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MIGRATION AS A FACTOR OF INSTABILITY OF RURAL SOCIETY

Abstract

Changes in the number of people living permanently in the countryside or making use of its resources on a temporary basis are central to rural geography and to the many problems of land management which are encountered in the countryside (Clout, 1976, p. 8). Reduction in the number of residents in the countryside can be caused by a variety of reasons. Migration is one of them.

The purpose of this article is the consideration of migration processes in Russia on three levels: national, regional and local. It will analyse three key issues in particular:

- Change in pattern of migration;
- Reasons for migration;
- Migration influence on rural society.

Keywords: migration, rural areas, Russia.

Migration as a term involves the specification of both a time scale and a set of boundaries within which and across which movement takes place (Woods, 1982, p. 132). Theories of migration are divisible into two groups. The first group concentrates on the cause and structure of migrations including motivation and constraints, form and the process of migration. There are two models, which are discussed in literature. The economic motive model holds that migration is a result of individual cost-benefit calculations: people move in order to increase incomes and pursue greater opportunity (De Jong, Gardner, 1981). Another model notes that people are averse to risk. According to this view, people migrate to a location perceived to have smaller risk (Wegren and Drury, 2001). The second group of theories explains the effects which migration has on various physical, social, economic and political environments through a focus on the demographic impact of migration, process of social change, migrants' attitudes and their roles in society.

Numerous studies have focused on out-migration from a rural to an urban area, and have explained that out-migration is undoubtedly the prime factor in rural depopulation (Lowenthal, Comitas, 1962). M. Pacione wrote that the causes of rural depopulation have not altered in any significant way during the last 150 years (Pacione, 1989, p. 124). Some studies have focused on rural in-migration (Green, 1999; Stockdale et. al., 2000).

Migration and stability of society are interrelated. There is a close relationship between human migration and political and social instability. Transitional Russia gives us many examples of such interrelations. In the Russian case, we must take into account both out- and inrural migration. One type of migration process has some effects at national, regional and local levels, but the other only takes place on one level.

In this research I used official statistical information from the State Statistical Committee as well as the material of field research which took place in Russian Karelia (Pryazha district) in summer 2003 (interviews, local statistics, local official documents).

CHANGE IN PATTERN OF MIGRATION

National Level

For many decades rural-urban migration was a dominant feature of the territorial mobility of the Russian population. The main direction from rural to urban area was characterised by high intensity and selectivity by age and sex. This type of migration had determined the demographic development of urban and rural settlements of the Soviet Union. The Soviet authorities tried to control and restrict mobility from rural areas and small towns to the metropolitan areas through so-called *propiska*. *Propiska* is the process of registration at the local police station which the Soviet government used for restricting migration. It was a system for managing internal migration effectively. In October 1993 the *propiska* system was officially abolished. According to the Russian Constitution and Federal Migration Programme, approved by the Russian Government in November 1993, Russian citizens have freedom of movement. But this registration is still required for getting access to official jobs, social benefits, and public services such as kindergartens, schools and healthcare. In most regions people do not have to ask for permission to register, although in some places, such as Moscow, Sakha-Yakutiya, Krasnodar and Stavropol *krais* the authorities can still deny registration.

Migration tendencies have changed since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The first change was a drastic reduction of different types of migration in Russia (inter-regional, regional, and between different types of settlements). During the

first years of crisis, the Russian countryside, which was more resistant to social and economic shock, attracted population.

Table 1

Changes in the rural population in Russia (1991–1997) in thousands

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Rural population	38744,3	39031,9	39753,1	399004,0	39908,9	39855,2	39708,7
Natural increase	44,3	-30,2	-184,1	-227,3	-211,7	-239,5	-233,0
Migration	57,4	289,5	264,0	272,4	96,2	34,2	56,4
Administrative reorganisation	185,9	461,9	71,0	19,8	1,8	58,8	43,7
Natural increase, persons per thousand	+1,1	-0,9	-4,9	-6,1	-5,7	-6,4	-6,3
Migration, persons per thousand	+1,5	+7,3	+6,5	+6,7	+2,5	+1,0	+1,6

Source: Quote from Simagin Y.A. (2000), *Sootnoshenie gorodskogo i selskogo naselenija v Rossii. 1991–1997 rr.* (Correlation between urban and rural population in Russia. 1991–1997), *Sociologicheskie issledovanija*, No. 1, pp. 66–74.

