

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION PROCESSES IN THE RUSSIAN ECONOMY: AN ANALYSIS OF CURRENT TRENDS

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***Abstract:** This paper systematizes the major theoretical approaches to determining the causes and effects of the movement of people between different countries. The authors describe the major theories of migration processes, including the classic, neoclassic, and modern approaches. The paper provides a survey of the major quantitative and qualitative characteristics of international migration in the Russian economy, examines the ratio of the in-coming to the outgoing of people on Russian soil, and looks at some of the key directions in these processes. Special attention is devoted to the dynamics of flows of forced migrants and refugees into the Russian Federation. Based on the findings of their analysis of major statistical indicators characterizing international migration processes in the Russian economy, the authors formulate a set of conclusions regarding the current trends and directions in the movement of people on Russian soil.*

***Keywords:** migration, in-coming and out-going of people, labor migration, refugees, migration processes, international migration*

1. INTRODUCTION

Russia's current demographic situation is characterized by increases in its population size, with the migration-driven population increase greatly surpassing the natural one. On top of that, some of the country's regions have yet, to date, to overcome the demographic crisis they have been going through, which has seen the death rate surpass the birth rate (Britvina, 2014, p. 26). Under these conditions, among the most topical objectives in the state's demographic policy are boosting the population's life expectancy, reducing the death rate, ramping up the birth rate, and maintaining and improving the nation's health. Among the factors that facilitate tangible improvement in the demographic situation are migration processes. Notwithstanding that those who are part of migration flows may pursue different goals, like employment, a better economic lot, religious, political, national, and other objectives, the migration balance

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both ensures increases in population size and can, if a proper effort is made to regulate migration, have a benign impact on the nation's overall social/economic performance.

As a process, migration is an indispensable element in the thousands of years-long history of the development of mankind and a well-established way for people to survive under changing conditions.

In the 19th century, the English scholar E.G. Ravenstein undertook one of the first attempts to define the term 'migration', which he construed as a process resulting in permanent or temporary change of residence (Ravenstein, 1885). In his work, Ravenstein established eleven objective laws governing migration processes, which would go on to form the basis of contemporary migration theories:

- there is a process of absorption, whereby people immediately surrounding a rapidly growing town move into it and the gaps they leave are filled by migrants from more distant areas, and so on until the attractive force [pull factors] is spent; there is a process of dispersion, which is the inverse of absorption;
- the major direction of migration is from agricultural to industrial or commercial centers, with most migrants moving from farm areas to more developed cities and communities with industry and a bigger market;
- the majority of migrants go only a short distance;
- migration proceeds step by step;
- each current of migration produces a compensating counter-current;
- migrants going long distances generally go by preference to one of the great centers of commerce or industry;
- the natives of towns are less migratory than those of rural areas;
- females are more migratory than males within the region of their birth, but males more frequently venture beyond it;
- large towns grow more by migration than by natural increase;
- migration increases in volume as industries and commerce develop and transport improves;
- the major causes of migration are economic.

The above laws have had a significant impact on subsequent research into migration processes, including in the way of determination of the underlying causes, factors, and conditions for these processes (Corbett, 2009).

Among classic migration theories, alongside the laws formulated by E.G. Ravenstein, of major interest is the econometric model developed in the 1960s by Everett S. Lee, sometimes referred to as the 'push-and-pull factors' model (Lee, 1966). Under this model, there are three groups of factors influencing migration processes –

restraining factors, pull factors, and push factors. To note, these factors can be characteristic both of large communities of people and of particular individuals.

Push factors include negative economic factors (high unemployment rate, low income, high taxes), social and political factors (military conflict, discrimination, poverty, religious and political persecution), as well as adverse natural-and-climatic conditions.

Pull factors include high income, security guarantees, employment opportunities, welfare, etc.

Apart from pull and push factors, migration processes can also be influenced by certain intervening factors, which can grow in the event of increases in distance and can limit migration flows. In particular, these include the size of transportation expenses, the effect of laws regulating migration processes, the degree of transparency of information regarding the host side, the actual possibility of crossing the border, the locals' attitude toward migrants, etc.

