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DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL REGIONS**

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Abstract

The given study presents a result of a multifaceted analysis of the steady development of rural regions based on their territorial differentiation. A particular attention is given to the socio-demographic and social and labour components of spatial development. Underdevelopment of these spheres in the periphery leads to desolation of rural territories and suspension of economic activity on them. Application of historical and logical investigation methods together with classification and scientific abstraction made it possible to confirm the urgency of spatial development of rural regions against the outflow of population to the metropolises and megalopolises within the country and the natural population decrease in majority of regions. It also confirmed the necessity of growth in the country economy with the implication of the natural and socio-economic potential of each territorial entity and its identity. Having analyzed the key provisions of spatial development of socio-economic systems, approaches to typologization of rural territories and evaluation indicators of their development, we managed to determine presence of an extraordinary variety of technical approaches, on the one hand, and absence of the scientifically proven optimal proportions of spatial development of rural regions – on the other hand. The three-step procedure of evaluating territorial entities suggested by the authors is aimed at elaborating significant recommendations concerning the policy of managing spatial development of rural territories and elevating their socio-economic efficiency.

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1. Introduction

One of the major problems of the present-day Russia and its regions lies within the rural population extinction caused by the outflow of population from the rural territories to the regional centers, metropolises and megalopolises together with the natural population decrease in majority of regions within the country. The above-mentioned tendencies lead to a considerable desolation of rural territories and a nearly complete suspension of economic activity on them. Against such a background the perspective of the further urbanization of the country, stated in the «Russia Spatial Development Strategy up to 2025», where the term «urbanization» is substituted by «development of agglomerations», looks rather odd. Despite the existing worldwide tendency of population and economy concentration in large cities, spatial development of rural territories with their natural, socio-economical, demographic, historical and cultural potential is still significant.

2. Problem Statement

Underdevelopment of socio-demographic, social and labour components of spatial development in the periphery leads to desolation of rural territories and suspension of economic activity on them. A comprehensive evaluation of the regional differentiation processes has a direct practical significance and socio-economic efficiency from the point of a steady development not only in a single rural area, but also within the territorial system.

3. Research Questions

Taking into account the fact that spatial development of rural territories is aimed at solving the majority of problems concerning their economic and social development, agriculture, food production, revival and maintenance of historical and cultural traditions, the findings of investigations performed by the lead agrarian scientists within the sphere of spatial development of rural territories based on their territorial differentiation must develop a clear understanding how to provide development of the poorly inhabited territories within the country and direct it not towards the prioritized growth of agglomeration economy and such scopes that can provide maximal economic effect, but towards social, demographic, historical and cultural components of the rural territories development, that is, above all, the population living and working in the countryside.

4. Purpose of the Study

A multifaceted analysis of the steady development of rural regions based on their territorial differentiation for providing growth in the country economy with the implication of the natural and socio-economic potential of each territorial entity and its identity.

5. Research Methods

The research is based on applying a set of methods of scientific investigation: historical and logical investigation method, analytical method, method of comparison and classification, scientific abstraction and integrated synthesis approach. That is why it is evidential, has a practical significance and socio-economic efficiency from the point of a steady development not only in a single rural area, but within the whole territorial system. The general scientific approaches of the empirical and systematic methods are used for substantiating the three-step procedure of evaluating territorial entities and elaborating recommendations concerning the policy of managing spatial development of rural territories.

6. Findings

It is worth noting that in recent years in Russia significant legal acts in the sphere of government regulations concerning spatial development of the country have been adopted, such as Russian Government's Decree, N 1662-p (2008), Russian President's Decrees (2015, 2017), Russian Government's Decree, N 207-p (2008). In the aforementioned legal acts the fundamental problems of socio-economic development of the territories within the Russian Federation are stated, and their steady development is emphasized. However even in the «Strategy of Spatial Development in Russia up to 2025», the fundamental legal document in this sphere, no due attention was paid to the socio-economic component of spatial development of rural territories.

Within single Russian regions, programs of strategic development have also been adopted and put into implementation. A perfect example is «The Strategy of Socio-Economic Development of Ulyanovsk Oblast up to 2030», which is directed at the efficiency growth of using natural and resource potential of the territories, their infrastructure supply, mitigation of the imbalance in economic development of the cities and environmental safety.

At the same time analysis of the federal and regional programs, directed at spatial development and territory regulation, including rural territories, indicates that they do not fully reveal the diversity and complexity of the conditions and the processes of spatial development in the context of establishing its sustainability. The given program activities are, as a rule, fragmental, not systemic, and, most importantly, they do not encourage territorial self-development. The system of the government intervention does not contain tools which take into account existence and coordinated exploitation of the territorial resource potential: natural, economic, financial, human, ecological, historical, cultural, etc.