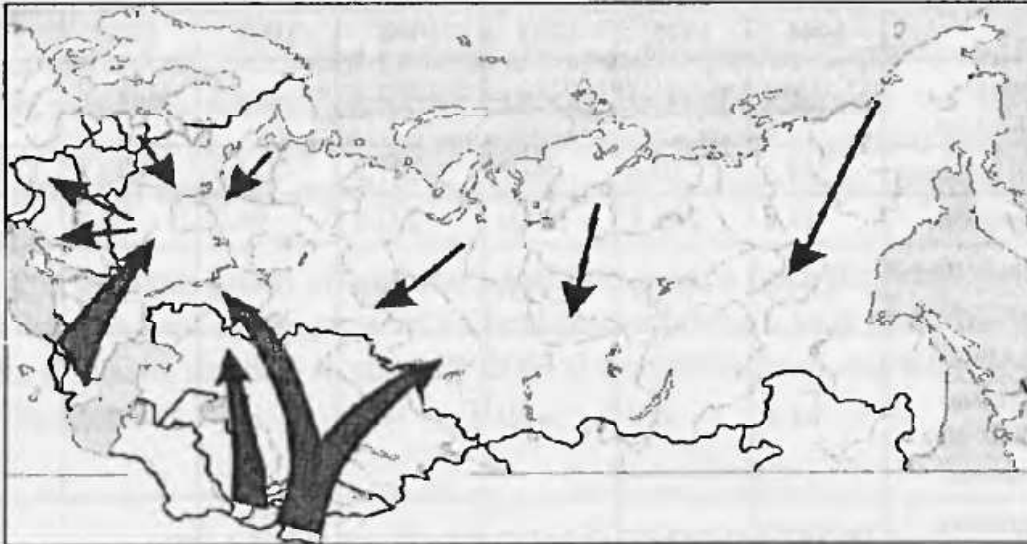
The inflow of migrants into rural areas was really high during 1992–1994 (table 1). In that time, rural in-migration had set off negative rural demographic trends such as falling birth rates and rising death rates. There were two main inflows of migrants to the Russian countryside during transition. The first was from the urban to the rural area, but it was not interregional migration. This was migration from urban settlements of the Far East, Siberia or European North to the rural settlements of Central and Southern Russia or to the southern part of Siberia (see, for example, Migration situation... (1996); Portyakov V. (1996); Myasnikov (1996)).

Out-migration from these regions rises with a higher unemployment rate. Economic performance also matters: on average higher real income attracts migrants to Central and Southern Russia. A smaller per capita number of buses, doctors, road density and telephones increases population outflow. During Soviet times the main directions of migration was north- and eastward. It connected to the industrial development of the country. These regions were areas of new economic

development, road-building, natural resources development. Now we can see the reverse process. People leave from these regions.

Picture 1

The resettlement of Russians in the 1990s



Source: Rom, V., Dronov, V. (1997).

The second in-flow was the migration of resettlers from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Baltic States to Russian rural areas (see, for example, Migration processes... (1994); Vitkovskaja G. (1996); Migration and urbanisation... (1999)). Many native Russians came back to Russia. In some of the Commonwealth of Independent States the share of migrants to Russia during the 1990s accounted for ten per cent of the labour force. Migrants chose inexpensive housing over job opportunities and cheapness instead of earning income (Nefedova, Treivish, 2002, p. 80). Among the factors pushing ethnic Russians to leave CIS countries were/discriminatory policies introduced by many CIS governments (especially Baltic States, and in the end of 1990s – Ukraine) that restrict educational opportunities and employment in the state and even other sectors; deteriorating economic conditions in CIS countries; the decreasing opportunities of Russian speaking people in these states for cultural expression. According to I. Gavrilova (2001) approximately half of the refugee population was transferred to rural locations in the under-populated regions of Russia, typically situated outside the black soil (*chernozjom*) zone. Special refugee quotas were introduced in locations considered unsuitable for industrial development, but willing to accept refugees. The main idea of the Federal Migration Programme was stimulation of “the revival of economically depressed regions, villages and suburban areas”

(Regent, 1994). However, the scheme, which envisioned the mass transfer of refugees to remote or depopulated areas, was doomed to failure. The majority of migrants were city dwellers with typically urban professions. Insufficient funding, poor housing, and the overall lack of jobs caused the failure of the programme to meet many migrants' needs.

