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**Revived Archaic: “Scattered Manufactories” in Provincial Russia**

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**Abstract**

The authors discover and describe a new economic phenomenon in modern Russia, which they term “scattered (or dispersed) manufactories”. In provincial Russian towns people engage in cooperative economic activities, which in their form and substance are strikingly similar to pre-industrial manufacturing in Europe and Russia in the 14–18th centuries. Such "scattered manufactories" are a post-archaic economic institution, in which industrial relations have a similar organization to guilds in Europe and artels in Russia. Such manufactories in five towns are described and analyzed in this article. The qualitative sociological methodology was used: the main methods are focused in-deep interview and observation the all stages of production and market processes in each craft merchandises. In a comparative context, including a description of all stages of the production chain, four types of manufactories are described. The main features of modern "scattered manufactories" are revealed, that making them similar to the ancient pre-capitalist and pre-industrial manufactories in Europe. The author's concept of the emergence of scattered manufactories de-novo in Russia is proposed. The concept is based on the uniqueness of the local resource and / or local technology. This makes such production competitive in the context of the prevalence of cheap mass production of goods. The authors argue that "scattered manufactories" are very common nowadays, and are highly likely to be found in other local communities, particularly in ones that enjoy accessing to unique natural resources and / or having a specific tradition in craft. All of "scattered entrepreneurships" represent the informal sector of local economies and exist outside the legal framework and outside the official local economy, controlled by state authority. The roots of their informal nature are traced back to the economic crisis of the 1990s, the general underdevelopment of local labor markets, and a generally high tolerance to rule evasion and informal relations in Russia. Another reason is the currently excessive state regulatory impact and fiscal pressure targeting small entrepreneurship and self-employment in Russia.

**Key words:** scattered manufacture, distributed manufacturing, informal economy, archaic economic institutions, pre-modern economic institutions, post-archaic economic institutions, Russian provincial society, local communities

**1. Introduction. Classical scattered manufactories in European history and contemporary Russian economy**

In March 2014 we came to Novokhopyorsk town, Voronezh region, Russia to carry out field seminars with the students of Higher School of Economics. We were interested in the daily life setup and population’s economical behavior, social and political sentiments of the people and their interaction with local authorities. Amongst a plurality of secondary and incidental data we have heard about the most popular way to gain means of subsistence for locals: fabrication and sales of goat down shawls. That is a historically well-established folk craft traditional for the area, involving a significant part of local community households. In fact, such a craft is a "distributed", or "scattered", manufactory (throughout this paper the terms "distributed" and "scattered" are used as synonyms). All the production chain of gathering and processing of the resource (goat fluff) along with fabrication and sale of shawls (and many other knit downy items) is carried out within the local community and dispersed among dozens of households. Many of these households specialize in separate segments of the process, thus being different links of the unified production chain.

Further observations in Novokhopyorsk town and later in the neighboring town Uryupinsk confirmed that this phenomenon actually matches all, without exception, signs of a dispersed manufactory, the long forgotten (by scientists) phenomenon of early capitalism. As is well known from economic history [The Cambridge Economic History of Europe 1978; Kahan, Hellie 1985; Ogilvie 1993] dispersed manufactories originally arose in Italian cities in the 14th century. Later they occurred in Netherlands and other countries in Europe and also in Russia. They came as an "early-capitalistic response" to the guild-based organization of craft activities. They were unbound of guild professional restrictions of that time and allowed for the mass production of consumer goods, that contributed to the subsequent success of this form of manufacture organization. The dispersed manufactories quickly became abundant and attracted to its orbit a significant number of small rural artisans, as well as urban indigent and poor, thus providing them with a labor market and additional sources of income. These manufactories were created, as a rule, in such strains of fabrication that had labor-intensive production chains requiring a large number of workers but not dependent on their high qualifications. Therefore, they were most common in the textile business (weaving, woolen, as well as fur and down), in logging and timber processing, in specialized construction (shipbuilding and housebuilding), in the mining industry (pig-iron, copper, silver mines and ore-smelting and metallurgical plants).

Manufactories in Russia are already well known in the 17th century [Blum 1961 (cited from: 1992: 293); Kahan, Hellie 1985: 121-136], therefore, the germs of manufactory production could exist by the end and even by the middle of the 16th century. [Kulisher 1924 (2004: 353-378, 399-412, 569-570)]. And from the first quarter of the 18th century, the rapid growth of manufactory production in Russia began. For example, in 1725 there were 233 manufactories, and in 1796 already 3360 (in addition to mines and metallurgical plants), both very large and small, mainly around Moscow [Blum 1961 (1992: 293-294)]. And by the beginning of the 19th century, for example, in the village of Ivanovo alone (a regional center nowadays) 49 manufactories were functioning in 1803 for the production of linen and cotton printed fabrics [Blum 1961 (1992: 300-301)]. It should be kept in mind that here, as well as in the regions adjacent to Moscow, besides Ivanovo, there were many other large villages with surrounding hamlets hosting many manufactories created mainly by Old Believer communities (for example, in the areas of Guslitsky Kray and Meshchera [*Torgovo-promyshlennaya Rossiya* (Commercial and Industrial Russia) 1899]). Perhaps that is why in Russia manufactories in the proper sense of the word were usually meant to be weaving factories, due to both historical reasons and the mass nature of the phenomenon. That is also likely due to the fact that mining, mines, and specialized metallurgical and machine production were state-controlled or owned by the treasury [Blum 1961 (1992)]. The development of manufactories in Russia was strongly encouraged by the state (including “otkup” – the state retail and service outsourcing). One of the possible little-known reasons for the mining and other manufactories development "at the behest of state" in Russia from the middle of the 18th century — this industrial "pre-revolution", a rapid and general upsurge in production. Fernand Braudel believes to be the sudden loss of a substantial part of state revenues from the sale of Siberian furs in European markets. During the reign of Alexei Mikhailovich, this part is known to have made up to 2/3 of the total treasury income, but since the 30s of the 18th century the furs of North America began to compete with the Siberian [Braudel 1992: 473, 478; also see: Kulisher 1924 (2004: 567)]. According to J. Blum, Russian pre-industrial manufacture development in the 18th century was equal to the development of the rest of Europe, and sometimes even surpassed it [Blum 1961 (1992: 294)]. That is also evidenced by comparative data, for example, for Germany of the same period [The Cambridge Economic History of Europe 1978: 498-511].

