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Peculiarities of Territorial Population Mobility in Yakutia under COVID-19 Pandemic Conditions *

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Abstract. The article discusses the special characteristics of the territorial mobility of the population of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia). Changes in the migration situation, structure of migration and migration activity of the population in different social and economic zones of the region in the context of the coronavirus pandemic are analyzed. The analysis shows that the peculiarities of distribution of productive forces and human resources in the labor market retain a fairly high potential for labor migration to the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) from the CIS countries and far abroad in the context of a pandemic, the share of arriving migrants indicating work among the reasons for migration continues to grow. The influence of socio-economic characteristics and urgent problems of the republic on the formation of migration activity and migration intentions of the population is considered. The article is based on the results of a mass survey in Yakutia (n=200). Analysis of the survey results shows that the features of territorial mobility, migration intentions of the population and absence of migration plans depend on the socio-economic conditions of residence, various factors of individual social status and position, and mobility resources. With mostly satisfactory assessments of the socio-economic situation in the republic and most factors of social life in the region, the respondents' migration intentions are conditioned by low incomes and territorial specifics — remoteness from the central regions of the country, the high cost of air fares and harsh climatic conditions. In the pandemic conditions, the spatial mobility of the population, as one of the most important social resources of society, is most characteristic of the part of young people who have financial resources, unmarried, seeking better socio-economic and climatic conditions, to regions with better infrastructure, where they can get a decent job, quality education, medical services, recreation and leisure.

Keywords: *territorial mobility, migration, labor migrant, Arctic zone, migration intention, Yakutia*

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the current socio-economic reality; experts assess its impact as the largest global crisis. "The pandemic has become an impetus that triggered or intensified crisis processes in all areas of life, from family relationships and personal hygiene practices to the global economy and politics"¹. According to experts, the death rate in Russia in 2020 was the highest over the past 10 years. Regional depopulation has accelerated with the onset of the pandemic against a backdrop of shortages of health facilities, doctors, medicines and basic protective equipment. In just 11 months of 2020, the natural decline in the population of the Russian Federation, according to official data, reached 574.8 thousand people. The total mortality of Russians in 2020 exceeded 2 million people [1, Moiseev V.V., Kolesnikova Yu.S., Smolenskaya O.A., p. 40].

In 2020, according to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the COVID-19 pandemic has severely disrupted all forms of human mobility, including international migration. According to preliminary estimates, by mid-2020, the pandemic may have reduced the number of international migrants by about 2 million². In the Russian Federation, a crisis of migration mobility is noted, a halving of migration growth in 2020 compared to 2019, an increase in unemployment and worsening working conditions for migrants [2, Ryazantsev S.V., Bragin A.D. Ryazantsev N.S.; 3, Dyachenko A.N., Pechkurov I.V., Mamina D.A.].

UN Secretary-General A. Guterres' Policy Brief on COVID-19 and People on the Move identified three forms of crisis as key challenges for spatial mobility. Firstly, there is a health crisis where people on the move are exposed to the virus without adequate protective equipment. Secondly, it is a socio-economic crisis affecting people on the move with precarious livelihoods, especially those working in the informal economy with little or no access to social protection measures. Thirdly, it is a protection crisis with border closures and other movement restrictions to contain the spread of COVID-19, which is having a serious impact on the rights of many people on the move, putting them in extremely dangerous situations³.

In Yakutia, in 2020, the natural growth decreased by 1 200 people compared to 2019. The coefficient per 1 000 people in 2019 was 5.4‰, in 2020 — 4.1‰. According to the State Statistics for the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), the natural increase in the republic is maintained by the num-

¹ Ilyin V.I. Voznikaet novaya real'nost', v kotoroy planka normal'nogo riska povyshena [A new reality is emerging in which the bar for normal risk has been raised] 02.09.2021. URL: https://covid19.fom.ru/post/vladimir-ilin-voznikaet-novaya-realnost-v-kotoroj-planka-normalnogo-riska-povyshena?fbclid=IwAR02csbdFN1J2QtREU6_zYyJ8xiFk2mrhkjYlbYXXm9boi3pLusnslQoWsY (accessed 01 October 2021).

² Key indicators of international migration for 2020. January, 2021. URL: https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/sites/www.un.org.development.desa.pd/files/imr2020_10_key_messages_ru_1.pdf (accessed 29 September 2021).

³ Analiticheskaya zapiska General'nogo sekretarya po voprosu o COVID-19 i peremeshchayushchikhsya litsakh [Policy brief by the Secretary-General on COVID-19 and people on the move]. URL: https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sg_brief_c19_people_on_the_move_russian.pdf (accessed 29 September 2021).

ber of births exceeding the number of deaths. In 2020, the number of births exceeded the number of deaths by 44.2% (in 2019 — by 68.6%)⁴. The number of deaths increased by 1 480 people. In the distribution of deaths by causes for 2020, deaths from coronavirus infection caused by COVID-19 accounted for 7.8%⁵.

In the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), the formation of the size, ethnic and gender-age structure of the population, the system of social and labor resources, socio-economic and cultural and economic development have traditionally been associated with intensive migration processes. Throughout the 20th century, the model of industrial development of Yakutia was characterized by a massive movement and concentration of labor, in contrast to the industrialization of the polar regions of Norway, Finland and Sweden, where local labor resources were predominantly used [4, Ignatieva V.B., p. 86]. The Republic belongs to the most important mineral and mining regions of Russia and intensively attracts migrants to work in remote and inaccessible areas, where mining is predominantly performed. The territory of Yakutia is still one of the most isolated and hard-to-reach regions of the world in terms of transport: 90% of the territory does not have a year-round transport connection, which creates socio-spatial forms of restriction and alienation of the population. Features of the socio-economic development of modern society, global challenges, climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic have brought to the fore the issues of spatial mobility of the population, which characterize the standard of living and are a factor in the region's development.

Materials and methods

The goals, objectives and basic principles of the Concept of the State Migration Policy of the Russian Federation for 2019–2025 reflect the main modern domestic scientific approaches to the study of territorial mobility, migration: the complexity of approaches, taking into account the solution of problems in the field of socio-economic (reproduction of human resources of economic development, competition in labor market, etc.), spatial (including geographical), demographic (analysis of the size and gender-age structure of the population and migrants, their impact on the state of human populations), cultural (problems of cultural integration/disintegration), legal development (analysis of legal mechanisms) of the Russian Federation.

There are many different approaches to the definition of territorial mobility. According to experts, over the past decades, there has been a reassessment of researchers' attitude to mobility and its perception solely as movement in space. Currently, mobility tends to become a "whole", which includes the movement itself, everything that precedes, accompanies and prolongs it [5, Stroev P.V., Kan M.I., p. 36]. According to J. Urry, social life is a constant process of transition from being close to others (at work, at home, on vacation, etc.) to being at a distance. All social life,

⁴ Population of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) as of January 1, 2021: Statistical compendium. Yakutsk: Territorial body of the Federal State Statistics Service for the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), 2021. p. 6.

⁵ Mortality in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) in 2020: Statistical compendium. Yakutsk: Territorial body of the Federal State Statistics Service for the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), 2021. s. 9726.

work, family, education and politics involve relationships of periodic presence and different modes of absence, partly dependent on numerous technologies of travel and communication that transport objects, people, ideas and images at a distance [6, Urry J., p. 135].

J. Urry believes that social processes are based on five interdependent “mobilities” that organize social life at a distance and shape (and re-shape) its contours. The first type of mobility is the movement of people for work, leisure, family life, pleasure, migration or flight, organized in different ways in relation to contrasting spatio-temporal modalities (from daily trips to a once-in-a-lifetime exile from homeland), that is, the territorial mobility of the individual himself. The physical movements of people are interdependent with the physical movements of objects between producers, consumers and sellers, imaginary movements with the help of images of places and people carried out through various printed or visual media, virtual travels, often in real time, overcoming geographic and social distances, communication journeys through the exchange of SMS, texts, letters and telegrams, via fax, telephone or mobile phone [6, Urry J., p. 135].

In Urry’s opinion, the ability to move and the interdependence of movement creates a new form of social or “network” capital. Moreover, he believes that “physical or virtual movement between different places can become a source of status or power, an expression of the right to move, temporarily or permanently. Where movement is blocked, social deprivation and inequality can arise” [6, Urry J., p. 76–77, 142].

M. Sheller develops this thesis: the theoretical understanding of mobility is focused on the material practices of movement, communicative mobility, infrastructures and control systems that help/hinder movement, representations, ideologies and meanings attached to movement/rest [7, p. 3]. While V. Kaufman and a group of researchers believe that socio-structurally embedded actors play a central role in spatial mobility, as do certain contexts that constrain or make movement possible. Causes, limitations, and implications for larger social processes will remain unclear if the geography of flows is considered in isolation, that is, unless we can explore the *modus operandi* of the social and political logic of movements in geographic space. In addition, the study of mobility potential will reveal new aspects of human mobility in terms of the possibilities and limitations of their maneuvers, as well as the wider social consequences of social and spatial mobility. Based on these considerations, they propose a theoretical concept of mobility capital relatively autonomous from economic, social and cultural capital. They define mobility capital or mobility as the ability of subjects (for example, goods, information or people) to be mobile in social and geographic space, or as the way in which subjects access and use opportunities for socio-spatial mobility according to their circumstances [8, Kaufmann V., Bergman M.M., Joye D., p. 749–750]. The purpose of this article is to study trends in the formation of spatial mobility of the population of Yakutia in the face of a new challenge — the COVID-19 pandemic.

