

The UN's Sustainable Development Goal 11 in Russia
Housing in Saint Petersburg: providing access to safe,
adequate, and affordable housing for all

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Abstract

Housing is crucial for human livelihood. Nevertheless, many people globally are still unable to access safe, adequate, and affordable housing. In the case of Saint Petersburg, the city is facing a significant housing shortage, and many housing facilities are of low quality. The metropolis experienced a transition from a Soviet public housing model to a more privatised one, although this process has not laid out satisfactory results. Accordingly, this thesis analyses the housing situation in the former Leningrad. Firstly, it introduces the analytical framework: the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11, which considers sustainable cities and communities, and the Target 11.1 “Safe and affordable housing,” together with the places of study, which are Saint Petersburg and Russia. Secondly, a historical section evaluates housing from late tsarist Russia, to the Soviet Union, and post-Soviet Russia. It outlines the situation in Soviet times and delves into the phenomena that led to structural housing transformations: the 1917 Revolutions and the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union. The following section assesses inappropriate housing, and non-housing, which is homelessness. For this, it considers the insights gained from an interview with Daniil Kramorov, a staff member of Nochlezhka, the leading homelessness-related NGO in Russia. The following section explores the Soviet right to ‘quasi-free housing’ regarding the Soviet housing model and tests its’ pervasiveness among Russian university students from the Higher School of Economics (HSE) through a survey. To end, a section suggests measures to cope with housing challenges in Saint Petersburg.

Keywords: Saint Petersburg, public housing, private housing, inappropriate housing, homelessness, the right to housing.

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1. Introduction to housing in Saint Petersburg

Saint Petersburg is an appealing case to study housing. It has experienced two structurally different housing models, following radical shifts in state ideology. All in all, these models can be outlined as the more private one of tsarist Russia and post-Soviet Russia, and the Soviet model of public housing. Therefore, this thesis explores housing in Saint Petersburg and Russia.

The first section presents Target 11.1 “Safe and Affordable Housing” within the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 of the United Nations (UN) as an analytical framework. The main indicator for this target is the share of the urban population living in slums, informal settlements, and inappropriate housing. It also presents Saint Petersburg and Russia as the spaces of study. The following section offers a historical overview of housing in Saint Petersburg and Russia, from the late tsarist empire to the Soviet Union and post-Soviet Russia. It examines the two historical moments that triggered fundamental changes in housing models: the period from the 1917 Revolutions until the end of the Civil War, which led to housing nationalisation, and the collapse of the USSR and housing privatisation. It also outlines the Soviet housing situation. For this, it considers academic literature. The following section focuses on the inability to provide safe, adequate, and affordable housing in Saint Petersburg, pointing out distinct types of inappropriate housing in nowadays Russia, drawing on academic literature. It also explores homelessness in Saint Petersburg, delving into the activity of the homelessness-related NGO *Nochlezhka*. For this, an interview is carried out with Daniil Kramorov, head of the Department of Resources and Public Relations. It also relies on *Nochlezhka*’s reports and literature. Next, a section explores the Soviet interpretation of the right to housing and tries to assess the notion’s prevalence among undergraduates of Russian citizenship through a six-question survey directed to students of the Higher School of Economics (HSE). The next section suggests measures for coping with the situation, proposing a reduction in military spending, a hybrid housing model, and state-civil society partnership for housing projects. To end, a section points out that Russia is not in the right pathway for change and stresses the urgency of tackling housing problems.

In many contemporary sedentary societies, housing refers to the space which, if appropriate for living, may end up becoming a place, a ‘home’. This process occurs through the attribution of symbolic and cultural meaning to housing. Housing is a pillar of human existence; it is difficult to imagine the blossoming of personal development and the maintenance of personal stability without a permanent and secure place where to live and call home. Therefore, even if there are claims that long working hours and telework are colonising households, housing will continue

to be a fundamental element of most of the human lifestyles. Therefore, housing should be one of the foci of development policies. Providing housing for all and securing safe, accessible, and affordable housing is essential. Policymakers should reflect on issues such as the quality, quantity, and fitness of housing. They should focus on how to address inappropriate housing, which implies living in unsuitable housing, and tackle concealed and open homelessness, which means living in informal or non-fixed housing or making one's living space out of the streets.

2. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Goal 11, and its Target 11.1 “Safe and affordable housing” in Russia

This chapter is divided into five subsections. The first one presents an outline of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and treats their configuration and some of their related problems. Moreover, another subsection provides information about Russia and Saint Petersburg, focusing on the state's political considerations and the restrictions on autonomous civil society activity. It also analyses the Russian government's approach to the SDGs and the shortcomings in their implementation, suggesting that Russia should focus on one main goal: the gradual step away from the current hydrocarbon-based economic model to build a more sustainable and robust economy. For this, it should embrace a reliable application of the maximum number of SDGs. The next subsection delves into the SDG 11 “Sustainable Cities and Communities,” putting it in relation with the governmental agenda of the “Housing and Urban Areas program” within the “2024 Development Agenda.” Finally, the last subsection touches upon the Target 11.1 “Safe and affordable housing” and its importance for human livelihood. All in all, this section has two main aims. On the one hand, it introduces the place of study, Saint Petersburg, and Russia. On the other hand, it presents the analytical framework, the SDGs, and concretely Goal 11 and the Target 11.1 “Safe and affordable housing.”

2.1 The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of goals for all the countries in the world for the years 2016-2030. They are the successors of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of 2000-2015, and they aim to continue their tasks and to achieve

what they could not (The United Nations, 2015). The SDGs offer a methodological and practical viewpoint for social, economic, and environmental development. They are composed of 17 Goals and 169 Targets, in an action plan for ‘people, planet and prosperity’. The most important challenge for the UN is the eradication of all forms and dimensions of poverty, and the organisation understands this as a necessary condition for sustainable development (UN, 2015).

Most of the goals are synergic and complementary. Illustrating, solving problems in Goals 7 “Affordable and Clean Energy” or 10 “Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure” can be positive for Goal 11 “Sustainable Cities and Communities.” Still, the advancement of a goal can also be detrimental to another. For example, the unsustainable expansion of building plots (SDG 11), may endanger ecosystems (SDG 15) and lead to water pollution (SDG 6) (Bobylev & Solovyeva, 2017, p. 260). To correctly monitor the SDGs, there should be coordination between the UN Statistics Division (IAEG-SDGs) and national data-processing agencies, to gather precise data and avoid time-lags recompilation (Bobylev & Solovyeva, 2017, p. 261).

2.2 The Russian Federation and Saint Petersburg

Russia is the largest country on earth, covering up to an eighth of the inhabited land areas of the planet. It is divided into eleven time zones and borders sixteen states, among which the Central Asian, the Baltic and the Transcaucasian Republics, Japan, or China. Russia is inhabited by around 150 million people (Keenan et al., 2020), although estimates change regarding the recognition of the annexed region of Crimea as part of Russian territory. Moscow is the capital, and the second-largest city is Saint Petersburg. The latter was founded in 1703 by Peter I and has had different names: from Saint Petersburg, it was renamed as Petrograd in 1914, then as Leningrad in 1924, and finally, its original name was re-established in 1991 (Serge Shmemann, 1991). The city is located in the Finnish Gulf and has a population of around 5 million people.

The Russian Federation is a multi-ethnic state where a plethora of different groups of peoples, languages, religions, and cultures coexist [see [Text annexe 1](#)]. The political system in Russia, is de jure, a semi-presidential Republic with electoral democracy. In reality, it rather fits into the category of ‘hybrid system,’ or of elective authoritarianism; elections take place but in an uneven playing field of electoral unfairness (Gel’man, 2014, pp. 503–504). Likewise, Putin’s cabinet pursues an authoritarian agenda (Rosefielde & Hlouskova, 2007, p. 1). The political system has a democratic façade, as democratic institutions exist, such as the State Duma, the Constitution, or elections. Nevertheless, the rulers have placed the state apparatus and the main

political party, United Russia, under hierarchical subordination to the Kremlin's authority (Gel'man, 2014, p. 505). An example is Putin's attempt to organise a referendum to change the Constitution to stay in power until 2036 (RFERL, 2020). Russia's public administration is corrupted and opaque (GAN Integrity, 2017). The country ranks low in charts elaborated by Human Rights agencies and restricts its citizens' civil rights (Human Rights Watch, 2017, 2018). For example, public demonstrations are illegal if they are not notified with four days in advance and approved by the town council (Russian Federal Law from 19th June 2004 N°54-FL "On assemblies, rallies, demonstrations and picketing"). Still, this is more than a formality: it is a mechanism for state censorship and banning of unwanted protests (Smirnova & Shedov, 2018). An example is the arrest of 2000 people in August 2019, rallying against a ban on opposition candidate Alexei Navalny for Moscow elections (Al Jazeera News, 2019). Another example is the disproportionate convictions for the members of Pussy Riot (BBC, 2012). Finally, independent media outlets are driven into marginalisation and self-censorship among journalists is common, so media freedom is shallow (Gel'man, 2014, pp. 504–510).

2.3 The Russian Federation and the Sustainable Development Goals

Russia has officially backed the SDGs and considers them as crucial for long-term sustainable development (Bobylev & Solovyeva, 2017, p. 259). The order "On National Goals and Strategic Objectives of the Russian Federation through to 2024" contains the majority of the SDGs.

The main problem comes in the understanding of sustainable development. For the United Nations, sustainable development may come at the expense of strict economic growth (Bobylev & Solovyeva, 2017, p. 259). For example, for a balanced economic model, coal as fuel should stop to be used, even if this may harm the economy in the short run. Moreover, the UN identifies sustainable development as a more fundamental process that interlinks many aspects. However, to the Russian government, economic growth is the objective, relegating sustainability to a lessened priority. Furthermore, it grasps sustainable development as related solely to economic growth, not as a process which entangles many aspects (Bobylev & Solovyeva, 2017, p. 259).

The main hamper for the application of SDGs in Russia lays in its economic model, oriented towards the export of natural resources, which account for over 55% of them. This model presents substantial economic, ecological and social issues [see [Text annexe 2](#)]. Russia should step away from this model to embrace a new and balanced economic, social, and environmental paradigm. Therefore, the authorities should diversify the economy to achieve sustainable

development and make the economy more robust and less dependent on hydrocarbon prices. A wholesome way to do so would be to include the greatest number of SDGs in the governmental agenda, to apply them, and to better monitor progress (Bobylev & Solovyeva, 2017, p. 262). Although most UN SDGs are incorporated into the “2024 Development Agenda” (Sakharov & Kolmar, 2019, p. 202), there is a need for a more consistent approach to them. The main concern is the lack of a genuine attempt to promote social justice and human rights, including gender equality, thus hindering the building of a peaceful and inclusive society. Furthermore, the importance of clean and green energy is demoted to a secondary place. The continuation of the economic system damages the ecology and advances an unsustainable model of domestic and global energy consumption. The government ignores Goals 5, 7 and 16 for the mid-term development perspectives (Sakharov & Kolmar, 2019, p. 203). Policymakers should embrace social justice and inclusion, human rights, gender equality, peace, and green energy.

To conclude, there is a need for systematic implementation of the SDGs in Russia, although the absence of political will seems to be the largest hinder for their wholesome implementation. Arguably, the government considers the SDGs as long as they do not compromise economic growth within the existent economic model. A policy shift is very much needed, along with a reliable system of quality-data collection and processing. Together with Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, Russia is a member of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) the largest economic integration organisation in Eurasia, which is committed to the implementation of the SDGs but faces similar challenges to those of Russia [see [Text annexe 3](#)].

2.4 The SDG 11 “Sustainable Cities and Communities” and Russia

The SD Goal 11 “Sustainable Cities and Communities” aims at making cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. This Goal is important because half of the global population lives in cities, and out of them, 830 million people live in slums. Finally, cities generate about 80% of the global GDP. (UN, 2015). The UN has set specific Targets for Goal 11 [see [Text annexe 4](#)].

For Russia, Goal 11 “Sustainable Cities and Communities” is vital. To illustrate, the “2024 Development Agenda” of May 2018, and within it, the “Housing and Urban Areas programme” pays considerable attention to urban areas’ development [see [Text annexe 5](#)]. However, Targets 11.6 “Reduce the environmental impacts of cities” and 11.7 “Access to safe and inclusive green and public spaces” are excluded from the programme and relegated to the embryonic and overlooked “Ecology programme.” Still, the government is concerned with housing and has.

elaborated goals and indicators for housing policies. Interestingly, the provisions e) “the easing of the procedures of population’s involvement in the design and creation of an appropriate urban environment” and f) “the attainment of a 30% share of participant resident in the decision-making regarding urban development,” shows an attempt to involve the citizens in urban development. This diverges from the Soviet authorities’ approach, which centrally planned urban development through master plans (Krashenninokov, 2003b, p. 1; Rudden, 1963, p. 592).

Finally, the provisions a) “the supply of affordable housing for middle-income households including increasing opportunities for the purchasing of housing through lower than 8% interest rate mortgages”; b) “the development of residential spaces with an annual expansion of at least 120 million square meters” and g) “the persistent reduction of housing that is not appropriated for livelihood” are all strictly related to the Target 11.1 “Safe and Affordable Housing.

2.5 Russia, housing, and the Target 11.1 “Safe and Affordable Housing,”

The Target 11.1 “Safe and Affordable Housing” is the focus of this research. It aims at ensuring access for all to adequate, safe, and affordable housing, providing essential services, and upgrading slums. The major indicator is the share of the urban population living in slums, informal settlements, and inadequate housing (UN, 2020). Undoubtedly, housing is vital for many human lifestyles. Home is where an individual can find a sense of security and hope for the future (Beigulenko, 1999, p. 236), and if someone cannot feel safe in their living space, it is unlikely he or she will feel safe in other spaces. In Russia, there are permanent types of housing that are inadequate for livelihood. This research focuses on these types of housing. Therefore, the following section assesses the historical situation of housing in Saint Petersburg, while section 4 examines inappropriate housing and homelessness in former Leningrad.

3. From late Tsarism to the Soviet Union, and post-Soviet Russia: a historical overview of housing in Saint Petersburg

This section provides a historical overview of housing in Saint Petersburg, giving insights into that in Russia. The first part explains housing in the Petrograd of the 1917 Revolutions and the Civil War. Secondly, it outlines the housing situation in the RFSFR and Leningrad. Lastly, it

assesses housing privatisation in Russia. Hence, this section outlines the historical situation of housing in Russia and Saint Petersburg in the last 100 years, outlining the Soviet housing situation and delving into the two periods that triggered structural changes in housing models.