Dispersed manufactories characterized only the initial period of capitalist development both in Europe and in Russia (the pre- or proto-industrial stage of capitalism, see: [Mendels 1972; Rudolph 1980; Houston, Snell 1984; Ogilvie 1993]) and were coming to naught relatively fast as a result of two interconnected processes. First of all, thanks to the development of monopolistic and financial capitalism demanding the corresponding "dissipation" of product chains to exclude transparency of capital [Wallerstein 2003: 81]. Secondly, due to the diversification of production, the condition for which is by the way production specialization inherent to manufactory. This process is necessarily accompanied by the state protectionism against the backdrop of growing sovereignty [Teshke 2011: 285-308]. However, within the economic periphery such institutions that have now become archaic continued to persist for a long time apparently in a strongly reduced form. This might be evidenced by the powerful development of cottage crafts and artisanal production in Russia until the 1930s [Gindin 1925; Vladimirsky 1927; Mints 1929; Vodarsky, Istomina 2004; Pavlov, Seleev 2015] which at the same time always constituted a condition and prerequisite for dispersed manufactory production. It should be noted, however, that we have not find any direct indications of the preservation of manufactory production in such archaic forms neither at the end of the 19th century nor especially throughout the entire 20th century. Therefore, it seems probable to us that this phenomenon is a "neoplasm" of the turn of the 20-21st centuries, a forced return of Russian provincial society to economic archaic.

Closer to our time, in the context of the systemic economic crisis of the 1990s, in the conditions of underdevelopment and collapse of local labor markets, the widespread adoption of the informal and shadow economy in Russia [Buev 2010; Alimova, Chenina, Chepurenko 2011; Gimpelson, Kapelyushnikov *V teni regulirovaniya* (In the shadow of regulation) 2014], the active population in small towns and the adjacent rural areas was forced to form (or better say "to recall") distinctive modes of economic activity. They are similar to the modes that were once characteristic of the early stages of capitalism in Europe and Russia (we call them traditionally "crafts"), and correspond in form to the so-called "dispersed manufactories". By the sum of features, such contemporary "scattered manufactories" in small towns represent an archaic economic institution since they reproduce all the attributes of a classical dispersed manufactory of the 14-18th centuries. A significant part of the able-bodied population is involved in such "distributed manufactories" both in the small towns themselves and in the rural areas surrounding these. Households are included in distributed production processes at the stage of receipt (extraction) of resources, in their use for the fabrication of traditional local goods and in their sale (both retail and wholesale).

However, there is the modern distributed manufacturing, which makes extensive use of information technology. It is widely known as a new form of organizing the industrial production of multicomponent goods, not being localized at one point but comprising a "network of loosely interconnected and interacting intellectual production (factory) facilities for the production of individual product components" [Distributed Manufacturing 2010: 1]. At the same time, as a rule, these facilities are exteriorized to third countries and distributed over a large territory (see: [Kühnle 2007; Kühnle, Bitsch 2015]). This new form of "distributed production" is now seen as a promising, complementary and alternative to traditional industrial, conveyor production (see, for example: [Coughlan, O'Connell, Murphy 2010; Bopp 2010; Distributed Manufacturing 2010; Dekkers, Bennett 2015]). (However, if we compare the attributes of a classical dispersed manufacture with the key features of modern "distributed production" we find that some of them coincide; in the list below in paragraph 3, these are points 1, 3 and 5 [Distributed Manufacturing 2010: 4].) Even so, the key feature of the distributed production processes discovered and described here is precisely their archaic nature, full correspondence with the classical dispersed manufactories, and by no means with the modern distributed production using innovative and IT technologies.

