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RUSSIAN SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT: GENERAL PATTERNS



RUSSIAN POPULATION ETHNIC STRUCTURE: TRENDS AND TRANSFORMATIONS

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Based on the census data from 1989, 2002 and 2010, the article analyzes the evolution of the ethnic structure of the population of the post-Soviet Russia from the territorial perspective. The stability of the ethnic structure of the “Russian mega nucleus” and indigenization of the national regions are considered in view of the differences in migration trends during the two inter-census periods and the socio-economic situation in the regions. The urbanization rate of major ethnic groups is an indirect indicator of the prospects of traditional “primordial” ethnic identities in different ethnic groups. Special attention is paid to new trends — an increase in the number of people refraining from answering the question about their ethnic identity or giving an unclear answer. Alongside serious census errors, this phenomenon can be a result of growing complexity of the ethnic identity structures and the processes of modernization, which occur at different rates in Russian and national regions. Based on the 2010 census data, the article analyses the differences in polyethnicity between the rural and urban population, which are accounted for by the historical background, particularities of regional development, settlement features, and migration processes of the past two decades.

Key words: ethnic geography, population censuses, ethnic mosaic index, population geography

Features and problems of ethnicity recording. Russia is one of the countries where ethnocultural diversity has always been a major influence on domestic and foreign policy. However, before the nation state could fully developed, Russia had been strongly influenced by ethnonational concepts borrowed from Austria-Hungary and Ger-

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many alongside social democratic ideas. At the turn of the 20th century, such authoritative experts on the national issue as K. Kautsky, O. Bauer, and K. Renner took part in the discussion about the essence of the concept of nation and the possible — territorial and exterritorial — forms of national self-identification.

In Russia, Bolsheviks, following classical Marxist authors, considered the national issue from the tactical perspective. Lenin — and later Stalin — sharply criticised exterritorial national and cultural autonomy, which would threaten the ‘unity of workers of all nations’ [5; 6]. However, the right of nations to self-identification in the form of national autonomies could attract the population of peripheral areas, where the proportion of proletariat was rather insignificant, to the Bolsheviks’ cause. National self-identification was believed to become one of the key elements in the struggle for power, later it had to be replaced by new international forms of identity [4].

In effect, the Soviet ‘national territory’ model of federalism and administrative division based on controversial and eclectic principles [16], as well as ethnic deportations and repatriations, contributed to the persistence of a primordial interpretation of ethnicity in the minds of the population. It dates back to the traditionalistic, primarily agrarian, inert society, where ethnos was considered as an objective kinship and marriage-based social association of people having common interests and goals. Ethnicity, assigned by birth, was an obligatory entry in national IDs until the 1990s. As a result, the dominance of the primordial approach to ethnicity in the minds of ordinary citizens and most of the Russian elite poses a serious challenge for the country’s future.

Prior to censuses, official lists of peoples and their hierarchy were approved by the country’s political leadership. Moreover, the lists were largely affected by the particularities of the current political situation.

The post-Soviet censuses of 2002 and 2010 were conducted and are analysed against the background of the dispute about the nature of ethnicity. In the 1990-2000s, there emerged new ethnic trends — specific features of ethnicity reproduction in large cities, multiple or uncertain ethnic identities, and a rapidly changing ethnic identity under the impact of political shifts or its mobilisation in conflict situations. These trends can be explained using the instrumentalist and constructivist concepts focused on either the functions of ethnicity or the ways of its mobilisation and cultivation [8; 13; 14].

Except for the expanded list of ethnic groups, post-Soviet censuses were poorly adapted to the new processes [10; 11]. One of their key problems was the unambiguous interpretation of ethnicity and the quality of census organisation. Cases of questionnaires filled in without personal interviews, using the data available to the authorities, were registered almost everywhere. Intensive migration processes, a significant increase in the temporarily registered and non-registered population reduces the number of census participants. However, despite all their flaws, censuses remain the key source of data on the territorial structure of the population’s ethnic composition. This structure is affected by a combination of the classical ethnodemographic processes relating to natural changes and migration and

nationally new ones relating to the transformation and complication of the ethnic identity structure.

An analysis of territorial shifts in the composition of Russia's *ethnic space* traditionally includes three key components:

— *Russian 'mega nucleus'*, whose boundaries, according to V. N. Strel'tsky, largely (but not completely) correspond to the border of the 'Russian' regions [12];

— *national regions* sharply differentiated by their proportion in the country's population and the proportion of title ethnic groups;

— transitional *ethnic contact zone*, whose structure has become much more intricate over the past decades.

'Internal' ethnic contact zones — large cities with a mosaic ethnic composition are expanding alongside the traditional contact zone belts on the periphery of the Russian mega nucleus. Although, as a rule, the proportion of large cities' ethnic minorities is not very significant, their activity, competition in the labour market, and ethnicity-based settlement areas attract increasing attention [3]. However, there is no definite answer to the question whether the large cities' ethnic diasporas are groups of people brought together by objective goals and needs or groups that are artificially constructed and mobilised by the elites.

