



Migration in rural areas of Russia: territorial differences

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Abstract

The article analyzes indicators of intensity of migration growth of municipal formations of the rank of district or urban district with completely rural or predominantly rural population. Rural areas in the suburbs of regional capitals and intraregional periphery, as well as those located in the South, the Non-Chernozem region, the South of Siberia and the Far East, the territories of the Far North and its equivalent areas, are considered separately. Both general indicators of the intensity of migration population growth (decline) and by 5-year age groups are compared. The source was data on long-term migration for 2012–2016, published in the Indicators of Municipal Entities databases of Rosstat. The analysis showed that suburban/peripheral differences in the migration balance of rural areas are more pronounced than spatial-geographical (zonal). Age profiles of migratory growth (loss) by geographical zones are similar, but differ in intensity — in the north and east outflow is higher. Suburban and peripheral rural areas in terms of intensity of migration balance differ fundamentally: the most intense migratory growth in all ages except for the youngest is noted in the suburbs.

Keywords

rural area; migration; age; suburbs; peripheral areas; Russia

JEL codes: J11, R23

Introduction

The rural areas of Russia are experiencing a steady migration outflow of the population. It resulted in the reduction of the rural population in the Soviet period, and also became the cause of modern demographic problems of rural areas, especially accelerated population

ageing. Although the annual migration decline of the rural population to cities recorded by Rosstat in recent years amounts to between 100 and 200 thousand people and seems to be far from the scale of the late Soviet period, the population census of 2002 and 2010 recorded an unaccounted outflow of villagers to cities. For the rural population that had severely reduced in recent decades, these figures are important. The potential for outflow of the rural population has greatly reduced. Moreover, the structure of migration outflow is primarily represented by the population at the young age; this negatively affects further reproduction of the rural population.

Despite the severity of the problem of out-migration from rural areas, knowledge about it is insufficient, and very few papers use data at the municipal level to identify the intraregional specificities of migration. In Russia, intra-regional contrasts, including in migration, are estimated to exceed interregional (Mkrtychyan and Karachurina 2013). In all regions, there are differences in the centre-periphery vector and, in the case of rural areas – between suburban rural areas and hinterland. In many regions, especially in the Asian part of the country, there are significant differences in climatic conditions, which is important for rural areas and their inhabitants.

This article sets the goal to analyze the differences in migration growth and its age structure for different types of rural areas on the basis of relatively recent (since 2012) data on migration of the population in the context of municipal entities – districts and urban districts (hereinafter ME): suburban and peripheral, located in different macroregions of the country. The very allocation of rural areas, as well as delimitation of suburban rural areas and rural hinterland, is not quite a trivial task, given that many MEs consist of both urban and rural populations. Allocating spatial-geographical types of rural areas is a separate task. Taking into account the results of other studies known to us, we are trying to solve these difficult tasks.

Level of study of the issue

In the Soviet era, the study of rural migration was seriously hampered by the lack of statistical data. Even scarce information on migration published in separate years contained only data on urban population; its growth due to migration inflow enabled estimating population outflow from rural areas (Zayonchkovskaya 1991). Census data were also used to assess rural mobility and age characteristics of migration. According to calculations, the rural population of the USSR decreased due to migration by 1.5-1.6% per year in 1966-1975, by 1980 losses decreased to 0.9%. Comparative analysis of census data of 1959, 1970 and 1979 showed that rural areas of the RSFSR lost more than half their youth in 1959-1979 (Zayonchkovskaya 1991). In the first post-Soviet years, the Russian countryside stopped losing population (Between the home... 2016), but the positive results of migration were the result of the influx of migrants from the former Soviet republics, while in migration with Russian cities the “breaking of the trend” was very short, and census data show that it may not have occurred at all. In the 2000s Russia established the usual balance of population flow from rural areas to cities, from small towns to large cities (Makhrova and Kirillov 2015; Mkrtychyan and Karachurina 2013).