After 1994 as in-migration flow decreased (even while remaining positive), the rural population again went down (see table 1), the tendencies changed and most resettlers came to the urban settlements. Unable to put down roots in rural locations, many migrants moved again in search of better luck in a new location. For a corroboration of this situation, I would like to give some statistical information (see Wegren, 2003). Rural capital investments as a percentage of all federal investment money declined from 18% of the national budget in 1991 to 5% in 1994. The construction of rural infrastructure was drastically curtailed, as seen by the fact that by the end of 1994 the construction rate of rural dwellings and rural schools had been halved, and the construction of rural roads was one-third compared to its 1991 level. Beside the deteriorating infrastructure, during the first half of the 1990s, a significant decline in rural services occurred. According to some studies, people who came to the countryside earlier and could not adapt there, then moved to urban areas (Migration and urbanisation..., 1999). Such areas became more attractive for the resettlers in comparison with rural areas. In addition, accelerated reorganisation of collective and state farms has led to a drastic reduction of "free" land in Central and Southern Russia (main area for migrants). The waiting list for land plots e.g. in Krasnodar *kray* is now so long that people have to wait twenty eight years to get a plot (I. Gavrilova 2001). After 1994 migration into rural areas declined very quickly and ceased to cover the natural population decrease.

Y. A. Simagin made up a typology of Russian regions according to changes in the ratio of the rural and urban population between 1991 and 1997 on the basis of data about the natural increase of population and migrations (Simagin, 2000). Seven types of regions were distinguished. Inside the four groups migration plays an important role.

1. Regions where the population grows predominantly due to migration, but migration inflow is directed to the urban areas.

2. Regions where the population grows predominantly due to migration, and migration inflow is directed to rural areas. There are regions with favourable natural-climatic conditions in this group: South of European Russia (Krasnodar, Stavropol *krais*; Rostov, Volgograd *oblasts*...), South Siberia (Tymen, Omsk, Novosibirsk *oblasts*) and Kaliningrad *oblast*.

3. Regions where the population decreases quite quickly due to migration. These include national territories where the indigenous population lives predominantly in rural areas, and migration is not typical. Accordingly, the more in-

tensive outflow of migrants (mainly Russians) is from urban settlements. In this group we can find Nenets, Taimyr, Evenk and Chukotka autonomous *okrugs*.

4. Regions where the population decreases quite quickly due to migration. More people leave the countryside than the urban areas. As a result the share of rural population declines very quickly. Such regions are located in Siberia and the Far East and are characterised by unfavourable climatic conditions for agriculture. The general level of socio-economic development in the rural area is lower than in the urban one because in Soviet times priority was given to industry and cities. A similar situation can be observed in some regions of the European North (Murmansk *oblast*, Komi Republic) as well as in the Republic of Kalmykiya. The latter has a high level of outflow of rural population because of the ecological situation in the region. The process of desertion has destroyed agriculture in the republic.

In three other groups of regions the natural increase/decrease of the population plays a more important role in the ratio of the urban and rural population.

