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RUSSIA'S WAY TO SUBURBANIZATION: MOSCOW AND SAINT PETERSBURG EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

This article deals with the process of suburbanization in Russia. Its special attention is paid to two major Russian cities: Moscow and St. Petersburg. The article compares the processes occurring in the above cities with the similar ones in the American cities. This comparison provides a means of appropriate ways for improving the quality of life in Russian megalopolises. This article suggests that Soviet heritage could not afford Russian regions to copy American experience to the full extent. However, American "edge cities" are considered to be the best form of suburbanization in terms of increasing the quality of life.

Keywords: quality of life; suburbanization; edge cities; suburbs; dachas; Moscow; St. Petersburg

Introduction

This paper focuses on exploring America's suburbanization and related processes of emergence of Edge Cities and tries to compare them to Russian realities. The main goal of this work is to figure out the way to improve quality of life in large Russian cities looking at how it was done in the USA with the help of suburbanization processes.

The first part of this paper is devoted to the analysis of American suburbanization that started almost 60 years ago. We try to explore whether this process of suburbanization increased the standards of living of American citizens. As it is suggested in the paper, American suburbs improved quality of life of their inhabitants only for a short period of time. Then people started to recognize disadvantages of suburban lifestyle, and new solution to the problem of quality of life was suggested in the form of Edge Cities. As second part of the paper will conclude, Edge Cities were recognized to combine all positive features of both suburbs and cities, leaving most of their negative features behind. The third part of this paper looks at suburbanization processes around two major Russian cities — Moscow and Saint-Petersburg, and tries to answer whether these processes are similar to American ones or not. All this will be done in order to figure out what pattern of suburbanization (i.e. suburbs or Edge Cities) is more likely to raise Russians' standard of living.

The paper does not cover the issues of suburbanism as a way of life or as a social phenomenon as we are focusing mainly on the problem of quality of life of urban residents.

This article is based on the critical analysis of studies of Russian and American scientists in the field of suburbanization as well as on the body of journalistic literature devoted to urban problems in Moscow and Saint-Petersburg.

American Suburbanization

Is it worth doing to become suburban nation following American pattern? Is American suburbanization really a good thing? Does it lead to improvement of quality of life? What are the key indicators of the quality of life?

From the beginning, American suburbanization was meant to raise the standard of living of urban white middle class. After the Second World War cities became overcrowded with black people migrating from rural areas that eventually resulted in the “white flight.” Massive migration of white middle class from cities into suburbs was possible due to two main factors. Firstly, government started propaganda of the “American dream” that included living in a single-family house simultaneously subsidizing housing for World War II veterans and providing them with very affordable loans. Secondly, marriage and baby boom created a need for larger houses. Moreover, construction of suburban housing became very cheap with the use of assembly line and inexpensive materials such as wood and plastic that allowed massive creation of unified houses.

During the War the American middle class accumulated a great deal of savings that they started to spend, after the War, on automobiles, homes and the needs of the large cohort of newly born children. But by late 1945 there was an acute housing crisis, so the government instructed the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) to allow 30 year mortgages (instead of 10 year) and approve mortgages with only 10 percent down (instead of 80 percent) [Patterson, 1996, p. 72]. The FHA also provided low interest loans to veterans for the purchase of single family homes. Growing suburbs made automobiles a necessity, so the construction of highways gained incredible importance. Auto makers, construction companies, and cement contractors made serious lobbying efforts [Jackson, 1985, p. 234–235] that resulted in massive federal funding of highways construction (over 90% of projected costs — the National Interstate and Defense Highways Act, 1956 <www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=88>).

The other main reason behind the growth of U.S. suburbs was marriage and baby-boom between 1946 and 1964. Firstly, it encouraged the demand for spacious houses. Secondly, it boosted the consumption of consumer goods which benefited American post-war economy meaning that houses and cars became cheaper and overall quality of life increased.

In this regard, it appears necessary to define the key components of this widely-used concept “quality of life” which is essential in our research. There is little agreement between scholars on the methods of assessment of the quality of life, but we can find some indicators (regardless their order of significance) which can help

us realize whether the quality of life in some area increases or decreases over a certain period of time. According to a national opinion survey [Findlay, Rogerson, Morris, 1988, p. 98], the most important features that illustrate the quality of (sub)urban life are the following:

- Levels of crime (safety),
- Health provision,
- Environmental pollution,
- Cost of living,
- Shopping, educational, sports and leisure facilities,
- Racial harmony,
- Employment prospects,
- Wage levels,
- Travelling to work time.

We can add some more which are relevant for our research —

- Housing conditions,
- Levels of noise, or soundscape,
- Public places for communication,
- Crowdedness,
- Creative (beautiful) landscape,
- Levels of car-dependency and proximity of different kinds of services,
- Public transportation system,
- Pedestrian-friendliness.

So, this is the approximate set of characteristics we will imply when mentioning the quality of urban life or its certain aspects.

