

Capital Region Demographics in the Republics of Russia

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Abstract. This article examines population fluctuations in the capitals of Russian Republics from 1970 to 2010. Factors contributing to population changes in each capital will be analyzed, with a special focus on natural growth rates and the role of ethnicity.

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1. Introduction

According to experts, demographic processes in Russia are an understudied and underreported phenomenon. This is largely explained by the delayed demographic transition in Russia compared to Western countries, and the controversial population policy agenda during the Soviet era (Szymańska, 2004). Conservative social development principles,

in which infrastructure took priority, created an environment where a 'low value was placed on human life' in Russia (Vishnevskiy, 2005). As a result, the Russian birth rate plummeted. However, this was not due to improvements in women's health care, as evidenced in the contraceptive revolution in the West. Rather, the allowance of abortions cut the birth rate severely, which also had a negative effect on women's health. Life expectancy rates dropped, which in turn dramatically raised death rates. Death

rates remained high in comparison with Western countries throughout the Soviet years.

The current situation has not changed noticeably. According to T. Golikova, the poor implementation of the strategies outlined in the government's Human Development Legislation, adopted until 2025, "unfortunately, does not make it possible to achieve the (Legislation's) ambitious goals". According to their projections, the Russian population should see a natural growth of 35,000 people in 2013, and average life expectancy should rise to 71 years across the nation. In reality, we expect to see a much smaller growth in 2013 and, of course, significant differences between regions due to various factors – one of which, we will argue, is the ethnicity of the population.

This paper looks specifically at the capitals of the Republics of Russia. We intend to reveal the different situations that these capital cities find themselves in according to the demographics of their region.

Average demographic rates across Russia come across as comparatively favorable. It is clear, though, that in multi-national Russia ethnicity plays a role in the demographic differentiation of the country. Russia is composed of 21 national republics or national autonomous regions and six national autonomous districts, some of which have cities considered to be population centres. It should be noted that even among ethnic areas and their centres, there is a considerable spread in demographic rates.

2. Research Methods

Traditional methods for the study of demographic processes were used for this paper. The speed of growth among populations in the centres of national territories was analysed for the intercensal periods between 1970 and 2010. Next, we incorporated component graphs by city-type analysing the growth of the population for 1998 and 2003. We then presented dynamic changes in natural growth rates within cities, which we compared to the ethnic makeup of the population. As a part of the study, we utilized several key demographic indices, including natural population growth, migration rates, and ethnic diversification (Trifonova, 2006).

3. Results

Population growth in cities is determined by natural growth, migration and administrative reforms. Therefore, growth during times of stability and favourable conditions will be positive. Thus, in the Soviet period, during comparatively stable socio-economic periods, all capitals in question experienced a rather high rate of growth (Table 1).

Table 1. The speed of population growth in the capitals of republics for the indicated periods of time (%)

| The capital | A | B | C | D |
|-----------------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| Abakan | 42.6 | 20 | 7.3 | -0.9 |
| Anadyr | 58.4 | 40.2 | -34.5 | 6.7 |
| Birobidzhan | 23.2 | 21.9 | -5.1 | -3.3 |
| Cheboksary | 42.3 | 36.6 | 4.9 | 2.9 |
| Cherkessk | 35.1 | 24.4 | 2.8 | 4.5 |
| Dudinka | 25.9 | 30.2 | -22.2 | -2.1 |
| Elista | 40.9 | 27.6 | 16.2 | -1.1 |
| Gorno-Altaysk | 15.9 | 9.3 | 3.8 | 4.6 |
| Grozny | 9.9 | 6.5 | -47.3 | 28.9 |
| Khanty-Mansiysk | 14.1 | 21.9 | 56.5 | 50.6 |
| Izhevsk | 29.9 | 15.7 | -0.5 | -0.6 |
| Kazan | 14.3 | 9.3 | 1.8 | 3.6 |
| Kudymkar | 7.6 | 17.9 | 0 | 3.9 |
| Kyzyl | 27.7 | 27.3 | 23.9 | 5.6 |
| Magas | * | * | * | 810.9 |
| Makhachkala | 35.2 | 25.3 | 46.9 | 24.9 |
| Maykop | 16.2 | 16.3 | 5.6 | -1.4 |
| Nalchik | 0.2 | 42.1 | 32.6 | -12.7 |
| Naryan-Mar | 38.5 | -13.7 | -8.4 | 6.5 |
| Petrozavodsk | 74.5 | 14.4 | -1.3 | 1.8 |
| Salekhard | 13.7 | 29.7 | 6.8 | 28.1 |
| Saransk | 37.6 | 19.2 | -2.4 | -2.4 |
| Syktyvkar | 1 | 85.3 | -0.7 | 2.5 |
| Ufa | 25.7 | 11.6 | -3.7 | 1.9 |
| Ulan-Ude | 18.4 | 17.7 | 1.7 | 12.5 |
| Vladikavkaz | 18.1 | 7.6 | 5.2 | -1.3 |
| Yakutsk | 41.5 | 22.5 | 12.9 | 27.2 |
| Yoshkar-Ola | 21.3 | 19.9 | 6.3 | -3.1 |

