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MIGRATION OF THE POPULATION OF TRANSNISTRIA: FACTORS, TRENDS, CONSEQUENCES

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Abstract

The article considers the factors influencing the formation of the modern migration situation in Transnistria, the trends of its development and socio-economic costs. Particular attention is given to the problems of the migration registration system in Transnistria. Also are presented the possible ways to optimize migration accounting in the region.

Key words

depopulation, population migration, migration factors, migration surplus, consequences of population migration, migration accounting problems, Transnistria.

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1. Introduction

The break-up of the system of the socialist stated had led to a number of reforms in these countries. These reforms caused a change in the social, political and economical situation of the population (Illner, 1996; Rose, 2009). Those reforms also lead to a number of important demographical processes and a change of the mortality data (Billingsley, 2011; Nolte et al., 2004), birth rates (Barakat, Durham, 2013; Bongaarts, Sobotka, 2012), as well as the degree and the directions of the migration. Most of the European post-communist countries starting with 1990s faced primarily a economical migration (Careja, 2013; Drbohlav, 1997; Weinar, 2014). Only lately there could

be observed a tendency of the migration among the rich layers of the societies (Górny, 2017; Janská et al., 2014).

This article is dedicated to the migration processes in Transnistria. The migration situation is a classic indicator which reflect the political and socio-economic trends in the region. Transnistria is a region of Moldova, located mainly on the left Bank of the Dniester river and comprising 7 administrative-territorial units. Over the past 30 years, it has been characterized by extremely negative migration trends. The negative migration balance has a direct impact on the natural movement of the population and socio-economic development of the region. The combination of migration and natural population decline

leads to depopulation of the region. Therefore, for Transnistria, it is vital to optimize migration accounting and develop an effective migration policy.

2. Materials and techniques

Sources of information about migration / population movement are administrative (current) accounting is a system of population registration or registration of foreigners; other administrative sources (residence permits, work permits or asylum applications); data obtained from checkpoints and collected at the border (types of visas at entry and exit from the country); general population censuses and special population surveys-family units and labor force / workforce (Cudinovskih, 2011). Issues of issuing and canceling a residence permit to foreign citizens are considered by the internal affairs bodies of Transnistria with the participation of representatives of the state security and justice departments.

Long-term registration of foreign citizens and stateless persons is carried out by providing documents confirming employment or the fact of training in the territory of the region, performance of duties on payment of taxes and other obligatory payments, availability of premises for actual residence, as well as other documents.

Registration of foreign citizens and stateless persons in Transnistria is carried out on the basis of a residence permit issued by the internal Affairs bodies. Residence permit is a document issued in accordance with the legislation to a foreign citizen or a stateless person in confirmation of the right to permanent residence, as well as the right to free exit and entry into the region. The databases of the internal Affairs bodies, as well as the population censuses of 2004 and 2015 contain information on the total number of foreigners and stateless persons living in the region; on the share of foreigners in the total population; on the number of permanent population of foreign origin by country of citizenship.

In the presence of more complete data on the population of foreign origin, it is possible to carry out additional classification by other subcategories – by age, country of origin of parents, professional status, occupation, level of education (Fomenco, 2017).

Distribution of Moldova's migration checkpoints on the Transnistrian section of Moldovan-Ukrainian border in 2015 included Transnistria in the migration registration area of Moldova and made it more complete. A significant source that allows to estimate the scale of labor migration and its geography is the information received by the Transnistrian (central) Bank about cash flows incoming to the region

from abroad. Experts suppose that among personal transfers realized by physical persons, about 3/4 are made by labor migrants.

3. Results and discussion

In the general scale of Transnistrian depopulation, the share of migration losses over the past thirty years has ranged from 40 to 50%. The remaining part is formed by natural population decline. During the examined period, the region lost more than 200 thousand people, which is about 1/3 of population number in 1991 (Predvaritelnye rezultaty..., 2016; Demografičeskaâ situaciâ..., 2019). During the 50-80ies of the 20th century, The Moldavian SSR (and the Transnistrian region as well) were magnetic to specialists and ordinary workers who were attracted by all-Union constructions, high salaries, comfortable living conditions. On the eve of the collapse of the USSR, in 1990–1991, Transnistria still had a significant positive migration balance. The military-political conflict in 1992, the absence of a certain international political-legal status of the region, the spread of many crisis economical phenomena, the external-economic limits, the inability to fully realize the rights of the population caused the depopulation of Transnistria, the loss of the region's migration attractiveness and intensive emigration of the population (fig. 1) (Burla et al., 2014; Fomenco, 2017).

