

# FROM THE EDITOR

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## SPACE AS THE MAIN FACTOR IN THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF TERRITORIES

Geopolitical confrontation and the growing dynamism of the external and internal environment are making the tasks of maintaining global dominance, ensuring national security, and achieving sustainable territorial development strategic priorities. At the current stage of development, the spatial factor is playing an increasingly important role in addressing these tasks. This issue of the journal brings together articles whose authors examine space as a factor in the sustainable development of territories at different levels, from global to local.

The article by *E.V. Balatsky* addresses the reshaping of geopolitical space and the redrawing of state borders as a way of preserving global leadership. The author argues that the merger of large territories into unified states could become a major driver of world economic development over the next two to three decades. He shows that the United States, through the Grand Unification project – which would incorporate three new territories: Greenland, Canada, and Australia – is attempting to restart the cycle of capital accumulation and preserve its geopolitical hegemony, since such a union could lead to a reconfiguration of the global natural resource market in favor of the United States.

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In her article, *E.A. Belousova* argues that spatial balance is one of the key characteristics of a municipality's economic well-being. She proposes a methodology for assessing it based on calculating the average deviation from unity of indices built from socio-economic indicators reflecting the stages of reproduction, and she tests the proposed toolkit on the municipalities of the Sverdlovsk Region. The calculations carried out over a fifteen-year period made it possible to identify periods of decline and growth in spatial balance, as well as its intraregional heterogeneity.

*E.A. Tretiakova's* study aims to develop an integrated model for the comprehensive spatial-dynamic ecological and economic assessment of natural resource use. This model makes it possible to objectively characterize the current situation in both spatial and temporal dimensions, to detect emerging trends in a timely manner, and to take appropriate management decisions well in advance. The methodology was tested on water use data for the regions of the Northwestern Federal District of Russia, which are distinguished by a developed and diversified industrial base with a high environmental intensity of impact on natural water bodies. The findings may be useful to public authorities in the regions of the Russian North-West when developing or updating projects and programs aimed at ensuring sustainable and balanced development.

*S.S. Patrakova* examines the influence of the spatial factor at the level of rural territories. The article emphasizes that the sustainable development of rural areas is a pressing task for the state. At the same time, despite the implementation of a wide range of state programs and projects at the federal and regional levels, a large number of problems in rural development have become chronic. The author concludes that the current model of rural development needs to be revised, considers the conceptual foundations of rural territorial development in Russia based on a neo-endogenous model, and proposes new

promising regulatory instruments, including individual rural development plans, quality-of-life standards, and cooperation projects along the lines of "city-village" and "village-village".

The next two articles address problems of the housing sector at the regional level. *G.F. Romashkina* and *O.I. Osokin* investigate the spatial interconnectedness of local housing markets in the Tyumen Region – one of the polycentric regions with pronounced differentiation of local markets not only among the constituent entities of the Federation that make up the region but also among municipalities. The article by *I.A. Sekushina* and *A.N. Belkin* reveals the features and trends of housing sector development in the municipalities of the Vologda Region. The authors identify persistent territorial disparities in the level of housing provision, the degree of housing amenities, the condition of the housing stock, and the volume and structure of new housing construction, including individual housing construction. They demonstrate the presence of spatial specificities: significant differences in housing sector development between urban and rural areas, the emergence of signs characteristic of suburbanization, and the particular features of the housing sector in rural municipalities. The findings can be used by regional and local government authorities in the development of housing programs and spatial development strategies.

The most acute internal challenges and threats to Russia's spatial development at present are the shortage of labor resources and demographic problems.

To some extent, the labor shortage is being addressed through external labor migration. The study by *A.E. Plakhin*, *E.S. Ogorodnikova*, and *K.V. Rostovtsev* is devoted to this issue. It aims to identify approaches to detecting the features of the territorial distribution of legal labor migrants and to update understanding of migration flows. The authors establish that the highest concentration of foreign workers is found in the economic centers

of the federal districts, with a substantial increase in foreign workers also observed in the regions of the Far Eastern Federal District.

Population aging, as one of the demographic threats, is particularly acute for the underdeveloped Far Eastern regions. A team of authors (*T.M. Komarova, O.V. Averina, E.V. Stelmakh, and S.A. Solovchenkov*) examines the process of population aging and its consequences for the socio-economic development of the Jewish Autonomous Region. They note the high demographic burden on the working-age population, the decline in the share of non-working-age residents, and the predominance of the population over working age. The authors conclude that the low life expectancy of the population indirectly reflects the weak level of healthcare development in the region. Moreover, the population's commitment

to a healthy lifestyle is insufficient. These demographic problems hinder the region's socio-economic development.

The article by *V.A. Stepanenko* and *E.V. Bazueva* examines intellectual inequality as one of the factors promoting persistent spatial differentiation in the socio-economic development of Russia's regions. The authors conclude that this problem is currently being addressed only in a fragmented manner and propose an organizational and managerial mechanism for reducing intellectual inequality aimed at the region's economic development.

The "Monitoring of Changes" section presents the economic trends of the Russian North-West as of May 2026 (*M.A. Sidorov, E.V. Lukin*) and the main trends in the social well-being of the population of the Vologda Region (*M.V. Morev, E.E. Leonidova*).

We hope that the articles in this issue will be of interest to readers.

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## ИНФОРМАЦИЯ ОБ АВТОРЕ

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