Explanation: A – 1970–1979; B – 1979–1989; C – 1989–2002; D – 2002–2010; * n/a

Source: Results of the USSR-wide Census of 1970, 1972; Results of the Russian-wide Census of 1979, 1989; Regions of Russia. The Main Social-Economic Findings of the Cities, 2010

In Soviet times, each capital experienced population growth due to migration. Trained specialists were sent in mass throughout Russia, even to the most remote Republics. In the post-Soviet era, mass migration ground to a halt, which is reflected in a stunt in growth in Table 1. From 1989 to 2002, ten cities began to show a decrease in population. Grozny, the capital city of the Chechen Republic, experienced the most severe decline, due to the First and Second Chechen Wars in the 1990s. Sharp decreases were also noticed in three national district centres, Anadyr, Dudinka and Naryan-Mar, all of which are located in remote areas of Russia and do not specialise in hydrocarbon export, an area that would arouse interest from Moscow.

City populations continued to decline from 2002 to 2010. The cities of Izhevsk, Saransk, Birobidzan, and Dudinka experienced decreases in population, in both periods 1989–2002 and 2002–2010. There was a noticeable population decrease in the capitals of three republics of the Northern Caucasus, in the capital of Kalmykia, and in two capitals of republics in the Ural-Volga region. Population decline is rather difficult to change, as the effects from efforts of population reproduction are often delayed for several generations.

Some capitals experienced population growth from 2002 to 2010, namely, Makhachkala, Grozny, Khanty-Mansiysk, Salekhard, Yakutsk, and Ulan-Ude. Population growth in Makhachkala and Grozny was mostly due to urbanization as people migrated from the rural areas to the cities. Specialists have found that rural youth are now eager to leave mountainous areas, preferring to live in the capitals where there is a greater variety of work opportunities. This is possible due to the stabilisation of the political and military situation in the Northern Caucasus as well as the enormous financial assistance from the federal government on the reconstruction of capitals and other population centres in Chechnya.

In Figure 1, we compare features of population growth, natural vs. migration growth, between cities for the years 1998 and 2003. The statistics for the two capitals, Magas and Grozny were not available for this study, nor were the centres of national districts, so they have not been included in the following Figure.

