



Institutional and regional features of organized second home development in Russia

Alexander V. Rusanov¹

¹ *Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, 119991, Russia*

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Abstract

The article studies the features of second home land development in Russia. Basing on the data of the All-Russian agricultural censuses, the author shows that organized second home development is represented by two quantitatively and qualitatively different processes, namely: development of residential dachas, observed in horticultural non-profit partnerships (HNP) with dominant residential, recreational and agricultural functions, and development of agricultural dachas (vegetable gardens), observed in gardening non-profit partnerships (GNP), performing only an agricultural function. Despite regional differentiation, the general developmental trend might be described as gradual strengthening of the recreational and residential functions of the HNPs, which is facilitated by institutional regulation. The absolute and relative scales of the GNPs extension are gradually decreasing, but due to the unique localization and long-term traditions of subsidiary gardening, they remain relevant, especially during periods of crisis. Therefore, in some regions, their share in the total land of garden and dacha formations substantially exceeds the national average. The desire of the owners to supplement the functions of the GNPs with a permit for the construction of houses leads to the transfer of gardening lands to other categories, but in the absence of such an opportunity, Russian GNPs remain an analogue of foreign «allotment gardens», where one cannot spend the night, but can do gardening.

Keywords

dacha; second homes; horticulture; gardening; suburban development; garden and dacha associations; suburban land use

JEL codes: P25, P28, N50, Q15, R14

Introduction

Suburban land plots owned by urban citizens with a specific lifestyle and habits of land use might be considered one of the features of the modern population settlement. In Russia, these

land plots are usually called *dachas*, regardless of whether there are second houses built for seasonal habitation, or only non-residential buildings there. The spread of such plots across the territory can be called *second home (dacha land) development*. This kind of land development embraces two different processes: organized land development, based on the targeted allocation of land with certain characteristics and permitted functions, and unorganized (spontaneous), based on the conversion of houses in villages and apartments in urban settlements for seasonal habitation. These processes are united by common goals, but their development trends are not the same — due to the institutional characteristics, economic and demographic capabilities of each segment, which also show some regional differences.

Dacha land development has attracted the attention of scholars quite recently, but due to the variety of acute problems, it immediately became the object of interdisciplinary research, reflecting a complex of ecological, geographical, socio-economic, and institutional changes. A generalized analysis of the spatial distribution of Russian gardening and dacha associations and their basic settlement features are considered, for instance, in the studies by Andrei Treivish, Tatiana Nefedova, Ksenia Averkieva (*Mezhdu domom...* 2016), Alla Makhrova (Makhrova 2015, 2017, 2020), Irina Shchepetkova (Shchepetkova 2018), but many aspects require further consideration. The genesis of organized dacha settlements and associated gardening and dacha associations (hereinafter referred to as GDAs), as well as organized dacha development, are of particular interest, since these activities might be seen as a volatile component of the economic potential of the territory, which quickly responds to federal measures of state regulation. A special place in it is occupied by gardening associations, the dominant function of which has significantly changed during their existence.

Research materials and methods

The empirical part of this study is based on the data coming from the All-Russian agricultural censuses of 2006 and 2016. The author carries out their statistical processing and presents analytical cartodiagrams. The statistical data was supplemented by content analysis of secondary sociological information (relevant online surveys conveyed in 2021) and materials from historical and journalistic literature.

Results and discussion

Evolution of organized dacha development in Russia

Today, Russia is the world leader in the number of suburban areas with second homes owned by urban citizens (over 1,000 per 10,000 people), most of which are united into GDAs (Rusanov 2019). According to the current legislation (Federal Law 2017), they can be plotted on specially allocated lands of organized dacha settlements and formally represent Real Estate Owners' Partnerships in the form of horticultural or vegetable gardening non-profit partnerships (HNPs and GNPs) with different types of permitted land use.

