IMMIGRATION TO RUSSIA:

WHY IT IS INEVITABLE, AND HOW LARGE IT MAY HAVE TO BE TO PROVIDE THE WORKFORCE RUSSIA NEEDS

An NCEEER Working Paper by

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Executive Summary

Between 1992 and 2008, Russia's population shrank by 6.6 million people, a result of deaths exceeding births by 12.6 million and immigration exceeding emigration by 6.0 million. Having reached a peak of almost 1 million people in 1994, net immigration subsided to 119,000 in 2004, but "negative natural increase" continued and is not likely to be reversed any time soon. Since the early nineties, many social scientists and journalists have commented on different aspects of Russia's demographic situation. Of recent analyses, the most informative are by Murray Feshbach (2008) and Timothy Heleniak (2009).

This paper addresses four questions: What causes and sustains the demand for immigration to Russia? What are the legal, illegal, and semi-legal segments of current immigration? What are the possible scenarios of immigration to Russia until 2026, the year for which the Russian Federal Bureau of Statistics (Rosstat) is currently making its own projections? What is the likely interplay of immigration and domestic migration, and what is the likely distribution of domestic and international migrants between Russia's Federal Districts (Okrugs) in 2026?

Introduction

Between 1992 and 2008, Russia's population shrank by 6.6 million people, a result of deaths exceeding births by 12.6 million and immigration exceeding emigration by 6.0 million. Having reached a peak of almost 1 million people in 1994, net immigration subsided to 119,000 in 2004, but "negative natural increase"[1] continued and is not likely to be reversed any time soon. Since the early nineties, many social scientists and journalists have commented on different aspects of Russia's demographic situation. Of recent analyses, the most informative are by Murray Feshbach (2008) and Timothy Heleniak (2009).

While Feshbach's major emphasis is Russia's health crisis, he also weighed in on the poor prospects of an upswing in births in Russia; the number of females aged 20 to 29 will peak at about 13 million around 2012-2013 and then plummet to some 7 or 8 million in the next decade. Anatoly Vishnevsky, a leading Russian demographer, echoed Feshbach's observation in a recent interview (Vishnevsky 2009). According to Vishnevsky, "when population is not growing it is losing drive" (Ibid.).

In addition to examining Russia's exceedingly low birth rate, Heleniak's survey of Russia's demographic situation reviews and commends Russia's package of pro-natalist policies, in place since 2007, calls attention to the exceptionally high mortality of working-age men and to the fact that Russia already has the world's second-largest stock of international migrants (mostly from the post-Soviet countries). Also, Heleniak reviews the evolution of Russia's post-Soviet immigration policy, invokes the UN 2001 projections of immigration to Russia required

[1] Population specialists in English-speaking countries do not seem to like the phrase "natural decrease" and prefer "negative natural increase." It is different in Russia, where the phrases *yestestvennyi prirost* and *yestestvennaya ubyl* are deemed equally legitimate.

to compensate for the upcoming decline of its working-age population[2] (WAP), and characterizes the reversal of centuries-old domestic migrations to the far north and east.

Taking Heleniak's survey as a point of departure, this paper addresses four questions: What causes and sustains the demand for immigration to Russia? What are the legal, illegal, and semi-legal segments of current immigration? What are the possible scenarios of immigration to Russia until 2026, the year for which the Russian Federal Bureau of Statistics (Rosstat) is currently making its own projections? What is the likely interplay of immigration and domestic migration, and what is the likely distribution of domestic and international migrants between Russia's Federal Districts (Okrugs) in 2026?

Why Does Russia Need Immigrants[3]?

So far, a single turning point in the dynamics of Russia's population has been publicized: in 1992, it began to decline. From 1992 to 2008, immigration compensated for a little less than half (47.7%) of the excess of deaths over births. Indeed, in the 1990s, Russia received an unprecedented influx of 4.5 million migrants from the former Soviet republics (Figure 1). The inflows during both the following (2000–2008) and the preceding (1980s) periods were much smaller–1.5 million and 1.9 million, respectively. Most analysts do not think that Russia's depopulation will end before the middle of the 21st century, although one of Rosstat's scenarios–the one referred to as high in Table 1 and matching the official demographic policy document–does postulate the earlier reversal in population dynamics. However, Russian demographers consider this scenario overly optimistic (*Russia Facing* 2009), mostly because of its excessive assumption about rising fertility (Table 1).

[2] In Russia, the working-age population consists of men aged 16 to 60 and women aged 16 to 55.

In 2007, Russia's population change reached a *second turning point* not quite publicized yet. Prior to 2007, Russia's WAP continued to grow as the balance between those entering the working age group and those exiting it remained positive. In 2007, retirements and premature deaths were–for the first time ever–not compensated for by people entering the WAP–a delayed effect of the consistently low birth rate. While in 2007, the net decline of working age Russians amounted to just 300,000, it was twice as big in 2008; and from 2011 to 2017, the WAP decline will exceed 1 million per year (Figure 2).

Between 2009 and 2026, Russia's WAP will shrink by 17 million, which is 24% of Russia's overall employment in 2009. This contraction lends itself to more accurate prediction than the total population's decline, for the simple reason that almost all of those who will enter the WAP group by 2026 have been already born. This adds certainty to the prediction of a drastic decline in the WAP and makes labor the most deficient production factor in Russia.

The prospect of growing immigrant communities is not yet fully accepted by the Russian public or even by the political class. For example, activists from Russia's national-patriotic ideological camp maintain that there is no objective need for immigration; rather, it is insinuated that "a well-paid campaign" (Krupnov 2005) and ploys of foreign institutions and foundations are bent on selling Russians "a demographic policy which is contrary to our interests" (Beloborodov 2005). A 2006 national survey revealed that only 4% of Russians see immigration as the way to solve Russia's demographic problem (Rossiyane 2006). According to Sergei Mironov, the Chair of Russia's Council of the Federation, "it is quite possible to make sure that not 100 but 250 million people will live in Russia in 2050," but recruitment of a foreign labor force can be considered only "as an extraordinary and short-term measure" (Mironov 2005). Is

[3] In this text, the notion of "immigrants" applies to international migrants only but not to incoming domestic migrants.

that really so?

Even a cursory glance at the Russia-without-immigrants scenario makes one doubt its plausibility. In 2003, when the WAP was still growing, the labor deficit was recorded at 42% of Russia's production units (Gimpelson 2004), and in the Moscow subway one could come across a billboard beginning with the sentence, "We have a lot of money but no people." So far, not a single country has demonstrated steady economic growth under a shrinking labor force.

For that reason, one might watch Japan, where population decline commenced in 2005 but immigration policy continues to be highly restrictive. Whether or not Japan eventually opens its labor market, that may not necessarily give a cue to Russia, where labor productivity is much lower than in Japan. Even the overly optimistic assumption of a 7.2% annual growth in Russia's labor productivity was shown to produce a GDP decline totaling 10 trillion rubles by 2020, if the deficit of labor is not compensated by immigration (Arkhangelsky et al. 2005).

One has to also take into account that technological advances usually allow for the release of labor from production, particularly from industry, whose share in Russia's workforce has been declining anyway–in 2008 it amounted to just 16.8% of the total (Rossiya v Tsifrakh, 2009: 98). In contrast, services tend to expand, and gains in service-sector jobs more than offset losses of jobs in industry and agriculture. This has been the case in the West, and Russia seems to follow suit. For example, from 2004 to 2007, the overall employment in Russia increased by 1,612,000 people, employment in agriculture declined by 505,000 people and in manufacturing by 419,000 people. During the same period, employment in retail increased by 870,000 people and in other services by 1,216,000 people. The number of people engaged in construction also rose–by 531,000 people (Rossiisky Statistichesky 2008: 138). Thus, the gain in service-and-construction sector employment was more than twice as large as the loss of industrial and agricultural jobs (Rossiisky Statistichesky 2008).

Some participants of the debate over Russia's demographic situation present its core subject as a zero-sum game–boosting fertility *or* boosting immigration. Clearly, Russia could benefit from rising fertility, but there has been no policy-induced reversal of a downward trend in fertility anywhere in the world. (Post-war baby booms may be called qualified exceptions.) Even if bonuses meted out since 2007 by the Russian government for second and additional children ultimately prove to be fertility boosters, a couple of decades will pass until the more numerous newborns reach working age.

