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COMPARATIVE URBAN STUDIES PROJECT AND KENNAN INSTITUTE

MOSCOW AND KYIV: CHANGING CITIES AND MIGRANT MAGNETS

The Woodrow Wilson Center's Kennan Institute has been engaged in the study of transnational migration in Ukraine and in Russia for the past decade. In particular, the Kennan Institute has supported three in-depth studies of migrant communities in Moscow and Kyiv, using surveys, census information, and interviews to collect data. (See insert below) Some of the Kennan Institute's findings are summarized below and point the way toward additional research.

Large urban centers in Ukraine and Russia historically have been magnets for migrants who came to work or study, and then stayed. Over the last sixteen years, dramatic economic changes have resulted in very different demographic trends. Moscow and Kyiv in particular are attracting new types of migrants, especially transnational migrants. The presence of these new communities is disrupting long-standing social systems in Moscow and Kyiv, as “outsiders” reshape each city. Although transnational migrants remain a relatively small percentage of these largely mono-ethnic cities, their influence nevertheless is quite substantial. Therefore, it is important to determine *how* national and transnational migrants are affecting Moscow and Kyiv, and *how* each city is responding to the legal, cultural, and demographic challenges associated with these newly arrived residents.

Official Russian statistics reveal dramatic growth in Moscow despite the fact that the country's population has been declining for nearly two decades. The primary source of Moscow's expansion has been migration as the city has become the top destination for migrants from other Russian regions, as well as other neighboring states. Consequently, Moscow is absorbing much of Eurasia's skilled and unskilled migration, with the overall result that nearly half of all Muscovites were born in other cities. By 2025, the greater Moscow metropolitan area is projected to attract 25 million people, producing new challenges for municipal as well as regional sustainability. (Please see Figure 1.)

The population of Ukraine, like that of Russia, has decreased since 1991 while Kyiv, like Moscow, has grown because of migrants. In 2007, Kyiv's official population was reported at 2,718,100, although unofficial estimates indicate the number of inhabitants may in fact be nearly twice that figure. Both Moscow and Kyiv are projected to grow significantly over the next decade.

Written by
**Renata Kosco-
Harmatiy and Mary
Elizabeth Malinkin**



Odesa, 2007

The expanding economies of Moscow and Kyiv are generating a demand for diverse labor, thereby offering migrants opportunities for increased wages and potentially long-term careers. The attraction of migrants to Moscow and Kyiv is further reinforced by the demographic crisis; an aging population is leading to a rapidly shrinking workforce. For example, migrants already account for 30–40 percent of the Moscow workforce in the 20–39 year-old category, and this percentage undoubtedly will grow as the number of retirees increases. The growing migrant populations in Moscow and Kyiv raise numerous public policy issues related to identity, power structures, economic diversification, and especially a city’s overall capacity to accommodate diversity. How local governments address these issues will depend in large part on their appreciation of the positive role that migrants play in a changing society.

Occupational Niches

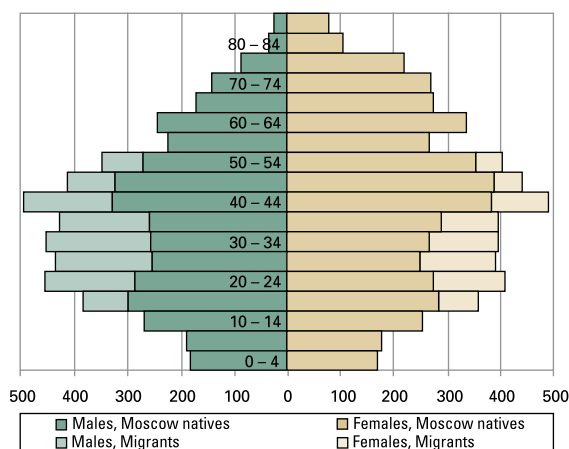
Shifting global and national economies affect migrants in Ukraine and Russia. Changes in opportunity,

coupled with pre-existing networks determine where migrants settle, what economic niches they occupy, and what new educational opportunities they pursue. Some of the changes in Moscow and Kyiv are due to economic restructuring and a decline in specific economic sectors such as industry and agriculture. Other changes are related to both cities’ centralization of economic activity.