Primary sociological information on the project “Ethno-demographic processes in Asian Russia: the current situation, forecasts and risks” was collected by means of a quota questionnaire

survey. Topic of the survey: the study of public perception of cultural diversity, migration and migrants. The purpose of the study: to assess the conflict and integration potential of the population in the field of migration relations, to study the problems of internal and international migration. A team of experts working at universities and scientific organizations in 12 regions of the Ural, Siberian, and Far Eastern federal okrugs was formed to conduct the research, including an ethno-sociological survey. All experts are ethnologists, sociologists, demographers by profession, with experience in working on projects of the Distributed Research Center for Interethnic and Interreligious Problems. While preparing the study, a toolkit was developed for studying public opinion on the problems of internal and international migration in the regions of Asia⁶. This article uses the results of sociological surveys conducted in five regions of the Far Eastern Federal Okrug (n=1000) — the Republic of Buryatia, Primorskiy Krai, the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), Khabarovsk Krai and Chukotka Autonomous Okrug.

The article is based on the results of a mass survey in Yakutia. A total of 200 respondents over the age of 18 years were interviewed in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) from October 1 to November 25, 2020 according to the established sample using standard project instruments. The survey results were additionally processed using IBM.SPSS.Statistics (Ver. 21) using descriptive statistics methods (cross-tabulations). The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents are as follows: by gender, women accounted for 54%, men — 46%; age: 18–29 years old — 24.5%, 30–59 years old — 53.5%, 60 and older — 22.0%. Marital status of the respondents: not married, lives with parents — 12.5%, not married, lives alone — 17.5%, not married, lives with a partner — 6.5%, single, lives in a hostel — 2%, single, has a child (children) — 9.5%, married, no children — 7%, married, has a child (children) — 40.5%; 3.5% indicated other answers about marital status.

By ethnicity: Yakuts — 83.0%, Russians — 12.0%, Evenki — 2.5%, indicated other answers about nationality — 2.5%. By type of activity, employed accounted for 73%, combining work and study — 7.5%, students — 1.0%, unemployed — 2.5%, pensioners — 14.5%; by field of activity: state and municipal administration — 13%, army, police, Ministry of Emergency Situations — 2.5%, education — 19%, healthcare — 9.5%, energy — 2%, transport — 6.5%, finance — 4.0%, extractive industry — 1%, trade — 8%, medium and small business — 16.5%, other — 1%; by official position: managers, deputy heads of enterprises, institutions — 6%, department heads — 10%, specialists — 53%, employees, technical performers — 6.5%, workers — 3.5%, other — 5%.

Respondents' income level: the funds I receive are not enough to live on, relatives help — 13.5%, enough to buy food, pay utility bills — 36.5%, enough to buy food, pay utility bills, buy clothes, buy consumer electronics or furniture — 30.5%, enough to buy food, pay utilities, buy

⁶ Report on the implementation of the project "Ethno-demographic processes in Asian Russia: current situation, forecasts and risks" within the framework of the 1st stage of the program of scientific research and applied work related to the study of the ethno-cultural diversity of Russian society and aimed at strengthening the all-Russian identity. Omsk, 2020, p. 4.

clothes, buy consumer electronics or furniture, pay for travel — 15%, enough to buy food, pay utilities, buy clothes, buy consumer electronics or furniture, pay travel, buying a car — 4%.

In addition, the article used the author's field materials: semi-formalized in-depth interviews among labor migrants (n=8) from the most numerous ethnic groups (Kyrgyz, Armenians, Tajiks, Uzbeks). At the same time, the migrant was considered as a member of transnational social networks (family, compatriot). The search for respondents was carried out at the place of work. The informants were selected according to certain criteria: gender, age, marital status, reproductive intentions, level of education, presence/lack of work experience; frequency/absence of departure to the permanent place of residence regardless of the legitimacy of border crossing and method of employment; migration attitudes or their absence.

Results

Unlike compact European countries, Russia is a country with vast territories, where individual regions are larger than many European countries, and differences in social development of the regions are comparable to the differences between underdeveloped and advanced countries, and, as experts note, the Russian population in general has a very low mobility [9, Barkov S.A., et al., p. 66, p. 69]. Assessing the territorial mobility of the population of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) during the pandemic, let us turn to the indicators of migration activity in 2020. In the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) in 2020, the migration loss was replaced by an increase for the first time since 1990. At the same time, there is a significant decrease in the share of migration growth due to movements within Russia, including within the republic. In general, the share of intra-republican out-migration in the structure of out-migration within Russia from the 2000s to date has averaged 89.8%, and this indicator has had an increasing trend. The coronavirus pandemic provoked a decrease in the number of intra-republican migrants: in 2019 — 24.816 people, in 2020 — 22.677 people.

The number of migrants increased by 26.5 times in 2020 compared to the pre-pandemic year of 2019 (-229 in 2019, +6065 in 2020) (Table 1). According to the State Statistics for the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), the number of arrivals to urban and rural areas in 2020 (47.355 people) is 4.950 more than in 2019 (42.405 people), and departures are 1.344 fewer (41.290 people in 2020, 42.634 people in 2019)⁷. If previously domestic migration prevailed in the overall migration structure, then, despite the period of coronavirus control and anti-epidemiological restrictions, there is an increase in migration activity throughout the republic, mainly due to migration exchange of population with foreign countries (CIS countries — migration increased by 2.1 times, non-CIS countries — 19.5 times) and at the expense of the Central zone of Yakutia (migration growth increased by 8.1 times).

⁷ Migratsiya naseleniya v RS (Ya) v 2020 g. Elektron. stat. sbornik. Yakutsk, 2021. T. 1. L. 8654 [Migration of the population in the RS (Y) in 2020. El. stat. collection. Yakutsk, 2021. vol. 1. p. 8654].

Thus, 24.678 people arrived in urban and rural areas from outside the republic in 2020, 17.589 — in 2019. Including 10.501 people from other regions of the Russian Federation, in 2019 — 11.282 people; 13.690 people arrived from the CIS countries in the year of the pandemic, in 2019 — 6.195 people; from far abroad — 487 and 112 people, respectively. According to the State Statistics for the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), the number of those who left in 2020 (41.290 people) decreased compared to 2019 (42.634 people) by 1.344 people. Including 18.613 people who left the republic in 2020, and 17.818 people in 2019; 13.133 people left for other regions of Russia, in 2019 — 115.495 people; 5.363 people left for the CIS countries in 2020, 2.323 people in 2019; to non-CIS countries — 117 and 93 people, respectively.

It is necessary to note the difference between the information provided by the Territorial Body of the Federal State Statistics Service for the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) and the statistics provided by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) on the migration situation in the region. So, for example, according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs for the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), in 2020, 40.120 (in 2019 — 77.423) foreign citizens and stateless persons were registered for migration registration in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), which is 48.2% less than in the same period last year. The majority of foreign citizens are put on migration registration at the place of stay in the center of the republic, the city of Yakutsk — 18.204 people. (in 2019 — 38.279 people), in the regions of South Yakutia: Neryungri — 5.165 (in 2019 — 12.236 people) and Aldan — 3.656 (in 2019 — 4.940 people); and in the districts of Western Yakutia: Mirninskiy — 3.754 (in 2019 — 7.442 people) and Lenskiy — 1.458 (in 2019 — 4.794 people). 37.342 (in 2019 — 62.578) foreign citizens were removed from the migration register, including 978 people due to leaving the territory of the Russian Federation (in 2019 — 2.007 people), establishing the fact of fictitious registration — 742 people (676 people in 2019). The main migration flow is formed by citizens of the CIS member states — 88% (79.7% in 2019). The share of citizens of the states of the European Union is 3.6% (in 2019 — 4.3%). Citizens of other countries account for 8.3% of the migration flow (16% in 2019). The largest number of migrants who arrived in 2020 are citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic — 2.594 people (64% less than in 2019 — 7.190 people); Republic of Tajikistan — 1.843 people (69% less than in 2019 — 5.992 people); Republic of Uzbekistan — 1.045 people (73% less than in 2019 — 3.939 people); Republic of Armenia — 932 people (58% less than in 2019 — 2.201 people); Ukraine — 939 (62% less than in 2019 — 2.489 people)⁸. The difference between the data of the State Statistics and the data of the Ministry of Internal Affairs is a topic for a separate study. For the purposes of this article we will use the data of the State Statistics Service of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia).

