be explained by several superimposed factors:

1) Widely-known, and traditional for Russians', scornful attitude towards foreigners and “younger brothers”, including Ukrainians, repeatedly fixed by sociological polls;

2) Neglect of cultural and educational needs of national minorities that do not have their own territorial formations on the territory of the Russian Federation, lasting since USSR times. Basically, similar treatment is explained by Russian government statements saying that “providing education in languages other than Russian violates the principle of equal possibilities, because, according to Russian authorities, children taught in such a manner will further appear in unequal conditions in relation to others (specifically in searching for work), i.e. they will be discriminated against”¹¹.

¹¹ <http://an-babushkin.livejournal.com/2017/01/12/>.

In pursuance of the above approach, the RF presidential decree of 2009 abolished the possibility for school leavers to pass the obligatory “single state examination” at the end of secondary school in one of the minority languages. The opportunity to take this obligatory examination only in Russian was given. According to a study by Federica Prina, this provision has led to a decrease in the number of parents who want to educate their children in languages other than Russian, since in that case their children would be at a disadvantage when doing exams¹². In practice, this decree concerned only those national minorities that have their national territorial formations on the territory of the Russian Federation. For such peoples who do not have their own national-territorial entities on the territory of the Russian Federation, like Ukrainians or Belarussians, such measures were superfluous, since school instruction in the native language in the territory of the Russian Federation was not carried out there both from the time of the collapse of the USSR and in the previous 70 years.

Currently on the territory of the Russian Federation there are no schools where instruction is provided in the Ukrainian language. Approximately the same number of schools was observed in the 1990s and the 2000s. To be fair, it is worth noting that in the Russian Federation in the 1990s – 2000s there were several schools where the Ukrainian language was studied as a discipline: 5 schools in the 1995/96 school year, 8 – in the 2000/01 school year, 4 – in the 2001/02 school year and 5 – in the 2002/03 school year¹³.

This situation is in line with the continuing policy of the Russian government: Russia continues to refrain from ratifying the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, despite making commitments on this issue when joining the Council of Europe. In 2009 -2011, a joint program of the European Union and the Council of Europe was held in cooperation with the Russian Ministry of Regional Development, entitled “Minorities in Russia: the development of culture, language, media and civil society”. The program was aimed at assisting Russia in ratifying the Charter through research, public discussions and seminars. However, after the program was implemented, the

¹² Федерика Прина (Federica Prina) *Защита прав меньшинств и коренных народов Российской Федерации: проблемы и решения для будущего*, p. 16, <http://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/mrg-protecting-rights-minorities-indigenous-peoples-russian-federation-RU.pdf>.

¹³ http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b03_33/IssWWW.exe/Stg/d010/i010630r.htm.

Russian authorities stated that its conclusions “indicate that the application of the Charter is not suitable for the specific multilingual situation in the Russian Federation”¹⁴.

Before the events of Russian-Ukrainian war that began in 2014, in 2010-2012 several Ukrainian national cultural organizations – the Association of Ukrainians of Russia and the Federal National-Cultural Autonomy Ukrainians of Russia – were liquidated in the Russian Federation¹⁵. At the same time, the authorities of the Russian Federation created a pocket organization called “The Federal National and Cultural Autonomy ‘Ukrainians of Russia’”. Authorities of the Russian Federation did not even let Ukrainian journalists attend its constituent congress, which testifies to the pocket status of this organization¹⁶.

3) Complete disrespect of Ukrainian society and the Ukrainian state towards the Ukrainians living on the territory of the Russian Federation. It may be stated that such insolence has some traditional grounds going by its roots the USSR era – only at that time such indignity was promoted by the union’s authorities. In the 2000s, the government of the independent Ukrainian state had the same attitude towards its compatriots on the territory of the Russian Federation as the republican Central Committee of the Communist party of Ukraine. Such negligence may have more or less feasible and logical grounds, for instance “those who wish to live in the Ukrainian environment and preserve their identity always have a possibility to leave for Ukraine”. However, such disputable explanations do not change the general evaluation of such treatment.

Even according to the information of the Ukrainian Embassy in Russia, there are only about 100 Ukrainian public organizations in Russia (for 1.9 million people who recognized themselves as Ukrainians according to the 2010 census)¹⁷. Moreover, the existing websites of some of these organizations (they do not exist for all organizations of Ukrainians in Russia) leave no doubt:

¹⁴ Федерика Прина (Federica Prina) *Защита прав меньшинств и коренных народов Российской Федерации: проблемы и решения для будущего*, op. cit., p. 17.

¹⁵ <https://ubr.ua/ukraine-and-world/society/obedinenie-ukraintsev-rossii-okonchatelno-likvidirovali-157831>; https://zn.ua/SOCIETY/obedinenie_ukraintsev_rossii_obzhalet_reshenie_suda_o_likvidatsii_organizatsii.html.

¹⁶ <https://ubr.ua/ukraine-and-world/society/obedinenie-ukraintsev-rossii-okonchatelno-likvidirovali-157831>.

¹⁷ <http://russia.mfa.gov.ua/ru/ukraine-ru/ukrainians-in-ru>.

organizations exist formally and, even at best, did not go beyond two or three small cultural events a year, even until 2014¹⁸. The law “On State Support of the Ukrainian Community Abroad”, the draft of which was submitted to the Parliament in 2010, has not been adopted in Ukraine yet¹⁹.

