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# Migration from Russia to Australia and Formation of a Russian Community

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## Migrants from Russia abroad: Russian Diaspora or Russian-speaking community?

Before the collapse of the Soviet Union at the beginning of the 1990s about 2 million people with 'Russian roots' were living outside of Russia. They made up the 'old' part of the Russian diaspora that was formed as a result of the migration of the pre-revolutionary and Soviet periods. In recent years, since the fall of the Soviet Union, high levels of emigration from Russia have significantly increased the numbers of ethnic Russians and Russian citizens abroad. However, there are conflicting and inaccurate estimates of these numbers, which are provided on the basis of a variety of approaches that have no common methodological framework. According to some reports the number of ethnic Russians and representatives of different ethnic groups from Russia, who are Russian-speaking but living outside of Russia, is 25-30 million. This would make the Russian diaspora the second largest in the world after the Chinese diaspora.

Despite the substantial intensification of emigration from Russia after the Soviet Union fell, there is no single statistical source to quantify the number of expatriates from Russia and the number of Russian migrants abroad. We have therefore had to draw upon several sources of information in our research for this paper.

The first source is the data of the *Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat)*. This records the number of Russians who have emigrated to take up permanent residence abroad. The data are published annually in the collection 'Size Population and Migration in the Russian Federation' and 'Demographic Yearbook of Russia'. However, these statistics have a significant limitation. They only take into account those Russians who withdrew from the register of permanent residents in Russia, and have no records of the large category of immigrants who live and work outside Russia without having removed themselves from the register at their place of residence

in Russia. This source of information therefore under-reports the number of this category of Russian emigrants.

The second source is the data of the *Federal Migration Service of Russia (FMS)*. This records the number of Russians who left to seek temporary employment abroad. Published in the collections 'Monitoring of legal labor migration to Russia' and 'Labor and Employment in Russia', the information is relatively accessible. However, it should be noted that 'Monitoring of legal labor migration to Russia' has not been published in recent years and the second is only published in alternate years. There is also a lack of solid information in relation to the temporary labor migrants from Russia, who have found employment through formal channels such as firms licensed by FMS as well as directly through the FMS. Studies show that many Russian citizens are now bypassing official channels, finding jobs abroad and living in other countries on visas such as business, business travel and guest visas that are linked directly to employers and therefore do not appear in FMS records. This means that the scale of labor emigration from Russia is much higher than that shown by the data of the FMS.

The third source is the data of the *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia*. These records are based on the information of embassies and consulates, which in turn is based on data from consular records. For example, the Ministry reported 1.5 million Russian citizens as residing abroad. However, these statistics are not published in the Statistical Yearbook. In addition, the data include only those Russian citizens who had registered at embassies and consulates and it is known that, due to various circumstances, not all Russians do so.

The fourth source is *national statistics of countries hosting major flows of migrants from Russia*. These statistics are published by national agencies in host countries. Some still use the category of "citizens of the former Soviet Union" even though there has been no such country for over 20 years. At the international level, this information is collected and systematised by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and published annually in the volume 'Outlook of Migration'. This information is available in the following categories, reflecting the annual migration flows: the number of immigrants from Russia; the number of Russian citizens who obtained citizenship in the host countries; the number of people born in Russia but living in the host country; and the number of Russian citizens living abroad. Paradoxically, the foreign statistics capture larger numbers of Russians abroad, and more

adequately reflect the scale of the phenomenon of Russian emigration than internal Russian records are able to.

Can we call the ethnic Russians and migrants from Russia living abroad a Russian diaspora? A diaspora can be understood as the sum of “the ethnic groups who live outside of their historical homeland or base area of living”.<sup>1</sup> An additional characteristic is that certain institutional structures help such groups to maintain their ethnic group identity, language and culture. Russian sociologist J. Toschenko understands diaspora to be a stable community of people of common ethnic origin living in a different ethnic environment outside of their historic homeland (or outside the area where its people live), with social institutions for the development of the national community.<sup>2</sup> Some researchers suggest that typical features of a diaspora are: dispersal from the homeland; collective memory and mythology of the lost homeland; return migration (repatriation); and a sense of solidarity with the ethnic cousins, etc.<sup>3</sup> Other scholars consider the main features of a diaspora to be: ethnic continuity outside of the country of origin; separation from historical homelands; preservation of national identity and contribution to its development; resistance to assimilation; the presence of the organisational structures; and the implementation of social protection for its members.<sup>4</sup>

Traditionally, the term ‘diaspora’ has not been applied to Russians and Russian citizens living outside Russia. This is due to several factors. First, Russians living outside of Russia are a very diverse group - ethnically, religiously, socially and politically. Russian emigration occurred at different times, for different reasons and under different socio-economic and political conditions. For example, other ethnic groups are sometimes incorporated into the statistics for immigrants from Russia. These include Russian Germans, Ukrainians, Tatars, Chechens, Armenians, Jews and many others. Most of these groups speak Russian, and many have lived in Russia for a long time, for several generations in some cases. Russian language is the second most important characteristic of migrants from Russia. The Russian language has become a social tool that binds Russian abroad. In recent years, many countries intensified publication of newspapers and

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<sup>1</sup> Avksentyev V., Avksentyev A., *Ethnic groups and Diasporas in Stavropol*, Stavropol, State University, 1997, p.7

<sup>2</sup> Toschenko J., *Diaspora as an object of social policy, Post-Soviet Space: sovereignisation and integration*, Moscow, 1997, p. 80.

<sup>3</sup> Vishnevsky A., *The collapse of the Soviet Union: the problem of ethnic migration and Diaspora*, *Social Science and modernity*, № 3, 2000.-p.115.

<sup>4</sup> Toschenko J., *Diaspora as an object of social policy, Post-Soviet Space: sovereignisation and integration*, Moscow, 1997, p. 79.

magazines in Russian. Often the migrants themselves refer to as 'Russian' anyone who has a historical link with Russia (born there, came out from there, has parents or grandparents of Russian descent, speaks Russian, etc.). For example, in Germany, there are ethnic Germans who are called 'Russian Germans'. In the United States, Canada, Australia and many other countries, the term 'Russian' has been used loosely to refer to anyone who was born in or came from the former Soviet Union, regardless of nationality or ethnicity even when the emigrants themselves identified with their specific ethnic heritage.

Secondly, Russians in many countries integrate quickly and successfully into the host society. Often first generation migrants from Russia are integrated so well that they give up their Russian identity. For example, having arrived recently in the latest wave of immigration from Russia, a Sydney programmer who has married an Australia citizen, does not want his son to speak Russian and has named him Michael (not Mikhail). There are many such cases where the Russian speaking parent of the child does not pass on to the child knowledge of the ancestral language. In practical terms, it is much easier to do so if both parents speak the old language. Our study suggests that successful assimilation of Russians in their host counties is generally due to their desire for integration as well as to some of the objective characteristics of migrants from Russia. They tend to have a high level of education, are active in the business, pragmatic, and easily adapt to new situations quickly, including mastery of the new language.

Thirdly, Russians are not especially inclined towards consolidation and concentration in groups. On the contrary, Russians generally prefer to live apart from other Russian immigrants. They are guided in their choice of housing by factors such as desirability of location and social status rather than the ethnicity or country of origin of neighbours. Areas densely populated by Russians or well-defined enclaves are almost nonexistent. There are a few exceptions, such as Brighton Beach in New York. However, Russian areas such as these were formed in specific socio-economic conditions that have a multinational component. Russian immigrants rarely seek to live in consolidated groups, though in some cases they may have been driven to do so by external threats or extreme environmental circumstances. In practice, there is no organised and well-developed government or public infrastructure to help Russian migrants abroad. 'Russian' social organisations, based abroad, act as 'service clubs' that have adapted to migrants, rather than providing real, practical support to newly arrived migrants.

Fourth, many Russians and representatives of ethnic groups from Russia who live abroad, are not there as immigrants, but because of changes in the boundaries between states. For example, the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 left about 25 million Russian peoples outside of Russia. Many of them are heavily oriented toward Russia and, not wanting to align themselves with the separate identity of the redefined nation or region that they were living in, sought to obtain Russian citizenship or return to Russia.

