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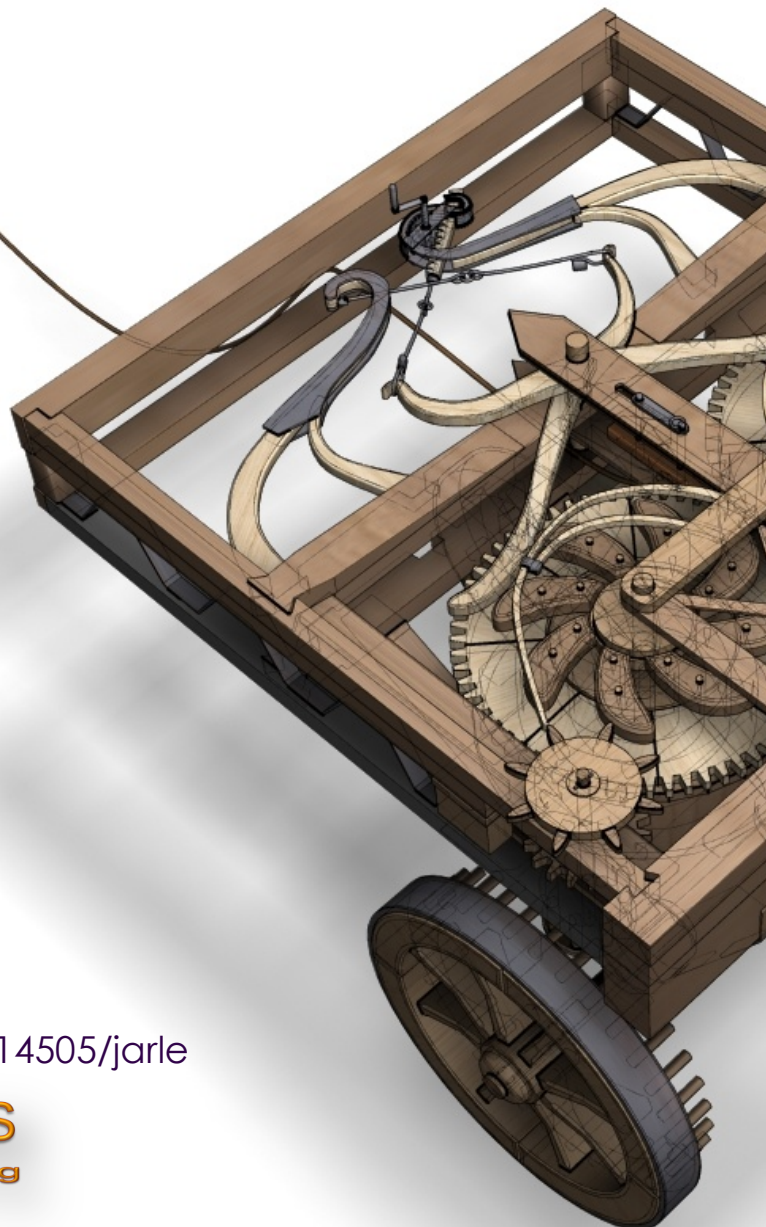
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## Russian Regions in the System of International Cooperation

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### Abstract:

This article is devoted to the research of international cooperation ties in Russian regions. Dynamics of foreign trade turnover in regions is investigated. The dynamics of foreign trade turnover of the Republic of Tatarstan is particularly researched. The authors proposed the method of analysis of international relations of the region on the basis of allocation of the core zone of international cooperation, whereas a core zone is a group of countries with which the researched region has had stable relations for a certain period of time. Special attention in the article is paid to the international relations and cooperation of the Republic of Tatarstan. The choice of this region of the Russian Federation is caused by the significant role of the Republic of Tatarstan in international relations of Russia and its economy. Confirmation of a hypothesis that participants of the international economic relations at the regional level form around themselves the zone of the international cooperation differing in heterogeneity is the result of scientific research. The offered technique can be used to carry out monitoring of international relations of the Russian regions.

**Keywords:** foreign trade turnover; the zone of international cooperation of the region; export; the core zone of international cooperation of the region.

**JEL classification:** O18; O19.

### Introduction

The modern world economy is developing very contradictorily. Processes of international integration and globalization of the world economy are gaining momentum on the one hand, while, on the other hand, there is a trend towards regionalization and isolation of individual areas, occasionally manifesting themselves in some countries, including very well-developed ones (Catalonia in Spain, Scotland in Great Britain, Quebec in Canada). The desire of administrative-territorial and municipal units (within national states) to play an independent role in the system of international economic relations has an objective economic basis and is the result of their desire to benefit from the international labor division and international cooperation.