To prevent social differentiation of Russian population and to optimally use the available resource potential and to substantiate the optimal kind of the government intervention in the process of spatial development, it is necessary to classify and systematize the regions according to their peculiarities. A rather controversial issue lies within the problem of selecting the indicator of complex estimate of the efficiency of spatial development (not only from the point of a single region, a municipality or a specialized zone, but also the territorial system in general). According to Glushenko, one can use singular indicators of development in the territorial socio-economic system together with a wide range of peculiarities that give its complex and comprehensive characteristics as the estimated characteristics in the compared types of rural territories (Glushchenko, 2018).

According to many researchers (Altukhov et al., 2016; Accorsi & Manzini, 2019; Borrelli, 2016; Campeol et al., 2016; Liu et al., 2019; Palatnik & Roson, 2012), when typologization of territories is performed, among the multitude of factors of spatial development the primary role should be given to the natural and socio-economic components of spatial differentiation. One of the criteria for making a typology of the Russian Federation regions in compliance with the UNO procedure, based on the Human Development Index (the key criterion of the living standard and living conditions of the population) is the quality of life. It is determined by a complex of quantitative and qualitative characteristics of socio-economic, demographic, ecological, geographical, political and other kinds of differentiation (Altukhov, 2019, 2008). Within the socio-economic set of indicators in investigations of different periods and by different scientists we have been singled out such indicators as the level of single foodstuffs consumption, the degree of development in service, education, social security, employment rate, housing conditions, etc.

Of interest is the research performed Trotskovsky who suggested using 4 sets of indicators for the integrated assessment of spatial development of the socio-economic system. They characterize: 1) population, 2) settlement system, 3) social and living conditions, 4) development of manufacturing sectors within the territory (Figure 1). The first set comprises 14 indicators collectively; the second set was based on using 26 indicators. The social and living sphere (the third set), according to the author, is advisable to be estimated according to 48 indicators. To evaluate the manufacturing sphere the author singles out 26 indicators (Trotskovsky, 1997).

In spite of the increasing interest of modern scholars in studying the influence of socio-economic factors on the territorial differentiation development, we have to admit that there are few integrated studies giving a systemic analysis of the problem, especially for rural territories. As a rule, on the basis of their own expert opinion researchers select several major, in their view, indicators that have the most significant impact on territorial differentiation of spatial development.

In her study Bufetova singles out from a number of indicators: average per capita volumes of agri-food production, retail trade turnover, fixed investment, commissioning of the total living space (Bufetova, 2017). In addition the scientist suggests evaluating the dynamics of the proposed indicators.

One of the examples of socio-economic evaluation of the territories is presented by the study of Syspitsyn who suggests using 6 major indicators from the whole set. Each indicator is relative: production volume, investment density, housing production rates, unemployment level, wages level, fiscal capacity (Suspitsyn, 2012). The practice of using social indicators together with economical indicators to evaluate territorial differentiation of the regions is quite new. Such combination of factors is used for many other scientific, research and monitoring purposes, for example, to evaluate the efficiency of governmental support (Nurullin et al., 2019).

It is interesting to see how scientists select indicators for their analyses depending on the level of the object of investigation. Thus, implementing evaluation of the intraregional differentiation of municipalities, Pobedyn suggests using the following socio-economic indicators as priority indicators: average level of wages, unemployment level, quantity of doctors per 10.000 population, housing per capita, crime level per 100.000 population (Pobedin, 2010; Trotskovsky, 2013).