⁸ Information and analytical note on the results of the activities of the internal affairs bodies in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) for January–December 2020. URL: https://mvd.ru/upload/site18/document_news/023/311/274/Informatsionno-analiticheskaya_zapiska_MVD_po_RSYa_za_2020_god.pdf (accessed 01 November 2021).

Table 1

*Migration growth in 2019-2020, people*⁹

Urban area	2019	2020	Rural area	2019	2020
within the republic	2 624	300	within the republic	-2 624	-300
between regions of the Russian Federation	-4 261	-2 753	between regions of the Russian Federation	48	121
CIS ²⁾	3 830	8 345	CIS ²⁾	135	-18
far abroad	16	368	far abroad	3	2

If we analyze the interviews conducted among labor migrants, we can conclude that the coronavirus pandemic has not predominantly affected their plans in the near future. None of the respondents is in a hurry to leave the republic, they value the available work, if their organization has suspended activities, they tend to look for alternative types of temporary jobs where restrictive measures are not applied — in taxis, construction, etc. For example, migrant M. from Uzbekistan says: “Here, anyway, we can earn more than at home, we’d better work here. I started working in a taxi, but I think we’ll go back to construction soon.”

Long-term plans of labor migrants are connected with work in the republic. Migrant from Kyrgyzstan D. (works in the commodity market) believes that “it is not necessary to come back to homeland because of COVID-19, all the more, then, in order to return to Yakutia, you again need to collect money for the trip – it’s expensive. I’m with my family. When the market was closed, my husband had a job at a construction site. We held out. Moreover, the sister who invited me here has already moved to Moscow. Who will help us to come back here now? We will try to work here as long as possible.”

The situation with network opportunities (or with network capital) of labor migrants is no different, apparently, throughout the world. Thus, according to the results of international studies, our colleagues write: “This is because people need resources to move and are generally unlikely to migrate without concrete opportunities and prospects in destination countries such as jobs and family or network assistance. Obviously, they can motivate people to migrate, according to the “push-pull” model, but international and national economic inequalities have limited explanatory power compared to community-level inequalities” [10, De Haas H., Czaika M., Flahaux M.-L., Mahendra E., Natter K., Vezzoli S., Villares-Varela M., p. 896].

We agree with domestic researchers, who believe that the potential for labor migration from the CIS countries remains quite high during the pandemic. At the same time, the potential for resettlement and integration in Russia is quite high and unrealized [11, Denisenko M.B., Mukomel V.I., p. 102]. D. Ratha believes that the more clearly the definition and observance of the national borders of states, their sovereignties, citizenship and the rights of citizens, the greater the gap in development between people and places, which in turn contributes to the growth of migration. In his opinion, in the coming decades, migration pressure will increase significantly due to

⁹ Migratsiya naseleniya v RS (Ya) v 2020 g. Elektron. stat. sbornik. Yakutsk, 2021. T. 1. L. 8654 [Migration of the population in the RS (Y) in 2020. El. stat. collection. Yakutsk, 2021. vol. 1. s. 8654].

income gaps, demographic differences between countries and climate change [12, Ratha D., p. 287].

The structure of general migration flows with the regions of Russia has remained unchanged for several years: the most dynamic migration exchange occurs with the Siberian Federal Okrug — 8.7%, and the Central Federal Okrug — 5.9%. Among the CIS countries, Kyrgyzstan (52.7%) and Ukraine (11.8%) stand out in terms of intensity of flows. Of the non-CIS countries (2.8%), it is mainly migrants from China (76.6%). During the pandemic, the share of incoming migrants significantly increased (by 11.5%), indicating work as the reason for their arrival: 3.8 times more migrants arrived in Central Yakutia, 1.5 times more migrants — in the Western zone. The share of arriving persons, indicating study among the reasons, has decreased (by 6.5%). The share of those returning after a temporary absence increased by 1.3%, and those returning to their former place of residence — by 0.3% (see Fig. 1).

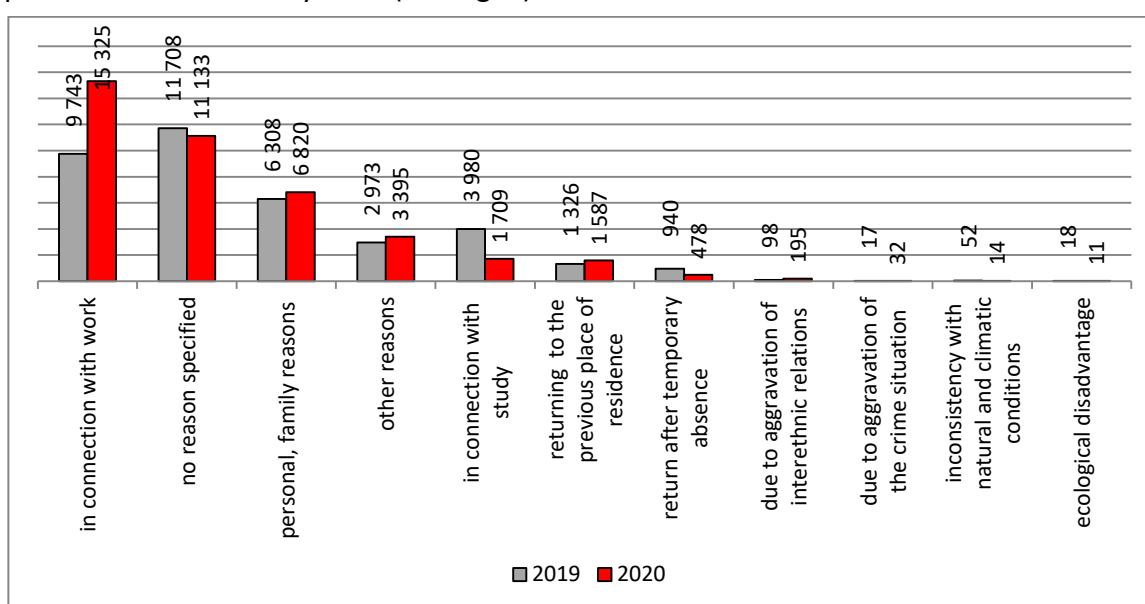


Fig. 1. Distribution of migrants aged 14 years and older by reasons for changing their place of residence, people¹⁰.

The peculiarities of territorial mobility of Yakutia's population are determined by a set of factors-conditions of the natural and social environment of the region [13, Rybakovskiy L.L., p. 54]. The main determinant of migration processes is the uniqueness of the territory in terms of diversity, quantity and quality of minerals: in terms of the total reserves of all types of natural resources, Yakutia ranks first in Russia. In this regard, there are disproportions in the distribution of human resources in the labor market and an uneven territorial distribution of productive forces. Migration processes in the republic are determined by the remoteness from the center of the country, the lack of year-round transportation for almost 90% of the territory and extreme natural and climatic conditions: the climate ranges from sharply continental in the south to subarctic and arctic in the north of the republic.

¹⁰ Migratsiya naseleniya v RS (Ya) v 2020 g. Elektron. stat. sbornik. Yakutsk, 2021. T. 1. L. 8712 [Source: Migration of the population in the RS (Y) in 2020. Electron. stat. collection. Yakutsk, 2021. vol. 1. p. 8712].

The Strategy for the Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) up to 2032 with a target vision up to 2050 states that in terms of space, the territorial structure of the republic is formed by areas united into socio-economic zones — Central, Western, Eastern, Southern and Arctic, characterized by a common transport and energy infrastructure, specialization of the economy, similarity of natural and climatic conditions. Throughout the last century, Yakutia, as a territory of pioneer economic development, actively attracted people from other regions of the country. Migration flows formed the population of certain regions and cities of South, Western and Eastern Yakutia in connection with the attraction of labor resources for the development of the economy [14, Sukneva S.A., p. 97].

E.G. Maklashova in the analysis of the ethnic composition of the population of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) starts from the stages of industrial development of the northern territory, defining the republic as a typical multi-ethnic region. She offers the following typification of the ethnic composition of the regions of Yakutia: southern type (dominance of Russians), central (dominance of Yakuts), arctic (dominance of representatives of the indigenous peoples of the North), mixed (an approximately equal and proportional share of the three main population groups), eastern (majority of Russians and a growing proportion of representatives of the indigenous peoples of Yakutia) and the republican (capital) type (the ethnic structure of the region corresponds to the proportions of the ethno-national composition of the whole RS(Ya)) [15, Maklashova E.G., p. 227].

The largest in terms of population and the most attractive for migration is the Central zone of Yakutia (Fig. 2), where 55.6% of the population (546.293 people) live, including 33.7% of the total population of the republic in the capital of the republic, Yakutsk (330.615 people as of January 1, 2021). In the smallest area of Central Yakutia, 56.0% of the urban and 54.9% of the rural population of the republic live in 9 municipal uluses and two urban districts. National composition is the following: Yakuts — 64.5%; Russians — 27.5%; Ukrainians — 1.0%; Kyrgyz — 0.7%; representatives of the indigenous peoples of the North — 1.9% (Evenks (1.0%), Evens (0.8%), Yukagirs, Dolgans, Chukchi) and other peoples.

