



## VOLUNTARY RESETTLEMENT OF YOUNG COMPATRIOTS IN AGRICULTURAL REGIONS OF SIBERIA: CASE OF STATE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

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### ABSTRACT

The article discusses the theoretical, methodological, and empirical aspects of the implementation of the state policy of voluntary resettlement of compatriots in the agricultural regions of Siberia. A review of scientific sources on the studied issues is carried out. The basis of the empirical study is the analysis of statistical data on the state and dynamics of the voluntary resettlement of compatriots in the agricultural regions of Siberia, as well as the analysis of statistical indicators of official reports of state authorities. In conclusion, the authors formulate the main problems in the field of voluntary resettlement of compatriots in the agricultural regions of Siberia and propose measures to address them.

**Disciplinary:** Internal Migration and Land Settlement, Economic Development, State Policy.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The sharp increase in migration activity in the post-Soviet space, the center of which was Russia, required the development of conceptual and methodological foundations of state policy in this area. This led to the inclusion of the policy of reception and accommodation of internally displaced persons and refugees in the competence of the federal center. The Federal Migration Service was designated as the responsible body, although duplication of powers was noted by representatives of state bodies (Balashova, 2009).

Regulatory formalization of the regions as subjects of a policy to support compatriots (including in the field of migration) should be attributed to the second half of the 1990s. In the federal migration programs 1994, 1996, 1998. The main mechanism of the regional policy was consolidated - regional and interregional migration programs (Anisimova et al., 2019). By 1994, 52 territorial bodies of the migration service had been created, which were responsible for most of the work of receiving migrants (in 1996, they examined 96% of the applications of 431 thousand). Thus, by the mid-1990s, when Russia received the largest number of immigrants, not all subjects had a representation of the FMS in the structure of regional bodies (Filippov, 2010).

Also, there was a gap between the activities of federal and regional bodies, as well as the federal and regional regulatory framework. Researchers note that federal legislation established a strict framework that limited the independence of the regions, despite the fact that the operational work on the reception and arrangement of immigrants was to be organized, primarily in the field

## 2 METHOD

The basis of empirical research is the method of analysis of statistical data of voluntary revisions of relevant indicators to Siberia and the analysis of statistical indicators in official reports of public authorities. Besides, the work uses data from independent Russian and foreign consulting and research institutions. These methods allow you to identify the main trends in the field of compatriots, identify possible problems, and propose measures to solve them.

As theoretical research methods, methods of deduction and induction, comparison, generalization, data analyzing (2017-2020 years), and data forecasting were used.

## 3 STUDY DETAIL AND RESULT

### 3.1 RESULTS OF STATISTICS DATA

The federal law "On the state policy of the Russian Federation with regard to compatriots abroad", which for the first time consolidated the concept of a compatriot at the state level, also became the legislative basis that determined the place of regions in-state activities to support foreign compatriots. First of all, the law determined the powers of the regions, which included participation in the development of the fundamentals of the state policy of the Russian Federation and federal legislation, the formation on its basis of the regional legislation, as well as activities to conduct policies in this area (through the implementation of federal and regional programs). Also, actors have become sources of funding for policies in this area. It is worth noting that the evolution of legislation regarding the role of regions in the implementation of policies to support foreign compatriots is inconsistent (Gimatdinov, 2015). Thus, the federal law of August 22, 2004, excluded the provisions of the Federal Law "On the state policy of the Russian Federation with respect to compatriots abroad" on the powers and obligations of entities in this area, as well as the rights to finance activities to support compatriots from the budget of the entities. In addition, there was talk about the activities of the regions in this direction only within the framework of the delegation of authority by the federal center (first of all, to donor regions, whose budgets allow pursuing a policy in this area without prejudice to other areas). Meanwhile, the position of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs testifies to the tendency to broader involvement of Russian regions in the implementation of the policy of supporting foreign compatriots. In 2010, the main provisions of federal law in the field of regional powers were returned (Gerasimova. 2019).

