

# **MIGRATION BEHAVIOR OF UNIVERSITY GRADUATES IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC SECURITY OF THE REGIONS**

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## **Abstract**

The problem of the behavior of university graduates due to the state of the regional labor market, quality of life and their own professional expectations is explored in the article. The consequence of the negative migration trends of young people, which is the main group of the working age population, is a manifestation of the threat of socio-economic security of the region. The comparative analytical data are presented based on a study, which was conducted in the fall of 2019 in Omsk and Sverdlovsk regions. Both these regions are industrially developed and educational centers that have a great number of enterprises and higher educational institutions. At the same time, these regional centers have differences in the level of their socio-economic development that has allowed to identify and compare the causes of migratory behavior of graduates. Despite these conditions, the regions have common problems, which is the lack of a greater degree of commitment and loyalty of young people to their place of residence and training. If negative migration trends persist, such a behavioral orientation can lead to a weak regional economy, the dependence of the regional labor market on foreign labor.

**Keywords:** socio-economic security, migration trend, migration flow, university graduates, young people

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## **Introduction**

Negative migration processes in the industrial regions of Russia, which are taking shape at present, affect the socio-economic security and sustainable development of territories. The main category of the population ascertaining such trends are graduates of higher educational institutions. They form and determine the quality of the social and human capital of the region, act as carriers and translators of new ideas, technologies, challenges, including digital content.

Graduates are the main competitive human capital, ensuring socio-economic security and sustainable development of the region. In the modern society students represent a very

specific social group, and in the long term form the basis of the economic, political and cultural elite of the nation. Flexibility, receptivity, the ability to absorb a huge flow of information allow us to consider this category of youth in the context of openness to the full in new ideas and opportunities, which determines, among other things, the directions of development of the labor market.

Graduate's migration behavior is based on their own professional goals, personal attitudes and values, determined by the living conditions and its surrounding environment. The main criteria of choosing the place of residence for the youth is the quality of life in a given particular region or country. That is why with the development of the modern society, as well as with the introduction of the digital economy, the student's migration intentions, as well as youth migration itself, become more active as the labor market and competitiveness indicators of the regions and the country as a whole. The internal migration is an important factor in the transformation of resettlement systems, especially in terms of the population concentration and deconcentration (Rowe, et al., 2019).

The issues of demographic projections, analysis of migration potential and development of migration strategies, including regional and international aspects, were raised in their studies by Abel (2018), Bonjour and Chauvin (2018), Burzyński (2018), Rowe, et al. (2019), Ryazantsev (2019), Rybakovsky and Kozhevnikova (2019), and etc. Assessments of labor market situations, the causes of regional migratory mobility, motivation of youth labor behavior were carried out by Abraham, Bähr and Trappmann (2019), Alikperova, Yarasheva and Vinogradova (2019), Hinz and Gartner (2005), Varshavskaya (2019), and etc.

The adverse trends in the quality of life and low employment opportunities contribute to the desired migratory outflow of young people. In addition, the significant problem is the imbalance between education received by graduates and the needs of the modern labor market, which contributes to the growth of unemployment among the younger generation (Alikperova, Yarasheva, Vinogradova, 2019). Under such circumstances and based on the increasing negative migration dynamics, there is a threat to the socio-economic security of the territory.

The socio-economic security of the territory is determined by the state of protection of vital personal, public and administrative interests from internal and external threats. This is due to the achievement and maintenance of the adequate quality of life on the territory, low level of social tension in the community, the civic engagement and the level of trust in government, the competitive market processes, the effectiveness of the administrative management, the balance of the government and population interests, and maintaining sustainable growth in the development of the territory.

Deepening the economic aspect of territorial security, it is necessary to point out the need to maintain the regional economy at the development level that would ensure the normal functioning of the region and its population. Behind this are the issues of ensuring employment and the effective functioning of the regional labor market, maintaining all economic systems of regional management in working condition, achieving a stable state and further economic growth of the region.

## **1 Data and Methods**

In this regard, the purpose of the study is to identify and understand the causes of migratory behavior of young people, which develops under the influence of regional conditions and factors of life and subjective professional expectations in the labor market.