The first suburb — Levittown — was meant, therefore, to address both issues of housing for the growing white middle class and their dissatisfaction with massive black migration to cities providing single-family houses exclusively for “whites.” This suburb had none of the problems that surrounded downtown. There were no slums, crowded streets, racial conflicts, poor people, or crime. Instead they had racially and economically consistent neighborhood, new houses, grassy play areas, safety and comfort [Henderson, 1953].

Suburbs consisted of rows of single-family houses, each with a piece of land. Typically nothing was taller than two stories, there were no full-grown trees, and the landscape was very monotonous as the mass builder sought flat land because it cut construction costs (Fig. 1).

People who lived there were primarily young couples with small children. Traditionally, the husband was a breadwinner commuting to work to the city, while the wife stayed at home looking after children, cooking meals and doing chores. Men just returned from the war felt that they had fulfilled their “American dream” having



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Fig. 1. Virginia suburbs

a nice house in good white neighborhood, a wife and the children. Women, who achieved relative gender equality on the job market during the war time, happily abandoned their careers and became housewives [Friedan, 1963]. While waiting for their husbands from work they built a strong sense of community — something that very rarely happened to them in the city [Henderson, 1953]. In the beginning of suburbanization process everyone seemed satisfied.

Now that 60 years have passed since the creation of the first suburbs, there is a growing critique of the suburban lifestyle. In their book “The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of Suburban Nation” Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck argue that suburbs no longer improve the quality of



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Fig. 2. Suburban nation landscape

life, in fact, they diminish it [Duany, Plater-Zyberk, Speck, 2011].

First of all, suburbs spoil the landscape with their rows of unified houses. These mass-produced “boxes” constitute forgettable, repetitive sprawling landscape that lacks uniqueness or creativity. These places are seen as neither interesting nor worth visiting (Fig. 2). They consume a lot of land causing significant damages to the environment. Because of low density they require huge land use which impacts the wildlife. Suburbs also cause significant water shed problems because the surface is impermeable which creates soil erosion. Suburbs, therefore, cause big intervention into natural environment.

Apart from nature and landscape, suburbs are not good for their residents as well. Firstly, suburban dwellers are dependent on automobiles, because no amenities are located within walking distance. To go to the grocery store, to the library or to school, each time they have to use their cars leading to approximately 13 car trips a day per person [Duany, Plater-Zyberk, Speck, 2011, p. 22]. Suburbs are pedestrian unfriendly — there is no sidewalks, because distance between places is often too great to go on foot anyway. These is also the reason of absence of public transportation, because there is no point of installing the bus stop that people will be unable to reach without using their car. Otherwise, there should be so many stops that public transport would be slow and inefficient.

Suburban car-dependency results in very congested traffic, and even adding several new lanes doesn't help the situation. Some suburban dwellers have to spend in their cars at least 3 hours a day travelling to work in the city and then back home both because of the distance and traffic jams.

Social effects of suburbs are also quite harmful. There is almost no communal life as people live far away from each other and don't have any public places where they could gather and communicate [Keats, 1956]. Children in suburbs who can't drive are totally dependent on their parents and can't make any decisions on their leisure time [Ibid.]. Teenagers are bored as suburbs lack much of the entertainment that could be found in the city. Elderly people also face some difficulties living there, especially if they have problems with driving, because they find themselves locked in homes with little opportunity to communicate with friends or visit the shop or hospital. For women suburban life can be hard if they want to combine family with work which

is located far away from home. And if a woman is a housewife she might find it very depressing as she has to spend all day with little adult company and without much variety day-to-day [Friedan, 1963].

Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck offer an alternative model that would solve all the problems created by the suburbs. They call this model a “traditional urban neighborhood” that is an opposition of the suburbs. This type of neighborhood is not created artificially but grows naturally as a response to the needs of its inhabitants. It is not a metropolis, but there are many workplaces, offices, and white-collar jobs. There are public places, parks and historical spots. All necessary services are located in close proximity which makes this neighborhood pedestrian-friendly. There are sidewalks and a wide system of public transportation system that eliminates residents’ car-dependency. Children can be more independent and parents can spend less time working as a driver for their offspring. The elderly are able to live full lives without the constant assistance of others. Teenagers and the youth have many more choices on how to spend their leisure time. People are able to visit public spaces, museums, galleries, theatres, etc. Their schools, colleges or jobs are close to their homes so they don’t need to spend a lot of time in a car. And at the same time they won’t suffer from such problems of the big city as air pollution, overcrowding, noise, rush and anxiety, because traditional neighborhoods are more the size of suburban towns than a big city. The main point is that there should be no separation between different “zones” as in suburbs where you can see separate clusters of houses, shops — a shopping mall, and roads between them. As Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck argue, houses, jobs, shops and public places should exist in all parts of the city. Significantly reduced travelling time will greatly contribute to higher quality of life (Fig. 3–5).

Therefore, we can conclude that American suburbs raised the quality of life only for a short period of time which then was followed by recognition of their numerous disadvantages. As a contrast to suburbs, the concept of “traditional urban neighborhood” was developed. We suppose that “traditional urban neighborhood” can be associated with the familiar term “Edge city” having in mind that the former type of neighborhood grows naturally (historically) while the latter is more artificially constructed. Thus, we continue this paper with deeper analysis of the phenomenon of Edge cities.