In the summer of 1992, the highest negative migration balance in the modern history of the nation was recorded – residents fled the war to neighboring Ukraine. The positive balance of migrations noted in 1993 was of a compensatory (return) nature. Also at the turn of 80-90ies. in Tiraspol from Chisinau was relocated 14th Russian army. Although the conflict on the banks of the Dniester didn't have a pronounced international character, during this period there was an «exchange» of the population between the left – bank and right – bank regions of Moldova-from Chisinau to Tiraspol moved predominantly Russian-speaking population, and in the opposite direction-Moldovan-speaking. Since 1994, the number of departures (emigrants) has exceeded the number of arrivals (immigrants) annually, which has led to a persistently high migration loss of the population (fig. 2) (Fomenco, 2015).

Significant migration losses of Transnistria in 1996 were to a great extent caused by the disbandment and withdrawal of the 14th Russian army-together with the servicemen, their family members left the region, and this represented, according to some estimates, to 10 thousand people. A slight positive balance of external migration in 2017 was formed as

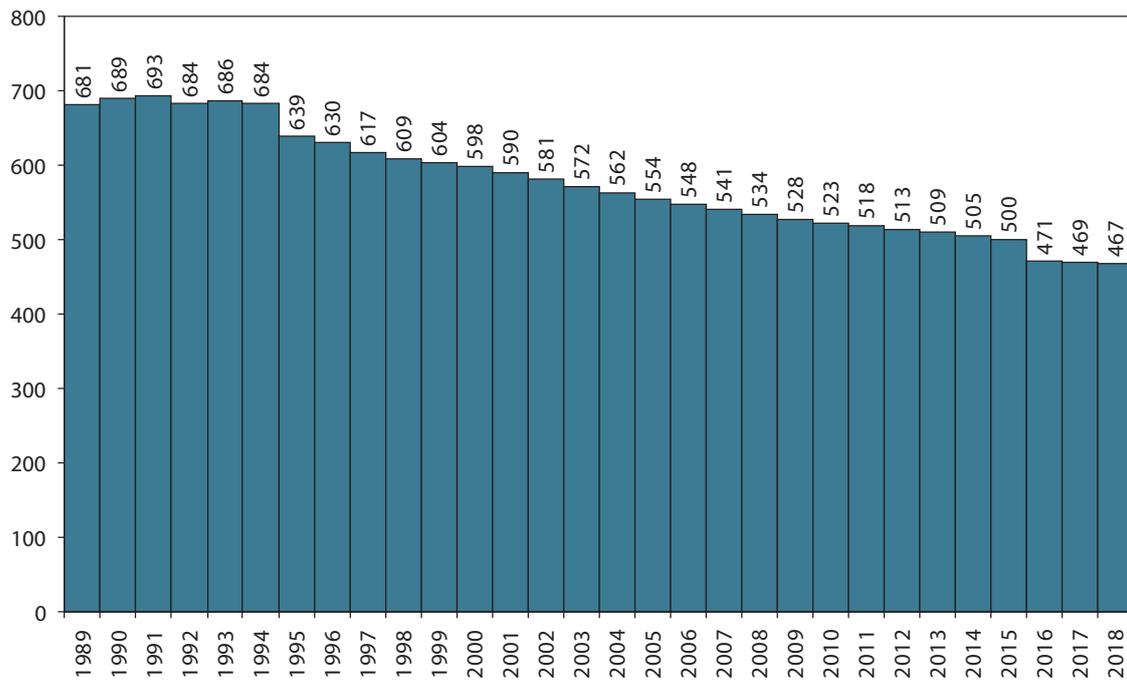


Fig. 1. The dynamics of the population of Transnistria [thousand inhabitants]

Source: Fomenco, 2017; Demografičeskaâ situaciâ ..., 2019.

