

Gorbanyov, Vladimir

Conference Paper

Geographical zoning of Russia

54th Congress of the European Regional Science Association: "Regional development & globalisation: Best practices", 26-29 August 2014, St. Petersburg, Russia

Provided in Cooperation with:

European Regional Science Association (ERSA)

Suggested Citation: Gorbanyov, Vladimir (2014) : Geographical zoning of Russia, 54th Congress of the European Regional Science Association: "Regional development & globalisation: Best practices", 26-29 August 2014, St. Petersburg, Russia, European Regional Science Association (ERSA), Louvain-la-Neuve

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/124539>

Standard-Nutzungsbedingungen:

Die Dokumente auf EconStor dürfen zu eigenen wissenschaftlichen Zwecken und zum Privatgebrauch gespeichert und kopiert werden.

Sie dürfen die Dokumente nicht für öffentliche oder kommerzielle Zwecke vervielfältigen, öffentlich ausstellen, öffentlich zugänglich machen, vertreiben oder anderweitig nutzen.

Sofern die Verfasser die Dokumente unter Open-Content-Lizenzen (insbesondere CC-Lizenzen) zur Verfügung gestellt haben sollten, gelten abweichend von diesen Nutzungsbedingungen die in der dort genannten Lizenz gewährten Nutzungsrechte.

Terms of use:

Documents in EconStor may be saved and copied for your personal and scholarly purposes.

You are not to copy documents for public or commercial purposes, to exhibit the documents publicly, to make them publicly available on the internet, or to distribute or otherwise use the documents in public.

If the documents have been made available under an Open Content Licence (especially Creative Commons Licences), you may exercise further usage rights as specified in the indicated licence.

Dr., prof. Vladimir Gorbanyov
Moscow State Institute of International Relations (University)

Geographical zoning of Russia

Zoning of Russia due to its huge size has always played an important scientific and practical role. The first attempts of zoning were made by Russian scientist Vasily Tatishchev in the early XVIII century. Later zoning Russia studied Klavdy Arsenev, Peter Semenov - Tyanshansky, Dmitry Mendeleev, etc. All these works took into account mainly the density and ethnic composition of the population, agricultural zoning, especially industry, that is physical-geographical factors played a secondary role. As an exception, can be called Dmitry Rihter, geographer, who gave no less important natural features of the territory of Russia in his work.

After the October Revolution, the Russian economy had tremendous changes. The entire economy of the USSR has become a single economic complex that developed on the basis of the administrative-command system of government and planned economy. There was an urgent need for a new economic zoning of Russia. To achieve this task prominent scientists of the country were attracted - economists and geographers.

In 1921 a special Commission of the State Planning Committee (Gosplan), led by Gleb Krzhizhanovsky formulated the basic principles of economic zoning, and later developed the Russian net economic regions consisting of 8 regions.

Since the Commission included prominent Russian scientists, the development of economic regions was put on a serious scientific basis. Determining factor was the specialization of economy regions and their relationship through the exchange of products. Already by 1922 the number of districts increased to 21, and by 1929 it was allocated 24 regions.

The ideas of Gosplan zoning and concept of economic region became one of the key in the Soviet school of economic geography. The main principles of zoning: the economic factors lie at the heart of zoning, complexity, inter-connection based on expedient division of labor, the prospects, economic zoning - the basis of the new administrative zoning of the country.

No doubt, the region school of national economic geography developed Nikolay Baransky - the pride of our science. Economic regions formed before the war, faithfully served our economy until 1990, although it was in the 70s they were slowly lag with the new needs of the economy, as, indeed, the entire economy as a whole. In 1991, the Soviet Union ceased to exist, and many of the negative traits of economic regions manifested most vividly. First of all is that they are virtually unchanged for almost 70 years. In a market economy, they can not meet the challenges of geographical specialization and division of labor, they do not take into account the social, national and environmental problems in areas of enormous regional differences.

And that is very important - regions formed, as has been said, on the basis of economic tasks, they do not correspond to physical- geographical zoning of the country. As a result, today Russia is without any zoning. Old economic regions do not work, and no one offered the new ones.

In our view, today requires more than economical-geography, or physical-geography but complex geographical zoning, which takes into account both natural and economic, social, and ethnic features of the area. This is a very difficult task, but taking into account that geography, in my opinion, should be unified, geographic regions should be generated with regard both natural and socio- economic factors.