Picture 2

Migration as the main factor of change in demographic situation



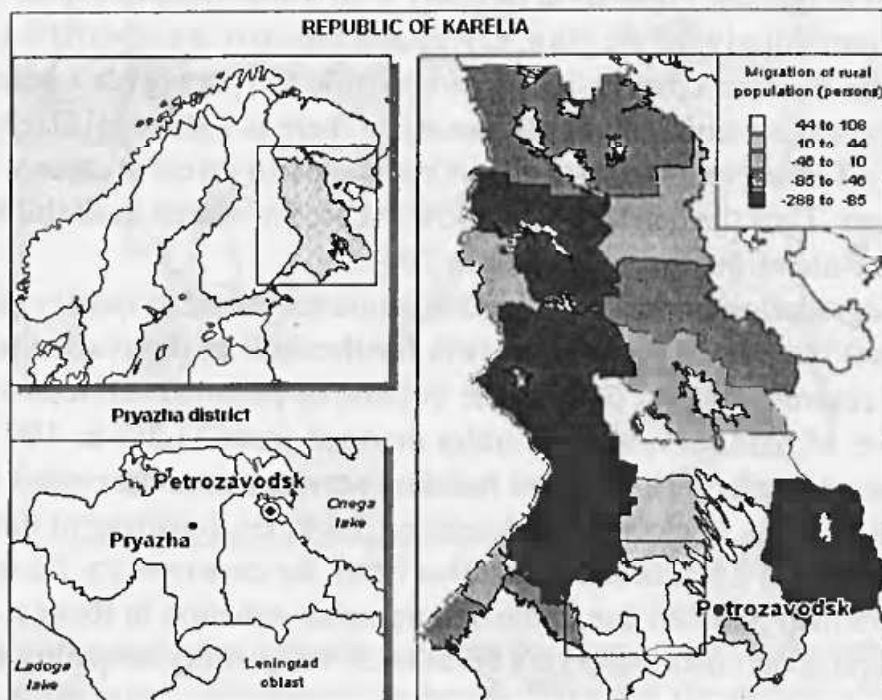
Migration plays a more important role in the demographic situation in Siberia excluding oil and gas provinces and Far East (picture 2). In the European part of Russia the natural population increase/decrease plays a significant role. According to Simagin's typology, the Republic of Karelia is a type of region where the population declines for natural reasons. Migration takes place in the republic, but it does not play such an important role as in many other Russian regions. The main reason for migration in Karelia is the outflow from the rural area.

Regional Level

At regional level, the contrast between centre and periphery and between zones of depopulation and growth is more noticeable. Such a tendency exists in Russian Karelia: migration from northern and less developed western areas of the republic to the south. Regions which are more attractive for migrants are located near the capital of the republic Petrozavodsk. These regions have both rural and urban in-migration. However, this process doesn't play as important a role in changing the rural population as it does at national level. The return of the Russian population from countries of the former Soviet Union doesn't play an important role in Karelia, either.

Picture 3

Migration of rural population in the Republic of Karelia (1998)



The mobility of the rural population of Karelia can be described as follows.

1. The mobility of the rural population is much lower in comparison with the urban one because of reduced transportation options, especially on the periphery. This feature leads to an increase in territorial isolation of settlements and reduces interaction between villages.

2. A low standard of living leads to the lack of means for long trips to relatives, friends or to rehabilitation areas. The salary level in agriculture has fallen during the 1990s. It is one of the lowest in Karelia (1602 roubles per month in agriculture in 2000, and 3186 roubles in industry).

Table 2

Dynamic of intersectorial salary differentiation in the Republic of Karelia,
% of average monthly salary in the national economy

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Industry	109,5	114,3	106,7	98,5	110,7	104,8	106,6	113,3	129,7
Agriculture	115,9	100,0	96,2	87,3	79,7	73,0	67,6	68,6	62,8

Source: Municipal'nye obrazovanija Respubliki Karelija. (Municipal formations of the Republic of Karelia). Statistic collection Petrozavodsk, 2000.

3. A high level of unemployment adversely affects, so-called, working migration. Migration is reduced as well as the number of settlements for which this type of migration is typical. Population mobility is of great importance for growth in rural areas, particularly for the poor. Cheap and effective transportation, which is lacking in the Russian countryside, could provide the poor with a better chance of exploiting wage-earning opportunities when there is a seasonal slack in the local economy. Labour mobility also allows companies to invest in cases where local labour is short. Thus the economy can grow in cases of scarce availability of local labour (The Role of the Private Sector..., 2001).