This situation developed as a result of the long evolution of organized dacha development, which, after the transition to a market post-industrial economy in 1991, became fundamentally possible on lands of any category, in case it met the current interests of the territory. The RSFSR Law «On Land Reform» (Law of the RSFSR 1990) abolished the state monopoly on land and restored the land market, but legal ambiguity led to the fact that «second homes» began to appear

even in collective gardens, and the gardening plots were replaced by lawns and swimming pools. The federal law «On horticultural and vegetable gardening and dacha non-profit associations of citizens» (Federal Law 1998) determined the norms for dacha land allocation and land use, in fact, indicating such an important characteristic as the permitted use of land plots. Horticultural lands were intended «for the cultivation of fruits, berries, vegetables, melons or other crops and potatoes, as well as for recreation (with the right to erect a residential building — without the right to register residence in it — or economic buildings and structures)». Garden plots differed from them by the possibility of «erecting a non-capital residential building and utility buildings and structures, depending on the permitted use of the land plot determined during the zoning of the territory)», and dachas were provided «for recreation purposes (with the right to erect a residential building without the right to register residence in it, or a residential building with the right to register residence in it and farm buildings and structures, as well as with the right to grow fruit, berries, vegetables, melons or other crops and potatoes)» (Federal Law 1998: article 1). In 2001, the Land Code of the Russian Federation allowed organized gardening and horticulture on agricultural land, which permitted the local administration to seize them for residential development with a transfer to the appropriate category (for example, in the lands of settlements or individual housing construction) or to put them up for sale (Land Code... 2001).

The situation changed after the legislative definition of activities permitted on plots for gardening, horticulture, dacha farming, and low-rise residential buildings (individual housing construction; placement of country and garden houses) (Classifier... 2014). The main differences were related to construction: only non-residential buildings were allowed on garden plots, while holiday homes and outbuildings were permitted on horticultural lands, and residential houses and outbuildings — on dacha plots. Gardening and horticulture on agricultural land were allowed either without construction at all, or with the construction of exclusively non-residential auxiliary facilities, and the construction of country houses and garden houses was possible on the land aimed at individual housing construction. This diversity met the needs of individualization of organized dacha development and contributed to the expansion of its scale. In 1992–2018, the total area of land in the suburban areas used by urban citizens increased by 40%. In particular, area of the horticultural lands grew by 11%, area of lands consigned for dacha construction — by almost 8 times, and for individual housing construction — by almost four times. At the same time, the area of gardening associations decreased by more than half over the same period (Fig. 1). The observed dynamics meant a change in the structure of

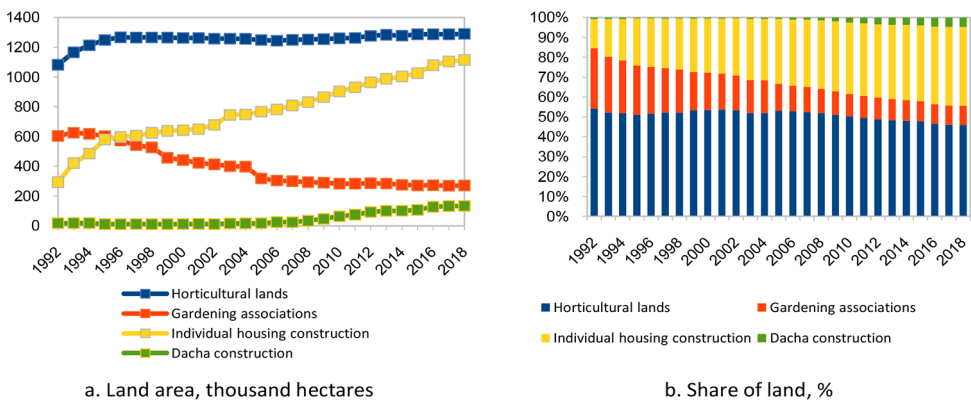


Fig. 1. Area and structure of lands of different types (by permitted use), 1992–2018. Source: author's estimates based on (State (national) report... 2019)

dacha land allocation, which has been adapting to changing socio-economic needs and the possibilities of their institutional regulation.

