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## Features of local identity of single-industry town residents (the case of the Murmansk Oblast) \*

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**Abstract.** The article presents an analysis of the local identity of single-industry town residents in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF) in the case of the Murmansk Oblast, which has half the single-industry towns of the Arctic zone. Considering local identity as a part of territorial identity, the authors present it as a symbolic space for creating and strengthening the sense of territorial identity. At the same time, according to the authors, the people's identification related to the area of residence contributes to the construction of an effective system of regional interaction. It is one of the critical factors for the sustainable development of territories. According to the results of the study, positive and negative factors of identity manifestation were obtained from the residents of single-industry towns of the surveyed area (questionnaire (n=428), in-depth interviews (n=12)); the assessment of connection with the place of residence and socio-economic status of residents, the degree of attractiveness of cities and migration attitudes of the population were determined. The authors argue that the socio-economic image of the area in the minds of its residents is developing along with the manifestation of their rootedness. A distinctive feature of the local identity of single-industry town residents in the Murmansk Oblast is well-being. It determines the visibility of communication with the place of residence. The increase in prosperity is proportional to the growth of identification with the town, and it is of strategic importance for building regional policies in single-industry towns.

**Keywords:** *local identity, territorial identity, single-industry town, the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation, the Murmansk Oblast.*

### Introduction

The socio-cultural space of modern Russia is a regional diversity due to both historical and geopolitical and socio-economic changes that have taken place since the 1990s.

Regional differentiation for our country has deep objective grounds. Firstly, the territory of the Russian Federation is located in nine time zones, in almost all natural and climatic zones, with a unique natural resource potential, inhabited by many ethnic groups, with a diverse configuration of settlement structures. Secondly, our country unites many regional communities, the life of which takes place in particular conditions.

The territorial principle of structuring social space gives rise to the need to continually clarify the role of a particular region and local territory in the system of external, internal, and interregional interactions. It requires determining the development directions of a specific area, identifying and ensuring the protection of the socio-economic interests of its community, and the for-

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mation of a positive image of the territories. As K. Topcu notes, today, it is difficult to maintain and strengthen the local character of small cities (territories) in a globalizing world [1, Topcu K., p. 371].

The successful solution of these problems is primarily determined by the formation and content of local identity. The identification of residents with the territory of residence may be conducive to building an effective system of regional interaction, consolidation of the regional community, and be one of the most significant factors in the sustainable and progressive development of territories.

In modern Russian realities, imbalances in socio-economic development and managerial influence in the regions lead to serious systemic shifts. They have generated relations between the center and the territories based on the “center-periphery” principle, where the main character is the remoteness of the periphery associated with backwardness and stagnation. An important fact remains the competition created by national and regional projects within the regions between municipalities, forced to fight among themselves for obtaining resources from higher-level budgets [2, Morozova E.V., Ulko E.V., p. 139].

These circumstances created a challenge for the state policy of Russia and require the search for mechanisms for its formation and subsequent implementation. The relevance of regional development issues is confirmed in the program documents of the Russian state, in particular, in the proposal of the President of the Russian Federation V.V. Putin to launch a large-scale spatial development program for Russia, incl. the development of towns and other settlements, and at least double the cost of these goals over the next six years<sup>1</sup>.

One of the main challenges to the social and political stability of our country is to ensure the development of single-industry towns. An important document on the development of single-industry towns in this regard is the “Strategy for the spatial development of the Russian Federation for the period until 2025”<sup>2</sup>, where the development of single-industry towns is one of the directions of the spatial development of our country.

### *Local identity as social phenomenon*

The key research question that determined the problems of this article is to study the features of the local identity of the population of single-industry towns.

Turning to the concept of “identity”, one must bear in mind the ambivalent nature of this phenomenon, indicated by E. Erickson, who considers identity, on the one hand, as a static phenomenon, and on the other – as a dynamic one. Based on the ambivalence of the concept, we will

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<sup>1</sup> Poslanie Federal'nomu Sobraniyu ot 1 marta 2018 g. [Message to the Federal Assembly on March 1, 2018]. Consultant Plus. URL: [http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons\\_doc\\_LAW\\_291976/](http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_291976/) (accessed 22 June 2019).