As is apparent from Fig. 1 (part A), in 1998 there was a positive population growth in seven cities (Syktyvkar, Yakutsk, Kyzyl, Cheboksary, Elita, Cherkessk, and Gorno-Altaysk) thanks to both natural and migration growth. At the same time, five capitals experienced a decrease in population with a simultaneous decrease of both factors (Vladikavkaz, Nalchik, Izhevsk, Saransk, Yoshkar-Ola). Six cities had a slight migration growth that did not counter balance the significant natural decline in population. All of these cities can be found in the third and fourth quadrants of Figure 1 (part A). This reflects the reaction of the population to the socioeconomic instability in Russia during the second half of the 1990s. During these crisis years, the population was reluctant to migrate or have children. In comparison, we see that in 2002, migration played a major role in the mobility of the population. This is illustrated in Figure 1 (part B), where all the cities are now stretched along the Y axis, as opposed to 1998 when they stretch along the X axis. The demographic processes in the cities of Gorno-Altaysk and Makhachkala saw drastic changes in migration growth compared to other populations (Fig. 1 (part B)). In the 1990s a sizable portion of the Russian population was forced to leave Makhachkala mostly for reasons of personal safety. Migration of skilled workers stopped during this period and native urbanization rapidly grew through the 2000s. Because of this, the contrast between the urban and rural ways of life in Dagestan is very high (Trifonova, 2011). In contrast, migrants from Central Asia and Kazakhstan flooded into Gorno-Altaysk during the 1990s, but by 2002 this wave had already subsided. Not only did the capitals of Saransk, Ulan-Ude, Abakan, Izhevsk, Nalchik, and Ufa also experience migration decline, but populations in these cities decreased due to natural population decline as well.

The changes in natural population growth in the studied cities are shown in Fig. 2. For comparison with the Soviet period, values during the year 1985 were also included. In the crisis years of the 1990s a sharp reduction in natural growth of the population can be seen. In 1995, in 18 of the 28 studied cities (including Nazran) rates of natural population growth fell. However, in Makhachkala and Nazran the magnitude of natural growth stayed above 10%.

