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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY



THE EFFECT OF CROSS-BORDER FIBRE-OPTIC TRANSITIONS ON THE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION CONNECTIVITY OF THE RUSSIAN CITIES

V. I. Blanutsa¹



The Russian cities are connected by many telecommunication lines. The information flow between any two cities can be sent via multiple routes, including those running through the networks of other countries. Cross-border transitions are created to connect the Russian lines with the international networks. The effect of these transitions on the connectivity of the cities has not been analysed earlier, either for Russia or for any other country. Using my own database on the Russian telecommunication lines, the Rosstat data on the cities' population, and the results of the scanning of the Internet topology, I attempt to assess the effect of these transitions on the connectivity of the Russian cities. The assessment is carried out at the physical, economic, and digital levels of connectivity. For each level, I calculate the proportion of cities and their residents interacting directly with international telecommunication networks. Of the three categories of physical connectivity, the system of the Russian cities is associated with the worst option — the exogenous connectivity. This is explained by the impossibility of connecting the Kaliningrad region with mainland Russia without using international networks. An analysis of the traffic redistribution between the core cities of the autonomous systems shows that closed flows and internal economic connectivity are predominant in Russia. The calculation of information flow delays between all the Russian cities and the cores of the national and international digital agglomerations makes it possible to establish what cities are affected by the international cores. I conclude that the cross-border transitions have little effect on the information and communication connectivity of the Russian cities.

Keywords: information and communication connectivity, cross-border transition, telecommunications line, autonomous system, digital urban agglomeration, Russian Federation

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Introduction

For any state, the connectivity of the socioeconomic objects operating on its territory is a major priority. This connectivity is obtained by creating transport and information and communications infrastructure equipped with transfer systems and control units. In a broad sense, socio-economic connectivity is the possibility for a rapid movement of energy, raw materials, goods, people, and information between each pair of spatially distributed objects. The disruption of connectivity may be viewed as a precursor of the disintegration and collapse of a state. In this article, we focus solely on the information and communications connectivity, namely, the possibility to link two objects for the transmission of information (data, sound, images) along telecommunications lines. In this case, the object may be a person, a robot (the Internet of Things), an organisation, a city, a region, or a country. Below, we analyse only the connectivity of the Russian cities, which numbered 1112 as of January 1, 2017, according to Rosstat.¹

The connectivity of the cities within one country can be supported by both domestic and international telecommunications lines. Each large state strives to control its connectivity, particularly, in order to minimise the number of domestic information flows that use the international lines. However, the geographic position, the settlement systems, and the telecommunications network configurations affect the ratio between the domestic and international lines. To understand this ratio, it is important to know the location of the junctions between these lines, the so-called transboundary links. Today, most information is transmitted via fibre optic communications lines (FOCL). Thus, in this article, we will consider only fibre optic links. Their effect on the information and communications connectivity of the Russian cities has not been studied before. This gap in the knowledge complicates the preparation of a new strategy for the information security of the Russian Federation, as well as the drawing up of the concepts of the spatial development of cities and agglomerations aimed at the technological breakthrough towards a digital economy.

The impact of international networks on the internal situation is often exaggerated due to political considerations (for a qualitative analysis of such concerns about the Internet, see [1]). Therefore, it is crucial to obtain a highly accurate quantitative assessment of the influence of transboundary links on city connectivity. Alongside the direct objective of this study, which is to assess the contribution of international resources into

¹ The population of the Russian Federation by municipalities. URL: http://www.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_main/rosstat/ru/statistics/publications/catalog/afc8ea004d56a39ab251f2bafc3a6fce (accessed 15.09.2017).

the connectivity of the Russian cities, we set a reverse objective of establishing whether it is possible to impose an international information and communications blockade by closing the transboundary links. Our primary focus will be on the direct research objective.

In this study, we rely on the ‘Communications lines of the Russian Federation’ database which we compiled based on the reports of the national communications service providers; the official websites of the communications service providers from the neighbouring countries; the Rosstat urban population data; the results of the international scanning of the Russian Internet topology from the *Expert Svyazi* (Communications Expert) website.² All the benchmark data are from January 1, 2017. The findings of the study are presented in the following order — the levels of city connectivity, the effect of transboundary links on different levels of connectivity, and the discussion of the findings with major conclusions.

City connectivity

Earlier studies have established the physical, economic, and social levels of information and communications connectivity [2]. Further studies have revealed the fourth level — the digital connectivity [3]. Below, we will analyse all these levels except the social connectivity. The lack of benchmark information relating to the interactions between the Russian citizens and their interactions with international users (this relates to the data exchange and the voice and video calls) precludes aggregation by city. Probably, such a study will become possible when the providers of all types of communications services disclose the ‘big data’ [4].

Physical connectivity is the possibility to send information from one city to any other, using telecommunications lines. If one city in the country is not connected by telecommunications lines with other cities, there is no connectivity. However, transboundary links to international networks can restore it. Of course, this requires at least two links. The affected city should be connected to one of them and the other should ensure a connection to the national network. Here, there are three categories of connectivity: self-sufficient, almost self-sufficient, and externally dependent (Fig. 1). The first category of connectivity (see Fig. 1, A) describes a situation when each city of the state has at least two communications lines linking it to the neighbouring cities. This ensures connectivity supported by domestic lines. Transboundary links contribute to connectivity (the number of routes among all the cities). In the second case (see Fig. 1, B), one line connects a city to the other cities of the state and the other line connects it with a city across the border. Although connectivity

² *Autonomous systems* (Russia). URL: <http://www.expertsvyazi.ru/index.php?id=bgpcity> (accessed 02.01.2017).

persists, it is impaired because there is always a chance that the only internal line may be damaged. If this happens, externally dependent connectivity will emerge (see Fig. 1, C). However, the above classification excludes the situation when a city is not connected to other cities by either a domestic or an international line, since this situation has nothing to do with either transboundary links or universal connectivity. A quantitative assessment of the social significance of the second or third categories can rest on the ratio between the affected cities to the total number thereof or the ratio between the population of the affected cities and the total population of all the cities. For instance, if one Russian city with a population of 10,000 people is affected, the significance of this case for the whole system of the Russian cities is 0.09% ($1: 1112 = 0.000899$) or 0.01% ($10000: 101854049 = 0.000098$).

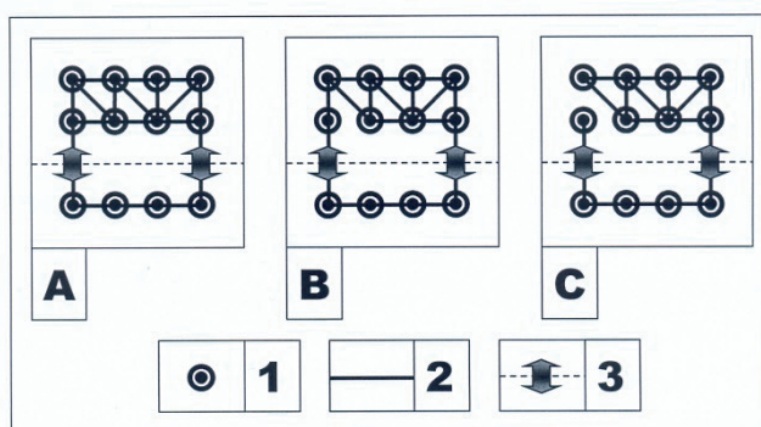


Fig. 1. The information and communications connectivity of the cities, international lines included: self-sufficient connectivity (A), almost self-sufficient connectivity (B), and externally dependent connectivity (C)
1 — city, 2 — communications line, 3 — national border with a transboundary link

Source: prepared by the author.

Relations between communications service providers emerging when Internet traffic is purchased, sold, or exchanged determine economic connectivity. Any operator can connect to a number of national or international providers, based on economic considerations. Thus, the physical connectivity of cities does not translate immediately into economic connectivity. A state may have self-sufficient physical connectivity (see Fig. 1, A) combined with externally dependent economic connectivity (see Fig. 1, C). This calls for a study into the second level of connectivity, at which a provider can have a local (servicing one city) or a regional (servicing several cities) network. In the latter case, all the data about the provider will apply to the city-core of a regional network. According to

the international classification, the independent network of a single provider is called an autonomous system. Each is assigned an identification number (Autonomous System Number, ASN). For example, AS8506 is the network of the Irkutsk Research Centre of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences located within one city. AS31214 is the regional network of OOO TIS-Dialog (Kaliningrad). The aggregated data on the connections of all the ASNs in one city make it possible to identify to what degree it is connected to other national and international cities. Four types of connectivity are possible here: (a) internal (the city receives 100% of the Internet traffic from the local ASNs), (b) mostly internal (over 50% from the national autonomous systems), (c) mostly external (over 50% from the international systems), and (d) external (100% from the international ASNs). These types can be translated to the level of the state by summing the data on the Internet traffic received by all the cities.

It is important to consider digital connectivity because there is a need to keep a record of the information and communications services relying on physical and economic connectivity. It is crucial to understand that the connection between two cities by a telecommunications line and the distribution of Internet traffic between them does not preclude the provision of services generated in one city to a different city. This relates to the breakthrough information and communications technologies and the associated future services: the Tactile Internet, the Internet of Nano-Things, virtual reality, augmented reality, holographic calls, interactive applications for 5G devices, e-health, and self-driving high-speed transport [5—10]. This list can be expanded with the need to manage digital agglomerations [3] comprised of ‘smart’ cities [11—15]. All these technologies are very sensitive to the connection quality (speed, data loss rate, delay, and delay variations [16]), particularly, to delay [17]. According to the recommendation of the International Telecommunications Unit [18], in the case of the breakthrough technologies such as the Tactile Internet, the delay should not exceed 1 ms (1 millisecond = 0.001 second). This delay has been called ultra-low [17]. It determines the maximum distances of the cities from the core where new services are generated. Thus, the cities located within the 1 ms isochrones have digital connectivity and those located beyond it do not. To calculate the delay, we used the formula from [17]. We described how it could be applied to identifying the connectivity of cities earlier in [3].

Physical connectivity

When analysing connectivity at the level of fibre optic communications lines (FOCL), it is necessary to take into account the fact that there are two types thereof: overland lines (FOCL proper) and submarine lines

(SFOCL). These lines cross the border of the Russian Federation and thus create transboundary links. The exact number of the transboundary links is unknown; one open source mentions 89 links [1]. Most links are of importance and they have little effect on the connectivity of the Russian cities. For example, these are the transboundary links created by the governmental communications (the FOCL of the Transneft company along the Uzen — Atyrau — Samara pipeline). Other minor links are associated with the ‘deadend’ lines (those that do not have junctions with the line of third countries connected to other Russian cities — the FOCL from Russia to Abkhazia or South Ossetia), the obsolete lines (those with a low bandwidth that does not meet today’s requirements — the SFOCL of 1993 from Kingisepp to Copenhagen or the Novorossiysk — Istanbul — Palermo SFOCL of 1994 with a connection to Odessa), and the lines that are temporarily out of service. Therefore, there not many main links created by the major communications service providers (Table 1). Our list includes the non-transparent link to North Korea (it was created by the TransTelekom company), because it is highly probable that this link is connected to the junction between the North Korean and Chinese information and communications networks. Moreover, some of the links that connect the geographically proximate junctions of various Russian providers are considered as separate links when a different calculation technique is employed. For example, the Russian-Azerbaijani border is crossed by four parallel communications lines that run very close to each other: Frankfurt am Main — Berlin — Warsaw — Kiev — Makhachkala — Baku — Teheran — Muscat by the Europe-Persia Express Gateway cable system, Makhachkala — Baku by the TransTelekom company and Delta Telecom, Makhachkala — Baku by Rostelecom and Delta Telecom, and Derbent — Baku by Megafon and Delta Telecom.

Table 1

Major transboundary fibre optic links connecting Russia to the neighbouring countries (as of January 1, 2017)

No.	Link	Type	Neighbouring country	The nearest large (capital) city across the border
1	Lyttä — Vartius	1	Finland	Helsinki
2	Svetogorsk — Imatra	1	Finland	Helsinki
3	Perovo — Lappeenranta	1	Finland	Helsinki
4	Buslovskaya — Vainikkala	1	Finland	Helsinki
5	Logi — Kotka	2	Finland	Helsinki
6	Ivangorod — Narva	1	Estonia	Tallinn
7	Sovetsk — Pagėgiai	1	Lithuania	Riga

End of Table 1

No.	Link	Type	Neighbouring country	The nearest large (capital) city across the border
8	Nesterov — Kybartai	1	Lithuania	Riga
9	Mamonovo — Braniewo	1	Poland	Warsaw
10	Pechory-Pskovskie — Koidula	1	Estonia	Tallinn
11	Pytalovo — Rēzekne	1	Latvia	Riga
12	Velizh — Surazh	1	Belarus	Minsk
13	Gusino — Obukhovo	1	Belarus	Minsk
14	Ponytovka — Zvenchatka	1	Belarus	Minsk
15	Suzemka — Zernovo	1	Ukraine	Kiev
16	Glushkovo — Volfino	1	Ukraine	Kiev
17	Krasny Khutor — Kazachya Lopan	1	Ukraine	Kharkiv
18	Gukovo — Krasnaya Mogila	1	Ukraine	Donetsk
19	Sochi — Poti	2	Goergia	Tbilisi
20	Yarag-Kazmalyar — Samur	1	Azerbaijan	Baku
21	Aksarayskaya 2 — Ganyushkino	1	Kazakhstan	Astana
22	Elton — Saykyn	1	Kazakhstan	Astana
23	Ozinki — Semiglavyy Mar	1	Kazakhstan	Astana
24	Ilets-1 — Shyngyrlau	1	Kazakhstan	Astana
25	Sagarchin — Yaysan	1	Kazakhstan	Astana
26	Soyuznoe — Soyuznoe	1	Kazakhstan	Astana
27	Zolotaya Sopka — Seleksionnaya	1	Kazakhstan	Astana
28	Zauralye — Zernovaya	1	Kazakhstan	Astana
29	Kazanskoe — Sokolovka	1	Kazakhstan	Astana
30	Isilkul — Bulaevo	1	Kazakhstan	Astana
31	Kulunda — Sharbakty	1	Kazakhstan	Astana
32	Rubtsovsk — Semey	1	Kazakhstan	Astana
33	Naushki — Sükhbaatar	1	Mongolia	Ulaanbatar
34	Zabaykalsk — Manchuria	1	China	Qiqihar
35	Blagoveshchensk — Heihe	2	China	Heihe
36	Khabarovsk — Fuyuan	2	China	Jiamusi
37	Grodekovo — Suifenhe	1	China	Mudanjiang
38	Khasan — Tumangang	1	North Korea	Chongjin
39	Nakhodka — Jōetsu	2	Japan	Niigana
40	Nevelsk — Ishikari	2	Japan	Sapporo

Comment: type 1 brings together overland lines and type 2 brings together submarine fibre optic lines. The link mentioned is the closest to the intersection of the state border and the telecommunications line.

Source: prepared by the author based on the data from the major communications services providers of Russia and the neighbouring countries.

All the main transboundary links (except those located in the Kaliningrad region) are connected by the major domestic FOCLs (Fig. 2). There are many variants of how information flows can be redirected in case of link damage. Thus, Russia's information and communications network is largely resistant to isolated external impacts. However, the physical connectivity of the Russian cities is externally dependent (see Fig. 1, C). The reason for this is the Kaliningrad region is connected to other Russian cities only by the international communications lines. The significance of the lacking direct connection between the Kaliningrad region and mainland Russia is estimated at 1.98% with respect to the total number of the Russian cities and 0.74% with respect to the population of the cities. In terms of the connection between each pair of the Russian cities, the 22 cities and towns of the Kaliningrad region account for 3.88% of all the links ($23980 : 617716 = 0.038820$). These figures (1.98; 0.74; 3.88) suggest that the effect of transboundary links on the physical connectivity of the Russian cities is very limited.

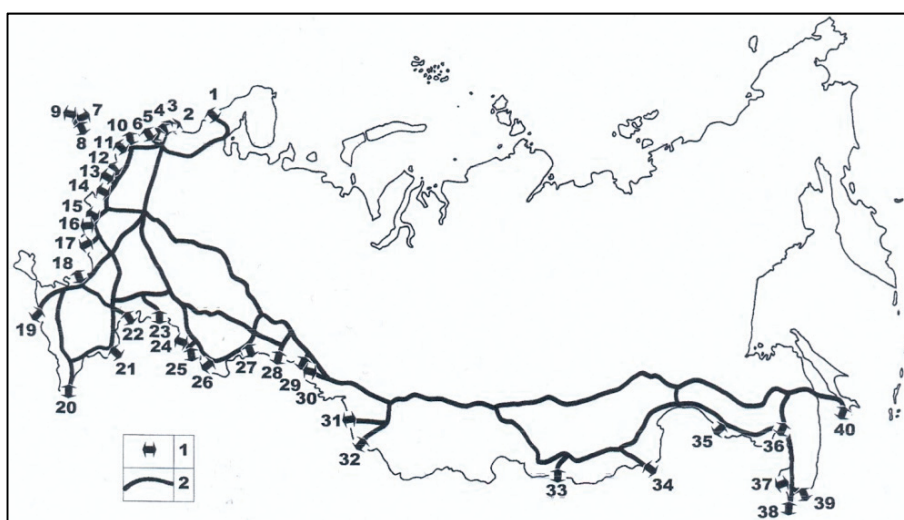


Fig. 2. Major transboundary links and the Russian fibre optic lines connecting them (as of January 1, 2017):

1 — transboundary link; 2 — communications line; the numbers of links are the same as used in Table 1

Source: prepared by the authors based on the reports of the major communications service providers of Russia and the neighbouring countries.



Economic connectivity

At this level, we study the economically feasible interactions (Internet traffic exchange) among the autonomous systems of communications service providers. Earlier, we analysed the spatial distribution of ASN to estimate the number of such systems and IP networks per area unit [19] or an agglomeration, to build a hierarchy of the cities [21], to model how the network developed [22], and to identify the index of regional telecommunications specialisation [23]. However, these works did not analyse the connectivity of spatially distributed ASNs in the context of the economic relations among the communications services providers. It is important to understand that the Internet functioning as a single network owes to the connectivity of the autonomous systems [24]. The only attempt to analyse the interactions among the ASNs from the perspective of connectivity was made in the framework of the feasibility study for Sibnet [2].

Since only 299 Russian cities or towns have the control centres of the autonomous systems (the other towns and cities are serviced from these centres), an analysis of the economic level of the information and communications connectivity focuses on the cities that are home to the control centres. Their distribution by the types of economic connectivity is as follows: 230 locations receive all the Internet traffic (100%) from the national ASNs, which corresponds to type (a), 65 receive most of the Internet traffic from the Russian autonomous systems (b), and four (Pokrov of the Vladimir region, Nizhnekamsk of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kuznetsk of the Penza region, and Sayanogorsk of the Republic of Khakassia) are fully dependent (100%) on the international ASNs (d). No Russian city hosting an autonomous system centre falls within type three (c), which means that the international systems account for 50% of the Internet traffic. Thus, 1.34% of the cities and towns under consideration depend on the transboundary links.

During the redistribution of information flows, some providers (uplinks) route Internet traffic from their autonomous systems, whereas the others (downlinks) receive this Internet traffic. This is how the relations among the communications service providers develop. All these relations are shown in a full BGP table.³ These data make it possible to identify the international ASNs routing Internet traffic to the Russian communications service providers (Table 2). In our case, most of these providers are registered in Moscow. As to the cities and towns, the 299 locations have

³ *Autonomous systems (russia)*. URL: <http://www.expertsvyazi.ru/index.php?id=bgpcity> (accessed 02.01.2017).

823 connections, 191 of which are accounted for by the foreign cores. When calculated this way, the impact of transboundary links on the system of the Russian cities reaches 23.21 %.

Table 2

International autonomous systems (uplinks) providing Internet traffic to most Russian systems (downlinks) as of January 1, 2017

International uplink		The number of the Russian downlinks registered in		
No.	Name	Moscow	Saint Petersburg	Other locations
AS9002	RETN	137	45	75
AS1299	TeliaSonera	73	11	30
AS6939	Hurricane Electric	28	7	18
AS50384	W-IX	16	2	13
AS3356	Level3	16	4	2
AS174	Cogent Communications	13	3	4
AS13030	Init Seven	10	4	1
AS25160	Vorboss	9	5	1

Source: prepared by the author based on the data from the *Autonomous systems (Russia)*. URL: <http://www.expertsvyazi.ru/index.php?id=bgpcity>

To correlate the uplink/downlink relations of the communications service providers with the transboundary links, we used the data on the Internet exchange points.⁴ Most of the Russian ASNs that are connected to such points to increase the Internet traffic exchange rate using the domestic resources. In Russia, the Internet exchange points (IXPs) are located in Moscow (4 points), Saint Petersburg (4), Voronezh (2), Krasnoyarsk (2), Novosibirsk (2), Vladivostok (1), Vladimir (1), Ekaterinburg (1), Kazan (1), Krasnodar (1), Nizhny Novgorod (1), Omsk (1), Rostov-on-Don (1), Samara (1), Stavropol (1), and Ulyanovsk (1). The largest international IXPs are AMS-IX (Amsterdam, the Netherlands; it facilitates 616 ASNs), DE-CIX Frankfurt (Frankfurt am Main, Germany; 513), LINX Juniper LAN (London, the UK; 500), MSK-IX (Moscow, Russia; 420), and PTTMETRO San Paulo (São Paulo, Brazil; 265). Six international exchange points facilitate at least five Russian autonomous systems each (Table 3).

⁴ *Internet Exchange Points (IX)* [E-resource]. URL: <https://www.expertsvyazi.ru/index.php?id=bgp2ix> (accessed 02.01.2017).

Table 3

**The international Internet exchange points facilitating
the most autonomous systems of Russia (as of January 1, 2017)**

Internet exchange point	City	Russian autonomous systems registered in		
		Moscow	Saint Petersburg	Other cities
De-CIX Frankfurt	Frankfurt am Main	28	4	2
AMS-IX	Amsterdam	19	4	1
LINX Juniper LAN	London	14	3	0
NetNod Stockholm	Stockholm	7	2	0
DTEL-IX	Kiev	5	1	2
LINX Extreme LAN	London	5	1	0

Source: prepared by the author based on *The Internet Exchange Points (IX)*.

The identification of the shortest telecommunications routes between each of the 69 Russian cities hosting the ASNs that receive Internet traffic from abroad and the international IXPs shows that the major information flows go along the following paths: Stockholm — Helsinki — Saint Petersburg, Amsterdam — Berlin — Warsaw — Pskov, Frankfurt am Main — Smolensk, Frankfurt am Main — Budapest — Kiev — Belgorod, and London — Paris — Frankfurt am Main — Vienna — Kiev — Rostov-on-Don. Thus, most information flows are carried to Russia's border via transboundary links 4, 10, 11, 13, 17, and 18 (the numbers are given in Table 1). Since most Internet traffic from abroad is routed to the Moscow and Saint Petersburg communications service providers (see Table 3) and later redistributed to the other Russian cities, the direct effect of international autonomous systems on the Russian cities is very insignificant. In terms of the number of the ASNs receiving Internet traffic from abroad, it is 5.16% ($136: 2636 = 0,051593$), which corresponds to type (b).

Digital connectivity

The development of the information and communications technology observed over the past decade has led to a situation where the study of the first two levels is not sufficient for understanding the phenomenon of connectivity. Artificial intelligence, M2M communication, and the other elements of the fourth industrial revolution [25—28] have set new connectivity standards. Understanding them requires new connectivity crite-

ria. One of them is delay. Digital agglomerations are identified based on ultra-low delays [3]. Within this approach, connectivity exists within agglomerations and does not beyond them.

A digital agglomeration comprises a core (a city with a population of over 500 thousand people or of 250—500 thousand people if its population combined with that of satellite towns amounts to the same numbers) and the towns that interact via telecommunications lines with the core, provided the delay does not exceed 1 millisecond. A study [3] has established that there are 43 digital agglomerations in the Russian Federation. They bring together 736 cities and towns. In this case, only the Russian locations and delays among them are taken into account. However, amid globalisation, one cannot rule out the influence of international cores on the Russian cities. If a city is located close to a transboundary fibre optic link to a core in the neighbouring state, the delay from the domestic core can be longer than that from an international one. In this case, the Russian city may become part of an international digital agglomeration in information and communications terms.

To verify whether such a situation is possible, we identified the large international cities (over 500 thousand residents as of January 1, 2017) and capitals (some of them have a population of fewer than 0.5 million people) that are the closest to the main transboundary links in terms of telecommunications lines (see the right column of Table 1). The calculation of delay among the core and other Russian cities shows that there are ten cities located closer to the international cores than to the centres of the Russian digital agglomerations. These are six locations in the Belgorod region (Belgorod, Valuyki, Grayvoron, Korocha, Novy Oskol, and Shebekino; the delay from Kharkiv is shorter than that from Kursk) and four in the Amur region (Belogorsk, Blagoveshchensk, Zavitsinsk, and Ratchikhinsk; Heihe is preferable to Khabarovsk when it comes to delay). A conditional estimate of the effect of the transboundary links that ‘pull’ the Russian cities towards the international cores, on the digital connectivity of the Russian cities is 0.9% if the number of the cities is considered ($10: 1112 = 0.008993$), or 0.80% if the population is taken into account ($818624: 101854049 = 0.008037$).

Discussion

The three levels of connectivity respond differently to the information flows carried via transboundary links. A more accurate conditional estimate of such responses can be obtained if other benchmark data sources are used or new communications lines are created. For example, the physical connectivity of the cities of the Russian Federation will be upgraded to the second category (see Fig. 1) if an SFOCL running along the bottom of the Baltic Sea connects Saint Petersburg and Kaliningrad. If

this happens, there will be 31 Russian cities forced to connect to the international networks when the Russian line is damaged. Alongside the 22 cities and towns of the Kaliningrad region, these are Gukovo, Dagestanskiye Ogni, Derbent, Ivangorod, Izberbash, Isilkul, Makushino, Nevelsk, and Pechory. In this case, the second category will account for 2.79% if the number of cities is taken into account ($31: 1112 = 0.027878$) and for 1.14% if the population is considered ($1157718: 101854049 = 0.011366$). Another possible change in the effect of transboundary links is associated with the use of 'big data' and the possibility to process the quantitative characteristics of the FOCL information flows handled by each Russian communications service provider. Researchers will be able to rank transboundary links according to their significance in terms of information and communications for the system of the Russian cities. Another possible avenue of research is the analysis of long-term dynamics of putting transboundary telecommunications lines into service, as well as the associated changes in physical connectivity.

The economic connectivity of the Russian cities is expected to remain mostly internal if the interactions among the communications service providers are accounted for differently or if the governmental regulation is tightened. A promising development will be big data disclosure, which will make information on the Internet traffic exchange among the providers available. Another problem is the absence of open data on the routes of information flows within each autonomous system. The disclosure of these data will help to assess the interactions among all the Russian cities and towns, not only among the ASN cores. In this study, we did not identify the trends in inter-city Internet traffic exchange. However, a promising area of research is the comparison of the dynamics of transboundary link and telecommunications line creation with the trends in Internet traffic exchange. This would make it possible to juxtapose the two levels of connectivity, which we did not attempt in this article. If the time series of the fluctuation of the digital agglomeration size (composition) are modelled, three levels may be compared in the future.

Since the breakthrough information and communications technology, such as the Tactile Internet, and the 'smart' cities are still a thing of the future, it is possible that the delimitation of digital agglomerations and, therefore, the estimate of digital connectivity will require the criteria that have nothing to do with the delay. Another prospect, the consequences of which are not completely clear, is the creation of cores in the neighbouring states. In this study, we assumed that the cores developed simultaneously in Russia and abroad. However, this synchronicity may not be observed in the future. If Russia decelerates, the other states may outstrip it as regards information and communications technology. Should this process be accompanied by the creation of new transboundary links, many more Russian cities and towns will be dependent on the international cores than are now according to the above estimates.



Conclusions

This first attempt to estimate the effect of transboundary links on the persistence of the information and communications connectivity of the Russian cities should be considered as an introduction to an entirely new research area. Earlier, the transboundary links, telecommunications lines, autonomous systems, Internet traffic, ‘smart’ object and cities were examined outside the context of spatial connectivity. This pioneering study could not cover all the pertinent aspects. Thus, they should be considered in further research. These aspects include the interrelations among all the levels of connectivity, the modelling of the tolerance of Russia’s information and communications network to transboundary link blockade, and an assessment of the effect of these links on the social connectivity of the cities.

This study demonstrates that the effect of the transboundary links on the information and telecommunications system of the Russian cities is insignificant. An estimate based on the number of cities showed the following. As to physical connectivity, 22 cities and towns (all of them in the Kaliningrad region) do not have connections to the others via the national telecommunications lines. The autonomous systems of four locations receive Internet traffic only from abroad. Ten locations may become dependent on the international digital agglomeration cores. Although the effect of the transboundary links on the connectivity of 1112 cities and towns is minor, there are several problems. These are the presence of externally dependent connectivity (the least desirable category) and the considerable proportion of international Internet traffic received by the local and regional networks (the international networks account for up to one-fourth of all the connections of the Russian autonomous systems). Another serious problem is the orientation towards Western European Internet exchange points (Frankfurt am Main, Amsterdam, London, and Stockholm) without a diversification of the information flows (Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Tokyo are used as backup exchange points).

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**POLITICAL
TECHNOLOGIES
AND INTERNATIONAL
CONFLICTS
IN THE INFORMATION
SPACE OF THE BALTIC
SEA REGION**

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The information space of the Baltic region has gradually developed since the free exchange of cross-border messages was made possible by media technology and international law. The international conflict between Russia and some countries of the European Union has become a factor hampering its sustainable development. Moreover, the conflict has adversely affected the functioning of many civil society institutions in the Baltic Sea region. This study focuses on the publications in the scientific media associated with the political technologies that may provoke conflict but must contribute to good-neighbourly relations in the region. We carry out a comprehensive political analysis and a specific examination of the Western scientific media to develop a package of measures that Russia can take to counter the conflict-provoking influences in the region. The current condition of the regional information space and information operations aimed at inciting Russophobia and forcing Russia out of the European political process is indicative of the politicisation of social sciences and the humanities and of the mythologisation of the policies of the regional social structures. The conflict must be urgently resolved, since the political technologies, which cause instability in the information space, damage the reputations of all the states involved. To reconcile the differences that underlie the information conflict in the Baltic region it is necessary to take into account common interests. There is a pressing need to join efforts in solving the challenging social problems that cannot be overcome without either international cooperation among the countries or effective social partnership.