The configuration of the *Russian mega nucleus* — territories characterised by the absolute dominance (over 80%) of Russians in the ethnic composition — has not significantly changed over the post-Soviet period (fig. 1). However, even in view of serious errors in the census data and despite the general stability¹, one can observe various unfolding in these regions. Only on the periphery of the Central and Northwestern regions, the proportion of Russians and their 'satellites'² in the ethnic structure of population is relatively stable, whereas its decrease is correlated with the increase in the number of questionnaires with unspecified ethnicity (fig. 2). Most of these regions located beyond the -Black earth area are not very attractive in socio-economic terms.

In the Central Black Earth region, the stable high proportion of Slavic ethnic groups is accounted for by the changing identity of Russian Ukrainians. Not only within Sloboda Ukraine at the modern Russian-Ukrainian border, but also in the other regions, Ukrainians and Belarusians demonstrate an increasingly complex and often dual ethnic identity. This is manifested in the rapid decrease in the

¹ If the ethnic structure is calculated not as part of total population but as that of those who answered the ethnicity question, the proportion of Russians and their 'satellites' is decreasing at a much slower rate (from 83.3% in 2002 to 82.9% in 2010), whereas the proportion of Russians 'proper' slightly increased from 79.8% to 81.5% [9]. However, the failure to take into account 'unsure' respondents, whose proportion is rather considerable in the most urbanised and attractive for migrants regions, does not seem to be justified.

² V. V. Pokshishevsky coined the term Russian 'satellites' to describe Ukrainians and Belarusians who, alongside Russians, took the most active part in the colonisation processes in the Russian Empire and the USSR and entered into inter-ethnic marriages [7].

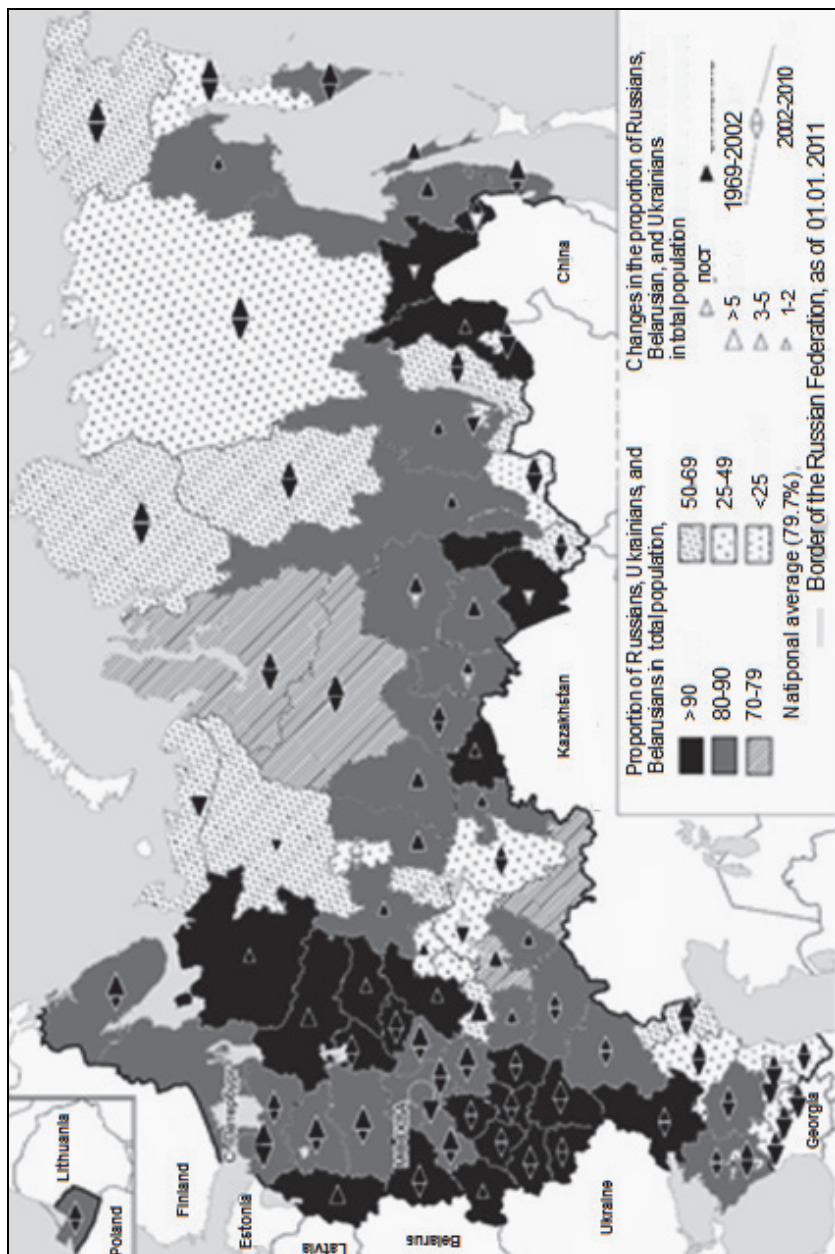


Fig. 1. The Russian 'mega nucleus' according to the 2010 census

proportion of Ukrainians and Belarusians³ in the post-Soviet period, which cannot be explained by purely ethnodemographic processes, including migration [2].