At the same time, the researchers drew attention to the spatial heterogeneity of rural areas, which is related primarily to its position relative to large cities. The area of their suburbs, first of all, becomes the arena of pendulum-like migrations of the population (Makhrova,

Kirillov 2018; Nefedova et al. 2016, as well as the territory of the most intensive country house (*dacha*) development (Nefedova 2015; Nefedova et al. 2016). In some regions, and not only near capitals, suburbs grew rapidly, as shown, for example, by studies in the Irkutsk region (Grigorichev 2013), Buryatia (Breslavsky 2014), Krasnoyarsk (Emelyanova and Se-rebrennikov 2016) and other regions of Siberia (Grigorichev 2017). In general, the growth of suburban rural population is observed throughout Russia (Alekseev and Safronov 2015), and the role of migration in this dynamics is great (Breslavsky 2017).

Researchers pay less attention to the zonal and territorial differences in the balance of rural migrations. It seems to be due to the lack of detailed data (since the early 1990s information is available only for regions as a whole), as well as repeatedly reforms of migration accounting and revisions of census data. Data at the municipal level have long been available only for cities, thanks to information from the Database of Russian Cities (Multistat), which drew the attention of researchers to their study (Antonov 2016; Denisov 2017; Karachurina 2018). Rural migration was the focus of study most often in the context of settlement studies and was almost always confined to a single region. Examples include a paper on Moscow Region, with a detailed study of three of its municipal districts (Ioffe and Zayonchkovskaya 2011) or a study of rural areas on the periphery of the Kostroma Region (Pokrovsky and Nefedova 2014).

Migration of the population has pronounced age characteristics, most often young people participate in it. J.A. Zayonchkovskaya (1991), T.I. Zaslavskaya (1970), V.I. Perevedentsev (1975) drew attention to this in the analysis of urban and rural migration and its impact on the age composition of the rural population during the Soviet period. In 2000-2010 attempts were made to estimate the outflow of youth from the territories of the internal periphery: according to estimates based on the results of censuses, it may have reached the values of the Soviet period and continued to exacerbate the problem of rural ageing (Mkrtychyan 2013; Endryushko 2018; Kashnitsky 2018). These papers were not devoted directly to rural areas, but we can see from them that extreme outflow was from the rural hinterland.

At the same time, in Western countries with better availability of detailed statistics, age profile of migration, including in rural areas, have been studied for a long time and in sufficient detail. In particular, the research is focused on the outflow of young people from the periphery to cities (Smith et al. 2014; Johansson 2016), but similar research in Russia is rare (Bednaříková et al. 2016). The influx of pre-pensioners and pensioners into rural areas (Stockdale and MacLeod 2013) and the impact of the latter on the socio-economic situation of rural settlements (Rowles and Watkins 1993) is a rather developed topic in foreign literature. In Russia it is studied rather in the context of seasonal return mobility (Nefedova 2015).

Data and methodology

The source of the data for our research is the Indicators of Municipal Units Database (MUD), posted on the Rosstat website. Among other indicators, it contains information on population size by age group, migration by 5-year age groups and by flows distinguishing intra-, interregional and international migration in urban and municipal districts. Data are collected by the territorial bodies of Rosstat, i.e. data uploaded to the database are not centralized. Perhaps for this reason, the database for a number of regions does not contain the required indicators or has gaps for individual years. In particular, it does not have the necessary indi-

cators for the republics of Ingushetia, Dagestan, Tyva, Crimea, Kiev, city of Sevastopol and the Chukotsky Autonomous Okrug. Also in MUD there is no information on many closed administrative-territorial entities (CATE). For several regions there is no information for individual years, so we use annual averages of indicators for 2012-2016 on migration growth and its intensity by age groups from 0-4 up to 70 years of age and over.

The use of data for urban districts and municipal areas does not allow for a separate analysis of the rural population in each municipality. It is impossible to separate migration of the rural population from migration of municipal unit (MU) population. Therefore, we analyze only those municipalities where the rural population clearly dominates. These are two types of municipalities:

1. Purely rural, when the entire population of a municipality consists of rural population by 100%.
2. Semi-rural, where the proportion of the rural population in the municipality is over 50 per cent, with the urban population not exceeding 50 thousand people, which corresponds to a small city or several urban settlements (towns and urban-like communities) in one municipality. The criterion of 50 thousand is chosen because small urban settlements are least different from rural areas, including in terms of migration [Nefedova 2013].