In public documents and literature different terms are used in relation to Russian citizens living abroad. Initially, Russian official documents, in practice, used the category ‘citizens of the Russian Federation’, which was based solely on Russian citizenship. This is reflected in the interaction of the state with migrants living abroad. It has been quite limited. However, the category gradually expanded and at the end of the 1990s there was a shift to the term ‘compatriots’ in relation to people with Russian roots living abroad. The term ‘national’ was first enshrined in law in 1999. According to the Federal Law № 99, compatriots were: Russian citizens residing outside the Russian Federation; persons who were citizens of the Soviet Union who live in states that were part of the Soviet Union, acquired the proper citizenship of those states or became stateless; immigrants from the Russian state, the Russian Republic, the Russian Federation, the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation who had the required citizenship to become citizens of a foreign state or hold a residence permit or had become stateless persons; or descendants of persons belonging to these groups, except for the descendants of the titular nationalities of foreign states.<sup>5</sup> This definition combined ethnic and territorial principles. However, the term is very broad and inclusive, incorporating groups that may see themselves as other than Russian.

After the start of the State program of voluntary resettlement in Russia of compatriots living abroad, the term ‘national’ was open to debate. Legally, eligibility was limited to ethnic groups living on the territory of the Russian Federation and representatives of non-titular nations of the former Soviet republics. But, in fact, in the implementation of the State program, the term ‘national’ was interpreted more broadly. For example, some participants in the State program were representatives of titular foreign countries but living in third countries. For example, an

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<sup>5</sup> Federal Law № 99 “On State Policy of the Russian Federation in respect of compatriots abroad” (<http://www.rusintercenter.ru/?lang=ru&text=101>)

ethnic Kyrgyz living in Tajikistan could become a member of the State program, as opposed to ethnic Kyrgyz living in Kyrgyzstan.

Another important point is the status of titular nations or foreign countries that have retained their linguistic, cultural and spiritual connections to the 'Russian world'. Many Tajiks, Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, Ukrainians and representatives of other ethnic groups who speak and think in Russian and know Russian culture, were separated from Russia for political reasons. Do they have the right to be 'compatriots'? As a result of these ambiguities, the government amended the law in July 2010. Under the new law the concept of 'national' has been expanded: "1) Compatriots are persons born in one state, living or having lived in it and having the characteristics of a common language, history, cultural heritage, traditions and customs, as well as descendants of such persons in a straight downward line; 2) Compatriots abroad are Russian citizens residing outside the territory of the Russian Federation; 3) Compatriots are persons and their descendants living outside the territory of the Russian Federation and related generally to the peoples living in the historic territory of the Russian Federation, who make a free choice in favor of the spiritual, cultural and legal ties with the Russian Federation, and whose relatives, in a direct ascending line, previously resided in the territory of the Russian Federation. This category includes: persons who were citizens of the USSR who live in states that were part of the Soviet Union and acquired the citizenship of those states or became stateless; immigrants from the Russian state, the Russian Republic, the RSFSR, the USSR and the Russian Federation who had the proper citizenship and have become foreign nationals or stateless persons".<sup>6</sup>

In a fact, a recognised principle is now that of self-identification. The new law says: "The recognition of belonging to the nation is an act of self-identity, reinforced by: social or professional activities to preserve the Russian language and native languages of the Russian Federation and the development of Russian culture abroad; strengthening of friendly relations between states where compatriots live and the Russian Federation; support by public associations of compatriots that protect the rights of compatriots; or other evidence of the free choice of these persons in favour of spiritual and cultural ties with the Russian Federation".

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<sup>6</sup> Article 1 of the Federal Law № 179 "On Amendments to the Federal Law "On State Policy of the Russian Federation in respect of compatriots abroad" from July 23, 2010.



So with regard to ethnic Russians and Russian citizens living abroad there is more justification for the term 'Russian-speaking communities' than the term 'Russian Diaspora'. The term 'communities' is more appropriate than 'diaspora', because the Russians are poorly consolidated, well integrated into the host society and not very focused on their homeland. Further, 'communities' is more appropriate than 'community' because in every country, and even in regions within countries, there are significant differences between Russians, and in practice, there is a low level of interaction. Finally, 'Russian-speaking' is more appropriate than 'Russian' because the term 'Russian' covers many ethnically diverse communities and, in many case, the only common factor is the Russian language as a means of communication.

### **Historical features of Russian migration to Australia**

Emigration from Russia occurred for various reasons and on different scales in different times. The direction of emigration from Russia changed repeatedly and different ethnic, religious and professional groups were represented at different times. One of the most exotic destinations of Russian emigration has always been Australia - a country located far from Russia.

There have been six historical waves of migration from Russia to Australia. The first migration wave was: ***Russian immigrants who came to Australia in the mid-nineteenth century*** during the "Gold Rush". According to Australia's 1891 Census, there were about 2,900 people from Russia living in Australia, of whom 2,500 were men. Before the October Revolution of 1917 Russian migration to Australia was episodic.

The second wave was: ***'White emigration' to Australia 1920-1940s*** which included people who did not accept the changes in Russia after the 1917 Revolution. Some of the migrants arrived in Australia directly from Russia and some migrated through the 'third countries' (USA, Brazil, Canada, etc.). One such group of Russian immigrants were the Cossacks who arrived in the 1920s after the defeat of the 'white' army in the Civil War. Most Cossacks settled in southern Queensland. Australian authorities gave them land on the Gold Coast, where they became farmers, engaged mainly in growing fruit. It is interesting that during the period 1914 -1917 about 1000 Russians left Australia and returned to their native Russia. Australian authorities imposed a travel ban on Russians, but in 1919 the ban was lifted. The 1921 Census showed that the Russian community in Australia totalled 4,138 of whom 1,444 lived in New South Wales,

1,139 lived in Queensland, 943 in Victoria, 170 in South Australia, 412 in Western Australia, 9 in the Northern Territory and 2 in Tasmania.

The third wave of *migration from the Soviet Union to Australia was after the Second World War in 1947-1952*. It consisted of refugees and displaced persons, prisoners of war and civilians deported to Germany who, after liberation from Nazi captivity, went to various countries, including Australia. Also in this wave of migration were representatives of the ‘white’ emigration who had not taken root in other countries. Levels of education and social status as well as the political views of this wave of migrants were very diverse. Many did not know English and worked in non-prestigious sectors of the economy such as factories, construction sites and plantations. Others were professional people whose qualifications were not transferrable or whose knowledge of the English language was insufficient for them to practice their professions. The unifying factor was generally the Russian Orthodox Church. In Sydney, Melbourne and other major cities where there were migrants, the church was an important focal point for Russian-speaking communities, regardless of differences between them.

