

ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TAMBOV PROVINCE IN THE XIX CENTURY

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Abstract: The paper studies the interrelation of geography situation and demographic behavior of the peasantry of the Tambov province in the XIX century and the availability of land for the peasantry on the example of the village of Malye Pupki of district of Kozlov. It is emphasized that the climatic conditions influenced the agricultural development of the province. It is noted that in the second half of the XIX century trading was developing in the village Malye Pupki.

Natural and geographical conditions of the region determine the nature of the work and activities of the population, its location and demographic behavior.

The Tambov province is located in the northern part of the Oka-Don lowland which is situated between Middle Russia and the Volga Uplands. There are forests in the north and central parts of the province and a large steppe to the south. Most of the province is flat but in the western, hillier part of the province, there are some ravines and gullies. The main waterway is the Tsna, which is part of the Volga river basin; forests on the banks of the river Tsna protected the population from Nomads and were also a useful source of both food and building materials.

Tambov had rich, fertile land with the soil that was called black earth or «chernozem», and in some districts such as Morshansky, Kozlovsky, Tambovsky and Kirsanovsky the top layer could be as deep as one meter. The Borisoglebsky and Lipetsky districts also had this fertile black soil.

Although the climate of the province was temperate, the temperature was not constant and varied from North to South and from North West to South East. As a rule, it varied most during December and January, but was more or less constant in October and July. For example, in Tambov, the temperature varied from 3 to 37 degrees below zero in January, and from 7 to 39 degrees above zero in July.

In spring, the warm weather began as soon as the frosts disappeared, and in autumn the cold weather began as soon as the temperature dropped and the last spring frosts in May and the first autumn frosts in September were extremely important for agriculture. The rainfall was sometimes heavy in autumn, but there was often a shortage of rain in spring and summer and frequently a drought in June. The break-up of the ice in the rivers could cause floods which might last as long as a fortnight.

The wide-scale and extensive development of the Tambov region began in the middle of the seventeenth century. At that time the population consisted primarily of military people («sluzhilie lyudi») minor officials, («dety boyarskiye»), and kossaks because the region served as a fortress which defended Moscow against Tatar invasions.

The system of farming known as “three-field cultivation” began to develop rapidly as well as cattle breeding, hunting, and fishing.

As a result of administrative reforms in Russia at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the county of Tambov was created, which became the province of Tambov (“guberniya”) in 1796. The province had a total area of about 66 500 square kilometers and included 12 districts (“uyezd”) and 13 towns and this administrative structure continued until 1923.

The population of the province grew rapidly. In 1811, there were 1.3 million people in the territory and this figure had grown to 2.7 million by 1897. The majority of the population (93 %) was from the countryside but from the social analysis point of view, the peasants were not a homogeneous group. In the seventeenth century, in Tambov province there were “dvortsyve” peasants who belonged to the Tsarist family, and monastery peasants who belonged to monasteries. At the end of the seventeenth century, large estates owned by landlords were created and simultaneously there appeared the “pomeshchii” peasants who were peasants or serfs belonging to the landlords who owned the great estates. From the middle of the eighteenth century, the numbers of these peasants increased rapidly after the government began to distribute land on a large scale amongst the landlords.

At the same time, “state” peasants appeared, their development was caused by the acts adopted by Emperor Peter I. Like other peasants, who had allotments of land, they paid rent to the state treasury and were also obliged to pay money for the “zemsky” needs and for those of the community. Besides this, they also paid a poll tax and were obliged to fulfill various duties including “road” duty which meant that when it was necessary to build or to reconstruct the state roads they were obliged to provide the labor, “lodge” duty – to give soldiers bed and board or “transportation” duty – to provide carts and horses for moving state goods and other things. The whole community (but not individual peasants) was responsible for fulfilling these duties which were called “krugovaya poruka”. On the whole, the “state” peasants had fewer duties than privately owned peasants (serfs), but at the end of the eighteenth century the monastery peasants became state peasants and by the middle of the nineteenth century, the state peasants had comprised 42 % of the total number of peasants in the province of Tambov.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, agriculture was the main occupation in the Tambov region and the province became the largest producer of corn in Russia. The peasant households played a major role in agriculture as the basis of the peasant household was the communal ownership of land. Peasant allotments were smaller in the province of Tambov than in other regions in Russia, and in the reforms of 1861 the former serfs were given only half as much land as the state peasants, an inequality which continued for some time.

