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The re-emerging peasantry in Russia: 'peasants-against-their-own-will', 'summertime peasants' and 'peasant-farmers'¹

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Abstract

This paper aims at conceptualising the re-emerging Russian peasantry by looking at objective characteristics (land use, production mode, and market relations) and subjective ones (peasant identity, land attachment, and cross-generational transfer of peasant culture) of the contemporary rural population, involved in individualized agricultural production. We argue that the post-Soviet transition in Russia is causing a re-emergence of the peasantry, albeit in a very fragmented manner. Three types of 'peasants' are being distinguished: (1) 'peasants-against-their-own-will', who were part of the former collective and state farms, continuing their production on subsidiary household plots; (2) 'summertime peasants' of urban origin, who produce on their dachas plots in the weekend and holidays; and (3) subsistence-oriented 'peasant-farmers'. We conclude that land attachment of the post-Soviet peasantry has still a strong collective component, while peasant identity is weakly developed, as well as cross-generational transfer of peasant values. The re-peasantisation is therefore only partial, with fragmented communities, and a near-absence of social capital, which is necessary to defend rural and peasant communities in the long run.

Keywords: *repeasantisation; peasant-against-their-own-will; summertime peasants; peasant-farmers; land attachment; peasant identity; fragmented communities; Russia.*

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1. Introduction

Peasant producers in the Global South are becoming increasingly marginalized and often impoverished in the current process of globalization. Whether this will mean the disappearance of the peasantry (Bernstein, 2010; Mooij et al., 2000), a reassertion of peasant production or even a redefinition of the peasantry (Johnson, 2004; McMichael, 2006) is a heatedly debated question (Araghi, 1995), going back to the heart of the 'peasant question' (Akram-Lodhi and Kay, 2010; who referred to the original work by Kautsky, published in 1899). The critical condition for peasants' survival depends on a 'logic of subsistence' (Johnson, 2004), i.e. an attachment to their land and knowledge of its cultivation, as central component of a peasant mode of production. Analysing the political reassertion of the 'peasant way' in programs of international peasant movements such as La Via Campesina and the Brazilian MST, McMichael (2006: 412) argues that the twenty-first century peasantry reassesses "the right to farm as a social act of stewardship of the land and food redistribution against the destabilising and exclusionary impacts of the neoliberal model".

When looking at family farmers in the Global North, who followed an entrepreneurial mode of production, van der Ploeg (2013: 128) observes that they got locked in a vicious circle of scale enlargement, technologically driven intensification and tightening of the dependency relations with the food industries, banks and retail chains. Losing their independence and balance between labour and consumption these farmers seem to become less efficient and highly vulnerable to the fluctuations in food markets. In contrast, there are gradually more European and North American farmers who follow a different route. They try to reduce their dependency on external resources (including credit), optimise the use of internally available ones, become closely involved in relations with 'living nature', and differentiate their activities in order to increase family labour income. These, as van der Ploeg argues, are the re-emerging components of the peasant mode of production.

While academic research continues to analyse the on-going re-peasantisation processes in developing and developed countries (van der Ploeg 2009; 2013; Johnson 2004, Hebinck and Lent 2008, as examples), rural transformations in the contemporary post-Soviet countries seem to be understudied, with some notable exceptions (Spoor and Visser, 2001; 2004; Wegren, 2005a; 2005b; 2009; Pallot and Nefedova, 2007). This is rather surprising to note as the 'peasant question' in Russia in the beginning of the 20th century was the starting point for the global debates on persistence and disappearance of the peasantry in the face of capitalist expansion. This generated bitter polemics between the Leninist and the populist (or Chayanovian) position on the future of the Russian rural society and the peasantry. The Leninist school of thought saw the peasantry as a backward class, destined either to become a rural proletariat or capitalist farmers (Zemstov, 1991; Bernstein, 2010). In contrast Chayanov argued that the economic laws that govern peasant societies are distinct from capitalist ones, guaranteeing peasant persistence and enabling them to produce food, and make significant contributions to the development of society as a whole (van der Ploeg, 2013; and previously Shanin, 1973).

The Leninist peasant disappearance thesis has largely predefined the Soviet government policy in rural areas. The elimination of the peasantry as a class started with the collectivisation campaign (1928-1933), which was accompanied by violent persecution of wealthy peasants (the so-called *kulaks*). Land and other property of peasants were expropriated in favour of creating large collective and state farms (*kolkhozy* and *sovkhozy*), and although there were differences between the two types of organizations, peasants were transformed into agricultural workers (Visser et al., 2012). The creation of this rural working class was aimed at the realisation of socialist objectives of material equity and workers'

democracy. In fact, the erosion of decentralised individual small-scale farming gave the Soviet government greater control over value-creation in the agricultural sector, which provided resources for the industrialisation of the country.

After the collapse of the USSR in 1991, the state's attention shifted back to the peasant mode of production; at least the discourse on the importance of family farming gained prominence. The following land reform of the early 1990s was aimed at distribution of land of collective and state farms to their workers in order to create private farming in Russia. However, this was done in the form of distribution of land shares, and because of various limitations, such as the absence of financial resources, extension services, and the existence of fragmented and dysfunctional markets and institutions, the majority of rural dwellers did not become private farmers (Visser and Spoor, 2011; Wegren, 2005b). Instead, the former *kolkhozy* and *sovkhozy* transformed into large farm enterprises or LFEs (Spoor et al., 2012).

Today, this new, but also old form of large-scale agricultural mode of production defines the development of the Russian countryside. However, in contrast to the Soviet *kolkhozy* and *sovkhozy*, the contemporary large-scale agricultural operators are not interested in creating employment for the rural population and apply modern capital-intensive technologies which decrease the demand for labour (Visser and Spoor, 2011). Rural dwellers are often left to themselves and in order to survive became largely dependent on subsistence farming at their household plots (Wegren, 2005b).

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union the share of personal subsidiary farming (*lichnoye podsobnoye khoziaystvo*) in total agricultural gross domestic product has increased from 26.3 percent in 1990 to 45.0 percent in 2012 (Rosstat, 2013). To date rural households produce 93 percent of the country's potatoes, 80 percent of the vegetables, 51 percent of the milk and 54 percent of the meat, either for family consumption or for sale in the local markets (ibid). These facts make us presume that the transformation from socialism to capitalism in Russia causes a re-emergence of the peasant mode of production, rather than its disappearance. However, re-peasantisation in the Russian context has different characteristics if compared with the processes which were studied in other countries, as one will not find the traditional peasant "attachment to land", or close links between peasants and nature.

In this paper we analyse therefore the re-peasantisation process in a critical manner and will look in detail at the characteristics of a re-emerging peasantry in Russia. We will argue that there is neither a universal framework to define the contemporary peasantry, nor a common approach that can categorize the current changes in the countryside as re-peasantisation. The Russian peasant mode of production is largely predefined by the existing agrarian structure and historical (Tsarist and Soviet) legacies. Therefore, the "new peasantries" in Russia have unique features that show similarities with other post-Soviet countries, but are rather peculiar compared with peasants from the Global South and North.

We therefore aim to reconceptualise the post-Soviet peasants by looking at the objective characteristics (land use, production mode, and engagement in market relations) and subjective characteristics (peasant identity, land attachment, and cross-generational transactions of peasant culture). In this way we combine the analysis of socio-economic parameters with a cultural identity-focused approach. The main questions of this research are: What are the characteristics of the Russian re-peasantisation? Who are the Russian peasants today? and finally, What is the future of the peasantry in Russia?, although the latter question can only be answered in only a partial and preliminary manner.

Our research is largely based on qualitative data (interviews and observations) collected by the first author during recent fieldwork in the Moscow region in spring/summer 2013. In total, 18 households (8 rural families, 7 urban dwellers who conduct subsistence farming in

the countryside, and 3 farmer families) were interviewed in-depth on the subject of land attachments, rural values, community relations, and visions for the future of the Russian peasantry. The choice for villages in the Moscow region, i.e. a suburban area, was more or less defined by the process of “shrinking space” in rural Russia. According to Nefedova (2009; 2011) the process of development of the vast rural spaces of Russia is associated with the reduction of the area of settled territories and concentration of population, infrastructure, and economy around urban settlements. She argues that villagers tend to move to suburban districts within average radius of 30-40 kilometres, while the rest of the countryside is left largely depopulated and even abandoned, what creates increased polarization of rural spaces in Russia. Following the assumption that re-peasantisation is taking place in populated (rather than depopulating) territories, we narrowed our research to peri-rural (or peri-urban) districts, consciously overlooking the hinterland.

