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**PHYSICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL IDENTITY FEATURES IN**  
**LOCAL MEDIA TEXTS**

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***Abstract***

The article considers the words northerners and southerners as markers of physical and geographical identity in the regional media of the north-western and southern Federal districts of Russia. The words northerners and southerners serve as means for the primary naming of residents of certain places that have not yet received official status in many countries of the world, including Russia. Elements of lexicographic description of these words, which we call vector and territorial meaning, manifest themselves differently in various contexts presented in regional media. Territorial indicators are associated with integrating (these contexts reflect the perception of the marker as a self-name) and differentiating (these contexts reflect the perception of regional identity marker as the way to make residents of another, usually neighboring territory) contexts. The vector meaning is usually associated with neutralizing contexts (reflecting a neutral attitude to markers of regional identity regardless belonging to a particular region or ethnic community, usually found in both regional and major cities media).

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## 1. Introduction

One of the features of regional identity in Russia (which is typical, first of all, of territories that do not belong to the central zone of the country's European part) is its connection not with the official administrative-territorial division, but with larger territorial entities, which is due to the process that Turovsky (1999) called the horizontal consolidation of regions. The latter is reflected in the "warm", "patriotic" names of regions used as "the titles for the provincial mass media and socio-political movements, appearing in newspaper texts and TV shows, and applied to emphasize local patriotism" (Turovsky, 1999, p.108). Turovsky (1999) claims "provincial consciousness looking for a substitute to the official names, as if trying to emphasize the "naturalness" of regions and their boundaries" (p. 119). The examples are as follows: Irkutsk oblast is called Priangarie, Omsk – Priirtyshie, Kurgan – the Urals, Chelyabinsk – South Ural, Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug – Yugra, Tyumen oblast – by Belogor'e, etc. In our opinion, the approaches to the study of regional identity that have emerged to date can be divided into two main groups. The first group explores the phenomenon from the inside, while such approach can be called socio-cultural. It enables the features of regional identity characteristic of a particular territory to be revealed in the course of socio-geographical research (Kibalnikova, 2016; Krylov, 2009; 2010; Sharova & Anufrieva, 2015), as well as different regions "mental landscapes" research (Zamyatin & Zamyatina, 2015), reflecting the way regions see multi-layered cultural and historical formations, aptly described by Schein (2011) as contemporary landscape palimpsest (p. 17). A special type of this approach is presented in studies on the socio-cultural environment of not just specific regions, but specific types of settlement. The example is presented in the research on the settlement socio-cultural environment of the Donbass, which combines rural and urban features (Agarkova, 2018). The second approach to the study of regional identity can be called media branding. It is primarily associated with certain regions positioning, which acts as a product of a targeted policy of local authorities to create the image of a particular territory, achieved through the intermediary of regional media (Bazikyan, 2017; Haranutova, 2016; Murav'eva, 2018; Zamyatin, 2015). The texts mentioned serve as the empirical material for the research to follow.

## 2. Problem Statement

The place of the words *northerners* and *southerners* among other ethnonyms and toponyms of the Russian language is not sufficiently defined, which, in our opinion, is also due to the uncertain status of the words North and South among other toponymic phenomena. Let's turn to their lexicographic description. In Ozhegov's (2007) dictionary, the word North has two meanings: 'one of the four countries of the world and the direction opposite to the South'; 'the area lying in this direction' (Ozhegov, 2007, p. 697). The word *northerner* is interpreted as 'a resident, native of the North'. The word South mirrors the abovementioned definition: 'one of the four countries of the world and the direction opposite to the North'; 'the area lying in this direction' (Ozhegov, 2007, p. 890). The word *southerner* is interpreted as 'a resident, native of the South' (Ozhegov, 2007, p. 89). We will call the first of the presented interpretations vector, and the second – territorial. The Explanatory dictionary of the Russian language, edited by Ushakov (2000) along with the vector and territorial values we have already considered, features the portable values 'direction, side opposite to the South' and 'North, cold country, countries'. It also adds a third value,