Thus, the migration direction is one of the main ones in regional activity to support compatriots. As noted above, regional activity in this area is carried out through the implementation of the State program to promote voluntary resettlement to the territory of Russia. It should be noted that in the built-up system of mechanisms for its implementation, the experience of the 1990s was partially taken into account. The regions, which can be designated as the main subjects of activity for the resettlement of compatriots, are developing their own regional programs based on a federal one that is essential of a framework nature. The regional programs should reflect the specifics of the region, its ability to attract and equip compatriots. This document is required to join the Program. Other normative and normative-methodological documents are not binding and are developed by the regions to disclose the contents of the regional program organize its implementation and provide additional information to the resettlers (Gimatdinov, 2015).

The leaders were the North Caucasus (242845) and Volga (206690) areas. The regions of the West Siberian and East Siberian regions occupied fifth and ninth places, respectively. Among the ZSR regions, the largest number was registered in the Novosibirsk Region (32529), Altai Territory (31311), Kemerovo Region (27253), and HRV - in the Krasnoyarsk Territory (14625). Researchers note that in the Kemerovo region in 1990-1991. The proportion of migration growth in the total population growth exceeded the proportion of natural growth; in 1994, migration growth compensated for 76.4% of the population loss due to excess fertility over mortality (in 1998 - by 11.8%). Significant migration inflow to Altai Krai in the 1990s allowed to achieve a “temporary demographic balance”, there is also a positive impact on the demographic position in other Siberian regions. Meanwhile, the migration situation of the 1990s became a significant burden for the regions in the absence of the necessary mechanisms for its provision.

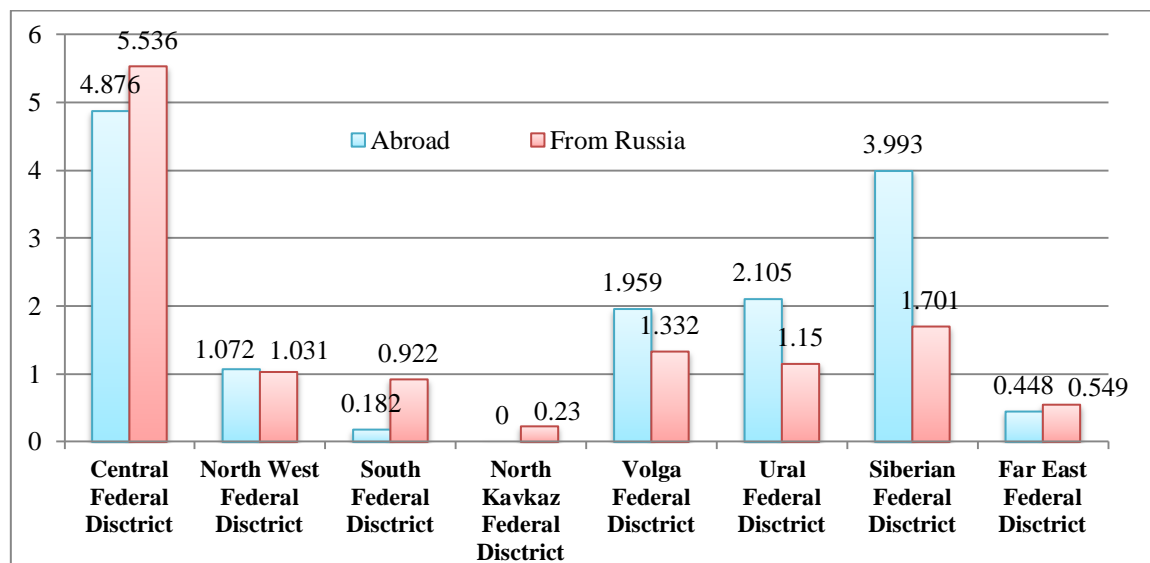
By the second half of the 1990s, there is a decrease in the share of Russians in the national composition of migrants from countries of the former Soviet republics (from 76% in 1993 to 67% in 1994, 63% in 1995, 60-61% in 1996-1998, 55 -58% thereafter). At the same time, 26.5% of the increase in 2000, 15.8% in 2001, and 17.8% in 2002 were obtained from the titular peoples of the CIS and Baltic countries. In the 2000s this trend continued. This suggests that the refugees of the 1990s (primarily Russian and Russian-speaking) were replaced, first of all, by labor migrants (mainly from Central Asian countries).