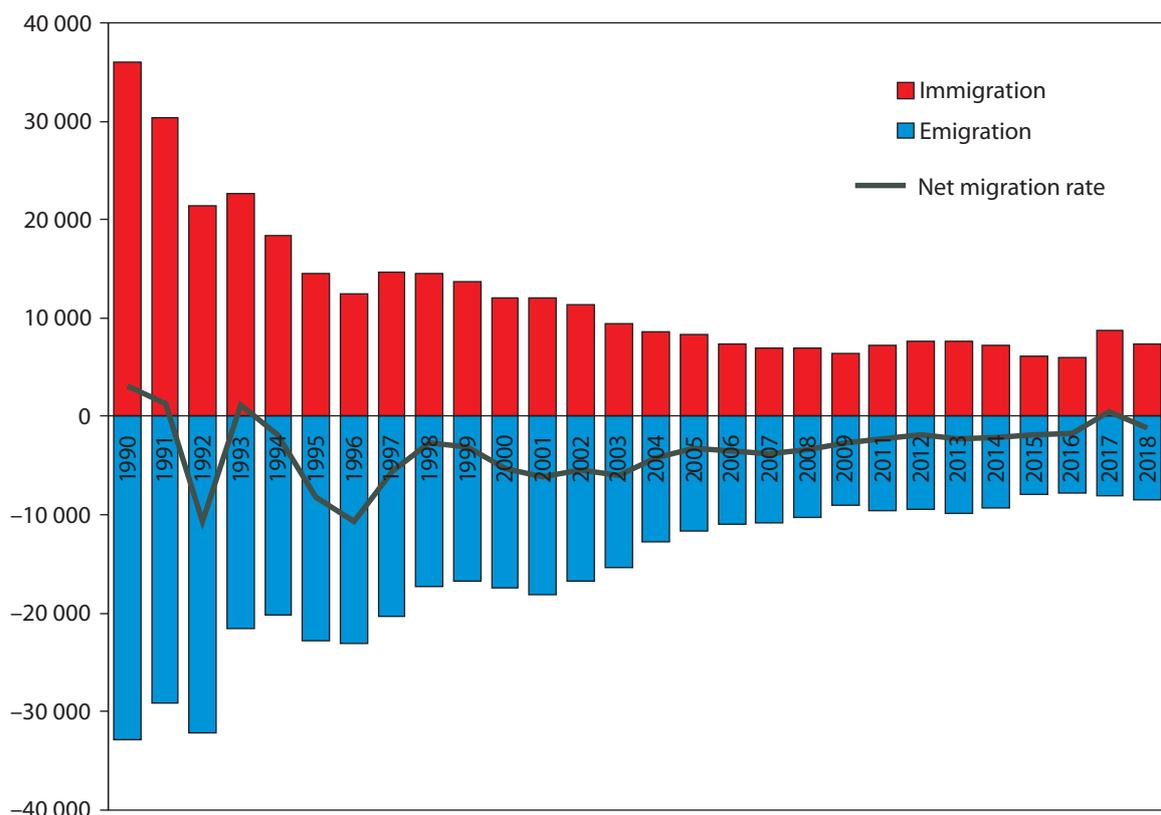


Fig. 2. The dynamics of the migration of the population of Transnistria [thousand inhabitants]

Source: Fomenco, 2017; Demografičeskaâ situaciâ ..., 2019.

a result of manipulations taking into consideration migrants (fig. 2) (Predvaritelnye rezultaty..., 2016; Fomenco, 2017; Demografičeskaâ situaciâ..., 2019).

In the XXI century the main reason for emigration is the uncertainty of the political status of the region, and as a consequence, the lack of clear socio-economic prospects for the population. This makes

it difficult for many enterprises to enter foreign markets, causes an increase in unemployment and insufficiently high wages in similar activities compared to neighboring countries (Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, EU countries). Therefore, the search for higher-paying jobs and conditions for self-realization also stimulates the «push» of the population from the region (Burla, 2015; Fomenco, 2015).

As a rule, highly skilled workers, scientists and graduates of educational institutions with high labor and intellectual potential leave the region—they show an increased migration tendency, since the level of their knowledge and skills is a significant guarantee of employment (with higher pay) in other countries. As a consequence, many persons temporarily working in Russia, Ukraine, potentially seek to remain permanently in these countries. The «brain drain» is facilitated by seemingly well-founded (from the point of view of civil rights protection) mechanisms of quota places in universities of Russia and Ukraine for graduates of Pridnestrovian schools. Graduates who use these benefits show an increased migration tendency and do not return to the region after graduating from the relevant educational institutions. Along with graduates of schools entering by quotas, a significant number of applicants enter foreign universities on their own and also after their graduation do not show any desire to return to Transnistria (Fomenco, 2017).

The region has also become actively involved in the growing migration processes in the post-Soviet space and around the world due to its relative geographical proximity to both Russia and the European Union. Since the 1990s, its participation in the process of international migration was carried out through the manifestation of several forms of migration (obliged, «Shuttle», labor, educational migration), but in the further and especially at the

present time, the predominant role was played by labor migration. More than a quarter of a century, Transnistria has been a source of labor migrants to the CIS and EU countries.