According to the data of 1877, the former serfs were given only 826 787 dessiatines of land (1 tithes = 2.7 acres) but the former state peasants had 2 152 323. The data for 1905 shows a change, with each group holding respectively 845 754 and 1 999 389 dessiatines of land [1, p. 10–11].

During the period of 1877 to 1905, there was an increase in the number of peasant households from a figure of 281 055 in 1877 to 405 953 in 1905 [1, p. 10–11], together with an increase in serfs household allotments and a reduction in the size of the former state peasants household allotments. Within the period from 1877 to 1905 there was a steady reduction in the average allotment per peasant household for all categories. For example, in 1877, former state peasants had on average 13.8 dessiatines of land per peasant household, but by 1905 this had been reduced to only 8.4. Former serfs had 6.6 dessiatines in 1877 but only 5 dessiatines in 1905 [1, p. 10–11]. In 1917, a village of former state peasants had on the average 1.285 tithes of land but a village of former serfs had only 272 dessiatines of land [2. F. 478. Op. 2. D. 232. P. 36].

The area of peasant allotments did not expand but on the contrary within the period of 1877–1905 the total area was reduced by more than 130 000 dessiatines. The peasant household could be enlarged only by buying private land and this meant that rural communities as well as individual householders and groups of householders were forced into the cost of buying additional plots.

Thus, according to the data of 1905, the area of peasant allotments was 284 823 dessiatines of land whilst individual householders added 214 283 dessiatines to their land through purchases, groups of peasants bought 96 348 dessiatines to enlarge their land-holdings, and rural communities bought 82 950 dessiatines. Overall, the peasants held 3 241 819 dessiatines of land during the period from 1877 to 1905. However, the area of land belonging to the landlords was reduced by more than 480 000 dessiatines leaving the landlords by 1905 with only 1 144 014 dessiatines [1, p. 37].

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the peasants had done a great deal both to improve and to strengthen their position and most agricultural production resulted from their labor.

The economic position and the methods of managing households, the methods of cultivating the soil and the possibility of introducing methods of intensive farming were all dependent on the size of the population. In the nineteenth century, the province of Tambov was one of the most densely populated in the country and for the period between 1881 and 1884, there were 72 permanent peasants (those peasants who didn't earn their living in town) per 1 square verst of useable agricultural land and forest area. But the population was distributed unevenly, for example, the northern district had poor soil and lower density of the population than the southern districts which had rich soil (93.8 people – 60 people) [3, p. 23–24].

Between 1882 and 1912, the annual increase in the population in the province of Tambov was 1.9 % with the rural population increasing during the same period by more than 42 %. In 1910, the Kozlov district was the most densely populated district in the province whereas the Morshansk district was the most thinly populated. In 1912, there were 87 peasants per square verst and by 1917, this figure had risen to 97.1 [4, p. 14].

The peasant population grew rapidly, but each family had decreasing quantities of land. In the period 1881 to 1884 each peasant household had about 9.6 dessiatines of land (which included allotments, bought land and forest land) but in 1912 they had only 7.6 dessiatines and by 1917 this had been further reduced to only 6.6 dessiatines [3, p. 22].

Domestic crafts in the Tambov province were poorly developed, neither were they a source of income to the peasants, as they only engaged in domestic crafts when they were free from their usual agricultural work. In the towns and cities, peasants were unable to find jobs because the factories and plants in Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century were not particularly well developed in this part of the country.