3.1 The housing Revolution: the late tsarist and early Soviet Petrograd

This subsection analyses housing in Petrograd from the eve of the 1917 Revolutions to its aftermath. Saint Petersburg, renamed Petrograd in 1914 to avoid Germanic resemblances, was already a large city before the Revolutions of 1917 and the capital and most populated city of the Russian empire with 2,300,000 inhabitants (Ruble, 1990, p. 28). There were various housing types, located in distinct quarters, as the city was highly fragmented in terms of social class and living conditions. This division was common in the Russian empire, where there were enormous inequality, poverty and illiteracy [see [Text annexe 6](#)]. The administrative buildings, palaces, and apartments of the nobility and the bourgeois were located near the Admiralty and the Winter Palace. These apartments were vast of about 200 to 300 m² and ceilings of over 4 metres, built in the late 18th century and early 19th century and located in the city centre, in the Avenues Nevsky, Ligovsky or Litevsky, or the Fontana or Neva Embankments. On the other side of the river, in the Vasilevsky and Petrogradsky Districts (see [Figure 1](#)), lived a mixture of small bourgeois and workers. They were officials, high-skilled workers, or intellectuals, which could rent an apartment and were relatively well off. However, many times they leased rooms to earn some extra income and struggled to find apartments due to the housing shortage.

The workers lived and worked in factories in the upper, eastern, and lower regions of Petrograd. These areas became afterwards a Bolshevik stronghold. Before the war, the number of people per room was 2,1, and there were about 50000 apartments with up to 4 people per room. These usually lacked reliable water and electricity supply systems, public transport, or decent paved roads (Jahn, 1990, p. 213). Living conditions became worse during World War I. Regarding the workers, the privileged ones had their corner of about 2 metres separated with curtains within a room, while the worse off lived in shared bunks in dark, dirty, and poorly ventilated rooms, with dreadful consequences regarding health. An example is the fourfold death rate of the workers in Vyborg District, who lived near the garbage dump (Jahn, 1990, p.214). Others lived in barracks, far from the centre and their working places. This miserable housing cost between more than 15 of workers' income. Petrograd had the highest rents of European capitals, together with the most crowded apartments and the unhealthy living conditions (Jahn, 1990, p. 214;

Ruble, 1990, p. 36). Those that could not afford rents had to resort to charity groups. In the city, there were about 8200 beds in night shelters, for around 20,000 homeless. All in all, pre-Soviet living conditions for most of the urban population were awful (Sosnovy, 1959, p. 1).

As Vladimir Ilyich Lenin said: “there are decades where nothing happens, and there are weeks when decades happen.” One of those historical moments was in February 1917, when the Revolution unleashed. At that time, widespread looting and expropriation of the housing of the ‘class enemies’ took place, in a spiral of chaos, vandalism, vague ideas of social justice and personal greed. There are testimonies of brutal actions regarding anyone or anything linked to Tsarism. An example is the assault of the Countess Fredericksz’s house, who could escape her house before the looters set fire into the house, letting horses, dogs and whoever or whatever was inside die calcinated (Jahn, 1990, p. 216). Hence, the political Revolution was paralleled by an unrestrained housing Revolution, coupled with the latter nationalisation of housing.

The Bolsheviks understood that order was needed for successful Revolution, and to avoid the blooming of rival groups. Regarding housing, policies draw on Lenin’s and Engel’s writings, based on the idea of putting the poor in the house of their former masters. They also drew inspiration from the Marxist critique of the relationship between landlord and tenant, perceived as unjust and contributing to low productivity (Jahn, 1990, p. 219; Reiner, 1991, p. 684). Thus, the Bolsheviks enacted some regulations, such as the expropriation of empty houses for needy families (Williams, 2018, Chapter 3), and expelled their political opponents from squatted apartments. Moreover, they granted large autonomy to districts. The first relevant housing policies drafted by the Petrograd Soviet came in early 1918 and were called ‘compression’ and ‘resettling’. These policies indicated that bourgeois could only keep one room per adult plus an additional one for the children, while the rest was to be distributed among the poor (Jahn, 1990, p. 220). Other sources assert the right was to keep one room per family (Krashenninokov, 2003b, p. 218; Varlamov, 2020), seeming this entirely credible because, in the 1926 census, the most of Soviet families lived in just one room (Sosnovy, 1959, p. 4). In any case, flats of 200 to 300 square metres for the wealthy were now inhabited by several families. The bourgeois shared kitchen and restrooms with the worse off, marking the birth of the shared apartments or *kommunalkas* in conditions of hostile coexistence. A decree of 20 August 1918 also abolished private property of buildings with more than five flats, excluding only small private dwellings, thus expropriating the most urban housing (Rudden, 1963, p. 593; Sosnovy, 1959, p. 1)

For the rest, a census of empty apartments was carried out, with the criterion that leaving one’s flat for more than two months should lead to expropriation. Hotels, such as the *Severnaya* or

the *Evropeyskaya*, were nationalised, creating the first workers' communes. Even if some workers were reluctant to move to the city centre, worried because of the distances from their factories, policies such as free public transport, relocation to apartments with central heating or subsidies helped to move 65.000 working families in former Petrograd only in 1918 and 1919 (Jahn, 1990, p. 221). Furthermore, around 550.000 people were relocated during the Civil War (Williams, 2018, Chapter 3). However, expropriations were not that caring with the working class; 18,5% of the expropriated buildings went to the hands of trade unions, committees, and new boards. Likewise, some expropriations were motivated by personal rivalries. For example, the new authorities confiscated houses of members of the intelligentsia or even a lunatic asylum. Nevertheless, the Bolsheviks had some ground-breaking ideas for the positive. An example is the creation of the House of Art, where they provided housing for writers such as Mandelstam, Gumiliov or Blok, and they opened private collections to the public (Jahn, 1990, p. 222).

After this new housing reconfiguration, came the urban planning, but all plans were postponed for the foreseeable future due to the lack of labour, money, and resources. Monumental projects such as public baths or garden cities had to wait, some forever. The city had been abandoned; driven by hunger and due to widespread shutdown, the population plunged from pre-war 2,300,000 inhabitants to civil war 720,000 (Ruble, 1990, p. 42), with the old privileged seeking refuge abroad and workers going back to their villages or joining the Red Army (Jahn, 1990, p. 225; Ruble, 1990, p. 42). Civil war, the shortage of essential goods, social unrest, and institutional abandonment were causes of the shrinking population, although the main one was death due to hunger and infectious diseases such as typhus or dysentery. These spread easily due to overcrowding. Illustrating, the 1920 census showed that there were 43 houses inhabited by 500 people or more and 379 houses with 201 to 500 residents. These conditions led to an appalling natural decrease rate of 63,3 (Ruble, 1990, p. 39; Williams, 2018, Chapter 3). The inability to supply appropriate housing for livelihood was a significant challenge for the Soviets.

At that point, the number of people per room had descended to 1,2 people, but living conditions had not improved, as building maintenance fell into oblivion. The residents per apartment ratio fell from 5 to 2,8 from 1918 to 1920, and there were 53,822 empty apartments in Spassky and Novoderevensky Districts alone (Williams, 2018, Chapter 3). Workers established communal apartments, where privacy was a chimaera, together with the rocketing of political repression. Meanwhile, the high-rank members of the embryonic Bolshevik nomenklatura swapped their living conditions with those of the aristocrats, moving to the best apartments. Some terrible winters worsened the situation, such as the one of 1918 (Williams, 2018, Chapter 3). In the winter, Saint Petersburg enjoys roughly six hours of light, snow and fierce wind are usual,

temperatures can go below -30°C degrees, coupled with high-level humidity. The cold and the lack of care largely impacted housing, and the shortage of wood and fuel triggered the collapse of water pipes and sewage systems due to the freeze. Wooden houses were looted to their foundations to get some firewood: during the civil war, the number of flats fell by 15% due to this (Williams, 2018, Chapter 3). The shortage was acute; in 1916, only 26% of the requested wood arrived at the city (Jahn, 1990, p. 226). In 1918, Petrograd lost its status of capital to Moscow, meaning the reconfiguration of priorities for the new authorities (Ruble, 1990, p. 42).

Concluding, the housing situation in Petrograd saw a drastic transformation between 1917 and 1920, affected by migration inflows and outflows, expropriations and appropriations, within a chaotic process that flipped the housing coin. The criterion for privilege halted to be wealth, and it became working-class belonging, which was, in turn, instrumentalised for personal profit, as asserting that one was a member of the proletariat was to attribute legitimacy. Eventually, Petrograd became an abandoned and disregarded city of semi-demolished buildings, collapsing water and sewage systems, shortage of basic goods, diseases, rats, and piles of rubbish and snow. Ironically, the bright side of the story is that there was no housing shortage anymore.

3.2 From utopia to reality: the housing situation in the RSFSR in Leningrad

This subsection assesses housing policies in the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR), with a part focusing on Leningrad. All in all, from the 1917 Revolutions to 1991, an unprecedented housing model operated in the RSFSR: the Soviets nationalised housing to a great extent, retaining the majority of ownership, besides small housing and rural dwellings. Five different processes helped to establish this system. Firstly, housing was taken over by the Soviets in the early days of the Revolution, in an unrestrained and chaotic housing revolution. Secondly, the owners that failed to appear for several months were stripped from their housing, after the latter was considered ownerless. Thirdly, private dwellers could be deprived of housing due to poor management. These two processes had as a legal basis the August 1918 decree that nationalised buildings with more than five flats. Finally, after 1957, the majority of the new housing stock was made up of mass-constructed buildings (Rudden, 1963, pp. 595–596).

In this housing model, the Soviet authorities were usually the housing owners. Local authorities and Soviets undertook the distribution, supervision, and administration of housing, following centralised planning along with decentralised operations. The Soviet Socialist Republics also had a role in this system, showing that it was a multifaceted and multi-agent one (Rudden, 1963,

pp. 596–605). Finally, although it was rare, private ownership existed, but it had to be used for living and not for profit. For the configuration of a robust and coherent model of public housing, the Soviet bodies tested different housing formulae, dynamically modifying the system according to shifts in. For example, in 1921 rent payments were abolished, triggering the decay of the housing stock due to little building maintenance, but the 1924 New Economic Policy (NEP) restored them with limitations (Rudden, 1963, pp. 593–594). After the revoking of the NEP, Stalin established the five-year plans. These were centralised programmes including details regarding housing production, together with all other sectors of the economy. In a period of six five-year plans, from 1929 to 1959, 373,6 million square housing metres were erected, out of which the state built 75%. Individuals, housing cooperatives, trade unions or cooperative enterprises constructed the rest (Alexeev, 1988, p. 415; Sosnovy, 1959, p. 2).

In the Soviet Union, there were mainly two types of housing. The first was apartments, either allocated for one or several families. Flats occupied by several families were the most common. Secondly, there were communal dwellings, mainly barracks. Housing was unequal and class-related. The intelligentsia and the government bureaucrats had privileges, living in whole flats or several rooms. The top rank officials occupied apartments in specially built residences, such as the House on the Embankment (Slezkine, 2020) or in private homes. However, most of the families and workers shared flats or rooms or lived in communal dwellings or barracks, with shared kitchens and bathrooms (Sosnovy, 1959, pp. 7–11) [see [Figures 2-4](#)].

Regarding new housing, the paperwork increased notably, although the organisation was poor, and shortcomings were common. This led to delays in construction and poor housing quality. Examples are leaking roofs, inefficient ventilation, unfinished facilities, and more (Sosnovy, 1959, p. 12). In both flats and communal dwellings, there were overcrowding and low rates of municipal services such as central heating or hot water. In the RSFSR, barely 1% of the citizens had hot water at home. Still, cold water, electric lighting, and sewer facilities were standard. After the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945), there were significant upgrades in the municipal services of Soviet cities, although, all in all, they were much weaker than those in the US or Western Europe 1939, with only Moscow having decent municipal facility rates. Also, the majority of private housing did not have access to municipal utilities. After a decree of 1948 that improved the conditions for private housing, the authorities offered counselling to private dwellers and housing cooperatives, mainly because of the poor quality of their facilities, which were isolated and constructed with poor materials. Still, this was not a step towards privatisation or citizen empowerment, but a way to legalise the bourgeois desires and the privileged position of elites that wanted to acquire private houses of several rooms (Sosnovy, 1959, pp. 8–15).

The goals of the five-year plans for housing construction were systematically unfulfilled, leading to an extremely acute housing shortage, mainly in the cities. Moreover, the policies of forced collectivisation and industrialisation of the 20s and 30s brought massive migration inflows to urban centres, which could not cope with the demographic pressure. Out of them, the newly built urban centres were the most severely hit (Sosnovy, 1959, pp. 3–6). After 1920, there was a steady decline in living space per capita, modestly reversed after the fourth five-year plan of 1946-1950. Joseph Stalin prioritised productive economic sectors, such as the heavy industries or the army, over mass housing (Baak, 2019, p. 419; Varlamov, 2020). Single-family flats were reserved to reward model workers, the intelligentsia, and political officials. Meanwhile, most of the families lived in one room in flats with shared bathroom and kitchen, and the housing shortage kept increasing, with outdated facilities (Christine Varga-Harris, 2012, p. 134). Under Stalin's iron rule, monumental and magnificent buildings were erected, such as Stalin's high-rises, in the style of Soviet Classicism. Thus, even if the bulk of citizens did not benefit from their construction, Muscovites could enjoy gazing at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and others [see [Figures 5-7](#)]. All in all, housing conditions during the first six five-year plans of 1929 to 1959 were appalling and living space per person kept decreasing. In fact, in 1956 housing conditions were worse than in 1926, with around 5 square metres of living space per capita (Sosnovy, 1959, pp. 3–11). The latter housing conditions were nicer than those in 1920, after the Civil War, but it is unclear if they were better than pre-Revolutionary ones.

The housing situation changed for the better after the fifth five-year plan. This transformation was led by the new attitude of the Soviet leaders, who recognised the majority of citizens' dreadful living conditions and started fulfilling the proposed construction plans (Sosnovy, 1959, pp. 13–14). In 1955, this governmental shift was made palpable in a series of decrees aimed at the mass production of industrialised housing, the increase of construction workers' skills, and more efficient housing planning and designing. In 1957 the leaders put forward a massive construction campaign for providing each family with a separate apartment. The goal was to differentiate housing before the Revolution when workers lived in slums in dreadful living conditions under capitalist exploitation, and after the Revolution, were families moved into single, clean, and well-equipped apartments. Improved housing conditions were to enhance productivity and contribute to society (Christine Varga-Harris, 2012, pp. 134–148). These shifts were distinctive of Khrushchev's period, who stated in the late 1950s that a major achievement of Communism would be the provision of free and modern housing and communal services for each family (Rudden, 1963, p. 604). He promised improved housing by 1965 and partially opened up the Soviet Union to the flow of commodity goods. During the Kitchen Debate at the

American National Exhibition of 1959 in Moscow, Khrushchev recognised the superiority of Western technology in the domestic sphere but stated that Soviet citizens would wave while passing by at Americans regarding housing conditions (Castillo, 2018, p. 262; Christine Varga-Harris, 2012, p. 133; Richard Nixon Foundation, 1959). He aimed too high, as there would have been a need for several multi-year plans to achieve this (Sosnovy, 1959, p. 19). This shows that Khrushchev developed a grasping of housing influenced by Western ideas, which formulated that improved housing commodities led to better living conditions. However, he envisioned a restrained type of consumption, different from the capitalist one (Castillo, 2018, p. 284).

