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Institutional changes in socio-economic organization of rural communities in post-Soviet Russia:
From kolkhoz symbiosis towards corporate social responsibility and cooperation

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Problem statement: From symbiosis and patronage towards corporate social responsibility (CSR)

In the late Soviet era planned economy, kolkhozes and sovkhoses were both economic and social organizations. They patronaged respective rural territories and rural population. Therefore, they were not just agricultural producers, but also the masters of all rural areas on which they operated and for which they were responsible. First, kolkhozes and sovkhoses kept social infrastructure and social sphere at large on their budgets. Second, a so-called symbiosis emerged between kolkhozes / sovkhoses and household plots of their workers, which was based on informal agreement that the workers could use the resources of a large farm for their plots and in return they should demonstrate loyalty and diligent labor for their large farm. Both above-mentioned aspects strongly effected the quality of life for rural people.

Soviet state treated rural household economies ambiguously and changed its attitude over time. At first, the attitude was suspicious and even hostile, because the state viewed household agriculture as a remnant of capitalist relations. However, in the late soviet period the state de facto legitimized household rural production. As a result, household economies survived and became an indispensable part of the soviet agrarian system, despite that the state tolerated them rather than encouraged during the most part of the soviet history. After several transformations, late Soviet agriculture eventually evolved into a bi-modal form, presented by collective and state farms, on the one hand, and household plots of the member-workers of those large farms, on the other. While virtually all land was cultivated by state-controlled large farms, the member-workers on their small household plots, with largely manual labor, produced a noticeable part of gross agricultural output. This was thanks to the symbiosis between large farms and these plots, in which large farms provided inputs for households.

The informal “social contract” between soviet agricultural enterprises and their workers implied, among other things, the exchange of labor on the collective farm for its resources used in households’ production. The resources could be transferred formally by an enterprise or through pilfering, which the enterprise’s head mostly tolerated. In return, the head of an enterprise hoped for a more motivated labor force, necessary to fulfil production quotas. This implicit contract was possible because both sides needed each other.¹

Soviet agricultural enterprises were not just economic organizations; they provided rural social infrastructure such as roads, water and gas, cultural clubs, schools, and kindergartens. The head of an enterprise often was a de facto head of the rural community. Overall, this symbiotic relationship provided three key benefits to villagers: guaranteed long-term employment, production support for their household plots and social infrastructure and services.² Moreover, the influence of kolkhozes and sovkhoses on everyday life of rural population went beyond

1 Nikulin A. Kubanskij kolhoz mezh holdingom i as'endoj: paradoksy postsovetskoj modernizacii yuzhnorusskogo sel'skogo soobshchestva / Refleksivnoe krest'yanovedenie: Desyatiletie issledovanij sel'skoj Rossii. Moscow, 2002, P.343-373. Amelina M. Why Russian Peasants Remain in Collective Farms: A Household Perspective on Agricultural Restructuring // Post-Soviet Geography and Economics. 2000. Vol.41, No.7, P. 483-511.

2 Without a doubt, Soviet collective agriculture had a lot of drawbacks. See, for instance, critique of everyday life of kolkhozes including many of the abovementioned features in Abovin-Egides P. Filosof v kolhoze. Moscow, 1998.

relations with household producers and maintenance of rural infrastructure. Enterprises participated in private (weddings, funerals, consequences of fires etc.) as well as public events (holidays, sports, and cultural activities etc.), being a kind of financial, resource and organizational foundation for periodical and emergency events in rural life. Today we could describe those relationships in terms of corporate social responsibility (CSR), though soviet enterprises were clearly not corporations. Almost every distinctive feature of implicit CSR, namely collectivism, systemic agency, and solidarity, is relevant when describing the Soviet symbiosis in rural areas (more about implicit and explicit forms of CSR see below).³

Soviet enterprises had instrumental motives (economic, political), such as guaranteeing sufficient labor, as well as intrinsic motives (moral) to engage in this symbiosis. Over time, symbiotic relations became customary practice, widely expected from agricultural enterprises by the state, plot holders and society at large, and perceived as a moral obligation by enterprises.

The legacy of soviet symbiosis and patronage between kolkhozes/sovkhoses and rural households in the frame of planned economy is the starting point for post-soviet changes in social policy of agricultural enterprises

The break of the Soviet system shifted the balance in symbiosis and patronage. During the deep crisis in agriculture and agrarian sphere at large in the 1990-s, the institutional transition from the planned economy of kolkhozes and sovkhoses was accompanied with degradation of agricultural production as well as rural communities. At that stage there were examples of resilience of soviet-style relations in rural areas (symbiosis and patronage) as well as the opposite examples of disruption with the Soviet legacy. In the early 2000-s, a new stage in the transformation of rural Russia began. First, the period of institutional transformation ended. Large agrarian capital emerged in that period representing a new shift in socio-economic relations in rural areas. Second, Russian agriculture started to grow rapidly.

While in the Soviet era, agricultural enterprises provided a wide array of support to households and rural social infrastructure, ongoing marketisation increasingly puts pressure on the farms to downsize or eradicate such responsibilities. Yet, the reshaping of social support substantially varies across farms and regions. The paper examines the changes in social support and responsibilities of farms as well as the factors influencing either reduction or maintenance of that social support and responsibilities.

Our general argument draws on CSR literature and distinguishes two different paths of transformation: a reduction of symbiosis and simultaneous emergence of “explicit CSR” and modified persistence of symbiosis as a kind of “implicit CSR”.⁴ We argue that the emergence of

3 Visser O., Kurakin A., Nikulin A. Corporate social responsibility, co-existence and contestation: large farms' changing responsibilities vis-à-vis rural households in Russia // *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*. 2019. Vol. 40. No. 4. P. 580-599.

4 Matten D., Moon J. 'Implicit' and 'Explicit' CSR: A Conceptual Framework for a Comparative Understanding of Corporate Social Responsibility // *The Academy of Management Review*. 2008. Vol.33, No.2, P. 404-424.
Bondy K., Matten D., Moon, J. Multinational corporation codes of conduct: Governance tools for corporate social responsibility? // *Corporate Governance: An International Review*. 2008. Vol.16, No.4, P. 294-311.
Sotorrio L., Sanchez J. Corporate social responsibility of the most highly reputed European and North American firms // *Journal of Business Ethics*. 2008. Vol.82, No.2, P. 379-390.

either explicit or implicit CSR models, which both evolved from Soviet-style patronage, is determined by the regional power distribution between the major actors: corporate farms, the state and rural communities. The degree of power of large agribusiness and the state's regional power and policy appear to be most influential.

Explicit CSR is the articulated element of corporate policy. Corporations try to make it visible to wider society, or even globally, often through websites and annual reports. Firms attempt to cultivate a positive image through initiatives such as promoting sports and culture, or environmental preservation. The actors to which this form of CSR responds are primarily shareholders and customers. This CSR tends to be driven by strategic (instrumental) motivations and represents voluntary, discretionary action.⁵

Implicit CSR is a taken-for-granted element of a corporate's institutional environment. Instead of following its own free choice, a company acts in line with norms and values of the wider society or/and the state. It is largely an obligation enforced by an institutional environment, rather than sheer goodwill. To characterize this distinction, in contrast with explicit CSR, Matten and Moon use opposite terms such as "collectivism" (versus individualism), "systemic/obligatory agency" (versus "discretionary agency") and "solidarity" (versus "liberalism").⁶ They view the explicit CSR model is an outcome of liberal capitalism, originating from the USA, while the implicit model originates from continental European coordinated capitalism, in which state and societal actors (for example, trade unions) are more prominent.⁷

Soviet collective and state farms were obviously not corporations, but in practice they had a degree of freedom in decision-making within the planned economy, suggesting that their relations with society constitute a relevant historical starting point when studying the subsequent development of CSR within a capitalist economy. To distinguish between explicit and implicit CSR, the following elements are of primary attention:⁸

(1) Motivations. We distinguish instrumental motivations (largely economic or political), stimulated by state pressure, from social or intrinsic motivations (based on norms, customs). It is an ideal-typical distinction, as in reality the sources of motivation intertwine. At most, we can speak about the predomination of a particular source of motivation.

(2) Formalization. Explicit CSR implies high level of formalization. It is represented not only by formal written programs, codes, and other documents, but also in disentangling claims and

5 Matten D., Moon J. 'Implicit' and 'Explicit' CSR: A Conceptual Framework for a Comparative Understanding of Corporate Social Responsibility // *The Academy of Management Review*. 2008. Vol.33, No.2, P. 410.

6 Matten D., Moon J. 'Implicit' and 'Explicit' CSR: A Conceptual Framework for a Comparative Understanding of Corporate Social Responsibility // *The Academy of Management Review*. 2008. Vol.33, No.2, P. 411.

7 Hall P., Soskice D. (eds). *Varieties of Capitalism: The Institutional Foundations of Comparative Advantage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

8 Ven B., Graafland J. Strategic and Moral Motivations for Corporate Social Responsibility / MPRA paper no. 20278. 2006. <http://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/20278>. Matten D., Moon J. 'Implicit' and 'Explicit' CSR: A Conceptual Framework for a Comparative Understanding of Corporate Social Responsibility // *The Academy of Management Review*. 2008. Vol.33, No.2, P. 404-424.

expectations from various stakeholders, what enables companies to demarcate them into important and non-important groups. In contrast, implicit CSR has more blurred boundaries.

(3) Visibility. High visibility indicates explicit CSR being one of its primary goals. Visible social support activities are represented via websites or annual reports.

Rural Russia has both abovementioned trends, i.e., decomposition of the Soviet patronage and symbiosis into two directions: 1) explicit CSR breaks with the Soviet tradition and enters rural areas via urban investors, who are familiar with practices and vocabulary of explicit CSR; 2) implicit CSR is a modified version of the Soviet patronage and symbiosis. The prevalence of any direction is determined by power relations between agribusiness, state, and rural communities.⁹

The living standards in rural areas depend not only on actions of large farms, but also on self-organization of rural people themselves. It is a so-called 'third way', which lies outside the continuum of the state versus large capital. Cooperative initiatives are one possible tool for such self-organization. Already at the end of the Soviet era, rural cooperation was considered as an alternative and opposition to kolkhoz patronage over rural territories.¹⁰ Cooperative initiatives were praised in the post-Soviet period as well and were viewed as a mean for the development of small farming assuming the managing capacity of rural population. Formally, cooperatives got the chance to reproduce the achievements of the pre-revolutionary cooperative movement in Russia, as cooperatives became free from direct state control previously faced by the Soviet cooperation.

