

# Quality of Life of the Population in the Context of Balanced Development of the Country's Regions

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## ABSTRACT

The article investigates how the quality of life of the region's population is determined through indicators that characterise various areas of its development. For this purpose, national ratings are studied, and methods of comparative and statistical analysis are applied.

Conclusions are drawn that achieving a high level in each block of targets (economic, social, environmental) to achieve a high quality of life of the population is an impossible task for most regions of our country. Russia's regions can be divided into groups, where either economic, social, or environmental conditions of development are decisive. Since the quality of life is more of a subjective concept, each person selects for himself the priorities that he puts in the basis of his life, and, accordingly, chooses a particular place of residence where he can meet his needs. For the most part, these are socio-economic priorities. Environmental characteristics of the region for the population begin to play a significant role when environmental problems are of a crisis nature, public consciousness is developed, and economic and social indicators of regional development are above average.

That is why the region's place in the rating of the quality of life at the current stage of Russia's development is determined more by economic indicators than by social or environmental ones.

**Keywords:** *Region, Balanced development, Quality of life.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The state regional policy aims to ensure balanced socio-economic development of the Russian Federation subjects, reducing the level of interregional differentiation in the socio-economic state of the regions and the quality of life.

Russia is the largest country in the world by occupied space, which determines the diversity of landscape and natural and climatic conditions, the ethnic composition of the population, religious denominations, and a rich cultural and historical heritage. A natural result of various prerequisites, conditions of development, and features of regulation of territorial arrangement is a significant differentiation of Russian regions in terms of economic development and the population's quality of life. Amirova E.A. notes: "It is vital to be aware of the positive and negative

components of differentiation, to take it into account when implementing public policy, and to try to prevent or minimise its negative consequences, especially in the social sphere "[1].

The current structure of the country's political, socio-economic and cultural life aggravates this situation, dividing the country into central and peripheral regions, making it difficult for the majority of the population to access modern technologies, infrastructure, quality medicine and education.

According to the Ministry of Economic Development, the poverty level in the regions varies from 6 to 40% of their population [2]. In the ranking compiled by the World Bank, Russia entered the top three in terms of regional inequality among the countries of Europe and Central Asia (2019).

The state regional policy and the internal policy of each of the country's subjects are aimed at economic growth, ensuring a high quality of life for the population, and, due to the influence of global trends, on the environmental well-being of the territories.

The regional policy implies a differentiated diagnosis of the country's regions to develop development directions. The effectiveness of development is usually determined by the growth of GRP and GRP per capita, the dynamics of which shows the trend of economic activity in the region. At the same time, the choice of priority goals depends on the region's level of development. For example, in some problem regions, the main goals of state policy are primarily social ones.

The world practice of regional development management shows that it is incorrect to put only economic indicators at the forefront when assessing the regional policy's effectiveness, since the quality of life is not determined only by indicators of regional product growth and population income.

Quality of life is a complex interdisciplinary concept defined by many characteristics and affects all aspects of human life, the level of satisfaction of material, spiritual and social needs, intellectual, cultural and physical development, and the degree of ensuring the safety of life.

Hadzhalova H.M. writes: "The economic category "quality of life of the population" can be defined as "a generalised assessment of the aggregate characteristics of the living conditions of the population formed in the mass consciousness" [3].

The concept of quality of life is determined by economic, social, and environmental indicators and has

an exact subjective aspect. For some people, the indicator of a good quality of life is material prosperity, for others - good ecology, for others - the tradition of society and the order of life, for others-access to various infrastructure facilities and quality services, etc.

Thus, the same regions can be attractive in terms of their characteristics, and unacceptable for different people to live in. Philip E. Graves notes, "The heterogeneity of preferences is important to the understanding of regional location patterns" [4].

The study's purpose is to consider how the quality of life of the region's population is determined through various indicators that characterise its economic, social and environmental spheres of development.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

The study's methodological basis is the works of domestic and foreign scientists devoted to the problems of balancing regional development, studying and analysing the quality of life of the population. The main research methods are methods of comparative and statistical analysis.

## 3. THE MAIN PART

Every year in Russia, different rating agencies prepare ratings of regions to assess the population's quality of life.