4. The degradation of the social infrastructure (decrease in quality of services, cost increase) represents a serious reason for the lack of motivation to come to the service centres (Filatov, 2002). The volume of personal services in the general structure of paid services in Karelia dropped from 31.5% in 1991 to 4.4% in 2000. For example, repairing and building services have decreased 8.5 times, repairing and sewing of clothes has decreased 3.5 times, repairing of home equipment has decreased 2.5 times. On the other hand, the expenses for funeral services have more than doubled due to the demographic situation in Russia, as well as in Karelia; transport costs tripled not because of the quantity or quality of service, but due to a rise in prices.

5. Among other reasons for migration I can mention declining employment opportunities in the countryside, age and sex differences, variation in education, and size and the degree of isolation of the home community (Pacione, 1989).

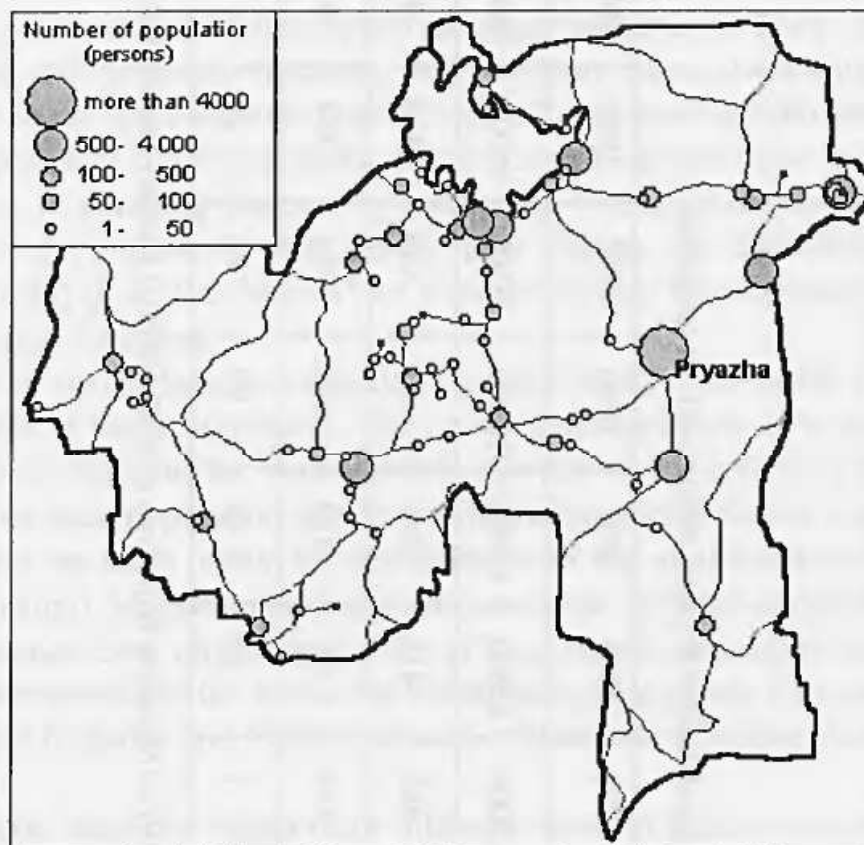
Local Level

The growing contrasts between centre and periphery, between the zone of depopulation and the zone of growth is also visible at local level. In the settlement

system of Karelia the processes of reduction of habitable areas, increasing the number of uninhabited villages occurred. During several years (1996–1998) the number of such villages in Karelia increased by 5.5%. The number of villages with a population of less than five inhabitants increased by 2.4%.