In sum, post-Soviet rural Russia dramatically evolved and thus generates several interrelated research questions. In what respect does a new balance of social forces, which was established in the frame of emergence of agrarian capitalism, differ from the kolkhoz symbiosis? Are there any rural areas, where patronage and symbiosis did not transform? How and why do Soviet practices of symbiosis and patronage decompose into explicit and implicit CSR? What potential does rural self-organization in the form of agricultural cooperation have? Those questions determine the paper, which deals with, first, the relations between rural communities and corporate farms, and second, with self-organization (household production and cooperation). Together, those topics seek to highlight some aspects of the diverse socio-economic organization of Russian rural communities.

The paper does not discuss the broad issue of Russian rural evolution at large. Instead, it focuses just on two aspects of rural transformation, namely, the changes in relationships between agricultural producers and rural communities as well as cooperative self-organization. Despite both aspects have economic nature, the paper uses sociological approach and considers them as exclusively social phenomena. The paper uses the legacy of so-called new economic sociology as a theoretical foundation¹¹, which evolved from the concept of embeddedness of economic

9 Visser O., Kurakin A., Nikulin A. Corporate social responsibility, co-existence and contestation: large farms' changing responsibilities vis-à-vis rural households in Russia // *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*. 2019. Vol. 40. No. 4. P. 580-599.

10 Cooperation at large (not just rural) gained popularity during Perestroika. On agricultural cooperation in the USSR see, for instance: Serova E.V. *Sel'skohozyajstvennaya kooperaciya v SSSR*. Moscow, 1991.

¹¹ *Klassika novej ekonomicheskoj sociologii*. Moscow, 2014.

action in social relations¹² and denies traditional distinction between economy and society, which served as exclusive domains for economists and sociologists respectively.¹³ The focus on agricultural enterprises and cooperatives inevitably simplifies the results, as it does not consider many macro-social factors, such as rural depopulation, aging of rural inhabitants, migration flows between rural and urban areas, unemployment, seasonal work, declining role of agricultural employment in rural life (more detailed discussion see in section 6 of general findings).

In conclusion, we mention some limitations of the paper. First, we do not directly consider the issues of the state policy, which undoubtedly influences the socio-economic organization of rural communities. We inevitably consider state actions in chosen regions, but we do not focus on the state policy (except for cooperative issues). Therefore, we do not consider options of a strong (maybe even authoritarian) regional government, when local authorities become a strong counterbalance to a large agrarian capital and influence the relations between farms and rural municipalities. Second, the cases of Krasnodar and Altai regions, which illustrate the transformation towards explicit and implicit CSR respectively, represent agriculturally developed regions (in fact, agrarian leaders of respective macro-regions). Therefore, we exclude agriculturally depressive regions. Third, a major part of the empirical data covers the period from 2010 to 2015 (data from 2017 are mostly supplementary). Hence, it imposes limitations on the analysis of corporate-community relations, due to the adoption of the federal law No.44 “On the contract system of procurement of goods, labor, and services for the state and municipal needs” in 2013. The law inevitably leads to formalization and institutionalization of corporate-community relations, as contracts steadily replace informal agreements.

Problem development

The emergence of agrarian capitalism in Russia has its own unique features as does the history of any given state and society. However, agrarian capitalism is also a global phenomenon applicable to many countries and societies despite that any case is special. Unlike many countries of the Third world, Western societies went through the stage of the emergence of agrarian capitalism long ago. Therefore, the emergence of agrarian capitalism in developing countries is a useful frame of reference for analyzing capitalist transformations in rural Russia.

The development of global agrarian capitalism is widely studied in international academic literature. Scholars suggest various macro-sociological concepts of evolving the international food system towards the dominance of global corporations (T. Byres, H. Bernstein, P. McMichael, H. Friedmann, C. Kay). Marxian view on agrarian development seems to be predominant.¹⁴ Hence, the global agri-food system is extensively criticized. One of the major

¹² Granovetter M. Economic action and social structure: The problem of embeddedness // *American Journal of Sociology*. 1985, Vol.91, No.3, P.481-510.

¹³ Hodgson G. Marshall, Schumpeter, and the Shifting Boundaries of Economics and Sociology / Marshall and Schumpeter on Evolution: *Economic Sociology of Capitalist Development*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2008. P.93-115.

¹⁴ Byres T., Bernstein H. From Peasant Studies to Agrarian Change // *Journal of Agrarian Change*. 2001. Vol.1, No.1, P. 1-56. Bernstein H. *Class Dynamics of Agrarian Change*. Halifax NS: Fernwood, 2010. Byres T. In *Pursuit of Capitalist Agrarian Transition* // *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 2016, Vol.16, No.3, P.432-451. Edelman

lines of that critique points out the negative effect of agrarian capitalism on the livelihoods of traditional rural communities in the developing world. On the examples of Third-world countries (Africa, Latin America, South-East Asia) critics show the dark side of capitalist emergence in national agricultures as well as the consequences of transnational agrarian and financial capital invasion. For example, they demonstrate the disruption of traditional way of living and exclusion of local population and small agricultural producers, impoverishment and unemployment of traditional peasantry,¹⁵ land grabbing,¹⁶ the dominance of monocultures and shrinking biodiversity (pushing out traditional crops),¹⁷ dependence on global capital (through credits and financialization),¹⁸ predatory behavior towards nature and people, orientation of national agricultures to exporting and external markets rather than to the needs of local population, unsustainable development.¹⁹ As a reaction, local and global rural protest movements and organizations emerge. For instance, global Via Campesina (peasant way) or Brazilian MST (landless movement).²⁰

Scholars suggest alternatives to the existing global agri-food system.²¹ Quite influential are populist approaches based on the tradition of K. Polanyi, J. Scott, A. Chayanov, T. Shanin.²²

M, Wolford W. Introduction: Critical Agrarian Studies in Theory and Practice // *Antipode*. 2017. Vol.49, No.4, P. 959-976. Akram-Lodhi A., Kay C. Surveying the Agrarian Question (part 2): Current Debates and Beyond // *Journal of Peasant Studies*. 2010, Vol.37, No.2, P. 255-284. McMichael P. *Development and Social Change: A Global Perspective*. Sage Publications, 2017. Friedmann H. World Market, State, and Family Farm: Social Bases of Household Production in the Era of Wage Labor // *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. 1978. Vol.20, No.4, P. 545-586.

- 15 Akram-Lodhi A., Kay C. (eds.). *Peasants and Globalization: Political Economy, Rural Transformation and the Agrarian Question*. Routledge, 2009. Hobsbawm E. Peasants and politics // *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 1973, Vol.1, No.1, P.3-22.
- 16 Borras S., Franco J. Global Land Grabbing and Political Reactions 'From Below' // *Third World Quarterly*. 2013, Vol.34, No.9, P. 1723-1747. Hall D. Primitive Accumulation, Accumulation by Dispossession, and the Global Land Grab // *Third World Quarterly*. 2013, Vol.34, No.9, P. 1582-1604. McMichael P. Rethinking Land Grab Ontology // *Rural Sociology*. 2014, Vol.79, No.1, P. 34-55.
- 17 Buscher B., Sullivan S., Neves K., Igoe J., Brockington D. Towards a Synthesized Critique of Neoliberal Biodiversity Conservation // *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*. 2012. Vol.23, No.2, P. 4-30. Fairhead J., Leach M., Scoones I. Green Grabbing: A New Appropriation of Nature? // *Journal of Peasant Studies*. 2012. Vol.39, No.2, P. 237-261.
- 18 Clapp J. Financialization, Distance and Global Food Politics // *Journal of Peasant Studies*. 2014, Vol.41, No.5, P. 797-814. Fairbairn M. 'Like Gold with Yield': Evolving Intersections Between Farmland and Finance // *The Journal of Peasant Studies*. 2014, Vol.41, No.5, P. 777-795. Clapp J., Isakson R. *Speculative Harvests: Financialization, Food, and Agriculture*. Fernwood Publishing, 2018.
- 19 Friedmann H. Paradox of Transition: Two Reports on How to Move Towards Sustainable Food Systems // *Development and Change*. 2017. Vol.48, No.5, P. 1210–1226. McKay B., Alonso-Fradejas A., Ezquerro-Canete A. (eds.). *Agrarian Extractivism in Latin America*. Routledge, 2021.
- 20 Borras S., Edelman M., Kay C. Transnational Agrarian Movements: Origins and Politics, Campaigns and Impact // *Journal of Agrarian Change*. 2008, Vol.8, No. 2-3, P. 169-204. Borras S. La Via Campesina and its Global Campaign for Agrarian Reform // *Journal of Agrarian Change*. 2008, Vol.8, No.2-3, P. 258-289. Martinez-Torres M., Rosset P. La Vía Campesina: The Birth and Evolution of a Transnational Social Movement // *Journal of Peasant Studies*. 2010. Vol.37, No.1, P. 149-175. Welch C., Sauer S. Rural Unions and the Struggle for Land in Brazil // *Journal of Peasant Studies*. 2015, Vol.42, No.6, P. 1109-1135.
- 21 Ploeg J, Ye J., Schneider S. Rural Development through the Construction of New, Nested, Markets: Comparative Perspectives from China, Brazil and the European Union // *Journal of Peasant Studies*. 2012, Vol.39, No.1, P. 133-173.

Their central argument is that peasant (family, individual, small-scale, petty commodity) forms of agricultural production are not doomed to extinction, are resilient and can successfully compete with capitalist agriculture.

The separate stream of research focuses on agricultural cooperation, which is considered to be an alternative to a classic capitalist firm.²³ Cooperatives are viewed as a way to overcome the negative consequences of agrarian capitalism.²⁴

In sum, the relations between agrarian capital and traditional (mainly peasant) rural communities are considered as antagonistic. Traditional rural communities are portrayed as victims of a capitalist agrarian transformation, and academic research is often intertwined with social activism.²⁵

Russia has never been a major issue for those international discussions, though agrarian capitalism (with local specifics) is developing there quite rapidly. However, the stages of agrarian transformations in Russia were registered by Russian and international scholars (S. Barsukova, S. Wegren, Z. Kalugina, Z. Lerman, P. Lindner, T. Nefedova, A. Nikulin, J. Pallot, E. Serova, V. Uzun, O. Fadeeva, N. Shagaida, R. Yanbykh). We will focus on agrarian issues only, though considering that agrarian transformations were a part of broader changes in post-Soviet Russia: in economy, politics, social structure.²⁶

The prehistory of the relationships of agrarian capital with family-based farming and rural communities began as an issue of household plot farming in the Soviet agrarian literature before the emergence of any capitalism in Russia. The major discussion was about legitimation of household agriculture in the frame of socialist planned economy. Household farming gained

22 Ploeg, J. *Peasants and the Art of Farming: A Chayanovian Manifesto*. Practical Action Publishing, 2014. Escher F., Schneider S., Ye J. *The Agrifood Question and Rural Development Dynamics in Brazil and China: Towards a Protective 'Counter-movement'* // *Globalizations*. 2017, Vol.15, No.1, P. 92-113. Schneider S., Niederle P. *Resistance Strategies and Diversification of Rural Livelihoods: The Construction of Autonomy Among Brazilian Family Farmers* // *The Journal of Peasant Studies*. 2010, Vol.37, No.2, P. 379-405.