According to sociological researches conducted by the NIL «Sociology» of the University of Pridnestrovie over the past 10 years, for 50% of Pridnestrovian families exit abroad for work is the only source of live, and for 20–25% of respondents significant complementary earnings. More than 60% of interviewed indicated a difficult financial situation, more than 50% – difficulties in employment, more than 25% – delays in payment of wages, more than 20% – its reduction. Thus, as a reason for moving, respondents mainly noted economic reasons (Ostavnâ, 2016; Fomenco, 2017).

On average, every year about 1/4 of Transnistrians of working age (men – from 15 to 60 years, women – from 15 to 55 years) leave the region for temporary employment. Over three-quarters of them choose to take up temporary employment in Russia. The share of those leaving for Russia until 2014 was about 2/3 of the total number of those leaving Transnistria. After Ukraine's entry into the political and economic crisis, its host role decreased from 1/4 to less than 10%.

Among the priority directions for the labor migrants from Transnistria are still the countries like Byelorussia, Romania, Germany, Poland, Bulgaria (fig. 3) (Kivačûk, 2014; Fomenco, 2015).

The width of the arrows indicated the intensity of the migrational processes

One of the main motivation of the migration could be considered the wish of the majority of the population to reunite with the rest of the family who live in the historical country for example, mainly in Russian Federation, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Israel, Germany.

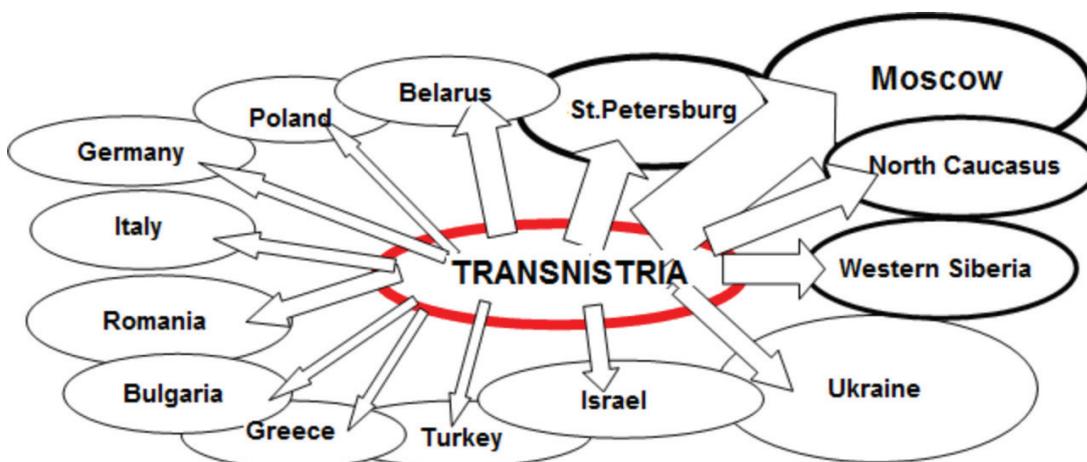


Fig. 3. The geography of the labour migration of the population of Transnistria

Source: Fomenco, 2017; Demografičeskaâ situaciâ..., 2019.

The loss of the attractiveness of the region and the outflow of a young, highly skilled and active part of the population leads to a steady decline in the number of the population of working and reproductive age, which creates significant imbalances in the gender and age, professional, ethnic, religious, social structure of the population, as well as in the system of settlements in the region. The gender make-up of the migrating population is traditionally led by women (Kivačuk, 2014). So, in 2018, 48% of the total number of both arriving and departing migrants in the region were men. The predominance of women among emigrants is one of the reasons for the spread phenomenon of «social orphanage». This negative social phenomenon is due to the long-term stay of parents outside Transnistria to earn money, while children are in the care of grandparents.

As the purpose of arrival (departure), migrants mainly indicate the nomination «permanent residence», but for a significant proportion of emigrants, this wording conceals employment and study for

a period of more than 1 year. The gradation of migrants in terms of education demonstrates an almost twofold predominance of people with higher education among emigrants over immigrants, which confirms the development of the «brain drain» trend (tab. 1, tab. 2) (Demografičeskaâ situaciâ..., 2019).

The external migration is traditionally dominated by the urban population. The share of urban residents among immigrants and among emigrants is stable and ranges from 2/3 to 3/4. At the same time, the rural population plays a leading role in internal migration and pendulum movements of the population. The data presented also indicate that there is a tendency towards a decrease in the migratory mobility of the rural population and a decrease in its role in migration flows. At the same time, a tendency toward a general decrease in the number of arrivals and departures to both urban and rural settlements should be taken into consideration, which indicates a reduction in the migration potential of many settlements.