**2. Research methodology and materials**

The specific nature of the "distributed manufactories" requires customized methodology. Such enterprises have two key features: they are "invisible" to the authorities and each member "elude" any registration. Besides, they are very irregularly distributed across the territory: neighboring towns can vary greatly. Due to the above, the research methodology was necessarily based on qualitative analysis; and the principal methods we used to collect field data were direct observations in the towns where "distributed manufactory" located, and interviews with participants. Our procedure of direct “naiva” observation is described in detail [Kordonsky et al., 2011]. Interviews focusing on production chain and sale of goods, status of participants roles were the second, more detailed source of information on manufacturing activities. The interviews were structured along several basic lines of research; and they were taken on the respondent's territory in the form of an open conversation. However, the search for a potential respondent could be exhausting and often unsuccessful, as evidenced by the report fragment quoted above. Moreover, even if a suitable person was found, there was absolutely no guarantee that he or she would be prepared to give an interview. As the members of “scattered manufactory” are often economically active in the "shadow" sector of the economy, many of them are reluctant to discuss these matters even with their neighbors, to say nothing of "suspicious" researchers. Although the interviews were conducted in free form, we followed a routine technology (for example see: [Rubin & Rubin, 2004]). We did not show the questionnaire to the respondent. An interview could last from several minutes (10-15) to one or two hours. On average, an interview lasted to an half-hour. Our field research of the "distributed manufactories" carried out from 2014 through the present days. During this period, we had been visited 84 small towns, focused on identification of such industries, hidden from official authorities. Аrom this many cities, we discovered and described 4 manufactories in 5 towns and recorded the presence of at least 5 more manufactories. Contemporary "distributed manufactories" identified and described by us in recent years (2014-2019) in other small towns turned out to be typologically similar to the "downy manufactories" of Uryupinsk and Novokhopyorsk. These are the "fur manufactory" in Labinsk (2014), the "boots manufactory" in Kimry (2015), the "Rostov Finift’ manufactory" in Rostov the Great (2016-2017), and a few other varied "folk crafts" that we have insufficiently described by now, where we find signs of "scattered manufactory". These are, for example, Temryuk's fisheries (Taman’, Krasnodar region), cucumber production in Porechye / Demidov (Smolensk region), watch production in Uglich, Yaroslavl’ region (I.V. Shmerlina drew our attention to these), cabbage cultivation in Gagatli (info from D. Sokolov) and a number of others. Importantly, all of these are concentrated in small towns and their rural surroundings.

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**3.** **Attributes of the classical and contemporary "dispersed manufactory"**

The main features of contemporary "manufactories" and the origins of their appearance in one form or another are everywhere the same. The following distinguishing features are characteristic of both the classical dispersed manufactory and todays provincial "distributed manufactory".

1. Manufactory production implies the presence of a significant number of separate relatively independent elements of the production process not always requiring their unification "under one roof" (in some cases this is impossible). As a matter of fact, the very need for several separate and relatively independent "technological lines" for the production of the final product determines the possibility to create a "scattered/ distributed manufactory”.

2. The second prerequisite is the laboriousness, but at the same time simplicity of the most of production operations that do not require high skills of workers. However, as a rule, simple and labor-taking operations are combined with the presence of complex operations that require highly skilled workers. The specificity of the manufactory production lies precisely in the combination of simple and complex components in the final product. This requires significantly different qualifications of workers.

3. The third condition is the specialization of workers (usually not individuals but households) in certain types or groups of production operations; often such a specialization attained the character of a "work dynasty", with the inheritance of skills, abilities, and know-hows within one family, which provided its members with a competitive advantage over their neighbors. Obviously, "dynasty" formation is characteristic of highly skilled workers (the preservation of this important element of the historically earlier guild organization is also inherent to the dispersed manufactory despite of alternativity of these forms of production organization). Since dispersed production is often based on the use of unique or hard-to-reach local raw materials, specialization depends on external constraints: certain types of operations require not qualifications but the presence or absence of access to production resources or production components.

4. "Scattered manufactory" requires the concentration of the entire production process in one controlled territory of one or more neighboring local communities against the backdrop of the distributed mode of production of individual components of the product. This is what makes a classic dispersed manufactory decisively different from modern distributed manufacturing since in the framework of the production process direct physical interaction of workers engaged in individual links of the chain is involved.

5. The cooperation of production activities and all elements of a distributed production process is absolutely necessary, which involves the self-organization of participants in the form of creating specialized artels and artel groups, usually or always on family and neighborly principles. Artel cooperation is one of the primary attributes of archaic economic institutions. It implies primarily neighborly but not kindred relations, communal but not personal responsibility, and the distribution principle of remuneration for labor.

6. As a result, on the basis of artel self-organization, a self-government institution spontaneously appears in the simplest — also archaic — forms: "rally", "showdown", "beef", "authoritative solver" (see also a recent study of folk crafts [Seleev, Pavlov 2016]). As a rule, the outcome is a formation of a single local source of control for all components of the production and sale of finished products (an organizational center like a wealthy kulak-peasant, a merchant, an industrialist, an entrepreneur, a bandit, a racket protection "krysha", a governmental "kontora", a state corporation). It is the artel cooperation and self-organization of the populace along with self-employment and economic self-sufficiency that allows ranging such economic practices of the populace as "folk crafts".

7. An essential, but not always present attribute is the presence of unique local natural raw materials (or the possibility of mass production of such raw materials by the populace) for the fabrication of the final product, which itself at the same time should be a mass-demanded product. We assume that the development (revival) of a number of "scattered manufactories" in the 1990s was primarily due to the fact of the availability of such raw materials for the local populace and lack of demand for it by the local economy, which provided natural competitive advantages to local community members both in relation to the local economy and neighboring societies.

8. Another important, but also not always present attribute is the presence of a unique production resource within the local community in the form of a unique technology used to produce a specific product. Local populace has preserved the tradition of a unique craft, which once provided the well-being of most households. The presence of a unique folk craft (economic practices) determines the stability and "conservation" of the "scattered manufactories" based on these practices due to the absence or weakness of the competitive environment.

Observing and describing contemporary "scattered" production in small towns, in all the cases indicated below we record in full the traditionally distinguished attributes of the early capitalist — nowadays already archaic — "dispersed manufactory". The organization of production in several such "manufactories" is briefly described below.

**4. The four "scattered manufactories" in small towns**

All four initially identified "distributed manufactories": "downy" of Novokhopyorsk and Uryupinsk, "fur" of Labinsk, "boots" of Kimry, and "Rostov Finift’" of Rostov the Great are similar and even identical in the production process organization, the character of populace employment, the peculiarities of logistics and sales of finished products. Therefore, the description of the individual components is generalized.