Ranking of quality of life in Russian regions, prepared by experts RIA Rating, on a range of indicators affecting the level of life of Russians living in a particular locality, as follows, some of the regions' leaders and outsiders and subjects of North Caucasus Federal district (table 1) [5].

**Table 1.** Rating of Russian regions by assessing the quality of life of the population (leading regions, outsider regions, NCFD regions), prepared by RIA Rating, 2018-2019

Region	Place in 2018	Place in 2019
Moscow	1	1
St. Petersburg	2	2
Moscow region	3	3
The Republic of Dagestan	69	64
The Republic of Ingushetia	82	79
The Kabardino-Balkar Republic	76	75
The Republic of North Ossetia - Alania	65	76
The Chechen Republic	71	71
Stavropol Territory	22	23
The Jewish Autonomous District	78	83
The Karachay-Cherkess Republic	84	84
The Republic of Tyva	85	85

The first positions in the rating of regions for quality of life for a long time are Moscow, St. Petersburg and the Moscow region, whose combined rating score exceeds the value of 70 (possible minimum - 1, possible maximum - 100). The central positions that allow these regions to lead the rating are developed infrastructure, a high economic and social development level, and a high potential for further development.

Simultaneously, if we take the ratings of socio-economic development and environmental ratings separately, the situation is different. Moscow and St. Petersburg's situation are stable because these cities are economic, financial, innovative, technological, and cultural centres of the country.

The leading regions in terms of socio-economic indicators in Russia for 2019 (according to the rating compiled by RIA-Rating experts) are Moscow, St. Petersburg and the Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous District – Yugra. The outsider regions are the Republic

of Altai, the Republic of Tyva, and the Jewish Autonomous District [6]. The North Caucasus Federal District regions occupy one of the last places in the rating, except for the Stavropol Territory (table 2).

The GRP per capita leader among the regions under consideration is Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous District - Yugra (almost 2 times higher than the same indicator in Moscow). In Russia, this indicator's highest value for 2018 was demonstrated by the Nenets Autonomous District (6950415.5 rubles) and the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District (5710130.2 rubles). Such values of indicators are associated to a greater extent with oil production and, including, its sale abroad, as well as with the population. The average per capita income level in these regions is also one of the highest in the country: the Nenets Autonomous District (78549 rubles) and the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District (79398 rubles), which corresponds to the 3rd and 1st place in the country. Simultaneously, both of these regions are

**Table 2.** Indicators of socio-economic development of Russian regions at the beginning of 2019

Region	GRP per capita, rubles	The poverty level,%	Per capita monetary income per month, rubles	Gini coefficient	The cost of food, %	Volume of paid services per capita (place in the Russian Federation)
Moscow	1423 588,6	6,8	68386	0,415	30,1	1
St. Petersburg	781 214,3	6,6	44999	0,405	32,3	6
Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous District - Yugra	2680 114,5	9,0	50717	0,393	26,7	18
The Republic of Dagestan	203 272,3	14,7	25755	0,342	54,1	71
The Republic of Ingushetia	112 553,4	30,4	16163	0,358	59,2	83
The Kabardino-Balkar Republic	168 192,1	24,2	20782	0,347	43,6	76
The Karachay-Cherkess Republic	165 358,9	22,9	18051	0,366	32,8	80
The Republic of North Ossetia - Alania	185 641,3	14,0	23270	0,378	38,3	68
The Chechen Republic	133 435,8	20,5	23197	0,378	34,3	73
Stavropol Territory	255 726,3	13,9	23408	0,393	31,3	30
The Republic of Altai	231 464,2	24,0	19503	0,371	30,8	82
The Republic of Tyva	212 874,5	34,4	15603	0,346	37,0	85
The Jewish Autonomous District	346 715,8	23,7	24696	0,349	31,3	34

not included in the top ten of the quality of life rating, taking 66 and 12 places, respectively.

According to federal statistics, almost all regions leading in the share of highly paid workers are remote regions (northern or Far Eastern) and the capital. The northern regions are competitive in the labour market, primarily due to the high availability of natural resources, high salaries are compensatory in nature. Similarly, high prices for consumer goods are compensated and losses in comfort and quality of life due to harsh weather conditions and territorial remoteness.