Edge City

What is an Edge City? Are Edge Cities able to overcome the issues of suburbanization in terms of quality of life? What advantages and disadvantages do they have? What perspectives for further urban development do they hold?

American urban landscape changed profoundly since the suburbanization of 1950s. A key part of the historical processes has been the emergence and development of so-called Edge Cities. Joel Garreau in his book “Edge City: Life on the New Frontier” introduced this term and thoroughly examined the phenomena, its causes, meanings and perspectives. The analysis of what constitutes an Edge City and how it emerged in America may help to better understand the Russian urban history and realities, as well as to evaluate the possibilities and the probable outcomes of this form of development in Moscow City-Region.

Garreau views the Edge City as logically resulting from suburbanization. What happened is that people living in suburbs needed more comfort. Firstly, during the 1960s large shopping centers moved closer to suburban areas, a process referred to as the “mallings” of America. Then, in the 1970s–1980s, the most important change took place — developers started to build white-collar office space outside of the downtown, thus providing high-quality jobs closer to residential areas. Consequently, cultural and entertainment facilities also spread in these new centers, therefore giving families the chance to live, work, shop and recreate in proximate and accessible places outside of the megapolis.

The dominant force in this process, Garreau argues in his article [Garreau, 1999], was played by female activism. Women were not satisfied with their ascribed roles of mere housewives and in the 1970s in unprecedented numbers they moved “out of the kitchen” and into the work force. That was very important because that is why high quality jobs started moving to the “realm of women,” thus turning the suburbs into the Edge Cities.

But what features make Edge Cities so special? As Garreau points out, there are five key characteristics (pp. 6–7).

- First, it must have 5 million square feet of office space, for it should provide white-collar workplace.
- Secondly, there must be 600 000 square feet of leasable retail space for people to shop.



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Fig. 3. Traditional urban neighborhood in Kansas



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Fig. 4. Traditional urban neighborhood in Innsbruck

- Thirdly, the population of an Edge City should increase on weekdays at 9 a.m. as far as it must have more jobs than bedrooms.
- Fourthly, an Edge City is supposed to be a mixed-purpose destination that is perceived by the population as a one place.
- Finally, Garreau emphasized that it should be a brand-new urban core in an area that looked like suburbia or farmland half a century ago.

Although they do have distinctive features, Edge Cities typically do not have defined boundaries on the map, because they have no legal sta-

tus and no mayors and also because they are very dynamic, growing and developing constantly.

Garreau studied the emergence of Edge Cities across America and showed that there were more than 200 of them in the United States (as of the year 1991). The first ones appeared in Northern Virginia, and their history is a worthy tale for it reveals the necessary preconditions and underlying problems of their development.

The archetype of any Edge City is the building of the Pentagon, with its 3,7 million square feet of office space and a huge nearby mall built in 1980s. It also has “natural” environment — lawns, basins, trees and jogging trails. The first and astonishing step in the creation of the actual Edge City is Tysons Corner (*Fig. 6*), which rose on the intersection of three highways, in a place which was an empty land in 1960s. The importance of roads and effective transport communication systems cannot be overestimated for the Edge Cities.

As developers explain, they need to make employees feel as if they are out in a country-like environment where they have everything — shopping centers, offices, hotels as well as ponds, lawns and trees. As a result, they are creating “a city in a garden” (*Fig. 7*).

This is an essential point for Garreau. He sees all American history as a constant controversy between those who perceive land as material and those who view the environment as something sacred. In the 20th century considerable debate occurred around the issues of environmental pollution and the limits of progress. Industrial development led to the concentration of dirt, smell, diseases and crime in the city, and affluent citizens ran from this ugly place into the tranquil suburbs, which became the opposite of the urban cores.

Meanwhile, the battle went on between those who wanted to preserve the natural surroundings and the developers who preferred economic growth instead. Garreau asks whether it is possible to conserve great places without denying growth. He feels that now a partnership is needed between the environmentalists and the developers. The USA is a country with plenty of land, and it must be possible to somehow agree on the ways to use it in order to recognize both human and natural ecology. Garreau believes that for Americans land is a value in itself, and a question of how to view it in the Information Age is of great concern. Americans have often yearned for simpler and more natural life, which is why they moved in suburbs in such great numbers.



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Fig. 5. Traditional urban neighborhood in New York



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Fig. 6. Tysons Corner, Virginia

And the dilemma remains, how to find balance between nature and civilization?

In this regard, an Edge City represent a compromise between the two as it reintegrates the best qualities of cities (jobs, culture, entertainment) and those of suburbs (natural surroundings, detached single-family housing). It embodies the controversial American character — a divide between the reverence for unspoiled nature and devotion to progress [Garreau, 1991, p. 12].