***4.1. Raw materials and its primary processing.*** Specific raw material for the manufacture of commodity products are available only in the first of the examined, "downy" manufactory and it is goat fluff of special quality long since inherent to goats in the middle reaches of Khopyor river. It is thanks to this fluff that shawls and other downy products from Uryupinsk and Novokhopyorsk are especially appreciated. Therefore, down goats here have been bred for a long time and without exception by the entire populace, not only in villages but also on urban courtyards. The unique qualities of downy goat’s fluff, like the one of Orenburg goats, provided the local population with a competitive advantage over their neighbors and for a long time constituted the most important source of welfare for the local households. Down is prepared in two ways, on which the quality of the produce depends: it is combed out or sheared. Combing is a more time-consuming process and high-quality products are obtained from such fluff; sheared fluff is used to make lower quality, more mass and cheaper knitwear. In the case of the remaining three types of manufactories the raw materials used are not unique. Although the "fur" manufactory in Labinsk works largely on fur supplied by local private "fur farms" from the entire rural area of almost half of the territory of the Krasnodar and Stavropol regions, there is also a lot of fur imported from Siberia. Secondary processing of fur (dressing) before sewing is often carried out on site, in the "workhouses" of Labinsk and neighboring villages. The shoemakers of Kimry apparently use exclusively imported already dressed leather. It comes not only from different regions of the country but also from abroad. In Rostov the Great, all the main components for the manufacture of Finift’ enamels: copper plates, silver, enamel, paints are also imported and are often purchased in Europe (primarily paints). Thus, only Uryupinsk-Novokhopyorsk and Labinsk manufactories work on local raw materials (exclusively or mainly), and Kimry and Rostov exclusively on imported ones. However, in all cases the supply of raw materials, providing it to those manufactory participants who are engaged in the initial stages of the production chain, is most often carried out by the sellers of the final product, retail or wholesale ones. At the same time, there are specialized suppliers (about which there is very uncertain and limited information) probably including individual entrepreneur carriers (taxi drivers and truckers). As far as one can judge, a part of those who control significant volumes of production and sales of finished products are at the same time large suppliers of raw materials for manufactory workers, thus being a group of people who control a significant share of the manufactory production market. These groups over time (probably nowadays already) become key organizers and controllers of the goods production at all stages.

***4.2. Workpiece production: simple but laborious steps.*** In all "distributed manufactories" the production cycle consists of both specialized and a set of simple and laborious, time-consuming operations. They need to involve a large number of workers, who do not need a lot of skills and who can do the job together: grouped in artels, in the "workhouses", and specially allocated premises for this kind of relatively unhealthy stages of production. In the "downy" manufactory, these stages are cleaning and washing the fluff, spinning (winding fluff onto a cotton or silk thread using a manual or electric spinning wheel) and, at the final stage, "fluffing" the finished product (giving the downy item a marketable appearance by fluffing out in a centrifuge). All these operations can be carried out (and actually were carried out in the past) in the same family and at home, but are gradually taken out to utility premises. The fluff along with the thread is often distributed to neighbors to make yarn and all family members are engaged in this (earlier, in the 1990s, when it was the basis for subsistence, men also spun). "Fluffers", home-made electric centrifuges, are not available in every family and they are rented: ready-made products are brought to the owner of this peculiar unit for "fluffing".

In "fur" manufactory for labor-intensive operations of final fur dressing prior to sewing, "workhouses" are more frequent than in other cases. These outbuildings are adapted or specially built in the yard of one family, and up to ten workers, neighbors and relatives, gather inside for joint dressing and cutting of fur pelts. Separate premises are necessary since in fur production this part of work is the most "dirty" in comparison with other types of manufactories and it is never done at home. Cutting is a more difficult part of production and is usually done by those who perform sewing of articles. Therefore, sewing is often, but not always, carried out in the same "workhouse" where fur dressing is done. Both dressing and sewing are done equally by women and men. The least skilled people who do not know how to cut and sew go for the "workhouses".

In the "boots" manufactory, laborious and simple operations are probably minimized due to the fact that two shoe factories have been preserved in Kimry and they are most likely the main suppliers of fine leather and materials for the sole and inside of shoes for many private manufacturers. Since processing of blanks is not required, draft operations are reduced to cutting out soles, half-soles, insoles, yuft or some fabric using paper patterns, which is done actually in the town’s privately owned garages.

In the production of Finift’ enamels, laborious operations are also minimized and limited to cutting out and bending of small copper plates further on covered by enamel and fired in a muffle furnace. Work with metal is often performed by the enamelist himself who requires a fairly high qualification since not only the quality and color of the surface but also the durability of the product depends on the thoroughness of the enamel firing (however, on the copper plate bending as well). Not everyone has furnaces and they can be rented. Significant electricity costs of firing lead to the fact that in Rostov there is a massive debt for electricity and its significant losses, and several special meetings of the municipality are devoted to this problem.

Thus, in cases where the number of simple labor-intensive operations is small (in Kimry and Rostov), ​​the share of operations requiring a high qualification and several specializations is greater in the technological chain. The uniqueness of the combination of specialties necessary for the manufacture of the product, in this case, turns out to be a resource that in a sense compensates for the economic advantage of using unique raw materials, as is in the case of Uryupinsk and Novokhopyorsk. Only for the "fur" manufactory of Labinsk we can not specify what is unique, except in the special skill of seamstresses.

***4.3. Stages of production requiring high qualifications and a unique profession****.* It is characteristic that in the production chains of all identified "distributed manufactories" there are links that require special knowledge, abilities, and skills which are often inherited in the same family. Apparently, these particular features in the manufacture of products do determine the possibilities for the development of such archaic economic institutions.