Municipal areas with a wholly rural or predominantly rural population were excluded from the consideration in case the urban district, which is the center of the MUs, is highlighted. For example, UD of Salavat city and the Salavat municipal district, UD of the city of Uryupinsk and Uryupinsk municipal district, etc., actually forming a single whole. The number of such MUs, according to our calculations, in Russia is 94 units, within them a rural population of 2.1 million lives.

A similar approach to the typology of municipalities was used, for example, in the typology of district settlement patterns of Central Russia [Tkachenko et al. 2013] with one difference: it used the population size of the center of the MU as a criterion of classification while we take into account the entire urban population of the MU.

The total number of analyzed MUs was 1116, which is 47.5% of the total number of MUs of the corresponding level in Russia (2351). Due to the lack of data 76 MUs were excluded from the analysis; within them 2.8 million people live. The total population of the analyzed MUs at the beginning of 2017 amounted to 26.7 million people, including the rural population — 22.3 million people. The remaining 10.5 million rural residents, according to the methodology used in this article, are considered to be living in the MUs with a dominant and clearly predominant urban population, such a MU would rather be attributed to urban than rural.

Among the analyzed MUs with a dominant rural population, those that are located in close proximity to the capitals of the regions, or peri-metropolitan (suburban) territories are identified. The method of allocation of metropolitan areas is based on the criterion of the closest neighbourhood to the territory of the metropolitan city, just as it was done in the article “Regional capitals and their suburbs: features of migration balance” [Mkrtychyan 2018]. In terms of allocation of suburban population the method is doubtful, for example, suburban MUs are allocated not only for regional capitals, but also for cities with a population of over 200 thousand inhabitants (Aleksseev and Safronov 2015). In accordance with the methodology used in this article, suburban areas of major cities other than capital cities are classified under the urban districts (see above) and excluded from consideration. There are 77 subcapital rural and semi-rural MUs among those considered, almost 4 million rural

inhabitants live there. The remaining 1039 MUs, we identify as “peripheral”, within them, at the beginning of 2017, 18.3 million rural inhabitants lived. Division into suburban and peripheral is made due to the particular migration attractiveness of the suburban areas of regional capitals (almost all — large cities), regardless of their formal affiliation to urban or rural areas.

We believe that the main differentiating feature of rural areas is its location in a particular part of the country. We used the types of regions of Russia on dynamics of labour-age population in rural areas and their employment in agriculture and forestry, proposed in the paper “Regional differences of placement and of the forecast of labor resources of agriculture of Russia” (Nefedova and Mkrtychyan 2018), and shape four groups of territories:

1. southern, south of the Kursk and Oryol regions in the west to the Altai Territory in the east; including the Kaliningrad region;
2. non-chernozem, from the Leningrad and Bryansk regions in the west to the Sverdlovsk region in the east, excluding the territories of the Far North and similar areas;
3. the south of Siberia and the Far East, excluding the territories of the Far North and equivalent areas;
4. northern, represented by the territories of the Far North and equated regions.

The most general characteristics of the distribution of rural areas according to the proposed groups are given in Table 1.

In semi-rural MUs, the average share of the rural population is 65%. The average number of inhabitants in semi-rural MUs is 26.9 thousand people, of which the rural population accounts for 17.4 thousand people. The average population of purely rural MUs is 21.8 thousand people. Despite the fact that suburban rural and semi-rural MUs are few, they are

Table 1. Number of rural population by types analyzed in MUs, thousand people

	Total	Rural		Semi-rural	
		deep	suburban	deep	suburban
Total	22 305,6	11 735,7	2427.7	6596.5	1545.7
Southern	14 722.4	8258.9	1516.1	4028.1	919.3
Non-chernozem region	4060.3	1432.4	556.3	1763.4	308.2
South of Siberia and the Far East	2325.1	1259.5	263.7	483.7	318.2
North	1197.7	785.0	91.5	321.3	-
As a percentage					
Total	100.0	52.6	10.9	29.6	6.9
Southern	66.0	37.0	6.8	18.1	4.1
Non-chernozem region	18.2	6.4	2.5	7.9	1.4
South of Siberia and the Far East	10.4	5.6	1.2	2.2	1.4
North	5.4	3.5	0.4	1.4	-

