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ABOUT THE JOURNAL'S DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT: SEARCHING FOR A RESPONSE TO MODERN CHALLENGES



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The development of the global community in the second half of the 20th century was characterized by the expansion and deepening of *globalization* processes. This era saw economic agents (individuals, businesses, and entire states) become

integral participants in global economic, socio-cultural, environmental, and other processes, facilitated by the liberalization of economic activity and the rapid development of information, communication, financial, and other technologies.

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However, the specific nature of the current stage of geopolitical transformations, which has intensified particularly after 2022, lies in the escalation of *regionalization* processes. This involves major states and their blocs (the European Union, NATO, BRICS+, etc.) protecting their strategic interests. Such tectonic shifts have an objective basis and are linked to the formation and strengthening of new centers of power in recent decades. For instance, in 1992, the G7's¹ share of global GDP at purchasing power parity (PPP) was 45.7%, while that of BRICS² (even before its expansion) was 16.5%. By 2022, the G7's share had fallen to 30.3%, whereas BRICS's share had risen to 31.5% (*see Figure*). Estimates suggest that by 2028, BRICS will account for 36.6%, while the G7's share will decline to 27.8%³.

According to expert assessments⁴, the outcome of this confrontation will be a new *multipolar world* consisting of major macro-zones. In this context, Russia, as a historically

formed Civilization-State (as it was during the times of the Russian Empire and the USSR), can and should aspire to become the organizing center of one such macro-zone – that is, a spatial complex of production and exchange with a population of no less than 250–300 million people.

In addition to geopolitical transformations, the world is currently facing a number of other economic, technological, social, and environmental trends that are rapidly gaining momentum. Foremost among these is the transition of the global economy to the Sixth Technological Paradigm, which entails the accelerated development of new economic sectors (artificial intelligence, platform technologies, the Internet of Things, nanotechnology, biotechnology, genetic engineering, etc.). These sectors drive productivity growth in traditional industries, raise the requirements for the quality of human capital, and form a

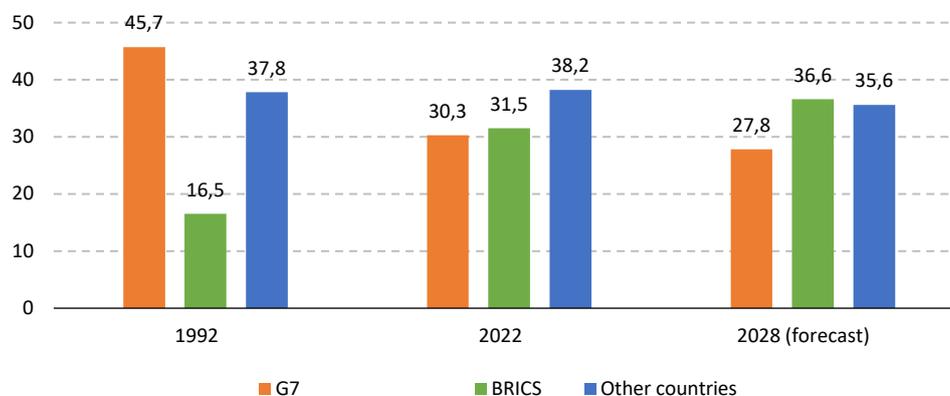


Fig. Share of the G7 and BRICS Countries in Global GDP (at PPP), %

Source: own compilation.

¹ The Group of Seven (G7) comprises the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Canada, France, and Japan.

² The BRICS composition has continually expanded: 2009 – Brazil, Russia, India, China; 2011 – Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa; 2024 – Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Ethiopia; since 2025 – Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Ethiopia, Indonesia.

³ Address by the President of the Russian Federation to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation. 29.02.2024. URL: <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/50431> (accessed: 27.01.2026).

⁴ On the Contours of the Long-Term Forecast... and What It Means for the Arctic. CMASF. March 2025; Dugin A. The Civilization-State. Izborsk Club. 31.02.2022. URL: <https://izborsk-club.ru/22879> (accessed: 27.01.2026); Fursov A., Titov I. At the Turning Point of Eras: On the Special Operation, the European Union, and the Influence of the Anglo-Saxons. Zavtra. 28.04.2022. URL: https://zavtra.ru/blogs/na_perelome_epoh_fursov (accessed: 27.01.2026).

new system for the spatial organization of the economy. Simultaneously, there is an objective risk of labor displacement, including in low-skilled occupations. In our view, these processes lead to a further intensification of urbanization and a growth in territorial disparities in socio-economic development along the center-periphery divide, necessitating the development of a scientifically grounded approach to finding answers to these challenges.