Consequently, the idea that Russia's bright economic future may not be achievable without attracting a large number of immigrants is sinking in, as evidenced in the 2006 amendments to the 2002 immigration law (enacted on 01/15/2007), which simplified registration requirements for foreigners, wrested registration away from the jurisdiction of endemically corrupt Russian police, and made it easier to obtain employment authorization.

Categories of Immigrants in Today's Russia

Following a surge in the first half of the 1990s, recorded immigration to Russia quickly receded. After the 2004 nadir of 119,200 immigrants, their number rose again, to 297,200 in 2008. To be sure, to a large extent this rise was conditioned by a change in the recording of migration. Since 2007, along with immigrants arriving in Russia for permanent residency, temporary immigrants with at least one year of stay in Russia have been included in the incoming immigration statistics. However, selective surveys and personal observations suggest that the actual number of immigrants in Russia exceeds the recorded total by a huge margin.

Any approximation of the actual number of immigrants, including that reflected by Figure 3, is open to debate. Aside from roughly 300,000 recorded migrants per annum who arrive for permanent residency in Russia, there are about 600,000 business migrants, determined as the incoming minus outgoing foreigners with business visas (596,000 in 2006; 604,000 in 2007; and 635,000 in 2008–according to annual data books *Chislennost* 2006–2009).

The incoming and outgoing flows of foreigners pursuing other goals (those with tourist and homestay visas) are mutually balanced. Labor migrants–foreigners who register their stay in Russia and get employment authorization–form another recorded component. Following the liberalization of the migration law, this component rose from 1.0 million in 2006 to 1.7 million in 2007 and to 2.4 million in 2008. Several surveys have shown that whereas prior to 2007 legal labor migrants accounted for 10-15% of the total number of foreign labor migrants in Russia, after the new migration law was adopted their number increased to 15-25% (Vitkovskaya et al, 2009).

This means that the illegal component is still very large, primarily because most employers reject employees' requests to formalize their hire. According to the joint report of the International Organization for Migration, OSCE, and Russia's Federal Migration Service, the new law significantly boosted the share of immigrants registering their stay in Russia (to 75%), but the share of legitimate *labor* immigration does not exceed 30% of the total (Ibid.). In other words, for the most part immigrants come to Russia and stay legally but the vast majority of them continue to work illegally. If the above-mentioned share (about 30%) is correct, then the overall stock of labor immigrants in Russia is somewhere between six and seven million people, which is 8-10% of Russia's entire employment.

Because some non-working dependents live with labor immigrants, the overall number of immigrants is between seven and eight million people. This estimate is fairly conservative, for two reasons. First, the selective surveys on which it is based never extend to all the shadow employers in the area covered by those surveys. Second, the estimate does not include migrants working as household aid; if they do not work for an agency and are attached to one household, they are not supposed to obtain an employment authorization card. Such people probably number in the hundreds of thousands in Moscow alone. According to available surveys, roughly 70% of labor migrants are men; according to an unpublished statistic obtained from the Federal Migration Service, the share of men is even higher–84%. The same source assigns 40% of labor migrants to construction, 7% to industry, 7% to agriculture, 20% to retail, and the rest to other services (Zayonchkovskaya, Mkrtychyan, and Tyuryukanova 2009: 34).

Figure 3 allows for several intermediary conclusions. First, in Russia, the recorded immigration is but a small component of the overall immigration. Second, there is high demand for foreign labor. Third, the fact that most immigrants work illegally and some stay illegally underscores the shortcomings of Russia's immigration policy (if there is any true policy). After 2007, the application of the law is at more fault than the law itself. As a result, recorded immigration can hardly be considered a reliable basis for prediction. Fourth, Russia is able to attract the needed number of immigrants. That the application of immigration law is flawed likely affects the quality of immigrants and the share of legal immigrants in the overall inflow more than the size of the inflow per se. Finally, to some extent the demand for labor can be satisfied through labor migration.

Immigration and Domestic Migration

Predicting future immigration, especially its spatial distribution, is hardly possible without taking domestic migration into account. In a vast country whose "demographic blanket" is getting thinner and thinner, domestic migration is often the major predictor of success in regional development. It is no accident that resettlement has been assigned great significance in Russia regardless of political order.

After the breakup of the Soviet Union, domestic migration in Russia fell by more than half. Whereas in 1989, 3.3% of Russia's population moved from one census-designated place to another, in 2007, only 1.4% did, a throwback to the horizontal mobility in Russia prior to World War I (Zayonchkovskaya and Nozdrina 2008: 48). This decline is a function of several factors, the most important of which is arguably a sweeping change in residence acquisition practices after the breakup of the Soviet Union.

Throughout the last three Soviet decades, a Soviet citizen could count on either obtaining a free apartment from the state or receiving a no-interest state loan to obtain a cooperative apartment. In that latter case, most salaried people would be able to afford a monthly payment, and quite a few could afford a down payment. Now, one has to *buy* a dwelling in a housing market where prices are out of proportion with regular family income, and a mortgage, if available, comes with at least 14% annual interest.

This change has imposed a drastic limitation on the possibility of moving permanently, and at the same time has led to replacement of (permanent) migration by circulation or temporary labor migration. Based on extrapolation of survey results in seven cities of Russia (Zayonchkovskaya and Mkrtychyan 2007), our estimate of temporary labor migration in 2002 was approximately three million people per year; by 2008, this number may have increased slightly. If one adds this flow to that involved in domestic migration (i.e., that associated with change in permanent place of residency), the resulting sum would roughly amount to Russia's domestic migration on the eve of the breakup of the Soviet Union.

Just like immigration, domestic migration is not fully recorded. Because freedom of movement is guaranteed by the Russian Constitution and a special 1993 law, "On Freedom of Movement and Choice of Place of Stay and Residence in the Russian Federation," Russian citizens often neglect to declare a change in their place of residency, especially when they move into rented accommodations. Consequently, Russia's *rate* of domestic migration may not be as low as reflected by the official statistics. We hypothesize that by 2026 the rate of domestic migration will rise to the 1989 level from which the downward trend started. The increase in domestic migration will be conditioned by rapid expansion of employment opportunities due to shrinkage of the WAP, but a steeper increase would require more affordable housing in the regions of inflow, an unlikely situation.

Domestic migration has two stable and interrelated trends: western drift and centripetal character. For the most part net migration from most civil subdivisions is directed to subdivisions located farther west, but the role played by Moscow (and its urban agglomeration) in the spatial redistribution of Russia's population has become overpowering. To be sure, the capital city region has attracted domestic migrants for decades, but European Russia's south (particularly Krasnodar and Stavropol regions) once exerted an equally powerful pull, at least until the late 1980s. Moreover, Russia's regional capitals attracted up to half of the migrants from each region's periphery.

Now, instead of relocating to regional capitals or to Russia's south, migrants tend to head straight to Moscow or its environs. In all likelihood, the Moscow region will be the only area in all of Russia that will be able to meet its demand for labor through domestic migration. However, other Russian regions might meet their labor demand through *external* migration, since in this area the Moscow region is not as dominant as in domestic flows.[4]

Because the Russian capital is located in the western part of the country, the role of Moscow can be construed as integral to the western drift. For about four centuries, Russians migrated to Siberia. The first sign of reversal in that movement appeared as early as the 1960s. In the first half of the 1960s, the natural increase of the Soviet Union's population had fallen by half (from its 1950s level). The government responded by reducing mandatory army service from three to two years, eliminating the 11th grade in secondary schools, expanding evening curricula in the institutions of higher learning at the expense of daytime curricula, cutting back on supplemental personnel (like janitors and guards), and imposing draconian limitations on household farming operations.

Despite all these measures, however, the outflow of urbanites from southern parts of Siberia and Far East exceeded the inflow. Since that time, migration to the east has been related to the dynamics of the WAP within the entire country. When the WAP slowed its growth, more employment opportunities arose in the most attractive regions, and correspondingly more migrants relocated from east to west. But when the WAP growth accelerated, more people relocated in the opposite direction. In the 1970s, domestic migration assumed the direction (from west to east) that the Soviet state actually wanted.