Source: calculations based on MUD.

the largest and by number of inhabitants constitute a significant part of the rural population in question. This article practically does not consider the rural population of Moscow and Leningrad regions, as in them, according to the described method, only 4 and 2 semi-rural MUs are allocated, and there are no purely rural ones at all.

Results

Migration balance of the population of rural and semi-rural MUs in all types of migration has fundamental differences in suburban and peripheral territories, geographical factor plays a lesser role (Table 2). Suburban territories had positive migration balance in three of the four selected geographical types, and only in the group of territories of the Far North and its equivalent areas they faced migration outflow. This outflow was much less intense than

Table 2. Migration balance rate by types of rural and semi-rural MUs, 2012 – 2016, annual average, per 1000 persons

	All mi- gration	Within Russia	Of which		Interna- tional
			intra- regional	inter- regional	
All rural and semi-rural MUs	-3,4	-5,1	-3,0	-2,0	1,7
suburban	12,6	9,9	9,8	0,1	2,7
peripheral	-6,4	-7,9	-5,4	-2,5	1,5
rural, suburban	13,8	11,6	11,6	0,0	2,2
rural, peripheral	-7,0	-8,2	-5,8	-2,5	1,2
semi-rural, suburban	11,2	8,0	7,7	0,3	3,3
semi-rural, peripheral	-5,7	-7,5	-5,1	-2,4	1,8
Southern rural and semi-rural	-2,3	-4,2	-2,4	-1,8	1,9
suburban	13,5	10,4	9,9	0,4	3,1
peripheral	-5,0	-6,8	-4,5	-2,2	1,7
Non-Chernozem rural and semi-rural	-3,6	-5,2	-3,3	-1,9	1,6
suburban	8,9	6,6	7,1	-0,5	2,3
peripheral	-6,2	-7,7	-5,5	-2,2	1,5
South of Siberia and the Far East, all rural and semi-rural	-4,3	-5,1	-2,5	-2,6	0,8
suburban	17,0	15,1	14,7	0,4	1,9
peripheral	-10,8	-11,3	-7,7	-3,6	0,5
North, all rural and semi-rural	-14,4	-14,9	-10,9	-4,0	0,5
suburban	-4,8	-5,3	-1,4	-3,9	0,6
peripheral	-15,1	-15,5	-11,6	-4,0	0,5

Source: calculations based on MUD.

from the peripheral areas of the same group of regions, and roughly corresponded to the loss of peripheral southern rural and semi-rural areas.

The most intensively growing suburban areas are located in the south of Siberia and the Far East. The rapid growth of the suburbs of Irkutsk, Ulan-Ude, and Krasnoyarsk attracts the above mentioned attention of researchers. In this part of Russia, the growth of suburbs is faster due to on-going urbanization and the existence of rural population potential, which is not exhausted like, for example, in many regions of the Non-Chernozem region.

Virtually all the inflow of migrants into suburban rural areas is due to intraregional migration, especially from the intraregional periphery. But in a large number of urban agglomerations the suburbanization process is taking place. For example, according to data on intraregional long-term migration, in 2017 Kazan, together with the five districts nearest to it, lost 3 thousand people because of migration, Ufa together with only the Ufa and Igli districts – over 3 thousand people. Migration decline of population of Novosibirsk together with the Novosibirsk district exceeded 2 thousand people, in Perm – 1.3 thousand, in Belgorod and Smolensk – 1.1 thousand.

