



Employment probabilities of migrants and local residents in the labor market of the Republic of Tuva

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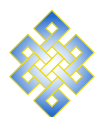
This article examines differences in employment odds between migrants and local residents in the Republic of Tuva (Russia) within a peripheral and economically constrained regional labor market. The empirical basis is individual-level microdata from the 2010 All-Russian Population Census (10% sample) harmonized in IPUMS International. The choice of these data is motivated by their status as the most recent comparable and publicly accessible microdata source that allows measurement of migrant status and key socio-demographic characteristics at the individual level, enabling statistically valid cross-group comparisons. In order to enhance contemporary relevance, the findings are interpreted in light of recent scholarship on migrant incorporation into the Russian labor market and descriptive administrative series on migration inflows to Tuva for 2018–2023, which indicate persistent structural constraints on employment and a predominantly work-oriented profile of mobility.

A binary logistic regression model is applied to estimate the probability of being employed (versus unemployed) among migrants relative to local residents, controlling for age (including a quadratic term), sex, marital status and education (N = 580 economically active individuals aged 15–64). Results indicate near-parity: migrants exhibit comparable or slightly higher odds of employment than local residents (OR = 1.05; $p < 0.001$), although the substantive magnitude of this difference is small. At the same time, a stable gender gap is observed (women have lower employment odds), and education remains one of the strongest predictors of employment. These patterns are interpreted as evidence consistent with employment-oriented and selective migration into the region. They remain relevant for understanding integration mechanisms in a “compressed” labor market. The study is explicitly statistical (not field-based); future research should test gender selectivity more directly, examine interactions between sex and migrant status, as well as assess job quality and sectoral employment structure.

Keywords: migration; employment; Tuva; labor market; integration; logistic regression

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Вероятность занятости мигрантов и местных жителей на рынке труда Республики Тыва

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Статья посвящена оценке различий в шансах занятости у мигрантов и местных жителей Республики Тыва (Россия) в условиях периферийного и экономически ограниченного регионального рынка труда. Эмпирическую основу составляют индивидуальные микроданные Всероссийской переписи населения 2010 г. (10%-ная выборка) из базы IPUMS International. Выбор именно этих данных обусловлен тем, что это последний сопоставимый и открыто доступный массив микроданных, позволяющий на уровне индивидов одновременно измерять статус мигранта и ключевые социально-демографические характеристики, необходимые для корректного статистического сравнения групп. Для актуализации контекста результаты интерпретируются с учетом современных исследований о включении мигрантов в российский рынок труда и описательных административных рядов миграционного притока в Тыву за 2018–2023 гг., отражающих сохраняющиеся структурные ограничения занятости и преимущественно трудовой профиль мобильности.

Анализ выполнен методом бинарной логистической регрессии и оценивает вероятность быть занятым (в сравнении с безработицей) у мигрантов относительно местных жителей при контроле возраста (включая нелинейность через возраст), пола, брачного статуса и образования ($N = 580$ экономически активных лиц 15–64 лет). Результаты показывают близость к паритету: у мигрантов шансы занятости сопоставимы или немного выше, чем у местных жителей ($OR = 1,05$; $p < 0,001$), однако величина эффекта невелика. Одновременно выявляется устойчивый гендерный разрыв (женщины имеют более низкие шансы занятости), а образование остается одним из наиболее сильных предикторов трудоустройства. Полученные выводы интерпретируются как свидетельство занято-ориентированной и селективной миграции в регион и сохраняют актуальность для обсуждения механизмов интеграции в условиях «сжатого» рынка труда. Подчеркивается, что исследование носит статистический характер; в качестве перспектив предлагаются углубленные проверки гендерной селективности миграции, взаимодействий «пол × мигрантский статус», а также анализ качества рабочих мест и секторальной структуры занятости.

Ключевые слова: миграция; занятость; Республика Тыва; рынок труда; интеграция; логистическая регрессия

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Introduction

The Republic of Tuva is one of the most remote and economically constrained regions of Russia, distinguished by its unique cultural and demographic profile. Tuva is located in southern Siberia on the border with Mongolia. Its population of 330.6 thousand people is predominantly indigenous Tuvans (over 88% ethnic Tuvans who speak the Tuvan language) with a minority of ethnic Russians (Gorina, 2022; Smirnykh, Polaykova, 2020). Tuva's demographic structure is distinct: it historically had one of the highest fertility rates in Russia, yielding a very youthful age distribution. The median age in Tuva is around the mid-20s — making it one of the youngest regions in the country — compared to a national median age over 40 (Anayban, Balakina, 2023; Poletaev, 2020). At the same time, the region faces long-standing socio-economic constraints, including a narrow economic base and limited diversification. Official statistics have often recorded that unemployment remains comparatively high and average incomes are lower than the national level; for example, the official unemployment rate in Tuva was about 18% in 2020, several times higher than the national average of 5–6% (Ledeneva, Rostovskaya, Oidup, 2025; Rakhmonov, 2022). The economy is largely oriented toward the public sector and small-scale agriculture. This limits the number of formal jobs outside government and social services. This context of structural economic constraints has profound implications for migration and labor market dynamics.

At the same time, Tuva occupies a distinctive place within the Russian Federation because of its specific historical trajectory. Unlike most Russian regions, Tuva followed a comparatively late path of incorporation into the Soviet state, joining the USSR only in 1944 (Abylkalikov, 2021). This historical trajectory is important for understanding the Republic's present-day social structure, including the persistence of strong ethnic identity and the centrality of the Tuvan population in the cultural landscape. Tuva remains one of the youngest regions of Russia, combining a comparatively high fertility level with a still elevated mortality burden and relatively low life expectancy, especially among men (*ibid.*). In demographic terms, this configuration differs from the pattern typical of many other Russian regions, where low fertility and advanced population ageing dominate. Together with long-term economic marginality, limited labor market diversification and sustained out-migration, these features create a distinctive social context in which migration cannot be interpreted solely through general all-Russian frameworks (Soyan, 2023).

Migration and employment outcomes in remote regions like Tuva remain under-researched. Most research on migrant labor market integration in Russia focuses on nationwide trends or major cities, whereas little is known about outcomes in smaller, non-metropolitan regions like Tuva (Vakulenko, Leukhin, 2017). On the one hand, migrants in Tuva might face disadvantages in finding jobs due to potential language/cultural differences and limited local networks. On the other hand, those who do migrate to a region with scarce opportunities may be a self-selected group (e.g., arriving with specific job offers or needed skills), which could give them an employment edge over locals. Tuva's labor market is also characterized by extremely low formal employment among women and a concentration of jobs in the public sector and resource-based industries, which may influence migrant-native differences in employment.