Keywords: information security, Baltic Sea common information space, media, national interests, diplomacy, information operations, Baltic region, international cooperation

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Introduction

The social conflict in the information space of the Baltic region has become one of the most serious problems for Russia's foreign policy. According to research, the information space of the Baltic region is an integral, although quite special, part of the global media communications [1; 2]. This space consists of the states with different political systems, history, culture and economy. At the same time, all the countries of the Baltic Sea basin share liberal ideology and Christian values that is common for Europe [3]. The duty of states to cooperate includes the information exchange aimed to improve the well-being of the European peoples in general and the Baltic region in particular. The need for cooperation has received international recognition at the level of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and all national administrations must ensure it in strict accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations (UN). Due to the consistent efforts of European states, the initiative to create the Baltic Sea Common Information Space (BCIS) was developed by 2005 within the framework of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) [4; 5]. However, it has never been fully implemented for political reasons.

In 2001—2005, during the meetings of Senior Officials on Information Society (SOIS) of the Council of the Baltic Sea States the concept of the Common Information Space of the Baltic Sea Region was presented. It aimed at providing access to various regional sources of information on the economy, trade and investment, as well as on business development [4]. This political initiative also did not receive a wide practical development. The common information space of the Baltic Sea region developed naturally. It became an arena for conflicting global media processes, Russian political science as well as the politics of some European states described as informational, or hybrid war [6—12]. The Doctrine of Information Security of the Russian Federation, approved by Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of December 5, 2016 No. 646, defines the list of national interests in the information sphere. Its aim is the development of the international information security system (paragraph 8 d.), though such a system is extremely difficult to organize in the context of information war.

Professor at the University of Tartu (Tartu Ülikool) Vyacheslav Morozov reasonably notices that the relations between Russia and the Baltic countries, being a weak link in the Baltic region, can improve due to the reasonable context of national identity in current political discourse [13,

p. 317]. In 2004, it was obvious that the Baltic States were no longer seen in Europe as the embodiment of a “false”, anti-Russian Europe [13]. However, after the events of 2014, the political situation has changed. The media space of the Baltic region was fragmented by national principle [2], the regional policy of Russia began to rely heavily on “soft power” [14], and some Western studies directly claim that the situation in the region is now moving to a “new cold war” [15]. Russia's European partners fear a revision of state borders [16] and believe there is a risk to the existence of rhizomatic (culturally diverse) information networks in the Baltic Sea region, the political space of the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Program 2014—2020 [17].

The study hypothesis is that the interests of political structures competing for authority in the foreign policy studies shaped the policy of NATO countries on the information space of the Baltic region. The American scientist Jonathan Mercer rightly notes that the opinion of the world community, some scientific structures and prestige are crucial for world politics, since states having prestige have more power, though the political goals that determine the authority of a particular country must be consistent with its capabilities [18, p. 133]. The article uses the discourse analysis to interpret doctrinal political texts reflecting a complex of political technologies that in the social and political conditions of the Baltic region provoke a conflict in the information space.

It was obvious to the scientific community in 2013 that the possibilities and prospects for cooperation between the Russian Federation and the EU should be the subject of constant attention and discussion of the Russian and European expert-academic communities [19]. However, as can be seen from the leading regional media, after 2014 the already thorny path to partnership [19, p. 466—468] in the media policy of the Baltic region degraded into an explicit political conflict. The political technologies for creating an international conflict are reflected not only in numerous news media materials [4] but also in Western scientific literature [11; 12; 20—27]. This seems a natural target for critical analyses pursuing the task of demonstrating the limitations of a narrow national approach to information security problems in the implementation of some political programs in the Baltic Sea region.

At the same time, without a doubt, the “strengthening of interstate and interregional cooperation in the Baltic region” is of considerable scientific interest to progressive institutions of civil society [3, p. 12]. Objectively there is also another political tendency aimed at creating the atmosphere of conflict and mistrust. This article analyzes the political technologies exploited by Western scientific media for creating an “enemy image” [28] in the Baltic Sea region. Sharing the opinion of Professor

Konstantin Khudoley that "Russia must do everything possible to prevent the outbreak of [armed] conflict in the Baltic Sea region" [29, p. 18], it is necessary, however, to notice that the international conflict in the Pan-European media space has a negative effect on the anti-Russian sentiment in the Baltic States. In our opinion, the relations between all parties involved in the conflict should be normalized through the natural preference for transforming regional political "institutions by saturating them with new practices" [30, p. 88]. The method of political modeling applied in the process of creating and introducing new cooperation practices aims at forming good-neighbourly relations in the Baltic region by identifying conflict-takers and eliminating their influence on regional policy.

Russia and the EU states as participants in an international conflict in the information space of the Baltic region

In his interview on September 1, 2016, with John Micklethwait, journalist of the international information agency "Bloomberg", President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin, emphasized that "Russia has been pursuing absolutely peaceful foreign policy aimed at cooperation, and will continue to do so... As for the influence, ... we want it to be absolutely peaceful and positive. What we have in mind is economic and humanitarian influence, which implies developing equal cooperation with our neighbours. This is what our foreign policy, as well as our foreign economic policy, is aimed at" [31]. It is obvious why the head of the Russian state address that symbolic invitation for cooperation to the global community to representatives of world business and voiced at the Far Eastern Federal University. He used the authority of the Bloomberg media holding to convince representatives of the business community that good neighbourliness in coastal spaces is mutually beneficial and military conflict resolution measures are not in line with the national interests of the Russian Federation, as they would inflict economic damage to the entire global community.

The resolution strategy for the contradictions in the Baltic region is definitely based on the striving for justice — the personal quality, which Vladimir Putin outlined in the above-mentioned interview as the dominant feature of the Russian mentality. The urgent need for a fair approach to resolving the conflict in the information space of both the Far East and the Baltic region is manifested in the strategic futility of confrontation between nations with a common history, culture and civilizational values facing the challenges of violent extremism, terrorism, uncontrolled migration and the digital divide in a postindustrial, transitive society [8].



The characteristics of media institutions [32] and media policy, which reflects the content of leading media, is determined by the ideological and diplomatic aspects of the national security of states. After the reunification of Russia and the Crimea, “the problems of self-identification and positioning in the new turbulent world came to the fore in the national consciousness of the Russians” [33, p. 183]. At the same time, in the context of global information confrontation, the media policy of many Western states is aimed at acquiring the right of foisting certain views on the world community [8, p. 73].

In the information space of the European Union, it is customary to talk about security in the context of a threat to democratic ideals coming from the east, from Russia. However, in the Russian Federation there is a growing understanding that a strong Russian state causes xenophobia in certain representatives of political forces of the European Union states. The aspirations of the peoples living on the shores of the Baltic Sea to productive political efforts to achieve a safe world and a fundamentally new, better quality of life for the people of the region are quite natural. Nevertheless, the political establishment of a united Europe shows restrained optimism to such an approach and frank resistance to Russian influence [26], which some states and a number of representatives of European civil society suggest to neutralize by implementation of the worst isolationist traditions of the Soviet era [22].

Since 1991 Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia have been developing the Baltic Assembly and the Baltic Council without the participation of Russia. Working outside the Council of the Baltic Sea States established in 1992 by the Copenhagen Declaration these small states seek to counter the influence of the Russian state by their “pro-European” policies. The lack of desire of the Baltic Council states to participate in mutually beneficial cooperation in solving the fundamental political problems of the Baltic region generates more and more conflict-prone messages and documents from all European Union countries. The marginal unwillingness to recognize the Russian language and Russian culture as one of the most important elements in the regional and global information space produces the same outcome. For example, the Joint Statement on the results of the 22nd session of the Baltic Council of October 28, 2016, says, “the Baltic States... regret that there have been no considerable developments with regard to the implementation of the Minsk Agreements. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania will continue to support all measures taken by the OSCE, the EU and NATO demanding Russia to play an active role in implementing its international commitments.” [34] The position of the Baltic Council states in many respects impedes international integration and provokes an escalation of the conflict, which is disadvantageous to most

countries of the Baltic region. According to the authoritative opinion of the Russian sociologist Renald Simonyan, in this conflict “the uncritical perception of new myths both by one and the other side is largely due to the existence of two isolated information spaces” [1, p. 105]. With a high degree of probability “false stereotypes of the mass consciousness become a breeding ground for the escalation of interethnic confrontation” [1, p. 105].

It should be noted that the socio-economic and ideological problems of Europe [35] directly affect the media industry in the region. The Joint Statement following the 22nd session of the Baltic Council says, “Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania confirm their readiness to promote initiatives that encourage the media to offer the public high-quality, responsible, reliable and independent journalism... In particular, the Baltic States will continue to work together to explore the best ways how to reach out to those parts of society which are not easy to access due to the language barrier and different consumption of media content” [34]. Such statements declare a certain level of competence of those journalists who fail to reach understanding with their target audience reading international materials on the Baltic issues in English and Russian.

Modern political technologies of conflict management analysis in the information space of the Baltic region

The ambiguity of the situation in the information space of the Baltic region is becoming increasingly apparent for European scientists and institutions interested in constructive cooperation with the Russians. Professor of the University of Helsinki Kristi Raik notes, “Contrary to some expectations, the Baltic states’ accession to the EU in 2004 was not followed by an improvement in their relations with Russia. Instead, the Baltic States became known as the “troublemakers” of EU — Russia relations. This was commonly explained by their history and national identity, which contributed to an understanding of the Baltic concerns as marginal.” [25, p. 237].

The political myopia of some states that are fundamentally concerned about the presence of the Russian world in the Baltic States and oppose the idea of Russia's integration into the political space from Lisbon to Vladivostok accompanies the accusations against the Russian state in imperial ambitions [11; 23; 27; 36]. All the absurdity of anti-Soviet rhetoric in the news media in the post-Soviet space of the Baltic States received a decent scientific assessment in the works of Russian scientists Olga Vendina, Vladimir Kolosov, Alexander Sebentsov [37]. In the socio-political

reality the conflict in the information space of the Baltic states leads to the fact that “the contradictions between the political discourse and socio-economic realities, the discrepancy of information drawn from the TV and textbooks, with information disseminated through the Internet and obtained from personal experience, contributes not so much the strengthening of patriotism and national-state identity, as much as a skepticism about the events of the past and the present” [37, p. 90]. The controversial influence of a number of Baltic scientific media, which deserves independent doctrinal evaluation, raises even more concerns due to the fact that this phenomenon cannot be attributed to populism and low qualification of journalists.

It was in the beginning of the 21st century that a significant part of the Russian and foreign scientific community connected the main problems of assessing the security of the Baltic region with the accession of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia to NATO [35]. The political elites of these states still regard participation in NATO as the main guarantee of national security [12]. We can observe political hostility to Russia in some studies of Polish scientists who offer a new interpretation of the term “anti-diplomacy” [23], some Finnish political studies with rather extravagant titles assigning anti-Russian meaning to the term “democracy” [26], Western attitude towards the fate of the Crimea [34]. This is dangerous manifestation of the inability of some Europeans to reckon with the consequences of political transformations taking place in Russia.

Russia is more interested than other countries in helping the world community to solve the problems in the quality of human life. Paradoxically, some foreign scientists wish to prove that Poland, Lithuania, Finland and a number of other countries are not responsible for the political situation in the Baltic States or some problems in the implementation of the political program of development of the Baltic Sea region. They insist on the fact that Russia is the source of all political problems. This odious and subversive political position is very far from social science, and especially from diplomacy. Therefore, those who carry out such policy are interested in deepening existing contradictions, right down to the real revival of the fascists, whose invention was the “paradiplomacy of intimidation” [20].

The professor of the University of the Basque Country in Bilbao (Spain) Noe Cornago writes about the positive connotations of the term “anti-diplomacy” as a way to emphasize the merits of frank and direct communication in comparison with diplomatic formality in the context of political views of Giuseppe Garibaldi. Subsequently, any positive connotation of the term “anti-diplomacy” disappears in the new semantics within the framework of the ideology of futurism, and then fascism, and its



use is “charged with negative content” [38, p. 23]. Anti-diplomacy is the result of intra-European contradictions. The problem of diplomatic relations between Russia and the EU countries is not much different from interstate relations within the EU itself. Protecting their own national interests, European governments quite often apply double standards with respect to the most complex foreign policy topics affecting the issues of population migration, the territorial integrity of states and some other politically and economically significant issues. Objective differences in the organization of the national economy of Russia and the economies of the EU states (language barriers, environmental standards, approaches to security, features of public administration, principles of the judicial system, etc.) create conditions for discrimination, mistrust and deep political conflicts.

The information space of the Baltic States creates a somewhat naive image of Russia supposedly burdened by the traditions of the Byzantine collectivism alien to the rest of Europe and the USA [39]. American scientists are alleging that President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin achieves his goals by combining imperative and soft power with elements of Soviet-style propaganda [36]. The principal difference between the diplomacy of Vladimir Putin from the ideals of anti-diplomacy by Giuseppe Garibaldi lies in the non-recognition of the current state of political affairs in the United States and Great Britain as a benchmark of justice. Russia's aspiration to develop in the context of a national culture without any thoughtless imitation caused some accusations in imperial ambitions. A number of politicians and scholars who are quite authoritative in the Baltic Council countries brought these accusations. Due to their stereotypes, they are convinced that Europe as a whole and the Baltic Sea region in particular can reach the goals of sustainable development without Russia [5; 11; 12; 21; 22; 24; 27; 40]. After the collapse of the USSR, Russia harmoniously fit into European politics, shares European values, participates in international communication and gradually expands its sphere of political influence, but with the strengthening of the Russian Federation its relations with European countries and NATO have been gradually deteriorating [35].

The conflict environment in the European media space is created by the complex of fictitious threats introduced into the mass consciousness, such as the revival of Russian Bolshevism, the imperial ambitions of the Russians and the danger of Russian military aggression against the states in the Baltic Sea region [26; 27; 31]. Countering the frightening myths about Russia is an extremely important condition for the normalization of relations in the information space of the region. An example of constructive communication in the Baltic region was the work of the EU-Russia



Research Center (CEURUS) in the Johan Skytte Institute for Policy Studies, established at the University of Tartu. However, in our opinion, its work cannot be fully successful without being connected to the projects of leading Russian scientific institutions, scientists and students from Russia.

Our attention to the research activity of the American Johns Hopkins University and the Institute of International Relations and Political Science at Vilnius University is due to the conflict-causing content of a large part of political studies on Russian issues funded by these institutions. Similar conflict-prone political structures operate in Poland, Sweden, Finland, generating a significant number of anti-Russian texts, in an attempt to shift political responsibility for the quality of national policy from the national governments of the Baltic Region States to Russia. Problems in the relations of peoples in the Baltic seem to be of a private institutional nature, derived from the interest of specific institutions in fomenting historical contradictions that are not do not pose a significant threat to the functioning of the common regional information space.

After 2014, research activity by Johns Hopkins University, which traditionally pays special attention to US foreign policy interests, switched from externally neutral forms of intervention in the information space of the Baltic region (through analytical materials such as the collection of articles “Regional Development in the Baltic Sea Region” [42]) to the direct opposition of Russia and NATO. For example, the Swedish scientist Gudrun Persson, a specialist in the military history of Russia, in his article “Russia and the Baltic Sea Security” positions Russia's policy as a threat to regional security. He expresses serious concern about the fact that “Not only has Russia increased its aggressive behavior with nuclear weapons in and around the Baltic Sea, the official nuclear rhetoric is also unprecedented in Russian and Soviet history” [24, p. 14]. The American institute uses such clearly absurd, “scientific” prospects of atomic weapon deployment in the Baltic region to form anti-Russian sentiments in the Baltic and legitimize the presence of the American military in the region.

The studies of leading experts on Russia at the Institute of International Relations and Political Science of Vilnius University [12; 40; 43; 45] demonstrate the mythologization of the enemy's image of Russia and promote a provocative approach to the political problems of modern history. This continues the traditions established by Zbigniew Brzezinski, an honorary professor at Vilnius University. Tomas Janeliūnas, one of the leading political scientists at Vilnius University, writes, “The overwhelming number of experts believe that Russia seeks to gain superpower status and change the rules of the international system” [49]. Experts of the Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI) reached this conclusion without



participating in an academic exchange with Russia and without any substantial evidence. However, they state that “Russia regards the EU as a competitor... does not see Europe as a single or even sovereign actor in the international system” [40]. It should be noted that Russia is geographically an integral part of Europe, and Europe does not legally have sovereignty, and all experts and political actors need to consider these facts in foreign policy.

The head of the Center for Russian and Eastern European Studies at Vilnius University Dovile Jakniunaite recognizes the complete futility of Lithuanian claims for compensation for the consequences of the “Soviet occupation of Lithuania”. In view of the fact that “It is difficult for Lithuania to receive international support for its compensation claims”, she rightly points out that no country in Eastern Europe demanded “compensation for damages caused during the Soviet occupation” [22, s. 165]. Analyzing the problem of “Soviet occupation” in her research, Dovile Jakniunaite [21; 22] maintains silence on the obvious fact that any discussion about the fate of Poland and the Baltic states should take place in the context of the international legal consequences of the Second World War, which are not subject to revision. Realizing that “without the contribution of Russia, it is impossible to change the Lithuanian-Russian relations” [22, s. 165] Lithuania is not trying to interest Russia in constructive cooperation. At the same time in the spirit of scientific research Dovile Jakniunaite admits that the situation in the Baltic States is “strongly influenced by the dynamics of Russian-American and Russian-EU relations, but these relations are usually not associated with the goals and interests of Lithuania, and sometimes even undermine them” [22, s. 165].

Another representative of the Center for Russian and Eastern European Studies of Vilnius University, Remigijus Žilinskas, proposes an obvious absurdity to ensure the security of Lithuania through the “allied force, mobilization reserve and the development of national concepts of armed and unarmed resistance” against the hybrid threat posed by Russia [12]. It seems rather provocative that a politicized approach towards the problem is transmitted through scientific sources, but it is also clear that such way of thinking is untenable and counterproductive.

A well-known Baltic political scientist Professor Gediminas Vitkus consistently expresses scepticism regarding the very possibility of normalizing Russian-Lithuanian relations [11; 27]. Having received a philosophical education at Moscow State University in Soviet times, Professor Vitkus pursued very specific goals when in 2009 in the journal of the University of Sapporo (Japan) wrote: “While many European countries still cherish certain illusions about Russia, the Lithuanian politicians and the general public do not. Due to specific historical experiences, Lithua-

nians do not harbour any doubts whatsoever that Russia will attempt to employ its new advantages that have emerged because of a considerable increase in energy source prices. Not for economic development, not for the welfare of its people, but for political dominance and revenge for the lost Cold War.” [27, p. 25]. Such a sincere desire to be at the forefront of global political confrontation is strange for a relatively small country and surprising for a scientist who studied and worked in the state that lost the cold war. Thus, examples of political manipulations using scientific media demonstrate the attempt of certain individuals to see the conflict in the information space of the Baltic region only from the side that benefits investors of such a science.

Ways of resolving international conflict in the information space of the Baltic region

The cultural identity of the peoples of the Baltic region is clearly manifested in the process of interaction within the framework of the common information space. At the same time, the information space on practice is formed by a system of information communication networks of general use. They function according to common technical rules on the basis of uniform political and legal principles, ensure satisfaction of the information needs of the population, and guarantee the realization of human rights and freedoms in the information sphere.

It so happened that the Baltic region found itself at the epicentre of a spiritual conflict of Romanesque and Hellenistic Common European values, which does not have a definite solution. For objective economic and socio-cultural reasons in the Baltic region, many European innovative multimedia projects (Euronews, European Broadcasting Union, Erasmus +) are being implemented with Russian participation [8, p. 265]. At the same time, Russian media and cultural forums successfully operate in large cities with a Russian-speaking population in free competition environment [35; 46]. However, this positive fact will always cause Russophobia although only among those representatives of the Romanesque culture who focus on the right-wing system of values.

While political situation is rapidly changing, the conflict unfolds between nascent Russian democracy and social groups with retrograde thinking that are accustomed to earning their political capital from the international confrontation in Europe. Such conflicts became a booming echo of the Cold War devoid of any progressive perspective. Objectively, gradual Pan-European and Eurasian integration should have smoothed out the existing contradictions in the economic interests and production



standards between the states of the Baltic Sea region. Instead, conflicts arise under the influence of a number of stereotypes in the information space of the region. The reason for this is the desire to protect the interests of small nations at the cost of discrimination of a wide range of Europeans who speak Russian. It is obvious that in order to realize the positive potential of the cultural diversity of the Baltic region “models of organization of intercultural relations that are different from multiculturalism and assimilation are necessary” [47].

In the context of transparency of the global media space and substantive differences in political cultures [43], the political vision that each Baltic state has of its own national interests acquire great importance. The situation when “the boundaries between national states are erased..., kinship and attachment to native land of the people is neutralized... leads to the perception of patriotism as an irrational feeling” [44, p. 67]. So the patriotic education of young people in Russia should be carried out in the context of the centuries-old history of the state [48, p. 31], taking into account the historical features of international relations in the Baltic region [3]. Professor Jean Toschenko is absolutely right when he consistently advocates “for the rule according to which any person having the citizenship of his/her country is free to live, work and move around the territory of the former USSR or the CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States] at the same time fulfilling the duties of a citizen of the state where at the moment this person lives and works” [49, p. 30].

The political and military threats arise under conditions in which the national interests of certain states acquire extremist antisocial content contradicting the European values and interests of civil society members in the sustainable development of the region. Extremist intentions form the “appearance of war” [6, p. 46]. Social discrimination can cause acute conflicts at the national and international level. Such conflicts according to the laws of social dynamics in the information society originate inside the social networks and then manifest themselves in non-democratic forms of the protest movement, aggressive foreign policy. Largely as a result of the fact that “the political media space is beginning to exist not only in reality but also in virtual space” [50], “the unconditional image of democracy formed in Europe... has been shaken” [43, p. 52]. The restoration of democratic ideals requires the abandonment of the policy of multiculturalism and the formation of a unified system of values and ideals in the process of social partnership between states and civil society institutions within the sphere of education and culture.

Overcoming the collective social trauma in the post-Soviet space is a prerequisite for resolving the conflict in the information space of the Baltic region. According to Professor Andrey Zdravomyslov, “a view of so-



ciety only through the prism of a traumatized mind, as a rule, distorts the overall picture. A healthy society finds strength to overcome injuries not only through media activities... but, above all, through a different composition of social action that creates a social basis for recovering from the trauma” [51, p. 9]. In this sense, the inability of national administrations to interact normally in a regional media space can significantly aggravate the crisis in a society. Since the countries of the Baltic region are united by common traditions and interests of preserving cultural diversity [3; 52], they are to overcome the contradictions about traumatic past of the peoples in the Baltic region (such as consequences of international armed conflicts and political radicalism at the national level). Multilateralism requires the consolidation of the efforts of the scientific community with an understanding of the need for good neighbourliness.

There is a certain positive experience of cooperation between Russia and the EU in the field of professional journalism. The TV channel “Euronews” is an important segment of the common information space of the Baltic Sea region because this media, thanks to the flexibility of its editorial policy, is available to the mass audience in all countries of the region without exception. The agreement on cooperation between the Russian Federation and the TV channel “Euronews” was concluded on June 29, 2001. The All-Russian State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company (VGTRK) acquired a 1.8% stake in the Secemie consortium and became one of the shareholders of the channel. Subsequently, the share of VGTRK in the consortium exceeded 16%. French law guarantees the independence and objectivity of the editorial policy of the TV channel “Euronews” although the channel’s shareholders are more than twenty public and state TV companies from Europe and the Mediterranean. The largest packages belong to such leading national media holdings as France Televisions (France), RAI (Italy), VGTRK (Russia) [8, p. 266].

Conclusions

Undoubtedly, informational cooperation on the issues of protecting the health and improving the quality of life of the population, counteracting environmental threats, exchanging opinions on global climate change issues is relevant to the Baltic region [53, p. 160]. Therefore, in our opinion, mutually beneficial regional cooperation in specific areas of state structures’ and civil society institutions’ activities may be the issue of particular importance for establishing good-neighbourly relations. In this context, it seems necessary to supplement Clause 23 of Section V “Stra-

tegic goals and main directions of ensuring information security” of the Doctrine of Information Security of the Russian Federation with a regional component — a system for protecting traditional Russian spiritual and moral values by increasing the authority of Russian scientific institutions and the media in Europe.

The common information space assumes the consolidation of the progressive public around the regional megapolises’ media agenda. In this context, it is important that St. Petersburg, the largest city on the Baltic Sea coast, would be interested in enhancing its global competitiveness as a scientific, academic, cultural and industrial center with some competitive advantages in the region. That competitiveness is "determined by its demographic potential, port traffic, as well as a favourable geo-economic position, the status of the “sea gate” of Russia” [54, p. 71]. In order to counter the identified conflict-causing influence in the Baltic region, it is necessary to develop national non-profit organizations in the Russian geopolitical centres that can influence the political agenda in the region. Only the model when political structures that are close in their legal status conduct the dialogue with those who propagate Russophobia can have a positive influence on the authority of the Russian Federation as a rule-of-law state.

The attainment of the ideals of the Council of Europe in the Russian megacities can turn emerging Baltic Europe without borders into an economic and cultural centre of the European continent. Without any doubt, there is a need to modify the ideals of the Council of Europe taking into account the best cultural and legal traditions of Russia. Positive changes in the model of interaction between these two will occur only if the European partners are interested in considering Russian interests. It seems rational to organize progressive model of interaction of Russian non-profit organizations with existing progressive and regressive (conflict-prone) structures in the EU by creating recommendatory norms of Russian corporate law in the media and scientific sphere. Such a recommendation should define the circle of responsible and conscientious partners in the Baltic region for Russian society to establish systematic and substantive communication links.

Creating Russian scientific information networks is an ambitious task, which should be solved in order to enjoy prestige in Europe and fully use intellectual potential available in the Baltic region. Constructive initiatives have social prerequisites for the effective cooperation that allow seizing every reasonable opportunity and using material incentives for guaranteed leadership of Russian megacities in the modern international system. An attractive social and cultural environment for people does not imply conflicts on a national basis. It can only be a re-

sult of a mutual understanding of the interests in the domain of international integration accompanied by sustainable development trends in the post-industrial era.

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LEGAL ISSUES



A FUNCTIONAL DESCRIPTION OF THE MODEL FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL INTERESTS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION

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This article identifies the objective conditions of the conflict between the interests of development and those of environmental security. The latter are given added urgency when, within the same ecological unit, one country needs to develop and another to protect its environmental interests. The borders of the countries and regions, the economies of which affect the safety of Russia's interests in the Baltic, do not coincide with the boundaries of the ecosystems. This calls for a study of the legal protection of Russia's environmental interests in the Baltic Sea region. There is no legal mechanism for ensuring a balance between the interests of development and those of environmental security of the countries that have shorelines along the Baltic Sea. Thus, it is necessary to give a functional description of the regional model for the legal protection of the environmental interests of the Russian Federation in the Baltic region. To this end, we identify the juridical content of the environmental interests of the Russian Federation. We consider the possibilities of the legal protection of the environmental interests in the national and international jurisdiction. The interests are divided into two groups respectively. We reveal the essence of the environmental interests of the Russian Federation in the Baltic Sea region. We analyse the case of the Russian regions located within the Baltic Sea catchment area to test an approach to identifying the region's boundaries. This approach may be used in modelling the regional level of the legal protection of Russia's environmental interests in the Baltic region. We identify the environmental interests of the Russian Federation in the Baltic Sea region, as

well as the forms of legal protection of the country's interests in this territory. We describe the elements of the system of the legal protection of Russia's interests in the Baltic region and examine the functions of these elements.

The result of this study is a functional description of the model of legal protection of the environmental interests of the Russian Federation in the Baltic region. This model may be used to strengthen the links between the elements of the protection of the legitimate interests of the Russian Federation in the Baltic region.

Keywords: international law, public interests, environmental interests, regional model, Baltic Sea region

Introduction

The national borders of many countries follow the natural divisions between land and water, which often do not coincide with the boundaries of ecosystems. Human occupation of land has an inevitably adverse impact on the contiguous water bodies. The areas affected by the economic use of coastal resources may go far beyond the territorial waters of the state benefitting from these resources [1]. In a meeting with the heads of international prosecution services, which focused on combat against environmental offences, the Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation, Yuri Chaika stressed that climate change, biodiversity reduction, water and air pollution, and deforestation had become transnational problems. Chaika emphasised that international cooperation was complicated by the differences among national legislations on environmental protection and environmental response measures [2].

The Baltic Sea is where the interests of the countries lying on its shores meet. Nine countries have shorelines along the Baltic Sea — Russia, Germany, Poland, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. The territories of these countries, in part or in whole, constitute the Baltic region. According to some definitions, the region includes the administrative units not only of the countries bordering the sea but also of those whose geological and hydrographic features affect the Baltic ecosystem [3].

The legitimate economic development interests of each Baltic region country are associated with growing human impact on the environment [4]. One country's deteriorating environment threatens the environmental interests of all the other states within the ecosystem. Environmental protection has become a common regional problem.

Important natural protection agreements have been concluded under the aegis of the United Nations to protect the environmental interests of the Baltic region states. Nadezhda K. Kharlampyeva cogently argues that the use of the European regional agreements in environmental rule-ma-



king and the associated international collaborations can be translated into other regions, whereas the ‘Baltic Sea region can provide a model for regional marine environment protection’ [5].

However, the objective need for Russia to protect its environmental interests within the Baltic region is at odds with the absence of a regional system for their protection. These circumstances narrow the object and topic of research and predetermine its aims and objectives.

The topic of this research is the social relations in the legal protection of public rights and legitimate interests.

The object of this research is the systemic properties of the ideal model of legal protection of Russia’s environmental interests in the Baltic region.

This study aims at modelling a regional level of the system of legal protection of Russia’s environmental interests in the Baltic region, as well as at identifying the elements of this system and describing their functions.