Though attributed to the Communist Party's wisdom, this movement was in fact due to a demographic wave resulting from the coming of age of a large generation born in the 1950s. In

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4 For example, from 2001 to 2005, out of 264,300 recorded migrants in Moscow, 232,800 (88.1%) were domestic migrants. By comparison, out of 18,300 recorded 2001-05 migrants in the Stavropol region, 11,300 (61.7%) were migrants from the "near abroad" (Zayonchkovskaya 2008).

the 1980s, the flow reversed again, although this time it was more than offset by the growth in military contingents in Russia's Far East. It appears that when labor is deficient, the population gains additional freedom of movement and relocates to the preferred regions, i.e., those with more favorable climate and living conditions. But when the supply of labor exceeds demand, people relocate to regions that still offer jobs, which in Russia means Siberia and the Far East. After the breakup of the Soviet Union, the western drift and the centripetal character of domestic migration were reinforced, and the demographic situation in the years to come will strengthen these trends.

One often hears that the most labor-deficient Russian region is the Far East. This belief is rooted in the notion that although the colonization of Siberia and the Far East lasted for four centuries, no equitable population distribution has been achieved, and the farther from the center, the thinner the "demographic blanket." But contrasts in population density are not always the most reliable indicator of labor deficiency. One can claim that in the regions of old colonization, particularly in the Central Federal District (CFD), the demographic situation is more dire than in the Far East.

For example, in the CFD, the rate of natural increase is more negative than in the Far East (minus 5.8 people per 1000 versus 1.0 people per 1,000 in 2008), and the share of people of retirement age is higher (23.9% versus 17.1%). In the CFD, population decline in the absence of migration is going to be steeper than elsewhere. Even more significant is the fact that in the CFD, the WAP will–in the absence of migration–decline by 27.0% (from 2008 to 2026), whereas in Russia as a whole it will decline by 20.4%. Figure 4 disaggregates the WAP decline into regions and shows that the regions of old colonization, particularly the CFD (without its south) as well as Leningrad, Pskov, and Novgorod regions (of the Northwest) are going to suffer the steepest decline in WAP.

The CFD is the country's most developed area, and it competes with the Far East and other federal districts for labor. The CFD is much like a powerful demographic pump that since the late 1960s has needed a steady inflow of migrants in order to make up for its steep decline in WAP. Before that, the CFD was a migration donor, sending migrants to all other regions within the Russian/Soviet polity for several centuries.

But by the mid-1960s, its pool of labor had been exhausted, and so the CFD became a migration magnet whose attraction has been directly proportional to its WAP dynamics. In fact, two of Russia's federal districts are polar opposites–the CFD draws people *from* all the other districts, and the Far East sends people *to* all the other districts. Each district to the west of the Far East loses migrants in favor of still more western districts and gets partial compensation through migration from the east.

The Far East sustained the heaviest loss in domestic migration–753,000 during the inter-census period from 1989 to 2002. Roughly one-third of these people left the Far East for the CFD, 22% for the Southern district, 15% for the Volga District, and 15% for the Siberia District. The latter, however, managed to compensate for 30% of its loss through outmigration from the Far East, while the Urals District compensated for half of its own outflow by inflow from Siberia and the Far East.

Curiously, CFD's gain in domestic migrations between the two censuses (1989 and 2002)–787,000 people–was almost exactly equal to the Far East's loss–that is, the polar opposite positions of these districts in domestic migration find numerical confirmation. Having contributed 28% of CFD's migration gain, the Far East was the CFD's greatest donor. Just because the most economically developed and attractive federal district of Russia competes for labor with the Far East and other districts, it is unrealistic to count on the resumption of the eastern drift in Russia's domestic migration.

More recent trends reflected by Table 4 reveal that besides the CFD, in 2007-2008 net gains in domestic migration were recorded only in the Northwest. But almost half of the Northwest's migration gains were "forwarded" to the CFD, and the magnetisms of these two migration gainers are not comparable. All other federal districts registered net losses.

Figuratively speaking, nowadays Siberia begins at the Volga River. The CFD absorbed almost all migrants from the South, 70% of migrants from the Volga and Urals, and more than 40% of migrants from Siberia and Far East. Siberia, the Far East, and the Volga Districts became the major migration donors of western Russia in general, but most especially of the CFD. In addition, Siberia and the Far East compensated for 12% of the migration losses of the Volga District and 40% of those of the Urals. But Siberia received very little inflow from the Far East. The western drift in domestic migration has been characteristic for the entire post-Soviet period (Table 5), and the deepening deficit of the WAP does not leave any hope for the reversal of this trend in the foreseeable future.

In most cases, losses from domestic migration were compensated by inflow from the countries of the CIS. But as immigration from the CIS declined, the attractiveness of the CFD grew. Between 1989 and 2002, the CFD accounted for 60% of positive net migration (both domestic and international); from 2001 to 2008 it absorbed practically the entire population redistribution between the federal districts of Russia and over half of immigrants. In the overall inflow into the CFD, domestic migration exceeds immigration. The share of the domestic component in the overall net migration to the CFD was particularly high from 2001 to 2006 (Figure 5) but continued to be significant thereafter. Although the net inflow into the CFD had declined since 1994, it has been on the rise again since 2001 (Figure 5), but in every other federal district it oscillates around zero (Figure 6).

Almost all the domestic inflow into the CFD–and since the mid-1990s, almost all the incoming immigrants–has been absorbed by Moscow and Moscow Oblast. Thus, migration within Russia has become overwhelmingly centripetal. In 2008, out of 80 Russia's regions, 47 had positive net migration. If one adds up these 47 region-specific increments, the share of Moscow and Moscow Oblast is 37.4% of the total. The 2007 statistic was close: 36.1%.

Prior to the above-mentioned change in recording rules, the centripetal character of migration was even more striking. Thus, in 2006, positive net migration was recorded in 32 regions, and Moscow and its oblast accounted for 46.5% of the total. The same took place in 2004 and 2005. Some weakening of Moscow's magnetism in 2007 and 2008, as well as the broadening of the set of regions with positive net migration, probably reflects the fact that in the Moscow region it is more difficult than elsewhere in Russia to obtain permanent residency.

A complementary perspective on centripetal growth is provided by Figure 7, which shows that since 1999, net migration to Moscow has been commensurate to net migration to Russia as a whole. It is almost as if Moscow is a state of its own. Indeed, it is now perceived all across Russia as the "inner abroad"–not only because it is so expensive to live in Moscow (unless you are in possession of a living space in that city) but also because for many Russians and people from the "near abroad" (i.e., from the CIS) migration to Moscow is an alternative to migration to the "distant abroad," that is, to countries outside the former Soviet Union.

While the centrality of Moscow in Russia may seem like common knowledge, its pivotal role in the national migration system may not be fully recognized. If it were, the well-publicized intent of the Moscow city government to cut back on the recruitment of foreigners and replace them with domestic migrants (Inorodnoye, 2007) would be seen as destructive for Russia as a whole. Moscow and its oblast *already* absorb from one-third to one-half of all domestic migrants; the area is rapidly converting Moscow's hinterland, now stretching to the Volga River, into a kind of a social desert. Consequently, the interests of Russia as a whole would be best served if, contrary to the Moscow city government's attitude, the city and oblast relied heavily on foreign, not domestic labor.

Even St. Petersburg, Russia's second largest city, is no competitor to Moscow. In 2008, together with the Leningrad Oblast, St. Petersburg absorbed 12.8% of the positive net migration of Russia's regions. Though Russia's northern capital attracts migrants from all over the country, only from the regions of the European north and the neighboring Pskov, Novgorod, and Karelia regions does St. Petersburg attract more migrants than Moscow. In 2008, the combined share of the two capital regions–Moscow, St. Petersburg, and their respective oblasts–in positive net migration of Russia's regions was 51%, but it was close to two-thirds in 2006 when the old migration recording rules were still being used.