Khrushchev made substantial efforts to ease the Soviet housing shortage, building thousands of cheap, capital-intensive, assembled five-story buildings made out of prefabricated panels (Christine Varga-Harris, 2012, p. 137) [see [Figures 8-10](#)]. This housing type was baptised by the people after him as “Khrushchyovka.” It was supposed to leave space for better housing eventually, it is still prevalent in the landscape of the majority of post-Soviet cities. They were built in the fringes of existing urban constructions, as close as possible to municipal utility webs to hook them up cheaply (French, 1995, pp. 75–77). Constructed in a minimalist style after condemning the excesses of Stalinist architecture, many people consider them horrible. Some claim that the unpleasant view of many post-Soviet cities is Khrushchev’s fault. Housing blocks were limited to five storeys to avoid the installation of lifts and similar facilities (French, 1995, p. 137; Kramorov, 2020). They were made to provide housing, not good-quality housing. A curious anecdote is that people did not ask for the bathroom in alien flats because they all had the same distribution. This universal design shows a desire to imprint a distinct social order in every aspect of life. Khrushchev paid attention to green and recreational spaces, designing micro-districts that were to satisfy the residents’ needs and bolster comradeship. This system also aimed at freeing women from labour-intensive housekeeping, equipping flats with handy facilities (Christine Varga-Harris, 2012, pp. 139–147), although their housekeeper role was not contested. All in all, Khrushchev largely contributed to housing in terms of quantity, not of quality or aesthetic. Housing materials were poor, roofs were low, living spaces tiny, and many buildings are now deteriorated (Varlamov, 2020), but the campaign he launched advanced the goal of allocating a flat per family, providing 300 million citizens with 70 million apartments by late 1980s (Christine Varga-Harris, 2012, p. 141). It was the largest housing programme in history, and one-family housing facilities were very welcome by the worse off, whose living conditions were substantially improved (French, 1995, p. 78; Zavisca, 2008, pp. 368–369)

Thus, the policies of mass construction designed by Khrushchev continued in place under the extensive mandate of Brezhnev and the short-lived ones of Andropov and Chernenko. Although

the design of buildings changed, the underlying ideas were the same. Hundreds of thousands of complexes made out of prefabricated panels were built, shaping the Soviet landscape. However, they now were taller buildings, ranging from 5 to 25 floors. By 1960, nine stories had become the minimum height standard (Alexseev, 2006, pp. 1–2; French, 1995, p. 79) [see [Figures 11-13](#)]. The stagnation of Brezhnev's late period and the crumble of general belief on Marxism-Leninism ideology led to a new approach to housing in the period of Gorbachev. The Soviet leader took gradual steps towards privatisation to improve the housing stock and cope with the rampant housing shortage. He envisaged a regulated market economy: he encouraged housing liberalisation but warned against speculation. By then, 42% of Soviet citizens listed housing as their biggest problem (Iams, 1990; Parks, 1990), and 17% lived in kommunalkas, hostels or lacked a permanent residence (Attwood, 2012, p. 906). The Soviet authorities set up a system of low-interest loans and mortgages and started subsidising cooperative and private housing (Alexeev, 1988, p. 419; Reiner, 1991, p. 692). Steps towards land privatisation meant a substantial break with Marxist-Leninist ideology, and this had detractors among the hard-liners of the Politburo. The ideological basis of Soviet housing would crumble under a free market of housing, as rent prices would rocket, not bound anymore by price limits. However, Gorbachev kept on and planned to build 30 million housing units by 2000, aiming to give citizens opportunities to choose for their housing and provide building materials for dwellers. However, he asserted the provision of adequate housing for government employees, pensioners, invalid and low-income families (Iams, 1990; Parks, 1990), showing that liberalisation was to be regulated. With the collapse of the USSR, this process could not be advanced any longer.

Now, focusing on Leningrad, with the end of the Civil War and the NEP, the city regained part of its population, although it would only surpass pre-Revolutionary levels in the 1939 census, with a population of over 3 million. This increase was caused by the policies of the NEP and the encouragement of trade and the vast influx of peasants in 1928 after launching the policies of collectivisation and industrialisation (Ruble, 1990, p. 42). Urban developers envisioned a new urban centre fitting with the Stalinist monumental ethos near the Avenue Moskovsky, 10 kilometres away from the tsarist districts. The construction of the House of the Soviets is an example of this (Ruble, 1990, pp. 42–45) [see [Figure 14](#)]. Later, the 1939 Winter War and the terrific siege of Leningrad led to a shrinking of the population to a fifth, along with the massive destruction of housing. After 1943, a new plan envisioned the rebuilding of Leningrad, giving primacy to its historic centre and abandoning the previous plan. In the aftermath of the war, the populace boomed due to migration flows, military demobilisation. Still, there was an ageing population and a substantially larger number of women than men (Ruble, 1990, pp. 45–55).

By then, there was a huge need for housing (re)construction to meet the need of residents and migrants. The housing shortage was acute: in 1951, an average of 3,3 families lived in each of Leningrad's flats. With the mass housing campaign of Khrushchev, the housing stock rose with sustained rates, mainly in the middle and outer districts (Ruble, 1990, p. 65). The majority of mass housing after 1957 was constructed in the outskirts, offering a different urban landscape from that of the tsarist-styled centre. In the latter area, communal apartments continued to exist, in large pre-Revolutionary apartments mainly occupied by pensioners and students (Ruble, 1990, p. 70). In general, Leningrad's housing situation was similar to that of other Soviet cities, only aggravated by the terrific 872-day siege. Therefore, living conditions for the majority of households were awful, and until 1956 living space decreased. If in 1926 each person enjoyed an average of 8,73 square metres, in 1956 each person only enjoyed 5,18 square metres. Also, municipal utilities were better than in the majority of Soviet cities and comparable to Moscow, but only 9,2% of the living space enjoyed central heating in an especially cold city. In 1935, 46,5% of the families lived in one room, and 25% in just a part of them, with only 10,8% enjoyed a whole apartment. After the campaign of 1957, mass housing suffered from its distinct low quality. Some buildings had unfinished façades, lack of equipment, and others (Sosnovy, 1959, pp. 5–12), but they relieved the shortage of housing. By the late 1980s, 80% of the families lived in a single flat and the area of the city had increased tenfold from tsarist times, based on the construction of an underground system (Ruble, 1990, pp. 64–67)

All in all, even if there were substantial advancements towards the goal of granting one flat per family, the promises of the Soviet authorities went unfulfilled; there was a good deal of housing sharing until the collapse of the Soviet Union (Rudden, 1963, pp. 599–605; Sosnovy, 1959, p. 7), and there still is. Even if housing was quasi-free, the system was arguably a curse for the citizens, as the authorities instrumentalised the allocation of flats for punish or reward. Also, there was an acute relation of dependence between the state and the citizens (Sosnovy, 1959, p. 2; Varlamov, 2020). The housing system was also as a tool for propaganda: the authorities used it to claim that they cared about the working-class and bolstered the idea that housing was a gift from the state to the people. This low rents of about 4-5% of citizens' income were a strong argument for this (Sosnovy, 1959, p. 17). In a nutshell, the Soviet authorities promoted the superiority of the future communist society over the capitalist one, depicting the latter as solely based on the pursuit of personal enrichment. The authorities promised prosperity: the building of a better society (Christine Varga-Harris, 2012, pp. 136–153). However, this did not consider the quality of housing: in 1959, while workers in the US enjoyed separated flats with modern facilities, their Soviet counterparts worked the same to have a room for their family in a flat,

sharing kitchen and bathroom. After the mass construction of housing, they could enjoy a tiny flat of less than 60 square metres, centrally planned and designed to the detail and made up of poor construction materials. Moreover, housing served as a tool for indoctrination for the Soviet authorities: they educated the citizens through paternalistic rhetoric and policies according to an ideal social order, imprinted in the planning of micro-districts and flats. This situation went on until the gradual privatisation of housing carried out by Gorbachev, who could not further advance it due to the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union. Full-scale privatisation would follow.

3.3 Opening the Pandora box: the privatisation of the Wild Nineties in Russia

This subsection analyses the bumpy period of the Wild Nineties or 1990s in Russia, one defined by a massive transformation in all societal spheres. The most significant change in housing was the acceleration of privatisation. Yeltsin's government based its economic policies on a shock-therapy approach to market reform, through liberalisation and privatisation, championed by its' chief architect Yegor Gaidar (Zavisca, 2008, pp. 370–371). The new cabinet abandoned gradual privatisation in favour of full-fledged privatisation, which portrayed as the natural solution to the existing housing shortage. Moreover, they justified the related sufferings because they were shared among all society members, and understated inequality. The latter was perceived as an inescapable evil for the transition to a better system: capitalism. In turn, citizens supported this privatisation and regarded it positively (Attwood, 2012, p. 913; Zavisca, 2008, pp. 366–372). Housing privatisation was motivated for two main reasons: the need to solve the pervasive housing shortage in post-Soviet Russia, and the necessity to alleviate state expenses.

In the Soviet Union, housing shortage was acute, with around one-third of urban households in 10-year waiting lists for better housing. Privatisation was thought to be a catalyst for an open housing market (Kosareva & Struyk, 1993, pp. 81–82). This market would naturally emerge after erasing the barriers to private housing and solve the housing shortage. These barriers were broad state intervention, artificially low rents, and hinders for private ownership. Secondly, in the Soviet Union housing was a decommodified product that could not be bought and sold. To sustain this reality, state intervention was massive, as well as housing-related expenditures (Lux & Sunega, 2014, p. 504). The public housing system implied high subsidies for building maintenance, communal services, and municipal utilities. With low oil prices and inflation, the state could not cope anymore with such an economic burden (Plotnikova, 2010, p. 2). Instead, with privatisation tenants would have to pay for the maintenance of their privatised properties.

Homeownership was also supposed to bolster tenant responsibility and was thus an easy and inexpensive way to improve the quality of the housing stock (Kosareva & Struyk, 1993, p. 82; Struyk, 1995, p. 193), which was in a poor state due to neglect (Vihavainen, 2009, p. 70). In 1991, housing privatisation became free and the extensive rights of tenants were curtailed to bolster this process (Attwood, 2012, p. 907; Struyk, 1995, p. 204). Nevertheless, give-away privatisation did not lead to the rapid increase of private ownership of housing, as it did in other post-Socialist countries (Lux & Sunega, 2014, p. 502). There are many reasons for this.

Firstly, many people rationally decided not to become homeowners. For families that did not have any expectations of moving out or were in waiting lists for improved housing, housing privatisation was simply not attractive. Even if it would contribute to family wealth, it also would mean a substantial burden on the household's budget. This is because privatisation meant responsibility for paying rising prices in rents, municipal utilities, and building upkeep. In turn, this occurred in times of recession. Being a state-tenant was more attractive than being an owner who bore maintenance costs (Plotnikova, 2010, p. 8). Among the groups that were likely to privatise their housing, elderly people were aiming at the eventual bequeathing of their property (Plotnikova, 2010, p. 4; Struyk, 1995, p. 200), educated people less likely to fall into economic uncertainty (Plotnikova, 2010, p. 15; Vihavainen, 2009, p. 74), and young households that saw housing as an asset that could be traded up (Attwood, 2012, p. 907). Moreover, newly-built housing was more likely to be privatised than old facilities with maintenance problems (Plotnikova, 2010, p. 14). By then, many Khrushchyovkas were already deteriorated. Secondly, privatisation was morally problematic for many. This process eroded the social contract that existed between the Soviet state and the citizens, where the former provided inexpensive housing to the latter and looked after its' upkeep (Plotnikova, 2010, p. 7; Vihavainen, 2005, p. 2004). For a few citizens, selling state assets was simply unacceptable (Attwood, 2012, p. 913). A few others preferred the Soviet public housing system of tutelage to the navigation of an unknown privatised model. Thirdly, the uncertainty regarding legislation and property rights and in the early privatisation stages hindered privatisation (Kosareva & Struyk, 1993, p. 92). The fear of fraud and crime linked to housing was extensive: as housing became a good that could be sold and bought criminal groups aimed at appropriating it through racketing activities (Vihavainen, 2009, p. 75). The elderly were the most likely criminal targets (Attwood, 2019).

By 1989, only 0,03% of the housing had been privatised, rising to 18% in 1993 (Plotnikova, 2010, p. 3). In 1994, this process slowed down, only to surge in the 2000s after a vast advertising campaign (Shomina & Heywood, 2013, p. 314). Together with these efforts, Putin linked in his discourses homeownership with the growth of a middle class, a stable society and a healthy

economy (Attwood, 2012, p. 904). By 2010, about 85% of housing was private, accounting for about 30 million housing units (Attwood, 2012, pp. 903–907; Shomina & Heywood, 2013, p. 313). The possibility for households to privatise existed for more than 20 years (Bashinform, 2015), showing that the government fancied this option. Moreover, criminal actors that were not approved by the Kremlin were cracked down. However, Lux and Sunega (2014, pp. 508–510) defines the Russian public housing system as guided by conservative policies, where many socialist features persist, such as the waiting lists, the idea of universal public housing, low rent prices, extensive regulations, and large tenant rights. In this sense, privatisation was restricted to secure social stability and avoid housing speculation. Privatisation has also been a multi-actor and multifaceted process. First, housing was transferred by the states to the municipalities, and after, offered for free to the tenants through privatisation. For the remaining public housing, tenants retained substantial rights, rents were low, and utilities were subsidised (Plotnikova, 2010, pp. 3–8). After 1991, municipalities became large homeowners, meaning an increase in their duties and rights. For example, they had to manage the allocation of housing allowances. However, their resources were many times limited (Shomina & Heywood, 2013, pp. 312–316).

Still, privatisation has not led to an efficient private housing market, as it has failed to alleviate the housing shortage. The authorities expected the market to tackle this shortage following the laws of supply and demand after erasing barriers to private housing. These were restrictive legislation, state intervention, or fixed rent prices. Thus, the authorities thought that the invisible hand of the market would appear as a ‘*deus ex machina*’. This did not occur, as there lacked complementary measures to guarantee wholesome market development. These could have been the ensuring of security, the precise definition of property rights, or the setup of a system of mortgages and loans with affordable interest rates (Attwood, 2012, p. 909; Zavisca, 2008, pp. 367–373). Therefore, the government delegated all responsibilities to the market, although all modern states intervene in housing. This failure delegitimised the capitalist promise of better living standards. Citizens became owners, but the housing shortage kept existing, and housing conditions were still poor. Moreover, the citizens’ newly acquired assets were frozen, and now they also had to pay for housing maintenance (Zavisca, 2008). As a result, a group of poor homeowners emerged, posing a challenge to housing upkeep (Vihavainen, 2005, p. 76).

