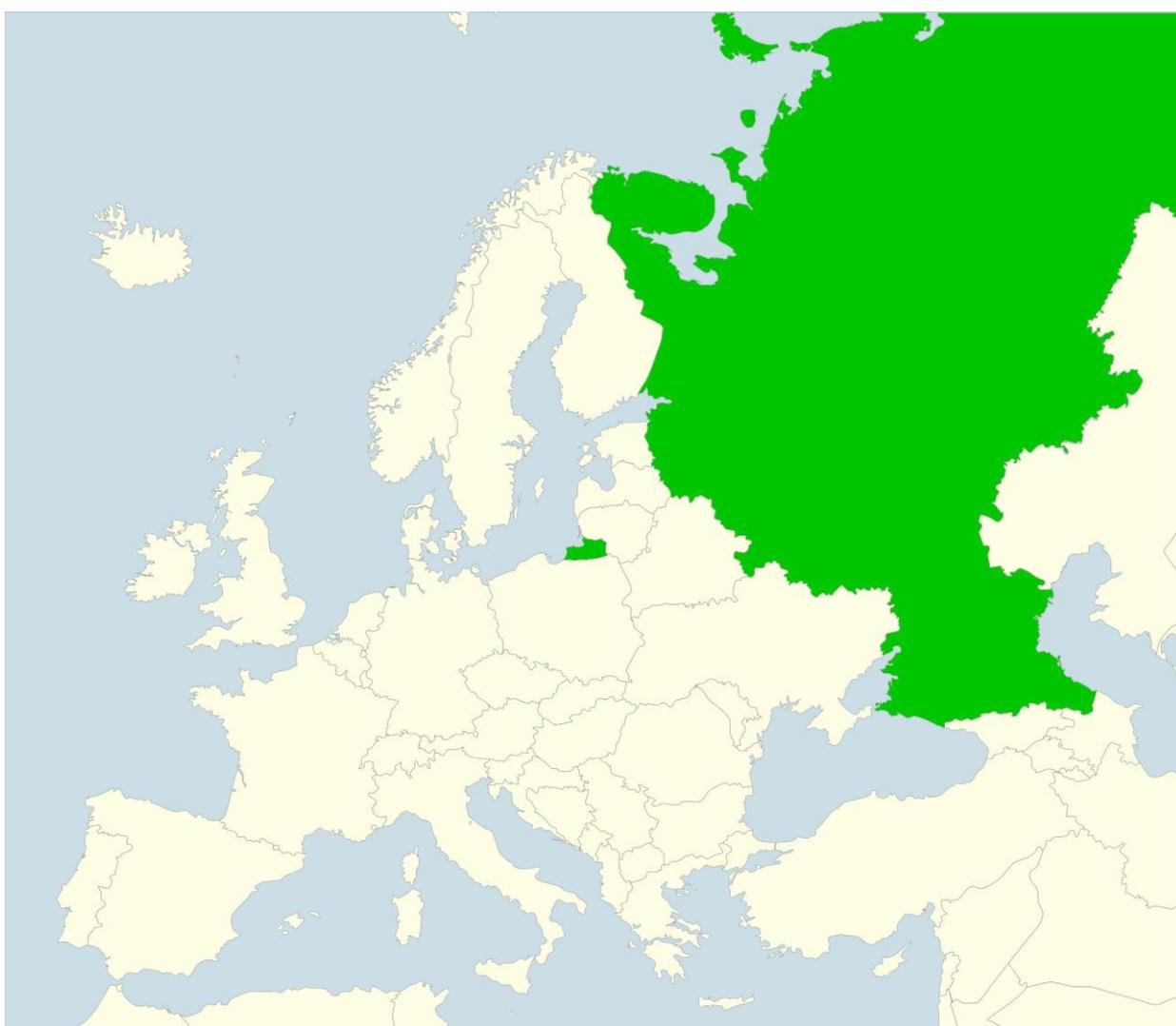


TERRA INCOGNITA OF THE RUSSIAN NEAR NORTH: COUNTER-URBANIZATION IN TODAY'S RUSSIA AND THE FORMATION OF *DACHA* COMMUNITIES

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Abstract: This article considers the salient features of counter-urbanization, which take place when urban residents, during the summer months, move to live in their second homes or their **dachas** [country homes or summer cottages]. Due to the social forces that are the result of incomplete urbanization, class polarization, and the rapid growth of major city centers, there are two powerful oppositional flows of migration taking place today in Russia. The first is centripetal migration or the movement of rural populations to large cities. The second form of migration is centrifugal migration or counter-urbanization, which is the relocation of urban populations to rural areas. The article gives a theoretical overview of a new vision of migration as a part of modern flexible 'liquid' mobility, which enables urban residents to be constantly 'on the move', migrating between their urban apartments and suburban or distant dachas. A theoretical sociological background provides the field research, presented in the article, with an understanding of the realm of meanings of de-urbanization in a short and long historical run and in perspective. Russian men and women, who work in various professions due to advances in telecommunication technologies, are able to spend some extended periods at their dachas where they simultaneously work and enjoy the natural beauty and countryside. The different types of dachas in Russia that are either close to cities or in remote regions are examined. The case study of dacha counter-urbanization in the periphery region of Kostroma oblast' considers: 1) various features of the return counter-urbanization to remote dacha and 2) the social, economic and cultural effects that these dacha settlements have had on both the urban and rural residents.

Keywords: urbanization, migration, recurrent spatial mobility, downshifting, seasonal counter-urbanization, dachas, rural–urban communities

Аннотация: В данной статье рассматриваются особый вид контрурбанизации, при которой городские жители в летние месяцы переезжают жить в свои вторые загородные дома или дачи. Для современной России при незавершенной урбанизации, сильной имущественной и пространственной поляризации и быстром росте крупных городских центров, характерны два мощных разнонаправленных миграционных потока. Первый центростремительный миграционный поток вызван перемещением сельского населения в крупные города. Противоположный центробежный миграционный поток связан с особым видом контрурбанизации – временным перемещением городского населения в сельские районы. В статье представлен теоретический обзор нового видения такой миграции как части современной гибкой "жидкостной" мобильности, позволяющей городским жителям постоянно находиться "в движении", перемещаясь из своих городских квартир на загородные и дальние дачи и обратно. Теоретико-социологический фон сопровождает полевое исследование, представленное в статье, с попыткой понимания смыслов такого рода сезонной дезурбанизации в кратко-и долгосрочной исторической перспективе. Российские мужчины и женщины, работающие в различных профессиональных сферах, благодаря достижениям телекоммуникационных технологий, имеют возможность длительное время проводить на дачах, где они одновременно работают и наслаждаются природной красотой и сельской местностью. Рассмотрены различные типы дач в России, которые находятся либо вблизи городов, либо в отдаленных регионах. На примере дачной контрурбанизации на периферии Костромской области рассмотрены: 1) различные особенности возвратной миграции горожан на отдаленные дачи и 2) социальные, экономические и культурные эффекты, которые эти дачные поселения оказали как на городских, так и на сельских жителей.