To this end, we set and fulfil the following objectives. We determine the environmental interests of the Russian Federation in the Baltic region, identify the forms of legal protection of Russia’s environmental interests in the Baltic, and describe the elements of the system for protecting the country’s interests in the region and the functions of these elements.

1. Methodology

In terms of law, interest can serve as an incentive in creating legal norms. Social relations never arise without interests [6]. The generic category for the concept of ‘the environmental interests of the Russian Federation’ is that of ‘public interests’. Public interests include the interests of society, interests of the state, and national interests [7]. The vagueness of the boundary between private and public interests is the result of the interests of a person and society converging in the interests of the state. This ensures the balance between private and public interests in each legal norm based on the Constitution of the Russian Federation [8]. In the Constitution, the category of interest is applied exclusively to a person. The categories of ‘interests of society’ and ‘interests of the state’ are widely applied in strategic planning documents within the generic category of ‘national interests’.

Note that the laws of the Russian Federation do not establish a direct connection between a legitimate interest and a legal norm. ‘the research methodology based solely on the acknowledgement of the secondariness of consciousness and the primacy of being (a result of the objective properties of Soviet society and the official doctrines prevalent during the historical period when the USSR existed) precluded the inclusion of public

interest into the scope of law, only permitted the discussion of its reflection in law' [9]. Historically conditioned, this approach to the legal category of 'interest' may cause the regulation of social relations to fail, if the goals specified in strategic planning documents as public interests are incoherent with the legal categories used in the legal regulation of these legal relations.

The connection between interest and law in this aspect have been tackled by addressing the category of 'legitimate interest' in the works of the followers of Aleksandr V. Malko's school of thought [10]. Nevertheless, legitimate interests are considered in the constitutional-legal aspect of the legitimate interests of a person and they have more to do with private legal relations. At the same time, legitimate environmental interests are rather a characteristic of public legal relations.

A major public interest as regards the interactions between society and nature is the preservation and restoration of a favourable condition of the environment relating to the quantitative measures of the cleanliness of soil, purity of air, and purity of water [11]. The convergence of private and public legitimate interests is clearly seen when it comes to environmental protection and environmental security provision. The Russian researchers usually either identify these activities [12; 13] or draw a clear line between them [14; 15]. However, the object of these activities is always the human being. Environmental protection is aimed at creating a favourable environment for human beings [16], whereas environmental security seeks to ensure the environmental security of human beings [17]. The English word 'environment' closely corresponds to the term *prirodnaya sreda* (literally, 'natural environment') used in the conceptual framework for the Law of the RSFSR of December 19, 1991, No. 2060-1 'On Environmental Protection' [18, pp. 146—160]. The interpretation of Article 1 of the Federal Law of January 10, 2002, No. 7-FZ 'On the Environmental Protection' stresses the difference between *okruzhayushchaya sreda* (environment) and *prirodnaya sreda* (the former includes man-made objects). This circumstance complicates the law enforcement practices, particularly, the determination of the elements of an environmental offence [19].

We maintain that the category of 'environmental security provision' cannot be isolated from that of 'environmental protection', since the protection of environment from human impacts is aimed at achieving the environmental security of humans. For example, the radioactive pollution caused by the Chernobyl disaster created an unfavourable environmental situation for humans. However, freed from human interference, the exclusion zone turned into a favourable natural environment for the restoration of earlier disturbed bicoenoses. Russia's environmental interests are closely connected with the economic interests of the country [20].

The traditional forms and methods of industrial, agricultural, and other types of production are associated with the environment deteriorating as a result of growing production. Vice versa, the quality of the environment improves as production falls. In many regions, after a reduction in production, the environmental situation stabilised and reached safe levels. The use of the most advanced production technology reduces the dependence between production and damage to the environment. At the same time, advanced technology can be introduced only when there are sufficient economic opportunities.

The strategic planning documents suggest that reducing or terminating production cannot be considered an environmental interest of the Russian Federation, since the generic term for 'environmental interest' is 'national interest'. At the same time, the discontinuation of environmentally harmful production by the states comprising the same ecosystem is very much in line with Russia's environmental interests.

We argue that the environmental interests of the Russian Federation are the legitimate interests of a person, society, and the state relating to their protection exclusively from environmental offences. The legal protection of environmental interests can be carried out within the limits of both national and international jurisdiction. Russia's environmental interests specified in the strategic planning documents are included in the structure of the legal norms of the Russian Federation. These interests are protected by the national laws. The environmental interests of the country can be protected outside its territory only within its continental shelf and special economic zone, after the implementation of the relevant rules of international law.

In the structure of a legal norm, the environmental interests should be distinguished from environmental laws (Table 1). Unlike environmental law, a legitimate environmental interest is subject to dynamic changes under the influence of external and internal features of a corresponding system. This leads to a conflict between the goals of a legal norm and its formal expression in the disposition of a legal norm.

Table 1

**The properties of environmental law
and a legitimate environmental interest**

	Environmental law	Environmental interest
Hypothesis	Is not mentioned as such	Is the goal of the new legal norm
Disposition	Specified in relevant regulations	None
Sanction	Criminal penalty	Only if it formally coincides with the disposition of a relevant legal norm

National law ensures the quality of the environment by legal regulation, which consists in the development, adoption, and enforcement of the legal norms that rest on the environmental requirements. The protection of the environmental interests of the Russian Federation, which correspond to the country's legitimate interests, can be carried out within international jurisdiction. These conditions are also met if the norms of international law are implemented in the laws of the countries located within the same ecosystem or if the violated legitimate interests are protected in a court with international jurisdiction.

Thus, the system for the legal protection of Russia's environmental interests comprises two independent levels of the protection of the country's environmental interests. These are the national and supranational levels.

At the national level, the environmental interests of the Russian Federation are protected by a legal norm, in which the environmental interest is encapsulated in the legal norm's hypothesis. Enforcement norms aimed at protecting the legal interests are embedded in the legal norms of the Russian laws and identified in Chapter 26 of the Criminal Law of the Russian Federation. These norms apply across the Russian Federation and the country's jurisdiction on the continental shelf and in the exclusive economic zone.

The supranational level ensures the protection of the environmental interests of the Russian Federation. This occurs when the countries, the territories of which belong to the same ecosystem, implement the norms of international law corresponding to Russia's interests in their legislation or conclude agreements on submitting disputes regarding the violation of environmental interests to a court with international jurisdiction.

International legal norms relating to the protection of the environmental interests of the Russian Federation comprise the norms and principles of international law, which are produced by the functioning of international foundations and organisations.

In the Baltic region, such an international organisation is the Helsinki Commission (below, HELCOM), which works on the protection of the marine environment of the Baltic Sea.¹ The propositions regarding the implementation of the HELCOM norms² by the Russian Federation require a systemic approach to the environmental security of the Baltic region and a systemic-functional characteristic of the model for the legal protection of Russia's environmental interests in the Baltic region.

¹ Communication Strategy: As adopted in HELCOM Annual Meeting 2014, available at: <http://www.helcom.fi/Lists/Publications/HELCOM%20Communication%20Strategy.pdf> (accessed 20.04.2018).

² Towards a healthier Baltic Sea — Implementation of the Baltic Sea Action Plan in Russia. *HELCOM: official site*, available at: <http://www.helcom.fi/Lists/Publications/BASE%20Final%20Report%20-%20implementation%20of%20BSAP%20in%20Russia.pdf> (accessed 20.04.2018).



Sergey A. Kondratyev emphasises the absence of a centralised, integrated science-based national system for the protection and sustainable use of the Baltic Sea and its catchment area [21]. Despite the wide variety of Russia's environmental interests in the Baltic region, the sea itself plays the key role in their formation. The physical properties of a water body limit the number of sources that affect the security of the environmental interests of the Baltic region states. Therefore, the object of research does not include the environmental interests relating to the protection of forests and animals in the Baltic region.

To identify the boundaries of the area of protection of Russia's environmental interests in the Baltic region, it is important to list the agents influencing the security of environmental interests in the Baltic region.

Andrey P. Klemeshev distinguishes among several approaches to the definition of the Baltic region, depending on the distance from the sea and the effect of the sea on the socioeconomic development of the territories. These approaches translate into a narrow, expanded, and broad definition. The area of the protection of Russia's environmental interests is identified using the broad definition of the Baltic region. It is a territory that lacks clear boundaries and is affected indirectly by the Baltic Sea [3].

For the purpose of this study, the Baltic region is defined as the catchment area of the Baltic Sea (Fig. 1). This area is four times that of the Baltic Sea³ (420 000 km²).

The catchment area includes both the territories of Russia's regions having shorelines along the Baltic Sea (Saint Petersburg and the Leningrad and Kaliningrad regions) and parts of the Pskov, Novgorod, Tver, Yaroslavl, and Vologda regions, and the Republic of Karelia.

The economic development of many of these regions precludes wastewater treatment in necessary volumes. This leads to the contamination of the Baltic Sea. According to the Government of the Kaliningrad region, most local rivers are classified as either contaminated or polluted.⁴ A potential cause of contamination is the discharge of contaminated waters into surface waters. Rosstat data⁵ suggest that the discharge into surface water bodies accounts for at least 4.7% of the total wastewater discharge in the Leningrad region (Fig. 2).

³ First version of the 'state of the Baltic sea' report — June 2017: to be updated in 2018. *HELCOM: official site*, available at: <http://www.helcom.fi/Lists/Publications/State%20of%20the%20Baltic%20Sea%20-%20First%20version%202017.pdf> (accessed 20.04.2018).

⁴ Doklad ob ekologicheskoy obstanovke v Kaliningradsoy oblasti v 2015 godu [Environmental Report for the Kaliningrad Region 2015]. *ECAT — Kaliningrad environmental centre*, available at: <http://www.ecatk.ru/download/dockad2015.rar> (accessed 20.04.2018).

⁵ Zabor vody dlya ispolzovaniya, poteri vody is bros stochnykh vod v 2016 [Water Extraction, Water Losses, and Wastewater Discharge in 2016]. *Federal State Statistics Service: Official Website*, available at: https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b_oxr17/IssWWW.exe/Stg/3-07.doc (accessed 20.04.2018).



Fig. 1. A fragment of the Baltic Sea catchment area, including its Russian part⁶

⁶ First version of the ‘state of the Baltic sea’ report — June 2017: to be updated in 2018. *HELCOM: official site*, available at: <http://www.helcom.fi/Lists/Publications/State%20of%20the%20Baltic%20Sea%20-%20First%20version%202017.pdf> (accessed 20.04.2018).

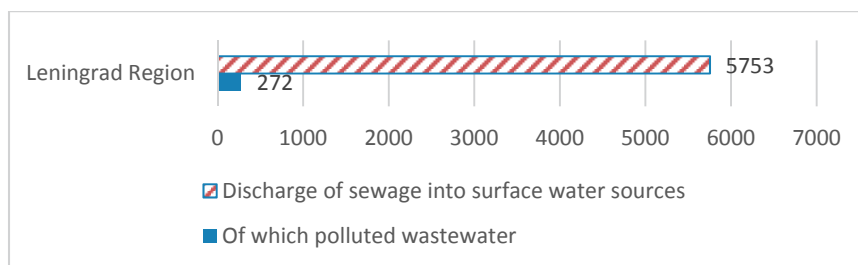


Fig. 2. The wastewater discharge in the Leningrad region within the Baltic Sea catchment area, 2016 (million m³)

In other Russian regions, these figures are significantly higher — 91.8% in Saint Petersburg, 91.9% in the Kaliningrad region, 45.7% in the Pskov region, 91.8% in the Novgorod region, 6.1% in the Tver region, 73.8% in the Yaroslavl region, 44.6% in the Vologda region, and 92.7% in the Republic of Karelia (Fig. 3). Bordering on the Baltic Sea, Saint Petersburg and the Kaliningrad region are absolute leaders in the wastewater discharge. In these regions, non-contaminated waters account for only 8.1—8.2% of the total volume.

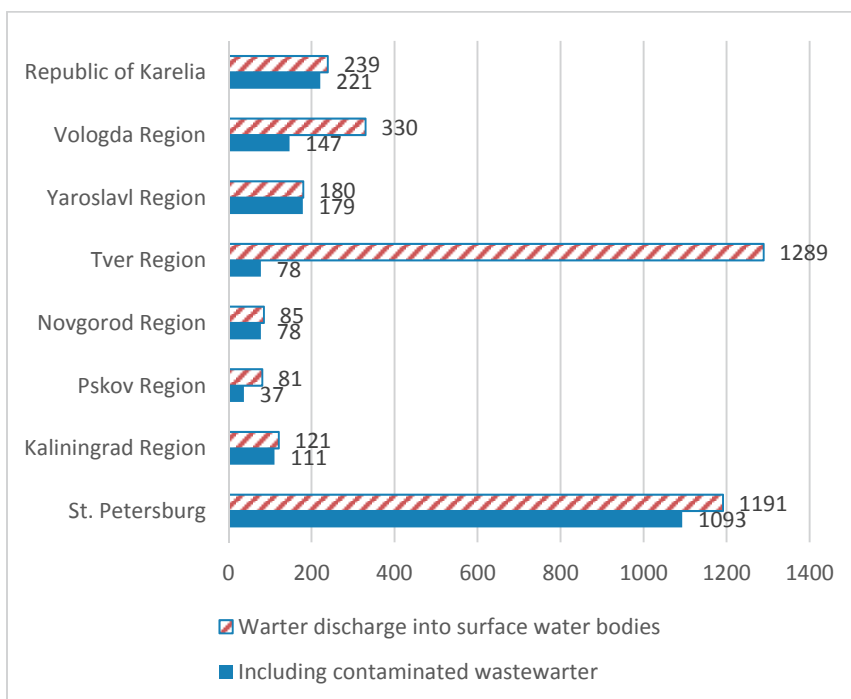


Fig. 3. Wastewater discharge in the Russian regions located within the Baltic Sea catchment area, 2016 (million m³)

An analysis of the absolute amount of contaminated water discharge shows that, although contaminated waters account for only 4.7% of the discharge in the Leningrad region (the third Russian territory bordering on the Baltic Sea), this discharge is 2.45 times that in the Kaliningrad region. Another problem alongside the direct discharge is that landfill sites often lack the simplest drainage systems. According to Rosstat,⁷ in 2016, the volume of the reused and decontaminated industrial and household waste amounted to 58.5% of the total waste generated in Saint Petersburg, 79% in the Leningrad region, 10% in the Kaliningrad region, 88.4% in the Pskov region, and 112% in the Novgorod region (earlier accumulated waste was taken into account), 53.4% in the Tver region, 78.9% in the Yaroslavl region, and 67.7% in the Vologda region (Fig. 4).

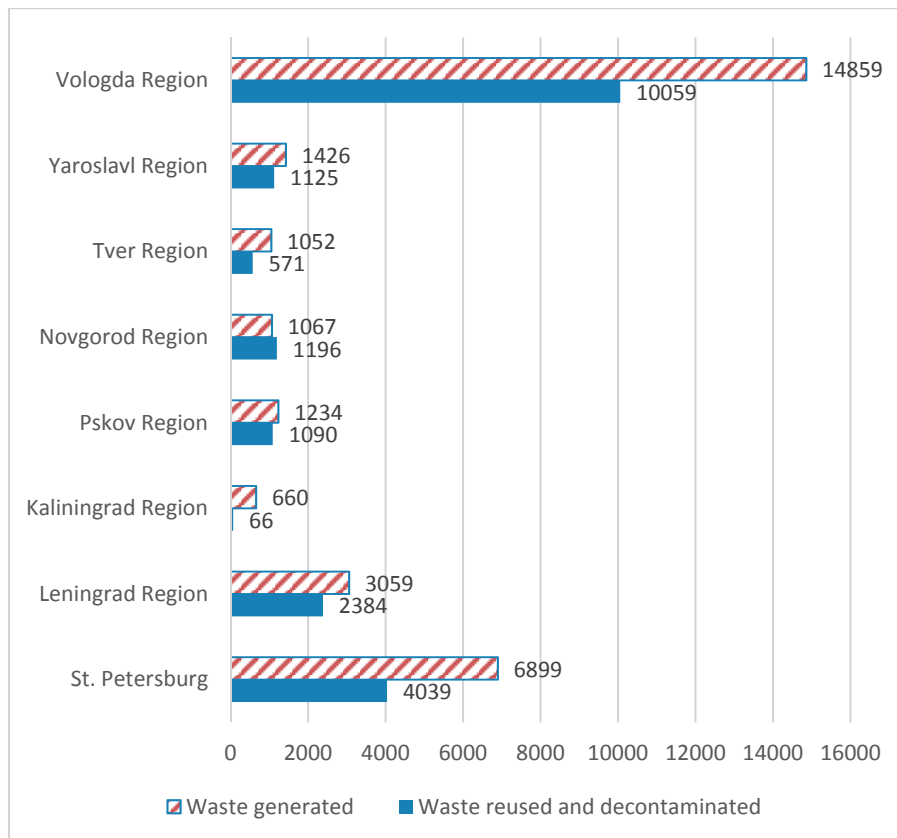


Fig. 4. Waste generated and decontaminated in the Russian regions located within the Baltic Sea catchment area, 2016 (thousand tonnes)

⁷ *Образование, использование, обезвреживание и размещение отходов производства и потребления в 2016* [The Generation, Reuse, Decontamination, and Disposal of Household and Industrial Waste in 2016]. *Federal State Statistics Service: Official Website*, available at: https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b_oxr17/IssWWW.exe/Stg/3-08.doc (accessed 20.04.2018).

In the Republic of Karelia, this proportion reached 13.1 % (Fig. 5). The smallest amount of waste is reused and decontaminated in the Kaliningrad region, which borders on the Baltic Sea. There, 90 % of the total industrial and household waste is not decontaminated.

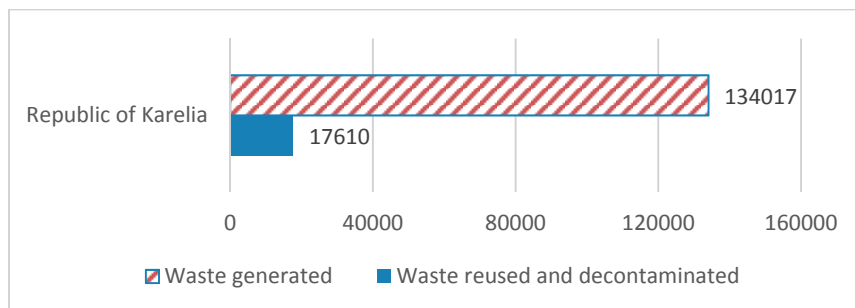


Fig. 5. Waste generated and decontaminated in the Republic of Karelia within the Baltic Sea catchment area, 2016 (1,000 t)

In absolute figures, the amount of non-decontaminated waste in Saint Petersburg is 4.8 times that in the Kaliningrad region and, in the Leningrad region, it is 5.1 times that level. Among the regions located in the Baltic Sea catchment area, the Republic of Karelia accounts for the greatest proportion of non-reused and non-decontaminated waste. In absolute figures, it is 196 times that in the Kaliningrad region. The fact that 99.5 % of that waste is buried in the Republic does not mitigate the adverse effect on the Baltic region's environment.

The non-decontaminated waste is often buried in the landfills, which were designed without due attention to the environmental requirements. For instance, 93 % of the waste is found in high-risk landfills, 6 % in moderate-risk landfills, and only 0.8 % in low-risk ones. Four high-risk landfills are located close to the Baltic Sea. In these landfills, leachate collection systems are either lacking or inadequate. Thus, leachate can easily reach the Baltic Sea.⁸

In a 2010 study, Dmitry M. Nechiporuk stressed the low efficiency of executive bodies as regards this environmental problem. He connected this with the exemption of Russian regions from participating in the fulfilment of the national requirements imposed by HELCOM [22]. However, today, the Russian regions are taking measures to reduce pollution in the Baltic Sea. In March 2018, as the Government of the Kaliningrad region reports, a number of HELCOM Hot Spots were recultivated.⁹

⁸ Snizhenie riskov i opasnykh otkhodov v Rossii [Reducing Risks and Dangerous Wastes in Russia]. *HELCOM: Official website*, available at: http://helcom.ru/media/hazardous_rus.pdf (accessed 20.04.2018).

⁹ Kaliningradszkaya oblast podgotovila zayavku na isklyuchenie tryokh regionalnykh "goryachikh toчек" iz spiska HELCOM [The Kaliningrad Region Ap-

The case of the Russian regions shows that the marine protection measures cannot be limited to the administrative units bordering on the sea. As public interests, the environmental interests of the Russian Federation in the Baltic region have to be promoted across the ecosystem, the boundaries of which do not coincide with the national borders.

The other countries of the Baltic region are faced with similar systemic problems. One country cannot solve them because of the very ecosystem characteristics of the Baltic Sea basin.

For example, the high nitrogen and phosphorous inflow from drainage leads to the eutrophication of the Baltic Sea waters, which affects 95 % of the water body. Plastic accounts for 70 % of the household waste washed ashore. Approximately 140 allochthonous species have been spotted in the Baltic Sea, which testifies to the destabilisation of the local ecosystem. Non-selective fishing reduces the species stocks and the number of the categories of non-commercial biological resources. Half of the Baltic Sea floor is considered potentially damaged.¹⁰

Therefore, the territorial scope of the protection of Russia's environmental interests in the Baltic Sea region includes the territories of foreign states and their administrative units, alongside the Russian regions situated within the Baltic Sea ecosystem.

The implementation of the HELCOM norms in the laws of the Russian Federation does not make it possible to protect the country's environmental interests in the case of transboundary pollution. These norms exclusively protect the environmental interests of the other countries. At the same time, Russia is interested in the other states implement those norms of international law that correspond to the country's legitimate environmental interests.

The goals of the legal protection of Russia's environmental interests should be grouped according to the nature of the associated threats to the state.

In terms of the internal threats to environmental security, there is a need to increase the law enforcement efficiency as regards environmental offences [23]. However, the specifics of the criminal law do not make it possible to differentiate between the Baltic Russian regions and the other territories of the country.

The legal protection of the environmental interests of the Russian Federation leaves much to be desired. According to the Office of the

plies for Exclusion of Three Regional Hot Spots from HELCOM List]. *The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Kaliningrad Region: Official Website*, available at: <http://minprirody.gov39.ru/news/1633> (accessed 20.04.2018).

¹⁰ First Version of the 'State of the Baltic Sea' Report — June 2017: to be Updated in 2018. *HELCOM: Official Site*, available at: <http://www.helcom.fi/Lists/Publications/State%20of%20the%20Baltic%20Sea%20-%20First%20version%202017.pdf> (accessed 20.04.2018).

Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation, 60901 environmental offences were registered in the country in 2015—2017.¹¹ The statistics shows that the most significant number of environmental offences was detected by the law enforcement agencies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation (Fig. 6), the jurisdiction of which is the territory of the Russian Federation. These bodies detected 53 804 environmental offences, or 88 % of the total number of environmental offences registered in 2015—2017. The number of environmental offences is constantly rising.

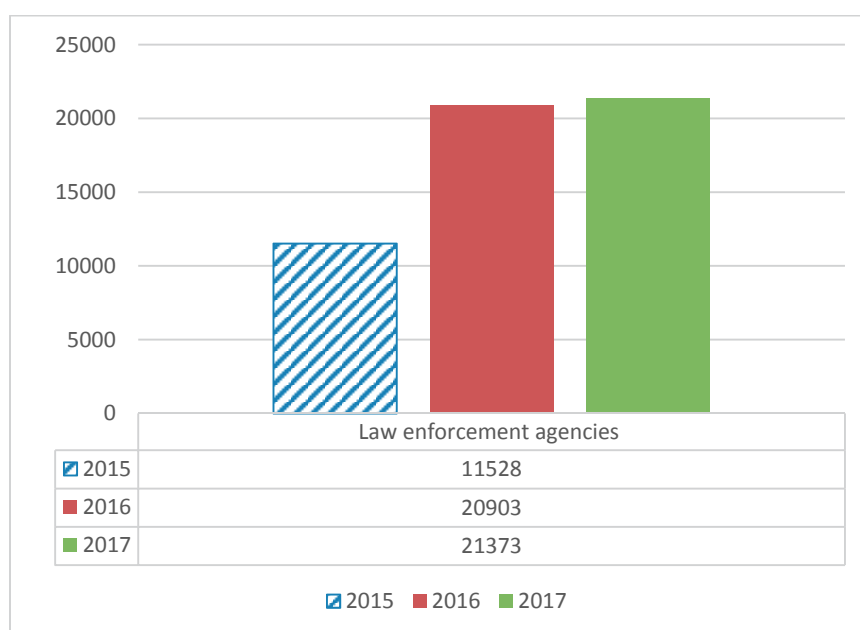


Fig. 6. The environmental offence detection by the law enforcement agencies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, in Russia

¹¹ Sostoyanie prestupnosti v Rossii za yanvar — dekabr 2015 goda [The Crime Rate in Russia in January — December 2015]. *Office of the Prosecutor General: the Department of Legal Statistics and Information Technology: the official website*, available at: <https://genproc.gov.ru/upload/iblock/29f/Ежемесячный%20сборник%20июнь%202015.pdf> (accessed 20.04.2018); Sostoyanie prestupnosti v Rossii za yanvar — dekabr 2016 goda [The Crime Rate in Russia in January — December 2016]. *Office of the Prosecutor General: the Department of Legal Statistics and Information Technology: the official website*, available at: <https://genproc.gov.ru/upload/iblock/f8b/Ежемесячный%20сборник%20декабрь%202016.pdf> (accessed 20.04.2018); Sostoyanie prestupnosti v Rossii za yanvar — dekabr 2017 goda [The Crime Rate in Russia in January — December 2017]. *Office of the Prosecutor General: the Department of Legal Statistics and Information Technology: the official website*, available at: <https://genproc.gov.ru/upload/iblock/aab/Ежемесячный%20сборник%20декабрь%202017.pdf> (accessed 20.04.2018).

The agencies of the Federal Security Service have jurisdiction beyond the national borders — on the continental shelf and in the exclusive economic zone of the Russian Federation. In 2015—2017, they detected 1349 environmental offences, or 2 % of the total number of such offences committed in the period in question (Fig. 7). There is no pronounced downward or upward trend in the number of environmental offences detected per year. The fourfold increase observed in 2016 was followed by a 4 %-decrease in 2017.

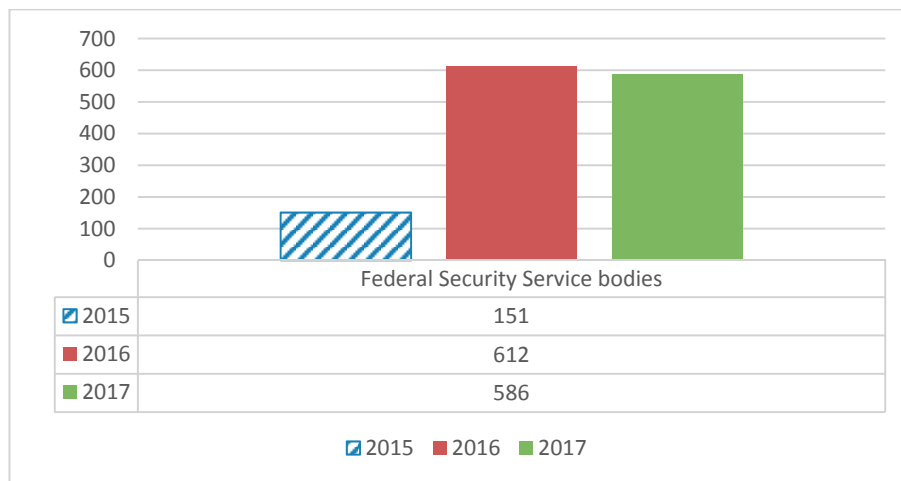


Fig. 7. The detection of environmental offences by the agencies of the Federal Security Service on the continental shelf and in the exclusive economic zone of the Russian Federation

At the same time, HELCOM stresses that the pollution of the Baltic Sea waters is still very considerable.¹² The objective difficulties of detecting environmental offences in the maritime spaces that include the high seas often lead to environmental catastrophes. For instance, a gyre of marine debris particles was found in the North Pacific. Its area is 1.6 million km² and it consists of 45—129 thousand tonnes of plastic [24].

All the above stresses the need for the protection of Russia's environmental interests at the supranational level. The agent of this protection is the national executive bodies vested with the authority to protect Russia's environmental interests beyond its borders.

¹² First version of the 'state of the Baltic sea' report — June 2017: to be updated in 2018. *HELCOM: official site*, available at: <http://www.helcom.fi/Lists/Publications/State%20of%20the%20Baltic%20Sea%20-%20First%20version%202017.pdf> (accessed 20.04.2018).

The means to protect the environmental interests of the Russian Federation in the Baltic region include the implementation of these interests in the laws of the other Baltic region states, as well as their protection in the courts with international jurisdiction.

The UN programmes, foundations, and organisations create a legal framework for the implementation of the legitimate interests that are in line with the environmental interests of the Russian Federation in the laws of the Baltic region states.

The judicial protection of the environmental interests of the Russian Federation in the Baltic region can be carried out at the International Court of Justice and the Permanent Court of Arbitration. The global problem of anthropogenic pollution of the environment and the need to protect the legitimate interests of the countries situated within a single ecosystem call for the establishment of a specialised International Environmental Court [25—28]. The regional protection of Russia's environmental interests may include the Baltic region states take intergovernmental efforts to found an environmental court.

2. Results

The regional system of protection of Russia's environmental interests in the Baltic region comprises the supranational and national levels. For the legal protection of the country's environmental interests, the spatial boundaries of the Russian Federation coincide with those of the regions located within the catchment area of the sea at the national level and with those of the Baltic Sea ecosystem at the supranational level.

As an integrative result of the functioning of the relevant system, the security of the environmental interests is ensured by the resource capacities of the elements, the communications between which create the structure of the model for protecting Russia's environmental interests in the Baltic region.

The structure of the supranational level of the system of Russia's environmental interest protection in the Baltic region includes such elements as programmes, foundations, relevant UN structures, and international organisations (Table 2).