The current analysis of the problems of migration behavior of university graduates continues the study begun in 2017 in Omsk region, dedicated to the assessment of migration processes as a factor in the socio-economic development of the region. In the fall of 2019, a comparative study was conducted on the “Migration behavior of youth in the framework of the regional security and sustainable development”, which included Omsk and Sverdlovsk regions, which belong to the category of the industrial regions with an established educational infrastructure that meets the needs of the regional industrial enterprises. The study was conducted using the methods of analysis of migration statistics, a survey of university graduates in two regions. The research interest is due to the attribution of these regions to the different federal districts of the Russian Federation, which have differences in the levels of socio-economic development: the Omsk region is located in the Siberian Federal District, the Sverdlovsk Region is in the Ural Federal District.

Accordingly, the following tasks should be singled out: analysis of the migration status of two regions in the context of determining behavioral factors and justifying the impact of migration outflows on the socio-economic security of the regions; identification of the causes of migration behavior of graduates of universities in these regions; highlighting problems in the migration policy of the regional authorities.

## **2 Results and Discussion**

### **2.1 Migration condition of the regions: Omsk and Sverdlovsk regions**

Russian conditions for the imbalance in regional development are characterized by an intensive outflow of the population from the Urals to the European part, to large cities (Ryazantsev,

2019). Omsk and Sverdlovsk regions have differentiation in terms of the living standards, labor market and social sphere. The state of migration flows is also ambiguously characterized in both regions. Over the past two years, both regions have shown negative dynamics of migration processes: in 2017 year, the outflow of the population of Omsk region amounted to 63935 people, in 2018 year – already 66 707 people; 120200 people left Sverdlovsk region in 2017, in 2018 year – 121994 people. Accordingly, by the end of 2017, the migration imbalance in Omsk region was -9853 people; at the end of 2018 it was -12102 people (Omskstat, 2020). In addition, an increasing indicator was fixed in Sverdlovsk region: -300 people at the end of 2017 year and -1300 people at the end of 2018 year, respectively (Sverdlovskstat, 2020). This indicates that both regions are gradually becoming regions of disposal; moreover, Omsk region shows an increasing negative dynamics of this state.

The total population of Omsk region at the beginning of 2019 year was 1944195 people, of which youth aged 20-29 were 232257 people. January 1, 2018, the population of Omsk region was 1960081 people, of which youth – 249179 people (Omskstat, 2020). The data in Sverdlovsk region reflects a quantitative advantage in population: it amounted to 4325256 people, with young people 516803 by on 1st January, 2018; at the beginning of January 2019 year, the number of Sverdlovsk region was 4315699 people, incl. youth – 481467 people (Sverdlovskstat, 2020).

At the same time, a decline in representatives of young people aged 20-29 years is recorded. So, in the total working-age population of Omsk region (1087582 people), the proportion of youth as of January 1, 2018 is 22.9% (249179 people); at the beginning of 2019 (1063608 people) – 21.8% (232 257 people) (Omskstat, 2020). On the one hand, the data of Sverdlovsk region reflect a quantitative advantage in the population, and on the other, there is the almost equal ratio of the share of youth to the total indicator of the able-bodied population (2367093 people): as of January 1, 2018 – 21.8% (516803 people); at the beginning of 2019 year (2337774 people) – 20.6% (481467 people) (Sverdlovskstat, 2020).

This determines the quantitative differentiation of students who study undergraduate, specialty, and master's programs. In 2017 the release under these training programs amounted to 16.3 thousand people in Omsk region, but there were 15.9 thousand people in 2018. In addition, 80.5 thousand people are students in 2017-2018 academic year and 78.8 thousand people in 2018-2019 respectively. In 2017 year, 25.0 thousand people graduated in Sverdlovsk region and 28.0 thousand graduates were in 2018. Moreover, 124.9 thousand people studied in the academic year 2017-2018, and there were 119.9 thousand students in 2018-2019 (Rosstat, 2018; Rosstat, 2020).

Such migration losses of student youth negatively affect the socio-economic condition of the region, as this category of population represents an economic and demographic potential, and makes a significant contribution to the formation of a positive image of any region (Tab. 1).