Ключевые слова: урбанизация, миграция, возвратная пространственная мобильность, дауншифтинг, сезонная контр-урбанизация, дачи, сельско-городские сообщества

1. Introduction

The rapid growth of Moscow and Russia's regional centers suggests that Russia has entered a mature stage of urbanization [Richardson, 1980; Fielding, 1989; Geyer and Kontuly, 1993; Nefedova and Treivish, 2003] with the elements of hyper-urbanization. The latter provides a strong impetus to des-urbanization or counter-urbanization). Counter-urbanization in the western style, when people leave cities to work and live permanently in the countryside, has been less common in Russia. However, due to housing shortages and overcrowded urban spaces, many Russians are strongly motivated to leave the cities. Nevertheless, rather often, they are hesitant if not scared of losing their city apartments, i.e., their social 'bridge' with the city. So, there are two opposing incentives: to keep their apartments in the city and buy and maintain a second home in a Russian village, sometimes a distant one [Between home and... home, 2016; Nefedova, Pokrovsky, Treivish, 2015].

Since the 1950s, members of the Russian population have not only migrated from rural areas to cities in search of work and to live, but there have also been many examples of "recurrent" mobility, where members of the Russian population have been moving back and forth between the city and countryside to work and live. The current increase in recurrent mobility (including long-distance commutes), is due to more efficient methods of transportation, the development of telecommunications systems, and Russian citizens developing a greater sense of inner freedom. When these factors are combined, they are an indication that the contemporary resettlement patterns are a sign that a more liquid form of modernity is developing in Russia (Urry, 2012; Pokrovsky and Nefedova, 2013).

The authors propose that there are two different types of counter-urbanization in Russia. The first form is described as 'downshifting' – a life decision that Russians make when they choose to leave the city where they live and work to take up permanent residence in dacha or rural communities. Important issues, related to the new colonization movement to countryside and establishing sustainable places of non-urban residence, are raised by Laurence A.G. Moss and Romella S. Glorioso (Global Amenity, 2014). The downshifting phenomenon is characterized by changes in the lifestyle and values of not only the urbanites, but also of the members of local communities where they have taken up permanent residency. The second form of dacha counter-urbanization is described as a form of recurrent mobility, seasonal counter-urbanization or 'cocooning,' by people who frequently move back and forth between the city centers where they live and work, to rural areas where they have second homes.

Over 40 years ago, Zelinsky predicted this current phase of population mobility; he referred to it as "migration transition" (Zelinsky, 1971). Due to the frequent movement of people from one residence to another, the actual size of a population living in the city or countryside depends on the season of the year or even the day of the week. Thus, migration transition has confounded our knowledge about the size of a population living in certain areas during different seasons of the year. In some cases, the size of a population remains unknown, which has caused serious administrative and financial imbalances in cities and in the countryside.

The purpose of this article is a theoretical understanding and empirical study of urbanites recurrent mobility to their dachas in countryside as a kind of "liquid migration" and quite specific form of counter-urbanism in Russia.

The question is how to determine and describe such an indefinite and loose type of oscillatory migration. The problem is approaching from not so much a rigid geographical/sociological perspective but a psychological one. What is most characteristic of the new counter-urbanization migrants is an inescapable inner stance towards 'leaving the city' and the feeling of impossibility of remaining within its boundaries because of diverse 'pressures', including overpopulation, cost of living, psychological fatigue, impersonality and dehumanization of interpersonal bounds and

relations, crime and hence permanent maintenance of the security measures, the deterioration of the environmental conditions, the growth of the proportion of the unhealthy food supply. The set of negative 'pressures' of urban life is rapidly growing and it naturally pushes out of the city an increasing number of city residents. At times, such a 'pushed out' feeling is rather hidden and it finds its outcome in diverse non-verbalized dreams about a 'good little place in the countryside', in other cases we indicate in various forms of open public behavior and social movements – the growing popularity of living beyond the city grid, the protection of the environment, environmental tourism which may often lead to a 'liquid' migration from the city), building dacha dwellings, private gardening, etc. In this sense, psychological motivation may be a working indicator and prerequisite of a counter-urbanization migration.

"Liquid migration" is a process of population mobility which in tandem with "liquid modernity" an idea proposed by Bauman (Bauman, 2000), allows groups of people to acquire new forms of social interaction and to occupy various social niches. The outcome of liquid migration is that many people now travel and live beyond the boundaries of megalopolises, subsequently creating newly formed social statuses and social dynamics that are in need of analysis. The principle "Permanent Place of Residence" PPR), which used to determine one's social and legal status, now needs to be combined with the principles of dynamic localization and destination in order to understand one's place in society. Scholars who are interested in the development of social networks and population flows (Urry, 2012) have subsequently brought the disciplines of sociology and social geography closer together.

2. Urbanization and counter-urbanization in the global and Russian context

2.1 The Social Phenomenon of Counter-urbanization

Over 100 years ago, the urbanization and population booms in megalopolises throughout the world created highly concentrated population centers that were fraught with social problems. It was not a coincidence that the institutionalization of the discipline of Sociology in the 20th century was largely associated with the study of cities and urban life by the representatives of the Chicago School, Park, Burgess, Wirth, Thomas, and Znaniecki (Park, 2008, 2011; Burgess, 2000). The Chicago School proposed that the city should be regarded as a universal urban space that would be a model for all future societies and that nonurban spaces will eventually disappear into the archaeological layers of history. In this respect, Sociology in the early stage of the 20th century in the US, became mainly a social science that was mainly devoted to the study of urban societies. However, social theorists who were not members of the Chicago School continued to examine the similarities and the differences between urban and rural types of organizations. For example, Simmel (2002) described the "city–village" demarcation by examining the concept of lifestyle and consumption patterns of groups of people. Toennies (1955) concluded that the village community corresponds to a communal type of living or *Gemeinschaft*, in which the prevailing social relations are rooted in kinship networks. Conversely, he proposed that urban societies are typically organized around the principles of *Gesellschaft*. In these larger loosely connected communities, Toennies proposed that decisions are made on behalf of the collective by leaders of formal organizations, who justify their actions by arguing that their decisions are beneficial for the "common good." Weber (2001) contends that the city is the focus of industrial life, and he argued that the social and economic relations that characterize an urban community are both the cause and the catalyst for a highly stratified division of labor. Thus due to its size, an urban community generates forms of competition and formal control and is not held together by traditional forms of social solidarity and cohesion. Classical sociologists in the early 1900s frequently contrasted urban and rural societies, and in many cases they favored the social organization of cities, which they felt was superior to the more variable forms of social interaction in rural communities.

However, since the 1950s and, even more so, in the last 20 years, social thinkers have been compelled to reconsider the ideas that were proposed by the Chicago School and have dominated the field of urban sociology for almost 100 years. In particular, the modern trend of counter-urbanization or de-urbanization) is a social phenomenon that cannot be reduced to a single common denominator. This term has many components which include the study of recurrent

migration patterns from urban to rural areas. What is most significant is that when rural communities are studied at the local level, it is possible to detect modern forms of socialization that are the result of the counter-urbanization phenomenon and have been super-imposed upon traditional rural infrastructures.