23 Zeuli, K., Cropp, R. *Cooperatives: Principles and Practices in the 21-st Century*. Cooperative Extension Publications, University of Wisconsin-Extension, 2004.

24 On the website of International cooperative alliance, cooperatives are distinguished from firms with the emphasis of their orientation to values, members, and sustainable development (<https://www.ica.coop/en/cooperatives/what-is-a-cooperative>)

25 Borrás S. *Land Politics, Agrarian Movements, and Scholar-Activism*. Paper presented to the International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University. 2016, 14 April.

26 For example, the development of agrarian capital was a part (with some lag) of capital accumulation in other industries, where integrated business groups emerged. The last notable stage in the evolution of large enterprises in Russia was the strengthening of the state influence in the form of establishing state corporations. This is still not happening in the agrarian sector. See, for instance, Pappé Y., Galuhina Y. *Rossiiskij krupnyj biznes: pervye 15 let. Ekonomicheskie hroniki 1993–2008 gg.* Moscow, 2009.

legitimacy already during Perestroika period,²⁷ and at the beginning of post-communist agrarian reforms the image of a peasant or a family farmer became central to the agrarian discourse.²⁸

The initial enthusiasm about entrepreneurial peasants quickly ended, due to a downfall of the national agriculture and widely criticized agrarian reforms.²⁹ Instead of the emergence of a rural entrepreneurial strata, semi-subsidiary household production of the former workers of kolkhozes and sovkhoses flourished.³⁰ At that period, scholars suggested the conceptual model of symbiosis between large agricultural enterprises and household plots, which was established back in the late Soviet planned economy and later was “inherited” and implemented into a new institutional environment of private capitalist firms.³¹

Scholars also registered differentiation of farms and rural communities, which led to the situation when backward farms tended to preserve symbiosis, while successful farms tried to get rid of it.³² A new stage of agrarian evolution started at the beginning of the new century with the entrance of external investors to agriculture and the rise of agrohholdings.³³ Unlike many countries of the so-called Third world (or developing countries), global agrarian capital did not become a dominant force in Russia and did not displace local agrarian capital. At that stage, land grabbing speeded up.³⁴ In sum, all those factors led to divergent regional trajectories of agrarian

27 See for instance, Simush P. *Oblik hozyaina zemli: novejshe i tradicionnye cherty*. Moscow, 1987. A review see in Kurakin A. *Sel'skoe hozyajstvo SSSR glazami sovremennikov – 2 (1985–1991 gg.) // Ekonomicheskaya sociologiya*. 2006. Vol. 7. No. 4. P. 97-126.

28 See for instance, Balandin Y. *Krest'yanskoe hozyajstvo*. Moscow, 1992. *Velikij neznakomec: krest'yane i fermery v sovremennom mire*. Moscow, 1992. A review see in Kurakin A. *Sel'skoe hozyajstvo Rossii glazami sovremennikov (1992–1995 gg.) // Ekonomicheskaya sociologiya*. 2007. Vol. 8. No. 3. P. 93-119.

29 A review see in Kurakin A. *Sel'skoe hozyajstvo Rossii glazami sovremennikov (1996–2000 gg.) // Ekonomicheskaya sociologiya*. 2007. Vol. 8. No. 5. P. 127-155.

30 Kalugina Z. *Paradoksy agrarnoj reformy v Rossii. Sociologicheskij analiz transformacionnyh processov*. Novosibirsk, 2000.

31 Nikulin A. *Kubanskij kolhoz mezh holdingom i as'endoj: paradoksy postsovetskoj modernizacii yuzhnorusskogo sel'skogo soobshchestva / Refleksivnoe krest'yanovedenie: Desyatiletie issledovanij sel'skoj Rossii*. Moscow, 2002, P.343-373. Nikulin A. *Konglomeraty i simbiozy v Rossii: selo i gorod, sem'i i predpriyatiya / Neformal'naya ekonomika: Rossiya i mir*. Moscow, 1999, P.240-269. Amelina M. *Why Russian Peasants Remain in Collective Farms: A Household Perspective on Agricultural Restructuring // Post-Soviet Geography and Economics*. 2000. Vol.41, No.7, P. 483-511.

32 Lindner P. *Differenciaciya prodolzhaetsya: reprodukcionnye krugi bogatstva i bednosti v sel'skih soobshchestvah Rossii / Refleksivnoe krest'yanovedenie: Desyatiletie issledovanij sel'skoj Rossii*. Moscow, 2002, P.386-406.

33 Rylko D., Jolly R. *Russia's New Agricultural Operators: Their Emergence, Growth, and Impact // Comparative Economic Studies*. 2005. Vol.47, No.5, P. 115-126. Epshtein D., Hahlbrock K., Wandel, J. *Why are Agroholdings so Pervasive in Russia's Belgorod Oblast? Evidence From Case Studies and Farm-Level Data // Post-Communist Economies*. 2013. Vol.25, No.1, P. 59-81. Davydova I., Franks J. 2015. *The Rise and Rise of Large Farms: Why Agroholdings Dominate Russia's Agricultural Sector // Mir Rossii*. No. 3, pp. 133-159. Uzun V., Shagajda N, Sarajkin V. *Agroholdingi v Rossii i ih rol' v proizvodstve zerna // FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia Policy. Studies on Rural Transition*. 2012. No.2012-2.

34 Visser, O., Mamonova, N., Spoor, M. *Oligarchs, Megafarms and Land Reserves: Understanding Land Grabbing in Russia // Journal of Peasant Studies*. 2012, Vol.39, No.3-4, P. 899-931. *Zemel'naya akumuljaciya v nachale XXI veka: global'nye investory i lokal'nye soobshchestva*. Moscow, 2012.

development and establishing of various economic orders.³⁵ The relationships between rural communities and household economies, on the one hand, and large farms, on the other, differed as well.³⁶

Scholars point out that the state policy favors large agricultural producers³⁷ and, by doing that, indeed has already made a significant progress in total volumes of agricultural output though causing risks of domination of industrial agriculture, namely, negative ecological consequences and unsustainable rural development.³⁸ Some argue that the sector of family farming is reviving despite the competition with agribusiness.³⁹ Smallholders (household plots) are either viewed as an important source of food sovereignty,⁴⁰ or as being left behind.⁴¹

Despite the reorganization of the Soviet cooperative system and the emergence of new types of cooperatives (consumer cooperatives out of the *Centrosoyuz* system), cooperative self-organization of small agricultural producers and rural population at large is still in its infancy.⁴² The state attempts to launch cooperation from above (as grassroots cooperative initiatives are generally weak) proved unsuccessful for now and face bureaucratic formalism and indifference at the regional level. Moreover, Russian rural communities demonstrate weak economic and political self-organization in general.⁴³ However, there are examples of genuine attempts to create a cooperative movement at the regional level (for instance, in Belgorod region), which deserve special consideration.

35 Kalugina Z., Fadeeva O. *Rossijskaya derevnya v labirinte reform: sociologicheskie zarisovki*. Novosibirsk, 2009. *Vtoraya Rossiya: differenciaciya i samoorganizaciya*. Moscow, 2012. Nefedova T. *Sel'skaya Rossiya na pereput'e: Geograficheskie ocherki*. Moscow, 2003.

36 Fadeeva O. *Sel'skie soobshchestva i hozyajstvennye układy: ot vyzhivaniya k razvitiyu*. Novosibirsk, 2015. Nefedova T., Pallot J. *Neizvestnoe sel'skoe hozyajstvo, ili zachem nuzhna korova?* Moscow, 2006. Pallot J., Nefedova T. *Russia's Unknown Agriculture: Household Production in Postsocialist Rural Russia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

37 Wegren S., Nikulin A., Trotsuk I. *Food Policy and Food Security: Putting Food on the Russian Table*. Lexington Books, 2018.

38 Wegren S., Trotsuk I. *Ustojchivo li promyshlennoe sel'skoe hozyajstvo v usloviyah klimaticheskikh izmenenij i ekologicheskikh ugroz?* // *Ekonomicheskaya sociologiya*. 2020. Vol. 21. No. 5, P. 12–38. Visser O., Spoor M., Mamonova N. *Is Russia the Emerging Global 'Breadbasket'? Re-cultivation, Agrohholdings and Grain Production* // *Europe-Asia Studies*. 2014. Vol.66, No.10, P. 1589-1610.

39 Wegren S. *Private Farming in Russia: An Emerging Success?* // *Post-Soviet Affairs*. 2011. Vol.27, No.3, P. 211–240.

40 Visser O., Mamonova N., Spoor M., Nikulin A. *'Quiet Food Sovereignty' as Food Sovereignty without a Movement? Insights from Post-socialist Russia* // *Globalizations*. 2015. Vol. 12, No.4, 513-528.

41 Wegren, S. *The "Left Behind": Smallholders in Contemporary Russian Agriculture* // *Journal of Agrarian Change*. 2018. Vol.18, No.4, P. 913-925.

42 Yanbykh R., Saraikin V., Lerman Z. *Cooperative Tradition in Russia: A Revival of Agricultural Service cooperatives?* // *Post-Communist Economies*. 2019. Vol.31, No.6, P. 750-771. Sarajkin V., Yanbykh R. *Analiz ustojchivosti kooperativnoj formy hozyajstvovaniya agrarnogo sektora Rossii v kontekste institucional'noj teorii firmy* // *Vestnik Sankt-Peterburgskogo universiteta. Ekonomika*. 2019. Vol.35. No. 2. P. 251–268. Sobolev A., Kurakin A., Pakhomov V., Trotsuk I. *Cooperation in Rural Russia: Past, Present and Future* // *Mir Rossii*. 2018. Vol.27, No.1, P. 65–89.