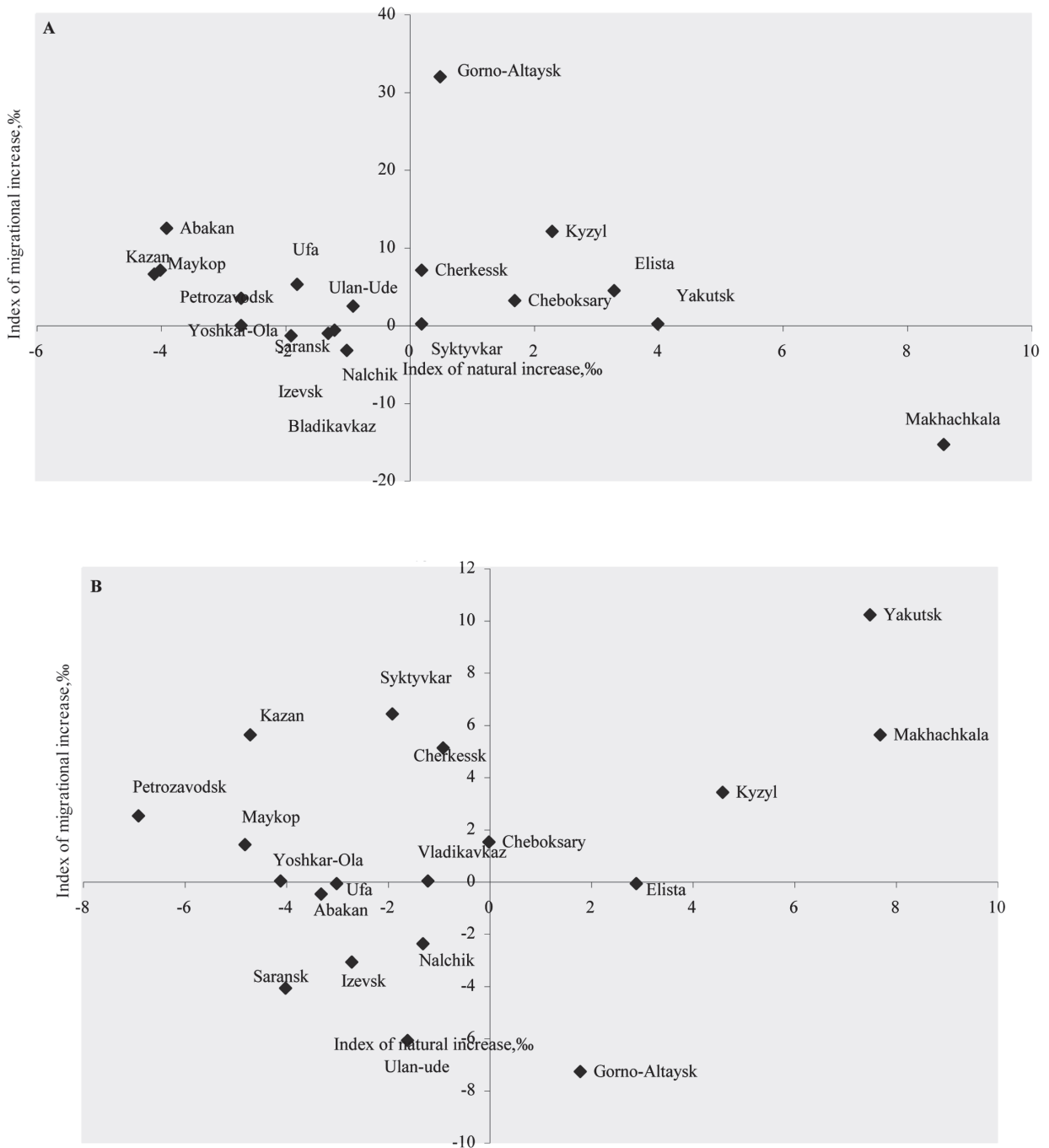


Fig. 1. Components of the growth of population of the capitals of national republics (A – 1998, B – 2002)

Source: Regions of Russia. The Predominant Characteristics of Subjects of the Russian Federation, 2003