If one extrapolates from current trends, no federal district but the CFD will be able to be replenished by migrants. Just to make up for the upcoming WAP shrinkage in that district, it will have to receive six million migrants before 2026. To accomplish this, one would have to mobilize the migration potential of the entire country. Under such conditions, Siberia and the Far East will remain migration donors of the CFD. This will remain so even assuming that immigration will rise to almost 400,000 per year by 2021-2025 as per the median Rosstat scenario (Table 3). This scenario implies population decline in every federal district, particularly in Siberia and Far East. But even then, only 85% of the decline in the WAP in the CFD will be compensated for, and retirees will account for 30% of its population.

Predicting Russia's Migration until 2026: Three Scenarios

Our projections of net migration (domestic and international) by federal district are not derived from a statistical model; rather, they are based on six assumptions that follow from the previous discussion. First, we assume that immigration is the only way to compensate for the upcoming deficit in the WAP. Second, we assume that the CFD will continue to absorb at least half of all international migrants to Russia. In fact, the CFD's *share* in net international migration (immigration) will rise to almost two-thirds if the overall *number* of immigrants coming to Russia does not increase significantly; the share in question will only decline slightly if the overall number of immigrants shoots up.

Third, we assume that the *shares* of other federal districts in the number of immigrants to Russia will not undergo significant change. Although an increase or decrease in the share of the CFD cannot but alter the shares of the rest, the *ranking order* of the remaining six districts' shares (in total net international migration) will stay the same as today: the South, the Volga, the Urals, the Northwest, Siberia, and the Far East. Fourth, we assume that the western drift and centripetal character of domestic migration will continue. Fifth, any increase in the *number* of immigrants coming to the CFD will result in a commensurate decrease in the number of domestic migrants to the Federal District. So while the western drift and centripetal character of domestic migration will continue, they may be weakened by the rise in immigration. Finally, while we believe that domestic migration will increase from its current low level (1.4% of the population) to its 1989 level (3.3% of the population), this does not necessarily apply to net migration between federal districts. In other words, if immigration rises, fewer domestic migrants will move *between* federal districts, which is a focus of our projections, but more domestic migrants will move *within* federal districts.

While all three scenarios reflected by Table 6 are based on these assumptions, the key difference between them (the one that triggers all other differences) is the amount of net international migration to Russia. The *low* scenario results from the *extrapolation* of current migration trends and ensures 15% compensation for the upcoming WAP decline in Russia as a whole. According to this scenario, net migration to the CFD will increase from 180,000 per annum in 2007-2008 to 250,000 per annum from 2009 to 2026. Under this scenario, all the (inter-district) domestic migrants and two-thirds of immigrants will relocate to the CFD. The total net migration to this district will amount to 4.7 million people over the entire period, including almost 2.3 million immigrants.

Even so, only half of the upcoming WAP decline in the CFD will be offset through migration. These outcomes will result from the CFD's share in Russia's net immigration rising from 48% in 2007-10 to 61% over the period from 2011 to 2026, and from the CFD receiving domestic migrants from all other regions of Russia. Net migration will be positive in the Northwest (due to St. Petersburg and Leningrad Oblast), the South (due to Krasnodarsky Krai), and the Volga (due to Tatarstan and Samara Oblast) Districts. Whereas the migration-induced growth in the CFD will be achieved through almost equal contributions from domestic migration and immigration (2.4 million people and 2.3 million people, respectively), in all other districts growth is possible only through immigration because the retention of a huge deficit in the WAP in the CFD means that no weakening of centripetal shifts in Russia's population can be expected.

The major region of outflow will be Siberia–a peculiar replay of the 1960s situation. The outflow from the Far East will probably lessen because its migration potential will be all but exhausted. Immigration will only partially offset Siberian and Far Eastern losses through domestic migration, and those losses will amount to 1.5 million people from 2007 to 2026. The low scenario is catastrophic for Russia because in addition to low compensation for the WAP decline through immigration, the population of all federal districts will decline due to negative natural increase. Even the most attractive federal district, the CFD, will experience an acute deficit of labor.

From this perspective, the high scenario is much more favorable for Russia. According to it, Russia will receive a total of 12.9 million immigrants by the end of 2025, which will compensate for half of the nationwide WAP decline (A reminder: working-age immigrants account for 70% of the total number of immigrants) and 90% of the WAP decline in the CFD. Under this scenario, we envisage the lowering of the CFD's share in immigration from 58% (low scenario) to 52%. As a result of high-level compensation for the WAP decline in the CFD, many more immigrants will relocate to districts other than the CFD, and the CFD's pull on domestic migrants will decrease by half.

Our high scenario distinguishes potential regions of exodus. For example, in two federal districts–the South and the Volga–rural populations are still numerous; consequently, the outflow from these regions will decline only by 25-30% (compared with the low scenario). In contrast, in the Urals, where the rural and small-town population is almost exhausted by previous migration and where Russia's largest oil and gas reserves are located, the out-migration will lessen more significantly. The mitigating effect of increased immigration will be at its lowest in Siberia and the Far East. The level of compensation for the district-specific WAP declines will remain low even under our high-immigration scenario. Only in the South will it reach 60%. In the Northwest, the Volga, and the Urals, it will be within the 30-40% range. Siberia and the Far East can count on only 10% compensation and only by the end of the period, after 2020.

Nationwide, the effect of our high scenario (Figure 8)–WAP decline–still displays significant spatial contrasts, although they are somewhat less than they would be in the absence of migration (Figure 4). In the Far East, only Khabarovsk Krai is likely to benefit more than other regions from the high-immigration scenario. In Siberia, the same applies to the Novosibirsk Oblast. The demographic situation will improve in the southern part of the Volga District as well as in the southern part of the CFD. Overall, however, even our high-immigration scenario suggests an inadequate supply of labor in much of Russia.

The *medium* scenario is by definition at a mid-point between high and low: it envisions almost a doubling of net migration to Russia (7.3 million people) compared with the low scenario (3.4 million people) but is well short of the high scenario (12.9 million). Consequently, the medium scenario will ensure compensation for the WAP decline in the CFD by a little more than a half and by 30% nationwide. This scenario includes the possible realization of the 2006–2012 compatriots' resettlement program (adopted by a presidential decree of June 22, 2006) now underway in Russia, although so far the number of newcomers covered by this program has been far short of the established targets (Bovt, 2009). Should the program performance improve between now and 2012, this may boost the inflow of immigrants to the regions adjacent to CIS countries of origin and thus partially offset the centripetal population shift. Compared with the low scenario, the migration losses of Siberia and the Far East will decline by half, and net migration to other districts will increase noticeably. However, the plausibility of the medium scenario depends strongly on the scale of (temporary) labor migration to the CFD, Siberia, and the Far East to replace domestic out-migration.

In our judgment, only the high scenario will tangibly mitigate the labor deficit in Russia. Any fewer immigrants than envisioned by that scenario will lead to further contraction of the populated space, stagnation, and the subsequent decay of Russia's ever-expanding east (which now includes the Urals), further decline in economic output outside the energy sector, and drastic limitations on retirement and other social programs.

Discussion

Our pivotal assumption is the imperative to compensate at least partially for the upcoming decline in the WAP through international migration. But any estimate of that need may seem unreliable without invoking planned investment and considering how it relates to the projected demand in newcomers and their geography. Likewise, one may question whether Russia has a migration policy that would address the country's needs. And finally, taking both considerations into account, which of our scenarios is most plausible?

It is unlikely that the geography of new job creation can change the geography of migration in Russia, because the decline in the WAP promises to be the most dramatic in the federal district whose attractiveness (an accumulated effect of lasting development) is second to none. In other words, even without commissioning new production capacities there will be plenty of vacancies in the existing ones. In Russia, the Gosplan's famous dictum that "investment in production begets people (to be employed in that production)" stopped working about four decades before the 2007 commencement of the decline in the WAP. For that reason, no inflow of young labor to Russian agriculture occurred even after its share in the overall investment had reached 28%, as it did in the early 1980s. For the same reason, Siberia and the Far East were officially designated as labor deficient (*trudodefitsitnye*).

In 2008, Russia's Institute for Regional Policy published its survey of 1400 large (> $100,000,000) investment projects (Dostatochno 2008). By 2020, they are expected to create 3.2

million new jobs. Together with smaller-scale projects, the overall growth in the number of jobs is expected to approximate 7 million by 2020. In other words, 7 million new jobs will have been created by the time the WAP will have declined by 14 million without immigration! This projected growth is well above our high scenario [Note that new jobs are in focus, working migrants account for 70% of the total migrants, and our projections are for the beginning of 2026, not 2020.]

