

MONOTOWN AS A WORLDWIDE PHENOMENON

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Abstract: One of the significant problems that the institutions of urban development around the world face today is the single industry towns. These settlements are entirely dependent on the competitiveness of one company or factory and were left over from the industrial revolution period in history with a series of negative socio-economic consequences. This terminology is especially often used in Russia, where after the Soviet Union collapsed, vast areas of small Monotowns got abandoned and gained widespread attention as potential sources of social protest and unrest. This thesis explores how these urban clusters are developing under the historical and contemporary context.

Key words: Monotowns, One-Industry Town, Company town, Characteristic Town, Resource Town, urbanization, revitalization.

МОНОГОРОД КАК МИРОВОЕ ЯВЛЕНИЕ

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Аннотация: Одной из существенных проблем, с которыми сегодня сталкиваются институты градостроительства во всем мире, являются моногорода. Эти поселения полностью зависели от конкурентоспособности одного предприятия или завода и остались от периода промышленной революции в истории с рядом негативных социально-экономических последствий. Эта терминология особенно часто используется в России, где после распада Советского Союза огромные площади малых моногородов были заброшены и получили широкое распространение как потенциальные источники социального протеста и волнений. Этот тезис исследует, как эти городские кластеры развиваются в историческом и современном контексте.

Ключевые слова: Моногород, моногород, город, живописном городке, городок ресурсов, урбанизации, активизация.

The problem of single-industry towns, r monotowns, has a long history as a global phenomenon. There is no developed country, whose settlements would be insured against changes in the world and domestic market. When those changes are unfavorable, some small towns face particularly severe social and economic challenges.

The most significant changes have happened in the middle of the twentieth century. At that time, most of the industrialized countries in the world entered the stage of industrial society, in which monospecialized cities and areas are formed, which brought not only a positive impact on the socio-economic situation but also became the economic leaders of their countries. However, for the transition to post-industrial production and knowledge-intensive technologies, their sectorial structure was not entirely suitable due to its technological backwardness and limited resources. As a consequence of the scientific and technical revolution, these old industrial regions lost the competition for investment and entered a period of depressive development. Concentrators of depressive trends and their attributes were urban settlements, which focused most of the technologically obsolete industries.

Historically there are two types of those settlements. The first is the old industrial towns that emerged as a result of new industries construction in the early XX century. The second type is the towns of one industry (so-called single-industry towns), where production is concentrated around natural resources (i.e., mining and fishing villages), with a population of 1-5 thousand, and 10 thousand people occasionally. They are usually far from transport hubs, which resulted in their isolation from the active public centers.

Such towns are ordinary, and such cases are everywhere around the world.

Both of these municipalities depend on city-forming enterprises. As experts of the analytical Agency RWAY noted, in the single-industry town, “the city-forming enterprise determines practically all economic and, what is especially important, social processes”, and other organizations and residents “are unable to compensate for the risks of the external economic environment, excluding the possibility of sustainable development of this settlement”

The city-forming enterprise is not only the primary source of income of the municipality but also a vital link in ensuring the quality of life of the settlement. Such patronage on the part of the enterprise only aggravates the dependence of the town on its functioning.

Thus, single-industry towns are a particular type of settlement, the successful development of which is closely connected with the fruitful functioning of the city-forming enterprise or enterprises. At the same time, a

characteristic feature of single-industry towns is the expectations of the population that the company is responsible for – not only the well-being of the associated workers but also their families and the residents of the town as a whole. In response to this, there are reverse expectations of loyalty to the enterprise on the part of both employees and the entire population.

It is evident that this specificity of single-industry towns leads to the fact that they are among the first victims of global financial crises, globalization, and changes in the world economy as a whole. In countries where the government is trying at all costs to maintain social stability (for example, China), such settlements are maintained by regular budget injections. In other countries, where inefficient production is not supported by public money, they turn into Ghost towns (especially many of them in the US). Accordingly, governments are forced to pay attention to single-industry towns in order to minimize the risks of socio-economic instability.

Monotowns is a term which is firmly established in the Russian public and scientific discourse. According to the World Bank report on Russia, a monotown is a settlement in which one or several similar enterprises operate, which have the status of town-forming. In a special section on the problems of Russian monotowns, the latter is understood as “urban settlements, the economy of which is dominated by one industry or city-forming enterprise”

The Union of small towns of Russia uses a narrower definition of a single-industry town: “a settlement where the life and well-being of people are closely dependent on the activities of one enterprise or a group of enterprises connected by a single production chain or serving the same market, which employs more than a quarter of the economically active population”

Regulations governing the operation of single-industry towns offer other more specific quantitative criteria. In 2009 The Ministry of Regional Development of the Russian Federation referred to single-industry towns municipalities. According to it 25% of the economically active population works at one enterprise, 50% of the industrial production of the city is concentrated at this enterprise, and the revenue part of the municipal budget is formed by 30% from the contributions of the enterprise. Even so, despite the various academic works and articles dedicated to the studied problem, researchers themselves acknowledge the deficiency of a universal approach to determine and characterize the phenomenon.

Table - One-industry town worldwide terminology

TERMINOLOGY	COUNTRY	MEANING	EXAMPLE
One-Industry town	USA, Great Britain	Town, industrial enterprises, which belong to one	Birmingham, Pittsburgh,

		branch	
Factory town, Mill town	USA, Great Britain	Town-based on one industrial enterprise	Manchester
Company town	Europe, Great Britain, USA, Japan, Canada	A town that is wholly owned by one company	Toyota city, Jamshedpur
Mining town	USA, Australia	A settlement that ensures the operation of the mine	Tennant Creek
Railway town	USA, Canada	The town is located near the railway junctions	Atlanta, Denver
Recourse Town	Canada	The settlement at the mining enterprise	Glace Bay, Elliot Lake
Characteristic Town, Feature Town	China	A small town specialized on the specific manufacturer: (Commodities, leather, timber and textiles, lingerie)	Wenzhou, Gurao

Therefore, there is no unambiguous equivalent of the concept of a monotown in the English language; in which at least six terms are describing municipalities of this kind can be found. Table above illustrates some of the examples of global terminology of one industry towns. According to it, in the US and the UK are most often used the concept of “company town,” “factory town” and “one-industry town.” The difference between these terms is reduced to two parameters: the specialization of the town-forming enterprise or enterprises and the nature of the relationship between the town and the enterprise. In the case of the “company town,” we are talking about the dominance of the enterprise in all spheres of public life. The company is the main employer and owner of social infrastructure. “Factory town” is an industrial enterprise, however, has its own, independent existence from its infrastructure. Finally, the concept of “one-industry town” focuses on the

belonging of the town to one industry. Also, some terms describe the town with a particular dominant industry: mining town, railway town and resource town.

Overall, every kind of Monotowns around the world represents the same concept of the strict existing dependence of its settlement from the financial and economic situation and the development of one or several town-forming enterprises. This research will operate with both terms Monotown and one-industry town interchangeably to avoid redundancy. However, the priority is given to keep the term Monotown as the primary focus area for this research is the territory in Russia.

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