2.2 Counter-urbanization in Social Science Discourse

Berry says, the natural process of periphery growth and population outflow from urban centers, is not mediated by external forces. Berry describes counter-urbanization as a new stage in the urbanization process, and however, he suggests that it is a social force that is directly opposed to the process of urbanization (1976, 1980). Berry and Fielding define counter-urbanization primarily as a form of reverse migration, which is understood as a resettlement pattern that takes place when a person moves from a city to live permanently in the countryside. (Fielding, 1989). Kontuly, Wiard, and Vogelsang (1986) subdivide the term counter-urbanization further into the categories of reverse migration to rural regions, and urban decentralization, which is due to population flow from metropolitan centers to their suburbs, creating urban sprawl. In this article, we consider counter-urbanization as a form of migration from cities to comparatively remote rural areas in Russia. Our definition is closer to the position of Mitchell (Mitchell, 2004), who explains that choosing to relocate to live in remote rural areas is a process of just physical displacement in space, but also as an identity shift that includes a change in one's social preferences and one's choices) to have an alternative lifestyle. Mitchell makes a distinction between "anti-urbanists" who in principle, reject an urban lifestyle and those members of society who were "ousted" from the city because of unemployment, poverty, psychological depression, etc., which he defines as a form of "urbanization displacement" (Mitchell, 2004, p. 27). Elgin (1981) and Etzioni (1998), contend that the need for "voluntary simplicity" is the motivation for a radical lifestyle change by urbanites who renounce material values and embrace individual opportunities for "spiritual enrichment" by reducing their levels of material consumption. This form of downshifting is often associated with the fear that an environmental disaster will soon develop. Thus, these urbanites choose to move to live in a safer place. Some counter-urbanites may move to live in villages which already have an organized community, or they may decide to form a new social organization such as an "eco-village" where they live "off the grid," without modern amenities such as electricity, running water and/or sewage systems.

If this social question is considered in a more general manner, most Russians are not ready to reject the social conveniences of a city life, but they do try to spend as much time as possible up to several months a year) living in remote rural areas. Thus, the concept of PPR which was once used to determine a person's social status in Russia, is simply outdated, especially if one considers the recurrent mobility patterns of the creative classes (Pokrovsky, 2014; Pokrovsky and Guseva, 2012). Today in Russia, either living permanently or seasonally at one's dacha represents a distinctive form of counter-urbanization, which has significantly affected the organization of social patterns in local communities.

The feature of the "dacha recreation" mostly described in this article is marked as a *second housing* in some international literature (Gallent and Tewdwr-Jones, 2018). The second homes are originally places of an escape from the urban chaos (Parsi, 2018), they could later become to be permanent residences.

2.3 The "City–Village" Dichotomy in Global Context

Migration to the countryside is often associated with new patterns of social organization in rural and urban communities, which emerge when these two "worlds" collide. Sorokin proposed that new research methodologies and theories need to be developed to study the relationship between rural and urban communities. The very title of his book "A systematic source book in rural sociology") reflects the shift from the traditional city versus village dichotomy, to the idea that these two types of communities are more closely connected than people think, and that there is a spectrum of categories on the urban-rural social life continuum. Sorokin argues that there are several criteria that are common to both city and village life, and the manifestation of these social phenomena is expressed differently in each community. (Patsiorkovskii, 2013). Even though it was Sorokin who introduced the concept of a rural–urban continuum, it was Redfield who

developed this idea by focusing on studies completed in the countryside. According to Redfield, the interface between “urban” and “rural” social phenomena erodes when two processes come into contact with one another. He contends that the social practices that have been largely associated with an urban lifestyle have penetrated the social consciousness of people living in rural areas and they have been absorbed into the everyday lives of members of rural communities (Redfield, 1930). Sociologists have observed that people living in both urban and rural communities have embraced the universal process of mass production and consumption, and this fact has, to a limited degree, led to reduced social differences between the two groups. (Harvey, 2015; Castells, 1983). In our post-modern world, the definition of the concepts "city" and "urbanites" has changed. Previously, a “city” was defined as a densely populated space where people lived and worked within a 10 to 50 kilometer radius. Today, many people who are commuters may live hundreds of kilometers away from the cities where they work, but they are still called urbanites due to their mode of life. Global processes and more efficient forms of transportation have allowed urbanites to transport the social practices of urban life outside of the territorial boundaries of the city, subsequently creating many nonurban settlements which are quite “urban” in their style of life and thought, and not as "country-like," as one might assume. It is reasonable to conclude that in the contemporary globalized world, the oppositional "urban–rural” comparison has lost its basic meaning. Studying the various forms of social life that fall on the urban-rural spectrum is now on the agenda of sociologists and geographers. However, even this dichotomy appears to be only temporary as many societies are in the process of making a transition to yet another form of social organization. In our post-modern world, the fluidity of modernity has enabled people to embrace, reject and absorb previously opposing social patterns – ultimately creating new forms of social life.

2.4 ‘Cellular’ Globalization in the Countryside

In rural sociology studies, the transformation of rural life by the social forces of globalization has been defined by Pokrovsky as "cellular globalization" (Pokrovsky, 2014). Pokrovsky concludes from his case study in the Near North of European Russia, that global processes have penetrated all of the "cells" of previously purely rural communities. He proposes that the globalization matrix has equally transformed both city and rural settlements, and there is a common transitive-dynamic flow taking place between members of both of these communities. Pokrovsky reports that the everyday practices of ruralists are characterized by:

- Complex changes in social and labor relations between community members;
- A system of economic rationality which dominates rural practices;
- New forms of flexibility and adaptability to social change;
- Changed perceptions of geographic space due to increased spatial mobility, the advent of information technologies which include: cellular communications, satellite television, and the internet;
- The multiplicity of cultural phenomena especially among young people;
- The growth of interest in primordial factors and reminiscent antiquity especially by new dacha residents);
- Pioneering spirit or self-reliance.

The paradigm shift in thinking about rural societies is a relatively new approach to understanding Russian village life. The culture and the way of life of Russian agriculturalists was, in previous eras, solely based upon agricultural practices. Today, traditional agricultural production is preserving its relevance where it is economically profitable, but it has entered a mode of production, which is developing in tandem with other factors, which includes for example, environmental, social and recreational ones.

Today, it is important to take into account the fact that under the condition of active globalization, such phenomenon as counter-urbanization, ‘reverse migration’, de-urbanization’ are considerably changing their social meaning. Studying migration from the cities to extra-urban, we indicate that

this social trend does not necessarily imply the transition from urban life to permanent or full-time life in the countryside. What is more typical of former urbanites is a combination of diverse lifestyles representing 'partial' migration, part-time life in non-urban areas. One may call it 'liquid migration' which means that it continuously changes its character from, say, very short-term seasonal stay in the countryside to a permanent residency outside the city – whether it is a home for retirees or residency for a family actively employed in free-lance distant work. In this sense, the discussed migration may be 'liquid' which means that it is predominantly diverse and 'plastic' in terms of being adaptive to any kind of desired condition of life and suggested traditional social format. For example, it may be a short-term or even episodic vacationing in the countryside, repetitiously taking place every year or a lengthier seasonal recreational life in the 'second home' in the environmentally favorable and healthy milieu, as opposed to the disadvantages of urban life with its psychological and physical pressure on human beings. It is 'liquid' because it 'fills' any time span without assigning people to migrate from the city 'once and forever' burning bridges with their former life. Today, moving to the countryside is usually not a life-long sentence as it historically used to be in many cases but a matter of choice. It can be anything including permanent residence in the village or occasional returns to the city depending on any motivation, such as visiting relatives, cultural needs going to the theater or art exhibit, undertaking in-depth medical check and treatment, etc. Modern means of communication and transportation, and the dynamics of migration also provide extra-city residents with a wide spectrum of possibilities for choosing the most favorable management of time, mobility and occupation. The world is on the move, including migration to the countryside.