All in all, privatisation exacerbated Soviet inequalities, as it crystallised the privileges of the wealthy and the appalling conditions of the worse off (French, 1995, p. 136; Zavisca, 2008, p. 371). However, this process eroded clientelist networks, as local officials were deprived of the power to arbitrarily allocate housing (Struyk, 1995, p. 193). It also empowered some groups, such as young adults, who could now live on their own if they had to purchase housing. For

others, privatisation solidified their position, giving them ownership over their living spaces but now demanding them accountability for housing. Further, it went against the interests of those that could not afford housing nor qualified for public housing (Vihavainen, 2005, p. 13) and would have eventually accessed housing in a public system. In a nutshell, housing is still a painful question for the Russian citizens, and the shortage has not been properly tackled by the authorities. Finally, in the case of Saint Petersburg, whose original name was restored in 1991 (Bater, 2006, p. 5), privatisation has not eradicated the housing shortage nor the existence of *kommunalkas*. Many times, it is the residents of communal flats, many times elderly people, that are reluctant to move out of their rooms, prioritising communal living in a central location over loneliness in improved housing facilities in peripheral districts (Vihavainen, 2005, p. 73).

In short, privatisation meant a shift in state ideology, moving away from a paternalistic housing approach in favour of one that emphasised citizen responsibility (Shomina & Heywood, 2013, p. 314). The state renounced to the advancement of ideology through housing and ceded housing as a tool for legitimisation. This became problematic with the failure of privatisation to solve housing issues, as the government had to find other means for legitimisation.

4. The inability to provide access to safe and affordable housing: inappropriate housing facilities and homelessness in Saint Petersburg

This section assesses the current situation in Saint Petersburg regarding the Target 11.1, named “Safe and Affordable Housing,” which aims at ensuring access to adequate, safe and affordable housing for all, providing basic services, and upgrading slums. All in all, this section exposes two issues: inappropriate housing and homelessness in Saint Petersburg. A separate subsection develops on each of them. This part aims at depicting some of the housing issues in Saint Petersburg, showing that the situation is far from perfect.

4.1 The murky side of housing: inappropriate housing in Saint Petersburg and Russia

This subsection analyses inappropriate housing in Saint Petersburg and Russia, drawing on existing literature. However, the lack of consistent and reliable data on the share of population living in inappropriate housing facilities is a shortcoming for their examination.

Concerning inappropriate housing, authorities consider that Russia is free from slums, but they do recognise that there are types of housing that do not comply with modern standards nor contemporary building codes (Krashennikov, 2003a, p. 218, 2003b, p. 6). In the provision g) of the “Housing and Urban Areas programme” of May 2018, the government commits to their persistent reduction. These types of inappropriate housing are communal flats, outdated and dilapidated buildings, shabby houses, old dormitories and barracks, squatter flats, and abandoned or deteriorated houses (Krashennikov, 2003b, pp. 7–9) [see [Text Annex 7](#)].

The inhabitants of deteriorated buildings and kommunalkas can ask for better housing facilities and improvements to the City Council, although queues are long, adding to several years. For the inhabitants of shabby houses, old dormitories and barracks abandoned and deteriorated houses, and squatter flats, their situation is linked to their legal condition: being irregular means having no prospects for decent housing. Some of these types of housing involve illegal activities, mainly illegal subletting, or occupation of deteriorated housing. Their occupants are outcasts, mainly homeless people, long-time internal migrants, and seasonal migrant workers. The majority of residents of inappropriate housing are dissatisfied with their living conditions, but the government largely ignores their claims. In turn, the authorities have failed to outline a specific and encompassing definition of homelessness, therefore leaving many residents of inappropriate housing facilities in concealed homeless (Beigulenko, 1999, p. 223). However, some of these residents see their housing facilities as their only property and are reluctant to abandon them without guarantees (Krashennikov, 2003a, p. 14). Of all types of inappropriate housing, the most well-known is that of kommunalkas, which came to define Soviet housing to a large extent, which perdures in the present, having consequences on the individual and society [see [Text annexe 8](#)]. In a nutshell, inappropriate housing is quite present for Russians and relevant for cultural productions. For example, it has inspired Sklovsky and Brodsky (Schlögel, 2000, p. 262), and films such as *Durak* or *Beanpole* [see [Text annexe 9](#)].

4.2 The issue of non-housing: homelessness and the activity of the NGO Nochlezhka

This subsection examines homelessness in Saint Petersburg, assessing Nochlezhka’s activity, the leading homelessness-related NGO in Russia. To better grasp its’ activity, an interview was carried out with Daniil Kramorov, head of the Department of Resources and Public Relations.

In the first place, considering the global dimension, estimates indicate that roughly 150 million people are homeless (YaleGlobalOnline, 2017). So far, such a pressing issue does not seem a

priority for global political institutions [see [Text annexe 10](#)]. In Russia, tackling homelessness or ‘people having no place of permanent residence’ (BOMZH) is an urgent social challenge. Institutionally, homeless people are understood as those lacking accommodation or means for subsistence, although a precise definition is lacking (Beigulenko, 1999, p. 221). In 2010, the State Duma reported a total of 64,000 homeless people in Russia, drawing on data gathered by Rosstat, the Russian governmental data agency. Still, many question this number; in 1998, researchers reported 4 million homeless people (Beigulenko, 1999, p. 221), and more recently, different sources have claimed numbers ranging from 1 to 5 million (Berkhead, 2020; Goble, 2017; Levkovich, 2017). Journalists have hinted that authorities are deliberately understating the issue. This fits with Rosstat’s infamous reputation of playing down issues according to the government’s desires (Goble, 2017). Just like AIDS or drug addiction (Ferris-Rotman, 2011), homelessness is an overlooked problem by Russian policymakers (Höjdestrand, 2002, p. 63).

Charity organisations, religious groups, and NGOs have a long tradition of facing rather alone homelessness in Russia. The government disregards the issue, prioritising Russia’s might in the international arena rather than being concerned about the daily problems of the citizenry (Ferris-Rotman, 2011). Accordingly, the Russian government fails to guarantee the right to shelter as stated in Article 40 of the Constitution, and institutional attitudes are ‘homelessphobic,’ as the bureaucratic system hinders any possibilities for decent livelihood for homeless people. For example, lacking a residence registration (‘propiska’) means not being able to benefit from barely any public service. In Russia, citizenship is not enough; without registration, there are virtually no rights (Cerami, 2009, p. 110; Höjdestrand, 2002, p. 57; Nochlezhka, 2018, p. 16). This system emanates from a 1930 Soviet law, where homelessness and unemployment were criminalised, becoming felonies that led to convictions of several years [see [Text annexe 11](#)].

With the dismantlement of the USSR, homelessness skyrocketed. The leading causes are family issues, fraud, high rents, unemployment, lack of property after release from orphanage or jail, diseases, housing privatisation and failed labour migration to big cities such as Moscow or Saint Petersburg (Höjdestrand, 2002, p. 59; Nochlezhka, 2018, pp. 17–18). The case of homeless and neglected children was outrageous in the 90s and 00s. There were estimated to be around 3 to 4 million of such children, who saw their rights systematically violated and whose lifestyles were miserable (AREF’EV, 2005, pp. 23, 42), as shown in the documentary *The Children of Leningradsky* (Polak & Celiński, 2005). Concerning failed labour migration, this means that migrants coming from other parts of Russia or the former USSR were unable to secure a job and had not got any alternative than resorting to the streets. The problem is that the post-Soviet disastrous context forced people into labour migration due to conflict and economic collapse.

Many Russians living in former Socialist Republics migrated to Russia, together with citizens from poverty- and conflict-ridden Transcaucasians and Central Asian Republics (Beigulenko, 1999, pp. 219–220; Korobkov, 2007, pp. 170–179). In 2002, the NGO Nochlezhka estimated that 40% of Saint Petersburg's homeless people were non-local (Höjdestrand, 2002, p. 60). Likewise, with the privatisation of housing in 1991, every squared meter could now be privatised and become a source of income, and fraud became common. Also, housing-related crime occurred in an environment of a virtual state of nature, suitable to the wicked activities of 'violent entrepreneurs' (Volkov, 2002, p. 26). Many lost their houses, merciless due to a lack of knowledge of the new system and under criminal pressures and extortion by unlawful groups. Some corrupted state officials were criminal accomplices (Höjdestrand, 2002, p. 60).

Inter-city differences regarding the treatment of homeless people are noteworthy. Muscovites have largely rejected NGO activity, mainly due to social stigma and the city's distinct civil society model, whose basis is networks of local cooperation (Kozin, 2019a; Kramorov, 2020). Moreover, civil society stances towards homelessness have been negative [see [Text annexe 12](#)]. Instead, the inhabitants of Saint Petersburg accept homelessness-related NGO (Kozin, 2019a), mainly thanks to the role of Nochlezhka. The organisation, whose name means overnight stay, was founded in 1990. Nochlezhka provides food, shelter, rehabilitation programmes for people with addictions, legal assistance, along with help sorting out papers, applying for registration, getting admitted to care homes and accepted to jobs, registering as disabled or finding relatives. The NGO challenges fraudulent real estate transactions defend those who lack a 'propiska' and offers consultancy to other groups. It also aims at increasing public awareness and eradicating stigma and aiding homeless people to go back to stable lives, covering a sphere ignored by the state, as there is not any effective homeless assistance. Nochlezhka stresses the importance of tackling homelessness systematically; their stance is that providing food and shelter is not enough and that a broader range of services must be provided to help people get once and for all out of the streets. Thus, they provide help from social workers and psychologists, together with assistance from lawyers, to offer the necessary tools for societal and labour integration.

Nochlezhka has many different projects. Firstly, there is a full-year operating rehabilitation shelter for the homeless, the biggest in Saint Petersburg, where shelter and food for more than 50 people are provided, together with legal assistance. Nochlezhka also runs a night bus, which operates in the afternoons and provides free meals, clothes, social help, doctor assistance, and medications to those in need. The bus goes to remote districts of the city and makes four fixed stops. A quarter of the benefited from this programme are just poor people. These are lonely and unassisted elders, unemployed people, or families with many children. An estimated 21

million people live under the poverty line in Russia (MT, 2019a). Nochlezhka has also three shelters, where they offer warm shelter, food, clean clothes, and medical aid to 150 people. Moreover, they run a launderette, cleaning clothes for free. Also, they offer consultation to 40 to 70 people per day. The 2018 report provides comprehensible data about the NGO's activity. The most remarkable data is that the NGO helped 9,157 people in 2018. Likewise, 51% of the 145 people that used Nochlezhka's shelter now have a stable home [see [Text annexe 13](#)]. In an exercise of utter transparency, the NGO makes public everything related to its' activity, such as the salaries of the staff or their legal documents, Furthermore, they display where the money comes from and where it is allocated. In 2018, the budget of the NGO was of 61,20 million roubles (around 800,000 €), coming mainly from donations, grants, and sponsorships.

To better understand the activity of Nochlezhka, I interviewed Daniil Kramorov, head of the Resource Mobilisation and Public Relations Departments. He has worked in the NGO for more than two years and was a volunteer before that. The interview revolved around 4 main topics. To start, we discussed the gendered dimension of homelessness in the former Leningrad. The data published in Nochlezhka's Report (2018, p. 17) shows that 81% of the homeless people are men, and Kramorov offered his explanation for this phenomenon, pointing out three factors. Firstly, many of the homeless people categorised as men, are migrant workers from less wealthy parts of Russia who seek work in Saint Petersburg and Moscow. He asserted that the majority of homeless men are Russian, thus differing from homelessness in some European countries, where a sizeable portion of homeless people are migrants from other countries. Still, he stated that there is a share of Belarusians and Ukrainians among male homeless people, together with nationals from other regions of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), such as Central Asia or the Caucasus. He said that many times, these migrants arrive alone at their destinations and rely to a minimal extent on networks of solidarity. Other times, they form part of national or international migration flows. Therefore, labour migration in the post-Soviet world has two main dimensions: it has a distinct gender composition, and it is motivated by the large salary gap between Russia and other CIS members (Juraev, 2015; Korobkov, 2007). Secondly, Daniil Kramorov argues that men are more reluctant to ask for help. This behaviour may be shaped by a cultural understanding of masculinity that punishes those that seek for aid for being weak. Thirdly, he argues that women rely more on social networks, resorting to social relationships in moments of need, related to their economic dependence in a gender unequal labour market.

Surprisingly, the topic of gender violence was not referred to, although it is mentioned by many scholars. Beigulenko (1999, p. 230) argues that women's economic dependence many times leads to violence, as those who stay at their households many times suffer from domestic abuse.

This trigger concealed homelessness, as those many seek for an alternative place in friends' or relatives' houses end up living in unsatisfactory conditions. Even in such a context, many of the homeless women are those that resorted to the streets after escaping violent relations, which are still primarily seen as a domestic affair in Russia (Beigulenko, 1999, p. 229). Probably, if there were a robust system of support for women, many more would flee their households. On top of that, an infamous 2017 law, which even some officials have defined as a mistake (MT, 2019b), decriminalised first-time domestic abuse, triggering the rocketing of domestic violence (MT, 2018). The recent lockdown has led to rising domestic violence linked to alcohol abuse, but no extraordinary legal provisions have been applied to address the issue (Palasciano, 2020).

Secondly, Daniil Kramorov confirmed that Nochlezhka completed the projects defined in the 2018 report. Concretely, these are shower facilities in Kalinsky District, a year-round shelter in Frunzensky District [see [Figures 15-16](#)] and the relaunch of the rehab programme. He mentioned that there had been changes in the outline of some projects. For example, the rehab programme has been redesigned and relocated in different facilities, isolating the people with addictions in a different building and taking care of them with the assistance of social workers, psychologists, and legal assistants for their safe and progressive reintegration. Also, Kramorov stated that the shower facilities in Kalinsky District had been ready for two to three years, but that they had to wait for governmental permission to start carrying operations. This was linked to the third topic, related to the bureaucratic constraints imposed on NGOs. Kramorov argues that constraints exist because authorities prefer to disregard problems rather than allowing NGO activity; after all, doing the latter would implicitly recognise the existence of problems. He illustrates the bureaucratic constrictions that homeless people have to undergo; while there exist shelters for homeless people, one cannot access them without a certificate that their situation. In turn, this can only be received after submitting one's passport to the authorities, thus excluding those without a passport. Also, the state is unable to provide housing for young adults coming out of orphanages, who are doomed to open or concealed homelessness. Kramorov contends that in Russia, the perceptions regarding homeless people are negative, regarded as people that either want to live in the streets or did something terrible to end up in them, hence not deserving any help. Moreover, he mentioned that there are structural problems in the social service system and that a titanic effort and a massive amount of resources and money would be needed to cope with them. This is a challenge that the state is not able nor willing to assume.