In addition to the qualitative material above mentioned, we will use the results of the survey, carried out by the Institute of Geography of Russian Academy of Sciences and the Higher School of Economics within the “Ugory Project: The Environment and the People of the Near North²” in 2008 (hereinafter, Ugory Project survey 2008). This survey was carried out in the Ugory and Leontyevskaya rural settlements (located 600 kilometres away from Moscow, between Kostroma and Kirov). In total, 109 rural households took part in this survey. The results of the survey were presented in Nefedova (2008).

Furthermore, various academic sources, media publications, and statistical material from the Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat) and the Ministry of Agriculture of Russia are used to strengthen the empirical base of our analysis.

The paper is structured as follows. In the second section we define which features the Russian rural society inherited from the past and how these are influencing the peasants’ perception of equity, private property and mode of production. In section three we define and characterise the three (re-)emerging types of Russian peasants, based on particularities of their mode of production, origin and identity, and lifestyle. These are the ‘peasants-against-their-own-will’, ‘summertime peasants’ and ‘peasant-farmers’. Section four provides an analysis of the relationships between these three groups and reasons for possible conflicts that arise during their interactions. The close link between land attachment and peasant identity is analysed and problematised in section five. The contemporary peasant mode of production that includes subsistence farming and (in amongst the peasant-farmers) semi-entrepreneurial agriculture is described in the section six. In order to hypothesize about further development of the peasantry in Russia we refer to the peasants’ opinion about their future and cross-generational transfer of peasant culture in section seven. Section eight draws some preliminary conclusions.

2. Tsarist and Soviet Legacies of the Peasantry

As we have argued above, the legacies of the past influence the on-going changes in rural areas of Russia today. In this section we will define what features the Russian rural society inherited from the Tsarist and Soviet past, and how these influence the peasant perception of equity, private and common property, and modes of production.

² The Near North of Russia is the territory (in particular Siberia) remote from the Trans-Siberian railroad and other roads at the distance of 300-800 km. It is located outside the zone of permafrost, and has enough natural and climatic conditions for the development of certain types of agriculture: various crops (including flax crops), dairy and dairy-beef cattle, forestry (including deep processing of wild plants).

According to Ioffe and Nefedova (1998), during the Soviet era Russian villagers retained and strengthened their collectivist values from Tsarist times, and lost their desire for individual landownership.³ For centuries, Russian peasants belonged to a land commune (*mir* or *obshchina*), governed by village elders (*skhod*). Even after the emancipation of the serfs in 1861, peasants in their everyday work had little independence from the *obshchina*⁴ (Kingston-Mann, 1980; Andusev, 2003), and peasant households mostly did not have fixed entitlement to the land they cultivated. Land was frequently redistributed anew among the villagers' households according to the needs (and capacity) of households (e.g. depending on changes in household size).⁵ Herzen (1848), and later Marx (1881), argued that there was a lack of bourgeois impulses towards ownership among Russian peasants and they saw the *obshchina* as a prototype of the socialist society. The contemporary Russian ethnologist Vyacheslav Ivanov defines the Russian peasant as being part a collectivist society, stressing that "[i]n the traditional Russian village not the individual, but the whole community was important" (2008: 122).

Private property was first introduced in Russian villages during the Stolypin land reform (1905-1906). The success of this reform has been often debated. Some argue that peasants welcomed and thrived under a free market policy (Macey, 2005). Others stated that "the individualisation of Russian agriculture was a hopeless struggle to aid the peasantry in their efforts to resist economic progress" (Maslov, 1907: 345). Even the statistical numbers on beneficiaries vary. According to Dower and Markevich (2011), most peasants stayed in the *obshchina*, and only 10 percent of them received titled land plots. Macey (2005) refers to a larger number (25 percent) who adopted independent family farming based upon land plots that had received land titles.

Despite different assessments of the results of the Stolypin land reform, its overall impact was rather limited. The majority of rural dwellers continued to stay within their *obshchina*. Moreover, the newly established independent family farms, that emerged as a result of the Stolypin reforms, did not last for long, making independent family farming a brief (and rather partial) phenomenon in Russia's history. Private land ownership was terminated by Stalin's collectivisation campaign of 1928-1933, accompanied by violent persecution against the *kulaks*. The rest of the rural communities were forced into collective and state farms (*kolkhozy* and *sovkhozy*), and for about 60 years, Russian rural dwellers worked as agricultural workers on collective or state land, rather than being peasants.

Nevertheless, despite the propagated proletarianisation of the countryside, the term 'Soviet peasant' became an official social category, which emerged and was used throughout the 1930s until the 1960s, while it even flourished during the Brezhnev period of the 1970s and 1980s (Humphrey, 2002: 140). However, Soviet peasants had little in common with the traditional peasantry as we understand it elsewhere. According to Koznova (1997: 361), the values of individual labour, the autonomous household economy, and independence in general, were repressed in Soviet villages, while corporatism and egalitarianism were enforced and maintained. Additional to their work on collective or state farms, rural dwellers were allowed to exercise small-scale subsidiary farming on household plots (which had a

³ However, we acknowledge that currently collectivist values often exist side by side with more individualist notions in the Russian countryside (Miller and Heady, 2003).

⁴ The *obshchina* controlled and redistributed the common arable, pastoral and forest land, and pursued various administrative and social functions, such as tax collection and protection of its members' interests in disputes with the state and landlords.

⁵ Although some aspects may be unique, the principle of a strong community influence on land distribution is common practice (see e.g. Scott, 1985).

average size of around 0.2 hectare). This individual farming provided an important additional source of living for rural workers (Nefedova, 2013). Therefore, the way of life of Soviet “peasants” was based on a tense relation between wage work for collective and state farms and labour invested in the subsidiary household plot (Humphrey, 2002: 140; Visser, 2003; 2009).

The post-socialist distributive land reform was initiated by the new Russian government after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The land of collective and state farms was distributed by means of share-based certificates to rural dwellers. Individual ownership of such land could occur through land-share registration and privatisation.⁶ However, these procedures required “significant time and financial resources due to the highly bureaucratic system in the country” (Visser et al., 2012: 904). Moreover, the majority of rural families had household plots for subsistence and most households had limited human and financial capital. Therefore, the increase of land holdings through the privatisation of distributed land shares in order to establish an independent family farm was attractive and/or feasible for only a relatively small percentage of rural households (Wegren, 2005b: 19). As a result, less than 10 percent of Russian rural dwellers registered property rights on distributed lands in order to establish private farms (Poshkus, 2009), and even less did actually do the latter.

Since 2003 land (share) sales became legalised in Russia, which attracted domestic and foreign investors to invest in Russian farmlands. The land share certificates were often acquired from rural dwellers for little money or with no compensation at all (Visser and Spoor, 2011). The new land owners restructured the unprofitable former collective farms and established new large farm enterprises. Spoor, Visser and Mamonova (2012), in their recent study on Russia’s agricultural productive potential, argued that the land reform did not, in fact, fundamentally change the existing land ownership. The collective agricultural enterprises were transformed into large-scale agro-companies, while a large part of the rural population continued to conduct subsistence farming at their household plots. In addition, “due to the socialist tradition of industrialized farming operations, rural inhabitants regard themselves primary as workers and not as land owners” (Petrick et al., 2013: 164). Therefore, the new (but also continuous) system of industrial agriculture seems to be largely socially accepted in the country.

The new large-scale agricultural operators apply economy of scale and labour-saving technologies, which negatively influences employment in the countryside. As there are no other accessible income-generating activities, many young and economically active rural dwellers migrated from Russian villages to urban centres, while the remaining (predominantly aged) population became highly dependent on subsistence farming. This means that the current agrarian structure is primarily bi-modal, with the share of emerged private (commercial) farmers in Russia remaining relatively insignificant (as it produces only 8.5 percent of gross agricultural product in 2012). Nefedova (2013) writes: “despite the 70 years of eradication of small-scale farming, it appeared to be immortal, and it has gotten a second wind after 1990. However, it is due not so much to the establishment of private farming, as to the crisis-related small-scale agrarianisation of rural spaces and expansion of the role of the household plot production” (ibid: 117, *translated by the authors*).