Of course, an Edge City has its drawbacks as well. First of all, it excludes less affluent social and specific racial groups as it is primarily a place for the middle class. Secondly, it might appear illogical and chaotic in its structure. But as Garreau points out in one of his articles [Garreau, 1995], throughout the whole urban history new cities appeared chaotic at first, and it usually takes several generations of urban restructuring to create a functional, harmonic and beautiful city.

Finally, it seems important to look at some critique against Garreau's viewpoint. John McCrory in his article "The Edge City Fallacy" [McCrory, 2013], argues that despite the fact that Garreau's concept is interesting and provocative, he fails to convince the reader that the Edge City is a new and different type of urban form. McCrory claims that it represents the same patterns of city-building as those of the industrial age, though their appearance has slightly transformed. Edge Cities are not economically independent because they are still parts of respective metropolitan areas and thus remain embedded into the market flows.

What is more, McCrory criticize Garreau because he does not take into account the prominent role played by the Federal government in making emergence and development of Edge Cities possible. McCrory emphasize that in fact Edge Cities were not simply the products of natural economic processes, but rather the results of concrete government policies and major financial support. Without it, the urban development would arguably have taken a completely different direction.

Notably, it has been more than 20 years since Garreau published his book. Thus, American urban realities have changed. The number of Edge Cities has grown both in the USA and across the world, and some of them have been successful in



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Fig. 7. A city in a garden (Duluth, Minnesota)

increasing the quality of life and providing people with decent housing, workplace and sites for recreation, while others were not. The key factor of success, according to Garreau [Garreau, 1995] was open-mindedness, creativity and adaptability of urban planners and people residing in the area to changing environment.

Anyway, Garreau views Edge Cities as a new level of history and a creation of a new world. He points out their ultimate significance for the future of urban development. Containing all the functions of the old downtown and suburbs, Edge Cities create a new understanding of "home" and a new relationship between the citizens and the land. They push the humanity onto the new frontier, and the outcomes of this change are for us to see. Likewise, whether such Edge Cities exist in Russia and what role they should play is for us to try to find out.

Russian reality

Which patterns of suburbanization can be found around two major Russian cities — Moscow and Saint-Petersburg? Are they similar to American patterns (i.e. suburbs or Edge Cities)? Can we conclude that in Russian capital regions Edge Cities are also a better solution than suburbs?

In Russia the term "suburbanization" is known mostly as a process typical of Western European and North American cities and characterized by creating a living space in the periphery of urban agglomeration usually in a form of comparatively low-density settings [Becker, Mendelsohn, Benderskaya, 2012, p. 72]. In Russian interpretation this phenomenon was generally associated with high quality of life which almost crosses the boundaries of luxury. Thus, taking into account difficult financial situation for the majority of Russians after the collapse of the Soviet Union, it is evident that to buy or to build a house out of town for living could only be afforded by a very small rich segment of population. Mainly for this reason, in Russian social science the concept of "suburbanization" is still unexplored. Besides, we should take into account the lack of Russian urban studies in general. However, the ongoing development of the largest Russian cities shows the possibility of the application of Western theoretical and empirical research in order to foresee, characterize and analyze the present and the future of Russian suburban areas.

As it has been found by American experience, the best model for developing suburban settings is the Edge City because this form of settlement

provides an opportunity for meeting the most urgent needs of modern urban population.

The main issue of this paper is to figure out what kinds of suburbanization processes take place in major Russian cities today and probably find the ways in which it is possible to improve the quality of life of urban and suburban populations in Russian city-regions. We will try to answer the question if it is technically possible for Russia to follow the American experience in terms of creating the "Edge Cities." For this purpose it is necessary to take into account the main differences that distinguish Russian urban realities from those in the USA and possible future of suburban areas by analyzing existing research along with interviews of experts in this sphere.

Among the most crucial difficulties in exploring this area can be found not only in almost a total lack of investigations in the field of suburban development in Russia, but also a fluidity of definitions and inapplicability of American terms to the Russian realities.

This paper deals primarily with the situation in two major Russian cities — the "two capitals" — Moscow and Saint Petersburg. The rationale behind this is rooted in the Soviet heritage that greatly influenced the way Russian cities look today. In spite of Russian turn to the Western ideology of the market and democracy, Soviet Union's traits are still visible in the cities [Tsenkova, 2005; Andrusz, Harloe, Szeleynyi, 1996]. The main thing that came from the USSR was Soviet centralization of power which became the reason why the processes of Russian suburbanization are taking place primarily around the "two Russian capitals." First of all, it might be explained with the fact that through all Russian history the capital has always had a special significance for the country because of the centralization of power. In Tsars Russia capital was a symbol of the nation's power, prosperity and culture [French, 1983; Brower, 1983]. Soviet centralization that came after also meant that all the planning and control emanated from the capital which explains the unprecedented status of Moscow for modern Russia. Its significance is so high that all the important corporations' headquarters, prestigious jobs, think-tanks, etc. are located here. This is true that during Soviet times a great amount of new cities emerged but almost all of them were tied to a certain production site that was controlled from Moscow. If in the USA urbanization covered the territory rather evenly, in Russia it meant vigorous growth of several urban centers among which were the

two giants — Moscow and to lesser extent St-Petersburg.