Against this backdrop, the present study provides a quantitative assessment of employment probabilities for migrants relative to native residents in Tuva. Recent microdata on individuals of working age are used, and a binary logistic regression model is applied to estimate the likelihood of being employed (versus not employed) as a function of migrant status, controlling for age, sex, marital status and education. This approach isolates the net association between being a migrant and the chance of employment. In doing so, the analysis addresses the questions of whether migrants in Tuva are disadvantaged, on par, or advantaged in terms of basic employment chances, and of how this pattern aligns with or diverges from findings in other contexts.

Remote regions with structural labor market constraints tend to generate distinctive patterns of labor market inclusion for both locals and newcomers. In such contexts, migrants can be disadvantaged by classic integration barriers — limited local social capital, imperfect knowledge of institutions and employers, and potential 'outsider' stigma or discrimination. These barriers may be amplified in Tuva by its particular socio-linguistic environment, where everyday communication and informal recruitment can occur in both Tuvan and Russian, potentially shaping access to networks and job information. At the same time, migration into peripheral regions is rarely random. A competing expectation is positive self-selection: individuals who relocate to a high unemployment territory are more likely to do so because they have pre-arranged employment, possess scarce skills or are recruited into specific sectors, which can raise their observed employment rates relative to the non-migrant population.



This study analyzes the resident migrant stock identified in the 2010 population census rather than current migration flows. In this article, migrants are understood as census-enumerated residents born outside the Republic of Tuva. By contrast, the 2018–2023 administrative statistics refer to registered migration flows and are used only as descriptive background; they are not directly comparable to the census-based stock measure.

A further conceptual distinction is necessary between settled migrants included in the permanent population and temporary labor migrants. The present analysis concerns the former rather than the latter. This distinction is theoretically important because their adaptation strategies, patterns of labor market incorporation and mechanisms of selectivity may differ substantially. Unlike temporary labor migrants, settled migrants recorded in the census were part of the resident population of the Republic of Tuva at the time of enumeration.

This selectivity appears especially plausible for Tuva. Badmaeva and Natsak describe labor migration in economically lagging Russian republics as an economically motivated household strategy: working-age residents, including Tuvans, often migrate to stabilize income, repay debts and support children, while maintaining ties through periodic return visits (Badmaeva, Natsak, 2021). The authors' account implies that mobility is strongly employment-driven and therefore selective toward individuals with higher work orientation or better job prospects. By extension, in-migration to Tuva may also be concentrated among those pursuing concrete employment opportunities — such as positions in government agencies or extractive industries — rather than among individuals with weak labor market attachment. Under this logic, the resident migrant population in Tuva could display relatively high employment likelihood because economically inactive individuals are less likely to migrate or remain.

Broader regional research reinforces the structural conditions that make Tuva an analytically important case. Akhmetova links migration intensity in national republics to levels of socio-economic development, emphasizing that regions with lower human development — Tuva is among them — face stronger out-migration pressures than more developed republics (Akhmetova, 2022). This perspective situates migration as an adaptive response to territorial inequality and limited opportunities. In Tuva, population size is strongly affected by net out-migration. If out-migration were reduced, high fertility and moderate mortality would translate into faster overall population growth (Ledeneva, Rostovskaya, Oidup, 2025). Complementing this, Baimurzina and Kabashova document that Tuva's rates are lower than in more economically advanced regions such as Bashkortostan (Baimurzina, Kabashova, 2022). The authors underline features of a constrained labor market — high informality, stagnant incomes and exceptionally low economic activity, particularly among women — indicating that labor market participation is shaped not only by individual characteristics but also by weak demand and limited institutional capacity.

These structural conditions in Tuva can be further interpreted through the lens of segmented, or dual, labor market theory. From this perspective, employment outcomes are shaped not only by individual qualifications, but also by the structure of labor demand itself, including the division between more stable and formalized segments of employment and more precarious, weakly institutionalized or informal forms of work (Wilson, Portes, 1980). In peripheral regions such as Tuva, where the public sector plays a disproportionately important role and private-sector opportunities remain limited, migrants may enter the labor market through specific channels linked to formal demand, while local residents may be more strongly represented in less formalized or economically marginal activities. This makes migrant-local differences in employment partly a reflection of labor market segmentation rather than of individual productivity alone (Portes, Jensen, 1989).

A related perspective is provided by the literature on ethnic enclaves and ethnic niches. Although Tuva does not represent a classic immigrant enclave economy in the conventional Western sense, this perspective remains useful as an analytical lens for understanding how ethnically structured networks, linguistic environments and historically shaped patterns of occupational concentration may influence access to employment (Sanders, Nee, 1987). In this context, labor market incorporation may depend not only on formal qualifications, but also on whether migrants' social and cultural profiles align with specific institutional sectors, recruitment channels or locally embedded networks. Used in this broader sense, the enclave/niche perspective helps explain why employment outcomes may be conditioned by ethnocultural structure and not solely by migrant status as such.

A stronger consideration of regional specificity is especially important in the case of Tuva. While the broader Russian literature usefully highlights the role of labor demand, human capital and migrant selectivity,



the Tuva case requires these mechanisms to be interpreted within a distinct demographic, economic and socio-cultural setting. The Republic combines long-term economic marginality, a limited formal labor market, high out-migration, low female labor force participation and a pronounced role of ethnocultural structure in shaping access to employment. These features suggest that migrant-native differences in employment are unlikely to reflect only individual characteristics or generic integration barriers. Rather, they are embedded in a regionally specific opportunity structure in which public sector employment, local networks, linguistic environment and historically shaped patterns of settlement may all influence labor market outcomes. Incorporating this regional perspective strengthens the interpretation of the statistical findings by linking observed employment probabilities to the institutional and demographic particularities of Tuva rather than treating them as a simple regional variation of all-Russian trends.

In addition to economic constraints, Tuva's labor market is structured by ethnocultural and sectoral patterns. Valiakhmetov et al. highlight that the titular ethnic group is strongly represented in public sector employment and certain traditional spheres, sometimes discussed as 'ethnic niches', whereas non-titular groups may be concentrated in other roles (Valiakhmetov et al., 2021). Importantly, the authors interpret these differences as arising largely from historical settlement and social structure rather than explicit formal exclusion. Such segmentation matters for migrant-native comparisons because employment chances depend on whether migrants' profiles align with the dominant niches and recruitment channels in the region (e.g., public administration, education or other state-linked sectors) or whether migrants are positioned in more precarious segments (Gorodzeisky, Semyonov, 2017).