Environmental challenges are also intensifying, manifesting in global climate change and its increasing impact not only on economic activity but also on human health. In turn, the depletion of natural resources leads to stagnation in a number of cities and other settlements specializing in raw material extraction, as well as the expansion of industrial periphery areas. This underscores the urgency of finding ways to diversify the economies of these territories.

In this context, a multifaceted and dialectical examination of the development features of territorial systems at various hierarchical levels (global, international integration associations, countries, macro-regions, regions, municipalities, urban and rural agglomerations, etc.) amidst escalating global, national, regional, and sectoral challenges holds not only high scientific value but is also particularly crucial for the practice of strategic territorial development management. The ultimate goal of such management should be enhancing the quality of human life and ensuring comprehensive human development.

Furthermore, Russia, as the world's largest country by area, is characterized by significant differentiation among its territories across key socio-economic, socio-cultural, geographic, climatic, and other indicators. This constitutes not only a competitive advantage but also a challenge, highlighting the necessity for increased attention to the spatial aspects of national development. The primary strategic task – finding and securing Russia's geopolitical status as one of the centers in the emerging multipolar world – also requires a spatial dimension. This entails the need to address deep-seated, accumulated problems related to the effectiveness of state governance in territorial development and the clear definition of a sovereign national development course. In our view, these issues should be studied in close connection with the necessity of forging a new social contract within the country—an agreement between the state and major societal groups in line with the pursued course of strengthening Russia's political, economic, and cultural sovereignty⁵.

The search for answers to these questions necessitates the scientific substantiation of strategic priorities for the development of the country and its regions. These priorities should be aimed at unlocking endogenous potential and creating conditions for the development of all types of territories, not just the largest cities and major urban agglomerations.

Furthermore, the results of a study conducted by the Vologda Research Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences in May–June 2025⁶ indicate that residents of municipal

⁵ The Constitution of the Russian Federation (adopted by popular vote on 12.12.1993, with amendments approved during the all-Russian vote on 01.07.2020; with amendments as of 04.10.2022), Presidential Decree 809 dated 09.11.2022 “On Approving the Foundations of State Policy for the Preservation and Strengthening of Traditional Russian Spiritual and Moral Values”, Presidential Decree 229 dated 31.03.2023 “On Approving the Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation”, among others.

⁶ The results of a survey of residents of the Vologda Region are presented, broken down by major cities (Vologda, Cherepovets) and a number of municipal okrugs (Babayevsky, Velikoustyugsky, Vozhegodsky, Gryazovetsky, Kirillovsky, Nikolsky, Tarnogsky, Sheksninsky). The sample is quota-based by gender, age, and territory and includes 1500 individuals aged 18 and over. The sampling error for the survey does not exceed 3% with a confidence interval of 4–5%.

okrugs, which are predominantly rural areas, currently give lower ratings for the current state of their locality on almost all key indicators compared to the population of the region's major cities. They are most concerned about the condition of roads (rated only 2.9 points on a five-point scale), street lighting (3.1 points), and the cleanliness of streets and courtyards (3.1 points; *Table 1*).

According to residents of municipal okrugs, the lowest ratings were also given to the availability of healthcare services (hospitals, outpatient clinics, paramedic stations: 3.2 points) and banking/ATM/postal services (3.4 points, *Table 2*). A high demand is observed for auto repair services and the creation of green recreational areas. In general, the situation is more favorable regarding the availability of educational services and sports facilities.

Table 1. Respondents' assessment of the condition of their locality (2025, average score on a five-point scale: 5 – highest, ..., 1 – lowest)

Assessment criterion	Vologda	Cherepovets	Municipal okrugs*	Region on the whole
Air quality	3.3	2.5	3.4	3.1
Landscaping of territories (green spaces)	3.4	3.5	3.2	3.3
General condition	3.4	4.0	3.1	3.4
Cleanliness of streets and courtyards	3.2	3.8	3.1	3.3
Street lighting	3.2	3.7	3.1	3.3
Road conditions	3.0	3.5	2.9	3.1

* Sorted in descending order of ratings given by residents of municipal okrugs.
Source: own compilation.