In these conditions, the adoption of a program to facilitate the resettlement of compatriots to Russia is criticized by the scientific community as a belated measure to attract compatriots that would be relevant in the 1990s. Meanwhile, the growth of demographic problems in many regions makes it necessary to pursue a state policy of resettlement of compatriots as culturally closest to the host society and more capable of rapid adaptation. Based on socio-economic characteristics, the regions of Siberia and the Far East come to the fore when implementing the State Program.

The adoption of the program in 2006 was partially regarded as the beginning of the formation of state policy for the repatriation of compatriots. Meanwhile, ideologically, the program was not repatriation. Researchers note the predominance of the “resource approach” associated to use the labor and economic potential of the Russian diaspora to satisfy Russia's internal interests. So, when filling out a questionnaire for participation in the State program, a compatriot indicates his profession and qualification, which is crucial when approving the questionnaires. The fact that the participants of the State Program are exempted from passing the mandatory exam for the Russian language, the history of Russia, and the fundamentals of the legislation of the Russian Federation under conditions of the insufficient specification of the concept of “compatriot” further reduces the repatriation

element and brings the Program closer to attracting labor migrants. The 2013 edition of the program abolished the prerequisite for having a workplace assigned to the migrant, and the program was extended to entrepreneurs and students, addressing the regional needs still remains a priority.

Of the twelve regions of the Siberian Federal District, by 2016, 9 regions have entered the program: Altai Territory (2009), Republic of Buryatia (2011), Trans-Baikal Territory (2010), Irkutsk Region (2007), Kemerovo Region (2009), Krasnoyarsk Territory (2007), Novosibirsk Region (2007), Omsk Region (2009), Tomsk Region (2016), Republic of Khakassia (2014). Of these, three regions (Irkutsk and Novosibirsk regions, Krasnoyarsk Territory) became the first “pilot” regions in which a new program began to be implemented (since 2007).



**Figure 1:** The number of resettled citizens under the state program by regions. (up to 2019, unit: thousand people).

Early the program participating regions were divided into three categories of settlement, after the introduction of a single category of priority settlement territories from the regions of the Siberian Federal District, it included the Irkutsk Region, Trans-Baikal Territory, and the Republic of Buryatia (the remaining seven regions belong to the Far Eastern Federal District).

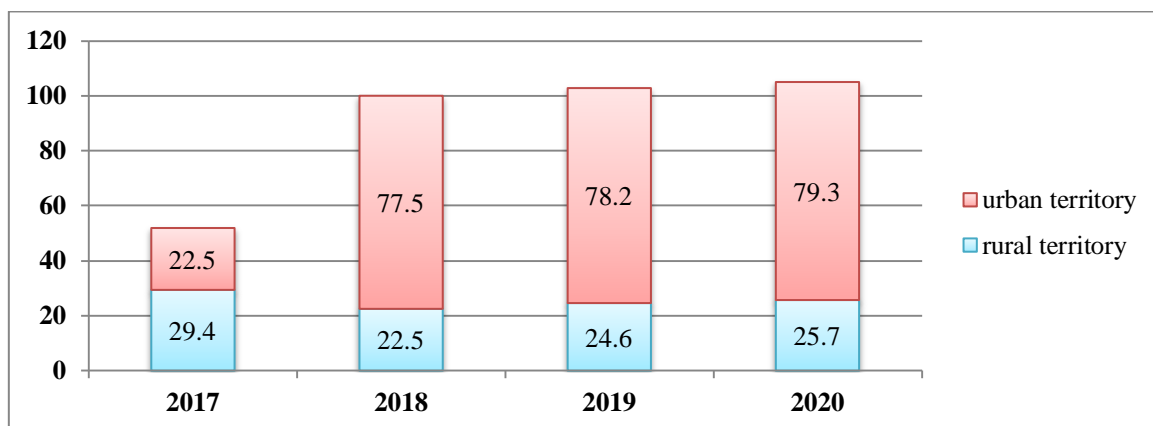
**Table 1:** Types of payments and services to participants in the state program of voluntary resettlement.