Picture 4

Net of settlements of Pryazha district



Medium, big and large villages organise the framework of the settlement system, on which other settlements are based. They are the central elements of a settlement system. These settlements are located along main roads, rivers and lakes. Medium (201–500 inhabitants, 10.9% of settlements of Pryazha district), big (501–1000 inhabitants, 3.6%), and large (over 1000 inhabitants, 4.8%) villages are more stable in a modern socio-economic situation. Population reduction in these villages is limited by in-migration. Moving away from these centres and main roads the settling system becomes disintegrated. Villages change into summer residences. Old houses obtain new owners. According to settlement data provided by the Statistic Committee 7.3% of the total number of rural settlements of the district are uninhabited villages. Gilkozha is such a village. Now there is only one house in the forest, which is only used in the summertime. In Pryazha district

Table 3

Rural population of Pryazha district and net migration

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	total
Rural population	13400	13200	13200	13000	12800	15500	15400	15100	15000	14800	14600	
Inflow	587	572	511	365	418	364	503	449	380	393	364	4906
Outflow	597	478	343	366	376	319	404	363	351	345	401	4343
Migration balance	-10	94	168	-1	42	45	99	86	29	48	-37	

Source: Municipal'nye obrazovanija Respubliki Karelija. (Municipal formations of the Republic of Karelia). Statistic collection, Petrozavodsk, 2000.

15.8% of villages have a population of under five inhabitants. People who live in such villages are socially unprotected, derelict people. These villages are likely to become uninhabited settlements. If we compare similar processes in other Russian regions, we could say that such trends are more acute in Central Russia. For example, during 12 years (from 1989 to 2001) the number of rural settlements has decreased by 8% in Bryansk *oblast* (Kunizha, 2002).

Villages with a population of 6–50 inhabitants belong to a group of dying villages. There are 55.9% such villages in the Pryazha district. These are mostly single-function villages which depend on bigger settlements. They have lost their own social and economic functions, and transport connections with other rural and urban areas. The economic base of such villages is self-employment of population in personal subsidiary plots. The lower demographic potential continues to drop due to a natural decrease in population. The deformation of the sex-age structure of the population takes place. Small villages (51–200 inhabitants, 17% of settlements) as well as the previous group of villages have lost their own social and economic functions.

Thus, the main elements of settlement patterns are very small villages with a population of under 50 persons. They constitute more than 70% of district settlements and represent the most unstable element of the system. These villages lost most of their population due to out-migration during Soviet times. In post-soviet times the main reason for depopulation of the rural areas in Pryazha district was natural. Migration no longer influences the population numbers as it did in Soviet times. Low migration activity at local level is caused by the socio-economic development of the areas. For example, increasing the livestock in one of the sovkhos brigades and building houses attracts several young families to this village.

Migration becomes apparent in different ways in different types of settlements. For example, the outflow of migrants from very small villages is insignificant because the majority of the population are “low-mobility” elderly people. Not so intensive out-flow of migrants from big and large villages which are located on the main roads and have developed social services. On the other hand, the great outflow is typical for small and middle size villages which have lost part of their own administrative and economic functions.

REASONS FOR MIGRATION

As stated above, the theory of migration gives us two causes of migration: economic motives and risk avoidance. “An individual and an ethnic instinct for self-preservation” (see Katagoshchina, 2002, p. 26) could be considered as a separate cause of migration or inside risk avoidance cause.

One of the most important determinants for migration concerns economic incentive. More than 70% of Russian internal migrants are of working age (Zayonchkovskaja, 1994, p. 46). According to S. Wegren and A. Cooper Drury (2001, pp. 31–32), if the economic motive model continues to work, two developments will be expected in present-day Russia:

Table 4

Causes of migration, some examples

Economic motives	Risk avoidance	Individual and ethnic instinct for self-preservation
Higher level of real income	Higher unemployment rate	Discriminatory policy (e.g. Russians in Baltic States)
Developed labour market	Degradation of social infrastructure	Decreasing opportunity for cultural expression
Developed housing market	Geographical isolation	Cognitive isolation
Higher level of investments	Ecological problems	–
Availability of land resources	Natural-climatic conditions	–
Cheapness		–

Source: analysis carried out by the author.

– the migration pattern should become more market-based and sensitive to economic opportunities and restraints;

– migration flows should occur towards the most economically active regions.

Consequences of such changes in migration pattern are the aggravation of the already extreme disproportion in geographic distribution of the population in Russia: between the Asian and European part of Russia, between urban and rural areas.

