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**MIGRATION PROCESSES IN SUBJECT OF RUSSIA OF NORTH  
CAUCASUS FEDERAL DISTRICT**

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***Abstract***

This article discusses the peculiarities of modern migration processes taking place in the social structure of one of the subjects of the Russian Federation of the North Caucasus Federal District (NCFD) – the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania (RNO-A). The complex socio-economic, political, ethno-social and confessional processes cause a lot of objective and subjective characteristics of the migration changes in the given region, which cannot but influence the public opinion and attitude towards the migrants. The article discusses both quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the modern migration processes in the territory of the RNO-Alania and presents the results of the empirical research of this issue. The subject of the research is the current migration situation in the territory of one of the subjects of the Russian Federation, the North Caucasus Federal District – the RNO-A, namely, its determination, content, subjecting, forms of inclusion in the social structures of the region. The aim of the work is a comprehensive study of the migration trend to the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania in the context of several research paradigms – political, governmental, ethno-political, socio-structural, and social-mental. As a research method, the general scientific method of analysis and synthesis of general trends and subtrends of the migration processes in the North Caucasus Federal District, particularly, in one of the subjects of the Russian Federation – the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania (RNO-A) was used.

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**Keywords:** Migration, movements, attractiveness, external, internal, legislation .



## 1. Introduction

The history of the mankind cannot be imagined without the history of migrations, because the process of the formation of the nations, states, and social structures always proceeded under the influence of this geopolitical, socio-economic, socio-cultural phenomenon (Zolberg, 1989). The migration processes, being an important component of social relations, are regarded as a complex, ambiguous social phenomenon, which causes a lot of problems in various spheres of public life. The clash of civilizations, as the world social practice shows, has a complex content; it is filled with significant mass displacements of the population (Huntington, 2013). On the one hand, such movements are the result of a clash of civilizations, and, on the other hand, they themselves deepen this collision, because the rapprochement of the different population groups of different countries, “as it is shown by the actual behavioral experience, does not always proceed peacefully and calmly” (Byazrova, 2012).

The problem of migration is of global importance in view of the processes of the “new migration” of peoples, the large-scale spatial mobility of the earth’s population. Massive movements of people from Africa and Asia to Europe in search of security, employment, social patronage and social perspectives are the greatest trend of our time, the consequences of which are still not completely clear at present. In addition to the load on the economic and social infrastructure of the host countries, the direct and indirect consequences of migration appear: development of ethnically compact and religiously compact territories of residence (“ethnic and religious ghettos”), contradictions of life views and lifestyles, a clash of ideologies and social outlooks – conservative-protective and liberal-democratic (Iontsev, 1999).

Currently, migration is acquiring a prominent ethno-political and ethno-social character; it transforms the social structures, influences the policies of the sovereign states and, crucially, influences (changes) the personal characteristics of both migrants and residents. In this regard, it seems relevant to study the given problem in the context of socio-political tasks and priorities, as well as in the system of socio-political scientific knowledge in general.

## 2. Problem Statement

In the 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia experienced a massive influx of migrants from the former Soviet republics, who migrated to the Russian Federation as a territory of refuge, security, and development. The evacuation migration flows strongly destabilized some regions of the Russian Federation (the Central region, Moscow, southern Russia), led to many clashes and contradictions between the residents and the migrants, as well as to the surge of xenophobia and nationalism (Korshunova., Shataeva, Moshkin, & Korshunov, 2017).

In the post-Soviet period, the North Caucasus region became a region with a highly positive migration balance due to such new independent countries as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, etc. At the same time, the multitude of migrants who entered the Krasnodar and Stavropol territories, the Rostov region, North Ossetia-Alania, was conditioned by the ethno-political conflicts, violent clashes and wars.

