



CARIM EAST – CONSORTIUM FOR APPLIED RESEARCH ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

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Characteristic Features of Migrants' Integration in Present-Day Belarus

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CARIM-East
Creating an Observatory of Migration East of Europe

Research Report
CARIM-East RR 2013/30

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in Present-Day Belarus**

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CARIM-East – Creating an Observatory East of Europe

This project which is co-financed by the European Union is the first migration observatory focused on the Eastern Neighbourhood of the European Union and covers all countries of the Eastern Partnership initiative (Belarus, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) and Russian Federation.

The project's two main themes are:

- (1) migration from the region to the European Union (EU) focusing in particular on countries of emigration and transit on the EU's eastern border; and
- (2) intraregional migration in the post-Soviet space.

The project started on 1 April 2011 as a joint initiative of the European University Institute (EUI), Florence, Italy (the lead institution), and the Centre of Migration Research (CMR) at the University of Warsaw, Poland (the partner institution).

CARIM researchers undertake comprehensive and policy-oriented analyses of very diverse aspects of human mobility and related labour market developments east of the EU and discuss their likely impacts on the fast evolving socio-economic fabric of the six Eastern Partners and Russia, as well as that of the European Union.

In particular, CARIM-East:

- builds a broad network of national experts from the region representing all principal disciplines focused on human migration, labour mobility and national development issues (e.g. demography, law, economics, sociology, political science).
- develops a comprehensive database to monitor migration stocks and flows in the region, relevant legislative developments and national policy initiatives;
- undertakes, jointly with researchers from the region, systematic and *ad hoc* studies of emerging migration issues at regional and national levels.
- provides opportunities for scholars from the region to participate in workshops organized by the EUI and CMR, including academic exchange opportunities for PhD candidates;
- provides forums for national and international experts to interact with policymakers and other stakeholders in the countries concerned.

Results of the above activities are made available for public consultation through the website of the project: <http://www.carim-east.eu/>

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Абстракт

Проблема интеграции мигрантов становится все более актуальной. Развитие социально-экономического сотрудничества Беларуси с другими странами мира способствует расширению списка участников интеграционных процессов, которые проявляются в различных сферах жизнедеятельности мигрантов. На протяжении нескольких десятилетий традиционными участниками этих процессов были граждане граничащих с Беларусью стран - России, Украины, Польши. На современном этапе наблюдается стремительный рост потоков мигрантов из стран ранее нехарактерных направлений, в частности южных. Среди них особо выделяются, Туркменистан, Ливан, Сирия, Иран, Турция, а также страны южной Азии - Китай и Вьетнам. В данной работе были оценены и проанализированы масштабы и структура участников интеграционных процессов в зависимости от страны рождения и страны гражданства. Основными источниками данных являлись результаты переписей населения, сведения о естественном и миграционном движении населения, а также ведомственная статистика образования. В результате исследования было установлено, что в целом в Беларуси интеграционные процессы не являются острой проблемой и протекают аналогично с другими социальными процессами. В большей степени это обусловлено притоком населения из стран бывшего Советского Союза, который представлен главным образом теми, кто либо сам прежде проживал на территории Беларуси, либо имел здесь родственников. Интеграция мигрантов на территории Беларуси проявляется в основном на рынке труда. Наиболее распространенными сферами применения труда мигрантов из стран старых направлений являются промышленность, сельское хозяйство и торговля. Тогда как граждане стран новых направлений преимущественно сосредоточены в торговле, здравоохранении и образовании. Отличительной особенностью новых миграционных трендов является перевес в сторону молодежи, мужского населения и мигрантов с высоким уровнем квалификации. Среди них более половины являются специалистами-профессионалами. Подавляющее большинство представителей стран новых направлений приезжает в Беларусь с целью получения высшего образования или под предлогом получения образования. В то время как для мигрантов из стран старых направлений в виду большей степени интеграции характерно рассредоточение не только по сферам занятости, уровню квалификации и образования, но и по возрасту. Исследование акцентирует внимание на необходимость разработки специальных мер по адаптации и интеграции мигрантов, что особенно важно для граждан из стран нехарактерных ранее направлений, с которыми у белорусов большие различия в культуре, языке, религии. В частности, особое внимание следует обратить на вопросы связанные с владением русским или белорусским языками, возможностью купить или снять в аренду жилье, пользованием услугами бесплатного образования и здравоохранения т.д. С этой точки зрения в Беларуси, с одной стороны, для мигрантов нет препятствий в области интеграции, с другой стороны, нет специально отведенного для этих целей органа власти. Самостоятельная интеграция для таких мигрантов представляет собой проблему, решение которой может стать длительным процессом.