In addition to the increasing dependency of rural dwellers on household food production, the emergence of private family farms, the transition period brought other small-scale agricultural producers to the countryside. There is an increase in migration of urban dwellers

⁶ In order to become a private owner of the land, a land-share holder had to privatize the land. Alternatively, the land-share holder could transform his/her share into authorized capital of reorganized collective enterprise and become a shareholder of the enterprise.

from the overcrowded cities to the countryside (summer or weekend-based migration), who produce ecologically good and cheap food products. Therefore we consider three groups, the 'peasants-against-their-own-will', the 'summertime peasants', and the 'peasant-farmers'. These three groups, we argue, represent the re-peasantisation process in Russia, and will be discussed first separately below.

3. The three flows of re-peasantisation

According to official statistics, the number of rural dwellers in Russia has been decreasing during the transition period since 1991. After the collapse of the USSR villages lost more than 2.5 million people (due to natural decline and strong out-migration), although the share of rural population in the total has only decreased from 27 percent in 1990 to 26 percent in 2012. This surprising statistic should be however be seen in the light of a reduction of the urban population, with a much lower life expectancy in the 1990s (Rosstat, 2013). However, it would be wrong to search for peasants amongst rural dwellers only. McGee (1973), and later Kearney (1996), argued that peasants exist both in rural and urban areas. Nefedova (2013) identified that rural life-style was inherently present among many urbanites in Russia. She calculated that 44 percent of urban dwellers conduct subsistence farming and it is the main income for 6 percent of them (ibid: 24). Therefore, the official statistical decrease in rural population based on their place of residence, is likely to underestimate the amount of people with a rural lifestyle. Nefedova suggests that 40 percent of Russian population might be referred as rural if this phenomenon is taken into account. We therefore go beyond the definition of the peasant as a rural citizen, practicing a traditional subsistence agriculture, and distinguish three types of (re-)emerging small-scale farm producers, who share the peasant mode of production.

3.1. Peasants-against-their-own-will

As it was demonstrated in section two, the Soviet legacy influenced the rural dwellers' decision whether to leave the collective farm units and start with private farming after the collapse of the USSR. The majority of villagers continued to define themselves as wage workers and did not want private property over land and economic independence (Humphrey, 2002). However, many large-farm enterprises appeared to be unprofitable and were not able to survive in the new market economy. Some of them got bankrupt and their lands were left abandoned; others were declared bankrupt by "investors" who aimed to acquire the land and property for a little money in order to establish new large-scale farm enterprises, or use the land for urban development in sub-urban areas (Visser and Spoor, 2011; Visser et al., 2012).

As a consequence, many former collective rural workers became unemployed. Migration to urban areas was an option only for few of these villagers: unemployment in urban settlements was often as large as in the countryside (as industry had collapsed in the early 1990s because of insufficient competitiveness), while the rural population was also not able to compete with city dwellers for well-paid jobs due to low quality of formal education. Because of a collective mind-set and complicated and unclear procedures of land rights registration, not many rural dwellers took the risk to establish private farms. Having no access to other income generating activities rural dwellers intensified food production at their subsidiary household plots. Thus, they became subsistence farmers, i.e. small-scale agricultural producers who grow food to feed themselves and their families, using family labour, and engaging in market relations by selling their produce in order to purchase consumer goods, necessary for their subsistence. Rural households that have become highly dependent on

subsistence farming (called in Russia personal subsidiary farming, or *lichnoye podsobnoye khoziaystvo*) on their household plots because there were no other options to survive. We therefore define them as '*peasants-against-their-own-will*'. In an interview with Alexander (52) from the village Borovikovo this category was provided a more precise content:

My family has begun to conduct the personal subsidiary farming on our household plot since 2005. It was caused by the closure of the kolkhoz "Kolos" in our village, where I, together with my wife had been working before. Subsidiary farming became the means which allowed us to survive in these conditions. At this moment we have four milk cows, three calves and 8 pigs. Now I realize that my family would not survive without this subsidiary farming. I am 52 years old. It is impossible to get a job in our small village at this age. And I have to feed my family somehow. [...] About a quarter of the Borovikovo residents are doing the same as I do, i.e. subsidiary farming. Another quarter works somewhere... The rest are either pensioners or alcoholics. They do not care. These are the sad statistics....

The category of personal subsidiary farming is for many people not really subsidiary but the main activity for the household (and more than in the Soviet era). According to the research of Vasin (2006: 173), one third of rural dwellers indicated personal subsidiary farming as the major source of livelihood for their households, and the only source for nearly 5 percent of the villagers. The composition of the average rural income is the follows: wage-work constitutes 22.6 percent, personal subsidiary farming 20.9 percent, and social transfers 21.9 percent (ibid.). Nevertheless, rural households often combine farming on their household plots with other activities (wage-work, for example), but an increased dependence (partial or complete) on subsistence agriculture is observed in the majority of rural households.

Table 1 demonstrates the development of personal subsidiary farm production in Russia during the past 20 years. There is a significant increase in the amount of land occupied by rural households (although the total is still relatively small), while the number of households remains relatively stable. Land under personal subsidiary farming increased from 0.2 hectare in 1991 to 0.43 hectare in 2011, which has occurred partly due to privatisation of collective lands, and partly due to the inclusion of vegetable garden plots into the official statistics of land possessed by households (see also below).

The increase in the amount of land used for cultivation of grains and legumes, potatoes, and vegetables (see Table 1) during the past two decades substantiates our argument about the increased importance of small-scale agricultural production in Russia. Rural dwellers cultivate more land and, consequently, produce more output. The grains and legumes output has tripled; production of vegetables has doubled; while potatoes production shows a slight increase of five percent during the period 1991-2011. Despite the increase in areas under crops, there are still reserves of uncultivated land in ownership of rural households. According to the Ugory Project survey (2008), only 28 percent of rural dwellers farms 75-100 percent of their household plots, while 20 percent uses half of their land for agricultural production. This means that there is still a potential for increased household production.

Besides the growth in output, there also are some changes in yield per hectare. There is no growth in grains and legumes, while fluctuations seem to depend on the weather conditions. However, there is an increase in the potato yields and even a significant rise of vegetable yields in 1991-2011. What this indicates is the gradual intensification of land use amongst rural households. Some increase is observed in livestock production. While cattle and pigs (slaughter weight) remain the same, there is a substantial increase in milk production by households. The same trend is observed in honey production. Small scale producers have

started to specialise in more labour-intensive farming, as they do not have competition from large-scale agricultural business in these market niches.

However, the growth in crop and livestock production through personal subsidiary farming could also be caused by an issue of measurement. While the data for the first three rows of Table 1 are from the *State Report on Land Use in Russian Federation* in 2008, 2010, and SNG STAT (the Statistical Bureau of the CIS). These provide information for rural households, but exclude small-scale farm producers with *dacha* plots, collective orchards, and vegetable gardens. The subsidiary household farm output and land under cultivation is taken from Rosstat (2013). According to Sovetov and Vernodubenko (2007), Russian statistics calculate the personal subsidiary farm production summarising the production by rural households, *dacha* holders, and users of collective orchards, and vegetable gardens.

[Table 1]

Unfortunately we do not have access to the methodology of Rosstat to be able confirm or refute this statement. Assuming they were right and there are other groups that influence the small-scale agricultural output, we confirm our second statement, that there is inflow of other small-scale farm producers into Russian agriculture, which creates an increase in gross domestic agricultural output.