On the economic side of this issue, we must admit that very often 'new migrants' to the countryside prefer not to sell their property in the city but have both homes – in and outside the city (Second home, 2013, Between home and... home, 2016). The property in the city is usually rented out to new migrants to the city. It generates today a considerable source of extra income for the downshifters. This brings into being a sort of circular mutual economic interdependency of incoming and outgoing groups of migrants in question. However, it would be important to indicate that the social characteristics of incoming and outgoing groups of population are different. Those who come in the city usually represent low-class work migration for survival, those who leave the city basically belong to the middle-class amenity migration. It all makes a considerable difference. In this sense, the balance of the social quality of urban population dynamically undergoes a significant change.

A liquid amenity migration is migration. In a contrast to its traditional meaning which involves an idea of permanent residency and radical life choice, the new type of counter-urbanization in a global world represents dynamism, fluctuations of life trajectories, temporality, and transitory changes as being normal.

3. Dacha culture in Russia: a manifestation of seasonal counter-urbanization

3.1 The Dacha-Life Tradition in Russia

The tradition of maintaining a winter residence in the city and a summer residence in the countryside, has deep roots in Russian history. During the summer months, the Russian elite lived in their rural dachas or country manor, subsequently setting a lifestyle example for the other classes of Russian society. The social origin of the word dacha may be found in the Russian verb 'davati' (to give). 'Boyars' (landed gentry) and members of the Russian aristocracy who lived and served in cities, were 'given' garden plots, fields and other tracts of land in the countryside by the Tsar. During the period of the Russian Emperesses, the number of dacha estates near St. Petersburg that were 'given' to the court nobility, mushroomed. However, it was during the reign of Peter the Great that the practice of spending more leisure time at one's dacha increased. It was during this period of time that the dacha culture of the Russian nobility was first mentioned in the diaries and journals of foreigners. In 1785, aristocratic males were relieved from compulsory military and administrative service by Catherine the Great. Subsequently, the nobility began to then leave St. Petersburg to live on their country estates. Therefore, we can conclude that the great manors of the Russian nobility were the prototypes of modern day dachas.

After the railroad system was introduced in Russia, many more dachas were built close to Moscow and St. Petersburg, and in areas that are located between these two cities. In the late 1800s, the building of dachas became a social phenomenon. The newspapers of that time wrote about a "dacha boom" and the "great dacha migration," especially when dacha life became affordable for people of more modest means. During the period of 1890 to 1910, the number of dacha settlements that were built near Moscow grew six-fold. Administrative reports from that period recorded 180 dacha settlements, with over 6,000 dacha cottages, and approximately 40,000 people living in them during the summer months of July and August (Nefedova, Treivish, *Journey from St. Petersburg...*, 2015, pp. 188–205). On the eve of the Russian Revolution in 1917, 20,000 dachas had been built near the city of Moscow (Khauke, 1960). Most of these dachas were within walking distance of local railroad stations.

The dacha phenomenon has been frequently discussed in the Russian and foreign literature. (Lovel 2003; Dijst, Lanzendorf, Barendregt, and Smit, 2005; Gallent, Mace, and Tewdwr-Jones, 2005; Makhrova, Nefedova, Pallot, 2016; Nefedova, 2015; *Between home and... home*, 2016). Treivish (2015) identifies five reasons why Russians have historically maintained two homes, and they are as follows: 1) Recreational–ecological idealism, which is associated with the real or imaginary qualities of the non-urban environment; 2) Investment-related opportunities; 3) Retirement options for elderly citizens; 4) Inheritance and nostalgic reasons; and 5) Occupational activities which include professional work carried out in a rural environment or switching from urban to agrarian and/or local trade activities.

Most Russians prefer to live in cities, where self-fulfillment opportunities, modern conveniences, and the social services are incomparably better. However, there are people who would like to leave their urban dwellings, but they are prevented from doing so by the 'propiska' (residency permit) system. Other reasons why Russians decide to move to rural areas only seasonally are as follows: a lack of social service infrastructure in rural areas, a shortage of funds to winterize a second home so that it can be used as a year-round residence, and difficulties adapting to a traditional rural lifestyle. In addition, if people *do* move to live in the countryside, the prohibitive cost of private property and housing in large cities, often make it impossible for them to return to the city if the need arises. These circumstances create quite specific form of counter-urbanism in Russia, which in practice is different from counter-urbanization trends in Western countries. (*Second homes...*, 1977; *Multiple Dwelling...*, 2006; *Second Home Tourism...*, 2013; Treivish, 2014; Nefedova, Pokrovsky, Treyvish, 2015).

Generally, Russians who do have dachas, have them for three major reasons. They are: recreational–ecological, investment-related, and agricultural, which is an important alternative food source for urbanites, especially in the suburban gardening associations.

The type of dacha that can be found in the Russian countryside is based upon four basic criteria: 1) The type of building, 2) The size of the property, 3) The age of the dacha and the social origin of its previous owners, and 4) The location of the dacha. Generally, the farther the dacha is located from a major city, the less expensive it will be. Thus, dacha settlements may be divided into settlements that are near, medium-distant, and distant (Nefedova, 2015).

Several types of dachas from earlier epochs have survived the ravages of time and they include: 1) Wooden dachas of the early and mid-20th century which are located close to Moscow and St. Petersburg, 2) Houses owned by gardening associations, 3) Stone cottages that are close to cities and picturesque landscapes, and 4) Log houses that have either been purchased or inherited by urbanites. Of these four types of dachas, the most widespread type is that which is owned by gardening associations. These communities were originally founded in the 1950s for the purpose of creating an alternative food source for urbanites. Almost every urban centre and small town in Russia is surrounded by fields of small garden plots which are approximately 400–600 m² in size. Buildings that can be found on these garden properties range from modest wooden shacks, which were built during the Soviet times, to luxurious modern villas. In total, there are 15 million garden plots in Russia. If we take into account the average size of a Russian family, then it means that almost 50% of Russian urbanites have access to these garden plots. However, due to crowding and various social problems associated with gardening associations, many urbanites have decided to buy their own land.

How far Russians will travel to a summer home is an important consideration when they are buying property. Near, medium-distant, and distant dachas differ from one another not only in their distance from the city, but other factors need to be considered as well such as: the type of building that the dacha is, the size of the property, the demographic composition of the residents of the dacha settlement and the relationship that the urbanites have with the local population. *Near dachas* are very diverse. There are not only two to three-storey stone mansions, but also old wooden cottages and garden houses. Some gardening associations have formed large blocks of low-rise "pseudo-towns" which may be found in the suburbs of a city as well. The total number of dacha residents in the Moscow oblast is estimated to be between 3 to 4 million people, while the actual size of the local rural population is only 1.4 million (Nefedova, 2015). The social composition of dacha residents living in near dachas is heterogeneous. Most of these dachas are fenced-in communities with high stone fences which protect them physically and psychologically from theft by the local rural population and/or foreign workers who are working on construction sites in the area. Near dachas are typical for any Russian town.