Abstract

The integration of migrants is becoming an increasingly important question in Belarus. As socio-economic cooperation between Belarus and other countries is developing the list of participants in the integration process of migrants is growing. For several decades, the traditional participants were citizens from neighboring countries: Russia, Ukraine and Poland. At the present there is also, though, rapid growth in migration flows from other areas, particularly from the south: Turkmenistan, Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Turkey and the countries of South Asia including China and Vietnam. This paper presents a study of the scope and structure of the main participants in the integration process, in terms of country of birth and country of citizenship. The main data sources are the census, data on vital and education statistics. The results suggest that integration in Belarus is not a serious problem, being similar to other social processes. One of the key explanations for this

is the influx of people from the former Soviet Union, above all, those who lived in Belarus themselves or had relatives there. The integration of migrants in Belarus is most evident in the labor market. The most common areas of integration for labor migrants from the older migrant nations are in industry, agriculture and trade. Citizens from the new areas are, on the other hand, concentrated in trade, health and education. The new migrants include more young males with higher-level skills. Among these, more than half are professionals. The vast majority of the new migrants come to Belarus to pursue higher education or under the guise of education. The old trends mean greater integration dispersion in terms of employment, skill levels and education, but also in terms of age. The study emphasizes the need for a special policy for the adaptation and integration of migrants, something particularly important for citizens from unusual areas due to differences in culture, language and religion. Special attention should be paid to the knowledge of Russian and Belarusian, the possibility of buying or renting housing, the use of free education and health care services, etc. At this point in Belarus there are no obstacles for migrants wishing to integrate, but there are no authorities specifically allocated for that purpose. Self-integration for these migrants is a problem which will take a good deal of time to work itself out.

Introduction

The integration of migrants is becoming an increasingly important question in Belarus. At the same time there are a lack of research of it. There are either no estimates of the number of people who are adapting and integrating, or they are only provided in ranges with a big margin error. The aim of this paper is to fill the vacuum. There is limited literature on migrant integration in Belarus. To a certain degree, analysis of the ethnic structure of the population and the distribution of languages (Shakhotko, Kudelka, 2002) can be found in previous research on integration. Despite the information included in the fore-mentioned research on social demographic characteristics of ethnic groups, this paper takes into account the whole population, and not only those who have migrant status. So the ethnic criteria is not the one. There are also criteria the country of birth and citizenship. The issues of migrant integration were also examined in the framework of research into refugee integration (Matus, Tumashik, 2007; Andrysek, Rantala, 2008). Based on the results of this research the authors provide a number of recommendations for improvement of migration policy measures, among which there are general ones which refer not only to refugees, but also to migrants, something and this was taken into account when drawing up the results of this article.

The primary objective of the present research project is to study the specifics of migrant integration in Belarus today. Displays of xenophobia, which can be observed in various countries, as well as the negative consequences for non-restricting migration policy means there is a real need to understand integration tendencies. When integrating in a given society, migrants become a part of said society, and a moving force therein. The demographic security of the country depends, to some extent, on how strong this force is, and whether it is a positive one. Thus, the relevance of this study is determined by the importance of identifying the principal integration participants in Belarus, and the characteristics of their participation in social and demographic processes. This study examines not only the integration process, but also the process of involvement as a 'bilateral process implying mutual adaptation of both the majority and the minority'. Whereas in the case of integration the 'external system (where the majority dominates) accepts some elements of diversity, however, it does not imply any changes in the system itself' (Ivanov, 2012).

1. Data

The primary source of data is the population census. This is the only source which provides a true reflection of the characteristics of the population. Based on the 2009 population census information about the population was selected by country of birth and citizenship, as well as the number of employed and unemployed by country of citizenship. Data on the most numerous ethno-cultural unions were put together in terms of official members, in order to reflect the number and population of diasporas registered in Belarus, based on the information provided by the Administration of the Authorized Representative for religion and ethnicities. Integration of students is researched based on the information of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus, in particular, data on the number of foreign students by countries of citizenship. The complexity of demographic analysis is first of all there in the scarcity of regular statistics on integration. Based on the information available ten-year series are collected for those who got married in terms of the citizenship of spouses-to-be, in terms too of the ethnic structure of migrants, as well as too as the number of births and deaths of different nationalities.

