

The Migration Intentions of Primorsky Krai Residents

The preservation and increase of the population in the regions of the Far East is currently of a strategic nature. The demographic potential, which now characterizes many Russian Far Eastern territories, is no longer enough for sustainable development, economic growth, and the introduction of innovative technologies. In fact, the demographic development of the regions is becoming one of the key factors of the national security of the country as a whole. Occupying one of the leading places in the Far Eastern Federal district in terms of socio-economic development, Primorsky Krai, however, shows the same negative dynamics of demographic processes as the other regions of this territory. Over the past two decades, there has been a natural decline in the population, which is characterized not only by low birth rate and by high mortality, but also by significant migration outflow (Table 1, Table 2).

According to official statistics, the demographic losses of Primorsky Krai from 1992 to 2014 amounted to more than 350 thousand people. About a third of this figure is due to migration loss. The gender and age structure of the population has also undergone very significant changes. If in the Soviet period the population of Primorye was younger in comparison with the Central regions of the country, now this difference is almost erased. The average age of the population increased from 37.9 to 39.1 years between, for example, the 2010th and 2014th.

Thus, in order to study the migration intentions of the inhabitants of Primorsky Krai, we decided to conduct a qualitative study using a number of methods. The methods of focus group discussions and expert interviews were chosen for the field study. In each location it was supposed to hold one mini focus group with mothers of minor children of different ages (4 people in each group), as well as with high school students (8-11 grade, 8 people in each group), in addition, several focus groups were held with students of universities and colleges. However, interviews with experts (local activists) played an equally important role in the study, since they are most fully aware of the processes and changes in each locality due to the specifics of their activities.

Focus groups were chosen as a method to save time and talk simultaneously with several informants in a situation of intense working schedule and limited time, as well as to use the possible mutual influence of informants on each other.

The format of mini-group discussion for mothers was chosen because this format allows for a more in-depth conversation with each participant separately. We also suppose that mothers, in connection with their life experiences, could tell us more not only about their own migration intentions but also about their children intentions.

Finally, the experts deserve an individual interview, since the experience and activities of each of them are unique and require a separate in-depth conversation

Thus, we can sum up preliminary results.

As for FEFU in Vladivostok, it is a center of attraction for students from all over the region, especially in the Humanities. Plans for further migration, if any, are connected either with Moscow and St. Petersburg, or with European countries (Germany, Czech Republic). FEFU students are not interested in other regions of Russia. The main incentive for possible migration is better employment prospects, psychologically more comfortable life, and finally - more favorable ratio of housing prices and income. Students believe that any business is better to realize in China because it will definitely be more profitable there.

Informants in Dalnegorsk believe that the city is in stagnation. The main reasons are remoteness from the regional center, poorly developed infrastructure, lack of investment, and neglect of city-forming enterprises (Bor and Dalpolimetal). Low standard of living (average salaries 20-25 thousand rubles), opportunities are very limited. The majority of respondents ideally see their future work as remote activity. Another category of respondents chooses working class specialties and they do not have any enterprising life position. They are sometimes inclined to choose work in Korea (high salaries), in other cases in their residence (the prospect of high wages in mining, logging, construction).

Unlike Dalnegorsk, the proximity of China plays the most significant role in Ussuriysk: "if it were not for China, there would be no fruits and vegetables at all." The Chinese play a big role in the economy, buying up lands, but the locals say that the residents do not interact with them, the Chinese live in parallel, sometimes just coming for work (pendulous migration). For local people it is sometimes easier to go to China for shopping, some are engaged in business, buying clothes in China. In Ussuriysk, many locals love their city, however they say that there is nothing to do, the economy is in stagnation. Therefore the youth is focused on education and then incline to leave the city (more likely in Khabarovsk, as it's "quieter"). Children have comprehensive lessons of Chinese or Korean in school.

The biggest part of locals in Nakhodka are also natives. A big advantage of the locality is the presence of the sea within walking distance, as well as a relatively small city in which everything is close and accessible. Contrasts include low transport accessibility, poor infrastructure, as well as environmental problems (as in most other studied Primorie cities). There are quite tangible links with external regions, ranging from tourism and students from China, ending with the move to China and Korea. As for the move, residents also consider the major cities of Central Russia. Adolescents are also aimed at moving, which is associated with the lack of prospects and good higher education institutions. On the other hand, they rely on free (public) education as far as just few of them can allow paying for it. Nevertheless the population believes that the standard of living in Nakhodka is better than in other areas but much worse than in Vladivostok or Moscow.