The migration balance of the population of peripheral territories has marked territorial differences. As can be seen from Table 2, the migration decline is increasing from the south to the north and east, in accordance with the general vectors of population redistribution between major parts of the country (population outflows from the North, westward drift). Intraregional migration in the south of Russia does not drain the population of rural hinterland as much as in other parts of the country. Despite the fact that inflow of international migrants goes to all types of regions, in the south of the European part of the country and in the regions bordering Kazakhstan it is more noticeable than in the south of Siberia, the Far East, and the North.

Differences in the migration balance between purely rural and semi-rural areas are weak, purely rural areas lose population as a result of migration slightly more intensely than those that have small urban settlements in their composition. The presence of a small town or urban settlement cannot in itself prevent outflow of the population. The labour market of these settlements is as poorly differentiated as in rural areas. In terms of the degree of development of social infrastructure and comfort of living they are also not much different from rural settlements. Small towns are unable to deter young people from leaving, their vocational education system is most often limited to a small number of secondary vocational education institutions (SVE).

Differences in the migration balance of rural areas by age

The calculation of age-specific rates of migratory growth (loss) of the population of the territories under consideration shows that in general they are characterized by outflow of young population. It has two peaks: 1) at the age of leaving school and entering SVE institutions and higher education institutions; 2) at the age of active beginning of a career. Between these peaks, the outflow seems to be falling, but this, in our view, is a statistical artifact. The reform of the current registration of migration in 2011, as a result of which Rosstat began to consider those who changed registration at the place of stay for a period of 9 months or more as long-term migrants, led not only to the growth of recorded migration, but also to the emergence in statistics of the category “returned to their place of residence after temporary stay in another territory”. For example, after graduating from a university or SVE in

another city and region, registration at the place of residence of former students ends, they are automatically considered to have left at the place of permanent residence. Regardless of whether a young person returns to the place of permanent residence or stays in the city where he/she was educated, finds a job in another city or region, statistics will record return to the place of residence.

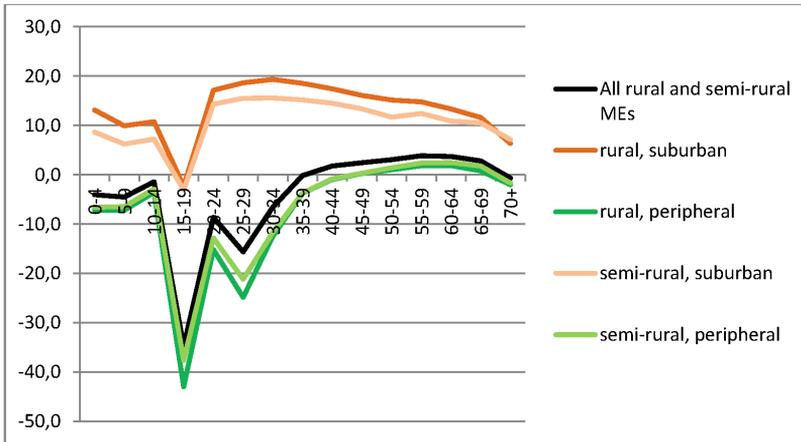


Figure 1. Migration balance of suburban and peripheral rural areas, on average for 2012-2016, per 1000 persons of the corresponding age. Source: calculations based on MUD.

In older ages, starting from 35 to 39 years, the studied rural areas have little migratory growth. Peripheral rural areas have an influx of persons in pre-retirement and young retirement age. The positive balance of migration of other ages 35 years and older is provided by the suburbs. They are generally attractive for all ages except for the 15-19 age group. The most intense migration inflow is of people in the 20-39 age group and in childhood. This may be evidence of the Western-type suburbanization, which is characterized by the influx of families with children into the suburbia [Vobecka and Piguet 2012; Wulff and Lobo 2009]. Purely rural settlements in a suburban area are characterized by a more intense influx of population of all ages, while on the periphery – by a more intense decline.