Table 2

**The functions of the supranational level
of Russia's environmental interest protection in the Baltic region**

Element	Function
ECOSOC, IMO, MARPOL, HELCOM	Create the legal framework for the implementation of the legitimate interests, which are in line with the environmental interests of the Russian Federation, in the laws of the Baltic region states

End of Table 2

Element	Function
International Court of Justice, Permanent Court of Arbitration	Can be used in the judicial protection of Russia's legitimate interests in the Baltic region
International Environmental Law	If it is established, can be used in the judicial protection of Russia's interests in the Baltic region

The federal authorities represent the national level.

The system of the legal protection of Russia's environmental interests includes three elements. The first element is the national executive bodies vested with authority to protect the country's environmental interests within its borders. The second is the national executive bodies vested with authority to protect the environmental interests within the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation on the continental shelf and in the exclusive economic zone. The third one is the federal executive bodies vested with authority to protect the country's environmental interests in the context of international relations.

Table 3

**The system of protecting Russia's environmental interests
in the Baltic region: functions of the national level**

Element	Function
The executive bodies of the Russian Federation vested with authority to protect the environmental interests within the boundaries of the Russian Federation	The environmental interest cannot be safeguarded within a single region. A legal protection model can be used only across the whole territory of the Russian Federation, due to the specifics of the national criminal laws
The executive bodies of the Russian Federation vested with the authority to protect the environmental interests within the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation on the continental shelf and in the country's exclusive economic zone	The environmental interests can be safeguarded only if environmental crimes are investigated in collaboration with the Baltic region states
The executive bodies of the Russian Federation vested with the authority to protect the environmental interests in the context of international relations	The conclusion of international agreements for protecting the environmental interests of the Russian Federation in courts with international jurisdiction

The use of a systemic approach makes it possible to build a functional model of the regional system for protecting Russia's environmental interests in the Baltic region.

3. Interpretation of results

The results obtained show that, unlike the environmental protection model, the regional model for protecting the environmental interests of the Russian Federation does not involve the country's regions, despite their significant contribution to the security of the national environmental interests. The protection using the tools of criminal law is carried out at the federal level.

The specifics of the Baltic region imposed certain limitations on this study. The region brings together eight countries of the European Union and the Russian Federation. Developing the structure of a model for the legal protection of Russia's environmental interests is complicated for military, political, and organisational reasons. The military economic pressure from the Baltic region states is growing. Eight out of nine countries of the region are members of the EU and NATO — the associations aiming at the economic and military containment of the Russian Federation [29; 30].

The joint actions on environmental problems are affected by the competitive economic struggle of the EU for sales outlets, as well as by the military and political situation. Russia's experience of integration into the international legal system has shown that the international legal system is used for the economic containment of this country.

At the current stage, the inclusion of the Russian Federation into the international legal system is fraught with adverse legal consequences for the country. Although in line with the goal of NATO to weaken the potential rival, these consequences are at odds with the aspirations of the Baltic region states to curb Russia's economic opportunities for financing environmental actions in the Baltic and, particularly, benefitting from the best available technology.

The establishment of an international environmental court and the participation of the Russian Federation in agreements on dispute resolution may be used for unfair competitive struggle in the markets relating to the hydrocarbon transport in the World Heritage areas.

The results obtained in this study can be used for the improvement of communication among the elements of the protection of Russia's legitimate interests in the Baltic region in order to ensure the environmental security of the Russian Federation.

Further studies should focus on identifying the organisational and legal framework for the establishment of international organisations by the

Russian Federation. These organisations are designed to provide legal and information support for the environmental interests of the Russian Federation in the Baltic region states.

Conclusions

The increasing human interference leads to a high level of pollution of the marine environment, the condition of which is crucial for the environmental security of human beings. The current development of international law does not make it possible to protect the environmental interests of an individual country. Building regional models and integrating them into law enforcement practices will facilitate the achievement of the global environmental security goals.

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LEGAL REGIME
FOR CHURCH PROPERTY
IN RUSSIA
AND THE BALTIC STATES

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In this article, we carry out a comparative analysis of the legal regimes for church property in the Baltic States and in Russia after the demise of the USSR. We stress the significance of this problem for the newly established relations between the state and the religious organisations, for the conclusion of agreements between these actors, and for the development of the ideas of interdenominational peace and intergovernmental relations. In this study, we aim at identifying the similarities and differences between the legal regulation of the state/denomination relations regarding church property, as well as the economic component of these relations. We analyse the regulatory documents of Russia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia that enshrine the transfer (return) of the church property, which was seized illegally in the first Soviet years in Russia and during the incorporation of the Baltic republics into the USSR, to the religious organisations. We compare the restitution, which was carried out in the Baltics, with Russia's moderate approach to the transfer of religious objects to religious organisations. We conclude that the international factor affects the resolution of the church property issue and that the economic benefits of the property transfer are unclear. The transfer of the church property is associated with additional expenditure incurred by the state. In conclusion, we consider the reasons why the complete transfer (return) of the church property seized in the Soviet period is impossible.

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Introduction

During the past three decades, almost all modern states that once were the republics of the Soviet Union have faced problems relating to church or religious organisation property seized under the Soviet rule.

During the last years of the USSR, without any directive from Moscow, local authorities started to restitute church property. The turning point was the year of 1988 when the millennium of the Baptism of Rus' was celebrated with unexpectedly grand festivities. To a great degree, that was a way to compensate for the grim fate of the religious organisations' property. In the RSFSR only, 9,574 religious buildings were not used for their proper purpose. Of them, 3,984 were abandoned and falling gradually into disrepair, 3,656 were repurposed as service and utility buildings and 1,934 as cultural venues [1].

Local authorities saw the celebration of the millennium of the Baptism of Rus' as an important landmark in the relations between the state and the Church and initiated a transfer of religious property. According to later estimates, over 4,000 immovable properties and over 15,000 museum items were transferred to religious organisations over the ten years from 1988 to autumn 1998 [2, p. 55].

This new state of affairs required a special legal framework. The work on the law of the USSR 'On the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organisations' was launched in 1990. The Russian Orthodox Church formulated its position on the issue at a local council the same year. The council issued a communique requesting the transfer of the immovable property used for religious purposes to the Church represented by religious communities and other church institutions [3, p. 71].

Chapter II of the 1990 law of the USSR 'On the Freedom of Conscience and the Religious Organisations Recognised in the Soviet Union' contained a classification of the religious organisations recognised in the Soviet Union.

According to Article 7, a number of institutions were recognised as religious organisations, Firstly, these were the religious associations established voluntarily by citizens for collective expressions of faith and other religious purposes. It was not obligatory to report the creation of such organisations to the authorities. Secondly, among the recognised religious institutions were the branches and centres acting upon a charter that did not contravene the current law. Thirdly, these were monasteries and convents, congregations, missionary societies, and the associations comprised of religious organisations represented by branches and centres.

Article 13 of this Law was of pivotal importance. It read: 'A religious organisation shall be deemed to be a legal entity immediately upon the registration of the charter of such an organisation.'

‘As a legal entity, a religious organisation shall have the rights and obligations according to the charter of such an organisation and the law.’ This Article abrogated the rule that denied religious organisations the rights of legal entities. This rule had been in force for 72 years.

On October 25, 1990, i. e. immediately after its Union-level counterpart, the law of the RSFSR ‘On the Freedom of Belief’ was adopted. Article 18 of the law was dedicated to the rights of the legal entity of a religious organisation. ‘A religious association of adult citizens that consists of at least ten people shall have the rights of a legal entity immediately upon the registration of the charter of such an organisation, according to the procedure referred to in Article 20 of this Law.

‘A religious association that has the rights of a legal entity shall be entitled to establish another religious association with the rights of a legal entity.’

A comparative analysis of the Union and Russian laws demonstrates that each had its advantages and disadvantages. Nevertheless, they marked a new state in the relations between the state and the church.

The first problem was the transfer of religious property to religious organisations. Article 9 of the Union law, which regulated the property matters of religious organisations, draw a fair line between the donations and the other incomes of religious organisations exempted from taxation, on the one hand, and the incomes of the enterprises established by these organisations subject to taxation as the enterprises of non-profit organisations, on the other.

On December 29, 1990, the Council of Ministers of the USSR issued Order No. 1372 ‘On the Procedure for the Transfer of State-Owned Religious Buildings, Structures, and other Religious Property to Religious Organisations’. It enshrined the principle of gratuitous transfer of property to religious denominations. ‘1. To establish that the transfer of state-owned religious buildings, structures, and other religious property is carried out gratuitously, according to the procedure of the transfer of property to non-profit organisations, specified in the Oder of the Ministers of the USSR of October 16, 1979 No. 940 “On the Procedure for the Transfer of Enterprises, Associations, Organisations, Institutions, Buildings, and Structures”.’

Thus, by the time when the USSR disintegrated, there was a ready regulative and legal framework for the transfer of the religious property seized under Soviet rule, to religious organisations.

Each of the newly established states was solving this problem its own way. Of interest are the cases of the Baltics and the Russian Federation, since their approaches to the restitution of religious property differed significantly at first. However, eventually, all these states faced the same problems.



Methodology

The legal regulation of the property relations of religious organisations has aroused both theoretical and practical interests internationally in the aftermath of very different events. Firstly, many studies have focused on the uses of religious land in the US according to the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000 (RLUIPA) [4, p. 41—93; 5, p. 1—54; 6, p. 195—267]. Secondly, much attention has been paid to the regulation of the Muslim endowment funds in England and Wales [7, p. 281—295]. Thirdly, a number of studies have addressed the Biblical doctrine of land as applied to the South African restitution, which is being opposed by the landowners, the former metropolises, and large corporations [8, p. 685—707]. Fourthly, the treasure found in Padmanabhaswamy Temple in Thiruvananthapuram, the state of Kerala, in 2011 launched a long discussion on the ownership of temple assets. The ensuing court proceedings reached the Supreme Court of India [9, p. 841—865]. Fifthly, a number of studies have examined the land holdings of the Orthodox Patriarchy in Jerusalem [10, p. 383—408]. Sixthly, the researchers have analysed the court cases relating to church property [11, p. 443—494].

Although the legal regulation of the property relations of religious organisations in the Baltics was given a legislative framework as early as the 1990s, this problem has not received much attention from the academic community. The few exceptions are the works of Christopher Hill [12, pp. 420—423], Mikko Ketola [13, pp. 225—239], Robertas Pukenis [14, p. 114—128], and Mirand Cruz [15, pp. 479—504].

In Russia, the legal regime of religious property has been attracting increasing attention recently. In effect, a new school of thought is emerging. The history of the legal regulation of the property relations of religious organisations in Russia and the economic component of these organisations' activities have been addressed by canon lawyers (V. A. Tsy-pin, A. Nikolin, and others), historians (M. I. Odintsov, S. L. Firsov, S. G. Zubanova, P. Vert), and lawyers (A. A. Vishnevsky, E. V. Garanova, E. V. Anilova, O. A. Ivanyuk, O. P. Kashkovsky, A. V. Konovalov, I. A. Kunitsyn, Yu. S. Ovchinnikova, L. V. Porvatova, V. B. Romanovskaya, T. V. Soyfer, N. N. Kharitonov, M. V. Khlystov, M. O. Shakhov, and others). Several PhD theses have focused on this issue — particularly, those by M. A. Kulagin, V. V. Bagan, and R. V. Tupikin.

The methodology for studying the legal regulation of the property relations of religious organisations has several important features.

A study in this field should not be limited to positive law, since each denomination has its own normative system — canon law, church law, religious law, etc. When studying the legal regulation of religious organisations' property relations, it is necessary to take into account the correlation between public and private law elements. The constitutional and civil law approaches can be considered only in combination.

The state structures and the religious organisations of the countries that once were part of the Russian Empire and, later, the Soviet Union have to embrace the fact that the estimates of church assets were rough at best in any historical period.

Research into the problems of religious organisations' property rights is complicated by the absence of a legislative definition of the legal content of this widely used term. Whereas the situation is more or less clear when it comes to the liability property rights of religious organisations, their inheritance rights and special rights lack a clear definition.

An important function of religious organisations is their social missions. Thus, each case of the transfer of religious property should be handled individually. If an illegally expropriated religious building houses a hospital, an educational, or a social welfare institution, the religious organisation may withdraw its claim for the public good.

The civil law aspects of the functioning of religious organisations require the same discretion and objectivity as the other aspects of relations among the state, religious organisations, society, and individuals. They should not encroach on the feelings of either the believers or the atheists. The transfer of religious property to religious organisations makes sense only if it contributes to the spiritual betterment of society.

Results

Most former republics of the Soviet Union did not hurry to solve the problems of the religious property and the legal regulation of freedom of consciousness [16, pp. 90—98]. However, this did not hold true for the Baltics.

The law of the Republic of Latvia 'On Restitution to Religious Organisations', which was adopted on May 12, 1992, contained the following provisions.

Article 1 abrogated all the regulative and legal documents on the alienation of the property of religious organisations, adopted between July 21, 1940, and October 13, 1990. The only exception was the lands that were allocated for permanent use to individuals and the objects that were sold to innocent purchasers (individuals) based on a notarized agreement.

Article 3 provided that, if restitution was impossible, the religious organisation was eligible for compensation. The exception was the objects



lost in World War II or those passed into the ownership of legal entities and individuals. The right of restitution was granted only to the religious organisations registered with the Department of Churches and Denominations of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Latvia, those reinstated as legal entities, and the successors to the religious organisations functioning before 1940 (Article 6).

The right to apply for restitution was valid for 18 months after the law had come into force. If the former owner of a religious building or its successor never applied, the building was transferred to the state while maintaining the status of religious property.

However, this law did not solve a range of problems, many of which persist to this day. For instance, in 2009—2012, a pressing issue was compensations for the property that had been owned by Latvia's families and organisations before World War II. The law of the Republic of Latvia did not provide such compensations since a considerable part of the Hebrew religious objects were either destroyed on purpose by the Nazis or ruined by war, whereas many of the owners and their successors were murdered. Nevertheless, Latvia's Jewish community started negotiations with the Government on the compensation for both types of property with the intention to spend the money obtained on helping the Holocaust survivors [17, p. 114].

In 2015, this problem reached a new level. Latvia's Jewish community claimed 270 buildings. In 2016, the Saeima adopted the law on the restitution of five buildings. This was only the beginning of a complicated process. Opinions clashed in both the Parliament and the Jewish community [18].

A serious discussion was sparked off by the amendments to the Latvian law on the restitution of property to religious organisations. Adopted in September 2009, these changes fuelled discontent among the religious organisations, which condemned the dissolution of the Department of Religious Affairs. Among other things, the Department officially corroborated the continuity of religious organisations' functioning. No similar structure was established instead. Finally, it was decided that this information would be provided by Latvia's Company Registry and Ministry of Justice [19].

Another reason why the legal problems of religious property have the international significance is the conclusion of agreements between a state and the religious centres. On November 8, 2000, the Republic of Latvia signed an agreement with the Holy See. In Article 10, the Latvian state guaranteed that it would restitute the illegally alienated property to the Catholic Church based on a permission from a relevant authority and the Conference of the Catholic Bishops of Latvia.

Latvia was historically a country of a Lutheran majority. Today, the Lutherans account for 55 %, Catholics for 24 %, and Orthodox Christians for 9 % of the country's population [20]). However, Article 22 of the Agreement of November 8, 2000, proclaimed the cultural and artistic heritage of the Catholic Church an important part of the national assets. The state and the Catholic Church were to share financial responsibilities for the protection of the Catholic cultural and artistic heritage.

In his analysis of this Agreement, R. V. Tupikin classified Latvia as a country where the presence of the Roman Catholic Church is the strongest [21, p. 13].

The Republic of Lithuania adopted the law 'On the Procedure for the Restitution of the Rights of Religious Communities to the Surviving Property' on March 21, 1995. The provisions of the law rested on the following principles:

1) July 21, 1940, was established as the reference point, i. e. the right to restitution was granted to the religious communities that had existed prior to that date.

2) The restitution did not cover land, inland waters, forests, and parks, as well as the objects constituting the exclusive property of the states according to Article 47 of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania.

3) The right to the restitution of the immovable property was granted to the religious communities, which were recognised as the successors to the pre-1940 associations.

4) The right to the immovable property could be restored in two ways — either by the restitution of the immovable property or by the purchase of the property by the state (transfer of the property in question or property of similar type and value to the community, compensation, assistance in renovation, lease of land at auction).

According to P. A. Shashkin, the measures taken in Lithuania were not radical. The restitution was selective and the Russian Orthodox Church was one of the beneficiaries [22]. In 2008, when describing the governmental and denominational relations in Lithuania, representatives of the Moscow Patriarchy emphasised that 95 % of the temples and the other church buildings had been restituted [23].

Testimony to the efficiency of the Lithuanian approach is the reaction from the Old Believers living in Lithuania. In particular, G. V. Potashenko stresses that the Old Believers' communities became autonomous and regained their property. Moreover, they were entitled to annual financial assistance [24].

Just like Latvia, Lithuania signed an agreement with the Holy See — the Agreement of May 5, 2000, on cooperation in education and culture.

Although the proportion of the Catholics has always been more considerable in Lithuania than it was in Latvia, the Agreement adopted a very balanced approach that suited the interests of both the state and the church. Particularly, Article 2 stated that the archives of the Roman Catholic Church, which had been expropriated between June 15, 1940, and March 11, 1990, and kept at the State Archive, remained intact and the authorised churches had gratuitous access and publishing rights to these materials.

The Agreement emphasises that the purchase, management, use, and disposal of religious property are carried out by the church legal entities in accordance with the canon law and the laws of the Republic of Lithuania (Article 10, Clause 1).

In Estonia, the Law on Churches and Parishes was adopted by the Riigikogu on May 20, 1993. However, soon the dramatic events followed, which are resonating to this day. In 1996, part of the parishes of the Estonian Orthodox Church was transferred to the Constantinople Patriarchy, which registered as successor to the pre-war Orthodox Church. The parishes that remained under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchy agreed to the arrangement but sought to the same status. However, they did not succeed.

On February 12, 2002, the Republic of Estonia adopted the new law 'On Churches and Religious Communities'. The major changes were as follows. Firstly, the religious associations were to be supervised by the judicial authority instead of the executive authority. Secondly, the concepts of 'Church', 'monastery or convent', 'community', and 'parish' were defined. Thirdly, the Estonian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchy was deprived of the right to claims to religious property. The situation has not been resolved. The Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church of February 4, 2011, issued the ruling 'On the Internal Affairs and External Relations of the Russian Orthodox Church'. Clause 10 of the ruling expressed regret about the persisting inequality in the property situation of the communities of the Estonian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchy as compared to the communities of the Constantinople Church.

In Russia, the normative and legal regulation of the transfer of religious property to religious organisations was a long process of the gradual adoption of a common position that would satisfy the state, society, and the denominations.

The turning point was the adoption of the Constitution of the Russian Federation on December 12, 1993. According to Article 8, Russia recognised private, public, municipal, and other forms of property (the Constitution of the Russian Federation (adopted by popular vote on Decem-

ber 12, 1993, with the amendments introduced through the laws of the Russian Federation of December 30, 2008 No. 6-FKZ, of December 30, 2008, No. 7-FKZ, of February 5, 2014, No. 2-FKZ, and of July 21, 2014, No. 11-FKZ). One of these forms of property was religious property. In 1994, Part 1 of the Civil Code of the Russian Federation was adopted. According to Article 50, religious organisations are classified as non-profits. Pieces of subordinate legislation regulating the property of religious organisations were constantly adopted. These included the Order of the President of the Russian Federation of April 23, 1993, No. 281-rp 'On the Transfer of Religious Buildings and Other Property to Religious Organisations', the Regulation of the Government of the Russian Federation of March 14, 1995, No. 248 'On the Procedure for the Transfer of the Federal-Owned Religious Property to Religious Associations', the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of March 14, 1996, No. 378 'On the Measures for the Rehabilitation of the Clergy and the Believers who Fell Victim to Groundless Repressions', etc.

On September 26, 1997, the federal law of the Russian Federation No. 125-FZ 'On the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations' was adopted. Article 21 of the law contained several provisions on religious property. Firstly, the buildings, lands, industrial, social welfare, charity, cultural, educational, and other facilities, religious objects, funds, and other properties, including historical and cultural monuments were recognised as religious properties. The property rights of religious organisations were extended to the property purchased or created at their own costs, donated by individuals and organisations, transferred to religious organisations by the state, or acquired by any other legal way. Thirdly, the transfer of public or municipal property to religious organisations was to be gratuitous.

Only on November 30, 2010, the President of the Russian Federation signed the Federal Law of the Russian Federation No. 327-FZ 'On the Transfer of Public or Municipal Religious Property to Religious Organisations'. The law came into force on December 14 the same year. Although small in volume (only 12 articles), the Law contained a number of innovations. Firstly, it introduced a list of religious properties, which included non-religious facilities used for religious purposes. Secondly, it specified only the gratuitous use rather than ownership of the unalienable state or municipal property constituting part of a building or structure that was not classified as religious property.

Alongside the federal efforts, rule-making was carried out in the regions of the Russian Federation. According to V.V. Bagan's estimates, the regions adopted 116 regulations relating to the property relations between the state and religious organisations [25].

The religious situation differs from region to region. For instance, the law of the Kaliningrad region of October 28, 2010, No. 502 ‘On the Gratuitous Transfer into the Ownership of the “Kaliningrad Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchy)” centralised religious organisation’ specified the transfer of 15 objects. Due to the historical reasons, many of these buildings and structures belonged earlier to the Protestant communities [26, p. 44].

The transfer of religious property in the Russian Federation and the Baltics has always had an economic facet.

Firstly, Max Weber’s classical idea about the role of the religious factors in the development has been evolved and corroborated in recent studies [27, p. 31—44]. Secondly, after regaining independence, all the former republics of the Soviet Union remained secular states. Thus, public authorities encouraged the self-financing and self-support of religious organisations. For example, the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor emphasises that secularism involves a complex requirement. More than one good is sought in this case. He distinguishes among the three goals that he classifies in the categories of the French revolution. The first one is liberty (no one must be forced in the domain of religion). The second one is equality between people of different faiths or basic beliefs. The third one is fraternity (all spiritual families must be heard, included in the ongoing process of determining what the society is about (its political identity) and how it is going to realize these goals (the exact regime of rights and privileges)) [28, p. 23—34].

However, the case of the Russian Federation shows that the attempts to expedite the transitions of religious organisations to self-financing do not yield the expected result. In 2012—2015, the Russian Orthodox Church received 14 billion roubles from the state. Further 2.6 billion roubles were included in the budget of 2016 [29]. Such considerable sums are needed because many religious objects are classified as cultural heritage [30]. Thus, the owners assume an obligation to preserve these objects, provide access to them, etc. In this case, the state subsidises the maintenance of cultural heritage.

Thirdly, some denominations have become large asset owners. Today, the assets of the Russian Orthodox Church are estimated to be comparable to those of the Russian Railways and Gazprom.

Fourthly, in Russia and the other post-Soviet countries, religious organisations enjoy a wide range of tax exemptions.

Fifthly, the transition of the objects of cultural heritage from the category of museum property to that of religious property may result in the museums, which not only finance themselves but also make significant contributions to the state or the city budget, become subsidised religious

objects and taxpayer burden. In 2017, these considerations led to a major debate relating to the transfer of St Isaac's Cathedral in Saint Petersburg to the Russian Orthodox Church.

Discussion

A comparative analysis of the legal regimes of religious property in the Russian Federation, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia demonstrates the following.

The regulations adopted in the Baltics used the term the 'restitution of religious property', whereas the Russian laws use the concept of the 'transfer of religious property'. This means that, in Russia, religious organisations are not privileged subjects of civil law that are eligible for restitution. The term 'restitution of religious property' is used in Russia primarily by the representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church. However, the term does not have wide circulation in the legal community.

As regards the selectivity of the transfer of religious property, Russia seems to be treading the path of the Baltics. An increasing number of objects are being transferred to religious organisations, including the buildings that have housed museums, archives, libraries, educational, and medical institutions since the Soviet times. This is not always economically feasible since new buildings have to be built or the old one repurposed to accommodate the affected cultural or social welfare institutions.

According to the post-Soviet laws, the transfer (restitution) of religious property to religious organisations is carried out only if it is owned by the state or a municipality. Private-owned property is not subject to transfer. This is the only reasonable approach that can prevent social unrest.

The problem of religious property in Russia, as well as in the Baltics, has both a national and an international dimension. For Russia, this aspect was limited to the assumption of the relevant obligations upon the country's accession to the Council of Europe, i. e. to the level of participation in international organisations. For Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, the international dimension is associated with the accession to the EU and bilateral relations, particularly, with Israel.

Neither Russia nor the Baltics can return all the religious property lost by religious organisations in 1918 or in the early 1940s respectively. The approach to the transfer of certain property from the state to a religious organisation should be balanced and object-specific.

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THE SPECIAL
ECONOMIC ZONE
IN THE KALININGRAD
REGION:
TOWARDS
A MORE EFFECTIVE
LEGAL REGIME

*K. N. Nilov*¹



In this article, I aim at identifying the main trends in the development of the laws on the special legal regime of entrepreneurship in the Kaliningrad region. I address the problems of the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in the Kaliningrad region and provide recommendations for improving its legal regulation. I analyse the 12 years experience of the practical application of the federal law on the regional SEZ and examine the gaps and conflicts in the regulatory legal acts. In this study, I consider the legal requirements for the SEZ residents and their investment projects, as well as benefits provided to the residents. Another focus is the goals of the SEZ. I investigate the effectiveness of the benefits to the investors and of the applicable procedures and analyse the factors reducing the region's investment attractiveness. I outline the 2017 amendments to the federal law on the SEZ in the Kaliningrad region and provide recommendations for the development of regulation and enforcement. I stress the need for tax harmonisation and the introduction of special procedures for the payment of taxes on profits and properties by the SEZ residents.

Keywords: special economic zone, special legal regime, legal regime improvement, investment, tax benefits, Kaliningrad region

Introduction

The special economic zone in the Kaliningrad region (below, the SEZ) is one of the largest and oldest national zones enjoying economic privileges. The SEZ has grown to become the trademark of the region's investment attractiveness.

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A principal component affecting the investment climate and sought by investors is a stable regulatory environment. However, economic efficiency and investor preferences are equally important factors.

The first step toward greater investment and the preferential treatment of businesses was the legal regime of the Yantar free economic zone.¹ An important contribution to the process was the Federal Law of January 22, 1996, No. 3-FZ 'On the Special Economic Zone in the Kaliningrad region'.² These steps were necessitated by the special economic position of the region. As the literature stresses, they had to accelerate the socio-economic development of the region in the conditions of its growing isolation from mainland Russia [1, p. 90].

During the past 12 years, the special legal regime for business in the Kaliningrad region has been governed by the Federal Law of January 10, 2006, No. 16-FZ On the Special Economic Zone in the Kaliningrad Region and the Amendments to Selected Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation³ (further, the FZ on SEZ in the Kaliningrad region). An important role in laying down harmonized rules of economic management in the Eurasian Economic Union is played by the Agreement on the Free (Special) Economic Zones on the Customs Territory and the Customs Procedure of the Free Customs Zone of June 18, 2010.⁴

The special legal regime of business in the Kaliningrad region is very different from that in other special economic zones in Russia. The Kaliningrad SEZ cannot be classified into any of the four types of special economic zones listed in the Federal Law of July 22, 2005, No. 16-FZ 'On the Special Economic Zones in the Russian Federation'.⁵ Note that

¹ On the Economic and Legal States of the Free Economic Zone in the Kaliningrad region: A Decree of the President of the Supreme Council of the RSFSR of June 3, 1991, No. 1356-1. *The Journal of the People's Deputies of the RSFSR and the Supreme Council of the RSFSR*, 1991, No. 23.

² On the Special Economic Zone in the Kaliningrad Region: A Federal Law of January 22, 1996, No. 13-FZ. *Collected Acts of the Russian Federation*, 1996, No. 4, article 224.

³ On the Special Economic Zone in the Kaliningrad Region and the Amendments to the Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation: A Federal Law of January 10, 2006, No. 16-FZ. *Collected Acts of the Russian Federation*, 2006, No. 3, article 280.

⁴ The Agreement on the Free (Special) Economic Zones on the Customs Territory of the Customs Union and the Customs Procedure of the Free Customs Zone (Saint Petersburg, June 18, 2010). *International Agreement Bulletin*, 2012, No. 7.

⁵ On the Special Economic Zones in the Russian Federation: A Federal Law of July 22, 2005, No. 116-FZ. *Collected Acts of the Russian Federation*, 2005, No. 52, part 3, article 5743.

this law is not effective in the Kaliningrad SEZ. In terms of the legal regime of business, the SEZ in the Kaliningrad region occupies a halfway position between a special economic zone and a priority socioeconomic development area [2, p. 29].

The use of the same term to denote different legal regimes is inadequate and incorrect from the perspective of legal science. This holds true for applying a generic term to refer to a legal regime that it does not even cover. In the legal literature, the generic term denoting special legal regimes of business that go beyond the general law on special economic zones in the Russian Federation (the Kaliningrad and Magadan regions, Crimea, and Sevastopol) is the ‘priority socioeconomic development areas’ [3]. However, this approach is not ideal, since the legislation does not specify this notion and the mentioned legal regimes of business differ substantially.

Most authors stress the need for systemic changes in the laws that are effective in the territories with special economic development conditions. However, it has been proposed to unify the legal regimes of these territories and regulate their legal statuses in a single federal law that would contain an exhaustive list of the types of such territories, the definitions of these types, and the description of the cases when each of them can be applied [4, p. 109]. A diversity of territories with special economic conditions does not translate into a diversity of legal measures to encourage business activity. ‘The legislator borrows whole articles, almost verbatim. This, on the one hand, raises the question about the necessity to multiply federal laws when the ones in effect could be amended and applied to the newly created territories. On the other hand, this proves that there is an established range of effective legal means of governmental regulation of the functioning of territories with special business regimes’ [5, p. 63].

Most studies into the development of entrepreneurship in the Kaliningrad SEZ are fragmentary. They focus on isolated aspects of the development of individual industries [6–8], taxation, or customs regulations [9, 10]. There have been attempts to assess the prospects of the development of the Kaliningrad SEZ and the region [11–14]. However, little attention has been paid to the legal aspects of the improvement of the special regime of business in the region. As a rule, current publications only give an overview of the benefits to investors and do not analyze the practical aspects. This might be explained by the local nature of the ongoing problems, which are relevant to only one region of the Russian Federation.