Having said that, Everett S. Lee noted that the above factors may have a different impact on different people. For instance, in making decisions as to relocating, highly-educated people with an edge within their original region of residence tend to be guided, predominantly, by pull factors. In this regard, the most mobile are high-level specialists, since migration facilitates career growth and boosts in income. By contrast, the major reasons behind the migration of low-level workers are push factors.

Consequently, in most cases, the decision as to migrating will have been made by reference to one's analysis of a combination of pull and push factors, as well as the difficulties associated with relocation.

Another important factor influencing one's decision to migrate, in Lee's opinion, is which family life cycle stage the person is presently at. It appears that the aptest to relocate are college graduates, newlyweds, and other similar groups, while the likeliest to re-migrate are divorced individuals and retirees.

It is worth noting that most of Lee's analysis is devoted to economic factors as opposed to non-economic ones, as well as non-rational and personal reasons (Harris & Todaro, 1970).

A significant contribution to the development of migration theory has been made by neoclassical economists (M. Friedman, P. Samuelson, etc.), characterizing the migration process at both the micro- and macro-level. Neoclassical economic theory emerged in the 1960-1970s with a view to explaining labor migration and its impact on economic development. The theory is grounded in postulates about the availability of free competition and a perfect market for factors of production (Samuelson, 1960).

Among the major causes of migration flows are the differences in local labor supply and demand – workers tend to leave areas paying low wages for those paying high. That being said, the size of one's new wages is expected to be sufficient enough to

cover one's moving costs. Consequently, migration theory is governed by the laws of effective deployment of resources and can be utilized in different countries (Massey et al., 1993).

However, there is one shortcoming to neoclassical theory – we cannot have perfect competition in the labor market, especially in the short run. Therefore, migration is not always conducive to bringing manpower demand and supply into equilibrium (Castles & Miller, 1993).

At the macro-level, the neoclassical theory of migration is predicated on the following postulates (Abylkalikov & Vinnik, 2012):

- international labor migration is induced by wage differences between two geographic locations;
- migration flows will stop after wage differences are resolved;
- the movement of high- and low-level manpower can be directed differently, due to the effect of different driving factors;
- the international movement of manpower is associated with national labor markets specifically – the impact of other markets is a lot less significant;
- it is possible to manage migration flows through influencing national labor markets.

Under the microeconomic model of individual choice (M. Todaro, L. Marusko), rational individuals make migration-related decisions based on the ratio of profit to costs associated with relocation. That being said, international migration is viewed as a form of investment in human capital, since the migration destination is determined by people's desire to be more productive based on their qualifications (Harris & Todaro, 1970). Thus, for instance, the wage gap between lowest-level and high-level workers in low-income countries is 10–20%, while in high-income ones it can be as wide as 10–30 times (Tsapenko, 2007).

Moving involves certain costs, like those associated with transportation, looking for a job, learning the host nation's culture and language, making new connections, and other difficulties in getting adapted to one's new place of residence. That being said, migrants with high education levels tend to derive greater gains from relocating. Accordingly, those who decide to migrate tend to be educated better than the rest of their fellow citizens (Massey, 2002).

The dual labor market theory was developed in 1979 by M. Piore with a view to helping resolve the shortcomings of neoclassical theory. Under this theory, international migration is the result of the development of industrial society and is immanently inherent to present-day economics. In Piore's view, developed countries are in acute need of foreign manpower, which is due to the following factors: structural inflation, motivational problems, economic dualism, and the demography of labor supply (Piore, 1979).

Structural inflation is associated with the fact that under current conditions wages are not only the result of the interaction between demand and supply in the labor market but also reflect the worker's social status. Therefore, in attracting lowest-level workers through raising wages, the employer is faced with the need to increase wages throughout the job hierarchy. This, in turn, leads to higher costs and, consequently, higher prices. In this regard, it appears most rational to attract migrant workers who will accept low wages (Brettell & Hollifield, 2000).

Motivational problems, under Piore's theory, are associated with one's standing in the occupational hierarchy, since people work not only for income but also for the accumulation and maintenance of social status. At the bottom of the job hierarchy, there is hardly any status to be maintained and work is viewed as just a means to the end of earning money. This kind of attitude is inherent to migrants who are unlikely to see themselves as part of the host nation's society and tend, therefore, to have little regard for status or prestige.