The leader of the quality of life rating in Moscow ranks 4th in terms of average per capita income of the population with 68386 rubles per month. However, it is necessary to consider that analysing this subject's development is out of all other regions' general range. There are large offices of almost all major Russian and foreign corporations, federal government agencies, and companies belonging to areas with high labour productivity (IT, Internet business, and others) are widely represented. All this determines that most top managers and the highest-paid employees work in the capital. Also, this region actively attracts young people with its potential for economic and social growth. Thus,

Moretti E. notes that "...the relative supply of college graduates increases in expensive cities because college graduates are increasingly attracted by amenities located in those cities. The increase in the cost of living in those cities reflects the cities' attractiveness to skilled workers and is the price for the consumption of desirable amenities" [7].

Simultaneously, Moscow takes the third place in the Gini coefficient, behind the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District (0.435) and the Tyumen Region (0.430), indicating the maximum stratification of employees' salaries among the regions of Russia.

The above allows us to conclude that not always high incomes provide a high quality of life for the population. Economic indicators should be considered in conjunction with social and environmental indicators.

The leading regions in terms of Russia's environmental situation in 2019 (according to the national rating compiled by Green Patrol experts) were the Tambov Region, the Altai Republic, and the Belgorod Region [8]. The outsider regions are the Chelyabinsk, Omsk and Irkutsk regions. The North Caucasus Federal District regions occupy places in the top part of the rating (table 3).

**Table 3.** National environmental rating of Russian regions (regions-leaders and regions-outsiders, the regions of North Caucasus Federal district), 2019

Region	Environmental index	Industrial and environmental Index	Socio-ecological index	The integrated environmental index	Place in the rating
Tambov region	73/27	61/39	82/18	73/27	1
Belgorod region	58/42	58/42	80/20	68/32	2
The Republic of Altai	71/29	43/57	78/22	67/33	3
The Republic of Dagestan	57/43	37/63	73/27	59/41	31
The Republic of Ingushetia	68/32	31/69	71/29	60/40	29
The Kabardino-Balkar Republic	76/24	28/72	72/28	61/39	16
The Karachay-Cherkess Republic	73/27	41/59	65/35	61/39	22
The Republic of North Ossetia - Alania	60/40	35/65	69/31	57/43	38
The Chechen Republic	58/42	35/65	78/22	61/39	18
Stavropol Territory	55/45	43/57	67/33	57/43	41
Sverdlovsk Region	33/67	42/58	56/44	44/56	83
Chelyabinsk region	21/79	45/55	61/39	43/57	84
Irkutsk region	26/74	43/57	54/46	42/58	85

**Table 4.** Summary analysis of the development of some regions of Russia, according to their national rankings, 2019

Region	Place in the rating for assessing the quality of life	Place in the ranking of socio-economic development	Place in the environmental rating	The coefficients of the net migration rate per 10,000 population	Distribution of the number of those who left to other regions as a percentage of the total number of those who left	The distribution of the number of arrivals from other regions in % of the total number of arrivals
Moscow	1	1	6	79	85,6	86
St. Petersburg	2	2	8	52	58,6	27,9
Moscow region	3	18	77	140	66,9	36,0
Belgorod region	5	18	3	27	38,2	71,8
Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous District - Yugra	10	3	74	-21	56,5	55,7
Sverdlovsk Region	13	7	83	-3	36,8	34,7
Stavropol Territory	22	30	42	-14	51,1	47,6
Chelyabinsk region	24	17	84	-26	41,4	34,5
Tambov region	43	55	2	-97	37,6	34,9
Irkutsk region	63	22	85	-25	36,5	31,8
The Republic of Dagestan	64	57	37	-36	64,6	53,2
The Chechen Republic	71	68	18	-25	59,9	50,3
The Kabardino-Balkar Republic	75	77	16	-39	69,7	61,7
The Republic of North Ossetia - Alania	76	78	36	-64	74,8	61,5
The Republic of Ingushetia	79	82	24	58	46,9	63,7
The Republic Of Altai	80	83	1	-16	37,2	34,6
The Jewish Autonomous District	83	85	72	-111	78,1	67,2
The Karachay-Cherkess Republic	84	29	22	-34	59,6	53,4
The Republic of Tyva	85	84	65	-30	45,9	40,7

If you compare all the above data, you can make a table with a summary analysis of the balance of development of some Russia regions, according to their positions in national ratings (table 4).

