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SOCIAL GEOGRAPHY

THE SEA FACTOR IN THE FEDERAL REGULATION OF RUSSIA'S SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT: POST-SOVIET EXPERIENCE AND CURRENT PRIORITIES

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Current geoeconomic and geopolitical transformations project on Russian society and its spatial organisation, highlighting the problems of spatial socioeconomic development and its governmental regulation. This article examines the theoretical and applied aspects of the incorporation into the national regional policy of the sea factor, understood as a combination of location and resources, which is determined by a country's jurisdiction over coasts and waters, its maritime activities and coastalisation potential, including the economic, settlement-related and psychological elements of the latter. The article describes the key influences of the sea factor on the spatial development of post-Soviet Russia. The steadily growing impact of maritime activities on the spatial-economic and settlement dynamics has been given a new impetus by the rising geostrategic, resource and transport-logistic significance of the World Ocean, as well as its water and water-land substructures, amid increasing military-strategic confrontation and geoeconomic regionalisation. The article presents a retrospective analysis of the role of the sea factor in Russia's regional policy and identifies its stages. The authors emphasise the need for a synergy between maritime and spatial policies and proposes ways of achieving it.

Keywords:
spatial development, federal regulation, coastal regions, coastal municipalities, marine economy, Russia

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Introduction

Spatiality is not only 'a special type of ordering the world' [1, p. 31], one of its universal and fundamental properties inherent, for instance, in the human community (embodied in its structure and projected on its dynamics), but also a basic approach and, to a large degree, the imperative of any productive social activity, including public policy. Careful and comprehensive consideration of the features of space, its determinants and possibilities is particularly important for Russia, a vast and very heterogeneous country, which has found itself in the epicentre of global geoeconomic and geopolitical tectonic shifts [2]. Russia has been increasingly focusing on the factors and priorities of its internal dynamics [3], including the socio-geographical situation. A prominent element of the latter is the so-called 'sea factor' [4], an umbrella term for the conditions shaped by Russia's coastal (or near-oceanic) location, its jurisdiction over the section of the World Ocean surrounding its coast and its strategic goals and interests conveyed in the national Maritime Doctrine[1] — all these factors have been recently discussed in the literature [5—9]. The country's strategic goals have been significantly affected by two tendencies, which have been plainly visible in the 1990s—early 2000s: the growing marine economy and increasing coastalisation (the gravitation of the economy, infrastructure and people towards the sea).

The 2025 Strategy for the Spatial Development of the Russian Federation[2], adopted in 2019, disclosed the major trends and problems of the then Russia, albeit with a certain degree of generalisation and political bias often present in such documents [11], and emphasised the country's spatial goals, objectives and priorities. The strategy also defined the central concept construct of spatial development, understood as 'improving the system of settlement and territorial organisation of the economy, including through an effective state policy of regional development'. Yet, the document only tangentially considered the maritime (land-and-water) aspects of the life of the nation. This article aims to identify the 'maritime component' in the regional policy of post-Soviet Russia and describe the opportunities, limitations and priorities of federal regulation, as seen through the prism of the sea factor. The focus of the study is on both the current geostrategic context and the domestic, particularly economic situation.

[1] On the Approval of Russia's Maritime Doctrine: Presidential Decree № 512 of 31 July 2022, 2022, *Official legal information website,* URL: http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202207310001 (accessed 06.08.2022).

[2] 2025 Strategy for the Spatial Development of the Russian Federation, Government Order № 207-r of 13 February 2019, 2019, *Official legal information website*, URL: http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202207310001 (accessed 06.08.2022).

The sea factor in spatial development: essential characteristics and post-Soviet manifestations

On the one hand, the sea factor is a historical and geographical certainty for Russia: it has been at work in the country since the times of the legendary Route from the Varangians to the Greeks, the Hanseatic links of Novgorod and Pskov, as well as the Genoa connections of the Golden Horde. On the other, it is a basically cyclic innovation, which sweeps the country again and again, each time changing the spatial organisation of society and giving an impetus to certain segments of the coast. First of all, the sea factor stimulates the sectors of the national economy that are in demand 'here and now', as well as the related components of the settlement-spatial structure, including coastal elements. The category 'spatial development' is characterised by almost inevitably intrinsic duality: on the one hand, it points to a positive, reasonable and preferable trend in the transformation of spatial socio-economic structure and proportion, manifested in regional policies and reflected in relevant programmes in strategic; on the other, it emphasises the spatiality of socio-economic dynamics. If we embrace this duality, the sea factor appears as a multifaceted phenomenon with important properties and characteristics, such as:

— coasts and water areas under national jurisdiction, their involvement in the economy; necessary infrastructure;

— developed maritime and coastal (water-land-industry) spatial structures, their features and significance on the national scale;

— efficient use of positioning and marine resources;

— the dependence of key industries and leading corporations on access (physical, technical and technological, economic, geopolitical) to marine resources and communications;

— the proximity of economic and engineering infrastructure and population to the coast;

— the awareness of the authorities, businesses and society of their maritime interests, opportunities and priorities.

We believe that the cumulative influence on spatial dynamics of such basic geographical phenomena as borders, neighbourhood, connectivity, regionalism, resource availability, transport and geographical position also fall into the sea factor category. In the broadest sense, the sea factor in spatial development can be also understood as ensuring a balance acceptable for society in socio-economic, geo-economic and geopolitical terms — a balance that is constantly calibrated within the land-sea dichotomy and accompanied by the advanced development of coastal areas, regions and municipalities. In an even broader interpretation,

the sea factor also encompasses the total influence (which has geopolitical and geo-ideological elements) exerted on a certain territory by the so-called maritime states and civilisations (as understood by Alfred Thayer Mahan [12]) as well as by trans-continental, trans-basin production chains effective by virtue of maritime transport (the founder of Eurasianism Piotr Savitsky accurately defined this phenomenon as the oceanic economy [13]).

The effect of the sea factor on Russia has been growing over the past three decades. At times, it was recovery growth: the country was reverting to the performance levels of the 1960s-early 1980s, when it was expanding into the World Ocean [14], becoming a 'continental-oceanic' nation [15]. Another, post-Soviet, period of growth commenced when the country was becoming closely involved in the global economy, including as part of maritime transboundary macro-regions [16]. The range of marine economy activities was increasing at the time, along with the number of maritime objects: ports, industrial port complexes along major routes, submarine pipelines, offshore oil and gas extraction facilities on Sakhalin Island and in the Arctic, etc. [5]. Another major influence on coastalisation is geopolitical and situational changes: the growing exclavity of the Kaliningrad region as tensions rise between Russia and the West [9], the incorporation of Crimea into Russia [17], the economic and geopolitical imperatives of the development of the Northern Sea Route [18].

The current period, whose onset was effectively marked by the military-political events unfolding since February 2022, is characterised by a combination of the inertia of the previous twenty-twenty-five years, on the one hand, and new targets and trends. An example of the former is transport and logistics: despite the sanctions pressure and market turbulence, Russian ports processed the same volume of cargoes in the first seven months of 2022 as over the same period a year ago.[3] As for the latter, it concerns, firstly, the growing geostrategic significance for Russia of coastal areas and territorial waters. There is also a need to shift towards new markets and rethinking logistics, transport and other interactions in the principal coastal regions: the Baltic and Black Sea areas. Secondly, it is essential to prioritise import substitution of maritime activities, which must be more intensive and effective than before in cargo shipping, shipbuilding, oil and gas exploration and extraction, as well as to generate positive socioeconomic externalities of the sea factor at a regional and municipal level. Thirdly, it is necessary to unlock the potential of the territorial waters skirting the country for greater spatial cohesion. Today, this particularly applies to the Kaliningrad region, albeit the

[3] Cargo handled by Russian seaports in the first five months of 2022. *Russian Seaport Association*, 2022, URL: https://www.morport.com/rus/news/gruzooborot-morskih-portov-rossii-za-5-mesyaca-2022-g (accessed 05.07.2022).

principal target objects of such initiatives are the Arctic zone and Pacific Russia. These national objectives have an apparent local and regional dimension and thus the federal system for spatial development regulation must accommodate them along with the sea factor.

The sea/coastal trajectory of federal spatial development regulation: an inventory of approaches and periodisation of trends

The multifaceted federal impact on the socio-economic dynamics of territories is exerted either directly, as part of the national regional policy, or indirectly, within industrial or social policy, etc. The specific feature of coastal regions is that they are affected by the nation's tailored *maritime policy*[4] targeted at maritime transport, shipbuilding and ship repair, fishery, offshore oil extraction, underwater pipeline construction, etc. As of August 2022, Russia had 23 coastal regions accounting for a quarter of its area and almost 27 % of its population.

The logic behind the evolution of Russia's maritime and regional policy was determined by landmark events in the socio-economic life of the country. Thus, the key stages in the development of Russia's maritime and regional policies closely coincided in chronological terms, but often differed in essence (Table 1).

The first decade of the post-Soviet period, the 1990s, was marked by dramatic economic transformations and federal budget deficit. Therefore, the focus shifted to the most acute problems and radical challenges. In the marine economy, this was Russia's heavy post-Soviet dependence as regards transport and logistics on major seaports in newly independent neighbouring states: Odessa, Klaipėda, Ventspils and others. These ports handled 40 % of Russia's maritime cargo traffic [19]. As to regional policy, prompt action was needed on the Kaliningrad region, a territory detached from mainland Russia. Since the 1990s, its exclavity has been compensated by the regimes of free, and later special, economic zone and funding within the FTP for the region's development. The very first years of market transition highlighted the persistent problems of the Far East, which was no longer supported by the state as it happened under Soviet rule, and particularly the Kuril Islands . Remarkably, in 1989—2002, the population of the Magadan region decreased by two-thirds; of the Kamchatka and Sakhalin regions, by one-third. For all these regions, individual FTPs were adopted, which, like all initia-

[4] According to Russia's Maritime Doctrine, the national maritime policy of the country consists in the identification by the state and society of the goals, principles, areas, objectives of Russian national interests in the World Ocean, as well as the practical steps to advance them.

tives undertaken at the time, were seriously underfunded. The regional policy did not consider coastal regions: the principal regulatory act, the presidential decree of 1996 On the Fundamental Principles of Regional Policy in Russia mentions only border regions, but not coastal regions.

Table 1

Stages of the co-evolution of maritime and regional policies in post-Soviet Russia

Maritime policy	Period	Regional policy
Import substitution in the port and logistics infrastructure handling export and import flows; localisation of positive socio-economic effects in selected coastal cities (the 1993—2000 Russia's Merchant Navy Revival programme, 1992)	1992—1997	Attempts (mostly unsuccessful) to devise a regional policy drawing on international best practice; the emergence of federal targeted programmes (FTP) as a central tool of regional policy (2010 Economic and Social Development of the Far East and the Transbaikal Region, 1996; FTPs for the Kuril Islands (1993), Krasnodar Krai (1996) the city of Sochi (1997), the Kaliningrad region (1997), the Astrakhan region (1997); the Special Economic Zone in the Kaliningrad region
A more intense and diversified maritime activity; closer attention paid to Russia's jurisdiction over territorial waters (World Ocean FTP, 1998; 2010—2021 Russia's Transport System Development FTP, Maritime Transport subprogramme, 2001; 2005—2020 Creating a Black Sea Fleet Stationing System in Russia FTP, 2004; 2020 onwards National Policy Framework for the Arctic, 2008	1998—2003	The virtual abandonment of regional policy, accompanied by the systematisation of regional development FTPs; renewal of FTPs for the Far East, the Kuril Islands and the Kaliningrad region
	2004—2008	The first steps towards a federal regional development policy (the Ministry of Regional Development established in 2004, the introduction of Regional Development into the 2020 Strategy); new federal tools for supporting regions (2007 amendments regarding port special economic zone to the 2005 federal law On Special Economic Zones in the Russian Federation)

The end of Table 1

Maritime policy	Period	Regional policy
A focus on the development of Russian shipbuilding; the declared realignment of maritime activity towards the Arctic and the East (2009—2016 Development of Civil Maritime Equipment FTP; 2009—2012 Greater Efficiency of Exploiting and Developing Fishing Industry Potential FTP; 2010 Strategy for the Maritime Activity of Russia; 2030 Strategy for the Seaport Infrastructure of Russia; 2020 Policy Framework for Navy Activities, 2012; 2013—2030 Shipbuilding Development, 2021)	2009—2013	Stronger federal support for regional development in response to the 2008—2009 crisis; growing importance of Far Eastern policy (Ministry for the Development of the Far East established in 2012; new economic zones; support for company towns)
A focus on the geostrategic import of coastal areas and territorial waters, the development of the Northern Sea Route; technological re-equipment of the maritime economy; the development of the Arctic in the framework of the maritime economy (the 2015 Maritime Doctrine of Russia; 2030 Strategy for the Development of Maritime Activity of Russia, 2019 version)	2014—2021	Formalising the federal policy on regional/spatial development (2025 National Policy Framework for Regional Development, 2017; 2025 Strategy for the Spatial Development of Russia, 2019); various measures to support priority geostrategic regions, both new (the Arctic, Crimea) and old ones (the Far East, the Kuril Islands, the Kaliningrad region): national programmes; 2014 federal laws on advanced development territories; 2015 law on the Free Port of Vladivostok; 2014 law on the free economic zone in Crimea; 2020 state support programme for business activity in the Arctic, etc
Delimiting the sphere of Russia's geostrategic interests in the World Ocean; a focus on shipbuilding as the key element of the maritime economy, as well as on the socio-economic development of coastal areas (2035 Maritime Doctrine of Russia)	2022	

The economic growth, which followed the 1998 crisis, opened up new opportunities for federal investment. Regional and maritime policies exhibited opposite trends at the time: maritime policy was gaining momentum, whilst the regional policy was relegated to the background: only major FTPs for the devel-

opment of regions and the Kaliningrad SEZ remained in place. The reason was probably the then dominance of liberal approaches to regulation of the economy. It was assumed that a favourable macroeconomic situation would solve regional problems without any additional support from the state. The maritime policy sought to create such a situation and, what is more important, safeguard national security and interests in the competition with other coastal states. Particularly, the volume of cargo handled by Russian ports increased 3.7 times compared to the initial post-Soviet levels; other maritime resources were also utilised more fully.

The attitude to regional policy started to change in the mid-2000s, when the need to support problem-ridden regions became evident, along with the prospects of developing Russian regions collectively, and promising points of growth were identified. The 2020 Concept for the Long-term Socio-economic Development of Russia (2020 Strategy), which was approved in November 2009, contains a section dedicated to the centres of regional development, where the advantages of coastal regions are underscored. At the same time, new regional policy tools were not widely introduced until the 2008 crisis. This equally applied to coastal regions. Despite the plans to create a port-based special economic zone (SEZs) in each of Russia's five sea basins, only one was established in Sovetskaya Gavan in Khabarovsk Krai (it, however, never reached its capacity, and was liquidated). The Investment Fund of Russia, created in 2005, backed just one project aimed at seaport development, namely Ust-Luga in the Leningrad region.

The 2008 crisis prompted the federal authorities to support the economy of the country and its regions. Since mid-2010, the priorities of maritime and regional policy have been converging, albeit the decisions on regional policy lagged behind those on maritime policy, which has a longer history. And the new Maritime Doctrine of 2022 finally emphasised the development of coastal territories. This convergence seems to be due to three circumstances.

Firstly, both maritime and regional policies pay enhanced attention to the priority geostrategic territories, including the Far East and the Arctic. A dedicated ministry has been created for these regions; multifarious federal measures have been adopted to support them. In particular, the prospects of the Northern Sea Route and Far Eastern ports is discussed with the objectives of regional and maritime policy in mind.

Secondly, the sanctions imposed on Russia brought to the fore the topic of import substitution. Central for many focus areas of the federal authorities, import

substitution is supported within both industrial and regional policy. For example, the Lotos industrial SEZ, established in 2014 in the Astrakhan region, was a response to the need for import substitution in shipbuilding. In 2020, a port-based SEZ appeared in the region. Together with the industrial SEZ, it comprised the Caspian cluster.

Thirdly, the incorporation of the Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol into Russia necessitated a coordinated policy with a maritime angle. In 2015—2020, the regions of Crimea received a total of 788 bn intergovernmental transfers among other forms of funding from the federal budget, which make up 7.3 % of the national total.

A substantial increase in federal support for the economy driven by the 2008 global crisis, the sanctions imposed on Russia in 2014, the Covid pandemic raging since 2020 and the new 2022 sanctions spurred many decisions for additional assistance to coastal regions. Yet, the federal regulation of spatial development lacks a comprehensive vision of the role these territories have in the space of the country, of their development prospects and peculiarities, as well as of interactions between coastal and inland areas. The 2019 Strategy for the Spatial Development of Russia limits itself to seaports or, at best, increasing the traffic capacity of corridors leading to them. Therefore, no considerable efforts have been taken to coordinate Russia's maritime policy and federal regulation of spatial development.

Concrete tools for regional development rarely involve the sea factor. Amongst the few that do are port-based SEZs and the regime of the free port of Vladivostok, which applies to 22 municipalities in five regions of Russia's Far East. In other words, coastal regions are mostly supported by federal measures common to all regions, coastal and inland. Nevertheless, these measures often focus on the marine economy, like the above-mentioned SEZ in the Astrakhan region or the Bolshoy Kamen advanced development territory created in Primorsky Krai to develop shipbuilding. Yet, as long as the actual volumes of federal support for coastal regions are considered, the territories account for a higher proportion in federal investment and national intergovernmental transfers than in the country's population and total GRP (Table 2). The distribution of funds by region is not stable, which is probably due to the COVID-19 crisis and the lack of prioritising characteristic of today's Russia [11]. We believe that the sea factor and its potential contribution to national development must be fully taken into account.

Table 2

Coastal regions and Russia's demography, economy, capital investment and inter-budgetary transfers, 2019—2020

Region	The proportion of coastal regions in Russia's demography, economy, capital investment and inter-budgetary transfers, %						
	Population	GRP		Public capital investment		Inter-budgetary transfers from the federal budget	
	01.01.2021	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
All Russian coastal regions, including	25.58	26.93	27.22	45.19	40.52	34.14	30.14
Geostrategic territories*	17.13	13.74	14.01	35.08	30.99	29.04	24.93
Marine economy regions**	20.32	20.86	21.07	39.98	34.80	22.63	22.04
Black Sea regions	8.40	5.06	5.29	19.04	15.10	9.33	9.09
including the Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol	1.65	0.63	0.70	11.30	7.97	5.87	5.02
Baltic regions	5.67	7.24	7.48	6.60	5.54	4.71	3.82
including the Kaliningrad region	0.70	0.55	0.57	1.40	0.67	3.00	1.95
Pacific Russia	2.83	3.81	3.90	4.51	4.08	7.88	5.72
Arctic Basin regions	5.68	9.33	9.10	8.35	8.35	7.85	7.33
Caspian regions	3.00	1.49	1.45	6.69	7.45	4.37	4.18
Including Dagestan	2.14	0.76	0.80	6.05	6.76	3.53	3.28

Source: prepared by the authors based on data from Rosstat.

Comment: * According to Russia's 2025 Strategy for Spatial Development; ** see [20].

Current priorities. Federal regulation of spatial development with a focus on the sea factor: capabilities and limitations

A global and universal phenomenon, the sea factor has peculiar features in the case of Russia. These peculiarities are a result of the substantial length of the shoreline (88 % of the 38,000 km lie in areas with a harsh climate requiring special approaches to settlement and the economy) and the multiplicity of geo-

graphic and geostrategic trajectories of maritime activities, which are often economically linked to distant inland areas. Different in a range of socio-geographic characteristics, the country's coastal regions and territorial waters require spatially adjusted and even targeted regulatory approaches taking into account the intricate connections between the sea and the land. When devising and improving these approaches, one may draw on international practice, particularly that of the EU, which has clearly outlined different avenues of supranational European policy and developed a consistent regional policy. The principal difference between international and Russian experience is the focus of the latter on spatial issues and the much sought-after synergy between land and water structures and processes.

It is worth noting that the EU developed an integrated maritime policy quite recently, in 2007, when the relevant directive was adopted.[5] Russia's first integrated maritime doctrine was approved six years earlier. Yet, as mentioned above, the questions of the socio-economic development of coastal regions were first raised only in 2022, whilst the EU has discussed the integrated management of coastal zones since the 1990s.[6]

The coastal regions of the EU are NUTS 3 territories that have a sea border and more than half of their population living within 50 km from the sea.[7] Although the Union's regional and cohesion policies pay little attention to coastal areas, most of which are prosperous territories, Eurostat continues to collect and analyse statistics on coastal and inland regions as two distinct territorial types. The statistical yearbooks of 2011 and 2012 have special chapters dedicated to coastal areas.[8] Such practices have not been adopted in Russia because of the low quality of municipal statistics and the tendency of the federal authorities to treat municipalities as objects of spatial development regulation [11]. These problems must be solved. Moreover, greater efficiency of maritime policy is an additional argument in favour of a federal system of municipal development monitoring.

In international and particularly European practice, a maritime policy is usually followed by marine spatial planning (MSP) initiatives. This is a new area,

[5] Our Oceans, Seas and Coasts, 2022, European Commission, URL: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/marine/eu-coast-and-marine-policy/index_en.htm (accessed 05.07.2022), as well as [17].

[6] EU Policy on Integrated Coastal Management, 2022, European Commission, URL: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/iczm/background.htm (accessed 05.07.2022).

[7] Maritime policy, 2017, Eurostat, URL: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/coastal-island-outermost-regions/background (accessed 01.06.2022).

[8] Eurostat Regional Yearbook 2011, 2011, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, P. 169—184; Eurostat Regional Yearbook 2012, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2012, p. 177—192.

which has rapidly developed over the last decade on the basis of online platforms developed by the EU,[9] the European Commission and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO.[10] In March 2017, the Union and UNESCO adopted a joint roadmap to accelerate MSP processes worldwide. According to their data, by mid-2018, about 70 states had prepared or were preparing marine spatial plans at a regional, national or local level, but countries, regions and municipalities still needed support to fully implement them. There is a growing body of publications on MSP [22; 23], all of them labelling this topic as new, demanding well-trained human resources [24] and offering enormous opportunities for integrating different industries, forms of knowledge and stakeholders [25].

In Russia, MSP was first mentioned about ten years ago in the context of the need to harmonise it with spatial planning [26].[11] However, works on MSP remain few until now [6]. Nor has been MSP embraced in the practices of public bodies.

In view of the sea-land nature of coastal municipalities and their parent regions, the most urgent task for Russia is the launch of an MSP system coupled with the traditional spatial planning format. Approaches to the integration of marine and terrestrial/land/land-based[12] spatial planning are an emerging area of research worldwide [27—29], albeit the problem was first formulated over a decade ago [30]. Nevertheless, substantial groundwork has been laid (see [31] for an overview of the relevant literature) for research on a less complicated subject: MSP-driven interactions between the land and the sea. There are also publications on coastal industrial clusters (inventoried in [32]), many of them concentrating on the case of Germany.[13]

Unfortunately, these problems have not yet been formulated in Russia. The country's strategy for spatial development limits itself to identifying promising economic niches, whilst it would be more productive to evaluate the possibility of developing in coastal zones corresponding marine economy formats, including

[9] The European Maritime Spatial Planning Platform, 2022, *European Commission,* URL: https://maritime-spatial-planning.ec.europa.eu/ (accessed 16.05.2022).

[10] Marine Spatial Planning Global, 2022, URL: https://www.mspglobal2030.org/ (acs cessed 11.06.2022).

[11] Territorial planning is understood here in accordance with Russia's Town Code.

[12] The use of the term 'territorial spatial planning' could be possible, but 'territorial planning' is strictly defined in the Town Code and has a different meaning. In this case, we are dealing with what is traditional called in Russia 'strategic spatial planning'. This can also be applied to MSP.

[13] Maritime Agenda 2025: The future of Germany as a maritime industry hub. Berlin: The Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, 2017. 40 p.

coastal clusters and complexes, industrial port complexes, etc. The situation in Russia is aggravated by the absence of coastal connecting links between maritime policy and spatial development policy. Further work should seek to couple maritime and terrestrial spatial planning, which is an urgent task at both the national and international levels.

Conclusion

In today's world, the role of the sea factor in socio-economic development is immense, almost all-embracing and undeniable. Having rightfully identified itself as a 'great maritime power',[14] Russia must identify and calibrate its spatial development goals, taking into account the specifics of coastal areas and territorial waters, as well as the land-water dichotomy, which is extremely pronounced in the case of the country. Within the logic of further harmonising national maritime and regional policies, it is necessary to combine the municipalisation of targeted measures and approaches with embedding maritime issues into the system of federal regulation of spatial development. The socio-economic geography of the World Oceans, which has been rapidly developing in Russia in recent years, can make a significant contribution to solving this problem.

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THE ECONOMY OF RUSSIAN BALTIC REGIONS: DEVELOPMENT LEVEL AND DYNAMICS, STRUCTURE AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE PARTNERS

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The article explores the challenges encountered during the formation of the Baltic macro-region comprising Russia and eight EU countries (Germany, Poland, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia) in the context of the ongoing geopolitical and geo-economic changes. The article aims to assess the dynamics, level, structure and pace of economic development of three Russian regions located on the Baltic Sea (St. Petersburg, Leningrad and Kaliningrad regions) and analyse the intensity of their trade relations with countries of the macro-region. Russian Baltic regions have higher development rates compared to the national average. However, they experience difficulties in their economic development resulting from negative external factors. The article describes possible ways of overcoming these difficulties by improving the sectoral structure of the economy and diversifying international ties. In this context, the development of inter-regional cooperation and the formation of a spatially distributed territorial socio-economic system, including the three Russian Baltic regions, will be particularly beneficial. The period covered by the article is 1996—2021, with a special focus on 2014—2021. The study is based on the economic and statistical analysis of official data of Rosstat and the Federal Customs Service on the sectoral structure and dynamics of the gross regional product (GRP), volume and changes in foreign trade, and its commodity and geographical structure.

Keywords:
Baltic macroregion, Russia, St. Petersburg, Leningrad region, Kaliningrad region, economic capacity, international trade turnover, economic development

Introduction

We understand the Baltic regions of Russia as Russia's constituents located on the coast of the Baltic Sea. These are the federal city of St. Petersburg, the Leningrad and Kaliningrad regions. Their development is closely connected with the blue economy: maritime transport, fishing and fish processing, coastal tourism and recreation, shipbuilding and other regional industries exporting goods by sea or using seaborne raw materials and semi-finished products. The three study regions performed these functions in the Soviet period as well.

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Although the fishing industry lost some of its importance after the collapse of the Soviet Union, other maritime industries are becoming ever more important. Economic cooperation with the former Baltic Soviet republics dwindled, whilst economic ties with the other countries of the Baltic macro-region (or the Baltic Sea region) — Germany, Poland, Sweden, Denmark and Finland — grew stronger. A range of publications by Russian and international authors [1—14] looks at the dynamics, possibilities and prospects of the formation of a Baltic macro-region as a cohesive socio-economic whole.

The deterioration of relations between Russia and Western Europe has provoked a surge of publications examining the conflict dynamics of the region. The sanctions policy of Western countries against Russia has caused trade between Russia's Baltic regions and the other states of the Baltic macro-region to drop; mutual ties have lost their significance, and cooperation has declined. Both Russian and international publications on a unified Baltic macro-region have become less optimistic [15—26].

Russian researchers stress that the attitudes of Western partners to strengthening mutual relations have become less favourable than before [16; 17; 22; 23], which can be clearly seen in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region [15; 24]. The term 'cool war' has found its way into scholarly use.

International authors have shifted the focus to security problems when investigating Russia's relations with the other countries of the region [19—21; 25], often emphasising possible conflicts that may arise from Kaliningrad's exclave position [26].

This study aims to explore the level, structure and dynamics of the economy of Russia's three Baltic regions and their international trade relations in 1990—2021. Possible solutions are proposed to the problems caused by external factors.

Methodology

The study spans the period from 1996 to 2021, with a focus on the last eight years. It uses official statistics from Rosstat and Russia's Federal Customs Service. The data were processed using customary statistical methods (typological and cross-classification, graph analytics, cluster and correlational analysis). Promising areas of economic cooperation between Russia and the other Baltic region states are taken into account, as seen in my earlier works and those of other Russian and international experts.

Economic development: current level and rates

The three Baltic regions play a special role in Russia (Table 1). Their coastal and border position, on the one hand, and Russia's involvement in the global economy, on the other, have made them 'international development corridors' [27]. They account for a significant portion of Russia's international trade, and their economies are included in international value chains. All this causes them

to outstrip most Russian regions in terms of social and economic development. A positive net migration rate provides for a population increase in the territories: the average annual net migration per 10,000 population in 2014—2020 was 15 throughout Russia, 63 in St. Petersburg, 156 in the Leningrad region and 96 in the Kaliningrad region[1]. The population of Russia's Baltic regions increased by 8, 13 and 6 %, respectively, from the end of 2014 to 1 October 2021 (the data of the national census).[2]

Table 1

Overview of Russia's Baltic regions

Indicator	St. Petersburg	Leningrad region	Kaliningrad region
Area, 1,000 km^2	1.4	83.9	15.1
Population, 1,000 people (as of 01.10.2021)	5602	2001	1030
The region as % of the total national:			
area	0.008	0.490	0.088
population, 01.10.2021	3.81	1.36	0.70
GRP, 2019	5.40	1.29	0.55
international trade, 2020	7.52	1.58	1.50

Prepared based on data from: Preliminary results of the 2021 National Census (as of date of the census: 01.10.2021), *RG.RU*, URL: https://rg.ru/2022/05/30/predvaritelnye-itogi-vserossijskoj-perepisi-naseleniia.html (accessed 01.06.2022); Russian regions. Socio-economic indicators. 2021, 2021, Moscow: Rosstat, 1112.

The Kaliningrad region stands out amongst the three regions in terms of economic and geographic development conditions. Its exclave position and territorial isolation from mainland Russia make its economy particularly sensitive to external influences. The region's development slows down under unfavourable external conditions, whilst, in more prosperous years, it occurs at a faster rate than throughout the country [17].

In the 1990s, the GRP of the Kaliningrad region fell more dramatically than that of the two other study territories. In 1997, its GRP per capita dropped to 57 % of the national average (Fig. 1); in 1999, industrial production in the region was only 17 % of the 1991 level, compared to 52.5 % across the country, 25 % in the Leningrad region and 59 % in the Leningrad region.[3] But, in 1997—2000, GRP

[1] Calculated based on data from: Net migration per 10,000 people, 2022, *EMISS*, URL: https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/43017 (accessed 11.05.2022).

[2] Calculated based on data from: Preliminary results of the 2021 National Census (as of the date of the census: 01.10.2021), *RG.RU*, URL: https://rg.ru/2022/05/30/predvaritelnye-itogi-vserossijskoj-perepisi-naseleniia.html (accessed 01.06.2022); Russian regions. Socio-economic indicators. 2021, 2021, Moscow: Rosstat, 1112.

[3] Calculated based in average annual chain indices, using data from: Industrial production index, 2022, *EMISS,* URL: https://fedstat.ru/indicator/43045 (accessed 11.07.2022).

per capita was increasing more rapidly in the Kaliningrad region than in the other two territories, albeit remaining slightly below the national average (in the Leningrad region, it was 3 % and, in St. Petersburg, 52 % above the average Russian values). In 2000, St. Petersburg ranked 19th amongst Russia's regions in terms of GRP per capita; the Leningrad region, 28th; Kaliningrad, 45th. In 2020, they ranked 10th, 17th and 29th respectively, whilst the top nine regions were Moscow (7th) and the eight northern regions with extractive economies.

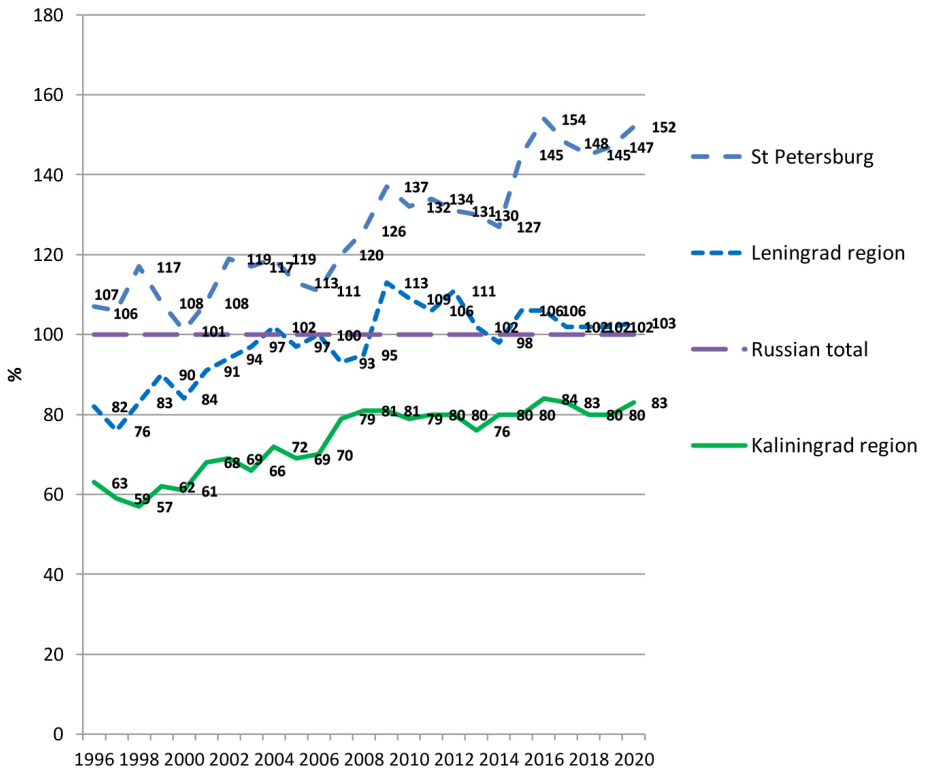

Fig. 1. GRP per capita of Russia's Baltic region, % of the national average (national total = 100 %) in 1996—2020

Prepared based on data from: GRP per capita, 2022, *EMISS,* URL: https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/42928 (accessed 01.06.2022).

Structure of the economy

The Kaliningrad region is the closest to the national average in terms of the general structure of the economy: market services prevail there over manufacturing[4] (Fig. 2, Table 2).

[4] Table 1 shows the division of businesses into the production of goods, market and non-market services.

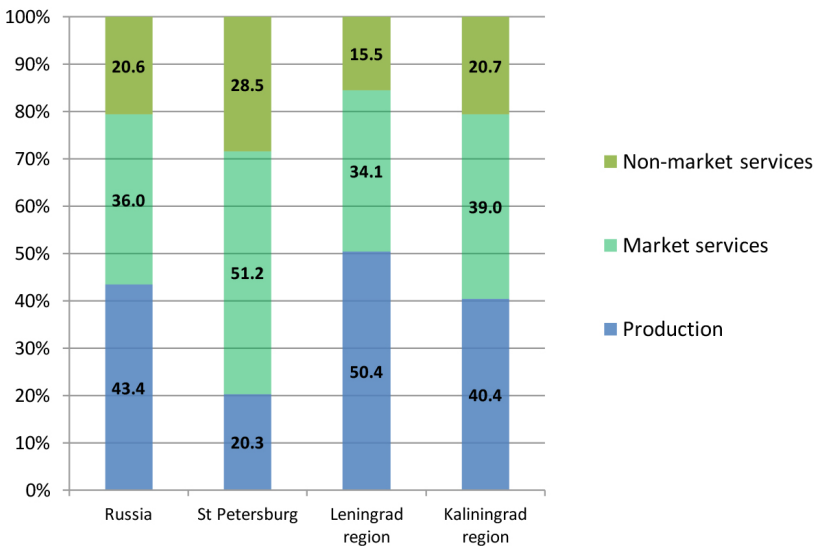

Fig. 2. Overview of the GRP of Russia and its Baltic regions, %, 2019

Prepared based on data from: Gross regional product at base prices (OKVED 2), 2022, *EMISS,* URL: https://fedstat.ru/indicator/59448 (accessed 11.06.2022).

Table 2

Types of businesses, as divided into production, market and non-market services

Code	Type of business
Production of goods	
A	Agriculture, forestry, hunting, fishing and fish farming
B	Mineral extraction
C	Manufacturing
D	Electricity, gas and steam supply; air conditioning
E	Water supply, wastewater disposal, waste management, pollution abatement
F	Construction
Production of market services	
G	Wholesale and retail; repair of motor vehicles and motorbikes
H	Transport and storage
I	Hospitality
J	Information and communications
K	Finance and insurance
L	Real estate
Production of non-market services	
M	Expert services, research and technology
N	Administration and related services
O	Public administration, military security and social security
P	Education
Q	Health and social services
R	Culture, sports, recreation and entertainment
S	Other services

In the Leningrad region, manufacturing accounts for a greater proportion of GDP than services, particularly non-market ones. In St. Petersburg, market and non-market services have a more visible role than production.

St. Petersburg, home to municipal and regional authorities, and the Leningrad region comprise a single territorial system. Many of its residents commute to the city, which is second in Russia only to Moscow in terms of population and socio-economic capacity; others travel there regularly for cultural and everyday purposes. St. Petersburg's infrastructure also services the contiguous part of the Leningrad region.

The contribution to GRP of all businesses involved in production (including manufacturing) is smaller in St. Petersburg than across the country (Fig. 3). Its whole area is urban, and agriculture and mineral extraction account for an insignificant part of its GRP. Yet, the city can hardly be considered industrially underdeveloped: it markedly outperforms an average region in production output per capita across all industries, except mineral extraction, i.e. those coded as C, D, and E (Table 2)

In the Leningrad and Kaliningrad regions, the contribution of production to GRP is above the national average for all industries, once again except mineral extraction (28.8 % and 20.7 % respectively, compared to 16.9 % across the country). Production output per capita is also above the national average in the same groups of industries as in St. Petersburg. In the Leningrad region, the contribution of manufacturing to GRP is 1.75 times the national average (2019).[5]

The Leningrad region's proximity to St. Petersburg and the considerable degree of urbanisation of the Kaliningrad region, as well as its technology-based agriculture, explain why these non-black earth territories have a higher percentage of agriculture in GRP than an average Russian region.

St. Petersburg has a more substantial contribution to GRP of all activities falling under the umbrella term 'market services' than an average Russian region. It only lags behind the Leningrad region in transport and storage. In the city, the production of market services per capita is also well above the national average (by a factor of 1.5—3, depending on the industry). Both the Leningrad and Kaliningrad regions outperform an average Russian territory only in transport and storage (the Leningrad region far outstrips St. Petersburg in this respect; in the Kaliningrad region, the values are close to the national average). These results are mainly explained by well-developed sea transport handling import and export cargoes in the three regions. In the Kaliningrad region, the proportion of real estate services is also above the national average, albeit twice as low as in St. Petersburg.

The social sphere is thriving in St. Petersburg. In the city, the proportion of non-market services is below the national average only in public administration, whilst production of services per capita is above that for all types of economic activity. A major centre for R&D, St. Petersburg stands out from other regions in terms of expert services, research and technology.

[5] Calculated by the author based on data from: Gross region product at base prices (OKVED 2), 2022, *EMISS,* URL: https://fedstat.ru/indicator/59448 (accessed 19.06.2022); Russian regions. Socio-economic indicators. 2021, 2021, Moscow: Rosstat, 1112.

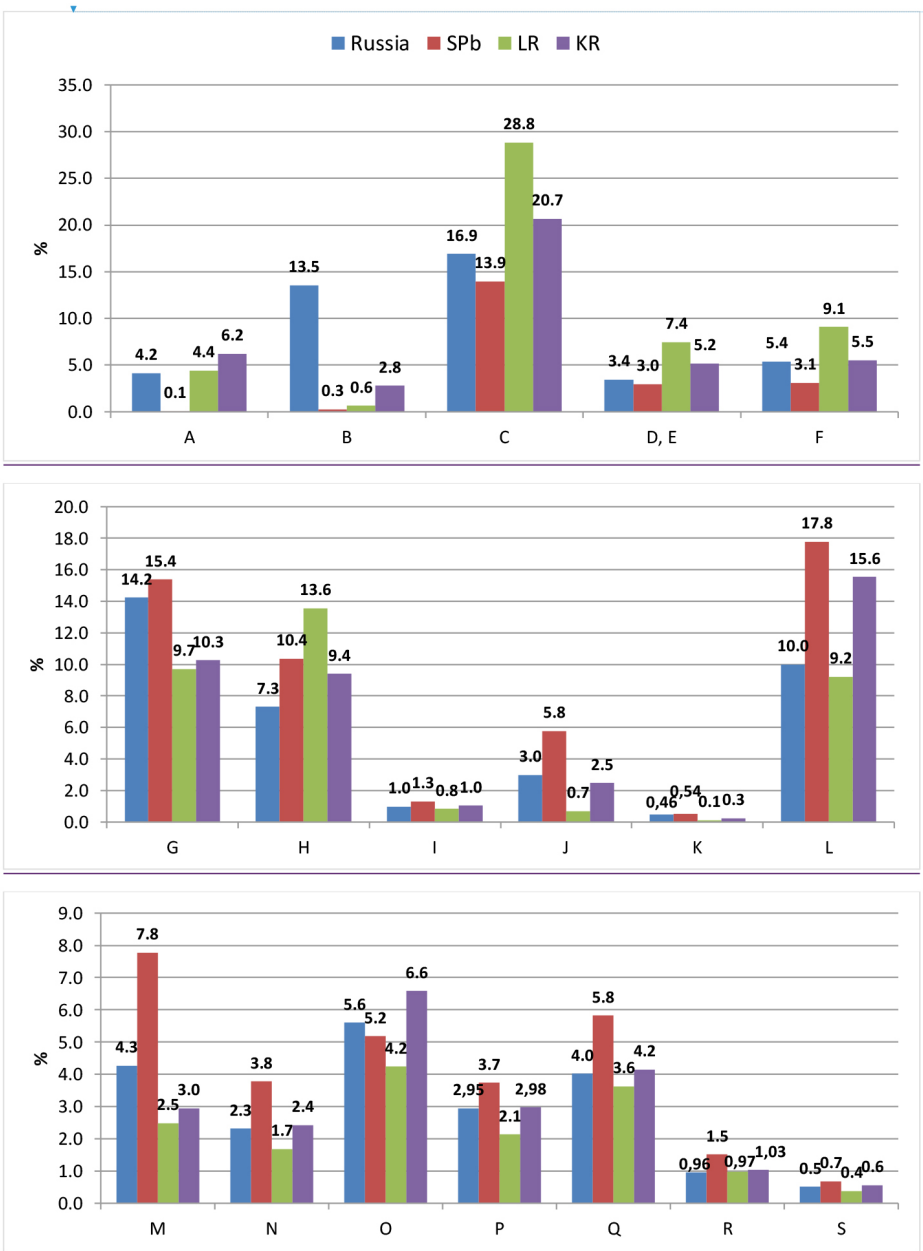

Fig. 3. Contribution of industries to GRP (see the codes in Table 2; SPb stands for St. Petersburg; LR, Leningrad region; KR, Kaliningrad region), 2019, %

Prepared based on data from: *Gross regional product at base prices (OKVED 2*), 2022, *EMISS,* URL: https://fedstat.ru/indicator/59448 (accessed 11.06.2022).