Economic dualism is characteristic of advanced industrial economies and implies the inherent duality between such factors of production as capital and labor (Sassen, 1988). Capital is a relatively fixed factor of production, while labor is a variable one, which means that a decline in demand for the company's product results in a drop in demand for labor and, consequently, in worker layoffs. That being said, there are tangible distinctions between high-level workers, whom the employer is compelled to invest in, and low-level ones, dismissing whom will entail almost no cost to the employer.

This kind of labor market segmentation may result in local workers being poorly motivated to seek work within the labor-intensive sector. To fill the shortfall in demand, employers turn to immigrants.

The demographic changes have become most noticeable in the last several decades. If in the mid-20th century demand for low-level, low-wage labor was met by women and teenagers, the situation was bound to change in the years to come, and due to the following reasons (Oishi, 2002):

- the rise in female labor force participation in economic activity;
- the decline in birth rates and, consequently, in the number of women on maternity leave or child-care leave;
- the extension of formal education, resulting in a drop in the number teenagers entering the labor force.

These factors have contributed to rising demand in advanced industrial societies for immigrants as a source of lowest-level manpower.

Thus, the principal postulates of Piore's dual labor market theory are (Sassen, 2000):

- international migration is largely based on demand for labor in developed societies;

- the size of migrant wages is not a crucial condition for labor migration to occur, since demand for foreign labor is, actually, the result of structural changes in the economy. In this regard, employers can hire workers without raising wages;
- wages in receiving societies do not rise in response to a decrease in the supply of immigrant workers;
- wages, low as they are, may fall as a result of an increase in the supply of immigrant workers;
- governments are unlikely to influence international migration substantially, with the greatest impact coming from major changes within the economy, changes that find reflection in corrected demand for immigrant labor (Massey, 1989).

One of the shortcomings of Piore's theory is the lack of analysis of push factors and mechanisms influencing the decision to migrate.

I. Wallerstein characterizes migration in the context of the so-called world-systems paradigm. This theory holds that migration processes are characterized by the division of the world into the periphery and the core. Urban development, peasant land dispossession, and globalization facilitate the acceleration of migration flows and bring about greater demand for migrant labor (Wallerstein, 1989).

According to world-systems theory, migration is a natural result of disruptions and dislocations that occur in the process of capitalist development. The incorporation of ever-larger portions of the globe into the world market economy, major increases in population size, and participation of peripheral regions in factor markets are the major factors behind the intensification of migration processes around the world (Deleva, 2010).

Wallerstein's world-systems theory suggests that international migration is the result of political and economic globalization, a view that produces six distinct hypotheses:

- international migration is a natural consequence of the development of resource markets and globalization of the world economy;
- foreign investment brings about changes that create a mobile population in peripheral countries, which leads to the transnational movement of manpower;
- international migration is especially likely between past colonial powers and their former colonies, due to linguistic, cultural, investment, and transportation links between them;
- international migration does not lend itself to direct control on the part of the government; the latter can only regulate the investment activity of corporations and control the international movement of capital and goods;

- political and military interventions by capitalist countries in the internal affairs of Third World societies result in increases in refugee flows;
- international migration has little to do with wage rates or employment differentials between countries; it, rather, follows from the structure of the global economy (Simonov & Klepikova, 2010).

In general, existing theoretical approaches can help gain an insight into the major causes and factors behind migration in the present-day economy, explore the laws governing migration and its possible effects, and offer guidance for putting together a goal-oriented and well-reasoned migration policy.

2. METHODS

An important factor in economic development in a tough period is the use of foreign manpower. Experts' appraisal of the impact of the 2014 economic crisis on migration processes is something of a dual one. On the one hand, economic sanctions and worsening international economic relations have led to a decline in the number of joint ventures in and the mass departure of foreign specialists from Russia. Besides, the devaluing ruble and inflation processes within the Russian economy have, to a degree, affected the economic effectiveness of the labor activity of migrants from neighboring countries (Zhuleva, 2014, p.16). On the other hand, the macroeconomic instability is forcing Russian entrepreneurs to look for ways to keep down their costs, including those associated with the payout of wages, something they feel they can achieve by using the labor of legal and illegal migrants.