Here are the indicators of migration activity in the regions under consideration. Migration is one of the most critical factors determining the population's quality of life in a particular region of the country. Traditionally, people leave those places that do not meet their internal life requirements and move to regions where they hope to meet their needs for a certain standard of living. That is why migration indicators and socio-economic development indicators and the environmental situation, indicate the standard of living in a particular region.

#### 4. THE STUDY RESULTS

To carry out the region's development from the position of balance is a big goal in the system of

regional governance. However, as the experience of even developed countries that have embarked on the path of a "green economy" shows, combining economic, social and environmental priorities equally to ensure a high quality of life for the population is a difficult task that requires compromise solutions. This is more difficult for our country's regions experiencing significant problems in their development.

From these positions, Russia's regions can be divided into groups of territories where either economic, social, or environmental results of economic activity are decisive. Since the quality of life is mostly a subjective concept, each person determines for himself the priorities that he puts in the basis of his life activity, and, accordingly, chooses a particular place of residence where he can satisfy his needs. For the most part, of course, these are economic priorities.

That is why the region's place in the rating of the quality of life at the current stage of Russia's

development is determined more by economic indicators than by social or environmental ones. Environmental characteristics of the region for the population begin to play a significant role when environmental problems are of a crisis nature, public consciousness is developed, and economic and social indicators of regional development are above average. Migration indicators show that people choose economically prosperous regions, potentially guaranteeing more development opportunities, ignoring social and environmental aspects.

In particular, the most striking example is the Republic of Altai, which was the leader of the national environmental rating at the end of 2019, but an outsider in the ratings of the socio-economic situation and quality of life. The indicator of migration growth is negative.

Simultaneously, the indicator is also harmful to, for example, Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous District - Yugra. Although it ranked 3rd in the ranking of the regions' socio-economic situation in 2019. In the environmental rating, it is at the end of the list, and its neighbour - the Moscow Region - ranks third in terms of quality of life and a high positive coefficient of migration growth.

Here we can mention two factors: the natural and climatic conditions of the regions, their territorial location, but, to a greater extent, the socio-economic potential for human development, which is characteristic of the central territories of Russia.

The subjects of the North Caucasus show the same picture of development, except for the Stavropol Territory. They occupy places in the second half of the ratings of socio-economic development and quality of life and two regions - the Karachay-Cherkess Republic and Ingushetia are in the last five. Some researchers note that the North Caucasus' republics are among the most disadvantaged territories of the Russian Federation in most indicators that characterise the socio-economic situation [9].

At the same time, these regions are safe in terms of ecology. The NCFD is the second most environmentally friendly federal district in Russia. Migration growth rates are negative, which is associated with a high percentage of people leaving the district. A positive value is shown by the Republic of Ingushetia's indicator, which is related to the action of program documents on the return of the Ingush population that left in different historical periods.

Abdulmanapov P.G. identifies the following reasons for the high migration activity of the North Caucasus population: the lack of jobs, promising sectors of the economy, and high-income differentiation [10].

Thus, of the regions under consideration, only Moscow, St. Petersburg and the Belgorod Region show balanced development signs, taking high places in the corresponding ratings. To clarify the prerequisites, conditions, and factors that determine the peculiarities of the development of Russian regions in the context of balance, more detailed analysis and further research are required.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Trying to achieve a high level in each block of targets (economic, social, environmental) to achieve a high quality of life of the population is an impossible task for most regions of our country. But it can be quite reasonable within the state's borders, then the balance of development will be a complex indicator that systematically incorporates the economic, social and environmental indicators of each region.

It is possible to solve this problem based on joint work of the federal and regional branches of government; interregional cooperation and partnership; competent, based on the principle of self-development, and the regions' internal policy.

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