Having said that, I tried to highlight the new geographical regions. They turned ten. While I relied on the old, but largely changed them, considering all possible factors. All regions marked me not violate prevailing administrative division, though perhaps it is not always justified. The only exception - the Krasnoyarskiy district. It is too great a difference between a small industrial southern part and huge unsettled northern part. So I had to share Krasnoyarskiy district.

For each region were calculated area, population and its density, natural, mechanical and total growth of population, gross regional product (GRP) in general and per capita (PPP as of 2012), the proportion of the population living below the poverty, the structure of employment and human development index (HDI).

1st Region - Capital. It is the smallest in size, but it is difficult to overestimate its role – It is Moscow. Its total area 2511 km², but the population is 12 108 thousand people; 28% of the Russian population. Moscow - the largest financial and business center. It accounts for about half of the banks in Russia. The city has the highest number of billionaires (79 people) among world cities, Foreign Policy magazine put Moscow in 2010 to the 25th place among global cities. In Moscow for the majority of research institutes and educational institutions, so the Capital region - is the center of high-tech and innovative technologies, where the services sector employs nearly 79 % of the population; we can conclude that the region enters into a phase of post-industrial development. GRP per capita in the metropolitan area is 25 thousand dollars, HDI - 0,964. Moscow - one of the few cities in the European part of Russia, where natural growth is small but still positive (1,1 ‰), at the same time the mechanical growth is very significant (7,2 ‰), so the population is growing rapidly in Moscow at the expense of migrants.

2nd region - Central. It is much more than the former Central region. It stretches from the border with Belarus to the Volga (Chuvash, Mari – El republics, and even Ulyanovsk and Kirovsk districts). In the north region captures Leningrad and Kostroma districts. In the south - Belgorod, Ryazan districts, Mordovskaya republic. The Central region - is the economic core of Russia, located on the hills of the East European Plain, in the temperate climatic belt, where the taiga and mixed forests turn into steppe. First of all processing industry developed in the region (not counting KMA), where large scientific and educational centers of Russia are focused, and where innovative technologies are actively developing. GRP per capita in the region is two times lower than in the Capital region - 6600 dollars. Feature of the region is that some parts of

it are well developed rich, but some are poor. Everywhere there is a significant negative natural growth of population (-4,5 ‰), the mechanical growth is very small, so the population is falling.

3d region - European North. This is the only region that has not been amended. 80% of it located in the area of the Planetary North, in areas of the taiga and tundra. This is a typical mining district, where a fuel production is developed, ferrous and nonferrous metals , timber and fish. GRP per capita here - 10 400 dollars. Population falls due to the negative natural and mechanical growth.

4th region - European south. It covers the steppe areas with black soil from Voronezh and Tambov districts to Stavropol, Krasnodar districts and Crimea republic. In the south- east the steppes of Kalmykia change into semi-desert and even desert. Region is a hilly plain and only in the southern Crimea we meet low Crimean mountains - up to 1500 m. European south – is a Russian breadbasket where crop and livestock production are developed. In addition, at the very south of the region main Russian resorts, even partially within the subtropical climate belt - Black Sea coast from Crimea to Sochi, and the area of Caucasian Mineral Waters - are focused. Because of the negative population growth population in the area falls. An exception is the Krasnodar edge, where there is a significant mechanical increase, due to which the population is growing. GRP per capita is about 5 thousand dollars in the region, at the same time especially low GRP is in the Crimea.

5th Region - North Caucasus . It is the smallest in size (112 thousand km²) region, excluding Capital region. It covers all the North Caucasus republics. Mostly mountainous area where the height of the Main Caucasian ridge reach more than 5 000 meters. One can see altitude zonation in the mountains. It is mainly Muslim region where the Russian population is in the minority. Here there is a significant population growth - 8 ‰, and the natural growth reaches to 21 ‰ in Republic Ingushetia. GRP per capita in the region is low - 3300 dollars. Population is mainly engaged in livestock. The criminal situation is unstable In the region, especially in Dagestan, Ingushetia and Chechnya Republics. So here we have often to conduct anti-terrorist operations.