The survey authors emphasize that interregional competition for labor will intensify, and the winners of that competition will be regions that will expand affordable housing, adapt local education programs to local needs, and offer the most attractive aid packages to migrants. This list does not include the enormous disparity in the regions' pull factors at the start of this race for domestic migrants, a gap that can be bridged only partially if at all. According to the survey, the list of twenty regions with the highest projected job creation is topped by the Leningrad Oblast, with 230,000 new jobs by 2020. Our data suggest that out of that list, only Moscow and Leningrad Oblasts as well as St. Petersburg can succeed in attracting domestic migrants, thus exacerbating the labor deficit elsewhere.

It may also be that the Voronezh, Nizhni Novgorod, Sverdlovsk, and Novosibirsk Oblasts will receive some migrants from within Russia. But there is practically no chance for most of the remaining twelve regions, especially for the Irkutsk, Orenburg, and Chelyabinsk Oblasts, and for Krasnoyarsk Krai. These and other regions can count only on immigrants. Out of fifteen regions with the highest *rate* of job creation (as opposed to the total number of new jobs), two ethnic homelands of the North Caucasus–the Adyghean and Karachai-Circassian Republics–can probably rely on the regional labor force reserves. But five regions of the Far East (the Amur, Jewish, Sakhalin, and Kamchatka Oblasts, and the Sakha/Yakut Republic) that are on the same list can only rely on immigration, and the same applies to a very significant degree to such CFD's regions as the Kostroma, Voronezh, and Lipetsk Oblasts, and the Perm Oblast (of the Urals district). Meeting the demand for labor that the investment projects will entail is beyond our high scenario.

Throughout the 1990s, Russia was arguably one of the most open countries in the world. This applied to both emigration and immigration. This open-door practice was accompanied by highly inaccurate recording of immigrants and by various forms of exploitation of them, including forced labor, human trafficking, and fraudulent recruitment schemes. Accustomed to a long lasting closed-country regime, many Russians became increasingly wary of "too many" foreigners in the streets of their cities.

Prompted by this wariness, the government went to the opposite extreme and introduced rigid immigration control. Adopted in 2002, the Federal Law, "On the Legal Situation of Foreigners in the Russian Federation" erected tall barriers to immigrants' lawful stay and employment. To legalize their stay in Russia, foreigners were required to register within 72 hours of their arrival for a maximum 90-day stay. In order to register, two applications had to be filled–one from the foreigner and another from the owner or leaser of the dwelling in which the foreigner would reside. (While hotels procured registration on their own, only tourists usually stay there; prior to 2007, many hotel clerks offered registration for a hefty bribe.) The applicant and his/her host would then visit a local police department and receive the approval stamp in his/her passport.

Employment authorization was to be procured by the prospective employer; it was impossible to even solicit an employment authorization without the residential approval stamp in the passport. It was almost as if someone had deliberately created an outlet for corruption. In every major Russian city, intermediary services offered residential registration and employment authorization for a significant fee, some of which was used to bribe the police. This situation narrowed the legal space for immigrants and boosted corruption, and the recorded component of immigration shrunk.

Those with personal experience of going through this routine can fully appreciate the changes that were adopted in 2006 and went into effect on January 15, 2007. Based on 2006 amendments to the 2002 law and on the newly adopted law, "On the Records of Foreign Citizens and Persons without Citizenship in the Russian Federation," temporary migrants no longer must *apply for* registration and receive a stamp in their passport. Instead, within 72 hours they must *notify* the Federal Migration Service of their arrival. This can be done by mail from any post office, which is to provide a blank migration form and certify that it is filled out correctly[5].

The address for the stay may not necessarily be the address of actual residence but that of a place of work or of a recruitment agency. A migrant attaches a copy of his/her photo-bearing passport page to that form and a copy of an immigration stub received at the border crossing. Once the form is accepted by the postal clerk, the migrant receives a stub testifying that he or she has registered. The initial period of temporary stay has been extended from 90 to 180 days, and it can be extended to one year upon request.

Equally important, obtaining an employment authorization card has become much easier as well. According to the 2006 amendments, it is to be handed to the applicant (by the local office of the Federal Migration Service) him/herself, not to his/her employer, which means that he/she can start job hunting on his/her own without being attached to a certain employer. The employment authorization changes have so far been made only in regard to CIS migrants entering Russia without a visa, but this is an understandable preference as the CIS countries are major origins of migrant labor force.

These changes brought about almost immediate positive effects but also a backlash from the members of Russia's bureaucratic class, including the mayor of Moscow (Inorodnoye, 2007), which triggered a partial restoration of constraints, and the global financial crisis has also exacerbated the situation. One positive effect was more complete migration records. In 2007, 8 million entries for temporary stay were recorded,[6] and 1.7 million job authorizations were handed to temporary migrants (up from 1.0 million in 2006). Whereas prior to 2007, surveys showed that almost half of all labor migrants were unregistered, in 2007 only 15% were. Also, before 2007 from 15 to 25% of all labor migrants worked legally, but in 2007, 76% of migrants had job authorization. Third, the tax base of the foreign labor force has doubled.

The rights of migrants and their freedom of movement have expanded, but that does not guarantee their legal employment. Moreover, the new job authorization program cast additional light on the dual nature of Russia's job market, especially on the ample opportunities for shadow employment. In 2007, about 40% of migrants authorized to work were hired unofficially (Zayonchkovskaya et al. 2009: 58). That is, a perfectly legal migrant may still turn out to be an illegal worker and may even not be aware of it. This situation is often used by Russian officials when demanding that the old restrictions be restored (as if the pre-2007 labor immigration control had not been a fiasco).

Today, restrictions operate through the centralized assignment of numerical quotas on the foreign labor force; beyond the quotas, no job authorizations are to be provided. The overall

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[5] One of this article's authors registered numerous times for a non-hotel stay in Moscow according to the pre-2007 law, and three times according to the new rules, and can testify to the almost unbelievable simplification of the registration procedure.

quota is determined through a complicated and multi-layered mechanism not backed by any serious methodology. Only large businesses can get their need in foreign labor registered. Small businesses, let alone individuals who hire foreign construction workers and nannies, cannot break through.

The 2008 quota of 1.8 million foreign workers was exhausted before the end of June–in some regions as early as in April. Before the decision to increase the 2008 quota, employers had to either slow down or terminate their activity, or hire workers illegally. This unfortunate experience led to a steep increase in the 2009 quota–to 3.9 million workers. However, the global financial crisis prompted a decision to cut that quota in half (Gritsyuk 2008).

Responding to situations in which employers actually laid off Russians but retained foreigners who worked longer hours and were paid less, in December 2008 Russia's trade union leader Mikhail Shmakov called upon the government to issue a temporary ban on hiring foreigners (Ibid.). For 2010, the announced quota is 2 million workers, including a 0.7 million reserve which may or may not be used. That includes the 250,000 quota for the city of Moscow (down from 392,000 in 2009) (Rossiya vdvoye, 2009). As stated above, like no other place, Moscow is able to meet its labor demand by hiring Russian nationals.

The liberalization of foreign labor hiring practices sustained a major setback in February 2009, when the Federal Migration Service issued its directive (*prikaz*) No. 36. According to it, foreigners with visa waivers (i.e., people from the CIS countries except Turkmenistan) are initially authorized to work for 90 days; after that, they may submit a finalized employment agreement and may be authorized to work for at most one year (actually for nine months, as this one-year term includes the initial 90 days). For the second (year-long) authorization, a specific

[6] In 2008, there were 9.2 million foreign migrants recorded in Russia, and 4 million during the first six months of 2009 (Romodanovsky, 2009).

employer must be listed. This means that after a short period, attachment to an employer is back. Although this amendment–much like the entire practice of assigning quotas–is done to protect domestic labor, it is unlikely to attain this goal. Rather, it will push both employers and immigrants to bypass the law and will open up new opportunities for corruption.

