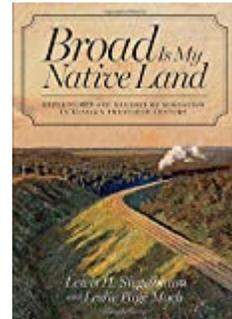




Lewis H. Siegelbaum, Leslie Page Moch. *Broad Is My Native Land: Repertoires and Regimes of Migration in Russia's Twentieth Century.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014. XVI, 421 S. ISBN 978-0-8014-7999-1.



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L. H. Siegelbaum u.a.: Broad Is My Native Land

Over the course of the last century, tens of millions of people – women and men, Christians, Muslims and Jews, rural and urban dwellers, soldiers, party-state officials and forced labor camp inmates – moved across the vast stretch of land that today is known as the *postsovet-skoe prostranstvo*, the post-Soviet space. In *Broad is My Native Land*, Leslie Page Moch and Lewis H. Siegelbaum combine their respective expertise in migration studies and Russian, East European and Eurasian history to analyze the history of this truly monumental, unprecedented movement. The focus is on the varieties of migration that took place from the late nineteenth to the early twenty-first century within what the authors call *Russian political space*, defined by them as Imperial Russia, the Soviet Union, and the post-Soviet Russian Federation.

In part, *Broad is My Native Land* is a book about state conduct: about government policies, practices and infrastructure designed to foster and limit human movement, and the ways in which these regimes of migration changed over time in response to political power shifts and transformations. At the same time, however, the book is as much about individual agency, and more

specifically, about migrants' repertoires: about the practices, strategies and social resources that migrants employed in adapting to particular forms of movement. The analysis of both migration regimes and migrants' repertoires is woven into the individual chapters, which are structured according to type of migration.

The first chapter examines resettlement, a form of more or less voluntary migration (similar to the transatlantic migrations of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) through which people sought to improve their lives by relocating themselves and their families to different, and often distant, sites. The second, third and fourth chapters investigate different forms of labor migration, that is, migration for the main purpose of employment. Chapter two traces the itineraries and experiences of seasonal migrants, usually rural residents who temporarily left their villages to work the harvest in other regions, or to toil in mines, logging or construction. The third chapter looks at migration from the village to the city, which, propelled by an increasing demand for an educated bureaucracy and industrial workers, constituted one of the major reasons for urban growth during the twentieth

century. Chapter four examines career migrants, focusing on state-employed professionals such as civil officials of the Russian empire or Soviet party-state cadres whose jobs took them regularly across all of Eurasia. Chapter five is concerned with military migrants. While the extent of soldierly movement was greatest in time of war, it also defined the soldiers' lives in peacetime, if only because conscription and military training took them away from home. Chapter six explores another form of war-related migration, namely the flight of civilians from regions under threat of external attack or internal conflict. Chapter seven analyzes deportations, that is, the process whereby both the Imperial Russian and the Soviet government practiced punishment by exile, removing people it deemed undesirable from their homes and sending them east into exile. At times, the line between deportees, resettlers and refugees became completely blurred, for example when the Soviet state's recruitment of peasants to be settled in areas from which others had just been deported turned out to be more forced than voluntary, or when the Tsarist army forcibly removed ethnic minorities, above all Jews and Germans, from areas close to the front in 1914. The eighth and last chapter focuses on itinerants, on people such as escapees or beggars who did not seek to be part of a sedentary society, or whose economic and social life ways were contingent on movement, as it was the case with nomads in the Kazakh steppe.

âBroad is My Native Landâ is the first comprehensive and systematic study of the history of migration in late Imperial Russia, the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation, and as such constitutes a tremendous scholarly contribution. Particularly impressive is the authors' skillful combination of analyses of state policies with rich and detailed descriptions of migrants' experiences, and their careful reconstruction of a multitude of human voices. Moreover, the book's broad temporal scope, bridging three different types of states, enabled Moch and Siegelbaum to provide new and fascinating insights into continuities and differences between the successive governments. Some Tsarist practices such as the resettlement of peasants to remote places in the east or migration control to the city via internal passports, for example, reappeared in Soviet times. The family always remained of crucial importance to migrants' repertoires, representing an individual's main pillar of support. At the same time, qualitative and quantitative differences existed. In Soviet times, and in particular under Stalin, state attempts to control the movement of people not only assumed unprecedented proportions, but the extent of coercion was also greatest.

For that reason, it makes sense that the book covers Soviet-era migration more extensively than migration in Tsarist and post-Soviet times. Still, the treatment of both state migration regimes and migrants' repertoires in the Russian Federation does seem a bit too sketchy, given that they are often only discussed in the chapters' individual conclusions. My main criticism, though, concerns the book's use of the term âRussian political space,â which the authors also define as territory under âRussian-based political powerâ (p. 2) or âRussian governanceâ (p. 12), as âRussian-dominated political spaceâ (p. 199) or as the space âwithin borders governed by Russian political authoritiesâ (p. 387). For Moch and Siegelbaum, not only Imperial Russia and the Russian Federation but also the Soviet Union can be called âRussian political space.â They also decided to speak throughout the text of Russia instead of using the âmore accurate, but unwieldy, label of Russian political spaceâ (p. 2). That approach, however, is problematic. For one, using Russia as a shorthand for three different types of states (on top of which one, the Soviet Union, consisted of different republics) is sometimes confusing, as it is not always clear what state the authors refer to. To give an example, on p. 392, the authors write that âwe offer to those most interested in Russia this observation: the regimes of migration and the repertoires of migrants have helped to shape the country's history at the level of family, community, region, and state.â Yet if Russia here stands for the Soviet Union, did that statement hold true to the same extent for all Soviet republics, especially given that some republics such as Kazakhstan arguably experienced more Soviet state-controlled movement than others? More importantly, however, defining the Soviet Union as âRussian political spaceâ governed by âRussian political authoritiesâ strikes me as a misconception of Soviet state structures. Even if Soviet Russia was the most important Soviet republic, and ethnic Russians numerically the largest group, Soviet Russia was nevertheless, like all other republics, subordinated to the larger union structure, which at the very top, at least during Stalin's times, consisted of a multi-ethnic ruling elite. In my mind, this is an important point. Considering that the book is directed not just at specialists but also at scholars outside the field of Russian, East European and Eurasian history who are perhaps not familiar with the specifics of the Soviet state, conceptualizing the Soviet Union as a specifically Russian political project could lead to misinterpretations and distortions of Soviet history.

Nevertheless, âBroad is My Native Landâ will not only be an indispensable read within the field of Rus-

sian, East European and Eurasian history, it will also be of great value to scholars outside the field who are interested in the causes, effects and experiences of human mobility. The book opens up new and exciting avenues of research, which could, for example, connect migration studies more closely to discussions on everyday subjec-

tivity and identity-formation in the Soviet Union, or link them to debates on how space and the natural environment influence the human experience and how individuals in turn transform abstract space into a place inherent with values.

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