3.2. *Summertime peasants*

The tradition of having land parcels for farming and recreational activities by Russian urban dwellers appeared long before the October revolution of 1917. Then white-collar workers privately owned or rented so-called *dachas*, which were seasonal or year-round second homes located in the countryside beyond the suburbs. In the early Soviet time *dachas* were the privilege of new Soviet elite, namely the Party, government officials and the intelligentsia (Ioffe and Nefedova, 1998: 1336). Another kind of *dachas* emerged after the 1950s, when land for vegetable plots was given to various Soviet state enterprises to distribute among their workers in order to allow them to produce food by themselves, which was a complementary mean of subsistence, and compensating the low salaries (Humphrey, 1998). *Dacha* plots range from 0.12 to 0.5 hectares and represent the largest-sized parcels of land available to urban population (Ioffe and Nefedova, 1998). Many urbanites that own second dwellings in the countryside, predominantly in the exurbia, use smaller parcels in so-called collective orchard comradeships, or still smaller ones as vegetable gardens (originally around 0.01 ha).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union urban demand for land outside the cities has increased. In the early 1990s the cultivation of *dacha* plots, orchards and vegetable gardens was a means to survive during the widespread economic crisis (Kopoteva, 2004). These days interest land parcels in the countryside can be explained by the desire of urban dwellers, nearly all living in multi-storey apartment buildings, to spend some time (during weekends, short holidays and in the summer) close to nature; and by the widespread belief (especially among the older part of the population) in the excessive use of agrochemicals in vegetables sold in urban supermarkets, and the higher costs of these vegetables. In 1996 there were 81.2 thousands of *dachas* occupying 11.9 thousand hectares. Since then the amount of *dachas* has doubled, and their size expanded. In 2010 there were already 172 thousands of *dachas* with 63 thousands hectares of land. The amount of orchards and vegetable gardens remain the same (*The State Report on Land Use in Russian Federation*, 2010). According to Ioffe and

Nefedova (1998) altogether about 60 percent of Russian urbanites use some kind of a summer dwelling outside a city, with a piece of land performing both farming and recreational functions. Unfortunately, there is no available statistical information on the amount of farm products produced by these small-scale producers. According to the fieldwork observations for this research, the *dachniks* were engaged in subsistence farming as much as the local rural population, and even sometimes more intensively.

While the population of working age is using the *dachas* or other dwellings in the countryside predominantly in the weekends in the summer, the older generations often move more permanently to their secondary houses in the countryside, and spend there the largest part of the summer. The seasonal character of these small-scale farmers has determined the name we are giving to this category: 'summertime peasants'. They significantly increase the rural population during that season. There are no official statistics on the seasonal migration of the urban population. However, the research by Nefedova (2012) in the Pereslavl district of the Yaroslavl region shows that rural population in summer is four times larger than in winter. The increase is caused by the arrival of urban families from Moscow and the Moscow region, who bought rural houses or inherited them from their relatives, or have *dachas*, orchards or vegetable gardens in the countryside of the Pereslavl district. In general, local rural dwellers welcome the newcomers as they bring life back to depopulated villages. The villagers name as the main advantage that the newly arrived residents support and ennoble the village houses, therefore, assisting in preserving and even re-emerging these rural settlements (Ugory Project survey, 2008; available in Nefedova, 2008). In an interview with Egor (61) from the village Ushakovo the position of local rural dwellers versus in new-comers was explained:

Our parents and grandparents had been living here. Their children, when they were young, moved to the cities. And now they are back, renovating the old houses. These heirs initiated and have been initiating lawsuits against each other in order to get a rural house. Everyone wants to have a house in the countryside! ...they ennoble, renovate, rebuilt the house and cultivate the land parcel around it. Since recently, our village became look like a village with life. Previously, it was a dead village. However, it is only for a summer. During the summer every home is full of people, they are doing something. But the autumn begins, they leave their rural homes. They are coming to their homes once in a while during the winter to check if everything is in order. That is all. Our village became a summer village.

With the natural decrease of original rural population, the summertime peasants play an increasingly larger role in development of rural areas. According to the Ugory Project survey, the share of urban dwellers who own houses in 9 villages in the Ugory rural settlement was 48 percent (Nefedova, 2008). The summertime peasants are more conscious about and attached to private property than the local rural population. Since the privatisation of *dacha* plots became possible in 1998, almost every parcel of land was privatised (*The State Report on Land Use in Russian Federation*, 2010). However, summertime peasants do not cultivate the whole land parcel they possess. According to the Ugory Project survey of 2008, 25 percent of *dachniks* used one quarter of their lands for farm products cultivation, and 30 percent use half of their lands. In comparison with the peasants-against-their-own-will, the summertime peasants do not significantly depend on subsistence farming, and in their case the term 'subsidiary' farming is more appropriate. The bulk of their income is coming from salaries, which are much higher than in rural areas. Therefore, the share of subsidiary farming in urban household resources is very small (on average 5.4 percent), however it increases with the age and reach 10 percent of pensioners' household income (Vasin, 2006).

3.3. Peasant-farmers

Peasant-farmers (or *krestyansko-fermerskiye khoziaystva*) is the official Russian term for private farmers, but contains a contradiction in itself. While 'peasants' are self-sustained small-scale farmers who use family labour and produce for consumption, not for profit; the 'farmers' produce for profit and often employ outside labour. Unsurprisingly, the peasant-farmer is the category which is not very clear for policy makers and not well understood by the rural population (Humphrey, 2012; Nefedova, 2013).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union the new government initially provided cheap credits, tax exemptions, and other benefits to people who wanted to establish private family farms (on a more entrepreneurial basis). In the early 1990s there was indeed a rapid growth in the amount of registered peasant-farms. In total 49 thousand peasant-farms were set up in 1991, and a year later, their amount had reached 182 thousand. However, by the late 1990s the state support to these (still relatively) small farms had decreased and, later, it was almost completely eliminated, when priority was allocated to the LFEs. The initial growth of the peasant-farm sector (peaking in 1995 with 280 thousands of registered peasant-farms) has shifted to a gradual decline. This reduction is related to the consolidation of farms into larger ones and liquidation of unprofitable ones. In 2010, there are 261.7 thousands of peasant-farms occupying 62.2 hectares on average (Table 2). The role of these rural family farms in total farm output is insignificant at a country scale. While nearly half of gross domestic agricultural output is generated by the peasants-against-their-own-will and summertime peasants, these more entrepreneurial peasant-farmers contribute only around 8 percent of the farm produce of the Russian Federation.

[Table 2]

Not all of these peasant-farmers may be seen as actors of the re-peasantisation process. As they form a very heterogeneous group. Nefedova (2013) distinguishes 3 types of private (family) farms in Russia. The first type is formed by the *kolkhozy*-farms. These farms were organised by the chairmen of reorganised former collective enterprises, who registered the property and land of these collectives as private ownership, and preserved the former management and collective farming techniques. These enterprises have very little in common with the family farming, both in size as well as in mode of production. The second type is formed by the farms which use hired labour, in some cases going up to 10-20 temporary (and some permanent) employees. They could be seen as similar to Western family farms, although the latter use hardly any hired labour (primarily because of high labour costs and the availability of machinery services that are contracted with the needed specialized labour). These private family farms (with an entrepreneurial strategy) are usually established by rural intelligentsia (such as former *kolkhoz* agro-engineers, veterinarians, accountants, etc.). They are involved in commercial agriculture, own part of their land and rent in the remaining part. However, the share of these farms in the total number is fairly small. According to Nikulin (2010), "... the family farmers, in the American sense of the word, literally, compose of a few tens of thousands. More than a hundred thousand of these so-called farmers are either recreational, either working with their machinery at large agro-enterprises, or they became subsistence farmers producing just enough to feed their families and are not engaged in market relations" (*translation by the authors*). The last group, mentioned by Nikulin, is referred by Nefedova (2013) as the third type of peasant-farmers.

The borderline between the third type of peasant-farmers (we refer to them just as 'peasants-farmers' further on) and peasant-against-their-own-will, has become vaguer since 1995, when farmers were allowed to conduct their entrepreneurial activities without

registration as a legal entity (Nefedova, 2013). Therefore, we suspect that the production of these peasant-farmers might be double counted in the statistics (namely appearing under personal subsidiary farming and under private commercial farming). The mode of production of peasant-farmers is similar to the characteristics of the classic Chayanovian peasantry, who secures a minimum standard of livelihood and does not attempt to expand production further, once family needs have been satisfied. Chayanov (1966) explained socio-economic differentiation among the peasantry in terms of demographic variation between families. He argued that total produce has a direct link with consumer-worker ratio in peasant families. However, there are also financial constraints (Visser, 2009). An interview with peasant-farmer Alexander (67) from village Deulino illustrates this mode of production:

Alexander: ...I had to slaughter all my cows when they started building houses on the former collective lands, where I used to graze my cows. I had to do this, as I do not have much land in my property. Now I have 3 pigs, a dozen of chicken, and two hectares under potatoes. I sell eggs and potatoes to the dachniks.

Interviewer: don't you want to expand... pork production, for example, you have a nice cowshed left?