<sup>2</sup> Strategiya prostranstvennogo razvitiya Rossiyskoy Federatsii na period do 2025 goda / utv. rasporyazheniem Pravitel'stva Rossiyskoy Federatsii ot 13.02.2019 g. № 207-r [Strategy for the spatial development of the Russian Federation for the period until 2025 / approved by the order of the Government of the Russian Federation]. Consultant Plus. URL: [http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons\\_doc\\_LAW\\_318094/006fb940f95ef67a1a3fa7973b5a39f78dac5681/](http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_318094/006fb940f95ef67a1a3fa7973b5a39f78dac5681/) (accessed 22 June 2019).

consider local identity from the standpoint of the constructivist approach. In this paradigm, identity is a placement in the “life world”, and therefore it can only be assimilated together with the social world. But this world should be understood by the individual and, if possible, clearly presented in the existing images of everyday order. In other words, the world is never completely closed and determined - it is always open to new interpretations and transformations. In other words, identity is something that can be selected, can be constructed, and something that can be manipulated [3, Golovneva E.V., p. 43].

Local identity is one of the components of territorial identity, which, according to N.A. Shmatko and Yu.L. Kachanova means the experienced and / or conscious meanings of the system of territorial communities (subjective socio-geographical reality) that form a practical sense or consciousness of the territorial affiliation of an individual [4, Shmatko N.A., Kachanov Yu.L.]. Accordingly, local identity means the person’s identification with the local community, a sense of ownership concerning events and situations occurring in the territory of direct residence (city, district, village, and micro-district) [2, Morozova E.V., Ulco E.V., p. 140]. In this sense, the territory acts as a symbolic space for the creation and strengthening of identity.

In understanding local identity, it is essential to consider the concept of group identity. Group identity is based on the idea that people recognize themselves as part of a group, and their well-being and status are associated with this group [5, Wilcox-Archuleta B., p. 961]. Attachment to the local community, incl. the territorial one also shows the ideas of individuals about success and satisfaction with life activity in specific conditions.

In the process of researching local identity, it is essential to identify clear identification boundaries of a particular locality of a region.

In this regard, of particular interest is the identity of single-industry towns included in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF). The single-industry towns of the Russian Arctic have the so-called specificity of “northernness” associated with their location in areas with extreme climatic and environmental conditions. It, as E.E. Plisetskiy and E.A. Malitskaya mentioned, left an imprint on the nature and directions of their development, the functioning of crucial life support systems [6, p. 86].

Among the regions of the Arctic zone, the most indicative, in our opinion, is the Murmansk region, which includes half of all single-industry towns. This region is especially interesting in connection with its inclusion in the supporting territories of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation. It is determined by the “Strategy for the development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation and national security for the period until 2030” and the State program “Socio-economic development of the Arctic zones of the Russian Federation for the period until 2025. “Also, the “Spatial Development Strategy of the Russian Federation until 2025” denotes the economic specialization of the region in industries that are tied to single-industry towns, for example, mining, metallurgical, and chemical industries.

The following administrative-territorial entities belong to the monotowns of the Murmansk Oblast: the towns of Zapolyarny, Kirovsk, Monchegorsk, Olenegorsk, Nickel, Kovdor, and the town settlement of Revda. According to official statistics, as of January 1, 2019, in the designated settlements, the total urban population was 138.8 thousand people, which is 18.6% of the total population of the territory and 20.1% of its urban population<sup>3</sup>.

Despite the climatic and resource specifics, the strategic importance of the Murmansk Oblast (outpost area, frontier region), the Oblast is in a difficult socio-economic situation, which significantly affects its image and the local identification of its residents.

As E.G. Animitsa and the team of authors noted, the single-industry towns of the Oblast are not able to fully satisfy the complex of social, cultural, and educational needs of the population. Therefore, the problem of increasing their socio-cultural self-sufficiency remains quite acute [7, p. 16]. Given this point of view and the difficult socio-economic situation in the Murmansk Oblast, it seems that residents of its mono-cities find themselves in an even more difficult situation, where the local identity crisis is exacerbated by the city's monofunctional structure with correspondingly low diversification of employment sectors (homogeneous professional becoming), high unemployment, monotonous cultural life.

#### ***Factors of the formation of local identities of single-industry towns of the Russian Arctic***

From our point of view, the local identities of single-industry towns are caused by several factors that make it possible to look more clearly at the problem of regional identity.