In the Leningrad region, on the contrary, all non-market services, except culture, account for lower proportions of GRP than in an average Russian region;

the same holds true for service production per capita. Culture is the exception here because of the large number of historical and cultural sites in the suburbs of St. Petersburg.

In the Kaliningrad region, the contribution to GRP of only expert services, research and technology is below the national average. The service output per capita, however, is below that across all the economic activities.

Let us consider the structure of manufacturing, where Russia's Baltic regions outperform their counterparts in the contribution to GRP, the proportion of the working population and production per capita. The sectoral composition of manufacturing is similar in the three regions, reflecting the commonality of development factors, such as the coastal economic and geographical position and a high proportion of the regions' territories involved in the economy.

Mechanical engineering — the production of metal products, machinery and equipment, instruments and vehicles — plays an essential role in all the study regions. Machine-building employs 6.4 % of the working population in St. Petersburg; 5 % in the Leningrad region; 3.9 % in the Kaliningrad region. The latter value is below the national average of 4.6 %. Nevertheless, Kaliningrad, like the other two study regions, outperforms an average Russian territory as regards the production of vehicles (cars and ships)[6].

Food production ranks second in the number of the employed in the industry. Such businesses rely on seaborne imports for raw materials. Food and beverage production employs 2.0 % of the working population in St. Petersburg, 2.4 % in the Leningrad region and 4.4 % in the Kaliningrad region, compared to 2.7 % across the country.

The forestry-related industries (pulp and paper, furniture, etc.), which mostly use timber as raw material, rank third in this respect. They account for 1.3 % of those employed in St. Petersburg, 2.9 % in the Leningrad region and 2.0 % in the Kaliningrad region, compared to the national average of 1.5 %.

The fourth-ranking industry is textile and leather production. In St. Petersburg, it employs 1.0 % of the working population; in the Leningrad region, 1.8 %; in the Kaliningrad region, 0.8 % (which is exactly the national average).

The other manufacturing industries account for 3.6 % of those employed in St. Petersburg; 5.3 %, in the Leningrad region; 3.3 %, in the Kaliningrad region (the national average is 4.4 %).

The development of the manufacturing industries of the three regions heavily depends on external factors. Despite the restrictive pressure from Western countries, St. Petersburg and the Leningrad region, as well as the country as a whole,

[6] Average annual employment numbers since 2017, 2022, *EMISS,* URL: https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/58994 (accessed 22.06.2022).

managed to achieve growth in production between 2014 and 2021. In the Kaliningrad region, which experienced the greatest external pressure, the industrial sector dwindled by only 4 % and manufacturing by 3 %.

The situation became less favourable in 2022: production has been declining in the three regions since March. From January to July 2022, only St. Petersburg showed a slight increase, year-on-year. In the Leningrad region, industrial production dipped by 0.2 %; manufacturing, by 1.1 %.[7] In the Kaliningrad region, the decline in production was much deeper: by 15.7 % and 18 %[8] respectively. Its import-substituting manufacturing was affected by a reduction in the imports of raw materials and semi-finished goods.

Particularly severe difficulties arose in the motor vehicle assembly industry, which manufactures the final product from components produced abroad, with very little value added created at Russian facilities. In 2021, the production of motor vehicles was 93 % of that in 2014 in the Kaliningrad region; 58 %, in the Leningrad region. In the first seven months of 2022, it was only 15 and 31 %, year-on-year, respectively.

In the Kaliningrad region, motor vehicle production increased by 20 % between 2015 and 2021. Yet, in the first seven months of 2022, it fell to 42 % of the values obtained for the first seven months of 2021.

There are several possible solutions to the problems faced by the automotive industry in Russia's Baltic regions. The first one is switching to the supply of components from states standing aside from the restrictive measures against Russia. The second way is to refocus towards the development of electric transport in line with the Concept approved by the Russian government in 2021[9]. The third way is to include assembly plants in value-added chains to ensure the production of Russian vehicles.

The production of furniture, pulp, paper and paperboard declined in the three regions between 2014 and July 2022. Here, it is essential to shift from the export of timber, which is included in the lists of restricted goods, to the processing of raw material by domestic enterprises, whose capacities should be increased (for example, in the Soviet period, four pulp and paper mills and a paper mill now closed, successfully operated in the Kaliningrad region).

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[7] Here and below, calculated based on data from:: Production index (current data) (OKVED2). URL: https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/57806 (accessed 09.09.2022).

[8] In Russia (since part of production is domestic vehicle production), motor vehicle production in 2021 was 83 % of the 2014 level. In the first seven months of 2022, it was 53 % compared to the same period, year-on-year.

[9] 2030 Concept for Developing the Production and Use of Electric Road Transport in the Russian Federation: government order of 23 August 2021 No. 2290-r, 2021, *Government of Russia,* URL: http://static.government.ru/media/files/bW9wGZ2rDs3BkeZHf7Zsaxnlb JzQbJJt.pdf (accessed 22.08.2022).

At the same time, the production of chemicals and chemical products, rubber and plastic products, other non-metallic mineral products, etc., has increased in all the three regions.

Depending on the region, a number of industries may experience a decline, an increase or stabilisation of production. For example, in St. Petersburg and the Leningrad region, the output of food products had increased by July 2022, compared to 2014 (it remained the same in Kaliningrad). At the same time, production declined in the dairy industry and fruit and vegetable processing in the Kaliningrad region, as well as in the meat and fish industry in St. Petersburg. In such cases, the cause often lies in plummeting exports. Measures are required to increase the domestic production of respective agricultural products (or to ensure supplies from other Russian regions, as well as from countries that have not joined the restrictive measures against Russia).

The ongoing shifts in external economic relations and the sectoral restructuring of production should solve the problems of economic development in a changed and still changing environment. A certain similarity in the economic structure of the three regions suggests the possibility of close cooperation between the Kaliningrad and Leningrad regions and St. Petersburg in rising up to the new challenges. The need for such cooperation, as well as for the transformation of Kaliningrad into an outpost of St. Petersburg to boost the development of the former, was stressed by the prominent economist Vladislav Ivchenko as early as the beginning of the 1990s [28].

The formation of value-added chains involving economic entities of the three regions, as well as the creation of distributed sectoral and inter-sectoral clusters of manufacturing industries (in shipbuilding, car manufacturing, instrument making, furniture production and fishing), seems to be a promising option. This also holds for tourism and recreation (including the launch of tourist cruises with calls to St. Petersburg and Kaliningrad), maritime and air transport.

International trade

Between 2000 and 2015, the role of the three regions in Russia's international trade was constantly rising, reflecting the growth in bilateral trade between Russia and the EU, as well as the increasing role of maritime transport in servicing international economic ties. The contribution of the three regions to the country's international trade grew from 6.5 to 11.4 % (Fig. 4). Yet, between 2015 and 2021, as sanctions imposed by the West were becoming more sweeping and Russia was turning economically towards the east, this percentage reduced to 10.1 %.

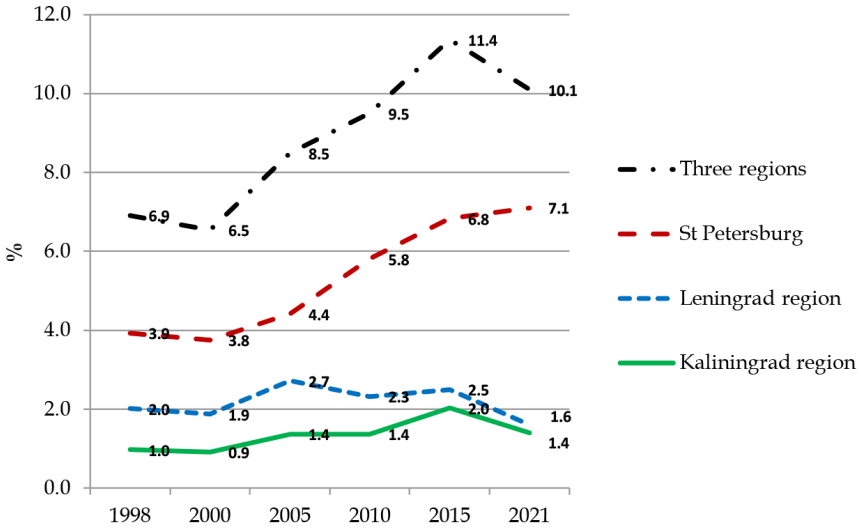

Fig. 4. Contribution of the Baltic regions to Russia's international trade (in value terms), %, 1998—2020

Prepared based on data from: Russian regions. Socio-economic indicators. 2002, 2002, Moscow, Goskomstat of Russia. 863.; Russian regions. Socio-economic indicators. 2006, 2007, Moscow: Rosstat, 2007. 981.; Russian regions. Socio-economic indicators. 2021, 2021, Moscow: Rosstat, 1112.; International Trade of the Kaliningrad Region, 2022, *Kaliningrad Regional Customs Service*. URL: https://koblt.customs.gov.ru/statistic/vneshnyaya-torgovlya-kaliningradskoj-oblasti (accessed 15.06.2022); International Tade of Russia's Northwestern Regions, 2022, *Northwestern Customs Service*. URL: https://sztu.customs.gov.ru/folder/147129 (accessed 15.06.2022); On international trade in 2021, 2021, *Rosstat,* URL: https://rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/26_23-02-2022.html (accessed 29.07.2022).

The countries of the Baltic macro-region, which accounted for a substantial proportion of the international trade of Russia's Baltic territories (Table 3), are now playing a less prominent role in both exports and imports. Between 2014 and 2021, their importance as trading partners of St. Petersburg and the Kaliningrad region significantly decreased, whilst their proportion in the international trade of the Leningrad region rose slightly, with their contribution to exports increasing and imports declining. Overall, the share of the countries of the Baltic macro-region in the international trade of the three study regions fell from 26.5 to 17.6 % (from 28.9 to 19.8 % for exports and from 20.6 to 15.4 % for imports[10]). At the same time, Germany, the three territories' principal trade partner in the Baltic macro-region, accounted for 6.6 % of their international trade in 2021, compared to 9.4 % in 2014.

[10] International trade of the Kaliningrad region, 2022, *Kaliningrad Regional Customs Service*. URL: https://koblt.customs.gov.ru/statistic/vneshnyaya-torgovlya-kaliningradskoj-oblasti (accessed 15.06.2022); International trade of Russia's Northwestern regions, 2022, *Northwestern Customs Service*. URL: https://sztu.customs.gov.ru/folder/147129 (accessed 15.06.2022).

Table 3

The contribution of Baltic macro-region states to the international trade of Russia's Baltic regions, 2014 and 2021, %

Baltic macro-region countries	St. Petersburg		Leningrad region		Kaliningrad region		Total for the three regions	
	2014	2021	2014	2021	2014	2021	2014	2021
Germany	11.1	7.4	4.3	4.7	20.9	5	9.4	6.6
Poland	0.8	1.8	0.8	1.7	3.6	3.4	1.1	2.0
Sweden	1.5	0.6	2.0	1.2	0.6	0.7	1.6	0.7
Denmark	0.2	1.4	3.5	0.7	0.3	1.3	1.6	1.3
Finland	5.9	2.2	6.8	7.2	0.5	0.8	5.7	2.8
Lithuania	0.1	1	0.2	1.5	1.3	3.1	0.3	1.4
Latvia	3.7	0.9	0.2	1.5	0.5	0.5	1.8	0.9
Estonia	7.8	1.2	2.2	6.9	4.3	0.1	5.0	1.9
Total	31.2	16.4	20.0	25.5	32.1	14.8	26.5	17.6

Prepared based on data from: International trade of the Kaliningrad region, 2022, *Kaliningrad Regional Customs Service*. URL: https://koblt.customs.gov.ru/statistic/vneshnyaya-torgovlya-kaliningradskoj-oblasti (accessed 15.06.2022); International Trade of Russia's Northwestern Regions, 2022, *Northwestern Customs Service*. URL: https://sztu.customs.gov.ru/folder/147129 (accessed 15.06.2022).

The tables below show the products exported (Table 4) and imported (Table 5) by each of the three Russian Baltic regions to and from the countries of the Baltic macro-region. All the products, except oil, are produced, for the most part, in the respective region.

The Kaliningrad region is an exporter of agricultural products (soya and rapeseed oil and meal are exported into all the countries of the macro-region except Estonia; wheat, raw amber, mineral products and ferrous metals, to Lithuania; mink skins, to Poland).

St. Petersburg and the Leningrad region export oil and petroleum products to all the states of the macro-region. Some of the countries purchase engineering products, ferrous metals and metal products, timber and plastic from the two regions. St. Petersburg ships albuminous substances to Denmark and Lithuania. Inorganic compounds are exported from the Leningrad region to the Baltics and Poland; fertilisers to the Baltic States; resin and rubber, to Germany, Poland, Sweden and Finland.

Table 4

Goods exported by Russia's Baltic regions to the countries of the Baltic macro-region, 2021

Goods	Importing countries							
	Germany	Poland	Sweden	Denmark	Finland	Lithuania	Latvia	Estonia
Soya and rapeseed oil	—	—	—	KR	—	KR	KR	—
Soya and rapeseed meal	KR	KR	KR	KR	KR	—	—	—
Wheat	—	—	—	—	—	KR	—	—
Mink skins	—	KR	—	—	—	—	—	—
Oil and petroleum products	SPb	SPb	SPb, LR	SPb, LR	SPb, LR	SPb, LR	SPb, LR	SPb, LR
Timber	SPb, LR, KR	SPb, LR	—	KR	SPb, LR	—	SPb	SPb, LR
Furs	—	—	—	—	SPb	—	—	—
Paper and cardboard	—	LR	—	—	—	—	—	—
Raw amber	—	—	—	—	—	KR	—	—
Mineral products	LR	—	—	—	—	KR	—	—
Inorganic compounds	—	LR	—	—	—	LR	—	LR
Fertilisers	—	—	—	—	—	LR	LR	LR
Organic compounds	—	—	—	—	LR	—	—	—
Albuminous substances	—	—	—	SPb	—	SPb	—	—
Plastic and plastic products	—	SPb, LR	—	—	—	—	—	—
Latex, rubber; latex and rubber products	LR	LR	LR	—	LR	—	—	—
Ferrous metals; ferrous metal products	—	SPb	—	—	SPb	KR	SPb	SPb, LR
Ferrous scrap metal	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Railway locomotives, trams, parts	LR	LR	—	—	—	—	—	—
Boats	—	—	SPb	—	SPb	—	—	—
Equipment	SPb	—	—	—	—	—	—	SPb
Instruments and machinery tools; knives, spoons, forks	—	—	—	SPb	—	—	—	—
Tools; knives, spoons, forks	—	SPb	—	—	—	—	—	—

Prepared based on data from: International Trade of the Kaliningrad region, 2022, *Kaliningrad Regional Customs Service*. URL: https://koblt.customs.gov.ru/statistic/vneshnyaya-torgovlya-kaliningradskoj-oblasti (accessed 15.06.2022); International Trade of Russia's Northwestern Regions, 2022, *Northwestern Customs Service*. URL: https://sztu.customs.gov.ru/folder/147129 (accessed 15.06.2022).

Comment. The exporting regions: SPb stands for St. Petersburg; LR, the Leningrad region; KR, the Kaliningrad region.

Table 5

Goods imported by Russia's Baltic region into the Baltic macroregion, 2021

Goods	Exporting countries							
	Germany	Poland	Sweden	Denmark	Finland	Lithuania	Latvia	Estonia
Food and beverages	SPb, LR	SPb	—	—	—	—	—	—
Animal feed	SPb	—	—	LR	—	—	—	—
Tobacco	SPb	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Paper and cardboard	LR	SPb, LR, KR	SPb, LR, KR	—	SPb, LR	KR	—	—
Dyes, paints	LR	LR	—	—	—	—	—	—
Inorganic compounds	SPb	—	—	—	SPb, LR	—	—	—
Soap and detergents	SPb	—	—	—		—	—	—
Pharmaceuticals	SPb	—	—	—	SPb	—	—	—
Tannin and dyewood extracts; dyes	SPb	—	—	—	SPb	—	—	—
Essential oils; perfumery products	SPb	—	—	—	SPb	—	—	—
Plastic and plastic products	SPb, LR, KR	SPb, KR	SPb	—	SPb, LR	KR	—	—
Latex, rubber; latex and rubber products	SPb	—	—	—	LR	—	—	—
Stone products	—	—	—	—	SPb	—	—	—
Ferrous metals; ferrous metal products	SPb, LR, KR	SPb, KR	SPb	—	SPb	KR	—	—
Equipment and mechanical units	SPb, LR, KR	SPb, KR	SPb, LR	—	SPb, LR	KR	SPb, LR	SPb, LR
Electrical machinery and equipment	SPb	—	—	—	SPb	—	—	—
Optical and measuring instruments	KR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Instruments and machinery	SPb	SPb	—	—	SPb	—	—	—
Electrical machines	—	SPb, KR	—	—	—	—	—	—
Land transport	SPb	SPb	SPb	—	SPb, LR	—	—	—

The end of Table 5

Goods	Exporting countries							
	Germany	Poland	Sweden	Denmark	Finland	Lithuania	Latvia	Estonia
Components for vehicle assembly	KR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Boats	KR	—	—	—	—	—	—	SPb
Furniture	—	KR	—	—	SPb	—	—	—

Prepared based on data from: International Trade of the Kaliningrad Region, 2022, *Kaliningrad Regional Customs Service*. URL: https://koblt.customs.gov.ru/statistic/vneshnyaya-torgovlya-kaliningradskoj-oblasti (accessed 15.06.2022); International Trade of Russia's Northwestern Regions, 2022, *Northwestern Customs Service*. URL: https://sztu.customs.gov.ru/folder/147129 (accessed 15.06.2022).

Comment. The importing regions: SPb stands for St. Petersburg; LR, the Leningrad region; KR, the Kaliningrad region.

Germany, Russia's principal trade partner in the Baltic macro-region, exports a wide range of products to the three study regions: from foodstuffs to instruments, equipment and vehicles. Ranking third, Poland also exports to the three Russian regions a rich variety of products, albeit less impressive than Germany does. Finland, the second-largest partner, ships different goods, but mostly to St. Petersburg and the Leningrad region. Table 5 contains detailed information on the exporters of specific groups of goods, mostly those that added up to USD 10 million in 2021.

An analysis of the table points to the essential role of the import of food, beverages, tobacco, animal feed, vehicles, soaps and detergents, pharmaceuticals, perfumes, etc. However, industrial products intended either for the technical equipment of enterprises or as semi-finished products account for most of the imported goods. A typical example is the supply to the Kaliningrad region of components for car assembly from Germany and furniture assembly kits from Poland. Since such ties are established with other macro-regions as well, Russia's Baltic regions are becoming important links in value-added chains, prominent on the geo-economic map of the world.

Conclusion

Russia's Baltic territories — St. Petersburg, the Leningrad and Kaliningrad regions — are amongst the most economically prosperous and rapidly developing in the country. St. Petersburg, the largest city in the Baltic region, is a major

centre for research, education and culture. All the three regions have burgeoning manufacturing, transport and tourism. The Kaliningrad and Leningrad regions also boast a thriving agricultural industry. Due to their similar sectoral structures, the formation of a distributed inter-sectoral cluster bringing together economic entities from the three regions looks very promising.

The main factors in the development of Russia's Baltic regions are the coastal border position and a high percentage of their territories involved in the economy. The economy of the Kaliningrad region is strongly influenced by its exclave economic and geographical situation, which necessitates taking into account the dependence of the region's development on external factors.

The study regions are 'international development corridors' playing a central role in Russia's international trade and using trade relations to enter internationalised value-added chains. Economic relations with the countries of the Baltic macro-region have a considerable, albeit declining, importance for the development of the three regions. These ties are beneficial to both sides, and their curtailment resulting from the actions of the Western countries can hardly aid any of the parties. Yet, as shown above, Russia's Baltic regions are successfully developing despite the dwindling contribution of the Baltic macro-region countries to their international trade. Russia's 'window on Europe' is increasingly becoming one of Russia's windows to the global economy.

Amid the current geopolitical and geoeconomic instability, a brisk economic development of Russia's Baltic region requires the restructuring of the regional economies and international economic ties to adjust to the changes in the external environment. I believe that the most promising option is encouraging economic entities and local manufacturers to cooperate with firms from other Russian regions. It is advisable, particularly for the exclave of Kaliningrad, to forge collaborations within a spatially distributed territorial system uniting the three Baltic regions. Such a system will have the capacity to develop shipbuilding, forestry and fishing clusters targeted at the domestic market and clusters focusing on tourism and recreation, as well as research and education, at both Russian and international markets. The automotive industry, most of whose produce is sold in the domestic market, should cooperate with the whole range of Russian enterprises operating in related fields.

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SMALL TOWNS OF LATVIA: DISPARITIES IN REGIONAL AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

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The article reports on the results of an economic and sociological study conducted by the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences in collaboration with Daugavpils University (Latvia) in 2020—2021. The study aimed to identify the reasons for the disparity in the development of small towns in Latvia. A comprehensive approach was taken to integrate the results of territorial, spatial and socio-economic analyses. By employing the methodology of indexing and ranking large-scale empirical data characterising the development of all small towns in Latvia, the authors attempt to identify the reasons for the disparity in the development rate of small towns in Latvia. The index of territorial development of regions, cities and rural settlements was developed and has been tested by the State Agency for Regional Development of Latvia since 2013. The data collected were then analysed taking into account the geographical location of small towns. The research showed that the main factors influencing the development of small towns are the level of business activity and the role of local authorities in the provision of public funding. The article describes prospects for the polycentric development of small towns and analyses the ways of reducing disparities in their development in terms of the working and living conditions of their residents.

Keywords:
regions, small towns, polycentrism, territorial development index, disparity, Latvia

Introduction

This study is a response to the growing significance for research and practice of the polycentric approach to the spatial development of local territories to the benefit of all residents of a country. The convergence of the socio-economic performance of local territories, a brisk business environment and developed infrastructure are an important prerequisite of a country's balanced territorial and spatial development.

Recent decades have seen changing approaches to Latvia's towns, most of them well in line with the town planning programmes devised by the UN and the

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EU.[1] At first, a geospatial approach was employed, focused on local geographical objects performing various roles at different times. Historically, Latvia developed as an industrial-agrarian society living a less urbanised lifestyle. This encouraged the development of a dense network of self-sufficient towns, whose unique landscapes and architecture make them attractive as places of residence and tourist destinations. Then, the socio-spatial approach came to the fore, drawing attention to the practices and activities of urban social groups: authorities, businesses, civil society organisations and local communities [1, p. 10—11]. Today, these two methodologies have merged within various development programmes for EU cities to produce a geosociospatial approach spanning 12—13 aspects.[2]

The geosociospatial differentiation of Latvia's towns reveals disparities between them from a regional and intraregional perspective. The socio-economic situation in the country, which became more uncertain following the 2019—2021 territorial consolidation, does not ensure either equal growth of territories or sustainable and harmonised national development. In the course of the reform, the number of municipalities was reduced by a factor of 3.5, from 119 to 42; from two to nine municipalities were brought under one local government. The questionable consequences of the reform have been mentioned by experts, members of local government councils and the president of Latvia. The heavy dependence of regional towns on European structural and investment funds, as well as on other international and domestic sources of finance, complicates their development.

Yet, reasonable autonomy of local authorities, community organisations, political groups and individual citizens, the established configuration of socio-cultural interactions between residents and the preponderance of traditional lifestyles ensure the relative stability of urban society. Moreover, all these factors contribute to the adaptation of the local community to external changes, now active, now passive [2—4].

The need for a comprehensive urban policy encouraging the economic development of towns and cities has been emphasised in the literature in the European context [5].

The problem addressed in this study is measuring the degree of interconnectedness in Latvia's regional towns between the industrial and economic aspects of the life of society, on the one hand, and its non-economic dimensions, on the other, as well as examining the effect of settlement patterns on the country's economy.

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[1] Urban Agenda for the EU Pact of Amsterdam, 2016, Amsterdam, EK. 36 p.; Cities and urban development EU, 2022, *European Commission*, URL: https://ec.europa.eu/info/eu-regional-and-urban-development/topics/cities-and-urban-development_en (accessed: 10.06.2022).

[2] Cities and urban development EU, 2022, URL: https://ec.europa.eu/info/eu-regional-and-urban-development/topics/cities-and-urban-development_en (accessed: 10.06.2022).

The article aims to determine the level and describe the features of development disparities amongst Latvia's towns. Its key objectives are to analyse and interpret measures and rankings comprising the territorial development index for Latvian towns, parent regions taken into consideration; to identify factors in the reduction of development disparities amongst regional towns and the restoration of polycentric development trends.

The territorial development index (TDI) for regions, towns and villages, devised by the Latvian State Regional Development Agency, is an adequate measure of inequalities in the socio-economic development of the country's towns. The TDI may provide a better understanding of the structure of development disparities amongst towns, helping to make the socio-economic disparity removal policy for regions, municipalities and towns more targeted. The index will also be of use when conducting quantitative verifications and making static and dynamic evaluations for supporting polycentric trends in the development of Latvia's towns.

Towns and urban policy: a literature review

Latvia's 76 cities and towns (Iecava and Koknese were accorded town status on 1 July 2021)[3] are home to 68 % of the national population; 1438 villages, 32 %. Seventy-three urban settlements have 50,000 residents or fewer and are considered towns; fewer than 3,000 people live in half of them.[4] Latvia has a steadily ageing and declining population: the average age increased from 26 in 1990 to 45 in 2019; the population fell from 2.668 m to 1.92 m over the same period.[5] Urbanisation in Latvia was characterised by migration from rural to urban areas, primarily to Riga, where 36.4 % of the country's population resides (the capital and the Pierīga region account for 53 % of the population). Latvia is divided into five planning regions: Riga and Pierīga, Kurzeme, Vidzeme, Zemgale and Latgale. Most Latvian towns are steadily losing population at a rate of about 12—13 % every 10 years. The towns comprising the Riga agglomeration — Salaspils, Olaine, Ikšķile, Lielvārde, Baloži — are experiencing a population increase at a rate of about 6 % every 10 years. Interregional migration from the periphery to the centre, to major municipal and regional towns is triggered by

[3] Administratīvo teritoriju un teritoriālā iedalījuma vienību klasifikatora noteikumi, 2021, Ministru kabineta noteikumi № 379, *Latvijas republikas tiesību akti*, URL: https://likumi.lv/ta/id/324030-administrativo-teritoriju-un-teritoriala-iedalijuma-vienibu-klasifikatora noteikumi (accessed 10.08. 2022).

[4] Population in cities, towns and counties, 2022, Official statistics of Latvia, URL: https://stat.gov.lv/en/statistics-themes/population/population/247-population-and-population-change?themeCode=IR (accessed 10.06. 2022).

[5] Statistical Yearbook of Latvia 2019, 2020, Riga, Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, 226 p.

wide disparities in Latvia's territorial-spatial development. The centripetal trend is dominant in the country, affecting the population structure, traffic and socio-economic development. It persists despite the numerous attempts of authorities of different levels to restore the polycentric spatial development of the past, which is not touted as a goal for the future.

Until 1991, most towns had thriving local manufacturing enterprises involved in furniture, electronic appliance and garment production, precision engineering, prefabricated building, construction, and agriculture (agricultural processing, biochemical production, agricultural machinery manufacturing). There were also branches of industrial enterprises headquartered in Latvia's larger towns and cities. Their output did not only meet the demand in the internal market, but also was shipped to other Soviet republics and exported abroad. For example, glass from the factory in Līvāni was sent to Soviet republics; cheese and other dairy products from the town of Preiļi, to Leningrad and Moscow. Latvia's regional towns progressively developed in industrial and intellectual terms, enjoying a high employment rate.

Analyses of trends in the current socio-economic development of Latvia's towns link the need to embrace polycentrism with several factors: cooperation and pooling resources; complementing, not overlapping, specialisations of towns; a balanced development at a municipal and regional level.[6] Yet, the effect of fiscal policy on the economy is such that it complicates a balanced development of its real sector. Latvia's monetary policy is attuned to the interests of international capital. The tax system does not seek to remedy disparities in regional development: tax concessions for businesses are industry-specific and pay little attention to the peculiarities of regional development [6]. In the Latgale special economic zone (the town of Rēzekne), international investors into wood- and metalworking and the textile industry get an 80 % reduction on corporate and property tax.[7] European studies often approach towns from the perspective of the concept of sustainable development, which looks for a balance between economic, environmental and social indicators of territorial development. Within this concept, the socio-economic development of cities does not degrade the environment but helps solve the social problems of poverty and inequality [7]. The prospects of towns relying on differentiated development strategies within local regional frameworks have been emphasised in the literature [8]. Most of such studies have practical implications and employ an interdisciplinary approach to summarise the experience of towns working towards a safe, green, socially responsible and economically developed environment, well up to the standards of EU residents.

[6] Latvijas pilsētu sociāli ekonomiskās attīstības tendences, *Pārresoru koordinācijas centrs,* 2008, URL: http://petijumi.mk.gov.lv/node/1717 (accessed 01.02.2022).

[7] Par Reģionālās politikas pamatnostādnēm 2021.-2027. Gadam, 2019, *Latvijas republikas tiesību akti*, URL: https://likumi.lv/ta/id/310954-par-regionalas-politikas-pamatnostadnem-2021-2027-gadam (accessed 01.02.2022).

The extensive historical network of Latvia's towns provides them with ample opportunities to preserve their cultural diversity and environment, whilst developing human resources, enhancing technological capabilities and embracing new practices in an ambiguous and uncertain socio-economic situation in the country and society. It is worth noting that EU membership allows Latvian towns to make independent decisions on the sources of funding for socio-economic and infrastructural projects. These sources may be the Latvian Municipal Cohesion Fund, EU structural and investment funds, etc. Territorial development disparities may require different methods for evaluating the amount of necessary assistance and ranking recipient towns depending on the level of development. When solving these problems, cumulative indicators of regional and local development are taken into account using the mechanisms of projects and business plans, which local authorities submit to the mentioned funds.[8] Latvia's government devised a 2030 strategy, drawing on UN and EU concepts. Its backbone is the thesis about inclusive self-sustained growth and wedding urban development goals to common European socio-economic and sociocultural values. The emphasis is placed on the role of towns in social cohesion policy within the social organisation of society, i.e. reducing regional disparities in standards of living and quality of life.[9]

Most Latvian publications scrutinised the national urban development policy within the socio-spatial approach in the 2010s, when various research funds supported projects aimed at a comprehensive solution to the socio-economic development problems of Latvia's cities. This was taking place against the background of the consequences of the 2008 crises and the adoption of the 2007 Leipzig Charter for sustainable European cities. In recent years, the geosociospatial approach has gained ground in the analysis of the economic differentiation of Latvia's region, including the investigation of towns as a factor in spatio-dynamic process. The literature review suggests that polycentric development requires a focus on knowledge economy (smart development) and high value-added production as a driver of the development of regional economies of towns and villages [12; 13; 14]. It has also been emphasised that a primary long-term goal of Latvia's development is the effective comprehensive involvement of weaker peripheries

[8] Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030, 2010, *Cross-Sectoral Coordination Centre Republic of Latvia*, URL: https://www.pkc.gov.lv/sites/default/files/images-legacy/LV2030/LIAS_2030_parluks_en.pdf (accessed 10.06.2022); Par Reģionālās polie tikas pamatnostādnēm 2021.-2027. Gadam, 2019, *Latvijas republikas tiesību akti*, URL: https://likumi.lv/ta/id/310954-par-regionalas-politikas-pamatnostadnem-2021-2027-gadam (accessed 10.06.2022).

[9] Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030, 2010, *Cross-Sectoral Coordination Centre Republic of Latvia*, URL: https://www.pkc.gov.lv/sites/default/files/images-legacy/LV2030/LIAS_2030_parluks_en.pdf (accessed 10.06.2022).

in the economy amid urbanisation and globalisation [15; 16]. Case studies have linked the capabilities and limitations of regional towns to economic stimuli and demographic problems [17].

Methodology and methods

The study draws on interdisciplinary, integrated, typological territorial-spatial and socio-economic analyses. The key to the comprehensive examination of the problems of Latvia's towns from a socio-economic, territorial and spatial perspective is indexing and ranking detailed empirical measurements performed for all the towns using an index of territorial development of regions, towns and villages. The literature on the subject of the study was analysed [18—20]. Legislative and regulatory documents on the 2019 territorial reform were studied along with statistics.

Results and discussion

The Habitat II international conference of the UN sustainable urban development programme called upon states to monitor their development with the help of integrated urban development indices.[10] In this vein, some countries have created urban indices based on indicators taking into account the national peculiarities of gathering statistics. The zenith of urban development indices came in the 2000s—2010s, when urban development planning received attention amid the global growth of urbanisation. There is, however, no internationally recognised measure of urban development performance. The City Prosperity Index, widely used to assess the potential of cities as regards development and prosperity, applies to large cities only. Since 2013, the Regional Development Agency has been calculating an index for assessing the development performance of Latvia's regional towns and villages. Designed for monitoring, this index focuses on the socio-economic factors of urban development, without addressing the quality of the urban environment or social infrastructure. It is limited to eight sub-indices, as is a common practice worldwide. The Territorial Development Index (TDI) characterises the level of development of Latvian regions, municipalities, districts and towns. The calculations use data from Latvia's Central Statistical Office, State Treasury, State Revenue Service, State Employment Agency, Ministry of Welfare, Ministry of the Interior and State Land Service for regions, towns and municipalities. To make the data comparable, standardised values of eight different indicators are used, each indicator weighted according to importance (Table 1).

[10] Global urban indicators database. Version 2. United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN — Habitat). Nairobi, Kenya, 2001. 41 p. URL: www.unhsp.org/guo (accessed 10.06.2022).

Table 1

TDI indicators and their weight for Latvian towns

TDI indicator	Weight
Economically active individual entrepreneurs and businesses per 1,000 population	0.25
Unemployment rate, %	0.15
Poverty rate, %	0.1
Crimes per 1,000 population	0.05
Net natural increase per 1,000 population	0.1
Long-term net migration per 1,000 population	0.1
Post-working age population per 1,000 working age population	0.05
Income tax per capita, euros	0.2
Total	1.00

The indicators of a territory's development, expressed in different units (people, euros, %) are grouped into the TDI are standardised using the formula

$$t = \frac{\mathrm{x} - \overline{x}}{\mathrm{S}},$$

where t is performance on the key indicators standardised for a specific territory;

x is the principal development indicator standardised for a territory, expressed in relevant measurement units;

x is the average value of the corresponding principal development indicator for a group of territories in the current year;

s is the standard deviation, the indicator of variation calculated for the required year, using the formula

$$s = \sqrt{\frac{\sum (\mathrm{x} - \overline{x})^2 f}{\sum f}},$$

where f is the statistical weight (the population of a territory; the working age population; area, km^2; corresponding principal development indicators used).

The indicators comprising the TDI are calculated as follows: standardised indicator is multiplied by its weight according to importance. The *Appendix* to the article shows the TDI for Latvia's towns. Some avenues of development require more considerable funds than are available to the local authorities. Most towns focus on networking, with many lacking a functional specialisation.

For further analysis, let us divide Latvian towns into three approximately equal groups in descending order of TDI values, as is done in similar Russian studies [21, p. 355; 22, p. 68—70]. Using data from the Regional development indicators module for 2019, towns are ranked from the highest value of TDI to the lowest.

Group A, *more developed towns*, includes towns and neighbouring settlements with a TDI value between 1.435 and 0.042.

This group comprises towns that can benefit from their efficient production enterprises, developed social infrastructure, larger fiscal capacity, plentiful natural resources, professional specialists, and knowledge-intensive and investment resources.

Group B, *less developed towns*, brings together towns and nearby settlements with TDI values ranging between 0.033 and -0.504. Profiting from the real sector of the economy, towns in the group do not have unique specialisation. Any of them are relatively prosperous tourism centres and resorts or have major agricultural businesses and SMEs with different life cycles, enraged in mid-and low-tech manufacturing and service provision (woodworking, metalworking). Usually, such towns have a component of socio-economic development more visible than the others.

Group C, *the least developed towns,* comprises towns and neighbouring settlements with a TDI ranging between –0.512 and –1.702. This group includes, with some reservations, towns performing poorly on all components of socio-economic development. Remote from potential economic centres, they have no latent capabilities in either industry, agriculture, recreation or tourism.

To develop under market conditions, towns need a conducive business environment creating points of growth and ensuring employment rather than contributing to population increase. For example, this is the case in Russia [20, p. 812]. As a cast study of Latvian towns suggests [13], another significant factor in the development of towns and adjacent villages is human capital assets, which are essential for regional specialisation. The significance of a brisk business environment is evidenced by the values of corresponding TDI sub-indices. However, most companies in Latvian towns, financed by local capital (usually, up to 20,000 euros) cannot switch to high-value-added production, which requires considerable investment (over 100,000 euros) and outlets abroad as a prerequisite for employees' high salaries. Therefore, the lack of external investors, internal financial savings, and top specialists leads to the preponderance of mid- and low-tech enterprises in regional towns. Most of such businesses, involved in construction, metalworking, woodworking, maintenance and services, generate low value added and cannot provide high salaries to their employees. Only the towns of the Riga agglomeration, have sufficient resources for an innovative economy (companies with a registered capital upwards of 100,000 euros) and ensure sustainable development and sufficiently comfortable life for their residents. These towns act as a buffer between the 'centre' and the 'periphery'. In some towns of other regions — Ventspils, Valmiera, Līvāni, Cēsis and others —a favourable business environment has translated into a relatively high quality of life. The business environment in these towns has several common features: a past industrial ex-

perience with extant infrastructure, a developed multimodal transport network, professional labour, attractiveness to international investors and the efficient use of EU structural and investment funds [23].

Table 2 shows Latvia's towns grouped according to TDI values.[11]

Table 2

Latvian towns grouped according to TDI values, by region, 2019

Group A		Group B		Group C	
Town	Index value	Town	Index value	Town	Index value
Riga and Pierīga planning regions					
Baloži	1.435	—	—	—	—
Ikšķile	1.295	—	—	—	—
Sigulda	0.994	—	—	—	—
Saulkrasti	0.913	—	—	—	—
Salaspils	0.714	—	—	—	—
Olaine	0.584	—	—	—	—
Baldone	0.539	—	—	—	—
Jūrmala	0.484	—	—	—	—
Ogre	0.437	—	—	—	—
Ķegums	0.301	—	—	—	—
Lielvārde	0.279	—	—	—	—
Vangaži	0.123	—	—	—	—
Ainaži	0.085	—	—	—	—
Salacgrīva	0.085	—	—	—	—
Tukums	0.042	—	—	—	—
Kurzeme planning region					
—	—	Roja	–0.010	Priekule	–0.580
—	—	Brocēni	–0.022	Skrunda	–0.846
—	—	Grobiņa	0.033	—	—
—	—	Sabile	–0.121	—	—
—	—	Stende	–0.121	—	—
—	—	Talsi	–0.121	—	—
—	—	Saldus	–0.122	—	—
—	—	Valdemārpils	–0.123	—	—

[11] The author of the article is grateful to Dr Vadim Krasko of the Daugavpils University for processing and grouping data in Tables 2 and 3.