The economy of Central Yakutia is dominated by municipal, social, transport and personal services, public sector — state administration, educational and health care institutions, wholesale and retail trade, real estate operations, financial activities, etc. Agriculture is mainly represented by meat and dairy cattle breeding, horse breeding and farming, in urban areas — by industrial poultry farming and pig farming. “The Central Economic Zone is the undisputed leader in the production of gross agricultural output”¹¹. The zone has a developed transport infrastructure, although there are also hard-to-reach settlements.

¹¹ Kondratyeva V.I. Tsentral'naya ekonomicheskaya zona v strategii sotsial'no-ekonomicheskogo razvitiya RS(Ya) na zonal'noy strategicheskoy sessii [Central economic zone in the strategy of socio-economic development of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) at the zonal strategic session] // Doklad GAU "Tsentr strategicheskikh issledovaniy Respubliki Sakha (Yakutiya)" [Report of the State Autonomous Institution "Center for Strategic Studies of the Republic of Sakha

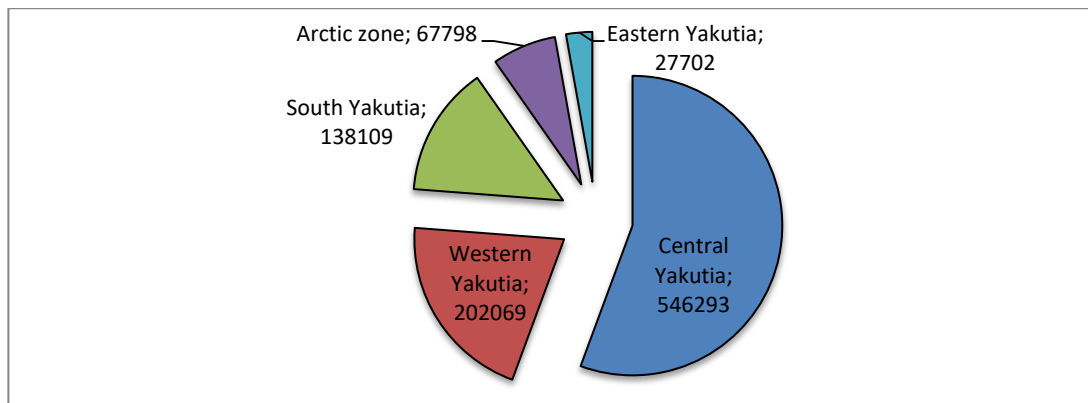


Fig. 2. Population of socio-economic zones of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), people.¹²

The city of Yakutsk is a political, economic, cultural, transport, energy, information and communication center of the region with a well-developed infrastructure. The capital attracts intra-republican rural, inter-regional and foreign migrants and has had a positive migration growth over the last 20 years, which has a significant impact on the migration structure of the Republic. Compared to 2019, the migration growth of Yakutsk increased by 3.6 times, and in Central Yakutia as a whole — by 8.2 times (Fig. 3). During the pandemic, the number of arrivals in the central zone of Yakutia (25,673 people) amounted to 54.2% of all arrivals in the republic, 1.7% more than in 2019 (22,250 people). And the share of those who left the republic decreased by 2.3% compared to the previous year (21,542 people) and amounted to 48.2% of all those who left the republic (19,882 people).

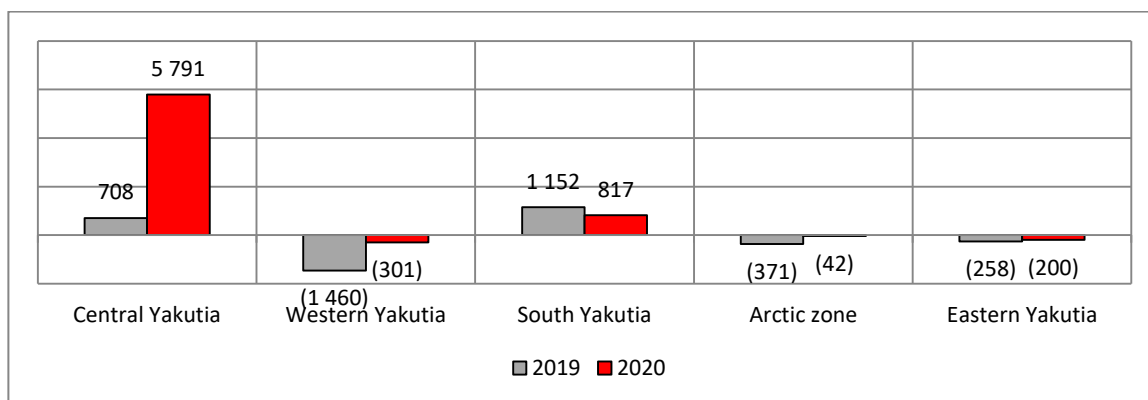


Fig. 3. Migration increase (decrease) by socio-economic zones of Yakutia, people.¹³

The next most populous zone is Western Yakutia, where 20.6% of the republic population (202,069 people) lives as of January 1, 2021 (Fig. 2). Western Yakutia is the center of the main sectors of the economy of Yakutia — diamond mining and oil and gas production. 19.2% of the urban

(Yakutia)". Yakutsk, 2018. URL: <https://mineconomic.sakha.gov.ru/tsentralynaya-ekonomicheskaya-zona> (accessed 29 September 2021).

¹² Chislennost' naseleniya Respubliki Sakha (Yakutiya) na 1 yanvarya 2021 goda: Statisticheskii sbornik. Yakutsk: Territorial'nyy organ Federal'noy sluzhby gosudarstvennoy statistiki po Respublike Sakha (Yakutiya), 2021. S. 14 [Population of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) as of January 1, 2021: Statistical Compendium. Yakutsk: Territorial body of the Federal State Statistics Service for the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), 2021. P. 14].

¹³ Migratsiya naseleniya v RS (Ya) v 2020 g. Elektron. stat. sbornik. Yakutsk. 2021. T. 2. L. 8747 [Migration of the population in the RS (Y) in 2020. Electron. stat. collection. Yakutsk. 2021. vol. 2. s. 8747].

and 23.3% of the rural population of the republic live in 6 municipal uluses of the zone. By ethnic composition: Yakuts — 49.5%, Russians — 40.0%, Ukrainians — 2.9%, Tatars — 1.2%, and representatives of the indigenous peoples of the North — 0.9% (Evenks (0.6%), Evens (0.2%), Yukagirs, Dolgans, Chukchi) and other ethnic groups.

The transport infrastructure of the region is complex and ambiguous. There are federal and regional highways, technological passages along the oil and gas pipelines routes (ESPO and Power of Siberia), navigable sections of the Lena and Vilyui rivers, as well as a network of airports. Roads are not accessible all year round. Many rural settlements do not have permanent transport links with regional centers.

One of the significant negative trends is the decline in the population in all regions of Western Yakutia, mainly due to migration outflow. Since the 2000s, the dynamics of migration decline in the districts of Western Yakutia have been persistent. Migration loss and release of the labor force are mainly associated with reorganizations and layoffs at the enterprises of PJSC ALROSA. In the structure of migration of the republic in Western Yakutia, the share of arrivals in 2019 (8.520 people) decreased by 1.2%, departures (9.980 people) — by 1.0% and amounted to 18.9% in 2020 (8.928 people) and 22.4% (9.229 people), respectively. Compared to 2019, the migration loss of this region in the year of coronavirus infection decreased by 4.9 times (Fig. 3).

South Yakutia, the center of coal and gold mining, is home to 14.1% of the population of Yakutia (138.109 people) (Fig. 2). In the three municipal districts of South Yakutia account for 18.1% of the urban and 6.2% of the rural population of the republic. By ethnic composition: Russians — 73.8%, Yakuts — 17.8%, Ukrainians — 4.6%, Tatars — 1.7%, Buryats — 1.1%, representatives of the indigenous peoples of the North — 3.5% (Evenks (3.5%), Evens (0.5%), Yukagirs, Dolgans, Chukchi) and other ethnic groups. The region benefits from high year-round transport accessibility (in Aldan and Neryungri districts — railway, highway and air traffic) and has interregional significance in the republic.

According to S.A. Sukneva, a characteristic feature of the demographic development of the SEZ (Southern Economic Zone) of the RS(Ya) is high migration mobility. The population of these areas was formed mainly due to the migration influx in the economically active age. The decrease in the population of the SEZ of the RS(Ya) occurs due to two components — a decrease in natural increase and migration loss [14, Sukneva S.A., p. 99, 100]. The region has experienced a long-term migration loss of the population, except for 2019 (+1,152 people) and 2020 (+817 people). In South Yakutia, the share of departing migrants for 2020 increased by 3.0% compared to 2019, it amounted to 17.3% of departing migrants of the republic. The share of incoming migrants decreased (by 0.3%) and amounted to 16.8%. Compared to 2019, the migration growth in South Yakutia decreased by 1.4 times (Fig. 3).