Taking into consideration all the circumstances described above, it is not surprising that there always had been migration from the province of Tambov to new areas. Within a period of about 14 years, from 1896 until 1909, more than 157 876 people moved from the province of Tambov to Siberia, a rate of about 11 000 per year. In the same period, 44 452 people or 28 % of the migrants (a rate of about 3 000 per annum) returned to the province as a result of their being dissatisfied with their new life in Siberia. Between 1910 and 1914, 63 026 people migrated to Siberia, an annual rate of 12 605, but more than 52 % of them returned [5, p. 2–3].

As a rule, people left the most densely populated areas which were the districts of Tambov, Kozlov, Kirsanov, Lipetsk, Shatsk and Morshansk. The population in these districts was involved in agriculture and the great majority of the peasants were former serfs.

The fewest number of migrants came from the three northern districts of Spassky, Yelatomsky and Temnykovs because wheat and rye were cultivated there in sufficient quantities to satisfy the needs of the population and the timber industry was also well developed [6, p. 32–33].

Analyzing the data on the Kozlov and Morshansk districts [7, p. 23] it is clear that the households of state peasants who belonged to communities from which the people migrated to new lands, were considerably wealthier than those who belonged to communities from which there were no migrants. The size of the allotments was larger and productivity and crop capacity higher in the communities from which the people migrated to Siberia.

From the so called “ruined” households, (those who had no horses or cattle and who rented their allotments), there was less migration than from those communities which were more prosperous and better supplied with horses and cattle. However, the analysis of the households of migrating former serfs suggests a different conclusion. The households of former serfs were less developed and the main reason for the lower level of development was that before their departure the migrants usually sold their allotments which provided the peasants who didn't migrate with much needed land. It goes without saying, that migration in combination with other social and economic measures was an effective and powerful way to solve the problem of overpopulation in the rural areas.

Not every family, however, was able to leave their home in order to migrate to somewhere new to start a better life. It demanded changing the traditional psychology, habits and customs which did not happen very often, and this refusal to change was the major reason why migration did not play a significant role in solving the agrarian problems.

When considering the agrarian question in the region, it is important to pay particular attention to the lack of available land as well as to the role of overpopulation. Because of the rapid growth in population there was the problem of a shortage of sufficient land for the peasants to cultivate, as a result, so they were obliged to pay rent for the land they needed. The price of this at the beginning of the twentieth century was 25 to 30 rubles per dessiatine for one sowing and between 1880 and 1884 the peasants rented 17.5 % of land in addition to what they already had [3, p. 41].

In the southern districts, which had rich, fertile soil, the peasants had access to superior land but despite this, they rented more land than the peasants who lived in the northern districts. Thus, in the Kirsanov district, the proportion of rented land was one quarter and in the Borisoglebsky district the rented land was one third of all the land cultivated.

Data from 1912 provide the information that peasants usually rented an additional 16 % of land in addition to what they already had, that 126 298 peasant households (38,8 % of all the households) rented land and that a further 57 500 rented other land from their countrymen [3, p. 42]. In the districts which were supplied with land at a higher rate per household and per capita, peasants rented land more often than in the districts which were poorly supplied with land.

Generally, people settled on the banks of the rivers or on the shores of the lakes and as there are relatively few rivers and lakes in the province of Tambov the rural settlements were rather large. According to the data from 1880 to 1884, the average rural settlement had 102 peasant households containing a total of 680 people [8, p. 51] and in 1920 the average village had a population of 977 [2. F. 478. Op. 2. D. 233. P. 34]. Such a large rural population needed a great deal of arable land and at first sight it seemed most natural to expand the arable land at the expense of other kinds of land focusing firstly upon meadows, forests and pastures. But according to Kaufmann, Chayanov, Chelintsev and other researchers, the three field system of agriculture could only work successfully if there was an area of meadows and pastures equal to the area of arable land.