Moreover, he argues that Muscovites are reluctant to accept Nochlezhka's activities because, in part, they operate differently. They are organised in local informal groups based on solidarity and reciprocity, in a distinct model of civil society activity. Hence, NGO homelessness-related

activity is entirely new in Moscow, as there has not been any NGO with a formalised structure, a long-time experience or the transparency of Nochlezhka. Kramorov underlines that many of Nochlezhka's detractors are ill-informed about its' activities, although the NGO aims at being at engaging with neighbours before setting up any projects. He claims that with time and the spread of information, the perceptions about the NGO may change in Moscow, as they did in Saint Petersburg, where, in the 90s, the residents embraced the NGO's activities because they helped relieve food insecurity and shortage. Finally, he argues that globally, people are afraid of homelessness-related activities, as there is a fear towards changes, together with a social stigma that dehumanises homeless people and defines them as substance addicts, criminals, and carriers of diseases. All in all, Daniil Kramorov contends that people support homelessness-related NGO activity but not in their district, as it could erode their security and convenience.

5. Should the state provide housing? The Soviet right to 'quasi-free housing' and its pervasiveness among Russian university students

This section examines the legal system of quasi-free Soviet housing and the sociological idea of the right to 'quasi-free housing'. It also tries to test the pervasiveness of this notion among Russian students of the Higher School of Economics (HSE) through a six-question survey.

The Soviet grasping of housing is that it must only be used to satisfy basic human needs, and the ultimate goal of the Soviet authorities was to allocate one flat per family for free. On paper, every Soviet citizen had the right to housing, provided through the mass production and distribution of housing units. Apartments were modestly designed but compensated by public facilities within walking distance in their respective micro-districts, which were equipped with shops and recreational spaces (French, 1995, p. 78; Krashenninokov, 2003b, p. 1). The right to free housing recorded in Article 44 of the Constitution of 1977 set a minimum of 9 square metres of living space per person. This measure was upgraded to 12 square metres in 1982, although such provision was many times unmet (French, 1995, p. 80; Højdestrand, 2002, p. 58; Rudden, 1963, p. 600). The measuring of housing in square metres rather than in people per flat showed the acute housing shortage (Sosnovy, 1959, p. 3). Housing could be enjoyed as long as one was not a criminal. This could mean being unemployed, homeless or a 'traitor to the homeland,' for example. Convictions meant hardship, as the penal system was outrageously

harsh. For the charges described, convictions went from execution, to several of years in labour camps or prisons (Beigulenko, 1999, p. 224; Højdestrand, 2002, p. 58; Slezkine, 2020).

This right to housing was, in fact, a right to quasi-free housing. Housing was mostly built and owned by the authorities, leading to a monopoly of housing; they were both housing's guarantor and provider (Sosnovy, 1959, p. 1). Housing was allocated concerning citizens' needs regarding the amount of living space they enjoyed (Alexeev, 1988, p. 416). Housing was free, and rents were low, of about 4-5% of tenants' income (Sosnovy, 1959, p. 17), but citizens did not have a word regarding housing location. The inability to pay rents was unusual, and evictions were linked to tenants' misbehaviour. Even then, the authorities had to provide them with alternative housing (Rudden, 1963, pp. 605–611; Vihavainen, 2005, p. 4). Housing was administered by the local Soviets and state bodies, that 'leased' apartments to citizens. Still, tenants could not dispose of housing as they pleased nor could become homeowners (Rudden, 1963, pp. 627–628). The authorities only secured private property for articles of personal use, and not for the means of production or land. There were exceptions, such as some forms of private ownership, mainly in rural areas or small urban centres. In general, the Soviet Union's paternal figure was the symbolic embodiment of the working class which not only owned the means of production but also the means of daily living, which is housing (Christine Varga-Harris, 2012, p. 146).

This constitutional right to housing existed to eliminate exploitation and safeguard housing justice (O'Leary, 1993, p. 1068; Reiner, 1991, p. 683). For this, public control aimed at securing fair housing allocation considering the genuine need, and residential housing was one of the most rationed goods in the Soviet Union. It was not a market good that could be bought and sold (Alexeev, 1988, p. 414). Still, the Soviet housing system was unable to fulfil its duties due to inefficiency. Firstly, the distribution of housing was class-related, as there were groups, such as state bureaucrats or the intelligentsia, which were granted privileged housing (French, 1995, p. 136; Sosnovy, 1959, p. 10). Moreover, there was a second economy for housing based on 'blat' (favours) and corruption, functioning as an unlawful market economy (Alexeev, 1988, p. 414; Reiner, 1991, p. 688; Vihavainen, 2009, p. 66). All of this led to unfairness in allocation, exacerbating social injustice, economic hardship, and housing shortage. The housing demand was persistent, exemplified in the long waiting lists (Alexeev, 1988, p. 416; O'Leary, 1993, p. 1068). This flawed housing went on until privatisation. The latter was carried out poorly, and the corruption attributed to it has not helped to legitimise private housing in the eyes of many. Some societal segments, mainly the elderly, see large housing payments as a 'moral problem,' conceive quasi-free housing as a civil right, and back up the Soviet system where the state provided housing and building maintenance (Plotnikova, 2010, p. 7; Vihavainen, 2005, p. 4).

Having touched upon the Soviet right to quasi-free housing, I try to test its pervasiveness among students from the Higher School of Economics (HSE). A total of 43 individuals participated in a six-question survey concerning the latter right and different housing models. The requirement for participation was being a Russian citizenship student with an age between 18 and 25 years. I used Google Forms for the survey's distribution. Snowball sampling was used to identify and contact students. Replies were recorded from 15 to 22 May 2020. Due to the reduced sample of the survey, the results are not representative of any societal group, but they are appealing to further explore the topic and shed light on general thinking trends among Russian HSE students.

The table of results displays strong trends. Firstly, 44% of participants support the constitutional right to free housing, but this share diminishes when taxes are mentioned, showing that a third of this 44% is not that committed to the idea. This shows a reluctance to consent to large state economic intervention, varying from the Marxist-Leninist doctrine of the former Soviet Union. Moreover, three out of four students disagree that public housing is more morally acceptable than private housing, with only 7% supporting it.

Table 1

Survey distributed among Russian students of the HSE regarding the right to free housing

	Absolutely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Absolutely agree
1. Do you agree to have a 'right to free housing' in the Constitution?	9,3%	16,3%	30,2%	16,3%	27,9%
2. Do you agree that it is fair if the state provided this free right to housing through tax-raising?	25,6%	18,6%	25,8%	23,3%	7%
3. Do you agree that a public housing system is more morally acceptable than a private one?	32,6%	39,5%	20,9%	2,3%	4,7%
4. Do you agree that a private housing system allows you to be freer than a public one?	7%	2,3%	0%	25,6%	65,1%
5. Do you agree that a private housing model works better than a public housing one?	0%	2,3%	27,9%	30,2%	39,5%
6. Do you agree that Russian students are rather left-wing or socialist-oriented?	14%	32,6%	23,3%	20,9%	9,3%

Likewise, over 90% of students think that private housing allows people to be freer than public housing, and 70% claim that, besides, a private system of housing works better than a public one, with only 2,5% disagreeing. Finally, 30% of the participants agree that Russian students are rather left-wing or socialist-oriented, while 44% disagree. Although results are balanced, there clearly is not any socialist majority, and support for Soviet ideological doctrine is part of the past. It remains unclear if there never was popular support for the state ideology.

To me, the constitutional right to free housing is incompatible with a private housing model. This is because free housing can only be provided in two ways: first, through the allocation of housing built by the state, and second, through the government making mandatory for private enterprises to provide free housing. Both of these options involve a massive degree of state intervention that undermines the basics of private housing. With this, I do not mean that a hybrid system could not exist nor be successful. The overall trend is that Russian university students from the HSE ultimately favour a model of private housing over a public one, as they perceive the former as freer, more efficient, and not less morally acceptable. They seem reluctant to embrace large state taxation to finance public housing. Indeed, there has been an erosion of the ideological pillars for the right to free housing in post-Soviet Russia. Perhaps, the experience of Soviet mishandling of housing has led to some degree of aversion towards public housing. In Soviet times, the authorities instrumentalised housing for punishing or rewarding citizens. Also, Soviet housing bolstered relations of dependence between the state and the citizens and corruption, leading to a housing curse concerning the freedom of citizens. Young students are unlikely to back up a paternalistic housing system and desire to choose freely their housing.

6. Recommendations for improving the housing situation in Russia

This section suggests measures for improving the housing situation in Russia. First, the Kremlin should abandon the current isolationist economic model, defined as an economy of war (Gaaze, 2017). For this, the sanction conflict with the West needs to come to an end. An effective way to help to this would be holding a referendum in Crimea supervised by international bodies, and cease supporting pro-Russian militias in the Donbas. Thus, Russia should rethink its aggressive foreign policy and respect international law. The current economic model based on hydrocarbon exports also needs to be revisited to diversify the economy and make it less dependent on oil prices. This shift would bolster sustainable development and reduce environmental pressure.

In 2018, Russia devoted up to US\$ 180 to the military, if measured in purchasing power parity exchange rates (Koffman & Connolly, 2019), totalling a 3,9% of its GDP. Thus, a more peaceful foreign policy and an economic reorientation would help Russia tackle the housing shortage and the low quality of housing, as a share of the military budget could be redirected to housing. Desirably, military spending should be cut to 2% of the GDP or less. This figure would not be particularly low; France, the United Kingdom, or China, also members of the UN Security Council, spent 2,3%, 1,8% and 1,9%, and India a slightly superior 2,4% (World Bank, 2018).

Likewise, even if the authorities have lifted all barriers to housing privatisation, they now need to focus on enabling a wholesome environment for the housing market. For achieving this, they should draft unambiguous legislation, promote fair inter-firm competition, establish systems of public accountability for construction enterprises, and slash corruption. For this, they should also relax constraints on foreign construction firms. This does not mean turning Russia into a tax haven, but rather improving the business environment. In short, a new housing model is needed. In it, the authorities should provide funding to private building firms, adopting a mixed housing model. This model should follow market rules, but also set flexible caps on rent prices, restrict mortgages' interest rates, and provide housing for the worse off. This decentralised model would be based on market competition but would secure the citizens' needs. For the utter legitimisation of this model, housing firms along with public bodies should have hearings with citizens, looking after their demands. Likewise, the authorities should provide with expertise and funding to projects for housing maintenance and remodelling coming from non-co-opted civil society groups, thus empowering them, and giving them agency regarding housing.

State-civil society partnership should be extended to face homelessness, easing NGO activity. The authorities should outline a precise and inclusive definition of homelessness and help those who fall under it. They should also erase the 'propiska' system and unnecessary bureaucratic constraints, favouring decentralised and local action. These measures should help to cope with the housing shortage, providing safe, accessible, and affordable housing for all, reducing all types of inappropriate housing, and allowing needy families to move to into improved housing.

7. Conclusions

Defining Russia's housing problems as endemic is mistaken; the housing shortage and the low quality of housing are nothing but the result of defined policies. From the tsarist empire to the

Soviet Union and post-Soviet Russia, many leaders have ignored housing. This is part of an on-going political tradition characterised by leaders whose policies are far removed from citizens' daily needs and who push for the state's clout in the global arena. This can be seen in Stalin or Putin. Still, this is not inherently Russian; it is the result of individual decisions. Thus, political will can improve housing conditions. Russia is not doomed to scarce and low-quality housing.

These housing problems have led to inadequate living conditions due to overcrowding, and inappropriate and unaffordable housing. These hardships were salient in tsarist Russia and worsened after the Civil War. Stalin did not do much to solve them; in fact, living space per capita kept decreasing and Soviet housing did not yield positive results for the citizenry. This changed in 1957 when Khrushchev drafted an extensive housing campaign. This programme largely relieved the housing shortage but had serious flaws, such as the low quality of materials, the inability to cope with the housing demand, or the little regard for aesthetics. This system went on until the late 1980s when Gorbachev carried out partial housing privatisation, followed by full-scale privatisation in post-Soviet Russia. Still, this did not work out perfectly; although private ownership was developed, there lacked a robust housing market. The lack of measures to support a housing market were the reasons for this, together with ambiguous legislation and crime. Nowadays, housing problems exist, aided by corruption and imperfect competition. The authorities have failed to provide safe, adequate, and affordable housing for all, illustrated in the various types of inappropriate housing and pervasive homelessness. The authorities have neglected this phenomenon, exacerbating social stigma, and putting limits on NGO activity, such as that of *Nochlezhka*. Finally, a survey has hinted that Russian HSE students reject public housing and perceive private housing as freer and more effective. Still, the sample is too limited to be representative of any societal segment. More extensive surveying would be enriching.

All in all, housing in Russia has been troubled for a long time, and the current situation is far from perfection. The problem is that the country is not in the right pathway for change. Even if the "Housing and Urban Areas programme" contains interesting targets, they are not enough. The authorities should place special emphasis on providing improved facilities to the residents of inappropriate housing, offering affordable housing mortgages and loans, and looking after the housing needs of the worse off. For this, a new political and economic orientation is desired, one that steps away from international disputes and focuses on pressing domestic issues. The vast majority of Russians would rather have improved housing than see their country involved in global geopolitical conflicts. However, Putin's cabinet seems to have other priorities. These ambitions must disappear. The Kremlin has an opportunity for legitimisation by providing safe, adequate, and affordable housing for all. And it is more necessary than ever.

8. References

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9. Annexes

9.1 Text annexes

Text annexe 1. Ethnic considerations and the civic national identity of the Russian Federation.

The translation of the Russian Federation into Russian is ‘Rossiyskaya Federatsya’. This name is related to Russia as a political entity, not to the Russian ethnic group. If it were the case, the name of the country would be ‘Russkaya Federatsya’. In this manner, the name of the country considers the presence of diverse ethnic groups; it is an all-inclusive name. This points out that national identity is, on paper, a multinational civic-defined identity than an ethnic-defined one. Yeltsin together with Tishkov, the then leading advisor on nationality policy, tried to encourage the term *Rossiyan* instead of *Russky* to refer to the citizens of the Russian Federation (Rutland, 2015, p. 70), but many citizens dismissed this name, perceiving it as artificial. Instead, ethnic groups such as the Bashkirs or the Buryats may say they are both Russian and Bashkir or Buryat. For ethnic groups which have had separatist claims in the past, such as the Tatars or the Chechens, this may be different, as the traumas of the past, in some cases related to armed conflicts, are still an open wound. In the same manner as the Russian Federation, both the Russian empire and the USSR were multi-ethnic, multicultural, and multi-national political entities in the Russian understanding of the word ‘natsionalnost’.