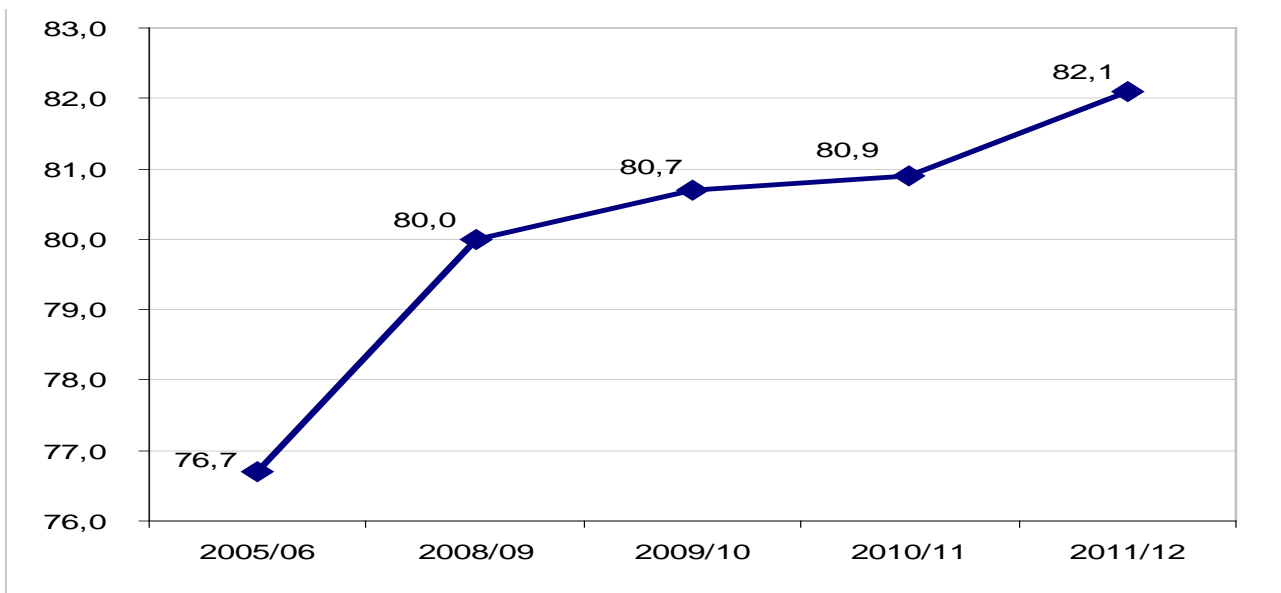
This paper estimates and analyzes the integration participants in terms of country of birth and country of citizenship. However, it provides a more detailed examination of migrant integration for country of citizenship.

Generally, integration processes in Belarus are not an acute problem and they are similar to other social processes. To a great extent integration is conditioned by population inflow from the former

Soviet countries, and it is predominantly represented by those who have either resided in Belarusian territory, or who have had relatives here.

2. Language Distribution

One of the key moments in terms of facilitating the integration of the Belarusian Russian-speaking population was declaring the Russian language the second national language. In the 2009 population census 37% of all ethnic Belarusians indicated that Russian was their native language. At the same time, only 3% of Russians and 8% of Ukrainians considered Belarusian their native language. Almost 60% of Belarusian Poles considered Belarusian their native language, and only 30% said it was Russian in the same census. Overall, more than 60% of Belarusian citizens speak Russian at home. Only 26.1% of Belarusians speak Belarusian at home. However, 40.8% of Poles residing in Belarus do so. To some extent, the widespread use of Russian in everyday life can be explained by the large number of mixed marriages, not only with Russians but also with other nationalities. In particular, Russian is a connecting language of communication between Belarusians and CIS nationals. Russian is the primary language of studies at all educational establishments in the country. Thus, according to official education statistics more than 80% of children receiving general secondary education study in



Russian: in the capital city there are more than 90% of them. The share of persons studying in Russian increases in the full-time education system as well, see figure 2.

Figure 2. Number of Persons Studying in Russian at Belarusian Schools, %

Source: data of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus

The popularity of Russian in the education system facilitates the integration of migrant children from post-Soviet states in Belarusian society. The situation is more complex for non-CIS countries and in the Baltic states. As it was noted by refugee integration specialists “the primary problem that refugee children face at secondary schools is the language problem” (Matus, Tumashik, 2007). Knowledge of language also helps in finding employment. Today not knowing Russian and Belarusian is a major obstacle to legal employment. One of the primary working languages in Belarus is Russian. And even knowledge of English helps little in finding a permanent job without Russian. On the other hand, the development of joint projects and the gradual involvement of citizens from China in work and study projects in Belarus have contributed to growing interest in the study of Chinese. In 1993 Chinese was included in the curriculum of Minsk State Linguistic University. The very great interest

in studying the Chinese language is also confirmed by the fact that along with English, German, Spanish, and French, Chinese is one of the languages introduced at schools among the mandatory foreign languages. For example, Polish, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, and Hebrew do not have this kind of status, despite numerous representatives of these ethnicities residing in Belarus.

There are only two schools teaching in Polish, and two teaching in Lithuanian. But this number is sufficient, because parents prefer to enroll their child in a school teaching in Russian or Belarusian. Then, in parallel, they take their child to Sunday schools or optional courses for Polish and Lithuanian. It can be stated that they function at the non-governmental ethnic associations, or official diasporas.

3. Activities of Ethnic Non-Governmental Organizations

Despite the possibility of contributing to integration processes the activities of these associations are normally limited to cultural events aimed at the preservation of cultural values and traditions, as well as strengthening friendship between nations. The Polish diaspora is the most active one. Despite the high degree of assimilation, Poles are also pro-active in terms of the preservation of their national culture. Currently there are 75 national cultural associations registered on Belarusian territory, spread across the country. The number of active members of these associations according to the lists is 16,000, of whom 80% perform their activities in the Grodno Region. There are eight ethnic cultural associations of Lithuanians along the border with Lithuania, in Vitebsk and Grodno Regions, with a total of 1,332 active members. There are 23 Jewish ethnic cultural organizations in Belarus, with a total of 3,038 members. Overall, there are 11 ethnic cultural Russian associations, with 1,335 registered members. Officially, the number of members in the other diasporas is small, and is under 1,000 people. Nevertheless, neither the multitude of organizations, nor the significant number of members in the above mentioned non-governmental ethnic organizations enhances their role in terms of integration. The role of diasporas in Belarus is still rather small.