The end of Table 2

—	—	Pāvilosta	–0.125	—	—
—	—	Piltene	–0.180	—	—
—	—	Kuldīga	–0.193	—	—
—	—	Durbe	–0.211	—	—
—	—	Kandava	–0.278	—	—
—	—	Aizpute	–0.503	—	—
Woodsmen planning region					
Cēsis	0.541	Aizkraukle	—0.113	Ape	–0.512
Valmiera	0.328	Gulbene	—0.248	Alūksne	–0.530
Līgatne	0.205	Mazsalaca	—0.295	Lubāna	–0.623
Limbaži	0.155	Madona	—0.360	Aloja	–0.658
Smiltene	0.144	Rūjiena	—0.438	Auce	–0.681
—	—	Valka	—0.504	Pļaviņas	–0.694
—	—	—	—	Staicele	–0.658
—	—	—	—	Cesvaine	–0.757
—	—	—	—	Strenči	–0.879
—	—	—	—	Seda	–0.879
—	—	—	—	—	—
Zemgale planning region					
Iecava	0.172	Dobele	–0.073	Jaunjelgava	—0.578
—	—	Bauska	–0.207	—	—
—	—	Koknese	–0.207	—	—
—	—	Aknīste	–0.246	—	—
—	—	Viesīte	–0.485	—	—
Latgale planning region					
—	—	—	—	Varakļāni	–0.657
—	—	—	—	Preiļi	–0.663
—	—	—	—	Līvāni	–0.674
—	—	—	—	Subate	–0.846
—	—	—	—	Ilūkste	–0.919
—	—	—	—	Balvi	–0.929
—	—	—	—	Viļaka	–1.224
—	—	—	—	Ludza	–1.271
—	—	—	—	Kārsava	–1.302
—	—	—	—	Rēzekne	–1.335
—	—	—	—	Dagda	–1.439
—	—	—	—	Viļāni	–1.460
—	—	—	—	Krāslava	–1.472
—	—	—	—	Zilupe	–1.702

As Table 2 shows, only in the Riga and Pierīga regions, all towns belong to group A comprising the most developed Latvian territories. The town of Baloži, located 10 km away from Riga, has one of the highest TDI values in the country

(1.435). Its population is 6,642 people (2019), 4,526 of whom are pensioners receiving about 407 euros a month (2019).[12] The unemployment rate in the town is 3.2 %; net salary in private companies is 1,126 euros/month; in public and municipal organisations, 735 euros/month (2020). This happy situation owes much to the town's history of peat production and the manufacturing of peat harvesting equipment. Latvia's largest peat substrate company Pindstrup Latvia, a branch of a Danish business, opened a new factory in Baloži in 2016. The new facility exports wood fibre to over 100 countries for the needs of plant nurseries. The company has created about 500 high-paying jobs.[13]

Group B includes most of the towns skirting the north-western Kurzeme planning region. The town of Ventspils is the lowest performer in the group (– 1.117), which is due to economic reasons: the sanctions imposed on Russia sharply reduced the turnover of the town's seaport. Two-thirds (67 %) of small towns in the north-east of Vidzeme also fall into this group. In the Zemgale planning region, most towns (60 %) and their environs belong to group B; 40 %, to group C.

Group C includes almost all towns of the Latgale planning region, where the unemployment rate is twice-thrice as high as the national average, and income per capita is 51 % of the average salary in Latvia.[14] Yet, Latgale also has towns with relatively high TDI values, compared to other areas in the regions. These are Varakļāni (– 0.657) with a population of 1,764 residents (2019), where a flax mill was repurposed for manufacturing environmentally friendly solid fuel — wood pellets and briquettes — from woodchips. A single investor from Austria put 1.7 m euros into the project in 2016. Employing 50 people, the enterprise exports its products mostly to Denmark and Sweden. It is worth noting that Latvia boasts 3 m ha of forests, over half of them privately owned. The largest owners are international companies and banks.[15]

It can be cautiously assumed that investors put money into regional towns with a track record of industrial excellence, appropriate infrastructure, adequate communications and multi-modal transport networks. In doing so they, repurpose the infrastructure to work in highly profitable industries, taking the net value

[12] Regional development indicators module, 2019, RAIM.gov.lv, URL: https://raim.gov.lv/ru/node/37 (accessed 26.08. 2022).

[13] Artemenko, V., Jermakova-Zaikovska, J, Baloži opens a woody fiber factory, 2016, Latvijas Sabiedriskie Mediji, URL: https://lr4.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/den-za-dnem/v-balozhi-otkrili-zavod-po-proizvodstvu-drevesnogo-volokna.a74318/ (accessed 10.03.2022).

[14] Par Reģionālās politikas pamatnostādnēm 2021.-2027. Gadam, 2019, Latvijas republikas tiesību akti, URL: https://likumi.lv/ta/id/310954-par-regionalas-politikas-pamatnostadnem-2021-2027-gadam (accessed 10.06.2022).

[15] Lursoft: Latvian forests belong to foreigners almost completely, 2021, SPUTNIK Latvia, URL: https://lv.sputniknews.ru/20210925/-lursoft-latviyskie-lesa-pochti-vse-prinadlezhat-inostrantsam-18571178.html (accessed 26.06.2022).

added out of the country. The towns that were never industrial wonders fly below the radar of international investors and opt for construction, maintenance, and services with low profits and no outlets outside the region. One of such towns is Zilupe (–1.702) in the Latgale region, which borders Russia; it has the lowest TDI both in the region and nationwide.

The most developed Latvian towns are situated in the Riga region and Pierīga planning regions (Group A). Less developed regional towns are situated in Kurzeme, Vidzeme and Zemgale (Group B). The least developed towns are found in Latgale (Group C). Overall, most Latvian towns belong to Group B in terms of their social and economic performance (Table 3).

Table 3

Average TDI values for Latvian towns, by region

Region (number of towns)	Average TDI	Group
Riga and Pierīga (15)	0.554	A
Kurzeme (16)	–0.22	B
Vidzeme (21)	–0.355	B
Zemgale (7)	–0.232	B
Latgale (14)	–1.352	C
Latvian total (73)	–0.277	B

The history of Latvia's socio-economic development, moulded by the country's transit function and strong agriculture, produced four models for towns with sufficient development resources: a satellite town (within 50—60 km from a city) with innovative development opportunities; an industrial town with a focus on mid and low-tech; an agro-industrial town; a resort with folk craft traditions.

The analysis showed that Latvia is characterised by an extremely unbalanced socio-economic development. Thus, it is hard to agree with the authors who believe that local territories can survive and develop against the background of the current differentiation. In their opinion, the differentiation of Latvia's inland regions according to the 'successful growth' indicator corresponds to the Gaussian distribution based on the regional Human Development Index [24]. Perhaps, this understanding indicates a departure from multi-factoriality as a methodological principle of analysing socio-economic processes within interdisciplinary studies. There are two poles distinguished according to a territory's economic potential: the 'centre' (Riga and Pierīga) and the 'periphery' (all the other regions and their towns). The former accounts for two-thirds of the country's economic potential

and from half to two-thirds of national economic activity. This skew complicates the development of towns, creating a development hierarchy and affecting local economic profiles.[16] Some larger towns perform better economically but lag behind their counterparts as regards local development rates. Such towns are Valmiera, home to 23,000 people in 2018 with a per capita GRP of 16,700 euros, and Ventspils with 35,000 people, 13,800 euros. Some towns have a pronounced economic profile and specialisation. For Ventspils, it is container shipping; for Krāslava, the garment industry and woodworking; for Preiļi, the food industry.

Latvia's towns have not yet become local centres for innovation, with very few exceptions. These are optical glass fibre production in Līvāni, Latgale; Madara natural cosmetics in Mārupe and a chemical-pharmaceutical factory in Olaine, both in the Riga region. So far, the other towns have not met the local innovative development criterion, which is a locally created knowledge-intensive production technology. This is achieved if the local economy is effective and GRP per capita is upwards and exceeds 16,000 euros. Amongst Latvian towns, Valmiera, Ventspils and Salaspils practically meet this criterion. All other regional towns meet the local investment development criterion: the use of available knowledge-intensive technologies in production. This criterion is linked to the local level of economic efficiency, where GRP per capita is between 7,000 and 16,000 euros. These towns can manufacture specialised goods and provide specialised services, expanding off-season and all-season activities to employ as many economically active residents as possible [25].

Branches of companies from Riga, different EU states and third countries dominate in some of the towns. Individual traders, small-batch producers, human-scale farms, and car and appliance repair shops prevail in the other towns, along with public and municipal organisations. Local governments are important employers in sparsely populated areas, smaller regional towns and rural areas. In 2020, traditional and intermediary services accounted for 73 % of Latvia's economy; agriculture, for 4.6 %; manufacturing, for 22.4 %.[17] Central to the real sector are forestry, food production, the garment industry, the chemical industry, mechanical engineering), woodworking, metalworking and agriculture. Their operations expanded in 2019, yet remained insufficient to beat unemployment. The economy is still dominated by mid- and low-tech production. High- and

[16] Par Reģionālās politikas pamatnostādnēm 2021.-2027. Gadam, 2019, Latvijas Republikas tiesību akti, URL: https://likumi.lv/ta/id/310954-par-regionalas-politikas-pamatnostadnem-2021-2027-gadam (accessed 15.08.2022).

[17] Statistical Yearbook of Latvia 2021.Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, Riga, 2022, p. 138, URL: https://business.gov.lv/sites/default/files/202201/Nr_01_Latvijas_statistikas_gadagramata_2021_Statistical%20Yearbook%20of%20Latvia_%2821_00%29_LV_EN.pdf (accessed 10.09.2022).

mid-tech comprise 6.8 % (biotechnology and pharmaceuticals, ICT equipment) and 33.2 % (mechanical engineering) of the total output, respectively; low-tech products (timber processing, the garment industry, food production, etc.), 60 %.[18] Therefore, in the towns of the 'periphery' dominated by mid- and low-tech production, local governments increasingly seek to attract tourists in order to create jobs and replenish municipal budgets. Despite the available financial assistance tools, tourism is experiencing immense pressure in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and the sanctions imposed on Russia in response to its special operation in Ukraine.

EU structural and investment funds contribute to the survival of these towns by supporting local SME projects and investing in infrastructure. This assistance, however, is not sufficient for stimulating development, i.e. creating new jobs or launching mid- and high-tech businesses within the national and international division of labour. There is a need for targeted public investment in the form of private-public partnership and giving the towns, as well as municipal and regional authorities, greater autonomy and flexibility as regards town planning and looking for new integrated forms of cooperation between neighbouring regional towns.

The level of development of regional towns depends on the business environment, support from EU funds and municipal tax collections (this concerns most of income and property taxes). Other important sources of revenue are the national cohesion funds and transfers from the state budget meant for implementing public functions in education and transport. Paid-for services, fees, property lease and other municipal functions account for a less significant part of budget revenues. Yet, the municipalities' fiscal decentralisation index is only 16 out of 100, compared to the self-rule index of 67 out of 100 [26]. Therefore, municipalities make a substantial contribution to the financial sector of public administration. In Lithuania, local governments' revenues account for one-third of the central government's budget [27]. Exploiting available resources, municipalities maintain and develop local infrastructure, and ensure access to healthcare and education, from pre-school to secondary level, and other services. Other major factors in the development of towns are the improvement of transport accessibility and greater mobility of residents; stimulating economic activity and creating new jobs, including in new fields; measures to increase fertility rates; encouraging the young and active population to stay in town by providing them with education, healthcare, career and housing opportunities. At the same time, Latvia's towns

[18] Centrālās statistikas pārvalde datu bāze. Uzņēmumu uzņēmējdarbības rādītāji apstrādes rūpniecībā pēc tehnoloģiskās intensitātes, 2019, *Centrālās statistikas Portāls Latvijas oficiālā statistika,* URL: https://data1.csb.gov.lv/pxweb/lv/uzn/uzn__uzndarb/SBG040.px (accessed 15.08.2022).

are environmentally sustainable, boasting human-scale urban spaces, as well as moderate housing and general prices. With these clear advantages, they comprise the spatial and intellectual backbone of the country.[19]

Conclusions

The study has revealed significant disparities in the development of Latvia's towns. These inequalities have a distinct regional angle accounted for by the features of the country's spatial centre-periphery evolution. The proposed index method for assessing the development of regional towns is a conclusive proof thereof. Another factor in the disparities is the track record of industrial and agricultural production. The typical cases analysed above confirm this conclusion.

On the whole, most Latvia's towns (44 out of 73) fall into the average performance group (B), having no real sector specialisation and being predestined to limited profits. These towns do not have large international and national businesses or their branches. The further 'cultivation' of Latvia's local territories by international big business for its own benefit is a likely prospect. Moderate business activity in Latvia's peripheral towns causes the quality of the business environment to grow very slowly. As a rule, regional towns have one relatively developed component: SMEs engaged in agriculture, woodworking or manufacturing; agricultural processing by farmers, crafts, tourism, services, etc. These competitive advantages stimulate the socio-economic development of towns and their urban environments within the limits of available resources.

The small share of innovative businesses and the crucial role EU structural and investment funds have in the development of the towns testify to the significant dependence of the latter on external resources. The prospects of Latvia's towns look rather optimistic as they are able to attract such funds, which are essential to the survival of towns, supporting SME projects and infrastructure development. Yet, they are not sufficient for the sustainable development of towns in Latvia. The role of towns in the development and reproduction of public life in Latvia goes far beyond their economic functions: towns contribute to the reproduction of the lifestyle and traditional values of Latvian society and thus require support from the state for education, healthcare and culture.

Latvia's extensive historical network of towns, many of whose spaces have the status of protected natural areas, provides the country with sustainable opportunities to preserve cultural diversity and natural environment, develop human resources, enhance technology and embrace new practices amid the ambiguous and uncertain socio-economic situation in the country and society.

[19] Pašvaldību 2020. gada publiskie pārskati, 2021, Vides aizsardzības un reģionālās attīstības ministrija, URL: https://www.varam.gov.lv/lv/pasvaldibu-2020-gada-publiskie-parskati (accessed 15.04.2022).

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INTERNET DIFFUSION AND INTERREGIONAL DIGITAL DIVIDE IN RUSSIA: TRENDS, FACTORS, AND THE INFLUENCE OF THE PANDEMIC

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The demand for digital technologies has been growing due to a shift in the technological and economic paradigm. The need for online services has increased since the beginning of the COVID pandemic. There are significant disparities between Russian regions in the digital technology accessibility and the development of computer skills. In 2020, the Internet diffused rapidly in most regions, although previously, there had been a slowdown. As markets got saturated with digital services, the digital divide between Russian regions narrowed. Overall, the Internet use patterns are consistent with those of the spatial diffusion of innovations. Amongst the leaders, there are regions home to the largest agglomerations and northern territories of Russia, whereas those having a high proportion of rural population lag behind. Coastal and border regions (St. Petersburg, the Kaliningrad region, Karelia, Primorsky Krai, etc.) have better access to the Internet due to their proximity to the centres of technological innovations as well as the high intensity of external relations. Leading regions have an impact on their neighbours through spatial diffusion. Econometrically, access to the Internet depends on income, the average age and level of education, and its use depends on the business climate and Internet accessibility factors. Regional markets are gradually getting more saturated with digital services and technologies. The difference between regions in terms of access to the Internet is twofold, whereas, in terms of digital technology use, the gap is manifold. In many regions, the share of online commerce, which became the driver of economic development during the lockdown, is minimal. Based on the results of the study, several recommendations have been formulated.

Keywords:
ICR, digital technologies, digital economy, Russian regions, diffusion of innovations, online trade, pandemic, econometric modeling, system of equations

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Introduction

Over the past few decades, there has been an active diffusion of information and communication technologies (ICT),[1] in particular, the Internet, into all spheres of human activity. The related changes in recent years in technologies, production methods, and in the interaction of economic agents are commonly called *digitalization* [1]. This is a technological revolution, though some authors also talk about a new industrial revolution [2]. The introduction of digital technologies and the spread of the Internet economy provided up to a third of the economic growth in Sweden, Germany, Great Britain and other developed countries [3]. During 2010—2017, the digital sector of the Russian economy grew by 17 %, almost twice outpacing GDP growth [4], and the costs of developing the digital economy reached 3.7 % of GDP by 2019 (in developed countries — 2—3 times higher) [5]. An increase in the number of broadband Internet access subscribers by 1 % on average leads to a 0.1 % increase in GRP in the Russian regions, and an increase in the intensity of use leads to an additional increase in output by 0.05 % [6]. Thus, the spread of the Internet is a significant factor of economic growth.

In 2021, the share of Internet users exceeded 59 % of the world's population, which is higher, for example, than the urbanization rate. The highest values are typical of the countries of Northern Europe, including the Baltic region, North America, and South Korea (more than 80 %), and the lowest values are in the Central African countries (in some countries — less than 10 %). In Russia, the value is about 77 % [5], but there are significant spatial differences [7].

The spread (diffusion) of technologies is spatially uneven, and the global risk of growing digital inequality is highly probable [8]. Differences between countries, regions, and households in access to ICT and the ability to use them grew. This limits the opportunities of a part of society to participate in modern economic processes and reduces access to modern distance education and telemedicine [9], and limits the ability of businesses to enter new markets, etc. In Russia, about 81 % of urban residents had access to high-speed Internet, and in rural areas only 65.8 %.[2] These differences aggravated after the introduction of quarantine measures during the pandemic [10].

[1] In the article, *digital technologies* are understood as a set of software and hardware tools associated with electronic computing and data conversion, which are used to store and transmit large amounts of data, provide high-speed calculations. The related concept of «information and communication technologies» (ICT) is used in a broader context — it is a set of software and hardware tools, processes and methods combined into one chain that provides the collection, storage, processing, analysis and dissemination of information. ICT can be based not only on digital, but also on analogue means of information processing. In general, both concepts are used in the article when describing the process of distribution and use of the *Internet* — a worldwide computer network designed to store, process and transmit information based on digital technologies [1].

[2] *Selective* federal statistical observation on the use of information technologies and information and telecommunication networks by the population, 2021, *Rosstat,* URL: https://gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/business/it/ikt20/index.html (accessed 15.07.2021).

The introduction of digital technologies made it possible to carry out many daily processes during the pandemic: distance learning, electronic public services, the delivery of goods, etc. Digital technologies have also become one of the factors for business adaptation due to the expansion of online commerce [11]. In the world and in Russia, the need for online services and 'unmanned' technologies has increased [12]. At the same time, the rate of new technologies diffusion in the world had been growing even before the COVID crisis [13; 14]. Earlier it took decades for television to spread, whereas in 2020, new Internet services, video conferencing programmes (Zoom and others) were mastered by most users in months. Various forms of remote work have become ubiquitous. So, before the pandemic, only 2 % of respondents worked remotely. In May 2020, 16 % of respondents partially or completely switched to this work format,[3] in Moscow and St. Petersburg — 29 %, and in rural areas — less than 10 % of respondents.

The introduction of digital technologies is considered by the governments of many countries both as a tool for anti-crisis measures and as a factor of long-term development. The Government of the Russian Federation included measures aimed at transferring public services to an online format in the action plan for economic recovery in 2020—2021, and one of the national development goals[4] is to increase the share of households with broadband access to the Internet up to 97 % (in 2020 — about 77 %). However, there are significant differences between regions, requiring a regional decomposition of the national goal. This requires a deeper analysis of the underlying factors of Internet diffusion.

In 2022, amid breaking global production chains, worsening trade relations and other restrictions, the role of digital technologies is increasing in Russia. Online stores (for example, Ozon, Wildberries, Yandex.Market, etc.) have become more popular, providing the import of goods (including parallel imports) and their delivery throughout the country. There is a record growth in online commerce.[5]

The aim of this study is to describe general spatial trends and identify significant factors that determine the differences in the distribution and use of the Internet in the Russian regions over the past decade. The novelty of the work lies in conducting an econometric analysis based on regional data over a long period of time, taking into account the mutual influence of various groups of technologies at different levels of the digital divide. Particular attention is paid to changes that occurred during the pandemic.

[3] Russian Public Opinion Research Centre: the number of Russians working remotely during the pandemic increased eight *times*.

[4] Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of July 21, 2020 № 474 "On the National Development Goals of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2030", 2020, President of Russia, URL: http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/45726 (accessed 14.11.2021).

[5] Online sales in Russia grew by almost 1.5 times over the year — up to 2.3 trillion rubles, 2022, *Vedomosti,* URL: https://www.vedomosti.ru/business/articles/2022/08/10/935478-onlain-prodazhi-rossii-virosli (accessed 14.08.2022).

The article presents a brief overview of the main patterns of technology diffusion identified in the literature to substantiate the hypotheses for empirical analysis. Next, three forms of the digital divide in the Russian regions are considered, their interconnections are assessed, and individual factors are identified. Finally, conclusions and some recommendations are given.

Literature review

The spread of new technologies, including digital ones, between countries and regions, generally follows the classical laws of innovation diffusion [15—17]. The world has accumulated a lot of experience in such studies (see a detailed review in [18]).

Society can be divided into several groups, depending on the speed of accepting a new technology (according to Rogers [15]): innovators, early followers, early majority, and conservatives. Initially, the spread of new technology reproduces existing patterns of socioeconomic inequality and may reinforce them. If we consider the country as a single community, then similar patterns can be seen between regions [17; 18]. Innovative regions in Russia usually include global cities, Moscow and St. Petersburg, early adopters are the Moscow region and the largest agglomerations. Lagging behind are underdeveloped regions of the North Caucasus, South Siberia, and rural areas. At the same time, the diffusion rate of a new technology depends on the innovation-geographical position of a region, that is, proximity to the source of innovation [10]. In innovative regions, the proportion of potential users is higher, diffusion begins earlier, and spreads faster. Proximity to the innovation core determines the special position of coastal and some border regions [18; 19], where new technologies may arrive earlier. The density of contacts and communications with the core is higher in them, as for example, between the Russian North-Western regions and the countries of Northern Europe.

When describing the spatial patterns of diffusion, three main models are distinguished [18; 20]: areal (or neighbourhood), cascade (or hierarchical) and network (chain). In the first case, the diffusion firstly goes from the core to the nearest settlements, in the second it is going according to the hierarchy of cities, and in the third – according to the network principle. It is also possible to single out a directive form of distribution, when the state determines the directions and ways of introducing technology, for example, when distributing electronic public services.

The heterogeneity of the socio-economic space and the uneven distribution of ICT have caused the problem *of digital inequality*, or *digital divide*[6] — *differences in access to ICT infrastructure, skills and goals of using digital technologies. There are three main levels:*

[6] In our study, we use both concepts as synonymous. Although the "gap" is often understood as high and growing inequality.

1. Internet access: availability of physical infrastructure and accessibility in terms of connection costs and subscription fees [21; 22];

2. The ability of residents to use digital technologies: digital literacy, competencies, the ability to order goods, services, etc. [23];

3. The ability of residents and entrepreneurs to use the Internet for commercial purposes: placing online orders, Internet banking, electronic commerce (e-commerce), etc. [24; 25].

Most of the studies are devoted to one of these levels [26]. The high availability of technology may not affect the level of its use [23; 26]. Accordingly, the availability of the Internet in some settlements may not contribute to economic growth or better quality of life, although the state is striving for this by introducing various programmes to support digitalization.

A person's actions regarding a new technology depend both on personal characteristics (age, gender, experience, propensity to take risks, etc.) and on environmental factors, for instance, the culture of the local community [22; 27; 28]. Therefore, a large set of sociological [29] and statistical methods can be used to study these processes.

In previous econometric studies (Table 1), most of the factors are various characteristics of the spread of digital technologies, for example, the availability of different plug channels and the cost of connection. One of the basic factors of digital inequality is the differences in the level of socio-economic development between regions, measured by GRP per capita. The problem is that digital technologies are also capable of influencing GRP, as it was mentioned above. Therefore, when building econometric models, various methods are used to avoid such endogeneity between variables: the generalized method of moments (the Arellano-Bond approach) or the two-step least squares method (2SLS).

Table 1

Overview of variables and methods for researching the digital divide

The authors	Dependent variable estimating the digital divide	Independent variables, factors (direction of influence)	Calculation method
Grosso, 2007 [30]	Number of broadband subscribers	Availability of different connection channels (+), GDP per capita (+)	Generalized Least Squares for Panel Data (Panel EGLS)
Lin, Wu, 2013 [31]	Number of broadband subscribers per capita	Availability of different connection channels (+), connection cost (–)	Generalized Method of Moments (GMM)
Haucap et. al., 2016 [32]	Share of households with broadband access, %	Connection cost (–), variety of tariffs (+), household income (+), high level of education (+)	Two-Step Least Squares (2 SLS)

The end of Table 1

The authors	Dependent variable estimating the digital divide	Independent variables, factors (direction of influence)	Calculation method
Lucendo-Monedero et al., 2019 [33]	Household and Individual Digital Development Index	Influence of neighbouring regions (+)	Moran's index I
Szeles, 2018 [34]	Share of internet and e-commerce users, %	High level of education (+), spending on research and development (+), economic growth (+/–)	Multilevel Modeling (MLM)
Vicente, Lopez, 2011 [35]	1. Share of households with access to the Internet, %. 2. Share of households with broadband connection, %. 3. Share of people who regularly use the Internet, %. 4. Share of people who ordered goods or services online, %	GDP per capita (+), high level of education (+), age (–/+), employment in services (+)	Factor analysis for dependent variables
Pick, Sarkar, Johnson, 2015 [36]	1. Share of households with a desktop computer or laptop, %. 2. Share of the total number of households with broadband Internet access, %. 3. Share of people aged 18 years and older living in households with only cordless phones, %. 4. Number of subscribers of mobile wireless high-speed devices per capita	Influence of neighbouring regions (+), high level of education (+/–), Putnam social capital index (+)	Methods: cluster analysis (k-means method), Moran's index I, OLS
Pick, Sarkar, Parrish, 2021 [37]		Business climate (+), high level of education (+/–), human development index (+),	Double step OLS (2 SLS)

Source: Compiled by the authors on the basis of the studies cited.

Household income, the size of a city, and population density influence Internet availability, thus determining the potential market for Internet providers [35]. The ability to use the Internet depends on income, the level of education and the age of potential users [36]. But the ability to make a profit using the Internet depends on business climate, including competition between companies in the online sector [37]. Some works [33; 36] noted the influence of neighbouring regions.

Hypotheses, data and research methodology

Patterns identified abroad may not always be directly applicable to the Russian regions. There are several constraining factors for the development of ICT in Russia, including relatively low household income, underdeveloped infrastructure in rural areas, and the weak demand for new technologies by businesses in non-competitive markets [18; 38; 39]. When analyzing domestic data, econometric methods are practically not used. Usually, one year and one technology were considered.

Based on our review of the literature and recent trends, we tested several hypotheses:

1. Differences between the Russian regions in the level of Internet penetration generally correspond to the spatial features and innovation diffusion factors identified in the literature (Table 2). The digital divide is affected by differences in income, education level, business development, as well as geographical characteristics of the region: proximity to a large city (hierarchical diffusion) and the source of innovation (neighborhood diffusion). The accessibility of the Internet affects its use and the development of online commerce, which has not been analyzed before.

Table 2

Indicators and drivers of the digital divide

Variable	Description	Possible direction of influence
Dependent variables		
intern1	Share of households with access to the Internet from a home computer, %	
intern2	Share of households with broadband Internet access, %	
intern3	Share of the population that are active Internet users, %	
intern4	Share of the population who used the Internet to order goods and/or services, %	
intern5	Share of online sales in total retail turnover, %	
Financial accessibility of the Internet (income of residents and cost of services)		
price	The ratio of the subscription fee for Internet access to the average income of the population, %	–
income	The ratio of nominal cash income, taking into account interregional prices, to the subsistence minimum, %	+
market_inc	The amount of cash income of all residents minus the subsistence level, billion rubles	+
Characteristics of human capital		
heurb	Share of employed citizens with higher education in the total population of a region, %	+

The end of Table 2

Variable	Description	Possible direction of influence
old	Percentage of permanent population older than working age (> 59 for men; > 54 for women), %	–
Institutional conditions (business climate and business development)		
SME	Number of small enterprises, including micro, per workforce, units	+
inform	Share of employed in the informal sector, %	–
Economic and geographical characteristics of diffusion of innovations		
centre	Population of a central city of a region, thousand people	+
Internet	Average level of Internet penetration among households in neighbouring regions	+

Source: Compiled by the authors on the basis of the literature review.

2. In 2020, the spread of digital technologies in the Russian regions was accelerated by the growing demand for remote services during the COVID pandemic [14]. This thesis is widely analyzed in the literature, however, the maximum spread rates of these technologies could have been achieved earlier, since more than half of households use the Internet. According to the theory of diffusion of innovations, in this case, the rate of diffusion should decrease.

3. The interregional digital divide in Russia has grown in 2020 due to the widening gap between rich and poor regions. However, according to the theory of spatial diffusion, inequality could decrease at the final stages of diffusion.

To confirm the hypotheses, the spatial differentiation and dynamics of indicators for the last available period of 2014—2020 were considered in detail based on data provided by Rosstat[7] (Table 2). For the first time in Russia, three levels of interregional digital inequality are analyzed in detail. Several indicators were used for purposes. The first level (*access to the Internet infrastructure*) is measured through the share of households having a computer (*intern1)* [36] and

[7] Selective federal statistical observation on the use of information technology by the population, 2020, *Rosstat,* URL: https://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/business/it/ikt20/index.html (accessed 15.07.2021). Since the results of sample surveys of the population were used, the interannual variation of indicators is high in certain regions, especially less developed ones. There are also certain doubts about the correctness of the statistical sample for the latter in conditions of weak civilian control. Distortions may be caused by a sample bias towards more educated urban residents, while the majority of residents may not be able or willing to participate in surveys. For example, the proportion of households with high-speed Internet is high in Tyva (Fig. 1). But there is no other source of data for a long period of time for all regions in Russia.

broadband Internet access *(intern2*) [31]. The second level (the *ability to use the Internet*) is measured as the intensity of using the Internet (at least once a week) (*intern3)* [35], as well as ordering goods and/or services online *(intern4*)[8] [34]. For the third level (the *ability to use the Internet for commercial purposes*), we chose the share of the online sector in trade"[9] *(intern5*), which was not previously used for these purposes. The latter indicator is not directly related to the population, but indirectly reflects the ability of residents and entrepreneurs (owners of online stores) to use the Internet for profit. No other indicators relevant to our purposes were found in the statistics available. In addition, the relevance of studying the processes of the spread of online commerce has increased dramatically in recent years.

To test the first hypothesis, econometric calculations were carried out to identify the determinants of the digital divide (Table 2). We proposed and applied several indicators to assess each of the main factors identified in the literature: the financial affordability of the Internet [31; 32], user characteristics [34—36], institutional conditions [37], and economic and geographical features of regions [18; 19; 33; 36]. One model used weakly correlated measures to avoid multicollinearity. Only significant variables were selected for the final model. It was the first time a system of simultaneous equations estimated by a two-step least squares method has been used on Russian data. This enabled us to avoid the problem of the correlation of endogenous variables and reduce the bias of the estimates.

It is also the first time estimates of changes in the interregional digital divide under the influence of the pandemic and in previous years have been made. For the purposes of verification, several indicators were used to characterize the degree of dispersion of the data array: the coefficient of variation, the ratio of the maximum value to the minimum, and the Theil index. The dependence of the growth rate of the indicator on its base value in the previous year was assessed to test the hypothesis about the divergence of values between regions.

Research results

The geography of the digital divide in Russia

The first type of digital inequality was assessed through access to ICT infrastructure. The basis for the sustainable use of the Internet is broadband access technologies: fibre optic cables, 4G, etc. In 2020, 77 % of households in Russia had access to fast Internet (Fig. 1).

[8] In some cases, the indicator can also be used to measure the third level of inequality, since the orders of the population and the placement of goods by business are highly correlated.

[9] Share of online sales in total retail turnover, 2022, *EMISS,* URL: https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/50236 (accessed 15.07.2022).

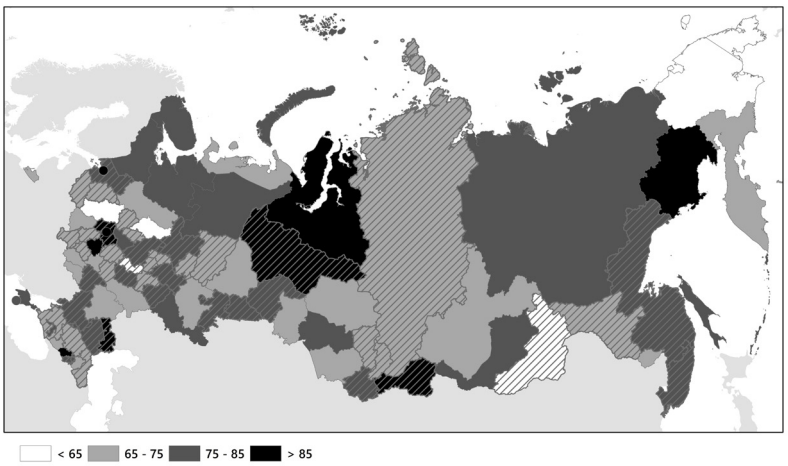

Fig. 1. Share of households with broadband Internet access in 2020, %

Hatching indicates regions where the value of the indicator increased in 2020, and the growth rate in 2020 was higher than in 2019.

The share of households with broadband Internet access is higher in the largest agglomerations with increased demand for relevant technologies and high competition among providers that reduces the price of the Internet: Moscow, St. Petersburg (87 %), Tyumen, Kazan, Samara, Voronezh, in their neighbouring regions (Tula, Moscow, Leningrad regions), as well as in Russia's north (YaNAO, KhMAO, Magadan, Murmansk regions, Karelia), where communication services are in demand because of spatial isolation, as well as the need to interact with the 'mainland'. In addition, northern regions have high household incomes and are characterized by a high degree of urbanization. The share of households with broadband Internet access is also higher in coastal regions: the Primorsky krai, Khabarovsk, Crimea, Rostov, Sakhalin and Leningrad Regions due to the high intensity of interregional and international interactions. The situation is worst in the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug (46.3 %), the Tver region (59.2 %), the Trans-Baikal region (61.7 %), Mordovia and the Kostroma region. Chukotka and Transbaikalia have a large number of remote settlements, and the rest of the regions have rural settlements. They have a poorly developed backbone digital infrastructure and the proportion of older residents having a low level of education and income is high. Consequently, demand for the Internet is lower. In general, the geographical picture corresponds to the regularities identified in the literature.

The second indicator, the share of households that have access to the Internet from a personal computer (PC) (65.9 % for Russia), is less related to the development of mobile communications and requires households to spend additional money on purchasing a PC. In general, the geographical picture is quite close. In rural and mountainous regions, the cost of services is high due to the difficulties of laying lines, and the unavailability of PCs due to low income. In Ingushetia, Chechnya, and Karachay-Cherkessia, the value of this indicator is below 45 %.

The second type (level) of inequality is the use of digital technologies. During the pandemic, the proportion of Russians with a basic level of digital literacy increased by educating the most lagging behind:[10] from 66 % in 2020 to 70 % in 2021. But not only the ability to use the Internet is important, but also the intensity of its use. The share of active users who accessed the Internet (at home, at work or in any other place) at least once a week is 84.1 %. It is higher in the most financially secure and urbanized regions with many young professionals: Khanty-Mansiysk and the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Moscow region. Among the unexpected leaders are the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug, Chechnya, Dagestan, and Kabardino-Balkaria, where the proportion of young residents who are active Internet users is high. They can use the Internet once or twice a week from a working computer, from a mobile device or public access points, etc. In underdeveloped regions, where the share of people employed in the public sector is higher (public administration, education, healthcare), the share of those actively using the Internet may be higher, since these organisations are provided with Internet access through various state programmes.[11]

The share of the population who used the Internet to order goods or services was 40.3 % in 2020, and it is only half the value of the previous indicator (Fig. 2).

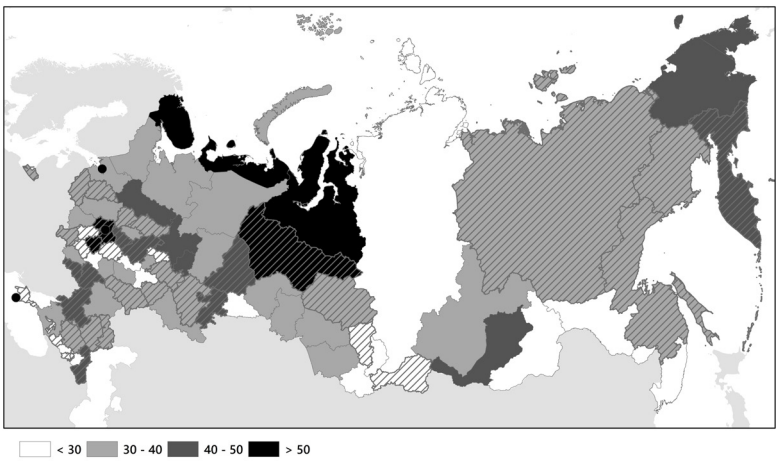

Fig. 2. Share of the population using the Internet to order goods and services in 2020, %

Hatching indicates regions where the value of the indicator increased in 2020, and the growth rate in 2020 was higher than in 2019.

[10] Forced digitalization: a study of digital literacy of Russians in 2021, 2021, *NAFI,* URL: https://nafi.ru/analytics/vynuzhdennaya-tsifrovizatsiya-issledovanie-tsifrovoy-gramotnosti-rossiyan-v-2021-godu/ (accessed 04.07.2021).

[11] For example, within the framework of the national project "Education" all schools in the country should be connected to the Internet.

The leaders are the same rich northern regions and the largest agglomerations in which residents are willing to pay extra for such services. In Moscow and the Moscow region, the value of this indicator is above 60 %, which can be explained by the high level of income, and the wide distribution of such services due to the competition of businesses. In Kabardino-Balkaria, the value is below 22 % due to poor infrastructure development, a high proportion of rural residents in remote mountain settlements, and the spread of shadow businesses that are not interested in using digital technologies, including Internet banking. Online delivery is less developed in most regions of the North Caucasus, in many regions with a large proportion of the elderly population (Ryazan, Oryol, Lipetsk, and Ulyanovsk regions), inland territories having low household income, and in remote settlements located far from large markets (Tyva, Khakassia, and the Krasnoyarsk krai). An unexpectedly low rate is observed in the Primorsky krai, where the price of the Internet is relatively high (Fig. 3).

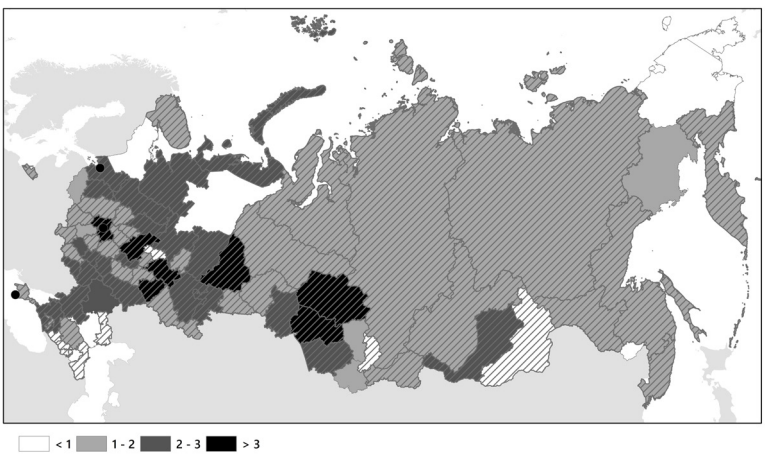

Fig. 3. Share of sales via the Internet in trade, %

Hatching indicates regions where the value of the indicator increased in 2020, and the growth rate in 2020 was higher than in 2019.

The third level of the digital divide is related to the ability of the population and entrepreneurs to get profit from the use of the Internet. In 2020, compared to 2019, there was a significant increase in the share of online sales in Russia — from 2 to 3.9 %. In Moscow, the share of online trade was about 9.3 %, but it is about nil in Chechnya, Chukotka, many regions of the North Caucasus Federal District, and in Buryatia.

The value is higher in large agglomerations (Novosibirsk, St. Petersburg, Tomsk, Nizhny Novgorod, Kazan, Samara) with good household access to the Internet, a high proportion of students, higher demand for internet services, and

developed Internet business. The younger generation is generally more active in using online services. The map (Fig. 3) also shows the influence of businesses in regions with a high level of digitalization on neighbouring ones: the Siberian cluster with the centre in Novosibirsk, the Ural cluster with the centre in Yekaterinburg, Moscow and the Moscow region. Many entrepreneurs start expanding their online stores to neighbouring regions due to the advantages of logistics.

Factors of the digital divide in the Russian regions

To confirm the first hypothesis and the patterns described above, we developed an econometric model that considers three levels of digital inequality (Table 3). At the first level, the availability of the Internet for the population is affected by the cost of connection to the Internet and household income. A 1 % increase in income leads to an increase in the proportion of households having access to the Internet from a home computer by 0.167 %, while an increase in prices reduces it by 0.119 %. It is important to have a large consumer market, where new technologies appear earlier. If in a region the overall income of the whole population is higher by 1 %, then the availability of the Internet is higher by 0.023 %. In other words, the first level of inequality is predominantly determined by economic characteristics.

Table 3

Results of the assessment of factors influencing the level of digital technologies penetration in Russian regions in 2014—2020, %

Variable	Odds estimates
2SLS method	
Equation (1). The third level of the digital divide	
The dependent variable (*intern 5*) is the share of Internet sales in retail trade turnover. The variable is logarithmic	
const	–145.361***
log(*intern3*)	1.739 ***
log(*intern2*)	1.556*
log(*internn*)	0.141**
R^2	0.135
Equation (2). The second level of the digital divide	
The dependent variable (intern 3) is the proportion of the population who used the Internet to order goods and/or services. The variable is logarithmic	
const	3.267***
log(*heurb*)	0.204**
log(*old*)	–0.334***
log(*inform*)	–0.169**
log(*SME*)	0.238***
R^2	0.172

The end of Table 3

Variable	Odds estimates
2SLS method	
Equation (3). The first level of the digital divide	
The dependent variable (intern 1) is the proportion of households that have access to the Internet from a personal computer. The variable is logarithmic	
const	4.019***
$\log(income)_{(t-1)}$	0.167***
$\log(market\_inc)_{(t-1)}$	0.023***
$\log(intprice)$	–0.119***
R^2	0.38

The second level of inequality — the use of the Internet to order goods and services by the population — is associated with the level of education and the average age. If the share of citizens with higher education is 1 % higher, then the share of those ordering online is 0.2 % higher. Less educated and older residents are less likely to use such services due to their inability to do it and their distrust of technology. Institutional conditions are also important [40]. So, if the density of small businesses in the region is 1 % higher, then the share of users increases by 0.24 %. Entrepreneurs compete and invest more actively in the introduction of new technologies and the development of online markets. If informal employment, associated with an unfavourable business environment, is widespread in a region, then the share of users of Internet services is lower. Entrepreneurs tend to hide from supervisory authorities, and are not interested in the digitalization of their services.