Text annexe 2. Russia’s hydrocarbon-resources export-based economic model

Russia largely relies on crude petroleum (28%), refined petroleum (17%), and coal (5%) for the majority of its exports (OEC, 2020). Thus, Russia is exposed to shocks in fossil fuel prices. For example, the oil price shocks of 2014 (Dabrowski, 2015), or 2020 demonstrate this. To illustrate, the latter shock has led to the devaluation of the ruble by 20% (Kramer, 2020). Moreover, Russia places the extraction of fossil fuels first to cover its social spending (Seddon, 2020), irremediably putting the country under enormous ecological stress for the sake of its economic functioning. Russia is already suffering from these consequences and will do more in the future, as its warming average exceeds by large the global one, especially in the Arctic regions. In the worst-case scenario, by the end of the century, winter in some regions could be up to 11 degrees warmer (Kozin, 2020b). Muscovites had a taste of this in winter 2020, the warmest in Moscow since records began (AFP, 2020). Meanwhile, Putin has doubted that climate is human-made, questioning the scientific community (DW, 2019).

Furthermore, this hydrocarbon resource export-based economic system favours the presence of massive inequality, as the shares of the companies related to the extraction of natural resources are concentrated in the hands of oligarchs, such as Alekperov, Timchenko or Abramovich, and state-owned enterprises, such as Gazprom. In turn, they have little public accountability (Guriev & Rachinsky, 2005, p. 173; Rutland, 2015, p. 73). Furthermore, this economic system raises the resource curse debate: some scholars theorise that the enormous hydrocarbon resources held in Russia are detrimental for its democratisation and economic liberalisation, as it bolsters corruption, imperfect liberalisation, economic statism and refusal for open politics (Fish, 2005, p. 138). Still, this thesis is contested (Treisman, 2010, p. 18). Instead, Treisman (2010, p. 19) claims that Putin benefited from great support of up to 80% of the population in times of spiking oil crises and economic growth to curtail democratic liberties, entrench his power position and solidify the status quo. The status quo means complying with the demands of the elites that are loyal to the state, the same that many times have stakes in hydrocarbon industries, therefore hindering a change in the economic paradigm. Thus, this shift is an immense challenge for Russia, and there does not seem to be political will to carry out the very needed reforms.

Text annexe 3. The Eurasian Economic Union and the Sustainable Development Goals

The Eurasian Economic Union (EEC) is an international organisation composed of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russian. It aims at regional economic integration and provides free movement of goods, services, capital and labour in the region. The organisations' objectives are the setting of a coordinated and harmonised set of policies determined by the member states. The EEC understands cooperation as a tool for raising the living standards of the member states, the competitiveness of their economies, the ability of cooperation within the Union and the modernisation of the national economies of its member states (EEC, 2020).

In 2017, the Eurasian Economic Commission elaborated a report named "Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the Region of the Eurasian Economic Union." (EEC, 2017). In the "Introduction," it says that the SDGs are implemented not only at the national level but also at the regional level. The EEC understands the SDGs as useful indicators for development. Development is precisely the reason for the existence of the Union, and hence their goals are quite similar. The Union is already bolstering development following the lines of the SDGs, particularly in the regulation of labour migration for more efficient labour distribution, reduction of unemployment and decent working conditions. One goal of the organisation is the

liberalisation of markets and goods through integration to promote healthy competition. Still, we consider that this liberalisation of markets and goods is only regional. An example is the existence of trade between Belarus and Russian and Belarus and the EEAU; while Belarus is still a partially closed country to global competition, based on a partial command economy with fixed prices, high inflation and quota productions (Dabrowski, 2016, p. 5), it trades with other member states. Also, the report stresses as crucial challenges the efficient usage of fuel and the energy capacity of the member states of the Union. It also mentions the exportation of energy resources, stressing the need for innovation and high-tech solutions. The document states that the sustainable development of these energies should be a locomotive for quality modernisation and commitment to global sustainable development. Nevertheless, it makes little emphasis on the usage of green and renewable energies.

Specifically, regarding the Goal 1 “No Poverty,” the report stresses that the major trends in the Union have been the reduction of unemployment rates, the increased expenditures for basic (social) services, the growth in average nominal monetary expenditures per capita and the poverty rate reduction. For Goal 2 “Zero Hunger,” the trends have been the growth of food production per capita, the increased consumption of meat products and the increased wheat sales. For Goal 3 “Good Health and Well-Being,” the report points out the increased life expectancy at birth, the reduced incidence of tuberculosis, and the decline of under-five and neonatal mortality rates in all Member states. For Goal 4 “Quality Education,” both the increases in the proportion of the literate population and the number of students arrived from the other Member States of the Union in higher professional education institutions are noted. For Goal 5 “Gender Equality,” increases in the number of employed women and the proportion of women in governing bodies are mentioned, while there has been a narrowing of the gender gap in unemployment. Then, the report jumps into Goal 8 “Decent Work and Economic Growth,” emphasizing the GDP per capita growth in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) terms and the growth in the employed population. For Goal 9 “Industry Innovation and Infrastructure,” the growth in cargo transportation and turnover is mentioned, along with the increase in passage turnover, gross value added of the sector of manufacturing per capita, and the increasing availability of cellular communications. For Goal 10, there is an increase in mutual investments between Union members. From then on, Goal 11 is lacking any specific assessment, and only Goal 17 “Partnerships for the Goals” is referred, noting a growing percentage of Internet users.

In conclusion, the report stresses the benefits of regional economic integration to achieve the UN SDGs. The latter Goals are important for sustainable and high-quality growth. The EAEU mentions that the four freedoms ‘à la EU’ are an improvement for the well-being of the member

states' citizens and a promoter of economic growth. The legislative framework of the Union incorporates such regulations. Moreover, the report states that unemployment rate in the EEC is not higher than that of the EU and that the level of economic development is aligning between the member states, despite differences in their economies' sizes, and the still present consequences of the 2008 recession. The gap in GDP per capita is also decreasing.

However, the Report is critical with the inability of the Union to cope with Goals 7 “Affordable and Clean Energy,” 8 “Decent Work and Economic Growth” and 9 “Industry, innovation and infrastructure.” All in all, there need to be increased efforts by the member states to implement energy-efficient and resource-saving technologies for a new orientation towards high-tech manufacturing and scientific-intensive products. The implementation of the “2030 Guidelines of Union’s Economic Development” should help in this regard.

Text annexe 4. The Targets of Goal 11

The targets set by the UN for Goal 11 are: Target 11.1: “Safe and affordable housing”; Target 11.2: “Affordable and sustainable transport systems”; Target 11.3: “Inclusive and sustainable urbanization”; Target 11.4: “Protect the worlds cultural and natural heritage”; Target 11.5: “Reduce the adverse effects of natural disasters”; Target 11.6: “Reduce the environmental impacts of cities”; Target 11.7: “Access to safe and inclusive green and public spaces” and Target 11.A: “support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning”; Target 11.B “By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels” and Target 11.C “Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials.” Moreover, each Target has one or two specific indicators.

Text annexe 5. The “Housing and Urban Areas” programme and its goals

The Russian Federation focuses on the development of urban areas with the “Housing and Urban Areas programme” and its goals within the “2024 Development Agenda” (decree “On

National Goals and Strategic Objectives of the Russian Federation through to 2024” from the May 2018 Executive Order). This programme includes several goals, that are the following: a) the supply of affordable housing for middle-income households including increasing opportunities for the purchasing of housing through lower than 8% interest rate mortgages; b) the expansion of development in residential spaces with an annual minimum of 120 million square meters; c) the substantial improvement of urban areas’ quality index by 30% and d) the reduction of the urban areas with adverse environments according to the index mentioned above to the half; e) the easing of the procedures of population’s direct involvement in the design and creation of an appropriate urban environment; f) the surge of the share of residents participating in the decision-making upon urban development by 30%, and g) the persistent reduction of housing facilities that are not appropriated for livelihood.

Text annexe 6. The Russian empire: serfdom, inequality, illiteracy, and social unrest

In 1917, the Russian empire was not in any way close to the development of other empires. Even if it had a notable military might and a vast territory, its socio-economic and political paradigm was old-fashioned compared to that of the British, the French or the German empires. Russia was in many ways, not a modern country, and industrialisation was absent. Also, tsarist policies focused on territorial expansion and international clout, far removed from the population’s concerns, following the Russian national psyche (Ferris-Rotman, 2011). Serfdom is an example of this: while in England, French or Germany had already been abandoned and been a residual practice for centuries, in Russia, serfdom was extensively active until 1861, when the Emancipation Act and the Peasant’s Reform brought a formal end to serfdom in Russia. However, after that, the former serfs were largely forced into informal ways of indentured labour. Freedom came at a heavy price for them; they were de jure free, but their conditions were deplorable, as landlords retained two-thirds of the land and kept the best for themselves. In addition to owning narrow and unprofitable strips of land, free peasants did not have those properties allocated for free; they had to contract mortgages without having any personal savings. These mortgages were provided mainly by the state but also by the landlords from which they have been freed. This system eventually led to debts that became a lifelong burden that was be handed on to their children (Lynch, 2003). Many had to go back to their masters, asking for work to subsist. Still, this flawed system had a positive effect on agricultural productivity, industrial output and peasant nutrition (Markevich & Zhuravskaya, 2018, p. 1113). The old system was worse than the new one. Still, the new one was far from perfection.

Tsarist Russia was a mostly poor country, with a largely rural and illiterate population of about 91 million people in 1917 (TASS, 2019). Bearing in mind the most accurate available estimates, Russia's per adult national income was stagnating at 35-40% of average income in Western Europe between 1870 and World War I (Novokmet, Piketty, & Zucman, 2017, p. 3). Besides, in 1917, the percentage of the population living in rural areas was 80-85% (Simkin, 2020; Varlamov, 2020). For the urban population, in the case of workers, living conditions were dreadful, and working days were of 11.5 hours (BBC, 2020). In 1897, the general literacy rate was estimated at 24% and 19,7% in rural areas. After 20 years, it was of 37,9% for male and 12,5% for women. Contrasting, in the mid-18th century, the male literacy rate in England was 60%, and in 1912, only 2% of the youth in Britain were illiterate (McVeigh, 2000).

Both in rural and urban areas, people lived in low-quality housing, such as wooden barracks with shared kitchens and washrooms. These harsh living conditions, the tsarist political and economic mismanagement, the defeats in the Sino-Japanese War along with the hardships of World War I, and the social unrest were issues simmering under the surface which could not be further stemmed; eventually, the country imploded with the Revolutions of 1905 and 1917. The latter two are, however, frequently analysed from the viewpoint of the urban intelligentsia, but peasants had already seized much of the land before October 1917 (Badcock, 2020), and there is a need of further research on the 'peasant Revolution' (Schlögel, 2000, p. 265).

Text annexe 7. Types of inappropriate housing in Russia

Russia has different housing types that do not comply with contemporary housing standards nor modern housing buildings codes (Krashennokov, 2003a, p. 218, 2003b, p. 6). These are communal flats: apartments used by more than one family that share a kitchen or other facilities; outdated and dilapidated buildings: the first generation of now outdated mass housing in terms of quality of their facilities and construction; shabby houses, old dormitories, and barracks: built mainly after the Great War to provide housing for workers in industrial areas; abandoned or deteriorated houses: structures built in the aftermath of World War Two recognised as unsuitable for a living; and squatter flats: housing stock subleased illegally by owners or tenants to refugees, illegal immigrants, seasonal workers, small sellers and others (Krashennokov, 2003b, pp. 7–9). In the provision g) of the "Housing and Urban Areas programme" the government recognises the existence of such housing facilities and commits to its reduction.

The last two types of inappropriate housing described, abandoned or deteriorated houses and squatter flats, involve illegal activities, which are that of illegal subleasing or occupation of deteriorated housing. The people that occupy these living spaces are excluded from society, falling under the category of concealed homeless people and seasonal or permanent irregular migrant workers, respectively. Still, some deteriorated houses have engineering functioning, such as water and heat, and are occupied by self-sustaining communities or even illegally leashed to families, workshops or even offices (Krashennikov, 2003b, p. 7). Regarding those that live in shabby houses, old dormitories and barracks, they are mainly internal migrants that refuse to leave the city although their conditions are deplorable, and many do not have permanent registration (Krashennikov, 2003b, p. 11).

Text annexe 8. The kommunalkas in Saint Petersburg

In the present, kommunalkas they are dying out, but Saint Petersburg is the city that hosts the most of them (Expatica, 2020). Some have been transformed into other spaces, mainly cultural centres and museums, such as the Ziferburg House or the Museum Anna Akhmatova, where the writer used to live. Another example is the Joseph Brodsky Museum, Nobel Prize of Literature in 1987, which was set to open in May 2020, once the creators of the museum reached an agreement with the other tenants of the kommunalka for the purchase of the whole flat, located in Avenue Liteiny 24 (Kozin, 2020a). As a curiosity, before 1917, in a flat of the same building lived the mother of General Wrangler, who decided to move to a room in the outskirts after receiving her newly allocated flatmates in 1918 (Jahn, 1990, p. 225).

However, many old Leningrad-style kommunalkas still are inhabited places. They are mainly located in the tsarist historical centre near the Admiralty, the Winter Palace, the Griboyedova Canal, and others. They are enormous flats of 200 to 300 square metres with high ceilings of over 4 metres (Yuliev, 2016), which were divided up into several families in the early days of the Revolution (Jahn, 1990, p. 220; Krashennikov, 2003b, p. 218; Varlamov, 2020). This process was accelerated in the late 1920s by the forced processes of industrialisation and collectivisation (Baak, 2019, p. 419). This housing type did not end Khrushchev's mass housing policies and still exist (AFP News Agency, 2018; Expatica, 2020; France 24, 2018; Juri Resheto, 2016). With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the process of housing privatisation, tenants privatised their rooms. In turn, smart business people saw in those apartments the opportunity of buying and reforming them (Expatica, 2020), leading to gentrification. Others

kept functioning on to today. To illustrate, in 1999, 15% of the population of Saint Petersburg lived in *kommunalkas* (Utekhin, 2004, p. 271). While some residents point out that communal living sometimes feels like living in a big family (Berkhead & Bargain, 2020; France 24, 2018), and others call their *kommunalka* a castle or a palace (Yuliev, 2016), living conditions in shared flats usually leave much to be desired and are sometimes atrocious, and in general, people desire to leave (AFP News Agency, 2018; France 24, 2018; French, 1995, p. 137).