Finally, Tuva's demographic and gender context provides an essential boundary condition for theory. Regional evidence indicates unusually low female participation in formal employment and a labor force composition heavily skewed toward men, reflecting gender norms, caregiving responsibilities and survival strategies outside standard wage employment (Baimurzina, Kabashova, 2022). This implies that aggregate employment differentials between migrants and natives may partly reflect compositional effects (e.g., gender structure, age, family status), not only 'migrant penalties' or advantages. Taken together, the literature suggests a theoretically ambiguous expectation: migrants may face integration barriers in a peripheral and culturally distinctive region, yet the employment-driven and selective nature of mobility described by Badmaeva and Natsak, combined with the segmented opportunity structure noted by Valiakhmetov et al. and the constrained labor market environment documented by Akhmetova, Baimurzina and Kabashova, implies that the observed migrant population residing in Tuva may be comparatively strongly attached to employment – potentially matching or exceeding natives' employment likelihood once demographic composition and regional labor market conditions are taken into account.

Methodology

Data source

The analysis uses individual-level microdata representing the working-age population of the Republic of Tuva, drawn from the 2010 All-Russian Population Census. A 10% sample of the census microdata for Tuva was obtained via the IPUMS International database (Minnesota Population Center). The census was conducted by Rosstat in October 2010 and covered all settlements of Tuva, including the capital city Kyzyl and 17 municipal districts (kozhuuns, encompassing small towns and rural villages). Enumerators visited every household; census interviews were primarily conducted in the Russian language which virtually all adults in Tuva understand (Tuvan was used informally by local enumerators for clarification when needed). Because this is a census-based sample, it is highly representative of Tuva's population. The sample weights provided with the IPUMS data were applied (expanding each person to reflect their probability of selection) to ensure representativeness. In total, the 10% census sample included roughly 30,000 individuals in Tuva. The analysis focuses on the working-age population, defined as ages 15–64 (inclusive), which aligns with the typical economically active age range in 2010 (at the time, 65 was the statutory retirement age for men and 60 for women, though many still worked beyond those ages). The sample is further restricted to those who are economically active – either employed or actively seeking work – in order to analyze employment probabilities within the labor force. This criterion excludes individuals who are neither working nor looking for work (such as full-time students, many retirees or homemakers not seeking jobs), as they are outside the labor force by standard definitions.



The choice of the 2010 census requires additional clarification. Although more recent census results for Russia are available in aggregate form, the 2010 census remains the most appropriate source for the present study for two reasons. First, it is the most recent Russian census round currently available in harmonized individual-level form through IPUMS International, which for Russia provides samples for 2002 and 2010 rather than for the 2021 census. Second, the latest All-Russian Population Census, officially labeled as the 2020 census but conducted in October–November 2021 after pandemic-related postponement, has raised documented concerns regarding data quality and comparability. Scholarly assessments show that the share of persons with unknown educational attainment and unknown marital status increased sharply in 2021 to 16.9% and 15.4%, respectively, compared with 2.9% and 3.1% in 2010, suggesting a much wider reliance on administrative sources for minimally observed records. For this reason, the 2021 census is less suitable for comparable micro-level analysis of employment outcomes, especially where the model relies on individual socio-demographic characteristics such as education and marital status.

The analytic sample was constructed in several stages. First, the analysis was restricted to the private household population. Second, only individuals aged 15–64 were retained in order to focus on the conventional working-age population. Third, the sample was limited to economically active persons, that is, respondents who were either employed or actively seeking work at the time of the census. In the final stage, observations with missing information on employment status, migrant status, sex, marital status or educational attainment were omitted. After these restrictions, the final analytic sample comprised 580 respondents. Accordingly, this sample does not represent the entire population of Tuva; rather, it captures the subset of economically active individuals aged 15–64 with complete information on all variables used in the regression model. Although this number may appear modest relative to the total population of the Republic, it reflects the labor force segment of the 10% census sample and is consistent with the low level of labor force participation in the region, particularly among women.

A conceptual clarification is also necessary regarding the migration measure used in the study. The analysis concerns the resident migrant stock identified in the 2010 census rather than current migration flows. In this article, migrants are defined as census enumerated residents born outside the Republic of Tuva, whether in another region of Russia or abroad. The comparison group consists of local residents born in Tuva who were part of the resident population at the time of enumeration. This distinction is important because the regression results describe the labor market position of settled migrants included in the permanent population of the region, not temporary labor migrants whose adaptation strategies and mechanisms of selectivity may differ substantially and who are generally not captured as part of the resident population in the same way. By contrast, the administrative data for 2018–2023 refer to registered migration flows and are therefore not directly comparable to the census-based stock measure.

In addition to the census microdata, the study uses official administrative migration statistics for 2018–2023 solely as descriptive background. Annual counts of arrivals to the Republic of Tuva by origin were obtained from the Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation (Rosstat), while the age distribution of arrivals was drawn from publications of Rosstat's territorial statistical office for Krasnoyarsk Krai, the Republic of Khakassia and the Republic of Tuva. These aggregated series are used to contextualize recent mobility patterns and are not included as covariates in the regression models.

Measures. The dependent variable is a binary indicator of employment status (1 = currently employed, 0 = not employed). The primary independent variable of interest is migrant status, coded 1 for migrants and 0 for natives. Several control variables known to affect employment are included:

- *Age:* Measured in years. To capture non-linear effects of age on employment, both age and age-squared (age^2) are included in the model.
- *Sex:* A dummy variable for female (1 = female, 0 = male). Given the very low labor force participation of women in Tuva, a negative coefficient for female is expected.
- *Marital status:* A dummy indicating whether the individual is married or in a cohabiting union (1 = married/in a union, 0 = not married or not in a union).
- *Educational attainment:* A categorical variable for highest completed education level with four categories: (i) no formal education, (ii) primary education, (iii) secondary education (includes basic and secondary general or vocational), and (iv) higher education (college/university degree). In the regression, 'no education' serves as the reference category.



In an extended specification, the model also includes respondents' ethnicity. This adjustment is substantively important in the context of Tuva, where migrant status may partly proxy ethnocultural affiliation. Controlling for ethnicity makes it possible to assess whether the estimated association between migrant status and employment reflects migration-related selectivity as such or, in part, the overlap between migrant status and ethnic composition.