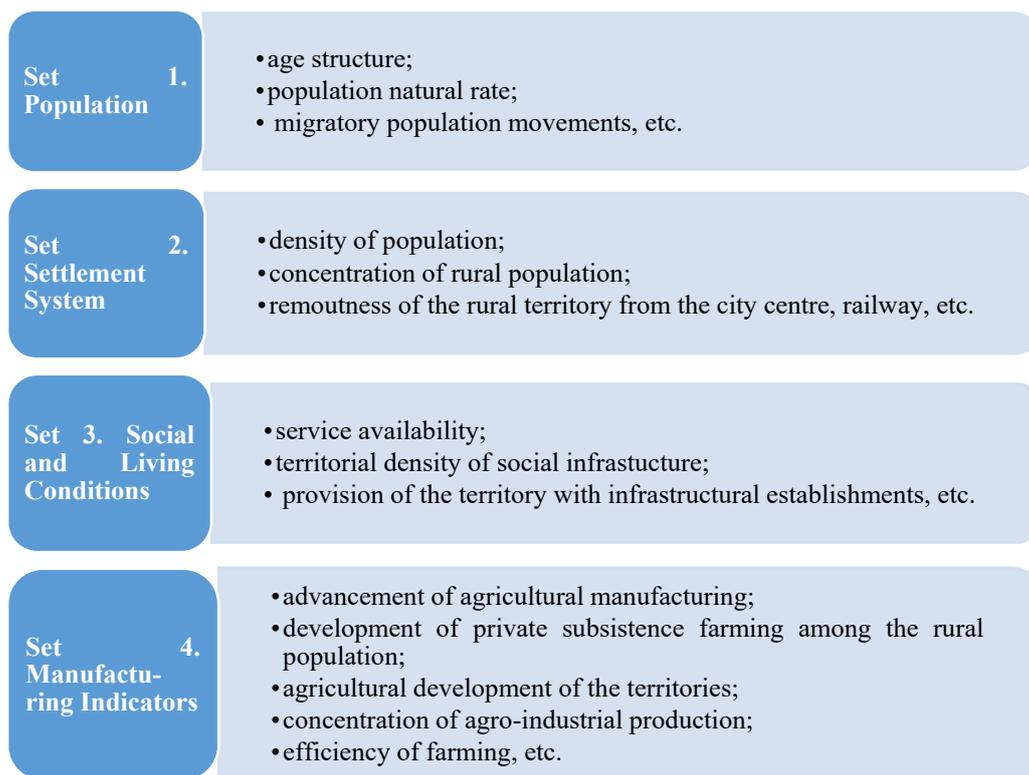


Figure 1. Estimation of territorial differentiation of the socio-economic system according to (Trotskovsky, 1997)

The investigations performed before make it possible to claim that differentiation of the regions within the Russian Federation must be based on the combination of different factors: economic, technological, organizational, natural and social (Yashina & Solntseva, 2019; Solntseva & Yashina, 2020). On the ground of the whole combination of the stated factors the regions must be grouped into large-scale specialized zones. Such comprehensive approach makes it possible to define the probable development directions of the regions taking into account their specificity, and to substantiate targeted measures of government regulation of the spatial development of rural territories for each specialization zone. The main issue of the given model of governmental regulation of territory consists in the fact that the approach to each territorial entity is unique not only from the traditional economic point, but also in accordance with its human potential, traditions and culture. Our country's specificity and one of its major advantages is its rich regional diversity. The great number of absolutely different urban and rural territories makes it possible to form the patchwork of spatial location of production specialization. That is why one of the most important directions of regional government and local authorities consists in supporting the specific identity of each area (Yashina & Solntseva, 2019).

To evaluate the efficiency of the municipal areas development with the methods presented in the Russian Federation Government Order of December, 17th, 2012 № 1317 «On Measures to Implement the Presidential Decree» of April, 28th, 2008 № 607 «On the Assessment of the Effectiveness of Activities of Local Authorities in City Districts and Municipalities» and the subparagraph «and» of paragraph 2 in the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of May, 7th, 2012 № 601 «On Basic Directions of

Perfecting the System of Government Administration» (with alteration in August, 16th, 2018), an indication system consisting of five sets (Figure 2) is used.