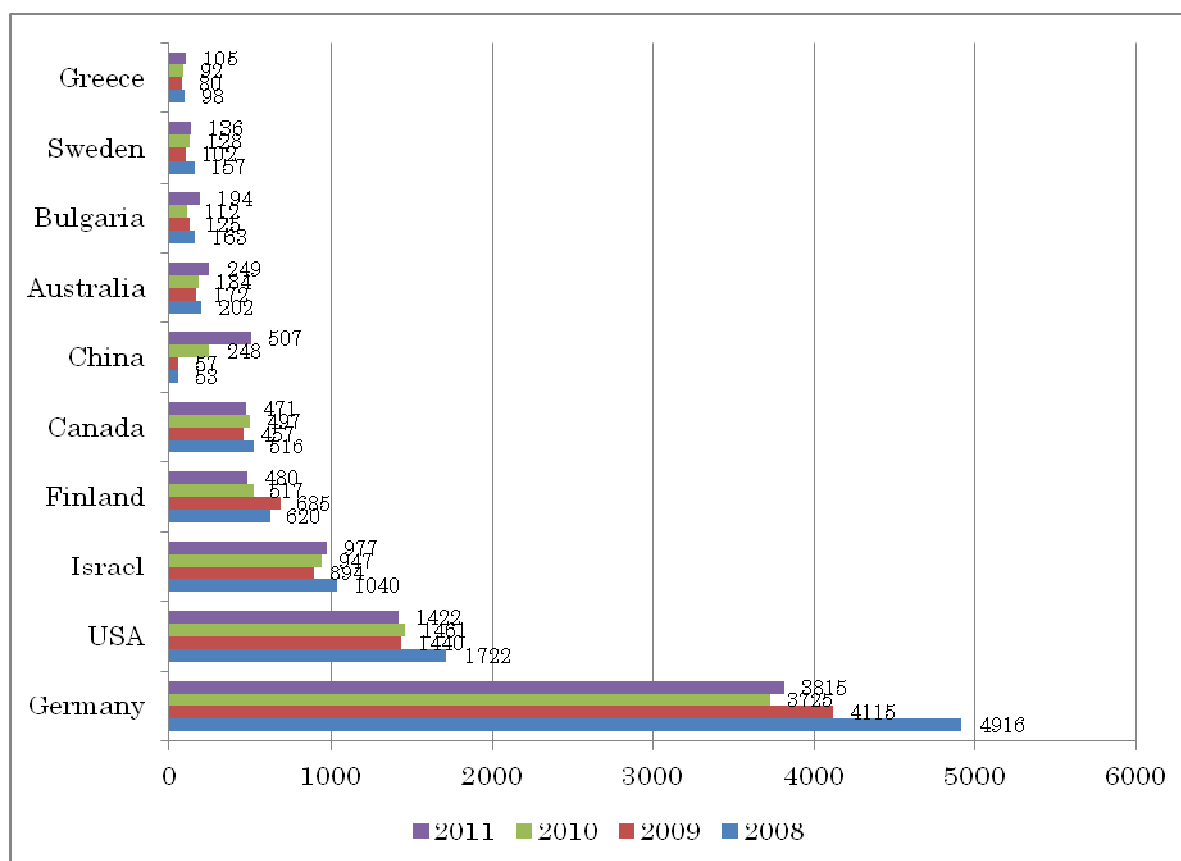
The fourth wave of migration took place from the *mid-1950s to 1970*. Referred to as ‘Kharbintzy’ (from the name of the city of Harbin in Manchuria, which was the centre of Russian emigration in China), these migrants had Russian parents who built and maintained the Chinese Eastern Railway. Some were members of the ‘white’ movement in the second half of the 1950s. When China launched its ‘cultural revolution’, there were strained relations between Mao Dzedong and Nikita Khrushchev. The ‘Kharbintzy’ had a choice between obtaining Chinese citizenship, returning to the Soviet Union or emigrating to the ‘third’ countries. Most of the Kharbintzy’ chose the third option, and supported by the World Council of Churches, moved to Australia. These Russians settled mainly in large cities - Sydney, Adelaide, Melbourne, etc. Although most of them were intellectuals and had a high level of education they often could not find work in their professions. They have made a significant contribution to the development of culture and the arts in Australia. Previous waves of Russian emigration led to some heated controversy in cultural and domestic arenas. However, these problems were gradually smoothed out and the immigrants increasingly participated in social and professional life on an equal footing in Australia.

The fifth wave was *Jewish migration 1970-1980s*. Australia was a distant and unknown country

and the number of Jews migrating from the Soviet Union was lower in Australia than in the United States and Israel. Most Jewish immigrants settled in Melbourne. The Jewish migration wave was met with suspicion and wariness by earlier migrants from Russia to Australia. Most Jewish immigrants did not put emphasis on their ethnic background and did not attend the synagogue. They did not want to draw attention to ‘cultural distance’ and religious differences because of a history of rejection in previous waves of Russian immigration.

### **Russian migration to Australia after the collapse of Soviet Union**

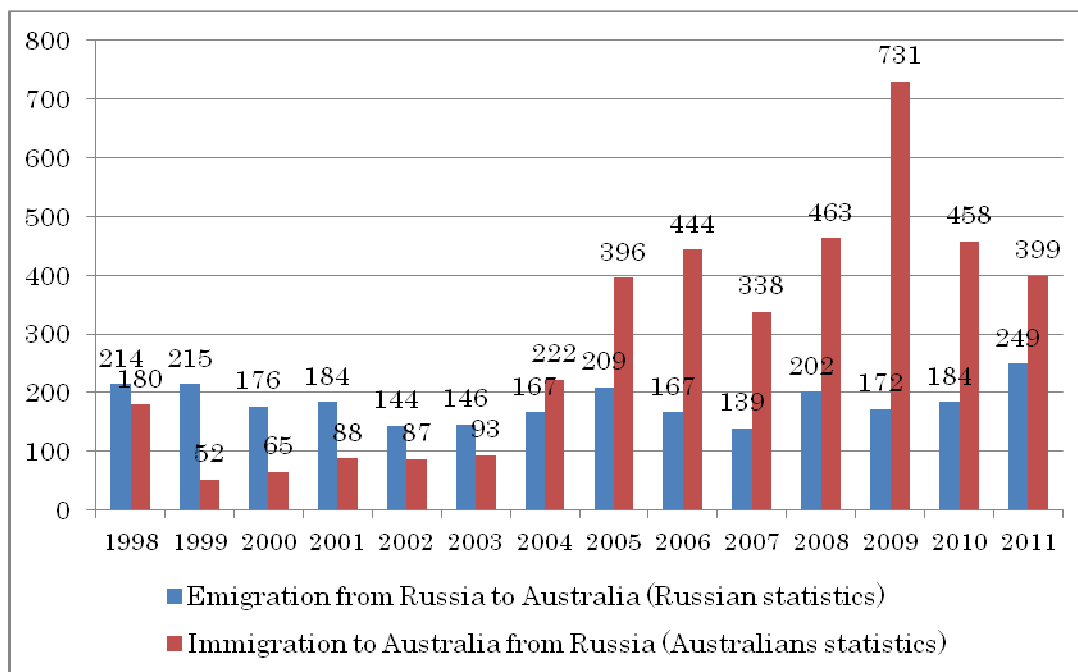
The sixth migration wave of Russian emigration from Russia to Australia began *after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s* and continues to this day. Political and socio-economic changes in Russia prompted the emigration of Russian citizens with a high level of skills and education. These people fell under the criteria either of independent professional migration to Australia or as family members of migrants who had left earlier. In 2010 Australia was in seventh place in the list of countries (outside the former USSR), who accepted Russian citizens for permanent residence (after Germany, the U.S., Israel, Finland, Canada, and China) (Fig. 1).



**Fig. 1. Trends in emigration from Russia to some countries outside the former Soviet Union in 2008-2011 (Russian Statistical Data)<sup>7</sup>**

Emigration numbers from Russia to Australia, though small in comparison with the countries of ‘traditional’ emigration (Germany, Israel and the U.S.), had an increasing trend. Direct comparison of Russian and Australian data on migration flows is difficult because of the fact that the Russian statistics are for the calendar year (January 1 to December 31) while Australia’s are for the financial year (July 1 to June 30). In this study, we compared the data on the number of immigrants from Russia to Australia, with data on the number of immigrants who arrived in Australia from Russia for permanent residence (Fig. 2).

<sup>7</sup> Size of Population and Migration in the Russian Federation, Statistical Yearbook, Moscow, Federal State Statistics Service, 2011, p. 45.