Alexander: Why should I? Since my wife has passed away, there is only me and my younger son. He does not want to get married. For the two of us it is enough for living. If he will ever find a good woman, get married, and further on... grandchildren, I mean. Then, we will, definitely, increase our production; maybe we will buy a cow or two again.

The above distinguished (re-)emerging types of Russian peasantry substantiate the re-peasantisation process as a counterforce to capitalist development in rural areas. However, how sustainable is this process and how stable are the emerged peasants groups? Below we will look at the relations within rural communities, new peasants' identities and cross-generational transactions of peasants' culture, which influence the process of rural transformation in Russia.

4. Intra-peasantry relations and competition for space

The re-emerged peasants share a number of features, such as small-scale subsistence farming, usage of family labour, and non-commercial orientation of their activities. However, they remain quite different from each other, what creates a variety of social relations ranging from symbiosis and cooperation to competition and conflicts.

Although generally peasants-against-their-own-will welcome the summertime peasants in their villages, the relationship between these two groups is not always easy. Despite the fact that the life-style of summertime peasants is 'peasant-like', these dwellers remain urban citizens with urban habits. An old lady, named Zoya (78) from the village Zykovo complained about her summertime neighbour in an interview in one of the authors:

My geese walk on the street. My neighbour says: "I'm going to kill them - excuse my expression - as they shit everywhere". I told him: "where do you think you are? in your Krasnogorsk apartment? Go and live there! This is a village. It's not a dacha settlement!" I was born here! My parents were born here, lived here, my grandparents lived here. Everyone was local. And what we have now!? No one respects us!

According to the Ugory Project survey of 2008, only about 40 percent of the *dachniks*, i.e. summertime peasants, answered they were satisfied with the local rural population. Around 20 percent said that villagers drink too much, and living useless lives; and just more than 30 percent mentioned the passivity of the local villagers, their unwillingness to live an organised

life and the reluctance to work, even if work was offered to them. However, summertime peasants buy regularly food products produced by peasants-against-their-own-will. Almost every *dachnik* buys milk, cottage cheese, and sour cream from villagers who hold cattle, and about 40 percent of *dachniks* buy fish, mushrooms, berries, vegetables and potatoes collected or produced by local villagers. Furthermore, 70 percent of summertime peasants hire peasants-against-their-own-will to help in reparation and improvement of the summertime houses (Ugory Project survey; as cited in Nefedova, 2008). This creates interdependency between the two groups. Therefore, although there are tensions between them, predominantly related to differences in life-style, these two types of peasants manage to co-exist peacefully in their rural social environment.

A different situation is observed when summertime peasants settle in separate communities, so-called *dacha* unions (*dachniye soobschestva*) or orchard-garden partnerships (*sadovo-ogorodniye tovarischestva*), which are located nearby villages and surrounded with high fences. The impact of 'gated communities' in other countries was already studied by various scholars (Blakeley and Snyder, 1997; Byers, 2003; Low, 2001), and this kind of social segregation is considered as a major disruptive force, which triggers conflict (Byers, 2003). However, in the Russian case, the origin of the conflict is grounded not so much in social segregation, which stresses the inequality of rural residents. The high fences of *dacha* unions and orchard-garden partnerships prevent the access of peasants-against-their-own-will to common pool resources, such as forests and rivers. Pallot and Nefedova (2007: 99) discuss a case of a village in the vicinity of Saratov where a *dacha* settlement was built literally on the common hay meadows and pastures. As a result the villagers had to cut hay from an island in the nearby river which could only be reached by boat. The dissatisfaction with the construction of a new *dacha* settlement nearby the SemKhoz forest in the Sergievo Posad district was expressed by Ivan (34) from a nearby village Morozovo:

They [the dachniks] got to the SemKhoz forest! Soon we will not have an access to the forest anymore. There will be fences everywhere. We already have to make a large circle in order to get to the river. These Moscovites are disrespectful: they build their dacha settlements on our rural roads and put security at the entrances, and we have to walk around their fences in an open field.

The privatisation of the common spaces seems to be an important reason for social tensions in the countryside. It often leads to hidden forms of rural resistance (such as gossiping and even damaging the fences) and, sometimes, to open mobilisation practices. For example, the authors observed open protests in two separate occasions, related to fencing of rural spaces.⁷ Furthermore, Pallot and Nefedova (2007: 101-103) describe cases of protest by rural villagers against encroachment on commonly used pastures or hay meadows, in the Stavropol and Perm region.

There is also an interesting, and somewhat contradictory development, namely that the peasant-farmers who have been fairly resistant in the transition period to transform into private family farms, are now the suppliers of farm produce for summertime peasants. The peasant-farmer Alexander (67) from the village Deulino said that he had informal agreements with a large number of *dachniks* for already 10 years. This expresses a positive attitude of these two categories towards each other. Furthermore peasant-farmers employ peasants-against-their-own-will during harvesting. Moreover, peasant-farmers often assist subsidiary

⁷ The First one was a protest by villagers from Noviselki and Arkhanovo villages in the Sergiev Posad district which resulted in a petition letter by inhabitants to the President of Russia in 2008; the second one was a rural protests against *dacha* construction in the village of Verkhutovo in the Istra district caused a visit of the Chairman of the Federation Council for investigation of a conflict in 2012.

farm producers with ploughing their land plots with own machinery, in a sense taking over some of the roles of the previous *kolkhozy* and *sovkhozy* during the Soviet era, when they had a symbiotic relation with households production (Spoor and Visser, 2004). Although there are close links between these categories of peasants, the differences and tensions between them are also significant, what prevents creation of social capital in rural areas, and keeps rural society fragmented and sometimes even segregated.

5. Land attachment and peasant identity

In his *Theory of Peasant Economy*, Chayanov (1966) described an intense, almost mystical attachment to land among peasants. He considered land attachment as the natural inclination of peasants. However, the Russian rural population showed weak interests in the individual (or private) ownership of distributed land during the transition period after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Some authors have indeed indicated there was low land attachment with post-Soviet rural dwellers (such as Ioffe and Nefedova, 1998). As we have shown in the historical analysis of the peasants' perception of equity, private property, and modes of production, the autonomous household economies based on individual property, were repressed during the Soviet era, while corporatism and egalitarianism were enforced. Therefore it was unsurprisingly that only a small number of rural dwellers dared to start private farming on the former collective or state lands.

Land attachment of contemporary Russian peasants has a different content than in countries where collectivisation of agriculture did not happen in the past. Land attachment of the Russian peasant has a strong collective component (*ibid.*). In the fieldwork interviews undertaken for this research it also became clear that there is indeed a close link between land attachment and peasant identity, but this relates to peasants' access to common lands, not to their private ownership of land. Again, the interview with Zoya (78) is indicative:

Interviewer: Is there a peasant in Russia?

Zoya: No. There is no land. No land - no peasant.

Interviewer: But everyone has a household plot. It is also land...

Zoya: Oh, that what you mean... Perhaps... I don't know.

Interviewer: Your neighbour told me that you have a cow and, therefore, you can be called a peasant. Don't you consider yourself a peasant?

Zoya: There were peasants in the past... During Soviet time there was no place to tie a cow. Every household had a cow or two. We all together took them to graze on public fields. Then, it was the peasantry. Not now... There is only me out of the entire village who keeps a cow. [...] And there is not a field to graze her, the kolkhoz lands were privatised by the bankers. I told them: "give me just a little piece of land to graze her". No, no land...

Interviewer: Did not you have a right for a distributed land plot during the land reform?

Zoya: I did. But nobody told me that I needed to privatise it. After the collapse of the Soviet Union my cows had been walking on the collective fields without any problems. And then in one night they [the investors] acquired our kolkhoz. Not many people received the compensation for their land plots. I did not.

Although she argued that there are no peasants in her village, she also does not personally refer to herself. On the one hand, she is a peasant as she has a cow and is perceived by fellow villagers as a peasant for her self-provisional farming. On the other hand, she does not have

the land she thinks peasants should have, while the household plot is taken for granted. The long history of collective farming has distorted the notions of what the peasantry is and its relation to land in the minds of people, and blurred the line between collective and private land ownership (Stark, 1996; Verdery, 1999). The communal system with shared lands during the Soviet era the symbiosis between collective farms and rural households, which allowed the last ones to use collective lands for particular needs of their households, predefined the current attitude to the property of land. According to the Ugory Project survey of 2008, half of the respondents believed that agricultural land should belong to the *kolkhozy* and *sovkhozy*, although they have disappeared long ago. Around 11 percent argued that land should be state property (what, in fact, include collective enterprises as well). Only 18 percent of rural dwellers were convinced that land should belong to farmers and 15 percent to local dwellers more in general. An overwhelming majority (80 percent) of respondents stated that they did not need private ownership of land. In order to highlight this aspect, we quote from an interview with Tamara (70) from the village of Gravornovo, who said:

Private is bad. Private property – you sold it, received money, and sit under the sun doing nothing. No, private property is not right... Before – it was right. Why did people survive? The kolkhozy had been working, produced grain... even during the war they produced grain. We went to the mill, milled it, everyone got bread; and now what?