The third level of inequality — the ability to profit from using the Internet — is associated with all the previous ones. The spread of online commerce depends on the proportion of the population that has access to the Internet from a personal computer, as it implies the possibility of delivering goods to their homes. The ability to order goods and services directly affects the volume of online trade. In addition, the level of Internet penetration in neighbouring regions is important, which is associated with neighborhood diffusion and the spread of retail chains from large shopping and transport centres that provide online delivery of goods.

Dynamics of the spread of digital technologies and the interregional digital divide during the pandemic

To confirm the second hypothesis about the acceleration of diffusion in 2020, Table 4 summarizes data on the dynamics of indicators in Russia in 2014—2020. According to the theory of diffusion of innovations, the rate of diffusion decreases after reaching 50 % coverage of potential users. In 2018—2019, the decline in growth rates is clearly visible in most indicators. In 2020, growth rates were lower than the average during previous years, except for the expansion of online commerce and broadband Internet. That is, our hypothesis about the acceleration of diffusion is not directly confirmed. But if we consider the stage of expansion, then everything is not so clear, since for most indicators and in most regions (Fig. 1, 2), growth rates in 2020 were higher than in 2019.

Table 4

Dynamics of the spread of digital technologies in Russia, %

Index	Annual growth of the indicator, year on year							Ratio of growth rates		Indicator value	Number of regions with growth rate in 2020 > 2019
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2020/geometric mean for 2014—2019	2020/2019	2020	
The first level of the digital divide											
Share of households with access to the Internet from a home computer	103	102	103	100	98	95	101	99.5	106.3	65.9	56
Percentage of households with broadband Internet access	113	104	106	103	101	101	105	100.4	104.0	85	51
The second level of the digital divide											
Percentage of the population that are active Internet users	106	105	105	104	107	103	103	98.1	100.0	84.1	47
Percentage of the population who used the Internet to order goods and/or services	116	110	118	126	119	103	113	98.2	109.7	40.3	51
The third level of the digital divide											
Share of Internet sales in turnover of retail trade	0	124	138	108	131	118	195	158.1	165.3	3.9	74

A high increase in the provision of broadband Internet access is associated with the transition to distant work, the spread of distance education, and the need for various online services during the pandemic [41]. Higher growth is observed near large agglomerations: the Ryazan, Yaroslavl, Ivanovo, Leningrad, and Samara regions. This may be due to the departure of workforce, including temporary workers, from densely populated large cities. So, for example, in 2020, during the period of self-isolation, 18 % of residents of Moscow left the city (mainly for the Moscow region).[12] The decline in household income in 2020 may have led to the refusal of some households from broadband access services, especially in old-developed and rural regions (in the Smolensk, Saratov, and Tver regions), where the proportion of older and less well-off residents is higher. In terms of the use of a PC to access the Internet in Russia, the maximum values were reached in 2017 (70.3 %), then they slightly decreased due to the competition of other forms of access to the Internet: the use of tablets, smartphones, etc.

In 2020, the share of residents who used the Internet to order goods/services and the share of online trade grew at the highest rates, and the latter almost doubled (from 2 to 3.9 %). In less developed Kalmykia, North Ossetia, Adygea, and Dagestan the share of residents who used the Internet to order goods and services grew the fastest, whereas in the regions that were significantly affected by the crisis [10] — Chukotka, Kabardino-Balkaria, Tambov, Amur regions, and Jewish Autonomous region — it significantly decreased as a result of a drop in income.

Active use of online services accelerated the digitalization of business[13] [40; 42]. Regions with a high proportion of young people — Sakha, Kalmykia, Kamchatka, and the Krasnodar region demonstrated faster online business development rates. The lowest growth rates were observed in the "aged" Pskov region.

The third hypothesis concerning the growth of inequality can be considered refuted, at least at the regional level. In almost all indicators, the digital divide between regions decreased in 2020 (Table 5). Internet penetration levels converged, i.e. the lagging regions grew faster than the leaders, which can be seen from the negative value of the correlation coefficient between the growth of the indicator in 2020 and its value in 2019. We also note that, on average, the differences between regions in access to technologies are lower than in their use. The gap between regions in terms of the share of households having access to the Internet is more than twofold, and in terms of the proportion of the population using the Internet to order goods and services, it is fourfold. The gap in online trade is even larger.

[12] Since the beginning of self-isolation, 18 % of Moscow residents have moved to the Moscow region, 2020, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, URL: https://rg.ru/2020/05/13/reg-cfo/s-nachala-samoizoliacii-18-zhitelej-moskvy-pereehali-v-podmoskove.html (accessed 14.11.2021).

[13] In 2020, many enterprises were forced to switch to digital technologies during the pandemic [43] to survive. There was digitalization of everyday processes, mainly documentation flow (39 %), and communications (24 %). More complex management technologies, for instance Agile, Lean (15 %), were used less frequently. A quarter of companies were not engaged in digitalization.

Table 5

Indicators of the level of the interregional digital inequality and convergence of regions, %

Index	The coefficient of variation		The ratio of the maximum value to the minimum		Theil index		Correlation coefficient between the growth of the indicator in 2020 and its value in 2019
	Average, 2014—2019	Value, 2020	Average, 2014—2019	Value, 2020	Average 2014—2019	Meaning 2020	
The first level of the digital divide							
Percentage of households accessing the Internet from a personal computer	0.15	0.15	3.9	2.1	0.012	0.011	–0.4
Percentage of households with broadband Internet access	0.14	0.1	2.7	2	0.012	0.005	–0.5
The second level of the digital divide							
Percentage of the population that are active Internet users	0.09	0.06	1.7	1.3	0.004	0.002	–0.54
Percentage of the population who used the Internet to order goods and/or services	0.39	0.28	7.96	4.6	0.076	0.037	–0.55
The third level of the digital divide							
Share of online sales in retail turnover	1.45	0.78	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.246	–0.27

Conclusion and recommendations

In accordance with the first hypothesis, it was possible to confirm the regularities identified earlier in the literature. The spatial structure of the spread of digital technologies between the Russian regions depends on the income, average age and level of education, whereas their use depends on the current business climate. Geographic factors are also important, particularly, proximity to sources of innovation (neighborhood diffusion) and the size of the central city (hierarchical diffusion). The work revealed that in some northwestern regions of Russia (the Kaliningrad region, Karelia, and St. Petersburg) the level of penetration of digital technologies is higher than the regional average due to the proximity of the European centres of innovation.[14]

As a result of the pandemic, the spread of digital technologies accelerated in 2020, but only in comparison with what was potentially expected. It only partially confirms the second hypothesis. Growth rates should have been declining according to the downward trend of the late stages of diffusion [15; 18].

The digital divide between Russian regions narrowed in 2020 due to the accelerated spread of new technologies in lagging regions (convergence), which refutes the third hypothesis.

Based on the study, it is possible to formulate some recommendations for regional authorities. To reduce the digital divide, it will be necessary to support the creation of ICT infrastructure in the least depopulated territories of the lagging regions (the Tver, Zabaikalsky, Kostroma regions, and some others), as well as in the North Caucasus regions. The development of programmes aimed at providing laptops and PCs to the most socially vulnerable households, as well as subsidizing Internet traffic, will be particularly beneficial. The constant work of qualification and employment centres is important for increasing the digital literacy of the population, including that of the elderly population. It is advisable to increase the level of trust in digital technologies. As part of the Digital Economy National Project, a further increase in recruitment for the digital sector is a possible solution.

To support the dissemination of the latest technologies in the leading regions and the largest agglomerations, it is necessary to subsidize the introduction of priority multi-purpose digital technologies (Internet of Things, telemedicine, online education, etc.) in the public sector with a further distribution throughout the country. It is required to improve the availability of digital technologies with the help of subsidized business digitalization programmes using standard technological solutions [44]. This will partially help to overcome the problems of the low penetration of the Internet economy in Russia.

[14] A classic example is the emergence of the Internet at Petrozavodsk State University (Karelia) earlier than in many Moscow universities, thanks to the cooperation with Finnish telecommunications companies (for example, Nokia) and universities. Finland is one of the leaders in the speed of digitalization of the economy in the world.

In general, the growth of digitalization and employment in the ICT sector can be considered as one of the ways to adapt to the consequences of global changes [7; 18; 44].

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CROSS-BORDER TOURIST MOBILITY AS SEEN BY RESIDENTS OF THE KARELIAN BORDERLANDS: COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

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This article offers a new approach to evaluating the significance of cross-border tourism for residents of the border region of Karelia amid COVID-19 restrictions. The work draws on data of a municipal-level survey of the region's population (575 people), conducted by the author in collaboration with Dr Ekaterina Shlapeko in 2021. Analysis of the survey results has confirmed the customariness of cross-border tourist mobility for the Karelians and the essential role it plays in their lives. These are manifested in regular trips to the neighbouring state, frequent contacts with Finnish travellers, marked preferences and a network of contacts with Finnish residents and organisations. The COVID-19 restrictions affected the routines of the residents of the Karelian borderlands more severely than those of people living in the inner municipalities or the regional capital. The findings of the study provide a comprehensive picture of the significance of cross-border tourist mobility (border tourism) and point to spatial differences in the perception of the study phenomenon by the residents of border, interior and urban municipalities. When applied in practice, the proposed approach gives an opportunity to widen the range of possible administrative decisions and can serve as a tool of regional economic policy on tourism.

Keywords:
cross-border tourist mobility, cross-border tourism, Karelian borderlands, municipality, Republic of Karelia, local population, COVID-19 pandemic, Finland

Transboundary tourist mobility is a staple component in the lives of people residing in the Karelian borderlands and, at the same time, a promising area for the development of international tourism in the republic. It consists of mutual travel of the region's residents and their Finnish counterparts for tourism, shopping and leisure. This article aims to answer the questions as to the role of transboundary tourist mobility in the life of the local community and the differences between the interior and border municipalities in this respect. To answer them, I draw on the results of a survey I carried out in collaboration with a colleague in 2021, when COVID-19 restrictions on travel across the Russian-Finnish border were in place.

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Transboundary tourist mobility: the borderlands phenomenon

The study of borderlands tourist destinations formed by domestic and transboundary tourist flows is rather new to Russian research. Investigating transboundary tourist mobility through the lens of interdisciplinary border studies is warranted by the changing function of Russia's national borders under the influence of national transformations, changes in the perception of tourism and recreation by the authorities, business and society, and the emergence of a system for tourism management and strategic planning.

Theoretically, the definitions of the study phenomenon stand out for the flexible use of the terms 'transboundary tourist mobility' [1], 'transboundary tourist migration' [2], 'international inbound/outbound tourist flow' [3] and 'cross-border tourism' [4; 5]. This circumstance points to some specific features of the life of modern society.

The broader term 'transboundary tourist mobility' denoting 'the total inbound tourist flow of foreign citizens into Russia and outbound Russian tourist flow into foreign states' [6] will be treated here as synonymous with 'cross-border tourism', with the emphasis placed solely on Russian-Finnish bilateral travel for tourism, leisure and shopping [7]. The use of the term 'transboundary mobility' [8; 9] spanning other purposes of cross-border travel is justified by the impact these flows have on the life of the locals. This article uses the term to describe the Karelian-Finnish exchange.

Summarising the theoretical and practical aspects of transboundary tourist mobility, including transboundary tourism helps identify the following approaches to studying the phenomenon, as shown by Prof Vladimir Kolosov of the Institute of Geography of the Russian Academy of Sciences [7]:

— the economic-geographical approach: evaluating the dynamics, volume and directions of tourist flows; delineating the borders of tourist regions; describing functional connections between border regions of neighbouring states and comparing their capacities for tourism;

— the economic approach: looking at the economic aspects of the influence of tourist mobility on the development of border regions of neighbouring states;

— interdisciplinary border studies: a comprehensive analysis of transboundary tourist mobility, including the effect of institutional, political and other factors on the border regime.

Along the Russian national border, these problems have been studied most extensively with a focus on the Russian–Polish [10—14], Russian–Estonian–Latvian [15; 16] and Russian–Chinese borderlands [4; 5; 17]. Although most of the studies offer a thorough analysis of transboundary tourist exchange (its dynamics, volume and structure) and travellers' expenditure, the changes taking place in the borderlands remain unclear.

As to the Russian-Finnish borderlands, the effect of transboundary tourist mobility of Russian citizens on the development of Finland's border areas has been investigated from the economic, socio-cultural and other perspectives, particularly by Finnish colleagues [18—23]. Many of these works look at the Russian tourist flow coming to the country for shopping [12; 24—27]. The studies stress the dependence of the socioeconomic development of Finland's eastern borderlands on the preferences and financial capacity of Russian tourists, as well as describe measures to stimulate the inbound tourist flow to Finland. Fewer works examine the tourist mobility of Finns coming to Russian borderlands, focusing on selected aspects of cross-border tourism [28; 29] and the features and/or results of cross-border interactions [30].

The effect of transboundary tourist mobility on the socioeconomic, sociocultural and spatial development of the borderlands has many facets, all of which have been addressed by Russian and international scholars. Yet, these aspects do not receive equal attention: most of the studies concentrate on the socioeconomic effect transboundary tourism has on a community or a territory, whilst much fewer look at the sociocultural and spatial effects [8; 25; 31; 32].

The development of transboundary shopping tourism is viewed as an everyday activity improving the standards and quality of life of the locals living on both sides of the national border. Sights, places of attraction, notable cultural events and medical services are amongst the pull factors for transboundary tourism [12; 26; 31].

It has been stressed in the literature that most tourist shoppers from Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Finland, when coming to Russia, do not travel any farther than the nearest petrol station [10; 11; 28]. Nevertheless, Prof Marek Więckowski of the Polish Academy of Sciences emphasises the role of transboundary tourist mobility as a factor in the development of the borderlands, even if some visitors spend no more than several hours in the area [1].

A study co-authored by researchers from Poland, Finland and Russia revealed that the primary destination for Russian tourist shoppers is the border towns of Finland; they rarely visit any other parts of the neighbouring state. Usually, the visitors limit their travel to major supermarkets and shopping malls located in suburbs or at the border, timing their trips to coincide with sales and price reductions [12].

Prof Ivan Pirozhnik of the Pomeranian Academy in Słupsk distinguishes two ways a border can influence border space development: firstly, tourist attractions create recreational landscapes in the vicinity of border checkpoints; secondly, the transit function causes a border landscape to emerge, complete with currency exchanges, offices of instance companies, restaurants, petrol stations and tourist information centres [2, p. 143]. When competing for tourists' money, the availability of goods and services appears to be more important than proximity to the national border.

Brisk trade in goods and services has a positive economic impact and causes the economy to diversify; in conjunction with the multiplier effect, this increases production output across various industries and stimulates related services [11; 27]. As tourist mobility intensifies, 'many border districts of the neglected periphery situated at a considerable distance from national centres turn into zones of contact between neighbouring countries, somewhat of drivers of integration and economic development' [8, p. 83]. Remarkable cases are the practices followed in Finland's border towns and Poland's northwestern voivodeships. In many eastern regions of Finland, which border on Russia, Russians comprise most of the tourist flow: about 80 % in South Karelia (one of the country's three major tourist-receiving regions, with the capital in Lappeenranta); 50 % in South Savo (with the capital in Mikkeli); 40 % in Kymenlaakso (Kouvola); 30 % in North Karelia (Joensuu) and Kainuu [29].

A common language or languages spoken in the borderlands, constant contacts and transboundary ties have been identified as having a considerable sociocultural effect on transboundary tourism development. Visiting a country with a different culture and lifestyle may encourage tourists to acquire new everyday habits [12]. Investigating the emergence and development of the Karelian transboundary sociocultural space has shown that transboundary sociocultural peculiarities manifest themselves mainly in culture, art, project activity, education, tourism and the information space. Transboundary territories are unique in that they experience the 'neighbourhood effect', which leads to the formation of a specific sociocultural space where the features of communities living on either side of the border intertwine [32]. Kolosov V. writes that 'special social unity of people is emerging for whom border crossing has become, for various reasons, an indispensable part of their everyday lives [8, p. 88]. The intergovernmental relations of recent decades developed in such a way as to bring to the fore public diplomacy. Public diplomacy promotes socio-cultural cooperation and good neighbourly relations, adds to a stronger climate of security and serves as a soft power tool making the region, the state, their language, culture and lifestyle more attractive [7]. The practices of the Russian-Finnish borderlands show that the way the residents of border areas see each other is based on the experience of communication with friends and relations living on the other side of the border or frequently visiting the neighbouring state. Other sources of ideas about the neighbours include traditional and social media, online resources and personal travel experience [33].

It has been stressed in the literature that, having a multiplicity of positive effects on the socioeconomic development of neighbouring states, transboundary tourist mobility (cross-border tourism) is affected by various factors [7]: 'transboundary interaction models based on border rent-seeking are unstable' [8, p. 92]. A wide range of factors affect the development of transboundary tour-

ist mobility (they may reduce it or even render any transboundary exchanges impossible): political, institutional, infrastructure-related, environmental, cultural, historical, economic, sociocultural, medical, etc. The latter has become the focus of a growing body of research [34; 35]. Particularly, this factor affected the practices followed in the Russian-Finnish borderlands amid the COVID-19 pandemic and the related restrictions.

In summary, there are in-depth comprehensive studies of the Finnish borderlands, concentrating on transboundary tourist mobility, whilst the processes taking place in the Karelian borderlands remain poorly understood, and the existing groundwork is sketchy. The views of the local population living in the study conditions also escape the attention of researchers. Periods of restrictions often highlight the significance of events and phenomena occurring in the life of society; thus, the COVID-19 pandemic and associated limitations launched the revision and revaluation of cross-border tourism.

This article aims to measure the significance of cross-border tourism mobility for people living in the Karelian borderlands, using the results of a sociological survey conducted in 2021 amid the COVID-19 restrictions on travel across the Russian-Finnish border. The study tests the hypothesis that the residents of Karelia's borderlands were affected by the restriction to a greater degree than their counterparts in the interior and urban municipalities due to the distinct economic and geographical position of the former and a developed network of cross-border ties and consumer preferences of the residents of the neighbouring territories.

Materials and methods

The survey of Karelians was carried out using Google Forms. It was a collaboration with Dr Ekaterina Shlapeko, a research fellow at the Institute of Economics of the Karelian Research Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The questionnaire contained several sections with closed- and open-ended questions. It sought to obtain the opinion of the local population about various aspects of cross-border tourism development and the organisation of tourism and recreation in Karelia. A total of 575 filled-in questionnaires were selected for the analysis; the distribution of questionnaires accurately represents population breakdown by municipality.

The significance of transboundary tourist mobility is measured using sociological tools, with a focus on the effect of COVID-19 restrictions on the lives of the local population, particularly:

1) the usual lifestyle of the locals;
2) the welfare of households in the Karelian borderlands;
3) the benefits and detriments of cross-border tourism development.

This is the first study to use sociological tools to reveal the views of the population of Karelia's borderlands on the development of transboundary tourist mobility amid current challenges.

The article focuses on the phenomenon of transboundary tourist mobility (cross-border tourism) and the effect of the COVID-19 restrictions on its development along the Karelian stretch of the Russian-Finnish border. The changes that took place on the Finnish side are not considered. Median values are calculated.

The study territory

Seven of the 18 municipal districts in the Republic of Karelia, Russia's region neighbouring on Finland, served as a model for this study. The study border districts are grouped under the term 'Karelian borderlands'. As of 1 January 2021, Karelia had 609,000 inhabitants, of whom one fifth (18.7 %) lived in the border areas. The municipalities of the Republic are diverse in terms of geography, socioeconomic situation, transport and logistics (Table 1.). Three border municipalities operate road and rail border checkpoints. These are Vyartsilya-Niirala (handling 75 % of the total traffic across the Karelian stretch of the Russian-Finnish border, the Sortavala district), Lyuttya-Vartius (20 %, the Kostomuksha municipal district) and Suoperya-Kuusamo (5 %, the Loukhi district, road only). The Loukhi, Kalevala and Kostomuksha districts are located in Karelia's Arctic zone.

Table 1

Overview of Karelian municipalities (as of 1 January 2021, median values)

Area	Area, 1,000 km^2	Population-density people/1 km^2	Population change, 2018—2021, %	Distance from the district centre, km	
				to the nearest border checkpoint	to Petrozavodsk
Petrozavodsk	0.11	2484.2	+0.5	290.5	0
Border municipalities*	75.7	1.1	–4.7	170	464
Interior municipalities	81.1	2.7	–5.1	250	246

Comment: *for the Loukhi municipality, the distance to the checkpoint was calculated as the way from the village of Pyaozersky and from the village of Loukhi, due to some specific features of the area.

The study area receives about 440,000 tourists and excursionists annually, most of whom arrange itineraries, sightseeing and entertainment in the Karelian borderlands on their own (Fig. 1). The Sortavala district accounts for over 90 % of all the borderlands visitors, bearing the maximum tourist load in Karelia. The municipality is home to about one-tenth (12.5 %) of the region's cultural heritage

objects included in the unified state register. Moreover, it is well located in terms of transport accessibility, connected by road and rail to the capital cities (St. Petersburg and Moscow). The local border checkpoint, Vyartsilya-Niirala, operated until 2020 handling about 1.5 million crossings per year [36; 37]. Yet, the median inbound tourism intensity in the seven border municipalities is 500 arrivals per 1,000 population, which is much lower than in the interior districts (1,200 arrivals/1,000 population).

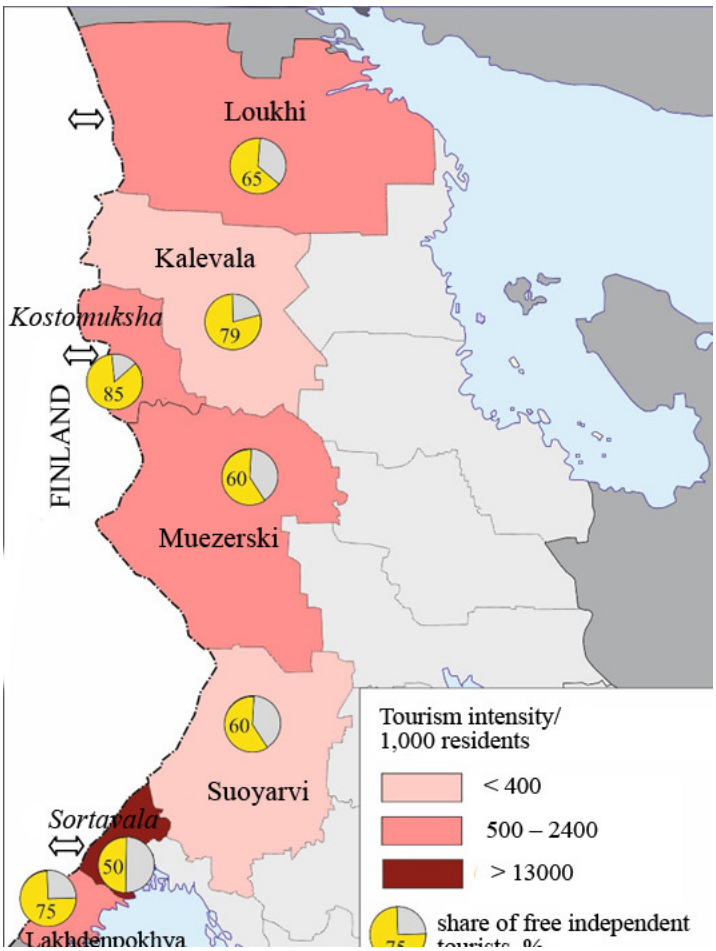

Fig. 1. Inbound tourism in the Karelian borderlands [36]

Overall, about one-third (29.3 % as of 21 April 2022) of the region's cultural heritage objects is located in its border area; over one-fourth (27.4 %) of cultural sights in the municipality have been identified as such but not yet included in the unified state register. Border municipalities cultivate cultural and educational tourism (including its ethnocultural, military-historical and religious varieties), ecotourism, hiking, event tourism and so on. About 100,000 tourists and pilgrims from all over the world visit the Valaam Monastery annually. In 2020, the

Paanajärvi National Park welcomed about 7,000 visitors. In the first nine months of 2021, approximately 460,000 people visited Russia's first mountain park – Ruskeala. Border municipalities also experience pressure from cross-border and transit tourist traffic.

Results

Respondent overview

A total of 575 questionnaires properly filled by surveyed Karelians were chosen for analysis. The sample comprised 340 females (59 %) and 235 males (41 %), its makeup matching the sex structure of the region's population: 54.4 and 45.6 % respectively. The distribution of respondents by municipalities also corresponds to the regional population breakdown (Table 2).

Table 2

Respondent distribution by Karelian municipalities

Area	Population, people	Proportion in the total regional population, %	Number of respondents, people	Proportion of respondents, %
Petrozavodsk	280,711	46.1	257	44.7
Interior municipalities	214,240	35.2	202	35.1
Border municipalities, including	114,120	18.72	116	20.1
Kostomuksha district	30,273	5.0	26	4.5
Kalevala district	6,489	1.1	8	1.4
Lakhdenpokhya district	12,298	2.02	13	2.3
Loukhi district	10,619	1.7	12	2.1
Muezerski district	9,241	1.5	10	1.7
Sortavala district	30,366	5.0	29	5.0
Suoyarvi district	14,834	2.4	18	3.1
Karelian total	609,071	100	575	100

As to the age structure, the dominant group was 30—39 years old (25.7 %); the groups aged 40—49 and 50—59 accounted for one-fifth each of the sample; aged over 60, for 17.2 %; aged 18-29, for 14.1, comprising the smallest age group.

Border tourism in the life of the Karelian borderlands as seen by the local population

The significance of transboundary tourist mobility for the local population comes across clearly in the responses obtained from the survey of Karelian borderlands residents during COVID-19 restrictions on travel across the Russian-Finish border.

Changes in the lifestyle of the local population amid COVID-19 restrictions

Changes in the usual lifestyle of the local population, brought about by COVID-19 restrictions, are evident in the analysis of responses to two questions about the frequency of visits to Finland before the pandemic and the effect of the COVID-19 travel restrictions. The survey indicates that, before the pandemic, residents of the border municipalities were the most active in the region in visiting Finland for recreation, shopping and tourism (Table 3). Thus, every third resident of the Karelian borderlands (29.3 %) visited the neighbouring country every month or more than 10 times a year; every tenth, from six to ten times. At the same time, almost half of the residents of the region's interior municipalities (46.0 %) have never been to Finland. The figures are the lowest in Petrozavodsk. This is explained by the capital of the region concentrating its administrative, research and educational potential.

Table 3

Responses to the question 'How often did you visit Finland for shopping, tourism or recreation before the pandemic?', people/%

Area	Very often (once a month or over ten times a year)	Quite often (6—9 times a year)	4—5 times a year	2—3 times a year	Once a year	Once in several years	I have never been to Finland
Petrozavodsk	9/3.5	19/7.4	33/12.8	75/29.2	3/1.1	63/24.5	55/21.4
Border municipalities	34/29.3 (29.8)	12/10.3 (9.6)	10/8.6 (9.6)	9/7.8 (8.7)	0	14/12.1 (12.5)	37/31.9 (29.8)
Interior municipalities	16/7.9	4/1.98	10/4.95	31/15.3	0	48/23.76	93/46.0
Karelian total	59/10.26	35/6.1	53/9.2	115/20.0	3/0.5	125/21.7	185/32.17

Comment: values for border municipalities, the Loukhi district excluded, are given in brackets

There is a slight difference in the frequency of Karelians' visits to Finland, depending on whether the Loukhi district is included in the calculation. This is explained by the municipality's unique, both border and interior, position. Below, it will be considered as a purely border area.

Municipal-level analysis of the Karelian borderlands reveals the specific features of individual districts (Fig. 2).

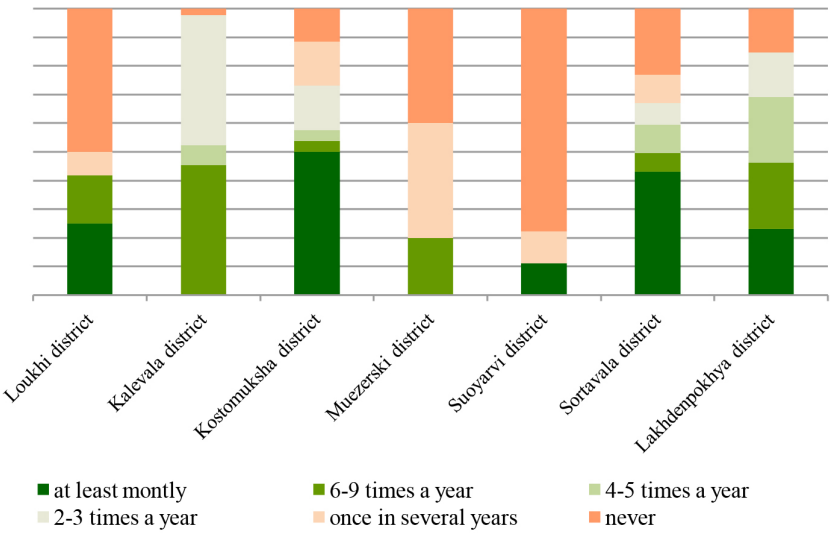

Fig. 2. Responses to the question 'How often did you visit Finland for shopping, tourism or recreation before the pandemic?', %

Comment: here and below, the districts are arranged from left to right according to their north-south geographical distribution

The high cross-border mobility of the population of the Kostomuksha and Sortavala districts (every second resident visited neighbouring Finland about once a month or more often) is easy to explain, considering the proximity of the border checkpoints (30 km and 57 km respectively) and their effective functioning. The residents of Lakhdenpokhya and Loukhi districts also have a high proportion of frequent travellers (46.2 and 41.7 % respectively). The Suoyarvi district stands out amongst Karelia's border municipalities as 77.8 % of its residents have never visited Finland either for shopping, tourism or recreation. This percentage was also high in the Muezerski (40.0 %) and Loukhi (50.0 %) districts. The absence of border checkpoints in the Suoyarvi and Muezerski districts, as well as the peculiar geographical position of the Loukhi municipality explains this distribution of the responses. Note that trips for purposes other than recreation, tourism and shopping, such as business, were not taken into account.

When asked about the impact of the restrictions on travel across the Russian-Finnish border on their lives (Table 4), residents of the border districts were more likely to describe it as considerable than their counterparts in the interior municipalities or Petrozavodsk. One-third of the borderland's residents (32.0 %) said that the restrictions 'significantly' affected their and their families' lives. The life

of each fifth (19.0 %) respondent living in the border municipalities was 'strongly' affected. Overall, every second resident of the borderlands and Petrozavodsk felt the impact of the restrictions: 50.2 and 51.0 %, respectively. Almost half of the population in the interior municipalities (48.5 %) reported no such effect on their and their families' lives.

Table 4

Responses to the question
'Was your and your family's life affected by the COVID-19 restrictions on travel across the Russian-Finnish border?', people/%

Area	Yes, strongly	Yes, somewhat	Not so much	Not at all
Petrozavodsk	66/25.7	63/24.5	49/19.1	79/30.7
Border municipalities	37/32.0	22/19.0	22/19.0	35/30.0
Interior municipalities	30/14.85	37/18.3	36/17.8	98/48.5
Karelian total	133/22.9	123/21.4	107/18.5	212/37.2

At the municipal level (Fig. 3), the effect was the strongest in the Kalevala (75.0 %), Lakhdenpokhya (69.2 %), Sortavala (58.6 %) and Kostomuksha (61.5 %) municipalities. At the same time, over half the residents of the Suoyarvi district (66.7 %) did not feel the impact of the COVID-19 restrictions on travel on their and their families' lives.

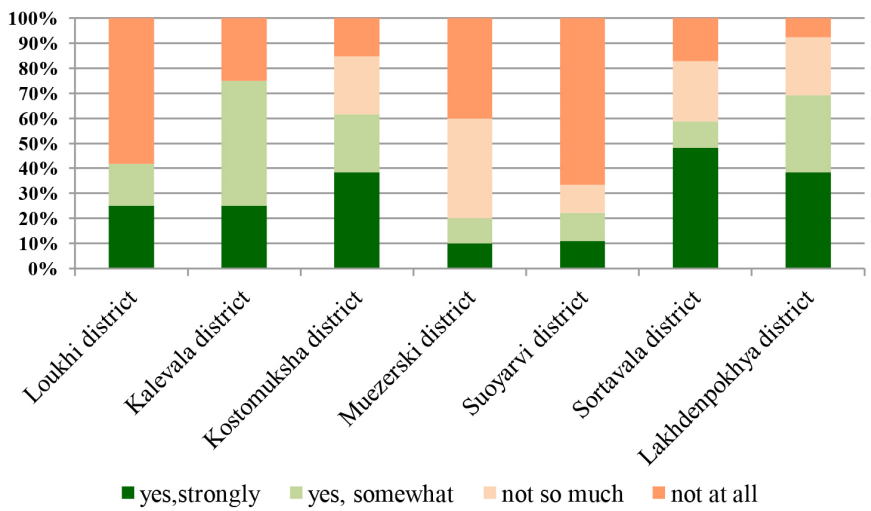

Fig. 3. Responses to the question
'Was your and your family's life affected by the COVID-19 restrictions on travel across the Russian-Finnish border?', %

Changes in the financial well-being of households brought about by the restrictions on travel across the Russian-Finnish border.

Changes in the financial situation of local households caused by the restrictions on cross-border tourism were studied using three questions focusing on different aspects of the significance of Finnish inbound tourism and outbound travel to Finland.

The question about cross-border tourism as a source of income (Table 5) reveals a difference between the situation of the borderlands residents and that of the population of the interior municipalities. Almost one-third of the residents of the borderland (30.2 %) named Finnish travel and/or their trips to Finland as a source of family well-being. Cross-border tourism had a less significant role in the lives of people living in the interior municipalities and Petrozavodsk. Moreover, respondents in the Karelian borderlands were the least likely (49.1 %) to give a neutral answer when assessing their dependence on cross-border tourism for livelihood. Neutral answers were given most often by residents of the interior municipalities (63.4 %). In the municipal context, the greatest dependence on cross-border tourism was reported by residents of the Lakhdenpokhya (46.2 %) and Kalevala districts (37.5 %). At the same time, one-third of the population of the Sortavala, Muezerski and Kostomuksha districts stressed the importance of cross-border tourism as a source of family income.

Table 5

Responses to the question 'Is cross-border tourism (Finns' visits to Karelia and your trips to Finland) a source of income for your household?', people/%

Area	Definitely yes	Yes, to some degree	Not so much	Not at all
Petrozavodsk	14/5.4	36/14.0	58/22.56	149/58.0
Border municipalities	13/11.2	22/19.0	24/20.7	57/49.1
Interior municipalities	12/5.9	22/10.9	40/19.8	128/63.4
Karelian total	39/6.6	80/13.9	122/21.2	334/58.1

Therefore, the restrictions on travel across the Russian-Finnish border affect the financial well-being of the residents of the Karelian borderlands.

As one might expect, the percentage of respondents catering to Finnish tourists was higher in the borderlands (7.8 %) than in the interior municipalities (5.0 %) or Petrozavodsk (2.7 %). Moreover, 59.4 % of the borderlands residents were ready to work with tourists from Finland to get extra money or if made a fair offer. Only every fifth of residents of the borderlands was not ready to cater to Finnish visitors (18.1 %), compared to 30.7 % of respondents in Petrozavodsk and 26.7 % in the interior municipalities.

The benefits and detriments of cross-border tourism as seen by Karelians

This aspect was explored based on the answers to three questions regarding the benefits respondents and their households derive from growing transboundary tourist mobility, as well as the positive and negative consequences tourism may have for the region.

A detailed analysis of responses to questions about personal/household benefits from the development of Finnish inbound tourism to Karelia (Fig. 4) shows that the border municipalities differ from the interior ones on a number of points. In summary, there are several fields that residents of the Karelian borderlands were more likely to associate with reaping benefits from Finnish tourism, compared to the population of the interior districts and Petrozavodsk: professional development, quality of life and personal affairs. These spheres correspond to the central aspects of human life. Therefore, it is safe to state that cross-border tourism was of greater significance for the population of the borderlands than for the residents of the interior municipalities and Petrozavodsk.

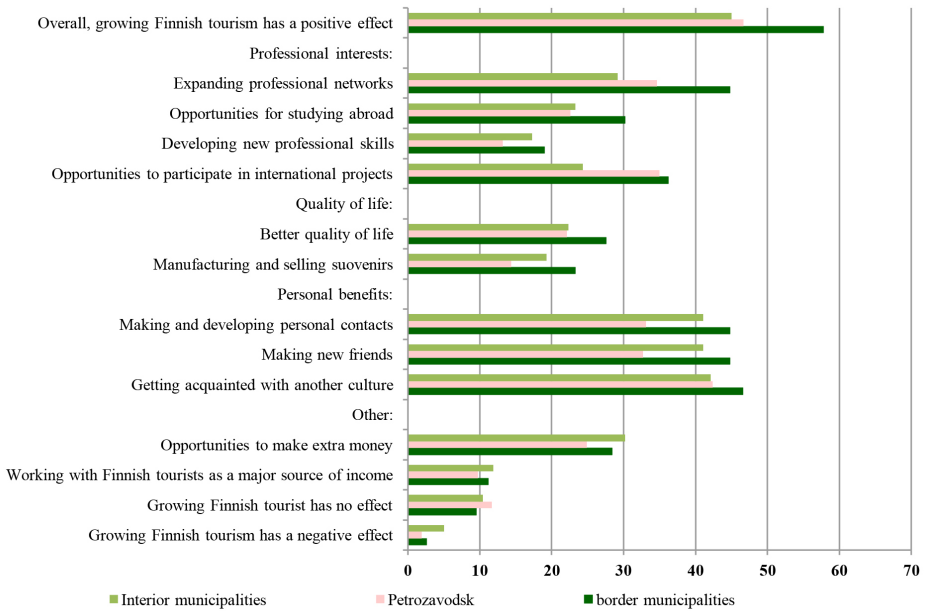

Fig. 4. Responses to the question
'How do you and your family benefit from growing Finnish tourism to Karelia?'
(multiple answers were possible), %

The results of the survey indicate that the development of inbound tourism from neighbouring Finland has considerable significance. Moreover, the residents of the border region had similar views on the significance and/or the prospects of inbound cross-border tourism (Table 6).

Table 6

Responses to the question 'Do you think that Finnish tourism to Karelia is an important/promising area of tourism benefiting the socioeconomic development of the republic?', people/%

Area	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Petrozavodsk	89/34.6	130/50.6	35/13.6	3/1.2
Border municipalities	54/46.6	43/37.1	16/13.8	3/2.6
Interior municipalities	62/30.7	102/50.5	33/16.3	5/2.5
Karelian total	205/35.7	275/47.8	84/14.6	11/1.9

A comparison of the respondents' opinions clearly shows that the population of the border districts is more interested in the development of Finnish tourism to Karelia than the residents of Petrozavodsk and the interior municipalities are (46.6 % strongly agree that Finnish tourism is important/promising for the socioeconomic development of the region, compared to 34.6 and 30.7 % respectively). This difference is explained by economic, social, cultural, professional and other reasons.

Fig. 5 shows the distribution of responses to the opposite question, about the possible negative effects of Finnish inbound tourism to Karelia at a municipal level.

Due to the economic and geographical features of the border municipalities, their residents often interacted with Finnish citizens during regular mutual travel for social, cultural, family and economic purposes. Close local social contacts across the border made the borderlands population less categorical when reflecting on the negative effects of a possible increase in the number of Finnish tourists visiting the region. The difference between the residents of the borderlands and the interior areas, including Petrozavodsk, was especially dramatic as regards undesirable consequences such as changes in the usual lifestyle, the appearance of private tourist facilities inaccessible to the general public and conflicts between the locals and tourists.

Fig. 5. Responses to the question 'What are the (possible) negative effects of the growing number of Finnish tourists coming to Karelia?', %

Conclusion

Transboundary tourist mobility was a customary element of the lifestyle of people residing in the Karelian borderlands. It manifested itself in regular trips to the neighbouring country, frequent contacts with Finnish visitors, peculiar preferences and networks of contacts with Finnish citizens and organisations. The COVID-19 restrictions caused a profound change in tourist mobility and had a dramatic effect on the life of the borderlands on both sides of the Russian-Finnish border.

Analysing the results of a municipal-level survey of Karelians, which was carried out in 2021 in collaboration with Dr Ekaterina Shlapeko and focused on various aspects of cross-border tourism development, revealed the significance of the study phenomenon for personal and household well-being, as well as the development of the region, and corroborated the study hypothesis. Indeed, the COVID-19 restrictions dealt a heavy blow to the residents of the Karelian borderlands and Petrozavodsk, whilst their effect on the interior municipalities was less profound. Despite the geographical position, economic situation, transboundary ties, consumer preferences and the complete lifting of COVID-19 restrictions on 15 July 2022, residents of the Karelian borderlands have to focus on internal rather than external resources as the medical-biological and other factors suggest. It is also advisable to consider the ways to

deal with other future restrictions. The changes in the Schengen visa application procedure initiated by Finland on 1 September 2022 pose a new challenge to the development of transboundary mobility. Although Petrozavodsk is now one of the four Russian cities where the application for a tourist visa is possible by appointment, the new developments will cause a reduction in transboundary tourism in the Russian-Finnish borderlands.

Our further research will look at the transformations, adaptations and functioning of the tourism industry amid new challenges, the way to overcome the new restrictions and the ways to promote a positive image of the state in the international arena. The current changes require a calibration of strategic priorities of international tourism development in Karelia in general and in the border districts in particular, the latter having long focused on catering to inbound Finnish tourism.