In conducting this study, the authors employed a set of general scientific methods. Using scientific abstraction, they conducted a retrospective analysis of the major indicators of dynamics of the development of international migration in Russia. In addition, the authors utilized an expert assessment method and a data matching method. The authors used a method of graphical interpretation of data and a data grouping method to describe the dynamics and structure of major indicators characterizing the current trends in the movement of people across the Russian Federation.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Dynamics of key indicators of international migration flows

The current stage in the development of Russia's economy is characterized by the need to maintain the competitiveness of national products and consumer demand in the domestic market. Apart from using innovation and investment resources, it is possible to maintain the competitiveness of nationally produced output through attracting foreign manpower, capable of helping keep production costs down. At the same time, foreign citizens create additional demand for goods and services in the consumer market, which stimulates increased production and leads to the creation of additional jobs (Efremova & Makhmudova, 2011, p.172).

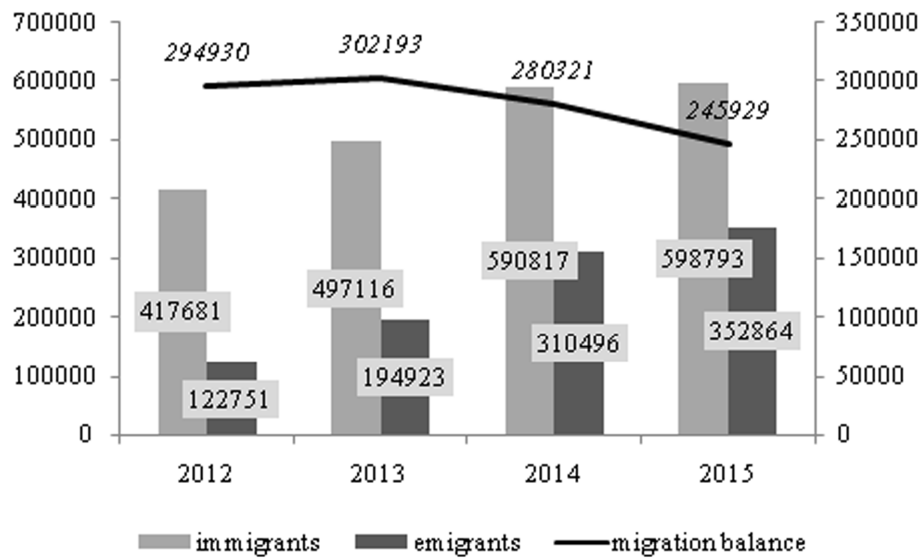


Figure 1: Indicators of international migration activity in Russia (number of people). (Russian Yearbook of Statistics, 2015)

Russia is an active subject of international migration processes. The dynamics of international migration in Russia have been characterized over the last few years by a considerable increase in the number of immigrants versus emigrants (Fig. 1). Specifically, 2013 saw the peak of the international migration balance within the Russian economy in the entire period under study, when it totaled 302,193 people. In other words, in that period Russia had 2.5 times more immigrants than emigrants.

The period of worsening international relations with Western countries marked with their imposing of sectoral sanctions on Russia in 2014 saw a spike in migration activity on Russian soil. The number of people coming in rose 19% on the previous year, 2013, while, on the contrary, there was also an increase in the number of those who left the country, which, consequently, produced a drop in net migration.

It is not just the volumes of migration that Russia's current complicated economic situation is having an impact on. Changing as well are the migrants' objectives, strategies, timeframes, and choice of destination (Makhmudova, 2015, p.97). The period under review evidences emigration from Russia being steadily in excess of immigration to the country (Fig. 2). The dynamics of international migration flows in Russia provide an insight into what can make the country steadily attractive to foreign citizens, whose share in the overall number of emigrants is 12–13%. The rise in emigration observed between 2013 and 2014 is due to, first of all, the toughening of migration control with respect to CIS nationals, and, second of all, the departure of high numbers of foreign specialists in conjunction with the shutdown of investment projects and joint ventures amid economic sanctions.