In cases of "downy", "fur", and "boots" manufactories the requirements for skills are not as high as in the production of Finift’ enamel in Rostov. But such skills themselves have a deep tradition supported, among other things, by a significant concentration of highly skilled workers in one or another special area within the local community. There are many knitters of shawls since every family knows how to do it, and yet the best knitters are very highly regarded and knitting art is deemed prestigious to learn. Moreover, a lot of downy products are made on knitting machines but their price is several times or even an order of magnitude lower than the price of a shawl knitted by a skillful knitter. The situation in fur production is exactly the same, where almost all the work is manual and the requirements are high for skin-cutters, fashion designers (these are also present), and craftsmen who make hats and other products from the highest quality fur. Tradition also plays a big role here and home-based (in a "workhouse") hat-tailoring training takes place. At the same time, a significant part of the production is routine and most of the fur articles, according to the masters themselves, are of medium and low quality intended for the mass buyer. However, there are always orders that are made by highly skilled craftsmen. The artisanal production of shoes in Kimry is based on the work of pattern designers who take special training not only locally but also abroad in Italy. But shoemaking (of high boots and boots for special use conditions, for example for polar aviation pilots) is itself an art that not everyone is capable of, and therefore good shoemakers are highly regarded. Although, as always, mass consumption commodities are produced in garages.

The production of Rostov Finift’ enamel requires the participation of class craftsmen of two or three specialties. Among these, the lowest requirements are imposed on enamelists applying and firing enamel on a copper plate, although it is believed that the final quality of the product depends on the experience and skill of the enamelist. Often the artists themselves do this work, but not for mass production. The artist’s work is laborious and time-consuming (one miniature or painting requires from several hours to weeks and months) but the work of a filigree jeweler creating silver rims for enamel is 3-5 times more labor-intensive. Artists themselves buy and prepare paints, draw mainly on tracing paper using a sample, but of course there are also original works, and a number of masterworks are always recognized as of very high artistic quality.

Renowned masters often work independently and for long do not associate themselves with several enamel manufacturing enterprises that still exist in Rostov. A filigree craftsman also usually independently fabricates all components for rims: draws and winds the wire, cuts and winds-on individual parts of a rim, welds them, makes the rim following a previously prepared drawing (the rims are often quite original). The work of a jeweler is the third and final stage of manufacturing a product that requires high qualifications. All these masters undergo preliminary training, both at an enterprise and in specialized educational institutions, and some learn from parents and relatives: there are many "work dynasties" of artists and jewelers who descend art and professional secrets to children.

***4.4. Sales, retail and wholesale of*** "***scattered manufactories***" ***products.*** This component of today’s "distributed manufactories" remains the least clear and is scarcely described by us for obvious reasons: here we deal with large batches of goods, with big money, and interaction between a few well-acquainted people takes place and the information is closed to strangers. There is great internal competition, but all participants are closely connected and jointly protect the common "business" from outsiders, if only because all of it is "in shadow". However, against the backdrop of a select few (according to our observations, up to a dozen large entrepreneurs in each manufactory) there are a significant number of small traders including both direct manufacturers (artists and jewelers, shoemakers and furriers, knitters and farmers) selling their own products at local markets and small "merchants" who engage exclusively in the sale of goods and buy up produce from several people renting a kiosk, a tray, a table at the town’s municipal market. Such small "merchants" rarely register as individual entrepreneurs, but do provide interaction between individual manufacture participants. They buy raw materials and distribute it between the workers involved in the primary processing, pick up the blanks and transfer them to the next stage for processing, sell finished products at the market. They also procure payments at all stages of production, quite often lend and credit workers. The same people are connected with external wholesale suppliers of raw materials (fluff from Kalmykia and Dagestan, yarn threads from Ivanovo, fur pelts from Siberian cities: Novosibirsk and Krasnoyarsk, leather from Kirov or Italy, copper from Moscow, silver from Kostroma, etc.). Naturally, they are also associated with wholesale buyers of the final produce. Therefore, out of these numerous small "merchants", many of whom are former masters themselves (albeit of a lower level) who gradually specialize exclusively in trading operations, large local businessmen also emerge, who begin to monopolize the market in intense competition. This process is taking place right now but is largely hidden not only from external observers, but also from local ones. Apparently, large local merchants not only control whole rows of tents at municipal markets but they establish (or buy out) firms for the transportation of raw materials and products, as well as set up "workhouses" whither unskilled workers are hired. In general, the process follows a well-known path although now we trace the state of production relations at the stage of the classical "dispersed manufactory".

Along with the two adjoining categories of entrepreneurial merchants — small producers selling their products by peddling or at the market, and specialized traders engaged in retail and wholesale, and at the same time providing connection between the links of the production chain — there is a third group of merchants and resellers in all manufactories: local Roma communities. According to respondents, gypsies are everywhere incorporated in the "shadowy business". Participation in the trade of downy shawls, fur products, leather shoes and enamel jewelry is concurrently a front for their criminal business (usually drugs, but also precious metals trafficking, as well as something else that our respondents do not know about, but suggest or speculate).

Buyer-ups and traders make up the component cementing a manufactory, creating and ensuring its integrity. From this environ come up those participants of the enterprise who gradually begin to control and manage all the business. At the present stage of the development of manufactories, these new small firms are still just being formed, crystallized; by appearance and character of operations they look similar to the remnants of former state enterprises, factories, which formerly produced or keep producing all the same articles that form the basis of production of nowaday "distributed manufactories". However, already here, in small towns with dispersed production of unique or rare goods, the time has come for the accumulation of capital.