According to the second model, migration is a manifestation of risk avoidance and relative deprivation. Out-migration will be higher from regions with ethnic turmoil and crime, higher economic and ecological risks. This model of behaviour could lead two directions of migration: into rural areas as being safer and quieter, and from rural areas as stagnant, economically unstable.

The individual and ethnic instinct for self-preservation is important in the case of migration from a former republic of Soviet Union. Interviews gave me several

examples of return migration from urban to rural areas (usually return into parents' or grandparents' houses) with the goal of preserving traditional Karelian culture.

MIGRATION INFLUENCE ON RURAL SOCIETY

A more important process is the influence of migration on the integrity of rural society. This process is significant at regional and local level. One example was given to us by Irina Gavrilova (2001). The administration of Krasnodar *kray* estimates that migrants, most of whom are of Caucasian or Central Asian background, make up more than 13% of the *kray's* population. The presence of this large refugee community generates tension among the local population. Such tension centres on employment, land use, cultural and psychological differences. Refugees are also blamed for the rising crime rate.

Another example we can see at settlement level in the case of Russian Karelia. The local "original" rural population moves to the urban areas and they will be replaced by newly-arrived people. Stepwise migration occurs in a series of movements. Very small villages lose their population and do not have in-migration. But medium-sized and big villages are characterised by the replacement of the population. Thus, the integrity of rural society has changed. During the last ten years of reform, some Karelian villages changed about half of their original population. For example, from 1990 to 2000 in the district administrative centre Pryazha out-migration aggregates 2374 persons and in-migration was 2412 persons. The total settlement population is 4300 inhabitants (table 5). Slightly more than half of the population has changed in Pryazha during this short period (but statistics does not reflect backward migration).

Table 5

Pryazha population and net migration

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Total
Population	4500	4500	4500	4500	4500	4400	4300	4300	4300	4300	4300	-
Inflow	444	320	344	216	298	214	113	120	117	116	110	2421
Outflow	525	402	269	240	211	196	128	104	86	118	95	2374
Migration balance	-81	-82	75	-24	87	18	-15	16	31	-2	15	-

Source: Municipal'nye obrazovaniya Respubliki Karelija (Municipal formations of the Republic of Karelia), Statistic Collection, Petrozavodsk, 2000.

The second question, which is important on the local level, is the survival of the residual population. After high-power out-migration during Soviet times and the natural decrease of population in post-soviet times many settlements have lost attachments due to lack of economic activity, and the closure of many public services (schools, shops, health-centres). Many villages, especially small ones, no longer have services. The problem with, so-called, service migration is becoming more acute. A trip to the central village has become a problem because of the lack of normal transportation and expensive tickets. There are two possibilities for the local population to solve this problem: walking or hitchhiking. For example, the distance between New Manga and Pryazha is fifteen kilometres. Hitchhiking which used to be popular among students, became a common type of travelling for the local population, especially in the summertime.

To conclude, migration patterns are undergoing transformation. One of the features of change is that in spite of the right of people to migrate freely and reside where they choose, internal migration of the population has decreased during the transitional period due to many factors.

The second one is that during the early 1990s urban-rural exceeded rural-urban migration. In-migration exceeded the negative natural increase and the rural population increased. But in-migration was a temporary occurrence, which came against the common urbanisation process. In-migration was caused by social and economic crises in Russia, which caused the movement of the population into rural areas. Towns and cities were unable to attract migrants because of setbacks in production levels, the increase in unemployment, the lack of housing etc. It was a temporary process which took several years. Out-migration is a permanent process, which has taken place for many decades and has led to big changes and instability in rural areas.

Regional migratory flows have also changed. In contrast to the Soviet period, Siberia, the Far East and North of the European part, which had an inflow of migrants before 1990s, now have reverse processes. In comparison, Central and South Russia were losing migrants in Soviet times, but now these regions have a huge inflow. Changes in migration patterns influence the transformation of Russia. These changes influence the settling system, economic development of regions as well as Russian society. High inflow into some regions causes competition on the labour and housing markets, thereby raising the potential for social and political tension among groups in the local population. Migration influences the integrity of rural society. And it could also arouse a new stress situation.

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