Table 2. Assessment of the availability of key social services for locality residents (2025, average score on a five-point scale: 5 – highest, ..., 1 – lowest)

Assessment criterion	Vologda	Cherepovets	Municipal okrugs*	Region on the whole
Education (pre-school)	3.7	4.1	3.7	3.8
Education (school)	3.6	4.1	3.7	3.8
Education (additional)	3.6	4.1	3.7	3.8
Sports facilities	3.5	3.9	3.7	3.7
Food trade enterprises	3.8	4.3	3.7	3.9
Culture, leisure (for adults)	3.5	3.9	3.6	3.6
Culture, leisure (for children)	3.6	4.0	3.6	3.7
Pharmacies	3.8	4.4	3.6	3.9
Industrial goods trading enterprises	3.7	4.3	3.6	3.8
Catering establishments (cafes, restaurants)	3.7	4.2	3.6	3.8
Car service	3.7	4.1	3.5	3.7
Parks, green areas, recreation areas	3.7	3.7	3.5	3.6
Mail	3.6	4.0	3.4	3.6
Banks and ATMs	3.7	4.3	3.4	3.7
Healthcare (hospitals, outpatient clinics, medical centers)	3.6	3.5	3.2	3.4

* Sorted in descending order of ratings given by residents of municipal okrugs.
Source: own compilation.

Municipal okrugs in the region are characterized not only by low service availability but also by the *low quality of the provided social services*. In particular, the quality of healthcare services received a rating of 3.2 points. The quality of financial and credit infrastructure services (banks, ATMs) is also low (3.3 points, *Table 3*).

An unfavorable living environment and dissatisfaction with one's life are among the factors that shape the migration intentions of the population.

The quality of life in a territory largely depends on the effectiveness of the state's regional development policy.

In July 2020, Decree of the President of the Russian Federation V.V. Putin established Russia's National Development Goals until 2030, which aim to create conditions for comprehensive human development. To achieve these goals, 14 national projects were developed and implemented from 2020 to 2024, focusing on human capital development, ensuring economic growth, and forming a comfortable living environment.

Overall, the region's population notes that the implementation of national projects has a positive impact on improving the comfort of the living environment in the territory. Residents of municipal okrugs see the most noticeable changes in the modernization of social infrastructure facilities (schools, hospitals, kindergartens, etc.): 36% of respondents indicated this; about 30% noted improvements in the amenities of squares and public spaces, and the development of road transport infrastructure (*Table 4*). Residents of the region's major cities give similar assessments.

The presented data indicates that under modern conditions, the role of the state in solving national development tasks must be decisive, and the implemented state policy should be built upon scientifically grounded methodological approaches. Consequently, scientific research should focus not only on deepening fundamental knowledge but also on ensuring its orientation toward solving practical problems of state and municipal governance.

**Table 3. Quality of social services provided to the population
(average score on a five-point scale: 5 – highest quality, ..., 1 – lowest quality)**

Assessment criterion	Vologda	Cherepovets	Municipal okrugs*	Region on the whole
Education (school)	3.4	4.0	3.8	3.7
Food trade enterprises	3.7	4.1	3.7	3.8
Education (pre-school)	3.4	4.0	3.7	3.7
Education (additional)	3.5	4.1	3.6	3.7
Culture, leisure (for adults)	3.4	3.9	3.6	3.6
Culture, leisure (for children)	3.4	4.0	3.6	3.6
Pharmacies	3.6	4.1	3.6	3.7
Sports facilities	3.4	4.0	3.6	3.6
Industrial goods trading enterprises	3.5	4.2	3.6	3.7
Parks, green areas, recreation areas	3.5	3.7	3.6	3.6
Car service	3.5	4.0	3.5	3.6
Catering establishments (cafes, restaurants)	3.4	4.1	3.5	3.7
Mail	3.5	3.9	3.4	3.5
Banks and ATMs	3.6	4.3	3.3	3.7
Healthcare (hospitals, outpatient clinics, medical centers)	3.2	3.1	3.2	3.2

* Sorted in descending order of ratings given by residents of municipal okrugs.
Source: own compilation.