Tab. 1. Data of the immigrating population on the territory of Transnistria in 2018 [persons]

	According to the arriving purpose				According to the education levels			
	including:				including:			
	Labor	Study	Permanent residence	Other	Higher education	Vocational and professional	Secondary	Other
Total	7	14	2 956	294	677	1 106	595	893
Including:								
0-16 years	-	3	598	47	-	-	1	647
17-24 years	2	9	239	19	48	91	83	47
25-29 years	-	1	235	35	102	92	55	22
30-39 years	2	-	584	53	200	241	132	66
40-49 years	2	1	419	40	107	217	104	34
50 years and elder	1	-	881	100	220	465	220	77

Source: Demografičeskaâ situaciâ..., 2019.

Tab. 2. Data of the emigrating population on the territory of Transnistria in 2018 [persons]

	According to the arriving purpose				According to the education levels			
	including:				including:			
	Labor	Study	Permanent residence	Other	Higher education	Vocational and professional	Secondary	Other
Total	7	36	4 085	10	1 155	1 334	650	999
including								
0-16 years	-	2	629	1	-	-	-	632
17-24 years	3	31	633	6	158	191	220	104
25-29 years	-	3	372	-	193	118	32	32
30-39 years	1	-	879	2	361	316	128	77
40-49 years	1	-	613	-	218	244	86	66
50 years and elder	2	-	959	1	225	465	184	88

Source: Demografičeskaâ situaciâ..., 2019.

An important indicator that can be regarded as evidence of migration loss in cities and regions is the proportion of the temporarily absent population. In the intercensal period (from 2004 to 2015), this proportion increased markedly. Resident population is the number of persons whose permanent residence is located in the relevant territory, including temporarily absent persons. In census statistics there is such a category of accounting as «temporarily absent population». This is an indirect source of information about migrants. Thus, in 2004, 6.5% of people in this category were recorded, and the 2015 census recorded a twice as many – almost 15%. Of the total share of the temporarily absent population of less than 1 year, 11% are absent, and 3.8% are missing for more than 1 year. If the first category of people left Transnistria (usually moving to neighboring countries) for temporary employment, since the

migration legislation of these States limits their stay for a period of 3 to 6 months, the second category can be attributed to the so-called «potentially irrevocable» emigrants (tab. 3, tab. 4) (Predvaritelnye rezultaty..., 2016; Fomenco, 2017).

With a high degree of probability, the population is temporarily missing for more than one year – this is a category of people who left the country for permanent residence and for further employment. In the territorial context, the number of temporarily absent during the inter-census period (2004–2015) has increased in the following cities: in Tiraspol – it has risen sevenfold, in the Dniester – in 2.5 times, in Bender – it almost doubled, in Rybnitsa district – it grew up in 2.5 times.

In rural areas of Transnistria, the increase in the number of temporarily missing citizens is less significant, since the vast majority of rural settlements have

Tab. 3. Temporary and permanently absent population of Transnistria in 2004 and 2015

	Total population (2004)	Temporarily absent population (2004)	Temporarily absent population and the percentage compared to the total population (2004)	Total population (2015)	Temporarily absent population (2015)	Temporarily absent population and the percentage compared to the total population (2015)
Transnistria	555 347	36 312	6.54	475 665	70 587	14.84
Tiraspol city	146 781	3 669	2.50	129 477	18 808	14.53
Dnestrovsk city	12 382	879	7.10	9 756	1 686	17.28
Bender city	105 010	11 916	11.35	91 298	18 298	20.04
Rybnitsa district	82 699	5 277	6.38	69 560	10 747	15.45
Dubossar district	37 449	3 092	8.26	31 222	5 110	16.37
Slobodseya district	95 742	4 640	4.85	83 863	7 520	8.97
Grigoriopol district	48 000	4 299	8.96	39 819	6 345	15.93
Kamenka district	27 284	2 540	9.31	20 670	2 073	10.03

Source: Predvaritelnye rezultaty..., 2016.

Tab. 4. Temporary absent population of Transnistria in 2015

	Permanent population	Absent population	
		Temporarily absent population less than one year	Temporarily absent population one year and more
Transnistria	475 665	52 558	18 029
Tiraspol city	129 477	12 263	6 545
Dnestrovsk city	9 756	1 216	470
Bender city	91 298	15 468	2 830
Rybnitsa district	69 560	6 319	4 428
Dubossar district	31 222	4 225	885
Slobodseya district	83 863	6 455	1 065
Grigoriopol district	39 819	4 809	1 536
Kamenka district	20 670	1 803	270

Source: Predvaritelnye rezultaty..., 2016.