The efficiency of the special legal regime for business

The Federal law on the Kaliningrad SEZ calls for the establishment of a special legal regime for business, production, investment, and other activities. In legal and technical terms, this phrasing is inadequate, since it allows for an open list of activities and uses concepts with overlapping meanings.

An important path to improve the special legal regime of business in the Kaliningrad region is increasing its efficiency. The concept of efficiency is the key to assessing the performance of special economic zones. Indeed, special legal regimes of business are established to ensure greater efficiency than in the usual legal environment. Expert reviews of the efficiency of legal regimes of special economic zones focus on the economic, social, and legal aspects. Thus, we can consider the economic efficiency of a SEZ, the social aspects of this efficiency, and the efficiency of legal regulation.

The economic efficiency of the performance of a SEZ is viewed as a complex property that affects various aspects of the operations of both the SEZ residents and the governing bodies. The efficiency of a SEZ is a complex property that covers various aspects of the operations of the SEZ and its residents, in view of the ratio between the revenues and expenses associated with the SEZ regime [15, p. 520]. As a rule, efficiency assessments consist in comparisons of the performance of a SEZ with associated costs [16, p. 309]. In practice, the economic efficiency of a SEZ is assessed using economic indicators listed in the applicable laws and regulations. A vivid example is the Order of the Government of the Russian Federation of July 7, 2016 No. 63 'On the Procedure for Assessing the Efficiency of the Performance of Special Economic Zones'.⁶ However, the criteria specified in the law do not extend to all the national special economic zones. In particular, this order is not applied to the Kaliningrad SEZ. Moreover, economic indicators for assessing the economic efficiency of the Kaliningrad SEZ have not been established yet. A composite index used by default is a favourable investment climate capable of attracting additional investment for the economic development of the Kaliningrad region. Since the introduction of the special legal regime in the Kaliningrad region, 216 companies have been included in the list of SEZ residents (as of March 14, 2018, there were 152 functional

⁶ On the Procedure for Assessing the Efficiency of the Performance of Special Economic Zones: An Order of the Government of the Russian Federation of July 7, 2016, No. 643. *Collected Acts of the Russian Federation*, 2016, No. 29, article 4820.

residents). The total amount of the committed investment reached USD 106.1 billion as of March 14, 2018. The considerable decrease in the number of newly registered residents in 2013—2015, when only 3—8 investors were included in the list annually, was followed by a slight increase. Twenty-six new residents were registered in 2016, 27 in 2017, and over ten in the first ten weeks of 2018.⁷

The legal aspect of the efficiency of a SEZ is approached from a different angle. Jurisprudence uses the concept of the ‘efficiency of legal regulation’, which describes the correlation between the goals and the impact of legal regulations [17, p. 505]. Therefore, the efficiency of legal regimes can be considered through the prism of attaining the goals that were set when these regimes were established. This applies equally to the (special) legal regimes of business introduced in the special economic zones, including that in the Kaliningrad region.

This SEZ was established to accelerate the socio-economic development of the region. The legal literature has stressed the inadequacy of this phrasing [18, p. 45]. Obviously, acceleration takes a limited time and can be only a short-term measure. The initial 25-year-period of the law (until 2031) contradicted the idea of continuous acceleration of socio-economic development. Amendments to the federal law on the Kaliningrad SEZ⁸ extended the period of the law for another 15 years (until 2045), without any changes to the goals of the legal regime. This made the inadequacy of the phrasing even more evident. A better phrasing was used in the earlier federal law of January 22, 1996, No. 13-FZ ‘On the Special Economic Zone in the Kaliningrad Region’, where the sustainable socioeconomic development was stated as the goal and the term ‘acceleration’ was never mentioned. The same goal is set in the National Programme of the Russian Federation ‘The Socioeconomic Development of the Kaliningrad region until 2020’.⁹ The phrasing used in this programme seems to be more adequate.

⁷ Osobaya ekonomicheskaya zona v Kaliningradskoy oblasti — novye vozmozhnosti dlya razvitiya biznesa [The Special Economic Zone in the Kaliningrad Region — New Business Opportunities. *The Official Website of the Ministry of Industrial Policy and the Development of Business and Commerce of the Kaliningrad region*. URL: <https://oez.gov39.ru> (accessed 22.04.2018).

⁸ On Amendments to Selected Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation Relating to the Socioeconomic Development of the Kaliningrad region: A Federal Law of December 5, 2017, No. 393-FZ. *Collected Acts of the Russian Federation*, 2017, No. 50, part 3, article 7564.

⁹ On the Adoption of the National Programme of the Russian Federation ‘The Socio-Economic Development of the Kaliningrad Region until 2020: A Regulation of the Government of the Russian Federation of April 15, 2014, No. 311. *Collected Acts of the Russian Federation*, 2014, No. 18, part 2, article 2157.



An analysis of the changes in the key economic indicators (gross regional product, industrial production index, fixed investment, etc.) over the past ten years¹⁰ does not show that the goal of accelerating the region's socioeconomic development was achieved. However, the positive effect of the legal regime is undeniable.

The stability of the regulatory framework for business is one of the key parameters of an effective legal regime. In describing the legal regimes of business, Prof. Aleksandr A. Mokhov cogently argues that the current regime was not established once and for all. It can change under the influence of various factors — the cycles of the market economy, current macroeconomic problems, the emergence of new forms of relations, etc. [19, p. 9]. In our case, changes to the legal regime seem to be justified. However, this does not hold true for the annual changes undermine the necessary stability of the regulatory framework.

An indicator of the intensive development of the legal regime of the Kaliningrad SEZ is the significant number of changes in the regulatory framework. Over the twelve years that the law on the Kaliningrad SEZ has been in effect, amendments have been made twelve times, which is a considerable number for a principal regulatory act specifying the conditions for investment activities in the region. Many of the regulations of the law have been sharply criticized. This is especially true for repealed chapter 8, which set a transition period until April 2016. The experts have stressed that 'the competitiveness of the regional economy was a product of customs privileges and, thus, of the rent, which originated from the difference between the cost of the raw materials and components used in the goods manufactured in the SEZ and in those produced elsewhere in the country. Closely connected to the logistics and financial flows, this rent created a system of competitiveness that was unfair to the producers of similar goods located in mainland Russia' [20, p. 23].

Another important stage of improving the special legal regime of business in the region began with the end of the transition period. It consisted of the preparation of regulations and took place in 2017. In particular, on the instruction of the President of Russia, the regional government in collaboration with the Ministry of Economic Development of Russia drew up the draft federal law 'On the Socioeconomic Development of the

¹⁰ Kaliningradskaya oblast v tsifrah 2017 (kratkiy sbornik) [The Kaliningrad Region in Numbers 2017: A Digest]. *The Official Website of the Kaliningrad Regional Office of the Federal State Statistics Service*, available at: http://kalininград.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_ts/kaliningrad/ru/publications/official_publications/electronic_versions/ (accessed 22.04.2018).

Kaliningrad region of March 15, 2016'.¹¹ Unfortunately, many of the regulations of the draft law were not supported at the federal level and only a few were included in the two federal laws adopted in November — December 2017.¹²

Another element of improving the efficiency of legal regulation is the increase in the efficiency of legal guarantees for investors. The inefficiency of the current guarantees for international investors has been emphasized in the literature [21, p. 12].

The legal status of the SEZ residents

The legislation links the benefits granted to investors to the obligation to acquire the status of a resident of the Kaliningrad SEZ. The residents are required to enter on the resident register. The eligible companies should be registered in the Kaliningrad region and comply with the industry-specific limitations and the SEZ requirements for investment projects.

The initial goal of the legal regime of the Kaliningrad SEZ was to attract large businesses capable of delivering considerable investment. The required minimum capital investment amount for the investment projects of the Kaliningrad SEZ residents was established at 150 million roubles over three years from the entry on the register. This approach deprived many small and medium businesses planning to launch large investment projects from the opportunity to acquire the status of a SEZ resident. The experts have repeatedly stressed the need to reduce the minimum amount of investment to half or one-third of the initial level and increase the investment project period from three to five years [22, p. 66] in order to attract more investors and expand the range of investment of eligible projects. These proposals were taken into account by the legislator. In 2016, the minimum amount of investment in projects in tourism and recreation, manufacturing, fishing, fish farming, and agriculture was reduced to fifty million roubles. A lower minimum was set in 2018 for investment projects in healthcare (ten million roubles of capital investment), computer technology, software development, information technology, and R&D (one million roubles).

¹¹ On the Socioeconomic Development of the Kaliningrad region [E-resource]: A Draft Federal Law. Accessed via the Consultant Plus system.

¹² On the Amendments to Selected Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation Relating to the Socioeconomic Development of the Kaliningrad region: A Federal Law of December 5, 2017, No. 393-FZ. *Collected Acts of the Russian Federation*, 2017, No. 50, part 3, article 7564 ; On the Amendments to Part Two of the Tax Code of the Russian Federation: A Federal Law of November 27, 2017, No. 353. *Collected Acts of the Russian Federation*, 2017, No. 49, article 7325.



Special tax treatment

The most important benefits granted within the special regime of business in the Kaliningrad SEZ are tax exemptions for the residents. We agree with the authors who have emphasised that the current legal regulation of the taxation of SEZ residents ‘is characterized by inadequate phrasing, a multitude of approaches to providing special tax treatment, and the absence of either a scientific rationale or a single method for creating a system of tax exemptions within special taxation regimes’ [23, p. 29].

Against this background, it seems logical to continue the improvement of the special tax treatment for the residents of the Kaliningrad SEZ. An important novelty was a change to the procedure for establishing the period of corporate tax exemption for the SEZ residents. Earlier, the exemption period was calculated from the date of the entry on the register. Now, it will be calculated from January 1 of the year when a resident starts to receive profits within their investment project. If they do not receive profits during the first three tax years, the exemption period is calculated from January 1 of year 4. Thus, the maximum exemption period was extended from 12 to 15 years.

Although it does not seem logical, the procedure for calculating the property tax exemption period did not change. This problem has led to legal disputes.¹³ The property tax exemption period is calculated from the date of the entry on the register and it does not coincide with the tax year. The SEZ residents that enter on the register at the beginning of a calendar year are not in the same position as those who enter at the end. No resident can benefit from the whole six-year property tax exemption period.

The land plots used by the Kaliningrad SEZ residents in implementing their investment project are subject to a 0% land tax over a period of five years.

However, the possibilities for expanding the tax exemption periods for the SEZ residents have been largely exhausted. It has been argued in the literature that international investors should be attracted to the Russian SEZs ‘by the general prospects of the Russian economy rather than tax exemptions and cheap labour. The key factors behind the develop-

¹³ A Decision of the Commercial Court of the Kaliningrad region of March 11, 2016 (case No. A21-3415/2014), available at: <http://www.ras.arbitr.ru> (accessed 31.03.2018); Resolution of the Commercial Court of the North-West District of September 1, 2016 (case No. A21-3415/2014), available at: <http://www.ras.arbitr.ru> (accessed 31.03.2018); Interim Order of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation of March 16, 2017, 307-KG16-18094, available at: <http://www.ras.arbitr.ru> (accessed 31.03.2018).

ment of the zones and the attraction of investment should be economic stability, capital protection, infrastructure, and administrative support for business' [24, p. 57]. All this applies equally to the Kaliningrad SEZ.

New ways to enhance the legal regime

Alongside the improvement of the earlier isolated elements of the special legal regime of business, which were discussed above, the legislator developed new regulations aimed to increase the investment attractiveness of the Kaliningrad SEZ.

Firstly, the range of exemptions for the SEZ residents was expanded. New exemptions were introduced in 2018 for the newly registered residents. Particularly, the idea of reduced insurance premium rates was borrowed from the legal regime of the priority socioeconomic development areas.

Legal entities entering on the register of the Kaliningrad SEZ residents from January 1, 2018, to December 31, 2022, will pay insurance premiums at a rate of 7.6%.¹⁴ This rate will be applied only if the residents create new jobs. Compiled by the residents, the list of new jobs will be approved by the administration of the Kaliningrad SEZ and the tax service. The reduced rates will be effective until December 31, 2025.

Initially, the exemption was to be granted to a wide range of businesses and it was expected to become a serious incentive. However, in the adopted version of the law, the exemption applies to a very limited group of the SEZ residents (in effect, a few dozen) and, thus, it will not have a considerable effect on the investment climate.

Secondly, the programme for the governmental support for legal entities operating in the Kaliningrad region and the residents of the Kaliningrad SEZ aimed at creating and sustaining new jobs, as well as promoting import substitution and localization of assembly operations, was formalized by law and extended until January 1, 2031. The programme has been effective since April 1, 2016, in accordance with the procedures and conditions established by the Government of the Kaliningrad region¹⁵. The total amount of subsidies granted by the programme reached 25.9 billion roubles in 2016 and 49.6 billion roubles in 2017.¹⁶

¹⁴ On Amendments to Part Two of the Tax Code of the Russian Federation: A Federal Law of November 27, 2017, No. 353. *Collected Acts of the Russian Federation*, 2017, No. 49, article 7325.

¹⁵ On the Procedure and Conditions for the Allocation of Regional Budget Subsidies for the Support for Legal Entities Operating in the Kaliningrad region, and the Residents of the Special Economic Zone in the Kaliningrad Region: A regulation of the Government of the Kaliningrad region of February 16, 2016, No. 83 [E-resource]. Accessed via the Consultant Plus system.

¹⁶ Special Economic Zone in the Kaliningrad region — New Business Opportunities. The official website of the Ministry of Industrial Policy and Business and Commerce Development of the Kaliningrad region, available at: <https://oez.gov39.ru> (accessed 22.04.2018).

Thirdly, the recycling fee for the vehicles produced less than three years ago was abolished. Now they are subject to the free customs zone procedure effective in the Kaliningrad SEZ. This regulation applies to the equipment used in agriculture and construction, with the exception of the vehicles engaged in the international carriage.

Fourthly, the federal law on the Kaliningrad SEZ was supplemented with chapter 5.1 on the regulatory compliance reviews of project documentation and engineering surveys and chapter 5.2 on the environmental impact assessment of projects run in the Kaliningrad region. Moreover, the maximum period of regulatory compliance reviews was reduced from 60 to 45 days and that of environmental impact assessments from three months to 45 days.

Fifthly, a simplified procedure for obtaining a visa for travel to the Kaliningrad region was introduced. A visa application can be submitted online four days before the visit. The document will be valid for eight days. The visas will be issued for business, tourism, or humanitarian purposes. No fee will be charged. This procedure will be effective after the funding is provided, the Customs Service of the Federal Security Service accompanies necessary works, and the Government of the Russian Federation specifies the details of the procedure (but not later than July 1, 2019).

However, the above does not exhaust the possibilities to improve the legal regimes. The literature proposes additional measures of support, in particular, ‘to encourage companies to work for international markets, to create systems for training managers specialising in international trade in view of the experience of the neighbouring countries and the regional characteristics, and to simplify the regime of cargo transit from the Kaliningrad region (including the customs formalities). These measures are expected to benefit the exporters and simplify the administrative and fiscal procedures that will fully comply with the international standards’ [25, p. 61—62].

Conclusions

The analysis of the twenty-year history of the special legal regime of business in the special economic zone in the Kaliningrad region suggests that the current legal measures are not sufficient for attaining the goals set in the federal law on the SEZ in the Kaliningrad region. The region’s socioeconomic development cannot be accelerated by benefits to a limited group of economic entities. Individual entrepreneurs and most small and medium businesses are not eligible for entering on the register of the SEZ residents.

The formalization of the considerable differences in the legal statuses of the residents depending on the date of the entry on the register seems to be unfair. This applies equally to the opportunity to benefit from the reduced insurance premium rates.

Further compliance problems are associated with the legally inconsistent regulations that introduce different procedures for granting corporate and property tax exemptions to the SEZ residents. The formalization of different methods for calculating the exemption periods for corporate tax, on the one hand, and property tax, on the other, does not seem to be justified.

The need to increase the efficiency of the legal regime of the SEZ requires further improvements to the legal regulation.

The major ways to enhance the efficiency of the legal regime of the Kaliningrad SEZ are as follows:

1) to extend the range of businesses eligible for the status of a SEZ resident by reducing the minimum investment amount for the industries that are most important for the region;

2) to apply the regulation on the reduced insurance premium rates to all the residents of the Kaliningrad SEZ;

3) to formalize the calculation of the corporate and property tax exemption periods from the same date.

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SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE LATGALE REGION OF LATVIA: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

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Youth unemployment is a serious problem in Latvia, as unemployed young people make up 16.3% of the total number of unemployed in the country, while in the Latgale region the number of unemployed young people aged 15–24 years was 18.8% of the total number of unemployed in the country in 2015. The purpose of this study is to identify the main current causes of high unemployment amongst young people in the Latgale region of Latvia aged 15–24 years. This age group of young people acted as a target group for sociological research based on a quota sample (by sex and age) in an online survey of respondents in 2016. The results of the study were processed using the Statistika program.

The transformation of social and economic processes in the world, Europe and the post-Soviet space has led to changes in the labor market of young people, which are objective and subjective, contradictory, which continue to this day. It is established that the behavioral rationalism of young people (labor mobility, vocational education, etc.) in the regional labor market is combined with its behavioral irrationalism (lack of desire to work for various reasons, the need for contact with family and friends, etc.). This is due to the growing uncertainty in the youth labor market due to the growth of competition, the emergence and growth of flexible forms of employment, depriving young people of the clarity of career and confidence in the future.

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The survey results also show that the majority of unemployed youth in the Latgale region deliberately refuses to emigrate outside Latvia and would like to link their future with the region and the country.

Keywords: youth unemployment, unemployment problems, unemployment rate in Latvia, economic behaviour in youth, regional labour market

Introduction

The UN defines the youth as persons aged 15—24.¹ Similarly, the International Labour Organisation's 'Key Indicators of the Labour Market — KILM 10 — Youth unemployment' classifies those aged 15—24 as youth.² Among the economically active young people, the unemployed are those not working but looking for a job and ready to take one that corresponds to their skills and knowledge. In the euro area, which includes Latvia, the rate of unemployment in this group reached 22.4% in 2015³ [1, p. 27]. The indicators used in Latvia's official statistics are comparable to the international ones. However, the national and regional statistics demonstrates that the youth constitutes the most vulnerable category in the labour market. The rate of unemployment among the youth is traditionally above the overall rate of unemployment in the economically active population of Latvia and its regions. In our study, we focus on the Latgale region, which has the largest proportion of Russian speakers in Latvia. In this area, the problem of youth unemployment is the most acute in the country. We relied on the official statistics, the literature published in 2007—2016, and our own applied studies to analyse and assess the regional youth labour market.

The central problem of this study is prospects and limitations faced by the youth in the regional labour market, which is affected by both external and internal socioeconomic processes and the global employment trends. Residents of the Baltics identify social inequality (Lithuania), unemployment (Latvia), and migration (Estonia) as the major current problems in the EU. According to the Eurobarometer surveys, 30% of the Latvians considered unemployment the main problem in the European Union⁴.

¹ UNESCO: working with the youth and for the youth, available at: <http://www.unesco.org/new/ru/social-and-human-sciences/themes/youth> (accessed 08.04.2018).

² KILM 10. Youth unemployment, available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/publication/wcms_422439.pdf (accessed 8 April 2018).

³ Eurostat Statistics Explained. Electronic resource, available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/> (accessed 8 April 2018).

⁴ European Commission. Standard Eurobarometer 86. Public opinion in the European Union. Fieldwork: November 2016. What do you think are the two most



We have already considered the socioeconomic background of the current situation in Latvia's economy and labour market [2, pp. 437—445]. The results of the survey corroborate the findings obtained. Since the country's accession to the EU in 2004, the economic growth in Latvia has been sustained by the service sector, borrowed funds, the inflow of foreign (primarily financial) capital, and the grants from the EU structural funds. Today, traditional and intermediary services account for 75% of Latvia's economy. They make money without producing anything, whereas the proportion of manufacturing is below 15% of the country's GDP. Latvia's manufacturing sector does not use advanced technologies. Almost 70% of the value added in production is associated with low-tech industries. The mid- and high-tech produce accounts for 2 and 29% of the total production respectively. The national budget and taxation policy cater to the oligarchs and the public officers. The government expenditure to GDP ratio has reached 43.9%, which is one of the highest levels across the EU. International experts believe that the Latvian tax burden caused the cost of labour and capital to soar, thus making the national manufacturing industries and agriculture so expensive that they were left without any competitive edge. The country became an export zone for the EU production and banks [3]. The national and regional large manufacturing exporters (VEF, Alfa, RAF, Khimvolokno, and many others) were closed and replaced by small companies that make a modest contribution to the country's GDP. Numerous shopping malls and entertainment centres stand as a surrealistic testimony to the 'flourishing' of the Latvian economy. Since an increase in the government revenue became an unattainable goal, the government have strived to reduce the expenditure, including that on the employment policy. Latvia is a thin market with small potential for exports. Thus, the service, manufacturing, and agricultural sectors cannot create skilled jobs for everyone who needs them, including the young people. When it comes to politics, the discussion of the employment of the economically active population, including the youth, is completely dominated by the political powers, whose interests do not coincide with those of the Latvians. These powers are the bureaucratic ethnocracy represented by the national-radical and liberal parties. This is manifested in the low level of popular trust in the political institutions (25%) — a result of a discriminatory policy against a significant part of the society. The civil society institutions are weak, which is particularly true of the employer and employee associations. The future of Latvia is

important issues facing (OUR COUNTRY) at the moment? Autumn 2016. P. 14, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/finland/sites/finland/files/eb86_first_en.pdf (accessed 28.12.2017).



uncertain because of the mass emigration fuelled by unemployment among the people of working age, low remuneration, and a low birth rate. The latter is a result of the youth lacking a clear vision of the future. The country lost a third of its population after regaining independence in 1991. These problems manifest differently from region to region. In 2016, the average salary in Latgale was approximately half of that in the capital Riga region. The average income of the Latgale residents was below 600 euros per months, whereas it ranged from 700 to 900 in the other regions of the country. The low incomes and salaries urge the local residents, primarily the young ones, to move either to the capital region and Riga or abroad, in search of a better life.⁵

In Latgale, where the problem of employment is the most acute, there are numerous causes of unemployment among young people. The traditional ones are the lack of professional knowledge and work experience, ageism in the labour market, low demand for the young people's professions, and the closure or repurposing of companies in the aftermath of the economic crisis in the EU and the world. The most recent causes are a poor command of languages (Latvian, Russian, English) and insufficient communicative and IT skills. Sometimes the private employers are neither interested in investing in the training of young specialists nor willing to do so. The knowledge and skills acquired by the youth during their study sometimes have little to do with the demands of the labour market. Another important aspect is the absence of subsidies for private and public companies that would encourage them to create jobs for the youth. All this lends an urgency to research into the possibilities of and limitations to youth employment in the regional market.

Methods

This study aims at exploring the behaviour of the Latgale youth aged 15—24 in the labour market and identifying the cause of the high unemployment rate among young people. To reach this goal, we set the following objectives — to study the literature and information on youth employment, to track the dynamics and describe the structure of unemployment among the youth in Latgale in 2007—2015, to identify the causes of youth unemployment in this region, and prepare relevant recommendations.

This analysis of the causes of youth unemployment in Latgale uses quota sampling (by sex and age) based on our 2016 survey (N = 402) of

⁵ Seventy people fewer each day. Will Latvia go extinct? Available at: <https://inosmi.ru/social/20170601/2394954.html> (accessed 01 June 2017).

people aged 15—24. The quota sampling corresponds to the structure of the population, as reflected in the statistics from the State Employment Agency of Latvia.⁶ We conducted the survey online. The questionnaire contained 23 questions relating to the behaviour and motivation of the youth in the regional labour market, as well as the features, current state, and dynamics of this market⁷ [17; 18]. The data were processed using the SPSS software.

According to the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, the Latgale region was home to 29,345 people of the selected age group. The study employed the logical methods (synthesis and analysis), the comparative methods, various statistical methods, the frequency analysis, and the diagram method.

The official statistics shows that, in 2016, the Latvian youth aged 15—24 and residing in Latgale (its cities and towns with the surrounding districts) had the following structure. The youth of Daugavpils and its district accounted for 38% of the total young population of Latgale. Thus, we surveyed 152 young people (78 males and 74 females) from the regional quota sample of 402 respondents. Rēzekne and its districts, where we surveyed 92 young people (48 males and 44 females), are home to

⁶ NVA. 2007, *Bezdarba radītāji un NVA aktivitātes 2007. gadā*, available at: <http://www.nva.lv/index.php?cid=6&mid=241> (accessed 17 December 2015); NVA. 2008, *Bezdarba radītāji un NVA aktivitātes 2008. gadā*, available at: <http://www.nva.lv/index.php?cid=6&mid=241> (accessed 17 December 2015); NVA. 2009, *Bezdarba radītāji un NVA aktivitātes 2009. gadā*, available at: <http://www.nva.lv/index.php?cid=6&mid=272> (accessed 04 January 2016); NVA. 2010, *Bezdarba radītāji un NVA aktivitātes 2010. gadā*, available at: <http://www.nva.lv/index.php?cid=6&mid=297> (accessed 28 December 2015); NVA. 2011, *Bezdarba radītāji un NVA aktivitātes 2011. gada*, available at: <http://www.nva.lv/index.php?cid=6&mid=330> (accessed 11 January 2016); NVA. 2012, *Bezdarba radītāji un NVA aktivitātes 2012. gadā*, available at: <http://www.nva.lv/index.php?cid=6&mid=404> (accessed 18 January 2016); NVA. 2013, *Bezdarba radītāji un NVA aktivitātes 2013. gada*, available at: <http://www.nva.lv/index.php?cid=6&mid=444> (accessed 27 February 2016); NVA. 2014, *Bezdarba radītāji un NVA aktivitātes 2014. gada*, available at: <http://www.nva.lv/index.php?cid=6&mid=470> (accessed 18 November 2016); NVA. 2015, *Bezdarba radītāji un NVA aktivitātes 2015. gada*, available at: <http://www.nva.lv/index.php?cid=6&mid=494> (accessed 10 October 2016).

⁷ Jauniešu bezdarbs Latgales reģionā vecumā no 15 līdz 24 gadiem, available at: <https://www.survio.com/survey/d/L2C9O8T9C0C7U7M8>; Grandars.ru. 2016, *The population and the sample technique*, available at: <http://www.grandars.ru/student/statistika/generalnaya-sovokupnost.html> (accessed 02.10.2017); Survio. 2016, *Jauniešu bezdarbs Latgales reģionā vecumā no 15 līdz 24 gadiem*, available at: <https://www.survio.com/survey/d/L2C9O8T9C0C7U7M8J> (accessed 8 April 2016).

23 % of the region's youth and the Preiļi district to 13 % (52 people surveyed — 28 males and 24 females). The Balvi district is home to 9 % of the region's youth (36 people surveyed — 18 males and 18 females), the Ludza district to 9 % (36 people — 20 males and 16 females), and the Krāslava District to 9 % (34 people — 18 males and 16 females).

Results

The unemployment rate in the EU, including Latvia, is high and it is increasing more rapidly among the youth than in any other age group [4, pp. 43—58; 5].

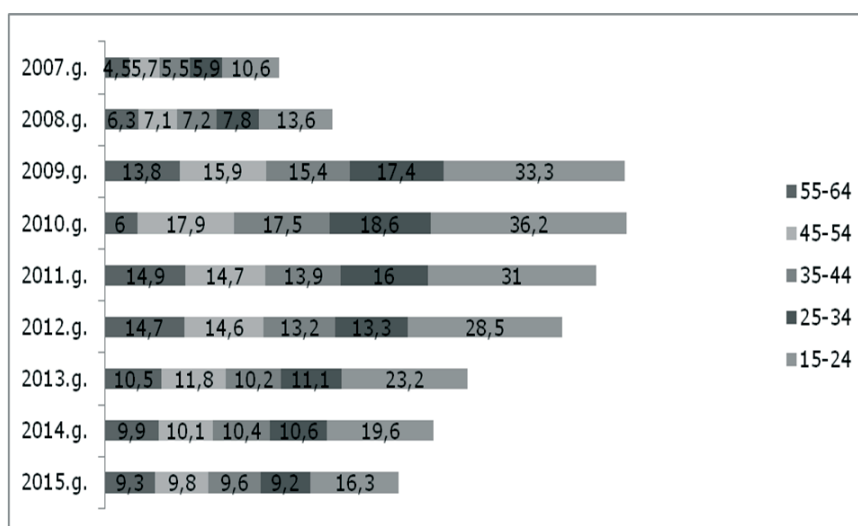


Fig. The unemployment rate in Latvia across all age groups in 2007—2015

Source: prepared by the author based on the data of the national statistics of Latvia.⁸

The concept of youth unemployment requires a complex approach that combines an analysis of changes in the economy, particularly, the labour market flexibility, of the skills and the employers' requirements, and the family background that often affects employment preferences. The success of the EU policies and investment will depend on Latvia's efficiency and readiness to respond [6—11].

⁸ NBG02. Ekonomikas aktivitātes, nodarbinātības un bezdarba līmenis, (%), Centrālās statistikas pārvaldes datubāzes, available at: http://data.csb.gov.lv/pxweb/lv/Sociala/Sociala__ikgad__nodarb/NB0020.px/?rxid=562c2205-ba57-4130-b63a-6991f49ab6fe (accessed 8 April 2016) ; Statistical Yearbook of Latvia. Riga: *Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia*, 2018, pp. 117, 119—121.

Our survey included various questions related to the offers in the labour market and the respondents' employment plans and current activities. Based on the results obtained, we analysed what problems the Latgale youth face when they start looking for a job [12—17].

A big group of people aged 15—24 consists primarily of the unemployed youth with secondary education qualifications. We strived to understand how the youth see their future and what plans they have regarding higher education. Our analysis shows that over half of the respondents (61.6%, 380 people) are planning to enter higher education. Another 5.8% (22 respondents) are considering the idea of a second degree. The youth have many good reasons to increase their education level that will shape their plans for the future. These reasons are the ambition to improve their financial prospects, the intention to find one's place in life, or the desire to start a job. Based on these considerations, young people choose training courses.