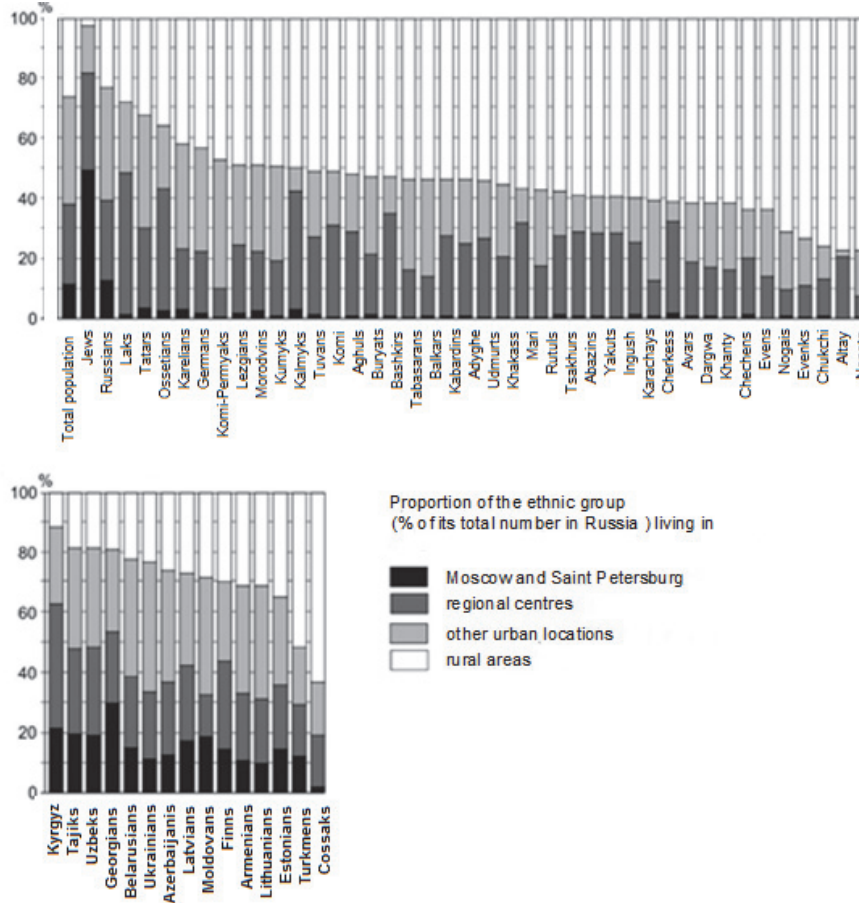


Fig. 2. The urbanisation level of ethnic groups in Russia, according to the 2010 census:
 (a) — titular peoples of Russian national autonomies,
 (b) — titular peoples of former Soviet republics

³ In 2002—2010, the proportion of Ukrainians and Belarusian continued to rapidly decrease across the country, including the Russian-Ukrainian borderlands. Alongside natural decrease and insignificant migration outflow, another significant factor was the assimilation processes following the disintegration of the USSR: as generations changed, the youth increasingly associated themselves with the dominant ethnocultural tradition. Although Ukrainians remain the third largest ethnic group in Russia (1.93 million people), their numbers, as well as those of Belarusians (0.54 million people) declined almost by 55% as compared to 1989.

An increased proportion of Belarusians is still observed in the ‘trophy’ regions (the Kaliningrad region and South-East Karelia), where they were resettled in the 1940-50s after World War II. The above the national average proportion of Ukrainians is observed in many regions of the European North and the Asian part of the country, whose populated formed under the impact of pre-revolutionary settlers’ migrations and Soviet labour migrations. Ukrainians comprise over 5% of population in the Khanty-Mansi, Yamal-Nenets, and Chukotka autonomous region, and the Magadan region.

In the Asian part of the country, the proportion of Russians and their ‘satellites’ is rather high and stable within the major settlement area stretching from the West to the East along the Trans-Siberian Railway. In the 1990-2000s, large cities — especially regional centres — located along the Railway accepted part of Russians migrating from the northern territories.

In the post-Soviet period, a significant reduction in the proportion of Slavic ethnic groups in the mega-nucleus has been characteristic of economically developed and attractive for migrants Saint Petersburg, Moscow, and some regions contiguous on the capital, which serve as stopover sites on the way to Moscow. An interesting situation is observed in Moscow. The 2010 census data ‘refute’ the thesis about the increasing polyethnicity of the capital, which was demonstrated by the 2002 census. This can be explained by the low quality of the recent census and the limited coverage of the actual Moscow population.

A decrease in the proportion of Russians in the total national population is accounted for by the respondents who did not answer the ethnicity questions, which — with reservations — is one of the major trends in the transformation of the ethnic identity. In total, such respondents comprised 5.6 million people leaving behind Tatars — the second largest ethnic group in Russia. D. Bogoyavlensky quaintly called them the *second largest quasi-people* [2]. The term the **unsure**, a new element to the Russian ethnic structure, should be interpreted within the constructivist concept of ethnicity. A significant increase in their number of the unsure was accounted for by both technical errors (questionnaires completed using administrative data, which do not include information on ethnicity) and by abandoning the practice of specifying ethnicity in national IDs, which made a multiple identity possible [10; 11].