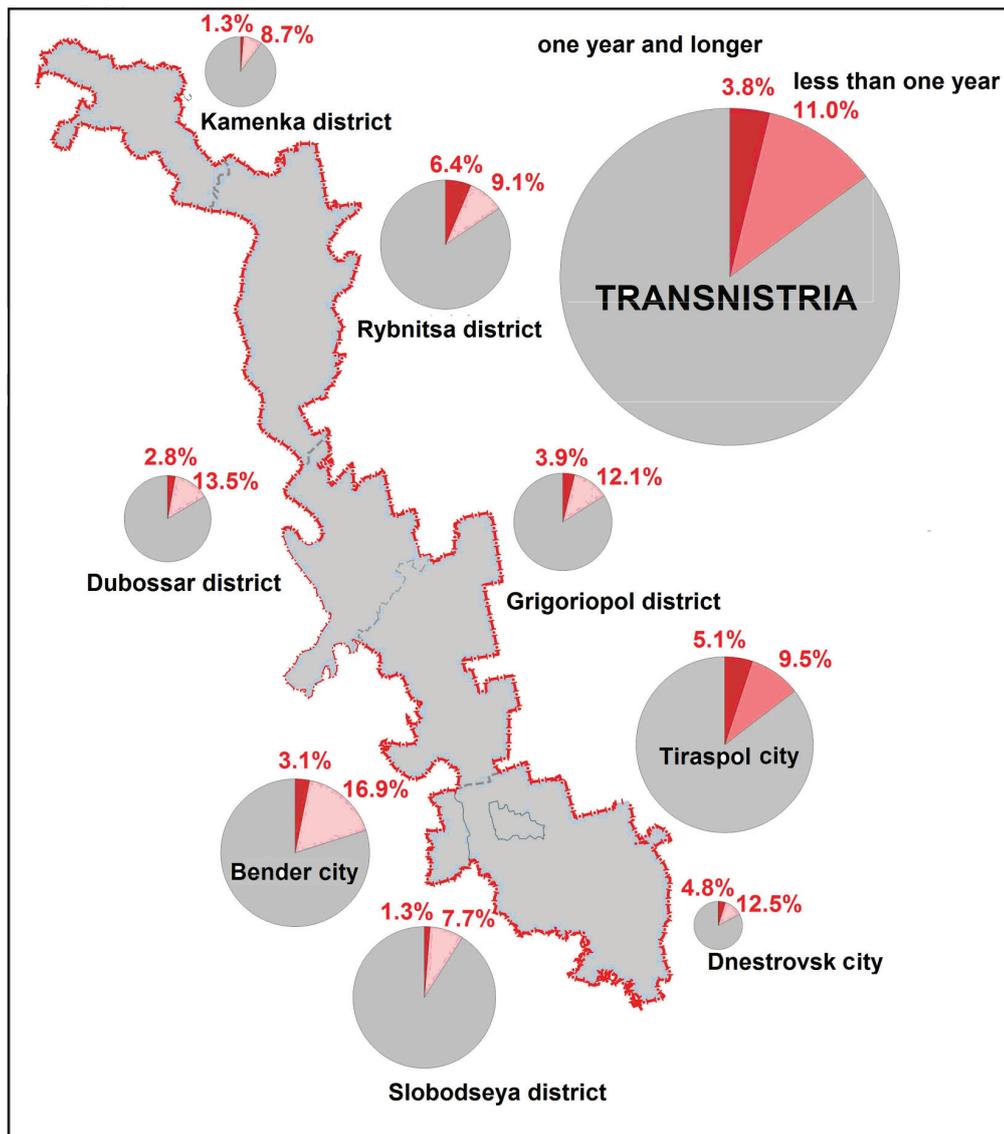


Fig. 4. Temporarily absent population of Transnistria.

Source: *Predvaritelnye rezultaty...*, 2016.

exhausted demographic opportunities the growth potential of emigration (see tab. 3; tab. 4; fig. 4) (*Predvaritelnye rezultaty...*, 2016; *Otchet o naučno-issledovatel'skoi rabote...*, 2016; Fomenco, 2017).