While organized horticultural and dacha plots, by definition, performed similar functions, which subsequently enabled combining them into a single category of horticultural non-profit partnerships (HNPs, addressing recreational, agricultural, and residential needs, although the degree of their manifestation is different), gardening plots, on the other hand, were initially allocated only for the sake of agricultural functions that allowed the workers of urban enterprises and organizations to feed themselves. Even in the period of post-revolutionary devastation and famine, land in the nearest suburbs and outskirts was allocated for the first vegetable gardens of workers. Its importance was discussed at the highest level (Lenin 1981). At the same time, the plots were to be, if possible, within walking distance, they were assigned to workers temporarily, only for the period of their work, and any buildings were strictly prohibited on them so that the land was sown to its utmost. The nationalization of land carried out in 1918 greatly facilitated this process; after the severity of the food crisis, the land was returned to the state, and then, if necessary, was allocated again. So, *«meeting the desires of workers — to acquire small gardens to work on them with their own labour in their time free from industrial work»*, on December 23, 1933 the *Politburo* of the Central Committee of the Communist Party approved the decision *«On the deployment of individual working gardening»* in order to *«provide in 1934 assistance to 1½ million workers to organize their individual vegetable gardens»*, involving *«not only members of trade unions employed in production, but also [members of] their families, in particular housewives, in gardening»*. *«Plots of land for vegetable gardens ranging in size from 1/8 to 1/4 ha per working family»* should have been located not far from enterprises, and *«when allocating land in massifs, provide for the possibility of organizing workers' dachas on these plots in the future. The land plots allotted to the workers should be assigned to them for 5–7 years, and they are a subject to the annual use of this land for gardens»* (Decision... 1933). This decision concerned eleven regions, and the planned number of plots depended, first of all, on the number of industrial workers in the regions; land resources were not the decisive factor, since less than half of the cities and only a quarter of the workers' settlements remained without «garden» land, the estimated area of which did not exceed 4 thousand square km (calculated according to: Administrative and territorial... 1935: IV). Almost half of the vegetable gardens were supposed to be located in the industrial regions of the RSFSR, where between a quarter and a half of the population lived in cities, and the network of urban settlements was quite dense throughout the region (e.g., Moscow and Ivanovo regions) or in its industrial part (e.g., Ural and Western Siberia districts; calculated according to (Decision... 1933; Administrative and territorial... 1935: VIII–XIX)). As a result, already in 1934, 44% of workers and employees in Kemerovo, 52% in Stalinsk (Novokuznetsk), and 39% of workers in Prokopyevsk were provided with their own gardens (Akimenko 2019). In 1935, in the industrial regions of Western Siberia, their share increased to 56% (Bukin and Isaev 2009).

The importance of the food potential of vegetable gardening was confirmed by the Great Patriotic War, and in 1942, the state set a course for its intensified development in the home frontline regions of the country (Resolution... 1957). In accordance with the adopted Resolution, land with an area of no more than 0.15 hectares was allocated for 5–7 years with a ban on redistributing plots between gardeners, building capital structures on them and planting trees (Lyubimov 1970: 242). To coordinate the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, a Committee for the Promotion of Individual and Collective Gardening was created, regular radio lectures were organized, and relevant literature was published.

The specific conditions of garden land usage during this period took into account regional specifics: in Moscow on March 26, 1942 the secretariat of Moscow City Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) adopted a resolution in which the district party committees and the executive committees of the district councils were obliged to «*immediately register all vacant land that could be used for vegetable gardens*» (Aleshchenko 1980: 256; Boevoi otryad...1985: 250). On April 14, 1942 the executive committee of Moscow Regional Council and the Bureau of the MK VKP (b) decided to allocate land for individual vegetable gardens of workers and employees, allotting empty land around cities and settlements suitable for crops for this purpose, and in their absence, allowing temporary crops on unused lands (Belonosov and Rusinov 1985: 249–50). In the spring of 1942, 205 thousand families of workers and employees of the capital received 5 thousand hectares for collective and individual vegetable gardens (Istoriya profsoyuzov... 1979: 14). To manage collective and individual vegetable gardens and provide them with the necessary assistance, the executive committee of Moscow City Council created an agricultural department, and the district councils ordered the creation of garden commissions. In 1943, about 1,300 thousand workers and employees of Moscow oblast had their own crops of potatoes and vegetables on an area of 31.7 thousand hectares, that is, compared to 1940, the number of gardeners increased fivefold, and the sown area for vegetable gardens more than doubled (Table 1). At the end of the war, vegetable gardens were used by almost 1.5 million Muscovites (Aleshchenko 1980: 2610, as well as by workers at enterprises in Yegoryevsk, Khimki, Podolsk, Shchelkovo, and other cities (Boevoi otryad... 1985: 252).