Type of Payments / Services	Moving on the territory of the category “A” invasion	Type of Payments/ Services	Moving on the territory of the category “A” invasion
Compensation for relocation	Upon submission of travel documents (Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 150 of 03/10/07)		
Compensation for the payment of a fee for the preparation of documents determining the legal status of a migrant	upon receipt of documents, within 15 days from the date of application (Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 715 of 09.25.08)		
Compensation package	The provision of services in the field of education, health care, social services, and employment is similar to the citizens of the Russian Federation from the moment of registration at the place of stay (Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 1 dated 10.01.07)		
Monthly unemployment benefits (no more than 6 months).	50% of the living wage until the moment of obtaining citizenship of the Russian Federation (6 months), hereinafter referred to as a citizen of the Russian Federation (Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 8 of 01/15/07)	It is not paid until the moment of obtaining citizenship, then - as a citizen of the Russian Federation in accordance with applicable law	

Upon resettlement, the program participant and members of his family receive a state guarantee and social support, in particular, the cost of moving to a permanent place of residence is paid, the cost of paying the state fee is compensated, a lump-sum allowance for accommodation (“lifting”) is paid for the first six months at no other income, a benefit of 50% of the subsistence level in the region is paid (Table 1).

### 3.2 PROBLEMS OF VOLUNTARY RESETTLEMENT OF YOUNG COMPATRIOTS IN AGRICULTURAL REGIONS OF SIBERIA

The main problems for most regions of the Siberian Federal District participating in the program (according to regional resettlement programs) are the lack of qualified personnel against the background of a general reduction in the number of able-bodied people (as a result of migration or natural decline). In these conditions, the involvement of compatriots in these regions as individuals with great socio-cultural opportunities for integration into Russian society can be considered as one of the priority options in the migration direction for solving problems. However, it must be borne in mind that the State Program should not be considered as the main solution to the socio-demographic problems of the regions. Compensation for the outflow of skilled workers to the central Russian regions and abroad by migrants seems to be an extensive solution, while the severity of the problems requires intensification of state activity to increase the labor attractiveness of the regions among Russian citizens. Figure 2 shows statistics of voluntarily resettled in rural and urban areas in 2017-2020 years. As can be seen from the figure, the rural locally is the least attractive for citizens during the last 3 years, which is a significant problem.



**Figure 2:** Voluntary resettlement of citizens in rural and urban areas (2017-2020) (thousand people)

The reduction in the number of able-bodied people results in the need for the regions of the Siberian Federal District for qualified human resources. Of particular urgency is the need for medical workers, teachers, educators, as well as workers in industrial enterprises, construction, transport (masons, locksmiths, carpenters, drivers, engineers, installers, etc.). Given the growing demand for specific categories of human resources with redundant supply in other areas, mainly mental work (primarily, legal and economical professions), emphasizing the program on the qualifications of immigrants and its compliance with regional needs is also one of the options to reduce the severity of the deficit in personnel and polarization of supply and demand in the labor market.

Meanwhile, the reduction in the repatriation potential of the program associated with this situation, given the growth of low-skilled labor migration, primarily from Central Asian countries, appears as an unresolved problem of prioritization between repatriation and labor migration. Persons who are denied the status of a program participant (one of the main reasons for refusal is the inadequacy of the potential migrant's qualifications to the needs of the region) often increase the number of those who move to Russia outside the program. So, in 2009, 270594 people resettled from the CIS, Baltic countries, and Georgia outside the program, in 1790662 in 2010 (as part of the state programs as of January 1, 2015, the total number of arrivals was 130, 8 thousand participants, together with family members - 262, 9 thousand). Moreover, according to official data from the competent authorities of the regions of the Siberian Federal District, there is no complete correspondence between the qualifications of the migrants and regional needs, on the one hand, and on the other hand, the full labor supply of the migrants. There are two stages in the implementation of the program related to this issue:

1). As amended by the State Program, valid until 2013, program participants were resettled "for vacant jobs," subject to agreement with the employer and qualifications. At this stage, the problem was related to the fact that the employer was not always ready to wait for the arrival of the immigrant to Russia, and the vacant places turned out to be occupied. In addition, taxation difficulties for employers prior to citizenship made immigrants less attractive applicants. It was noted that employers prefer to post vacancies that remained unoccupied for a long time, which is a consequence of their prestige for the local population. There were cases when in the questionnaires one specialty demanded in the region was indicated, and a job search was carried out independently upon arrival in Russia, as a rule, for other specialties.