Few respondents (8.9%) are planning to enrol in professional training courses as an opportunity to improve their knowledge and skills. Only 10% of the respondents are going to benefit from retraining opportunities and take on a different profession. Some of the young people aged 15—24 are not planning to receive education in the future. They account for 4.2%, which is the smallest proportion among the respondents. A sound reason for a young person not to continue education is current employment or sufficient monthly income.

An analysis of the data on the officially and unofficially employed young people shows the following. Out of the 402 respondents, 120 people work full-time and 88 part-time. In the first group, 80% are employed officially. The others do not have any social guarantees. In this case, the employer does not pay the taxes imposed by the state. Only 9.1% of the respondents working part-time have registered their labour relations. This is rather common for the youth, whose employment is often sporadic. At the same time, the labour relations of a significant proportion of the young people employed full-time are not legally registered. Usually, the employer is unwilling to employ a young person officially (22.7%). Some respondents have made some sort of a deal with the employer in order to work unofficially (18.2% of those working full-time and 20.5% of those working part-time). We have established that, in the Latgale region, the two parties decide for unofficial employment in the case of a part-time job. However, young people do not understand that, this way, they are losing many benefits — social guarantees, official work experience, and employment records for their future careers. The respondents explain their behaviour by the hope to find a full-time job that would meet their career aspirations and income expectations. During the survey, we explored how young people looked for and found jobs.



Most young people working full-time found their jobs through relatives (17.6%). Another 16.2% were employed by the HR department of the company and 11.8% via the mass media. Only 7.4% of the young people surveyed found a job with the help of a state employment agency. This means that the mediation between the employer and the employee, carried out by these organisations, is inefficient. Most Latgale companies advertise to find new employees, without relying on mediators. The survey shows that some local young people are enterprising enough to start their own company (4.4% of the respondents). The young people who were invited by the company management or staff account for the smallest proportion — 2.9%, whereas 1.5% found a job differently — for example through acquaintances or fellow athletes.

The mass media (the Internet, TV, the radio, the press) was instrumental in the employment of 13.6% of the youth. The same proportion of young people found a job differently and did not specify how. Another 9.1% started their own business or 2.3% took a part-time job at the invitation from the company management or staff.

Overall, most young people in the Latgale region look for a part- or full-time job through friends, acquaintances, and relations.

As to the reasons for terminating employment, most respondents (25.6% of those employed full-time and 25.6% employed part-time) explained that they had made this decision because of the need to pay more attention to their studies. The other reasons for leaving a full-time job were dissatisfaction with the working conditions, work schedule, long commuting distances (16.7%), and remuneration (14.4%). Another 10% of the full-time young employees said that they had lost their jobs because of personnel cuts or even the closure of the company. Other reasons for quitting a job were mentioned. These are poor relationships with the colleagues and management, change of residence, family affairs (the birth of children, marriage, the need to look for an ill relative or to support the family, etc.), health condition, and dismissal by the employer. The other respondents who were employed part-time quit their job because they were dissatisfied with the remuneration (5.9%) or their labour contract expired (2.9%).

Our questionnaire included a question about the motives of young people. We asked whether they were willing to work, to find a job, or to fulfil their potential as professionals. Those who were employed but not satisfied with their current job were asked the question about whether they were looking for a different employment opportunity. We have established that the desire to find (or change) a job was a strong motivation for 78.3% of the respondents. However, 21.7% of the young people surveyed stated openly that they were not willing to work.

The major reason for avoiding employment is the intention to complete one's studies. When surveyed, these respondents studied full-time and their priorities were shifting towards receiving an education. Part of the young people surveyed accepts only seasonal job offers to work full-time during vacations. When asked about the high unemployment rate in the Latgale region, the respondents mentioned such circumstances as the impossibility to find a job, regardless what the professional field is and how much time was spent on the search. Other common circumstances include the impossibility to find a job close to home (this is especially true for the rural areas), the lack of necessary experience or education, and poor health.

Another 4.4% of the respondents lost any motivation or hope to find a job. These data suggest that the social welfare institutions should support the young residents of the Latgale region as regards their hopes and motivation for employment, in order to reduce the numbers of the future clients of these institutions. Only a small proportion of the respondents (3.3%) was satisfied with their current employment.

Overall, the biggest problem faced by young people looking for a job is the lack of work experience (46.3%). This is not surprising, since the youth, aged 15—24 are either students or recent graduates and thus have little work experience. By adopting the best practices of the other EU states, Latvia has to ensure a higher employment rate among the youth. Many of the EU member states (the UK, Ireland, Germany, the Netherlands, France, and others) have launched youth employment programmes in collaboration with the national companies. These programmes include targeted assistance in employment, financial support for specialists providing professional training for the youth, subsidies for the companies that employ young people, and other initiatives. This way, young people gain an idea of work and acquire the necessary experience and skills. However, the Greek, Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese national programmes for youth employment support did not yield the desired results. In these countries, the youth unemployment rates are very high and growing. Thus, a promising common strategy for the EU countries and regions is an increase in the flexibility of the youth labour market (this means seasonal and part-time jobs).

Another problem of the Latvian labour market (and the Latgale region is no exception) is that the local educational institutions train specialists whose knowledge and skills do not meet the requirement of the labour market. Our study has shown that young people find it difficult to secure a job in the field of their expertise (22.7%). The youth also believe that the knowledge and skills obtained during their studies do not

meet the employers' requirements (3.4%), whereas 2% of the respondents experienced a situation where the private employer was not interested in either hiring a young specialist or investing in her or his training.

When answering the question about the preferable options of employment, over a quarter of the respondents (27%) said that they wanted to open their own business. This can have a positive effect on the employment rate in Latgale, where business activity is much less intense than in the other Latvian regions. The youth are ready to implement their ideas and they do not want to be in a subordinate position.

Labour migration to the other countries of the European Union is another prospect considered by the local youth. Almost a quarter of the respondents (21.2%) are planning to look for a job abroad. Another 18.9% of the young people believe the large Latvian companies to be an attractive employer. The same proportion of the respondents is willing to work at a small local private company.

Fewer respondents entertain the idea of continuing their education — only 10.8% (56 people) are planning to enter a Master's, doctorl, or post-doctoral programme.

Having studied the services provided by the National Employment Agency (NEA), we concluded that they were not very popular among the youth. Only 17.4% of the respondents rely on and hope for help from the NEA and only 46.4% (306 people) are registered with the Agency. The two most popular reasons foregoing registration are the status of a student and current employment. However, the NEA helped 82 people of the 290 who answered the relevant question (28.3%) to find a job, to complete a training course, or to undergo retraining. Among those registered with the NEA as unemployed, only 47.9% (68 people) received assistance. At the same time, 134 people (81.7%) were not registered as unemployed and thus they did not get any help from the Agency.

When asked what personal shortcomings may have prevented them from finding a job they wanted, the respondents mentioned insufficient professional skills, poor command of languages (English, Latvian, Russian), and a lack of communicative skills necessary for getting along with the management, the staff, and the clients (47.3%). Some young people (8%) admitted that they lacked skills in working with the necessary software and the Internet (3.5%). The importance of this factor cannot be overestimated in today's world. The respondents also mentioned some other skills (1.5%), for example, that of driving a tractor.

To move with the time, mobility is a necessity. Mobility is very important for young people willing to adapt to today's life, new technology, employment requirements, etc. In this study, we tried to find out whether the local young people understand the concept of labour mobility. When

asked about what was necessary to be mobile in today's world, 59.2% of the respondents mentioned command of a foreign language, 48.8% fine health, and 48.3% good education. All this, they believe, creates chances for better employment and higher remuneration.

Loyalty to the state, region, or town is not very important for the youth in today's world. This is especially true for the new EU member states. People are adapting to the current situation and benefitting from the opportunities of free migration within the EU and beyond it. Thus, migration means not only finding employment but also receiving education abroad. In our study, we identified what reasons compelled the Latgale youth to stay and receive education in their home region.

Most respondents who stayed in Latgale (398 out of 402 people) stressed that they chose to study and work in the home region because of their family, friends, and acquaintances, who matter much in their lives. This reason belongs to the realm of psychology — people value those close to them, their support and emotional reassurance. Only 18.9% of the respondents believe that they can develop, receive a good education, and do what they like and want in Latvia. Another 11.9% of the respondents stay in Latvia because of their profession. Their knowledge and skills are in demand in the home country. A smaller group (8.5%) brings together the patriots who cannot imagine living in a different country, whereas 6% stay in Latvia because of the rich cultural heritage — the language, the traditions, the art, the architecture, etc. Only 2.5% of the respondents said that they might leave the country if they had enough money after they finished school. Some of these respondents are not Latvian citizens. The survey shows that for most local young people the refusal to emigrate is completely conscious and they associate their future with their home country and region.

When answering the question about the possibility of moving abroad, over half of the respondents mentioned that at the time, they did not have an experience of studying or working abroad and they were not planning to leave Latvia. At the same time, 17.3% of the local young people had an international work experience. However, they did not want to emigrate at the time of the interview. Almost a fifth of the respondents (23.8% or 80 people) had used to work abroad and was planning to repeat this experience in the near future. The smallest proportion (6%) did not have an experience of working abroad but they wanted to try it soon.

The data obtained prove that migration is a serious demographic problem for Latvia. Almost 30% of the young people interviewed in Latgale were ready to work abroad. This gives considerable cause for concern, since these attitudes may lead to a significant reduction in the number of young people in Latgale. We believe that the authorities re-

sponsible for national migration have to pay greater attention to the demographic and socioeconomic problem in question. The issues considered above are a consequence of the problems in the regional and national economies, of sluggish manufacturing and agriculture, and of the poor development of knowledge-intensive services. These sectors are responsible for economic stability, national economic growth, and public welfare.

Conclusions

The growing competitiveness in the labour market and the appearance of flexible forms of employment, such as freelance work, contribute to uncertainty in the labour market. This is a long-term trend, which is especially pronounced in the case of the youth.

The Latgale youth aged 15—24 demonstrate two types of behaviour in the labour market. The first one is active adaptation. It is characteristic of the young people looking for a job (78.3%). They are looking not only for permanent employment but also for part-time jobs. The other type is passive adaptation. It describes those young people who rely on the National Employment Agency (20.2%). Most young people find jobs through relatives, friends, and acquaintances (27.9%) or via the mass media (27.5%).

The employers usually want their future employees to be professional, experienced, and enterprising, yet willing to work for very low remuneration. These requirements are unlikely to be met, since most young people do not have either the work experience or the necessary knowledge and skills.

The young people admit that the knowledge that they obtained at educational institutions often have little to do with that required in the labour market. This leads to a growing unemployment rate and young people are forced to leave the country and look for a job abroad. Although unskilled, the jobs the Latvian youth take in other countries pay much better than those in Latvia do. All this accelerates emigration from Latvia and its regions and leads to depopulation.

Part of the young people (30%) views emigration as a solution to all the problems they may encounter in their adult life. However, most young people from Latgale try to stay in their home region and to get an education and find a job in Latvia. This behaviour is explained by both rational and emotional reasons — the need to stay in touch with friends and relations, confidence in one's professional skills, the hopes to start a business in the future, patriotism, the desire to live in a familiar environment, and the rich national culture and heritage.



The youth explain their difficulties with employment by:

— the lack of work experience (46.3 %) and the absence of suitable vacancies (22.7 %);

— low demand for their skills, knowledge, and ageism in the labour market (9.4 %);

— the absence of a state language certificate required for a range of jobs, poor command of foreign languages and insufficient communicative skills (8.4 %);

— the unwillingness of private employers to train young specialists (5.9 %);

— insufficient skills in working with the necessary software and the discrepancy between the employers' requirements and the knowledge and skills obtained at educational institutions (3.4 %).

Only a small proportion of the Latgale youth (10.8 %) are planning to enter a master's, doctoral, or postdoctoral programme. They explain this by lack of time, a low salary in their current place of employment, and the overall low level of income. All this prevents the young people from continuing education.

Some local youth (11 %) lost motivation and hope to find a job. This means that social welfare institutions should support and encourage young people to regain their motivation for work. If they do not approach this problem today, the number of their clients will grow in the future.

It is necessary to consider the best EU practices to pursue a more active national labour policy aimed at the flexible employment of the youth. Many countries of the EU (the UK, Ireland, Germany, the Netherlands, France, and others) have developed national youth employment policies. These programmes include targeted assistance in employment, financial support for specialists providing professional training for the youth, subsidies for the companies that employ young people, and other initiatives. This way, young people gain an idea of work and acquire the necessary experience and skills.

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TRENDS
IN THE DEVELOPMENT
OF CROSS-BORDER TRADE
IN THE RUSSIAN-FINNISH
BORDERLANDS

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This article considers the development of cross-border trade and tourism in the Russian-Finnish borderlands in the 19th/21st centuries. We describe the evolution of cross-border trade in the Russian-Finnish borderlands at different stages of the territory's development. The patterns of cross-border trade have always been depended on the national policies of the two countries. Since the 19th century, cross-border trade in the Russian-Finnish borderlands has been the product of two factors. The first one is the demand from local residents for certain imported goods that are either absent or much more expensive in their own country. The second factor is the possibility of receiving additional or even basic income. We distinguish several periods (peddler trade, Soviet-Finnish tourism, shuttle trade, shopping tourism) in the evolution of Russian-Finnish cross-border trade and identify their major trends and characteristics. We describe the general patterns of cross-border trade in these historical periods and juxtapose the pertinent institutional, organisational and infrastructural settings. We explain why the direction of the flow of finance and goods changed. Until the early 20th century, goods were brought to and money collected from Finland's borderlands. Since the 1920s, the opposite situation has been observed. The latter trend has been growing in recent years.

In this article, we aim at providing a periodisation and detecting the trends in and features of the evolution of cross-border trade in the Russian-Finnish borderlands in the 19th/21st centuries. To this end, we carry out a statistics and data analysis. We describe the Russian and international approaches to studying cross-border shopping tourism. We address Finland's experience in stimulating inbound shopping tourism from Russia and examine why the Russians are attracted to the neighbouring state.

Keywords: border region, Russian-Finnish borderland, shopping tourism, Republic of Karelia, Finland, peddler trade

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Introduction

The cross-border trade in the Russian-Finnish border area developed in the 19th—20th centuries (peddler trade, Soviet-Finnish tourism, shuttle business, shopping tourism). It can be explained by the demand of the local population for certain types of goods due to their absence or a much higher price in their own country. Cross-border trade often helps to get an additional or sometimes basic income. Besides, leisure activities have a positive impact on the development of shopping tourism. Cross-border trade existed during all periods of the Russian-Finnish border development. Its forms have been changing depending on the policies pursued by the two states. It should be emphasized that throughout the history of the two countries peddler trade, the Soviet-Finnish tourism and the shopping tourism contributed to the formation of the interest in the Russian-Finnish border area.

The works of Russian and Finnish researchers consider a variety of aspects of cross-border trade in the Russian-Finnish borderland. The Karelian researchers D. V. Bazegskiy and I. S. Nesterova analysed the historical aspects of the development of peddler trade. The largest number of studies is devoted to the Soviet period, including those written by Finnish researchers: L. I. Vavulinskaya, Yu. M. Kilin, A. Kostainen, A. Käyhly, A. Laine, T. Hämönen, and Yu. Shikalova. These research works reveal the political, economic, socio-cultural and other aspects of people-to-people interaction in the Russian-Finnish borderland. The article of O. Yu. Gurova and S. Ratilajnen describes the preferences of Russian tourists and study the change in the attitudes of the local community towards tourists. At the same time, these research works do not describe the phenomenon of cross-border trade in detail and do not assess its scale in the Russian-Finnish border area during the 19th-20th centuries. In addition, the available materials are fragmented and can be obtained in some areas only (for example, in Helsinki, Vyborg, etc.).

We aim at a comprehensive study of the problem of cross-border trade, which will be organized according to historical periods. Moreover, we use our findings to justify the trends and specifics of the cross-border trade in the Russian-Finnish borderland in the past and at present.

We pay special attention to practices of cross-border trade and tourism in the border regions of Finland. This country takes different measures to attract Russian visitors, because of the multiplicative effect on the local economies of its border regions. The novelty of the study lies in the fact that we define the periods and identify the main trends and specificity in the development of cross-border trade in the Russian-Finnish borderland during the 19th—21st centuries.



The development of trade in the border area in the 19th century and the beginning of 20th century: historical aspects

In the 19th—20th centuries, peddler trade in the Grand Duchy of Finland was crucial for earning money to live on. Although the exchange of goods was a common practice, the majority of the Karelian peasants needed money to pay taxes and purchase grain. The distance between settlements, a weak rural trading network in Finland as well as the similarity of the languages and cultures [1—7] contributed to the development of peddler trade. Peddlers usually delivered bread, flour, salt, flax, leather, cloth, needles, mirrors to Finland and furs (foxes, squirrels, ermines etc.), as well as the ‘Danish’ skirts, tea, coffee, rum, wine from Finland to Russia. Products of the chemical, pulp and paper industry as well as metal ware extended the list at the beginning of the 20th century [2; 5]. At the same time, the Karelian population of several border districts of the today’s Republic of Karelia purchased their essentials in Finland, because of the territorial proximity and economic benefits [4]. The scale of peddler trade increased significantly after the inclusion of the Grand Duchy of Finland into the Russian Empire [2].

Both poor and well-off peasants of the border territory of today’s Republic of Karelia were peddlers. Poor peddlers (the ‘horseless’) accounted for about 40% of the total number of merchants and depended on wealthy peasants who provided goods at the 20% interest. Better off peasants, who had a small, but steady income from their own farms, were less active in peddler trade [5]. In some cases, successful trading allowed merchants to open their own shops in Finland. Rich Karelians moved to the neighbouring state in the second half of the 19th century [1; 3].

According to the then existing regulations, a merchant had to obtain a certificate from the governor of the province where he was going to start his business. Then he had to make an annual contribution to the province treasury and pay the community tax on the income from his trade. Finally, he received a poster passport. In fact, there was confusion with the documents and the majority of peasants had no documents and took secret roads. The following measures impeded the development of the Karelian peddler trade: the Senate decree of March 12, 1818 and signed by Alexander I in 1820 (the ban on peddler trade in the Arkhangelsk province); the decree on rural commerce in the Grand Duchy of Finland in 1859 (the right to open a shop which was granted to Finnish citizens only); the decree on crafts approved by Alexander II in 1868 (only Finnish citizens, who knew how to write and fill out the book of accounts; the right to sell only the Finnish goods) [3; 4].

Peddlers ceased to play the same role in trade with the fall of trade fair turnover in the Russian North. According to the decree of March 31, 1879, individuals were allowed to trade and export their goods only after sending a written request to the governor. The request was to be sent together with a certain certificate of the peddler's good name and the guarantee for the payment of the state duty for three years [3; 4; 6; 7]. However, from 1,000 to 2,000 merchants visited Finland annually at end of the 19th century [6; 7]. During the Crimean War (1853—1856) the cost of goods delivered by the Karelian peddlers to the Grand Duchy was about half of Russia's official export [1]. In the middle of the 19th century, the annual revenue of one merchant reached 250—300 roubles in silver. Goods, which were worth 1.3 million rubles, were exported to into Finland. In the 1870s, the trade turnover reached 2 million roubles per year, the total profit — 80—90,000 rubles per year and the profit for one trader reached 30—80 rubles. In the 1870s, almost a quarter of all goods exported to Finland from Russia were brought by peddlers [5].

At the beginning of the 20th century, there were rumours about the redistribution of land, the Karelian peddlers began to endure the harassment. Some Finnish communities gave locals instructions how to deal with different traders from Karelia. Local Finnish residents, on the contrary, often helped merchants from Karelia (hiding them during raids) and were punished for it. In the summer of 1899, the Karelian peasants from Ukhta, Voknavolok and Kestengi sent a petition to the governor-general of the Grand Duchy of Finland asking to legalize peddler trade since it was the only way to make a living [3]. The decree of July, 2, 1900 equalled the rights Russian and Finnish peasants. However, in 1859, the decree on crafts (the ban on rural trade) remained in effect. Gradually, the competition of the Finnish shopkeepers, including the Karelian wealthy merchants who moved to Finland, reduced the income of peddlers.

In the 1885—1990, the earnings of one merchant did not exceed 40—60 rubles [5]. Thus, during the 19th and early 20th centuries the legal status of the Karelian peddlers remained uncertain. However, the unclear rules were rather beneficial for merchants: people used the opportunity to feed their families and pay all the necessary taxes.

Soviet-Finnish tourism and cross-border trade

The development of the outgoing tourism and cross-border trade in the USSR was determined by the country's dominant ideology and policy (following the formation of the 'iron curtain' in the 1920s). It resulted in a very small number of Soviet citizens travelling to capitalist countries. Likewise, visits of foreign citizens to the USSR were also restricted. Fin-

land, having friendly relations with the USSR, was an exception among capitalist states and the leader in the development of international tourism. Tourists from Finland accounted for more than half of all arrivals from capitalist countries [8; 9].

To go abroad, a Soviet citizen had to submit a package of documents to get permission from several authorities. Provided the person got good references from all of them, the permission to travel abroad was given. There was a special guidebook for Soviet citizens on how to behave abroad. In addition, each tourist group had an appointed leader who was responsible for reporting to the authorities [9]. The limited amount of currency as well as the fixed travel itinerary made it almost impossible to shop abroad. However, cross-border trade was still developed even under the restrictions in 1960—1980. Consequently, ‘shadow’ trade in foreign goods (‘fartsovka’) appeared. Those goods were bought from Finnish tourists visiting the USSR, or bought in Finland and then smuggled to the country. For example, in the 1970s, Finnish tourism was an important factor of local life in the city of Vyborg. There were illegal traders specialized in Finnish goods. It was then that the first currency exchange emerged [10]. Vyborg was named the ‘city of illegal traders’, who made profit on price difference that often allowed the Finns to almost cover their travel expenses [11].

The development of a network of sister-cities served as the basis for the development of bilateral contacts between the two states (Leningrad — Turku, 1953; Petrozavodsk — Varkaus, 1965; the exception is Vyborg — Lappeenranta, 1987). The experience of Petrozavodsk — Varkaus sister-cities is a good example. International tourism was one of the cities’ cooperation areas: in 1966, 110 tourists from the Republic of Karelia visited Finland and 300 Finnish citizens traveled to the Republic of Karelia in organized groups. Besides, about 300 individuals traveled to Finland annually to see their relatives or for other reasons. More than 500 people per year visited Finland and Russia at the end of 1980s [12].

Theoretical aspects of the development of shopping tourism in the border area

In the contemporary context, cross-border shopping is one of the most popular trends in the consumption practices of people living in the border areas of neighbouring countries. Theoretical aspects and the development practices of cross-border shopping tourism are widely discussed in international research literature [6; 11; 13—18]. Russian authors started writing about cross-border shopping tourism much later due to the specifics of Russia’s border areas development [19—20]. According to professor



D. Timothy (USA, Canada), the three main driving factors for a shopping trip are the following: searching for the necessary consumer goods (a particular product, souvenirs, duty free shopping), the choice of a specific destination and price advantages [21]. It is particularly evident in the border regions characterized by the significant economic, legal and social differences. There are four main conditions that reveal the development possibilities of cross-border shopping tourism [21]:

- difference in the range, quality and price of the product on the opposite side of the border;
- information about opportunities on the opposite side of the border;
- the ability and willingness of the population to travel;
- transparency of the state borders.

The development of cross-border shopping is stimulated by the following economic factors: shopping in duty free shops, seasonal sales and shopping in second-hand shops and flea markets [13].

Two types of interactions between tourism and shopping are described in research literature. They depend on the preferences of tourists and the purpose of their trip. It leads to different approaches to the marketing of goods and services in border areas [17; 21]:

- shopping tourism when shopping is the main purpose of the trip;
- tourist shopping or recreational shopping when shopping seems to be an integral, but not the main part of the journey.

Researchers point out that besides the need to purchase certain goods and services on the opposite side of the border, shopping tourism seems to be a pleasant pastime and a leisure activity, for example, during the holidays and vacations [22]. Based on the study of shopping tourism and tourist attractions, T. Makkonen, a researcher at the University of Southern Denmark, concludes that shopping tourism is an integral part of territorial attractiveness, impressions and experience of the tourist [16].

There are three categories of shopping tourism depending on the motivational factors: the character of goods or services (cheaper, better or unique); shopping during a vacation (usually souvenirs and gifts) and shopping as an organized commercial trip.

Tourist shopping is an integral part of holiday tours and most tourists want to buy souvenirs and presents to remember holidays by. Tourist-oriented industries are able to satisfy tourist needs and develop marketing strategies for these consumers, including visits to shopping centers, souvenir shops and other outlets. We will not consider such kind of practices and pay more attention to the development of cross-border shopping tourism (purchasing goods both for private and commercial purposes). Goods purchased for a commercial purpose are sold through social networks, friends, courier delivery or organizations. Despite restrictions on the volume of imported goods, this type of activity is very common. However,

residents of the Russian-Finnish borderland prefer not to report their income to tax authorities. Moreover, in recent years, the organization of shopping tours has become an increasingly popular tourist product oriented towards the local population of Russia's border regions.

At the same time, many researchers indicate that the development of the near-border retail trade poses some threats: the possibility of changing the direction, difficulties at state border crossing-points (queues), the 'mirror' profits and losses of the companies on the opposite sides of the border [15; 23].

Shopping tourism of Russian citizens in the border regions of Finland

At present, Russian entrepreneurs who purchase goods for commercial purposes as well as shopping tourists appear to be a source of wealth for some residents of Finland's border regions (Fig. 1).

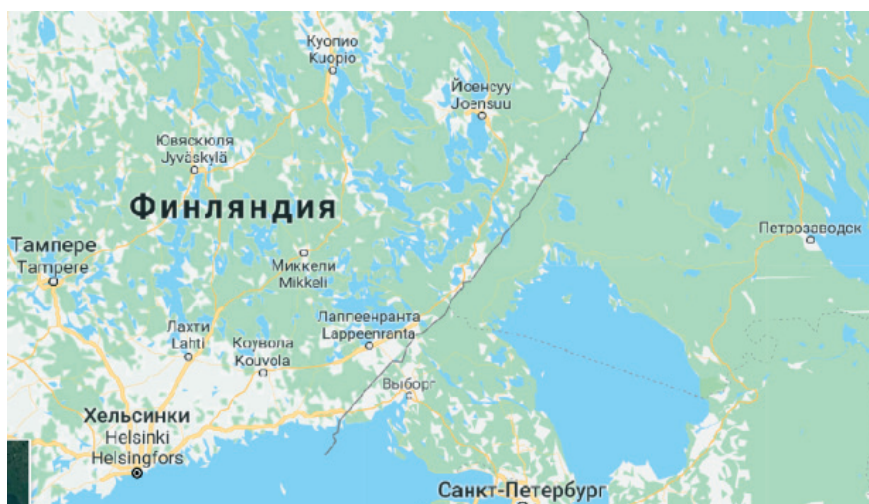


Fig. 1. Parts of Finnish-Russian border

* compiled by the authors based on Google maps.

According to A. Käyhty, the border town of Lappeenranta has transformed from the 'remotely located border town into a 'shopping mall' thanks to Russian tourists [24]. In 2013, 2 million tourists visited Lappeenranta (the population of the city is 75 thousand people), and 1.8 million people were Russians who spent 300 million euros there.

In the historical context, the removal of the 'iron curtain' served as a prerequisite for the development of shopping tourism in the Russian-

Finnish borderland. Every tenth Russian who arrived in Finland participated in the shuttle trade business. Several decades after the demise of the USSR various customs procedures (customs duties, restrictions on the weight of imported and exported goods) led to the emergence of ‘professional’ shuttle traders commuting between Finland and Russia. In 2006, due to the weight-restriction (from 50 to 35 kg) and the frequency of duty-free transportation from once a week to once a month, the number of shuttle traders decreased [13].

O. Gurov and S. Ratilajnen indicated that the perception of ‘tourists from the east’ (Russians) in Finland has changed. At the beginning of 1990, shuttle traders endangered the internal social order, now Russian tourists are seen as consumers and potential clients [14].

In recent years, cross-border trade and shopping tourism has become popular among Russians. Tourists from Russia constitute the largest group (36% in 2016) in the inbound tourist flow to Finland. In 2016, Russian tourists spent about 470 million euros there (in 2015 — about 1 billion euros; in 2013—1.3 billion Euros). It accounts 174 euros per trip or 82 euros per person per day. Finland is one of the most popular shopping directions among residents of the border regions of North-West Russia.

Finnish companies take the following measures to increase the flow of Russian tourists:

- increase the social function of navigation (signs in Russian);
- offer tourist services in Russian;
- publish tourist booklets and guidebooks in Russian;
- develop and operate web-sites in Russian.

The duty free system (from January 5, 2017 the refund is carried out at the Allegro and Leo Tolstoy trains), the invoice system and service culture, the infrastructural features of the commerce [13, 25], as well as Duty Free shops (at the border crossing points ‘Torfyanovka’, ‘Brusnichnoye’, ‘Vyartsilya’, at the Finland Station for the passengers of the ‘Allegro’ train, the airports and the ferries) are very important.

Helsinki stores welcome Russian tourists: there are navigation signs in Russian and in many shops, shop assistants speak Russian, etc. [13]. This practice of expressing interest in welcoming Russian shopping tourists is also noticeable in retail outlets and shops in other border settlements in Finland. Finnish border cities began to open shopping malls (for example, Laplandia Market, 800 m from the Brusnichnoye border crossing point) and hotels with different pricing and develop tourism-related services (recreation, spas, and aquaparks and spas). Besides, they run advertising campaigns in Russian. For example, advertising in different mass media, social networks, tourist portals and shopping malls in St. Pe-

tersburg have become the main tool of promoting Lappeenranta and Imatra. A good example of a successful promotion is the Go Saimaa information portal with a budget of 3.3 million euros.¹

Transport logistics, prices, the possibility of obtaining the multiple-entry Schengen visa and the convenience of international border crossing points are of particular importance for the residents of the Republic of Karelia, the Leningrad Region and St. Petersburg.