The amount of arable land was unchanged and invariable and, according to the data from 1881 and 1917, comprised 79.5 % of the whole [3, p. 46]. This suggests that in the 1880s the arable land was used completely, but for more than 36 years, the

quantity of arable land did not enlarge at all, covering 2 346 846 dessiatines in 1881 and 2 257 678 dessiatines in 1917. The area of meadows and pastures also did not change, covering 266 000 dessiatines in 1881 and 260 000 dessiatines in 1917 [3, p. 47]. The share of arable land which was bought or rented by the peasants was higher, and in 1881, comprised 81.9 % of the total land area which had been purchased. In 1917, this figure had risen to 88.3 % and in some districts, this percentage was even higher. Examples of this higher percentage include the Usman district at 96.1 %, Lipetsk at 94.9 % and the Kirsanov district at 94.4 % [3, p. 49].

In the province of Tambov from 1900 to 1917, the area of forest, meadows and pastures became reduced in size from 55 % to 30 % [4. F. 478. Op. 2. D. 232. P. 38]. This meant that the forests, meadows and pastures had become arable land and the quality of the remaining pasture was very poor because the best pastures were given over to crops and, as a result, the herds grazed on the pastures for only 17 to 25 days a year [4. F. 478. Op. 2. D. 233. P. 24]. But as the peasants were obliged to pasture their cattle instead of maintaining them indoors they put the cattle out to grass on arable land, and the worsening of the quality of pastures adversely affected the conditions of peasant cattle farming. Importantly, the necessity to graze their cattle together forced the peasants to make agreements about which crops should be sown, and where this should be done. This was decided at the community assembly, and this method of making communal decisions was the reason for the majority of fields being used for the common system of crop rotation.

Let's consider the socio-economic and demographic processes on the example of the village of Malye Pupki of district of Kozlov.

The village was founded in 1648 and developed rapidly. Originally, the population consisted of "military men" who were part of the military, and minor officials, known as "deti boyarskiye". By 1650, there were 55 households totaling 220 people who owned 338 quarters of arable land and 1032 quarters of virgin land [9, p. 24].

The population grew steadily and by 1744, there were 98 peasant households which had 429 men. In 1834 there were 1 340 males and 1 353 females; Table 1 shows the subsequent growth of the population [10. F. 149. Op. 1. D. 64. P. 49; D. 210. P. 55; Op. 1. D. 1048. P. 204; 11, 12–13].

The village was densely populated, a feature which was characteristic of the villages in which "state" peasants lived. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the average village in the district of Kozlov had only 100 peasant households, so the village of Malye Pupki was more than twice as large as average.

The population in the village grew rapidly, and at the same time the number of peasant households also increased, as the division of peasant households became common practice. The main occupation of the people of the village was arable farming with cattle farming as an activity of lesser importance. All the peasants were members of the peasant community and the area of arable land, meadows, pastures remained the same size with only the forest area becoming smaller. The following table 2 1 shows this in detail [10. F. 149. Op. 1. D. 28. P. 132; D. 62. P. 49; D. 1094. P. 70; Op. 2.D. 77. P. 414; F.12. Op. 1. D. 1048. P. 207; 11, p. 12–14].

Table 1

The population of Malye Pupki

Year	Number of households	Males	Females	All
1859	255	1 785	1 803	3 588
1881	527	2 273	2 225	4 498
1911	683	2 781	2 891	5 672

Table 2

Land use in Malye Pupki

Year	Arable land (dessiatines)	Forest (dessiatines)
1832	9 192	1 080
1868	9 812	928
1873	9 812	–
1881	10 740	928
1913	10 540	200
1916	10 540	200

In the community, allotments were provided only for males, and until the 1880s, were given only to men who had been registered at the state revision of 1859. In the 1860s, in Malye Pupki, each person's allotment measured five dessiatines, and in 1911, because of the growth of the population the size of each allotment had been reduced to only 3.4 dessiatines of land per person. Such allotments of land were peculiar to the villages of former “state” peasants and resulted from a land shortage. The rate of the rental of additional land emphasizes this point, and in the 1880s and 90s, between 15 % and 17 % of the peasant households rented land which was mainly arable and utilized the three-field system of agriculture which is characteristic of this period.