43 Mamonova N., Visser O. *State Marionettes, Phantom Organisations or Genuine Movements? The Paradoxical Emergence of Rural Social Movements in Post-Socialist Russia* // *Journal of Peasant Studies*. 2014. Vol.41, No.4, P. 491–516.

Though large agrarian capital, as elsewhere in the world, should inevitably engage in antagonistic collision with traditional rural communities (in Russia, those are post-kolkhoz communities), some elements of corporate social responsibility emerge, which inherit some traits of the Soviet symbiosis.⁴⁴ Moreover, that happens not only in the declining farms.⁴⁵

In result, we can see in Russia the emergence of agrarian capitalism, which should lead (and often does) to the same consequences as international literature suggests elsewhere in the world. Nonetheless, there are also some elements of institutional inertia, which manifests itself in the situations when post-kolkhoz rural communities, which, unlike the Third-world countries, are no longer traditional peasant economies, oppose agrarian capital. Those processes are also combined with divergent trajectories of regional agrarian evolution.

Yet it is still unclear in what cases one of the abovementioned tendencies prevails, and what causes either disruption or preserving of symbiosis and social patronage from corporate farms. Also, the conceptual discontinuity emerges when discussing the evolution of the relationships between farms and rural communities (i.e., symbiosis and patronage), which stems from the transition from planned to capitalist economy (primarily, the emergence of a capitalist corporate farm), while in practice that sudden discontinuity simply did not exist.

Research aim

The aim is to show the nature of institutional changes in socio-economic organization of rural communities in post-Soviet Russia from the late Soviet symbiosis and patronage towards new arrangements in the form of corporate social responsibility and cooperative self-organization in the frame of the emergence of agrarian capitalism and the rising role of large agrarian capital.

The paper describes the abovementioned institutional changes in the following preliminary assumptions/expectations:

1. After three decades of market reforms, agricultural producers are expected to transfer their social functions to municipalities. Socialist relations in kolkhoz agriculture should be replaced by capitalist corporate social responsibility (SCR).
2. Therefore, symbiotic relations of kolkhozes and sovkhoses with rural communities should inevitably vanish.
3. Regional and local power relations between agribusiness, state and rural communities determine the transformation of symbiosis either into “continental European” or “Anglo-Saxon” models of CSR. The dominance of large agribusiness should lead to explicit CSR, while the effective resistance to agribusiness from local authorities and/or communities should give way to implicit CSR.

44 Davydova I., Franks J. Responses to Agrarian Reforms in Russia: Evidence from Novosibirsk Oblast // Journal of Rural Studies. 2006. No.22, P. 39–54.

45 Nikulin A. Oligarhoz kak preemnik postkolhoza // Ekonomicheskaya sociologiya. 2010. Vol. 11. No. 1, P. 17–33.

4. State support of cooperative movement contradicts the independent nature of cooperation as a form of bottom-up initiative. Therefore, it should lead to the establishment of non-viable cooperatives.

Research objectives:

1. To show the influence of large private capital on the practices of social patronage for social infrastructure and social rural sphere.
2. To show the impact of large private capital on the transformation of the symbiosis between corporate farms and household agricultural producers.
3. To investigate the reasons for the emergence of a new balance of socio-economic forces in agriculture as well as the persistence of zones with traditional practices of patronage by the examples of two agriculturally developed Russian regions (Krasnodar krai and Altai krai).
4. To demonstrate both the potential and limitations of the top-down state organized rural cooperation of rural households and family farms as an alternative to large agribusiness (by the example of Belgorod region).

Personal contribution

1. Post-socialist transformation of the relationships between agricultural enterprises and rural communities was described through the categories of corporate social responsibility (CSR) approach, that enabled to spotlight the succession of rural economy from its planned to market form (thus overcoming its discontinuity) as well as to make some comparisons to the same transformations in other countries. The paper shows that the Soviet patronage system is transforming either to explicit or implicit CSR models.
2. The paper introduces a conceptual model, which suggests that the destiny of symbiotic relations depends on the relative ratio between three type of actors: farms, regional authorities and rural communities. That destiny could be preservation of symbiosis, its disruption or even its inversion in the form of land grabbing, suppressing of smallholders, focusing on export monocultures etc.
3. The paper uses the abovementioned model of power relations between agribusiness, state, and rural communities, to explain regional paths of CSR evolution towards its explicit either implicit forms. The dominance of agribusiness (or its alliance with regional authorities) leads to explicit CSR, while implicit CSR has a chance to emerge when agribusiness has to compromise with interests of local authorities and/or local communities.
4. Using the example of Belgorod region, the paper demonstrates the possibility of establishing a really effective rural cooperation from above. However, the paper argues, that short-term successes of rural cooperation come along with long-term unsustainability and uncertainty. The paper provides empirical evidence of the reasons for that unsustainability: 1) dependence on the state patronage, 2) identity problems of the cooperative members, 3) corporative rather than cooperative thinking of coop management.

Data and methods

The qualitative interviews on CSR issues were collected by A.Nikulin in Krasnodar krai (2011, 2014, 2017, and earlier; the author participated in gathering 5 interviews in 2017) and Altai krai (made by the author, A.Nikulin, O.Fadeeva, V.Vinogradsky, and O.Vinogradskaya) in 2013 and 2015. In total, Krasnodar study resulted in 118 interviews and Altai study resulted in 94 interviews. The respondents include rural households, corporate farm staff (managers as well as employees), and non-farm employees (municipal administrations, schools, kindergartens, medical organizations, culture clubs).

Also, we use the information from the websites of the 20 largest corporate farms in each region (Krasnodar and Altai) to check their reported CSR activities. The farms were selected using the annual revenue criteria according to Ruslana database for 2019 (bureau van Dijk, Moody's company).

Furthermore, in the fall of 2013 the author and A.Sergienko conducted 5 case-studies in rural settlements in Altai krai, which focused on the relations between local farms and rural communities. The data consist of qualitative interviews with the staff of corporate farms and municipal administrations as well as a group discussion with individual farmers. The sample includes individual farmers, a state-owned farm, a closed joint-stock company, and open joint-stock company (bought up by a Moscow holding), and an agricultural production cooperative.

The cooperative issue is based on a case-study of two consumer cooperatives (dairy and vegetable) in the Belgorod region in the autumn of 2010, conducted by the author and A.Nikulin. Two focus group discussions were conducted in the dairy cooperative's milk stations, and one FGD was conducted with one of the main purchasers of the vegetable cooperative's products (the purchaser being a kindergarten). Each FGD included a diverse set of actors: cooperative managers, members, hired staff (non-members), external contractors and district state officials responsible for promoting cooperation. These FGDs provided the core empirical evidence on the day-to-day performance of Belgorod cooperatives. Further, we conducted two interviews with district officials concerning cooperative policy, and a third interview with the deputy head of the regional department of agriculture. Finally, we organized an FGD with regional officials to determine their ideas on the development of small-scale farms in the region.

The central topics in the CSR and symbiosis issue were material and financial flows between municipalities, farms, and households as well as employment relations in organizations. Those topics manifested themselves through narratives about a farm (its history, problems, achievements), land issues, a respondent's career, household plots (including land shares), the daily routine of a municipal administration and a social organization (school, culture club etc.). We reveal each practice of CSR and symbiosis from empirical examples, which allow us to assess the level of formalization and the leading counterpart in those relations. We record motivations not only through direct questions but also through descriptions of certain situations, examples, which allow to assess the benefits of counterparts. The longitudinal observation of one of the districts in Krasnodar made by Nikulin allows to trace the history of local farms and the dynamics of farm-community relations.

Five case-studies in Altai krai focused on revealing CSR relations between farms and rural municipalities. Each case-study represents a rural settlement, its history, and the history of a key local farm, that allow to get views on the same events from both sides of CSR relations. The major task was to explore the effect of a key farm's ownership form on CSR.

The cooperative issue is based on the analysis of the history of establishing and daily practice of two cooperatives in the Belgorod region in 2010. The empirical data came from three sources: cooperatives' management, regional and district authorities, and cooperative members. It allowed not only to explore how the plans of regional administration were implemented on the ground, but also to understand motives and relations between cooperative management, cooperative members, and authorities. We used personal narratives by respondents, examples of problem solving, thinking over those problems, and organizational planning to spotlight motives and relations in the cooperatives.

Selected regions (Krasnodar, Altai, Belgorod) do not represent rural Russia at large. However, they are useful territories for regional comparison because all of them are among agricultural leaders in respective Federal districts and climate zones.⁴⁶ Referring to Marx's metaphor that "human anatomy contains a key to the anatomy of the ape"⁴⁷, we argue that the leading agricultural regions to a certain degree represent typical and long-term tendencies in Russian agricultural development.

General statements

1. Private agrarian capital (especially large) tends to get rid of social patronage and at best use explicit CSR instead. However, if private capitalists are forced to compromise with the interests of local authorities or rural communities, patronage tend to evolve into implicit CSR, especially in the case of smaller private farms embedded in a local society.
2. Private agrarian capital tends to get rid of Soviet-style symbiosis with household economies. Moreover, it often pressures on households (prohibits its employees to raise poultry and pigs or even supports the overall regional prohibition using sanitary excuses) and engages in predatory forms of competition, especially for land. A natural payment for land shares constitutes the remnants of symbiosis. Smaller and locally embedded agrarian capital is less hostile towards households and partly preserves symbiotic traditions.
3. Regions with the dominance of large agribusiness demonstrate the emergence of explicit CSR (exemplified by Krasnodar krai). In the cases of smaller and embedded agribusiness, implicit CSR is likely to emerge (exemplified by Altai krai).
4. Top-down cooperatives are able to succeed if local authorities are truly engaged in the revival of household production through rural cooperation. However, newly established cooperatives are internally unstable and unsustainable and are hardly able to operate independently (without patronage from local authorities) in the long run (exemplified by Belgorod region).

⁴⁶ According to Rosstat, Krasnodar krai, Altai krai, and Belgorod region regularly occupy leading positions in producing various agricultural commodities in Russia.

⁴⁷ Marx K. *Ekonomicheskie rukopisi 1857-1861*. Moscow, 1980.