First, as a product of the Soviet system of administrative-territorial division, monotowns found themselves in a more difficult socio-economic situation after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Transformations of a geopolitical and socio-economic nature that have launched negative processes in the social sphere of single-industry towns have led to an intensive outflow and marginalization of the population to a greater extent than was observed in large cities. And the lack of resources and real levers of influence on the crisis led the territory to depressive states. Therefore, the negative characteristics of local identity will be traced here more clearly.

Secondly, being an inheritance from the Soviet system of the administrative-territorial organization, with its distribution policy and social guarantees, residents of single-industry towns broadcast most of all nostalgia for the Soviet past. The population was not ready for life in the new capitalist realities, requiring greater individual responsibility and activity. This circumstance is mainly cultivated by representatives of the age group that found experience (either childhood or labor activity) in Soviet realities. It is this group that begins to prevail more and more in the age

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<sup>3</sup> Chislennost' naseleniya po munitsipal'nym obrazovaniyam Murmanskoy oblasti na 1 yanvarya 2019 goda i v srednem za 2018 god. Federal'naya sluzhba gosudarstvennoy statistiki, Territorial'nyy organ Federal'noy sluzhby gosudarstvennoy statistiki po Murmanskoy oblasti [Population by municipalities of the Murmansk region as of January 1, 2019 and on average for 2018. Federal State Statistics Service, Territorial Authority of the Federal State Statistics Service for the Murmansk Oblast]. URL: [http://murmanskstat.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat\\_ts/murmanskstat/ru/statistics/population/](http://murmanskstat.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_ts/murmanskstat/ru/statistics/population/) (accessed 12 June 2019).

structure of single-industry towns, mainly due to the outflow of young people due to the low attractiveness of life there.

Thirdly, the production link to a limited number of enterprises remains the basis of economic life for single-industry towns. This circumstance has a unique effect on the structure of local identity, where corporate identity occupies a particular place. Most of the able-bodied population of single-industry towns continue to be employed at city-forming enterprises, which, being uninterested in staff turnover, try to keep them within the region. In the 1990s, the leading industrial enterprises were acquired by the most significant Russian business structures, e.g., such large corporations as PJSC MMC Norilsk Nickel, AO MCC EuroChem, PAO Severstal, PJSC PhosAgro, JSC RusAl Ural and others. Decision centers and company profits are located outside the territory.

Local researcher Izmodenova N.N. notes “the export-resource orientation of the economy creates dependence on price fluctuations in the global raw materials market. If the situation worsens, large companies, as a rule, reduce production volumes, underestimate the prices of production units in the regions of production. Thus, profit is concentrated in the central administrative structures, and then the funds are redistributed in those areas that are a priority for business groups. There is a conflict of interests between companies and their base region, which does not receive taxes.

The companies that came to the Oblast are interested in efficiency and profit, not in the human mind, not in people with their needs. The population is considered as an effective or ineffective labor force” [8, Izmodenova N.N., p. 53]. And in this sense, local identity is filled with the qualitative characteristics of additional content. City-forming enterprises with their corporate culture are a significant agent of influence on local identity in settlements of this type, where a special way of life (associated with everyday communication and direct interaction of the city and their groups for various reasons) reproduces a particular mentality. Here, solidarity groups are formed with their leaders and authorities, in which formal and informal relations are created with the managerial structures of enterprises, the zone of influence of which often extends far beyond the boundaries of organizations. An important role is played by the nature of the professional activity of the majority of the able-bodied population. E.g., having a narrowly specialized worker (e.g., a mining worker), the opportunities for diversifying labor activity by specialty outside the Oblast are reduced to zero unless it is a question of territories with similar industry affiliations. But here a number of circumstances are included, which are more likely to be factors of retention and rooting: polar premiums, long holidays, northern pension, social benefits of corporations themselves. So, the average wage as of April 2019 in industries such as mining was 88 516.0 rubles, in metallurgy 75 759.0 rubles, while the average salary in the Oblast is 58 227.0 rubles.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Dannye o srednemesyachnoy nominal'noy nachislennoy zarabotnoy plate rabotnikov organizatsiy po vidam ekonomicheskoy deyatel'nosti [Data on the average monthly nominal accrued wages of employees of organizations by type of economic activity]. *Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoe polozhenie Murmanskoy oblasti v yanvare – mae 2019 goda: doklad* [Socio-economic situation of the Murmansk region in January - May 2019: report]. Federal'naya sluzhba gos-

Fourth, a remarkable circumstance that qualitatively fills local identities in single-industry towns, incl. the Murmansk Oblast, are the consequences of the activities of city-forming enterprises that negatively affect the ecology of territorial entities. This circumstance is considered aggravating and introduces negative characteristics into the image of places of residence.