Analytical approach: Binary logistic regression is employed to estimate the odds of being employed versus not employed. The model produces odds ratios (ORs) for each predictor, indicating the multiplicative effect on the odds of employment. An OR greater than 1 implies a positive association with employment (higher odds of being employed), while an OR less than 1 indicates a negative association. ORs are reported along with standard errors and 95% confidence intervals. Statistical significance is evaluated at the conventional levels ($p < 0.05$, with key effects noted at $p < 0.01$ or $p < 0.001$). All analyses are cross-sectional and aim to identify associations rather than establish causation. Table 2 displays the logistic regression results for the full model.

Results

Before turning to the regression results, it is useful to consider the broader context of migration in Tuva. *Figure 1* illustrates annual in-migration to Tuva in recent years, broken down by origin. The volume of incoming migrants is quite low for a region of Tuva's population size, and it has been consistently outweighed by the number of people leaving the region (out-migrants) each year. In 2018, for example, roughly 12–13 thousand people moved into Tuva, while an even greater number moved out, resulting in a net migration loss of about 1,000 individuals (Anayban, Balakina, 2023). This pattern of net out-migration persisted through the late 2010s and early 2020s. Virtually all migrants arriving in Tuva come from other parts of Russia; international immigration to Tuva is minimal. Taken together, these trends underscore that Tuva is not a major migrant destination, and those who do migrate into the Republic represent a select group.

The incoming migrants to Tuva also have a distinctive age profile. As shown in *Figure 2*, the majority of recent in-migrants are in the young working-age brackets (roughly late teens to 30s). A substantial share of migrants are young adults, while relatively few migrants are older (near or above retirement age). This age composition suggests that migration into Tuva is largely labor-driven — younger individuals moving in, presumably for work or career opportunities, rather than older people relocating.

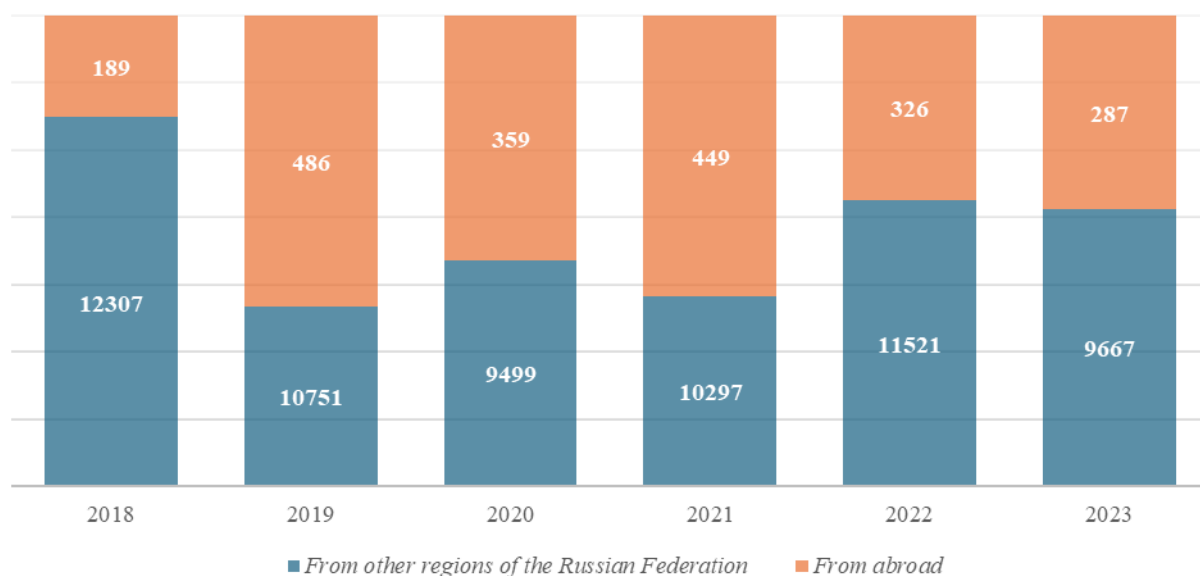


Fig. 1. Inflow of migrants to the Republic of Tuva from other regions of Russia and from abroad, 2018–2023, number of people.

Source: Data from the Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation (Rosstat).

Рис. 1. Приток мигрантов в Республику Тыва из других регионов России и из-за рубежа, 2018–2023 гг., чел.

Источник: данные Федеральной службы государственной статистики Российской Федерации (Росстата).

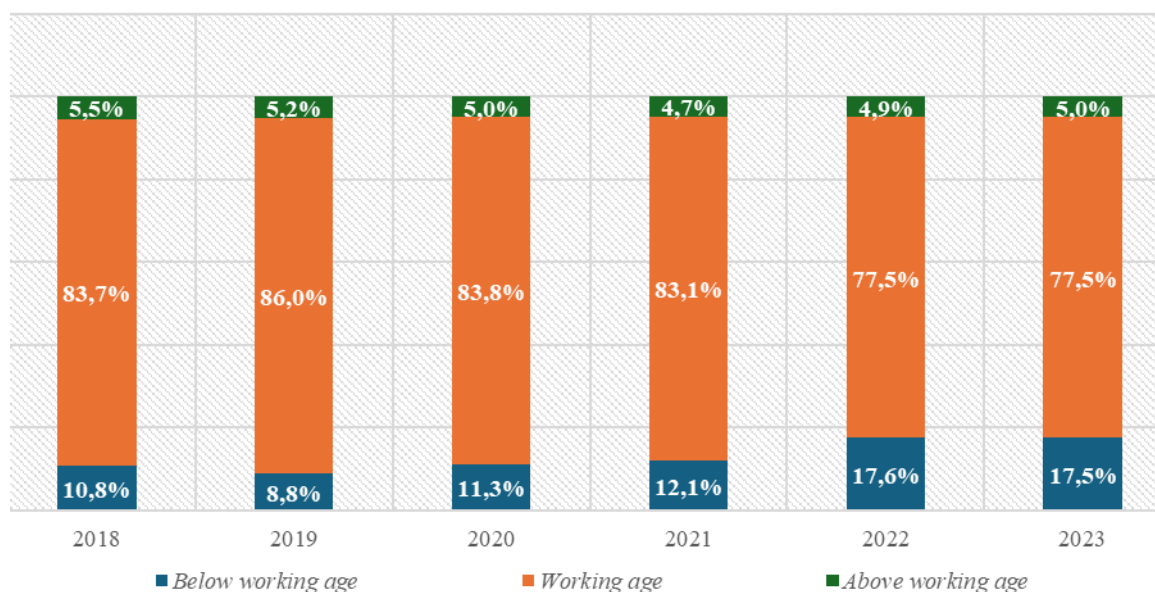


Fig. 2. Inflow of migrants to the Republic of Tuva by age groups, 2018–2023, %

Source: Data from the Territorial Body of the Federal State Statistics Service for Krasnoyarsk Krai, the Republic of Khakassia and the Republic of Tuva (Rosstat).