These nostalgic feelings about the past are still profoundly present in Russian rural areas today. The majority of the current rural residents has lived during the late Soviet period. They often remember the Brezhnev period of the 1980s, with highly subsidised agriculture, which was widely seen as “a golden era, a time of stability, economic abundance, national pride, social justice and the belief in the future” (Humphrey, 2002: 141). In contrast to that epoch, the post-Soviet transition period showed a general decline of agriculture, bankruptcy of collective enterprises, and the massive abandonment of farmlands. According to the research of Steggerda and Visser (2012), rural dwellers are very concerned about uncultivated land. They say: “land overgrown with bushes is hurting the eye”. For the rural population it is more important that the land is cultivated, and less important– by whom. Therefore, the use of farmland for summer house construction is criticised by local dwellers. The position of peasant-against-her-own-will Svetlana (55) from the village Zykovo confirms this:

I am not against dachas, but let's give them the land where sowing machines are not going, where the ploughing is inconvenient. Instead they received 90 hectares of magnificent fertile farmland where they construct their houses! Why??

Contrary to peasant-against-their-own-will, summertime peasants and peasant-farmers are more “property-conscious” because neither of them have ever bought or rented land parcels for their own use. They do not see the land they own as granted but as a result of deliberate action. Peasant-farmer Alexander (67) from village Deulino said this about the land he owns:

My land is from those spruce trees till here and till that shad. I bought it in the 1990s. Then, the price was, frankly speaking, low. I sold my dacha plot for 7 thousand dollars. With this money I bought this farmland, and even some machinery. As soon I bought the land I planted the spruce trees to mark the borders of my property.

Nevertheless, neither the peasant-farmers, nor the summertime peasants, consider themselves really as peasants, the first category because they do not equal the definition that was valid in the Soviet era, and the second because they are still urban, but adopting (at least part-time) a rural lifestyle.

6. Peasant mode of production

The peasant mode of production, based on family labour and production of food enough for subsistence of the family, not for profit, is the peasants' choice, which is predefined by their risk aversion. According to Scott (1976: 18), peasants prefer to minimize the probability of having a risk, which could lead to losses, rather than maximising their average return as part of profit maximization. The Russian peasants' choice to produce just enough to meet their subsistence needs is predefined by subjective and objective factors. Indeed, the subjective probability of the maximum loss plays a significant role in peasants' reluctance to conduct commercial farming. Besides that, the peasants' household production capacities are limited by the objective factors, such as difficulties with product sales, lack of money, and lack of labour, which prevent peasants to produce more (and for the market). Although there is a high domestic demand for food products in Russia, this demand is often met with products from large-scale farm enterprises and imported products. The peasants' food appears directly on the dining tables of urban dwellers less regularly, than those processed through large-scale food chains and supermarkets.

There are several reasons for this development. Local farm markets are not widespread in Russia (Kuzmenko, 2013). In the areas where they do exist, peasants often do not have access to them. These markets are occupied rather by large agricultural producers or by resellers. Due to the absence of (or very limited) bargaining power, rural dwellers have to sell their products to resellers or processing agricultural enterprises at a price often lower than the production costs (Vaschenko, 2013). In the areas with no such intermediaries the sales of farm products are nearly impossible for rural dwellers. The underdeveloped system of purchasing farm products from rural population hinders the emergence of small-scale commercial farming. Zoya (78), who has been cited before, explains the reason why she does not engage in commercial activities:

Formerly, we had a milk collection point, a car from the Istra dairy plant came daily. We put our flasks. They took everything. We received our money at the end of the month. No problem; and now? Only if someone from here wants to buy our milk. Even if we would establish a farm..., the Istra dairy plant does not take the milk from private producers anymore. You can call everywhere, you can search where to sell your milk! It is not a good business!

Many milk processing companies prefer to buy milk from large farms or produce it themselves, because the milk collection from local population is a very expensive process (with high transaction costs), and milk produced by rural households does often not meet the quality standards, which creates extra costs for its processing, or becomes unprofitable for the dairy business (Dairynews.ru, 2013). It is clear that the exclusion of peasants from agricultural food markets strengthens the phenomenon of subsistence farming.

However, it would be incorrect to conclude that Russian peasants are not engaged in market relations and are not affected by consumers demand. Mamonova (2013) in her study of adaptation practices of the Ukrainian rural population to large-scale farm business argued that although rural dwellers are excluded from many market segments, they find their place in the market niches where big business is absent. Thus, they develop time- and labour-intensive production, such as milk and vegetables, and the leave grain production sector. A similar picture is observed in Russia. The repositioning in different market segments can be observed in the Table 3 (a & b).

This analysis makes us suggest that the re-emerging Russian combines in itself the traditional subsistence orientation (which is partly their choice, partly predefined by objective factors), and a slightly more entrepreneurial logic of production, responding to

the competitive advantages in particular market niches, and peasants demonstrate an ability to respond to changes in demands of consumers of their products, such as sales to the summertime peasants of urban descent.

[Table 3]

The domination of agricultural enterprises in the output of grains and legumes is also observed during the analysed period. However, the last years indicate also a growth in share of private farmers in this market niche. Peasant-farmers of Nefedova's first and the second type (the ones we do not refer to as 'peasants') specialise produce slightly more grain (Nefedova, 2013). However, while there was indeed an increase in peasants' share in production of grain and legumes during the first decade of the transition period, it remains stable at not more than around one percent of total output of these products, during the last decade. At the same time, the share of rural households has been increasing in milk and vegetable production in the analysed period. The same trend is observed for farmers, who in this case, we expect, are the peasant-farmers of the third (peasant-like) type. This increase has happened because the "big business" leaves labour-intensive farm production and specialises in production where it can benefit from the economics of scale (such as in grain production). In that sense the peasantry shows some flexibility and moves towards market niches, where it can operate without competition with the large agribusiness.

In Table 3 (part b) the response of rural households to changing of the consumer demand is reflected. In the early 2000s rural households gained the leading position in amount of cows, pigs, and poultry for own consumption and sales in local markets or to summertime peasants (the increase is marked with yellow). Later on we also note an increase in the amount of horses and bee families. This possibly indicates peasants' response to the demand of the consumers, who, with the increase in urban incomes and living standards during the last decade, show interests in more luxurious goods and services (such as horse riding and honey consumption). This shows not only an ability of the peasantry to move to an available market niche, or spotting new opportunities and develop them further.

7. The future through the eyes of a peasant

In order to answer the question, which we raised in the beginning of the paper: 'What is the future of the Russian peasantry?', it is important to know what peasants think themselves about the future and whether there is a next generation, which will take over subsistence farming from their parents. Peasants-against-their-own-will remain conservative about their future. According to the research of Sovietov and Vernodubenko (2007), 74.3 percent of rural dwellers are not intending to transform their personal subsidiary farming into private commercial farming, and 55.7 percent do not want to use the distributed former collective land for the expansion of their farm production.⁸ Even better economic conditions would not change the peasants' way of life. Answering the question: 'How would you do farming with a hypothetical increase in other income of your household?', nearly 50 percent of the respondents of the Ugory Project survey indicated in 2008 that they would continue subsistence farming as they do currently. Just 14 percent of the peasants-against-their-own-

⁸ The second group is smaller as many of rural dwellers sold their land shares and only a few are renting them from large-scale agro-enterprises or commercial farmers.

will would increase the production, while 25 percent were intending to decrease it (Nefedova, 2008).