It should be noted that citizens of the Russian Federation residing in the North-West Federal District and having a permanent or temporary residence permit do not need to provide documents to prove the purpose of the trip. The visa centre in Petrozavodsk simplifies the procedure of obtaining a visa for the residents of the Republic of Karelia and issues visas for a period of up to two years and up to 360 days stay. There is a wide range of shopping tours organized by tourist and transport companies to the territory of the neighbouring state (Table 1). The standard price of a shopping tour package includes: transfer, insurance, visits to shopping malls, sometimes accommodation, food and sightseeing.

Table 1

Popular destinations of shopping tourism in Finland

Departure	Petrozavodsk			Saint-petersburg		
Arrival	Joensuu	Savonlinna	Kuopio	Lappeenranta	Helsinki	Imatra
Distance	365 km	426 km	501 km	196 km	378 km	200 km
By car (private trip)						
Travel time	5—6 hours	6—8 hours	7—8 hours	3 hours	7—8 hours	3 hours
Price one way	1 000 ru	1 000 ru	1,3 t pyđ.	500 ru	1 000 ru	500 ru
By bus (shop-tour)						
Price round trip	1400 ru	6 000 ru (night stay)		800—1300 ru	1 600—2 000 ru	800—1300 ru

* compiled and calculated by the authors based on the tourist companies proposals from the Republic of Karelia and Saint-Petersburg (may 2017).

Residents of St. Petersburg have the opportunity to get to Helsinki by rail (the Allegro train covers the distance in 3.5 hours and the Leo Tolstoy train — in 6 hours). There are several bus routes (it takes 6 hours to get to Helsinki by bus). There is a daily international bus route Petroza-

¹ Kitajskie turisty — novaja cel' goroda Lappeenranta [China tourists as a new goal of Lappeenranta city], available at: <http://fontanka.fi/articles/20095/> (accessed 17.04.2017) (in Russ.).

vodsk — Joensuu (travel time — 7 hours) in the Republic of Karelia. The intensification of the tourist flow across the Karelian-Finnish border at the Wärtsilä border crossing point was a prerequisite for a small café ‘Kolmas’ in the 1990s. The café is located in 2 km away from the checkpoint on the territory of the Republic of Karelia. Now, the main activities of the Kolmas Karelia LLC are tourism, retail trade and catering.

O. Gurova points to the paradox of the border regions integration, which, on the one hand, enhances opportunities of cross-border mobility, and on the other, reduces the effect of the ‘novelty’ of the border area of the neighbouring state. For instance, the emergence of foreign trade networks reduces the need to visit border areas of the neighbouring state. The reasons that restrain the Russians from shopping in the neighbouring Finland are the following ones: time, market economy development in the border regions, disappointment in the product characteristics, and the prices that most Russian tourists cannot afford [13].

The introduction of sanctions against Russia and the increase of the euro exchange rate had a negative impact on the inbound flow of Russian tourists to Finland. In recent years, there is a significant decrease in the interest of Russian tourists in the neighbouring Finland: in 2014, 4.2 million people visited Finland for sightseeing or shopping, in 2015—3.1 million people, and in 2016—2.9 million people². According to the Director of the Centre for Parliamentary Studies of the University of Turku, Markku Jokisipilä, the fall in the exports of food was 25% after counter-sanctions were imposed by Russia³. According to the Global Blue Oy, in November 2014, Russians spent 43% less money in Finland compared to 2013. At the same time, the tax return of Russian tourists is 83.5% of the total tax refund⁴. In December 2014, the duty-free sales in the border cities of Finland decreased more than 70%. It affected the economy of Joensuu, Imatra, Kotka, Kouvola, Kajaani, Lahti and Kuopio⁵. Researchers point out that Russia’s counter-sanctions affected Finnish producers and the Finland’s market: for example, the cost of the Oltermanni cheese

² Official'nyj sajt Federal'nogo agentstva po turizmu. [Official web-site of Federal Tourism Agency], available at: <http://www.russiatourism.ru/> (accessed 17.04.2017) (in Russ.).

³ Uchastniki ‘Baltijskogo dialoga’: Obshhenie grazhdanskogo obshhestva i jekspertov ne dolzhno zaviset' ot politicheskoy konjunktury [Participants of ‘Baltic dialogue’: communication of civil society and experts shouldn’t depend on politicians], available at: <http://gorchakovfund.ru/news/17531/> (accessed 15.03.2017) (in Russ.).

⁴ Official'nyj sajt Global Blue Oy [Official web-site Global Blue Oy], available at: http://localservices.globalblue.com/fi_su/local-news/myyntitilastot-marraskuu-2014-tax-free-shopping/ (accessed 17.04.2017) (in Russ.).

⁵ Tax-free sales drop by up to 75 percent, available at: http://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/tax-ree_sales_drop_by_up_to_75_percent/7726403 (accessed 03.05.2017) (in Russ.).

went down from 6—7 euros per 1 kg to 4 euros and the demand among Finish consumers increased [14]. However, cross-border trade continues to develop thanks to the traditional preferences of Russian tourists.

Shopping tourism from Russia gradually begins to recover after a sharp decline. In 2016, the decrease in sales was 18%⁶. According to the data provided by the Finnish office of Global Blue, during the period from January to March 2016, the sales volume increased in Lappeenranta (+63%) and Imatra (+84%) compared to 2015. According to the data provided by the TAK Oy research centre for January-August 2016, the average spending of the Russian traveler was 172 euros, 114 euros of which was spent on shopping⁷. In 2016, high sales growth rates were observed in the cities bordering Russia: Lappeenranta (+34%), Joensuu (+32%), Imatra (+19%) and Vantaa Airport (+48%), and Lahti and Hamina (+37%)⁸. In 2017, according to the Global Blue, the largest increase in sales according to the tax free system was registered in Savonlinna (98%), Hamina (80%), Lahti (66%), Imatra (65%) and Rovaniemi (58%). In January-April 2017, the duty-free purchases of Russian tourists in Finland increased 44% compared to the same period last year. The most dynamic growth was registered in February, when duty-free purchases of Russian tourists increased 64% year-on-year⁹.

According to Mirka Rahman, Head of Marketing, Tourism and Customer Service at City of Lappeenranta, the main reason for the return of Russian shopping tourists is the stabilization of the ruble exchange rate¹⁰. The most popular goods purchased in Finland by Russian tourists are food (75%, cheese and dairy products, fish, tea and coffee, sweets), household goods (30%, household chemicals, such as Fairy dish washing liquid, tablets for dishwashers etc.) and clothes¹¹.

⁶ Prodazhi sredi rossijan v Lappeenrante yrosli natret'. [Sales among Russians in Lappeenranta have tripled], available at: <https://colibris.ua/countries/finland/news/2175/> (accessed 17.04.2017) (in Russ.).

⁷ Rossijane snova edut na shopping [Russians again go shopping], available at: <http://fontanka.fi/articles/31620/> (accessed 17.04.2017) (in Russ.).

⁸ Prodazhi sredi rossijan v Lappeenrante yrosli natret'. [Sales among Russians in Lappeenranta have tripled], available at: <https://colibris.ua/countries/finland/news/2175/> (accessed 17.04.2017) (in Russ.).

⁹ Suomalais-Venäläinen kauppakamari. URL: <https://www.svkk.ru.html> (accessed 16.07.2018) (in Finn.).

¹⁰ Rossijane snova edut na shopping [Russians again go shopping], available at: <http://fontanka.fi/articles/31620/> (accessed: 17.04.2017) (in Russ.).

¹¹ Shopping v Finljandii: Men'she 'Fejri', bol'she restoranov [Shopping in Finland. Less 'Feiry', more restaraunts], available at: <http://m.fontanka.fi/articles/33230/> (accessed 03.05.2017) (in Russ.); Top samyh populjarnyh tovarov iz Finljandii. [Top of the most popular products from Finland], available at: <http://gubdaily.ru/blog/obzor/top-samyx-populyarnyx-tovarov-iz-finlyandii/> (accessed 17.04.2017) (in Russ.).

Conclusions

The study revealed several periods in the development of cross-border trade in the Russian-Finnish borderland in the 19th—20th centuries:

- peddler trade — up to early 20th century in the Grand Duchy of Finland;
- Soviet-Finnish tourist exchanges, 1920—1990;
- shuttle trade in the 1990s and beginning of 20th century;
- shopping tourism at the beginning of 21st century — up to the present.

There are several criteria for distinguishing these periods: the state structure, functions of the state border, as well as the institutional, organizational and infrastructural conditions for the development of cross-border trade. In different historical periods, cross-border trade in the Russian-Finnish borderland differed significantly in its intensity.

The peculiarity of the peddler trade period is the purchasing of necessary goods by the Karelian peddlers for making profit. This type of cross-border trade was quite profitable and allowed traders to open their own shops in the neighbouring state.

The Soviet period was characterized by the restriction of cross-border mobility of people, goods and services. Cross-border trade was practically absent, but its ‘shadow’ forms appeared during the Soviet time. Nowadays, the growing trend is shopping tourism aimed at purchasing Finnish goods and services. Moreover, there is a need not only to purchase goods and services but also to have leisure activities. Thus, in the development of the cross-border trade in the Russian-Finnish borderland, we can distinguish a change of commodity and financial flows. Until the beginning of the 20th century, there was a tendency to export goods from Russia to Finland in order to generate profit, and starting from the 1920s the reverse trend has been forming. It has even increased lately.

The interest of local residents and the travel possibilities were determined by the degree of the border openness, the established contacts and the attractiveness of the adjacent territory. The contemporary residents of the Russian borderlands choose Finland as an attractive destination due to the transport accessibility, the developed tourist infrastructure and a wide range of the high-quality goods at affordable prices.

Stimulating the cross-border entrepreneurship is considered as a priority direction for the development of the border regions on both sides of the Russian-Finnish state border. Taking into account the positive effect of the cross-border trade on the development of the Finnish border regions, it is crucial to attract the Finnish tourists to the Russian border are-

as. The distance of the settlement from the state border is not as important as the availability of the necessary goods and services for the consumer.

Based on the measures implemented by the Finnish party aimed at stimulating the flow of Russian shopping tourists to the border regions and to Finland in general, it is possible to draw a number of recommendations for boosting the economy of the Russian border regions. These measures include: better navigation and better services for the Finnish citizens provided in Finnish, translation and localization of websites ready to work with Finnish companies or companies from the neighbouring state as well as road infrastructure etc.

Developing detailed recommendations for regional and municipal authorities, business, the non-profit sector of the Republic of Karelia and other Russian border regions requires a more thorough study of the shopping needs and preferences of the Finns. Further research will be aimed at identifying the specifics of the shopping tourism of Finnish citizens in North-West Russian border regions and elaborating measures of attracting tourist flows and revitalizing the economy of the Russian border regions.

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REGIONAL POLITICS
OF MEMORY IN POLAND'S
WARMIA AND MASURIA

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A contribution to memory studies, this work focuses on Poland's Warmian-Masurian voivodeship. Before the war, this territory and the neighbouring Kaliningrad region of Russia comprised the German province of East Prussia. In this article, we strive to identify the essence, mechanisms, key stages, and regional features of the politics of memory from 1945 to the present. To this end, we analyse the legal regulations, the authorities' decisions, statistics, and the reports in the press. We consider such factors as the education sector; the museum industry; the monumental symbolism, the oral and printed propaganda, holidays and rituals, the institutions of national memory, the adoption of memory-related laws, and others. From the first post-war years, the regional authorities sought to make the Polonocentric concept of the region's history dominate the collective consciousness. This approach helped to use the post-war legacy impartially and effectively. However, the image of the past was distorted. This distortion was overcome at the turn of the 21st century to give rise to the concept of open regionalism. An effective alternative to nationalistic populism, open regionalism provides a favourable background for international cross-border cooperation.

Keywords: politics of memory, Warmian-Masurian voivodeship, Poland, historical and cultural heritage, open regionalism

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Introduction

The concept of 'politics of memory' gained currency in the literature quite recently, in the 1980s. However, it is often used to refer to earlier periods in the 20th century. There are diverse interpretations of this term [1].



In this article, we understand politics of memory as the combination of the attitudes of the state and its affiliated institutions towards the past, and the embedding of certain interpretations of historical events in the collective consciousness in order to suit the political moment.

Discussions on the use of history for political purposes often centre on the national historical narrative, whereas the regional aspects thereof receive much less attention. The focus on Warmia and Masuria (today, Poland's Warmian-Masurian voivodeship) is explained by the fact that this territory provides us with an opportunity to compare Polish experience and Soviet practices [2; 3] of the reclamation of the former German province of East Prussia, which was divided between Poland and the USSR in 1945 at the Potsdam Conference.

In this study, we aim at revealing the contents of politics of memory and its tools employed by Polish authorities of Warmia and Masuria after the war, as well as at analysing the integration processes in the region — home to both the indigenous population and the new settlers. We relied on the local authorities' regulations and directives, official statistics, the publications in the press, and the recent works of Polish historians and political scientists [4—6].

Since the post-war history of Warmia and Masuria is not widely known, we will start our narrative with examining the origins of the local population.

An 'integration pot'?

The former South of East Prussia was first referred to as the Masurian District. Later, in 1946, it was renamed the Olsztyn voivodeship. After a series of administrative reforms, a Warmian-Masurian voivodeship was established in 1999. Home to 1,434 thousand people (2018), it covers 24.2 thousand sq km. The reforms restored the historical name to the territory [7]. The Poles have governed the region since May 23, 1945, when the Soviet commandant of the city Colonel Aleksandr Shumsky handed over power to Poland's Plenipotentiary Jakub Prawin. In December 1945, the Masurian voivodeship *Rada Narodowa* (National Council) was established by appointing 100 council members. The first election to the local bodies took place only in 1954 [8, pp. 682—683, 700].

As the fighting was over, approximately 200—250 thousand German citizen out of a pre-war population of 936.5 were remaining in the districts of East Prussia that were to be transferred to Poland. These numbers included both ethnic Germans and Polonophones. The decision of the Allied Control Council on the 'repatriation' of the German population to Germany enjoyed the firm support of the Poles. The *Wiadomości Ma-*

zurskie newspaper wrote that ‘the piles of hatred and untruth that grew between the Poles and the Germans’ precluded not only the assimilation of the latter but even the two peoples living in one state [9, p. 4]. The disabled and senile, the mothers with many children, and the orphans were the first to be expelled. With interruptions, the mass deportation continued from August 1946 through 1948. From the cessation of hostilities through 1950, approximately 112 thousand Germans left the Olsztyn voivodeship for Germany [10, p. 395—400, 412].

When it comes to integration processes in Warmia and Masuria, Polish historiography often refers to the concept of the ‘melting pot’ [11, s. 11—12]. Thus, it is important to analyse the composition of the region’s population and identify its largest groups.

Table 1

The population of the Olsztyn voivodeship in 1950, by origin [12, p. 329]

Population category	Autochthonous	Internal migrants	Repatriates from the USSR	Repatriates and reemigrants from the West	Unknown origin	Total
Number (thousand people)	117.2	352.4	134.2	3.1	3.3	610.2
Specific weight (%)	19.2	57.8	22.0	0.5	0.5	100

Table 1 shows that the majority of new settlers (57.8%) originated from the southern and central Polish voivodeships. The autochthonous population and the settlers from the USSR accounted for a similar proportion — around 20%, whereas the percentage of the repatriates from the West was insignificant. Let us consider each group to gain an idea of their social experience, life ambitions, and collective memory. This comparison will make it possible to evaluate the actions of the authorities, as well as the relevance of the theory of ‘melting pot’ to the situation in the region.

Autochthons. This term was used to refer to the local Polonophone residents that were citizens of the Reich. However, it was not completely accurate, since there were many descendants of migrants among the East Prussian Poles. The actual autochthons of the region were the ancient Prussians who had been fully assimilated.



Whereas the Soviet authorities deported all the German citizens from the Kaliningrad region, regardless of their ethnic origins, their Polish counterparts distinguished between the Germans and the autochthonous Poles. The two major groups of the latter were the *Warmians* (the Polish residents of Warmia who practised Catholicism) and the *Masurians* (the Protestant residents of the Masurian Lake District). These former German subjects had to go through the *verification* procedure — their Polish descent had to be confirmed by a ‘civic commission’. The applicants had to prove that they originated from a Polish family, spoke their native tongue and cherished the national traditions. They also had to sign a declaration of loyalty to the Polish state. The preservation of their identity was out of the question. Moreover, the Polish settlers perceived the autochthons as ‘Schwabians’ and often discriminated against them. The verification was a lengthy process. In 1949, the Polish authorities granted forced citizenship to those autochthons who refused either to leave for Germany or to take an oath to Poland. Overall, approximately 133 thousand Warmians and Masurians obtained a Polish citizenship in the course of verification [10, p. 396; 13, p. 488].

These groups of the former East Prussian residents found it hard to adapt to the new conditions. When the opportunity arose, they preferred to leave for the country that they still considered their homeland. In 1956—1959, 3.9 thousand autochthons left the Olsztyn voivodeship for the GDR and 32.3 thousand for the FRG. In the next decade, another 15,000 people managed to obtain exit permits. The repatriation gained momentum as Poland and the FRG concluded a family reunion agreement on October 9, 1975. In 1976—1984, 36.2 thousand people left for the FRG in the framework of the reunion programme. Overall, 105 thousand residents of Warmia and Masuria resettled in West Germany in 1952—1984 [13, p. 488]. Today, the official Polish statistics largely neglects these ethnic groups. In the 2011 census, only 1376 people identified themselves as Masurian. The number of Warmians is usually estimated at 4—5 thousand people. Some experts write that these groups number 20 thousand people, i. e. not more than 1.5% of the total population of the Warmian-Masurian voivodeship [13, pp. 488—491; 14, pp. 91—92].

Internal migrants. This group comprised the settlers from the central and southern voivodeships of Poland. Either resettling of their own will or recruited to populate East Prussia, all of them were coming to the region seeking a better life. Among them were several thousand people from war-ruined Warsaw, most of whom were high-ranking officials. However, the majority of the new settlers came from the rural areas. Although poor and ill-educated, they were active, mobile, enterprising, and

in the prime of the lives. Some of the new settlers would terrorize the local population by committing plunder and robbery and dislodging the rightful owners from their flats and houses [15, p. 201].

The internal migrants included the Ukrainians who were forced out of the south-eastern voivodeships as part of Operation Vistula in 1947. The operation aimed at removing material support for the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UIA) and the cells of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) in Poland. Approximately 12 thousand Ukrainian and mixed Polish-Ukrainian families, numbering 55 thousand people, were deported to the Olsztyn voivodeship. They were to settle in the most war-torn districts at the border of the USSR. Although the majority of these people was never engaged in any subversive activities, both the authorities and the settlers of the Polish origin treated them as second class-citizens [15, p. 192—193; 16].¹

Repatriates from the USSR. Another stream of settlers was coming to Warmia and Masuria from Western Ukraine, Western Belarus, and the Vilno province, i.e. the parts of the Second Polish Republic that were incorporated in the USSR in 1939—1940 (the Poles called these areas *Kresy*). In 1950, the Olsztyn voivodeship became home to over 130 thousand *Kresy* residents. Their repatriates continued over the next years, with most *Kresy* Poles (approximately 30 thousand people) arriving in 1956—1960. Settling primarily in the cities, they accounted for 42% of the Olsztyn population in 1950. Most of the repatriates from the USSR were psychologically damaged, having gone through arrests, imprisonment, and exile. They felt that they had been wronged and combined strong anti-Soviet attitudes with hostility towards the new political regime. They settled close to each other, preferred isolation, and tried to preserve the traditions of their home areas [11, p. 17—18; 17, p. 614; 18, p. 138].

Most settlers from the West were the Poles who either had been deported to Germany for forced labour (repatriates) or had left the country of their own free will (re-emigrants). This group was rather small in numbers (slightly over 3,000 people in 1950). However, their international experience (most of them returned from Germany and France) made them the transmitters of the knowledge, norms, and traditions that they had obtained in these countries [19, p. 175].

There were significant differences among the four groups. The relationships among them were not free of tensions or even hostility. Sometimes, the tensions led to open conflicts. All this rendered the ultimate goal of uniting these diverse elements into a harmonious regional community and an integral part of the Polish nation even more difficult to at-

¹ In 1990, Poland's Sejm condemned the deportation of the Ukrainians.

tain. The authorities were faced with the challenge of ensuring a fair distribution of land, dwellings, and other material values. They had to establish equality of rights among all the population groups and to provide access to social benefits, education, and culture. Alas, this was not easy to do.

Since the majority of both the local residents and the new settlers had had traumatic experiences in the war, of pivotal importance for the state and its institutions was to mitigate the consequences of this trauma and launch massive propaganda and awareness campaigns. It is quite natural that the construction of the ‘correct’ collective memory lay at the heart of the authorities’ efforts. The collective memory was to unite people with different historical experiences.

Regional politics of memory in the post-war years

Firstly, it was necessary to develop an attitude to the East Prussian legacy. In the Soviet and Polish parts of East Prussia, the authorities’ ideological attitudes rested on a common principle of denying the values of German culture, which was proclaimed ‘Nazi’ and ‘hostile to Slavs’. Both the Olsztyn voivodeship and the Kaliningrad region resounded with the calls to ‘expel the Prussian spirit’, to ‘erase any traces of Germanisation’, to ‘get rid of all the German things’, to change the old toponyms, and to establish the new national and ideational symbols [20, p. 4].

In a short time, almost all the monuments and memorials were either dismantled or ‘revamped’. For instance, a relief was taken off the monument to the German economist Franz Hermann Schulze-Delitzsch in Olsztyn. Instead, a plaque was mounted, saying that now it was a monument to the fighters for the freedom of Warmia and Masuria. The famous Tannenberg Memorial in the environs of Olsztynek was dismantled and its magnificent granite blocks were repurposed for the district’s largest memorial — the Monument of the Gratitude for the Soviet Army Soldiers (it was opened in 1954 and renamed the Monument to the Liberation of the Warmian-Masurian Land in the early 1990s) [21, pp. 395, 397, 403, 409]. In those days, still restorable buildings and fortifications were often demolished so that their bricks could be used in construction. This happened in Dobre Miasto and Lidzbark Warmiński in the 1950s. Some of the local churches were lost for good [22, p. 292—294].

In practical terms, the Polish authorities were, for the most, part ready to embrace the new environment without prejudice. They showed tolerance to the pre-war architectural landmarks and tried to draw on the economic practices used by the previous generations of local residents. The efforts of the Polish intelligentsia, especially its indigenous members, helped to save and restore the Teutonic Order’s castles, palaces, and pub-

lic and religious buildings. They succeeded in convincing the authorities that, in essence, the legacy received by the Poles not only was a product of German culture but also borrowed from the cultures of the other ethnic groups living in East Prussia — primarily, the Polonophone Masurians and Warmians. Later, the historical and cultural heritage of East Prussia was interpreted as part of Poland's national wealth (which was not always correct). This thesis was supported by the fact that the region was once a territory of the Kingdom of Poland or an area colonised by the Poles.²

An interesting aspect is the attitude of the Polish authorities toward the movable cultural legacy. The employees of the voivodeship and powiat administrations collaborated with the civic activist from 1945 to save the museum items, books, and historical documents from local and provincial archives, including those from the collection of the famous Prussia Museum in Königsberg. The documents, books, and artefacts collected across the voivodeship were brought to Olsztyn. In 1947—1951, over 800 settlements were surveyed and over 700 tons of documents retrieved. These efforts translated in the vast collections of the voivodeship library, museums, and the state archive in Olsztyn. Not only the items linked to the Polish national tradition but also those with German roots were saved from destruction [23, p. 467].

One of the major elements of politics of memory were museums and exhibitions. In the absence of television or opportunities to travel in Poland and abroad, the museum exhibits played a crucial role in the formation of collective memory. Moreover, museum visits were often obligatory. The Museum of Local History opened in March 1945, before the cessation of hostilities. It was housed in the Olsztyn Castle. In 1948, the Copernicus Museum opened in Frombork. Museums and travelling exhibitions had to familiarise the new settlers with the 'Polish traces' in Warmia and Masuria — early printed books and manuscripts, famous people, the fights of the Poles against Germanisation, etc. After 1949, the recurring themes of exhibitions were the achievement of socialism in the USSR, the PRC, and other friendly countries [24].

In May 1945, a voivodeship information and propaganda department was established to coordinate the political and educational initiatives. At the time, the department employed 24 staff. Two years later, the number of employees reached 86. Alongside the socialistic propaganda, the institution focused on historical education. The task was twofold — to famil-

² Warmia (German: Ermland), as a part of so-called Royal Prussia, was a province of Poland in the 15th—18th centuries. The historical area of Masuria (German: Mazuren) was populated primarily by the Polish colonists, who converted to Protestantism and were strongly Germanised.



iarise the autochthons with the Polish national historical narrative and to acquaint the new settlers with the rich history of the Poles living in Warmia and Masuria. The local press regularly published essays on the history of the region. Public lectures were held, many towns and villages organised popular courses and folk high schools. Public administration officials, teachers, and culture specialists were obliged to study the history of the region. Additional history classes were taught at the local schools [25, p. 63—64, 75—76; 26, p. 320].

Grand celebrations marked the anniversaries of the Polish triumph over the Teutonic Order in the Battle of Grunwald in 1410. In the times of the Polish People's Republic (PPR), the remembrance of this battle was the cornerstone of politics of memory. It was used to legitimise the republic's authorities. Moreover, Grunwald was a symbol of the 'Slavic unity', the brotherly alliance with the USSR. In the 1950s—1960s, a tourism and entertainment infrastructure was built around the Grunwald battlefield [27, pp. 287—288]. For Warmia and Masuria, the celebration was also a means to put the history of the region into the national context. The Weeks of the Recovered Territories, which were held nationwide from 1946, acquainted the whole country with the present and the past of the reclaimed lands.

The central role in these educational efforts was played by the Masurian Institute, which was established by the local intelligentsia. Engaged in both research and education, the Institute forged close links with the largest national universities. The Institute's staff were prolific authors and were often recruited as experts by the local administration [5, p. 63—65].

Politics of memory in the Polish People's Republic

Despite the ostentatious rejection of the 'German legacy' in 1945—1948, the Polish authorities pursued a consistent policy of re-Polonising Warmia and Masuria. The Polonophone autochthons provided a link between the East Prussian legacy and the hundreds of thousands of new Polish settlers. As the democratic opposition was crushed and Poland tread on the Soviet path of development in 1948, the situation on the Recovered Territories changed. The Communists were convinced that the Poles of East Prussia had been germanised to such a degree that their very presence was a potential threat to the Polish state.

Urged by the national authorities, the Olsztyn voivodeship opted for unification and the abandonment of regional identity. The Masurian Institute was closed (it was reorganised into a 'research facility' of the Western Institute in Poznan). The popular courses and periodicals focusing on

the local history stopped their operations. The members of the Polish movement in East Prussia were accused of breakaway and even separatism. The focus of the politics of memory shifted from regionalistics to a national Polish narrative [28, p. 29—30]. However, these changes did not affect the architectural landmarks, which were considered national wealth and protected by the state. Major restoration and reconstruction efforts were launched in the 1950s.

The Polonocentric model of memory, which was adopted in the late 1940s, remained virtually unchanged throughout the history of the PPR [29, p. 164]. However, the model gradually evolved over the four decades. As a rule, a change happened when the country was faced with another social crisis forcing the ruling Polish United Workers' Party to adjust its ideological tenets. In 1956 and in the first years of the rule of Władysław Gomułka, regionalistics was reinstated. The local historians and culture professionals were exonerated from separatism. This process was supervised by the *Pojezierze* (Lake District) civic association, which had been established following the official repudiation of Stalinism. This organisation brought together hundreds of local history aficionados. In 1962, the Wojciech Kętrzyński Research Centre was established in Olsztyn to coordinate the professional efforts at studying the past of Warmia and Masuria. The publication of the local history periodicals was resumed [23, p. 468—469].

An important landmark in the politics of memory relating to the Recovered Territories was an event that took place in 1965. During the Second Vatican Council, 34 Polish bishops, including Karol Józef Wojtyła (future Pope John Paul II) sent a message of reconciliation to the German bishops. This verbose document analysed the Polish-German relations within a wide historical context, examined their light and dark sides, and recognised the fact that millions of Germans fell victims to the post-war deportations. In inviting the Germans to the celebration of the 1000th anniversary of the Baptism of Poland (1966), the Polish bishops addressed their fellow believers with the words: 'We forgive and ask for forgiveness' [30, pp. 179—186]. Signed by 41 bishops from the FRG and the GDR, the response to this message accepted the invitation and supported the idea of reconciliation. However, the German side avoided the recognition of the Oder-Neise Line, which was a top priority on the Polish agenda. This exchange of messages was condemned by the Polish authorities who interpreted it as treason by the clergy. The message of the bishops met a mixed response in the West and North of Poland, from where the Germans were deported after the war. Thus, this document can hardly be considered the 'cornerstone in the restoration of the Polish-German dialogue' [29, p. 324]. However, a quarter-century later, as the

communist regimes in Eastern Europe had collapsed and Poland sought accession to the EU and NATO, the message of the bishop came in useful in providing an ideational rationale for the ‘return to Europe’.

In the 1970s, the tension eased in Europe and the countries started to forge new relations with the FRG. Against this background, the debates on the historical legacy of East Prussia (which was usually associated with the threat of West German revanchism) lost their urgency. After the vast majority of the autochthons had left for the FRG, the remaining residents of the territory, most of whom were new settlers, had little interest in the region’s cultural heritage and local traditions. Turning into abstract museum exhibits, the local culture was cherished only by the few members of the Warmian and Masurian intelligentsia [31, p. 46].

Warmia and Masuria and the ‘historical wars’ at the turn of the 21st century

In the 1990s, the changes in the regional memory landscape were associated primarily with the dramatic social and political transformations and with the geopolitical rearrangement of Eastern Europe. The communist regimes collapsed, the USSR disintegrated, Germany reunified, and Poland was preparing to accede to NATO and the EU. Similarly to the other post-communist countries, Poland adopted memorial laws and created a ramifying infrastructure to support its politics of memory. Established in 1998, the Institute of National Remembrance has been a major actor in Poland’s academic, social, and political life since the mid-2000s. The ‘new revival of the politics of memory’ [32, c. 41—51]) in Eastern Europe owes to the growing nationalist trends and the use of ‘historical arguments’ in propaganda.