The results of the study by I. Roshchina and N. Artyukhova show that most of the single-industry towns they studied (9 out of 11) have a shallow index of happiness. Also, most residents from single-industry towns are not satisfied with the state of the environment, the development trends of the municipality, life safety, and material well-being [9, pp. 44–45].

It is important to note that single-industry towns are micro-societies of the area filled with a limited number of identification markers. This circumstance requires close research attention, primarily from understanding the processes taking place in the Oblast in the structure of towns.

Significant to justify local identity is the historical context of the formation of single-industry towns, whose population was formed due to migrations of the first half of the 20th century. Intensive development of the territory of the Kola North was due, among other things, to the development of new deposits and the construction of mining and processing enterprises. The socio-demographic composition of the visitors was very diverse; people from all territories of the Soviet Union came here both voluntarily and forcibly. Since the 1930s, residents of the territories gained advantages in the form of additional material preferences for living in the conditions of the Extreme North; these were polar allowances, long-term leave, northern pension, and so on. The ethnic composition of the monotowns of the Murmansk Oblast is diverse; there are almost no indigenous people; there are about 2 thousand Sami and indigenous residents throughout the Murmansk Oblast.

Today, the Murmansk Oblast is a highly urbanized region (92% of the urban population) with a high level of education.

Back to single-industry towns. It should be noted that according to the degree of influence of the crisis, experts propose the following classification: 5% of single-industry towns are territories with a high degree of crisis manifestation, and urgent measures are required at the federal level. In the Murmansk Oblast, these territories include the town of Revda and the city of Kirovsk; 15% are in the high-risk zone - the leading role in solving the problems of single-industry towns should be played by the constituent entities of the Russian Federation. In the Murmansk Oblast, Monchegorsk, Kovdor, Nickel, Zapolyarny, Olenegorsk remain in the designated zone; 80% require regular monitoring of the socio-economic status at the regional and federal levels and the development of programs for the development of single-parent families for the medium and long term. In the Murmansk region there are no mono-profile formations of the indicated type.

Over the past decades, the monotowns of the Murmansk region have experienced a severe demographic burden, one of the reasons for which is the intensive outflow of the population (Fig.1).

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darstvennoy statistiki. Territorial'nyy organ Federal'noy sluzhby gosudarstvennoy statistiki po Murmanskoy oblasti. Murmansk, 2019, pp. 43–44.

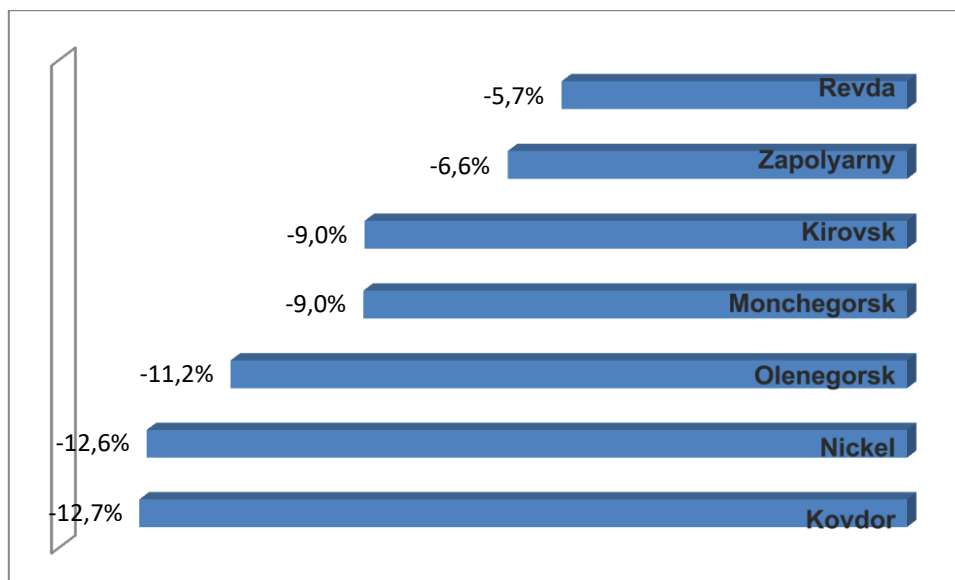


Fig. 1. The dynamics of population decline in single-industry towns of the Murmansk Oblast between 2010 and 2019.<sup>5</sup>