The Arctic zone of the republic is the largest economic zone in terms of area and includes 13 Arctic regions (5 Arctic (coastal) and 8 northern regions). Only 6.9% of the population (67.798

people) live in a vast territory, the area of which is 52% of the entire territory of the republic (Fig. 2) — 4.0% of the urban and 12.6% of the rural population of the republic. By ethnic composition: Yakuts — 48.1%, Russians — 19.4%, Ukrainians — 2.1%, representatives of the indigenous peoples of the North — 27.6% (Evenks (12.1%), Evens (11.4%), Yukagirs (1.3%), Dolgans (2.1%), Chukchi (0.8%)) and other ethnic groups.

As indicated in the draft Strategy for the Socio-Economic Development of the Arctic Zone of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) for the period up to 2035, there is no year-round land transport system connecting the Arctic zone with neighboring territories and settlements within the zone. All passenger transportation, both in long-distance and intra-regional traffic, is carried out only by air, while seasonal modes of transport (winter roads and inland waterways) are also used for cargo transportation. At the same time, waterways are uncontested for the delivery of life-sustaining goods¹⁴. The key sectors of the economic specialization of the Arctic zone are mining and traditional forms of nature management (reindeer husbandry, hunting and fishing). In addition, due to the underdevelopment of transport infrastructure and the lack of a unified energy system, the economy of the regions is characterized by high energy and resource intensity¹⁵.

The period of transition to a market economy, the closure of enterprises in the industrial complex of the Arctic have caused a significant outflow of the previously arrived working population of the Arctic regions. In 1990, 11.968 people left the regions of the Arctic zone. According to the State Statistics for the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), in the period after the 1989 population census until 2002, 51 settlements in the regions of the Arctic zone with a total population of 16.291 people were excluded from the accounting data, mainly due to the actual loss of significance and functions settlements, the absence of a permanent population and the futility of the settlement due to the closure of industrial enterprises during the reforms of the 1990s. In the intercensus period between 2002 and 2010, of 108 rural localities of the Arctic zone, 13 more remained without population. The negative migration balance that has been stable for many years in both urban and rural settlements indicates significant migration losses in the Arctic regions of Yakutia [16, Tomaska A.G., p. 383, 386].

If we consider the migration activity of the population of the Arctic regions, from the 1990s to the present, the greatest number of migrants both among the outgoing and incoming ones is observed in the areas of industrial development. The smallest migration activity in absolute num-

¹⁴ Proekt strategii sotsial'no-ekonomicheskogo razvitiya Arkticheskoy zony Respubliki Sakha (Yakutiya) na period do 2035 goda [Draft strategy for the socio-economic development of the Arctic zone of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) for the period up to 2035]. URL: https://economy.gov.ru/material/directions/regionalnoe_razvitie/strategicheskoe_planirovanie_prostranstvennogo_razvitiya/strategii_socialno_ekonomicheskogo_razvitiya_subektov_rf/proekty_strategiy_subektov_rf/proekt_strategii_socialno_ekonomicheskogo_razvitiya_arkticheskoy_zony_respubliki_saha_yakutiya_na_period_do_2035_goda.html (accessed 07 October 2021).

¹⁵ Kondratyeva V.I. Arkticheskaya zona v strategii sotsial'no-ekonomicheskogo razvitiya RS(Ya) [The Arctic zone in the strategy of socio-economic development of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)]. Yakutsk, 2018. URL: <https://mineconomic.sakha.gov.ru/arkticheskaya-ekonomicheskaya-zona> (accessed 07 October 2021).

bers is in the agrarian national uluses of the indigenous peoples of the North. According to experts, the curtailment of industrial enterprises in the Arctic zone of Yakutia in the 1990s reduced the level of its impact on the traditional economy and culture of the indigenous peoples of the North. It is no coincidence that, despite the socio-economic problems, many researchers characterize the period of the 1990s as the time of “ethnic rebirth” and cultural revival of the natives of the North [17, Vinokurova L.I. et al., p. 193–195]. So, for example, studies in the Arctic village showed that 73.5% of the respondents do not have any migration intentions [18, Tomaska A.G., p. 109]. The share of arrivals (by 0.4%) and departures (by 0.1%) of the region in the migration structure of the republic decreased slightly and amounted to 18.9% and 22.4%, respectively. However, the coronavirus pandemic provoked a reduction in the migration loss of the Arctic Zone of Yakutia by 8.8 times relative to 2019 (Fig. 3).

Eastern Yakutia is the smallest, with 2.7% of the urban population and 3.1% of the rural population, only 2.8% of the total population (27.702 people) (Fig. 2). There are large mineral deposits in Eastern Yakutia: the Nezhdaninskoye gold deposit, the Verkhnee-Menkechenskoye silver-polymetallic deposit, the Agylkinskoye copper-tungsten deposit with significant silver reserves. In Eastern Yakutia, one of the contenders for the northern cold pole was recorded — the area of Tomtor of the Oymyakonskiy ulus.

Although there are federal and regional highways, they do not have year-round access. Most of them are located in the mountains and are difficult to reach. The region also has significant migration losses since the 1990s. Since the 2000s, there was a gradual reduction in migration loss. In Eastern Yakutia, the share of arrivals (by 0.2%) and departures (by 0.1%) in the migration structure of the republic changed insignificantly and amounted to 18.9% and 22.4%, respectively. Compared to 2019, the migration loss of Eastern Yakutia decreased by 1.3 times (Fig. 4).

We are interested in the migration intentions of the respondents and the lack of migration plans, reasons and resources in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, because the ability to move has become a new form of social capital [6, Urry J.] or mobility capital [8, Kaufmann V.]. According to the respondents' answers to the question “Are you thinking about moving to another region of Russia or to another country?”, which reflects the presence and degree of migration intentions, we conditionally divided respondents into 5 groups.

Thus, 42.0% of participants would not want to leave Yakutia or move to another region of the republic, including 23.5% of women and 18.5% of men of the total number of respondents. We will conditionally classify this group of respondents as Group I — they can be designated as “sedentary”. If we compare this indicator with the results of the survey conducted within the framework of the mentioned project in five regions of the Far Eastern Federal Okrug, this indicator occupies the penultimate position among other regions of the Far Eastern Federal Okrug after the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug (39.0%). Thus, the group of respondents who do not want and do

not plan to move is 45.5% in the Republic of Buryatia, in Khabarovsk Krai — 52.5%, in Primorskiy Krai — 54.5%.

Group II — “active”, is a group of respondents who have decided to move to another region of Russia or to another country, they take active steps in connection with the move and make up only 3.0%, including 1.0% women and 2.0% men. Interestingly, this group is the minimum among the FEFO regions. So, for comparison, the highest level of respondents who definitely decided to leave their current place of residence and take active steps, is in the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug — 12.0%, in Buryatia — 10.5%, in Primorskiy Krai — 9.0% and in Khabarovsk Krai — 7.0%. It is noteworthy that with a relatively low indicator of “sedentarization” (42.0%), there are few people who actually intend to move. This can be interpreted in two ways: on the one hand, as satisfaction of the population with the socio-economic conditions of the region, on the other, as limited resources for the mobility of the population.

Groups II and III are united by the reality of migration intentions (13.0%). Group III — temporary migrants — are those wishing to leave temporarily — 10.0%, including 6.0% of women and 4.0% of men. In this group, Yakutia leads with Primorskiy Krai — 10.0% each. 8.0% of the respondents plan temporary migration from Khabarovsk Krai, 7.0% — from Buryatia, and 4.0% — from Chukotka Autonomous Okrug.

Group IV — “passive” — makes up almost a quarter of the respondents (23.5%). These are those who would like to move, i.e., in general, they are positively oriented towards migration, but have not done anything yet, including 12.5 % women and 11.0% men. Type V — “neutral” — these are those who sometimes think about moving (21.5%), but at the same time are not averse to being “settled”, including 11.0% of women and 10.5% of men. The last two groups are united by the desire to change their place of residence, a certain declaration of intent, most likely due to dissatisfaction with the socio-economic situation in the region or in the country. Respondents in these groups do not take real action in relation to the move; they can also be conditionally designated as “hesitators” or “dreamers”. In these groups of respondents, Yakutia and Chukotka Autonomous Okrug are in the lead in the Far Eastern Federal District (45.0%). The Republic of Buryatia accounts for 36.5% of respondents in these groups, the Primorskiy Krai — for 26.5%, and the Khabarovsk Krai — for 32.5%.

Among the total number of those who are thinking about migration, 9.0% plan to leave in the next year or two, 18.9% — within 3-5 years, 72.1% have not decided definitely. Among them, 28.8% want to go to another region of Russia, 35.1% — to another country, 11.7% want to go anywhere, if only to leave, 24.3% found it difficult to answer. The main reason for the migration intentions of the respondents, regardless of the reality of their implementation, is the low standard of living in the region as a whole: 53.5% of the respondents of group V, 50.0% of group I, 40.0% of group III and 38.3 % of group IV.