The first private farms appeared after 1910, and in 1913 217 peasants (22.6 %) left the community and formed “otrubs” which were plots of land separate from the community land [10. F. 41. Op. 7. D. 72. P. 2]. In Russia as a whole, 26 % of peasants moved from their community in this way.

There are no precise data on property owned by the peasants, but by using some indirect evidence it is possible to draw some possible conclusions. Thus, according to data from the household census of 1881, there were 1481 draught horses in Malye Pupki, suggesting that the average household had 2.8 draught horses. According to many economists, a draught horse could probably plough about 5 dessiatin of land. If a peasant had less land, it was probably uneconomic to keep a horse but on the other hand, if there was a larger amount of land a single horse might not be able to cope with the increased work needed. In Malye Pupki, 52 % of the peasant households had 3 or more horses, 36 peasant households (6.8 %) had more than 5 horses, whilst at the same time, 49 peasant households (9.2 %) had no horse at all [11, 12–14]. In addition, 13 peasant households (2.4 %) had no house of their own but at the same time, 4.9 % owned two houses [11, p. 12–14].

Crafts, trades, and other kinds of work not connected with agriculture didn't exist in the village and according to the data of 1881 only two peasant households were engaged in domestic crafts. There were 4 or 5 pubs and 3 to 5 shops in the period from the 1870s to the 1890s [10. F. 149. Op. 1. D. 101. P. 58–60; D. 215. P. 181–183; D. 450. P. 145–146; Op. 2. D. 4. P. 1–2; D. 15. P. 12–18] and usually these belonged to people who were migrants from other villages. In 1822 a water-mill was built on the Chelnovaya river and there was also a fulling mill. In 1830 there was a water-mill on the Buzuluk river [10. F. 12. Op. 1. D. 1048. P. 204–208] and from the 1860s there were also private windmills of which there were 6 in 1870 and 5 in 1896 [10. F. 149. Op. 2. D. 4. P. 3–4; Op. 1. D. 450. P. 146]. However, the beginning of industry through the development of both wind and water power did not seriously affect the character of Malye Pupki as a large peasant village.

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Экономические и демографические характеристики Тамбовской губернии в XIX в.

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Ключевые слова и фразы: густонаселенные районы; крестьянские наделы; крестьянское землепользование; крестьянское хозяйство; кустарные промыслы; переселение; плодородные почвы; плотность населения; производство зерна; размеры владений; сельское хозяйство; трехпольная система земледелия.

Аннотация: Рассмотрена взаимосвязь географического положения и демографического поведения крестьянства Тамбовской губернии в XIX веке и землеобеспеченность крестьянства на примере деревни Малые Пупки Козловского уезда. Подчеркнуто, что климатические условия определили аграрное развитие губернии. Отмечено, что во второй половине XIX века село Малые Пупки стало торговым.

Wirtschaftliche und demographische Charakteristiken des Tambower Gouvernements im XIX. Jharhundert

Zusammenfassung: Es ist die Wechselbeziehung der geographischen Lage und des demographischen Verhaltens der Bauernschaft des Tambower Gouvernements im XIX. Jahrhundert und die Erdesicherstellung der Bauernschaft am Beispiel des Dorfes

Malye Pupki von Region Koslow betrachtet. Es ist betont, dass die Klimabedingungen die landwirtschaftliche Entwicklung des Gouvernements bestimmt haben. Es ist bemerkt, dass in der zweiten Hälfte des XIX. Jahrhunderts das Dorf Malye Pupki zum Handelsdorf geworden wurde.

Caractéristiques économiques et démographiques de la province de Tambov du XIX siècle

Résumé: Est examinée l'interrelation de la situation géographique et démographique du comportement des paysans de la province de Tambov du XIX siècle ainsi que l'approvisionnement en terres à l'exemple du village Malye Pupki du district de Kozlov. Est souligné que les conditions climatiques ont déterminé le développement agricole de la province. Est noté que'en deuxième moitié du XIX siècle le village Malye Pupki est devenu commercial.

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