2). In the 2013 edition of the State Program, compatriots were given the right to choose the territory of the settlement, without focusing on the available places. In addition, the program was extended to the entire territory of the subject, rather than individual municipalities. This innovation increased the repatriation potential of the program and expanded the categories of potential participants (primarily at the expense of students and entrepreneurs). On the other hand, it is necessary to strengthen the responsibility of regional state structures for support in the field of employment. This seems to be most relevant in the period before the migrant acquires citizenship since the employer gives priority to the citizen, and not to the holder of the certificate of the state program participant.

The combination of problems in the field of employment entails the potential likelihood of replenishing the number of unemployed at the expense of immigrants. In this regard, it seems necessary to strengthen the support from the regional bodies of the participants of the State program (including those who are looking for work on their own), as well as the formation of an information field not only for migrants but also for potential employers.

The greatest shortage of labor resources in the regions of the Siberian Federal District is observed in rural areas. This is primarily due to migration to cities (primarily regional centers) and outside the region. The main mechanisms for stimulating relocation to rural areas are the provision of housing or land for the construction of a residential building and the establishment of an economy (on preferential terms or free of charge when determining the time interval for mandatory permanent work), as well as subsidizing the acquisition of agricultural machinery and products. Meanwhile, both

in the regional programs and in the State program for the promotion of voluntary resettlement of compatriots, insufficient attention is paid to the conditions of resettlement in urban or rural areas (the most detailed information is presented in the programs of the Republic of Khakassia and the Trans-Baikal Territory). In this regard, in regions with a significant polarization between the urban and rural populations, it seems necessary to pay special attention to the conditions of resettlement in rural areas (for example, as part of a subprogram or resettlement project). This will allow, on the one hand, focusing the attention of potential participants on the possibility of relocation to the countryside, on the other hand, to finance directly this direction, which is most relevant for the regions of the Siberian and Far Eastern federal districts.

Regional programs, regulatory legal acts, and information materials in the regions of the Siberian Federal District contain information on compensations for migrants, both guaranteed by the State Program and specific to a specific region. The main point of support for compatriots at the regional level is the housing issue. The state program does not imply the provision of housing for immigrants, which seems natural in the context of the urgency of the housing issue for the local population. The regional authorities provide information support (providing information on housing rental opportunities, temporary accommodation in hotels, soft loans, and mortgages), as well as most regional programs, provide for partial compensation for hiring (usually before the period of obtaining citizenship). Also, regional programs imply some other payments aimed at increasing the attractiveness of the settlement territory for potential migrants. Among them is the payment of a fee for establishing equivalence of documents on education/qualifications, benefits in the absence of income, reimbursement of expenses for translation services of documents from a foreign language, expenses for retraining, etc. Meanwhile, many compensations apply not to the entire subject, but a specific municipal district. So, in the Yenisei district of the Krasnoyarsk Territory, compatriots working in agriculture are given a 50% discount on a calf once a year, 2 tons of hay are allocated for those who keep cattle. Regional programs do not provide enough information on such compensation. Such information is partially contained in informational publications for compatriots (for example, in the magazine "Russian Century"), but they are not official regulatory and legal materials. Also, information on the implementation in the regions of programs of social and economic support for the population, in which migrants can take part, seems insufficient. The most widely presented information on programs for large and young families. Although since the start of the implementation of the State program, there has been an increase in the information component, both at the federal level (the creation of information Internet portals of immigrants, periodicals in electronic and paper versions, etc.) and at the regional level (conducting field and online presentations of regional programs, posting information on the websites of the competent authorities, sending information materials to the representative offices of the FMS of Russia abroad, consular posts, and other competent bodies). In this regard, it is necessary to expand the information content of both the State Program and regional programs. For the latter, the most relevant is the inclusion of information on compensation in certain areas of the subject (for example, in the form of an annex to the program) and maximization of information on the programs implemented in the region, of which migrants can become participants.