Therefore, territories with an increased proportion of the ‘unsure’ residents include regions with complicated conditions for conducting a census (remoteness and low population density) and urbanised regions with intensive migration (fig. 3). Firstly, it is federal cities, the most ‘advanced’ neighbours of the Moscow region, where this process started as early as the 1990s, and the most urbanised regions of Ural and Western Siberia.

The lowest proportion of the unsure was observed in the regions where ethnic identity is crucial for the wellbeing of an individual living under constant pressure from the society with strong traditions, where ethnic identity is a means of political mobilisation aimed to increase the proportion of the titular ethnic group. It is the republic of North Caucasus and some regions of the Middle Volga region.

A small proportion of the ‘unsure’ was also observed within the ‘ethnic contact’ zones. An exception is certain problematic areas, for instance, the Astrakhan region. In ethnic borderlands, the ethnic identity also serves as a means to mobilise different population groups, which, as the national elites believe, will help them to protect their socioeconomic interests and preserving culture.

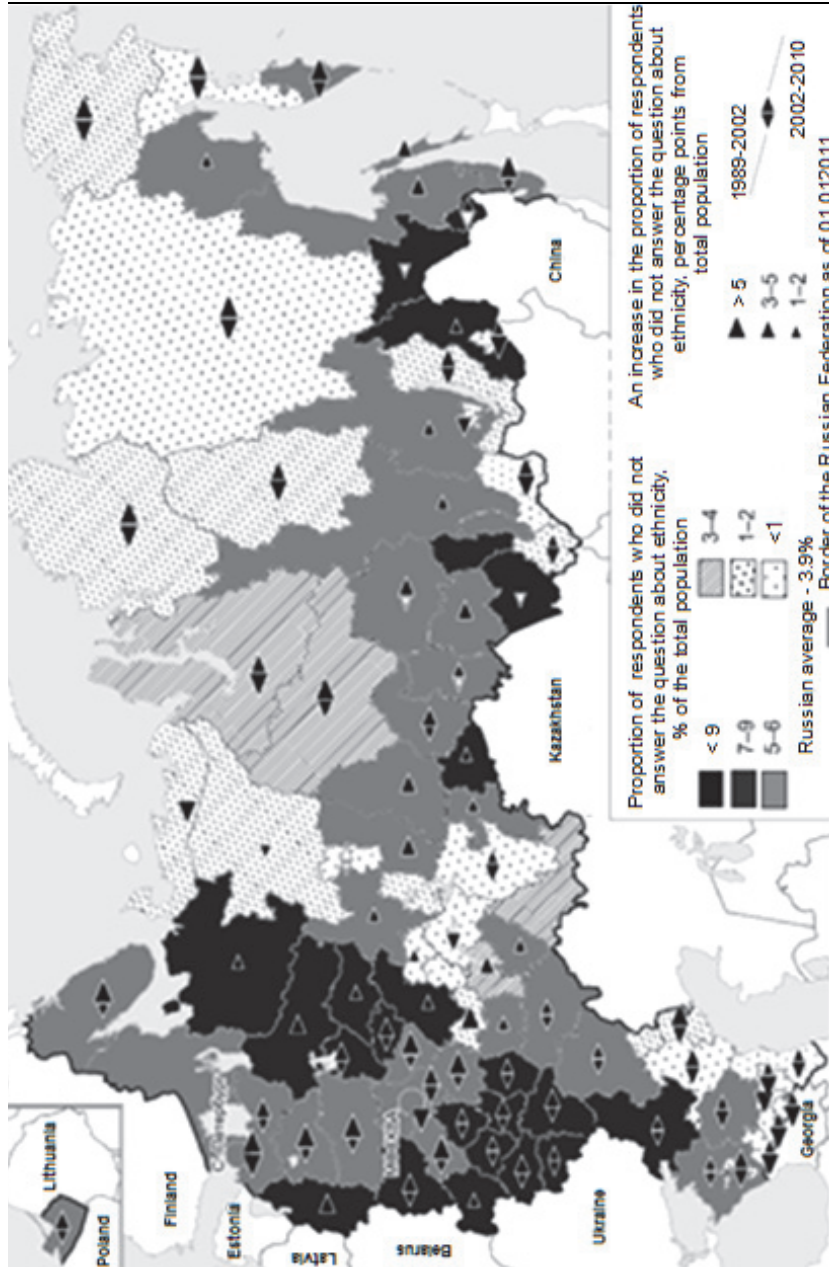


Fig. 3. Percentage of respondents who did not state their ethnicity in the 2010 census

In the 1990s, most Russian national regions⁴ exhibited another trend in the ethnic space transformation, namely, '**post-Soviet indigenisation**'⁵ — an increase in the proportion of titular ethnic groups in the population. This process continued in the 2000s, however, at a slower rate.