Table 4. Population's assessment of the most noticeable positive changes from the implementation of national projects over the past year, % of respondents

Assessment criterion	Vologda	Cherepovets	Municipal okrugs*	Region
Modernization of social infrastructure facilities (schools, hospitals, kindergartens, etc.)	16.0	33.3	36.1	29.7
Improvement of squares and public spaces	34.5	36.9	29.4	32.8
Development of road transport infrastructure (repair of roads, bridges, public transport stops)	16.9	34.8	28.2	26.8
Landscaping of courtyards	18.1	36.1	27.5	27.1
An increase in housing construction	13.1	18.4	16.8	16.2
Reconstruction of old buildings and structures	15.5	23.5	14.8	17.3
Increasing the number of sports facilities (stadiums, gyms, fitness halls, etc.)	10.7	27.5	13.0	16.2
Improving the environmental situation	9.8	1.0	10.7	7.9
Increasing the number of cultural and entertainment facilities	12.6	17.4	9.5	12.5
An increase in the number of cultural events for all socio-demographic groups	11.4	12.4	6.9	9.6
I find it difficult to answer	41.7	28.0	31.9	33.6
* Sorted in descending order of ratings given by residents of municipal okrugs. Source: own compilation.				

The aforementioned circumstances underscore the need to revise the core conceptual foundations of the journal “Problems of Territory Development” as one of the country’s leading platforms for discussion among scientists, experts, and management practitioners on issues of territorial system development. In this context, we deem it appropriate to outline several **conceptual theses aimed at clarifying the journal’s subject field and its positioning** among other leading Russian periodicals in regional and spatial economics.

First. The journal is focused on publishing scientific works aimed at the comprehensive study of development problems in territorial systems at various hierarchical levels amidst ongoing geopolitical and other global transformations. Territories can be examined both in a highly general and even abstract sense (i.e., from the standpoint of developing the fundamental foundations of regional

and spatial economics) and in relation to the development problems of specific territories in Russia and foreign countries.

Second. Currently, research by domestic and foreign scholars often directs attention exclusively “inward” into the territory, thereby failing to account for global, national, regional, and sectoral challenges and trends that determine and will determine the specific features, problems, and strategic opportunities for territorial development. Considering this, the journal’s scientific and discussion platform advocates for a spatial approach to studying territories within the context of ongoing global and national processes and their integration into global and national socio-economic space.

Third. Within the journal’s pages, territorial systems are examined as economic, socio-cultural, financial, innovative, institutional, and other spaces where key actors of national development operate: the state (authorities at all levels, political elites), society (socio-

demographic groups and strata), businesses, civil society actors, etc. However, the primary focus of research is on the individual, who, in close connection with their living environment and economic activity, forms a territorial community.

Fourth. Research of high fundamental and practical significance for Russia and its regions is encouraged. Such research should be oriented toward scientific frontiers in both theoretical and instrumental terms and be based on rich empirical data.

The outlined principles of *multi-scalarity* and *interdisciplinarity* shape the journal's research and discussion field, establishing a broad and comprehensive direction for the development of regional and spatial science in a rapidly changing world.

The first issue of the journal this year features articles addressing development problems of territories at various levels: municipality, region, country. The authors' works cover theoretical aspects of spatial and territorial economic processes and relations (*V.N. Lazhentsev*); a methodological approach to assessing the financial stability of territorial systems at regional and municipal management levels (*I.V. Naumov, N.L. Nikulina*); a methodology for assessing

regional and sectoral differentiation in corporate social responsibility (*L.V. Babich, S.L. Ivanov*); a methodological approach to identifying sectoral reserves for labor productivity growth at the regional level (*I.R. Cheplinskite, E.V. Lukin, D.M. Lisenkov*); key problems of digital transformation in Russian regions and an assessment of its potential as a tool for reducing economic space differentiation (*A.D. Lavrik*); an assessment of the impact of improved housing conditions on the convergence of urban and rural fertility rates in post-Soviet Russia (*E.L. Domnich*); regional specifics and an assessment of the impact of population aging on the quality of life and human potential of territories (*A.A. Kolesov*); spatial-econometric modeling of factors affecting regional labor productivity in China, accounting for population aging (*Jiang Ling*); and the economic situation in Russia's Northwest in January–November 2025 (*M.A. Sidorov, E.V. Lukin*).

We invite to collaborate all those interested in expanding scientific knowledge on the problems of territorial system development and its implementation into the practice of state governance at the federal, macro-, and regional levels to achieve the country's national development goals.

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