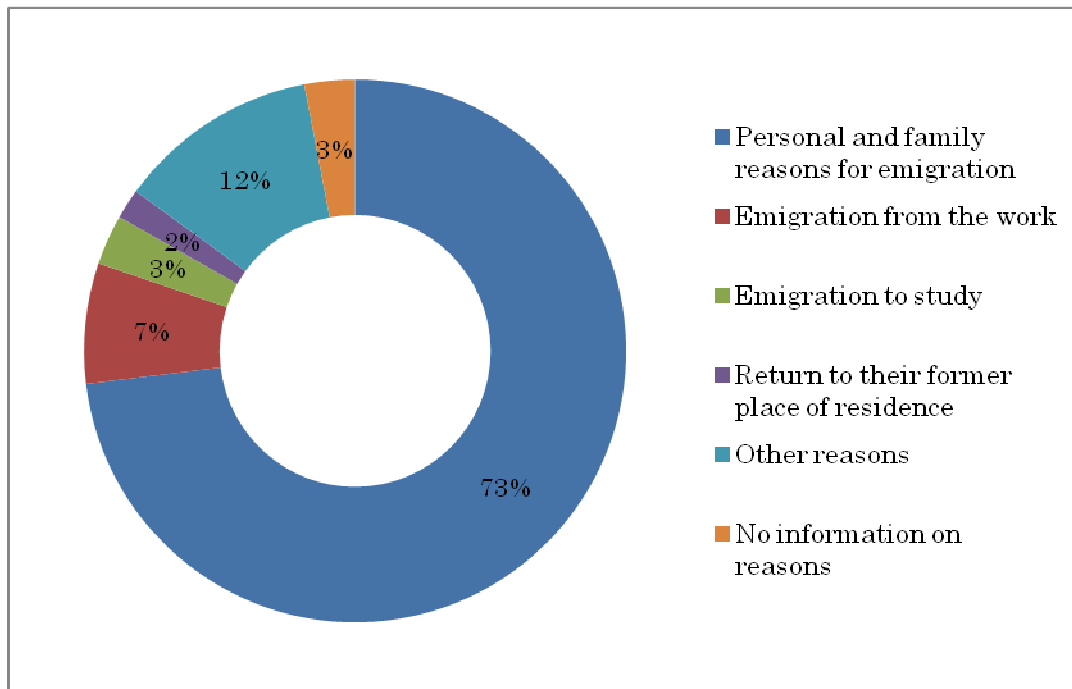
**Fig. 2. Trends in migration from Russia to Australia on the basis of comparison of Russian and Australian sources in 1998-2011<sup>8</sup>**

Research shows that up to 2003 Russian statistics on emigration were higher than Australian statistics on immigration for the same period. Beginning in 2004 the trends changed, with Australian immigration statistics on average 2-2.3 times higher than those recorded in the Russian data on emigration from Russia to Australia. In our opinion, this is due to a significant underestimation of emigration to Russia resulting from the fact that one can leave Russia for permanent residence and then be struck off the register in the community.

Unfortunately, in the Russian data, there is no clear record of the reasons for emigration, including to Australia. Turning to the Australian Federal State Statistics Service, 78% of immigrants record 'personal or family' reasons (Fig. 3). This language is so broad that it absorbs almost all the causes of migration. Purely employment motives accounted for only 8% of

<sup>8</sup> Size of Population and Migration in the Russian Federation, Statistical Yearbook, Moscow, Federal State Statistics Service, 1999 – 2011, p. 45; Immigration Update 2005-2006, Research and Statistics Section, Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA), 2006, p. 11; Settler Arrivals 2000-01 to 2010-11 Australia States and territories, Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA), 2011, pp. 6, 8, 11.

immigrants, but reasons such as these would certainly have remained hidden for many immigrants under the ‘personal and family’ heading.

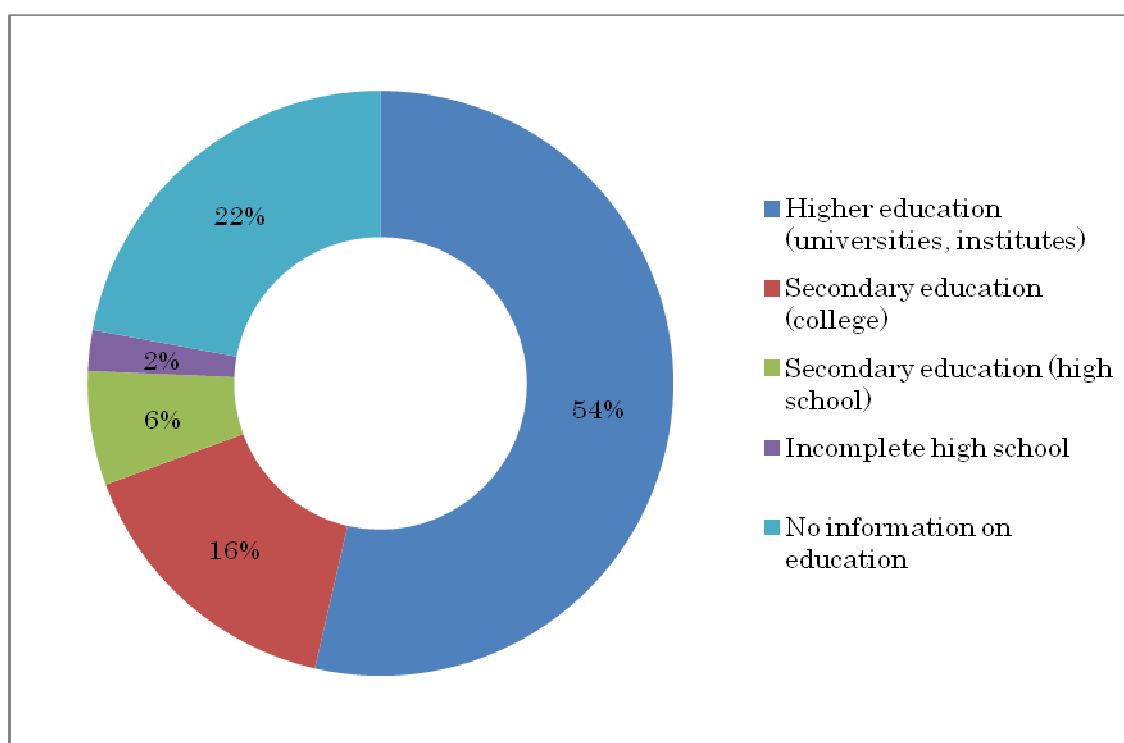


**Fig. 3. The structure of emigration from Russia for permanent residence in Australia based on reasons over 14 years - 2010 (Russian statistic data) <sup>9</sup>**

The level of education of Russian emigrants to Australia is quite high. For example, among emigrants from Russia to Australia in 2008, over 54% had a higher education (university level), 14% had a secondary education (full scale) and 10% had a secondary vocational education. This is the natural result of Australia’s selective immigration policy which gives first priority to qualified professionals. Young professionals with high levels of education tend to come to Australia at the individual invitation of major Australian companies and have accumulated enough points to immigrate to the country. Some famous Russian athletes have had citizenship granted by Australian authorities through a simplified procedure. Among the latest wave of immigrants are famous athletes, artists and scientists, including: boxer Kostya Tszyu, athlete Tatiana Grigorieva, pianist Evgeny Ukhanov, music professor Victor Makarov and others.

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<sup>9</sup> Size of Population and Migration in the Russian Federation, Statistical Yearbook, Moscow, Federal State Statistics Service, 1999 – 2011, 1999-2011, p.51.



**Fig. 4. The level of education of immigrants from Russia for permanent residence in Australia – 2011 (Russian statistic data) <sup>10</sup>**

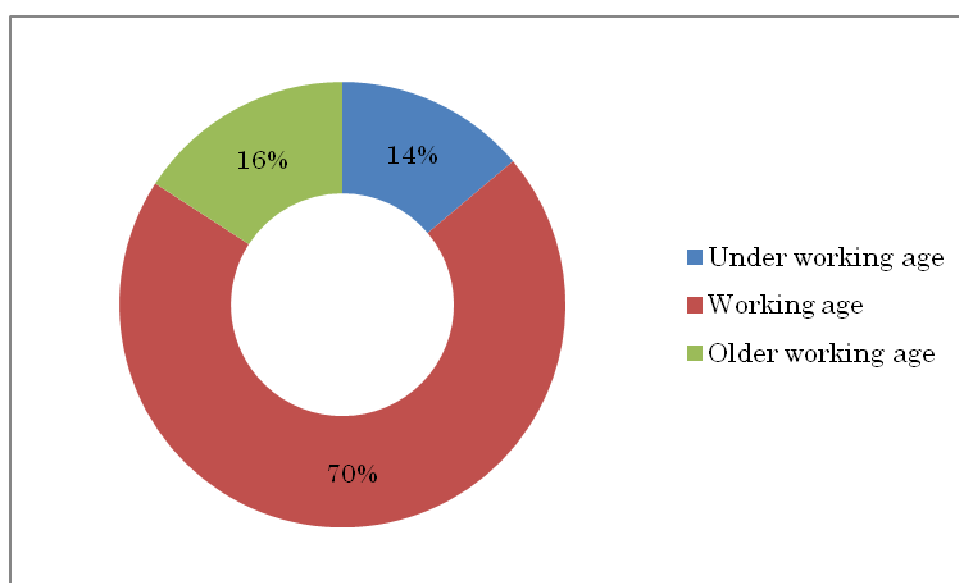
Approximately 70% of all permanent emigrants from Russia to Australia are people of working age. Only 14% are children and adolescents and 16% are pensioners. Age structure by emigration to Australia is in agreement with statistics on the general structure of emigration from Russia. However, the specifics of the migratory flow to Australia are worth considering in that Australia attracts highly skilled specialists and in-demand professions to the national labour market. For example, Russian programmers and experts in the field of IT technologies quickly find work in Australia.