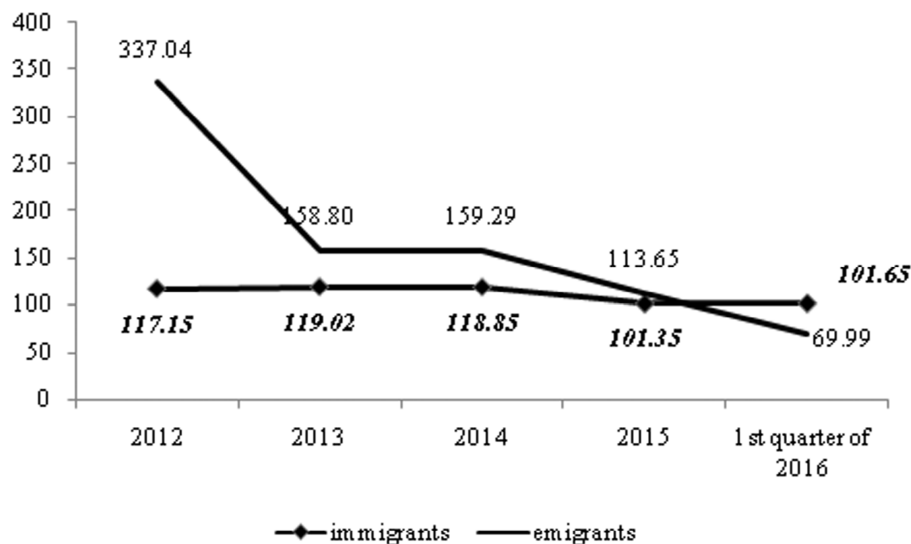


Figure 2: Dynamics of international migration flows in Russia (% against the same period of the previous year).

The current stage in the development of Russia's economy is characterized by a sharp drop in the number of emigrants and a minor increase in the number of immigrants. In the early 2016, the Russian Federation received 133,080 immigrants, which translates into a 1.6% increase on the same period of 2015, whereas it dispatched 30% less foreigners than in the first quarter of the previous year, 2015. This trend attests to the stabilization of migration processes within the Russian economy and a boost in the effectiveness of international migration, the positive migration balance being an indication that by staying on Russian soil migrants do, actually, replenish the nation's labor potential, needed for its economic development.

3.2. Geography of Russia's international migration

Russia, with its significant economic potential, decent population well-being levels, special geographic position, and well-developed interregional and foreign economic relations, can be viewed as quite attractive to migrants from the near and not-so-near abroad. Its most active partners in terms of migrant flows are the CIS states. The intensity of population movement between these states and Russia has been governed by a range of historical, economic, political, cultural, and other factors. To be specific, the share of migrants from Russia's near abroad in the structure of its overall international migration is around 88% (Fig. 3).

Immigration from CIS countries can be termed "pendulum-like", since the number of immigrants from these regions virtually overlaps with that of emigrants from Russia.

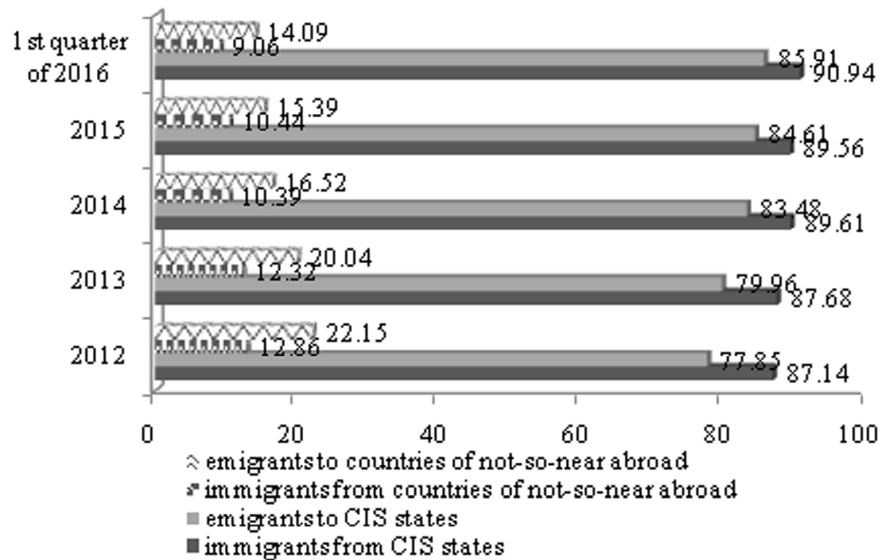


Figure 3: Migration activity of countries of the near and not-so-near abroad in Russia (% of the structure of Russia's international migration). (Russian Yearbook of Statistics, 2015)

A substantial share in migration flows on Russian soil belongs to labor migration. Year-by-year increases in the scale of labor migration are a definite boon to Russia's economy (providing the domestic labor market with lacking manpower and facilitating greater competition in regional labor markets). Having said that, one also gets to deal with the negative effects of intensifying migration (aggravated social situation, growing interethnic tension, falling wages among the local population, etc.).