Table 1. Indicators of the development of individual and collective gardening of workers and employees in Moscow and Moscow suburbs in 1943

Region	Number of gardeners (people)	Sown area (ha)	Average size of a garden plot per family (sq m)
Moscow Oblast	1,447,776	39,571	273.3
including Moscow	843,376	11,371	135

Source: (Kozhurin 1990: 110–1]

The relevance of suburban gardening remained in the first post-war years: the regulatory documents of the union level were updated annually, then industrial enterprises gradually liquidated most of the collective vegetable gardens as non-core assets. However, in conditions of food shortages, some of them persisted. Thus, by the end of the 1940s in the Sverdlovsk Oblast, about 80% of the urban population had vegetable gardens (Razumkov and Rabinovich 1949: 4–5).

Since 1949, horticulture has been regulated as a component of a single suburban development process, including gardening and suburban construction. Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the USSR «On collective and individual gardening and gardening of workers and employees» of February 24, 1949 No. 807 secured the right to use the previously allocated land and obliged the regional leadership to allocate plots to those who do not have them. «*The free land of cities, settlements, the state land fund, in railway and highway right-of-ways, as well as free land of enterprises, institutions and organizations*» were intended for vegetable gardens, and for horticultural use, or orchards was plotted «*the free land of cities and bordering settlements and settlements on the land of the state forest fund*», which contributed

to the immediate neighbourhood of orchid and vegetable garden plots (Resolution... 1949). Some of them united in gardening partnerships, where it was allowed to build «*small summer one-story buildings (gazebos, sentry boxes) according to standard projects with an area of 6–10 square meters for the recreation of gardeners and their families during the period of work in the collective garden*» (Resolution... 1952); later this became one of the reasons for the appearance of residential houses on vegetable garden lands.

Economic transformations at the turn of the 1950–1960s were accompanied by a deterioration in the food provision, in connection with which the Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR and the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions of April 12, 1965 No. 453 «On collective gardening of workers and employees» emphasized that «*the production of potatoes and vegetables in collective gardens is an important additional source of these food crops*», and the state should «*encourage collective gardening, take the necessary measures to increase the area under vegetable gardens, the widespread involvement of workers, employees and members of their families in the processing of vegetable gardens; to allocate land plots to enterprises, institutions and organizations for collective vegetable gardens of workers and employees at the rate of up to 0.15 hectares per family*» (Resolution... 1965). In the 1970s, the unfavourable situation in agriculture remained at place, and the Decree of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Council of Ministers of the USSR of September 14, 1977 No. 843 «On personal subsidiary plots of collective farmers, workers, employees and other citizens and collective gardening and horticulture» noted the need to «*promote the development of collective gardening and horticulture, which could become an additional source of fruits, vegetables and potatoes, and would also contribute to improving leisure time, improving the health of the urban population and bringing adolescents to work*» (Resolution... 1977). In the last socialist decade, the area of land under collective horticulture increased pursuant to the Food Programme, adopted at the May (1982) plenary session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, because «*further development of collective horticulture should be regarded as an actual socio-economic problem*» that needs «*to be given <...> a wider scope*» (Food programme... 1984).

During the transition to the market economy at the turn of the 1980–1990s, a new peak in the popularity of vegetable gardening was observed. At this time, collective and state farm lands began to be vacated, and they were transferred to temporary garden plots available to all citizens, and not just working people. After the land reform of 1990, which abolished the state monopoly on land, land plots for collective gardening and horticulture could be transferred to collective (joint or shared) ownership (Law of the RSFSR 1990: Art. 2), and the new Land Code of the RSFSR of 1991 declared the right of citizens to choose «*the acquisition or lease of land plots for <...> vegetable gardening*» from agricultural land (Land Code... 1991). Later, the laws of 1998 and 2014 did not interfere with the change in the organizational and legal status of gardening associations and the land status of garden plots, which could have even been transferred to the lands of adjacent settlements or individual housing construction (Federal Law... 1998; Federal Law... 2014).