The next reason for migration intentions is the unfavorable climate. The official information portal of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) describes the climate of the region as follows: “The natural and climatic conditions of Yakutia are in many respects characterized as extreme. First of all, Yakutia is the coldest inhabited region on the planet. The climate is sharply continental, characterized by long winters and short summers. The maximum amplitude of the average temperatures of the coldest month, January, and the warmest month, July, is 70–75°C. In terms of the absolute value of the minimum temperature (in eastern mountain systems — basins, depressions and other reductions up to minus 70°C) and in terms of its total duration (from 6.5 to 9 months per year), the republic has no analogues in the Northern Hemisphere. Human activities and economic methods require special approaches and technologies, based on the conditions of each natural and climatic zone. So, on average, in the territory of Yakutia, the duration of the heating season is 8–9 months a year, while in the Arctic zone it is year-round”¹⁶. In addition, poor infrastructure, lack of development opportunities, lack of affordable housing and low wages are cited as the main reasons for migration intentions.

The main purpose of moving for the majority of respondents with migratory intentions is to find a permanent place of residence. Respondents of I (33.3%) and IV groups (36.2%) are in the lead here. Naturally, among those who think about temporary migration, this figure is only 5.0%. Sometimes, representatives of group V who think about moving consider the search for a permanent place of residence to be the main purpose of moving only in 16.3% of cases. Undoubtedly, the desire to find a permanent place of residence means dissatisfaction with the living conditions in the region, they strive for more prosperous conditions, with better infrastructure, where they can get a decent job, quality education, medical services, recreation and leisure.

The next main goal is rest and travel. Recreational and cultural needs are most likely to be met by temporary migrants (40.0%), followed by “neutral” (16.3%) and “passive” (14.9%) migrants. Those who definitely decided to leave and are taking active steps, i.e. Group I of respondents, did not indicate rest and travel as the purpose of moving. And, finally, among the main goals of moving, quite a lot of respondents indicated the desire to see the world, to expand the socio-spatial, cultural horizons — 16.7% of the Group II, 20.0% of the Group III, 10.6% of the Group IV, 20.9% of the Group V. In addition, the main reason for moving is socio-professional mobility, growth potential: the desire to earn more money, find a more attractive job. Among the main reasons for migration intentions were such channels of social mobility as successful marriage, access to a better quality health system.

Half of the respondents in Group II with “active” migration intentions are planning to move to another region of Russia. Most often, the places of migration preferences in Russia are St. Petersburg and other specific cities. A third of this group of respondents want to leave “anywhere,

¹⁶ The Republic of Sakha (Yakutia): General information. URL: <https://www.sakha.gov.ru/o-respublike-saha--kutiya/obschiesvedeniya> (accessed 01 October 2021).

just to leave”, 16.7% found it difficult to answer the question about the place of the planned move, despite the fact that they are taking active steps in connection with the move, i.e. the degree of social and subjective dissatisfaction of these respondents is very high. Group III of “temporary” migrants and Group IV of “passive” migrants most often plan to leave for another country — 47.4% and 44.7%. Among the countries of migration, the United States and the Czech Republic are more frequently indicated. Respondents of Group V, “neutral”, found it difficult to answer the question “Do you want to move to another region of Russia or to another country?” — 35.9%.

By marital status, there are more married respondents of Group I with no migration intentions — 55.4%. In all other groups, except for the active ones, where the number of married and unmarried respondents was distributed equally, single people predominate. Among the unmarried, most of the respondents live alone. It is noteworthy that only among those who have plans for temporary migration, there is a high proportion of single people living with a girlfriend/boyfriend (21.1%).

When considering the age factor in the formation of migration intentions, the respondents of the Group II with active migration intentions were divided equally into young people under 35 years old and respondents from 36 to 59 years old; there are no respondents aged 60 years and older in this group. Most of all young people under 35 are in groups III and IV of respondents: with the intention of temporarily leaving the republic — 70.0%, and “passive” migrants — 83.0%. That is, young respondents are more likely to focus on meeting educational, cultural and recreational needs and expanding their socio-spatial horizons, having temporarily left the region, or declare the intention to move, but the reality of the desire or the implementation of their intention to move is questionable. Probably, for the latter, this is due to the limitations of social, financial, qualification or educational and other mobility resources.

Temporary migration is considered by 20.0% of respondents aged 36 to 59 and 10.0% of those aged 60 and over. Among the “neutral” group V, those under 35 made up 51.2%, respondents aged 36 to 59 41.9%, and those aged 60 — over 7.0%. It is expected that there are more respondents older than working age in the Group I of “sedentary” — 45.2%. If we consider the age of the general array of respondents, then there are more young people under 35 years old in the Group IV of “passive” (19.5%), aged 36–59 years old (13.5%) and aged 60 years and older (19.0 %) among Group I “sedentary”. In general, young respondents have a higher migration potential, probably associated with age characteristics — a transitional position in society, the stage of personal search and the formation of social status, etc. This is also due to the fact that in 2019, Yakutia topped the list of regions with the highest percentage of young people who, having received

diplomas, could not find a job. In the republic, this figure is the highest in the country and is 73.8%¹⁷.

In terms of social status, among the respondents of group I — “sedentary” who do not want and do not plan to move, the lowest share is employed (65.5%) and the highest one is pensioners (29.8%). The highest proportion of workers in groups II and III with migratory intentions are “active” (83.3%) and “temporary” migrants (85.0%). Among the respondents of these groups, managers, deputy managers of enterprises, institutions and departments are the most numerous (40.0% and 32.4%, respectively). High migration potential is characteristic of those occupying managerial positions due to high socio-economic resources in comparison with representatives of other socio-professional groups. Among the people of groups II and III with migration intentions, the share of the unemployed is also high (16.7% and 5.0%, respectively). In the group of respondents of type IV, “passive”, the employed make up 78.7%, of type V, “neutral” — 74.4%. There are more specialists in these groups — 68.2% and 73.2%, respectively. Obviously, specialists, having financial resources for migration, are thinking about improving their social status. In the last two groups of “dreamers”, there is a relatively high proportion of respondents who combine work with study (12.8% and 14.0%, respectively) (Fig. 4).

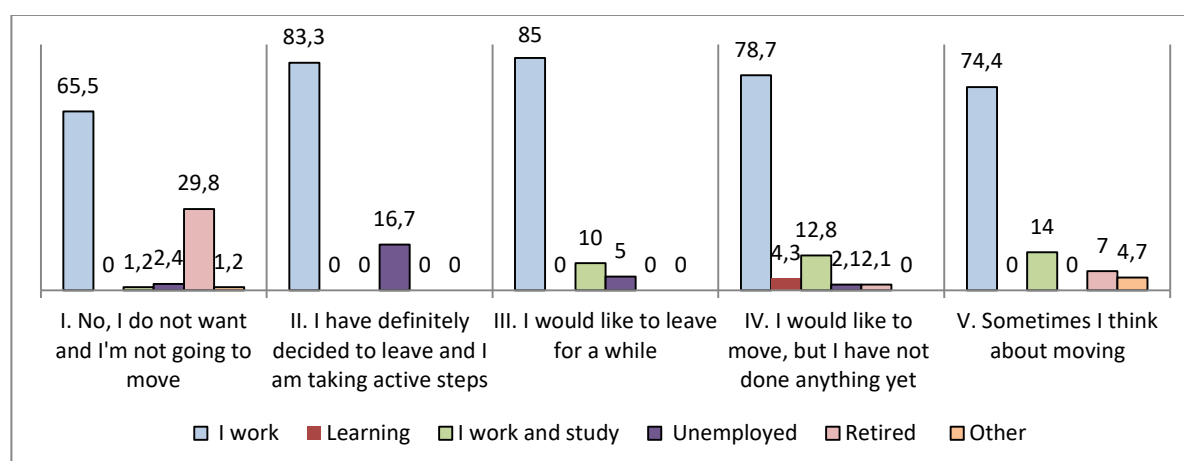


Fig. 4. Social status, in %.

One of the main factors of territorial mobility is the financial and economic resource of a potential migrant. According to estimates of the level of income, the lowest incomes belong to the respondents of the I group of “sedentary” ones, who have no migration intentions (56.0%), and the IV (46.8%) and the V (53.5%) groups of “dreamers”. They indicated that “they cannot provide for themselves and need the help of relatives” (13.1%, 14.9%, and 7.0%, respectively), i.e., they can be classified as living below the poverty line. Among those who noted the answer: “the funds I receive are enough to buy food, pay utility bills”, the largest number of respondents are in Group I — 42.9%, Group IV — 31.9%, Group V — 46.5%, these respondents have only a conditional sub-

¹⁷ V Yakutii zashkalivaet bezrobotitsa: netrudoostroennykh sredi molodezhi — 73,8% [In Yakutia, unemployment is going through the roof: unemployed among young people — 73.8%]. URL: <https://regnum.ru/news/society/2588833.html> (accessed 02 October 2021).

sistence minimum. These respondents — “sedentary”, “passive” and “neutral”, who are united by the absence of real migration plans — have limited financial and material resources for moving, i.e. the lack of financial and economic resources in this case, perhaps, creates deprivation and territorial mobility.