***4.5. Populace participation*** It turned out to be rather difficult to assess the degree of involvement of the population of small towns and their rural surroundings in "distributed manufactories". The reasons are well known (see: [Plusnin, Kordonsky, Skalon 2009]): the complete absence of data at the level of municipalities and regions on unemployed people in the local economy and on the structure of the self-employed population. Therefore, we have to confine solely to estimates based on the opinions of respondents, local experts, and our own comparisons and calculations based on statistical and municipal reporting materials. These estimates are as follows. In the "downy" manufactory of Uryupinsk and Novokhopyorsk in the 1990s and 2000s the entire population was involved; it is significantly less by now but not less than 1/3 of households. Moreover, not only able-bodied family members and pensioners were involved in downy production before but children as well. Now the numbers of goats have decreased significantly, many citizens have stopped growing them on courtyards and the main herd belongs to farms and villages. Knitting no longer makes up a constant perquisite for a household; other and new sources of income have appeared. In connection with springtime observations of 2017 we can estimate the populace participation in distributed production as being 1/3 – 1/2 of all households, i.e. not less than 1/3 of the able-bodied population. This is roughly 10 thousand out of 25-30 thousand households (exact data on the number of households in both areas were not found). In the "fur" manufactory of Labinsk about 1/5 in total of the town’s adult population are engaged at different stages, i.e. about 4 thousand out of 20 thousand households. About 1 thousand out of 10 thousand households are involved in the production of Rostov Finift’ enamel. We could not derive an estimate for boots production in Kimry. No matter how great the errors of such estimates may be, it is quite obvious that a significant part of the local population is employed in "distributed manufactories", and this is precisely the basis of their livelihoods and source of well-being. However, this is precisely that nothing is known about neither by statistics nor by local authorities.

**5. General features of contemporary "scattered manufactories"**

What are the characteristic common features of the four described "distributed manufactories", as well as several others identified but not yet fully described?

Firstly, all these industries have a very long tradition of local folk crafts, which in the Soviet years were developed and put on an industrial basis: in all the towns factory-type production units were established long ago based on the local populace traditional folk crafts and on its skills and economic practice. Artisanal downy crafts in the middle reaches of Khopyor (in Uryupinsk and Novokhopyorsk) have been known since the 18th century. In Labinsk, as far as one can judge, factory furrier production was already developed in the 1930s and artisanal production existed much earlier. In the Soviet years there were several fur factories and nowadays there are seven of them in the town. In Kimry, handicraft footwear and tanneries have been known since the beginning of the 17th century (although they are claimed to date back even to the 16th century), and shoemaking factories from the beginning of the 20th century (1903). Rostov Finift’ enamel as a hand-painted enameling has existed since the 1760s and the enamel factory since 1918. Note that it is from the beginning of the 18th century that rapid growth of manufactory production in various sectors of the national economy begins in Russia [Blum 1961 (1992: 293-294)]. However, the beginning of the process should be attributed to as early as the middle of the 17th century, when various manufactories were created in the vicinity of Moscow, Tula, Kashira, in the Urals and in the Trans-Urals territories under the patronage and with assistance of the state and with the involvement of foreigners. [Kulisher 1925 (2004): 399-412]. In other words, the nowaday "distributed manufactories" of small towns described herein have the deepest history of this particular type of local production.

Secondly, the production process of "scattered manufactories" either utilizes unique local resources (for example, a breed of Khopyor goats with a special fluff quality) or traditional, often unique, practices of the populace (such as a long-time tradition of high-quality boots production in Kimry, tradition of manufacturing Rostov Finift’ enamel). In all cases, raw materials or materials for production requiring special skills in processing constitute the most important competitive advantage of the populace participating in a distributed fabrication process. But along with the immanent (natural) advantage, there is an advantage provided by professional ("guild") skills which are still carefully guarded and inherited in families.

Thirdly, the manufacture of finshed products requires several separate simple, but labor-intensive operations that can be performed separately and asynchronously whilst not requiring an ordered, one-time assembly of components, i.e. there is no benefit of conveyor production. This allows carrying out of each operation independently and distribution of operations among individual independent performers. It is possible that the artisanal nature of production and the autonomy of its individual components make up the very feature of "scattered manufactories" that ensures their vitality and longevity. The cultivation of goats, shearing or combing out their down, its processing, knitting, "fluffing" of finished articles and their sale at a market are distributed in the environ of rural and urban households not only spatially but also in time, covering the annual cycle. Exactly the same applies to the production of fur products from imported fur as well as sourced from domestic "fur farms" of Labinsk and its vast rural surroundings. The purchase and cutting of leather, the preparation of patterns, outsoles, tailoring of high boots (and other leather footwear) is carried out independently by many households in Kimry. Making copper or silver bases, enamel filling, drawing and firing, making filigree and final jewelry processing of various Rostov Finift’ enamels — all these processes are independent and exactly in the same way distributed among many households.

Fourth, two types of operations are combined in the production cycle of a "scattered manufactory". Most of them are laborious and at the same time very simple (like making a copper base for enamel, growing goats and fur animals, primary processing of leather, fur or down). But the other part of the cycle’s operations — one or two — usually requires high professionalism, capability, special skills (the work of miniature painters and filigree jewelers, patternmakers and fashion designers of leathern gear, fur seamstresses or knitters of "hand-combed" shawls). Because of this, the entire production cycle is "tied" to the residency of individuals possessing such rare or unique skills, and the elementary and labor-intensive components of production are often distributed not only in the town’s area, but throughout the rural vicinity (which is especially typical for Khopyor goats and Labinsk "fur farms" pertaining to households scattered over vast territories).