Dacha land development in modern Russia

With the abandonment of centralized planning and the transition to the market, the processes of allocating suburban land plots have become much easier, which enabled using garden plots as a measure of social support for privileged categories of the population. For example, in the suburbs of Moscow, in pursuance of the resolution of the Council of

Ministers of the RSFSR «On priority measures to provide residents of Moscow with land plots for the organization of collective gardening and vegetable gardening» of February 22, 1991, it was ordered to allocate at least 0.03 hectares to each Moscow family from the former land holdings of collective farms and state farms located mainly along the main railway branches (Resolution... 1991). In addition to social aims, economic issues were also posed related to providing citizens with the opportunity to independently procure themselves with food in the context of the food crisis. In this regard, in 1993, the need to lease land plots to the population instead of those seized for municipal needs, in particular, for construction, was fixed at the normative level (Decision... 1993).

In accordance with the practice of that time, plots for vegetable gardens were provided near power lines, gas pipelines, railways, that is, in areas of increased risk to health and life, but this was allowed taking into account their temporary status and the ban on residence. However, after registration of ownership, many owners stopped paying attention to this, using them not to obtain agricultural products, but to build a second house, especially if it was located in the well-accessible areas of the nearest suburbs. It turned out to be impossible to settle the situation using centralized planning methods, so the owners obtained the right to transfer the land to another type of permitted use (for gardening or individual housing construction), but only if the site met certain standards, for example, an area of at least 0.06 hectares. Otherwise, the site remained used for gardening, and, if unregistered buildings were found on it, it was subject to increased taxation (1.5% instead of 0.3%) due to misuse of the land. The buildings themselves were ordered to be brought in line with urban planning norms or demolished at the expense of the owner by order of the municipalities on the territory of which the GDA is located. Such a strict institutional regulation led to the fact that, according to the Union of Dacha Residents of Moscow Region, by 2018 in Moscow Region the share of GNPs was under 1% of all GDAs, while in Russia as a whole there were about 7% of them («Everyone will pay»... 2018), although the distribution of gardening lands is different (Table 2).

Table 2. Ratio of gardening lands among all GDA lands in federal districts, 2016, %

RF as a whole	Central	North-western	South-ern	North Caucasian	Povolzhsky	Ural	Siberian	Far Eastern
2.5	2.1	5.3	0.1	4.1	3.5	0.7	1.6	8.3

Source: author's calculations based on the (All-Russian Agricultural Census 2016)

The highest share of gardening lands is observed in the Bryansk (17%) and Tambov (15.6%) regions of the Central Federal District, the Nenets Autonomous Okrug (100%), Murmansk (12.8%) and Novgorod (59.4%) regions and St. Petersburg (24.7%) of the Northwestern Federal District, the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) 58%, Magadan (28.4%) and Sakhalin (12.4%) regions of the Far Eastern Federal District. One of the reasons for this is precisely the agricultural orientation of gardening and the good accessibility of garden plots, suggesting the possibility of short visits to care for the garden without living there (European organized dacha development began from such plots after the rapid growth of urban industry in the 19th century) (Rusanov 2019). Other reasons may be associated with natural conditions that complicate the construction of even seasonal housing, with the regional characteristics of rural settlement contributing to the growth of the popularity of spontaneous dacha development, as well as specific legal requirements

(for example, in Moscow Oblast, the decision to change the type of permitted use of land is taken by an interdepartmental commission). With regard to the research topic, this confirms the differentiation of modern organized dacha development by region, due to both the geographical characteristics of potentially suitable land and the uneven spatial development of territories (Makhrova 2017).

Modification of the use of land in the process of organized dacha development leads to the fact that even agricultural land remains of that purpose only formally. This is because on small individual plots in the GDAs (0.06–0.12 hectares), particularly where buildings are also located, resources for maintaining agricultural activity are not sufficient on a commercial scale. However, their owners usually do not strive for this, sowing some of the plots with ornamental crops or placing recreational infrastructure there: according to the averaged data of current surveys, only every third summer resident uses his land for growing agricultural products (The Russians named... 2021). This is also externally manifested in the differences in the structure of land use of plots, the dominant function of which, in most cases, remains agricultural, since the share of areas under crops of vegetables and perennials almost everywhere exceeds the share of areas under lawns and ornamental plantings. Land plots of the «near-capital type» (Makhrova 2017) in the Leningrad and Moscow regions and some regions of the Central Federal District are an exception, where the main areas are allocated for lawns, decorative plantations, buildings and paths (Fig. 2), and the dominant functions are recreational and residential.