specified geographically: 'the Arctic, the cold belt of the globe adjacent to the pole' (Ushakov, 2000, p. 124-126). A similar encyclopedic element complicates the meaning of the word *northerners*: 1) 'resident, native of a Northern area, country, or Northern part of a country: opposite. a southerner; 2) (only plural) an ancient tribe of Eastern Slavs that lived in the basin of the Desna river (historical); 3) (only plural) 'members of the Northern Secret society (Decembrists; historical)'. The meaning of the word *south* given in the Explanatory Dictionary in comparison with Ozhegov's (2007) dictionary is interpreted with the addition of a figurative meaning to define a 'warm country'. The definition of the word 'southerner' virtually unchanged, corresponds to the one presented in Ozhegov's (2007) dictionary: 'a native of the South, people living in the South' (p. 1444). The vastness of the territories exemplified by the words *North* and *South* in their territorial aspect allows to relate them to the phenomenon of macrotoponymy, in the way that is reflected in Podolskaya's (1978) dictionary 'proper name of a large physical and geographical object that has a wide scope of use, wide popularity [ ... ], usually the result of an artificial nomination process that took place during the systematization of objects' (Podolskaya, 1978, p. 82). A remarkable set of examples to illustrate such interpretation is as follows: Africa, Eurasia, the Pacific, Eastern European (Russian) plain, Siberia, the Pamirs which includes the names of the parts of the world and words *north* and *south* take a place of an attribute. Still there is no category that incorporates the words *North* and *South*, as a defined component: Russian North, South USA, etc. The artificiality of the names, on the one hand, and on the other hand, their correlation with nature and landscape brings the words of the type *North-South* close to a phenomenon called "natural choronym" and explained in Podolskaya's (1978) dictionary as 'any natural landscape area' (p. 161). On the contrary, the factor that does not allow us to attribute the words *North* and *South* to choronyms is often observed in not fully formed clarity and accuracy of the boundaries of the territory referred to by these words. In our opinion, a similar feature does not allow us to eventually attribute the words *North* and *South* to the phenomena of toponymy. What further strengthens the above-mentioned features observed in the words *North* and *South* is the principal imaginative openness of one of the borders, which is an integral component of the vector meaning of this word. The latter is superimposed on its territorial meaning and does not allow us to put this word on a par with such macro-toponyms as the Eastern European plain, the Central Siberian plateau, or the Crimean Peninsula. The meaningful difference between expressions like the Eastern European plain and expressions like the Far North or Deep South is obvious in our opinion. In the first case we deal with a feature which concerns the landscape and is regarded as absolute. The second feature is rather territorial and proves relative. It is compounded with climatic features relevant to the far more ephemeral and undefined category of signs than the characteristic landscape. Other features that make it difficult to include the words *North* and *South* into the range of macro-toponymic or choronymic categories are the following. The categories should also imply the universality of these concepts, which often serves as a generating base for indicating a variety of contrasted phenomena that coincide in their location with the cardinal directions. On the other hand, the words *North* and *South* are not only universal, but also extremely individual concepts. More precisely the concepts reveal a trend towards individualization, which is embodied in the territory with administrative borders, like the South of the United States (the American South, The South), or in a cultural and historical region that does not quite fit into administrative divisions, like the Russian North. Universality, in our opinion, also makes it difficult to correlate the *North* and *South* categories with such categories as the Crimea or Siberia, while the potential

individualization and proportionality of scales still allows us to consider these phenomena in one row. Microtoponymy emphasizes a gravitation to some universal coordinate systems designated by the words North, South or center. The words North and South explicate these features of their meaning to the full. Such qualities as universality and the ability to act as markers of regional identity have caused the demand for the words northerners and southerners as names of parties to various intra-national conflicts, locally correlated with the cardinal points – e.g. northerners and southerners labelling residents of the Republic of Korea and North Korea, South and North Sudan, South and North Kyrgyzstan, etc.

Thus, the system of macro-toponymics shows a structure with gradient characteristics, at one end of which there are extremely individualized, unique names of regions such as Siberia or the Far East, and at the other end there are regions corresponding to a different degree of individualization and belonging to the type *North* and *South*. Northerners and southerners derived from the words we have considered are characterized by an inherent implicit correlation with the territorial meaning of the cardinal points, which is reflected in the presence of words like native or resident, that make an integral part of definitions. To add to semantic characteristics of the words northerners and southerners, we should mention their universality, which is expressed in the presence of full equivalents in other languages. This universality is relative, since their equivalents can be represented in different languages differently – for example, *Westerners* and *Easterners* are part of American English, but they do not have direct equivalents in Russian. The words North and South, which act as names that unite vast territorial formations around them, are quite specific concepts that can generate consolidating images, including those embodied in the words northerners and southerners formed from them. The universal ability of the words "northerners" and "southerners" to serve as nominations for residents of places related to the cardinal directions is reflected in the texts of regional media, which will be discussed later.