The fact that the recent liberalization of immigration practices has already been subject to setbacks casts doubt on Russia's readiness to respond to what may well be its existential demographic challenge. The nature of immigrant job-hunting channels, of media coverage, and of public debate over immigration increase that doubt. Currently, more than 70% of labor migrants find work through relatives and friends, about 15% through unlicensed private mediators, and only 10% through official employment agencies (Zayonchkovskaya et al. 2009). Members of the immigrant labor force have limited access to the justice system and cannot protect their rights. Xenophobia (in Russia often called migrantophobia) is rampant and bolstered by the media. The titles of media articles like "In Russia Every Tenth Labor Migrant has Tuberculosis" (V Rossii 2007) or "Labor Migrants Bring Tuberculosis and AIDS to St. Petersburg" (Trudovye 2009) are as widespread as they are misleading. In 2007, tuberculosis was found in every 125th–not 10th–migrant, and AIDS was diagnosed is every 534th one (Zayonchkovskaya et al. 2009).

Migrantophobes claim a high crime rate among labor migrants. However, in 2007 migrants committed only 1.4% of recorded criminal offenses in Russia–a slight decline from 2006. Conversely, crimes *against* foreigners in Russia are on the rise. Whereas migrants are for the most part caught stealing, crimes against migrants are usually more grave, including brutal slayings. From January to May 2008, in Moscow there were no fewer than 126 assaults on foreigners; 72 died. The most frequent hate crime victims are Uzbeks, Kyrgyz, Tajik, and Azerbaijanis.

Migrantophobes also invoke cultural distance between major groups of migrants and Russians. (This problem is quite real but is no more serious than that faced by other immigrant-receiving societies.) According to a 2007 survey by the Levada Center, only 12.5% of Russians have a favorable attitude toward immigrants, whereas 22% are hostile to them (Trudovaya 2008).

Russia's regional leaders' mantra continues to be "if we come up with the right pay, we will find workers at home." But while some employers will, most won't, and that simple truth has not sunk in yet. Even public debates between social scientists do not always suggest an understanding of Russia's demographic challenge. For example, *Izvestia*'s report from the roundtable on immigration held in Moscow's Polytechnic Museum on November 29, 2009, is couched in pro-et-contra terms, as if there were some genuine alternative to immigration (Priyakhina, 2009).

There are strong indications that Russia's top leaders understand that, for Russia, immigration is not an option but a necessity; however, no reasonable policy can hinge on the good intentions of national leaders alone. At least some societal consensus is required. This particularly applies to immigration policy, which must be enforced all over the country, and by low-level bureaucrats. Not only is there no consensus; all too many Russians are in denial. The issue of immigration has not been adequately examined yet, and this is arguably the main reason why Russia does not have a coherent immigration policy. As there has been a sequence of inconsistent immigration control acts, our medium scenario (implying that only 30% of the upcoming decline in WAP will be compensated for) appears to be the most realistic.

Russia's institutional behavior in the area of immigration is more reactive than proactive, so the low scenario is likely to be exceeded as soon as businesses across the country make their acute deficit of workers known to the upper echelons of power. In response, those in power will expand foreign labor quotas. However, they will also have to offer naturalization to ever-increasing number of immigrants, first in the southern regions of the Far East, where new investment projects will require a stable labor force, and then in the other regions. At the same time, the absence of a broad social consensus on immigration will continue to restrain immigration and may not allow it to reach the high scenario.

Conclusion

In 2007, Russia's population dynamics entered a new phase–a decline in the working age population. From 2011 to 2017, this decline will exceed one million people a year. This will make labor the most deficient resource in Russia, and it will increase Russia's demand for immigrants. A few Russian regions will be able to compensate for their decline in the working age population by attracting Russian nationals from other regions, but this will only boost demand for immigrants elsewhere. While the country already hosts a number of international migrants second only to that in the United States, Russian society has not yet realized that immigration is Russia's destiny and that Russia's economic prospects–as well as perhaps its territorial integrity–depend on it. As a result, it is definitely in Russia's interests to resolve as soon as possible a glaring contradiction between the demographic challenge and the institutional response to it.

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Table 1

The Official 2026 Population Projection

Indicator	Starting Value	Scenarios		
		Low	Medium	High
Population in Millions	141.9 (2009)	129.4	137.0	145.1
Total Fertility Rate	1.406 (2007)	1.379	1.680	1.890
Life Expectancy at Birth:				
Men	61.4 (2007)	62.4	63.8	67.8
Women	73.9 (2007)	75.1	75.8	77.6
Net migration in Thousands Per Year	257 (2008)	200	Gradual Rise to 450	Gradual Rise to 690

Source: *The Demographic Yearbook of Russia*. 2008. p. 532-540

Table 2

Net Immigration to Russia That Would Ensure Variable Compensation for Working Age Population Decline (in Thousands of People)

	2007-2010	2011-2015	2016-2020	2021-2026	2007-2026
Low Scenario (15% Compensation)	730	940	1040	1170	3880
Medium Scenario (30% Compensation)	1060	1750	2150	2300	7260
High Scenario (50% Compensation)	1260	2850	4400	4400	12910
Working Age Population Change without Immigration in Millions*	-3.9	-5.6	-5.4	-3.2	-18.1

* Under Age-Specific Mortality Assumed in the Medium Rosstat's Scenario

Table 3

Net Immigration According to Official (Rosstat's) Prediction (in Thousands of People)

	2008-2010	2011-2015	2016-2020	2021-2026	Всего 2008-2026
Low Scenario	427	999	1053	1036	3515
Medium Scenario	750	1478	1881	1988	6097
High Scenario	906	1907	2548	3229	8590

Compensation for the working age population decline is 14% in the low scenario, about 25% in the medium scenario, and 33% in the high scenario.

Table 4

2007–2008 Domestic Net Migration between the Federal Districts (in Thousands of People)

Federal Districts	Center	Northwest	South	Volga	Urals	Siberia	Far East
Center	-	-18.1	-34.7	-51.7	-18.0	-28.3	-21.6
Northwest	18.1	-	-5.6	-7.1	-5.7	-9.4	-7.2
South	34.7	5.6	-	-7.5	-1.3	-13.6	-9.7
Volga	51.7	7.1	7.5	-	6.8	-4.9	-3.9
Urals	18.0	5.7	1.3	-6.8	-	-7.6	-2.3
Siberia	28.3	9.4	13.6	4.9	7.6	-	-5.1
Far East	21.6	7.2	9.7	3.9	2.3	5.1	-
Total	**172.4**	**16.9**	**-8.2**	**-64.3**	**-8.3**	**-58.7**	**-49.8**

Calculated on the basis of the annual data books, *Chislennost i Migratsiya Naseleniya Rossiiskoi Federatsii*, Moscow: Rosstat 2007 (and 2008)

Table 5

Western Drift across Federal Districts in 1991–2008 (in Thousands of People)

Years	Gain (+) or Loss (-) in Migration Exchange Between					
	European* and Asian** Federal Districts	Urals and European Districts	Urals with Other Asian Districts	Siberia and European-Plus the Urals Districts	Siberia and the Far East	Far East with all Other Districts
1991-1995	514.2	-94.6	30.1	-130.4	63.8	-383.1
1996-2000	415.2	-47.5	38.2	-164.2	45	-286.6
2001-2005	274.1	-37.1	23.9	-139.9	6.3	-127.3
2006-2008	174.6	-27.1	14.4	-95.2	6.7	-73.3

* European Districts: Center, Northwest, South, and Volga
** Asian Districts: Urals, Siberia, and the Far East

Source: Annual Data Books *Chislennost i Migratsiya Naseleniya Rossiiskoi Federatsii*, Moscow: Rosstat

Table 6

Net Migration across Federal Districts of Russia from 2007 to 2026 (in Thousands of People): A Prediction

Federal Districts	Low Scenario	Medium Scenario	High Scenario
Russia	3880	7260	12910
Center	4740	5760	7920
International	2260	3990	6650
Domestic	2480	1770	1270
Northwest	110	390	880
International	150	310	720
Domestic	-40	80	160
South	210	720	1440
International	500	940	1640
Domestic	-290	-220	-200
Volga	190	620	1560
International	530	920	1820
Domestic	-340	-300	-260
Urals	-70	390	850
International	260	540	970
Domestic	-330	-150	-120
Siberia	-690	-270	140
International	250	450	600
Domestic	-940	-720	-460
Far East	-610	-350	120
International	-70	110	510
Domestic	-540	-460	-390