In the *kommunalkas* coexistence is difficult, and facilities such as electricity, water, or equipment are of low quality (AFP News Agency, 2018; Berkhead & Bargain, 2020; France 24, 2018; Juri Resheto, 2016). Also, there lacks a notion of responsibility for the cleaning and maintenance of common areas (French, 1995, p. 137). Many times, tenants only taking care one's private room and live in a constant state of alert, making sure that nothing of their property is used by other tenants or stolen (Utekhin, 2004, pp. 272–273). In some cases, the lack of privacy, the constant struggle for balancing intra-*kommunalka* relationships and the effort this demands trigger paranoia and mental health issues (Utekhin, 2004, pp. 274–275).

In Soviet times, pensioners and students inhabited the majority of communal apartments (Ruble, 1990, p. 70). Nowadays, although a few families still live in *kommunalkas*, students and pensioners are still the major shares of residents (Berkhead & Bargain, 2020; Yuliev, 2016). Moreover, migrants from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have moved to rooms in shared apartments (Juri Resheto, 2016), aiming at cutting living costs to send larger remittances back home. For students, low rents are what make *kommunalkas* attractive (Berkhead & Bargain, 2020). Moreover, some pensioners have lived in communal apartments since the times of the siege and are reluctant to leave (Utekhin, 2004, p. 275) All in all, *kommunalkas* are a feature of Soviet Leningrad that have passed onto nowadays Saint Petersburg. The authorities set 2020 as a limit for relocating tenants in new apartments (Expatica, 2020), but this objective is unlikely to be fulfilled. Shared flats are an inappropriate housing type that does not seem to disappear soon.

Out of all inappropriate housing types, *kommunalkas* are the most popular among scholars and people interested in the USSR and Russia, as they are the clearest reminiscence of Soviet housing. For some, their existence perpetuates a romantic conception of communal housing as a fraternity signal for Sovietophiles. Moreover, they are understood as authentic and folkloric; genuinely “Russian” and “Soviet.” The cons of this type of living conditions, such as the fact that communal living was forced, problematic, conflictive, and unpleasant (Baak, 2019, pp. 420–424) is sometimes overlooked. However, many interesting accounts have tried to describe reality. The most extensive work is that of Ilya Utekhin (2004). *Kommunalkas* have been

studied from anthropology, sociology and others, explaining the effects of this housing type and the lack of privacy it implies on the individual and society as a whole. Some have defined them as characteristics of the Soviet microcosmos, even if authorities always aimed at making them disappear (Baak, 2019, p. 419). Likewise, *kommunalkas* can explain other types of housing, such as the necessity of the Russian *dacha* to escape the reality of communal dwelling (Schlögel, 2000, p. 262). Others have explored the bittersweet nostalgia towards *kommunalkas* from a personal point of view (Boym, 1994, pp. 287–291). Last but not least, the symbiosis in the *kommunalkas* and the setup of hierarchy relations in them have been linked to the policies of nationality of the Soviet Union (Slezkine, 1994).

Text annexe 9. Inappropriate housing in Russian films

Inappropriate housing is very present in the Russian legacy and its imaginary, and many cultural manifestations revolve around this idea. Examples are films such as well-known “The Fool” (*Durak*) by Yuri Bykov. In the movie, a studying building engineer discovers that the nine-floor building where he lives with his wife and his parents is about to collapse, as it tilting and has a huge fissure going from the ground up to the ninth and last floor. He is unsuccessful in having a positive effect with his deliberations to the council town decision-making body, as there are complex webs of with personal interest and corruption. The film is named after the main character, considered by his family as a ‘fool,’ as he is threatened to death and eventually beaten up by his neighbours. The main character lives in deplorable conditions with his parents and his girlfriend, showing the inability of the youth to get out of the home of their parents due to low incomes and a scarcity of housing. Likewise, the freshly released “Beanpole” shows the situation in *kommunalkas* in post-World War II. A slow and shocking film, it also treats issues of mental health and post-war traumatic experiences.

Text annexe 10. The Global situation of homelessness

The last UN global homelessness survey was in 2005, and it showed the number of homeless people was of 100 million (HMWC, 2020). In 2017, the estimated amount of homeless people is 150 million, or 2% of the world’s population. Data is difficult and costly to gather, and both authorities and homeless people are likely to underestimate numbers due to institutional shame and social stigma. Likewise, the lack of a systematic definition is a methodological burden.

Likewise, the visibility of homelessness has rocketed, linked to higher exposure and proximity to the political and economic centres with new urbanisation waves, while in rural areas it is less present. Homelessness' causes are complex. Some factors are shortages of affordable housing, privatisation of civic services, housing speculation, unplanned and rapid urbanisation, unemployment, poverty, and family breakdown. Homelessness only worsens off the situation of individuals, sometimes leading to alcoholism, mental illness, or substance abuse. Addiction rates may be high among homeless people, but the majority get addicted only after losing their houses (Nochlezhka, 2018, p. 16). There is a generalised stigma towards homelessness. Public and private enterprises try to constrain the establishment of facilities for the homeless, as they are considered a security concern, burdensome, and bad for business (YaleGlobalOnline, 2017). All in all, homelessness is a generalised feature of urban life that is to stay. Global political inaction is worrying; homelessness does not seem a pressing issue for political institutions.

Text annexe 11. Homelessness in Soviet times

The system of 'propiska' or permanent registration against homelessness emanates from a Soviet law of 1930 which criminalised homelessness and made it illegal. Thus, not having a 'propiska' could mean a couple of years of imprisonment and not being able to find a job. Together with this, unemployment was named as 'parasitism' or refusal to work. Homeless and unemployed people were rather criminals worthy of punishment than people in need of a helping hand (Beigulenko, 1999, p. 224). This goes along with a long-established official tradition of isolating disadvantage groups in Russia (Beigulenko, 1999, p.235). Some convicted homeless people spent up to two decades in labour camps for those petty crimes, along with food theft or the violation of passport laws, while prison sentences were often or more years for repeated violations of registration rules (Beigulenko, 1999, p. 224; Højdestrand, 2002, pp. 57–58). The main reasons for homelessness were prison sentences, as the authorities could confiscate housing if the tenant left for more than 6 months. Hence, this was a lethal loop: imprisonment led to unemployment and homelessness, which ultimately meant a conviction for homelessness or unemployment. Without any family, friends, or social ties, escaping this loop was a chimaera (Højdestrand, 2002, p. 59). Fortunately, this legislation ceased to exist in 1995, and previously, the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1991 decriminalised homelessness (Beigulenko, 1999, p. 225), being hitherto rather a social security concern. Social stigma nevertheless did not disappear.

Text annexe 12. Stances towards homelessness in Moscow

The phobia related to homeless people is notable in Moscow. Official estimates report 15,000 homeless, but independent agencies calculate around 80,000 to 100,000 people. Examples of this social stigma are many. Starting, the NGO Nochlezhka and the activist Daria Alexeyeva had to give up on the establishment of laundry for the homeless due to neighbours complains and threats in Begovaya District (Такие Дела, 2018). Locals in Facebook posts stated they feared "dirty," "contagious" and "antisocial" homeless people spreading tuberculosis and crime, and many were suspicious of the aims of the organisers (Daria Litvinova, 2018; Kuzina & Coalson, 2019). This is mainly due to general distrust towards any kind of organisation in the aftermath of the Wild Nineties. When Nochlezhka opened a homeless shelter in Moscow, a city deputy, Zoya Adrianova, sent a letter to President of the Russian Federation warning of the organisation's foreign backing and the spread of disease (Kozin, 2019b). Foreign backing is a common accusation in a highly nationalist political arena. Thus, there is an institutional burden for tackling homelessness. To illustrate, a homeless shelter was moved due to the World Cup in 2019 but was never relocated (Perera, 2019). Moreover, regarding the coronavirus lockdown, no measures have been taken to ease the homeless people's situation (Berkhead, 2020).

Text annexe 13. Nochlezhka2018 report's data regarding the number of people helped in 2018

In 2018 Nochlezhka helped 3,211 people get off the streets, treating 600 persons per day. Social workers provided 8,269 consultations, and lawyers offered a total of 857 meetings. The permanent shelter provided accommodation for 145 people, and a remarkable 51% now have a permanent home. With paradigmatic transparency, the NGO provides the shelter's operation costs, with an annual cost of around 120.000 €. Such data is provided for all projects. Moreover, the Night Bus served the needs of 2,955 people, handed out 17,683 hot meals and examined 1,428 people. Furthermore, 3,485 people used their free launderette, and their shelters accommodated 1,299 people, who spent a combined of 13,279 nights in them. In total, Nochlezhka aided 9,157 people with the effort of 409 volunteers, the permanent work of 47 employees, and the help of 52 business partners.

9.2 The interview with Daniil Kramorov, a staff member of the NGO Nochlezhka

This interview explores the activity of Nochlezhka, the most important homelessness-related NGO in Saint Petersburg and Russia. Daniil Kramorov is the interviewee, who has been working in Nochlezhka for already two years and a half and was a volunteer before that. At this moment, he is the head of the Resource Mobilisation Department and Public Relations. A native inhabitant of the central Petrogradsky District in Saint Petersburg, Kramorov studied physics in the SPbPU, the Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University. After completing his studies, he worked as a programmer in an enterprise, while volunteering at Nochlezhka. After some time, the director of Nochlezhka offered him a job as a volunteer coordinator in the NGO, and Danil Kramorov accepted, aiming at helping people and feeding his soul. Nowadays, he is proud and happy about being a part of Nochlezhka.

The interview is structured around 4 issues. Firstly, we touch upon the gendered dimension of homelessness in Saint Petersburg, as 81% of homeless people are men. Secondly, we refer to the completion of the projects that were described in the 2018 report. Among these, there are shower facilities in the Kalinsky District or the rehab programme. Thirdly, we chat about the bureaucratic constraints of the government upon NGO activity and the reasons for this. Fourthly and lastly, we examine differences in public support for Nochlezhka's activities between Saint Petersburg and Moscow and the reasons for it. To end, Daniil Kramorov is fluent in Spanish, as he spent several weeks in Spain in different language exchanges. Therefore, he preferred having the interview in this language rather than in Spanish. Thus, the transcription that follows is written in Spanish, after receiving the consent of my supervisor, Teresa Segura García. Also, it is an 'edited transcription,' aiming at making the interview clear and readable. Hence, it omits grammar errors and redundant sentences. It follows the guidelines of TheMole (2019) and New Media Services (2020). This interview can be accessed in video format on Youtube¹.

Aris Dougàs: El reportaje de Nochlezhka de 2018 muestra que el 81% de las personas sin hogar son hombres. ¿Cuáles son las razones para esto?

Daniil Kramorov: Es difícil de decir, ya que no sabemos exactamente la razón por la que hay tantos hombres en la calle. Hay algunas variantes que debemos tener en cuenta. La primera es la migración masculina desde ciudades más pequeñas a San Petersburgo o a Moscú, con el objetivo de encontrar trabajo. Segundo, las mujeres suelen tener más contactos a la hora de

¹ See (Kramorov, 2020) for the link to the interview.

pedir ayuda. Por ejemplo, las mujeres tienen más amigos o familiares que les pueden ayudar. Y, por último, muchos hombres no suelen pedir ayuda. Aunque no está del todo claro, me parece que estas variables pueden explicar un poco la situación.

Aris Dougàs: Muy interesante. Si no me equivoco, la migración a las grandes ciudades proviene no solamente de las ciudades pequeñas de Rusia, sino que también de países Tayikistán, Uzbekistán o Kirguistán.

Daniil Kramorov: Sí, pero es importante saber que la mayoría de gente sin hogar tienen nacionalidad rusa o de países muy cercanos, como Ucrania o Bielorrusia. En general, casi todas las personas sin hogar son rusos. Esto difiere de la situación en Europa y en España, donde muchas de las personas sin hogar son migrantes. En Rusia no sabemos aún por qué, pero es muy interesante, sí.

Aris Dougàs: En el informe de 2018 se mencionan unos nuevos proyectos, como una instalación de duchas en el distrito de Kalinsky, una tienda climatizada abierta todo el año para las personas sin hogar en el distrito de Frunzensky, o un nuevo programa de rehabilitación para personas con adicciones, retomando uno que ya había existido. ¿Habéis conseguido llegar a cabo todos estos proyectos?

Daniil Kramorov: Sí, pero algunos proyectos han sido modificados. Por ejemplo, el programa de rehabilitación funciona de manera distinta. Antes, este programa estaba ubicado en nuestro edificio general, con el resto de gente. Pero entendimos que el programa de rehabilitación es un poco diferente al resto de proyectos. La gente con adicciones necesita otro tipo de ayuda y por eso el proyecto está bastante aislado del resto. Estas personas viven en una parte del edificio separada, con la ayuda de psicólogos, trabajadores sociales y los coordinadores del proyecto. En general, todos los proyectos funcionan, pero algunas de otra manera.

Aris Dougàs: Excelente. Personalmente, creo que las duchas en Kalinsky son una gran idea.

Daniil Kramorov: Sí, es un proyecto poco común pero muy interesante. Aun así, es un poco difícil porque tuvimos que esperar alrededor de tres años para poder inaugurarlos, y esto pasa con otros proyectos. A veces ya tenemos las instalaciones listas, pero no podemos empezar los proyectos. Esto pasa porque casi todo lo que hacemos en la ciudad tiene que ser discutido con el gobierno y después aprobado por las autoridades.

Aris Dougàs: En relación con esto, has dicho que el gobierno pone una serie de, digamos, trabas burocráticas ¿Cómo percibes el ambiente para las ONGs en Rusia? ¿Cómo crees que es el sistema? ¿Crees que el ser una ONG apolítica os beneficia?

Daniil Kramorov: El ambiente es complicado porque parece que, al gobierno, no sé por qué, le es más fácil hacer ver que los problemas no existen. Creo que es porque, si ellos nos ayudan, reconocen que el problema existe y que no están haciendo nada para solucionarlo. Por eso, para el gobierno es más fácil hacer la vista gorda. Así, nosotros afrontamos los problemas que el gobierno no reconoce. Por ejemplo, hay problema un muy claro, que es que si no tienes documentos o pasaporte en Rusia significa que básicamente no puedes beneficiarte de ningún servicio social. Uno de los casos más curiosos es el de los albergues que el gobierno proporciona para alojar a las personas sin hogar en cada barrio. El problema es que, si quieres dormir en este lugar, tienes que tener un documento que certifique que eres una persona sin hogar. Para recibirlo, se tiene que ir con el pasaporte a las oficinas del estado. Así, si no tienes pasaporte no puedes dicho documento y no puedes dormir en los alojamientos para las personas sin hogar.