The features of the use of plots in the GDAs have regional differences associated with natural conditions and socio-demographic characteristics. The share of the GDAs land in the total area of agricultural land increases from south to north, reaching a maximum in the northern and far eastern regions, where agricultural land is relatively scarce, as well as around the capitals with the maximum population density and concentration of dachas and gardens belonging to rural citizens. The share of lands located in the GDAs and performing an agricultural function, on the contrary, decreases from south to north, remaining at maximum in the chernozem areas (Fig. 3).

Comparison of the data of the All-Russian Agricultural Censuses of 2006 and 2016 shows that the subsidiary agricultural function of plots is gradually weakening (the share of agricultural crops in the structure of land plots in the HNPs has decreased from 49.1% to 34.6% over 10 years), and the importance of residential and recreational functions is growing (the share of buildings, structures and paths increased from 11.4% to 17.3%; the share of lawns and ornamental plantings grew from 16.4% to 21.8%). This trend is especially strong in the metropolitan regions, where lawns and ornamental plantings occupy on average up to half of the plots' area, and the average per capita income is one of the highest in the country, which reduces the need for self-produced food.

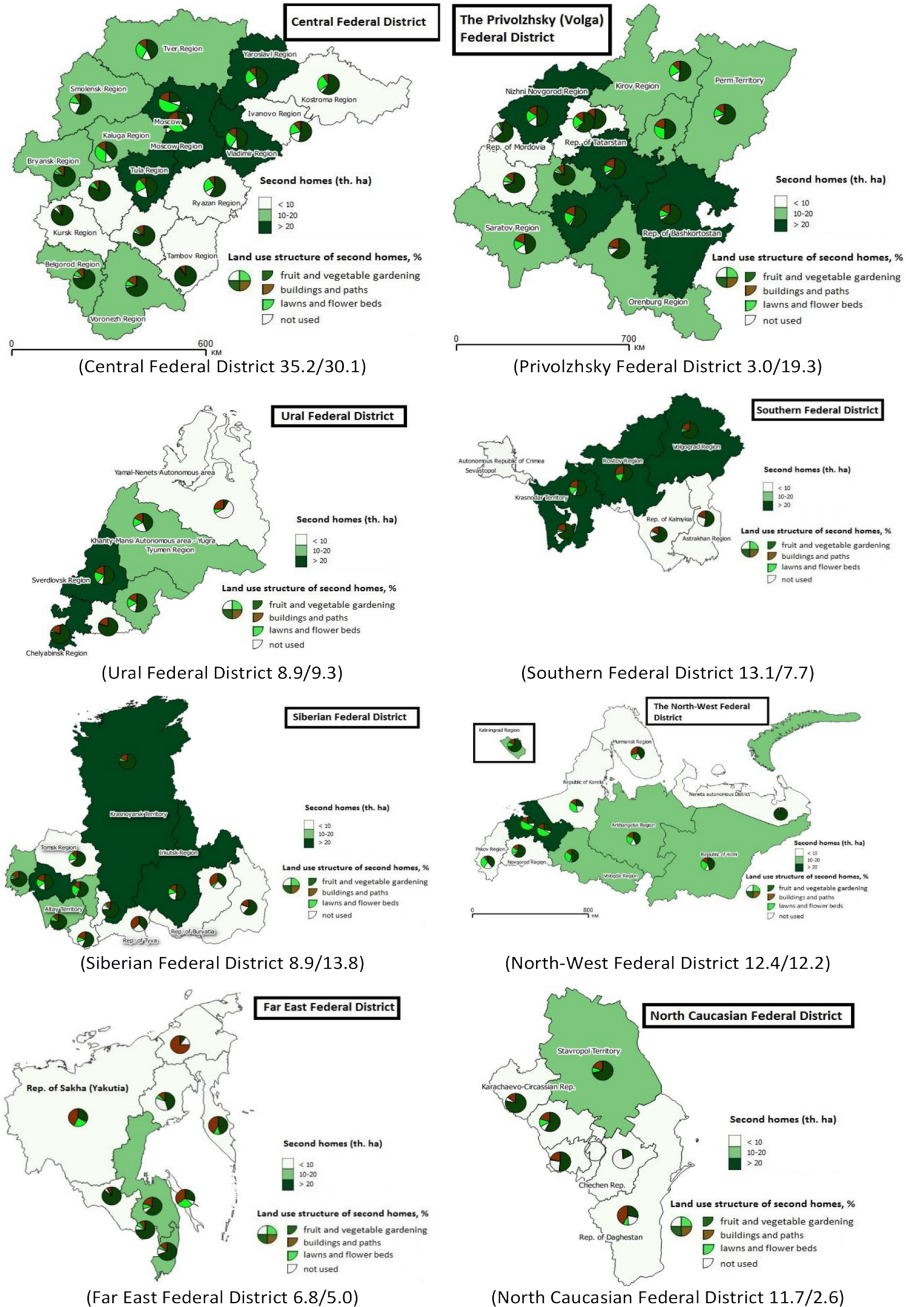


Fig. 2. Dacha land use in federal districts and their share in the total land area. *Note:* the cartograms are compiled according to absolute values for a clearer visualization of suburban land use on the territory of Russia and are not considered as an analytical parameter. In parentheses, the ratio between the share of the total land area of the federal district in the total land area of the country and the share of the land area under the GDAs of the district in the total area of land under the GDAs in the country are indicated. *Source:* compiled by the author based on the (All-Russian Agricultural Census 2016)