The “active” group is distinguished by a high proportion of those in need — 33.3%. But at the same time, this group has a high proportion of respondents who are well off in terms of income, along with those willing to temporarily leave — 66.7% and 70.0%, respectively. These groups of respondents thus have real resources for territorial mobility. At the same time, most of the respondents who have plans for temporary migration are satisfied with the living conditions at the present time, i.e. in Group III — 80.0%. It can be assumed that this group of respondents has a high financial and economic position that determines their migration intentions, the desire to expand the socio-spatial horizons associated with the satisfaction of their cultural and recreational needs. There are more dissatisfied with the living conditions respondents in the Group II who decided to leave — 50.0%, their migration intentions are connected with the desire to live in better conditions, they want to move to socially, economically and infrastructurally more prosperous regions.

If we turn to the respondents’ assessment of the socio-economic situation in Yakutia, then the majority of respondents of all types designated it as “average” — from 33.3% (Group II) to 55.0% (Group III) and “unfavorable, below average” — from 20.0% (Group III) to 66.7% (Group II). Only 2 groups rated the socio-economic situation as “very good, prosperous” — Group I without migration plans (1.2%) and Group V with uncertain thoughts about moving (2.3%). An insignificant number of respondents in all groups, except for Group II, believe that the situation is “good” — from 4.3% (IV) to 7.1% (I). Most of all, the socio-economic situation was assessed as “difficult” by those wishing to leave for a while to another region of Russia or to another country (III) — 15.0%.

Respondents were asked to compare the situation in the region with the situation in Russia as a whole. According to the majority of respondents, standard of living, unemployment, quality of school education, quality and accessibility of higher education, crime, public safety, political stability, protest activity, corruption, activities of officials, relations between people of different nationalities, relations between locals and migrants and religious relations are the same as in Russia as a whole. With regard to medicine, quality of healthcare, prospects for young people, prices for food and necessary goods, and housing, the situation is assessed worse. Only the Republic’s ecology, according to most respondents, is better than in other regions of Russia.

Here we would like to note some points. Thus, representatives of Group II with migration intentions, tend to assess the situation in the republic more negatively in several positions: unemployment, quality and accessibility of education, political stability, relations between locals and migrants (50.0% each), medicine and quality of healthcare (66.7%); these positions are considered more difficult than in Russia. People intending to move express the most formed request for

changes in the socio-economic sphere. Representatives of the Group IV, who would like to move from the region, but did nothing, have the most negative assessments of environmental issues (55.3%) and protest activity (61.7%).

According to the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), due to objective factors prevailing in the foreign market in 2020 and restrictions introduced in order to prevent the spread of a new coronavirus infection (COVID-19), the decrease in the gross regional product of the republic amounted to 5% compared to 2019 (1204 billion rubles). As indicated in the report of the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), the decline is associated with a reduction in industrial production due to a decrease in consumer demand in the world market for jewelry and technical diamonds, and construction volumes. There were also declines in capital investment by 45.2%, retail trade turnover by 4.6%, paid services by 23.5%, freight by 14.2% and passenger transportation by 52.7% compared to 2019. At the same time, there are positive changes, such as oil production growth of 112.5%, natural gas production growth of 2.3 times, gold production growth of 8.2%, livestock production growth of 2.4%, average wage growth of 4.5%, real wage growth of 1.3%, reduction in the total number of unemployed by 1.6%.

Respondents assess the changes that have taken place in the region over the past year, mainly as “practically nothing has changed” - from 34.5% (I — “sedentary”) to 66.7% (II — “active”), and “for the last year the situation has only worsened” — from 31.9% (IV — “passive”) to 45.0% (III — “temporary” migrants). Respondents who do not have migration intentions (14.3%) and those who plan temporary migration (15.0%) predominantly believe that “the situation began to change for the better”.

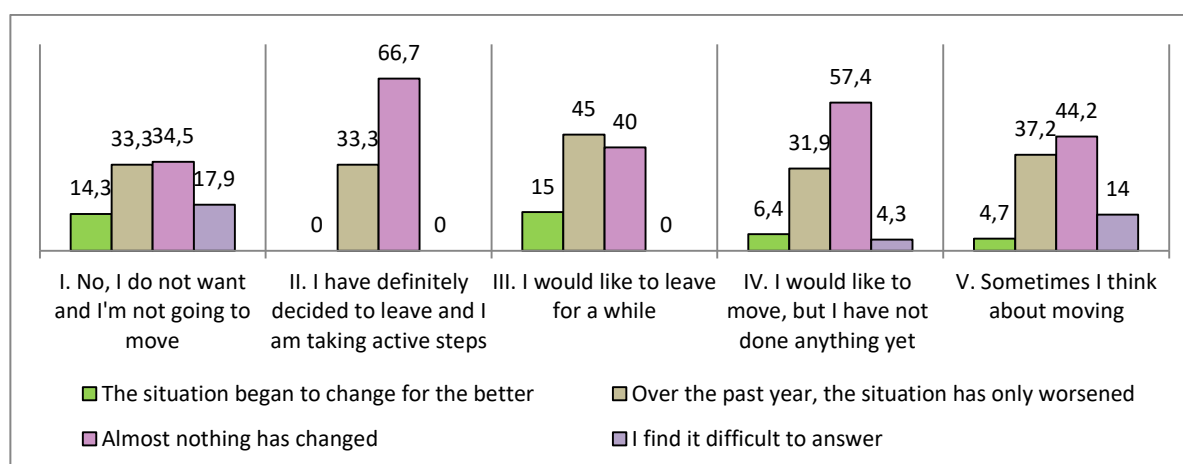


Fig. 5. Distribution of answers to the question: “How would you rate the changes that have taken place in your region over the past year: the situation in the region has begun to change for the better, has nothing changed, or has the situation only worsened?”, in %.

Among the respondents who do not have migration intentions, there is a high proportion of those who found it difficult to answer questions about the prospects for the development of the region. For example, the highest proportion — almost a quarter (23.0%) — among the “settled population” found it difficult to answer to the question “What, in your opinion, are the economic,

social and cultural prospects of the region in which you now live?" As for the assessments of economic prospects, the largest proportion of respondents expects the economic situation to worsen to a greater or lesser extent. Respondents of Group II with active migration plans are most confident in some deterioration of the situation — 50.0%. The participants of the Group III, "temporary" migrants, are the least confident — 20.0%.

The next most popular position is: "the economic situation will not change" — almost a third of the respondents agree: II ("active") — 33.3%, V ("neutral") — 30.2%, IV ("passive") — 27.7%. The most optimistic ideas about the prospects for the economic development of the region are in the Group III, with temporary migration intentions (30.0%) — 2.1% expect a significant improvement in the situation, 19.1% — a slight improvement. The most pessimistic is the Group II, "active" — 50.0%, and the respondents of Group V, who sometimes think about moving (48.8%), are the most pessimistic: 30.2% expect some deterioration in the economic situation, 18.6% — significant deterioration.

Social policy in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), in addition to the activities of the Ministry of Labor and Social Development of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), is provided by national projects such as "Demography", "Culture", "Housing and Urban Environment", "Health", "Education", etc. The respondents' assessment of the region's social prospects looks slightly better than the expected economic prospects. Thus, the largest number of respondents believes that the social situation will not change. The proportion of respondents with pessimistic expectations of the development of the social situation in the republic is very high. Respondents of groups II and III with active migration plans are most confident in some and significant deterioration of the social situation — 50.0% and 40.0%, respectively. The share of optimistic ideas about the prospects for the social development of the region is higher than the ideas about the prospects for economic development. The most optimistic expectations of social changes are among the respondents of Group III with temporary migration intentions (35.0% — some improvement) and group IV, the so-called "passive" migrants — 2.1% expect a significant improvement in the situation, 34.0% — some improvements.

As stated in the report of the Ministry of Culture and Spiritual Development of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), in 2020, before the introduction of restrictive measures, the main indicators of culture were constantly growing, including the main one — the number of visits to cultural organizations. According to the results of 2019 and the first quarter of 2020 (before the introduction of restrictive measures), the republic achieved the highest attendance rate for cultural organizations among the regions of the Far Eastern Federal District. The respondents highly appreciate the prospects for cultural development in the region. Most respondents expect some improvement in the situation. Here, the so-called groups of "dreamers" have the most positive expectations — the respondents of the groups IV (48.9%) and V (39.5%) expect a significant and slight improvement in the situation. The groups with migration intentions have the most negative expectations — the

respondents of Group II (50.0%) and Group III (40.0%) expect a significant and slight improvement in the situation.