Such over-concentration of power located in these two cities has resulted in an extra-high population density, exhaustion of space resources, extra-high prices on real estate, overcrowdedness, poor ecological situation, plenty of migrants and low security level [Petrova, 2013, p. 89; Muraviev, Pozmogova, 2012, p. 58]. The combination of all these factors resulted in a rather rapid decrease in the quality of life in the city [Maloyan, 2009, p. 36].

Moscow and to a lesser extent Saint-Petersburg currently are about to reach the limit of population they can contain, so these cities have come to the point where urban infrastructure is unable to support the increasing amount of citizens. So the cities just push their dwellers out of it. The second reason for the fact that Russian suburbanization is concentrated around Moscow and Saint Petersburg is much higher economical status their inhabitants have compared with people in other Russian cities. Only very prosperous people can afford buying a detached house in the suburbs because of the price of land and construction so life in a cottage is strongly associated with luxury [Petrova, 2013]. They are wealthy enough and have rather high standards of living that motivate them to wish to leave a city voluntarily.

In the classic example suburbanization is a stage of socio-economic development that is characterized by rising quality of life [Ibid.], which allows people to live in a comfort houses in the countryside and to work in the city center [Maloyan, 2009, p. 36]. This kind of suburbanization exists in Russia, but at a very small scale constituting 1% of all the Russian territory [Petrova, 2013, p. 89].

There is also the second type of suburbanization that is specific to Russian reality and usually called “quasi-suburbanization.” We are talking about small country houses or just plots of land (“Dachas”) that a lot of Russians got during Soviet times. But people can enjoy them only for certain seasons — usually the summer — because they lack any basic utilities or infrastructure. Since this cannot be fully perceived as a rise in the living standards “dachas” are considered “quasi-suburbanization.” Moreover, they are unable to take people from the city to make it less dense as people still live there most of the year. We propose to analyze the phenomenon of Russian “Dachas” in more detail.

The Edge Cities as well are usually found near Moscow and Saint-Petersburg due to the Soviet centralization but from an economic point of view. The two major cities are facing the need to de-centralize their production and business which is connected with the turn to modern technology requiring significant space for their mills as well as headquarters, offices and parking lots [Maloyan, 2009]. We will consider a case of an Edge City which appeared near Moscow.

According to Denis Vizgalov, among the main factors that contribute to the growing willingness of Russians to move out of the city it is necessary to mention the rising cost of living along with a reduction in quality of life, which includes increases in criminal activities, environmental degradation and lack of living space [Bulatova, 2008]. In addition, today fewer and fewer people can survive in the big cities from the psychological point of view under conditions of overcrowded public spaces and transport, noise pollution and the pulsating life of the city. As Vizgalov claims, modern urban living conditions in Russian cities is suitable for work, rather than for living and this fact encourages inhabitants to seek a place outside the city where they can rest from the physical as well as physiological points of view.

In addition, suburbanization in Russia becomes more real because of the intensive process of motorization, increasing the availability of loans for some categories of population, the rise in jobs via the Internet as well as because of the moving of some industrial enterprises out of the city [Process of suburbanization...].

Taking into account difficult financial situation and the heritage of the Soviet Union with garden-plots that were provided free of charge to the urban population regardless of social position, in order to give people the opportunity to support themselves by growing food and to have a place for recreational purposes, “dachas” (Fig. 8) can be considered as a massive Russian suburbanization, unique in its own way and sometimes called “quasiurbanization” [Golubchicov, Makhrova, Phelps, 2010]. However, most “dachas” were not comfortable places for staying for a long time, because of a lack of basic services such as electricity, heating and running water.

As Vizgalov notes, if originally people used their “dachas” mostly as an additional source of food, now they tend to consider it as a second home (after some reconstructions), a place for rest and recreation where they spend week-ends



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Fig. 8. The russian "Dacha"



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Fig. 9. The example of the house owned by the "nouveau riches"



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Fig. 10. Townhouses, New York

and holidays but still not for a long period of time [Bulatova, 2008].

As for traditional for Western countries forms of suburbanization, in Russia this process is found only in the construction of luxury detached houses by the newly emerged class of nouveau riches just before the end of Soviet Union (Fig. 9). However, such isolated suburban developments were not effective from the point of view that it did not contribute to the local budget and did not create new work places.

According to Vizgalov, the main obstacles for Russia on the way to suburbanization are, on the one hand, the lack of government attention to this phenomenon and absence of reliable statistics and, on the other hand, public opinion, according to which living outside of the city is viewed as a privilege of only the wealthy part of the population. However, it goes without saying that the most crucial impediment for living in suburbs is a lack of highways that condemns inhabitants of suburbs to spending a great amount of time each day in order to go to back and forth to work. Nevertheless, Vizgalov tends to view the urban future in Russia as a massive rise in suburbanization which will be possible mainly because of the increase in employment via the Internet. However the question of infrastructure will remain crucial as never before.