The northern rural areas are characterized by an outflow of population of all ages, but the most intense is in the 15-19 year-olds group (Figure 2). Unlike the other geographical groups, they face an outflow of older populations, although not as strong. For regions of the North in general the outflow of the elderly population is typical (Karachurina and Ivanova 2017). Less intensive migration losses in the rural areas of the rest of the country are due to both the lower outflow of young people and the inflow of older persons, which, to some extent, compensate it. Thus, in the Non-Chernozem region, inflow of the population aged 40 years and older in 2012-2016 compensated for the outflow of 15-39 year age group from rural areas by 43%; in the group of southern regions — by 39%; in the south of Siberia and the Far East East — 14%. However, this compensation occurs primarily at the expense of suburbs. If peripheral areas of the Non-Chernozem region and the South are taken separately, the inflow of older persons made up only 18% and 9% respectively.

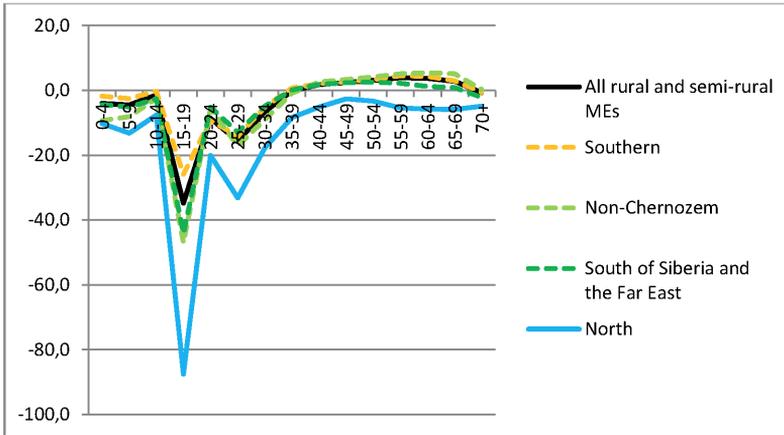


Figure 2. Migration balance by geographical groups of rural areas, on average for 2012-2016, per 1000 population of the corresponding age. Source: calculations on the basis of MUD

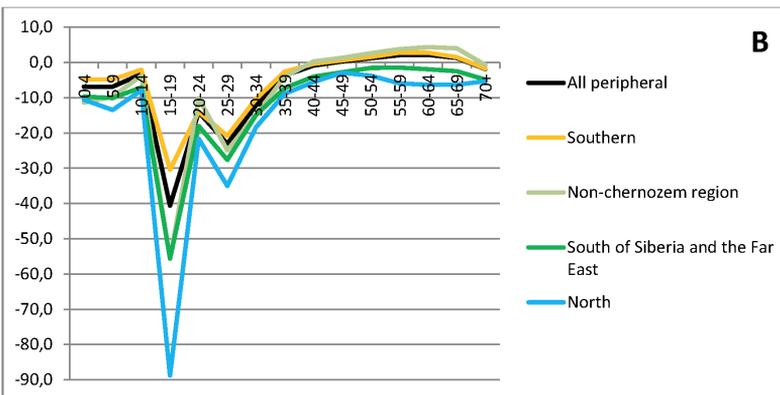
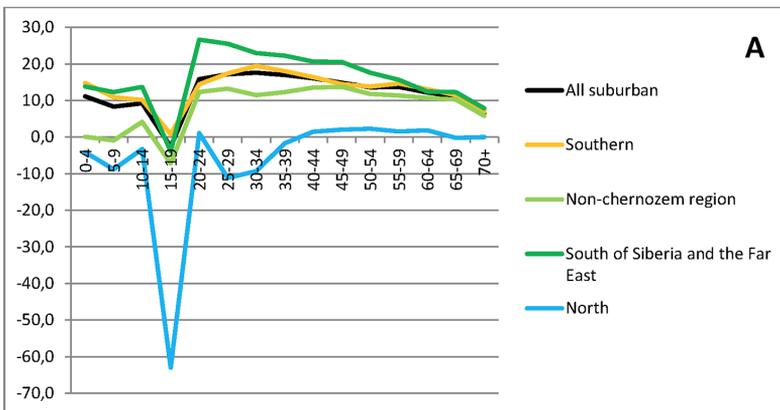


Figure 3. Migration balance by geographical groups of suburban (A) and peripheral (B) rural areas on average for 2012-2016, per 1000 persons of corresponding age. Source: calculations based on MUD.