### **3. Research Questions**

The subject of the research is the current migration situation in the territory of one of the subjects of the Russian Federation, the North Caucasus Federal District – the RNO-A, namely, its determination, content, subjecting, forms of inclusion in the social structures of the region. The low-level chronic migration (labor, educational), primarily from the countries of the South Caucasus, as well as from the countries such as Libya, Syria, Iran, and Turkey to the territory of the RNO-A is researched. A particular attention is paid to the study of the essential and functional features of the current migration flow, which is extremely important in the context of the following considerations. The first one considers the fact that because of solving the demographic problems the Russian Federation is aimed at social integration and cultural adaptation of migrants, primarily from the former Soviet republics; for these migrants the North Caucasus Federal District may be attractive due to its natural and climatic characteristics. Secondly, the subjects of the Russian Federation of the North Caucasian Federal District (first of all, the republics) can be attractive for migrants from Turkey, Libya, Syria, where the descendants of the peoples from the North Caucasus live (representatives of Adyghe-Abkhazian, Turkic, Nakh-Dagestan peoples), they left the Russian Empire after the end of the Caucasus war and they dream of returning to their historic homeland.

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The aim of the work is a comprehensive study of the migration trend to the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania in the context of several research paradigms – political, governmental, ethno-political, socio-structural, and social-mental. The study includes: the content and prospects of migration, the migration policy of the regional authorities, the content and forms of the relationship between the migrants and the local population, axiological assessments of migrants and migration by the residents of different audiences in the context of such indicators as: state of the national security, strengthening of the civil unity, preservation of the ethnic and cultural identity, provision of employment and social services, etc.

### **5. Research Methods**

As a research method, the general scientific method of analysis and synthesis of general trends and subtrends of the migration processes in the North Caucasus Federal District, particularly, in one of the subjects of the Russian Federation – the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania (RNO-A) was used. The indicator monitoring was used as well; it was developed in the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the RAS named after N.N. Miklukho-Maklay (scientific group of V.V. Tishkov) (Tishkov, 2011). The authors applied the method of expert and mass polls of the population on the basis of the previously declared hypotheses, which were developed in the Institute of Sociology of the RAS (Drobizheva, 2009). The method of the expert insider's observation was widely used, which allowed providing not only the analytical basis of the study, but also its practical and prognostic orientation.

### **6. Findings**

*The geopolitical aspect of migration in the RNO-A.* The migration processes in the RNO-A are conditioned by the geopolitical position of the region to a large extent, since the RNO-Alania is a border region of the Russian Federation and has a state border with the Republic of Georgia. The Republic of

North Ossetia-Alania experiences a significant transit migration flow during the summer period, which negatively affects the general situation in the RNO-A. In recent years the passenger traffic and transit along the Georgian Military Road increased significantly, and it is becoming a serious problem not only for transit migrants, but also for the residents of the RNO-A. Those who wish to travel outside the Russian Federation find themselves in multi-meter traffic jams at the checkpoint *Verkhni Lars* during the summer period, waiting for leaving or entering the state for up to 15 hours, which leads to conflict situations, as well as with the local population.

According to the Border Guard Service of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation, in the summer of 2018 the traffic capacity of passenger cars at the checkpoint *Verkhny Lars* was exceeded 6 times, that of truck transport – more than 3 times. The design traffic capacity of the checkpoint *Verkhny Lars* is 4,000 individuals, 200 cars, 170 trucks and 30 passenger buses per day. During the peak loads in August of 2018, more than 14,000 individuals, more than 2,000 cars and 600 trucks went through the checkpoint per day, which led to multi-kilometer traffic jams and long waits (RSO-Alanya, 2018a).

The residents of the settlements of the RNO-A living near the Georgian Military Road are also dissatisfied due to the day-and-night movement of vehicles and cargo; as the environmental and sanitary conditions become worse, as well as leisure and recreation regimes, etc. At the checkpoint *Verkhny Lars* the majority of the transit migrants and cargo goes to Armenia, and this flow increases every year. The Georgian Military Road is the only way of communication with the Russian Federation for the Republic of Armenia, excluding air travels.