Nevertheless, it differed significantly from the Soviet indigenisation, being caused by a relative higher natural increase rate in the indigenous population of the national regions of North Caucasus and the country's Asian part against the background of out-migration of Russians and their 'satellites' and increasing popularity of ethnic identity. At the same time, socioeconomic instability, growing ethnic tensions, and — as it happened in Tatarstan — persistent policy towards attracting ethnic migrants from abroad led to the **concentration of titular nations in 'home' regions**, i. e. an increase in the proportion of ethnic groups residing within their national regions (table).

Titular ethnic groups in Russian national regions *
according to the 1989, 2002, and 2010 censuses

Region	Ethnic group	Proportion in the republic's population, %			Proportion of the ethnic group members living in the republic, %		
		1989	2002	2010	1989	2002	2010
<i>Republics</i>							
Chechnya	Chechens	...	93.5	95.1	—	75.8	84.3
Ingushetia	Ingush	...	77.3	93.5	—	87.4	86.7
Chechen-Ingushetia	<i>Total</i>	70.7	94.9**	95.9**	—	—	—
	<i>Chechens</i>	57.8	71.7**	72.9**	81.7	82.9**	85.6**
	<i>Ingush</i>	12.9	23.2**	23.0**	76.1	88.1**	87.0**
Dagestan	<i>Total</i>	80.2	86.6	87.4	—	—	—
	<i>Avars</i>	27.5	29.4	29.2	91.2	93.1	93.2
	<i>Dargins</i>	15.6	16.5	16.9	79.4	83.4	83.2
	<i>Kumyks</i>	12.9	14.2	14.8	83.6	86.6	85.8
	<i>Lezgians</i>	11.3	13.1	13.2	79.4	81.8	81.3
	<i>Laks</i>	5.1	5.4	5.5	86.3	89.3	90.3
Tyva	Tuvans	64.3	77.0	81.0	96.3	96.7	94.5
Kabardino-Balkaria	<i>Total</i>	57.6	67.0	69.7	—	—	—
	<i>Kabardians</i>	48.2	55.3	57.0	94.2	95.9	94.9
	<i>Balkarians</i>	9.4	11.6	12.6	90.4	96.8	96.2

⁴ Here and below, the study uses information on national administrative units as of 2002.

⁵ The indigenisation policy was announced at the 10th Congress of the RCP (b) almost simultaneously with the introduction of the new economic policy and national division efforts. It suggested 'nurturing local cadre and reliance on the indigenous population of the republics'. One of the key objectives of the policy was strengthening the centre's paternalism, bringing up a new Soviet elite, struggle with traditional cultures, and development of symbols and meanings of an industrial society [16]. However, its 'side effects' shortly became evident — separatist attitudes among the national elite started to increase, which became especially pronounced as the Soviet state grew weaker.

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Region	Ethnic group	Proportion in the republic's population, %			Proportion of the ethnic group members living in the republic, %		
		1989	2002	2010	1989	2002	2010
Chuvashia	Chuvash	67.8	67.7	65.1	51.1	54.3	56.7
North Ossetia-Alania	Ossetians	53.0	62.7	64.5	83.2	86.5	87.0
Kalmykia	Kalmyks	45.4	53.3	56.2	88.2	89.6	88.7
Tatarstan	Tatars	48.5	52.9	53.2	32.0	36.0	37.9
Karachay-Cherkessia	Total	40.9	49.8	52.5	—	—	—
	<i>Cherkess</i>	9.7	11.3	11.8	79.3	81.9	77.2
	<i>Karachays</i>	31.2	38.5	40.7	86.1	88.0	89.0
Sakha (Yakutia)	Yakuts	33.4	45.5	48.7	96.1	97.4	97.6
Mari El	Mari	43.3	42.9	41.8	50.4	51.7	53.1
Mordovia	Mordvins	32.5	31.9	39.9	29.2	33.7	44.8
Altay	Altay	31.0	32.7	33.9	85.2	92.5	92.7
Buryatia	Buryats	24.0	27.8	29.5	59.8	61.3	62.2
Bashkortostan	Bashkirs	21.9	29.8	28.8	64.2	73.0	74.0
Udmurtia	Udmurts	30.9	29.3	27.0	69.5	72.3	74.3
Adygea	Adyghe	22.1	24.2	24.3	77.7	84.1	85.8
Komi	Komi	23.3	25.2	22.5	86.7	87.4	88.7
Khakassia	Khakass	11.1	12.0	12.0	80.1	86.5	87.2
Karelia	Karelians	10.0	9.2	7.1	63.2	70.3	74.9
<i>Autonomous regions</i>							
Agin-Buryat	Buryats	54.9	62.5	65.1	10.1	10.1	10.9
Komi-Permyak	Komi-Permyaks	60.2	59.0	54.2	64.8	64.1	66.7
Ust-Orda	Buryats	36.3	39.6	39.8	11.8	12.1	10.8
Koryak	Koryaks	16.5	26.7	30.3	73.5	76.7	71.4
Taymyr	Total	13.2	21.5	25.8	—	—	—
	Dolgans	8.9	13.9	15.7	75.0	76.0	68.4
	Nenets	4.4	7.7	10.1	7.2	7.4	7.8
Chukotka	Chukchi	7.3	23.5	25.3	78.9	80.1	80.3
Evenk	Evenks	14.0	21.5	22.0	11.6	10.7	9.3
Nenets	Nenets	11.9	18.7	17.8	18.8	18.8	16.8
Yamalo-Nenets	Nenets	4.2	5.2	5.7	61.2	64.0	66.7
Khanty-Mansi	Total	1.4	1.9	2.0	—	—	—
	Khanty	0.9	1.2	1.2	53.4	59.7	61.6
	Mansi	0.5	0.7	0.7	79.3	86.5	89.5
Jewish	jews	4.2	1.2	0.9	1.7	1.0	1.0