Source: Authors' calculations

Figure 1. Components of Russia's Population Change (in Thousands of People)

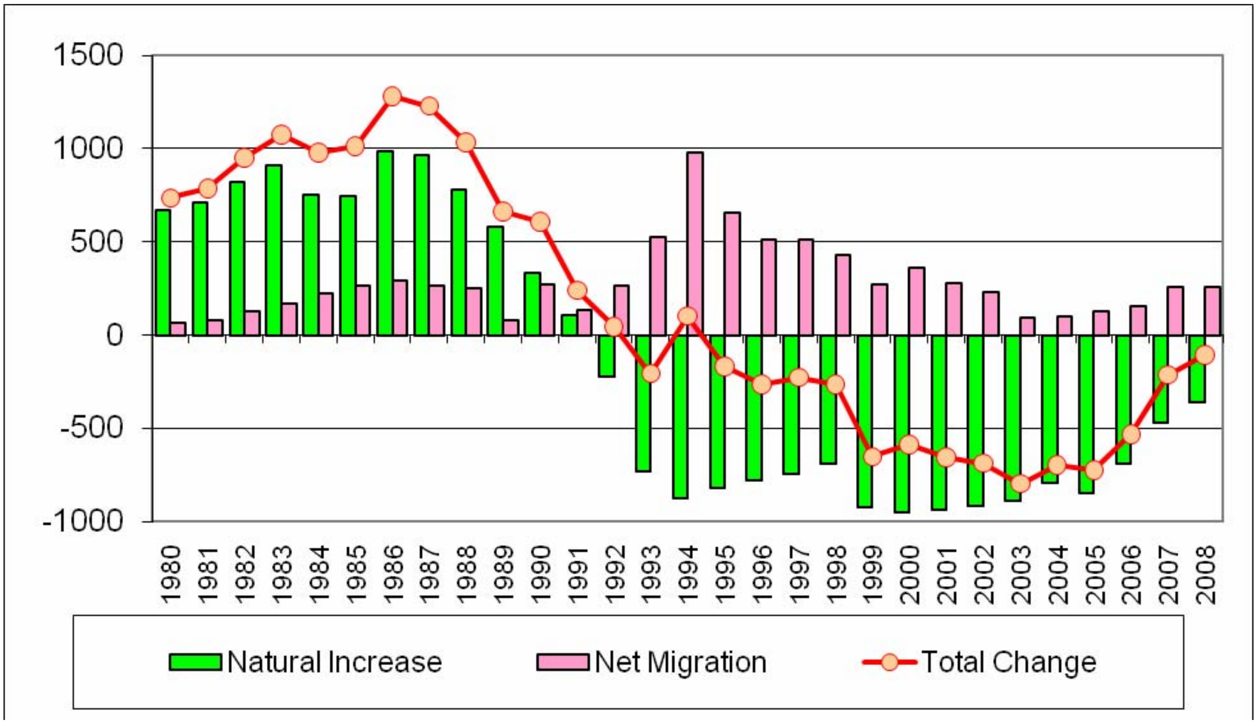
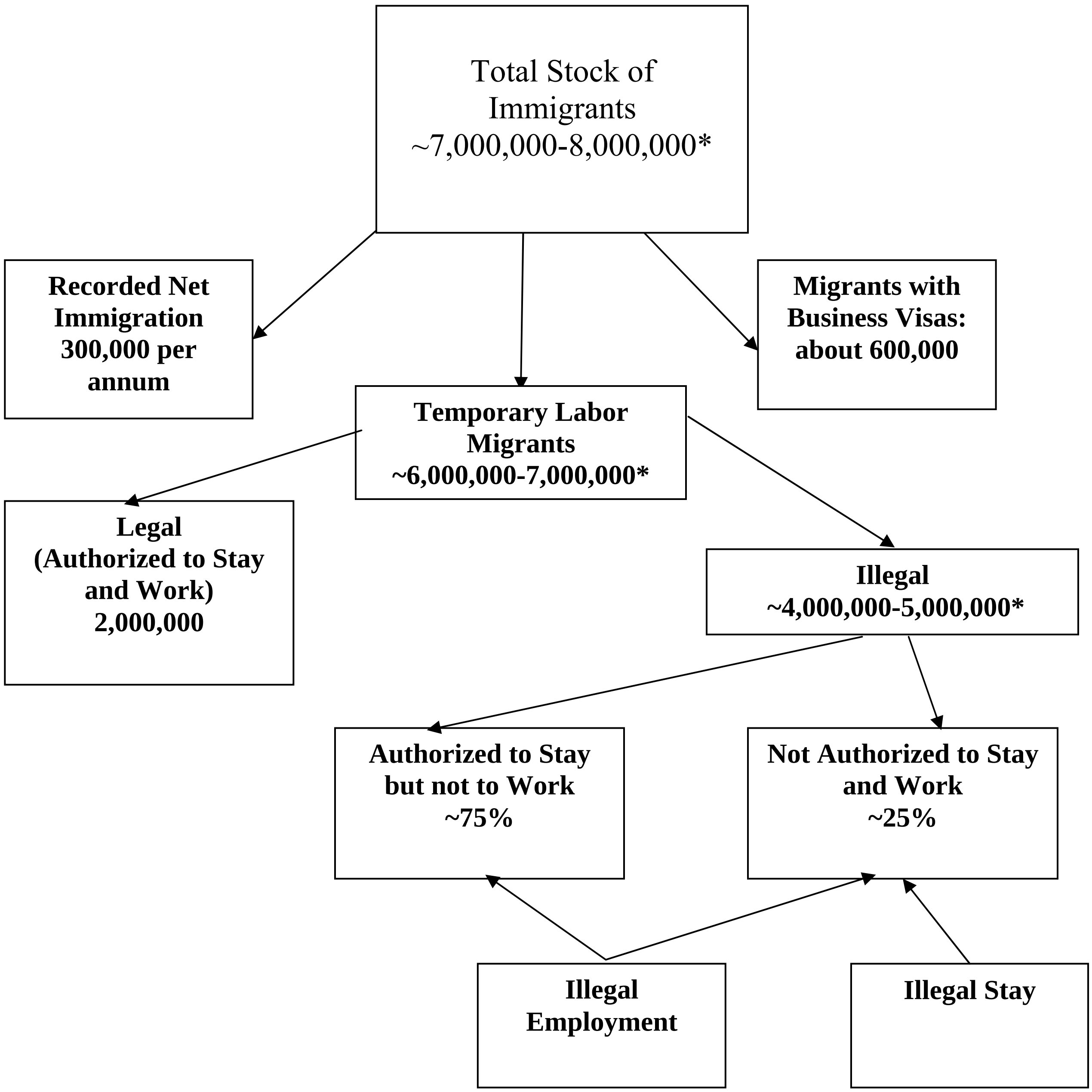


Figure 2. 2005–2026 Dynamics of Russia's Working-Age and Total Population in the Absence of Immigration (in Thousands of People)

Figure 3. Migration Flows to Russia: 2009 Estimate



* Peak season number

Figure 4. Working-Age Population in 2026 as a Percentage of That in 2008 in the Absence of Migration

Figure 5. Net Migration to the Central Federal District (Left Axis) and Percentage Share of Domestic Component in That Migration (Right Axis)