One of the problems in the field of organizational support of the program should be noted the

lack of a single body responsible for its implementation. In the regions of the Siberian Federal District, the competence in the organization of the resettlement of compatriots is also distributed among state bodies. In ten regions of the Siberian Federal District participating in the State Program in 2016, the authorities responsible for implementation are the departments of the Federal Migration Service and the institutions for ensuring and monitoring employment. At the same time, the executors are other regional bodies (in the field of health care, social policy, etc.), for the coordination and control of whose activities interdepartmental commissions for the implementation of programs are created. Also, in some regions, Public Councils are being formed as public advisory bodies. The attribution of the implementation of the resettlement policy of compatriots to migration services and employment institutions once again emphasizes the non-repatriation nature of the state program, aimed primarily at solving the demographic and socio-economic problems of the Russian regions. Even though, on the whole, the interdepartmental approach has significant advantages associated with complexity in implementing the resettlement policy, the absence of a separate competent authority and the attribution of this activity to the competence of the FMS brings the State Program closer both conceptually and organizationally to the policy of attracting labor migrants.

Thus, by the mid-1990s Russian regions are included in the system of state migration policy in the field of involuntary resettlement as its individual entities. At the same time, one cannot talk about the complete independence of the regions, since they did not possess a sufficient amount of resources (primarily financial). The main burden fell on the federal budget, which was executed with a significant deficit, and therefore the funds allocated for the implementation of migration programs did not meet their planned indicators (even though they were underestimated in comparison with the actual migration situation). The main organizational measures were carried out by regional bodies that did not have sufficient experience in their implementation and qualified personnel.

The formed system of territorial bodies of the migration service was not fully integrated into the structure of regional bodies, in connection with which it is necessary to note the insufficient level of interagency cooperation, as well as the interaction between the levels of government in the regions. In the absence of sufficient state mechanisms, the main problem should be the absence of a system for the efficient use of the resources of resettlement organizations and coordination of their activities both at the state and regional levels.

The resettlement policy of compatriots in the framework of the 2006 State Program was largely based on the principles laid down in the 1990s. The migration direction in the implementation of policies to support compatriots living abroad is the main one for the regions of the Siberian Federal District. This fact is explained by the fact that the State program to promote the voluntary resettlement of compatriots gives priority to the “resource approach”, which implies the use of the resources of immigrants (labor, economic and socio-demographic) to solve regional problems. The reduction in the number of able-bodied people is a steady trend for most Siberian regions, and participation in the state program is seen as a way to compensate for its decline. Meanwhile, in the face of the severity of the problem, extensive methods should not replace intensive methods related to state policy to increase the attractiveness of regions for the local population.

The most urgent problem is the lack of qualified personnel in rural areas of the Siberian Federal District. In this regard, it is necessary to shift priorities in regional programs to attract migrants to the



village, for example, through the development of subprograms or resettlement projects. Besides, it seems necessary to increase the role of the federal center in stimulating resettlement in the countryside, since the severity of the problem requires a focused state policy. The competence of the federal center should also include the housing issue and the related problem of registration at the place of residence. Given the impossibility of preferential provision of housing for immigrants given the potential increase in negative attitudes on the part of the local population, a solution to the problem can be the creation of temporary accommodation centers with the possibility of registration in the municipal regions of the regions, but this process is not intensive enough. In this regard, coordination is required on the part of the federal center or the establishment of the presence of the CVR as a prerequisite for participation in the state program.

#### 4 CONCLUSION

Thus, Summing up, it should be noted that, despite the constant introduction of changes to the State program, its qualitative improvement in the implementation process (since 2006), there are flaws associated, inter alia, with a low level of coordination of regional activity by the federal center. On the example of the regions of the Siberian Federal District, it was revealed that in regional programs there is a lack of taking into account the specifics of subjects, and also a mechanism has not been developed to inform the local population about the implementation of the program (including employers). Also, some problems arising during the implementation of regional programs require an increase in the role of the federal center in coordinating regional activity to overcome them. In this regard, close interaction between federal and regional government bodies is necessary to create a bilateral information field and bring regional programs with real socio-economic processes in the subjects, as well as the objective needs of the migrants.

#### 5 AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIAL

Information can be made available by contacting the corresponding author.

#### 6 ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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