### 3. Research Questions

The article deals with the words northerners and southerners, which in different contexts of regional media serve as markers of physical and geographical identity. We reviewed the regional media of the North-Western and southern Federal districts. The words northerners and southerners, as well as any markers of regional identity, consistently manifest themselves in three types of contexts: integrating (these contexts reflect the understanding of this marker as a way of self-designation), differentiating (these contexts reflect the marker of regional identity functioning as a designation of residents of another, usually neighboring territory) and neutralizing (reflecting a neutral attitude to markers of regional identity regardless of a specific region or ethnic community) contexts. The first two types of contexts are typical of regional media, and the last type of context is typical of both regional and major city media. The system of contexts which was developed can act as a methodological tool for investigating the degree of connectivity of regional identity with certain markers. In this article, we establish the relationship between the words northerners and southerners, which act as markers of regional identity, and elements of the lexicographic description of the words North and South, defined here as the ones possessing a vector and territorial meaning. Regional identity expressed both by the words North and South, and by the words northerners and southerners derived from them, manifests itself with different degrees of formality. According to our hypothesis, the primary allocation and naming of certain territories related to the cardinal directions is characterized by a vector-

based meaning, which is implemented in regional media in neutralizing contexts. Over time, the vector meaning is replaced by a territorial one, which is reflected in integrating and differentiating contexts.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The aim of our research is considering the markers of regional identity (words northerners and southerners), the relationship between their meanings and the use of these words in different contexts of regional media.

#### **5. Research Methods**

We use the method of contextual analysis, the method of semantic analysis, the method of analyzing scientific literature, and we will also rely on statistical data that we received in the course of previous studies (Telpov, 2019a; Telpov, 2019b).

#### **6. Findings**

We considered the words "northerners" and "southerners" using continuous sampling technique of 35 regional socio-political publications covering 18 regions that are part of the northwestern and southern Federal districts (for more information about the study conditions and statistical analysis, see Telpov, 2019a). The words northerners and southerners appear in the media texts mentioned above as markers of physical and geographical identity. Together with Turovsky (1999) we understand the physical-geographical identity as markers that are characterized by binding to large geographical areas in a process that Turovsky (1999) called physical and geographical identification: "in geography, we talk about 'ordinary areas' " (vernacular regions). These are territories that their residents define for themselves as their place of residence, for which there is a generally accepted name" (p. 93). Among other types of identification, Turovsky (1999) also distinguishes sub-ethnic (based on ethnic and sub-ethnic characteristics) and political-administrative (based on official administrative divisions) identification. We cannot say that the distinction between these types is insurmountable as different types of identity can coincide, which is due to the political situation, the age of residence, as well as the self-determination of the local population. The final status of identity markers of this type causes long-term discussions among scientific community and authorities, as an example of which we can cite the discussions of the southerners regional identity marker in the United States (Brooks, 1985; Griffin & Doyle, 1995; Killian, 1985; Reed, 1982; 1993; Gregory, 2005; Smith, 1982; 2009; Wilson, 2004) or pomors in Russia (Tulaeva, 2009). Binding to physical and geographical objects as a reflection of horizontal consolidation of regions, in our opinion, manifests itself in the special use of the words northerners and southerners in the texts of regional media in three types of contexts, which we have already mentioned above.