This is, to some extent, the result of the effective assimilation of long-term migrants who arrived several decades ago, and who do not need support from side organizations, as they already have full rights, on a par with natives locals. Over 70% of non-Belarusian ethnicities arrived in Belarus before 1990. Some of them are not migrants at all in the normal sense of the word, and are representatives of the second or even later generations. Thus, integration research in terms of ethnicity has its disadvantages, first, due to the difficulty of distinguishing between migrants by length of stay in the country. Therefore, further research must be based on country of birth and country of citizenship.

4. Primary Participants of Integration Processes

According to the 2005 UN Population Division estimates, the number of persons born in different countries of the world and residing in Belarus is as high as 1.1 million persons. The top three countries, which account for 97%, are: Russia (62.4%); Poland (21.6%); and Ukraine (13%). Due to the forced migration of the 1990s, though with a significant lag, Armenia comes next, accounting for 0.55%. All other countries are under 0.4%.

According to the last 2009 Belarusian population census the total number of people born outside of Belarus was 925,000. Out of these, the share of those born in Russia was 50%; in Ukraine 17%; in Kazakhstan 6.5%; in Germany 1.6%; in Poland 1%; in Lithuania, Latvia, and Uzbekistan 1.3%; and in Armenia 0.65%. This structure also corresponds to the distribution of citizens of other countries residing on Belarusian territory, by countries of citizenship. Thus, the leaders by country of citizenship are Russia and Ukraine, which account for respectively 66% and 13%. Also, numerous representatives of other CIS countries and countries bordering on Belarus live here. It is worth noting the growing role of Chinese citizens and citizens of some Southern countries in Belarus. The share of Chinese citizens is already at the level of countries of former Soviet republics or the level of Poland, about 1.2%. The

total share of such countries as Lebanon, the Syrian Republic, Sri Lanka, Iran, Venezuela and India is also as high as 1.2%. The vast majority of these are students.

There are several the most common old and new countries which take the most substantial and sizeable part in the integration processes the following three groups can be classified as old countries of origin:

1. Countries with the most numerous ethnicities: Russia, Poland, Ukraine and Israel.
2. Caucasian countries: Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia.
3. Baltic countries: Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.

New origin countries are worth classifying apart. In particular, flows of migrants from these countries increased recently as a result of economic integration.

1. CIS countries: Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Moldova, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan;
2. Southern countries: Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Sri Lanka and Turkey;
3. South Asia countries: China and Vietnam.

Integration shows in different spheres of migrant's life activity. Study of integration processes in Belarus implies getting to grips with: gender; location; marital status; status in the labor market; level of completed education, and education in progress.

5. Structure by gender

The 2009 population census shows a difference in population structure depending on country of citizenship. Thus, overall, women are predominant in migrant waves from "old" countries of origin, except for the Caucasus nations and Israel. Their share in the total number of migrants for old and new countries is between 51% and 56%. Women are predominant among all migrants, as "old" migrants are more numerous than "new" migrants. Due to the traditionally higher mobility of men from the Caucasus region, women from these countries account for only one third of migrants. To some extent this has to do with stage-by-stage migration: the man migrates first, and the family comes later, once he has settled down. Besides, some male migrants work in Belarus and send money to their family in their home country not intending to settle.

A similar situation exists with respect to Muslim countries, which are included among the "new" countries, where tradition dictates that the woman must take care of the family, rather than be trained in a profession. Therefore, compared to western countries, there are few students among the women. Given this and given too that the vast majority of migrants from these countries are students, the share of females is low. This is valid both for CIS countries (Turkmenistan, Tajikistan), and for very "new" countries (Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Turkey and Sri Lanka). As a result, there is a more proactive process of integration among men, and this is true in all spheres.

6. Structure by Age

There is also an interest in Belarus as a country for completing higher education and this has obvious consequences for the age structure of migrants from new origin countries. The share of migrants aged 17 to 40 is high: 50% for CIS countries and up to 70% for Southern countries. For Chinese citizens the share of people in this age bracket is 98%. In the "old" countries only one third of migrants are 17 to 40: these are the Baltic states and countries with numerous ethnic representation. Thus, integration of "old" origin countries shows up to a greater extent in social services and in the behaviour of self-preservation. Migrants from new origin countries are more likely to get married and have children.