The major reason why the country's regions need to bring in foreign manpower is the fact that it is sometimes impossible to have some of the positions offered by local employers filled by residents registered at the employment bureau. Employers tend to hire foreign citizens to have them do lowest-level, low-wage work. Most of the time, foreign workers assume jobs that remain long unfilled by citizens of the Russian Federation (Koroleva, 2015).

Among the traditional "suppliers" of manpower to the Russian economy are Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Ukraine (Fig. 4). Ukraine's complicated political, economic, and social situation in the period 2014–2015 triggered mass emigration from the region. In 2015, the number of Ukrainian immigrants to Russia totaled about 195,000, which is 50% more than in 2014. Thus, it is Ukrainians who have provided for Russia's largest migration-driven population increase, which totaled in 2015 146,136 Ukrainian immigrants.

At the moment, the share of migrants from countries of the not-so-near abroad in the overall flow of Russia's international migration is steady and does not exceed 20%. The period under review evidences the share of emigrants from Russia being steadily in

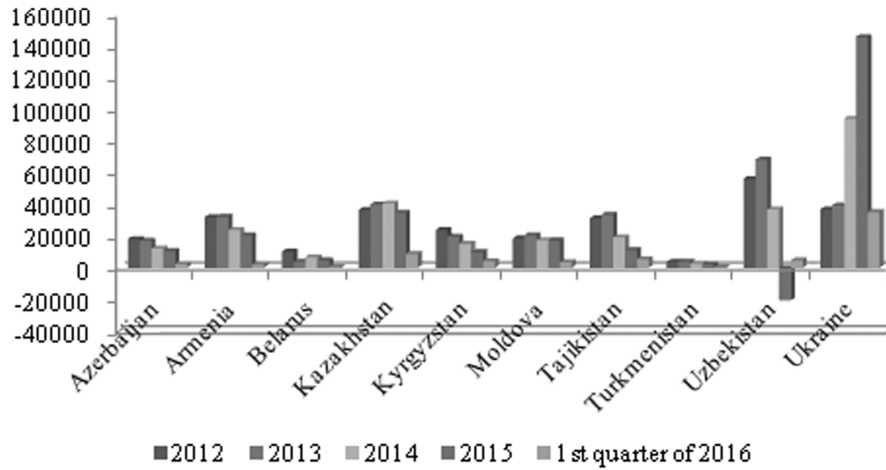


Figure 4: Russia's migration-driven population increase based on migrants from CIS states (number of people).

excess of that of immigrants from countries of the not-so-near abroad. Among the countries actively providing for Russia's population increase through migration are Georgia, China, and Latvia (Fig. 5). In the period of Russia's worsening international relations and unstable macroeconomic situation in the year 2014, the nation's negative migration balance had to do mainly with the departure of citizens of European countries.

By tradition, migrants from countries of the not-so-near abroad are mostly attracted to regions within the country's central portion, which receive about 25% of all