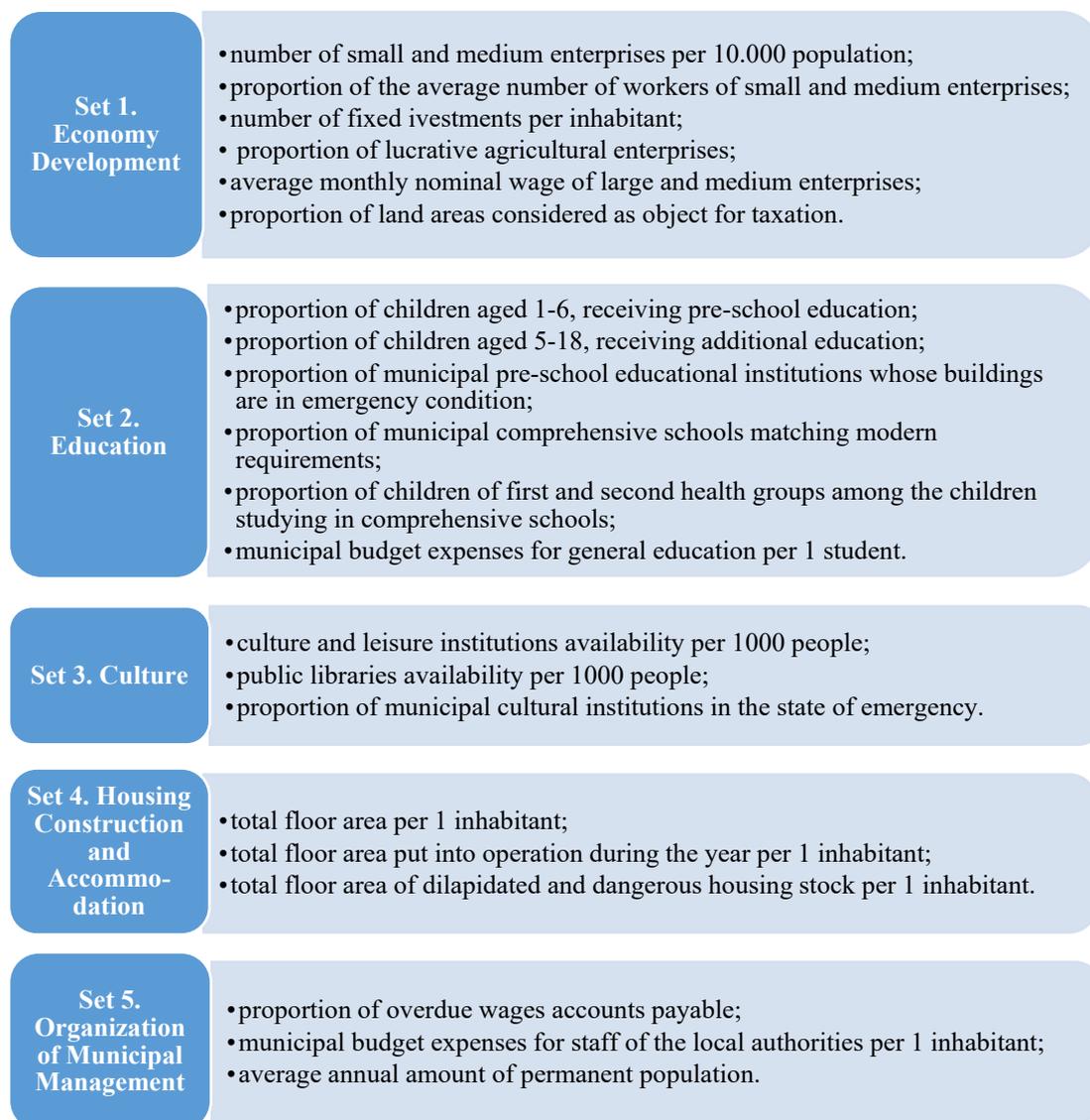


Figure 2. The system of indicators of efficiency of municipal areas development

Each set presents a system of indicators characterizing a single tendency within the development of the municipal area: economy, education, culture, housing construction and accommodation, organization of municipal management.

The methods of evaluating territorial differentiation of territorial entities, as a rule, consist in the three-step procedure (Figure 3). On the first stage a selection of the most significant indicators is performed from their total multitude, which characterizes socio-economic development of the territorial system. The second stage consists in evaluating the influence of various factors on the development of the territorial system. On the final stage integral indicators (indices), which are frequently based on the score, are formed and further used to perform typology of the territories.

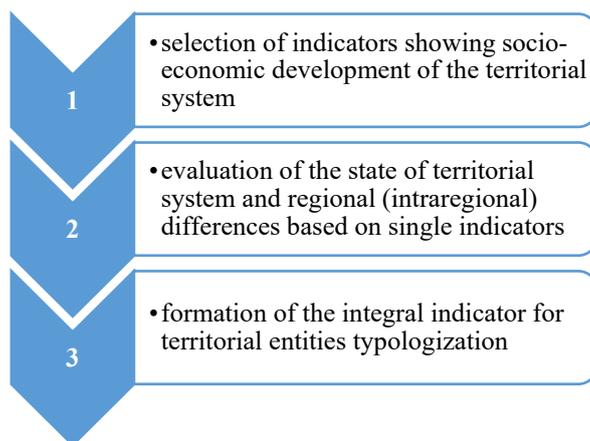


Figure 3. Stages of comparing territorial entities

7. Conclusion

Thus, we can observe a variety of approaches towards the evaluation of spatial systems development. In our view the main scientific issue of this process consists in the fact that optimum proportions of spatial development of territories have not been defined up to now, whereas exploiting natural and socio-economic potential of each territorial entity and its identity is the necessary condition of growth of the country economy. The given analysis of scientific approaches showed that majority of researchers focus on intensification of interregional and intraregional differences. Such research priority is largely due to the deep process of disintegration of economic area in Russia, which has lasted more than one decade and, undoubtedly presents one of the factors hampering its steady development (Sidel'nikov, 2010). However it is more often than not that a disadvantage turns into an advantage. In our case differences between territorial entities may appear to be some kind of a driving force, a powerful mechanism of territorial development. Stagnation and decline in some areas become a prerequisite for developing and prosperity of others. Consequently, a comparative territorial analysis has a direct practical value, since it is aimed at elaborating the most significant recommendations for perfecting the policy of managing spatial development of territories, state interference into this process, enhancing socio-economic efficiency of territorial differentiation. Taking into account the world trend of population and economy concentration in large agglomerations, development of rural territories with their natural, socio-economic, demographic, historical and cultural potential must be viewed in terms not only of sustainability of development of a single territorial subsystem, but of the whole country together.

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