

The Russian Elite Diaspora Abroad: Its Origins, Dynamics, Scale, Structural Characteristics, and Ties to Russia

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Russia is a relative newcomer to the field of international migration. Meanwhile, with the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, it quickly became one of the major migrant receiving states. Simultaneously, Russia started losing significant numbers of emigrants, primarily to the Global North countries. This emigration wave has a visible share of highly qualified workers, including the academic personnel.

This process, along with the escalating tensions between Russian Federation (RF) and the West, raise a number of interesting questions related to scale, dynamics, political preferences, and structural characteristics of the Russian *diaspora* abroad, especially its elite and, in particular, intellectual components, as well as the intensity and direction of the current elite migration flows from Russia.

Relying on three data sets, assembled from 2002-3, 2009-2010, and 2015, the author analyzes the major characteristics of the elite migrant communities and considers the major forms of their social, professional, and political activities.

The concluding part of the paper discusses the forms and effectiveness of the RF interaction with the Russian/post Soviet elite *diaspora* abroad. In particular, the author concludes that Russia's policy should not be limiting the intellectual migration or promoting the permanent return of the Russian scholars to the RF. Just the opposite, relying on the "soft power" concept, it should promote the establishment of long term international academic and professional contacts and the formation of the Russian elite *diasporas* abroad, actively engaged in cooperation with the RF academic institutions.