Medium-distant dachas are located 150 to 300 km from large cities. The relationship between urbanites who own medium-distant dachas and local inhabitants is more congenial than the ones that owners of near dachas have with their rural counterparts. However, as the number of medium-distant dacha residents has increased and the size of the rural population has decreased, these social bonds become weaker and psychological barriers between the two groups have grown. In districts that are adjacent to the outer borders of the Moscow oblast, the number of urbanites living in the area during the summer months doubles or triples the size of the local population.

Distant dachas are located between 300 – 700 km and more and usually belong to inhabitants of the largest cities in Russia. These dachas are especially numerous between the cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg (Journey from St. Petersburg..., 2015), as well as to the north and northeast of Moscow. Problems that are associated with urbanization have motivated the seasonal exodus of urbanites to the countryside. At the same time that urbanites are searching for new homes in rural regions, young local people are leaving rural areas and elderly people are dying leaving their homes empty. Thus, it is these vacant village houses which are usually sold to urbanites. Generally speaking, the farther the village home is located from a major metropolis, the cheaper it is to buy. Ironically, by purchasing houses in villages, Muscovites have been indirectly helping to preserve entire villages, which, in reality are only vibrant communities during the summer months of a calendar year. Yet, the social practice of seasonal counter-urbanization has enabled urbanites to combine urban and rural lifestyles, to invest in real estate, and to reduce the depopulation of peripheral zones.

3.2 Studying Distant Dacha Settlements

Assessing the number of houses that have been bought by urbanites in villages that are far from large cities is a complicated task. Municipal authorities do not keep records of the number of village homes that are purchased, nor do they record the number of dacha residents that live in the villages during the summer period. Prior to 2007, rural administrations did keep reports that recorded information about PPR and who the owners of garden plots were, which made it possible to obtain information about the number of seasonal inhabitants who lived in rural settlements (Nefedova, 2008). In recent years however, no local government recorded this information. The number of land, purchases or lease transactions that have been made is kept by federal administrative agencies, and there is no statistical data available by region and settlement. The data of the Federal Service for State Registration, Cadaster, and Cartography (Rosreestr) that is available on the Internet, only show the location of a dacha property but the sites do not have any information about who the owners of the properties are or who has a residency permit. The administrative heads of rural settlements do know which houses in these settlements belong to urbanites, but they are not interested in collecting statistics on them because the transfers from upper budgets depend only on the full time permanent population that lives in that area.

Keeping these limitations in mind, our research is based on a sample of adult members of households in villages in the Kostroma, Tver, and Pskov province during the dacha summer season (Nefedova, 2008; Puteshestvie, 2015). We conducted in-depth interviews with

representatives of the local administration, dacha residents, and local permanent residents. Thus, it was possible to identify who were permanent or seasonal residents. In this paper, results for the Manturovskiy district of the Kostroma region are presented.

Manturovskiy district of Kostroma region with 4 thousand inhabitants) is 550 km North-East of Moscow and 230 km from Kostroma (Fig. 1). This is a typical Russian periphery. The town of Manturovo³, district's center 16 thousand inhabitants), is a principle junction on the Trans-Siberian Railroad. In general, the Kostroma Region, with all its historical embeddedness, especially in the emergence of the Romanovs dynasty, is regarded in the public opinion as the "heartland of Russia" and the bearer of "national consciousness", whether it is true or not today. There, we regularly conduct in-depth interviews with permanent and summer residents: 80 local households in 2008 and 2013, and 30 summer residents' interviews each 2008, 2015, and 2017 according to the specially designed questionnaires see table 1 and figures. Second homes of urbanites located so far from large cities are typically distant dachas, especially due to the fact, that the majority of their owners are Muscovites. Comparing the results of 2008 and 2017 allows us to identify the trends in the functioning of the urban community in the countryside and its interaction with the locals.



Fig 1. Location of Kostroma region and the town of Manturovo relatively to Moscow. Source: own elaboration

³ The town Manturovo is not a part of the Manturovskiy district, although the district management is situated there.

3.3 The Rural–Urban Community in the Outlying Region of the Kostroma Province

A major characteristic of Non-Black Soil Zone around Moscow especially to the North in the peripheral areas of the province) is that an agricultural crisis is taking place. The impact that this food shortage has had on Russian urbanites is especially noticeable in the suburbs of large cities. Due to the reduction of arable land in the peripheral regions of Russia and a long period of rural depopulation during the 20th century, there is a lack of motivation by rural inhabitants to work as farmers (Ioffe, Nefedova, and Zaslavski, 2004; Nefedova, 2012). The development of free range livestock farms that could feed upon the grass lands of abandoned fields has also failed. Thus the size of the population that now lives in the Ugorskoe rural commune of the Manturovskiy district of Kostroma province is only 12% as large as it was in the early 1900s (see Fig. 2). Many of the inhabitants that live in these settlements only grow a few vegetables and potatoes in their local subsidiary plots (see Fig. 3). Now there are only three working farms in the entire Manturovskiy district, and all three of these farms have been organized by newcomers to the region.

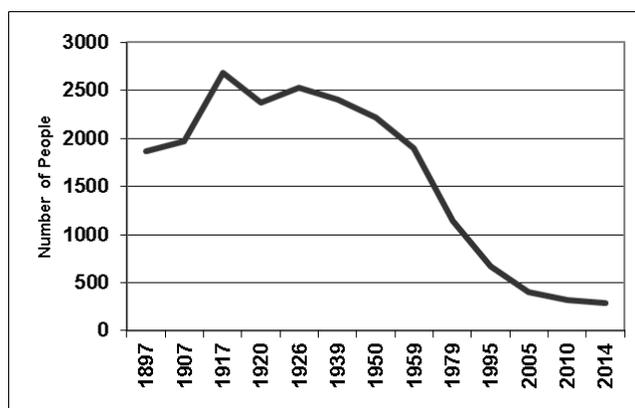


Figure 2. Population Size: Number of People Living in Ugorskoe Commune from 1897 to 2014

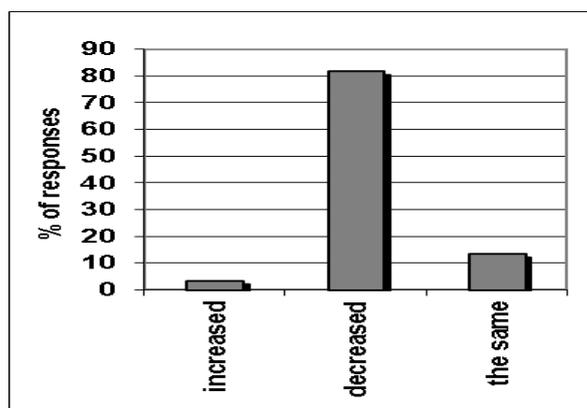


Figure 3. Change in the agricultural product yield from locals' subsidiary plots, % of the respondents

Dacha communities in this remote area began to form spontaneously during the 1970s and 1980s. The dacha boom that began in the mid-1990s has persisted into the 21st century.