Speaking about future of Russia in terms of suburbanization, Andrey Shishkin, General Director of the Federal Fund for Housing Development notes that the main goal is to make suburban settlements more homogeneous, because for now there is a great diversity in terms of quality of life [Prospects of suburban...].

Shishkin proposes to take as a model a style of townhouse that is very popular in Western countries but is only beginning to appear in Russia (Fig. 10). In his opinion, an ideal suburban settlement should be presented in a form of a relatively small community with strong social ties and should necessarily include such elements of infrastructure as accessible highways to the inner city, paved sidewalks, schools and kinder gardens, grocery stores and pharmacies, ATMs, sport- and playgrounds as well as recreation area that do not require access by car. However, for now the price of this type of housing is not affordable for the majority of population because of the high cost of land.

In addition, for the city itself the fact of moving part of its inhabitants to the suburban areas seems to be very favorable in terms of more rational use of territory, changing the appearance

of cities and suburbs in a better way as well as stimulating the formation of a Russian middle class which still remains diffuse [*Process of suburbanization...*].

As it is claimed by Shishkin, in order to realize this idea first of all it is necessary to introduce a comprehensive approach from the government aimed at providing jobs in the suburban areas, creating accessible mortgage and social benefits for buying and building houses in suburbs, developing infrastructure and improvement of legislation as well as changing public opinion concerning life outside the city [*Prospects of suburban...*]. Generally speaking, by means of mass media it should be argued that living in suburbs is a real way to improve the quality of life that is affordable by an average citizen. However, the question if it will become true in the nearest future remains open.

Now let us turn to consideration of the process of Edge Cities' appearance in Russia. In their work "Contemporary Processes of Urbanization in Moscow City-Region: the Edge City Phenomenon" O.Yu. Golubchicov, A.G. Makhrova, and N.A. Phelps try to apply American concept of Edge City to the analysis of contemporary processes of suburbanization in Moscow city-region on the example of city Khimki (Fig. 11) [Golubchicov, Makhrova, Phelps, 2010].

Despite the fact that in Russian sociology the concept of Edge City is not developed, the authors claim that the American theoretical approach to the Edge Cities can be partially applied to the Russian reality. The authors justify their point of view by looking at the processes in one of the most developed city in Moscow region — Khimki.

According to the Soviet Union economic and territorial planning, Khimki was identified as satellite town and was at the same time the secret center of cosmic complex playing a very crucial role for the central government. However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union Khimki has lost its importance and become a sleepy area consisting mainly of multistory buildings typical for the outskirts of big cities in Russia at this time (Fig. 12).

At the beginning of 2000s changes came to the outskirts of Moscow: shopping malls (Fig. 13) and logistic complexes began to appear, and recently some companies began to move their back and even main offices out of the city.

During this period of intense economic growth cities began to compete to attract investments, and Khimki became one of the most suc-



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Fig. 11. Modern Khimki



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Fig. 12. The sleepy area, Russia, Korolev



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Fig. 13. Shopping centre RIO, Rumyantsevo, Moscow

cessful centers of the Moscow region mainly due to favorable location (Khimki is situated near Moscow in close position to the international airport and to the highway to Saint Petersburg) and ecologically advantageous position. During the years 2001–2007 Khimki has met significant development of market, retail and services, considerable increase in investments and capital, rapid construction of living zones as well as shopping malls, offices, logistic centers and business area. As a result, Khimki became an independent city with a developed service economy without losing its strong connections with Moscow. It is worth noting that the average wage in Khimki is similar to that in Moscow, as well as the quality of life.

According to empirical research, conducted in 2008 by Golubchicov, Makhrova and Phelps, the image of Khimki as a city was impacted not as much by existing urban governmental plans but rather by developers and investors. Local government does not want to resist the interests of private investors mainly because of the planning gains and the opportunity to make the city even more attractive for further investments. As a result of agreements between developers and local government, investors often not only pay a regular price for building an object, but also often compensate the use of city infrastructure by constructing a kinder garden, a school or another public place.

However, as the authors note, local business and local developers are not interested in development of the city itself, their only goal is profit. Thus, real estate in Khimki is highly speculative. In addition, governmental urban planning is usually taken into account only after the decisions of developers. As a result, developments are often chaotic, which means territorial fragmentation and ecological degradation.

The authors pay attention to the fact that unlike in America, Russian government has fewer problems with social and spatial inequalities, which along with highly educated population and emerging civil society should help to improve the appearance of Khimki in the future.

As a result of their study, the authors underline some features that characterize Khimki as an Edge City such as a high developed service economy, attractiveness for investments, equal concern of local government and developers for rapid profit, and postindustrial multifunctionality (city as a place for life, work, consumption and entertainment). However, according to the authors, urban development almost without

governmental space production and territorial fragmentation distinguishes Khimki from the American model. As it is claimed, some other developed cities of Moscow region such as Krasnogorsk, Kotelniki, Domodedovo, Stupino, and Dubna can be also potentially called “Russian Edge Cities.”