General findings

1. Explicit corporate social responsibility (Krasnodar krai)⁴⁸

Krasnodar is Russia's most agriculturally favorable region in terms of a good southern climate, prime soil, developed infrastructure, excellent access to ports and comparatively dense population. Unsurprisingly, Krasnodar has become the center of Russia's so-called agroholding expansion, together with Rostov and Stavropol regions. That led to a rapid decline in symbiosis and patronage, and simultaneous rise in explicit CSR, often being just cosmetic. The following tendencies support that claim: a comparatively high level of visibility of CSR via web-reporting, decreased actual support of rural communities, predominantly instrumental motivations that mostly work against continuing symbiosis, and a process of separating villagers through formalization into roles of shareholders versus other villagers.⁴⁹

Web searches revealed that of the 20 largest farms in Krasnodar, 13 have a website and seven mention CSR activities. The most widely reported activities are support for children and students, sports and cultural activities and support for vulnerable groups (disabled, orphans).⁵⁰

We did not encounter managers expressing an intrinsic motivation to maintain social support. Even the former director of a farm studied for more than a decade, who provided wide support for local people and municipality, noted that he tolerated employees pilfering enterprise resources because it divided the employees, reinforcing his power.⁵¹

We also did not find any instrumental motivations. First, the region has enough labor force as it is located nearby labor-excessive countries, which provide sufficient migrant workers. Second, corporate farms have an incentive to cut support to the household plots of their employees because the latter distracts them from employment on a farm. Third, the largest, most capitalized agribusiness invest heavily in mechanization decreasing their need for labor force.⁵² Fourth, corporate farms tend to implement more friendly policy towards the owners of land shares, differentiating them from other households.⁵³

In return for acting in favor of agroholdings, the state expects them to help avoid open social protest like in the case of a tractor march to Moscow organized by local farmers to complain to

48 See details in Visser O., Kurakin A., Nikulin A. Corporate social responsibility, co-existence and contestation: large farms' changing responsibilities vis-à-vis rural households in Russia // Canadian Journal of Development Studies. 2019. Vol. 40. No. 4. P. 580-599.

49 Visser O., Kurakin A., Nikulin A. Corporate social responsibility, co-existence and contestation: large farms' changing responsibilities vis-à-vis rural households in Russia // Canadian Journal of Development Studies. 2019. Vol. 40. No. 4. P. 580-599.

50 According to Ruslana database by bureau van Dijk.

51 The history of the farm see in Andryushchenko V., Kochegura A. Sud'ba moyo – zemlya Privol'ya. Krasnodar, 2001.

52 Pallot J., Nefedova T. Russia's Unknown Agriculture: Household Production in Post-Socialist Rural Russia. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, P. 83.

53 Ioffe G., Nefedova T., de Beurs K. Agrarian Transformation in the Russian Breadbasket: Contemporary Trends as Manifest in Stavropol // Post-Soviet Affairs. 2014. Vol.30, No.6, P. 441-463.

Kremlin on the local agrarian policy.⁵⁴ Therefore, agroholdings must at least go through the motions of social responsibility, so it is not surprising that they choose explicit CSR philosophy, which is often only cosmetic in fact.

2. Implicit corporate social responsibility (Altai krai)⁵⁵

Like Krasnodar, Altai krai also has fertile soils. However, in comparison to southern regions, Altai faces harsh and volatile climate, particularly droughts leading to higher risks in agriculture. Therefore, the presence of large agribusiness and corporate farms at large is lower here than in Krasnodar. Instead, individual farms and household plot agriculture plays a bigger role.

The visibility of CSR is noticeably lower in Altai than in Krasnodar. Out of 20 largest agricultural producers in Altai region only nine have a corporate website, of which only four mention CSR activities.⁵⁶

First, large farms continue to sponsor social infrastructure, including not only “minor services” such as clearing roads of snow and supporting schools and culture clubs, but also capital-intensive activities such as providing water, gas, and heating to villages. Second, farms in Altai maintain a diversified production profile avoiding a shift to monocultures. Maintenance of livestock is telling here, for it brings meagre profits or is outright unprofitable, but it helps to keep up village employment.⁵⁷ Third, while Altai has not escaped the countrywide erosion of support for household plots production, it has not seen the drastic and aggressive reduction as in Krasnodar.

Altai interviews show that social (intrinsic) motivations of CSR are more prevalent there, contrasting instrumental motives. Farm managers constantly underscore that the village in which they live is their home and the farm workers are their neighbors, friends, or former classmates. Very often, management staff also originate from the same village or district as the employees.⁵⁸

Respondents also mention instrumental reasons in motivating social support. An important instrumental reason for CSR is to keep workers in the village in a context of a sparsely populated

54 Mamonova N. Naive Monarchism and Rural Resistance in Contemporary Russia // *Rural Sociology*. 2016. Vol.81, No.3, P. 316-342.

55 See details in Visser O., Kurakin A., Nikulin A. Corporate social responsibility, co-existence and contestation: large farms' changing responsibilities vis-à-vis rural households in Russia // *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*. 2019. Vol. 40. No. 4. P. 580-599; Kurakin A. When the State is Shirking: Informal Solutions for Social Services Provision in Altai Villages // *Przeład Wschodnioeuropejski*. 2015. Vol. 6. No. 2. P. 145-159.

56 Visser O., Kurakin A., Nikulin A. Corporate social responsibility, co-existence and contestation: large farms' changing responsibilities vis-à-vis rural households in Russia // *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*. 2019. Vol. 40. No. 4. P. 580-599.

57 Bavorova M., Ponkina E. Which Agricultural Businesses Financially Support the Development of Social and Rural Infrastructure in Russia / Paper presented at the Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies (IAMO) Forum 2018, Halle, June 26-28, P.15.

58 Moser E. Forms of Communication between Large-scale Farms and Local Administrative Authorities in Russian Villages: About Benefactors and Sponsors // *Europe-Asia Studies*. 2016. Vol.68, No.8, P. 1369-1395.

Altai region with high rural outmigration. Many respondents note high staff turnover and unattractiveness of agriculture, especially for young generations.⁵⁹

Our empirical data provide us with a gallery of cases showing the relations between farms of diverse forms of ownership with rural communities. Those relations are based on informal support of rural settlements from local farms. Despite that the level of support is incomparable with the Soviet period, it is still maintaining and is driven not only by instrumental motives, but by local norms. The latter we name an institutional inertia or the new life of old institutions. The magnitude of support is determined by the implicit understanding from both sides, what is correct to ask and what is not. Below we provide some examples from the case-studies.⁶⁰

1. The state farm helps their municipality with water supply as well as provides “small assistance” in everyday needs (for instance, once it provided gas for a car to transport children to a district fest).
2. The CJSC, being a private farm, proceeds to provide three neighboring settlements with water and heating despite it brings financial losses. The farm did not get rid of that non-core activity, which it inherited from its sovkhos predecessor. The management was even ready to reduce prices for their services, but tax inspection prohibited that. Besides the widespread motive saying that “we live in countryside, so it is highly unlikely that someone else will do it”, the CSR activity is supported by shareholders, who are locals.
3. The hostile takeover of a sugar plant (when the employees were forced to sell their shares) by a Moscow holding and the appointment of a new director decreased support for municipal administration but did not erase it. The new director was born elsewhere but has a local wife and he has been living in the settlement for a long period already and considers it as his home. He has to maneuver between the needs of local administration and financial discipline imposed from the central office in Moscow.
4. Family farmers, despite their proverbial individualism, also engage in CSR. Besides the abovementioned motives, they are concerned in maintaining good relations with local communities and, above all, with the holders of land shares rented by farmers. They keep symbiotic relations with the land share owners providing their household plot economies with resources and services.
5. The agricultural production cooperative also provides various support to their municipality including heating the local school and culture club. Cooperative form favors such behavior as the majority of cooperative’s members are locals.

59 Visser O., Kurakin A., Nikulin A. Corporate social responsibility, co-existence and contestation: large farms' changing responsibilities vis-à-vis rural households in Russia // *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*. 2019. Vol. 40. No. 4. P. 580-599.

60 Kurakin A. When the State is Shirking: Informal Solutions for Social Services Provision in Altai Villages // *Przegląd Wschodnioeuropejski*. 2015. Vol. 6. No. 2. P. 145-159.

Hence, farms of various organizational forms perform quite similar social functions and differ from each other by the level of engagement in CSR activities.⁶¹

3. From symbiosis towards predatory capitalism (Krasnodar krai)⁶²

Longitudinal fieldwork in Kanevskoy district shows that the local corporate farm (former sovkhoz) reduced its social support after the death of a long-standing director and the division of the enterprise into several independent farms. A visible sign is the deterioration of the culture club, the village's former beacon of pride.⁶³ The directors of newly established farms are curtailing provisions of inputs to households and have become less tolerant of villagers pilfering farm resources. The only remaining element of symbiosis is the in-kind payment (grain, hay) for land shares rented from the villagers.

A common practice by corporate farms is “business optimisation”, that is, closing down supposedly unprofitable branches and firing excessive labor. Scholars recorded those tendencies, especially in the Russian South.⁶⁴ Previously diversified production of kolkhozes and sovkhozes transformed into monocrop production (first of all, grain).

While Russian large agribusiness overall enjoys privileges in the access to credits, subsidies, and other state support,⁶⁵ Krasnodar demonstrates especially shadow and untransparent relations between large agribusiness and local authorities. The most telling example is Agrocomplex N. I. Tkachev, an agroholding named after its Soviet-era director and the father of the former governor of Krasnodar krai and the former minister of agriculture. Krasnodar shows huge land concentration in the hands of a few actors.

Resistance from below (including from the lower-level officials) is aggressively suppressed. In our case study district, opposition of farm directors, private farmers and a district head to land grabs by agroholdings was crushed.⁶⁶ A particularly violent murder in Kushchyovskaya village became famous all over the country and made the name Tsapok a common noun.⁶⁷ One can

61 Kurakin A. When the State is Shirking: Informal Solutions for Social Services Provision in Altai Villages // *Przeglad Wschodnioeuropejski*. 2015. Vol. 6. No. 2. P. 145-159.

62 See details in Visser O., Kurakin A., Nikulin A. Corporate social responsibility, co-existence and contestation: large farms' changing responsibilities vis-à-vis rural households in Russia // *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*. 2019. Vol. 40. No. 4. P. 580-599

63 Nikulin A. Kubanskij kolhoz mezh holdingom i as'endoj: paradoksy postsovetskoj modernizacii yuzhnorusskogo sel'skogo soobshchestva / *Refleksivnoe krest'yanovedenie: Desyatiletie issledovanij sel'skoj Rossii*. Moscow, 2002, P.343-373.