As for Caucasian countries, they have two characteristic features. First, unlike other countries, the share of children among migrants from these countries is high. Second, unlike older countries of

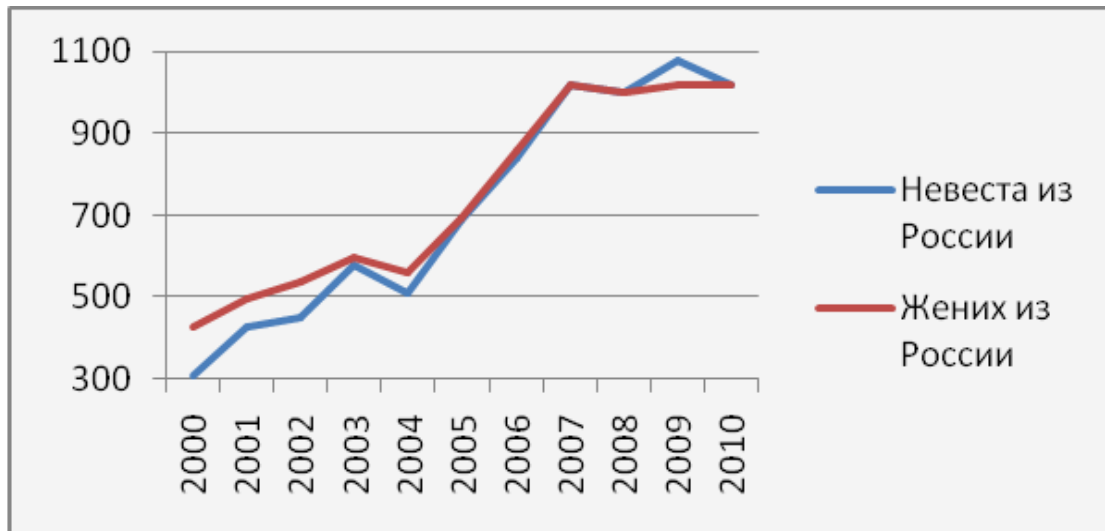
origin, over half of them, besides children, were in the 17-40 bracket. Thus, a lot of them come not only to earn money, but also to stay in Belarus, which may serve as confirmation of the favorable integration climate for people from the Caucasus. Undoubtedly, this kind of structure also means a high share of married persons, which is highest among Caucasus citizens, on average almost 70%.

7. Marriage Structure

The share of married persons among citizens of in “new” countries is not particularly high, because the absolute majority of them are students. Data on all other groups of countries show the relative homogeneity of marriage structure, where over one half of the population older than 15 are married, one-tenth of them unofficially. There is no information about the frequency of international marriages. Statistical bodies only receive information about the number of registered marriages *per* year. According to this information, which is available every year for 2000 to 2011 in 5% of all marriages registered in Belarus only one of the spouses was a citizen. Although the share is unstable through the whole period, the absolute number of marriages grew until 2010. It is important to note that these are not all the marriages registered between Belarusians and foreign nationals. Belarusian statistics do not encompass those events which occur in other countries.

In terms of international marriages Russians in Belarus are among the most integrated nations. Among marriages where once spouse is foreign, marriage with Russians account for over 40%. According to the official statistics Russian-Belarusian marriages in Belarus represent about 1% of all marriages registered there, and there is virtually no difference between the number of Russian wives and husbands; though recently there has been some growth in marriages registered between Belarusian men and Russian women (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Dynamics of Russian-Belarusian marriages in Belarus in, 2000-2010, by citizenship of spouses

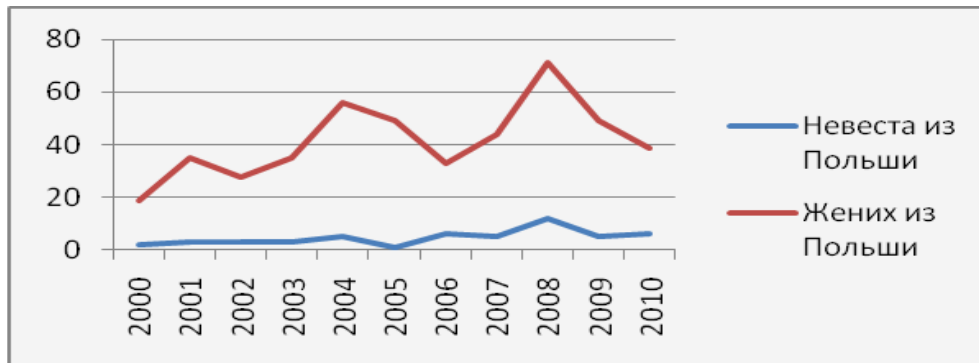


Source: Data of the civil registry offices

When Russian citizens get married in Belarus, in 99% of cases it is with Belarusians.

There are also mixed Polish-Belarusian marriages in Belarus. Every year civil registry offices note about 50 such marriages. Despite these small numbers, the number of marriages where the wife is Belarusian is several times higher than those where the husband is Belarusian (Figure 4).