Different research conducted by Charles Becker, S. Joshua Mendelsohn and Kseniya Benderskaya in 2010–2011 explores Post-Soviet suburbanization in terms of transformation of the St Petersburg agglomeration [Becker, Mendelsohn, Benderskaya, 2012].

St Petersburg is one of the fastest-growing economic centers as well as a bright example of Post-Soviet deconcentration and changing morphology of fringe towns in Russia. One of the aims of profound research concerning Russian urbanization in the Soviet and post-Soviet eras by Becker, Mendelsohn and Benderskaya is to analyze residents' experience of suburbanization and to understand how they affect their decision-making process in terms of moving outside of the city.

Becker, Mendelsohn and Benderskaya claim that Russia is characterized by the historical absence of suburbanization and the first features of this process began to appear only in recent decade, after a period of impressive economic recovery. Speaking about St Petersburg, they note the relatively high-income character of suburbanization and the high speed of development of this process caused by the near absence of legislation impediments along with rapid increase in the number of automobiles. The four closest suburban districts of St Petersburg region (Leningrad Oblast) include Vsevolozhsk, Pushkin, Vyborg and Gatchina (Fig. 14).

Among factors that contribute to the willingness of people to move out of the city the authors have identified a city's shortage of quality housing, the high cost of housing in the inner city, people's rising demands for modern dwelling and green space, rapidly rising incomes of professionals, expansion of Internet use and the rise of legal services. New needs of the population resulted in a construction boom of multi-family high-rise estates on the cheaper land in the metropolis's fringe territories.

Results of the study revealed that the vast majority of suburban residents are well-educated, highly mobile young couples with children who continue to work in the inner city and use city-based services and become daily commuters. It was also found that significant predictors

of people's decision to suburbanize are housing price, size, distance from the metro and the quality of courtyards.

Speaking about Russian suburbs, it is necessary to note two different types of suburban settings distinguished by their level of infrastructure and social developments: suburban towns ("prigorod") and settlements ("poselok"). Suburban towns are usually located immediately outside a large city with population around 12,000–100,000 people, good transportation access and social and engineering infrastructure. By contrast, fringe semi-urban settlements have a population usually near 2000–3000 people, can be either rural or urban and have less developed infrastructure with fewer urban amenities.

Despite the fact that suburban towns are more developed, research over the recent decade has revealed that greater social, functional and physical transformation have occurred in settlements with a significant effect on the wellbeing of local residents in terms of social segregation, exclusion and dispossession.

Among the most crucial consequences of suburbanization in St-Petersburg the authors first of all note greater social-spatial polarity between local villages and upper/middle class newcomers. This implies the formation of separate enclaves for wealthy residents (often in forms of gated communities) and struggling locales who do not contribute to the social life of each other. Also rapid suburbanization resulted in inadequacy of the existing infrastructure which is used by newcomers regardless of system capacity and the resulting risk of collapse. Then, even if industrial development has brought employment opportunities to the suburban towns, in general it only worsened living conditions of local inhabitants in environmental terms and increased the cost of living.

Speaking about the future, Becker, Mendelsohn and Benderskaya suppose that further social and spatial segregation will develop among residents of Russian suburbs. In their opinion, it is possible that poor and lower-middle class industrial workers and often elderly farmers will be separated from younger highly educated prosperous professionals working in the modern service sector and not interested in "dacha" farming anymore. Social and physical connections between those two groups of residents will be very limited and this fact will continue to highlight the difference between Russian's new "middle class" of professionals and the remainder of nation.

Conclusion

In this paper we analyzed patterns of American suburbanization and found out that in the U.S. this process took two major forms — traditional suburbs and Edge Cities. As was shown in this work, suburbs improved quality of life for its inhabitants only for a short period of time which then was followed by recognition of their numerous disadvantages. Edge Cities were suggested to be much more beneficial form of suburbanization process because they combined positive traits of both suburbs and cities.

Nevertheless, we found out that in Russia the process of suburbanization is much less clearly defined and it is not possible to say that suburbs are a negative form of suburbanization and Edge Cities are a positive one. This study revealed that people in Russia today tend to move outside of the city but this process seems to be very different from that in Western European and North American cities.