Tab 1. Population Size of the Villages in the Ugorskoe⁴ Commune in the Manturovskiy district of Kostroma Oblast and the percentage of urban residents in their dachas. Source: Data of the Ugorskoe rural administration of Kostroma province.

	% urbanites who own land in the countryside in 2007	Estimated % dacha residents July-August 2007	Registered local rural population in 2007	Registered local rural population in 2013	Local rural population, 2007 in % to the population in 1926	Local rural population, 2013 in % to the population in 2007
Ugory	32	29	227	190	34	84
Davydovo	47	41	40	30	10	75
Medvedevo	79	75	10	8	5	80
Khlyabishino	39	40	59	51	14	86
Dmitrievo	92	71	10	0	4	0
Anosovo	n/d	n/d	22	18	12	82
Zashilskoe	71	80	6	0	5	0
Poloma	75	71	10	8	9	80
Stupino	91	91	2	1	2	50
Total	48	45	386	306	14	79

⁴ Ugorskoe is a common name for nine villages named after the village Ugory.

Middle-aged and elderly urbanites of moderate means and members of the creative professions prevail. This is largely because of their interest in dacha-related activities and abundance of free time. Initially, the dacha boom was comprised of the formation of professional communities including summer villages of: scientists, teachers, artists, and journalists. Later, this narrow "clusterization" of professional groups began to diffuse. Tending to their homes and land, was the main occupation of 85% of the dacha residents. About 40% of them reported foraging in the forest for mushrooms and berries as a leisure activity. One-third of the respondents noted that they spend a lot of time reading and in addition to their main profession in the creative arts (such as writing, drawing, and photography), 10% reported that they engaged in additional creative pursuits. 20% of the distant dacha owners confessed that they also have a "near dacha" in the Moscow province. Yet, because of urban sprawl and the reduction in natural landscapes around Moscow, including the abundance of automobile traffic, their near dachas are losing their function as attractive places to live and, as a result, they usually choose to visit their distant dachas during the summer months.



Fig 4. The village of Medvedevo in the Manturovskiy district and its inhabitants.

According to surveys completed in 2008, the attitude of 61% of the local people towards dacha residents from Moscow was mostly positive. Nobody gave a negative response, and the remaining 39% of respondents were indifferent to their summer neighbors. In order to understand what attitudes the rural population have towards life in a city, we asked them this question: "Would you like your children to live in a city?" 85% of the respondents answered that yes they would. Only 50% of the local residents said that they wanted to continue living in the countryside, while 32% said that they wished to move to a city and the final 18% chose not to answer the question. In the opinion of the local respondents, the main contribution that the visiting urbanites have made is the fact that they have renovated their homes, which has improved the appearance of local villages. When permanent residents were asked about the influence that dacha residents have had on the local rural economy, they said that the main benefits included the possibility that they could sell berries to them and they could earn extra money doing house repairs, though only a few people said that they were actually willing to do this type of work (see Fig. 6).



Fig 5. The Village Of Medvedevo. Moscow summer residents dachnics) arrived.

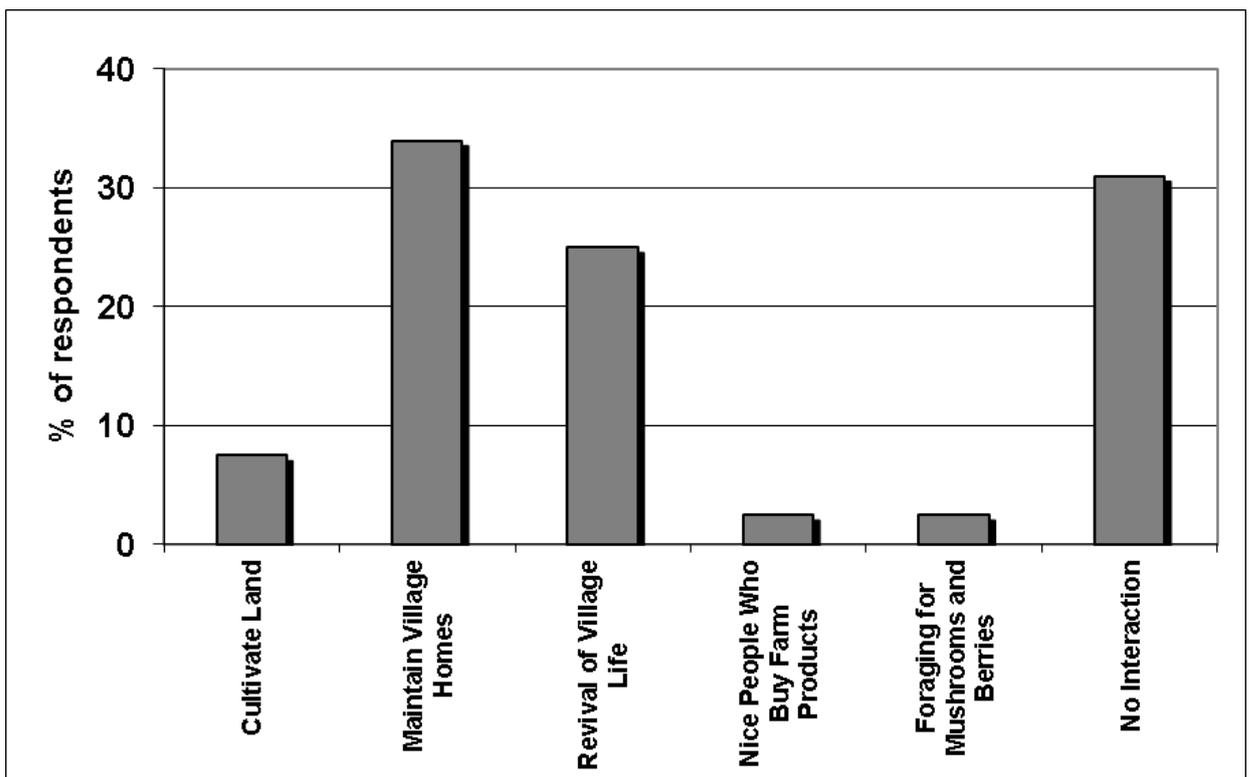


Fig 6. What the local residents think about summer incomers from cities, % of the respondents?