A typical example is that of the Russian programmer, Alexander. Born in 1975 in a small town in southern Russia he graduated with a degree in Physics and Mathematics from the local university. Has a wife, born in 1980, who is a Medical School student and a son, born in 2001. In Russia, Alexander worked as a programmer. He looked for a job abroad via the Internet and employment agencies. In 2001 he received an invitation to work in a USA computer firm. However, after the attacks of 11 September 2001, application procedures for emigration to the

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<sup>10</sup> Size of Population and Migration in the Russian Federation, Statistical Yearbook, Moscow, Federal State Statistics Service, 1999 – 2011, p. 53.

USA slowed down and so he started looking for alternative employment in another country. He approached an agency for immigration, paid about \$100 US, completed a questionnaire and was selected for immigration to Australia. In May 2002, the family went to the Australian Embassy in Moscow and after passing a medical examination, they were allowed to enter Australia. In February 2003 Alexander travelled to Australia alone but was later joined by his wife and son. At first, in Melbourne, Alexander worked as a programmer for computer courses for immigrants. He had a temporary job at a university and then at an Internet club. After that, for about 4 months he had no work at all. After posting his resume online, he received a call from a travel company in Sydney and was accepted for the position of programmer. The family had to move to Sydney where his wages could cover a three-room apartment. His wife took courses in English and has applied to study at a university not far from Sydney, majoring in immunology and microbiology. Soon the family expects to receive Australian citizenship, which gives them the possibility of obtaining benefits for university study and kindergarten. Later Alexander helped his friend in Russia to find a job in Australia and he moved with his family to Australia in May 2005.



**Fig. 5. The age structure of immigrants from Russia for permanent residence in Australia - 2010 (Russian statistic data) <sup>11</sup>**

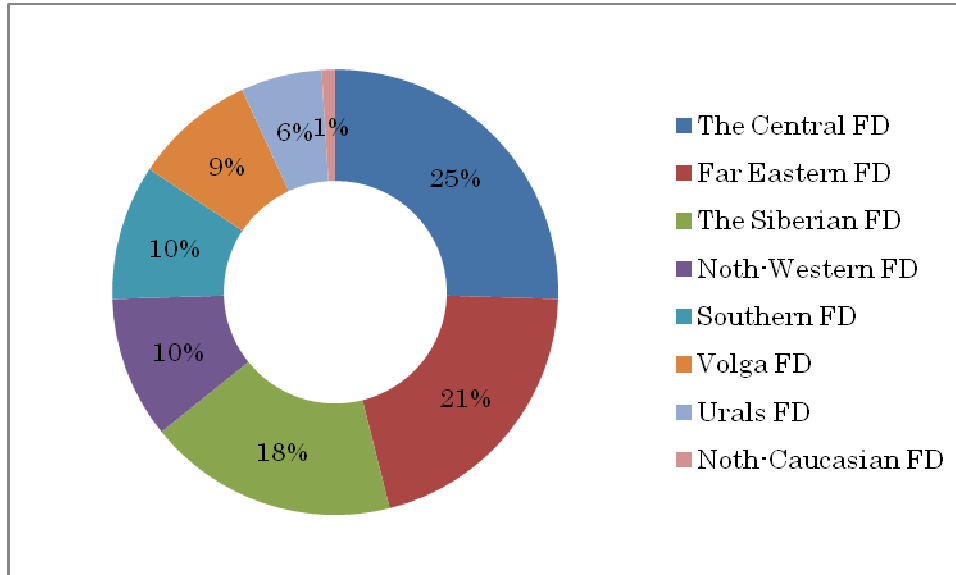
These Russian statistics show that most people are emigrating to Australia from Central Russia (especially Moscow), the Urals and the Far East (Fig. 6). Moscow residents traditionally have

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<sup>11</sup> Size of Population and Migration in the Russian Federation, Statistical Yearbook, Moscow, Federal State Statistics Service, 1999 – 2011, 1999-2011, p. 59.



high emigration rates in comparison with the inhabitants of the provinces. High levels of emigration of residents of the Far East may be due to the relative geographic proximity of this region to Australia.

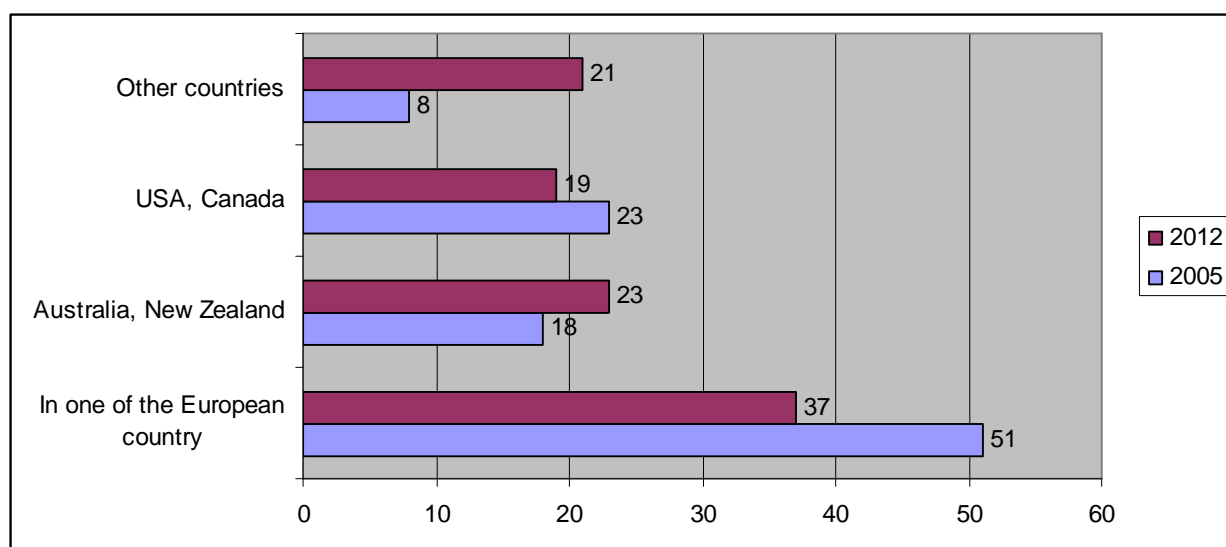


**Fig. 6. The geographical origin of immigrants from Russia for permanent residence in Australia - 2010 (Russian statistic data) <sup>12</sup>**

Opinion polls show that Australia is becoming more and more popular as an emigration destination. For example, recent polls of the Russian agency ‘Romir’ recorded that almost a third (31%) of urban residents of Russia said they would like to emigrate from Russia. In the seven years since a similar survey was conducted, the number of prospective emigrants increased by 12%. The survey involved 1,000 respondents aged 18 to 50 years and older, living in cities of the eight federal districts with populations of 100,000 or more. The sample is representative of the adult, economically active urban population in Russia. Respondents who answered ‘yes’ to the question about the desire to leave the country, were also asked to clarify which country they would prefer to move to. The results are shown in Fig. 7.

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<sup>12</sup> Size of Population and Migration in the Russian Federation, Statistical Yearbook, Moscow, Federal State Statistics Service, 1999 – 2011, 1999-2011, p. 67.