*The natural-climatic factor of migration in the RNO-A.* The migration processes in the RNO-A are closely related to climatic and natural cycles, since the migration flows occur along such difficult and strategic roads as the Georgian Military Road, the Ossetian Military Road – the Transcaucasian Highway (Transkam). So, in the late autumn-winter period, the migratory movements become one of the most complicated problems in the territory of the RNO-A. It is conditioned by the difficulty of crossing the state border between the Russian Federation and Georgia, as in winter there are many problems caused by the danger of avalanches and bad weather conditions in the mountains. The winter regime of crossing the state border of Russia and Georgia permits travelling in both directions only by a special permission; this fact causes problems with migrants. In 2017-2018 a limited pass regime was introduced several times at the checkpoint of the state border of the Russian Federation *Verkhny Lars*, it caused the accumulation of transit freight, passenger cars and passenger buses from the countries of the South Caucasus which led to periodic conflict situations and social tension (In the Traffic Jam at the Checkpoint *Verkhny Lars*, There are More than 600 Heavy Trucks). Also during the winter period, due to the special weather conditions the Transcaucasian Highway connecting Russia and the Republic of South Ossetia is sometimes closed (RSO-Alanya, 2018b). In the region the migration transit flow from and to the Transcaucasia weakens with the onset of cold weather and increases with the start of the spring-summer period.

*Motives and content of the migration trends in the RNO-A.* First of all, the migrants of the RNO-A consider it as a territory of transport transit of the labor, service, educational, tourist, resort-recreational, nostalgic, and commercial migration. The decrease of the migration attractiveness of the RNO-A is associated with the general problems of economic and social development. They negatively influence the migration processes in the region. Thus, for example, the number of illegal migrants from Vietnam

decreased in the republic, at the same time, there was an increase of the number of migrants from Armenia and Azerbaijan, the neighboring republics of the North Caucasus, primarily Dagestan, engaged in trading at food and non-food markets. Migrants mainly work in the spheres of trade, services and construction. The flow of the internal migrants leaving the republic is also increasing, it particularly involves internally displaced persons from Ukraine; they leave for the other regions. The local people move to larger cities in search of seasonal or permanent work, as there is an opportunity to find better-paid jobs.

The size and composition of the region's population does not depend only on the natural increase – surplus of births over deaths, but to some extent on the mechanical movement – migration. Its scale, intensity and character constantly change under the influence of many socio-economic and other factors. From the late 1980s to 2002 the flow of migrants into the republic (primarily from South Ossetia) significantly exceeded the outflow from it, that is, the external migration had a large positive balance. It covered a significant part of the negative effects of depopulation – a decrease of the population due to a decrease of the natural growth. However, from 2002 to the present, the situation radically changed: more people leave the republic than come to it, that is, there has been a negative migration balance for 16 years in the RNO-A.

Since 2011 the migration has begun to grow a little in both directions – from and to the republic, but at the same time, the negative balance has grown as well. During this period, 150 thousand people left the republic, and only 103 thousand arrived. Thus, the negative balance of the external migration was 47 thousand people (Ryazanov, 2018). The balance of migration shows only the intensity of this process, but the social characteristics of migrants are of greater interest for the research. The negative balance of migration does not only reduce the population quantity; it also changes its qualitative composition. This characteristic is extremely important for the peoples of the North Caucasus, as they are the dominant ethnic group in the given republics. However, the statistical and migration agencies excluded the “fifth column” (nationality) from the fixed parameters of migration, that is why it is difficult to determine a true “ethnic portrait” of migrants. It is not possible to analyze migration in the republic from the ethnic point of view, it is only possible to explore only such qualitative indicators of migration as age and gender of the people who left and arrived in the republic.

The statistical analysis of the main characteristics of migrants leaving the republic (citizens of the Russian Federation) shows, that the majority of them are young people under 30 years old, able-bodied men and women and their children. At the same time, men of working age leave, averagely, a quarter more often than women. Children and young people under 30 account for almost half of the entire migration flow, and this is also one of the reasons of the rapid aging of the population of the republic.

In this regard, a peculiar feature of the migration situation in the republic can be noted, namely: “brain drain” among the applicants and the most active and qualified working-age population, reducing the demographic potential, involving the dominant ethnic group – Ossetians. All this requires taking crucial steps in studying the demographic and migration situation in the republic and taking measures to correct it.

The processes of the RNO-A population movement within the region are noted. In particular, the population flow to Vladikavkaz continues, as a large part of the population of the republic traditionally lives there. Also, there is some outflow of the local population from the Mozdok district. In order to reveal the causes of the native population outflow from the Mozdok district, monitoring and sociological studies

are periodically carried out (Tsutsiev: Find out the Reasons of the Immigration of the Indigenous Population).