64 Pallot J., Nefedova T. Russia's Unknown Agriculture: Household Production in Post-Socialist Rural Russia. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, P. 117. Ioffe G., Nefedova T., de Beurs K. Agrarian Transformation in the Russian Breadbasket: Contemporary Trends as Manifest in Stavropol // *Post-Soviet Affairs*. 2014. Vol.30, No.6, P. 441-463. Nefedova T. *Desyat' aktual'nyh voprosov o sel'skoj Rossii: otvety geografa*. Moscow, 2013.

65 Visser, O., Mamonova, N., Spoor, M. Oligarchs, Megafarms and Land Reserves: Understanding Land Grabbing in Russia // *Journal of Peasant Studies*. 2012, Vol.39, No.3-4, P. 899-931.

66 In April 2004 the district head E.Kuhlev got a suspended sentence for abusing its official position. <https://regnum.ru/news/272865.html> (last access 17 Feb 2019). Our respondents suggested that it was a revenge for his resistance.

67 <https://rg.ru/2013/11/19/reg-ufo/pozhizneno.html> (last accesse 17 Feb 2019). <https://ria.ru/20131119/978100199.html> (last access 17 Feb 2019).

suggest that it is only a tiny part that accidentally became visible. Russian media have exposed a substantial number of fraudulent and criminal cases of land dispossession by agribusiness, often implicating powerful officials.⁶⁸

The other form of dispossession of plot holders (either intentional or not) are restrictions and even prohibitions for households to raise pigs because of the threat of African swine fever, which periodically breaks out in the southern regions.⁶⁹ Belgorod region, being one of the leading regions in large-scale farming, demonstrates the same practices.⁷⁰ Employees of the large animal farms also prohibited to raise any animals (employees of poultry farms cannot have a bird and employees of pig farms cannot have pigs). One way or another, household production of the goods similar to large farms drastically decreases due to natural shrinking of household rural economies as well as administrative prohibitions.

4. Inertia of symbiosis (Altai krai)⁷¹

The bigger role of family farmers in Altai makes a difference in maintaining Soveit-style symbiosis, in comparison to Krasnodar. Though family farms are smaller than corporate farms and hence have less abilities to support households, they are deeper embedded in local communities, what makes it more painful for them to be at odds with a local community than to an outsider director of a large corporate farm. Furthermore, Altai family farmers do not engage in milk production, while households produce large volumes of milk and need fodder for their cows from farmers. Finally, farmers have an interest in providing this, as they depend on the land share leases from households, or because it prevents pilfering from their fields.⁷² Thus, it becomes reasonable to establish good relations with local people what implies some assistance to household producers.

Further, in contrast to Krasnodar, no obstacles are created to household plot production either from agribusiness or from administrative restrictive regulations. Therefore, Altai households have avoided a drastic downfall in meat production experienced elsewhere and maintain – although with some decline – a level of milk production.

As a rule, large and small agricultural producers specialize on different crops and livestock products, thus avoiding direct competition. The most attractive export-oriented branches are usually occupied by large enterprises. Altai though represents an exception because households are successfully competing (or relatively peacefully coexisting) with corporate farms in milk

68 Tihomirov R. Vmesto Capkov prishli «Pokrovskie». 2017. July 6
http://kavpolit.com/articles/vmesto_tsapkov_prishli_pokrovskie-34653/

69 Visser O., Kurakin A., Nikulin A. Corporate social responsibility, co-existence and contestation: large farms' changing responsibilities vis-à-vis rural households in Russia // Canadian Journal of Development Studies. 2019. Vol. 40. No. 4. P. 580-599.

70 Visser O., Mamonova N, Spoor M., Nikulin A. 'Quiet Food Sovereignty' as Food Sovereignty without a Movement? Insights from Post-socialist Russia // Globalizations. 2015. Vol. 12, No.4, 513-528.

71 See details in Visser O., Kurakin A., Nikulin A. Corporate social responsibility, co-existence and contestation: large farms' changing responsibilities vis-à-vis rural households in Russia // Canadian Journal of Development Studies. 2019. Vol. 40. No. 4. P. 580-599\

72 Fadeeva O. Sel'skie soobshchestva i hozyajstvennye układy: ot vyzhivaniya k razvitiyu. Novosibirsk, 2015.

production, in which Altai is specialized (along with grain production). Therefore, it might be seen as an indication of households' resilience and the absence of pressure from agribusiness or state.⁷³

It is worth to note that resilience and total volumes of production by rural households in Altai do not mean that they are better off in terms of prosperity and living standards. Altai krai is commonly described as a poor and depressive region, with low income per capita, especially in rural areas. Our aim is to illustrate regionally diverse models of social organization and economic provision of rural population. Furthermore, plot holders' livestock production in Altai does continue to decline as elsewhere in Russia. That overall trend is determined not only by pressure from the state and agribusiness but mostly by internal dynamics in households themselves, i.e., aging rural population, outmigration of young generations, unwillingness of younger people to engage in agriculture including their small plots of land, the development of retail stores, which provide easy access to a variety of food.

In contrast to Krasnodar and its restrictions on livestock holdings by plot holders, in Altai, the state stimulates companies' social support activities locally by pressuring corporate farms to maintain livestock for employment.⁷⁴ Following a 2015 governor's decree No.22 "On increasing social responsibility of the employers in Altai krai", a regional registry of socially responsible businesses was created, which gave advantages in receiving state support.⁷⁵ Beyond the registry, the state pushes corporate farms to maintain symbiosis in informal negotiations, i.e., to provide employment to support municipal administrations and communities.⁷⁶

5. A cooperative alternative for rural households (Belgorod region)⁷⁷

Cooperation is a long established and tested way elsewhere on the globe for self-organization of local communities (not only rural) serving as an alternative to large economic enterprises. The Russian state tried to revive consumer rural cooperation, however it always failed.⁷⁸ The most large-scale attempt was the 2006 national project for the development of agro-industrial complex "AIC Development" and successive programs, which offered (beyond many other things) state

73 Visser O., Kurakin A., Nikulin A. Corporate social responsibility, co-existence and contestation: large farms' changing responsibilities vis-à-vis rural households in Russia // *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*. 2019. Vol. 40. No. 4. P. 580-599.

74 Bavorova M., Ponkina E. Which Agricultural Businesses Financially Support the Development of Social and Rural Infrastructure in Russia / Paper presented at the Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies (IAMO) Forum 2018, Halle, June 26–28, P.6.

75 <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/2200201503160003> (last access 9 March 2022).

76 Fadeeva O. *Sel'skie soobshchestva i hozyajstvennye układy: ot vyzhivaniya k razvitiyu*. Novosibirsk, 2015. P. 142.

77 See details in Kurakin A., Visser O. Post-socialist agricultural cooperatives in Russia: a case study of top-down cooperatives in the Belgorod region // *Post-Communist Economies*. 2017. Vol. 29. No. 2. P. 158-181; Kurakin A. Neklassicheskie sel'skohozyajstvennye kooperativy Belgorodskoj oblasti: kak vlast' uchrezhdaet kooperaciyu // *Vestnik Rossijskogo universiteta druzhby narodov. Seriya: Sociologiya*. 2012. No. 4. P. 50-63.

78 See, for instance: Ovchintseva L.A. *Sel'skie kooperativy: celi prezhnie, problemy novye* // *Krest'yanovedenie*. 2017. Vol.2. No.2. P. 121-141.

support for small-scale agricultural activities.⁷⁹ An important mechanism within those programs was the establishment of supply and marketing cooperatives. The establishment of these cooperatives was largely carried out in a top-down fashion and immediately faced with bureaucratic formalism, when plans from above to create a certain amount of cooperatives were executed locally by establishing non-viable fake cooperatives.⁸⁰

As an exception, there are a few regions like Tatarstan⁸¹, Lipetsk⁸² and Belgorod. A typical example of a formalist approach to cooperative development is provided by Golovina and Nilsson in their research in Kurgan region.⁸³ The practices we encountered in Belgorod, although not unique within Russia, appear to be rather divergent from what seems the main pattern found in regions like Kurgan, because Belgorod cooperatives were not established just on paper but instead were providing real services to their members for several years before our field research. For instance, they were providing a market outlet for agricultural produce, supplied seeds and fertilizers, and credited their members. Our case-study milk and vegetable cooperatives were planning to buy larger trucks and establish processing units.⁸⁴

Formally, Belgorod administration did the same things as elsewhere. Regional plans were distributed among districts and from the district level they were transferred to rural settlements. However, we would argue that it was the 2007 ‘Belgorod family farms’ regional program, which made the difference.⁸⁵ The program aimed to revive small-scale agricultural production in the region and implied subsidized credits, guaranteed credits, and consulting from district administrations. The program was not economically oriented but served as a social activity to fight rural poverty, unemployment, depopulation, alcoholism etc., i.e., nobody expected any economic return from it because economically the region relied on large agribusiness.

That local initiative distinguished Belgorod from most Russian regions as it shows the genuine interest in reviving cooperation and not just fulfilling commands from Moscow. In result, while

79 Barsukova S. *Prioritetnyj nacional'nyj proekt «Razvitie APK»: ideya i realizaciya* // *Voprosy statistiki*. 2007. No. 11, P. 19-31.

80 Franks J., Davydova I. *Reforming the farming sector in Russia: new options for old problems* // *Outlook on agriculture*. 2005. Vol.34, No.2, P. 97–103. Golovina S., Nilsson J. *The Russian top-down organised cooperatives – reasons behind the failure* // *Post-communist economies*. 2011. Vol.23, No.1, P. 55–67.

81 *Cooperative sector in Russia and the implementation of the ILO recommendation no. 193 in the development of different Russian cooperative trends*. Analytical report. Moscow: International Labour Office, 2009. Yanbykh R. et. al. *Monitoring deyatel'nosti sel'skohozyajstvennyh potrebitel'skih kooperativov / Sostoyanie i perspektivy razvitiya kooperacii v agrarnom sektore ekonomiki*. Moscow, 2012.

82 *The regional program “The development of cooperation in Lipetsk region for 2013-2020”*. The decree No.416 of Lipetsk regional administration of 15 October 2012.

83 Golovina S., Nilsson J. *Russian agricultural producers’ views of top-down organized cooperatives* // *Journal of rural cooperation*. 2009. Vol.37, No.2, P. 225–241. Golovina S., Nilsson J. *The Russian top-down organised cooperatives – reasons behind the failure* // *Post-communist economies*. 2011. Vol.23, No.1, P. 55–67.

84 Kurakin A., Visser O. *Post-socialist agricultural cooperatives in Russia: a case study of top-down cooperatives in the Belgorod region* // *Post-Communist Economies*. 2017. Vol. 29. No. 2. P. 158-181.