The majority of peasants-against-their-own-will do not find the urban life attractive and are not intending to migrate to the cities. About 80 percent of the respondents of the Ugory Project survey answered that they do not want to leave the countryside, while they do want to have an urban future for their children. More than 70 percent of the peasants-against-their-own-will have children living in cities and towns. According to the elderly rural dwellers, the reasons why young people leave the countryside are unemployment, low rural salaries, poor infrastructure and hard rural life. Peasant-against-her-own-will Nyura (65) from the village Gravornovo explained this in interview:

Rural live now is like servitude: working hard and no joy. Can you get a putevka [vacation voucher] for free? Are there any children summer camps? No! Are there any clubs for the youth? No! We have a lot of young people. Some of them study, some work in nearby towns. Where do they gather? at a bus stop. What do they do? Drink beer! In the past we had a dance club here... We had a harmonica club, we had a cinema... It was interesting to live here. Now there is nothing... What can young people do here? Therefore, they leave... There is no work in the village; what else you can do: just leave.

Indeed, Russian villages experience a “negative social selection” (Nefedova, 2009: 65), caused by out-migration of young and economically active people from the countryside, while less active and predominantly ageing rural dwellers remain behind. However, many of the migrants to urban areas return regularly to their villages of origin, to help their aged parents with the household, and leave their children for the summer or other vacation periods. Hence, some of the urbanised peasants-against-their-own-will transform into summertime peasants, who spend their summer holidays in villages, and, after the death of their parents, inherit the village houses, which they use as a summertime residence.

The cross-generational transfer of land attachments is more complicated for the summertime peasants. Although 72 percent of *dachniks* indicated that their adult children have been visiting them at their *dachas* once in a while, only 7 percent were convinced that their children will take over the subsistence farming at the *dacha* plots after them (Ugory Project survey, 2008, as cited in Nefedova, 2008). The further development of the summertime peasantry depends on the future financial position of the inheritors and the changes in socio-economic situation in the country at large. If the current situation will remain the same, it might well be that only one or maximum two generations will still continue subsistence farming in Russian villages in that form.

To date, life in villages is still attractive for the ageing group of village dwellers, as well for children who have to spend their summers with grandparents at their *dachas* or village houses. However, an active and young stratum of the population is absent in the Russian countryside. Every fifth peasant-against-his-own-will in the Ugory Project survey answered that rural areas need more new active people, while only 7 percent of summertime peasants indicated the same problem. The differences can be explained by the summertime peasants' desire for privacy and quiet lifestyle, which they found in the countryside, therefore, the increase of rural population is less desirable for them. Nevertheless, both groups indicated the need for infrastructure development (water supply, electrification, gasification, and transport connection between villages), creation of rural jobs, and increased state support. This, according to them, will create a higher life-satisfaction in rural areas and prevent villages from disappearance.

Summertime peasants are more concerned about nature preservation and environmental problems, mostly, because these resources predefined their choice for the summertime

migration. Oleg (45), a *dachnik* from the village Novoselki, said about the on-going housing construction nearby his village:

These constructors discharge their waste into our river. We can't go there to swim anymore. When my wife and I have bought this dacha plot five years ago, there were wonderful landscapes, fresh air, river nearby... and now what?

In this aspect the summertime peasants show themselves closer to nature, than peasants-against-their-own-will. In general, this group of rural residents is more oriented towards the preservation of rural traditions and rural lifestyle. According to the Ugory Project survey (2008), five percent of the *dachniks* see the future of Russian villages in development of handicraft production, while the same amount pointed out the need for traditional art development. Nearly a quarter of them indicated the possibility of development of green tourism and recreation sport activities in rural areas, while the peasants-against-their-own-will see the better prospects for their village mostly through the return towards collective agriculture (Nefedova, 2008).

In their forecasts of the future for rural areas, summertime peasants are more optimistic than peasants-against-their-own-will. On the question of the Ugory Project survey: "what will happen to Russian village in 15 to 20 years?", to total of 17 percent of summertime peasants answered that the future situation will be the same as now; 13 percent believed that the polarisation of space will continue and only large villages with summertime peasants and peasants-against-their-own-will are going to remain. Some predict that traditional rural dwellers will be substituted by farmers and *dachniks*, and some think that rural areas will be occupied by urban dweller's vocational houses. In contrast to these forecasts, a third of peasants-against-their-own-will predicts the disappearance of rural villages and 40 percent were not able to answer this question (Nefedova 2008).

8. Conclusions

In our detailed analysis of the re-emerging peasantry in Russia, we have seen that the picture is highly differentiated and that in the transition period rather 'fragmented communities' in rural areas are being formed, consisting of various –very different types of peasants. We have identified three broadly defined types. The first one are those who cultivate the subsidiary household plots, as they have been doing during the Soviet era, without will and possibility to become private family farms that can accumulate assets and produce for the market. They primarily produce for subsistence, which means food for own consumption and some to sell, in order to be able to buy the bare necessities in life, guaranteeing a subsistence-type of livelihood. We have called them peasants-against-their-own-will. The second type of peasant we identified is an unexpected one, as these are the many Russian owners of *dachas*, or country houses, who as so-called *dachniks* cultivate at least part of their small *dacha* gardens and even smaller orchards. They are welcomed in the traditional rural villages, except when they start to build fences around their *dachas* (or communities of *dachas*) which prevent the original rural dweller to access and make use of common pool resources such as rivers and forests. These urbanites who in weekends and during summer populate the Russian countryside, try and adhere to a rural lifestyle, but also care for individual property, something which (with the communal legacy) the first category hardly finds important, even after years of transition towards a market economy. The third type of peasants, named the peasant-farmer, represent a much more diverse group. There are the farmer-*kolkhozy* (where the former *kolkhoz* leader has privatized the land or part of it, but still uses the old labor organization); the second type is more similar to western family farms, and the third type is the peasant-farmer who is more a peasant than a farmer, forming the dominant group.

We have presented quantitative data from which it becomes clear that the three types of peasants jointly produce nearly half of the gross agricultural output, and even higher shares in particular products. We have little knowledge how this output and land use is precisely divided amongst the various groups, as Russian statistical services do not provide insights in the methodology of data collection. Therefore, our picture remains necessarily imprecise. What however comes out of the qualitative data, through the interviews held in several peri-urban areas in 2013, is that of the partial emergence or re-emergence of a Russian peasantry. This is because of the already mentioned rather fragmented emergence of new groups, such as the summertime peasants, but also because of the complex struggle for (or sometimes against) a peasant identity, which is the reason why we have named the traditional subsidiary household plot producers 'peasants-against-their-own-will'. These are often the elderly remaining in the countryside, depending more on output of the household plot than the word subsidiary would suggest, but they lack human capital, money, the energy, the access to markets, and even the necessary individual attachment to land, in order to become private (and more entrepreneurial) peasant-farmers.

We have indicated that in some cases there are conflicts, and forms of resistance, in particular from the side of the traditional rural dwellers, who resist in particular the fencing of "gated *dacha* communities", that use fertile communal land, and sometimes block the access to rivers and forests. Nevertheless, there are also forms of symbiosis, as the summertime peasants bring energy, new life, and purchasing power, which leads the peasants-against-their-own-will to produce and sell products to the incoming group, and rent out its labor to build houses and to do repairs. What remains is the picture of a very partial re-emergence of the peasantry, with fragmented communities, and an absence of the build-up of social capital which would be necessary to defend rural and peasant communities over a longer term than possibly the one or two generations that seem to be now the maximum future life. This estimate is given in view of ageing, rural-urban migration and unwillingness of the urbanites to keep the tradition to cultivate the land, and contribute substantially to local markets and in the end to national agricultural production. However, on the question of what is the 'fate of the peasants in Russia', we have only been able to contribute to answering who is the peasantry and what is their identity, and it would need much more study to make sensible predictions about their future, and to decide whether the disappearance thesis or of the peasant mode of production in its own right will be the correct one in the Russian context.