Рис. 2. Приток мигрантов в Республику Тыва по возрастным группам, 2018–2023 гг., %

Источник: данные Территориального органа Федеральной службы государственной статистики по Красноярскому краю, Республике Хакасия и Республике Тыва (Росстат).

It also aligns with the possibility of migrants moving to Tuva to fill specific jobs (for instance, positions requiring certain skills), since employers are more likely to recruit working-age specialists. The age structure of the migrant inflow complements the overall population's age structure: Tuva has a very youthful population with high birth rates (Badmaeva, Natsak, 2021), and the influx of young migrants may slightly bolster the working-age population even as many local young people leave for opportunities elsewhere.

Table 1 provides the basic employment rates and characteristics of migrants versus natives in the sample. In the labor force sample, migrants actually exhibit a slightly higher employment rate than natives. Specifically, about 95% of migrants are employed (only ~5% unemployed), compared to about 91% of natives employed (9% unemployed). This is a first indication that migrants are *not* at a disadvantage in terms of finding jobs; if anything, they appear somewhat more likely to be employed than local Tuvans, even before controlling for other factors. However, it should be noted that migrants and natives differ in composition. The migrant group (23% of the sample, $N = 134$) is disproportionately male (over 95% of migrants in the labor force are men) and tends to be slightly younger on average than the native group. Many migrants in Tuva are working-age men who moved for employment, whereas the native labor force includes a small number of women and a broader age range, including older individuals approaching retirement. For instance, women constitute only 7% of natives in the labor force and an even smaller 2–3% of the migrant labor force. Thus, the descriptive figures hint that once these differences (sex, age, etc.) are controlled for, an even clearer picture of parity or a slight advantage for migrants may emerge.

The settlement structure of the analytic sample also deserves attention. As shown in Table 1, the sample is predominantly rural: 76.2% of respondents reside in rural areas, whereas only 23.8% live in urban settlements. This distribution is substantively important for interpreting employment outcomes in Tuva, since labor market opportunities are unevenly distributed across urban and rural contexts. In particular, urban areas are more likely to concentrate formal sector employment, while rural residents are more often associated with agricultural, household-based or less formalized forms of economic activity. Accordingly, migrant–local differences in employment may partly reflect differences in settlement structure rather than migrant status alone.



Table 1. Descriptive characteristics of the analytic sample for the employment model, the Republic of Tuva, 15–64
Таблица 1. Описательные характеристики аналитической выборки для модели занятости, Республика Тыва, в возрасте от 15 до 64 лет

Variable	%	N
<i>Employment status</i>		
Not employed	7.8	45
Employed	92.2	535
<i>Migration status</i>		
Native	76.9	446
Migrants	23.1	134
<i>Sex</i>		
Male	93.1	540
Female	6.9	40
<i>Age group</i>		
15–24	17.2	100
25–34	34.5	200
35–44	6.9	40
45–54	27.6	160
55–64	13.8	80
<i>Marital status</i>		
Not married / not in a union	37.9	220
Married / in a union	62.1	360
<i>Settlement type</i>		
Urban	23.8	138
Rural	76.2	442
<i>Educational attainment</i>		
No education	0.14	1
Primary	0.56	3
Secondary	34.5	200
Higher	64.8	376

In terms of education, migrants in the sample exhibit educational attainment that is comparable to, or slightly higher than, that of natives. The share with higher (tertiary) education is about 56% among migrants versus 53% among natives, indicating only a modest difference. This pattern is consistent with selective migration: some migrants may be specialists or professionals recruited to Tuva, whereas natives include a larger proportion with secondary education employed in local occupations. The overall education level in the analytic sample is relatively high (more than half with post-secondary credentials), partly because individuals with weaker labor market attachment — especially women with lower education — are less represented in the labor-force-based sample. In addition, prior research notes that the out-migration of ethnic Russians from Tuva in the 1990s, many of whom held skilled positions, reduced the Russian share to around 16% by 2010 (Dorzhu, 2016); those who remained may be disproportionately concentrated in formal sector employment, contributing to a higher education profile among workers (Chevalier, 2013). Both migrants and natives are predominantly married, although the marriage rate is slightly higher among migrants, plausibly reflecting a composition with more adult men and fewer young single individuals.

One particularly interesting descriptive finding is the age distribution anomaly noted earlier — the very small proportion of individuals aged 35–44 in the labor force (only 7% overall). This pattern holds for both natives and migrants, though it is more pronounced among natives. It suggests that many people born around 1966–1975 were not present in Tuva's 2010 labor force — likely due to heavy out-migration of that cohort in the late 1990s and early 2000s (when they were in their 20s and 30s). This aligns with reports that during Russia's post-Soviet economic crisis, working-age Tuvans (especially men in their 30s) left the Republic in large numbers in search of better opportunities (Abylkalikov, 2021). By 2010, those who remained or returned were relatively fewer, creating a 'hole' in the age structure of the workforce. This observation provides context for the regression: the migrants in the sample are mostly either younger newcomers or older-era migrants, since a whole cohort of potential migrants (and natives) in middle age



was partly 'lost' to out-migration. As Rostovskaya et al. discuss, such historical outflows have altered Tuva's demographic composition, leaving a younger population and a skewed age profile in the labor force (Rostovskaya, Natsak, Nakisbaev, 2025).

Table 2 displays the results of the binary logistic regression predicting the odds of being employed (versus unemployed) among labor force participants in Tuva. The table provides odds ratios (ORs) for each predictor, along with standard errors (SEs), z-statistics, p-values, and the 95% confidence interval of the OR. An OR above 1 indicates a factor associated with higher odds of employment, while an OR below 1 indicates lower odds of employment. The key findings for each variable are highlighted below.