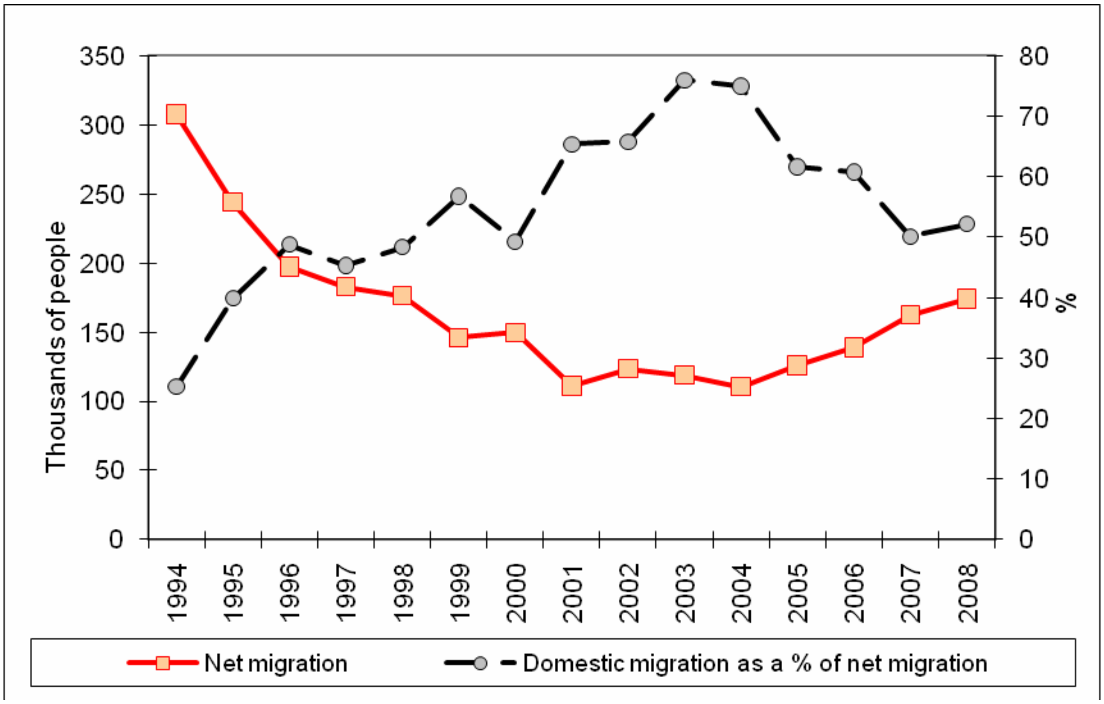
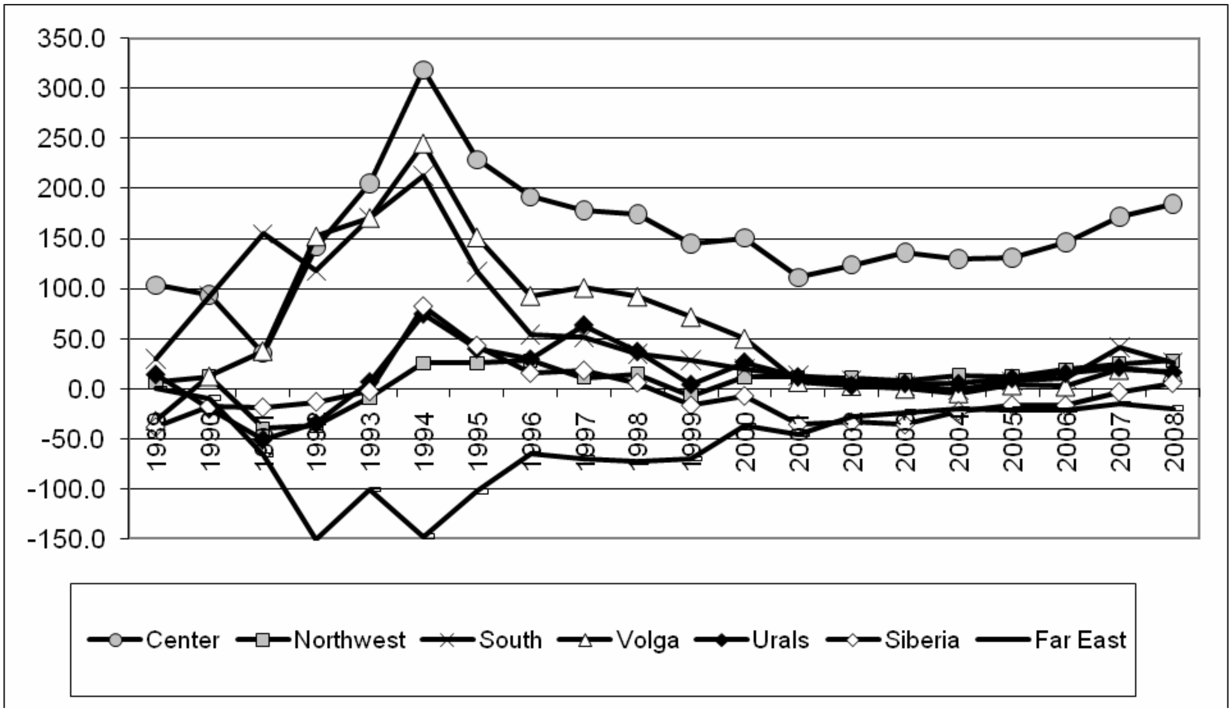
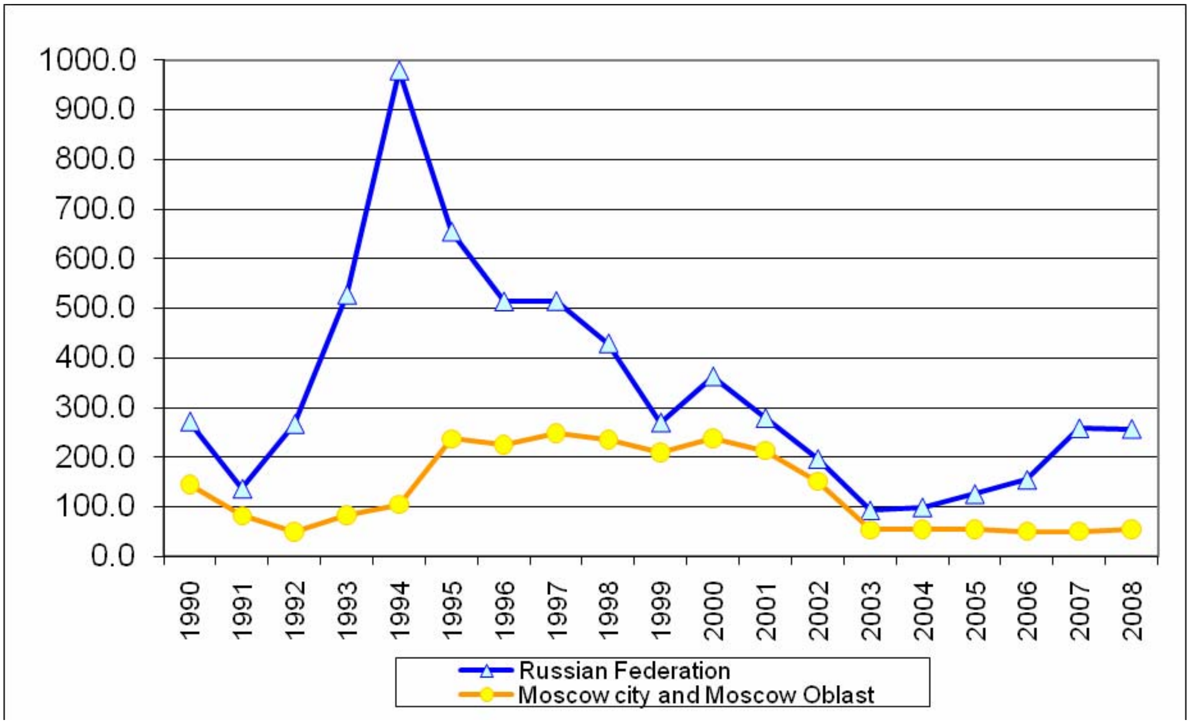


Figure 6. Net Migration by Federal District (in Thousands of People)



Source: Chislennost i Migratsiya Naseleniya Rossiiskoi Federatsii (Annual data books by Rosstat).

Figure 7. Net Migration to Russia and the City of Moscow (in Thousands of People).



Source: Chislennost i Migratsiya Naseleniya Rossiiskoi Federatsii (Annual data books by Rosstat).

Figure 8. Working-Age Population in 2026 as a Percentage of That in 2008, According to the High Scenario

(For this map, net migration was determined for the Federal Districts (Table 6) and then disaggregated into oblasts in proportion to their current working age populations.)