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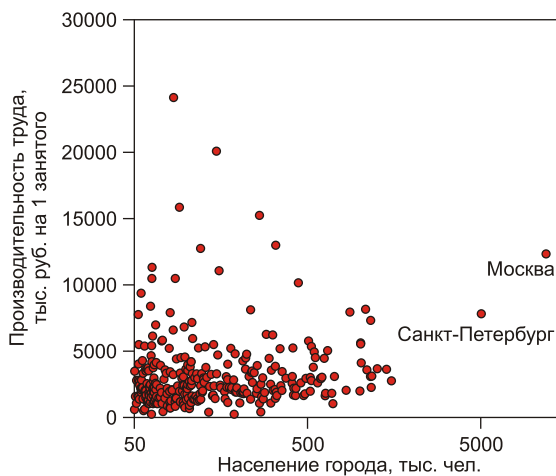
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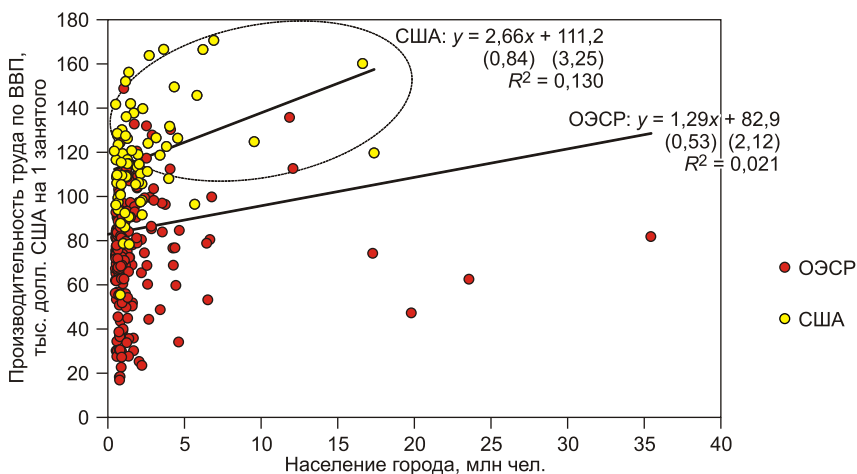
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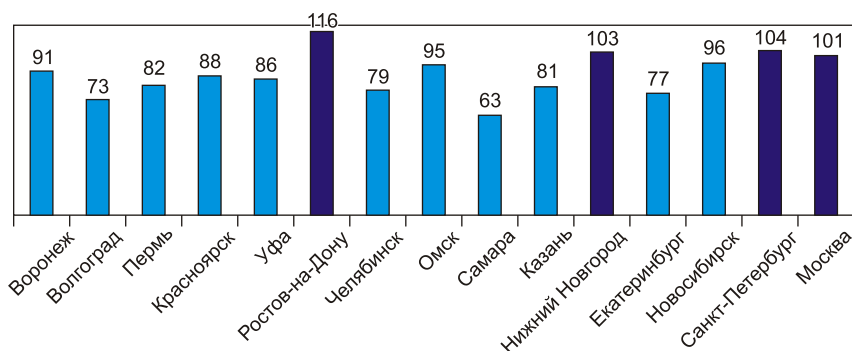
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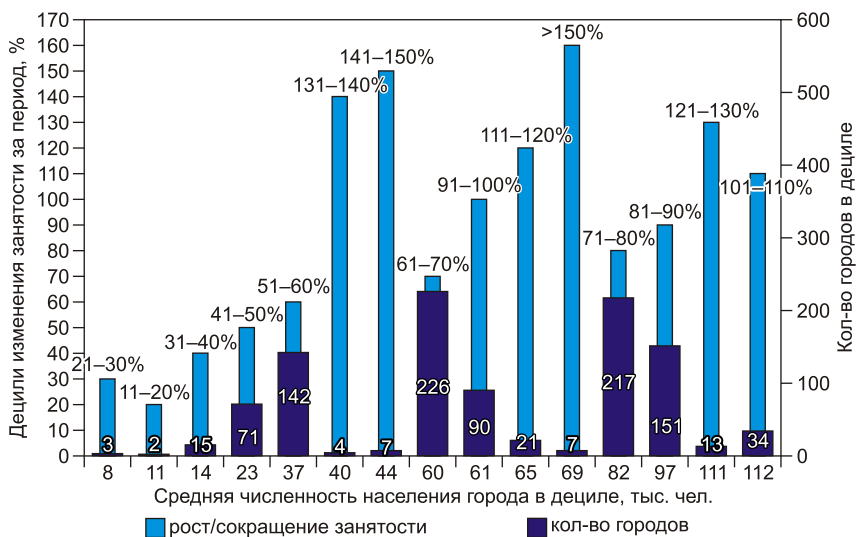
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L.V. Melnikova

THEORETICAL ARGUMENTS AND EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE IN STRATEGIC PLANNING

The article raises the question whether some theoretical arguments implicitly contained in fundamental strategic documents are supported by empirical evidence. The answer is essential to assessing the validity of the proposed regional policies that, in turn, could vary significantly depending on the used theoretical framework. We show that, despite the latest achievements of regional science, the current regional policy stays within the theoretical concepts of the 20th century. There are obvious problems with empirical confirmation of agglomeration effects. Difficulties in interpreting observable data relate to the use of macroeconomic indicators for testing the initially microeconomic models. This practice is stimulated by methodological challenges and is complicated by the lack of data. We verify empirically the assertions about clear advantages of the territorial concentration of economic activities in cities in terms of production efficiency, national growth, and reducing regional disparities. According to the calculations, higher labor productivity is not the exceptional property of large cities; there is insufficient evidence to support the concentration of economic growth in agglomerations; interregional inequality is growing in most countries, including the ones with high per capita incomes. We conclude that our results contradict to the widely broadcasted statements about the higher economic efficiency of urban agglomerations. It is alarming that some assertions acquire the force of law in the Fundamentals of State Policy for Regional Development of the Russian Federation until 2025 and the discussed Concept for the Strategy of Spatial Development of the Russian Federation until 2025.

Keywords: strategy of spatial development; agglomeration; manufacturing efficiency; interregional inequality; empirical estimation

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