An analysis of regional media in the northwestern Federal district shows that the use of the word "northerners" in media contexts in Arkhangelsk district, Murmansk district, the Republic of Karelia, the Republic of Komi, and Nenets Autonomous district correlates with the use of the same word, but in differentiating contexts presented in regional media in other regions (Vologda region, Kaliningrad region, Leningrad region, Novgorod region, Pskov region, and Saint Petersburg) (for further details see [Telpov,

2019a)). The integrating group of contexts is an important feature of regional media. Such contexts are often presented in reports about various competitions, non-professional sport and other events. The contexts show the tactics implemented, that are typical of regional media and highlighted by Shusharina (2013) as: "tactics of expressing concern for the residents of the city, tactics of reporting on the success of city residents, tactics of expressing the development of the city, tactics of expressing the significance of the city for Russia on the whole and the particular region" (p. 52). As an example, the headlines of the newspaper "Pravda Severa" play the role of integrating contexts for the word northerners: 55 young northerners are transferred from primary to secondary school ("Truth of the North", 29.05.2019); Children's Commissioner will answer questions from northerners ("Truth of the North", 24.05.2019); public movement "Clean North" will engage in eco-education of northerners ("Truth of the North", 06.05.2019) "Repair school" for northerners with special needs ("Truth of the North", 29.06. 2018); Father Frost fulfilled the dreams of little northerners ("Truth of the North", 17.01.2018); Young northerners will be treated by dogs ("Truth of the North", 06.09.2018).

In our opinion, such contexts reflect not so much the physical and geographical self-identification of the local population, but rather a view of such self-identification from the outside, realized with varying degrees of awareness and purpose by journalists working in regional media, or by various bodies that finance such publications. The manipulative role of regional media in building mass consciousness has been noted by both domestic and western researchers of regional media: That there is now little to distinguish between the South and other sections of the country is shared by polemicists, politicians, and poets [...]. With the explosion in communication technology, the images have become more complex, and they have often been consciously and rhetorically manipulated to achieve certain purposes (Smith, 1985, p. 108).

As for differentiating contexts, they employ regional identity markers to denote representatives of a "foreign" region. A sign of such contexts is the inclusion of a marker identifying a "foreign" region in the text with the nomination of a representative of their local region. The use of the word northerners in such contexts is particularly characteristic of regional media in Pskov and Novgorod regions: "The Congress was attended by representatives of non-profit organizations and territorial public autonomies, authorities and mass media. In total more than a thousand northerners and guests from other regions of the North-West, including Pskov, says Semyon Nikonov, Chairman of the center for sustainable development of Pskov region" ("Pskov Residents visited Arkhangelsk during the V Northern civil Congress" // "Pskov truth", 21.12.2015).

Analysis of regional media in the Southern Federal district shows that the ratio of markers used in different regions is not characterized by a clear distribution and affiliation with specific regions. In the texts of regional media of the Southern Federal district, there is a predominance of neutralizing contexts inherent in the media of all regions that make up this district (Telpov, 2019a). Neutralizing contexts in which the word southerners is used are represented in the following varieties: neutralizing-stereotypical, neutralizing-institutional, neutralizing-substitutive, and neutralizing-euphemistic. In neutralizing-stereotypical contexts, various stereotypes related to the severity of the northerners and the warmth of the southerners are presented: "in January-October 2005, the civil registration authorities of the country recorded 281,639 marriages and 148,549 divorces. And here the case of Sevastopol is also remarkable. Along with Kiev, we