The constitutional structure of democratic federal states gives the possibility of participation in independent foreign economic relations to the regions within the country.

The rights of regions in the Russian Federation, in particular the Republic of Tatarstan, to take part in international economic relations are stipulated by the contract 'On the delimitation of powers between the state authorities of the Russian Federation and state bodies of the Republic of Tatarstan' (June 26, 2007). Paragraph 3 of this document states that: 'The Republic of Tatarstan within its authority carries out international and foreign economic relations with regions and administrative-territorial entities of foreign countries. The republic is involved into the activities of specially created for these purpose international organizations and also makes agreements on the implementation of international, foreign economic relations and implements such relations with state authorities of foreign states in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation via the procedure established by the Government of the Russian Federation' (The agreement on delimitation of the subjects of jurisdiction and authority between the bodies of state power of the Russian Federation and the bodies of state power of the Republic of Tatarstan).

## 1. Theory

Methodological approaches to the analysis of regional participation in international division of labor were considered in the works of both Russian (Gibadullin, Fazlieva and Nurieva 2014; Gibadullin, Fazlieva, Nurieva and Grigoryeva 2014), and foreign researchers: Acharya and Sharma (2003), Andresen (Andresen 2010; Andresen 2009), Gauselmann and Marek (2012), Gilmartin, Learmouth, Swales, McGregor and Turner (2013), Clark, Munroe and Mansfield (2010), Mikheeva (2005).

The main, although not the only one, form of regional participation in international economic relations is foreign trade in the region, the material embodiment of which is the foreign trade turnover. Domestic statistics define foreign trade turnover as the sum of the value of exports and imports of the country (region) for a certain period of time (Encyclopedia of statistical terms. Economic statistics 2011). Data on foreign trade in the region, the Republic of Tatarstan in particular, are annually published by the territorial bodies of the Federal Statistical Service (Territorial body of the Federal State Statistics Service of the Republic of Tatarstan, n. d.).

However, foreign trade turnover as such, despite the fact that it is a basic indicator that reflects the character of the region's participation in the international system of economic relations, cannot determine the qualitative aspect of international cooperation in the region, of links stability over a period of time in particular.

In this regard, the existing methods of analysis of international cooperation in the regions were supplemented by the authors' developments, based on turnover differentiation data. The essence of the proposed method consists in the fact that all operational territorial units (countries) involved in trade interaction with the region (the part of the Russian Federation), economic relations of which are the subject of the study, are divided into several groups, depending on the intensity of their participation in the commodity turnover.

The first group includes countries that have the proportion of 0.89% or more in the commodity turnover of the region (the Republic of Tatarstan) both in import and export; the second group includes countries that have the proportion of 0.89% or more in the commodity turnover of the region of the Russian Federation only in export or only in import; the third group includes countries that have a proportion of less than 0.89% in the commodity turnover of the region both in import and export; the fourth group includes countries that have a proportion of less than 0.89% in the commodity turnover of the region only in import or only in export and that do not take part in the commodity turnover of import or export accordingly.

The developed classification of countries based on the differentiation of turnover allows considering the qualitative aspect of cooperation interaction of the region of the Russian Federation. However, the proposed classification describes a static picture of foreign trade. Meanwhile, in order to predict and to monitor international cooperation ties of the Russian Federation, it is important to analyze the dynamics of these relations and their stability. Therefore, methods of turnover differentiation are supplemented by a rating system of assessment.

Rating is built by introducing the measures of the indicators: the more the significance of the indicator, the bigger point (score) ascribed to it.

We should proceed from the fact that world countries of the first group are of the biggest significance to the region (the subject of the research) of the Russian Federation, countries of the second group are of little less significance and so on. Assigning a corresponding annual ranking of importance to each group (from 4 to 1), we find that all the regions of the first group in a given year have a rating of four points, the second group countries have three points, the third group countries get two points and the fourth group countries get only one point. Thus, we may calculate the rating of importance of each country, with which the region of Russian Federation has had



a foreign commodity turnover for any period of time, for example, short-term (three years), medium-term (five years) and long term (ten years).