**Tab. 1: Migration indicators of the population of Omsk and Sverdlovsk regions (people)**

Year	Migratory influx		Migratory outflow		Migration balance (+/-)	
	Total	including from foreign countries	Total	including from foreign countries	Total	including from foreign countries
Omsk Region						
2017	54 082	8 776	63 935	7 608	-9 853	1 168
2018	54 605	9 253	66 707	8 347	-12 102	906
Sverdlovsk region						
2017	120 500	8 800	120 200	5 200	-300	3 600
2018	120 694	7 472	121 994	5 703	-1 300	1 769

Source: Omskstat, 2020; Sverdlovskstat, 2020

In 2017, the share of young people (aged 20 to 29 years) amounted to 20.4% in the working-age population (aged 15-72 years) in Omsk region, taking into account the average age of employed people - 41.0 year. At the same time, these figures are presented, respectively, 21.1% and 40.3 years in Sverdlovsk region. Moreover, the highest share of the unemployed population is observed in this age group: there was 29.9% of the total number of unemployed (taken as 100%) with an average age of the unemployed population is 37.3 years in Omsk region, and 31.8% and 37.7 years in Sverdlovsk region, respectively (Rosstat, 2018).

The regional labor market is also characterized by a certain differentiation in the employment of the able-bodied population, which is reflected in the employment opportunities of graduates. In terms of employment, Omsk region takes 37th place out of 83 subjects of the Russian Federation with an indicator of 64.6%, Sverdlovsk region is on 44th place with an indicator of 63.7% (places are ranked in descending order). In terms of unemployment, Omsk region ranks 63rd place with an unemployment rate of 7%, Sverdlovsk region is on 43rd place with an unemployment rate of 5.5% (places are ranked in increasing order). Accordingly, the coefficient of tension, which is the ratio of the average annual number of unemployed to the average annual number of vacancies reported by employers to the employment service authorities, is 2.9 in Omsk region and 3.6 in Sverdlovsk region (Rosstat, 2018).

Thus, the active migratory behavior of young people is determined by the search for better living conditions and the application of labor efforts, which at the same time leads to the

outflow of highly qualified personnel and helps to reduce the level of socio-economic security of the territory.

## **2.2 Migration behavior of graduates: Omsk and Sverdlovsk regions**

The positive or negative impact of migration trends on the socio-economic security of the region is determined by the nature of the migration behavior of university graduates. A survey in the fall of 2019 of graduate students from universities in Omsk region (245 people) and Sverdlovsk (255 people) regions illustrates the conscious desire of young people to find themselves on the labor market and to be able to realize themselves professionally as soon as possible after graduation.

The survey results presented the vision of young specialists not only about their own opportunities to find a job with an adequate salary or to continue their studies at a good university, but also about the territorial environment in which they have to live. This determines their choice of future place of residence and indicates the active or passive nature of the migration behavior. In many ways, the reasons for the relocation of young people lie in the fact that in larger cities they see more prospects for personal development and professional growth. Respondents point to more developed infrastructure (transport, social, etc.), the rapid development of digital technologies and a huge gap in income levels in such cities.

It is necessary to note the divergence of student's views in these two regions in assessing their place of residence after graduation. The overwhelming majority of students surveyed in Omsk region want to change their city after graduation, that take 54.2% of those surveyed, of whom 5.4% are planning to leave to the town where they come from. Meanwhile, only about 30% are going to stay in Omsk. Students studying in Sverdlovsk region are more patriots of the region, as 46.0% of respondents expressed a desire to stay in the city where the university is located. At the same time, a large number of respondents (19.6%) are still in thought and found it difficult to answer.

This migration behavioral differentiation is associated with the level of socio-economic development of cities, which are regional centers. So, Yekaterinburg city is considered by Omsk graduates as an attractive new place of residence and the application of labor (6th out of 15 in the ranking of places to move), while Omsk city is not even included in the similar list among students of the city of Yekaterinburg. The labor market of Sverdlovsk region is estimated graduates on 4 points out of a possible 5, as in Omsk region - barely reaches 3 points. At the same time, the three leading cities chosen for the move coincide, these are Moscow, St. Petersburg and Tyumen. International migration has some differences: Omsk citizens choose

to move to the USA, Germany, Poland and Canada, but the graduates from Sverdlovsk region prefer the USA, Germany, Czech Republic and Italy.

However, the main reasons that encourage able-bodied youth to leave the territory of study coincided in their significance for graduates of both regions (Tab. 2).