* As of 2002

** Within the borders of Chechen-Ingush Republic as of 1989

However, these trends manifested rather ambiguously and with different intensity largely due to the development particularities of previous historical stages. A significant contribution to these processes is made by the ethnodemographic factor. Almost all North Caucasian ethnic groups either increased or maintained their numbers over the past inter-census period due to

a stable positive natural increase rate. The titular ethnic groups of Ural and Volga regions and the European North of Russia have not showed high natural increase rates in the post-Soviet period. Therefore, three major groups of Russian national regions are identified based on the features of transformations in the ethnic structure of population in the post-war period (fig. 4).

In the regions of the *first group* — the republics of North Caucasus, Kalmykia, and Tyva — a rapid decrease in the proportion of Russian-speaking population is a continuation of the preceding trend. At first, it was a result of different natural increase rates in different ethnic group. Later, another factor appeared — the migration outflow of Russian-speaking population forced out of the republics. All the above increases the influence of traditional cultures in these regions, contributes to the preservation of traditional practices, institutions and, thus, the traditional ethnic identity, which successfully competes with the civil and national political identity. Even regular labour migrations from these regions to large cities, which involve a significant part of the male population, cannot undermine this basic identity.

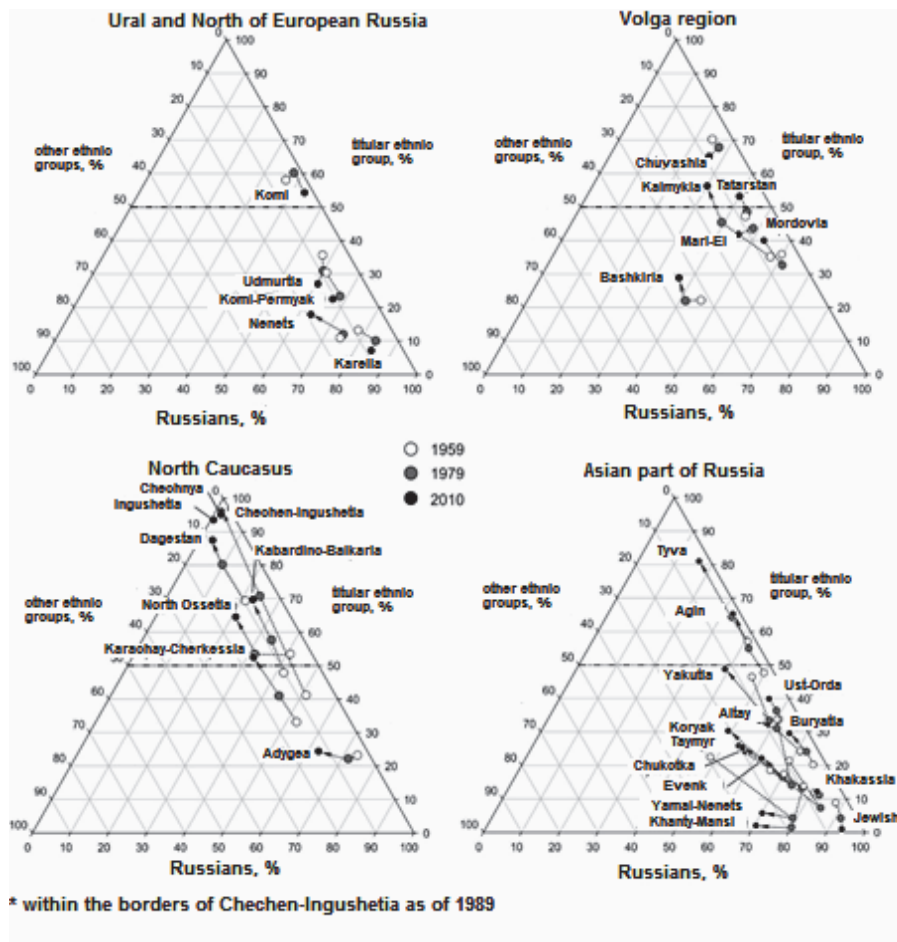


Fig. 4. Ethnic composition of the population of Russian national regions



A completely different situation is observed in the regions of the *second group* comprised of most national regions of Russia's European North and the Ural and Volga regions, where the natural decrease in the indigenous population is accompanied by assimilation processes. This usually results in an insignificant increase in the proportion of Russians and their 'satellites'. The 2010 census shows that this trend suddenly reversed in Mordovia without any objective reasons, which is usually explained by either 'technical particularities of census organisation' or 'community outreach'. This 'exception' does not make the prevalence of a more complex dual or multiple ethnic identity any less real.