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ETHNIC GEOGRAPHY

REFUGEES FROM SYRIA AND IRAQ IN SWEDEN: RESETTLEMENT DURING THE MIGRATION CRISIS

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The vast increase in the number of forced migrants during the European migration crisis has compelled the receiving countries to concentrate on the issues of migrant recepe tion and accommodation. This study aims to demonstrate how the patterns of settlement of Syrian and Iraqi migrants changed in 2014—2019. We propose a new methodology, building on the Herfindahl-Hirschman index, an indicator of the level and direction of the spatial concentration—deconcentration of migrants, and the Ryabtsev index, which is used to measure the proximity between the settlement structures of migrants and the Swedes. It is established there was a deconcentration of migrants during the crisis (especially in its ascendant phase), carried out by the Swedish authorities. However a reverse process took place in the descendant phase, as a result of self-arranged migrants' resettlement. The deconcentration of Iraqis and Syrians led to the convergence between the settlement structure typical of immigrants and the Swedes, whilst concentration resulted in divergence accompanied by the emergence of close-knit immigrant communities on the outskirts of Sweden's largest cities. The formation of such communities, seen as vulnerable by the national authorities and marked by a high crime rate, impedes the integration of Syrian and Iraqi immigrants into Swedish society.

Keywords:
European migration crisis, Sweden, refugees, resettlement, vulnerable areas

Introduction

Over the last 20 years, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the number of migrants in the world has grown by more than 100 million, amounting to 281 million in 2022;[1] labour migrants make up the

[1] World Migration Report 2022, 2022, *IOM,* URL: https://publications.iom.int (access date: 10.07.2022).

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largest share — about two thirds of all migrants.[2] At the same time, the number of forced migrants has increased dramatically in recent decades: the difficulties of their adaptation to the host societies, along with the weak control of refugee flows, put migration high on today's agenda.

The European migration crisis, ushered by the rapid growth in the number of refugees coming to Europe since 2014, has been showing the complexity of solving migration issues.[3] At the height of the crisis, in 2015—2016, 2.5 million refugees came to the European Union, herein former residents of just two Middle East countries — Syria and Iraq — accounted for nearly 40 % of all newcomers.[4] Such an unprecedented increase of migrants has posed a serious systemic challenge to EU nations, revealing existing flaws in the realization of the EU's migration and regional policies [1; 2]. According to the Dublin Regulation[5] Greece and Italy, as countries crossed by major migration routes from the Middle East to the EU, had to process a major portion of asylum claims. Such uneven distribution of forced migrants across the EU countries led to the issue of directives on the resettlement of them from Greece and Italy.[6] The initiative to resettle migrants across the EU became a serious challenge to intra-European solidarity, causing negative reactions primarily by Eastern European member states, which essentially refused to accept refugees despite the directives [3; 4]. The European migration crisis threw into the spotlight not only political disagreements across the EU but also socio-cultural problems related to the adaptation of Muslim migrants and refugees in the countries that accepted the largest numbers of them: Germany, Sweden, Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark [5—9].

One of the most important integration factors of immigrants with a different cultural background is the structure of their settlement on the territory of the host state [10]. In most cases, their settling is very inhomogeneous [11]: high concentration of migrants within the large urban agglomerations of Europe lead to the rise of neighbourhoods characterized by spatial exclusion and social segregation of non-native ethnic and religious communities [12; 13].

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[2] Global Issues. Migration, 2022, *United Nations,* URL: https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/migration (accessed 10.07.2022).

[3] In this article, the chronological framework of the European migration crisis covers the period 2014—2019.

[4] Asylum and first-time asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex — annual aggregated data (rounded), 2022, *Eurostat,* URL: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/migr_asyappctza (accessed 01.05.2022).

[5] Regulation (EU) № 604/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council, 2013, *EUR-Lex,* URL: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2013/604/2013-06-29 (accessed 10.04.2022).

[6] Council Decision (EU) 2015/1601 of 22 September 2015 establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and Greece, 2015, *EUR-Lex,* URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2015/1601/oj (accessed 19.02.2022).

The aim of the study is to identify changes in settlement patterns of Syrian and Iraqi migrants in Sweden in 2014—2019. In line with the aim, the following tasks are solved in the study: 1) to identify differences in the resettlement of Syrian and Iraqi migrants, on the one hand, and Swedes (locals) on the other, developed as a result of the migration crisis; 2) to reveal changes in the Swedish migration policy due to necessity to accept and accommodate significant numbers of migrants.

Materials and methodology

The following factors explain the choice of Sweden as the research ground.

1. The country has a long history of receiving and accommodating migrants with different cultural backgrounds. Prior to the early 1980s most labour migrants came to Sweden generally from Northern, Western and Southern Europe [14]. Regulating migration was handled by the Labour Market Board, which dealt with the issues of hiring immigrants, helped to adapt and provided them with housing [15]. The intensification of refugee flows and the increase in the migration burden on the largest Swedish cities in the 1980s led to the establishment of the Swedish Migration Agency, which in 1985 began implementing the 'Sweden-wide strategy' ('Hela Sverige strategin'). The Strategy's objective was to facilitate migrants' integration into society by distributing them more evenly across the country — settling them from large into medium and small-population communes of the country that had enough housing stock and unfilled vacancies [16]. Persons who were granted refugee status were provided with social housing in a certain commune, where they had to live for 18 months in a row, although if such persons relocated, they were not fined or other penalties.

The authorities abandoned the 'Sweden-wide strategy' in 1994 adopting a new law on asylum seekers,[7] which offered them two options — either to be accommodated in social housing provided by the Swedish Migration Agency ('Anläggningsboende', ABO) or to live in accommodations of their own choosing ('Eget boende', EBO). Refugees who opted for the ABO option did not have the opportunity to choose a municipality of residence and were usually placed in sparsely populated communes; and those who chose the EBO option usually settled with friends or relatives in more densely populated communes [17—19]. All categories of refugees, irrespective of the housing option they chose, were granted financial aid by the state. Those who opted for the EBO, however, were entitled only to a daily allowance and had to cover much of the housing costs by themselves. The country's authorities expected that only a small part of the newly arrived refugees would find housing on their own, however, have shown that in the pre-crisis period of 1998—2010, more than 50 % of the forced migrants chose the EBO, which led to the rise of segregated areas densely populated by migrants [20; 21].

[7] Lag om mottagande av asylsökande m.fl, 1994, *SFS-nummer 1994:137,* URL: https://rkrattsbaser.gov.se/sfst?bet=1994:137 (accessed 12.05.2022).

The growing migration burden experienced by Sweden during the European migration crisis, as well as the problems of refugee resettlement, exacerbated by the criminalization of migrant neighbourhoods, called for changes in the country's migration policies. One of the steps in this direction was the law on the reception of newly arrived immigrants adopted on March 1, 2016: according to this law, all Swedish municipalities were obliged to accommodate refugees.[8] The number of refugees to be sent to particular communes was to be determined based on the situation on the labour market, the size of a particular commune's territory, and the number of asylum seekers already hosted by the commune. In 2020, as a result of amendments to the 1994 Law,[9] according to which those refugees who want to settle independently in the 32 areas marked by the state as 'socially and economically vulnerable' are no longer eligible for state financial assistance [22].

2. Based on the principles of its migration policy, Sweden, which positions itself as a 'humanitarian superpower' [23], took in the highest number of Syrian and Iraqi refugees per capita among the EU states during the migration crisis [24], and in terms of absolute numbers Sweden took in over 140 thousand person — more than any other EU country except Germany.

3. The reception of people with alien cultural backgrounds, including migrants from Syria and Iraq, leads to a growth of the Muslim community, which has become the 'second majority' in the country. The share of Muslims in the religious population of Sweden, according to our estimate, is 14 % (950 thousand people) [14]. The Swedish authorities were among the first in the EU to recognize the presence territories with a high crime rate and large share of migrants in the population — 'vulnerable areas'[10] where the state monopoly on power has actually been lost.

The research is based on official data of Statistics Sweden (SCB), containing information about the structure of migration to Sweden, the origin of the population and the placement of migrants by the country's administrative-territorial units.[11]

Transformations of the migrant settlement patterns across a certain territory are conditioned by the intensity of spatial concentration/deconcentration. The Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI) uses as the main indicator characterizing the structure of migrant accommodation in Sweden (in top-level administrative subdivisions such as counties (läns)):

[8] Lag om mottagande av vissa nyanlända invandrare för bosättning, 2016, *SFS-nummer 2016:38* URL: https://rkrattsbaser.gov.se/sfst?bet=2016:38 (accessed 12.05.2022).

[9] Lag om ändring i lagen (1994:137) om mottagande av asylsökande m.fl, 2019, *SFS-nummer 2019:1204*. URL: https://svenskforfattningssamling.se/sites/default/files/sfs/2019-12/SFS2019-1204.pdf (accessed 12.05.2022).

[10] Utsatta områden — polisens arbete, *Polisen,* 2022, URL: https://polisen.se/om-polisen/polisens-arbete/utsatta-omraden (accessed 15.06.2022).

[11] *Statistiska centralbyrån (SCB), 2022,* URL: https://www.scb.se (accessed 25.06.2022).

$$HH1 = \sum_{i=1}^{N} S_i^2 ,$$

where S_i — the share (%) of a particular county's migrant population in the country's migrant population; N — is the number of counties.

The values of this index running from 10 000/N to 10 000 make it possible to measure the degree of migrants' concentration. The comparison of corresponding indexes for a period under review shows changes in concentration. A higher value signals a greater spatial concentration of migrants and vice versa.

Migrants' movements from Syria and Iraq to Sweden during the crisis were conducted mainly not by air, but by land — via Denmark, as well as the specifics of the inner Sweden migrants' movements and peculiarities of Swedish migration policies, led to differences between the settlement patterns of Swedes on the one hand and migrants on the other. The Ryabtsev Index of relative structural shifts (I_r) applies to measure the changes in 2014—2019:

$$I_r = \sqrt{\frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} (k_m - k_s)^2}{\sum_{i=1}^{n} (k_m + k_s)^2}}$$

where n is the number of second-level administrative subdivisions (communes); k_m is the share of each commune's migrant population in the overall population of Syrian and/or Iraqi migrants in Sweden; k_s — is the share of each of n communes in the population of Swedes.

The advantage of the Ryabtsev Index, compared with the other indicators of absolute or relative structural shifts, implies primarily the presence of the scale of values (within the interval [0; 1]), permitting a qualitative interpretation of results obtained [25]. The lower the value of the index, the closer the migrants' patterns of settlement across communes to those of locals.

In order to identify the peculiarities of Syrian and Iraqi migrants' settlement patterns to those of Swedes, the differences between which were brought into sharp relief during the migration crisis, we combine all 290 communes of the country into 10 groups — deciles, each with more or less equal population size. The first decile, consisting of only one commune (Stockholm), is not considered due to the anomaly of the front 'tail' of the distribution — by analogy with that under Zipf's law. This anomalous 'tail' is the result of the distribution of the communes across deciles bottom up, with the share of each subsequent group deviating more strongly from the ideal 10 % (especially in the first decile).

Results and Discussion

The first Iraqis and Syrians, according to SCB, arrived in the country in the 1950s and 1960s; however, by 1980 they numbered only slightly more than 2.2 thousand people. Since the 1980s, a period of more active immigration to Sweden began (Table 1). The country received several waves of refugees — primarily from Iraq, due to the worsening political and economic situation in the Middle East [26], as well as armed conflicts, such as the Iran-Iraq War in 1980—1988, the Gulf War in 1990—1991, the invasion of the Coalition forces in Iraq in 2003 and the ensuing Iraq War in 2003—2011 [27; 28].

Table 1

Syrian and Iraqi populations size in Sweden in 1950—2020, persons

Country of origin	Year							
	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
Syria	0	6	100	1,606	5,874	14,162	20,758	193,594
Iraq	5	16	108	631	9,818	49,372	121,761	146,440

Source: Compiled by the authors based on: Folkmängd Efter Födelseland.[12]

By 2014, when the migration crisis began, Sweden was home to 197.8 thousand citizens of Iraq and Syria, with Iraqis outnumbering Syrians by two-to-one. The structure of their settlement that had developed over the previous decades was characterized by significant unevenness: 64.2 % of Iraqis and 50.8 % of Syrians lived in 3 out of 21 counties: Stockholm, Västra Götalands, and Skåne.[13]

Arising from the European migration crisis, by 2019 Syrians and Iraqis had become the largest ethnic minorities in Sweden, pushing Finns, who had been the country's largest minority since the beginning of the 20th century, into third place. Despite the fact that by the end of the crisis period the mentioned counties continued to have the country's largest shares of Syrians and Iraqis (Fig. 1), the settlement patterns of each of these two migrant communities had been marked by deconcentration across the country during previous five years (Table 2).

[12] Folkmängd Efter Födelseland 1900—2021, *Statistiska Centralbyrån (SCB), 2022,* URL: https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/statistik-efter-amne/befolkning/befolkningens-sammansattning/befolkningsstatistik/pong/tabell-och-diagram/utrikes-fodda--medborgarskap-och-utlandsksvensk-bakgrund/folkmangd-efter-fodelseland-19002021/ (accessed 10.02.2022).

[13] In these 3 counties lived 50.3 % Swedes.

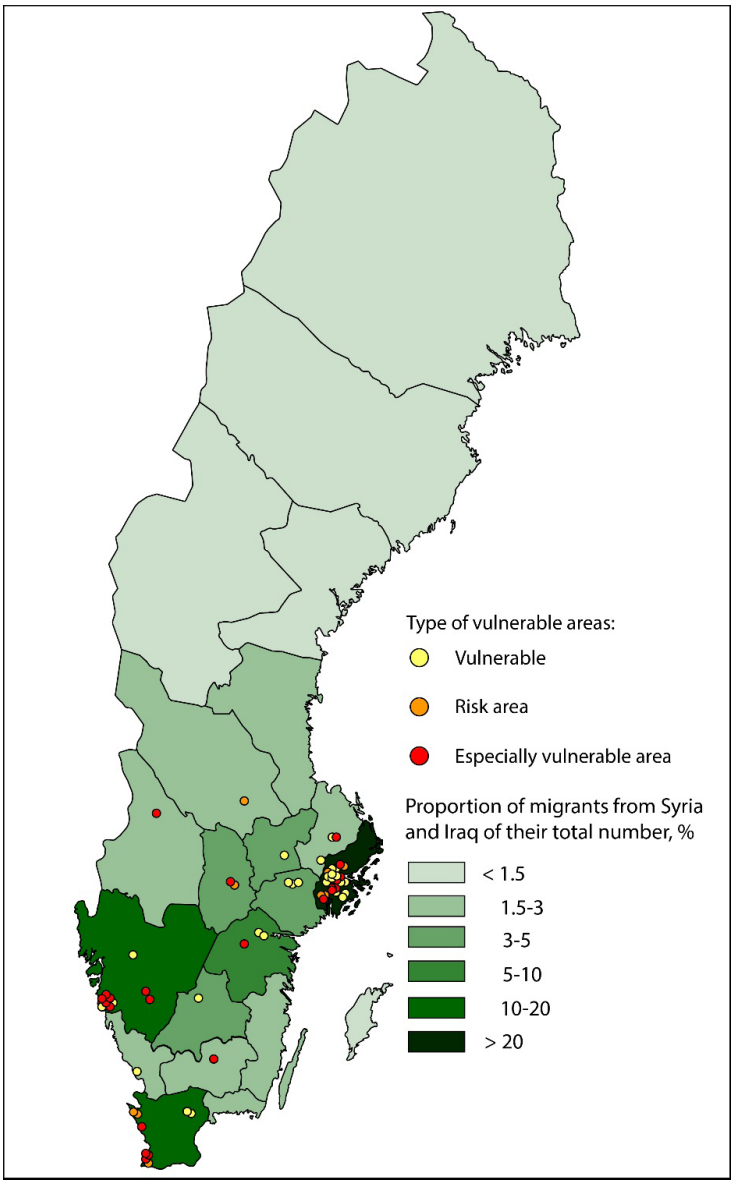


Fig. 1. Structure of resettlement of migrants from Syria and Iraq across counties and 'vulnerable areas' of Sweden, 2019

Source: Compiled by the authors based on: Folkmängden efter region, födelseland och kön;[14] Kriminell påverkan i lokalsamhället.[15]

[14] Folkmängden efter region, födelseland och kön. År 2000—2021, *Statistiska Centralbyrån (SCB), 2022,* URL: https://www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se/pxweb/sv/ssd/START__BE__BE0101__BE0101E/FolkmRegFlandK/ (accessed 14.03.2022).

[15] Kriminell påverkan i lokalsamhället — En lägesbild för utvecklingen i utsatta områden, *Polisen,* 2019, URL: https://polisen.se/siteassets/dokument/ovriga_rapporter/kriminell-paverkan-i-lokalsamhallet.pdf (accessed 13.07.2022).

Table 2

Spatial concentration of Iraqi and Syrian migrants, and Swedes, across counties, 2014—2019

HHI by population group	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Migrants from Iraq	1640.2	1639.0	1630.1	1608.3	1606.2	1599.8
Migrants from Syria	1149.6	988.4	898.7	932.5	937.4	936.0
Swedes	1027.4	1032.1	1035.7	1038.1	1040.5	1042.9

Source: data for the calculation here and below (unless stated otherwise) is based on: folkmängden efter region, födelseland och kön.[16]

The Syrian community experienced significant deconcentration, as the share of Stockholm County in the total population of Syrians in Sweden fell sharply (from 24.6 % in 2014 to 16 % in 2019), at the same time the share of Syrians living in southern counties grew (Skåne, Halland, Kalmar, Kronoberg, Jönköping) due to migrants during the crisis increasingly were coming to Sweden from its southern border — via Denmark. It is noteworthy that the deconcentration of Syrians across counties reached its peak not before or after but at the height of the crisis, in 2016, the year when the migrants' settlement law was adopted and they started to get settled across the country more evenly.

The Iraqis structure of settlement is marked by a higher degree of concentration compared to the Syrians' because a significant part of Iraqis arrived before the crisis in the country in 2000—2010 their settlement patterns across the country was more stable. During the crisis, the Iraqis' concentration level reduced because the share of Iraqis in their total population declined in Stockholm County (from 31.3 % to 30.7 %), and also in Örebro and Gävleborg. At the same time, the share of Dalarna County grew (by 2 %) as a result of determinate efforts to redistribute refugees [29].

The settlement of Iraqi and Syrian refugees changed not only at the level of counties, but also at the level of communes. The migration crisis initiated the process of convergence of distribution patterns of Swedes and migrants across communes, and after the height of the crisis, the trend reversed to divergence (Table 3). The convergence of the settlement structures of Syrians and Swedes reached its maximum in 2017 — the first year when the flow of migrants from Syria decreased. It was the result of the Swedish Migration Agency's efforts to distribute Syrian refugees more evenly in social housing provided by host communes (ABO). The incoming refugees were systemically steered first of all to

[16] Folkmängden efter region, födelseland och kön. År 2000 — 2021, *Statistiska Centralbyrån (SCB), 2022,* URL: https://www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se/pxweb/sv/ssd/START__BE__BE0101__BE0101E/FolkmRegFlandK/ (accessed 14.03.2022).

the country's small communes (8th, 9th and 10th deciles), and the share of these communes' migrant population in Sweden's total migrant population grew from 28.6 % in 2014 to 39 % in 2016 (Fig. 2).

Table 3

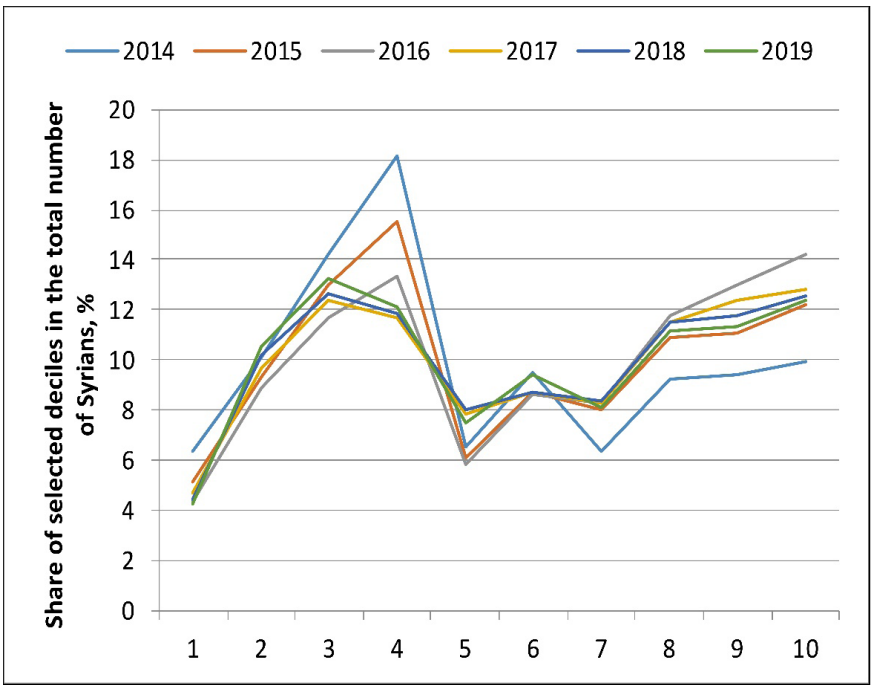
The degree of difference between the settlement structures of Swedes and migrants from Syria and Iraq by communes, 2014—2019

Year	Average population size of groups in communes, persons			I_r of migrants' populations and Swedes across communes		
	Large (2nd—4th deciles)	Midsize (5th—7th deciles)	Small (8th—10th deciles)	Migrants from Syria	Migrants from Iraq	Migrants from Syria and Iraq, combined
2014	93,567—560,199	33,484—91,238	2,445—33,130	0.376	0.348	0.319
2015				0.351	0.345	0.295
2016				0.329	0.342	0.266
2017				0.298	0.334	0.256
2018				0.305	0.331	0.258
2019				0.311	0.328	0.262

The growth of differences in the settlement of Swedes and migrants since 2018 is associated with the activation of self-organization processes in the settlement of Syrians. The results of this study are in line with the conclusions reached by scholars from Stockholm, who argue that refugees steered to ABO in 2005—2009, even during the first years of their stay in the country, quite often moved from small towns/rural areas to large urban centres [30]. Thus, we can state the long-term nature of this trend in the self-organization of refugee resettlement in Sweden.

By the beginning of the crisis, the distribution of Iraqis across the country's communes was marked by an even higher level of concentration in large communes than among Syrians. In 2014—2019, the distribution of Iraqis, however, was more even (while the population size of small communes was slightly growing) — this is explained by the fact that during the crisis Sweden took in relatively few Iraqis, as compared to the 2000s. A significant increase in the Iraqi population in midsize communes (5th decile) in 2016—2017 is explained by the fact that some communes moved from the 4th decile to the 5th. Thus, the redistribution of Iraqis within Sweden during the migration crisis was by and large in line with a trajectory formed before the start of the crisis.

The settling of Syrians and Iraqis in large urban communes, primarily the three 'metropolitan' counties (Fig. 2), as well as the preponderance of 'foreign-faith' migrants, mostly Muslims, in the migrant population, is a handicap to their integration in Swedish society, which is highly secularized [31; 32].



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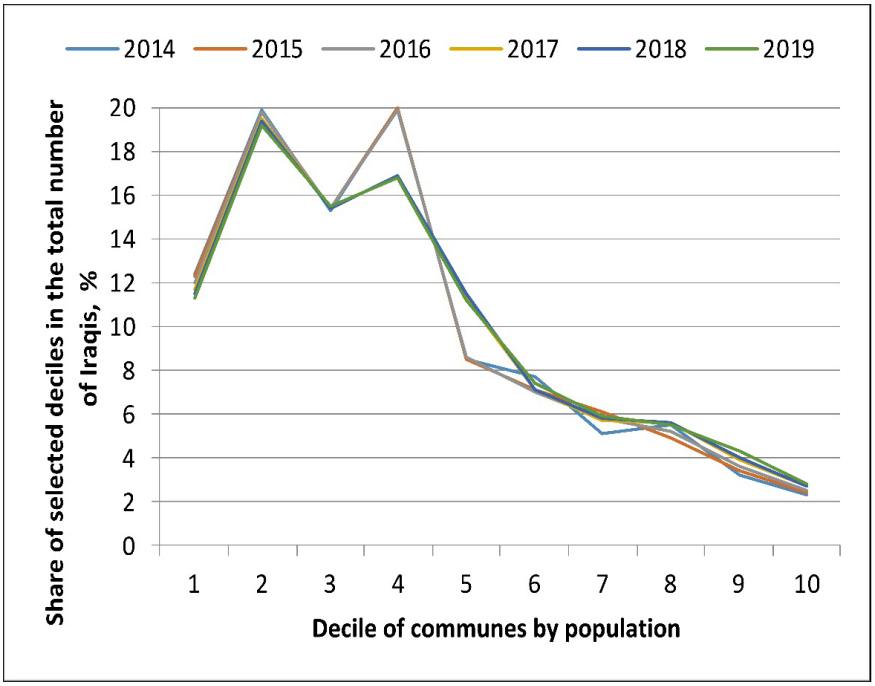

б

Fig. 2. Distribution of Syrians (*a*) and Iraqis (*b*) across deciles of communes in Sweden, 2014—2019

Most vulnerable areas are situated precisely in the country's biggest urban centres[17] (see Fig. 1). These areas are a Swedish version of the 'no-go-zones', which lately have become quite common in many European cities and which can be regarded as a form of spatial exclusion of migrant, primarily Muslim, populations in the EU countries [33]. Swedish government institutionalized the concept of 'vulnerable areas' precisely when the inflow of refugees rose sharply in 2014. The Swedish authorities divided the areas marked as vulnerable into three categories, depending on the acuteness of social problems they experience and their crime rates: vulnerable areas, risk areas, and especially vulnerable areas.

By 2019, 27.5 % of Sweden's Iraqis and 15.8 % of Sweden's Syrians lived in vulnerable areas[18], which testified to a high level of their spatial exclusion. The level of spatial exclusion was particularly high in three counties where the largest cities are situated: vulnerable areas of Stockholm were home to 47.1 % of Iraqis and 37.7 % of Syrians residing in Stockholm County; vulnerable areas of Västra Götaland had 56 % and 48.5 % of the county's Iraqis and Syrians, respectively; and Skåne's vulnerable areas was home to 34.4 % of the county's Iraqis and 30.3 % of the county's Syrians. The government marked 22 vulnerable areas with a combined population of 200,000 people as especially vulnerable: these areas include Husby in Stockholm, Ronna/Geneta/Lina in Södertälje, Hjällbo in Gothenburg, Rosengård in Malmö, Kronogården in Trollhättan and some other localities with high shares of Iraqis and Syrians among their residents[19]. Swedish authorities essentially have no control over these areas while representatives of ethnic and religious minorities perform the functions of oversight[20].

Conclusion

The precipitous growth in the number of refugees from Syria and Iraq arriving in Europe has demonstrated flaws in the migration and regional policies of the EU, whose member states have ultimately failed to work out a consensual solution to the problem of distributing the flows of refugees and settling them across the EU. The lack of solutions exacerbated the political and social tensions in the EU countries.

During the European migration crisis, migrants' resettlement within Sweden — the country that took in the largest number of refugees per capita among

[17] Swed. utsatta områden.

[18] And only 1.9 % of all Swedes.

[19] *Fakta för förändring: demografi och boende,* 2019, Stockholm: Stiftelsen The Global Village, 84 p. URL: https://theglobalvillage.se/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Fakta-för-förändring-Final-version.pdf (accessed 13.07.2022).

[20] *Kriminell påverkan i lokalsamhället — En lägesbild för utvecklingen i utsatta områden*, *Polisen,* 2019, URL: https://polisen.se/siteassets/dokument/ovriga_rapporter/kriminell-paverkan-i-lokalsamhallet.pdf (accessed 13.07.2022).

all EU states — was characterized by spatial deconcentration. The deconcentration trend was especially strong in the Syrian migrant community, reaching its peak in 2016, after which it reversed to a concentration trend. In turn, the settlement of Iraqis was characterized by a more uniform deconcentration throughout the period.

The convergence in resettlement on the level of communes among Swedes on the one hand and migrants from Syria and Iraq on the other took place precisely during the most active phase of the migration crisis in 2015—2016 and reached its zenith in 2017 — the first year of the reduction of the migration flow to the country. The reason for the convergence of the settlement structures of migrants and Swedes occurred the fact of newly arrived refugees' redistribution during the active phase of the crisis into small-population communes, carried out by the Swedish Migration Agency. Later, in 2018, a sharp divergence in the resettlement of these population groups began. This process was associated with the increasing role of self-organization in the resettlement of Syrians and Iraqis across Sweden, who preferred to settle in large urban communes of the country.

The prevailing trend in the internal migration of the Syrians and Iraqis has been to settle in peripheral areas of Sweden's largest cities. It is these areas, marked by the government as vulnerable, characterized by high crime rates, lack of acceptance of the host society's norms and values, and the popularity of Muslim fundamentalism and radical ideas, that are now the site of spatial exclusion of the Syrian and Iraqi migrant populations.

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ETHNIC MINORITY ORGANISATIONS IN RUSSIA AND POLAND: A COMPARISON CHALLENGE

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This article proposes a framework for classifying ethnic minority organisations based on a broad combination of discursive and non-discursive criteria rooted in their political opportunities profile. One diasporic and one non-diasporic organisation were chosen for Russia and Poland, respectively. Diasporicity is understood according to William Safran's criteria and Rogers Brubaker's triadic configuration. The Russian study cases are Komi Voityr and the Russian Polish Congress; the Polish, the Silesian Autonomy Movement and the Belarussian House. The analysis of their status, activities, domestic and external political impact, localisation and role in the 'triadic configuration' has shown that the four cases are ethnic minority associations, and their legal status and scope of activities differ significantly. Their domestic political opportunities are rather scarce. Out of the four cases, just one organisation is an active part in Brubaker's classical triadic configuration; its role is not traditional, ascribed to the respective 'angle'. Although both Russian associations enjoy an official status, their activities are limited to the cultural, memorial and linguistic domains, primarily at the national level. In Poland, both associations act internationally as advocacy groups, and their activities are not confined to culture and language. Far from being universally applicable, the proposed classification framework can still add to the comparative ethnic politics toolkit.

Keywords:
ethnic minority, ethnic association, ethnic politics, diaspora, Silesian Autonomy Movement, Komi Voityr, triadic configuration

Literature, methodology, and methods

Ethnic minority organisations in Russia (and the nationalism accompanying their creation and activities) were profoundly studied by Dmitry Gorenburg [1], Guzel Yusupova [2], Konstantin Zamyatin [3], Marat Iliyasov [4], to name

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just a few. The works of prominent scholars such as Raymond Pearson [5], Will Kymlicka [6], and Michael Keating [7] focused on the issue of ethnic minority nationalism elsewhere. However, in this paper, I attempt to shed some light on the difficulty that arises while trying to group ethnic associations: they differ along various criteria, and to compare some cases even within one polity, one has to take into account many dimensions of legal, discursive and political nature. Despite the great salience that is generally attributed in academic writing to the politicization of ethnicity and the activities of ethnic minority organizations [8], quite a few attempts were made to group and classify them according to some more or less universal criteria. Apart from a common distinction between the ethnic associations formed by, respectively, ethnic minorities and ethnic majorities [9], we may name quite a limited number of successful and widespread classifications: for instance, the classification of ethnic communities according to their position at the intersection of institutional resources (weak or robust) and community boundaries (permeable or impermeable) [10], or the classification of ethnic minority coalitions according to their ethnic affiliation (intraethnic or interethnic), level of operation (local, state, regional, or global), public policy sector, and declared goal [11]. In this article, we propose a framework for a classification that would be based on a broader combination of various criteria linked to the profile of an organization's political opportunities in a given polity; a framework that would combine both discursive and non-discursive, subjective and objective characteristics. Though far from being universally applicable, and taking into account the fact that any comparison of human-driven organisations is problematic because of their unavoidably dynamic nature, we hope that this classificatory framework might add to the researchers' toolkit for comparing various ethnic minority organizations.

The works by Benedict Anderson inspired me to understand ethnic community as 'imagined' in the sense that we have to imagine it, being unable to know every member of our group personally [12]. I would also agree with Walker Connor that an ethnic group may be regarded as some sort of an "extended kinship" [13, p. 202]. I would partly support Michael Banton's thesis that ethnically acting individuals usually act within a paradigm of a "rational choice theory" [14]; notwithstanding the fact that in the ethnic consciousness rationality peacefully coexists with a large degree of the irrational.

While selecting case studies for this paper, I had to choose the research design that would fit the complex nature of the ethnic structure of Eastern Europe. Neither MDSO nor MSDO applied 'properly' would perform the task

because of additional endogenous and exogenous factors. So, I decided to take two minority organizations for each of the two countries: one diasporic and one non-diasporic. Walker Connor [15, p. 16] defined diaspora as a "segment of a people living outside the homeland". To refine the definition, we should follow William Safran's criteria: the spread of the group from the initial territory of origin into external regions, collective memory about the country of origin, alienation feeling from the accepting population, the myth of a possible return to the country of origin [16, pp. 83—84]. For sure, these definitions of diaspora do not presuppose an inevitably 'ethnic' nature of a diasporic group; all diasporic identities are dynamic and multidimensional, and their 'ethnic' component might be replaced with some other indicators of "diasporicity". However, we should admit that "diaspora itself relies on a conception of ethnic bonds as central, but dynamic, elements of social organization" [17, p. 576]. In other words, diaspora is indeed an ethnic phenomenon; nevertheless, the very boundaries of "ethnic" may be understood quite broadly and beyond the primordial paradigm [see also: 18; 19].

An additional criterion may be drawn from the work by Nina Glick Schiller. She supposed that diasporic communities foster "long-distance nationalism", that is, "a set of identity claims and practices that connect people living in various geographical locations to a specific territory that they see as their ancestral home", regardless of how far it is situated from their current place of residence [20, p. 570]. Last but not least, I added a criterion made possible by the geographical closeness of the countries I was going to scrutinize. According to Rogers Brubaker, if a state is trying to become 'national', and it has a certain minority group within, it is important, whether this group has "external national homeland" that may (or may not) advocate the rights of this minority [21]. Such triadic configuration is usually expected to appear when an ethnic minority group enjoys certain support from a neighbouring state that is at the same time its "external national homeland".

Another important dimension of studying ethnic minority communities is whether what we study is an 'ethnic minority community', or, in our case, a more or less established 'ethnic minority organization'. Here I stand on Don Handelman's four-fold typology of ethnic incorporation. He famously distinguished between "ethnic category", "ethnic network", "ethnic association", and "ethnic community". In the latter case, the degree of incorporation means having standardized ethnic characteristics, cooperation along ethnic borders, corporative organisation with common goals, and territorial basis [22]. While applying

his criteria to the cases chosen, we see that the diasporic organizations do not match the last "ticking box", the territorial bases. However, all the organizations chosen for this research, match the criteria sufficiently to be called 'ethnic associations'.

To sum up, here I aim to study diasporic and non-diasporic ethnic associations partly inscribed into Brubaker's "triadic configuration". For this purpose, and bearing in mind the above-indicated criteria, I opted for comparing the "Komi Voityr" organization representing the interests of the Komi people (non-diasporic) and the Russian Polish Congress (diasporic organisation) in Russia with the Silesian Autonomy Movement (non-diasporic organisation) and the "Belarussian House" (diasporic organisation) in Poland. Russia and Poland were chosen as two neighbouring countries with a long tradition of joint co-existence in the Russian Empire and in the "Eastern Bloc", but at the same time, they are very different qua their current political systems. In the times of the Russian Empire, parts of Eastern Poland were included in the "Russian" territory. In the post-war era, the USSR directly influenced the political system of the Polish People's Republic *(PRL)*, which borrowed many features from the eastern neighbour, for instance, planned economy, ideological domination and repressive apparatus. Now, Poland is a member of the EU and NATO, and it is usually perceived (or constructed) as one of the main antagonists to the growing and threatening Russian influence in Eastern Europe. Its political system is considered far more democratic than the Russian one. However recently, under the rule of the "Law and Justice" Party, the two states show many resemblances - executive authoritarianism, limitations imposed on parliaments and the judiciary, the discursive safeguarding of the so-called "traditional values", and the overall "illiberal biopolitical conservatism" [23]. I would not dare to say that, out of many examples of ethnic associations in the world, the cases selected for comparison here are the most "exemplary". Yet they bear all the necessary characteristics that enable us to illustrate, on the one hand, the difficulties associated with comparing ethnic associations across the world, and, on the other hand, the possible applicability of the comparative scheme proposed here.

All the criteria combined, we come to the four cases to be analyzed in the paper. The categorical framework allows us to define (1) the applicability of the concept of 'diaspora' to an organisation in question, (2) important characteristics of an organisation that disclose discursive rationales behind its activities, (3) external support that an organisation might enjoy, as well as its orientation inwards or outwards, (4) the organisational type, that is, whether a category of an 'ethnic association' might be applicable in a particular case. I summarized the initial features of the organisations I analyzed in the form of a table (Table 1).

Table 1

The cases selected for the study and the sampling criteria

Cases / criteria	Collective memory (Safran)	Alienation (Safran)	Myth of the Return (Safran)	Long-distance nationalism (Glick Schiller)	External national homeland present (Brubaker)	Ethnic association (Handelman)
Komi Voityr	+	+	–	–	–	+
Russian Polish Congress	+	+	+	+	+	+
Silesian Autonomy Movement	+	+	–	–	–	+
Belaruski Dom	+	+	+	+	+	+

In this paper, I attempt to look at the political opportunities of each of the four organisations. This objective should not be confused with the classic concept of the political opportunity structure (POS) formulated by Sidney Tarrow [24]. In Tarrow's view, the POS comprises assessing the openness of the political system, stability of political alignments, availability of potential partners, and political conflicts within the elite. Obviously, these factors are tightly connected to a dynamic change that might be either repressed or facilitated. I aim to indicate the core features defining the status of each association, without digging too much into the surrounding political system context (though, to a certain degree, it is inevitably required). I still call it political opportunities, because I look at what steps the associations in focus are allowed to undertake by their structural position to gain more public power and influence. Nevertheless, I think it is important to note that my research is not situated in a classical POS framework.

Methodologically, this research is a structured and focused comparison of case studies [see 25]. The comparison is based on the analysis of the external and internal context in which the associations operate, namely legal status, the scope of activities, internal and external political impact, the role in the 'triadic configuration', and localization (a more detailed description of the comparison parameters is placed in the "Comparison" section of the article). These lines of comparison make it possible to create a profile of political opportunities for each organisation, and further integrate it into an analytical framework for comparative studies of ethnic minority organisations.

Case studies

"Komi Voityr" (*Komi People* in Komi) was formed in 2002 as a reaction to the legislative collision: the republican law "On the assemblies of the Komi people" was officially revoked as inconsistent with the federal legislation, because "the assembly cannot have the monopoly to represent the Komi people" [26, p. 259]. Now, according to its statute, it is an "interregional public movement", and it does not aspire to political representation. "Komi Voityr" has branches in all districts of the Komi Republic and in some other Russian regions where Komi ethnic presence is considerable (the Yamalo-Nenets and Khanty-Mansi okrugs, the Murmansk oblast, Saint-Petersburg, Moscow) [27, p. 60]. It also enjoys the right to legislative initiative, according to Article 75 of the regional constitution of the Komi Republic (adopted in 1994), as an executive body of the assemblies of the Komi people. For sure, this right is limited to the Komi region only. In fact, it has a consultative status, comparable to the status of the "Yasavey" association of the Nenets people in the Nenets autonomous okrug [28].

The regional authorities support "Komy Voityr"'s activities as long as they do not interfere in the realm of the actual political struggle [29; 30]. The main aim of "Komi Voityr" is to support and popularize Komi culture in the republic and beyond. So, for the republican authorities, it is a body that helps to sustain its image of ethnic uniqueness, promote internal tourism as well as foster a 'special attitude' to the organisation) as an ethnic unit. In the 1990s, "Komi Voityr" took an active part in the decision-making process, especially in the issues regarding the use and allocation of natural resources, and the elaboration of cultural and linguistic policies of the republic.[1] However, now its activities are confined almost exclusively to the domains of culture and language.[2] The consultative status does not allow the organisation to act as an independent political actor promoting its candidates at the election and setting a larger agenda; nor can it transform into a political party, because the creation of parties based on ethnic or regional affinity is prohibited by the Russian laws. Article 9.3 of the Russian Federal Law on Political Parties (adopted in 2001) states that "political parties cannot be formed on the basis of professional, racial, ethnic or religious affinity". However, it has an important opportunity to act internationally as one of the representatives of

[1] Some big companies, whose activities threaten to damage the ecological sustainability of the Komi Republic, still prefer to enlist the support of "Komi Voityr", to avoid even the least possible risks. For instance, in 2015, the Komi regional branch of Lukoil (Russian energy corporation) signed a cooperation agreement with "Komi Voityr" (the agreement of this kind was also signed with the above-mentioned "Yasavey" association in Nenets Autonomous Okrug). For more detail, see [31, p. 13].

[2] See: Komi Voityr Interregional Public Movement Webpage, available at: http://komivoityr.ru (accessed 15.07.2022).

the Russian Finno-Ugric ethnic communities, even though the position of "Komi Voityr" at international Finno-Ugric congresses is usually in line with the views of the Russian authorities.

