

Regional Studies Association - A Leading and Impactful Community

PUSHING REGIONS BEYOND THEIR BORDERS

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at the turn of XX-XXI centuries. The object of the study is the largest cities with a population of over 1 million people, the administrative centers of the regions. Unlike Moscow and St. Petersburg, these are administrative centers or “capitals” of large territories that have the status of a constituent entity of the Russian Federation. The authors emphasize the special role of cities - regional capitals in post-socialist and developing countries, where there are significant and rapid changes in the distribution of functions between the center and the regions. At the same time, cities - regional capitals are not considered as isolated objects, but as elements of a national settlement system, the leaders among Russian secondary-tier cities. The common features of the evolution of the largest regional capitals, the continuity of the factors of city formation are revealed. Considerable attention is paid to assessing the consequences of the collapse of the Soviet Union for the development of the urban settlement system. It was concluded that the “compensatory” nature of the accelerated growth of the largest regional capitals in post-Soviet Russia. “Compensatory” growth is considered as a form of adaptation of the urban settlement system to the weakening of links between its essential links. A methodical approach is proposed that allows a comparative analysis of the role of the largest regional capitals and the capital of the state in the economy of the country. In the process of testing it, an assessment was made of population dynamics, as well as key economic indicators, such as the volume of products shipped, retail turnover, investments, the volume of work in the construction of major regional pages, as well as Moscow and St. Petersburg. The evaluation results allowed the classification of the largest regional capitals in terms of their role in the economic development of the country, as well as in terms of the extent of the gap between the indicators, on the one hand, the largest regional capitals, and on the other, Moscow and St. Petersburg.

#### **URBAN CHANGE AND THE ROLE OF THE CAPITAL CITY. A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF 3 BALTIC STATES**

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Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – the three Baltic States – have experienced radical changes in their socio-spatial organization due to the transition from the Soviet regime to market-led neo-liberal economies in the 1990s. Since then the general trend in the Baltic States is population concentration in the capital city regions and shrinkage beyond them. The main focus of this study is on the (changing) dominance of the capital city regions. The aim of the present paper is two-fold. Firstly, it attempts to determine the long-term urban dynamics. Therefore, we test how well the existing theoretical models reflect the urban dynamics in the Baltic States and we invite to connect post-socialist cities in advancing these models forward. Secondly, this paper investigates the current state of urban development of three Baltic countries with the aim to better understand the role of the capital cities in the population redistribution in the context of population decline, urbanization and selective migration. Therefore, we analyse the patterns of internal migration to obtain more insight into the (changing) dominance of the capital cities in the settlement systems. This paper investigates whether the capital cities are the “winners” who concentrate younger and higher educated residents at the same time pushing away older and less educated residents. Or maybe the capital cities act as the distributors of the “successful” people to other locations within the countries? This is the first comparative Baltic study on urban and population change, which explores the patterns of internal migration using individual level census data.