are named leaders in the field of weddings. It is pleasant. But unfortunately, Sevastopol occupies the leading place concerning the number of divorces as well (according to the Russian newspaper "AIF"). It's very simple to explain this from a philistine point of view: after all, we are southerners! Summer, the sea, you know. Again, we are people of got temperaments. However, experts are more inclined to a different point of view (Irina Karatayeva. "Marry, divorce, do what you want... " // "Glory of Sevastopol", 18.01.2006). It is noteworthy that such contexts do not include dialect features in representatives' of the southern and northern regions speech, which in our opinion, are fundamental for American culture stereotypical contexts associated with southerners. Examples include contexts from the Corpus of Contemporary American English: "a laid-back, soft-spoken Southerners; She said in the gentle cadence of a Southerners; Just a few long vowels, and much of the rest of America is swept up by mystique, fascinated by the ancient hurt we imagine lurking behind the lips of the speaker. Southerners know this, and they use it to great effect" (Corpus of Contemporary American English, 2020). It is also relevant that neutralizing-stereotypical contexts with the words northerners and southerners do not lead to the appearance of an image of a local hero (Homegrown Heroes), similar to that created in the local media texts of the South of the United States (Smith, 1985, 110). In our opinion, The words "Cossacks" and "Pomors" are more often used as a kind of Homegrown Heroes corresponding to the texts of Russian regional media, with an implicit hint of certain positive qualities that are inherited and rooted in the sub-ethnic identity of this person: "this was a big surprise, because everyone expected that the first to finish would be a more experienced participant, hereditary Pomeranian Alexey Syrnikov, but he eventually took second place in the competition (the Surprise was a success / / "Evening Murmansk", July 14, 2014); Family means a lot for Anatoly Alexandrovich. Among his predecessors there were Don Cossacks, great-grandfather and grandfathers being St. George's knights; his father is the knight of the order of Glory. It was in the family that he was instilled a special attitude to matters of faith.... (Marina Adamova. When the soul responds / / "Kuban today", August 29, 2019). If the words northerners and southerners are used in neutralizing institutional contexts, then their indispensable attribute will be interpreted by referring to some official structures: for the word northerners it is 'a citizen who receives Northern benefits', and for the word southerners it can be, for example, contexts with various statistical data and they can be interpreted as 'a resident of the Southern Federal district': Southerners (81%), 18-24-year-olds (80%), and well-off respondents (88%) report that they had a good vacation. (Darya Neklyudova. Most Russian citizens are happy with the new year holidays // New region 2, 2011.01.20). The third group of neutralizing contexts can be called neutralizing-substitutive contexts. In such contexts, the words northerners and southerners are used in a substitute meaning and serve as a means of creating the effect of stylistic diversity. Striking examples of such contexts are reports on professional sports events, in which this type of context is implemented for the word southerners in reports about games involving football teams from the southern cities of Russia "Rostov", "Kuban" and "Krasnodar": in the first period, both opponents attacked dangerously, had chances to score, but only southerners took advantage of them, Leonov closed the diagonal pass of Prokhorov and the score became 1:0. (Alexander Pestryakov. Hunting for the Siberian "lynx" // Our time, 18.01.2019). The word southerners in neutralizing-euphemistic contexts serves as a substitute nominative component in relation to the word Caucasians: This feeling was compounded when the police took explanations from us, journalists,

and brave southerners waddled between the cars blocking exits from the enterprise, and laughed. (Igor Prilukin. The rule of law is the image of the territory // Kuban today, 01.11.2018).

## 7. Conclusion

It can be stated that the abundance of integrating contexts for the marker of regional identity by physical and geographical affiliation is, in our opinion, a sign of northern publications, for which the word northerners plays the role of a symbol, leveling all differences between the inhabitants of the northern regions. In southern publications, the word southerners does not play such a role. The reason for this unevenness is not only a more active and purposeful policy of local authorities that consolidate the residents of their region according to the marker of physical and geographical identity, but also other factors. The latter include the presence of the element "gorod" in the word "Archangelogorodtsi", which makes it not entirely acceptable to use this word as the name of residents not only of the city of Arkhangelsk, but also of the Arkhangelsk region, as well as distinct ethnic associations related to the words "Karelians" or "Nenets", which, due to the presence of such associations, are also not quite acceptable for residents of the entire region (compare: artificially created "ethnonyms" such as Tatarstan or Yakut, used as common names for residents of regions, regardless of ethnographic characteristics). Returning to the distinction between vector and territorial values made above for the names of countries of the world, we can distinguish different groups of factors that actualize each of these senses, although, in our opinion, in none of the groups vector or territorial characteristics can be represented in a pure form. The territorial meaning is revealed in integrating and differentiating contexts. It reflects either a strong degree of self-identification of residents with territories marked by the names of the cardinal points, or a purposeful policy to consolidate regions around the nominations related to the cardinal points. The neutralizing-substitutive and neutralizing-stereotypical contexts discussed above are related to the vector type, since all these contexts feature an implicit component of opposition. In our opinion, neutralizing-euphemistic contexts are also of a partly vector nature, since they actualize the most general features that distinguish the group of ethnic groups designated by this word from the rest and are based on limiting characteristics.

Thus, the words northerners and southerners demonstrate the ability to serve as the primary and most general ways of nominating residents of certain territories that have ultimate or almost ultimate characteristics. A high degree of identity associated with a particular marker is manifested in the actualization of territorial significance, as well as in the complementary distribution of integrating and differentiating contexts across regional media published in different regions.

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