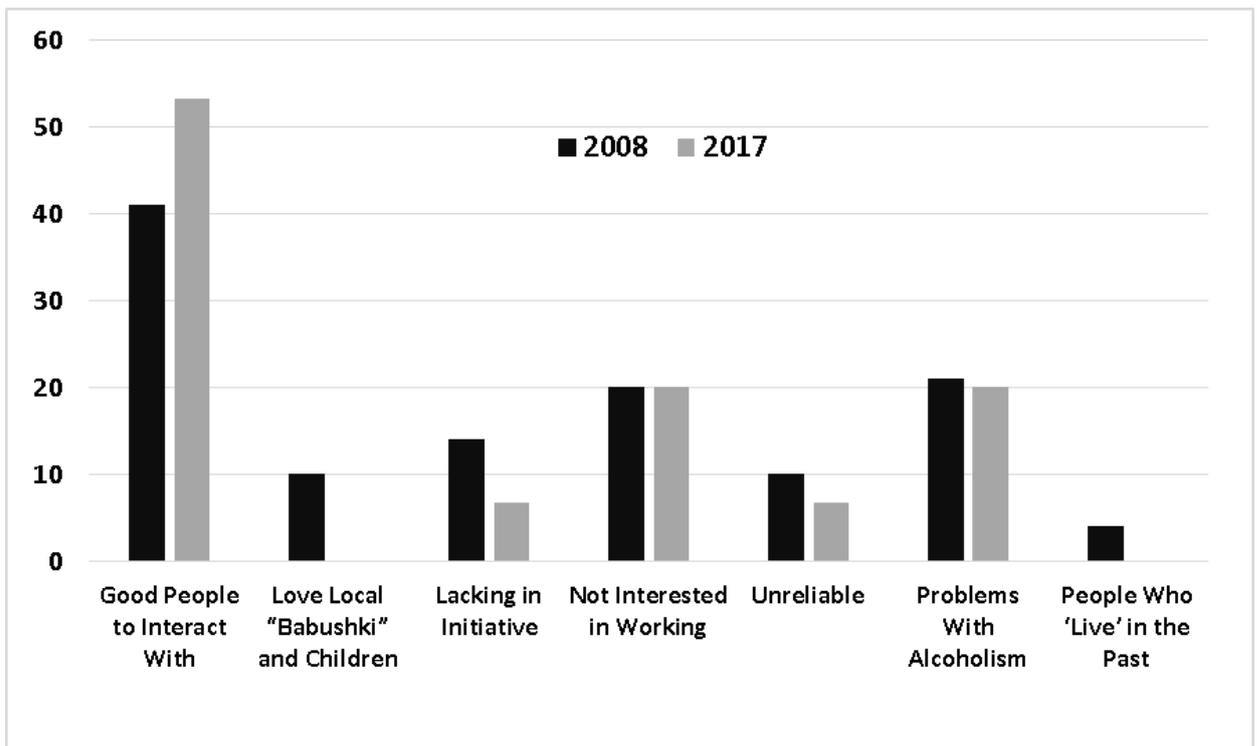


Fig 7. What the summer incomers from cities think about local residents, % of the respondents.

Dachnics also spoke positively of the local people. Moreover, the proportion of the surveyed urbanites who consider local rural residents to be good people to interact with has increased between 2008 and 2017. Proportion of the dachnics who are friends with local residents also increased from 30 to 40%. Sociability, friendliness, simplicity, and identity were mentioned as positive features of rural residents. Alcoholism and unreliability are noted among undesirable features. The proportion of the latter has not changed in 10 years (see Fig. 7).

'Dachnics' and permanent residents understand local traditions and innovations differently. In our research, we found out that different time periods in Russian history are perceived differently by both groups. Local people are generally more nostalgic not about the old peasant way of life during the time of Tsarist Russia, but they reminisce about the 'kolkhozes' collective farms and the collective form of labor and lifestyle that was present during the Soviet period. Respondents recall large fields of blue flax, healthy herds of cattle, and working collectively for a common cause. It is not by chance that the rural populations living in the peripheral regions of Russia cling to their fragmented memories of a former life and regularly vote for the Communist Party in local and federal elections. The Communist government used to subsidize agricultural practices in the region since it was unprofitable, due to climatic and geographical factors, to engage in agricultural activities in this part of Russia. Elderly local women who were in the prime of life and worked actively in the 'kolkhozes' during the Soviet Era, were the most nostalgic about this period in time.

While local residents think favorably about the Soviet period, the summer dacha residents are more sentimental about the wooden cottages and household culture that was dominated in pre-Soviet Russia during the early 1900s (Nefedova, Nikolaeva, Pokrovsky, 2016). Urbanites carefully keep all the artifacts that they find in their homes and they even organize mini-museums to display them. In the attics or haylofts of every home, one can find artifacts of wooden household items, which are made of wood or birch bark and including things such as: chests, spinning wheels, tools, musical instruments, barrels of different sizes, spades, rakes, cradles, wooden baskets, kitchen and fishing accessories, skis and sleds. One can also find, for example, a disassembled wooden loom or flax brakes etc. Generally, the older generations of women and men living in the villages kept these artifacts, while young people were often reported burning them. Even though some of the looms and spinning wheels have been preserved, most of the local inhabitants do not have the skills nor the knowledge about how to create traditional crafts. Even though older

women living in the villages knew how to assemble a loom that they saw being used when they were children, they themselves do not know how to weave. In earlier eras, men were engaged in the production of **valenki** (felt winter boots) and they would travel to other villages, and sell and trade their boots with other villages and towns. This craft has also been 'lost' and no longer practiced by rural residents.



Fig 8. Ugory: the aerial image. Source: mapy.cz

Therefore, paradoxical as it may seem, it is the urbanites who are usually the main custodians of artifacts and the arts and crafts of rural household cultures from previous centuries. Generally, the federal authorities in the region are not interested in the revival of folk art, artisan crafts and country traditions, but they are concerned about preserving some individual architectural landmarks and nature reserves. Conversely, the government is interested in restoring a kolkhoz-style of agriculture in the region, which would be based on the principles of collective farming.

3.4 Are Urbanites Ready to Live in a Distant Village?

The future of the development of dacha settlements in remote rural districts in Russia is unclear. If the tax policy in these regions is changed, then the maintenance of dachas may become too costly for the middle class. No change in rural socioeconomic conditions would encourage people to leave cities to work and live in countryside as well. Then the current wave of dacha development in remote areas will likely begin to recede. In addition, due to the advanced age of many present-day distant dacha residents, they will not be able to travel so far in the summer months and would rather prefer the nearest dachas or just cities.

According to the surveys among the available dacha residents in summer 2017, only 12 percent of them were positive that their children would be committed to living in their distant dachas as they were (see Fig. 9). The responses of urbanites in 2008 and 2017, show that the euphoria about the desire of young people to live in remote villages has decreased among the dachnics of middle and older generations.