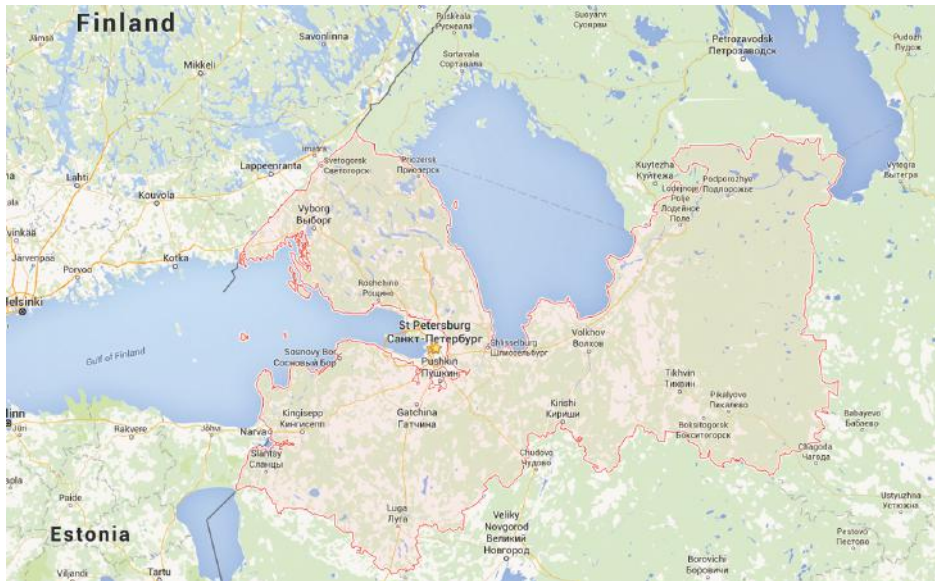
Among push factors that contribute to the willingness of people to suburbanize it is necessary to note the rising cost of living and reduction in quality of life in big cities along with conditions leading to psychological stress. Such factors as cheaper land and better ecological situation outside of the cities can be identified as pull factors. In addition, the increase in the use of motor vehicles, availability of loans and jobs via the Internet also facilitate suburbanization processes.

The government needs to promote opportunities to suburbanize in order to use land rationally, improve the appearance of cities and quality of life of citizens as well as to stimulate formation of a middle class.

However, the main obstacles in the way of suburbanization are the lack of governmental attention and financial support, the absence of highways and the fact that moving out of the city is still affordable only for the richest small part of population.

In order to answer the question as to what kinds of suburbanization processes take place in modern Russia two empirical researches were observed, which analyzed one of the most developed cities in Moscow region — Khimki — and St Petersburg agglomeration respectively.

With the example of city Khimki it can be claimed that in Moscow City-Region there are Edge Cities, characterized by highly developed service economies, attractiveness for investments, a focus on profit, and postindustrial



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Fig. 14. Leningrad oblast (OpenStreetMap)

multi-functionality. However, urban development almost without any governmental space production and territorial fragmentation distinguishes Khimki as well as presumably other similar cities from the American model.

Looking at the agglomeration processes in St Petersburg it can be claimed that one finds “traditional American suburbanization” where young professional couples move out of the city seeking a more comfortable life for themselves and their children while continuing to work in the inner city. However, this process results in creating social-spatial polarity between the poor local inhabitants and the upper/middle class newcomers, a tension that is completely different from American model.

The reasons for the difference between the Western reality and the Russian one are rooted first of all in the heritage of the Soviet Union with its historical absence of any kinds of western-like suburbanization. As a result, suburbanization processes in Russia now are characterized by an astonishing pace and high rate of exclusion at the same time. One of the most crucial details is the fact that those who decide to suburbanize usually do not create new settlements but move to existing ones thereby creating tension between themselves and local inhabitants.

Thus, suburbanization in Russia is not consistent, as it was in America, but instead characterized by a simultaneous development of different types of suburban processes (traditional suburbs

and Edge Cities) which can sometimes even mix with each other creating completely new types of suburban settlements. It goes without saying that for Russia suburbanization in broader sense (including both suburbs and Edge Cities) can be one of the most effective methods to improve quality of life of the population but for now there are too many obstacles in this way. However, today Russia has an opportunity to avoid the mistakes of Western countries and apply the most successful variants.

Today the best way to improve the situation depends almost completely on the actions of government which should be able to realize complex approach (creating jobs in suburbs, providing easier access to mortgage and various social benefits, constructing roads) in order to make suburbanization more appealing and available for greater part of population. Also there is some evidence that Moscow, as the largest city in Russia, will have Edge Cities sooner than other regions simply because of the physical inability to contain its enormous number of offices. It is worth to say that while creating suburban policing and developing some forms of suburban settlements, government should first of all pay attention to the real needs and problems of population instead of blind replication of the American experience. That is why it is so important to continue to explore Russian suburban reality.

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РОССИЙСКИЙ ПУТЬ СУБУРБАНИЗАЦИИ: ОПЫТ МОСКВЫ И САНКТ-ПЕТЕРБУРГА

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Аннотация

Статья посвящена разворачиванию процесса субурбанизации в России. Особое внимание уделено двум крупнейшим российским городам — Москве и Санкт-Петербургу. Сравниваются происходящие здесь процессы с похожими изменениями, которые имели место в американских городах во второй половине XX в. Данное сопоставление позволяет выдвинуть гипотезы относительно оптимальных способов улучшения качества жизни в российских мегаполисах. Авторы приходят к выводу, что советское наследие не может позволить отечественным регионам в полной мере скопировать американский опыт, однако американские «окраинные города» представляются нам наилучшей формой субурбанизации с точки зрения повышения качества жизни горожан.

Ключевые слова: качество жизни; субурбанизация; окраинные города; пригороды; дачи; Москва; Санкт-Петербург