A different pattern is observed only in two Turkic republics. In Tatarstan, a low natural increase rate is accompanied by an active socioeconomic and migration policy against the background of gradual outflow of the Russian-speaking population. In Bashkortostan, the situation is complicated by almost equal representation of three ethnic groups — Bashkirs (28.8 %), Tatars (24.8 %), and Russians (35.2 %). The changes in the ethnic structure (especially at the municipal level) registered in the 1979, 1989, and 2002 censuses that can hardly be explained by regular reasons have become a textbook case of the influence of administrative factor on census results.

The *third group* consists of either resource-oriented or poorly economically developed recently reclaimed regions of the country's Asian part. In these regions, the intensive 'post-Soviet indigenisation' was caused not by high natural increase rates in the indigenous ethnic groups, but rather by a rapid outflow of Russian-speaking population caused by economic factors — a reduction in the number of and increasing competition for prestigious jobs, a decrease in the standards of living and relative income. In these regions, different population groups seem to combine different types of ethnic identity, including multiple one. Moreover, the titular ethnic identity is often mobilised by the political elites, as it happened in the Republic of Altay prior to the 2010 census.

The concentration of ethnic groups within 'home' republics results in a low urbanisation level (see fig. 2), which contributes to the preservation of ethnic traditionalism. Except for Russians, only Tatars and Ossetins — whose traditional settlement areas became home to large economic and administrative centres — have a high proportion of urban population. Traumatic historical past and forced migrations contributed to a higher urbanisation level in Jews and Laks⁶.

A higher urbanisation level is observed in the ethnic diasporas of former Soviet republics, which developed largely due to the Soviet and post-Soviet labour migrations. The concentration of diaspora members is rather high in

⁶ For the 'first' time it happened during the campaign for resettling mountaineers into submountain and plain areas, which was fervently pursued by the Soviet authorities. In 1944, a number of Laks were resettled into the newly formed Novolaksky district, whose lands were left vacant following the deportation of the Akkin Chechens. In 2011, against the background of growing ethnic tensions and the territory claims of the Akkin Chechens who returned from deportation, a decision was made to resettle the residents of the Novolaksky district into the Kirovsky City district of Makhachkala. This solution is fraught with ethnic conflicts.

regional centres and capitals. The only exceptions are Kazkaks, who prefer settling in the rural areas bordering on Kazakhstan and Turkmens — 40% of the diaspora live in the rural areas of the Stavropol region, where they were resettled from the Mangyshlak Peninsula in the late 17th - early 18th century.

Diaspora members remain leaders in the increase rate among all Russian ethnic groups. In the 1990s, the most rapidly growing ethnic group was Tajiks and persons of Transcaucasian origin forced out of their homelands by violent ethnic conflicts and the economic situation. In the 2000s, the maximum rates were demonstrated, first, by Central Asian people — Kyrgyzs, Uzbeks, and Tajiks. According to the official data, the numbers of Georgians and Azerbaijanis slightly decreased in the 1990-2000s — a phenomenon that can hardly be given a rational explanation.

Another acknowledged trends in the development of ethnic space in post-Soviet Russia is the ‘heterogenisation of large cities’ ethnic composition’ [12, p. 1]. However, this seemingly evident trend is not universal. In Russia, there are several combinations of the level of ethnic diversity in rural areas, regional capitals, and other cities. One of the methods for examining ethnic diversity is the comparison of corresponding **ethnic mosaic indices** calculated using a technique proposed by B. M. Ekkel⁷ (fig. 5). In this case, the index is employed to assess the ‘theoretical probability of inter-ethnic contacts between nationalities’ [15].

There are two clearly opposite situations. The values of ethnic mosaic index are minimum within the ‘Russian mega nucleus’ — in both the European and Asian regions of the country located along the major settlement belt⁸. The exceptions are the centres of several regions neighbouring on the capital. Minimum values are also observed in Chechnya and Ingushetia, where almost all Russian-speaking residents were forced out in the 1990-2000. The maximum values in the rural areas are registered in the national republics accommodating several ethnic groups and the regions of ‘ethnic contact zones’ involved in mass ethnic migrations.

Although, on average, cities have a higher ethnic mosaic index, this pattern is not universal. The index values for the urban and rural areas of the ‘Russian mega-nucleus’ differ insignificantly, by 0.1-0.2. Of course, a more ethnically diverse population is found in the regional centres attracting labour migrants. In many national republics, large cities, especially capitals, also demonstrate high index values accounted for by a large proportion of Russians and their ‘satellites’. In the Russian regions, ‘ethnic contact zones’ of the Middle and Lower Volga region, North Caucasus, Ural, the country’s Asian part, and the former outposts of Russian colonisation and Soviet industrialisation, cities often show a lower mosaic index value as compared to the rural areas.