In the early 2000s, the intensification of the assistance of the Ukrainian state in meeting the national-cultural needs of Ukrainians abroad and the protection of their rights and interests was put forward as a counter-strategy of the then government in response to an attempt by Western diaspora representatives to exert political pressure on it. A key role in this strategy was assigned to the III World Forum of Ukrainians, organized and conducted with the involvement of significant resources and active involvement of government agencies. Formed by local administrations, the “delegations” of the forum participants from all oblasts were intended to ensure the loyalty of the Forum to the incumbent President. In the Administration of the President of Ukraine, program documents were developed, in particular, the National Program “Foreign Ukrainians”, which had to create the visibility of the country’s decisive intentions in this area. However, during the next period, the state authorities did not ensure the implementation of one tenth of the provisions of the National Program. In the decree of the President of Ukraine, by which this program came into force, neither the sources of its funding nor the mechanisms of coordination and responsibility of the authorities regarding the implementation of the specific provisions of the program were foreseen. This practice has caused considerable disappointment and pessimism in the Ukrainian environment of those regions where their activity has a particularly limited support base and often faces opposition from local authorities. The fair indignation of community activists also caused the lack of attention to the interests of Ukrainian communities by some Ukrainian embassies and consulates, and attempts at bureaucratic pressure on Ukrainian organizations abroad²⁰.

More success in terms of state support for the Ukrainian diaspora could be considered from 2012-2015: On July 18, 2012, the Ukrainian Government

¹⁸ See for example: <http://ukrnkaspb.narod.ru/unka.html>; <http://zemlyaki.moscow/?p=301>; <http://nko-karelia.ru/nko/318>; <http://ukrcentr.ru/ukra%D1%97nci-rosi%D1%97/ukraina-dalekaya-i-blizkaya/>.

¹⁹ http://search.ligazakon.ua/l_doc2.nsf/link1/JF4NZ00B.html.

²⁰ *Україна: Стратегічні пріоритети. Аналітичні оцінки*, 2006, pp. 175-176, http://old.niss.gov.ua/book/Vlasyuk_mon/04-4.pdf.

adopted a resolution, “On Approval of the State Program of Cooperation with Foreign Ukrainians for the Period until 2015”. According to this program, it was planned to allocate 109 million UAH (approximately \$13 million) for co-operation with foreign Ukrainians for four years²¹. In a rough recalculation on all foreign Ukrainians, it turned out that approximately less than 1 dollar would be allocated to one person for 4 years. However, the specification of the estimated costs under this program shows that only a quarter of the funds were supposed to be spent on activities that somehow related to mass cultural and educational activities²².

For the solace of the rapidly decreasing remnants of Ukrainian migrants on the territory of the Russian Federation, it may be noticed that the Ukrainian state shows similar treatment of its compatriots not only in the Russian Federation, but in the majority of countries in the world. In this context the tiny connections with the Ukrainian diaspora in Canada and USA looks like discord. Such dissonance provides a recipe for seeking contacts with the Ukrainian state for diasporas: to establish solid connections with the homeland, the representatives of diasporas should independently get on their feet, preserve national identity and interconnections of foreign communities, and after that the Ukrainian state will notice them and will even ask for assistance (financial) in the building of an independent Ukraine.

It is telling that in the above-mentioned draft law “On State Support of the Ukrainian Community Abroad”, three of the six goals of state support for the Ukrainian community abroad (Article 2) refer to the sphere of the cultural development of the Ukrainian diaspora, and three to the issues of attracting diaspora finance to the economy of Ukraine²³.

Another aspect of the problem is related to civil society in Ukraine: due to various reasons, in the 2000s different communities and assemblies foremost reproduced factually the attitude of our state towards Ukrainians in CIS countries, as well as in the Russian Federation.

²¹ Державна програма співпраці із закордонними українцями на період до 2015 року. Затверджена постановою Кабінету Міністрів України від 18 липня 2012 р. № 682, <http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/682-2012-%D0%BF#n48>.

²² Ibid., Додаток 2 до Програми. Завдання і заходи з виконання Державної програми співпраці із закордонними українцями на період до 2015 року.

²³ http://search.ligazakon.ua/l_doc2.nsf/link1/JF4NZ00B.html.

It seemed important to focus Ukrainian society efforts on the support to Ukrainians in the Russian Federation and other CIS republics. It is essential for both the internal development of civil society in Ukraine (in the sense of capacities for consolidation around one common task) and for the slowing of Ukrainians' assimilation processes in the Russian Federation.

Conclusion

According to the study of the RF census 2002 and 2010 data, we can state that in all regions of the Russian Federation, and even in regions where the absolute number of the population has increased, was decrease in the number of Ukrainians significantly exceeded the overall rate of depopulation. While the rate of change in the total population of the regions varied from -14.1% to + 10.8%, the rate of change in the number of Ukrainians was negative in all regions of the Russian Federation and varied from region to region from -19% to -50% over the same 8 years. The share of the decrease in the number of Ukrainians, which goes beyond the general rate of depopulation in a relevant region, can characterize the rate of assimilation of Ukrainian migrants in Russia. Thus, the annual rate of assimilation of Ukrainian migrants in the Russian Federation varies in different regions from 2.38% to 6.25%. The average rate of Ukrainian migrants' assimilation is estimated for regions of the Russian Federation as 3.78% per year.

The main factors of this issue are: 1) Widely-known, and traditional for Russians', scornful attitude towards foreigners and "younger brothers", including Ukrainians; 2) Neglect of cultural and educational needs of national minorities that do not have their own territorial formations on the territory of the Russian Federation, lasting since USSR times; 3) Complete disrespect of Ukrainian society and the Ukrainian state towards the Ukrainians living on the territory of the Russian Federation.

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