This circumstance is recognized as a negative factor in the socio-economic development of the Oblast, and various measures are proposed at various levels of government to improve the living standards and attractiveness of the territories (from federal ones - “The development strategy of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation and ensuring national security until 2030”, State the program “Socio-economic development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation”; to regional programs – “Strategy of the economic security of the Russian Federation for the period until 2030”, Program “Socio-economic development of the Murmansk Oblast till 2020 and for the period up to 2025,” integrated development program single-industry towns of the Murmansk Oblast, the creation of areas of advancing socio-economic development and so forth.). Despite several proclaimed government measures aimed at keeping the population and improving the quality of life of the territories, the migration balance and the attractiveness of the territories continue to have a negative value.

#### ***Studying the local identity of the single-industry town residents of the Murmansk Oblast***

To identify local identities of residents of single-industry towns of the Murmansk Oblast, a sociological study was completed in 2016-2019 by the authors. The empirical basis of the study was the data of opinion polls collected through electronic questionnaires (n = 428) and in-depth interviews with residents of single-industry towns (n = 12). Surveys were conducted for the following single-industry towns of the Murmansk Oblast: Monchegorsk, Olenegorsk, Zapolyarny, Kovdor, and Kirovsk. The age of respondents was from 14 to 75 years.

The analysis of local identity was carried out through such indicators as the image of the town (assessment of the connection with the place of residence, the degree of attractiveness of the city, assessment of the socio-economic situation), and migration attitudes.

<sup>5</sup> Chislennost' naseleniya na nachalo goda [The population at the beginning of the year]. Federal'naya sluzhba gosudarstvennoy statistiki, Territorial'nyy organ Federal'noy sluzhby gosudarstvennoy statistiki po Murmanskoy oblasti [Federal State Statistics Service, Territorial Authority of the Federal State Statistics Service in the Murmansk Oblast]. URL: [http://murmanskstat.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat\\_ts/murmanskstat/ru/statistics/population/](http://murmanskstat.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_ts/murmanskstat/ru/statistics/population/) (accessed 17 June 2019).

**Assessment of communication with the place of residence.** When studying attachment to the area of residence, it was proposed to distinguish several levels of identification: local (city/village), subregional (Murmansk Oblast), and macro-regional (North). The respondents experience the strongest attachment, corresponding to five points, with Russia — almost half of the respondents (49.6%) indicated this position. It is followed by attachment to their city/village - it is noted in 35.4% of respondents. A quarter of respondents reported a connection of five points with the North (26.4%), one in five - with the Murmansk Oblast (20.1%). When summing up positive ratings in the zone of 4–5 points and negative first and second points, the ratings are distributed as follows: residents of single-industry towns feel the strongest connection with Russia (70.4%) and with their city/village (64.2%) and only 15.7% and 14.9%, respectively, give low estimates of attachment for these indicators. A high attachment to the Murmansk Oblast is experienced by 52.0% of respondents, to the North - 50.4%. At the same time, every fourth (26.4%) resident notes that he practically does not feel an attachment to the North and every fifth (21.0%) - to the Murmansk Oblast. The analysis of average scores reflects the described situation, where civic and local identities are manifested with the greatest force (4.0 and 3.8 points, respectively), with the least - sub-regional and macro-regional (3.4 points each).

Statistical confirmation was given to dependence on the place of birth, attachment to the Murmansk Oblast, and Russia: those who were born in the studied area are relatively more attached to the Murmansk Oblast. On the contrary, those born in another area have a pronounced civic identity, noting a great attachment to the country of residence as a whole. The age of moving also affects the manifestations of respondents' attachment to their place of residence in different ways. Thus, those who arrived in childhood (up to 10 years old) - 3.9 points - experience greater attachment to their city (village) than 2.8 points - those who moved to 20–29 years old. It is also worth noting the statistical differences - the criterion in an attachment to the North: in the group of people who moved in childhood (up to 10 years) - is 3.6 points, and in older age groups of respondents (after 20 years) - by 2.7 points. In relation to the Murmansk Oblast, statistical differences in assessing the attachment of younger (up to 9 years old and 10–19 years old) and older (20–29 years old and after 30 years old) age groups: the former are relatively more attached to the region. Relationship with Russia as a manifestation of civic identity does not depend on the age of moving to the Murmansk Oblast.