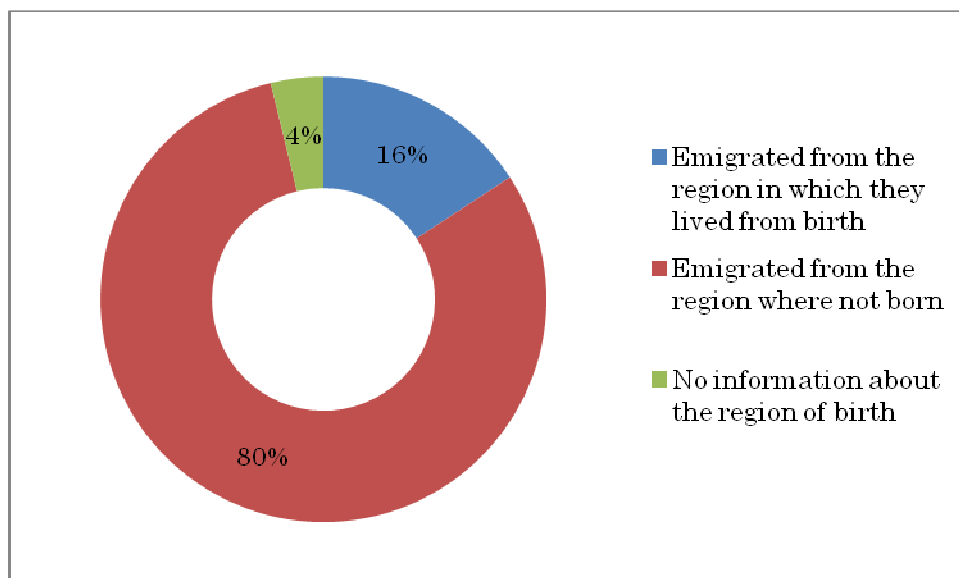


**Fig. 7. What country would urban residents of Russia like to emigrate to?**

Australia and New Zealand were the second most attractive destination, with 23% of respondents giving choosing one of these countries. They were particularly appealing to the group representing the average age of the respondents (35-44 years), who have a secondary education and a low income, and are not restricted by ties of formal marriage.<sup>13</sup> At present, Australian policy in relation to emigration to Australia from Russia favours young, educated, skilled and active people. Approximately 87% of the emigrants had already had experience of migration within Russia or abroad. This fact supports the idea previously expressed by many researchers that “migration - is a sieve through which pass most educated, trained and active people”.<sup>14</sup> In the case of Australia, this “sieve” is a point system that governs the selection of immigrants, allowing the country to recruit necessary human resources and personnel.

<sup>13</sup> [http://romir.ru/studies/390\\_1348084800/](http://romir.ru/studies/390_1348084800/)

<sup>14</sup> Radaev V., *Economic sociology*, Moscow, Aspect Press, 1998, p. 117.



**Fig. 8. Duration of residence of immigrants from Russia for permanent residence in Australia over 14 years - 2010 (Russian statistical data) <sup>15</sup>**

Restricted by official policies, temporary labour migration from Russia to Australia is small. According to the Federal Migration Service, 15 people left to work in Australia in 2004, 22 in 2005, 7 in 2006 and only 2 people in 2010! At the same time, according to Australian statistics in 2006, the country has about 5,400 Russian citizens. These discrepancies are understandable: they are caused by the imperfection of Russian statistics in the area of temporary labour emigration. FMS of Russia records in its reporting only the labour of immigrants who were either employed abroad by firms that have a licence for such activities, or directly through the FMS. This covers only a tiny fraction of labour emigrants. A considerable proportion of Russian labour migrants find jobs on their own, without informing the authorities. Some do not go on a work visa but use a tourist or other visa, and then find a job. Research also shows that self-employment is very common amongst Russian citizens.

Russia's temporary migrant workers in Australia are, predominantly, experts - in fields such as shipping, setting up specialised equipment, installing refrigeration systems, computer technology, coaching and athletics. According to the Federal Migration Service of Russia in 2005, more than 82% of temporary labour migrants from Russia who left to work in Australia

<sup>15</sup> Size of Population and Migration in the Russian Federation, Statistical Yearbook, Moscow, Federal State Statistics Service, 1999 – 2011, 1999-2011, p. 45; Immigration Update 2005-2006, Research and Statistics Section, Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA), 2006, p. 11; Settler Arrivals 2000-01 to 2010-11 Australia States and territories, Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA), 2011, pp. 6, 8, 11.

had a higher education qualification (had graduated from university).<sup>16</sup> Most employment contracts were short: 50% - up to 6 months and 36% - from 6 months to 1 year.<sup>17</sup>

A more detailed analysis of Australian statistics show that emigration from the CIS and Baltic states to Australia during 1997-2011 accounted for more than 11,500 people, including from Russia - about 4,000 people (Table 1). Noticeable flow of migrants also came from the Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and other former Soviet states. All of these workers, despite their different ethnic and national origins, are fluent in Russian and brought together in Australia under the term 'Russian-speaking population'.

Table 1.

**The dynamics of immigration from Russia and the former Soviet Union to Australia in 1997-2011 (According to Australian statistics)<sup>18</sup>**

<b>Страны</b>	<b>2000-2001</b>	<b>2001-2002</b>	<b>2002-2003</b>	<b>2003-2004</b>	<b>2004-2005</b>	<b>2005-2006</b>	<b>2006-2007</b>	<b>2007-2008</b>	<b>2008-2009</b>	<b>2009-2010</b>	<b>2010-2011</b>
Russia	88	87	93	222	396	444	338	463	731	458	399
Belarus	18	9	13	20	46	47	37	20	39	26	24
Ukraine	87	100	107	203	200	202	205	180	186	180	151
Moldova	0	10	8	31	12	22	15	30	11	15	17
Armenia	3	7	23	15	6	6	11	8	10	16	5
Azerbaijan	2	10	4	9	12	13	8	3	11	10	9
Georgia	10	9	8	5	6	3	10	10	8	16	3
Kazakhstan	25	13	18	41	35	45	39	57	66	49	27
Kyrgyzstan	2	7	10	25	24	23	18	23	15	10	9
Tajikistan	1	2	2	0	2	5	3	1	2	3	3
Turkmenistan	1	1	3	2	2	6	8	2	2	7	1
Uzbekistan	15	17	11	31	35	82	50	47	57	33	30
Latvia	21	18	29	27	30	29	20	23	29	34	21
Lithuania	16	25	18	30	38	22	21	27	27	30	30
Estonia	10	21	16	13	14	10	14	14	15	21	13
Former USSR	788	815	740	660	687	699	505	556	671	811	904
All of the countries of the former Soviet Union	<b>299</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>674</b>	<b>840</b>	<b>959</b>	<b>797</b>	<b>908</b>	<b>1880</b>	<b>1719</b>	<b>1685</b>

<sup>16</sup> Monitoring of legal labor migration 2004-2005: Statistical Yearbook, Moscow, FMS, 2006, p. 77.

<sup>17</sup> Monitoring of legal labour migration 2004-2005: Statistical Yearbook, Moscow, FMS, 2006, p. 91.

<sup>18</sup> Settler Arrivals 2000-01 to 2010-11 Australia States and territories, Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA), 2011, pp. 6, 8, 11.

Thus migration from the former Soviet Union in recent years remains the primary source of the Russian-speaking population in Australia. Because this stream is generally highly educated, skilled and relatively young, it is playing a positive role in the evolving Australian population.

### **Possibilities of statistical identification of Russians in Australia**

The Russian-speaking community in Australia is unique both in its structure and features of integration into local society. The role of migration was very high in its formation, and the presence of a variety of waves led to a significant stratification of the Russian-speaking community in Australia. This study is based on a quite complex delimitation of the concept of a 'Russian-speaking community', and determination of its size. First, we note that, with regard to the phenomenon of Russians in Australia, the term 'Russian-speaking community' is applied, because as a group they are poorly consolidated. They are essentially bundled together, represented by different ethnic and social groups of immigrants, who to speak Russian to varying degrees, and have different attitudes to Russia. In attempting to gain a better understanding of these immigrants, we need to rely on the few sources of statistical information that are available relating to the Russian community in Australia.