The Russian Polish Congress was launched in 1992 as a part of the global "Polonia" [see: 32; 33]. It unites 48 Polish organisations in different Russian cities. The "window of opportunities" for the Russian Polish Congress is scarcer than for "Komi Voityr". It enjoys the status of "federal national and cultural autonomy", according to the Russian Federal Law "On National and Cultural Autonomy" of 1996, and any possibility of political action is excluded. Moreover, it can hardly act as an advocacy movement because of Russian political practice. Though the Congress's leader, Halina Romanowa, is a member of a consultative body by the Federal Agency for Ethnic Affairs and of the Council for Interethnic Relations by the President of Russia, these positions are of mere symbolic significance. In fact, the Congress is excluded from the 'triadic configuration' because of this non-ability to act politically. Since Polish ethnic minority in Russia is dispersed, the Congress's activities are not concentrated in a particular location. Though both "Komi Voityr" and the Russian Polish Congress are officially registered and have a certain official status, their actions are limited to cultural, memorial and linguistic domains[3], primarily at the domestic level.

Silesian ethnic movement is based on the constructivist perception of the Silesian people that present themselves as the ancestors of the indigenous Slavic population of Silesia, i.e., a historical region situated mainly in Poland (Wroclaw, Katowice), but also partly in Germany and Czechia. In the 2011 Polish census ca. 809 thousand individuals identified themselves as Silesians[4]. As Józef Kożdoń, one of the founders of the Silesian nationalist movement, wrote, "I am not a German, but neither am I nor want to be a Pole (…). Language community is not a national community. The decisive factor is a spiritual community" [35, p. 31]. The Silesian Autonomy Movement (*Ruch Autonomii Śląska*) was formed in 1990 as an advocacy group to (re)establish the autonomy the Polish part of Silesia had before the war [36]. Officially, it is not a political party but a social movement; however, it participates in the elections as a registered advocacy group.

The main ideology of the Silesian Autonomy Movement is ethnoregionalism, i.e., the claims for more autonomy for particular regions, based on the ethnic

[3] See: Russian Polish Congress Webpage, available at: http://www.poloniarosji.ru/ru (accessed 15.07.2022).

[4] *Wyniki Narodowego Spisu Powszechnego Ludności i Mieszkań 2011. Podstawowe informacje o sytuacji demograficzno-społecznej ludności Polski oraz zasobach mieszkaniowych*. Warszawa, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 2012. S. 18. In the 2021 Census, no possibility to automatically identify oneself with the Silesian ethnicity was provided, which caused not only a certain distortion of numbers, but also a great resentment among the Silesian ethnic activists [34].

distinctiveness of these regions' population [37; 38; 39]. Classifying it as an exclusionary nationalist movement would not be correct, because the Ruch sees the Silesian people as an "inclusive, pluralist, and variative community" [40, p. 266]. In that instance, the Ruch is to be compared to, for instance, the Scottish National Party: in its discourse, "if you live in Scotland, you are taken to be part of the project that is Scotland — you are taken to be Scottish" [41].

One of the movement's main activities is the organisation of "Autonomy Marches"; the first one took place in 2007. As an organisation with a status quite similar to the one of a political party, the Silesian Autonomy Movement may exert direct influence on the Polish political system. However, since its programme is directed exclusively at a rather narrow circle of Silesian ethnic activists, it has no representation at the national level. Its activities are confined to the Silesian Voivodeship. However, even there, in the Silesian Regional Assembly, the movement was present in 2010—2018 only, with three to four seats. In the incumbent assembly, no seats are allocated to the Ruch. The movement is one of the founding bodies of the Silesian Regional Party (*ŚPR*, established in 2017), which has no representation at any level of governance. Its programme covers various aspects of self-government; hence, it stretches far beyond cultural and linguistic issues. The Movement acts internationally in the framework of the European Free Alliance, an umbrella organisation for independence- or autonomy-seeking parties in Europe [42; 43]; the Alliance is also present in the European Parliament, as a part of the Greens-EFA political group (though the Silesian actors are not represented in the EP directly). The Ruch has several sister organisations in Europe, such as the "Initiative for the Silesian Autonomy" (Germany) and the "Silesian Autonomy Movement" (United Kingdom).

The "Belarusian House" (*Belaruski Dom*) is officially a foundation (*fundacja,* non-governmental organisation), without specific mention in the Polish legal system. It was officially set up in Warsaw in 2012. It maintains close cooperation with other Belarusian diasporic communities. As a non-governmental organisation, the *Belaruski Dom* does not have a direct opportunity to influence Polish internal politics, but it acts broadly as an advocacy group and presents itself as an "alternative embassy" opposed to the current Minsk representatives, with its primary aim "to serve Belarus, not the diaspora" [44]. It is an active part of the "triadic configuration", though it does not perform a classical role ascribed to an ethnic minority organisation; or rather, the Belarusian state in this configuration does not perform the role that is classical for an "external national homeland". Conventionally, some form of cooperation between these two elements of the triadic configuration is anticipated. In the Polish-Belarusian case, it is not cooperation but rivalry, since the incumbent political regime in Belarus is seen as oppressive, and the *Belaruski Dom* tries to create an alternative image of Belarus that should not be associated with the rule of Aliaksandr Lukashenka [45].

After the 2020 post-election protests in Belarus, the *Belaruski Dom* organized numerous campaigns to support political prisoners and other opposition activists in terms of financing, medical care and consultations. It also organized the meeting of opposition leader, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, with the diaspora representatives in Warsaw. Before and after the 2020 political crisis, the foundation organized numerous cultural and educational activities, such as educational visits to Poland for Belarusian citizens, meetings with Belarusian diasporic writers and journalists, as well as solidarity actions with the people of Belarus. The *Belaruski Dom* also acts internationally, especially in the framework of different EU programmes, such as Erasmus+[5]; for instance, in the summer of 2022 only, the *Dom* organized an educational trip to the European Parliament for Belarussian citizens, meetings with the US Ambassador to Poland, a Lithuanian MEP, and a number of meetings with the Polish MPs, as well as EU4Belarus — SALT funding competition. It might seem that the activities of *Belaruski Dom* do not encompass the Belarusian diaspora in Poland in its broadest; however, it's obvious that these activities are not confined to the youth and students, they are rather directed towards various segments of Poland's Belarussians, including seniors and children. Though both Silesian Autonomy Movement and the Belarusian House have a certain official status, their domestic influence is scarce; however, both act internationally as advocacy groups, and their activities cannot be limited to the domains of culture and language.

Comparison

To compare the cases, I prepared a table that includes the main criteria and the description of the parameters (Table 2). I opted here for such criteria as legal status, the scope of activities, domestic and external political impact, the role in the "triadic configuration", and localization of the actor. To be sure, I have not used any quantitative formulas to count down the political impact; it would be probably a useful endeavour but not a necessary one for this paper. So, all the criteria suggested and the respective results are based on a raw observation that is outlined above, in the cases section. The criteria of legal status (how an organisation is referred to in official documents), the scope of activities (number of domains where an organisation is active) and localization (geographical representativeness) are based on facts and official documents. However, the assessment of both domestic and external political impact (number and scope of an organisation's achievements in the sphere of domestic and foreign policy, official rights ascribed to an organisation according to the national documents, as well as representation in the official bodies), as well as of the role in the "triadic configuration" (correspondence of an organisation's profile with the Brubakerian model), is more dependent on my personal view of the state of affairs. Nevertheless, this personal view is based on the analysis of associations' websites, social media pages, and media presence.

[5] Belarusian House in Warsaw Webpage, available at: https://belaruskidom.eu (accessed 15.07.2022).

Table 2

Political opportunity profiles of the associations selected

Ethnic Association	Legal Status	Scope of activities	Domestic political impact	External political impact	Role in the "triadic configuration"	Localization
Komi Voityr	Interregional public movement	Cultural and linguistic	The right to legislative initiative stipulated in the regional constitution of the Komi Republic, but now is confined to cultural affairs	Representative of the Komi people in international Finno-Ugric congresses, but the agenda is similar to the official Russian position	None, since there is no "external national homeland"	Primarily the Komi Republic; several local branches in the regions with sufficient Komi ethnic presence, but there, even semi-political actions are impossible
Russian Polish Congress	Federal national and cultural autonomy	Cultural and linguistic, partly also educational	Consultative status by the Federal Agency for Ethnic Affairs, which refrains from any actions in the domain of public policy	None	Insignificant; though all the "angles" are present, since the organisation does not interfere in the political process, it can hardly be considered an active participant in the "triadic" interactions	Dispersed through ca. 50 Russian cities with significant Polish minority; not concentrated in a particular region

Silesian Autonomy Movement	Social movement, acting locally as a political party and in close association with the Silesian Regional Party	Regionalist, electoral; the program covers most public domains related to the Silesian region	An advocacy group for the Silesian autonomy; in 2010—2018, enjoyed small representation at the regional level; as in 2022, no representation at any level of governance	An active member of the European Free Alliance; maintains close relationships with other ethnoregionalist political movements and parties across Europe, including Silesian groupings outside the Polish Silesia	None, since there is no "external national homeland"	Silesian Voivodeship
Belaruski Dom	NGO, foundation (fundacja)	Human rights advocacy, education, political lobbying	Formally none; informally, the centre of the Belarusian diaspora and opposition to Lukashenka's regime in Poland	Self-proclaimed "alternative embassy of Belarus" in Poland, maintains close relationships with the EU and different international programmes, including educational and human rights projects	Highly important; acts primarily as an external actor representing the alternatives to the incumbent regime in Belarus; facilitates international contacts of the Belarusian opposition. However, the role in the "triangle" is not the classic one (defense of ethnic minority's rights in a nationalizing state)	Headquarters in Warsaw; however, also active in other Polish cities with significant Belarusian communities

Conclusion

To sum up, all the four ethnic minority associations are very different in their legal status and the scope of activities. Except for the Russian Polish Congress, the associations play an active role in external politics, while at the domestic level their political opportunities are rather scarce. Out of the four cases analyzed, just one organisation is an active part in a classical Brubaker's triadic configuration; however, the Belarusian House does not play a traditional role ascribed to a minority's "angle" in the triangle. Instead of protecting the interests of a presumably oppressed minority (Belarusians) in a nationalizing state (Poland) while conducting tight contacts with the external national homeland (Belarus), it still influences the bilateral Polish-Belarus relations, acting as an influence group pushing for political reforms and counter-regime struggle in the homeland as mentioned above. If we compare separately the two associations based in Russia, though both are officially registered and have a certain official status, their actions are limited to cultural, memorial and linguistic domains, primarily at the domestic level. In Poland, both associations under scrutiny also enjoy the official status, though their domestic influence is scarce. However, they both act internationally as advocacy groups, and their activities cannot be limited to the domains of culture and language.

The sample presented in my paper is far from being representative; however, it is the closer analysis of individual cases that helps to understand the difficulties associated with categorizing and classifying different minority associations, as well as ascribing them to certain 'ideal types'. In the analysis presented above, I demonstrate that individual features and opportunity structures should be necessarily taken into account in particular contexts while trying to build complex and large-scale generalizations. The findings of this short survey are to be further complemented with deeper thematic and discourse analysis, as well as with quantitative research strategies exemplified by a larger cross-national sample. However, I hope that a comparative strategy based on a combination of formal and discursive characteristics rooted in a political opportunities profile, may have some added value for comparative studies of ethnic minority structures.

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PRESERVE VS DISMANTLE: MAJOR TRENDS IN THE BALTICS' POLITICS OF MEMORY REGARDING SOVIET MONUMENTS AT SITES OF MASS VIOLENCE

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Another round of the Soviet 'monument fall' in the Baltics, which began in the early 2000s, continued into 2022. This process, however, has not affected Soviet memorials at the sites of mass violence perpetrated during the German occupation of the Baltics. This article aims to investigate major trends in the Baltics' politics of memory regarding Soviet monuments erected at sites of mass violence. The official policy of the Baltics towards these memorial sites has been largely shaped by the international agenda and the perception of the commemorated events. During the Euroatlantic drift, the concept of the Baltic States' past incorporated the Holocaust narrative, recoding the symbolic space of Soviet sites remembering Nazi crimes against Jews and integrating them into the national culture of remembrance. Soviet memorials at sites commemorating the tragedy of local peoples were incorporated as is into the national memorial landscape. Yet, Lithuanian authorities viewed these memorials with greater suspicion because of the Soviet countermemory, which the sites preserved. Memorials to Soviet POWs, albeit perceived as 'alien', are protected by law in the Baltics. Nevertheless, it did not save the places of remembrance from acts of vandalism. Moreover, there are trends in the Baltics towards a revision of the laws protecting the monuments.

Keywords:
politics of memory, mass violence commemoration sites, Baltics, Soviet monuments, Ponary, Salaspils memorial, Pirčiupis, Klooga

Introduction

Since the demise of the Soviet Union, relations between the Baltics and Russia have been on a downward path. Periods of de-escalation have alternated with further escalations of tensions. Alongside factors determined by concrete episodes of interstate interaction and domestic political processes, the 2014 and

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2022 Ukraine events have had a direct impact on the deterioration of relations between the countries. The political elites of the Baltic States have clearly taken a pro-Ukrainian stance in the Ukraine-Russia crisis, acting as the key voices of sanctions pressure on Russia.

The Baltics' politics of memory are largely shaped by the foreign policy agenda and rooted in the anti-Russian historical narrative, which depicts the country as the successor of the Soviet Union — the state directly responsible, as the Baltic political elites see it, for 'Soviet occupation'.[1] A clear example of the anti-Russian sentiment of the Baltics' official historical discourse is the policy towards Soviet memorial sites, which are still many in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.

The aim of this paper is to identify key trends in the Baltic States' politics of memory as regards Soviet memorials at sites of mass violence committed during the German occupation.[2]

The Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian SSRs remained under the German occupation from 1941 to 1944. A forensic report of 20 January 1946 says that Nazis murdered over 1 million people in the Baltics, including Soviet prisoners of war: 666,000 in Latvia, 314,000 in Latvia and 61,000 in Estonia [1, p. 231]. During the Great Patriotic War, the local Jews were almost completely exterminated in the Baltics by Nazis and their collaborators.[3] Squalid conditions, systematic torture and executions took the lives of countless Soviet POWs held at *Durchgangslager,* Oflags and Stalags. The same fate befell many Soviet citizens driven from the western regions of the USSR. Nazis and collaborators also perpetrated repressive practices against the local Baltic population: villages were burnt; massacres were often.[4]

In Soviet times, memorial objects — individual monuments, plaques, stones or memorial ensembles – were erected at many places of mass crime in the Baltics as reminders of the tragedies that had occurred. These monuments usually have their own aesthetic and semiotic features setting them apart from the 'heroic' Soviet legacy associated with the Great Patriotic War. For the most part, memorial objects installed by Soviet authorities rather than semi-official actors

[1] The narrative of Soviet occupation underpins official historical concepts of the Baltic States. It suggests that Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia did not join the Soviet Union voluntarily and incurred demographic and material losses when part of the USSR. That is why the Baltics regularly adopt documents demanding reparations for the losses sustained under 'Soviet occupation'.

[2] Here, we define sites of mass violence areas where the Nazis and their collaborators committed numerous crimes against civilians and POWs or created conditions leading to the death of such persons.

[3] The estimates of the number of victims amongst the Baltic Jews differ. I will draw here on the works of the influential historian of the Holocaust Anton Weiss-Wendt, who writes that 8,500 Jews were murdered in Estonia, 61,000 in Latvia and 195,000 in Lithuania [2].

[4] For more detail, see: *Pribaltika. Under the sign of swastika (1941—1945). A collection of documents* [*Pribaltika. Pod znakom svastiki (1941—1945). Sbornik dokumentov],* 2009. Moscow: Russian Ministry of the Interior Press, Kuchkovo pole.

started to appear at sites of mass violence in the Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian SSRs in the 1960s, when a tendency to emphasise the sacrifice made by the local population and the grief the war brought on them became dominant in the politics of memory of the Soviet Baltic republics. Whilst the national subtext of the 'monumental memory' of the war was coming to the fore, there were no mentions of nationality on the monuments' inscriptions: it was not Latvians, Lithuanians, Estonians, Russians or Jews who were killed, but Soviet people.

The massive wave of the 'monument fall' targeted at the Soviet legacy swept into Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia in the early 1990s. However, it did not affect Soviet memorials at sites of mass violence. This is most likely explained by the very historical episodes these objects are dedicated to. Depending on what exactly a monument commemorated, the actors of the Baltics' official politics of memory opted for one of the three strategies: integration, reworking the space around the memorial or obscurity.

Historiography

Historiographic works do not specifically examine Soviet memorial presence at sites of mass tragedies in the Baltic States. International researchers, however, have explored the fate of Soviet monuments through the lens of how Soviet memorial heritage is treated within the official politics of memory. Here it is worth noting the books by the German historian Ekaterina Makhotina from the University of Bonn, who published a number of works in Russian and German on the history of Soviet museums, memorials and military monuments in pre-Soviet and post-Soviet Lithuania [3—6]. The Soviet war memorial heritage in Lithuania is analysed in the collective monograph *Soldiers. Concrete. Myth. Burial Places of Soviet World War II Soldiers in Lithuania*, which discusses the conflict potential of Soviet monuments [7]. The reflection on the Bronze Soldier events of 2008 has inspired several overview studies focusing on Soviet monuments in Estonia and the attitude of the Estonian authorities and society towards them [8—10]. The Latvian scholar Vita Zelče has considered Soviet monuments as a space conducive to the institutionalisation of political activities by the local Russophone community [11, p. 30]. Russian historiography mainly focuses on general trends in the Baltics' politics of memory [12; 13] and, as a rule, touches on the topic of Soviet monuments in passing and mostly as regards the Bronze Soldier episode [14; 15]. Some aspects of the official memorial policy in Latvia are discussed by Vladimir Simindey [16]; in Lithuania, by Tamara Guzenkova et al. [17].

Total recoding: the fate of Soviet sites commemorating the Holocaust

As noted above, attitudes towards Soviet monuments erected at sites of mass violence in the Baltics depended primarily on the events they are dedicated to. I will first consider the group of sites commemorating the Holocaust.

Many Jews were exterminated in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia during the German occupation. Although neither fact nor the episodes of collaboration were visible in either all-union or regional discourse, official places of remembrance dedicated to the Holocaust were created in the Soviet Baltic republics. In Estonia, this was the monument in Klooga, in Latvia, a plaque in Rumbula and, in Lithuania, memorials at the Ninth Fort in Kaunas and in Paneriai in the environs of Vilnius. It is important to stress that the Soviet Union viewed the Holocaust as crimes committed by Nazi invaders against citizens of the Soviet Union, without emphasising the ethnic component. And this interpretation is conveyed by the study places of remembrance.

The 'monument fall' of the early 1990s did not affect the Soviet heritage bearing on the Holocaust, despite the dubious Soviet 'pedigree' of these memorials and the participation of some of the locals in the anti-Jewish acts commemorated by such sites. In the mid-1990s, an important precedent of a symbolic nature took place against the backdrop of the semi-official commemoration tradition started by Baltic Jewish organisations: President of Lithuania Algirdas Brazauskas repented for the crimes committed by Lithuanians during the war. Yet, in official discourse, the traumatic past was forgotten rather than processed [18, p. 436]. The emphasis was placed on collective victimisation rooted in the narrative of the Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians being the main 'victims' of the German and 'Soviet' occupation of the Baltic States. The situation changed as Euro-Atlantic integration commenced, simplifying the inclusion of the pan-European Holocaust narrative into the Baltics' concept of history. Appropriating and memorialising places commemorating the Jewish tragedy had to bring the image of the Baltics to European democratic standards. This process involved several Soviet architectural sites 'guarding' the memory of Nazi crimes.

In Estonia's Klooga, a monument was put up marking a mass grave at what was a concentration camp at the same site. The stele bore the inscription: 'To the eternal memory of the victims of Nazism'. Public events commemorating those who fell victim to Nazi crimes were held at the site, yet they were not dedicated exclusively to the Holocaust. In 1994, at the instigation of the Jewish Community of Estonia, memorial stones appeared near the Soviet monument, from which the five-pointed star was dismantled. New memorial plaques linking to the Holocaust and the events that had taken place there 50 years ago were put up as well. Major steps towards the official memorialisation of the object were made at the peak of Euro-Atlantic integration: Estonian monuments commemorating the tragedy of the Jewish people were erected in Klooga [19]. In 2013, the memorial ensemble was reconstructed, and the open-air exhibition 'The Klooga camp and the Holocaust' was put in the same year [20]. Today, Klooga is Estonia's principal site commemorating the Holocaust. It is officially incorporated into Estonia's culture

of remembrance, effectively distanced from the Soviet legacy. Remarkably, the five-pointed star mounted on the stele in Soviet times was replaced with the Star of David [19].

In Latvia, the major Soviet site commemorating the Holocaust was the Rumbula forest in the environs of Riga, where thousands of Jews were murdered at the end of 1941. A memorial stone dedicated to the victims of the massacre was put up in the forest in 1964 on the initiative of Jewish activists. The engraving read: 'To the victims of Nazism'. All this was perfectly in line with official Soviet discourse, which neglected the ethnic nature of Nazi crimes. The inscription, however, bore the signs of the authorities' leniency: it was made not only in Russian and Latvian but also Yiddish. When working towards Euro-Atlantic integration, the country rethought the space surrounding this place of remembrance: a full-scale memorial ensemble was constructed in Rumbula in 2002, funded by the Latvian state and international non-profits.[5] What is remarkable is that the stones at the entrance have inscriptions in Latvian, German, English and Yiddish, telling the story of the massacre.[6] Yet, no room was found for information in Russian despite the substantial size of the Russian-speaking community in Latvia.

Lithuania has many Holocaust memorial sites, which is not surprising as over 90 % of the local Jewish population perished under the German occupation [21]. During the Soviet era, one of the key sites of remembrance of mass violence in the republic was Paneriai, where the Germans and their collaborators murdered Jews, Soviet POWs, and all undesirables. After the war, in 1948, the Jewish community sponsored the erection of an obelisk, which was reconstructed four years later. It was unique in that it had inscriptions in three languages: Russian, Yiddish and Hebrew. The monument, they read, was dedicated to the murdered Jews of Vilna and other places. A wave of criticism came from Moscow, and, in the early 1960s the monument was Sovietised: the new obelisk said in Russian and Lithuanian that it was erected to commemorate the victims of Nazism [5, p. 99—101]. At the same time, the Museum of Nazi Terror was opened at the sight [5, p. 69].

In the early 1990s, the place of remembrance was transformed from an official Soviet and semi-official Jewish site into a multinational one. The Paneriai tragedy inspired many monuments commemorating the Jews, Lithuanians, Poles and Soviet POWs murdered there over the five years[7]. The place of commemoration

[5] The Rumbula Memorial, 2022, *Latvijas Ebreju Kopiena*, URL: https://jews.lv/еврейские-кладбища-и-памятные-места/мемориал-в-румбуле/ (accessed 12.06.2022).

[6] Memoriāls nacisma upuru piemiņai, 2020, *Cita Riga,* URL: https://www.citariga.lv/lat/rumbula/memorials/ (accessed 16.06.2022).

[7] Panerių memorialo ekspozicija, 2022, *Vilniaus Gaono žydų Istorijos muziejus,* URL: https://www.jmuseum.lt/lt/ekspozicija/i/188/paneriu-memorialo-ekspozicija/ (accessed 21.06.2022).

became multilayer: democratic, as it is many-voiced, and at the same time fraught with conflict because of the inconsistent symbols and images of the victims [5, p. 197]. This eclecticism emerged spontaneously rather than as a result of a coherent policy [22, p. 101].

Lithuania's national remembrance strategy is ambivalent, as can be seen in Paneriai. On the one hand, it is presented as a place of Jewish tragedy, incorporated into the country's narrative of remembrance cleansed from the Soviet memorial taint.[8] On the other, it is viewed as a site where Lithuanians themselves suffered atrocities. In 1990, a cross was erected in Paneriai to commemorate the Lithuanian victims of the German occupation; a full-scale monument was put up in 2004, dedicated to the military volunteers from Povilas Plechavičius's Lithuanian Territorial Defence Force murdered by Nazis in Paneriai in 1944[9]. With Lithuanians taking an active part in the extermination of the Jews, an attempt was made to provide a different angle on the events by adding the narrative of Lithuanians' suffering: not only the Jews were victims, but 'we' were afflicted as well. The problematic attitude to episodes of Jewish history within Lithuania's cultural memory is vividly illustrated by periodic desecrations of the Jewish monument in Paneriai.

The Ninth Fort in Kaunas is another Lithuanian site of war-time mass murder of Jews. After the war, a stone commemorating the victims of Nazism was put up near the fort with an inscription in the Lithuanian language, and in 1959 these events were museumised. The exhibitions of the Ninth Fort museum told both about the Nazi crimes and the 16th Lithuanian Division, which fought in the Red Army and the communist underground in interwar Lithuania. Jews were mentioned in the museum's narrative of the horrors of the German occupation as a group afflicted by Nazi terror [5, p. 78—81]. In 1984, a 32-metre memorial called The Way of Death, one of the largest in Europe at the time, was erected on the premises of the museum.[10] Makhotina writes that 'this monument evinces an unusual style, unparalleled in Soviet monumental sculpture' [5, p. 81]. She sees the sculpture as a fine example of the 'Lithuanisation' of Soviet monumental memory that occurred in the republic [6, p. 269].

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[8] Today, the monument to Jews in Paneriai is at the heart of the memorial, which also is the official place of commemoration of the victims of WWII in Lithuania. Members of the Lithuanian Government visit the site on 8 May, the Day of Memory and Reconciliation [5, p. 196].

[9] Paminėtos Lietuvos vietinės rinktinės karių savanorių sušaudymo 65-osios metinės (nuotraukos), 2009, 15min.lt, URL: https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/paminetos-lietuvos-vietines-rinktines-kariu-savanoriu-susaudymo-65-osios-metines-nuotraukos-56-46873 (accessed 21.06.2022).

[10] The Museum, 2022, *Kauno IX forto muziejus,* URL: https://web.archive.org/web/20220202164204/https://www.9fortomuziejus.lt/istorija/muziejus/?lang=en (accessed 22.06.2022).

In the 1990s, the area around the Soviet memorial, which was created by the famous Lithuanian sculptor Alfonsas Ambraziūnas, was completely recoded. The once-Soviet museum now functioned as a Museum of Occupation, and its concept changed dramatically: the focus shifted to the crimes of the Soviet authorities. Following this logic, the narrative of Jews as victims of the Holocaust was relegated to the background. The philosophy of the museum exhibitions was structured in such a way as to put the genocide of the Lithuanians at its core.[11] Alongside official Holocaust commemoration, the museum honours the memory of Lithuanians afflicted by Soviet rule. This is done on the Day of Mourning and Hope is observed on 14th on June and the Day of Remembrance for Victims of Totalitarian Regimes on August 23 [5, p. 139—144]. As a result, the Soviet monuments to the victims of Nazism are situated now in a symbolic space telling the story of the horrors of 'Soviet occupation'. The Soviet terror thus dwarfs the crimes of Nazism there, with Lithuanians being the main victim.

These places of Holocaust remembrance dating back to the Soviet era have been incorporated into the Baltics' official commemorative culture, using various strategies for reworking memorial spaces. In the 1990s, it was mostly Jewish organisations that stimulated and guided the work at the sites of the tragedy, but, in the early 2000s, Euro-Atlantic integration brought official state structures into the process. Whilst Latvia and Estonia sought to demote Soviet statues to less prominent positions and put up Holocaust monuments in their stead as part of transforming the memorial space, Lithuania added yet another element to the deactivation of the Soviet commemorative layer, namely the focus on the suffering of the Lithuanian people during World War II (Paneriai) and the Soviet period (the Ninth Fort). In the Lithuanian version, this symbolic space commemorates both the Holocaust and the 'genocide' of the Lithuanians.[12]

The Salaspils memorial ensemble: bound for a Latvian place of remembrance

The concentration camps where the Jews were held were not the only places of horror in the Baltics as they remained under the sign of swastika. An infamous place of mass violence was the Salaspils concentration camp, where, after the extermination of the Jewish prisoners in 1941, thousands of violators of the occupation law and Latvian opponents of Nazi rule were brought, alongside civilians deported from the USSR as part of the anti-partisan struggle. Amongst the latter were children, who were drained of blood for medical experiments [23; 24].

[11] The stories of Soviet WOPs were excluded from the narrative of the museum, except for a successful escape on 25 December 1943.

[12] The 'genocide' of Lithuanians is the central topic explored at the Ninth Fort in Kaunas.

In 1967, the impressive Salaspils memorial complex was unveiled at the site of the Nazi concentration camp. Its authors[13] were awarded the prestigious Lenin Prize. The significance of the memorial for Soviet Latvian memory culture was exceptional. According to Nikolai Surin, 'the main idea of the memorial, embodied in stone, is a protest against violence, inhumanity, war and the solidarity of fighters against Nazism'. A metronome was installed at the site, whose sounds symbolised the heartbeat of the prisoners [25, p. 606—608].

In post-Soviet Latvia, this monument to the victims of Nazism was included in the Latvian cultural canon as one the most significant works of art and national cultural values. Despite its Soviet background, it was incorporated into the official Latvian narrative. The actors shaping Latvia's politics of memory would have found it difficult to bury in oblivion this place, which was central to the Soviet concept of history, particularly given the aesthetic value of the memorial, the sensitivity of the theme and the significance of the Salaspils memorial for the country's large Russophone community. Moreover, driving the memory of Salaspils into obscurity would have provided the grounds for accusing the Latvian authorities of rehabilitating Nazism. This accusation would be unacceptable as the country acceded to the EU and national history was reworked to incorporate the general European narrative of the Holocaust into Latvia's accredited concept of the past. Unsurprisingly, the Salaspils architectural ensemble became part of the country's official commemorative culture.

Official Latvian historical scholarship, however, concentrated on the Soviet-era myths surrounding the camp, which were linked in the literature to excessive exaggeration of suffering and the propagandistic labelling of the site as a death camp. Some works aimed to debunk the myths and clichés of Soviet historiography appeared [26]. For example, the Latvian publicist and journalist of controversial reputation, Elita Veidemane, writes that the Latvian society is allergic to the Salaspils Memorial because it is a 'sacred cow' for many Latvian Russophones [27].

Thus, an attempt was made to metamorphose the Salaspils Memorial, once a Soviet object of remembrance, into both an international site and a place of national tragedy. As part of this transformation, a German POW cemetery was established near the memorial ensemble in 2008; ten years later an exhibition was put on there, co-authored by historians from the tendentious Museum of the Occupation of Latvia. The exhibition shows that the prisoners of the camp were not only civilians deported from the Soviet Union, but also Latvian political prisoners,[14] labour discipline violators, members of *Hilfspolizei* and *Ostlegionen* [27].[15] Information boards were installed at Salaspils, describing the horrors of

[13] The sculptors Janis Zariņš, Lev Bukovski and Olegs Skarainis; the architects Gunārs Asaris, Oļģerts Ostenbergs, Ivars Strautmanis and Oleg Zakamenny.

[14] In particular, the pro-US and pro-UK leadership of the Latvian Central Council.

[15] Salaspils nometne (1941—1944), 2022, *Salaspils Memoriāls,* URL: https://salaspils-memorials.lv/salaspils-nometne/ (accessed 29.06.2022).

the German and Soviet regimes,[16] which are identified within the official Baltic discourse. Yet, the episodes of collaboration and Latvian involvement in the operations of the camp are left out of the museum's narrative.

The integration of Soviet memorials dedicated to annihilated Baltic villages

Another group of Soviet war memorials to the victims of mass violence in the Baltic States comprises places of commemoration at the sites of annihilated villages. In Lithuania, the most famous Soviet-era memorial commemorating such a tragedy was built at the site of the village of Pirčiupiai, destroyed in June 1944. This memorial, opened in 1960 and consisting of the statue of a mother and walls with the names of the dead engraved on them, is a unique place: it was the first monument in the USSR to commemorate a burnt village. One of its authors, the Lithuanian sculptor Gediminas Jokūbonis, was awarded the Lenin Prize in 1963 [5, p. 72—77]. This place of memory had the same symbolic value, commemorative function and significance for the Lithuanian USSR as Khatyn did for the Belarusians. In Soviet Lithuanian discourse, the Pirčiupiai tragedy was central to the narrative about Nazi crimes in the occupied Soviet Union (for more detail, see [28]). One of the most visited memorial museums in the republic was located nearby, and the memorial site itself symbolised the cruelty of German Nazism on the Lithuanian territory and was known far beyond the republic's borders [3].

After Lithuanian independence, this memorial site was repudiated as 'alien'. According to the Lithuanian historian Zigmas Vitkus, 'when deconstructing the myth of the Great Patriotic War, Pirčiupiai was deconstructed concurrently' [29]. As a consequence, the museum was closed in post-Soviet Lithuania, and the exhibition, which had moved to the local library, was liquidated later [3]. The memorial itself has not been dismantled, despite its significance for Russian countermemory, and still has an important role as a place of remembrance: local residents and the staff of the Russian Embassy participate in annual commemorative events held at the site. Local cultural memory preserves the narrative of Nazi crimes formed by the Soviet architects of the politics of memory, whereas Lithuanian public discourse considers Pirčiupiai as a 'foreign body'. Vitkus believes that this signals a gap in Lithuanian historical policy, which developed a conventional attitude to the German occupation as an easier, more favourable period than that when the country was part of the USSR [29]. The tectonic shift in sentiments on Soviet monuments that took place in Lithuania in 2022 leads one to believe that the policy of obscurity pursued in the case of Pirčiupiai will be replaced by more active steps against the symbolism of the Soviet heritage.

The memorial in Pirčiupiai embodied the official Soviet politics of memory, whereas the sculptures at the site of the village of Ablinga in the Klaipėda

[16] Ekspozīcija, 2022, *Salaspils Memoriāls,* URL: https://salaspilsmemorials.lv/ekspozicija/ (accessed 29.06.2022).

country (it was destroyed on 23 June 1941, its inhabitants murdered) appeared in 1972 as a grassroots initiative launched by the local woodcarver Vytautas Majoras. Initially, the only reminder of the tragedy was a cement monument. It was replaced with 30 oak sculptures carved by local artisans in a folk tradition completely uncharacteristic of Soviet memorial culture. Although it was not a party project, the opening of the memorial was attended by the first secretary of the Lithuanian Communist Party Antanas Sniečkus and the minister of culture of the Lithuanian SSR Lionginas Šepetys [5, p. 81—84]. Its unconventional style made Ablinga famous throughout the Soviet Union and beyond [30, p. 76]. In 1984, a museum opened its doors in the village, telling the story of the tragedy that had occurred. Yet, there was certain ambivalence to this place of remembrance: its content corresponded directly to the Soviet narrative, whilst its execution and form reflected the Lithuanian folk tradition, a mixture of Christianity and paganism.

The memorial in Ablinga was a grassroots initiative, and its post-Soviet transformation was also carried out by the locals, having little to do with the official politics of remembrance. As early as 1985, the Virgin Mary statue was restored in an artificial grotto next to the memorial ensemble [31], becoming its dominant feature [32]. The Christian component, which remained inextricable even during the Soviet era, and the obvious folk influence safeguarded the Ablinga memorial. The Lithuanian authorities went no further than closing the local museum. Finding little interest from the Lithuanian media, the story of the destroyed village is mostly cherished by the locals.[17] Rare visits of Lithuanian politicians to the sculptural ensemble are explained not by the peculiarities of the tragedy itself, but the overlapping of commemorative dates. The speaker of the Seimas Irena Degutienė laid flowers at the monument twice: on 8 May 2010 (the Time of Remembrance and Reconciliation for Those Who Lost Their Lives during the Second World War) and 22 August 2012 (the eve of the European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism.). Remarkably, in her 2012 speech she noted that not only Nazis but also Soviet people killed during the Second World War.[18]

Latvia's counterparts of Pirčiupiai or Khatyn was the village of Audriņi in Latgale. At the beginning of January 1942 almost all of its inhabitants were shot and the village burnt down. The reason for the massacre was that one of the villagers helped escaped Soviet POWs. In 1965, the collaborators who committed these

[17] It suffices to consider the number of publications on Ablinga in the Lithuanian media over the past 20 years. According to my calculations, there are about a dozen of such texts.

[18] Atmintis, 2013, *Banga,* URL: https://gargzdai.lt/atmintis-203/ (accessed 13.07.2022).

crimes stood trial in Riga, which was widely discussed across the USSR [33]. This triggered the active phase of memorialisation of both the Audriņi tragedy and Nazi crimes in Latgale.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, monuments and memorial plaques (in Rēzekne and Audriņi) and the Ančupāni memorial (in the Ančupāni Forest) appeared in the Rēzekne region to commemorate the events. All these objects comprised a single memorial place. Commemorative events, held at these sites every year at the beginning of January, became part of the official politics of memory after Latvia's independence.[19] Having particular importance to local residents, these commemorations were also occasionally visited by the country's leadership. In 2015, Raimonds Vējonis, who would later be elected President of Latvia, participated in the events marking the 73rd anniversary of the Audriņi tragedy. When he laid flowers at the Ančupāni memorial, *Zemessardze* militia stood guard.[20]

Overall, the Soviet monuments in the environs of Audriņi were incorporated into Latvia's official memorial culture without any significant changes. This distinguishes Latvian politics of memory from those of Lithuania, where a similar story of the burnt-down village of Pirčiupiai is largely disregarded at the official level, despite the importance of the tragedy for the local population. However, given the effect of relations with Russia on the Baltics' politics of memory, one might expect that the places commemorating the Audriņi tragedy will be either recoded or consigned to oblivion.

Monuments to Soviet POWs: the 'alien' memorials

Numerous POW camps were established in the Baltics during World War II. Many prisoners lost their lives there to the appalling conditions.[21] In the first postwar decade, the USSR effectively silenced these issues. And only after the resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU On On Remedying the Consequences

[19] Audriņu traģēdijai — 80. Kad nacisti likvidēja gandrīz visus nelielās Latgales sādžas iedzīvotājus, 2022, *LSM.lv,* URL: https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/dzive--stils/vesture/audrinu-tragedijai--80-kad-nacisti-likvideja-gandriz-visus-nelielas-latgales-sadzas-iedzivotajus.a435839/ (accessed 12.07.2022).

[20] Vējonis: Audriņu traģēdija ir atgādinājums par totalitārā režīma zvērībām. 2015, *SARGS.LV,* URL: https://www.sargs.lv/lv/otrais-pasaules-kars/2015-01-05/vejonis-audrinu-tragedija-ir-atgadinajums-par-totalitara-rezima (accessed 12.07.2022).

[21] According to different estimates, out of 25,000 Soviet POWs held at Oflag 60 in Kudirkos Naumiestis, from 4,000 to 11,500 people died over the year of the camp's existence between July 1941 and July 1942 (OFLAG 60 Kudirkos Naumiestis, the years 1941—1942, 2017, *Lietuvos gyventojų genocido ir rezistencijos tyrimo centras* URL: http://genocid.lt/muziejus/ru/891/c/ [accessed 29.09.2022]).

of Grave Breaches of Law in Relation to Former Prisoners of War and Their Families was adopted in 1956, the problem merited the attention of historians (for more detail, [34]). The research was followed by memorialising the sites of mass violence against Soviet POWs, which were considered principal for the Soviet narrative. The Baltics were no exception. In the Latvian,[22] Lithuanian[23] and Estonian[24] SSRs, various memorial objects were put up in the 1960s—1970s at the sites of camps and burial grounds. What stands out is that the inscriptions on the monuments did not mention POWs, albeit often named concrete camps. As a rule (but not always), they referred to Nazis as the source of evil and gave the number of Soviet citizens murdered at the site.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, almost all of these places were put on the protected lists of the Latvian,[25] Lithuanian[26] and Estonian[27] states since

[22] The memorial at the site of the mass graves of Soviet POWs who died in Stalag 350/Z in Salaspils (1968), the memorial stone on the site of the POW camp Stalag 340 in Daugavpils (1975), the memorial at the site of the POW camp Stalag 340/347 in Rēzekne (early 1970s). (The list of monuments and places commemorating the events of the Great Patriotic War in the Republic of Latvia, 2022, Russian memorials in Latvia, URL: http://voin.russkie.org.lv/vov_pam.php [accessed 27.07.2022].)

[23] The obelisk (1951) and the memorial (1981) at the burial site of Soviet POWs held at Stalag-343 in Alytus; the memorial stone at the burial site of Soviet POWs held at Stalag 336 in Kaunas; the memorial at the site of camp Oflag-53 in Pagėgiai (1978) (German prison camps during World War II, 2022, Soldat.Ru, URL: https://www.soldat.ru/force/germany/camp.html [accessed 27.07.2022].)

[24] 4501 Terroriohvrite matmispaik, 2006, *Kultuurimälestiste register,* URL: https://register.muinas.ee/public.php?menuID=monument&action=view&id=4501 (accessed 27.07.2022).

[25] In 2008, the Governments of Russia and Latvia signed an agreement on the status of Latvian graves in Russia and Russian graves in Latvia (Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Latvia on the status of Latvian graves in the Russian Federation and Russian graves in the Republic of Latvia, 2008, Electronic Fund of Legal and Regulatory and Technical Documents, URL: https://docs.cntd.ru/document/902086902 [accessed 27.07.07].)

[26] In fact, Lithuania and Russian have not signed an intergovernmental agreement on the protection of monuments between Lithuania and the Russian Federation. Nevertheless, part of the Soviet monuments located at burial sites in Lithuania have been entered into the Register of Cultural Property and are preserved under the Law on the Protection of Immovable Cultural Heritage of 22 December 1994 (LR Nekilnojamojo kultūros paveldo apsaugos įstatymas. URL: https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalActPrint/lt?jfwid=14nhkh-1wmh&actualEditionId=zqQvRFIdmG&documentId=TAIS.15165&category=TAD [accessed 13.06.2022].)