At the same time, the depopulation value of the negative migration balance is most significant in rural areas, where it has a strong cumulative effect along with the natural population loss. As a result, there is not only depopulation of rural areas, but also the deformation of the sex and age structure of the population, which significantly undermines the reproductive and labor potential. The current negative demographic state of the rural areas of the Transnistrian Moldavian Republic results from the severe agriculture crisis, accompanied by the degradation of industrial and social infrastructure. Therefore, many villages are covered by demographic ageing and they have lost their production function, retaining

only the consumer one. The decrease in transport accessibility, economic and social difficulties of the Transnistrian village, the negative demographic situation allow us to make a conclusion that the role of large rural settlements as poles of migration attraction will increase, that is why, the larger villages are characterized by the highest demographic stability and stability of the population, as a result of compensatory migratory flows from small villages to larger ones (Fomenco, 2016).

In fact, the dimension of international migration of Transnistrian residents is carried out at the border and migration registration points on the Moldovan-Ukrainian and Moldovan-Romanian border and at the Chisinau international airport by taking into account passports of Russia, Ukraine and other countries, residence permits and internal passports of the Republic of Moldova (RM).

First of all, these are Transnistrians who are citizens of Moldova (20%), Russia (15%) and Ukraine (10%). Belarus, Bulgaria and Romania are much less (from 1 to 5%). Dual citizenship is allowed in principle, but it requires notification of the passport services of both countries of which citizenship the subject possesses. It is not possible to make a sufficiently complete accounting of the citizenship of the inhabitants of Transnistria. Moldova's experts recognize the open border with Transnistria as a significant problem of regulating migratory flows.

When we speak about the impossibility for the inhabitants of Transnistria to cross the border of Republic of Moldova, especially those who do not have a resident permit or a Moldovan identification card, the number of Transnistrians who registered their profiles in the passport registration bodies of Republic of Moldova. Nowadays there is a 100% tendency from the part of the registration bodies of Republic of Moldova to record all migration active Transnistrian citizens (Krivenko, Ostavnaâ, 2013; Fomenco, 2017). It is also important to mention that the citizenship of a certain country is not necessarily coinciding with the ethnical identity of the persons. The Russian passport is most appreciated and it reflects the tendency of the population to choose Russian Federation as their future temporary or permanent settlement (Volkova, Ostavnaâ, 2014).

The migration of the population affects a certain defining influence of the number, settlement, structure and dynamics of the population of the discussed region, as well as of the separate administrative units, cities or villages. It mainly influences the age, gender, ethnical, social and professional composition of the population, the territorial organization of the population and of the economy of the republic. The demographic costs of emigration are of a depopulation character. The departure from the region of young people leads to a change of the age structure of the population, to an increase in the demographic burden on the economically active population and reduces the reproductive potential. The demographic problems of the region which are caused by the negative migration balance possess an extremely negative prolonged socio-economic consequence.

The labor migration leads to the equalization of wage and consumption levels in different countries. The distribution of the positive economic effect resulting from migration occurs in the form of an increase in the income of migrants, remittances from abroad to their homeland, as a result of lower production costs in countries receiving the remittances. In case when legal status is established, immigrants generally receive less social benefits and pay more

taxes and contributions than the native population. This is topical for Transnistria as an exporter of workforce. However, currency transfers to the region makes up for these costs. The international movement of workforce is one of the most important factors of production, because it has a direct impact on the economic growth rate of the region. At the same time, workforce emigration from Transnistria reduces the unemployment rate in the republic and reduces the potential burden on various social institutions of the state.

The current migration situation in Transnistria requires solving a number of high priority tasks. The categories of migrants who need to be registered, the procedures for collecting primary data, their accumulation, processing and dissemination should be determined by special regulatory acts. The main task is to put in order the legal framework for migrants. It is necessary not only to audit existing acts, but also to create new ones that will allow the formation of a more efficient system for collecting statistical data.

It is necessary to improve the law on migration as the main regulatory framework governing various aspects of migration and the development of an effective migration policy. For example, because of the lack of an internationally defined status of the region, the existing Transnistrian migration legislation does not contain provisions governing the status of labor migrants working outside the region. A system that has been debugged for decades and uses the statistical records of migrants has made it possible to obtain sufficiently versatile information suitable not only for description, but also for a comprehensive analysis of migration processes.

For example, because of the lack of an internationally defined status of the region, the existing Transnistrian migration legislation does not contain provisions governing the status of labor migrants working outside the region. A system that has been debugged for decades and uses the statistical records of migrants has made it possible to obtain sufficiently versatile information suitable not only for description, but also for a comprehensive analysis of migration processes. The system has now been converted to an electronic format. Statistics should be disseminated with detailed data, including information on the source of the primary data, the concepts and special used terms, the extent of coverage, frequency and reliability.