⁷ B.M. Ekkel’s ethnic composition mosaic index:

$$P = \sum_{i=1}^m \pi_i (1 - \pi_i),$$

where P is the mosaic index of the population’s ethnic structure, m the number of ethnic groups in the region, π_i the proportion of i^{th} ethnic group in the total population.

The calculation took into account ethnic groups comprising over 0.5% of the population; Russians and their ‘satellites’ were considered as a single ethnic group.

⁸ The ethnic diversity of urbanised territories might be underestimated by censuses.

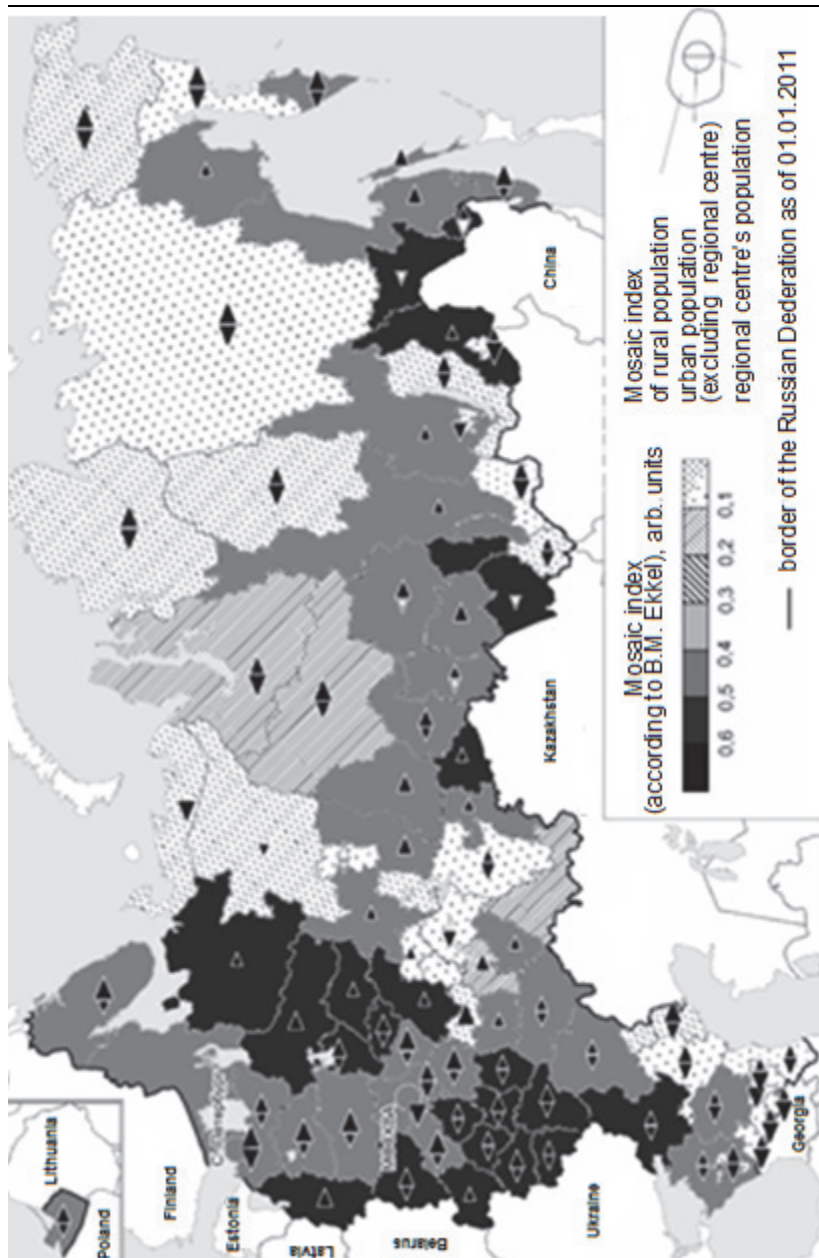


Fig. 5. Ethnic composition ethnic index according to the 2010 index

Conclusions. A comparative analysis of post-Soviet censuses' results in Russia makes it possible to speak of a complication of ethnic processes in the country. Alongside classical ethnodemographic processes, the issues of ethnic identity formation and stability play an increasingly important role.

First of all, this relates to the most attractive and economically and socio-politically prosperous regions, which demonstrate an increase in the number of people that, due to various reasons, do not answer the question about their ethnicity. These interregional differences are remarkable even in view of technical errors, whereas the thesis about the stability of 'Russian mega-nucleus' requires further investigation.

The processes manifested in the growing proportion of titular ethnic groups and the concentration of peoples in 'home' republics, characteristic of most national regions, slowed down in the 2000s. An increasingly important role is performed by labour migrations targeted primarily at the largest agglomerations. A significant part of working age (predominantly male) population spends most of the year beyond the regions of their permanent record. This 'blurs' the static territorial ethnic pattern reflected in censuses.

At the same time, the census data do not make it possible to speak of a wider ethnic diversity in the rural areas as compared to Russian cities. The ethnic mosaic index is affected by a number of factors that are dissimilar in different regions — the size and administrative status of cities, their genesis, the development of urban settlement, and the regional economic situation.

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