In Poland, politics of memory was widely used by president Lech Kaczyński and the conservative party Law and Justice. On September 17, 2009, the President opened the Alley of the Victims of Katyn to mark the 70th anniversary of the Polish Campaign of the Red Army [33, p. 453]. The unveiling of the monument was timed to coincide with the 18th Congress of Polish Historians, which was held in Olsztyn. At the Congress, President Kaczyński made a long speech, which set the tenor of the meeting. This case demonstrates that a major area of the Polish authorities’ politics of memory is a confrontation with Russia in the field of history. In recent years, Poland adopted the laws that extended the powers of the Institute of National Remembrance and sanctioned the demolition of the monuments of the communist era, including the memorials to Soviet soldiers (with the exception of the war graves) [34]. In the late 1980s, the region of Warmia and Masuria faced an identity crisis. The former sket-

chy and tendentious interpretation of the territory's past was criticised. These new trends, which were embraced by the Olsztyn intelligentsia circles, coincided with the socio-political and cultural transformations caused by the revolution of 1989. Moreover, the decentralisation of the social lead to the so-called 'uprising of the provinces', when the local community acquired a taste for independent actions, including local cultural initiatives [29, p. 165].

A major event was the establishment of the Borussia (the Latin of Prussia) cultural association in Olsztyn in 1991. The organisation was founded by the historian Robert Traba and the poet Kazimierz Brakoniecki, who started a magazine of the same name. The association's charter stressed that Warmia and Masuria had always been a multinational and multicultural region. Its members affirmed their commitment to a comprehensive study of the territory's past, of the political and national relations that had existed in the region, and of its cultural, artistic, and civilizational values. The goals of the association included the adoption of a critical and innovative approach to creating new knowledge, new culture, and new relations [35]. This meant both the abandonment of a unilateral, Polonocentric interpretation of the history of East Prussia and openness to all the ethnocultural groups that once lived on this territory.

The advocates of the concept of Borussia believe that, today, the central problem lies in the preservation of the identity of the local historical and cultural landscape amid globalisation rather than in overcoming the taboos in the history of East Prussia. Moreover, the 'open regionalism' approach is increasingly in conflict with the principles of politics of memory professed by the ruling conservative forces. Their conservative commitment to patriotic education and the strengthening of national identity may lead to a return to the old national-communistic interpretations of history [29, p. 166].

Conclusions

During the reclamation of the Recovered Territories, which began in 1945, Polish authorities had to develop a politics of memory that would prove the legitimacy of the new national borders, create the optimal conditions for the integration of these territories into the Polish state, and facilitate the adaptation of the new settlers to the unfamiliar historical and cultural environment. Soviet authorities had to solve similar problems in the Kaliningrad region of the RSFSR and the Klaipeda region of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic. However, the politics of memory pursued in the two neighbouring states differed in terms of both form and content.



In Warmia and Masuria, the regional authorities found a solution in emphasising the Polish elements in East Prussian historical and cultural heritage and using the experience of the autochthonous population in the reclamation of the region. However, the hopes that the region would become an ‘integration pot’ and a common home to Warmians, Masurians, and the new settlers never materialised. The absolute majority of the local residents of Polish origin left Warmia and Masuria, primarily, for the FRG.

In the 21st century, the region of Warmia and Masuria became, on the one hand, a hub for research and cultural collaborations with the neighbouring territories and, on the other, found itself involved in the new ‘historical wars’ brought about by the rise of nationalistic populism in Eastern Europe. All this had a negative effect on the tenor of relations in the Baltic region. Although producing benefits for the ruling elite (such as national consolidation, and the legitimisation of the regime), the ‘war of the monuments’ and other confrontations in the field of history may have very negative consequences for international relations. Moreover, they encourage xenophobic attitudes and provoke and deepen international conflicts.

This background gives rise to tensions and even conflicts between the capital and the region, whose local historical discourses rely on the regional identity, the recognition of the local multicultural heritage, openness, and the readiness to cooperate with the neighbours and the ‘big historical narratives’, which gravitate towards national singularity and exclusiveness. In seeking dialogue, open regionalism remains an effective alternative to aggressive nationalistic populism and encourages international transboundary cooperation and international integration.

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DISCUSSION



TWO CIVILIZATIONS: THE RELATIONS OF RUSSIA AND WESTERN EUROPE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 21ST CENTURY

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The challenges of building relations between two different civilizations, which Samuel Huntington and Lev Gumilev wrote about, are currently becoming more obvious due to the cardinal geopolitical and geoeconomic changes that have taken place since the demise of the USSR and the world socialist system. Today, in the West, as if in contrast to the famous project by Charles de Gaulle — “Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals”, an extremely negative image of Russia is being formed. Western ideologists stick to the axiom according to which despotism and slavery, allegedly being the basis of Russia's internal order, inevitably give rise to aggression in relations with the outside world. Of course, these ideas do not take into account the ongoing socio-economic changes in the country and have little to do with modern realities. They are a mere reproduction of the old Western xenophobic moods going back to the time when Russophobia was widely spread in a number of leading European countries. The article explores historical roots of Russophobia and their manifestations at the beginning of the XXI century in Poland and the Baltic countries.

Keywords: inter-civilization splits, Russophobia, geopolitics, peaceful co-existence, the Baltic region

Samuel Huntington's book “The Clash of Civilizations”¹, often mentioned by political scientists and political geographers, as well as the

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¹ Huntington, S. 1996, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York.

work of Lev Nikolayevich Gumilyov on intercivilizational relations and the formation of Eurasian civilization², are, unfortunately, not fully comprehended. This is manifested in the desire to impose the authors' view of the world, which is characteristic of a particular civilization. The possibility of a different attitudes to social processes is regarded as defective, impossible and requiring, at the very least, censure. Any deviation is considered unacceptable and immoral. A vivid manifestation of such an approach is the so-called Russophobia — an unjustifiably critical view of Russia, the Russians and their ethno-cultural, religious and national-state identity. In this sense, a number of authors propose to consider Russophobia one of the forms of xenophobia [1—8]. Today, the question of negative attitudes towards Russia is acquiring not only scientific but also political [9—19] and practical dimensions.

In the 19th century, Russophobia as a phenomenon was spread quite widely. Similar sentiments in the West were connected with the active foreign policy of the Russian Empire aimed at preserving European monarchies and the political balance of power in Europe. Interference in the internal affairs of other states and Russia's participation in all European wars led to Europe becoming fearful of Russia's strengthening and her growing role in the European and therefore in the world order. The clash of the foreign policy interests of the Russian Empire in the Balkans and then in Central Asia with those of other European countries, especially Great Britain, led to aggressive political propaganda declaring the Russian people "barbarians and the cunning Asians".

In his time, the outstanding Russian thinker I. A. Ilyin in his article "The World Politics of Russian Sovereigns" listed the characteristic features of the West's attitude to Russia in the 19th century and described the existing in Europe set of "bad affects: fear, arrogance, enmity, envy and ignorant slander...". A capacious, precise and expressive formulation by Ilyin explaining the essence of such an attitude can be summarized as follows: "Europeans 'need' a bad Russia: **barbarous**, so that it could be 'civilized' in their own way; **threatening with its size**, so that it could be divided; **expansionistic**, so that a coalition against it could be created; **reactionary**, so that one could justify a revolution in it and demand a republic for it; **religiously decomposing** [highlighted by I. A. Ilyin] in order to break into it with the propaganda of Reformation or Catholicism; economically untenable in order to claim its 'unused' space and its raw materials or at least to demand favorable trade agreements and concessions. But if such a 'rotten' Russia could be strategically used, then the Europeans are ready to make alliances with it and to demand its participation in military actions "to the last drop of its blood" [20, p. 93].

² *Gumilev, L. N.* 1979—1980, *Etnogenez i biosfera Zemli* [Ethnogenesis and the Biosphere], Moscow, Vol. 1—3 (in Russ.).

Much of what I. A. Ilyin wrote and what gave rise to Russophobia as an ideological and political phenomenon retains its relevance nowadays. It is not by chance that the Russophobic policy, which took the form of Russiaphobia, intensified in the West and became actually the prevailing tendency when Russia had overcome the crisis of transition period and risen from its knees, when, by relying on its restored economy and revived armed forces, it returned to the policy of defending its national interests, which by no means always and completely coincide with those of the United States (which took the place of the 19th century Great Britain) and their Western allies. There are still attempts to ‘civilize’ Russia; if they fail, then to dismember or at least to internally divide her, to use our country’s resources in their own interests (let us recall the famous ‘project’ of Zbigniew Brzezinski to make Siberia a common Eurasian domain, subject to transnational efforts for its development and settlement³).

At the same time, Russophobia (Russiaphobia) is greatly manifested in the foreign and domestic policies of not only the leading Western states (primarily the United States and Great Britain), but in particular in those of their Eastern European allies. It is primarily about the position of the current authorities of Poland and the Baltic States and their ideologists who were defined by German researchers back in 2007, that is before the events in Ukraine, as “soldiers of the Cold War” who are set to increase conflict with Russia⁴.

The origins of Russophobia and our times

According to F. I. Tyutchev, the basis for Russophobia is “a fiery, blind, cruel and hostile attitude... towards Russia” [21, p. 191]. From his point of view, the appearance of the image of Russia as a “monster” and “cannibal of the 19th century” [21, p. 176] in the public consciousness of Europeans was conditioned by a number of reasons: firstly, by deep civilizational differences between Western and Eastern Europe (i. e. Russia); secondly, by the lack of understanding of the social system, a civilization that can replace the Western one: “The Western people who make judgments about Russia are a bit like the Chinese making judgments about Europe, or rather the Greeks (Greculi) making judgments about Rome. This seems to be the law of history: never has any social system or any civilization manifested the understanding of that one which had to replace it...”; and thirdly, “moral irresponsibility” [21, p. 100, 182, 191]. Fourthly, Tyutchev also notes the instinctive nature of Russophobia,

³ Brzezinski, Z. 2004, *Vybor. Globalnoe gospodstvo ili globalnoe liderstvo* [The Choice: Global Domination or Global Leadership], Moscow, p. 139—140 (in Russ.).

⁴ Kulik, S. A. 2013, *Rossiya v Baltijskom labirinte* [Russia in the Baltic Labyrinth], Moscow, p. 26—27 (in Russ.).

which arises in Western society in the face of the material strength of Russia. This instinctive feeling is “something between respect and fear — the feeling of awe, which is held only in relation to the Power” [21, p. 100—101].

All these historical roots of Russophobia, alas, are relevant today; the only difference is that Russophobia is now acting mainly as Russiaphobia⁵. For all their similarities and common Christian roots, quite serious civilizational differences persist between Russia and the West, and it is obvious that the attempts of the West to mould Russia as they wish will not be successful. Moreover, these attempts are incomprehensible and unnecessary — Japan is a very successful member of the geopolitical West in spite of the fact that in terms of mentality it is much further from the West than modern Russia.

The source of Russophobia is also the fact that Russia, without abandoning modernization and innovation, at the same time remains loyal to historical traditions and values and is becoming one of the leaders of enlightened conservatism in the modern world. It is notable that a well-known American politician and publicist Patrick Joseph Buchanan, famous for his conservative views, in his book “The Death of the West”⁶ repeatedly mentions Russia and Russian realities and apparently considers our country a natural ally of the West if not a part of it. Russia is also turning into a leader of the conservative world in the eyes of a number of right-wing European politicians⁷. This, in turn, causes a negative, or if you wish, Russophobic reaction from the liberal-minded political circles of the United States and European countries, because Russia and attitudes to it and relations with it are becoming a factor of both the foreign and domestic policy, an instrument in the fight for votes.

As in Tyutchev’s time, Russophobia rests on the same fear of the military might of Russia, which is not only one of the two leading nuclear states but has also recently demonstrated, as we saw it in Syria, the ability to project power and achieve its geopolitical goals by using conventional weapons in opposition with the world’s leading geopolitical players.

⁵ In the modern outwardly politically correct and tolerant West it is not customary to demonize peoples, so now they demonize Russia as a state, hypocritically emphasizing that they have nothing against the Russian people. Still the essence of Russophobia remains the same; that is why in this paper we use this term for describing the modern period of time.

⁶ Buchanan, P. J. 2003, *Smert’ Zapada* [The Death of the West], Moscow (in Russ.).

⁷ Osipov, E. 2017, The Leader of the Conservative World, *Izvestiya*, March 7, 2017, available at: <https://iz.ru/news/669056> (accessed 12.10.2018) (in Russ.).

The economic growth in Russia, which after overcoming the transition crisis has become one of the world's main centers of attraction and export of foreign capital, has also raised fears in the West. It is significant that in 2013, the year before the imposing of anti-Russian sanctions, the Russian Federation ranked third in the world in terms of inflows of foreign direct investment and fourth in their exports⁸. One should mention also the role of Russia as the world energy superpower, which plays a key or important role in the supply of energy to many countries of the world, primarily to Europe.

One of the roots of the traditional and recently increasing Russophobic policy of the United States, in which it involves the rest of the West, is the fear of a rapprochement between Russia and Europe. As noted by the well-known American political scientist and geopolitician George Friedman, "For generations, keeping the technological sophistication of Europe separated from the natural resources and manpower of Russia has been one of the key aims of American foreign policy"⁹. He emphasizes that "the unification of Russia and Europe would create a force whose population, technological and industrial capability, and natural resources would at the very least equal America's, and in all likelihood outstrip them". That is why, as noted by G. Friedman, "during the twentieth century, the United States acted three times to prevent the kind of Russian-German entente that could unify Eurasia and threaten fundamental American interests". In his opinion, "the response of the United States to a Russian-German entente must be the same during the next ten years as it was in the twentieth century. The United States must continue to do everything it can to block a German-Russian entente and to limit the effect that Russia's sphere of influence might have on Europe, because the very presence of a military powerful Russia changes the way Europe behaves."¹⁰

Objective factors of cooperation between Russia and Western Europe

The current processes of confrontation contradict the fact that economic and geographical factors determine the need for cooperation.

Russia and Western Europe are objectively complementary and, according to Vladimir Chizhov, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the EU, "there is no reasonable alternative to cooperation

⁸ World Investments Report 2014, New York ; Geneva, p. XV.

⁹ Friedman, G. 2011, *Sledujushie 10 let* [The Next Decade], Moscow, p. 20 (in Russ.).

¹⁰ Friedman, G. Op. cit., p. 20.



and unification of potentials”¹¹. Now we are talking mainly about the complementarity in the supply of raw materials (primarily energy) in exchange of finished goods, but in the future the complementarity of economies can also cover high-tech areas such as nuclear energy, aerospace and others. Certain groundwork in these fields has already been laid. In the long run, with the normalization of relations, a colossal industrial and raw material giant from “Lisbon to Vladivostok” can be created¹².

There are objective factors for the cooperation between Russia and its closest European neighbors, including such anti-Russian “Cold War soldiers” as Poland and the Baltic States.

Dr. Leszek Sykulski, the author of the recently published book “Geopolitics and Security of Poland”, who previously worked as an analyst on international security issues in the office of the President of Poland Lech Kaczynski, notes that Poland and Russia are doomed to cooperate because of geography itself¹³. And he is not alone in his views. Thus, Kornel Morawiecki, who is the oldest deputy of the Polish Sejm and the father of the current Prime Minister of Poland Mateusz Morawiecki, believes that Poland could become a natural bridge to the East for Western Europe and to the West for Russia¹⁴. For example, the pan-Eurasian transport system “The New Silk Road” proposed by China could become one of the promising projects that would benefit both Poland and Russia. However, largely because of Poland’s policy towards Russia, the transportation of cargoes can be redirected round that country through Kaliningrad and St. Petersburg¹⁵. Ultimately, Warsaw would gain from the restoration of mutually beneficial pragmatic relations with Moscow, but in the first place it is the Russophobic emotions that impede that. Russia,

¹¹ Chizov, V. 2017, Chizhov: otnosheniya Rossii i Evrosojuza ispitivajut deficit kanalov kommunikacii [Chizov: the EU-Russia Relations are Lacking in Communication Channels], *RIA Novosti*, available at: <https://ria.ru/politics/20171204/1510182711.html> (accessed 12.10.2018) (in Russ.).

¹² Yakunin, V. I. 2013, Political and Economic Competitiveness of Europe and Russia: Possible Synergies, *Sravnitel'naya Politika*, No. 1 (11), p. 77—78 (in Russ.).

¹³ Khavich, O. 2018, Polsha i Rossija: Soyuz pochti ne viden [Poland and Russia: Union almost out of Sight], *Ukraina.ru*, available at: <https://ukraina.ru/exclusive/20181004/1021310602.html> (accessed 12.10.2018) (in Russ.).

¹⁴ Morawiecki, K. 2018, Kornel Morawiecki: improvement of Polish-Russian relations for the benefit of the world peace [Kornel Morawiecki: Uluchshenie otnoshenij Polshi i Rossii v interesah mira], *RIA Novosti*, available at: <https://ria.ru/interview/20180703/1523789744.html> (accessed 12.10.2018) (in Russ.).

¹⁵ New Silk Road may not go through Poland [Novij Sholkovij put' mozhet bit prolozhen v obhod Polshi], *Radio Polsha*, 15.05.2018, available at: <http://www.radiopolsha.pl/6/138/Artykul/363551> (accessed 12.10.2018) (in Pol.).

however, is not going to respond in the same manner. As stated by Russian Foreign Minister S. V. Lavrov: “We have been included in the category of enemies; we will not reciprocate, although we see that Russophobia is being consciously, consistently and on a large scale planted in Poland as a national idea”. The Minister assured that if Poland understands that a dialogue can only be based on mutual consideration of interests, Russia will be ready for dialogue with Poland¹⁶.

The Russophobic policy of the leadership of the Baltic States seems to be even more irrational compared to that of Poland, since due to the history, geographical location and economic development features Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia even more badly need normal relations with the Russian Federation. The curtailment of previously uneven economic relations with Russia — first of all the cessation of cargo transit through the Baltic ports as well as the support of anti-Russian sanctions imposed by the European Union seriously hurt their economies. The attempts to abandon Russian energy supplies will force them to incur higher costs for the purchase of liquefied natural gas from other countries, as has already happened to Lithuania. The Baltic States, pursuing Russophobic policies both internally and externally, seem to have almost missed the chance given by geography and history to become a transit territory (or “gateway region” in the terminology of the American geopolitics scholar, Saul Cohen) between Russia and Europe. According to S. Cohen, the main function of the regions, which he considered ‘the gateways’, is the stabilization of the world geopolitical system, the stimulation of global economic and political interaction and international cooperation¹⁷. In fact, the Baltic Sea region is rapidly becoming (if it has not already become) a zone of confrontation, a kind of “new powder keg” of Europe like the Balkans at the beginning of the last century, an economically depressed margin of Europe losing its population as a result of mass migration (especially youth). The blame for that should be put, above all, on the anti-Russian Russophobic policy pursued by the ruling elites of these countries.

Conclusions

In the modern world Russophobia appears, above all, as Russia-phobia, that is hostility towards Russia as a state, its foreign and domestic policy. It is a reflection of the strategy of the West which seeks (and not

¹⁶ Lavrov: Polsha zapisala RF v kategoriju vragov, Moskva ne budet otvechat' vzaimnostju [Lavrov: Poland Believes Russia is an Enemy, the Feeling is not Mutual], *Tass, Russian News Agency*, Jan. 15, 2018, available at: <https://tass.ru/politika/4874070> (accessed: 12.10.2018) (in Russ.).

¹⁷ Kolosov, V., Mironenko, G. 2001, *Geopolitika: uchebnik dlja vuzov* [Geopolitics: a university handbook], Moscow, p. 109—110 (in Russ.).

for the first time since the times of tsarism) to oppose the “bad Russian authorities” to the majority of the population, to whom (say the supporters of this policy) they are friendly and seek to help them live in prosperity, freedom and democracy of the Western type. It is indicative, however, that “bad” are any authorities in Russia, which try to defend Russian national interests and do not allow the Western states to pursue their own economic and geopolitical ends in relation to our country — regardless of whether it is the tsarist, Soviet, or post-Soviet capitalist rule. Perhaps, the only exception is the period from the end of “perestroika” until the mid-1990s, when the West supported first M. S. Gorbachev’s policy and then B. N. Yeltsin’s. It is not worth mentioning that this policy resulted in the collapse of the USSR, the economic crisis and the significant loss of Russia’s previous geopolitical positions. The population, with a few exceptions, for which Western ideologists of the transition to democracy and market advocated so much, was plunged into deprivation and poverty, which was overcome only after a serious adjustment of the economic and political course. All this makes us at least be wary of the game of contrasts “the bad authorities — the unfortunate Russian people”.

Russophobia is not so much ethnophobia as the tool that the West led by the United States is using to prevent the restoration of Russia as a great world power that occupies a rightful place among the leading players in global politics and economy. It is not by chance that Russophobia is declining when Russia is weak and when it is possible to try to manipulate her. When these attempts fail, the West turns back to Russophobic policy, as it happened in 2003—2004 when “color revolutions” began to spread in the post-Soviet space.

Russophobia as ideological and political tool is used not only by great powers, such as the USA or EU leading countries, but also by the countries of the second (Poland) and third (Baltic States) echelons. In this case we are talking about using Russophobia and whipping it up in order to act as privileged partners of the first-echelon Western countries to benefit from this partnership economically and politically. At the same time, in Poland and especially in the Baltic States, Russophobia to a much greater extent than in the “Old West” exists not just as a tool, but as ethnophobia, i. e. hostility towards Russians as an ethnicity but towards Russia as a state.

It seems that it is possible and necessary to counteract Russophobia through an active information campaign abroad (an example of such a successful campaign is the work of the RT TV channel), support for pro-Russian parties, public associations, politicians, activists and the grassroots as well as through the formation of pro-Russian lobbies in the leading Western countries (primarily in the United States), the promotion of contacts of ordinary people (the recent World Cup 2018 in Russia played a huge positive role in this sense), etc. In other words, it is necessary to activate all possible mechanisms of “soft power”, which now, in our

opinion, are not used by Russia in full or are insufficiently coordinated. An important positive role in overcoming Russophobia in the Baltic Sea region can and should be the active participation of Russian regions, governmental and non-governmental institutions in the programs and projects of cross-border and trans-border cooperation both on a bilateral and multilateral bases (primarily with the EU). We believe that cooperation at the local and regional level will gradually contribute to overcoming mistrust and to improving relations at higher levels of interaction between Russia, individual countries of Western Europe (including the Baltic Sea region) and the EU as a whole.

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REVIEW



RUSSIA IN THE SYSTEM OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: A NEW PERSPECTIVE

Tsvetkova, N., ed., 2017. *Understanding International Relations: Russia and the World*. Rowman and Littlefield.

The shifts in the system of international relations, Russia's new foreign policy, disappointment with globalisation, growing nationalism, and the effects that digital technology has on politics — all these factors impose new requirements on international relations studies. It is no secret that the European and US schools of thought used to dominate the field. In the 1990s—2000s, globalisation and neo-liberalism created the background for Russia's new role in the international arena. The country's financial system, economy, politics, culture, and education became integrated into the system of international relations and open to all the countries of the world. However, Russia's position and the opinions of Russian politicians and experts on certain aspects of world politics were disregarded and ignored by both the international political establishment and the specialists in international relations. Of course, Russia and the views of Russian scholars were visible in the research discourse but they never came to the fore. On the other hand, Russian scientists often complain that their studies are not accepted by the international journals and publishing house because of the lack of a pro-western and anti-Russian sentiment.

International relations experts from Saint Petersburg State University set out to correct the imbalance between the actual role of Russia in the world politics and the limited visibility of Russian expertise in the international research discourse on international relations and to demonstrate that the views of Russian scholars on the most urgent political problems deserve publication abroad. To this end, they prepared a multi-authored monograph in the English language, aimed at both authoritative researchers and postgraduate students who have just trodden the path of research into international relations and other social sciences. The ongoing discussion between Russian and international experts on the interpretation of the current global problems necessitated this monograph. There is an urgent need to familiarise the international community with the essence of Russian foreign policy and the approaches to international relations developed by the Russian scientists.

The authors of the monograph employed very innovative approaches.

Firstly, the authors managed to overcome the usual drawback of similar works where the examination of international relations takes priority over Russian studies proper or the analysis of Russia dominates over the

study of world politics. The monograph managed to show the role and place of Russia in the system of international relations and to reveal the Russian interpretation of the current events and of international relations theories. This book is not about Russia but rather about the system of international relations and the role of Russia in solving the problems in the international arena. The authors move from the general to the particular — from a theoretical perspective on international relations to Russia as part of world politics. Each chapter presents different takes on the problem, describes various concepts that can be used in analysing it, and contains numerous case studies. All this provides a solid framework for understanding Russia and the current international relations system.

Secondly, the publication of such a monograph in the English language is still a novelty for Russian science. The fact that the book saw the light testifies to the considerable expertise of the authors who managed to explain the most acute Russia-related problems to the foreign reader. Many of these problems (for example, that of unrecognised states) were first formulated and analysed from a research perspective in this monograph. Such publications remain a rarity outside Russia. However, this publication proves that the Russian research discourse is not in isolation. Today, the journals of high-ranking outlets discuss the most diverse points of view.

Thirdly, the authors of the monograph managed to provide an objective view of Russia's foreign policy and internal development. On the one hand, the experts refrained from the criticism of Russia, which is often expressed by the researchers who publish their monographs in Europe or the US. On the other hand, they do not ignore the weakness of Russia's position on international affairs. The monograph offers a balanced analysis of Russian politics and presents diverse points of view.

The book consists of three parts. Part one is dedicated to the analysis of various theories, concepts, and models of international relations. It examines the methods for studying world politics and narrates the history of the current system of international relations. The Russian experts on the history, theory, and methodology of international relations interpret the views of the traditional schools of thought and demonstrate what methods of world politics and regional studies are the most popular in Russia. They offer an original perspective on the system of international relations from the perspective of the geographical, economic, and political standing of the Russian Empire, the USSR and today's Russia throughout world history.

Part two focuses on the current problems and challenges of world politics. It addresses such issues as international political economy, international conflicts and their resolution, non-proliferation, unrecognised states, international organisations, environmental policy, soft power, and public diplomacy. Political economy opens this part of the monograph. In my opinion, this is a fortunate and innovative way to approach the development of world politics. Usually, the analysis of various aspects of in-

ternational relation starts with the consideration of individual countries, regions, and crises. In this case, the Russian researchers start with the economic and commercial ties among the states — the ties that make our world global and connected despite the political problems, the system of sanctions, or the severance of diplomatic relations.

The popular topic of conflicts receives a thorough accounting in this part. The authors address the essence and methods of conflict management. A novelty topic is the factor of unrecognised states and its effect on world politics. This is one of the most sensitive issues in international relations studies. Usually, the discussion on unrecognised states is reduced to the official positions of the leading states. The authors managed to expand this topic and create a typology of unrecognised states.

Non-proliferation also receives an original interpretation in this monograph. The authors not only list the treaties and conferences dedicated to this topic but also identify the factors in the bilateral relations that either contribute to or subvert the non-proliferation regime.

In analysing such traditional topics as the role of international organisations in world politics, environmental policy, and soft power, the authors place emphasis on the most acute problems and analyse the Russian position. The international organisations are examined from the perspective of their actual role in world politics and economy. The monograph not only focuses on such major organisations as the UN or the OSCE but also presents a thorough analysis of the effect of regional organisations on the global system.

Environmental policy is also tackled from a new point of view. Political bias, ideology, and money combine when it comes to environmental protection, which might seem at first to be very loosely related to politics. The authors analyse various conceptual political and even party-specific approaches to these problems across the globe. The soft power and public diplomacy of such leading states as the US, Russia, Iran, China, France, Germany, and others are analysed in the final chapter. The authors identify their strengths and weaknesses while managing (which is rarely the case) to avoid exaggerating the role of soft power in world politics. Each chapter is a combination of different conceptual and discursive frameworks. This provides the reader with a balanced and multi-faceted perspective on various problems of international relations.

Part three addresses the key aspects of Russia's foreign and domestic policy. An analysis of the evolution of today's Russia, its economic development, its Eurasian and Arctic policies, and its relations with Europe and the US gives a comprehensive picture of the current functioning of world politics. The problems of Russia's political and economic development and its trade imbalance are considered in the first two chapters. The authors do not avoid the contentious issues relating to the building of the new centralised state in Russia. However, the key to understanding Russia's current foreign and domestic policy is the chapters on national security, military strategy, and Russia's policy towards Eurasia and the Arctic.



The authors make the first attempt in the literature to demonstrate the connection between Russia's internal development and its standing in Eurasia and the Arctic. The monograph presents the perspectives of the Russian government and experts and compares them to the views of the leading international powers. Finally, Russia's bilateral relations with Europe, on the one hand, and the US, on the other, conclude both part three and the book. Here, the authors also employ an innovative approach. Placing the chapters on bilateral relations at the end of the monograph stresses both the weakening effect of these ties on the international relations systems and the importance of Russia's relations with the EU and the US. This logic is used to show in which parts of the global system Russia should look for partners in solving the most serious global problems. The authors identify the levels of and pressure points in Russia's relations with both Europe and the US. Special attention is paid to the weaknesses of the US, EU, and Russian policies.

However, just as any work, this monograph has its own shortcomings. I think that a separate chapter on the relations between Russia and China was warranted. These bilateral relations are addressed in the chapters on Russia's Eurasian policy and in the context of Russian-US relations.

Nevertheless, this multi-authored monograph prepared by the Russian researchers who studied and worked at various universities in the US, Europe, and the Asian-Pacific Region builds up a comprehensive picture of how the system of international relations develops. The book also demonstrates the significance of Russia for world politics and addresses the country's internal development.

This book can be used as a textbook for postgraduate students and it will benefit a wide range of specialists in Russian studies, international relations, and political science.

The publication of this monograph testifies to the considerable expertise of the Russian researchers and their close associations with the global academic community. This association is a result of studying abroad and participating in international conferences. All this makes it possible for the Russian experts to discuss the most acute problems in the pages of the works published in the US and Europe. It would be a mistake to say that the position of the Russian party is not available to the international audience or that the opinions of Russian researchers are not taken into account by the international press, journals, and publishing houses. The high quality of research is a fast track to the publication of the Russian expert opinions abroad.

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