With the exception of the suburbs of the capitals of the northern territories — small in the number of MUs that constitute this group, sparsely populated and clearly not defining the “face” of Russian suburbias, age profiles of these territories are similar (Figure 3A). However, even in the North suburbs have a small inflow of persons of older ages. Meanwhile, peripheral territories are differentiated by the intensity of the outflow of youth — in the group of 15-19 years in the North it is three times more intense than in the South, in 25-29 years — by 2/3. Peripheral territories of the North are also characterized by increased outflow of persons after 50 years (Fig. 3B), because people here can retire earlier, and some of them change their place of residence. It is noteworthy that the influx of persons aged 40 and over in the hinterland of the Non-Chernozem region is higher than in the southern regions. This accelerates ageing of the rural population in this part of the country, it is here that the countryside is already called the “aggregate retirement home” (Alekseev and Safronov 2017).

It is clear that registration of the long-term migration does not reflect the full picture of the decline in the rural population, especially in the intraregional periphery. The outflow of young people is in reality higher than statistics show. Research results at the microlevel show that about 30% of the population officially registered in rural settlements of the Russian hinterland actually do not live there. Discrepancy is especially large in ages 20-40 years (Fomkina 2017; Alekseev and Vorobyev 2018).

Conclusions

Rural areas, more precisely, those areas of the level of municipal districts and urban districts which can with a certain convention adopted in this article be attributed to rural areas, are heterogeneous in terms of migration balance. This article deals with the differences between suburban rural territories and intraregional periphery, as well as between rural areas of four major geographical groups of the country, characterized by significant differences in climatic conditions and economic development (North-South, West-East differences).

Suburban and peripheral MUs are very different both in terms of the overall results of the migration balance and in the structure of the inflow and loss of the population by age groups. Suburban rural areas are not only largely a transit zone on the way of migrants from rural areas to major cities, but also the scene of suburbanization taking place in the largest urban agglomerations. The proportion of suburban rural population is growing: in the majority of regions, 20 to 30% of rural population lives in close vicinity of the regional center [Alekseev and Safronov 2015]. The rural areas of the regional periphery is still a territory of continuous and sufficiently intensive migration outflow of the population; it has limited attractiveness only for the population of pre-retirement and retirement age, and faces heavy loss of young people. In general, the population of the intraregional periphery (not necessarily rural) is shrinking almost everywhere, and the inhabited space is shrinking (Nefedova 2005). This is a result of not only the outflow of the rural population, but also its specific age profile.

Regardless of the geographical location of rural MUs, all of them, if on the intraregional periphery, lose population, and if in the suburbs have positive migration balance (except for a small number of suburban MUs of regional capitals of the territories of the Far North and equivalent areas). It can be hardly said that this positive migration balance is higher in the west and lower in the east or that in the south it is fundamentally different than in the regions of the Non-Chernozem region. The age profiles of the intensity of migration growth

of rural MUs in different parts of the country are similar, of course, taking into account their differences in suburbs and at the periphery. But in the south, outflow rates are lower in all age groups than in the north, and the western territories lose population less intensely than the eastern ones.

This should be taken into account in the analysis of rural-urban migration, because the speed at which the rural population is declining as a result of migratory outflows varies not only between regions of the country, but also, even more at the intra-regional level. At the regional and the country level, rural populations may be reducing slowly as a result of migration, but this may occur (and occurs) as a result of population concentration in the suburbs of major cities, with constant outflow from the hinterland. The influx of the elderly population into the countryside, already quite noticeable, also reduces the total amount of outflow, but, from the point of view of the prospects of rural development and its demographic and labour potential, this inflow cannot be considered as a compensation for the continuing outflow of young people. These processes require further study, in which Russia is far behind Western countries.

The rural population living in MUs with a predominantly urban population is left outside our analysis, but the current procedure for publishing data does not allow to consider its migration characteristics at a sufficiently disaggregated spatial level. It is likely that in the future it will be possible to analyse them if data are available at a more territorially disaggregated level.

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