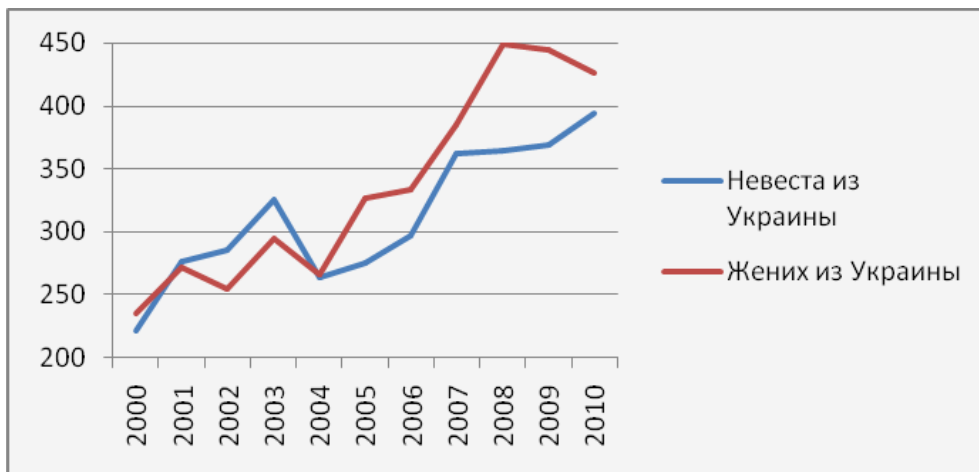
Figure 4. Dynamics of Polish-Belarusian marriages in Belarus, 2000-2010, by citizenship of spouses-to-be



Source: data of civil registry offices

As for the citizenship of spouses-to-be, just as in case of Poland, in Ukrainian-Belarusian marriages Belarus is a source of wives rather, than husbands (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Dynamics of Ukrainian-Belarusian marriages in Belarus, 2000-2010, by citizenship of future spouses



Source: data of civil registry offices

The share of citizens from other countries marrying Belarusian citizens in Belarus itself is small, and, therefore, is not considered here.

It is impossible to estimate precisely how many children are born in interethnic and mono-ethnic marriages. The only criteria of integration in this regard is the nationality of the parent. Overall, according to the data of birth registering authorities, an average of 14% of children born in Belarus, 2000-2011, had a different nationality from their mother, another 15% were those whose mother was Belarusian, and whose father had a different nationality. Therefore, about 30% of all live births include marriages where one parent is non-Belarusian, 15,000 children *per* year. It should be noted that there is a growing number of children whose mother is Belarusian and whose father is of a different nationality. Earlier the growth was insignificant but in 2011 there was an almost 1.5-fold increase compared to previous years, and the total stood at 21%. Russians (55%), Poles, and Ukrainians account for over 90% of births among mothers who are not citizens. All other nationalities barely reach 1%.

International marriages certainly help a migrant's integration into Belarusian society. But active participation in the labor market ensures even better results.

8. Employment Sectors and Occupations

The jobs held down by migrants also affect their place of residence. The more young people there are among migrants, the more students there are, who study and live, of course, in cities. Therefore, almost 100% of migrants from southern countries and Turkmenistan reside in urban areas. 95% of Israeli citizens also reside in cities, because of their traditionally urban occupations: trade, processing industry, real-estate transactions, education... At the same time the high share of those employed in agriculture explains the higher share of citizens from Latvia (20%), Lithuania (15%), Ukraine (24%), Kazakhstan (42%), Moldova (28%) and Tajikistan (20%) residing in rural areas, compared to other countries. Their share varies from 35% to 50% depending on their country.

Although there are no restrictions on employment in any sector in Belarus, there are some spheres where it is easier for migrants to integrate and this again depends, in part, on the home country. More particularly the support of compatriots who have arrived earlier also plays an important role. Thus, migrants from the Caucasian states, Vietnam, Turkey, and Uzbekistan mostly work in commerce. The share of citizens from Lebanon, Syria, Sri Lanka, and Iran in commerce is also high, but a lot of them are also employed in the health-care system. Among Chinese citizens, besides trade, it is also common to be employed in education, and industry. Besides, the employment status of citizens from newer migration countries, in particular from southern states, is, as a rule, high. Thus, according to the population census, over half of all employed citizens from all of these countries are highly-skilled professionals.

Migrants from older migration countries are more diverse both in terms of employment sectors, and kind of activity. Generally speaking, the structure of migrants from older migration countries sees a similar profile to citizens in terms of employment. A high share of employees in industry, trade, agriculture, transportation and communication is also characteristic for them, which is explained by the specialization of the Belarusian economy in these sectors.

The age structure of migrants and their employment sectors also determines the means of subsistence and where they get these means from. In this respect there are differences both between "old" and "new" countries, and also within the groups. There is a high share of dependents among migrants from the "new" countries, which is a result of a significant number of students. At the same time the share of students with scholarships is extremely low. Only Tajikistan here is an exception: scholarship represents subsistence for 8% of citizens. This low percentage can be explained by the fact that migrants from "new" countries as a rule have the right to study based on paid tuition, i.e. they do not receive a scholarship. Along with money for tuition they also receive other funds, as dependents of their families. Vietnam stands out in the group of "new" countries, as 60% of its citizens live on their job earnings. Also, one can note Tajikistan, Moldova, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan, as 4 to 7% of these countries use their subsidiary plots as the primary source of means of subsistence. 12% to 25% of citizens of these countries live on pensions, which is much higher than in other "new" countries and brings them into the range of the old origin countries, where one fifth of citizens receive a pension. The percentage of people living on a pension is somewhat lower among Caucasus citizens, which can be explained by a higher share of children, and which in its turn increases the share of dependents. Among all older host countries, one third of citizens are dependents of other persons, compared to 15-20% in other countries. Overall, Russia and Poland are the highest in terms of pension: respectively, 29% and 37%, which is a result of the inflow of migrants from these countries to Belarus at more advanced age, including after retirement.