Table 2. Binary logistic regression predicting odds of employment among migrants and natives in the Republic of Tuva, 15–64
Таблица 2. Бинарная логистическая регрессия для прогнозирования вероятности трудоустройства мигрантов и коренных жителей в Республике Тыва в возрасте от 15 до 64 лет

Predictor	OR	SE	Z	P	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
<i>Migrant status (ref. = all other population)</i>						
Migrants (1 = yes)	1.047	0.011	4.192	< 0.001	1.025	1.070
<i>Age</i>						
Age (years)	1.196	0.000	729.802	< 0.001	1.195	1.197
Age ² (years ²)	0.998	0.000	-632.839	< 0.001	0.998	0.998
<i>Sex (ref. = male)</i>						
Female (1 = female)	0.914	0.001	-102.577	< 0.001	0.912	0.916
<i>Marital status (ref. = not married / not in union)</i>						
Married / in a union (1 = yes)	1.485	0.001	423.708	< 0.001	1.488	0.001
<i>Settlement type (ref. = rural)</i>						
Urban	1.840	0.001	653.454	< 0.001	1.836	1.843
<i>Educational attainment (ref. = No education)</i>						
Primary education	1.026	0.012	2.103	0.0355	1.002	1.050
Secondary education	1.828	0.011	52.515	< 0.001	1.788	1.870
Higher education	4.575	0.011	132.341	< 0.001	4.473	4.679

Note: OR = odds ratio; SE = standard error; CI = confidence interval. The model also included a constant (not shown). All coefficients are significant at $p < 0.05$ or lower.

Looking first at the focal variable, *Migrant status*, the OR is 1.047 with a 95% confidence interval of [1.025, 1.070] and $p < 0.001$. This means that, holding age, sex, marital status and education constant, migrants have about 4.7% higher odds of being employed than natives. Although the magnitude of this effect is small, the coefficient is statistically significant. Substantively, an odds ratio close to 1.0 suggests near parity in employment chances, with migrants displaying only a slight advantage. Therefore, migrant status in itself does not appear to reduce the probability of employment in Tuva; if anything, it is associated with a modest increase in employment likelihood.

This finding is noteworthy in light of Tuva's structurally constrained labor market. Despite persistent economic difficulties in the region, migrants who are present in the labor force appear to be at least as successful as local residents in securing employment. Such a pattern is consistent with the interpretation that migration into Tuva is to a considerable extent employment-oriented and selective, with those arriving in the region more likely to possess either pre-arranged jobs or characteristics conducive to labor market incorporation. At the same time, this result is in line with broader evidence from Russia suggesting relatively rapid labor market absorption of migrants, particularly among men.

At the same time, the estimated effect should be interpreted with caution. The regression results do not describe temporary labor migrants, but rather settled residents with migration experience who were included in the permanent population at the time of the census. Their strategies of adaptation, patterns of labor market incorporation, and mechanisms of selectivity may differ substantially from those characte-



ristic of temporary labor migrants. Moreover, the observed average effect may conceal important internal heterogeneity. As suggested in the literature, the slight employment advantage associated with migrant status may in part reflect gender composition, given that the migrant group in Tuva is overwhelmingly male. Accordingly, the positive coefficient is likely to capture primarily the labor market position of male migrants, whereas the employment trajectories of female migrants may be considerably different.

One further consideration concerns the census-based measurement of employment itself. In Tuva, traditional forms of economic activity, especially livestock-related and other household-based forms of work among the indigenous population, may be incompletely reflected in standard employment categories. By contrast, migrants are more likely to be represented in state administration and other formal sector occupations that are more clearly captured by census employment definitions. For this reason, the observed employment advantage of migrants may partly reflect differences in the statistical visibility of employment rather than a pure advantage in actual labor market incorporation.

By turning to Age, we can observe a strong non-linear pattern. The coefficient for linear age is $OR = 1.196$ per year, and for age-squared is $OR = 0.998$ per year², both are highly significant ($p < 0.001$). The $OR > 1$ for Age and $OR < 1$ for Age² indicate an inverted-U shape in the probability of employment. In practical terms, at younger ages, each additional year greatly increases the odds of being employed. This implies that after finishing school young people can gain experience. The odds continue to rise in adulthood, but the quadratic term shows that beyond a certain age, the gains taper off and reverse. Calculating the approximate turning point: the odds peak when the age effect and age² effect balance out. Roughly, that occurs in the early 40s (solving $1.196^{*}(\Delta age)$ vs $0.998^{*}(\Delta age^2)$ yields a maximum around age 45, consistent with typical working life patterns). After the mid-40s, the odds of employment begin to decline with further aging, as more people retire or cannot work due to health issues. Thus, a 50-year-old has slightly lower odds of being employed than a 40-year-old, all else equal, and a 60-year-old has substantially lower odds (approaching retirement age).

The magnitude of the age effect is quite pronounced initially: for example, if we compare two identical individuals except one is 30 and the other is 20, the 30-year-old would have much higher odds of employment (because 10 years of age difference with $OR \sim 1.2$ per year compounds to a large increase). But if we compare 60 vs 50, the older person's odds are lower due to the quadratic downturn. The age terms collectively capture the life-cycle employment trajectory that is very steep in this data — a reflection that virtually all prime-age men are working, whereas youths and near-retirees have gaps.

Next, Sex (Female) has an OR of 0.914, indicating that women's odds of employment are about 0.91 times those of otherwise similar men — roughly 8.6% lower. This effect is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) and points to a gender gap in employment even among those in the labor force. Recall that the sample already excludes most women who did not participate; those counted as female labor force participants are presumably relatively motivated to work or in need of work. Yet, even among this group, women are slightly less likely to actually have a job compared to men.

One plausible explanation is demographic. In Tuva, relatively high fertility and early family formation may generate a substantial childcare burden which can restrict women's participation in paid employment even within working ages. In such a context, lower employment among women may reflect not only labor market exclusion in the narrow sense, but also the interaction between demographic behavior, family responsibilities and limited opportunities for combining childcare with stable wage work. This interpretation is also consistent with broader regional evidence pointing to gendered divisions of labor, caregiving obligations and survival strategies beyond standard formal employment.

Several plausible reasons exist: women might face discrimination in hiring or may be concentrated in industries with fewer job vacancies in Tuva. They might also have more intermittent work histories or be choosier due to family responsibilities, leading to a slightly higher unemployment rate. The estimated gap (around 9%) is not enormous, but given the male-dominated sample, this likely reflects the difficulties of the few women who are trying to work. This result is consistent with broader patterns in Russia and elsewhere where women's unemployment rate can be higher and employment lower, though the gap here is smaller than one might expect — possibly because the women who do enter the labor force in Tuva are a self-selected group (perhaps more skilled or determined).