Moscow’s growth is creating new opportunities. During the 1970s and 1980s migrants tended to fill jobs in street cleaning, public transportation maintenance, roadwork, construction, and factory work, with Moscow natives working in such occupations less and less. Recently new sectors of “migrant work” have been created in trade and retail, the restaurant business, and custodial services. Furthermore, migrants in Moscow are no longer excluded from high-skilled industries and are entering the banking and medical sectors.

Kyiv’s transformation into an international business center has created a demand for both high- and low-skilled labor to service the growing number of private enterprises in the retail, automobile, construction, and service sectors. In addition, open air markets have increasingly served as important entry-points for transnational migrants in Kyiv and throughout Ukraine. Markets have been so successful, in fact, that they have enabled many migrants to send significant money remittances back to their home countries. These venues, however, remain difficult ones in which to operate. Established migrant vendors, many of whom have become owners of small businesses, must compete with subsequent waves of internal Ukrainian migrants seeking to enter the open air market. At the same time, these new migrants face major financial impediments, such as the rising costs of living and housing in Kyiv. Therefore, while Kyiv is experiencing positive economic growth, the ability of new migrants to enter the Ukrainian market increasingly depends on existing networks, especially within ethnic communities.

FIGURE 1 Native and Migrant Population by Gender and Age: Moscow 2002



Source: Zhanna Zaionchkovskaya, unpublished manuscript, 2002

Ethnicity

The recently arriving wave of migrants to Moscow and Kyiv has a different ethnic make-up than previous generations. Our research teams have shown that where a migrant is from has a substantial impact on his/her experience in both cities. Moscow's traditional migrants—ethnic Tatars, Ukrainians, and peoples from the Caucasus—have recently been supplemented by migrants from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Moldova, former Soviet republics with a history of limited migration. Migrants also are coming to Moscow in growing numbers from countries beyond the borders of the former Soviet Union, such as China, South Korea, Vietnam, and Afghanistan.

Kyiv, too, is a leading destination for transnational migrants. China, Vietnam, Pakistan, India, and Afghanistan serve as the major sources of migrants. Recent surveys have further identified migrants from Indonesia, Iraq, and some African countries, particularly Nigeria, Angola, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. (Please see Figure 2.)

Employment niches are regularly correlated with ethnicity. For example, Tajiks, one of the newest and fastest growing migrant communities in Moscow, generally work in unskilled labor, as they often come from rural areas and lack urban work experience. Chinese and Azeri migrants in Moscow, in contrast, predominantly engage in trade and services. In Kyiv, migrants from African and Asian countries also typically participate in retail trade and services.

Further in-depth studies of ethnic divisions of labor in the Moscow and Kyiv labor markets will provide insights into creating more integrated, effective workforces.

Education and Language

In *Creating Diversity Capital: Transnational Migrants in Montreal, Washington, and Kyiv* (2005), Blair Ruble found that a common reason for migrant parents to withhold children from school in Kyiv was the



Kharkiv, 2007

erroneous belief they would be required to provide official residency permits for their children to attend classes. In a more recent round of surveys (2006) of over 100 respondents, none reported withholding their children from school. While this development serves as an indication that children of migrants are slowly assimilating, adult migrants in Kyiv are facing more entrenched difficulties. The majority of adult migrants—even those that were enrolled in institutions of higher learning after 1991—speak Ukrainian very poorly. Although they can understand the language, many cannot speak it, creating problems for employment, since even to trade on the market requires a rudimentary knowledge of Ukrainian. The lack of government-sponsored language courses for migrants is aggravated by the fact that language tutoring is very expensive, making it difficult for adults to enroll in classes or improve their qualifications. This situation leads to a vicious cycle; some migrants cannot cover language tutoring costs because they are unemployed, and they are unemployed because they do not know the local language. The situation in

Moscow is slightly different, in that Russian language courses are abundant and easily accessible.

Legal Issues for Migrants

A common problem facing migrants in both Moscow and Kyiv is the legal requirement that all residents register their home address with local government officials. For a multitude of reasons, many landlords refuse to file the necessary paperwork for their tenants (and the majority of migrants are renters). As a result, even those migrants who have become citizens of Ukraine or Russia often are unable to register their residence, and thereby lack the legal rights that registered citizens possess. Without becoming registered, it is impossible to obtain a *propiska*, a legal document confirming one's permanent residence at a particular address in a particular city. A *propiska* opens many doors to those who have it, and has an effect on their employment, social status, and overall integration into the city.