[27] Nor is there a monument preservation agreement between Estonia and Russia. Most of the remaining Soviet memorials have been included in the register of cultural monuments and are protected by law. Moreover, Soviet memorials at war graves are protected under the law On the Protection of War Graves of 10 January 2007 (Sõjahaudade kaitse seadus, 2017, Riigi Teataja, URL: https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/12777064 [accessed 13.06.2022].)

they are located at war cemeteries. Yet, despite legal protection, Soviet memorials often become targets of unofficial acts of vandalism purportedly inspired by the official politics of memory and labelling Soviet heritage as 'alien'.

The Russian embassies to Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia do most of the work in maintaining the memorials. Albeit their opportunities were limited, in the 2000s, Russian diplomats managed not only to initiate and fund the restoration of some of the objects[28] but also put up new monuments.[29]

There were also occasional deviations in the Baltics from the dominant strand of the official politics of remembrance, with state structures funding the restoration of Soviet memorials. One of these cases was the Soviet memorial site in Pagėgiai: during the occupation, between July 1941 and July 1942, there was a camp for Soviet POWs; 24,000 people passed through it. And, according to the literature, about 10,000 of them were murdered [35]. In 1977, a memorial to fallen Soviet POWs was erected at the site of the German camp, created by the sculptor Steponas Šarapovas and the architect Gediminas Baravykas [36, p. 188]. In 1993, this object was included in Lithuania's register of historical and cultural monuments [37]. Further accounts vary: according to some, it fell into disrepair in the early 2000s;[30] according to others, it was destroyed by vandals in 2004 [5, p. 208]. This is a classic unhappy fate of a Soviet monument. Yet, the government of Lithuania allocated funds to repair the memorial as part of celebrating the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II; on 8 May 2005, Lithuania's Prime Minister Brazauskas attended its reopening [5, p. 207—208]. A new Lithuanian monument appeared at the memorial; it has the inscription 'Eternal memory to the victims of Nazism' (which is reminiscent of the Soviet tradition), engraved in Russian, English and Lithuanian. It was created by the architects Vytautas Mockus and Jonas Jankus; the engraving was done by the artist Stasys Krasauskas [37]. Uncharacteristic of Lithuania's politics of memory, this episode was altogether possible because of the influence of Prime Minister Brazauskas. An 'old school' Lithuanian leader, he had an attitude towards the Soviet Union (and Russia as well) different from that of Lithuanian nationalists. Moreover, according to the founder of the Lithuanian Military Heritage Institute Jurijus Trakšelis, Brazauskas participated in the unveiling of the Soviet memorial in Pagėgiai in 1977 [38]. Anyway, such a precedent is a clear aberration from Latvia's politics of memory.

[28] The inscriptions on the restored memorials, however, mention Soviet WOPs.

[29] For example, a memorial at the site of the Koshary camp was opened in 2006 in Lithuania; a monument was erected in 2011 in Kudirkos Naumiestis at the site where Oflag 60 and Stalag I D were located during the war.

[30] Oflager 53, 2011, *NIEKOnaujo,* URL: https://www.niekonaujo.lt/20110917/oflager-53 (accessed 15.07.2022).

Conclusion

Unlike many other Soviet places of remembrance, the memorials erected at sites of mass violence against Jews or the local population were incorporated into the official or regional commemorative culture of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. The study places of remembrance were recoded most energetically when the Baltics embarked on the Euro-Atlantic journey: the need to incorporate the Holocaust into the national concepts of history urged the architects of public policy to initiate a full-scale reworking of the symbolic spaces. Semi-official practices were superseded by the Baltic's newly formulated approaches to places commemorating mass murders.

The principal public strategy for appropriating such heritage was the comprehensive relabelling of the symbolic space surrounding the memorials. Official commemorative practices, museumification, the erection of new 'correct' monuments and information boards, and the elimination of Soviet symbols and the Russian language expedited the de-Sovietisation of such places of remembrance. In the cases of regional integration, such as those of Pirčiupiai and Audriņi, the Soviet narrative of atrocities committed by Nazis was preserved, albeit one might expect it to be eradicated in the near future.

In the new situation, the monuments built in Soviet times either remain dominant features (Salaspils, Audriņi, the Ninth Fort in Kaunas, Pirčiupiai) or were consigned to the periphery of the memorial space as new objects appeared (Paneriai, Rumbula, Klooga). At the same time, the Soviet narrative of Nazi crimes the monuments had been imbued with was transformed either into Holocaust discourse or the accounts of Soviet terror against the local population.[31] In the latter case, in spite of the mass murders having been committed by German troops and their collaborators, the focus was shifted on the responsibility of the USSR for the 'occupation' of the Baltics and unleashing World War II. Within this approach, the pre-war or post-war history replaced that of the Great Patriotic War, regardless of the fact that accusations against the Soviet Union had no bearing on the context of the places.

The Soviet legacy commemorating the episodes of violence against Soviet POWs was left out of the Baltics' memorial landscape. Nevertheless, they are protected by the laws that were adopted when relations between Russia and the Baltics remained constructive. That period saw a few cases when the authorities took part in the restoration of the Soviet military legacy, and these exceptions proved the rule. Since the politics of memory promoted by the Baltics' elites as regards Soviet memorials are largely affected by relations with Russia, which are

[31] This narrative is characteristic, first of all, of the politics of memory promoted by Lithuania.

now at the lowest point in the post-Soviet history, one might expect that the laws protecting Soviet monuments in the three countries will soon be revised and most of the statues dismantled.

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DISMANTLING MONUMENTS AS THE CORE OF POST-2014 'DECOMMUNISATION' IN UKRAINE AND POLAND

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Drawing on a wide range of sources (Polish and Ukrainian legal acts, Russian and international media), this study looks at the 'monument fall' in Ukraine and Poland as part of the post-2014 memory wars. The purpose of this article is to identify the main patterns associated with the demolition of Soviet and Russian monuments in the two countries. The 'decommunisation' of public space is an element of Ukraine's and Poland's politics of memory, enshrined in legal acts. Its driving force is the Institutes of National Remembrance, whose priorities include dismantling Soviet and pre-revolutionary Russian monuments, which came into full swing after the beginning of Russia's special military operation to denazify and demilitarise Ukraine. The official narratives allot Poland and Ukraine the role of victims of 'two aggressors' in World War II, which found themselves under 'communist occupation'. Therefore, the politics of memory of the two countries seek to get rid of the 'Soviet legacy' as the legacy of the 'occupying country'. Whilst Poland pursues 'residual decommunisation' focused on dismantling the remaining memorials to Soviet soldiers-liberators, Ukraine is committed to transforming 'decommunisation' into full-scale 'derussification'. At the same time, the process of 're-Sovietisation/Sovietisation' has been launched in the liberated territories of Ukraine. It consists in restoring previously destroyed monuments or installing new ones.

Keywords:
monument fall, decommunisation, politics of memory, collective memory, symbolic Policy, Ukraine, Poland

Speaking about the relationship between history and memory in his 2011 interview, Pierre Nora, the author of the concept of memory space, noted that memory, unlike history, is emotional: rooted in real or imaginary recollections, it is subject to manipulations, changes, suppression and disregard [1, p. 75]. According to Lorina Repina, 'the memory of events, people and phenomena of the past, which we call collective memory, not only differs between social strata and is selective, but is also variable, with a tendency towards substantial and even radical changes' [2, p. 14]. Therefore, political changes leave their mark on the symbolic structure of the urban environment, such as monuments, which may be erected or dismantled. Alterations in memory infrastructure are the key elements of the politics of memory [3, p. 48].

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The key to Ukraine's and Poland's politics of memory is the 'decommunisation' of public space. According to the Ukrainian historian Georgy Kasianov, the concept of 'decommunisation' spans a range of political actions aimed to remove the cultural codes of the Soviet past from the symbolic, political and cultural space of Ukraine, as well as to stimulate the 'the elimination, marginalisation and public condemnation of political and social groups perceived as a legacy of that regime or showing real or imagined sympathy for it' [4, p. 175]. This definition holds for Poland, where the Constitution prohibits political parties and organisations whose programmes appeal to 'the totalitarian methods and practices of Nazism, Fascism and Communism'.[1]

At the core of 'decommunisation' is the so-called 'monument fall', i.e. mass dismantling of Soviet and Russian monuments. Russia's special military operation to demilitarise and denazify Ukraine was a catalyst for another round of 'monument fall' in both countries analyzed. The phenomenon has been widespread since the spring of 2022, with regular reports of monuments being dismantled or vandalised.

Recent Russian historiography has focused heavily on collective memory [3; 5; 6], with special emphasis on Poland. Yet the topic of the 'monument fall' is not central to the research [7; 8].

Many historians have addressed the symbolic transformation of public space in Ukraine [9—12]. Particularly noteworthy is the monograph by Kasianov [13]. He takes a critical stance on 'decommunisation', drawing attention to pluralism being rejected by Ukrainian society, as well as to the ensuing of 'memory wars' [13, p. 270]. The historian Oleksandr Hrytsenko, on the contrary, positively assesses 'decommunisation', noting that this policy meets public demands and sentiments [14, p. 267]. In general, Ukrainian researchers tend to approve of the politics of memory pursued by their state.

After the reunification of Crimea with Russia, a new stage of 'memory wars' began. It is manifested in the elimination of Soviet memory narratives, the most intense in the history of Ukraine [13, p. 137]. Kasianov writes that '2014 was a turning point for Ukraine as a nationalising state' [15, p. 123]. Similar processes are underway in Poland, where Russia is traditionally perceived as an 'aggressive and backward country' papering over any controversy in its history, whilst Poland seeks truth and a 'reckoning with the past' [16, p. 139].

This article aims to identify the main patterns in the demolition of Soviet and Russian monuments in Ukraine and Poland as part of the post-2014 'memory wars'. The study draws on Polish and Ukrainian legislative acts, as well as materials in the Russian and international media.

[1] Konstytucja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, 1997, *SEJM Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej,* URL: https://www.sejm.gov.pl/prawo/konst/polski/kon1.htm (accessed 30.06.2022).

Ukraine. The 'memorial' laws

From 2013 to 9 April 2015, 'decommunisation' was carried out in Ukraine mostly by nationalistic and far-right organisations, which were not prosecuted by law [11, p. 196]. The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted a series of four 'memorial' laws, taking the campaign to eliminate Soviet monuments to the state level and thus launching a radical transformation of Ukraine's symbolic space and cultural memory [17, p. 41]. According to the law On the Condemnation of the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) Totalitarian Regimes in Ukraine and the Prohibition of Propaganda of their Symbols, the term 'symbols of the communist totalitarian regime' covers any image, monument, memorial sign or inscription dedicated to people or events associated with the communist party. In exceptional cases, the use of the symbols of the 'communist totalitarian regime' is allowed: for example, on tombstones located on burial sites and honour graves, original battle flags or documents issued before 1991.[2]

The Ukrainian Institute of National Memory has a leading role in 'decommunisation'. It works towards the 'restoration of the national memory of the Ukrainian people, the prevention of the use of symbols associated with totalitarian regimes and raising awareness worldwide about the contribution of the Ukrainian people to struggle against totalitarianism'.[3] In 2015, the Institute was reinstated as a national executive agency (it was a research institution under Viktor Yanukovich); its funding increased fourfold in 2015—2019 [4, p. 179]. And the then director, Volodymyr Viatrovich, lobbied hard for the 'memorial' laws [12, p. 132].

Along with the Institute of National Memory, 'decommunisation' is promoted by commissions under local authorities, whose task is to prepare proposals for a total revision of toponymy and 'the demolition of monuments and memorial sites associated with the communist regime' [13, p. 210].

The ambiguity of attitudes to decommunisation amongst the Ukrainians has been noted in the literature: most opponents of the policy reside in the south-east of the country [18, p. 122]. Surveys show the growing indifference to and disapproval of the nationalist narrative of memory amongst respondents [15, p. 134—136]. Kasianov cites several cases when locals displayed ingenuity in

[2] Про засудження комуністичного та націонал-соціалістичного (нацистського) тоталітарних режимів в Україні та заборону пропаганди їхньої символіки, закон України № 317-VIII від 09.04.2015, 2015, *Український інститут національної пам'яті,* URL: https://uinp.gov.ua/dokumenty/normatyvno-pravovi-akty-rozrobleni-v-instytuti/zakony/zakon-ukrayiny-pro-zasudzhennya-komunistychnogo-ta-nacional-socialistychnogo-nacystskogo-totalitarnyh-rezhymiv-v-ukrayini-ta-zaboronu-propagasndy-yihnoyi-symvoliky-no317-viii-vid-09042015 (accessed 18.06.2022).

[3] Положення про Український інститут національної пам'яті, 2020, *Український інститут національної пам'яті,* URL: https://uinp.gov.ua/pro-instytut/pravovi-zasady-diyalnosti (accessed 18.06.2022).

preserving monuments. For instance, members of the city council of Volnovakha in the Donetsk region, who did not want to demolish the monument to Chapaev, renamed it the Cossack Monument [13 p. 212].

The central component of the 'memorial' laws is the elimination of the nostalgic Soviet memory narrative from the memorial symbolic space and its replacement with a nation-centric/nationalistic one [17, p. 39] — a narrative that has become the leitmotif of Ukraine's politics of memory after 2014. All this sped up the process of 'decommunisation', the first part of which was Leninopad — the dismantling of monuments to Lenin.

The fall of Lenins

The war against monuments to Lenin has a long history in Ukraine. The first demolition took place in Chervonohrad in the Lviv region as early as 1990. In the same year, the monuments were dismantled in Ternopil, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk and some other cities and towns of Western Ukraine [13, p. 148—149]. The selective monument demolition policy continued: in 2009, President Viktor Yushchenko signed a decree striking off all monuments to Soviet leaders from the national cultural heritage register [10, p. 43].

Another round of the large-scale war on monuments to Lenin began in 2013. In December, a group of supporters of the nationalist Svoboda Party pulled down a monument in Kyiv, which was erected in 1946. Before the end of the year, several more monuments were dismantled in the Odessa, Volyn and Cherkasy regions [10, p. 49].

The dismantling of the Lenin monument in Dnipropetrovsk (Dnipro since 2016) on 22 February 2014 drew a sharp response (local authorities and the city's law enforcement officials took no action to prevent the unlawful act). On the same day, city council deputies voted to rename Lenin Square as Heroes of Maidan Square [9, p. 32].

The adoption of 'memorial' laws accelerated Leninopad. In August 2017, the director of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory Viatrovich declared that 'Lenin is completely absent on the Ukrainian-controlled territory'. He provided statistics, according to which 2389 monuments were removed during the campaign, 1320 of which were Lenin statues. Nevertheless, he added in the same interview, some monuments may have survived in the rural areas and at industrial facilities;[4] Leninopad continued. The data published on the Lenin Statues website suggest that another 60 monuments were taken off between Viatrovich's interview and June 2002.[5]

[4] All monuments to Lenin demolished in Ukraine, 2017, *Interfax*, URL: https://www.interfax.ru/world/575246 (accessed 25.04.2022).

[5] Monuments to Lenin dismantled in Ukraine since December 2013, 2022, *Lenin Statues,* URL: http://leninstatues.ru/leninopad (accessed 14.06.2022).

From 'decommunisation' to 'derussification'

Viatrovich, when holding the position of the director of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, also used the term 'decolonisation' to describe the country's attempts to detach itself from the Russian legacy: it was applied not only to Soviet monuments but also to statues of Russian pre-revolutionary personages. A vivid example is the demolition of the monument to Alexandr Suvorov on the premises of the Ivan Bohun Military High School (earlier, the Suvorov Military School) in January 2019. The acts of the general were labelled as 'ambiguous' because of his role in suppressing the uprising of Cossacks and peasants in Right-bank Ukraine in 1768—1769, exterminating the Nogais in the 18th century and putting down the Kościuszko Uprising in 1794 [19].

As Russia's special military operation began on 24 February 2022, the Ukrainian 'decommunisation' campaign turned into a'derussifcation' crusade, marking a new and more radical stage in the war of monuments: mass demolition has extended from Soviet monuments to everything reminiscent of the Russian past. In April 2022, deputies of the Kyiv City Rada representing the caucus of the Servant of the People and Holos parties suggested destroying 60 monuments and plaques commemorating Aleksandr Pushkin, Mikhail Bulgakov, Sergey Vitte and even the characters of the film *The Meeting Place Cannot Be Changed* Gleb Zheglov and Vladimir Sharapov [20].

In June 2022, Ukraine's Ministry of Culture proposed to establish a council overseeing the 'derussification', 'decommunisation' and 'decolonisation' of the republic. A priority task of the new body is monument demolition. Local authorities will be charged with the fate of monuments, which they have to decide 'in dialogue with society'.[6]

A concrete manifestation of the policy pursued by the Ukrainian authorities was the removal of Pushkin statues in Mukachevo, Ternopil, Uzhgorod and Mikolaiv. The head of Ternopil, Serhiy Nadal, when commenting on the incident, said that 'all things Russian have to be dismantled, including the monument to the Russian author'.[7] The mayor of Mikolaiv, Oleksandr Senkevich, adopted a less radical stance, noting that the monument had to be pulled down to prevent acts of vandalism.[8]

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[6] Ukraine's Ministry of Culture to create Derussification Council, 2022, *Izvestiya,* URL: https://iz.ru/1346467/2022-06-07/minkult-ukrainy-zakhotel-sozdat-v-strane-sovet-po-derusifikatcii (accessed 11.06.2022).

[7] Pushkin statue pulled down in Ternopil, 2022, *TASS,* URL: https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/14332683 (accessed 22.04.2022).

[8] Mayor of Nikolaev explains pulling down Pushkin statue from pedestal, 2022, *RBC,* URL: https://www.rbc.ru/society/21/05/2022/62891c339a79473cd1b5157b (accessed 11.06.2022).

Another instance of 'derussification' was the demolition of the monument to Grand Prince Alexander Nevsky in Kharkiv on 19 May 2022.[9] Remarkably, the statue became the target of vandalism in 2015; back then, the Kharkiv police filed a case against the perpetrators.[10] Seven years later, there was no reaction.

In 1982, the monument to People's Friendship was put up in Kyiv's Khreshchatyi Park. The bronze sculpture depicted a Ukrainian and a Russian worker holding a ribbon with the Order of People's Friendship suspended from it; the pedestal had an inscription in the Russian and Ukrainian languages: 'In commemoration of the reunification of Ukraine and Russia. The monument became a stumbling stone in 2015 when its demolition first appeared on the agenda. The move from words to deeds was made in April 2022. Now the Kyivan authorities plan to remove the sculpture of the workers and light up the arch in the colours of the Ukrainian flag.[11]

Demolition of Great Patriotic War memorials

A characteristic feature of Ukraine's national politics of memory is the revision of the history of the great Patriotic War, perceived as World War II or even the Soviet-German War [21, p. 10]; Ukraine is presented as the victim of a 'fight between two totalitarian regimes' [22, p. 42—43]. At the heart of Ukraine's policy is the demolition of Soviet military monuments, a process that intensified after 24 February.

In June 2002, the Verkhovna Rada approved the law on withdrawal from the Agreement on Enshrining the Memory of Bravery and Heroism displayed by the Peoples of CIS Member States in the Great Patriotic War of 1941—1945, signed in 2011 in Dushanbe.[12] It sought to 'protect and maintain war graves and memorials' in the countries of the agreement.[13]

[9] Alexander Nevsky statue demolished in Kharkiv, 2022, *RIA Novosti,* URL: https://ria.ru/20220519/pamyatnik-1789426015.html (accessed 11.06.2022).

[10] Monument to Grand Prince of Kyiv Alexander Nevsky taken dismantled in Kharkiv, 2022, *RBC,* URL: https://www.rbc.ru/rbcfreenews/62860ade9a7947cdc8589646 (accessed 11.06.2022).

[11] Klichko announces partial demolition of Friendship of Peoples monument in Kyiv, 2022, *RBC,* URL: https://www.rbc.ru/politics/25/04/2022/626689319a794785e9293132 (accessed 26.04.2022).

[12] Ukraine denounces agreement on enshrining memory of bravery displayed by CIS peoples in war, 2022, *TASS,* URL: https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/14695879 (accessed 11.06.2022).

[13] Agreement on Enshrining the Memory of Bravery and Heroism displayed by the Peoples of the CIS member states in the Great Patriotic War, 2013, *Official Legal Information Portal,* URL: http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001201301300008 (accessed 11.06.2022).

Nation-centric/nationalistic narratives of remembrance, which traditionally prevailed in western Ukraine, [13, p. 23] have gained fresh momentum. Many widely discussed demolitions of Great Patriotic War monuments took place in the western regions of the republic.

The memorial on the Hill of Glory, erected in 1970, suffered a peculiar fate. Several commissions were convened after 1992, agreeing to dismantle monuments or individual elements of the 'communist symbols'. In 2016, deputies of the Lviv City Council asked the city's mayor to demolish the monument. Next year, the decision was reached, justified by the 'critical condition' of the memorial [23]. A gradual dismantling began and continues to this day: in April 2022, the hammer and sickle sign and the Soviet star were removed from the Hill of Glory memorial[14]. As early as 2014, the authorities of the town of Stryi in the Lviv region initiated the removal of the statue of the Soviet Soldier the Liberator holding a child in his hands. The stele commemorating the liberators was left intact at the time but was pulled down in April 2022.[15]

Such incidents are a common sight in other Ukrainian regions as well. In June 2019, nationalists dismantled the Zhukov statue in Kharkiv. However, the head of the city intervened, and the monument was restored a month later.[16] This story continued in 2022: on 17 April, the Zhukov bust was dismantled once again, this time by militants of the Kraken nationalist unit, part of the Azov battalion (recognised as an extremist organisation and banned in Russia).[17]

At the same time, the return of the Lenin statue to the central square of the town of Genichesk in the Kherson region [24] and the restoration of the monument to liberator soldiers in Lugansk[18] marked the beginning of the opposite 'resovietisation' process, which involves re-erecting Soviet monuments. On 9 May 2022, Russia's Deputy Minister of Defence Aleksandr Kirilin reported the mass demolition of Great Patriotic War monuments in Ukraine.[19] At the same time, Minister of Culture of the Donetsk People's Republic Mikhail Zheltyakov announced the restoration and return to the initial sites of monuments removed by the Ukrainian authorities in Mariupol, Volnovakha and other towns [25].

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[14] Soviet star dismantled from Glory Hill memorial in Lviv, *RIA Novosti,* URL: https://ria.ru/20220416/lvov-1783900163.html (accessed 22.04.2022).

[15] Stele dedicated to Soviet Soldier dismantled in the Lviv region, 2022, *RIA Novosti,* URL: https://ria.ru/20220412/stela-1783039893.html (accessed 12.06.2022).

[16] Marshal Zhukov bust pulled down by radicals restored in Kharkiv, 2019, *RBC,* URL: https://www.rbc.ru/rbcfreenews/5d26d14d9a79474c3bdbdbfd (accessed 26.04.2022).

[17] Zhukov Bust pulled down in Kharkiv, 2022, *RBC,* URL: https://www.rbc.ru/politics/17/04/2022/625be2ba9a79474879213646 (accessed 22.04.2022).

[18] *Izvestiya* correspondent shows Soviet monument restoration in LNR, 2022, *Izvestiya,* URL: https://iz.ru/1325035/2022-04-23/korrespondent-izvestii-pokazal-vosstanovlenie-sovetskogo-pamiatnika-v-lnr (accessed 11.06.2022).

[19] Russia's Ministry of Defence: Ukraine dismantled hundreds of statues of Soviet heroes, 2022, *TASS,* URL: https://tass.ru/armiya-i-opk/14582675 (accessed 09.05.2022).

Poland: the legal framework of Polish 'decommunisation'

Conspicuous 'decommunisation' began in Poland as early as 1989, when a wave of street renaming and demolition of monuments to collaborators with the 'communist regime' swept across the country [26, p. 90]. Amongst others, the monument to Marshal Ivan Konev was dismantled in Krakow, along with the statue of Soviet and Polish Marshal Konstantin Rokossovsky in Legnica [27]. In 1994 in Krakow, Russia and Poland signed the agreement On the Burials and Sites Commemorating Victims of Wars and Repressions, which provided for 'the proper maintenance of commemorative sites and burials of servicemen and civilians slain, killed and martyred in the course of wars and repressions: Russian ones in the Republic of Poland, and Polish ones in the Russian Federation'.[20] In April 1997, the List of Sites Commemorating Soviet Defenders of the Fatherland Fallen on the Territory of the Republic of Poland was compiled. It contained 561 commemorative sites, including 415 memorials, 77 obelisks, 46 commemorative plaques and 23 units of military equipment. The list did not comprise burials located at military, municipal and church cemeteries.[21]

The Polish historian Antoni Dudek distinguishes two main strands of Poland's politics of memory: liberal and conservative. The former implies that the state remains neutral as regards the formation of Poles' historical consciousness; the latter requires the state to play a central role in the process, whilst politics of memory is considered a tool for strengthening the national community and an essential element of the country's foreign policy [28, pp. 35—40]. The principal vehicle of the conservative politics of memory is Law and Justice (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, PiS), Poland's national-conservative party formed in 2001. Its 2004 programme emphasised the importance of the politics of memory. The party ideologists insisted that there had been no politics of memory before, only 'national amnesia' [7, p. 171].

Having come to power in 2005, members of PiS proclaimed a 'new politics of memory', which meant a focus on historical and patriotic education in schools, instilling a sense of national dignity and the 'historical calibration' of how the Polish People's Republic is perceived. Such calibration was aimed to 'capture the essence of communism and the PPR' [29 p. 105].

In 2015, PiS won the parliamentary election for the second time; its candidate Andrzej Duda became president of the country. Once again, the ruling party

[20] Agreement Between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Poland on the Burial Sites and Places Commemorating Victims of Wars and Repressions, 1994, *Electronic Legal and Technical Documents Archive*, URL: https://docs.cntd.ru/document/420349827 (accessed 01.07.2022).

[21] List of Sites Commemorating Soviet Defenders of the Fatherland Fallen on the Territory of the Republic of Poland, 1997, *Russian Embassy to Poland*, URL: https://poland.mid.ru/documents/3987513/23059461/Перечень+мемориалов.pdf/30cdaf37-5a70-46f1-907d-07aff8625930? (accessed 01.07.2022).

showed its commitment to a politics of memory rooted in nation-centric interpretations of history and the formation of a 'patriotic and consolidated nation' [30, p. 8], whose key element is 'revealing the truth about the dark times of the Polish People's Republic' [29, p. 107].

The Institute of National Remembrance (*Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*, IPN), established in December 1998 and operating since 2000), is a major vehicle of politics of memory in Poland. Since PiS came to power in 2015, the importance of the state-funded IPN has increased considerably. According to the Institute's official website, its mission is to 'research and popularize the modern history of Poland and to investigate crimes committed from 8 November 1917, throughout the Second World War and the communist period, to 31 July 1990'. Amongst the principles defining the work of the IPN is 'the patriotic traditions of the Polish Nation's struggles with its occupants, Nazis and communists'. A part of the Institute is the Office for Commemorating the Struggle and Martyrdom, whose tasks include 'de-communising' public space.[22]

The legal framework for the 'decommunisation' of Poland is the law On the Prohibition of Propaganda of Communism or Other Totalitarian Systems, adopted in 2016 and initially aimed at banning proper names associated with 'communism or other totalitarian systems'. In 2017, The Sejm adopted amendments to the law, including a new section titled On the Prohibition of Propaganda of Communism or Other Totalitarian Systems by Monuments. This new section banned memorials dedicated to people, organisations, events or dates 'associated with totalitarian regimes'. The term 'monuments' has a very broad interpretation in the document, including burial sites, obelisks, commemorative plaques, etc. The law gave the green light to demolish practically any monument commemorating the socialist past of the Polish state. Just like in Ukraine, the law also imposes restrictions on the removal of monuments: statues located at cemeteries, those 'not on public display' or included in the state register of monuments are not on the list. It is the remit of local authorities to select monuments for removal; the final decision on demolition is made by the IPN's Office for Commemorating the Struggle and Martyrdom.[23]

Polish officials believe that the country does not violate the 1994 agreement in any way. In particular, such an opinion was voiced in 2022 by Adam Siwek of

[22] The statutory tasks of the Institute of National Remembrance, 2006, *Institute of National Remembrance,* URL: https://ipn.gov.pl/en/about-the-institute/mission/2,Institute-of-National-Remembrance-Commission-for-the-Prosecution-of-Crimes-again.html (accessed 30.06.2022).

[23] Ustawa z dnia 1 kwietnia 2016 r. o zakazie propagowania komunizmu lub innego ustroju totalitarnego przez nazwy jednostek organizacyjnych, jednostek pomocniczych gminy, budowli, obiektów i urządzeń użyteczności publicznej oraz pomniki, 2016, *SEJM Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej,* URL: https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU20160000744/U/D20160744Lj.pdf (accessed 30.06.2022).

the IPN.[24] The Russian party holds a different position. The website of the Russian embassy to Poland says that the 1994 agreement applies to 'any monument to Russian soldiers fallen in armed conflicts'.[25] Since war graves are not subject to 'decommunisation', a possible compromise would be moving the remaining monuments to cemeteries. Yet, swift 'decommunisation', complete with radical methods of implementation, gives little hope for reaching some sort of middle ground.

Demolition of monuments to Soviet liberator soldiers

World War II is at the core of Poland's politics of memory. The official narrative allots Poland the role of the 'victim of two aggressors': Germany and the Soviet Union. The Warsaw Uprising of 1944 is viewed as a turning point in the war [8, p. 453]. Poland also has a special vision of the war's outcome. Back in 2015, the head of the IPN, Lukasz Kamiński, called the end of World War II 'the beginning of new occupation and terror' in Eastern Europe (cited from [16, p. 140]).

One of the most prominent episodes involving the demolition of Soviet monuments in Poland took place in 2015, when the authorities of Pieniężno decided to dismantle the monument to General Ivan Chernyakhovsky, having previously run a fundraising campaign amongst local residents under the pretext of participating 'in a symbolic act of restoring historical truth'.[26] Put up in the 1970s, the statue was that the target of several acts of vandalism, whilst Chernyakhovsky was labelled 'the butcher of the Home Army'.[27] Fourteen years later, the decision to pull down the statue was justified in a similar way. In June 2016, the monument was fully dismantled.[28]

After the amendments to the 'decommunisation' law came into force, the scope of the 'war on monuments' expanded. Even the COVID-19 pandemic could not stall the process. According to the Russian embassy, despite the strict restrictions, six monuments to Soviet soldiers were pulled down, and eight were damaged through acts of vandalism [31].

On 9 May 2022, the websites of the IPN published an article stating that 'the activities undertaken by the USSR in 1944—45 were not the liberation of Poland but the re-annexation of nearly half of the territory of the Republic'. It also

[24] Polish authorities set out to dismantle monument to Red Army in south of county, 2019, *TASS,* URL: https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/14161033 (accessed 03.07.2022).

[25] On Russian-Polish relations regarding military memorial issues, 2016, *Russian Embassy to Poland,* URL: https://poland.mid.ru/o-rossijsko-pol-skih-soglaseniah-po-voenno-memorial-nym-voprosam (accessed 02.07.2022).

[26] A fallen monument: Polish war on monuments to Soviet soldiers, 2015, *RIA Novosti,* URL: https://ria.ru/20150917/1258230801.html (accessed 03.07.2022).

[27] Pomnik kata AK, 2001, *WPROST*, URL: https://www.wprost.pl/kraj/14620/pomnik-kata-ak.html#an_980223801 (accessed 03.07.2022).

[28] Chernyakhvosy statue fully dismantled in Poland, 2016, *TASS*, URL: https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/3389839 (accessed 03.07.2022).

stressed that the monuments erected in Poland were 'part of a coherent and intentional propaganda program' to create an image of the USSR as a liberator'. The contribution emphasises that construction of the monuments was 'ordered' by the Soviet authorities to express 'the local people's gratitude for liberation' (which did not exist in reality, according to the author of the cited article); it was merely 'image-building activities intended to disguise Soviet imperialism'.[29]

After 24 February 2022, the IPN stepped up its efforts to 'decommunise' public space. The IPN head Dr Karol Nawrocki made a statement saying that 'the removal of names and symbols promoting communism is of utmost importance', and 'there can be absolutely no consent for any forms of commemorating the totalitarian communist regime and people serving it'.[30] In other words, another round of the 'war on monuments' was declared.

It did not take long before Nawrocki's words were put into action. Seven weeks later, in the presence of the media, he participated in the demolition of the monument commemorating the Red Army in the village of Chrzowice, the Opole Voivodeship. 'There is no room for such memorials and symbols marked with the red star in the public space … because they symbolize the crimes of the communist system, the atrocities dating back to the interwar period', said Nawrocki, commenting on the dismantling.[31]

In April 2022, the IPN held a briefing in the town of Siedlce, the Greater Poland Voivodeship, where Nawrocki called the tune. The event concluded with pulling down the statue of a Red Army soldier. Monuments were pulled down in other Polish towns on the same day.[32] There were several acts of vandalism too.[33]

At the same time, Poland is organising new symbolic spaces. For example, in May 2022, a monument to 'victims of totalitarianism' was opened in the town of Prószków, the Opole Voivodeship, in the presence of the deputy head of the IPN Karol Polejowski.[34]

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[29] The meaning of the term "liberation" in Soviet and Russian narratives on the Second World War, 2022, *Institute of National Remembrance,* URL: https://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/9575,The-meaning-of-the-term-liberation-in-Soviet-and-Russian-narratives-on-the-Secon.html (accessed 03.07.2022).

[30] Statement by the President of the Institute of National Remembrance on decommunization of the public space, 2022, *Institute of National Remembrance,* URL: https://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/9335,Statement-by-the-President-of-the-Institute-of-National-Remembrance-on-decommuni.html (accessed 01.07.2022).

[31] From words to action! 2022, *Institute of National Remembrance,* URL: https://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/9404,From-words-to-action.html (accessed 01.07.2022).

[32] IPN continues decommunization of the public space, 2022, *Institute of National Remembrance,* URL: https://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/9505,IPN-continues-decommunization-of-the-public-space.html (accessed 03.07.2022).

[33] Poland is exterminating monuments to the Red Army along with its own past, 2022, *FAN,* URL: https://riafan.ru/22031585-pol_sha_iskorenyaet_pamyatniki_krasnoi_armii_vmeste_s_sobstvennim_proshlim (accessed 03.07.2022).

[34] Unveiling of the monument commemorating the victims of totalitarianism — Prószków, Opolskie province, 2022, *Institute of National Remembrance,* URL: https://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/9581,Unveiling-of-the-monument-commemorating-the-victims-of-totalitarianisms-Proszkow.html (accessed 01.07.2022).

Overall, according to the Russian embassy to Poland, 125 monuments to Soviet liberator soldiers were pulled down from 2014 to April 2022; many of them were on the 1997 list.[35] As of 20 April 2022, there were 60 such statues in Poland. The IPN, however, is committed to 'continu[ing] the campaign aimed at removing all the monuments commemorating Red Army soldiers'.[36]

Part of Poland's population, however, does not support 'decommunisation'. Both concerned citizens[37] and organisation, such as Kursk, headed by Jerzy Tyc, endeavour to protect the monuments. Members of Kursk renovated over 50 memorial objects, saved several statues from demolition and held rallies and protests.[38] The attitudes of local authorities also vary: in May 2022, the mayor of Olsztyn Piotr Grzymowicz vetoed pulling down the monument of gratitude to Soviet liberator soldiers, citing the opinion of local residents who had spoken in favour of keeping the statue.[39]

Until 2014, the nationalistic interpretation of the past, which sought to 'cleanse' Ukraine of Soviet symbols, was just one of many discourses, and it was mainly supported by the Western Ukrainian elite. Since 2014, this discourse has been dominant, and, in 2022, it finally became the foundation for Ukraine's historical concept developed by the Institute of National Memory. In Poland, the narrative of ridding the memorial landscape of Soviet legacy is part of the politics of memory as seen by the ruling PiS party and promoted by the Institute of National Remembrance.

In their official concepts of the past, Ukraine and Poland present themselves as the victims of 'two aggressors' in World War II, forced to live under 'communist occupation' afterwards. This vision is in line with the European thesis, which originates from the East of the continent, about the identity of the 'two criminal totalitarian regimes' (the Nazi and Communist ones). And this partly explains why the EU is certainly not opposed to the 'monument fall', if not pledging support for it.

Yet, there is a marked difference between the 'historical and commemorative strategies' of Poland and Ukraine. After the reunification of Crimea with Russia and the formation of the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics, about 6

[35] List of settlements in the Republic of Poland that dismantled statues of Soviet warriors-liberators, 2022, *Russian Embassy to Poland,* URL: https://poland.mid.ru/documents/3987513/23059461/Перечень+населенных+пунктов+где+снесены+памятники_рус.pdf (accessed 02.07.2022).

[36] IPN continues decommunization of the public space, 2022, *Institute of National Remembrance,* URL: https://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/9505,IPN-continues-decommunization-of-the-public-space.html (accessed 03.07.2022).

[37] Pole saves monument to vanquishers of Fascism, puts it up in his yard, 2020, *TASS,* URL: https://tass.ru/obschestvo/8085507 (accessed 12.07.2022).

[38] Kursk community (Poland), 2022, *Kursk,* URL: http://kursk-surmowka.com/ru/содружество-курск-польша/ (accessed 12.07.2022).

[39] Mayor of Olsztyn refuses to dismantle Soviet military monumet, 2022, *TASS,* URL: https://tass.ru/obschestvo/14606479 (accessed 13.07.2022).

million people whose identity can be described as Russian/Eastern Ukrainian/internationalist post-Soviet dropped out of the Ukrainian political process. This allowed the Ukrainian state to embrace the Western Ukrainian set of symbols and narratives [32] and opt for such politics of memory that occasioned a massive wave of monument demolition. An external factor, i.e. the Ukraine events of 2014, accelerated the removal of Soviet memorials in Poland; the process, however, was not widespread until February 2022.

The beginning of Russia's special military operation was used by the elites of both countries to 'cleanse' the symbolic space. The 'de-Sovietisation campaign with a slightly disguised element of derusification' [32], which was run in Ukraine, has turned into full-blown 'derusification'. As a result, several monuments were removed that had no connection to the 'communist regime'. Poland, which does not have a substantial pre-revolutionary Russian legacy or a common Soviet past shared with Russia, is performing 'residual decommunisation' — a swift and massive removal of monuments to Soviet soldiers throughout the country.

Since the Soviet and Russian discourse is competitive in Ukraine (albeit not as much after 24 February 2022: the anti-Russian sentiment has become more radical in the country since then), the architects of the national politics of memory are trying to completely 'cleanse' the space of remembrance from any Russianness/Sovietness to establish a nationalistic concept of the past. It seems likely that the recoding of Ukraine's memory space will be even more radical than it happened in the Baltic States in the early 1990s. At the same time, the current stage of the 'monument fall' can be described as emotional: many Soviet and pre-revolutionary memorial sites are being demolished. Further developments will largely depend on the course of the special military operation. It seems quite possible that the Ukrainian authorities will take a more careful approach to this process when separating 'ours' from 'theirs'.

The Soviet narrative is not a major threat to Poland's official discourse: it is not competitive because it does not enjoy massive support in the country (and its few advocates are labelled as a fringe group). Therefore, one might expect a less radical 'decommunisation' campaign. Moreover, the Soviet memorial legacy may even have a somewhat positive role: serving as 'alien' elements, they facilitate the entrenchment, and support the hegemony, of the official vision of the past promoted by PiS.

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DATA ARTICLE

INTER-REGIONAL DISPARITIES IN AGRICULTURE AND RURAL POPULATION CHANGE IN RUSSIA

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The article presents data reflecting the territorial peculiarities of rural population dynamics and shows their dependence on external factors (primarily, the development of agriculture). The database includes 14 indicators of the regional spatial differentiation of rural population development in Russia between 2010—2020. A typology of regions based on eight economic and ecological parameters is provided. The dataset covers the statistical indicators of 85 Russian regions from 2010 to 2020, published by the Federal State Statistics Service and the Unified Interdepartmental Information and Statistics System. The results are presented in seven tables and six maps. The dataset can be used by federal and regional authorities elaborating science-based rural development programmes and strategies, as well as experts on rural development.

Keywords:
rural settlement, production dynamics, inter-regional disparities, typology of regions, Russian Federation

Data characteristics

Subject area	Geography, planning and development
Data type	Tables Figures
Data collection method	The statistical data were obtained from the Unified Interdepartmental Statistical Information System (EMISS) and the *Regions of Russia. Socio-economic Indicators* official statistics publications, prepared by Russia's federal state statistics service
Data format	Raw data Grouped data
Data collection process	The data collected include key indicators of settlement, agricultural production and regional employment in Russia. The data were structured by collating statistical information and normalising it by 1,000 population. Changes in the measures were calculated

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Data source location	Central federal district (18 regions): Belgorod region, Bryansk region, Vladimir region, Voronezh region, Ivanovo region, Kaluga region, Kostroma region, Kursk region, Lipetsk region, Moscow region, Oryol region, Ryazan region, Smolensk region, Tambov region, Tver region, Tula region, Yaroslavl region, Moscow; Southern federal district (eight regions): Republic of Adygea, Republic of Kalmykia, Republic of Crimea, Krasnodar Krai, Astrakhan region, Volgograd region, Rostov region, Sevastopol; Northwestern federal district (11 regions): Republic of Karelia, Republic of Komi, Arkhangelsk region, Vologda region, Kaliningrad region, Leningrad region, Murmansk region, Novgorod region, Pskov region, Nenets Autonomous Okrug, St. Petersburg; Far Eastern federal district (nine regions): Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), Kamchatka Krai, Primorsky Krai, Khabarovsk Krai, Amur region, Magadan region, Sakhalin region, Jewish autonomous region, Chukotka Autonomous Okrug; Siberian federal district (12 regions): Republic of Altai, Republic of Buryatia, Republic of Tuva, Republic of Khakassia, Altai Krai, Transbaikal Krai, Krasnoyarsk Krai, Irkutsk region, Kemerovo region, Novosibirsk region, Omsk region, Tomsk region; Ural federal district (six regions): Kurgan region, Sverdlovsk region, Tyumen region, Chelyabinsk region, Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug — Yugra, Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug; Volga federal district (14 regions): Republic of Bashkortostan, Republic of Mari El, Republic of Mordovia, Republic of Tatarstan, Republic of Udmurtia, Republic of Chuvashia, Kirov region, Nizhny Novgorod region, Orenburg region, Penza region, Ulyanovsk region, Samara region, Saratov region, Perm Krai; North Caucasus federal district (seven regions): Republic of Dagestan, Republic of Ingushetia, Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia Republic, Republic of North Ossetia — Alania, Republic of Chechnya, Stavropol Krai
Data availability	The data are also available on Mendeley Data: Kuznetsova, Tatyana (2022), A regional-level database of rural population and agriculture in Russia, Mendeley Data, Vol. 2, doi: 10.17632/t286xfwmj6.2

Value of data

Rural areas across the world develop at different speeds. This has been linked in the literature to the national economic and political transformations [1], the state of infrastructure and market accessibility [2], natural and migration population change [3; 4] and the principal economic activity in the study area [5].