The first source of information is *data on place of birth*. The results of the population Census in 2006 showed that in Australia there were about 19,100 persons born in Russia, 15,600 in Ukraine, 1,900 in Estonia, 5,600 in Latvia and 3,100 in Lithuania. However, the Russian-speaking community is not limited to those who were born in the USSR. It should be noted that some of the Russian-speaking population of Australia cannot be identified by these statistics either because they were born in other countries (for example, many 'Kharbintzy' were born in China) or in Australia.

The second source of information is *language skills*. According to the last census 80% of Australia's population spoke English well or very well. However, about 3.2 million Australians used a different language to communicate at home. The most common foreign languages in this regard were Chinese (including different dialects) 15.5%, Italian 10.1%, Greek 8%, Arabic 7.7% and Vietnamese 6.2%. Russian language is used by about 36,000 people. Studies show that knowledge and use of the Russian language usually fades by the third or fourth generation. Many immigrants transferred knowledge of the Russian language to their children. Children, in turn,

entered Australian schools and became fluent in both languages. Grandchildren, as a rule, prefer to use the English language, which provides more opportunity to interact with their peers and surroundings. In this situation, parents are not always willing to support a high level of Russian language for their children. As a result, in many Russian-speaking families that have lived in Australia for a long time, there is little knowledge of Russian in the third generation. This phenomenon can be called ‘the fading language’ as immigrants are integrated into the new society.

In major Australian cities local Russian-language newspapers are being published and sold, including ‘Horizon’, ‘Unity’ and ‘Word’, and there are also Russian newspapers—‘Arguments and Facts’ and ‘Komsomolskaya Pravda’. In Sydney, the community publishes ‘Australiada’ and is actively publishing local work. In large cities the community works with video rentals to access Russian films, and there is cable TV in Russian. However, for the most part, this market exists mainly for the middle and older generations. Young people, who were born in Australia in the families of new Russian immigrants, or who arrived under the age of 12 with their parents, are quick to adapt. They are able to master the language and speak it without a Russian accent, make Australian friends and become Australian.

The third source is *religion*. According to the Census of 2006, the number of Orthodox Christians in Australia is 590,000 or 2.8% of the total population. The Orthodox religion was introduced into Australia in the early nineteenth century. The first Divine Liturgy was celebrated in Sydney in 1820 by the Russian priest Dionysius. In 1898 construction began on the first Orthodox Church (the Holy Trinity) for Russian, Greek and Arab members. The Patriarchate of Jerusalem sent priests for permanent pastoral ministry in Sydney and Melbourne. In 1925 I opened the first Russian Orthodox parish of St. Nicholas of Myra in Brisbane. In 1850 anti-Christian massacres in the Ottoman Empire forced many Orthodox Greeks and Syrians to move to Australia. There was another wave of Russian immigration in 1917. From 1922 the second wave of Greeks were expelled from Turkey and after World War II tens of thousands of immigrants were added, including Serbs, Romanians and Bulgarians. This was followed by a further wave of immigrants from Orthodox countries.

The large influx of immigrants to Australia in the last few decades has increased the Orthodox population by a factor of several dozen. During the last thirty years the Orthodox population in

Australia has grown more than any other Christian denomination. Most of the Orthodox population is composed of four ethnic communities: Greek, Serbian, Russian and Arabian. These communities have their dioceses: Australian Archdiocese of the Patriarchate of Constantinople (118 churches and monasteries, and 7 parishes); Australian and New Zealand Diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church (38 churches and parishes, 2 monasteries and 2 hermitages); Australian and New Zealand Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (31 churches and parishes, 5 monasteries and 2 hermitages); and Archbishop for Australia and New Zealand, the Patriarchate of Antioch (25 churches and congregations and one convent). In addition, the parishes contain the Romanian Orthodox Church, the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, the Orthodox Church in America and the Polish Orthodox Church.

In Australia there is a total of 228 Orthodox churches and parishes of different jurisdictions, 15 monasteries and 4 hermitages. Monasteries are small, with the number of inhabitants rarely exceeding 2-3 people, and there are about 50 monks in total. The Greek monasteries are regularly visited by experienced monks from Mount Athos for spiritual guidance. Currently the Russian Orthodox Church is in Sydney, Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Newcastle, Dandenong and Geelong. There are two monasteries – one for women in Kentline, near Sydney, and one for men near Cooma, in New South Wales. Some of the churches have shrines and venerated icons dedicated to miracles that have taken place through the prayers of the faithful.

In 1979, a Conference was organised by the canonical Orthodox Church of Australia to allow members of various Orthodox jurisdictions to work together to address common issues of church life on the Australian continent. Represented were Orthodox schools and higher educational establishments, publishers, community centres and periodicals (e.g. the magazine 'The Voice of Orthodoxy') and Orthodox radio. The Melbourne Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies convened the conference. Held in various cities of Australia, there is also an annual Congress of Russian Orthodox youth.

There are Australians of Anglo-Saxon origin who have moved into Orthodoxy from Anglicanism or from a Baptist background and in some cases have even become priests or monks, but their number is not large yet. There are also examples of engagement with Aboriginal people and

there were special missionary parishes targeting Australians, with services conducted in English. Experts believe that a number of factors are limiting the spread of Orthodoxy in Australia. First, Orthodoxy has not become part of Australian culture because of the isolation of Orthodox national communities and services through the use of national languages. This shuts Australians out from understanding the beauty of the liturgy. Therefore, the church in Australia is perceived by many as a strictly Orthodox ethnic form of Christianity that does not contribute to the overall mission. Second, the mission of Christianity runs counter to the secularism and self-sufficiency of many Australians. In Australia you can live well, without local community support, even if you don't work.

The fourth source is the data on *ethnic identity*. According to the census of the population of Australia in 2006 more than 67,000 people have indicated their Russian origin, and identified themselves as Russian. Also living in the country are Ukrainians, Belarusians, Armenians, Moldavians, Tatars, Bashkirs, Jews and people of other nationalities. Now most of the Russian population lives in Sydney and Melbourne. There are also large colonies in Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth and a few smaller colonies in Canberra, Geelong, Cooma, Hobart, Darwin and Newcastle. Thus, the most realistic assessment of the size of the Russian-speaking community in Australia can be regarded as a figure of 60,000 -70,000 people who are at different stages of integration into Australian society.

The Russian community in Australia has created a network of community organisations. Compatriots come together in clubs formed on the basis of belonging to a wave of immigration and on their shared views. Many states have officially registered not-for-profit organisations to represent Russian ethnic groups. These coordinate the work of Sunday schools, nursing homes, social welfare departments and the production of publications in Russian. They are the main carriers and centres of Russian culture. They organise groups and activities such as studio-theatre, art groups, youth groups, literary and sports associations. The potential impact of the organisations on the mechanisms of decision-making in Australia is generally low, although individual members of the Russian community have played significant roles and gained influential positions in Australian official structures.



Table 2.

Criteria for selection of the Russian community

Criterion	Number, persons	Disadvantages accounting method
Geographic identity (birth in Russia)	19,100	Does not include Russians born outside of Russia (for example, in the former Soviet Union, China and others) and includes non-Russians born in Russia
Linguistic identity (Russian language)	36,000	Excludes third generation
Religious Identity (Orthodox)	590,000	Includes other ethnic groups (Serbs, Ukrainians, Greeks)
Ethnic identity (Russian origin)	67,000	Includes many people (Tatars, Jews)
The mean value	178,025	
Mean (no religion)	40,700	

Thus, we can assume that the real extent of the Russian community in Australia is about 41,000 people. This number can be called the ‘core’ of the Russian community, that is, people who have a combination of at least two of the three attributes that identify them as Russian. However, if we consider the religious identity, the boundaries of the Russian community can be extended formally to 178,000 people. In reality, the figure is in the vicinity of 60,000 -70,000. It should be noted that the statistics for the Orthodox Church are a factor that essentially ‘blurs’ the border of the Russian community. This is due to the fact that many non-Russian European people living in Australia profess Orthodoxy, and to identify these statistically is impossible.

### **Integration of Russian migrants in Australian society**

Integration is a process of adaptation of immigrants within the host society. Integration is a two-way process. On the one hand, migrants adapt to their new environment, lifestyle, socio-economic situation, cultural background and language. On the other hand, the host society adapts to immigrants, their characteristics, lifestyle and culture. Even when the integration process is successful it can be accompanied by challenges. Typically, problems occur in conflicts between local communities and migrants.