Arsenyev is the city of the helicopter plant, which continues to operate but not at full strength. The infrastructure of the city is well developed; we also can see many people

with higher education. At the same time, the locals feel that before they have been living as in "very distant Moscow region" (could fly on weekend and have fun in Moscow), and now they are short of money and this distance with Central Russia feels really strong. There are also not enough jobs, even local activists are thinking about moving. Respondents could not list common and serious "reasons why" to stay in the locality.

Thus, the majority of respondents from different regions of Primorsky Krai have the intention to leave. The reasons are generally similar: first, the lack of quality higher education institutions, low living standards (low wages, lack of specialists, poorly developed infrastructure-it is easier and cheaper to go abroad than to Central Russia). Programs for the development of the region do not work and are not felt by residents. People say they feel abandoned, they believe that neither the state nor the enterprises want to invest in the region (it's also about corruption). However, many respondents see opportunities for development - it is tourism which is associated with very favorable natural conditions of the region.

Table 1

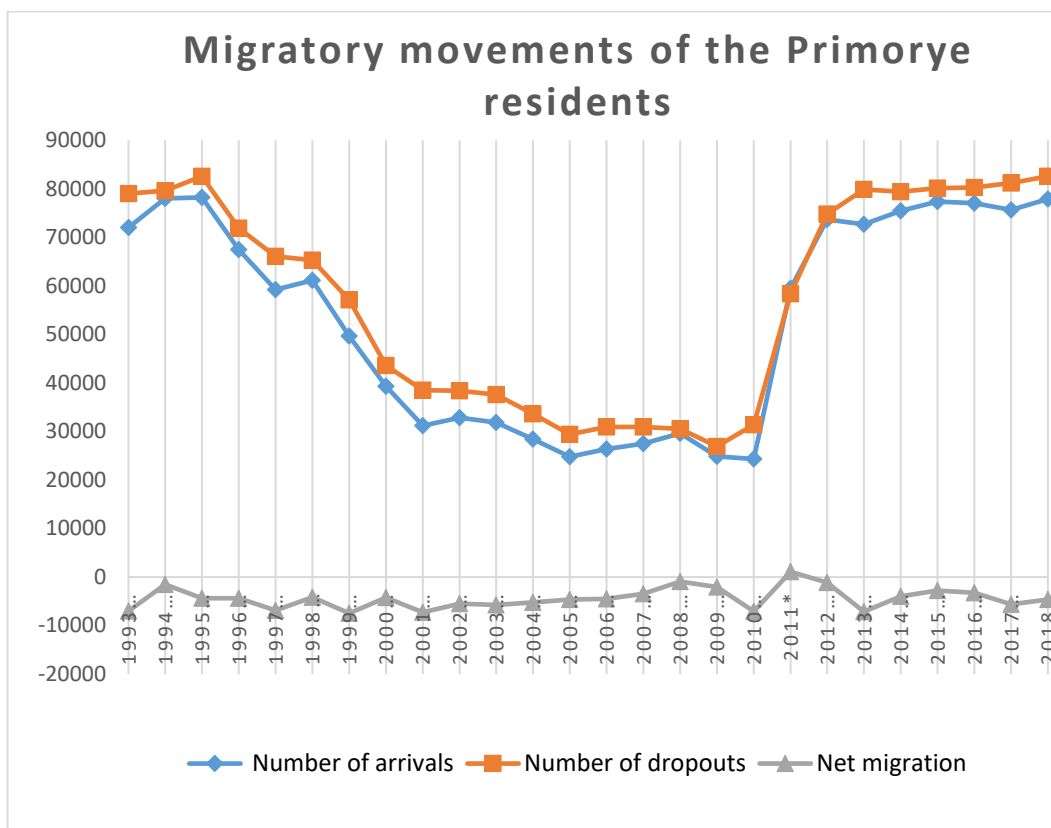


Table 2