Fifth, individual basic elements of the production cycle are territorially concentrated in "workhouses": several workers (from 2-3 to 10) combine and perform one operation together, usually within the territory of one household and as a rule in dedicated premises (not only in purposefully built ones, but also in utility units such as a summer house, outbuilding, barn, garage, basement, etc.) Here the effect of cooperation takes place: separate uniform operations are easier and faster performed together. Therefore, in all the towns studied many "workhouses" were set up in which participants are united in line with the artel principle. The members of such collectives are far from always relatives, more often close acquaintances, neighbors (which is most characteristic of the artel organization of labor). This creates the basis for artel-type cooperation in the framework of "distributed manufactories", which seems as being one of the key factors for the sustainability and viability of this type of populace crafts.

Sixth, the sale of finished products — retail and wholesale — is carried out not only at local markets but is becoming regional and intercountry. In all towns, coalitions ("clans") of finished goods merchants have been established, who are in close cooperation with each other and at the same time in fierce competition. They "hold the market", do not let in outsiders, actively develop wholesale "long-haul trade" (in within the country and abroad). This component of the "scattered manufactory" is associated with many other types of entrepreneurial activity of the populace: suppliers of raw materials (copper, silver, leather, fur, fluff), wholesale buyers (which are often large organizations of various forms of ownership), salespeople distributing products (in particular, Gypsies, "otkhodnik" shift workers, specialized Internet sellers), as well as those who provide ancillary services, especially transportation (truckers, private carriers, taxi firms).

These features may be diagnostic signs in the search, identification and description of similar distributed production entities in other small towns of the country.

**6. The uniqueness of the territory and technology. The concept of folk craft uniqueness**

It seems however, that more important is to note the following. The distinguished features highlight the importance of the locality (territory) and economic practices (folk crafts) of the populace for the development of certain economic institutions. We believe that characterization of territory and crafts in terms of their uniqueness is important.

By the "uniqueness" of the local territory and the uniqueness of crafts we mean the rarity, singularity or special rare qualities of any type of local resources used as raw materials for production; a craft can be unique due to long-standing historical traditions (no one nowhere, or almost nowhere, does it anymore) in the production of those local products that create a competitive advantage for members of local community.

Typical local territory, as well as typical practices (indiscernible among many other territories and indistinguishable from similar industries) determine the conditions for mass (industrial, or "conveyor-type") production. The uniqueness of a territory in terms of resources (raw materials), of practices developed thereon, and the depth of local historical tradition, as well as the uniqueness of economic (folk crafts) practices themselves determine the conditions and the possibility of developing a modern "distributed manufactory". At the same time, we admit that most likely this should not be called de-novo development, but rather the process of restoring the once abandoned / forgotten way of organizing local folk crafts.

Therefore, we can offer a phenomenological concept for types of development of economic practices of a populace (folk crafts), starting from the resource and historical features of a territory and the spread of a type of craft. We illustrate this with the following diagram (see. Figure). The abscissa axis represents the degree of uniqueness (more precisely, the rarity) of a craft type, and the ordinate axis represents the degree of uniqueness of a local territory by resources and traditional economic practices. The uniqueness of both the territory and the crafts determines the path to the development of a "scattered manufactory" or, more likely, to the long-term preservation of archaic economic institutions in some places (the same is: conservation of archaic practices in time and space). The opposite trend — the movement towards indistinguishability, the sameness of territories by natural and climatic conditions (resources) and the ordinariness, non-specificity of the history of its economic development and the uniformity of craft types — determines the path to mass production, industry, conveyor.



*Uryupinsk*

*Novokhopyorsk*

*Rostov the Great*

*Kimry*

*Labinsk*

**Low**

**High**

**Low**

**High**

**FOLK CRAFTS**

**SCATTERED MANUFACTORY**

**CONVEYOR-TYPE PRODUCTION**

**NATIONAL  
 ARTISTIC  
 CRAFTS**

**Uniqueness of crafts**

**Uniqueness of territory**

***Figure*** Ways of development of economic institutions in line with the concept of uniqueness of a territory/craft

Note, in addition, that in the same "territory/crafts" coordinate space other types of economic practices can be distinguished. Widespread (non-unique) practices implemented on a territory with unique characteristics in terms of resources (raw materials) create a path for the development of the institution of diverse folk crafts. This probably allows us to explain why with such a powerful development of folk crafts in imperial Russia and in the early Soviet years, individual provinces and their neighboring counties (districts) differed so much in types of folk crafts developed there: only pots and another clayware were made in one county, only aspen spoons in the other, in the third timber was cut down and rafted along the rivers, and in the fourth — within the same conditions — the populace were engaged only in "waygoing crafts" (crafts involving temporary relocation), etc. (see, for example: [Ezerskij 1894; Kustarnaya promyschlennost’ Rossii 1913; Vladimirsky 1927]). Everywhere, local resource and climatic features of the territory created some minimal competitive advantage for local communities compared to with their closest neighbors. In contrast, the uniqueness of populace crafts on a territory which in itself does not have unique characteristics (in particular, for example, does not have unique resources) determines the path to development of the so-called "national artistic crafts". Such, as we know them, are all contemporary handicrafts of an artistic orientation, associated with "folk crafts" [Pavlov, Seleev 2015].