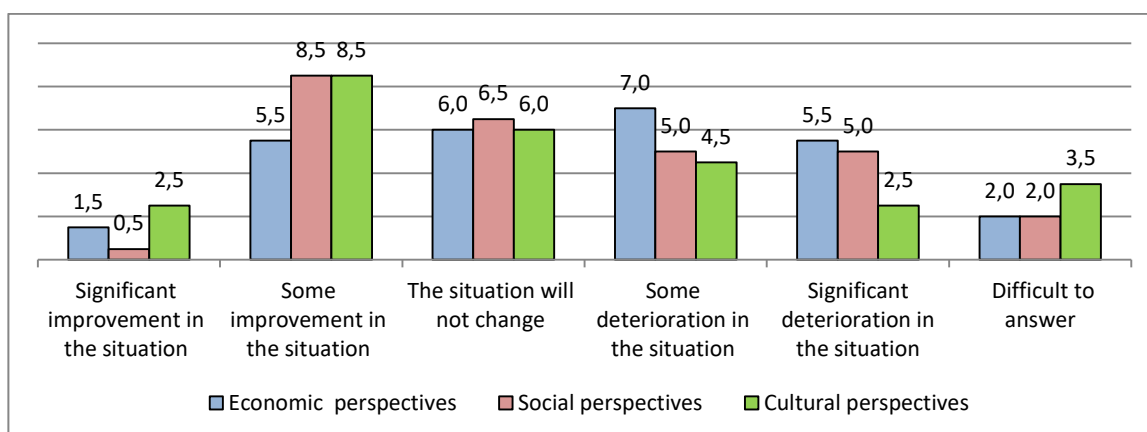


Fig. 6. Distribution of answers to the question: "What, in your opinion, are the economic, social and cultural prospects of the region where you live now?", in %.

Respondents were asked the question: "Under what conditions would you stay to live and work in your region?" Half of the respondents of all groups of potential migrants, except for Group II — "temporary" migrants, indicated that if decent wages are provided, incomes will increase. Here we would like to note that according to preliminary data from Federal State Statistics Service of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), in 2020, the population with cash incomes below the subsistence level is 17.4% of the total population. Despite the coronavirus pandemic, the poverty rate in Yakutia in 2020 decreased by 0.4% compared to 2019, from 17.8% to 17.4%. The cost of living for the fourth quarter of 2020 amounted to 18.368 rubles in the RS(Ya). Among the 11 subjects of the Far Eastern Federal District, the Republic of Sakha ranks fourth from the bottom in terms of the share of the population with cash incomes below the subsistence level, after the Jewish Autonomous Okrug (23.7%), the Trans-Baikal Krai (21.0%), the Republic of Buryatia (20.0%)¹⁸.

A third of respondents of all groups who are going to move, regardless of the reality of their intentions, indicated that the condition for refusing migration intentions would be the availability of air travel to the central regions of the country. By the way, the problems of the high cost of air fares not only in the central regions of the country, but also on domestic flights in Yakutia have existed for many years. State Duma deputy from Yakutia Fedot Tumusov told *Parlamentskaya Gazeta* that "the Federal Antimonopoly Service should not only find out why all carriers operating flights to Yakutsk have sharply raised ticket prices, but also deal with the high cost of flights to the Far East. The problem has existed for many years for ordinary passengers, air travel from Mos-

¹⁸ Uroven' bednosti v Respublike Sakha (Yakutiya): elektron. stat. sbornik. Yakutsk: Territorial'nyy organ Federal'noy sluzhby gosudarstvennoy statistiki po Respublike Sakha (Yakutiya), 2020. L. 11874 [Poverty level in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia): electron. stat. collection. Yakutsk: Territorial body of the Federal State Statistics Service for the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), 2020. s. 11874].

cow to Yakutsk is one and a half to two times more expensive than to Khabarovsk or Vladivostok”¹⁹.

“A cartel collusion between airlines is quite probable, and it’s good that the Federal Antimonopoly Service has taken up this,” said Kirill Yankov, chairman of the Passenger Union. “But the fact that flights to Yakutsk are more expensive than to Khabarovsk can be explained more simply: the more take-offs and landings at the airport, the cheaper the service rates are. Do not forget the difference in climatic conditions — there are no minus 50 in Khabarovsk. Of course, there is also such a factor as demand — in a wide-body aircraft, the cost of a passenger seat is somewhat less than in a narrow-body one. Of course, the totality of such factors should be taken into account by the FAS in its investigation”²⁰. As the study showed, the lack of accessible transport links is a problem in the Far Eastern Federal District as a whole. Transport inaccessibility and a feeling of isolation from the main part of Russia forms the opinion among the Far East that the huge region in which they live is needed by the federal center solely in the form of a raw materials appendage. The lack of affordable regular transport links is forcing an increasing number of residents of the Far East Federal District to leave forever for the southern and western regions of Russia [19, Smirnova T.B., p. 7].

According to the respondents, the next condition for staying to live and work in Yakutia is the development of social infrastructure, leisure and recreation facilities. Here, Group III of “temporary” migrants stands out – 35.0%; for information, Group II — 16.7%, Group IV — 19.1% and Group V — 18.6%. The Strategy for the Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) up to 2032 with a target vision up to 2050, adopted in 2018, points to the underdeveloped social infrastructure, the ongoing migration outflow of the population since the 1990s, including skilled personnel, the low quality of life, along with underdeveloped infrastructure, especially energy and transport infrastructure, which hinder the dynamic development of the Sakha (Yakutia).

Among the priority measures designed to stop the migration outflow of the population, primarily young people, the respondents indicated the creation of jobs (on average — 61.6%), the development of industry and agriculture (44.4%), innovative sectors of the economy (43.2 %) and social sphere (43.0%) of the region. In order to attract young and skilled migrants to the region, the respondents suggest creating jobs (on average — 56.1%), improving work on the support program for compatriots (33.2%), offering social housing (28.4) and allocating quotas for students (24.4%).

¹⁹ Aviaperevozki v Yakutsk nuzhdayutsya v dopolnitel'nom subsidirovanii — deputat Tumusov [Air transportation to Yakutsk needs additional subsidization - deputy Tumusov]. URL: <https://www.pnp.ru/economics/aviaperevozki-v-yakutsk-nuzhdayutsya-v-dopolnitelnom-subsidirovanii-deputat-tumusov.html> (accessed 29 October 2021).

²⁰ Dorogovizna aviabiletov v Yakutsk ob"yasnyaetsya ne tol'ko kartel'nym sgovorom — ekspert [The high cost of air tickets to Yakutsk is explained not only by cartel collusion — expert]. URL: <https://www.pnp.ru/economics/dorogovizna-aviabiletov-v-yakutsk-obyasnyaetsya-ne-tolko-kartelnyim-sgovorom-ekspert.html> (accessed 29 October 2021).

Conclusion

Thus, the territorial mobility of the population of Yakutia during the pandemic has a number of distinctive qualities and reflects a complex of socio-economic features and problems of the region. As the materials of the State Statistics for the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) showed, in 2020, the migration loss was replaced by an increase for the first time since 1990, and the structure of migration flows changed. The peculiarities of the distribution of productive forces and human resources in the labor market maintain a fairly high potential for labor migration to the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) from the CIS countries and far abroad in the context of a pandemic, the share of incoming migrants who indicate work among the reasons for migration continues to grow. The most attractive for labor migrants are the central zone of Yakutia due to a more developed infrastructure and a diversified economy, Western and Southern Yakutia, where there are centers of the extractive industries of the republic's economy: diamond mining and oil and gas production, coal and gold mining. The Arctic zone of the republic, the largest in area, is characterized by a negative migration balance of both urban and rural settlements that has been stable for many years, and the population decline trend continues due to migration loss.

The analysis of the survey results shows that specific features of territorial mobility, migration intentions of the population and lack of migration plans depend on socio-economic living conditions, various factors of individual social status and position, as well as mobility resources. For example, the main reason for the migration intentions of the respondents, regardless of the reality of their implementation, is the low standard of living in the region and the unfavorable climate. Potential migrants, mostly young people who are not married and have financial resources, strive for more prosperous socio-economic and climatic conditions, for regions with better infrastructure, where it is possible to get a decent job, quality education, medical services, recreation and leisure. There is a group of respondents planning a temporary change of residence — mostly people with a good social and financial status, who are driven by the desire to see the world, expand their socio-spatial, cultural horizons, and satisfy recreational needs and requests. Thus, the spatial mobility of respondents is inextricably linked with social resources and social mobility.

At the same time, the respondents predominantly give satisfactory assessments of the socio-economic situation in the republic and believe that in terms of most factors of social life in the region, the situation does not differ from Russia as a whole. When evaluating the prospects for the development of the region, the largest proportion of respondents expect the economic situation to worsen and the social and cultural situation to improve. For the majority of respondents, a decent salary, an increase in income and availability of air travel to the central regions of the country would serve as a condition for abandoning migration intentions for the majority of respondents. The specificity of the region is such that, in addition to solving issues of socio-economic living conditions, due to the remoteness from the central regions of the country and the harsh climatic con-

ditions of the territory of the republic, the spatial mobility of the population turns into one of the most important social resources of society.

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