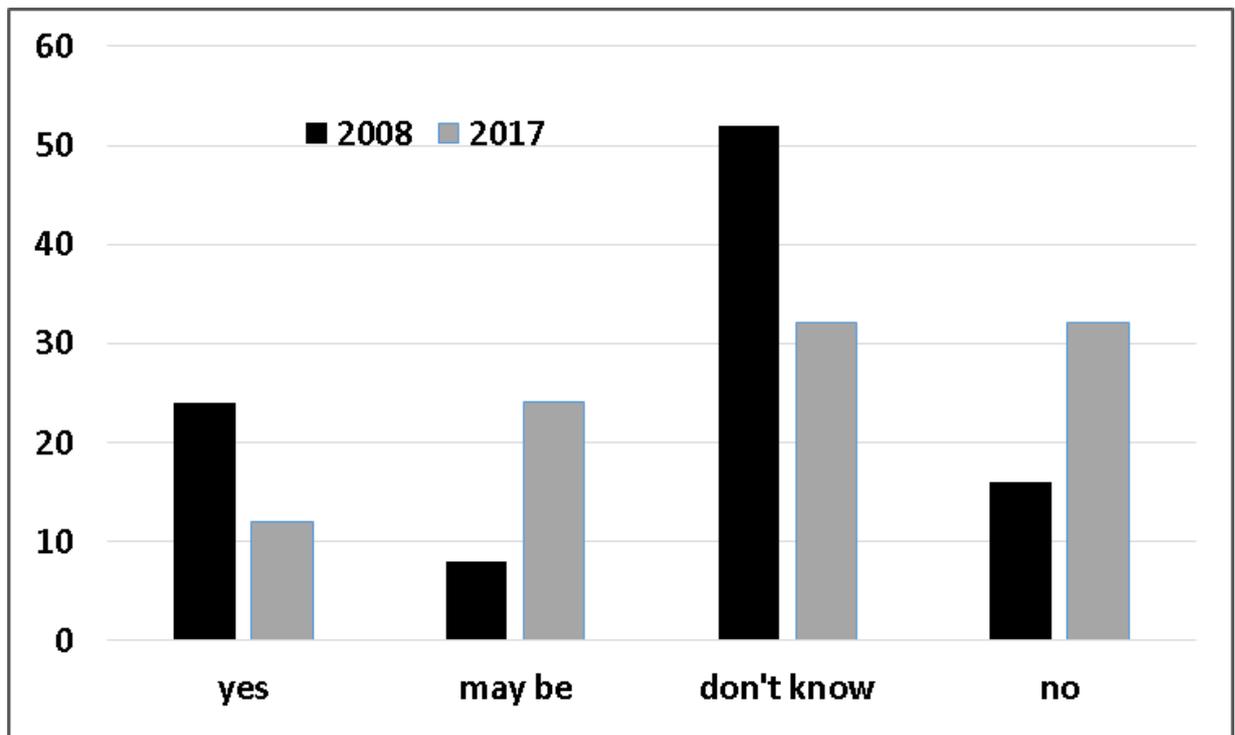


Fig 9. The answers to the question: Would their children be as committed to living in their distant dachas as they were.
Source: own survey

During our interviews, 50 percent of the respondents failed to answer the question, "Would you like to live in a distant dacha all year round?", and only a third said "yes". In fact, even these do not follow their desire because they continue to work in the city, fear the problems associated with the lack of infrastructure (no gas, running water and sanitation), winter boredom, and wild animals, etc. They just continue to feel urban themselves.

Based on the interview data that we have compiled, we have concluded that people's attitude about living in the countryside depends on the age that a person is when he or she inherits a dacha, and whether he or she has the material means that will enable him/her to pursue a dacha lifestyle. The most significant finding in our research is that generational differences are highly correlated with the desire to live in a distant village. Only elderly people or their grandchildren are interested in spending time living in the countryside.

The necessary living conditions in distant villages include: improving the quality of the roads and ensuring that social services, such as better stores, reliable medical aid, broadband internet service, would be readily available for their use in the villages. However, instead of moving towards a more inclusive form of community living, Russian authorities have recently begun amalgamating local rural administrations by concentrating social service offices and administrative outlets in district centers and in larger villages. As a result, due to poorly built roads that are difficult to traverse and no public transportation system, people living in smaller villages are not able to access social services as readily as their counterparts who are live in larger villages. In 2011, the amalgamation of the Ugorskoe commune with the neighboring Leont'evskoe commune "distanced" the villagers from receiving social services by changing what used to be a 5 to 7km trip from small villages to the service center of the settlement to a 15 to 20km trip.

On the other hand, even though there are many challenges to be found living in distant dacha communities, Moscow is becoming a less attractive place to live due to the high level of psychological and ecological stressors, increases in the cost of living and rising unemployment rates. These factors have contributed to an economic crisis that is beginning to "push" members of the Russian population out of large cities into the countryside. However, it is an open question whether poorly equipped dacha houses in distant villages with insufficient infrastructures are able to support urbanites who have become downshifters. Urbanites are not yet ready to participate in a mass counter-urbanization movement to remote areas in the Russian countryside.

4. Conclusions

Generally, during both the late-Soviet and post-Soviet periods, the Russian population has been engaged in forms of centripetal migration which have contributed to the over population of major Russian cities and the depopulation of the Russian countryside. The opposing centrifugal migration patterns of urbanites during the summer months to the northern and north eastern provinces of Russia, will not replenish the demographic losses of the entire countryside nor will it lead to the revival of agricultural production.

The present-day village and especially the distant village, is impossible to understand without examining the social impact that summer dacha residents from cities have had on these communities. Urbanites contribute to the preservation of many villages which had been more or less abandoned by local ruralists. However, the ongoing lack of interest in seasonal counter-urbanites by local authorities, as well as a general lack of motivation to improve public transportation services and the infrastructure of the villages' social service networks, has discouraged many summer dacha residents from becoming permanent residents. Counter-urbanization trends in Russia are different in practice than they are in other developed countries, where the counter-urbanization movement is mainly carried out by the middle classes. Very wealthy Russian urbanites live in their "manor homes" or closed cottage settlements during the summer months. Less wealthy people live off of the money that they make from renting out their urban apartments during the winter months and they themselves live in hurriedly winterized dacha cottages. Neither members of the very wealthy or the less wealthy social classes are willing to live all round the year in the countryside. Though there are currently only a few cases, an initiative has been made to organize workers to live and work in rural villages. The laborer signs a contract and agrees to live and work in a remote village for several years and in exchange, they are given housing and land for private farming.

There are also several confirmed reports that there are people who have left large cities to live in isolated rural areas, but there are still very few people doing this and when this number is compared to the millions of people who are dacha residents, the number is insignificant. However, these resettlers are people who are actively writing about their lives on the internet, subsequently creating an illusion that they are part of a wave of counter-urban migration. Usually, these people are intellectuals who have retired or are working part time in their urban occupations and they live in rural areas. Some of these resettlers try to combine their creative urban occupations with their country lives, but they keep their urban apartments from which they derive an additional income. As a rule, generally these people have already had a second home in the country, and they have simply moved there to live. Other people buy houses in remote villages (even if they have a dacha nearby) to enhance the rural component of their life. As they are often educated people, they often offer their services to the local schools and they participate in the social life of the community. The farms of resettlers, even the subsidiary ones, are not labor intensive, although some of them dream about one day, creating their own farm, raising cattle, and possibly leasing land. Urbanites tend to approach any work project in a creative manner, using new technologies, and mastering old tools and instruments. These activities disturb the usual way of life in the countryside, which has caused some passive resistance not only from bureaucrats but also by members of the local population. Thus, the experiences that urbanites who have lived in the country have had, demonstrate just how difficult it is for them to fit into the local community.

The Non-Black Soil Zone village which is isolated from cities, unlike villages in the southern regions of Russia where agriculture production is thriving, is changing. The new economy that is developing here will most likely have more of a "focal" character. Hunting, berry and mushroom gathering businesses, which are currently organized by the local authorities, may shift to become commercial enterprises. Construction and landscaping businesses that assist dacha residents may encourage young people to stay in the village and to create their own companies. The focus on the new economy may also favor the development of new agricultural practices. However, most newcomers to dacha settlements are not prepared to organize and run these business on their own, thus these new businesses will then have to draw on members of both communities to be successful. In conclusion, we suggest that a patchwork economy, which can be based on the current seasonal migration, may be more profitable than cultivating large fields of a single

crop, which may have low yields. Economic restructuring and creating an economic base which has various "foci," may be the only way to regain social and economic control over this vast territory.

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