The phenomenon of contemporary "distributed manufactory" is thus determined by the uniqueness of the local territory and/or economic practices (crafts). Bold arrows in the figure indicate alternative development paths, thin arrows indicate probable transitions from one type to another. We assume that the now existing archaic "scattered manufactories" cannot directly transform into industrial "conveyor-type" production (arrow is broken). It should be noted that in line with the concept under consideration "folk crafts" and "national artistic crafts" are seen as different economic institutions and they also do not directly convert into each other. There is only a similarity in names. It seems to us that the reasons and conditions for the development of both types of institutions are different. It should yet be discussed what they are. The diagram also indicates the conditional location of the four earlier described "distributed manufactories" in the suggested coordinates "territory/crafts". The "manufactories" of Uryupinsk-Novokhopyorsk and Labinsk are to a certain extent less unique in terms of populace economic practices, but more unique in terms of territory (resources); Rostov the Great and Kimry, on the contrary, are unique in their practices (crafts) and less unique in their territory (resources, raw materials). Thus, generally speaking, the "scattered manufactory" can capture both the area labeled "folk crafts" and the area "national artistic crafts".

**7. Probable causes of archaic economic institutions restoration**

The revealed ways of economic practices of the provincial population are mainly in the informal and shadow segment of the economy and by no means recorded officially. Almost all the fabrication and trade activities of the populace within the framework of a "scattered manufactory" are informal and shadowy, with very few exceptions. Income from production is income in personal subsidiary plots, it is not taken into account anywhere by anyone and cannot be accounted for. Exchange relations between performers of certain operations are very rarely formalized. Although some people register as individual entrepreneurs or even small enterprises, this is done only by necessity. For example, for constant trading in a tent at the market, when opening a private store, renting some resources or mechanisms necessary for the production, and the like. Private enterprises are also created to sell products on the external, international market, and these are present in all five towns. The volume of raw materials as well as the cost of manufactured products are not registered anywhere and are not taken into account. Neither in the municipal accounting and reporting data nor, all the more, in the state statistical data neither the number of the population participating in the "distributed" production, nor the production volume, nor the trade turnover are recorded.

One important feature of the already identified and described "distributed manufactories" should be noted. All of them arose in the early 1990s and continue to exist only in small towns. In large cities, the shadowy "garage economy" as a form of “post-guild” organization of production can be observed everywhere, but there are no "distributed manufactories" there. At least we have not found them. On the contrary, in small towns, garages are still mainly used for their main (intended) purposes [Seleev, Pavlov 2016: 44] or as "workhouses" within the production cycle of a "distributed manufactory".

We assume several reasons for explaining the phenomenon of "distributed manufactories". The first "trigger" reason could be the critical situation that developed in small towns in the early 1990s and put their population in a specific position compared to residents of large cities and rural areas (see: [Plusnin 2000]). Unlike large cities, in small towns the few city-forming enterprises that existed from the Soviet era collapsed and fell apart literally at once and people lost their jobs and the opportunity to find them in their area. Unlike rural surroundings, the majority of households in a small town could not immediately switch to natural sustenance due to the absence or insufficiency of personal subsidiary plots (in most of our small towns, the size of a family’s plot is 2-4 ares, rarely reaches up to 10-12, and all the more to 40-50 ares necessary for self-subsistence). Therefore, the main ways of urgent adaptation of small towns residents became such archaic forms as the return of "waygoing" craft [Plusnin et al. 2013; Plusnin et al. 2015] and the transition to artisanal labor on a neighborly and family basis with the use of unique local resources or manufacturing technologies for unique products. This last way of life maintenance in some small towns (probably a few, but so far we don’t know for sure) quickly developed into a "distributed manufactory" being a form of artisanal organization of economic life as archaic as "waygoing" practice. However, it should be noted that these two, in essence, additional forms of economic behavior of the population — "waygoing" and artisanal crafts —have always jointly developed in Russia, at the same provincial territory, depressive from the todays point of view (see, e.g.: [Kustarnaya promyschlennost’ Rossii 1913; Mints 1929; Vladimirsky 1927]).

The second reason which caused, in particular, the shadowy character of "distributed manufactories" is seen in the state’s domestic policy [Kordonsky 2016]. We assume that the main factor in the development of the "scattered manufactory" as an archaic economic institution is the excessive state’s regulatory impact on small business. As is known, such an impact almost always turns out to be an "inhibitor" for a new business [Chepurenko 2008], and over time it forces one to "move underground" or curtail existing small businesses, especially in the provinces, small towns and their rural surroundings [Plusnin, Slobodskoy-Plusnin, 2013]. As a result of this, the emerging provincial "distributed manufactories" are one of the two answers (the second is the "waygoing" craft or "otkhodnichestvo") of the active population to the regulatory influence of the "concentrating state", which has been increasing since the 2000s.

We do not see any other significant reasons for the resumption of such archaic economic institutions as "distributed manufactories" and "otkhodnichestvo" in the Russian province. The very two, the inadequate local labor market and the excessive regulatory impact on local entrepreneurial activity, are interrelated as a motivating and provoking reason, and it leads to the cumulative effect of their joint action. Undoubtedly, there are local conditions that act as additional factors stimulating or inhibiting the development of archaic forms, especially "distributed manufactories". Otherwise, we would observe such forms everywhere, as is the case with todays otkhodnichestvo in our province. Meanwhile, "distributed manufactories" are relatively rare. The reason, in our opinion, lies precisely in the presence or absence of unique (rare) resources and manufacturing technologies for goods that provide local society with competitive advantages over its neighbors. However, in this case, the uniqueness of local resources and/or technologies acts as a necessary condition, and not the reason for the development of "distributed manufactories".

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