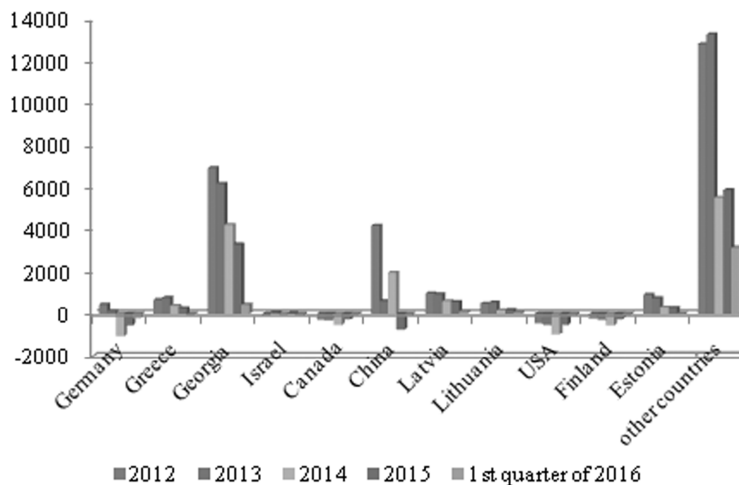


Figure 5: Russia's migration-driven population increase based on migration from countries of the not-so-near abroad (number of people). (Russian Yearbook of Statistics, 2015)

immigrants. There are a considerable number of foreign citizens migrating to the cross-border areas of the Far Eastern Federal District – about 22% of the overall number of immigrants from the not-so-near abroad moving to the country's regions. Immigrants are attracted the least to areas within the (unstable) North Caucasian Federal District (4.4%) and the Ural Federal District (4%).

4. DISCUSSION

Of particular relevance to present-day Russian society is the issue of forced migrants and refugees. Despite the fact that the bulk of refugee migration already occurred in Russia during the period of its economic transition, when each year the Russian border was crossed by up to 60,000 migrants from countries of the near abroad, residents of neighboring states are still forced today to leave for other places due to interethnic tension, terrorism, and mass disruptions of public order. Statistically, at present Russia receives over 2,000 forced migrants and refugees (over 700 families) yearly (Fig. 6). On the whole, the dynamics of the number of forced migrants in the period under review can be described by a trend toward a decline in their number on Russian soil: the entire year 2015 is characterized by a quarter-by-quarter decline in the number of forced migrants, totaling 23,143 in the current year, 2016, which is 20% less than at the end of 2014.

Current refugee-based migration to the Russian Federation is characterized by its bulk being made up of, mainly, citizens of Ukraine. That being said, the Russian economy is still quite receptive to migrants from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Georgia. Under these conditions, of relevance is the need to enhance Russia's national migration policy by aiming the effort at optimizing the process of realizing the factor

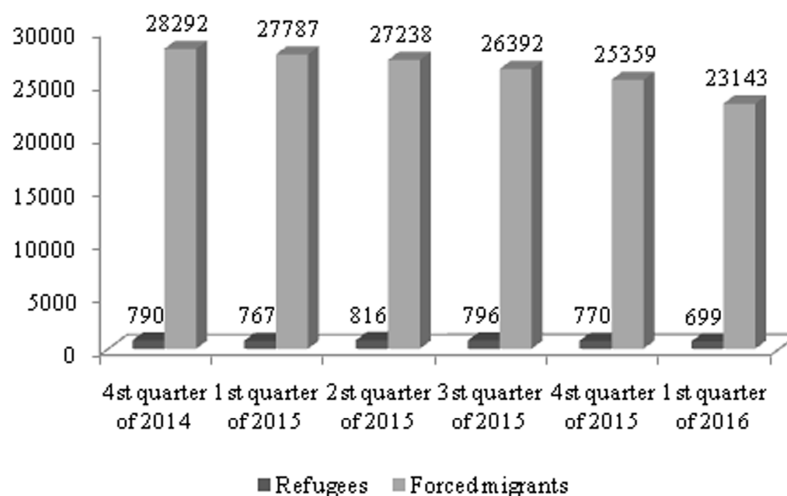


Figure 6: Dynamics of the number of refugees and forced migrants on Russian soil (number of people).

of refugee-based and forced migration within the framework of rule-of-law and political development.

On the whole, over the period under review international migration flows in Russian practice have been characterized by a decline in their boon to the national economy. Specifically, despite the overall positive migration balance on Russian soil, starting in 2013 we observe a decline in net migration accompanied by an increase in migration turnover (Fig. 7). However, the early current year, 2016, produced a trend toward an increasing index of effectiveness of international migration in the Russian economy.

Normally, the movement of people between different states entails a number of costs, but, at the same time, it may also provide proven benefits for them. Typical economic costs include the migrant's relocation expenses, job-hunting expenses, etc.