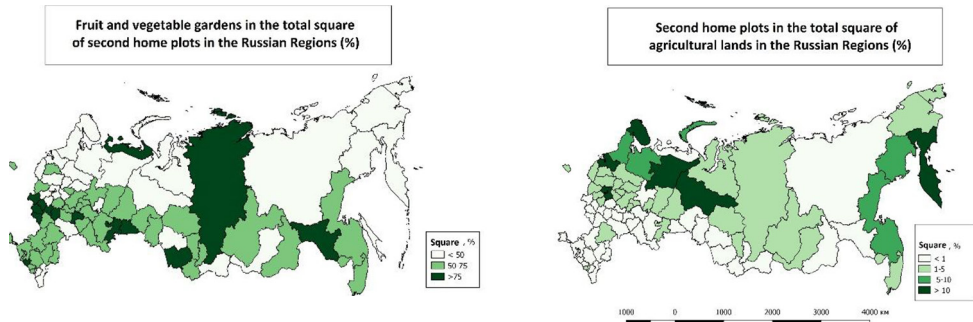


Fig. 3. The share of the GDAs land in the total area of agricultural land and the share of land occupied by crops and perennials in the total area of land plots in the GDAs, %. *Source:* compiled by the author based on the (All-Russian Agricultural Census 2016)

Conclusion

The current Federal Law No. 217 of July 29, 2017 defines two general directions of organized second home (dacha) development, which can be conditionally called residential, based on the HNPs, with dominant residential and agricultural functions, and agricultural (vegetable gardens), based on the GNPs, performing only an agricultural function. Despite the regional differentiation of organized dacha development, the general trend is their gradual reorientation from agricultural (agrarian) to recreational and residential style of usage, which is institutionally regulated. The peculiar role of the few gardening associations is related to their maximum proximity to the borders of cities and the unique possibilities of auxiliary agricultural activities, the importance of which increases during periods of crisis. These respond well to legislative regulation, and at present they are partially losing their status due to the transfer of the GNP lands to lands of other categories and types of permitted use that include the construction of residential buildings. If such a transfer is impossible, the GNPs become an analogue of foreign «allotment gardens», where one cannot spend the night, but can perform daily gardening.

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Information about the author

- Alexander Valeryevich Rusanov, Engineer, Research Laboratory of Population Economics and Demography of Lomonosov Moscow State University. E-mail: rusanovmsu@gmail.com