The coefficient (conditional rating of the region) is determined by formula:

$$\acute{O}DD = X_1 + X_2 + \dots X_N$$

where  $X_1$  is a score of the region in each year of the period,  $X_n$  is a score of the region in the last year of the period.

Thus, we may notice that all the countries that are in the first group will have a rating of importance of 12 points on a short-term period, 20 points on a middle-term period and 40 points on a long-term period.

Countries that have appeared in the second, third and fourth groups will have floating ratings of significance for their counterparties.

Due to existing labor division and specialization of production, each region forms its own zone of international interaction and cooperation. The zone of international interaction and cooperation is a group of countries with which the region has a certain level of trade and economic contacts. This zone is not homogeneous in its structure. It is possible to allocate the core, the center and the periphery in it.

The core is a group of countries characterized by the most dense and stable trade relations with the base region. As noted earlier, seven countries forming the core area of international cooperation have been allocated for the Republic of Tatarstan in the range of 2008-2013 (see Table 1).

The center is a group of countries that have quite dense, but less stable trade relations with the region. Countries that belong to the second group are allocated here.

The periphery is a group of countries with mild and unstable trade relations with the base region. Countries that comprise the third and the fourth groups according to the chosen criteria of assessment are allocated here.

## 2. Results

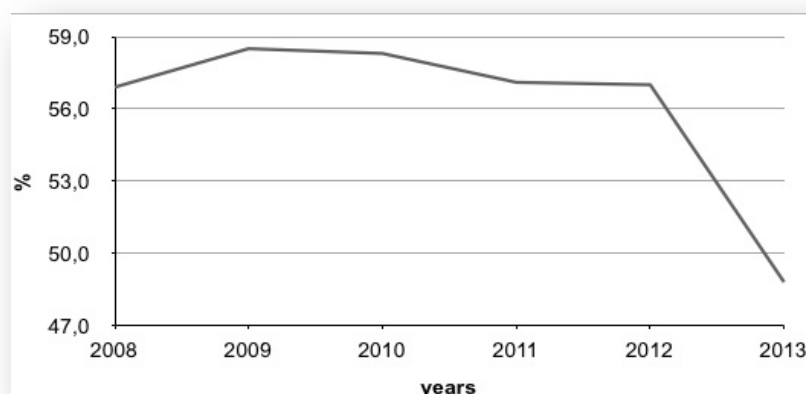
Based on the above described methodology of world countries classification, a research was done, the purpose of which was to establish the presence (or absence) of stable foreign trade relations of the Republic of Tatarstan in the medium-term time interval (2008 – 2013). The study revealed that group 1 consists of seven foreign trading partners of the Republic of Tatarstan (Belarus, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Turkey, Ukraine). Throughout the specified time interval they have had the highest rating of importance for the Republic of Tatarstan, as their final rating index was 20 points. This group of countries is the core of international cooperative interaction of the Republic of Tatarstan in the medium term.

The group of countries that make up the core area of international cooperation of the studied region of the Russian Federation is of great interest from the point of view of the analysis of interregional cooperation links.

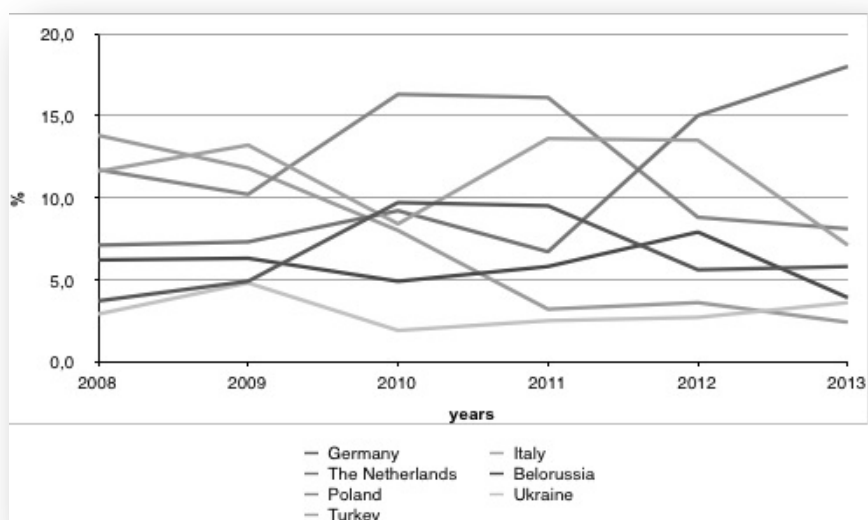
As it may be seen from the diagram in Figure 1, the seven countries that make up the core area of international cooperation of the Republic of Tatarstan take up more than half of its foreign trade turnover. However, there was a significant reduction of the foreign trade contracts of Tatarstan within this group of countries in 2013. This phenomenon can be defined as a contraction of the core area of international cooperation of the region.