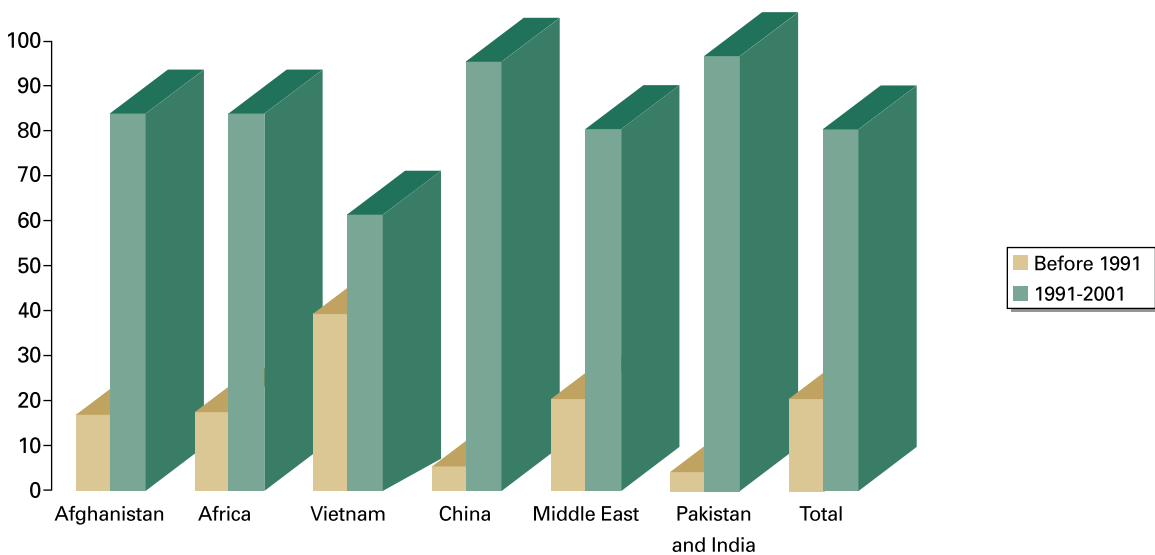
Another legal issue is that many people who migrate *legally* to Moscow or Kyiv often prefer to

work *informally* due to heavy taxes, thereby disappearing into the respective cities' deep-rooted informal economies. However, new trends recently have been observed within the Kyiv migrant community regarding legal status. Unregistered migrants in Kyiv tend to be migrants from *within* Ukraine rather than from outside its borders. *Transnational* migrants, in contrast, generally make their status official, and the level of illegal migration has decreased.

New Challenges: Tolerance

In spite of the significant role played by migrants in Moscow and Kyiv, or the fact that the majority of the city's residents are themselves either second or third generation migrants, one could hardly call their attitude toward newcomers friendly. Contrary to reality, migrants are too often associated with various threats: crime, panhandling, infectious diseases, speculation, and loitering. In Kyiv, almost all immigrants from African countries, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh reported instances of skinheads threatening or assaulting them. Some

FIGURE 2 Percentage of Migrants by Country/Region of Origin Arriving Before and After 1991



Source: *Netradytsiini Migranty u Kyievi*, Kennan Institute, 2003

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respondents noted an increased intolerance toward Asians and Africans among the local population and militia, having identified these attitudes as explicit racism.

Conclusion

By studying how diverse cultures integrate themselves both into the labor market and into civil society, we better understand how ethnic groups become a part of the urban landscape. Migration presents Russia and Ukraine with several major challenges, including: reconfiguring traditional labor markets; addressing legal restrictions against migrants; and, perhaps

most importantly, integrating transnational migrants into the formal economy and society at large.

How the custodians of the Russian and Ukrainian governments ultimately respond to these challenges will play a major role in defining the political and economic future of each respective country. Both countries need to foster goodwill among all of their residents and promote a “pragmatic pluralism” in order to build a sustainable society on both the national and local levels. By overcoming deep-rooted national prejudices against migrants, Russia and Ukraine will be able to find the human resources required to grow and prosper in a global marketplace.