Among the benefits of migrating to another country are the ability to earn wages that are higher than back home, the chance to give one's children a better education, better prospects for their employment going forward, etc. In some cases, one's desire to migrate can be driven by reasons of political and physical freedom, rather than just financial prosperity (Ivakhnyuk, 2011). The economic effect of manpower migration is not limited just to its impact on production volumes but spills over to redistribution processes, impacting on the volumes of the state's revenue and expenditure both domestically and internationally.

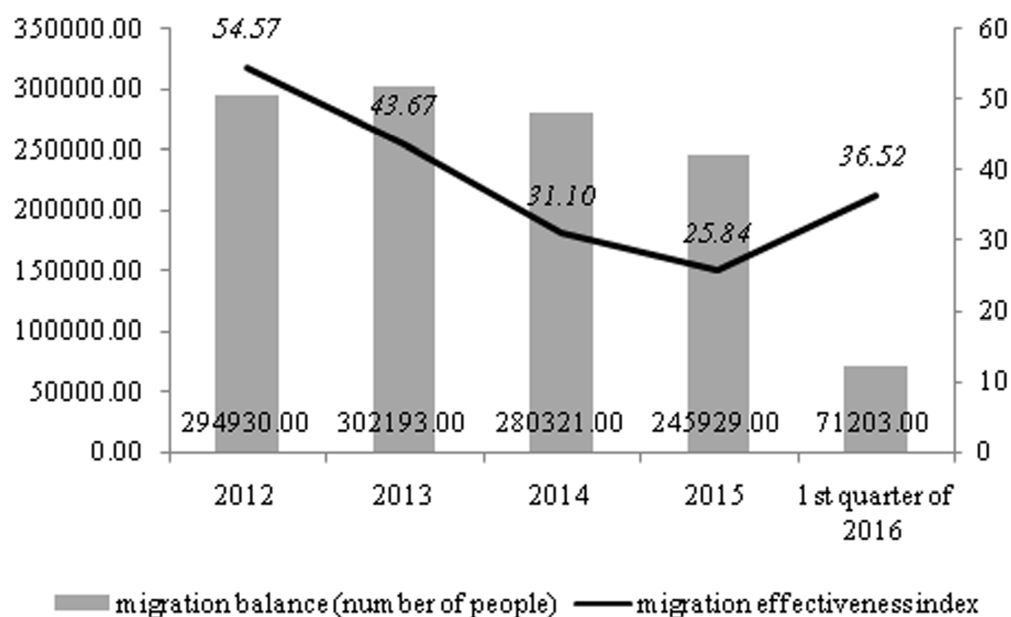


Figure 7: Dynamics of the indicators of effectiveness of international migration

5. CONCLUSIONS

Thus, it can be concluded that present-day Russia is quite an attractive region for foreign migrants to come to. The upsurge in international migration on Russian soil witnessed in the period under study has to do with international economic relations undergoing a transformation, sectoral sanctions being imposed on Russia by foreign states, and the national economy showing signs of domestic macroeconomic instability.

The existing migration attractiveness of some of the country's regions facilitates further increases in the uneven spatial distribution of the population, aggravating territorial disproportions in the deployment of human and natural resource potentials. This orientation of population flows may pose considerable social-economic and geopolitical challenges. In the long run, the country's eastern and northern regions are likely to be in need of manpower inflows, which they could get from the near and not-so-near abroad.

Having said that, it is important to be able to take realistic stock of the objective limits of the state's migration capacity. These limits have to do not only with things changing in the labor market as a result of structural transformations in the economy but also with the adaptive capability of mechanisms underlying the social-economic and cultural integration of migrants into Russian society.

Just like in most countries around the world receiving migrants, bringing in foreigners, as future permanent residents and as workers, is a priority area in Russia's current migration policy. It is impossible presently to maintain steady economic growth, reduce income inequality in society, and boost population size without using the advantages that international and domestic migration appears to offer. The current geography, dynamics, and structure of migration flows in Russian practice are distinguished by being somewhat imbalanced, short-lived, and inefficient. This being the case, it appears worthwhile to carry out a range of activities aimed at creating the right conditions and mechanisms conducive to boosting the inflow of multidisciplinary categories of qualified and highly-qualified specialists who may be sought after in the nation's regional labor markets for their professional skills and expertise.

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