85 *The regional program “Belgorod family farms”*. Belgorod regional administration decree No.134 of 18 June 2007.

only 20 agricultural cooperatives existed in the Belgorod region in 2000, by 2009, 465 had already been established.⁸⁶

The dairy cooperatives' activities (our first case-study) included purchasing milk from its members (all of them households) and selling it to the local milk processing factory. Apart from a few individual traders at the district central market, the milk factory was the only buyer of the cooperative's milk at the time of our fieldwork. The cooperative also provided loans to its members to buy more cows on credit and pay for them through milk delivery. In addition, the cooperative supported its members by providing fodder for livestock.

The activities of the vegetable cooperative (our second case-study) were similar. It had more sales channels than dairy cooperative including a special one – regional social organizations (schools, kindergartens, hospitals). The cooperative also transacted with individual farmers who were not its members.

From our interviews and focus group discussions, it became clear that the 'Belgorod family farms' program had created – through strong state influence – complete food chains into which these cooperatives are integrated. In fact, the local, district and/or regional administrations had established secure market niches for the cooperatives, with guaranteed sales on different levels.⁸⁷

In the case of the vegetable cooperative we studied, state influence manifested itself through contracts between the cooperatives and municipal social organisations (such as schools and hospitals). Being one of the key sales channels of the vegetable cooperative, all of those contracts were signed at once rather than emerging gradually, what should be expected in the case of market contracting between independent economic actors.

In the case of the dairy cooperative we studied, the secure channels' only buyer was a milk factory, which, although private, was strongly influenced by the district authorities. For instance, when a conflict emerged between the milk factory and the dairy cooperative, the district head personally intervened and pressured the milk factory not to terminate its relationship with the cooperative.

Such patronage from district administrations benefits in the short run, while creates risks in the long run as it cannot last forever. Moreover, both of studied cooperatives faced inherent problems, which questioned their viability, though at the moment of the field study they were quite successful organizations and useful for their members.

The first problem is the lack of cooperative identity. A cooperative requires additional skills from its members, such as the ability to compromise and solidarity, while both studied cooperatives recruit its members without any entrance barriers. The membership fee was very small, and the ordinary members had no financial responsibility for the cooperatives' performance. Without these measures, it would have been difficult to recruit any sizeable number of members.

86 Nikulin A. Missiya krest'yanstva i obyazannosti gosudarstva // Krest'yanskije vedomosti, 12 Jan. 2009.

87 Kurakin A., Visser O. Post-socialist agricultural cooperatives in Russia: a case study of top-down cooperatives in the Belgorod region // Post-Communist Economies. 2017. Vol. 29. No. 2. P. 158-181.

For instance, the members of the dairy cooperative would sell their milk to itinerant traders from the neighboring Voronezh region, if they offered even a slightly better price. From the cooperative's point of view, this is an absolutely opportunistic behavior, which is impossible for a true cooperative member. From the households' point of view, they were not doing anything wrong as they view their cooperative as just a one more possible sales channel for their milk. The management and members of the vegetable cooperative also did not distinguish between members and non-members when selling or buying their products. The management of both cooperatives paid little attention to increasing the households' involvement in the cooperative's decision-making.⁸⁸

Thus, both cooperatives were perceived as simple outlets, or mediators between farmers and processing companies, which are governed by their management and in their interests. The second problem, stemming from the first one, is that the cooperatives' management used corporate rather than cooperative logic and thinking, which is based on profit making rather than on meeting the needs of cooperative's members as the classic cooperative theory implies. For instance, the management increasingly aimed to focus on a limited group of medium-sized and/or high quality producers, rather than targeting as many households in the district as possible. Nobody clearly distinguished between members and non-members of the cooperatives. That thinking confronted not only cooperative principles but also the aims of regional administration, which focused on social rather than economic effects of their program.

There were no indications of a transformation to classic, member-based cooperatives. From the side of the members, there was significant opportunistic behavior, and practically no involvement. From the side of the management there were no plans to enhance the involvement of members.⁸⁹

6. Beyond explicit and implicit CSR

The transformation of Soviet symbiosis into either explicit or implicit form of CSR does not reflect the variety of trends in post-soviet rural development in Russia. It is just one element of multidirectional rural evolution.

The changes described in the paper are taking place on the background of ongoing urbanization and migration from rural areas to cities, especially among young generations. Rosstat indicates a lot of abandoned rural houses, especially in the North and non-black earth regions.⁹⁰ Working age rural population actively engage in seasonal work that seriously effects rural social life.⁹¹ At the same time, scholars indicate the reverse flow of urban population to rural areas though that

⁸⁸ Kurakin A., Visser O. Post-socialist agricultural cooperatives in Russia: a case study of top-down cooperatives in the Belgorod region // *Post-Communist Economies*. 2017. Vol. 29. No. 2. P. 158-181.

⁸⁹ Kurakin A., Visser O. Post-socialist agricultural cooperatives in Russia: a case study of top-down cooperatives in the Belgorod region // *Post-Communist Economies*. 2017. Vol. 29. No. 2. P. 158-181.

⁹⁰ *Itogi Vserossijskoj sel'skohozyajstvennoj perepisi 2016 goda*. Vol.8. Atlas perepisi. Moscow, 2018.

⁹¹ Plyusnin YU.M., Zausaeva Y.D., ZHidkevich N.N., Pozanenko A.A. *Othodniki*. Moscow, 2013. *Mezhdum domom i ...domom. Vozvratnaya prostranstvennaya mobil'nost' naseleniya Rossii*. Moscow, 2016.

flow is yet not comparable with rural outmigration to cities.⁹² Among those urban migrants are freelancers, downshifters, followers of the idea of family estates, farming beginners etc. They bring urban culture, preferences, and lifestyle to rural areas, thus changing rural communities. It is one of the aspects of “cellular globalization” suggested by Pokrovsky.⁹³ The term implies that the elements of the global world can penetrate very remote places, which seem to be isolated from global tendencies. *Dacha* owners constitute a specific social group being de facto pendulous migrants and reviving rural life in summertime. The abovementioned processes increase the gap between rural territories and agriculture, which traditionally were almost indistinguishable.⁹⁴ Agriculture itself needs less and less labor force due to mechanization and digitalization. At the same time, it demands more skilled labor. It creates seemingly opposite consequences of rural unemployment and labor shortage. However, agriculture (in Russia as well as in Western world) cannot still operate without low-skilled manual labor, relying more and more on labor migrants.⁹⁵

Beyond general trends, scholars indicate regional differences in rural transformation. Economists distinguish between regions with dominance either of small or large agricultural producers.⁹⁶ A group of scholars headed by Serova suggest a typology of Russian regions based on 16 indicators: demographic, economic, and infrastructural.⁹⁷ Geographers underscore climatic factors, dividing rural areas according to the “South-North” vector, as well as polarization between centers and peripheries.⁹⁸ They foresee further agricultural decline in northern and non-fertile zones, while southern fertile areas will proceed to develop industrial and technically advanced agriculture. Cities tend to suck out resources (first of all, manpower) from rural peripheries thus deserting them.

Old-inhabited rural areas go through that kind of evolution, experiencing “polarization” and “shrinking”.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, neighboring districts can substantially differ even inside the north

⁹² Pokrovsky N. E., Nefedova T. G., Trejvish A. I. *Urbanizatsiya, dezurbanizatsiya i sel'sko-gorodskie soobshchestva v usloviyah rosta gorizontальной mobil'nosti* // *Sociologicheskie issledovaniya*. 2015. No.12. P. 60-69. Zvyaginets V.N., Neuvazhaeva M.A. *Pereseleny iz goroda v sel'skuyu mestnost': fenomen «obratnoj migratsii» v sovremennoj Rossii* // *Mir Rossii*. 2015. Vol.24, No.1, P.101-135.

⁹³ Pokrovsky N.E., Nefedova T.G. «Kletchnaya globalizatsiya» i tendentsii v sel'skikh soobshchestvakh Blizhnego Severa Rossii // *Sociologicheskie issledovaniya*. 2013. No.4. P. 13–35.

⁹⁴ Those trends are applicable to developed capitalist countries as well. See, for instance: Lobao L., Meyer K. *The Great Agricultural Transition: Crisis, Change, and Social Consequences of Twentieth Century US Farming* // *Annual Review of Sociology*. 2001. Vol.27, P.103-124.

⁹⁵ *Trudovye migranty v rossijskom sele*. Saratov, 2015.

⁹⁶ Shagajda N.I., Uzun V.Y. *Agrarnaya reforma v postsovetsoj Rossii: mekhanizmy i rezul'taty*. Moscow, 2015.

⁹⁷ *O sostoyanii sel'skikh territorij v Rossijskoj Federatsii v 2018 godu. Ezhegodnyj doklad po rezul'tatam monitoringa*. Issue. 6. Moscow, 2020.

⁹⁸ Nefedova T.G. *Sel'skaya Rossiya na pereput'e: Geograficheskie ocherki*. Moscow, 2003

⁹⁹ *Staroosvoennye rajony v prostranstve Rossii: istoriya i sovremennost'*. Moscow, 2021. Discussion on the topic see in: *Diskussiya po dokladu T.G. Nefedovoj «Polyarizatsiya social'no-ekonomicheskogo prostranstva i perspektivy sel'skoj mestnosti v staroosvoennykh regionah Centra Rossii»* // *Krest'yanovedenie*. 2021. Vol.6. No.1. P. 154-169. Pokrovsky proposes the concept of cellular globalization. The example of Kostroma region see in: Pokrovsky N. E., Nefedova T. G., Baskin L. M. *Evolyuciya prostranstva sel'skikh territorij Blizhnego Severa (kejs Manturovskogo rajona Kostromskoj oblasti)* // *Sociologicheskie issledovaniya*. 2021. No.12. P. 124-134.

non-fertile zone.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, scholars observe sites of relative stability and sustainability on the background of overall depression.¹⁰¹

The effect of a strong, authoritarian regional administration, which can withstand large agribusiness and satisfy paternalistic expectations of rural communities, cannot be ignored either. For instance, that kind of regional power was represented by Belgorod governor Savchenko.¹⁰²

Agriculture in extreme Arctic conditions is another special issue.¹⁰³ The cases of spatially remote, almost isolated rural communities also have their own specific features.¹⁰⁴ The abovementioned areas of dacha colonization are usually located near cities but sometimes in remote rural territories as well.¹⁰⁵ Here traditional rural life experience dramatic changes and have little to do with explicit or implicit CSR.