The settlement of internally displaced persons from Ukraine takes its place in the organization of the migration inflow, the issues of their residence and employment in the republic remains in abeyance (The Question of the Further Stay of Internally Displaced Migrants from Ukraine in the Republic will be Solved in a Month) (RSO-Alanya, 2016a).

*Prevention of violations of immigration laws in the RNO-A.* In the RNO-A there are typical problems associated with the migration processes. There are state borders with the neighboring countries in the region – the Republic of Georgia and the Republic of South Ossetia, the State of Alania; it creates conditions for violations of the migration legislation of the Russian Federation and causes the necessity of preventive measures.

In 2017 the officers of the Frontier Department of the FSB of Russia in the RNO-Alania revealed more than three hundred citizens who committed repeated violations of the current migration legislation. For instance, they found foreigners who had advanced knowledge of the ban on their entry to the Russian Federation, however, they had the intent to violate the law decisions of judicial and law enforcement agencies. This category includes people who changed their personal data after their expulsion from the Russian Federation, as well as those who tried to cross the state border using the passports with partial forgery elements. Only in March 2017 more than 80 violators were held administratively liable, and in the period of three months the number was more than 270. At the same time, 20 case materials of the Department ended by convicting the individuals under Article 322 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation “Illegal Crossing of the State Border of the Russian Federation” (Ministry of Interior affairs, 2017). The overwhelming majority of the defendants come from the countries of the CIS and neighboring countries, despite their disregard for the legislative base of the Russian Federation they have a strong desire to stay in the country for permanent residence.

During the period of six months of 2017 the officials of the Migration Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the RNO-A revealed over 1,200 administrative violations in the field of migration and charged 2 million rubles of administrative fines (Official Website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation). For example, during the first five months of 2017 the Migration Directorate of the RF Ministry of Internal Affairs of the RNO-A carried out about 3,700 actions to detect violations of the immigration legislation. The number of refugees registered at the end of the first half of the year was 31 people, 46 people were granted temporary asylum; at the end of May 2017 the total amount of the registered refugees and those granted temporary asylum in the RNO-A was 688 people. During the first half of 2017 the police carried out about 4,000 inspections in the field of migration. As a result, they revealed more than 1,200 administrative violations (Official Website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation). They are mainly related to violations of the immigration laws by the host party, of the regime of stay in the country, as well as to the illegal employment of foreign citizens. The courts delivered a judgment to expel 95 citizens from the Russian Federation (RSO-Alanya, 2017).

In the territory of the republic during the period from November 9 to 18, 2017, the officers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania together with the Department of the Federal Tax Service of the Russian Federation of North Ossetia-Alania carried out the practical preventive

measure “Illegal Migrant”. During this time, they checked both employers using the labor of foreign workers and the workers themselves. More than 40 facts of violations of the regime of stay of foreign citizens in the territory of the Russian Federation were revealed. The police imposed administrative fines amounting for more than 84,000 rubles. Besides, 37 facts of illegal migration were revealed, 6 criminal cases were opened (2 of them – under Article 322.1 of the RF Criminal Code "Organization of Illegal Migration", 4 – under Article 322.3 of the RF Criminal Code “Fictitious Registration of a Foreign Citizen or Stateless Person at the Place of Residence in a Residential Property in the Russian Federation”) (Press Office of the Ministry of Interior Affairs of the RNO-Alania).

From the beginning of 2018 the North Ossetian border guards stopped more than 300 attempts to violate the immigration laws. In particular, they detected and arrested the foreigners, who had advanced knowledge of the ban on their entry to the Russian Federation and intended to violate the law decisions of judicial and law enforcement agencies. This category includes persons who changed their personal data after the deportation from the Russian Federation, as well as those trying to cross the state border using passports with the elements of partial forgery or forged documents. The overwhelming majority of the defendants are from the CIS and neighboring countries (Vladikavkaz Information portal, 2016; RSO-Alanya, 2016b).