6th Region - Uralo-Povolzhsky. This region is of the old development. There has long mined ore, timber, grew crops, steel mills worked. Low Ural Mountains are the axis of the region, gradually sinking in the west to the valley of the Volga, and in the east steeply sloping down to the West Siberian Plain. The whole area is in the temperate climatic belt, but if in the north and west lot of precipitation, in the south and east - limited moisture. Taiga is dominated in the north and in the center, turning into a narrow band of mixed forests, and in the south lies the steppe with black soils. The region is distinguished as the powerful mining and processing industry and developed agriculture. Labor relatively high qualifications are concentrated here. Oil and gas industry mainly developed In the west, metallurgical industry and engineering is in the east and agriculture developed in the south. Natural population growth is mainly negative, mechanical is positive, so the population is quite stable. GRP per capita in the region is 8600 dollars.

7th Region - Western Siberia. The region extends from the Karskoe Sea to the border with Kazakhstan along the West Siberian Lowland. Tundra and permafrost is in the north of the region, turning in the south into the swampy taiga, and in the far south is drier and taiga replaced by steppe with black soils. Western Siberia - the main oil and gas region of Russia. This is an area of new development, mainly mining, processing industry is underdeveloped. Agriculture is developed in the southern part of the region. The population growth rate is positive, but very small, except of the Tyumen district, where natural growth is 7,5 %. GRP also generally small, but thanks to the Tyumen district, where it is 37300 dollars per capita, the average value becomes quite significant - 11 700 dollars. If we exclude the Tyumen district, the GRP per capita immediately drops to 6500 dollars.

8th Region - South Siberia. The region tends to the Trans-Siberian Railway. A chain of mountains of Southern Siberia stretches here through the whole area, with heights of 3-4 thousand meters here; the highest mountain in Siberia - Belukha, a height of 4.5 thousand meters, is in the Altai Republic. Vegetation is mainly taiga, but there is an altitude zonation everywhere. The steppe one can meet in the intermountain basins. Southern Siberia - the main coal region of the country, the area of electricity, steel, aluminum and wood processing plants in the country. Here are the most powerful hydroelectric power plants in Russia. GRP in the district is 6400 dollars per capita. In the region one can see relatively high population density, when compared with other regions of Siberia. Natural growth is quite high (especially in the republics of Altai and Tuva), so despite the fact that the mechanical growth is negative, in general, the population is growing.

9th Region - Northern Siberia. It is the largest region by area and the most unsettled. Population density is 0.25 people / km². Region stretches from the Krasnoyarsk district to the Pacific coast and in the north - it is washed by seas of the Arctic Ocean, it borders on the south with districts and republics of Southern Siberia and Far East. Northern Siberia is an area of rich forest, water, hydropower, marine biological resources, nickel, cobalt, gold, diamonds and other mineral resources. Relief here is represented by huge plateaus and mountains, and in the Kamchatka district there are many high active volcanoes (up to 4700 m). The climate here is sharply continental, where is the " cold pole " (-68°C). More cyclones run along the Pacific Ocean, and therefore the climate here is closer to the marine . Approximately half of the territory is tundra and forest-tundra, south - dark coniferous taiga. Almost the whole area is in the permafrost zone. Soils - cryogenic taiga. High negative mechanical growth is in the region, resulting in population decreasing (- 6,6 %). But there is a high GRP per capita - 19 100 dollars, and the highest GRP is in the Chukotka Autonomous district - 27 000 dollars.

10th Region - Far East. It is much smaller than the previous Far East Region. The region opens to the waters of the Pacific Ocean, where strongly pronounced monsoon climate is predominant. The region mostly mountainous, though the mountains are not very high; there are also many volcanoes, frequent earthquakes, typhoon often. The taiga is dominated in the region, but zone of mixed forests - unique Ussuri taiga - extends in the south along Amur River. There is almost no permafrost here. This is the area of coal mining, oil, gas, non-ferrous metals, forests and marine biological resources . There is also a decline of population (-5,7 %),

GRP per capita also high - 13 700 dollars, and the highest is in the Sakhalin district - 36 600 dollars - the highest rate among the subjects of the Russian Federation. If we estimate the GRP per capita in the Far East area without Sakhalin district, it immediately reduced to 8 000 dollars.

These are geographic regions, I propose to allocate in Russia. Of course, this is not ideal, it is only the first attempt. Here there is still work to do. But at least, in my opinion, the proposed zoning - an attempt to break from the impasse in which we were due to zoning Russia .

I absolutely did not mention the famous zoning Russia by Federal Districts, which were proposed by the Russian government, and which are now being financed from the state budget and which are being given all the statistics. This was done because, in my opinion, unlike the old economic areas, the federal districts do not correspond to any scientific criteria - neither geographic nor economic. Federal districts - a typical example of unscientific, bureaucratic approach .