In Russia, rural development disparities are enormous. There are significant differences in settlement characteristics: population density, the share of the rural population and the population per village ratio. The economic and social indicators of agricultural development vary by region. The size and geographical features of Russia's territory, and the history of its exploration and development also have a role here. Tatyana Nefedova has categorised the factors at play into seven groups: a vast territory, diverse natural conditions, a sparse city network,

incomplete urbanisation, the vagaries of history, a centralised economy and social inequality [6]. She concludes that the key to the spatial reformatting of rural areas is their position along the 'north–south' and 'suburb–periphery' axes [7, p. 52].

Since rural areas develop under disparate conditions, different approaches should be applied to their study and management [8; 9]. The database presented in the study covers a range of indicators for measuring disparities in the development of rural population at a regional level. Linking the inequalities to the peculiarities of agricultural production and employment, this database may benefit rural development experts and the authorities in devising science-based programmes and strategies for rural development.

Methods

Russian official statistics publications containing information on rural population density, rural population as per cent of the total national population, the average number of villages and agricultural output were used to create a list of statistical indicators of settlement and socio-economic development of rural areas [10]. The data on the rural population employed in agriculture were obtained from the Unified Interdepartmental Statistical Information System for agriculture (EMISS) [11]. Growth and correlation coefficients were calculated to track changes in settlement indicators occurring in response to rural socio-economic processes.

Data description

The data cover 85 Russian regions for 2020. When comparing the change between 2010 and 2020 values, the Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol were left out, as comparable data are unavailable.

Table 1 shows the data used in the database.

Table 1

Measures of rural population development by region

Measure	Calculation method	Data source
Annual average population, 1,000 people	Raw data	Annual average resident population, EMISS, 2022, URL: https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/31556
Annual average rural population, 1,000 people	Raw data	Annual average resident population, EMISS, 2022, URL: https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/31556
Rural population as % of the regional population, 2020	Calculated as the ratio between the annual average rural population and the total annual average population	Annual average resident population, EMISS, 2022, URL: https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/31556
Rural population as % of the regional population, 2020	Calculated as the ratio between the annual average rural population and the total annual average population	Annual average resident population, EMISS, 2022, URL: https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/31556

The continuation of the Table 1

Measure	Calculation method	Data source
Annual average number of people employed in agriculture, forestry, hunting, fishing and fishery, people	Raw data	Annual average employment (calculated based on data integration) since 2017, EMISS, 2022, URL: https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/58994
Average rural population per village ratio, 2020, people	Calculated as the ratio between the annual average rural population and the number of villages (national census)	Number of municipalities, inner-city districts, city districts, inter-settlement territories and settlements, All-Russian Population Census 2020, Rosstat, 2022, URL: https://rosstat.gov.ru/vpn_popul; Annual average resident population, EMISS, 2022, URL: https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/31556
Population change, 2020, % of the 2010 value (as of the beginning of the year)	Calculated as the ratio between the annual average population in 2020 and the national population in 2010	Annual average resident population, EMISS, 2022, URL: https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/31556
Rural population change, 2020, % of the 2010 value (as of the beginning of the year)	Calculated as the ratio between the annual average rural population in 2020 and the rural population in 2010	Annual average resident population, EMISS, 2022, URL: https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/31556
Value added in agriculture, 1,000 roubles	Raw data	Gross regional product in basic prices (OKVED 2) in agriculture, forestry, hunting, fishery and fishing, EMISS, 2022, URL: https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/61497
Value added in agriculture per a rural resident, 2019	Calculated as the ratio of gross regional product in basic prices (OKVED 2) in agriculture, forestry, hunting, fishery and fishing to the annual average rural population	Gross regional product in basic prices (OKVED 2) in agriculture, forestry, hunting, fishery and fishing, EMISS, 2022, URL: https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/61497 Annual average resident population, EMISS, 2022, URL: https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/31556
Agricultural output per a rural resident, 2020	Calculated as the ratio between agricultural production across all categories in actual prices and the annual average rural population	Agricultural output in actual prices (final data), EMISS, 2022, URL: https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/43337; Annual average resident population, EMISS, 2022, URL: https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/31556

The end of Table 1

Measure	Calculation method	Data source
Agricultural output per person employed in agriculture, 2020	Calculated as the ratio between agricultural output across all categories in actual prices and the annual average number of those employed in agriculture, forestry, hunting, fishing and fishery	Agricultural output in actual prices (final data), EMISS, 2022, URL: https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/43337; Annual average employment (calculated based on data integration) since 2017, EMISS, 2022, URL: https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/58994
Contribution of the region to agricultural output, 2010, %	Calculated as the ratio between regional agricultural output across all categories in 2010 in actual prices and the national average	Agricultural output in actual prices (final data), EMISS, 2022, URL: https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/43337
Contribution of the region to agricultural output, 2020, %	Calculated as the ratio between agricultural output across all categories in 2020 in actual prices in the region and the national average	Agricultural output in actual prices (final data), EMISS, 2022, URL: https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/43337
Change in the regional contribution to the total agricultural output, 2010—2020, percentage points	Calculated as the difference between regional contribution to the total agricultural output in 2020 and 2010	Agricultural output in actual prices (final data), EMISS, 2022, URL: https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/43337
Agricultural output per person employed, % of the national average, 2020	Calculated as the ratio between agricultural output per person employed in the region and the national average	Agricultural output in actual prices (final data), EMISS, 2022, URL: https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/43337 Annual average employment (calculated based on data integration) since 2017, EMISS, 2022, URL: https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/58994
Agricultural production per capita, 2020 % of the national average	Calculated as the ratio between agricultural output per capita in the region and the national average	Agricultural output in actual prices (final data), EMISS, 2022, URL: https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/43337; Annual average resident population, EMISS, 2022, URL: https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/31556
Those employed in agriculture as % of the total rural population, 2020,	Calculated as the ratio between those employed in agriculture, forestry, hunting, fishing and fishery and the total rural population	Annual average employment (calculated based on data integration) since 2017, EMISS, 2022, URL: https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/58994; Annual average resident population, EMISS, 2022, URL: https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/31556

The Appendix contains a database of the absolute and relative measures regarding settlement, rural population employed in agriculture and agricultural output by Russian regions between 2010 and 2020. Fig. 1 shows key parameters of rural settlement as of 2020 are rural population density, rural population as per cent of the total population and the population per village ratio.

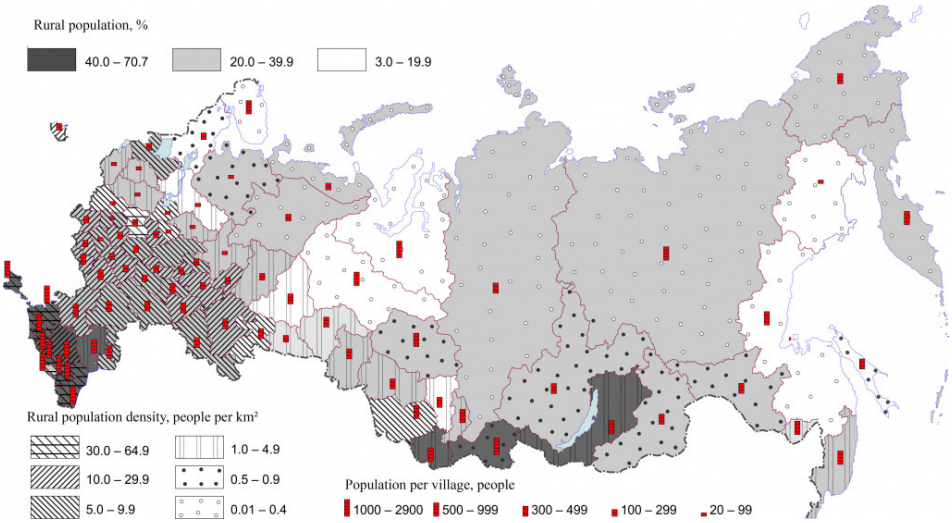


Fig. 1. Spatial features of rural settlement in Russia, 2020

Prepared based on data from [10].

The central factor in rural settlement is favourable farming conditions. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient between the annual average temperature in the administrative centre of a region and population density is 0.67; between the share of rural population and the average annual temperature, 0.51. The average population per village ratio is also affected by natural conditions: smaller settlements are usually found in non-Black Earth regions where croplands have sinuous contours and pre-Soviet settlement patterns dominate. The southern steppe regions of the country with regular cropland contours and the eastern territories, where villagers are often involved in non-agricultural pursuits, have larger settlements. In most of the northern and eastern regions, the proportion of rural population is low and so is its density (less than 1 person per km^2). In the north of European Russia, the situation is further complicated by a sparse population of local settlements and the resultant inadequate transport and social infrastructure. Although in the east, the population per village ratio is relatively high, rural settlements are still not sufficiently large to provide services of a quality comparable to that available in usually remote cities. The correlation coefficient between average population density and mean annual temperature is 0.52, compared to 0.62 for regions with more than one inhabitant per km^2.

Almost all non-Black Earth regions of Central Russia, as well as the southern territories of Western Siberia and the Far East, have a rural population density in the range of 1—10 people per km^2. The proportion of rural population is either low or close to the national average, except in the Republics of Kalmykia, Altai

and Buryatia, where it is rather high. There is a preponderance of smaller rural settlements in European Russia (albeit medium size villages are prevalent along the Volga River) and larger ones in the Asian part of the country. A peculiar is the Leningrad region, which is technically independent of St. Petersburg, but comprises with it a single territorial system.

The regions with the highest rural population density (10—75 people per km^2) are in Black-Earth Central Russia, the Middle Volga area, the North Caucasus region and the western part of the Southern federal district. Most of these territories have a high proportion of rural population. The exceptions are the highly urbanised Kaliningrad region, Moscow, Vladimir and Tula regions, the latter three strongly influenced by the Moscow agglomeration. The density of rural settlements in the southern regions is high and decreases northwards.

Rural population change

Russian regions also differ substantially in rural population change. In 2010—2020, the Republic of Adygea witnessed a 16 % increase in the rural population; the Republic of Karelia and the Kirov region, a 27 % reduction. Fig. 2 shows population change in regions differing in rural population density. As can be seen from the figure, rural population grew in the metropolitan Moscow and Leningrad region, three rapidly developing highly urbanised regions in Central Russia (Kaliningrad, Kaluga and Samara), Krasnodar Krai, several North Caucasus republics (except North Ossetia, whose rural population diminished), the Republics of Altai and Sakha (Yakutia), Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug. In the republics, the growth is due to natural increase and/or a continually high population replacement rate; in the other regions, to a positive net migration rate. The most rapid decline in rural population was taking place in the north of European Russia, as well as some regions of the country's Far East and Southern Ural,

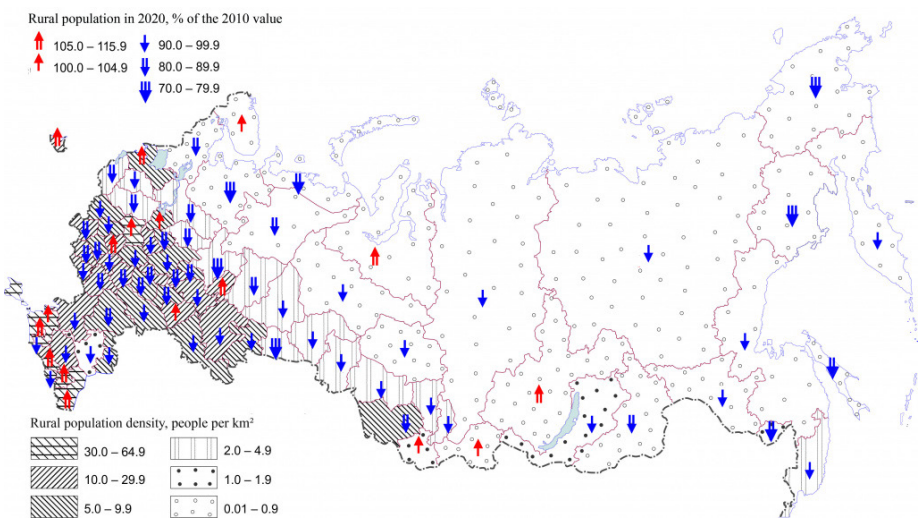
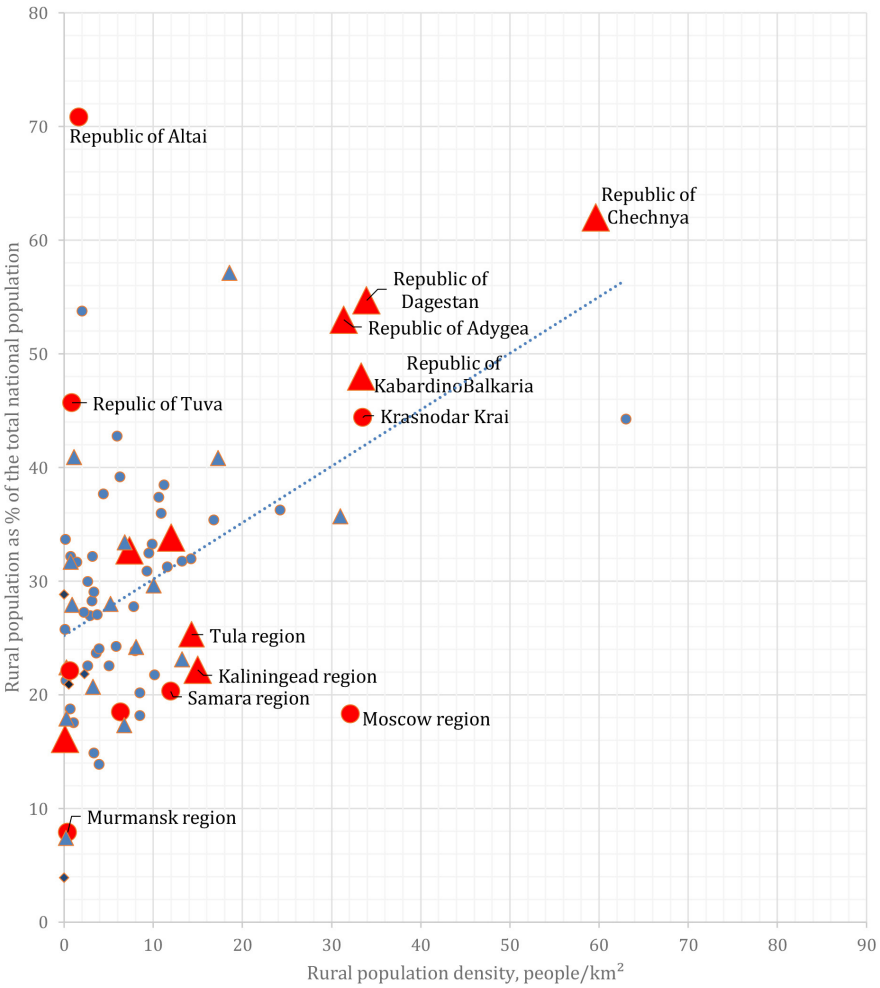


Fig. 2. Differences between Russian regions in rural population change and density

Prepared based on [10; 11].

Fig. 3 shows that rural population declined in most regions that have a rural population density of about the national average, regardless of the degree of urbanisation.[1] The reduction is due to migration from villages to towns, interregional population redistribution and age structure peculiarities.



Symbols	Rural population, 2020, % of 2010 values	Symbols	Rural population, 2020, % of 2010 values
▲	105.0—119.9	▲	95.0—99.9
●	100.0—104.9	●	80.0—94.9
		◆	70.0—79.9

Fig. 3. The distribution of Russia's regions according to some measures of agricultural development pace and rates, 2015—2019 average, % of the national average

Prepared based on data from [10; 11].

[1] There is a direct correlation between the density of a population and its contribution to the total national population, as the trend line in Fig. 3 demonstrates.

A higher proportion and density of rural population is associated with population growth, which is the case in Russia's southern regions (Fig. 3, top right). Amongst the regions that have a low density but a high proportion of rural population, the number of rural residents increased in the Republic of Altai and Sakha (Yakutia).

In highly urbanised and densely populated regions, such as the Moscow and Leningrad region, suburbanisation stimulates rural population growth. These processes were also taking place in the Kaliningrad and Samara regions, as well as Udmurtia.

Rural population change and spatial features of agriculture

There is no apparent direct connection between the change in a region's contribution to agricultural output and rural population change (Fig. 4). Therefore, it would be false to claim that population drift from rural areas has a markedly negative effect on agricultural output. In other words, Russian regions with a similar population change rate can perform differently in terms of agricultural production.

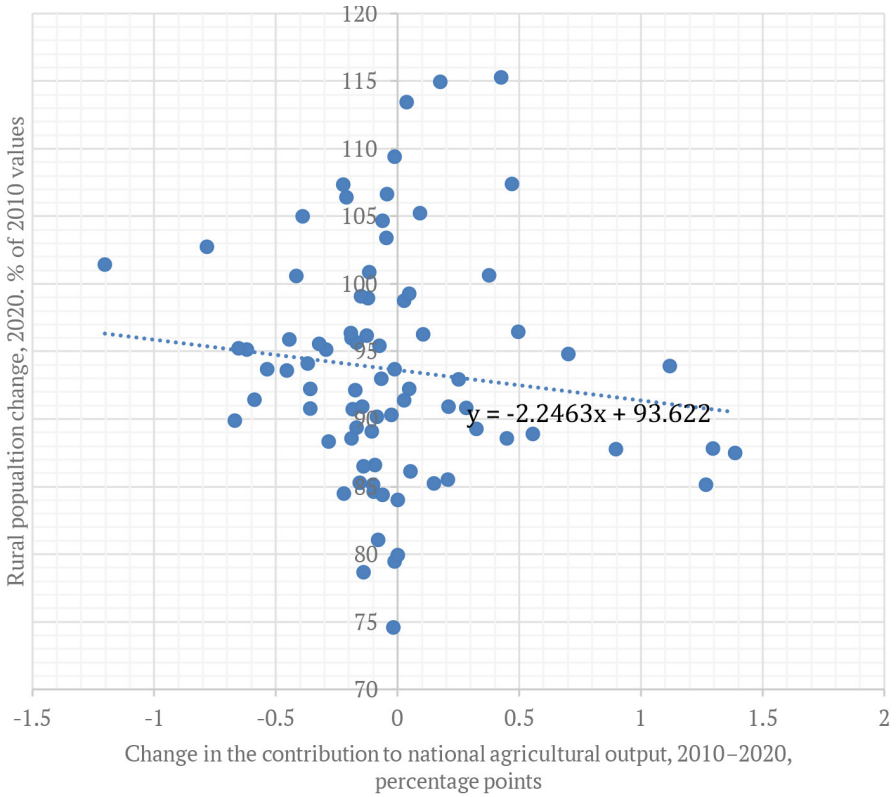


Fig. 4. Distribution of Russia's regions according to rural population change and change in their

Prepared based on data from [10; 11].

Table 3 shows Russian regions grouped according to the two measures. As can be seen, only some regions with a growing population became more visible in national agricultural output. And the contribution of economically prosperous territories with a growing population, such as the Moscow and Leningrad regions and Krasnodar Krai, diminished, the latter having extremely favourable conditions for agriculture. The opposite change occurred in the south-west of European Russia, i.e., in the regions located in the fertile Black Earth zone and outstripping other territories in agricultural output per rural resident against the background of a declining population (Fig. 5). The contribution of some agriculturally developed and densely populated republics of North Caucasus decreased.

Table 3

Russian regions grouped according to their contribution to agricultural output and rural population change

(1)*	Rural population, 2020, % of 2010 values			
	70.0—79.9	80.0—89.9	90.0—99.9	100.0—115.9
0.50—1.39	—	Kursk, Voronezh, Tambov, Penza, Oryol regions	Belgorod, Lipetsk, Rostov regions	—
0.20—0.49	—	Ulyanovsk, Volgograd, Bryansk regions	Ryazan, Orenburg, Saratov regions	Republic of Dagestan, Tula, Samara regions
0.0—0.19	Chukotka Autonomous Okrug	Republics of Mordovia, Mari El, Nenets Autonomous Okrug	Republics of Tatarstan, Ingushetia; Astrakhan, Amur, Kaluga regions	Republic of Chechnya, Republic of Adygea, Leningrad region
–0.09— –0.01	Arkhangelsk, Magadan regions	Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Tver, Sakhalin, regions, Republic of Karelia	Khanty-Mansi Autonomous region — Yugra, Kamchatka Krai, Republics of Khakassia, Kalmykia, Novgorod region	Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria, Republics of Altai, Tuva
–0.19— –0.10	Kirov region	Pskov, Ivanovo, Vologda, Kurgan regions, Jewish autonomous region, Republic of Chuvashia, Republic of Komi	Republics of Buryatia, North Ossetia — Alania, Karachay-Cherkessia Republic, Primorsky, Transbaikal Krai, Smolensk, Tomsk, Nizhny Novgorod, Vladimir regions	Yaroslavl region

The end of Table 3

(1)*	Rural population, 2020, % of 2010 values			
	70.0—79.9	80.0—89.9	90.0—99.9	100.0—115.9
–1.3— –0.21	—	Kostroma region, Altai Krai	Kemerovo, Omsk, Sverdlovsk, Tyumen, Chelyabinsk, Novosibirsk regions, Republic of Bashkortostan, Perm, Krasnoyarsk, Khabarovsk, Stavropol Krais, Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	Murmansk, Moscow, Irkutsk, Kaliningrad regions, Republic of Udmurtia, Krasnodar Krai

Comment: (1*) change in the region's contribution to national agricultural output, 2010—2020.

Prepared based on data from [10; 11].

A common trend is the concentration of agricultural production in regions with a higher per capita output (Fig. 5).

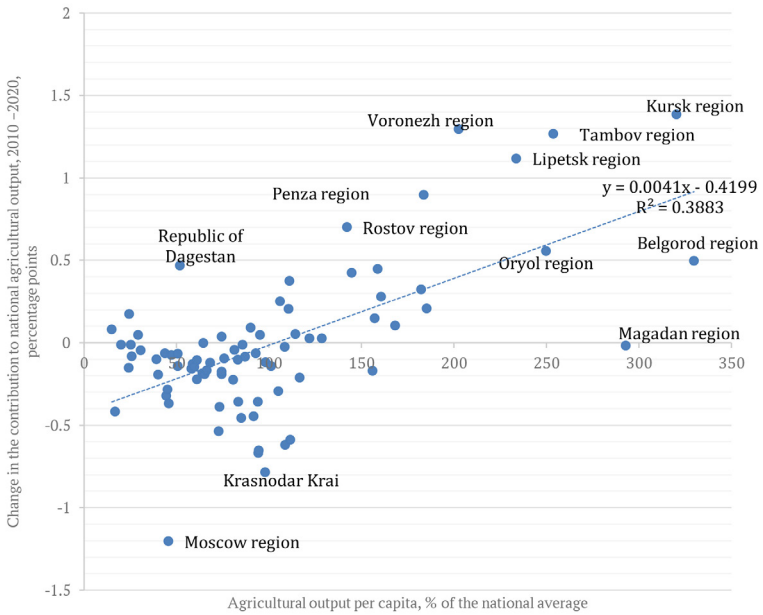


Fig. 5. The distribution of regions according to per capita agricultural output and change therein.

Prepared based on data from [10; 11].

Agricultural production grew most rapidly in central Black Earth regions with the highest per capita rates (top right in Fig. 5). This is explained by their contribution to the national output increasing faster than in other territories. In the bottom left, there are regions performing the most poorly on per capita output and production development. These are the Moscow region, where most of the population is engaged in industries other than agriculture, as well as Russia's northern and eastern territories.

As can be seen in Fig. 6, the contribution of a vast majority of Russia's northern and eastern regions to national agricultural output declined in 2010—2019. Most of these territories lag behind the national average as regards output per capita and per person employed. Yet, stronger performance on both indicators does not immediately translate into output growth above the national average. Rural population is declining everywhere in the north and east of Russia, except the Republics of Sakha (Yakutia) and Altai (due to a high birth rate) and Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug (where those employed in agriculture account for only 9 % of the rural population, the lowest percentage across the country).

The contribution to agricultural output of some southern regions with a growing population decreased as well. In most non-Black Earth regions, this reduction occurs against the backdrop of a rapid decline in the rural population.

The contribution to agricultural output increased not only in Black Earth regions proper but also in some of the neighbouring ones. All these regions are leaders in per capita agricultural output, whilst their rural population is declining.

An increase in this measure was also observed in regions where conditions are relatively favourable for agriculture. These are territories in the Middle and Southern Volga area, Southern Ural, the south of Central Russia, and the Kaliningrad and Pskov regions.

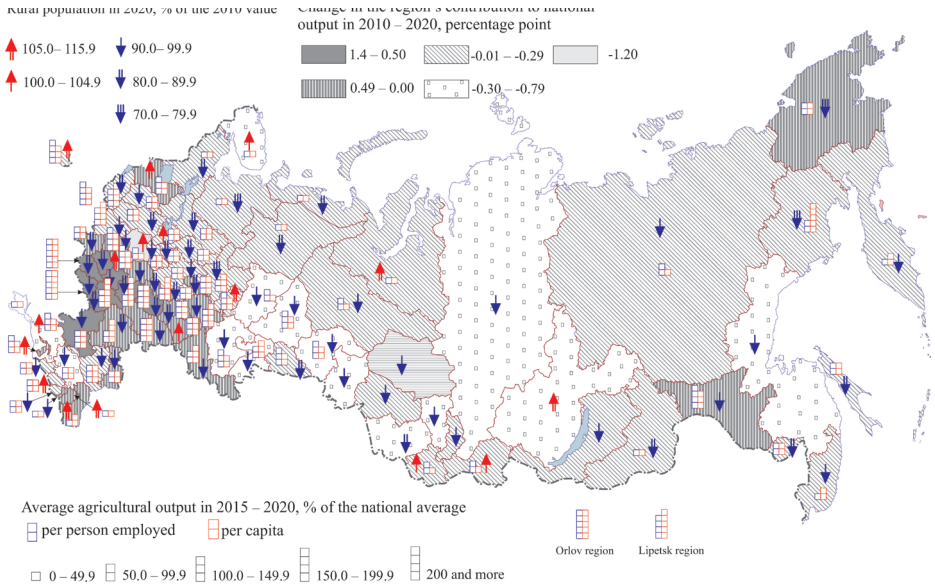


Fig. 6. Some indicators of agriculture development and rural population change n Russian regions

Prepared based on data from [10; 11].

Russian regions were divided into seven groups according to the features of rural population change, rural settlement and agriculture development.

The first three groups bring together 15 Russian regions with a growing rural population (Table 4). The groups differ markedly in settlement indicators, characteristics of agriculture development and the role natural increase and migration have in population change. Let us now consider them in detail.

Table 4

Regions with a growing rural population (2010—2020)

Region (17)	Measure*							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
National average	98.5	2.2	25.3	241.9	100	100	12.3	100
1								
1.A. Moscow region	101.4	32.1	18.5	243.9	88.4	45.8	6.4	–1.20
1.A. Leningrad region	105.2	7.4	32.7	214.9	108.3	90.2	10.2	–0.46
1.B. Kaliningrad region	106.4	15.0	22.3	210.6	150.8	116.7	9.5	0.07
2.1								
2.1.A. Tula region	115.3	14.3	25.2	106.6	171.9	144.8	10.4	0.43
2.1.B. Republic of Udmurtia	107.4	12.0	33.8	259.2	130.3	80.8	7.6	–0.23
2.1.B. Yaroslavl region	100.9	6.4	18.4	38.2	68.3	98.1	17.7	–0.10
2.2								
Samara region	100.6	12.0	20.2	489.9	107.9	111.2	12.7	0.38
2.3								
Krasnodar Krai	102.7	33.5	44.5	1465.4	136.4	98.1	8.8	–0.78
Republic of Adygea	113.4	31.4	52.8	1073.3	131.9	74.5	6.9	0.04
3								
Republic of Dagestan	107.4	33.9	54.7	1065.1	48.4	52.0	13.2	0.47
Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria	106.7	33.3	48.0	2422.6	58.6	81.4	17.1	–0.04
Republic of Chechnya	114.9	59.7	62.5	2607.3	25.9	24.5	11.6	0.17
4.1								
Republic of Altai	104.7	1.7	70.8	634.5	64.0	43.8	8.4	–0.06
Republic of Tuva	103.4	0.9	45.7	1043.5	84.8	30.8	4.5	–0.05

The end of Table 4

Region (17)	Measure*							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
4.2								
Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug	109.4	0.1	16.1	1109.5	37.7	20.1	6.6	–0.01
Irkutsk region	105.0	0.7	22.1	358.0	68.7	73.3	13.1	–0.4
Murmansk region	100.6	0.4	7.8	530.6	11.9	16.9	17.5	–0.42

Comment: *the key:
1 — rural population change, 2020, % of 2010;
2 — rural population density, people per km^2, 2020;
3 — rural population as % the total national population, 2020;
4 — average population per village ratio, people, 2020;
5 — output per person employed in agriculture, % of the national average, 2020 average;
6 — agricultural production per capita, % of the national average, 2020 average;
7 — the ratio between the number of people employed in agriculture and rural population, %, 2020;
8 — change in the contribution to national agricultural output, 2010—2020, percentage points

Prepared based on data from [10; 11].

Type 1 is represented by two metropolitan regions (Moscow and Leningrad) and the Kaliningrad region, whose rural population increases due to suburbanisation, whilst the rate of growth in agriculture is either at or below the national average.

Type 2, represented by developed regions of Central Russia with a growing rural population, includes three subtypes:

2.1 — highly urbanised industrial-agrarian regions of non-Black Earth Russia where rural population increases due to the administrative transformation of urban settlements into rural ones with the rate of growth in agriculture above (2.1. A) and below (2.1 B) the national average;

2.2 — the Samara region, which, very much like southern Black Earth regions, has large rural settlements. Its agricultural output per person employed and per capita is above the national average. The region's contribution to agricultural output increased over the study period;

2.3 — Krasnodar Krai and the Republic of Adygea, which have large rural settlements, a high rural population density, a significant proportion of rural residents in the total population and an agricultural output per capita and per person employed above the average. The contribution of these regions to the total output either reduced (Krasnodar Krai) or remained unchanged (Republic of Adygea).

Type 3 is represented by the republics of North Caucasus with large rural settlements and a high proportion and density of rural population. Output per person employed is below the national average. An increase in the rural population is due to a high birth rate and a low mortality rate (life expectancy in the territories is above that of an average Russian region). The contribution of Dagestan and Chechnya to the national agricultural output grew over the study period.

Type 4 brings together sparsely populated eastern regions with large rural settlements and the proportion of the rural population either high (4.1) or low (4.2). These regions have poor conditions for agriculture; the ratio between the number of people employed in agriculture and the rural population is low (which is especially true of subtype 4.2). Agricultural output per person employed and per capita is below the national average.

Tables 5—7 describe the characteristics of regions with a falling rural population. The types and subtypes are identified based on the same measures as used in Table 4.

Table 5

Regions with a 10 % reduction in rural population (2010—2020)

Region (36)	Measure*							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
5								
Republic of North Ossetia — Alania	96.0	31.0	35.7	1153.6	92.3	74.4	9.9	–0.19
Karachay-Cherkessia Republic	98.9	18.6	57.1	1940.2	96.1	68.3	8.7	–0.12
Republic of Ingushetia	92.2	63.0	44.3	1937.0	26.5	29.4	13.7	0.05
6.1								
Stavropol Krai	95.9	17.3	40.9	1558.7	71.4	91.9	15.8	–0.45
Astrakhan region	99.3	6.8	33.4	797.6	66.3	95.1	17.6	0.05
6.2								
Belgorod region	96.5	18.5	32.5	319.0	203.4	329.8	19.9	0.50
Lipetsk region	93.9	16.7	35.4	250.5	197.1	233.8	14.6	1.12
Republic of Tatarstan	96.3	13.3	23.1	292.5	130.5	168.2	15.8	0.10
Rostov region	94.8	13.2	31.8	588.2	108.4	142.2	16.1	0.70
Ryazan region	90.8	7.7	27.8	111.6	229.2	160.7	8.6	0.28
Kaluga region	98.8	8.1	24.2	76.0	158.3	128.7	10.0	0.03
Saratov region	90.9	5.8	24.3	329.8	163.0	185.4	14.0	0.21
Orenburg region	92.9	6.2	39.3	448.2	89.0	106.0	14.6	0.25
7.1								
Republic of Bashkortostan	93.7	10.6	37.5	332.7	123.5	72.8	7.2	–0.53
Tyumen region without autonomous okrugs	93.6	3.1	32.4	405.1	129.2	85.1	8.1	–0.46

The end of Table 5

Region (36)	Measure*							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
7.2								
Chelyabinsk region	95.1	6.8	17.3	479.6	91.4	108.7	14.6	–0.62
Novosibirsk region	95.2	3.3	20.8	383.2	106.7	105.0	12.1	–0.29
7.3								
Vladimir region	90.7	10.1	21.8	118.0	76.4	64.0	10.3	–0.19
Nizhny Novgorod region	92.1	8.4	20.3	135.7	99.2	74.5	9.2	–0.17
Smolensk region	96.2	5.2	28.1	53.7	87.5	58.8	8.3	–0.13
Novgorod region	90.2	3.1	28.4	45.6	91.4	87.2	11.7	–0.08
8.1								
Tomsk region	95.7	0.9	27.8	522.4	104.2	66.4	7.8	–0.17
Kamchatka Krai	93.7	0.1	21.4	826.5	43.2	85.7	24.4	–0.01
Krasnoyarsk Krai	95.2	0.3	22.4	384.3	78.0	94.6	14.9	–0.65
Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug	95.4	0.2	7.4	811.7	55.6	47.2	10.4	–0.07
Republic of Yakutia (Sakha)	96.3	0.1	33.8	576.1	57.7	46.0	9.8	–0.28
Khabarovsk Krai	95.5	0.3	17.9	568.5	45.8	44.4	11.9	–0.32
Primorsky Krai	90.9	2.6	22.6	687.2	39.1	59.8	18.8	–0.15
Amur region	91.4	0.7	32.2	420.5	167.4	122.0	9.0	0.03
8.2								
Republic of Khakassia	93.0	2.6	30.1	592.3	78.0	50.8	8.0	–0.07
Republic of Buryatia	99.1	1.1	40.8	654.3	46.7	24.3	6.4	–0.15
Perm Krai	94.1	3.9	24.1	174.4	74.1	45.8	7.6	–0.37
Omsk region	91.4	3.7	27.1	352.5	69.1	111.7	19.9	–0.59
Kemerovo region	90.8	3.9	13.9	346.3	132.6	94.1	8.7	–0.36
Sverdlovsk region	92.2	3.3	14.9	362.9	123.7	83.4	8.3	–0.36
Republic of Kalmykia	90.3	2.0	54.0	557.3	106.3	108.6	12.6	–0.03

Comment: * see Table 4 for the key.

Prepared based on data from [10; 11].

Table 5 describes types 5—9, where rural population decreased by 10% or less in 2010—2020.

The republics of North Caucasus (Type 5) are less urbanised than an average Russian region. They also stand out for a high density of rural population and large rural settlements. Output per person employed and per capita is above the national average.

Type 6 regions also have a high proportion and density of rural population. Rural settlements are rather large as well. Output per person employed is below the national average for type 6.1 and above it for type 6.2. Agricultural output per capita and production growth rate are above those in an average Russian region.

Type 7 regions, on the contrary, have lower rates of growth in agriculture: in 2010—2020, their contribution to the national output decreased. Type 7.1. territories are less urbanised; just like subtype 7.2 regions, they have larger-sized rural settlements. Agricultural output per capita, as well as production per person employed , is rather high. In subtype 7.2 and 7.3 regions, the degree of urbanisation is higher, and output per person employed and per capita is lower. In subtype 7.3 regions, rural settlements are usually small-sized.

Type 8 regions have a low population density; output per person employed and per capita is below the national average, with the exception of the Omsk and Kemerovo regions; production growth rates are below those in an average Russian region, the only exception being the Amur region.

Table 6 describes regions that experienced a 10-20 % population decline in 2010—2020. Amongst them, only the Republic of Chuvashia (type 10) is a developed agrarian region: its rural population density is above 24 people per km^2, with rural residents accounting for 36.6 % of the total population. Yet, in the region, output per person employed and per capita is below the national average. The contribution to the national agricultural output decreased in Chuvashia over the study period, just as it did in type 12, 13 and 14 regions, with the exception of the Pskov region (subtype 13.1). The highest production growth rates are characteristic of subtype 11.1, whose regions are the most agriculturally developed, boasting an output per person employed and per capita above the national average. Yet, the ratio between the number of people employed in agriculture and the rural population is higher for subtype 11.2, which increased its contribution to the national output over the study period. At the same time, these regions lag behind subtype 11.1 and the national average in terms of output per person employed .

Table 6

Regions experiencing a 10—20 % reduction in the rural population (2010—2020)

Region (24)	Measure*							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
10								
Republic of Chuvashia	85.3	24.2	36.5	257.2	68.0	58.1	10.5	–0.16
11.1								
Penza region	87.8	9.3	31.0	290.6	163.2	183.8	13.8	0.90
Kursk region	87.5	11.5	31.4	124.6	232.2	320.4	17.0	1.39
Oryol region	88.9	9.8	33.3	83.0	280.6	249.8	10.9	0.56
Voronezh region	87.8	14.2	32.0	436.5	141.6	202.6	17.6	1.30
Tambov region	85.1	11.2	38.5	248.0	124.2	253.7	25.1	1.27
Bryansk region	88.6	10.1	29.6	134.8	142.6	158.7	13.7	0.45
11.2								
Republic of Mari El	86.1	9.5	32.7	138.9	116.9	114.4	12.0	0.05

The end of Table 5

Region (24)	Measure*							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Republic of Mordovia	85.2	10.8	36.1	228.7	77.4	157.2	24.9	0.15
Ulyanovsk region	85.5	7.9	24.0	303.0	103.9	110.7	13.1	0.21
Volgograd region	89.3	5.0	22.6	385.7	91.7	182.4	24.4	0.32
12.1								
Altai Krai	89.9	5.9	42.9	624.1	102.9	94.4	11.3	–0.67
Kurgan region	85.1	4.3	37.7	254.6	111.4	83.2	9.2	–0.10
13.1								
Pskov region	89.4	3.3	29.1	21.7	118.6	156.0	16.2	–0.17
13.2								
Kostroma region	84.5	2.8	27.1	49.6	88.0	61.2	8.6	–0.22
Vologda region	88.6	2.2	27.3	40.2	71.0	65.3	11.3	–0.19
Tver region	86.6	3.5	23.8	31.3	63.7	75.9	14.6	–0.09
Ivanovo region	89.1	8.5	18.2	60.0	87.1	61.2	8.6	–0.10
Kirov region	78.7	2.3	22.0	66.1	68.7	101.3	18.1	–0.14
14								
Transbaikal Krai	88.3	0.8	31.7	399.1	45.9	40.2	10.6	–0.19
Sakhalin region	84.4	1.0	17.6	384.5	60.2	92.9	19.0	–0.06
Jewish autonomous region	86.5	1.4	31.5	501.3	64.6	50.8	9.7	–0.14
Republic of Komi	84.6	0.4	21.7	247.4	49.0	39.1	9.8	–0.10
Republic of Karelia	81.1	0.6	18.9	140.8	27.6	25.8	11.5	–0.08

Comment: * see Table 4 for the key.

Prepared based on data from [10; 11].

Table 7 includes northern and eastern regions with a low population density and agricultural production rates about the national average.

Table 7

Regions experiencing a 20-30 % reduction in the rural population (2010—2020)

Region (3)	Measure*							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
15								
Chukotka Autonomous Okrug	79.9	0.1	28.7	376.3	61.9	64.5	12.8	0.00
Nenets Autonomous Okrug	84.0	0.2	26.0	280.7	43.1	38.6	11.0	– 0.01
Magadan region	74.6	0.3	3.9	116.3	82.1	293.0	43.9	– 0.02

Comment: * see Table 4 for the key.

Prepared based on data from [10; 11].

Conclusion

The rural population is declining in Russia. Economic realities and concentration effects cause agricultural production and the rural population to converge on southern and metropolitan regions, which have favourable natural and socio-economic conditions. The patterns of settlement and spatial organisation of production change differently in regions of disparate socio-economic types having unique agrarian production and rural settlement features.

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