**The degree of attractiveness of life in a single-industry town.** In general, cities of residence are largely attractive only to 29.8%, i.e., less than a third of respondents. Every fourth respondent (26.8%), on the contrary, estimates the attractiveness of life in a single-industry town rather low. Almost half of the respondents (43.4%) indicated that there are features attractive for living, and those factors that make the place of residence unattractive. To identify such traits, open-ended questions were asked where it was proposed to indicate in which respondents see the attractiveness of life in the city and what is unattractive to them. These questions were an attempt to reveal the content component, which is a rather abstract concept, difficult to directly



empirical measurement. The basis of the attractiveness of life in single-industry towns is formed by such features as: “northern nature, climate”; “standard of living”, “people, mentality.” At the same time, the first two characteristics are leading in the ranking of unattractive features of the territories of residence. So, among the problems of life in the region prevail: “northern nature, climate”, “ecology”, “health”, “standard of living”, “development, prospects”, as well as “infrastructure, roads.” In our opinion, the characteristics of the northern nature and climate and the parameters of the standard of living form the core of both the local and regional identities of the population of the Murmansk Oblast. Moreover, both of these characteristics are ambivalently combined in the residents’ self-awareness. On the one hand, cold summers, harsh winters, and polar nights are risk factors that worsen the health of the region’s inhabitants and are often regarded as unattractive features. On the other hand, the beauty of northern nature, the northern lights, the polar day constitute an exotic habitat and are positively perceived by respondents. Personal needs and ambitions largely determine the assessment of the parameters of the standard of living: while for some, the presence of northern and polar allowances represents a particular advantage of life in the region; for others, it is insufficient “payment” for life in harsh permafrost conditions. A comparative analysis allows us to see that the climatic conditions to a greater extent characterize the negative type of local identity (65.4 versus 47.7%), and the standard of living in the minds of young people has relatively higher indicators than in other regions and forms the positive basis identity (23.2 versus 12.6%). The first mentality of the northern people (calm, goodwill, decency, etc.) characterizes the positive vector of self-consciousness of the respondents (11.7 versus 2.3%). The environmental situation and conditions for maintaining health, on the contrary, are mostly perceived negatively by the respondents (14.0 versus 2.9%). Such a feature as the development and prospects of the region is also quite pronounced in the structure of positive and negative local identities of northerners (8.0 and 11.5%, respectively). An interesting fact is that young respondents more critically evaluate this parameter, indicating: “there is nothing to catch,” “there are no prospects for self-realization,” “the development of the region is at a deficient level.” Positive assessments of the development and prospects of the region were mainly associated by respondents with the availability of natural resources, an ice-free port, a border status (proximity to Scandinavia), and the youth of the region itself. Further, respondents were asked to determine what exactly they see as the prospects for the development of their territories. As the most popular direction for the development of their settlements, respondents indicated industrial activity and the development of natural resources of the Arctic (42.9%): the development of factories, the development of minerals, the development of the mining and metallurgical industry, the development of energy, and so on. Almost the same number of respondents (42.1%) see prospects for development in the tourism industry, leisure, sports, culture, and creativity. One in five respondents indicated the importance of developing infrastructure, transport, construction, roads, and services (19.7%). This category included those answers that reflected the need for the development and modernization of the urban environment (the development of institutions and the

material base of the spheres of education, medicine, culture and sports, leisure, road works, and so on). Assessment of the socio-economic potential of the territories of residence. According to the results of the analysis of this indicator, it was revealed that it differentiates in different socio-demographic groups. Thus, representatives of the middle age group (30 to 49 years old), residents with specialized secondary education, as well as high and low-income groups are relatively more critical. On the contrary, residents of single-industry towns with higher education or without vocational education (among the latter mainly young people), middle-class representatives in terms of material well-being, demonstrate relatively high grades. Interestingly, visiting respondents are relatively more polarized in assessing the socio-economic situation of the region than those born in the Murmansk Oblast. The value of the index largely depends on the time of the move: visitors in adulthood are more critical than those who arrived in early childhood.

The socio-economic image of the region in the minds of its inhabitants is formed in conjunction with the manifestations of their rootedness. Thus, low index values correlate with a problematic attitude to the natural phenomena of the North (difficulties of adaptation and perception are more often noted), less involvement in regional practices and types of recreation, with a greater focus on emigration, with a low attractiveness of the region for life and lack of identification with the place of residence as a “small homeland” in general.