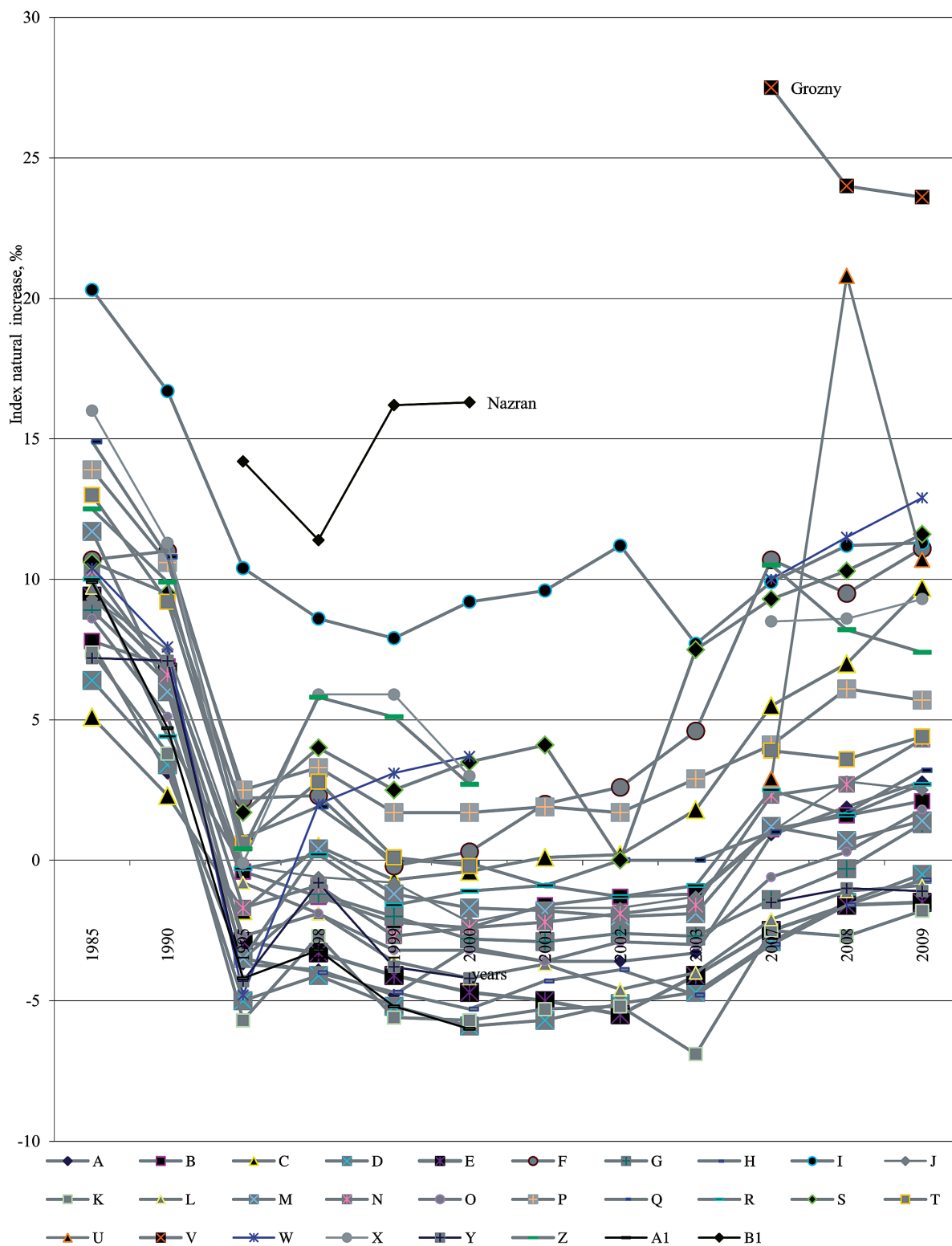


Fig. 2. Index of natural population growth

Explanation: A – Abakan; B – Vladikavkaz; C – Gorno-Altaysk; D – Kazan; E – Yoshkar-Ola; F – Kyzyl; G – Izhevsk; H – Maykop; I – Makhachkala; J – Nalchik; K – Petrozavodsk; L – Saransk; M – Syktyvkar; N – Ulan-Ude; O – Ufa; P – Elista; Q – Cheboksary; R – Cherkessk; S – Yakutsk; T – Naryan-Mar; U – Magas; V – Grozny; W – Khanty-Mansiysk; X – Salekhard; Y – Birobidzhan; Z – Anadyr; A1 – Kudymkar; B1 – Nazran