A characteristic feature of "old" countries is the fact that due to a high degree of integration over 40% of migrants state that their job is the primary source of subsistence. Besides, Baltic citizens find themselves maintaining a household, which is the primary source of subsistence for 8% of migrants

from Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. Once they arrive in Belarus, migrants from these countries integrate into Belarusian society easily, not only through personal relations, but also becoming active members in terms of labor relations. Citizens of the new origin countries can also find employment successfully in Belarus. However, their primary reason for residence is education.

9. Students as Active Participants in the Integration Process

Nowadays Belarus is the country for studying, especially for new countries. As was noted above, the absolute majority of citizens from “new” countries are students. As of the academic year 2010-2011 there were 10.7 students permanently residing in foreign countries, studying at state universities and Belarusian colleges. The top country in terms of the number of students is Turkmenistan, 47%; followed by Russia, 17%; China, 12%; Azerbaijan, 2.7 %; Sri Lanka, 2.5%; Lebanon, Ukraine, and Iran, 1.5% each, and Syria 1.2%. The other 13% are covered by almost 70 other countries.

Overall, in recent years in Belarus there has been a growth of foreign students studying at Belarusian educational institutions. Thus, from 2005/2006 to 2011/2012 academic years their numbers doubled, reaching 12,000. It should be noted that increases in the number of foreign students is not related to the availability or increase of the number of vacant places not occupied by Belarusian citizens at educational institutions. These are two different groups of students. Except for certain agreements, foreign students are not entitled to scholarship spots at universities: paid from the state budget after which students are obliged to reimburse tuition by being assigned to a job at state institutions. They either pay for their own studies, or tuition is paid in the framework of targeted programs in their home countries. Foreign students cannot enjoy rooms or dorms for students who study for free, as there are separate buildings for them. However, they do create competition for those students who pay their own tuition, though their share in this category of students is not high, only 4.5%. Overall, more than 60% of students pay their own university tuition. Having graduated, a student who has paid his/her own tuition, can find his/her own employment. Thus, he/she can find a job in Belarus, or leave the country. Besides, in cases when the origin country pays for foreign student’s tuition, there are two possible outcomes. A number study in Belarus and, then, go back to their home country. These include those who do not have free spots in their home countries, and those who preferred Belarusian education due to its lower tuition cost as compared to, Russia. Most of them are citizens of Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and southern countries: South Africa, Venezuela, Cuba, etc. The second group includes representatives of their home countries who come to Belarus for the development of commercial and economic collaboration. These include citizens of China, Lebanon, Iran, Syria, and some others. The total number of foreign students at Belarusian educational establishments increases directly in terms of the growth of numbers of students in the second group. Such growth is conditioned by the development of economic ties with these countries. Currently the impact of foreign students on demography is insignificant. However, the situation may change in the future. Certainly, according to the 2009 census the vast majority of citizens of such countries as China, Lebanon, Syrian Republic, Sri-Lanka, Iran, Venezuela, India are students- their share varies from 60% for Iran to 90% for China, Sri Lanka, and India (Table 2). Growth of companies with foreign participation, including investment companies also determines growth in the number of employed foreign students and graduates in Belarusian enterprises. It is impossible to estimate the exact scale of participation, because there is no reliable statistics for countries of citizenship. Taking into account employable and reproductive age, a certain impact on demographic processes is to be expected. Nevertheless, due to relatively small migration volumes, the impact will not be that significant. Besides, migrants from “new” countries, as a rule, marry their compatriots or persons of the same ethnicity. Their integration is limited to labor activity. In the future integration processes can be expected if current students stay in Belarus, and their children go to normal Belarusian schools: at present there are no specialized schools for “new” migrants.

Table 2. Population and number of students from some countries, by country of citizenship, residing in Belarus

2009 population census	Students	Total citizens of this country	Share of students, %
Russia	11402	83561	14
Turkmenistan	2537	2828	90
Ukraine	1925	16874	11
China	1398	1545	90
Kazakhstan	502	1811	28
Lithuania	457	2995	15
Armenia	296	1622	18
India	293	333	88
Sri-Lanka	293	304	96
Azerbaijan	291	1452	20
Uzbekistan	243	1661	15
Israel	233	1157	20
Moldova, Republic of	230	1636	14
Lebanon	216	334	65
Syrian Arab Republic	200	293	68
Georgia	196	1078	18
Latvia	187	818	23
Iran, Islamic Republic	175	300	58

