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Internal Migration Dynamics in Russia, 1985-2001: Detrminants, Motivations, and Consequences

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Abstract

This report presents the main findings from a study of internal migration in contemporary Russia based on individual level survey data. The Survey on Stratification and Migration Dynamics in Russia (SMDR) provides migration histories spanning 1985-2001 for a representative sample of 7167 Russian adults. The survey results yield novel insights that cannot be derived from analyses of aggregate migration data. Although the individual and regional factors identified by economic theories of migration generally shape economic migration within Russia, only about 25% of internal migrations are motivated by economic incentives, and non-economic migration responds to different. Neither the rates of overall migration and of economic migration nor the effects of individual characteristics on migration behavior were demonstrably affected by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the attendant economic shocks and political changes. Economic migrants appear to have enhanced access to employment relative to non-migrants with similar characteristics.