Source: Regions of Russia. The Main Social-Economic Findings of the Cities, 2010

Table 2. Index of natural population growth

| | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 |
|-----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Abakan | 7.7 | 3.1 | -3.7 | -3.9 | -4.8 | -3.1 | -3.6 | -3.6 | -3.3 | 0.9 | 1.9 | 2.8 |
| Anadyr | 12.5 | 9.9 | 0.4 | 5.8 | 5.1 | 2.7 | | | | 10.5 | 8.2 | 7.4 |
| Birobidzhan | 7.2 | 7.1 | -4.3 | -0.8 | -3.8 | -4.2 | | | | -1.5 | -1 | -1.1 |
| Cheboksary | 14.9 | 10.8 | 0.8 | 1.9 | 0.0 | -0.1 | -0.9 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 1.7 | 3.2 |
| Cherkessk | 10 | 4.4 | -0.3 | 0.2 | -1.6 | -1.1 | -0.9 | -1.3 | -0.9 | 2.5 | 1.6 | 2.7 |
| Elista | 13.9 | 10.6 | 2.5 | 3.3 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 1.9 | 1.7 | 2.9 | 4.1 | 6.1 | 5.7 |
| Gorno-Altaysk | 5.1 | 2.3 | -1.8 | 0.5 | -0.7 | -0.4 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 1.8 | 5.5 | 7 | 9.7 |
| Grozny | | | | | | | | | | 27.5 | 24 | 23.6 |
| Khanty-Mansyisk | 10.4 | 7.6 | -4.8 | 2.0 | 3.1 | 3.7 | | | | 10 | 11.5 | 12.9 |
| Izhevsk | 8.9 | 6.3 | -3.5 | -1.2 | -2.0 | -2.8 | -2.9 | -2.6 | -2.7 | -1.4 | -0.3 | 1.3 |
| Kazan | 6.4 | 3.4 | -5.0 | -4.1 | -5.2 | -5.9 | -5.7 | -5.1 | -4.7 | -2.9 | -1.5 | -0.5 |
| Kudymkar | 9.9 | 4.7 | -4.2 | -3.2 | -5.2 | -6.0 | | | | | | |
| Kyzyl | 10.7 | 11.0 | 2.2 | 2.3 | -0.2 | 0.3 | 2.0 | 2.6 | 4.6 | 10.7 | 9.5 | 11.1 |
| Magas | | | | | | | | | | 2.9 | 20.8 | 10.7 |
| Makhachkala | 20.3 | 16.7 | 10.4 | 8.6 | 7.9 | 9.2 | 9.6 | 11.2 | 7.7 | 9.9 | 11.2 | 11.3 |
| Maykop | | | -3.5 | -4.0 | -4.7 | -5.3 | -4.3 | -3.9 | -4.8 | -3.0 | -1.6 | -0.7 |
| Nalchik | 9.3 | 7.5 | -0.2 | -0.6 | -0.8 | -2.2 | -1.7 | -1.7 | -1.3 | 1.0 | 2.8 | 2.5 |
| Naryan-Mar | 13.0 | 9.2 | 0.6 | 2.8 | 0.1 | -0.2 | | | | 3.9 | 3.6 | 4.4 |
| Nazran | | | 14.2 | 11.4 | 16.2 | 16.3 | | | | | | |
| Petrozavodsk | 7.4 | 3.8 | -5.7 | -2.7 | -5.6 | -5.7 | -5.3 | -5.2 | -6.9 | -2.5 | -2.7 | -1.8 |
| Salekhard | 16 | 11.3 | -0.1 | 5.9 | 5.9 | 3.0 | | | | 8.5 | 8.6 | 9.3 |
| Saransk | 9.7 | 7.0 | -0.8 | -1.9 | -3.6 | -4.2 | -3.7 | -4.6 | -4.0 | -2.1 | -1.1 | -0.9 |
| Syktyvkar | 11.7 | 6.0 | -3.5 | 0.4 | -1.2 | -1.7 | -1.8 | -2.0 | -1.9 | 1.2 | 0.7 | 1.4 |
| Ufa | 8.6 | 5.1 | -2.7 | -1.9 | -3.2 | -3.2 | -3.6 | -2.9 | -3.0 | -0.6 | 0.3 | 1.8 |
| Ulan-Ude | 10.3 | 6.6 | -1.7 | -0.9 | -2.7 | -2.4 | -2.2 | -1.9 | -1.6 | 2.3 | 2.7 | 4.3 |
| Vladikavkaz | 7.8 | 6.9 | -0.4 | -1.3 | -2.2 | -2.4 | -1.6 | -1.3 | -1.2 | 1.1 | 1.6 | 2.1 |
| Yakutsk | 10.6 | 9.5 | 1.7 | 4.0 | 2.5 | 3.5 | 4.1 | 0.0 | 7.5 | 9.3 | 10.3 | 11.6 |
| Yoshkar-Ola | 9.4 | 6.7 | -2.9 | -3.3 | -4.1 | -4.7 | -5.0 | -5.5 | -4.1 | -2.5 | -1.6 | -1.5 |

Source: Regions of Russia. The Main Social-Economic Findings of the Cities, 2010

There were six cities (Type 1) that experienced stable positive natural population growth: Makhachkala, Elista, Yakutsk, Kyzyl, Cheboksary, Nazran (Fig. 2). For the entire examined period, the magnitude of natural growth remained positive in the capitals of Makhachkala, Elista and Yakutsk. An insignificant early decline of natural population rates was noted in Kyzyl, Cheboksary. This was followed by a sharp population rate increase, which allows us to include them in this group. These cities are also categorized by their relatively high prevalence of native peoples. While all the studied cities differ in the balance of native and Russian peoples, it is only in Yakutsk where there is a Russian majority (Table 2). Not only was the predominantly-native

makeup of the populations maintained throughout this period, but we also argue that it was precisely this ethnic component that ensured positive natural population growth. Russians, in comparison with other peoples of Russia, long ago completed the transition to smaller families. In contrast, Turk-Islamists and Buddhist peoples have maintained their traditional poly-nuclear families with many children.