The diagram in Figure 2 shows that the contraction of the core area of international cooperation ties occurred due to a sharp reduction in trade turnover with Italy, Belarus and Poland, but was partially offset by increasing trade turnover with the Netherlands.

**Figure 1.** Dynamics of the proportion of the core zone of international cooperation ties of the Republic of Tatarstan (Composed according to: the Republic of Tatarstan: annual statistics.- Kazan, 2011; (statistics of 2008-2010); The Republic of Tatarstan: annual statistics 2013. Kazan, 2014 (statistics of 2011-2013)).



**Figure 2.** Dynamics of proportion of the core zone of international cooperation of the Republic of Tatarstan (Composed according to: the Republic of Tatarstan: annual statistics.- Kazan, 2011; (statistics of 2008-2010); The Republic of Tatarstan: annual statistics 2013. Kazan, 2014 (statistics of 2011-2013)).



### 3. Discussion

If the shown above tendency remains in the future, the following variants of international cooperation development are possible:

- partial destruction of the core zone of international cooperation of the Republic of Tatarstan and dropping out of several countries;
- formation of a new core zone of international cooperation through a process of substitution of some countries by others;
- complete restructuring of the core zone of international cooperation.

From these possible scenarios the second option seems most likely to happen.

It should be mentioned, that compressing of the core zone of cooperation may have ambiguous consequences. On the one hand, foreign trade relations of the region are being diversified. But, on the other hand, the core of the zone of international cooperation becomes less stable. The possibility of mutual substitution

of some countries by others in it increases, thus, the degree of 'indifference' to the preservation of long-term partnerships between the two parties decreases.

The core zone of international cooperation of the Republic of Tatarstan's turnover detailing on exports and imports allows concluding that the compression of the core area of international cooperation of Tatarstan was mainly due to the reduction of export flows (8% downward). Import flows also reduced, but to a lesser degree (5%).

**Table 1.** Density of core zone countries of international cooperation ties of the Republic of Tatarstan in export and import (%) (Composed according to: the Republic of Tatarstan: annual statistics. Kazan, 2011; (statistics of 2008 – 2010); The Republic of Tatarstan: annual statistics 2013. Kazan, 2014 (statistics of 2011 – 2013)).

Export						
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Germany	1.84	2.27	7.99	7.7	2.34	2.72
Italy	11.62	13.48	7.46	14.07	15.29	7.95
The Netherlands	8.01	8.08	10.39	7.56	17.27	21.89
Poland	12.7	11.45	18.65	18.42	9.78	9.01
Turkey	14.72	13.11	8.45	2.57	3.26	1.59
Belorussia	5.33	5.91	4.02	4.78	7.4	3.26
Ukraine	2.88	4.49	1.54	1.57	1.45	1.59
<i>Total</i>	<i>57.1</i>	<i>58.79</i>	<i>58.5</i>	<i>56.67</i>	<i>56.79</i>	<i>48.01</i>
Import						
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Germany	15.48	22.89	20.13	20.16	24.27	18.98
Italy	11.07	11.1	14.24	9.69	3.03	3.37
The Netherlands	1.17	1.68	1.64	1.28	1.84	1.38
Poland	5.16	1.4	1.13	1	2.89	4.39
Turkey	7.92	3.24	5.42	6.86	5.43	5.76
Belorussia	11.49	9.07	10.25	12.32	10.57	6.59
Ukraine	3.06	7.02	4.28	8.31	10	11.9
<i>Total</i>	<i>55.35</i>	<i>56.4</i>	<i>57.09</i>	<i>59.62</i>	<i>58.03</i>	<i>52.37</i>

## Conclusions

This study allows formulating the following conclusions:

- (1) Every Russian region that takes part in foreign economic relations forms a zone of international cooperation ties around itself.
- (2) The zone of international cooperation is not homogeneous in its structure. The core of this zone are the countries, with which the region has had stable foreign trade turnover for a long-term period.
- (3) The core of the zone of international cooperation of the region is always a changeable structure.

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