Migration preferences. Before moving on to an analysis of the migration patterns of residents of the single-industry town, we dwell on the data of the Federal State Statistics Service on the migration situation in the region as a whole. According to the results of 2017, the number of people who left the Murmansk Oblast amounted to 43.4 thousand people; over the past five years, the situation with retirement has remained quite stable in quantitative terms +/- 1.5% (in 2013, those who left were 43, 5 thousand people)<sup>6</sup>. In this case, the highest outflow of the population falls on urban settlements. Regarding the territorial directions of the departed, one can ascertain the predominance of intra-Russian migration, in 2017, 91.0% of the residents of the Murmansk Oblast dispersed to the territories of the Russian Federation, in 2013 - 95.4%<sup>7</sup>.

Statistics also indicate the prevalence of economically active citizens among those who left the territory. Of the total number of migrants, more than 65% are citizens of working age (a large proportion of arrivals are citizens aged 20–24, and those who had left the area — 30–39 years

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<sup>6</sup> Obshchie itogi migratsii naseleniya. Federal'naya sluzhba gosudarstvennoy statistiki, Territorial'nyy organ Federal'noy sluzhby gosudarstvennoy statistiki po Murmanskoy oblasti [Common population migration results. Federal State Statistics Service, Territorial Authority of the Federal State Statistics Service in the Murmansk Region. URL: [http://murmanskstat.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat\\_ts/murmanskstat/ru/statistics/population/](http://murmanskstat.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_ts/murmanskstat/ru/statistics/population/) (accessed 12 June 2019).

<sup>7</sup> Raspreделение migrantov po territoriyam pribytiya i vybytiya po Murmanskoy oblasti za 2017 god. Federal'naya sluzhba gosudarstvennoy statistiki, Territorial'nyy organ Federal'noy sluzhby gosudarstvennoy statistiki po Murmanskoy oblasti [Distribution of migrants by the territory of arrival and departure in the Murmansk Oblast for 2017. Federal State Statistics Service, Territorial Authority of the Federal State Statistics Service in the Murmansk Region]. URL: [http://murmanskstat.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat\\_ts/murmanskstat/ru/statistics/population/](http://murmanskstat.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_ts/murmanskstat/ru/statistics/population/) (accessed 12 June 2019).

olds). The outflow of youth as a socio-economic potential of the territory is an aggravating fact of the migration situation in the Murmansk Oblast.

According to the analysis of a survey of residents of single-industry towns, the majority of respondents (52.7%) plan their departure. Including one in ten (11.2%) intends to leave their place of residence during the year, 27.6% of respondents expect to move in 3-5 years. Each fifth (20.9%), who expressed a desire to leave the city, is going to do it in 6-10 years. A minority of respondents (9.2%) postpone moving for 11–20 years.

Among the main reasons, problems of a socio-economic nature dominate job cuts, low wages, inadequate conditions for self-realization; in second place, the causes of the natural-climatic origin, i.e., harsh climatic conditions that significantly affect health. Interesting are the results of cluster analysis. They revealed a statistical relationship between the estimated level of well-being and satisfaction with life in the Oblast. Thus, people with higher incomes demonstrate a high degree of satisfaction with life in the Oblast (19.8%).

The preferred directions of moving are St. Petersburg (Leningrad Oblast), Moscow (Moscow Oblast), the southern regions of the Russian Federation (Krasnodarsky Krai, Belgorod Oblast).

It is necessary to supplement the analysis on the above indicators with the results of in-depth interviews.

Regarding the images of cities, the situation is similar for all objects of research. So, in the representations of the population, the image is dominated by “proletarian identity” [10, Davydov D.A.]. The majority of the population associates their cities solely with the activity of industrial enterprises; enterprises remain the main source of employment. Often, the local political elite is formed from the natives of these enterprises (all current heads of administrations had the experience of leadership positions in the industrial enterprises of their settlements). This circumstance leaves an imprint on the policy of positioning cities, making it difficult to get away from the myth of “cities of labor glory”. This problem has a number of consequences, first of all, for young people, whose image is more likely to cause rejection, and many do not like life in unpromising provincial cities. They assess their potential employment in enterprises extremely uncertainly: *“Jobs are constantly being reduced, it’s virtually impossible to get a job at the enterprise unless you are just someone’s son”, “I don’t want to work at the plant, I want to go to St. Petersburg and study there to stay, I want to work in the IT field”*.