Additional three cities also experienced positive population growth, but for different reasons (Type 2). Khanti-Mansyisk, Salekhard and Anadyr are all centres of autonomous districts, in which Russians dominate the ethnic structure. Khanti-Mansyisk and Salekhard are centres of prosperous

export-oriented hydrocarbon districts. Social conditions in these cities are quite favourable which is reflected in positive population growth, both natural and due to migration. The city of Anadyr falls into

this category due to the “phenomenon of Abromovich”. Abromovich generously supported this region to such an extent that similar positive population growth resulted from the favorable social conditions.

Table 3. Distribution of capitals of national territories by degree of ethnic mosaic (P_j)*

| 1 group | | 2 group | | 3 group | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|-------|---------------|------|-------------|------|
| P_j less 0.4 | | P_j from 0.4 to 0.65 | | P_j more 0.65 | | | | | |
| predominance of titular peoples | predominance of Russian peoples | predominance of titular peoples | predominance of Russian peoples | 3 and more nationality | | | | | |
| Capital | P_j | Capital | P_j | Capital | P_j | | | | |
| Grozny | 0.07 | Anadyr | 0.28 | Cheboksary | 0.51 | Gorno-Altaysk | 0.43 | Nalchik | 0.70 |
| Magas | 0.39 | Birobidzhan | 0.22 | Vladikavkaz | 0.57 | Maykop | 0.44 | Makhachkala | 0.85 |
| | | Petrozavodsk | 0.33 | Kyzyl | 0.53 | Ulan-Ude | 0.47 | Cherkessk | 0.65 |
| | | Hanty-Mansiysk | 0.33 | Elista | 0.60 | Izevsk | 0.47 | | |
| | | Salekhard | 0.34 | Kudymkar | 0.49 | Yoshkar-Ola | 0.50 | | |
| | | Abakan | 0.33 | | | Syktvykar | 0.61 | | |
| | | | | | | Ufa | 0.64 | | |
| | | | | | | Yakutsk | 0.60 | | |
| | | | | | | Saransk | 0.45 | | |
| | | | | | | Kazan | 0.52 | | |
| | | | | | | Naryan-Mar | 0.47 | | |

Explanation: * Calculated by National composition and use of language, citizenship, 2004

$$P_j = 1 - \sum_{i=1}^m (a_i)^2,$$

where P_j – index of ethnic mosaic; m – quantity of nationalities in cities of settled regions; a_i – share of nationalities in all of the population with the city of the population of the region

Source: Calculated by National composition and use of language, citizenship, 2004

As can be seen in Figure 2, all studied cities experienced a positive change in the rate of natural population growth in the second half of the 2000s. By 2009, however, the six cities of Birobidzhan, Petrozavodsk, Maykop, Kazan, Saransk, Yoshkar-Ola still maintained a natural decrease in population (Type 3). These cities are predominantly mono-ethnic and have a Russian majority, which, we believe, explains the delay in natural population growth.

Ethnicity has been shown to be one of the major factors that determines the flow and counterflow of migration in cities with positive population growth (Streletskiy, 2011). While ethnic diversity certainly played a positive role in population growth during the Soviet period, there was also a high influx of highly skilled professionals into these regions from Moscow and St. Petersburg. During this time, non-

native migrants into the republics balanced with the urbanization of native peoples. In the post Soviet-era, however, migration of native peoples from the rural areas to the cities has only risen, and external migration into the capitals has dwindled down to isolated cases of Russian representatives in factories and institutions. This has resulted in a larger percentage of native peoples in the capitals of national republics.

4. Conclusions

The role of ethnicity in demographic processes is evident in the capitals of Russia's national republics. These capitals can be separated into three distinct types. Type 1 capitals are those with a high urban

concentration of native peoples and high rates of natural population growth. This type especially concerns representatives of Turkish and Bulgar cultures. Type 2 capitals are exceptions to this rule and they are those cities that experienced natural population growth due to exceptional resources and social support in the northern districts of the country. The third type of capitals concerns those with a Russian/non-native majority and thus a corresponding natural population decline.

Migration processes between the latter two censuses in particular have strengthened the native ethnic makeup of the studied cities. The rapid increase of urbanization of native peoples, coupled with a drastic decline of Russian-migration in the republics, has changed the ethnic makeup of the capitals of Russia's republics.

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