**Tab. 2: Indicate for what reasons you want to leave the region (no more than 3 options)**

Criteria	Omsk Region,% of respondents	Sverdlovsk Region,% of respondents
The lack of career prospects	59.6 %	53.1%
Change of scenery and desire for change	54.5 %	46.8%
Poor economic situation	50.7 %	30.1%
Negative environmental conditions	41.8 %	45.6%
Unfavorable urban environment, infrastructure is not well developed	39.4 %	33.6%
Close ones (relatives, friends) live in another region	11.7 %	15.8%
I plan to return to where I came from	7.5 %	10.0%
Other	5.0%	2.0%

Source: authors' research

The value characteristics of the reasons for the return of graduates deserve attention, such as the desire to return to their homeland and live with their loved ones. At the same time, these reasons serve for graduates with passive migratory behavior as an incentive to finally gain a foothold in the respective region after completing their studies. Graduates, who are permanently living in the region of study, note that their relatives and close people live here (27.6% are Omsk respondents; 30.5% are Sverdlovsk respondents). In addition, the positive character reflects the desire of graduates to develop their region of residence (11.0% and 9.9%, respectively), while some respondents already have their own business (3.2% and 6.6%, respectively) that also inhibits the activity of their migratory behavior.

It is necessary to note that in most cases Omsk students (86.9%) and Sverdlovsk students (73.0%) make decisions regarding their further place of residence by themselves. According to respondent's answers, the second place belongs to the parent's opinions, which have an effect on the children choice of the place of residence, which is 23.1% of the number of respondents in Omsk region and 15.1% in Sverdlovsk region.

Graduates also show a good awareness about the labor market, realistically assessing their employment opportunities within the framework of the specialties they receive and the corresponding expectations regarding their employment. Three quarters of the respondents in Omsk and Sverdlovsk regions have sufficient information about the labor market in their region (78.7% and 76.9%, respectively). In this case, information resources of the Internet and social

networks enjoyed the greatest authority in obtaining information about the state of the regional labor market among students.

Graduates of Omsk and Sverdlovsk regions assess their own job opportunities not very optimistic - as “high” (20.4% and 28.3% respectively) and as “average” (51.9% and 52.0% respectively). The majority of respondents in both regions determine their willingness to work with a salary of at least 30,000 rubles. At the same time, graduates are considering not only the realization of their professional capabilities in practice, but also choosing to continue their further studies. Generally, they are talking about the second stage of education - the magistracy, and about getting additional education related to the IT industry.

Reflecting on their future in the labor market, graduates also assessed the impact of active migration behavior on the socio-economic security of the region. The representatives of both regions believe that, first of all, the migration will lead to changes in the demographic structure of the population, namely to a decrease in population growth rates and population obsolescence. As a result, in the future, this will lead to a change in the structure of employment in the labor market and a reduction in the possibility of functioning and development of a number of industries in the region. According to the respondents of both regions, the second negative factor is the need to attract labor migrants (including foreign ones) in order to make up for the loss of the working-age population, which, in turn, will significantly affect the deterioration of working conditions and the wages level in the region.

## **Conclusion**

The survey results, which confirm the statistical characteristics of migration processes in the regions, illustrate that university graduates in both regions have a general tendency to change their place of residence, determined on the basis of the serious problem of lack of commitment, youth loyalty to their place of residence and study. We see that the concept of "love for the region" is being blurred among graduates. This certainly requires the authorities of both regions to form a positive image of the territory, destroying generated negative stereotypes and to ensure economic and social stability of the territory. Objective statistics on migration outflow and subjective opinions of young specialists show the aspiration of graduates to better employment outside the region of residence. In industrial regions, a gradual process of reduction of highly professional specialists is taking place, which is being replaced by labor migrants, mainly those with low qualifications. Thus, it contributes to the situation of the migration



imbalance of the region labor potential, forms the disequilibrium environment of the regional labor market and, as a result, affects the socio-economic security of the territories.

Summarizing statistical data and survey materials, we can highlight some recommendations to the authorities on changing the migration situation in the regions. Regional authorities should pay attention to the effectiveness of the mechanism of regulation of migration processes aimed at retaining and securing graduates in the regions of obtaining professional knowledge. To solve the problem of migration outflow of graduates, it is necessary to develop a regional program for the preservation of potential young cadres, in which actions will be developed that promote the employment of young people. In this regard, the authorities should form and maintain a two-way communication between universities and employers (industrial partners) in order to predict the size of the labor market and coordinate potential jobs in the regions.

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