The Woodrow Wilson Center’s Kennan Institute has been engaged in the study of transnational migration in Ukraine and in Russia for the past decade. In particular, the Kennan Institute has supported in-depth studies of migrant communities in Moscow and Kyiv. In 2001–2002, the George F. Kennan Fund of the Woodrow Wilson Center supported surveys in Kyiv with the assistance of the U.S.-Ukraine Foundation and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). These surveys of: 1) transnational migrant families; 2) indigenous Kyiv residents; and 3) Ukrainian specialists and officials working with migrants sought to establish a baseline portrait of transnational migrant communities in the Ukrainian capital. The surveys were supervised by a research team made up of the following members from Ukraine and the United States: Olena Braichevska, Olena Malynovska, Nancy E. Popson, Yaroslav Pylynskyi, Blair A. Ruble, and Halyna Volosiuk. The team’s findings were published in a number of publications including *Netradytsiini Mihranty u Kyievi* (Kennan Kyiv Project, 2002), *Nontraditional Immigrants in Kyiv* (Woodrow Wilson Center, 2003), *Creating Diversity Capital: Transnational Migrants in Montreal, Washington, and Kyiv* (Woodrow Wilson Center Press/Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), *Kapital Rozmaitosty: Transnatsionalni Migranty u Monreali, Vashingtoni ta Kyievi* (Krytyka Press, 2007), and the journals *Problemy mihratsii*, *Post-Soviet Geography and Economics*, *Urban Anthropology*, and *Nationalities Papers*.

The Kennan Institute and its George F. Kennan Fund, together with the Kennan Kyiv Project and Kennan Moscow Project, initiated follow-on studies in Kyiv in 2006 under the direction of bi-national research team members: Blair A. Ruble, Kennan Institute; Yaroslav Pylynskyi, Kennan Kyiv Project; Olena Malynovska, National Institute for International Security (Kyiv) – team leader; Olena Braichevska, International Slavic University (Kyiv); Renata Kosci-Harmatiy, Kennan Institute; and Mary Elizabeth Malinkin, Kennan Institute. This study is expanding to other Ukrainian cities through the sponsorship of the International Organization for Migration and the International Renaissance Fund.

Similarly in 2006, the Kennan Institute and its George F. Kennan Fund, together with the Kennan Moscow Project, initiated field research examining Moscow migrant communities under the direction of Russian research team members: Zhanna Zaionchkovskaya, Center for Migration Research (Moscow) – team leader; Olga Vendina, Institute of Geography, RAN (Moscow); Vilya Gelbrass, Moscow State University (Moscow); Tatyana Ivanova, Institute of Economic Forecasting, RAN (Moscow); and Nikita Mkrtychyan, Institute of Economic Forecasting, RAN (Moscow). Plans are underway to expand the field research in Russia to St. Petersburg.

Full reports of the Kennan Institute publications *Nontraditional Migrants in Kyiv* (2002) are available on-line, in English (<http://www.wilsoncenter.org/topics/pubs/KyivImmigrants.pdf>) and Ukrainian (<http://www.kennan.kiev.ua/kkp/content/publications/Immigrants.pdf>).

COMPARATIVE URBAN STUDIES PROJECT AND KENNAN INSTITUTE

Founded in 1974, the **KENNAN INSTITUTE** brings together scholars, experts, public intellectuals, and policymakers in a variety of settings. The Institute promotes high-quality, interdisciplinary research and discussion on Russia, Ukraine, and other states in the region that bridge the worlds of academia and public policy. The Institute supports research and programming on a variety of topics in the social sciences and humanities, cover economics, politics, social issues, culture, history, and literature.

The **COMPARATIVE URBAN STUDIES PROJECT (CUSP)** of the Woodrow Wilson Center was established in 1991 in an effort to bring together U.S. policymakers and urban researchers in a substantive discussion about how to build the viable urban governance structures and strong democratic civic culture that are essential for sustaining cities. Research priorities for CUSP include urban health, poverty alleviation, youth populations and conflict, and immigrant communities in cities.

For more information about the Comparative Urban Studies Project and the Kennan Institute, please visit:
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COVER IMAGES

From left to right: Moscow; Odesa; Kyiv

ONE WOODROW WILSON PLAZA, 1300 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20004-3027



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