The functions of the statistical service and other public authorities in the production of data on international migration should be expanded. There is a need for greater coordination among major data producers. These institutional structures have the greatest potential and methodologies for working

with databases in the field of international migration. However, international requirements in the field of migration statistics are not always observed systematically and correctly. In Transnistria, the Russian migration accounting standards are applied and in Moldova – those which are adopted in the EU.

Based on the sustainable development goals of the region, census data on the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of migrants should be developed in detail. In preparation for subsequent population censuses their programs should be substantially transformed: the range of issues should be expanded and new formulations introduced to obtain more diverse and adequate information on the place of residence (the exact address of places of residence, including the second homes, work and study), the number, origin, composition of migrants and the geography of movements made.

Also local mobility of the population need to improve the system of storage and processing of census results, to organize sample (1%) of census data for a wide range of users (Cesnokova, 2010).

The census is a unique opportunity to assess the coverage and completeness of the data in the state population register by comparing the data with the data of persons specified in the census, which will contribute to the introduction of the internationally recommended concept of permanent population in the annual demographic statistics, after the census of Transnistria.

In addition, the combination of the state population register and census data can serve as a reference point in the creation of a statistical population register, which will better meet the needs for annual statistics and will serve as the basis for further register-based censuses. For this, specific information must be included in the census questionnaire, in which a personal identification number will be of key importance.

It is also necessary to introduce into the periodic practice a survey of household budgets (one of four quarterly surveys, as well as an annual survey) an additional program that includes questions identifying migrants, and increase the sample itself to form a population of migrants representative of the country or its large regions. Household budget survey data should be accessible to a wide circle of researchers, including in the form of microdata. And a number of questions identifying migrants should be added to the employment survey program, in particular, the length of stay in a given place, place of previous residence, reasons for a change of residence. The additional program should include questions about citizenship, the year since which the respondent lives outside the region, the length of

residence in this place, the place of residence one year (or five years) before the survey, reasons for the change of residence, migration intentions, local migration mobility (Cesnokova, 2011).

A procedure for the extension of registration of people arriving to the territory of Transnistria has been introduced in practice in order to avoid re-registration of the same people entering and leaving multiple times over a short period to highlight the totality of long-term migrants registered at their place of residence. Statistical reporting forms on registration of citizens by place of residence and place of stay are updated. Any migration data produced on the basis of administrative bases should be adjusted through the use of more stringent processing rules, including verification of their authenticity. In such statistics, more attention should be paid to describe various aspects of the migration process, and less attention to monitor activities undertaken by agencies.

In addition to the population census once every 10 years, the Statistical Service recommends two important research sections that include information related to international migration: a labor force survey and a household budget survey. Social services may also collect more specific data on children left without parental supervision («social orphans»), as well as on the volume of remittances.

Various ministries should send some summary data to the statistical service to create and disseminate statistical tables. The provision of such data should be supported in order to expand the number of statistical tables already available to experts and general public, as well as the inclusion of additional relevant topics.

The problem of the lack of a common methodology for determining and evaluating the migration process can be offset by separate targeted government and departmental normative legal acts and decrees. There is a need for further training of Transnistrian employees and experts who are directly related to the production and analysis of statistics in the field of international migration.

In 2017, the Transnistria Advanced Migration Profile was developed, which needs further structuring, filling in the existing statistical gaps, and developing a strategy for further updating and improvement (Fomenco, 2017).

4. Conclusions

The migration situation in the region requires the development of a scientifically reasonable and effective migration policy, which includes a set of legal,

economic, administrative, educational, health care activities. Also, creation of favorable conditions for «retention» of potential emigrants and attracting immigrants, which imply expansion of economic measures and firstly, it need to create new jobs. The important direction of migration policy is to reduce the emigration of young people. Young generation is the most reproductively valuable and employable part of population. It is also necessary to retain qualified specialists – «brain drain». The key to the optimal migration policy is comprehensive analysis of population migration based on the use of various sources. According to the statistics services are almost the only official source of information on the migration movement of the population of the region. However, the real number of migrant worker is not amenable appropriate statistical accounting. What is promising is the further improvement of statistical tools estimates of migration flows. The rational it should be recognized the use of the experience of the CIS countries and other states which have identifying the investigation of work force. Likewise, the issue of improving migration legislation remains relevant.

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