Source: 2009 Belarus population census

According to the education statistics for 2007-2012 there are citizens of two countries, Turkmenistan and Sri-Lanka, who become students but who rarely graduate. In particular, 1,000 students from Turkmenistan enrolled at universities of Belarus, but only 4-6 persons actually graduated. According to the statistics of departures by destination countries, the outflow to Turkmenistan in 2004-2011 was under 100 persons. Therefore, after graduation Turkmenistan nationals clearly stay in the country. According to the results of the 2009 census, only 5% of citizens of Turkmenistan claimed to be employed, 2% classified themselves as unemployed. In reality, those who claim that they are students – the rest – are for the most part “fictional” students. Hence, there is high unofficial employment, which accounts for as many as 2,000 people. At first glance, they seem to be more attractive employees because they ask for relatively low pay. However, in the long run the negative consequences of illegal employment override any benefits. These include fines, and the revocation of a license for work activity. Nevertheless, the employer is not charged with any criminal offence. Previously, criminal liability was limited to the employee, and it applied after the third occurrence of illegal activity. Currently, a foreign national has only to register. Then, even after being expelled, a foreign national who has paid for a university semester is still registered as a student, and may continue his or her illegal labor activity. In case of repeated expulsions the procedure may repeat itself an unlimited number of times. Thus, a legal stay in Belarus is ensured through studies, though not all “students” are actually studying. Given their primary official activities, and the average level of education of most of the citizens of Turkmenistan, we can identify those activities which are also predominant in the non-official employment sector: service workers, highly-skilled agricultural and industrial workers.

The following conclusions can be drawn based on the analysis of the data of arrivals and departures combined with the data of education statistics and the 2009 population census results. First, the vast majority of nationals from these countries arrive in Belarus to receive higher education or under the pretense of receiving higher education. Second, having obtained their diploma most of the migrants do not leave the country, but rather put their knowledge to practice in Belarus, this includes working for the offices of the companies from their countries. Third, if we adjust the migration balance by the number of graduates for any given year, the number of persons who arrived and graduated exceeds the number of departures for any given year for such countries as China, Lebanon, Syria, Iran, and India (Table 3).

Table 3. Migration balances for certain citizenship countries minus the number of graduates at Belarusian higher-educational institutions for 2008-2010

	2008	2009	2010	2011
India	119	156	94	14
Iran	10	117	46	74
China	405	489	200	206
Syria	140	169	53	67
Lebanon	57	148	39	25

Source: data of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus and migration statistics

A certain number of the graduates who stay in Belarus fall into the unemployed category. Some of the most important reasons for unemployment include poor knowledge of Russian and lack of work experience. Unlike in many other countries, Russian or Belarusian prevail in Belarus as the means of communication in all spheres of activities. The top ten countries in terms of the number of unemployed nationals are: Ukraine, Lithuania, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Moldova, Uzbekistan, Israel, Turkmenistan and China. Population census data on the unemployed by country of citizenship confirm the high share of unemployed migrants from “new” countries in the total number of the unemployed, in particular, from China, Lebanon, Iran and India. This is particularly true of young people aged 21-35, second, it is true of people with a higher education. As for the “old” countries the share of persons who graduated from higher educational institutions is not high - 15 to 25%, whereas the share of young people varies from 33 to 50%.

Thus, Belarus is not only an active participant in global integration processes, but also provides opportunities for involvement in Belarusian society to migrants. At the current stage of development there is a growth in economic collaboration with “new” and “old” countries. The most prominent of these are Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Turkey, as well as countries of South Asia such as China, and Vietnam.

The primary manifestation of migrant integration on Belarusian territory is the labor market. The most wide-spread employment sector for migrants from “old” countries are industry, agriculture, and commerce, while citizens from “new” countries are mostly concentrated in commerce, health care, and education. Besides, a higher level of qualification of immigrants from new directions can be observed. Over half of them are highly-qualified specialists. While for “old” countries there is more scattering in terms of employment sectors, education and qualification levels, but also in terms of age due to better integration. The vast majority of migrants from the “new” countries are students. Some graduates now remain in Belarus working, in some cases, for joint Belarusian-foreign companies. Thus, the integration process is still, for them, at an early stage of development. Currently it is impossible to evaluate how problematic integration will be for migrants from “new” countries. However, based on the growth in the number of joint projects and the expansion of commercial and economic

collaboration, it is important to raise now the issue of special integration measures for citizens from “new” countries. In particular, special attention should be paid to the issue of knowing Russian and Belarusian, buying and renting housing, free education and health care services, etc.

In the opinion of international experts the “success of integration measures mostly depends on the readiness of the state to create favorable conditions, i.e. to actively develop and pursue a policy which creates possibilities for the new-comers, and a positive public opinion” (Andrysek, Rantala, 2008, p. 72). From this point of view, on the one hand, there are no obstacles for the integration of migrants in Belarus, on the other hand, there is no special authority specifically in charge of this issue. The need for such an authority becomes more and more relevant due to increased inflow of migrants from “new” countries, who are different from Belarusians in terms of culture, language and religion. Independent integration for such migrants is problematic, and resolving this issue will likely prove a lengthy matter.

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