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Table 1: The development of personal subsidiary farming in Russia (1991-2011)

	1991	1995	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005	2007	2009	2011
Number of households (x1,000)	16,380.3	16,533.5	16,064.9	15,957.1	15,872.2	15,859.0	15,872.3	16,037.3	16,132.3	15,822.9
Amount of land (x1,000ha)	3,243.5	5,728.2	5,781.9	6,216.7	6,469.4	6,932.8	6,971.2	7,075.7	7,385.2	6,808.6
Land per household (ha)	0.20	0.35	0.36	0.39	0.41	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.46	0.43
OUTPUT OF CROPS PRODUCED (x 100 T)										
Grains and legumes	351.9	567.1	669.9	451.4	591.1	752.0	803.8	812.2	870.9	1,076.1
Potatoes	24,781.0	35,885.0	31,931.0	25,496.4	26,877.4	26,686.2	24,980.3	23,253.4	25,245.9	26,018.6
Vegetables	4,836.6	8,280.2	7,989.9	8,196.7	8,516.7	8,843.0	8,448.3	8,337.8	9,553.9	9,783.2
AREAS UNDER CROPS (x 1,000 Ha)										
Grains and legumes	132.0	292.0	294.0	287.0	328.0	382.0	384.0	401.0	468.6	516.4
Potatoes	2,151.0	2,998.0	2,830.0	2,652.0	2,475.0	2,305.0	2,064.0	1,825.0	1,866.8	1,852.3
Vegetables	303.0	510.0	524.0	539.0	553.0	536.0	500.0	470.0	493.6	501.8
YIELDS (T/HA)										
Grains and legumes	2.67	1.94	2.28	1.57	1.80	1.97	2.09	2.03	1.86	2.08
Potatoes	11.52	11.97	11.28	9.61	10.86	11.58	12.10	12.74	13.52	14.05
Vegetables	15.96	16.24	15.25	15.21	15.40	16.50	16.90	17.74	19.36	19.49
LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION (x 1,000 T)										
Cattle (slaughter weight)	710.1	1,110.2	1,178.7	1,047.9	1,079.5	1,134.9	1,102.7	1,047.0	1,085.2	1,024.8
Pigs (slaughter weight)	1,359.2	1,188.1	1,077.9	1,076.2	1,047.8	1,129.6	1,006.2	1,119.4	1,079.5	1,003.2
Poultry (slaughter weight)	575.3	297.2	255.4	271.4	276.7	279.0	285.5	308.5	303.8	319.1
Milk	13,508.4	16,251.9	16,113.0	16,039.1	16,734.3	17,105.5	16,088.4	16,541.8	16,650.6	15,725.2
Honey	33,992.0	48,304.0	42,393.0	45,076.0	47,513.0	43,985.0	48,062.0	49,144.0	49,605.4	55,855.0

Sources: The data on households and their land is taken from SNG STAT for 1991, 2011, and from the *State Report on Land Use in Russian Federation* in 2008, 2010 for the period of 1995-2010. Although, the numbers are comparable, they do not mean that data collection techniques were the same, what might influence the exact numbers, but less likely the general trend. Moreover, the All-Russian Agrarian Census (2006) has indicated that there were 17,401.7 rural households in Russia. That makes a difference with the *State Report on Land Use in Russian Federation* by more than 1 million households. Meantime, the Census provides the data on the land in possession of population as 10,952.5 thousands ha, without specification of the owners, which might include citizens with dacha plots, vegetable gardens, and collective orchards. The data on crop and livestock production as well as areas under crop cultivation is taken from Rosstat.

Table 2: Number of peasant-farms and output produced (1991-2011)

	1991	1992	1995	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005	2007	2009	2010
Number of farms (x 1,000)	49.0	182.1	280.1	274.3	264.6	263.9	272	267.5	267	265.1	261.7
Amount of land (x 1,000ha)	2100	7800	12000	13045.1	14484.1	14289.7	14108.7	14910.5	15516.6	16111.2	16284.1
Land per farm (ha)	42.86	42.83	42.84	47.56	54.74	54.15	51.87	55.74	58.11	60.77	62.22
OUTPUT OF CROPS PRODUCED (x 100 T)											
Grains and legumes	6.82	181.3	4163.2	3239.1	3240.8	5513.1	10598.1	13647.8	15657.9	22703.4	20320.3
Potatoes	2.27	87.9	301.9	359.3	308.9	375.2	453.4	739.2	1146.0	1467.7	1821.6
Vegetables	0.12	17.9	106.8	111.3	182.1	261.5	315.2	645.9	980.9	1300.8	1368.7
AREAS UNDER CROPS (x 1,000 HA)											
Grains and legumes	6	204	3836	3429	4335	4628	6551	7806	9148	10948	11371.4
Potatoes	0.3	12	42	41	38	42	48	60	78	86	110.94
vegetables	0	2	17	19	25	34	35	50	61	68	72.366
YELDS (T/HA)											
Grains and legumes	1.14	0.89	1.09	0.94	0.75	1.19	1.62	1.75	1.71	2.07	1.79
Potatoes	7.57	7.32	7.19	8.77	8.13	8.93	9.45	12.32	14.69	17.07	16.42
Vegetables		8.95	6.29	5.86	7.28	7.69	9.01	12.92	16.08	19.13	18.91
LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION (x 1,000 T)											
Cattle	0.6	5.2	48	41.5	38.3	33.9	41.6	52.5	53.7	71.7	76.1
Pork	0.5	3.4	31.3	33	26.4	35.2	39.2	44.1	53	77.6	70.9
Poultry		3.5	2.7	2.2	3.1	3	3.3	4	9.5	16.5	18.9
Milk	1.8	43.9	567.9	525.3	546.8	567.7	699.6	905	1122.8	1379.2	1424.7
Honey		267	964	991	1004	1184	1126	1579	1640	1928	1792.2

Sources: The number of farms and amount of land they possess in 1991, 1992, 1995 are taken from the report of the Association of Peasant Farms and Agricultural Cooperatives of Russia (AKKOR) on development of farming in Russia, available at: <http://akkor.ru/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/2011.10.06-pokazateli-proizvodstva.pdf> (accessed 21 July 2013) in the Table on page 9. Nevertheless there are often sources who claim that the farm sizes are much higher, such 81 in 2006, up to over a 100 ha later and even 162.8 in 2009 (although the latter number is not very reliable). The figures in this AKKOR table are incoherent for the last years 2008-2010 as there was a sudden drop in the number of farmers from 253 thousand (in 2008) down to 180.5 (2009) and up again to 304.6 (in 2010), hence for these years calculating an average size does not make much sense. However, it seems that the figures up to the years 2006 and 2007 are more in tune with reality. Therefore, the data on the number of farms and amount of land they possess in the period 1997-2010 is taken from the *State Report on Land Use in Russian Federation* in 2008, 2010, which seems to us as more reliable source. The data on crop and livestock production as well as areas under crop cultivation is taken from Rosstat.

Table 3: Peasant farms and their changing share in output (1991-2011)

	1991	1993	1995	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005	2007	2009	2011
a. Output of grain and legumes, vegetable, and milk production by types of agricultural producers (in %)											
Grains and legumes											
Agroenterprises	99.4	94.2	94.4	93.0	92.1	88.3	84.4	80.6	78.8	78.2	76.8
Farms	0.2	5.2	4.7	6.2	7.1	11.0	14.5	18.3	20.2	20.9	22.1
Rural households	0.4	0.6	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.7	1.1	1.1	1.0	0.9	1.1
Vegetables											
Agroenterprises	53.4	34.5	25.3	23.3	23.3	21.1	20.9	18.7	18.9	18.4	19.7
Farms	0.2	1.0	1.3	1.6	2.3	2.7	3.8	6.9	8.7	10.3	13.7
Rural households	46.4	64.5	73.4	75.1	74.4	76.2	75.3	74.4	72.4	71.3	66.6
Milk production											
Agroenterprises	73.9	64.2	57.1	51.3	48.6	47.2	46.2	45.1	44.3	44.5	45.5
Farms	0.1	1.1	1.5	1.5	1.7	1.9	2.5	3.1	4.0	4.4	4.8
Rural households	26.0	34.7	41.4	47.2	49.7	50.9	51.3	51.8	51.7	51.1	49.7
b. Population of farm animals hold by rural households (in % to total of all farm types)											
Cows	27.9	34.2	38.4	42.9	45.5	48.3	50.5	50.7	51.7	51.2	49.1
Pigs	21.8	27.8	33.4	40.2	43.1	43.7	45.4	42.9	41.5	34.0	29.9
Horses	13.2	22.0	32.4	41.1	48.2	51.8	54.1	56.0	57.1	55.4	53.7
Poultry	30.8	32.8	38.0	39.9	39.4	36.9	35.9	31.6	28.4	22.9	20.4
Bees	64.9	70.3	76.1	79.3	83.1	84.8	88.0	89.3	90.4	91.2	91.2

Source: Rosstat (1991-2011)