In this study, carried out during 2008-2009, we have attempted to find out how well migrants from Russia are integrated into Australian society. We understood that Russian workers are very

varied and are represented by different migration waves that occurred in Australia at different times and in different socio-economic conditions. So we decided to focus on the degree of integration of three groups of Russian immigrants in Australia. These were groups that arrived in the country in three different periods over the past 60 years: 'Kharbintzy' (1950-1970s), Jewish immigrants (1970-1980s) and representatives of the 'New Russian migration' (1990-2000s).

While it was beyond the scope and resources of this project to conduct a comprehensive survey of the migrants in these groups, we initiated the project with a poll in the form of interviews with experts. These experts include people who have been employees of various government agencies involved in migration and integration, academics, representatives of Russian organisations, representatives of the Orthodox Church and editors of Russian publications in Australia. Interviews were conducted in Sydney, Adelaide, Melbourne and Canberra. In total we carried out 22 interviews. The experts were asked to rate integration on a scale of six for components covering civil, economic, ecological (environmental), social, psychological, religious, and cultural integration of each group of Russian-speaking immigrants in Australia.

Each component of integration included more detailed settings. For example, civil integration addressed the quality of the component through: 1) the presence of Russian migrants of Australian citizenship, and 2) participation of Russians in the elections at the local level, and 3) participation in the Russian elections at the national level, and 4) following the activities of Russian political leaders. Ecological (environmental) integration was assessed on the following criteria: 1) the state of health of the Russian after moving to Australia, and 2) responses of the Russian to climatic and natural conditions of residence, and 3) the Russian's desire to move home because of the unfavourable climate. Of course, it must be understood that this assessment was not provided by the migrants themselves, but by experts offering their opinion, based on experience. However, the choice of experts was thorough. They are competent people with responsibilities that have enabled them to have insights into the lives of Russians 'from within'. They provide a reliable framework for the results of the study which, while they are expressed in quantitative terms, depend heavily on qualitative data.

After evaluation by the expert of each component, the mean was estimated for each form of integration. Then the total score was calculated for each level of integration of Russian migrants to Australia. The final results of this study are presented in Table 3.

Table 3.

Expert assessments of the degree of integration of Russian migrants into Australian society (the maximum level of integration - 10 points, the lowest level of integration - 1 point)

	‘Kharbintzy’ (1950-1960s)	Migrants of Jewish wave (1970-1980s)	‘New Russian migration’ (1990- 2000s)
Civic integration	10	10	10
Economic integration	8	6	10
Ecological (environmental) integration	9	9	9
Social and psychological integration	7	5	9
Religious integration	4	5	5
Cultural integration	1	6	8
<b>The total estimation of the level of integration</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>51</b>

The study showed that the maximum integration into Australian society was by migrants who came to Australia from Russia after the collapse of the USSR in 1990-2000s. Assessment of their degree of integration was 51 points out of a possible 60. Experts assessed the civic and economic integration of the ‘New Russian Migration’ wave at the maximum possible number of points (10 out of 10). This is undoubtedly due to the high professional qualifications of people in this category. Most migrants from Russia, who arrived in Australia at that time, were people with higher education - scientists, experts in the field of computer technology, engineers, doctors and teachers. Most of them came via professional immigration selection processes which automatically guarantee residence and citizenship for them. Many people had no difficulty in finding work in Australia, with most of them able to work in their specialty or a similar field. These immigrants were easily included in the life of local society, becoming fully-fledged - politically and economically - residents of Australia. We know, for example, that children born in Australia in the families of this recent wave of migrants already identify themselves not as Russian, but as Australian. This can be taken as an indication of the successful integration of Russians. Also, according to experts, in the parameter ‘religious integration’ representatives of the ‘New Russian migration’ received a minimum score. Most of the latest wave of Russian immigrants do not attend church and, in principle, do not accept any religion.

The second place on the scale of degree of integration was for Jewish immigrants to Australia in 1970-1980s. Their integration has been less successful, especially in terms of social,

psychological, religious, and cultural components. The experts assessed the extent of their integration at 41 points out of a possible 60. Jews maintained their religion, regularly attended the synagogue, preserved their cultural identity, and were more psychologically oriented towards communication with people from their country, preferring to talk to each other in Russian. For Jewish immigrants civic integration had the highest rating. They are accepted as Australian citizens in the local community.

The study showed that the lowest degree of integration into Australian society was by Russian migrants of the Kharbintz wave. Experts have estimated their level of integration at 39 points out of a possible 60. The assessment for cultural integration of 'Kharbintzy' was very low because they were the least receptive to assimilation. To a greater extent than other migrants 'Kharbintzy' tend to preserve the Russian language, Russian culture and involvement in Russia. 'Kharbintzy' also preserve the Orthodox faith, which is an important element of Russian identity. For most of the 'Kharbintzy' Russian identity is traditionally a source of pride. Moreover, the older generation hoped to return to Russia. Some families managed to maintain the Russian language for two or even three generations. However, the majority of modern descendants—grandchildren and great grandchildren of 'Kharbintzy'—do not know the Russian language and use it very rarely, if at all. In the study, we recorded many cases of the extinction of the language in 'Kharbintzy' families by the third generation. The grandchildren, with good intentions and efforts of grandparents, speak in English, even with their parents, and identify themselves as Australians rather than Russians. It is the 'Kharbintzy' who are often the core of the consolidation of the Russian community in Australia. The founders and leaders of Russian clubs and organisations in Australian cities also tend to be representatives of the 'Kharbintzy' waves of migration. Economic integration of 'Kharbintzy' was rated by experts as 8 out of a possible 10. Among them there have been engineers, artists, scientists and teachers.

## **Conclusion**

The more correct term for Russians in Australia is 'Russian-speaking community' as Russian immigrant groups are diverse and poorly consolidated. They are generally well integrated into the host society and not very focused on their homeland. The term 'Russian' covers a great variety of ethnic groups many of which use the Russian language only as a means of communication rather than as a source of cultural self-definition. The real extent of the Russian

community in Australia is about 41,000 people. This number can be called the 'core' of the Russian community - people who have a combination of at least two of the three identifying attributes that we have used: Russian - born, Russian language or of Russian origin.

The Russian speaking community in Australia is unique both in its structure and features of integration into local society. The role of migration was very important in its formation. A variety of waves of migration led to a significant stratification of the Russian-speaking community in Australia. Today emigration from Russia continues to play a major role in the formation of the Russian-speaking community in Australia. Approximately 70% of all permanent emigrants from Russia to Australia are people of working age. Only 14% are children and adolescents and 16% are pensioners. Statistics on the age structure of emigration to Australia is in agreement with data on the general structure of emigration from Russia. The specifics of the migratory flow to Australia are important. Australia attracts highly skilled specialists and in-demand professions in the national labour market.

The study showed that of the three groups considered, migrants who came to Australia from Russia after the Soviet collapse in 1990-2000s are the most fully integrated into Australian society. Assessment of their degree of integration was at 51 points out of a possible 60. Experts gave the maximum number of points possible on civic and economic integration of the Russian migration wave. This is undoubtedly due to their high professional qualifications. Most migrants from Russia, who arrived in Australia at that time, were people with higher education qualifications - scientists, experts in the field of computer technology, engineers, doctors and teachers. Most of them came via professional immigration selection processes which automatically guarantee residence and citizenship for them. The second place on the scale of degree of integration was for Jewish immigrants to Australia in 1970-1980s. Their integration has been less successful, especially in terms of social, psychological, religious, and cultural components. The experts assessed the extent of their integration at 41 points out of a possible 60. The study showed that the lowest degree of integration into Australian society was by Russian migrants of the Kharbintz wave. Experts have estimated their level of integration at 39 points out of a possible 60. The assessment for cultural integration of 'Kharbintzy' was very low because they were the least receptive to assimilation. To a greater extent than other migrants 'Kharbintzy' tend to preserve the Russian language, Russian culture and involvement in Russia.

‘Kharbintzy’ also preserve the Orthodox faith, which is an important element of the Russian identity.

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