Scholars suggest various options to address the problems of rural development at large¹⁰⁶, as well as specifically for depressive rural areas of the North and non-black earth regions, seeking the remedy in alternatives to agriculture.¹⁰⁷

Ethnicity is also a very important variable for multinational Russia. Thus, national republics represent distinctive cases full of national flavor, social and cultural distinctiveness.¹⁰⁸ Ethnic diversity is applicable not only for national federation entities, but also for historically indigenous Russian territories, where one can find, for instance, “post-soviet farmer international”.¹⁰⁹

Such diversity of rural Russia provokes scholars to suggest various classifications of rural regions.¹¹⁰ Fadeeva suggests four rural models: corporate-paternalistic, corporate-

¹⁰⁰ Bozhkov O.B., Ignatova S.N., Trocuk I.V., Nikulin A.M. *Sel'skoe predprinimatel'stvo v Severnom Nechernozem'e*. Moscow, 2022.

¹⁰¹ Averkieva K.V. Simbioz sel'skogo i lesnogo hozyajstva na staroosvoennoj periferii Nechernozem'ya: opyt Tarnogskogo rajona Vologodskoj oblasti // *Krest'yanovedenie*, 2017. Vol.2. No.4.

¹⁰² Nikulin A.M., Trotsuk I.V., Wegren S. Ideologiya i filosofiya uspeshnogo regional'nogo razvitiya v sovremennoj Rossii: belgorodskij kejs // *Krest'yanovedenie*. 2018. Vol.3. No.1.

¹⁰³ Naumov A., Sidorova D., Goncharov R. Farming on Arctic margins: models of agricultural development in northern regions of Russia, Europe and North America // *Regional Science Policy & Practice*. 2022. Vol. 14. No. 1. P. 174-186.

¹⁰⁴ Pozanenko A.A. «Otdel'naya tipa respublikha»: strukturnye osobennosti prostranstvenno izolirovannyh lokal'nyh sel'skih soobshchestv // *Mir Rossii*, 2018, Vol.27, No.4.

¹⁰⁵ Averkieva K.V., Nefedova T.G. Dachnaya «kolonizaciya» rossijskoj glubinki. Primer Kostromskoj oblasti // *Mir Rossii*, Vol.25, No.1.

¹⁰⁶ Serova E. V., Naumov A. S., Yanbykh R. G., Orlova N. V., Abdolova S. N. Problemy sel'skogo razvitiya i novye podhody k ih resheniyu v Rossii // *Mezhdunarodnyj sel'skohozyajstvennyj zhurnal*. 2021. No.6. P. 10-16.

¹⁰⁷ Nefedova T.G. Desyat' aktual'nyh voprosov o sel'skoj Rossii: otvety geografa. Moscow, 2013. Pokrovsky N.E. Perspektivy rossijskogo Severa: sel'skie soobshchestva // *Mir Rossii*, 2008, Vol.17, No.4, P. 111-134.

¹⁰⁸ Nefedova T.G. *Sel'skaya Rossiya na pereput'e: Geograficheskie ocherki*. Moscow, 2003

¹⁰⁹ Bozhkov O.B., Ignatova S.N., Trocuk I.V., Nikulin A.M. *Sel'skoe predprinimatel'stvo v Severnom Nechernozem'e*. Moscow, 2022.

¹¹⁰ See, for instance: Naumov A. S., Rubanov I. N., Ablyazina N. H. Novye podhody k tipologii sel'skih territorij Rossii // *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta. Seriya 5: Geografiya*. 2021. No.4. P. 12-24.

entrepreneurial, family-consuming, and family-entrepreneurial.¹¹¹ Nikulin and Kurakin propose models of roadside economy, symbiosis, mixed economy, and unipolar economy. The latter dissolves into options of large agribusiness domination or prevailing of small family subsistence economies.¹¹² However, as any classifications, the abovementioned suggestions inevitably simplify the reality.

In sum, the issue of dissolution of soviet symbiosis into two directions (explicit and implicit CSR), presented in the paper, is combined with many other factors of rural development, which can be significantly more influential.

Conclusion

1. The conjunction of the interests of locally disembedded large agrarian capital with the interests of local authorities and their mutual support create the most favorable conditions for breaking with the Soviet-style patronage and symbiosis and emergence of predatory competition. In that case Russia replicates global trends reflected in academic publications. That scenario leads to explicit CSR.
2. With the dominance of large agribusiness and lack of resistance from state or municipal authorities, symbiotic relations between enterprises and households can be replaced by predatory exploitation of rural communities by corporations.
3. State dirigisme can mitigate the relations between agribusiness and rural population by creating regional models of state-corporate partnership (for instance, in Belgorod region).
4. Any deviations from the abovementioned ideal-typical situation stimulate maintenance of the Soviet-style patronage and symbiosis even in the limited form of implicit CSR. Those deviations can be the following: smaller size of a corporate farm with limited ambitions, its embeddedness in local community, and effective resistance from local authorities and/or rural community.
5. In remote, hardly accessible rural areas with the lack of state influence and agribusiness interests, symbiotic, soviet-style practices have a good chance to survive. Neither explicit nor implicit form of SCR is unlikely to emerge in those rural territories and settlements. If a local agricultural enterprise managed to survive during the period of social transformations, it may become a site of cohesion for the local community that enables to reproduce many practices of the Soviet past helping the community to survive together. If a local agricultural enterprise collapsed, local people often shift to individual pre-industrial survival strategies (hunting, fishing, gathering).
6. Attempts to create viable top-down agricultural cooperatives can eventually succeed, but in Russia they face severe obstacles in the form of indifference of local administrations and/or the lack of grassroots initiatives, that can deny any efforts of federal and regional authorities.

¹¹¹ Fadeeva O.P. *Sel'skie soobshchestva i hozyajstvennye układy: ot vyzhivaniya k razvitiyu*. Novosibirsk, 2015.

¹¹² Nikulin A., Kurakin A. *Contradictions of centralization: Four models of interaction between Russian rural communities and government and agribusiness // The Ambivalence of power in the twenty-first-century economy: Cases from Russia and beyond*. London: UCL Press, 2022.

7. Emerging of either explicit or implicit models of CSR does not guarantee economic prosperity and sustainable development, which are effected by many other social factors (economic, demographic, migration). Sustainable development of rural territories could be achieved through combination and interaction of various economic arrangements and institutions: large agribusiness, embedded local agrarian and non-agrarian enterprises and organizations, peasant farms, cooperatives, social sector, municipal and state authorities.

8. By showing institutional changes in social organization of Russian rural communities, exemplified by the case of transformation of soviet symbiosis into explicit or implicit CSR as well as the emergence of cooperative movement, the paper presents the rural transformation not as a unique “Russian way”, but uses the already established in international academia concepts of corporate social responsibility. No doubts, that any country and society have its own unique identity, and Russia is no exclusion. However, that distinctiveness can be constructed from universal concepts developed by social sciences. Therefore, rural development in Russia is not unique but distinctive, encompassing various features of global agrarian development. Chayanov and Makarov draw attention to that a century ago.¹¹³ Today Russia also has contradictions of global agrarian evolution, related to large agribusiness expansion, corporate social responsibility, rural depopulation, resilience of small agricultural producers, cooperative movement.¹¹⁴ Rural Russia at large as well as its regions are not representing “their own way” of rural development, but combine in themselves features of both developed capitalist societies and the developing Third World.

Research limitations

As the paper is based on informal interviews, we cannot make any statements about the prevalence of studied phenomena. We also avoid any generalizations about relationships and effects and use them only logically (as meanings) and not statistically.

The limited sample of regions (Krasnodar, Altai, and Belgorod regions) does not let us to make countrywide conclusions as well. Therefore, when the paper uses the words “tendency” or “trend”, it refers to either conceptual relationship or to academic literature.

Finally, the paper provides already outdated evidence, which do not refer to the latest trends in rural Russia. Therefore, paper conclusions reflect recent history of post-soviet rural transformations rather than current events.

¹¹³ Makarov N.P. Na velikom rasput'e. Opyt sravnitel'nogo analiza evolyucii sel'skogo hozyajstva Kitaya, Soedinennyh SHtatov Severnoj Ameriki, SSSR, Zapadnoj Evropy (Publikaciya stat'i N.P. Makarova) // Krest'yanovedenie. 2019. Vol.4. No.1. P. 6-21. Chayanov A.V. Pis'mo A.V. Chayanova V.M. Molotovu o predstavlenii zapiski o sovremennom sostoyanii sel'skogo hozyajstva SSSR po sravneniyu s ego dovoennym polozheniem i polozheniem sel'skogo hozyajstva kapitalisticheskikh stran ot 6 oktyabrya 1927 // Krest'yanovedenie. 2018. Vol.3. No.3. P. 6-18.

¹¹⁴ Nikulin A.M. Agro-BRICS, agromir i sel'sko-gorodskaya Rossiya // Krest'yanovedenie. 2017. Vol.2. No.4. P. 184-190.

Approbation of the findings

The author tested the research findings in the reports on the following conferences:

2018: VI Conference of BRICS Initiative of Critical Agrarian Studies (Brasilia). Report: Defensive-Offensive Model of Russian Food Sovereignty: Security, Independence, Self-Sufficiency, Autarky, or Invasion?

2017: 5-th International Conference of the BRICS Initiative for Agrarian Studies 'New Extractivism, Peasantries and Social Dynamics: Critical Perspective and Debate' (Moscow). Report: Agricultural cooperation in Russia: Today and 100 years before

2015: Future of the Cooperative Model: Creativity, Innovation, and Research (Paris). Report: Cooperatives in Rural Russia: Promising Potential and Controversial Perspectives

2014: Food, Farmland and Forest in Transition (Bucharest). Report: Social Partnership in Post-Soviet Countryside: Between Socialism, Capitalism and Populism

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3. Kurakin A. When the State is Shirking: Informal Solutions for Social Services Provision in Altai Villages // Przegląd Wschodnioeuropejski. 2015. Vol. 6. No. 2. P. 145–159. (Scopus - Q4)
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Nikulin A., Kurakin A. Contradictions of centralization: Four models of interaction between Russian rural communities and government and agribusiness // The Ambivalence of power in the twenty-first-century economy: Cases from Russia and beyond. London: UCL Press, 2022.

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Kurakin A. Belgorodskie sel'skohozyajstvennye kooperativy: mezhdru administraciej, rynkom i soobshchestvami // Krest'yanovedenie. Teoriya. Istorija. Sovremennost'. 2012. Vol. 7. P. 312–344.

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