*Expert opinion on the migrants in the RNO-A.* In April 2018 in order to clarify the expert opinion on migration and migrants, an expert survey was conducted in the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania; the topic was *Study of the Public Opinion on the Possibilities and Resources of the Socio-Cultural Integration of Migrants in the Regions of the Russian Federation*. The total sample size was 30 people. The terms of the expert survey also included the division of the interviewed experts depending on the sphere of their activities. The opinion of civil society about migrants and migration processes was compiled on the basis of the responses of the experts representing the public organizations of the republic. The number of the interviewed experts representing the system of executive and legislative power, as well as the municipal structures of the RNO-A amounted for 17% of the total number of the experts taking part in the survey. The number of the experts representing the scientific intellectuals was 33% of the total number of the interviewed experts.

Some responses are of interest for understanding the public opinion on the problems of migration in the Russian Federation and in the RNO-A. According to 23% of the respondents, the risks of migration are associated with the flows of economic migration and refugees who come to Russia in search of a better life and earnings. 30% of the experts believe that the political manipulation of the migrants and migration situation is a threat to Russian, which can undoubtedly influence the future situation. The vast majority of respondents – 83% – believe that it is necessary to develop programs aimed at the population growth at the expense of the birth rate without attracting external resources in the form of migrants. 60% of the respondents think that for the modern economic development of the country it is necessary to take measures aimed at increasing labor productivity and using existing labor resources. The experts consider the inflow of external migrants as a measure of last resort, however, 10% of the respondents believe that it is problematic to raise the economy in the country without an influx of immigration in the Russian Federation (Dzakhova & Chikhtisov, 2018).

The question “Whom do you consider to be “insiders” and “outsiders” among the hypothetical migrants?” turned out to be specific for the experts. 67% of the respondents continue to consider former citizens of the USSR and their descendants as compatriots, and they do not perceive these post-Soviet states and their citizens on the basis of ethnic, political and other models.

Characterizing the migration situation in the RNO-Alania, the experts (77%) noted that there is a calm migration situation in the republic without social tensions and conflict potential. 20% of experts see the problem in a high percentage of the local population outflow to more prosperous regions of Russia. 10% of the experts surveyed indicated an active influx of the residents from other regions of Russia, which differ sharply in language and culture. This is conditioned by the fact that for the past few years there has been an influx of citizens, primarily of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Vietnam and other countries, who are pushing the local population out of the food and clothing markets, as well as from the service sector. As to the neighboring regions, the influx of migrants is mainly observed from Dagestan and Ingushetia.

The characteristics of the level of tolerance to visitors vary depending on many factors: the unemployment rate, the socio-economic situation and the border character of the survey region, etc. 80% of the experts believe that migrants come to the republic without any difficulty and live in the region quite well. 17% of the respondents treated the migrants negatively and 3% found it difficult to answer. The experts assessing the migrants negatively had the following typical ideas about the visitors: 25% of the respondents believe that migrants occupy workplaces in the region; 32% of the respondents have a negative attitude towards migrants because they have culture, norms, values, different from those in the region. 13% of the respondents believe that migrants can influence the crime rate and 19% consider migrants a potential base of terrorism. Such ideas are not unreasonable and are formed on the basis of the practical experience of other regions and countries where migrants are prosecuted not only for the crimes committed, but also as men of radical ideas (Dzakhova, & Chikhtisov, 2018).

## 7. Conclusion

Currently, the mass migration to the North Caucasus, as a whole, ceased; since 2005 it has not been noticeable in the regional infrastructure and has not compensated for the natural population decline.

The goals and objectives of migrants are conditioned by the modern processes, not only economic and social, but political, ethnopolitical, geopolitical, ecological and mental ones as well as.

The migration processes in the RNO-A have a certain relevance, although the influx of migrants aimed at employment and settlement in the RNO-A is insignificant and does not affect the situation in the region.

At the same time:

- migration processes occurring in the modern North Ossetian society are complex, which is determined by many different problems of objective and subjective nature arising in the Russian society;
- ethnic identity and the religion of migrants are of great importance in the perception of them in the RNO-A, as they can form both a positive and a negative image of the migrant;
- accelerated attempts of quick adaptation and integration of migrants into the social structure of the society can lead to inter-ethnic tensions and even conflicts.



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