For *Marital status*, being married or in a union has an $OR = 1.485$, meaning married individuals have about 49% higher odds of employment than those not in a union (controlling for other factors). This coef-



ficient is also highly significant ($p < 0.001$). In the output, the confidence interval is extremely tight [1.482, 1.488], reflecting the large weighted sample and precision. The positive effect of marriage is in line with expectations: it could be driven by the male side of the sample (married men are more likely to be employed, as they may have family to support). It is also possible that those who are employed are more likely to get married, introducing some reverse causality or selection (employment can enhance marriage prospects). This control is included mainly to adjust for differences between migrants and natives — for example, if migrants are less likely to be married (e.g., young single men moving for work), this could affect employment propensity. But in the model, regardless of migrant status, being married correlates with higher employment odds. For women, marriage often has a neutral or negative effect on employment in some contexts; however, given the nature of the sample (few women and many men), the positive effect likely reflects that married men drive this coefficient upward.

Once *Settlement type* is introduced into the model, the interpretation of migrant status changes in an important way. In the baseline specification, migrants appeared to have a slight employment advantage. However, after controlling for urban-rural residence, the odds ratio for migrant status declines to 0.948 (95% CI: 0.927–0.968; $p < 0.001$). This indicates that, net of age, sex, marital status, education and settlement structure, migrants have approximately 5.2% lower odds of employment than local residents. Although the magnitude of this effect remains modest, its reversal relative to the baseline model is substantively important. It suggests that the apparent migrant advantage observed earlier was at least partly driven by compositional differences in place of residence rather than by migrant status alone. The coefficient for settlement type is itself large and statistically significant (OR = 1.840), confirming that employment chances in Tuva are strongly structured by the spatial organization of the labor market. This finding directly supports the argument that urban-rural differentiation must be taken into account when assessing migrant-local employment differences in the Republic. In other words, once settlement structure is incorporated into the model, the evidence no longer supports the interpretation that migrants enjoy a labor market advantage as such. Rather, the earlier pattern appears to reflect, at least in part, the concentration of different population groups in different settlement contexts with unequal access to formal employment.

Finally, *Education* shows a clear gradient. Using the tiny group with no education as baseline, those with *Primary education* have OR = 1.026, which is a modest 2.6% higher odds of employment than someone with no schooling, and this is marginally significant ($p = 0.035$). Essentially, having even a primary education provides a slight advantage over none — though the effect is small, likely because so few have no schooling that this comparison is not very meaningful. The effect grows for *Secondary education*: OR = 1.828, meaning secondary educated individuals have 83% higher odds of employment compared to someone with no education.

This is highly significant. In practical terms, a person who has finished high school (or vocational training) is much more likely to be employed than a person with no schooling at all — not a surprising result. Higher education has OR = 4.575, a very large effect (over 4.5 times the odds) relative to someone with no education. This suggests that those with university or institute degrees have dramatically better chances of being employed. However, caution is warranted: since the ‘no education’ category has only one individual, these ORs are somewhat notional. It might be more sensible to compare higher vs secondary: dividing 4.575 by 1.828 (if one were to compute an implied OR for higher vs secondary) would yield roughly 2.5. That implies that higher educated people have about 2.5 times the odds of employment compared to those with just secondary education — still a very strong effect. The huge ORs and extremely tight confidence intervals reflect that virtually everyone except the one person with no education is employed.

Indeed, in the data, that single individual with no education might have been unemployed (driving the baseline odds down to near zero), whereas the majority with schooling are employed. The takeaway is that education is a critical determinant of employment in Tuva. Given the scarcity of jobs, those with higher qualifications likely secure the available positions (in administration, education, skilled trades), whereas those with very low education might only be employable in manual or informal work if available, and many such individuals may not find jobs. This reinforces the earlier observation that the active labor force is skewed to the educated — less-educated people might not even be in the labor force because their job prospects are so poor (Rakhmonov, 2025).



Discussion

The findings from this study provide a nuanced picture of migrant-native labor market dynamics in one of Russia's more peripheral regions. Contrary to some expectations, no evidence is found that migrants are marginalized in Tuva's labor market — on the contrary, migrants are just as likely as natives to be employed, and even appear to have a slight statistical edge in employment probability. This result aligns with the hypothesis that migration into Tuva is highly selective and largely job-driven. Those outsiders who relocate to Tuva are often doing so for employment (e.g., teachers, doctors, invited specialists or entrepreneurs) (Abylkalikov, 2021), and thus they slot into jobs, whereas many local residents (particularly women and less-educated individuals) remain without work or out of the labor force. In essence, migrants in Tuva constitute a self-selected subset of the labor force that is highly motivated and perhaps better positioned to be employed. This interpretation resonates with findings by Kartseva, Florinskaya and Lazareva at the national level, which showed that migrant men in Russia often have equal or higher employment rates than native men, suggesting positive selection and strong labor force attachment among male migrants (Kartseva, Florinskaya, 2024; Lazareva, 2015). Tuva-specific evidence extends this pattern to a remote, rural region: even under adverse/strained economic conditions, migrant men who are present seem to integrate into employment effectively.

At the same time, these results should not be interpreted as evidence concerning temporary labor migrants. The analysis refers specifically to settled residents with migration experience who were included in the permanent population at the time of the census. Their adaptation strategies, patterns of labor market incorporation and mechanisms of selectivity may differ substantially from those of temporary labor migrants, whose employment trajectories are shaped by a different institutional and social context.

It is important to emphasize the gendered nature of this outcome. Tuva's labor market is extraordinarily male-dominated — a fact corroborated by official data and prior studies (Baimurzina, Kabashova, 2022; Kahanec, Zaiceva, 2009). The sample had over 93% men among labor force participants, reflecting that most women did not participate in formal employment. In such an environment, the migrant population in Tuva is also overwhelmingly male (the analysis indicates ~95% of migrants in the labor force were men). This means that the positive (or neutral) migrant effect observed is essentially driven by male migrants' experiences. If a counterfactual scenario with more female migrants coming to Tuva is considered, it is possible that greater difficulties would emerge — analogous to patterns in other settings where migrant women have lower employment due to family roles or discrimination. However, in reality very few migrant women are present in Tuva, likely because job opportunities for women are scarce and because the kind of migration happening (e.g., rotational work in mines or specialists coming in) is male-skewed. Badmaeva and Natsak note significant gender aspects in Tuva's migration: men are the predominant labor migrants, while women often stay behind or migrate as dependents (Badmaeva, Natsak, 2021). This context suggests that the finding of migrant parity might not hold if female migration were higher — it is contingent on the current composition of migrants. Future research could delve into this by examining, for instance, the outcomes of the few migrant women or exploring qualitative aspects of why migrant women are so few (e.g., cultural norms, safety concerns, lack of suitable jobs for women in Tuva).