The very quality of life in the city is also not optimistic: *«сходить некуда», «ловить нечего», «глушь, хочу заработать на жильё и уехать отсюда», «врачей не хватает, приходится анализы сдавать ездить в Мурманск, пока все сделают, они [анализы] уже не актуальны», «детям здесь будущего нет», «экология ужасная, комбинат нас травит, ничего не растёт»*.

Informants employed in city-forming enterprises have a clear connection of the image of the city with the corporate culture of the enterprise itself. It often extends beyond the workflow. Noteworthy were the examples of the influence of corporatism on non-production situations:

“When the elections were held, we all had to report to the line manager that we went and voted. The manager had listed, and he noted. And it is advisable to say who to vote for. I voted as I saw fit, phoned my boss that I went to the station and that’s all. ” The situation with voluntary-compulsory attendance of elections was monitored in 5 single-industry towns out of 7. When asked what would happen if a person did not go to the polls and report, the answers were similar: that, in principle, nothing is possible, and it should not be, but no one runs the risk of being non-performing. Fear of being left without work in conditions of constant optimization of personnel is the leading feeling of those employed in enterprises.

For the same reason, informants in all cities note that over the past five years, there have been no problems with labor discipline at enterprises. Also, workers employed in the city-forming enterprise note a constant contribution to the development of the social infrastructure of their cities. In fact, in all single-industry towns, at the expense of enterprises, swimming pools and sports clubs were built. The nature of employment also determines the inseparability of corporatism in the structure of local identity: constant work in insecurity forms a particular type of partnership in the team, which, as our informants noted, go over to unhappy everyday life - joint leisure and simple friendship between shifts are common practice for monotowns under study. Group cohesion is also the reason that the features of the attractiveness of life in the city feature a particular mentality with a predominance of such human qualities as “calm, goodwill, decency, openness, and so on.” The important thing that is noted during the interviews is a constant reference to the Soviet past, which is found in comparative characteristics on a wide range of issues among informants who found Soviet times either in childhood or in working age: *“Before [in Soviet times] everything was different, everything was adjusted, several state farms worked, factories ... everything was closed, there is nowhere to work, there was no way to get a factory ”*, *“ Give me back the Soviet Union! ”* Life in the city has a clearly defined chronotope: a cloudless Soviet past - a difficult present - an unpromising future: *“Anyone here will say that he does not want his children to live here. What kind of education can they get here? I am already silent about health care; hospitals have all been closed, is it free to not get doctors. Plus emissions from the plant, people are constantly dying of cancer ”*. It is important to note that informants under 30 do not reproduce Soviet identity at all; the past does not appear in their comparative references. Here, links to other regions, especially St. Petersburg and some southern ones, are crucial. The factors determining the migration mood are the natural and climatic conditions, the ecology, and the uncomfortability of the urban environment of this place of residence.

Bad ecology is the curse of the regional single-industry towns, according to the words of residents of the city of Nickel - *“In our city, you can shoot Armageddon.”* For several decades, the active activity of enterprises has turned the area into blasted wastelands with polluted reservoirs and sparse vegetation. Emissions also cause polluted air, which is reflected in disappointing disease statistics. Bad ecology leads the way in leaving residents and is a decisive factor in the outflow from single-industry towns.

### Conclusion

Summing up, it should be noted that the majority of the population of the Murmansk region considers their cities to be native, demonstrating a significant connection with their place of residence. Still, no more than one-third of those surveyed associate their lives with them. The leading reasons for a possible departure are the climatic and environmental conditions, as well as the socio-economic nature. And here, it is essential to note the analytical finding in the form that the distinguishing property of local identity is the material factor, which significantly determines the severity of the connection with the place of residence. Improving wealth is directly proportional to the growth of identification with the city, which is of strategic importance for building regional politics in the Murmansk Oblast.

The peculiarities of the northern nature and climate and the standard of living ambivalently combined in the minds of the townspeople are the core parameters of self-awareness as residents of the northern region. An important factor is leisure activities related to climatic conditions, which are very highly valued by residents of single-industry towns. In essence, this is fishing, hunting, picking berries and mushrooms, winter and summer sports that are more applicable in these conditions. Gathering and fishing with hunting also constitute an additional (sometimes the only) source of income for some residents. "Local patriotism" of residents of the region's single-industry towns is becoming a significant factor in the formation of their attitude to the country as a whole: attachment to the city of residence translates a particular state of civic consciousness.

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