Another angle to discuss is the role of ethnic and cultural integration. Migrants in Tuva are mostly non-Tuvans (ethnic Russians, Ukrainians, Kyrgyz, etc.), whereas natives are mainly Tuvans. Despite this ethnic divide, the results show no employment penalty for non-Tuvans. This suggests that ethnic background per se is not a barrier to getting a job in Tuva's labor market. Indeed, earlier studies (Valiakhmetov et al., 2021) argue that differences in employment among ethnic groups in Tuva are due more to educational and urban/rural factors than to ethnicity itself (Baimurzina, Kabashova, 2022). Many non-Tuvan migrants tend to occupy positions in urban centers (like Kyzyl) and often have higher qualifications (e.g., Russian doctors or teachers who moved to Tuva). Thus, they integrate into professional roles where their skills are needed and face little competition. Meanwhile, local Tuvans might be in more precarious or informal roles. It is telling that the public sector in Tuva — a major employer — includes both locals and some non-local specialists; the data imply that being a migrant does not exclude one from these jobs. It is also important to note that Russian is the official working language and is spoken by virtually everyone in the labor market, so language barriers are minimal (unlike in some other contexts where migrants struggle with the local language). This likely facilitates the integration of migrant workers in Tuva despite cultural differences. Moreover, qualitative findings from Badmaeva and Natsak indicate that migrants maintain close ties to



their home but also adapt to local conditions — for example, they may form their own ethnic communities (e.g., a small Russian community in Kyzyl, or Kyrgyz workers networking together) without directly clashing with the local Tuvan majority (Badmaeva, Natsak, 2021). The absence of an employment gap between migrants and natives could thus reflect a relatively smooth, if small-scale, integration process for those who do come. Migrants likely enter niches in the economy where they are welcomed (or at least accepted) due to labor demand.

The analysis also sheds light on the broader labor market challenges in Tuva that affect both migrants and natives. The extremely high returns to education ($OR = 4.6$ for higher education) and the high unemployment among less educated individuals underscore that job scarcity disproportionately hurts the low-skilled. This aligns with Baimurzina and Kabashova's observation that Tuva's economy cannot absorb all working-age people, and those with better qualifications have a significant advantage (Baimurzina, Kabashova, 2022). For policymakers, this suggests that improving educational attainment and vocational training in Tuva could raise overall employment. It also suggests that the kind of migrants Tuva might want to attract (or retain) are those with skills and education, as they integrate well and contribute to filling skilled positions. Indeed, many of the migrants in the sample likely fall into that category (e.g., professionals from outside). The finding that marriage correlates with higher employment also hints at the social stability factor — those who are settled (married, with family responsibilities) are more anchored in the labor force, whereas unattached individuals might be more inclined to drop out or leave the region. This could be reflective of a broader issue: single young people without jobs might choose to migrate out of Tuva (adding to the outflow), whereas those who are married and jobless face pressure to find work or might remain unemployed locally out of necessity. In the sample, only those in the labor force were captured, but it is worth noting that hidden unemployment and discouraged workers (especially among women) remain a major issue in Tuva. The present study does not directly measure that, but the findings indirectly point to it (given how few women are even counted as unemployed — most are simply not working nor seeking, likely due to discouragement or traditional roles).

Comparing these results to patterns in other regions, similarities emerge with certain other Russian ethnic republics. For example, research on regions like Dagestan or Chechnya (North Caucasus) often finds that local labor markets are limited and male out-migration for work is common, but those who migrate in are usually specialized personnel who find employment readily (Holland, Eldarov, 2012). Tuva appears to fit this mould of a peripheral 'donor' region in migration terms — it sends out labor migrants and only attracts a small number of workers in return. It is interesting that in the first nine months of 2020, Tuva actually had a slight migration inflow (as noted in the Introduction). That unusual moment (likely due to some people returning during the COVID-19 pandemic) did not change the fundamental dynamic that those who came or returned presumably did so for employment or family reasons. The fact that the 2010-based analysis shows migrants doing fine in terms of employment could have positive implications: if Tuva were to succeed in attracting more in-migrants (say, to develop projects or industries), those migrants might integrate into work as well as the data suggest. However, the scale is key — currently migrants are few and often come with arrangements in place. A mass influx could be different and might strain the labor market or create competition.

Finally, the study contributes to broader theoretical debates by highlighting a case where peripheral migration results in parity (or slight advantage) in employment outcomes for migrants. This contrasts with many Western cases where migrants often face disadvantages for long periods. It also provides an interesting comparison with other Russian regions: in many wealthier regions, migrants occupy the lowest rungs of the labor market (e.g., Central Asian migrants in Moscow working in construction or janitorial jobs). In Tuva, by contrast, migrants are relatively advantaged or on equal footing — not because Tuva is an easy environment (it is not), but because the selection mechanism produces a migrant cohort that is better matched to available jobs than the general populace. It is a reminder that migration outcomes are context-specific. Under limited labor-demand conditions, only certain types of migrants come (those fairly assured of jobs), whereas in a booming economy, a wide range of migrants come, including those who struggle to find good jobs. Therefore, one could say Tuva's labor market filters migration even before it happens — and the results are observing the outcome after that filtering.



Conclusion

In summary, this study found no evidence of an employment disadvantage for migrants in the Republic of Tuva; if anything, migrants have slightly higher odds of employment than native residents when accounting for personal characteristics. This outcome stands in contrast to some conventional expectations about migrant labor market difficulties, and it highlights how regional context can shape integration outcomes. Key determinants of employment in Tuva's labor force include age (with mid-career individuals faring best), sex (with men far more likely to be employed than women), marital status and education level. The overarching implication is that in a challenging labor market environment like Tuva, being a migrant does not hinder one's chances of having a job — perhaps reflecting the selective nature of migration to the region and the demand for skilled labor.

These findings enrich the understanding of migration and employment beyond the usual focus on large economies or metropolitan centers. They indicate that policies and theories of migrant integration should be flexible enough to account for local conditions. In Tuva, the immediate concern may not be migrant unemployment, but rather the broad issues of limited job creation and gender disparities that affect all residents. Future research could build on this work by examining other regional cases, exploring longitudinal outcomes for migrants or assessing aspects of job quality and earnings for migrants versus natives. Such research would further illuminate the complex interplay between migration and labor markets in diverse socio-economic settings.

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