Aris Dougàs: Entiendo. Esto va en línea con lo que había leído, donde se desprende que, en el 2010, la Duma había declarado que había 64.000 personas sin hogar, pero que hay estimaciones que calculan que hay entre 2 y 3 millones de personas sin hogar en Rusia. ¿Crees que hay una ideología política detrás de esto?

Daniil Kramorov: No lo sé. En Rusia parece que se piensa que todos los que viven en la calle es porque quieren vivir calle o porque hicieron algo mal para acabar en la calle, y que por eso no hay razón para ayudarlos. Me parece que este es el primer problema. El segundo, es que, si hablamos sobre las ayudas sociales de gobierno, hay que entender que el sistema no funciona. Por ejemplo, cuando el gobierno trata con las personas sin hogar, se puede percibir que hay un montón de partes del sistema que no funcionan, y que solventarlas sería un grandísimo trabajo. Parece que el gobierno entiende la magnitud de este trabajo, y no tienen los recursos para enfrentarse a este reto, y quizás tampoco la voluntad de hacerlo. Otro ejemplo es que el gobierno no puede proveer alojamiento para los jóvenes adultos que salen de los orfanatos, y por culpa de ello, muchos acabar en la calle. El gobierno tendría que trabajar con ellos. La misma situación pasa con las personas con adicciones, que el gobierno ignora. Hay un montón de causas por las que la gente acaba en la calle y que el gobierno debería tratar.

Aris Dougàs: Es interesante ver cómo el Gobierno dificulta la acción de las ONGs.

Daniil Kramorov: Sí, es así en todos los niveles. Personalmente, no puedo entender por qué lo hacen, puesto que nosotros en general nosotros hacemos el trabajo que tendrían que hacer ellos, y ellos tendrían que querer ayudarnos. ¿Por qué ellos no lo hacen? No lo sé.

Aris Dougàs: Yo tampoco lo acabo de entender. He estado leyendo bastante sobre Nochlezhka: vuestros informes, varios artículos de periódicos, entre ellos algunos del *The Moscow Times*. Hay un periodista, Daniel Kostin, que dice que habéis tenido mucho éxito en San Petersburgo, y que habéis conseguido cambiar la forma en que la gente piensa sobre Nochlezhka y sobre la gente sin hogar en San Petersburgo. Por otro lado, en Moscú está siendo más difícil, ya que hemos visto como los moscovitas han estado en contra de programas como la instalación de lavadoras para personas sin hogar. ¿Cómo crees que habéis conseguido cambiar las percepciones en San Petersburgo? ¿Fue difícil al principio? ¿Creéis que conseguiréis cambiar las percepciones sobre Nochlezhka en Moscú?

Daniil Kramorov: Cuando hablamos de las diferencias entre la gente en San Petersburgo y en Moscú, no creo que haya ninguna real. En San Petersburgo, la gente en general se ha acostumbrado a la labor de Nochlezhka. Además, nosotros hacemos lo máximo posible para tratar este problema social: participamos en eventos y festivales, hacemos cosas en las calles para mostrar nuestro trabajo, charlamos con la gente... Además, cuando Nochlezhka nació en 1990, me parece que, en general, toda la gente vivía bastante mal, y para los habitantes era bastante normal que se ofreciera ayuda para la gente que no tenía nada. Por ejemplo, si alguien tenía pan, lo compartía con los otros. Crecer en una ciudad donde existe esta idea creo que es algo más fácil. Cuando hablamos sobre Moscú, el problema es que no hay organización que haya estado trabajado durante 30 años, que muestre su trabajo de manera tan transparente y que explique la situación de las personas sin hogar. Me parece que es una cuestión de tiempo.

Aris Dougàs: ¿Así, confías que la situación en Moscú poco a poco va a mejorar?

Daniil Kramorov: Yo creo que sí, y además hay otro factor también bastante interesante. Moscú, ha sido históricamente más activo a nivel social. Por ejemplo, en San Petersburgo casi no hay organizaciones sociales basadas en la solidaridad. En Moscú, la gente trabaja en grupos más pequeños y localizados en barrios, y esta organización parece que funciona. La gente ve que hay un problema y deciden hacer algo para solucionarlo. En relación con Nochlezhka, parece que algunos moscovitas muestran rechazo respecto a nuestra actividad, y prefieren hacer cosas por su cuenta para mejorar sus barrios. Es otro modelo, una idea muy bonita. Ellos están

más acostumbrados a organizarse para resolver los problemas que ellos se encuentran en su barrio.

Aris Dougàs: ¿Y por qué es más fácil organizarse en Moscú que en San Petersburgo?

Daniil Kramorov: No sé. Me parece que no es que sea más fácil organizarse en Moscú, sino que lo que pasa en el resto de Rusia siempre pasa primero en Moscú. Creo que es un ejemplo de modelo de sociedad civil donde los habitantes resuelven solos sus problemas, sin gobiernos ni nada.

Aris Dougàs: Digamos, pues que, en Moscú, van algo más avanzados y que ha surgido una red de iniciativas locales de la sociedad civil donde la gente se junta a nivel más local para resolver sus problemas. Así, han visto a Nochlezhka como una oenegé más formal que tiene un sistema de trabajo más o más profesionalizado y no han dejado que la organización actúe allí.

Daniil Kramorov: Sí, es verdad.

Aris Dougàs: Aun así, creo que hay que tener en cuenta que sois una oenegé ejemplar. Sois muy transparentes, puesto que publica sueldos, gastos... hacéis público todo. Para mí es difícil no tener confianza en Nochlezhka.

Daniil Kramorov: El problema es que, en este momento, los detractores de Nochlezhka en Moscú no tienen suficiente información sobre la gente sin hogar ni sobre Nochlezhka. En general, piensan que las personas sin hogar son criminales, enfermos, etc., priorizando su comodidad y conveniencia. Me parece que esto absolutamente normal; es habitual tener un poco de miedo respecto a lo que es nuevo. Nosotros entendemos que es un proceso difícil. Por eso, cuando tratamos de abrir proyectos en Moscú, primero intentamos hablar con los vecinos de la zona, aunque no estamos obligados a hacerlo. Aun así, pensamos que es muy importante exponer nuestros proyectos, explicar nuestra metodología de trabajo y mostrar que las personas sin hogar no son monstruos y que solo personas con problemas. Creemos que todo esto es muy importante. En este caso, la gente que está en contra de Nochlezhka no quieren escuchar. Ellos tienen su propia opinión y creen es que queremos empeorar la vida en sus barrios.

Aris Dougàs: Estuve leyendo artículos y estoy de acuerdo. Creo que hay una visión sobre las personas sin hogar que está basada en un estereotipo negativo.

Daniil Kramorov: Honestamente, creo que esto no es un problema solo de Rusia o de Moscú, sino que es un problema global. Los vecinos dicen que las organizaciones hacen un trabajo muy

importante y que hay que ayudar a las personas sin hogar. Aun así, algunos están en contra de que se lleven actividades para ayudarlos en su barrio. Es decir, están en favor de trabajar con las personas sin hogar, pero no en su barrio, puesto que existe un miedo respecto a ellos.

Aris Dougàs: Muy bien. Me parece que podemos dar por terminada la entrevista. Ha sido muy enriquecedor hablar contigo y te lo agradezco mucho. Gracias Daniil Kramorov.

9.3 Local and international news of interest for this thesis

In this subsection of the annexes, I attach news of interest regarding my thesis. These are both local and international news, written in English and of short extension. Therefore, local articles and news written in Russian have been excluded. The majority are news from recent years, although the first one is an original piece from 1990. They all can be found online. The links to the pieces can be found at the end of the articles. I have only chosen among articles that appear in the thesis' body. Finally, this is just a short sample of five news, sorted out chronologically.

Gorbachev Decrees Peoples' Right to Own Land for Private Homes

MOSCOW (AP) _ President Mikhail S. Gorbachev on Saturday called for legalizing private ownership of homes and residential lots, challenging a 73-year-old Communist law that stipulates state ownership of all such property. The official Tass news agency said he made the proposal in an attempt to solve the nation's critical shortage of housing.

All Soviet land is now owned by the state, under one of the strongest tenets of Communism. However, Soviet leaders have already approved private ownership of buildings, equipment and factories. Gorbachev's decree instructed the government to formulate new measures by Sept. 1 that would double the pace of building individual homes and apartments.

Tass said Gorbachev ordered a housing plan that "removes the whole number of restrictions on building individual housing in the Soviet Union, grants the right to own and inherit housing and the plots on which it is built." The housing plan would overturn the Land Decree of 1917 that nationalized all private land holdings. The law was the precursor to dictator Josef Stalin's massive collectivization of farms in the 1930s. The collectivization cost of millions of lives through starvation, and many peasants who resisted were sent to forced labor camps.

Gorbachev's decree Saturday called for at least 30 million new apartments and houses by the year 2000 to meet Gorbachev's pledge of individual dwellings for all Soviets by the end of the century. "The seriousness of the housing problem has not lessened, " the decree said. "It is obvious that solving the housing problem with current methods is impossible." Gorbachev's call-to-action urged legislation allowing individual bank loans for housing construction, construction of apartments for immediate sale, and a sharp increase in the availability of construction materials, now virtually unavailable to individuals because they are allocated to government agencies.

Gorbachev's decree said there have been recent positive shifts in solving the housing problems, but the problem is still acute. "Nearly 4.5 million families live in housing with less than five square meters (yards) per person, " it said. Five square meters is about half the size of a small Western bedroom. The long-range plan is to develop a housing market in which every family can choose whether it wants an apartment or a house, Gorbachev's decree said. It did not spell out whether individuals would have the right to sell property purchased from the government, but it warned against speculation, the Soviet term for selling at a profit.

The Supreme Soviet legislature in March approved private ownership of buildings, equipment and factories. But under Gorbachev's direction, it rejected legalizing private ownership of land. Just a month later, Gorbachev's advisory board was reported to be reconsidering that policy. At the time, Gorbachev spokesman Arkady Maslennikov told a news conference that economists believed the widespread sale of apartments, and possibly land, could help soak up a vast pool of billions of rubles in private bank accounts and under mattresses, for which there are no goods to buy.

Author: John Iams

Media outlet: Associated Press News

Date of publication: 20 May 1990

Link to the article: <https://apnews.com/3035869d97cf10c435d3b234a6c3647d>

Moscow Domestic Violence Appeals Skyrocket After Decriminalization Law

Domestic violence complaints have shot up in Moscow since Russia adopted a law decriminalizing abuse in the family last year, said the city's human rights ombudswoman.

The 2017 law scraps prison sentences for “first-time” abusers whose beatings result in “minor harm” such as small abrasions, bruises, superficial wounds, and soft-tissue damage. Supporters say the law is needed for parents to discipline children.

“Looking at statistics of appeals, we saw that after the law decriminalizing beatings was passed, the number of complaints on this issue increased significantly,” Moscow ombudswoman Tatyana Potyayeva was quoted as saying by state-run RIA Novosti news agency Monday.

Women, children, and the elderly are most likely to file complaints of familial abuse, Potyayeva said. Familial abuse appeals have grown by 27 percent since 2016 and make up over half of all physical abuse complaints, state-run TASS news agency reported, citing the ombudswoman’s office.

Author: The Moscow Times

Media outlet: The Moscow Times

Date of publication: 24 April 2018

Link to the article: <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2018/04/24/moscow-domestic-violence-appeals-skyrocket-after-decriminalization-law-a61247>

Decriminalization of Domestic Violence Was a 'Mistake,' Russian Official Admits

Russia’s top human rights official has called the country’s 2017 decision to adopt a law that decriminalizes domestic abuse “a mistake.”

In 2017, President Vladimir Putin signed a law that scrapped prison sentences for first-time abusers whose beatings result in “minor harm,” such as small abrasions, bruises and superficial wounds. Since the law was adopted, human rights activists say that domestic violence complaints have skyrocketed, negatively impacting the situation for women in Russia and giving abusers a sense of impunity.

“I believe that decriminalization was a mistake and we need to adopt a law to combat domestic abuse,” Russia's Human Rights Ombudswoman Tatyana Moskalkova said at a rights conference on Monday.

"Today, a person who is in the family space is not protected from family members who do harm unto them without it being considered a crime," Moskalkova was cited as saying by the state-run RIA Novosti news agency.

Russia's top human rights official had earlier spoken out in favor of the decriminalization of domestic violence.

Author: The Moscow Times

Media outlet: The Moscow Times

Date of publication: 3 December 2018

Link to the article: <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2018/12/03/decriminalization-domestic-violence-was-mistake-russian-official-admits-a63688>

21M Russians Live in Poverty, Official Data Says

The number of Russians living below the poverty line has grown by half a million since early 2018, according to official data.

Western sanctions and falling oil prices over the past five years have led to a decline in real incomes and a rise in consumer prices. President Vladimir Putin is pursuing a national program on drastically reducing poverty by the time his term ends in 2024, aiming for 12% poverty rates this year.

Russia's poverty rates totaled 14.3%, or 20.9 million people, in January-March 2019, according to Russia's State Statistics Service (Rosstat). That's up from 13.9%, or 20.4 million people, in January-March 2018.

"If the subsistence minimum grew commensurately with inflation, the share of the population with incomes below the subsistence minimum would remain unchanged," Rosstat said.

Authorities set the minimum subsistence level for January-March at 10,753 rubles (\$169), up from 10,038 rubles (\$158) the previous year.

"When inflationary pressure increases, it's the poor who suffer in the first place," Alfa Bank chief economist Natalya Orlova told RBC.

In total, 18.4 million Russians, or 12.6% of the population, lived below the poverty line in 2018, Rosstat said.

Author: The Moscow Times

Media outlet: The Moscow Times

Date of publication: July 30, 2019

Link to the article: <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/07/30/21m-russians-live-in-poverty-official-data-says-a66618>

Why does Russia say protests are illegal?

Police detain hundreds of protesters rallying against a ban on opposition candidates for Moscow elections.

It is one of the biggest security crackdowns seen in Russia in many years. An independent monitoring group says more than 800 protesters were detained on Saturday. The week before, the figure was almost 1,400. A leading opponent of President Vladimir Putin, Alexei Navalny, was jailed.

Russians are angry at the exclusion of some candidates from next month's city elections in Moscow. The council, controlled by the pro-Kremlin United Russia party, is responsible for a large municipal budget.

The vote comes at a time when Putin's approval rating has dropped following discontent over the economy and falling incomes, although it is still high at more than 60 percent. So, why is the government taking such a hard stance against the protesters, and warning their demonstrations are illegal

Author: Al Jazeera News

Media outlet: Al Jazeera

Date of publication: 4 August 2019

Link to the article: <https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/insidestory/2019/08/russia-protests-illegal-190804195555013.html>

9.4 Figures

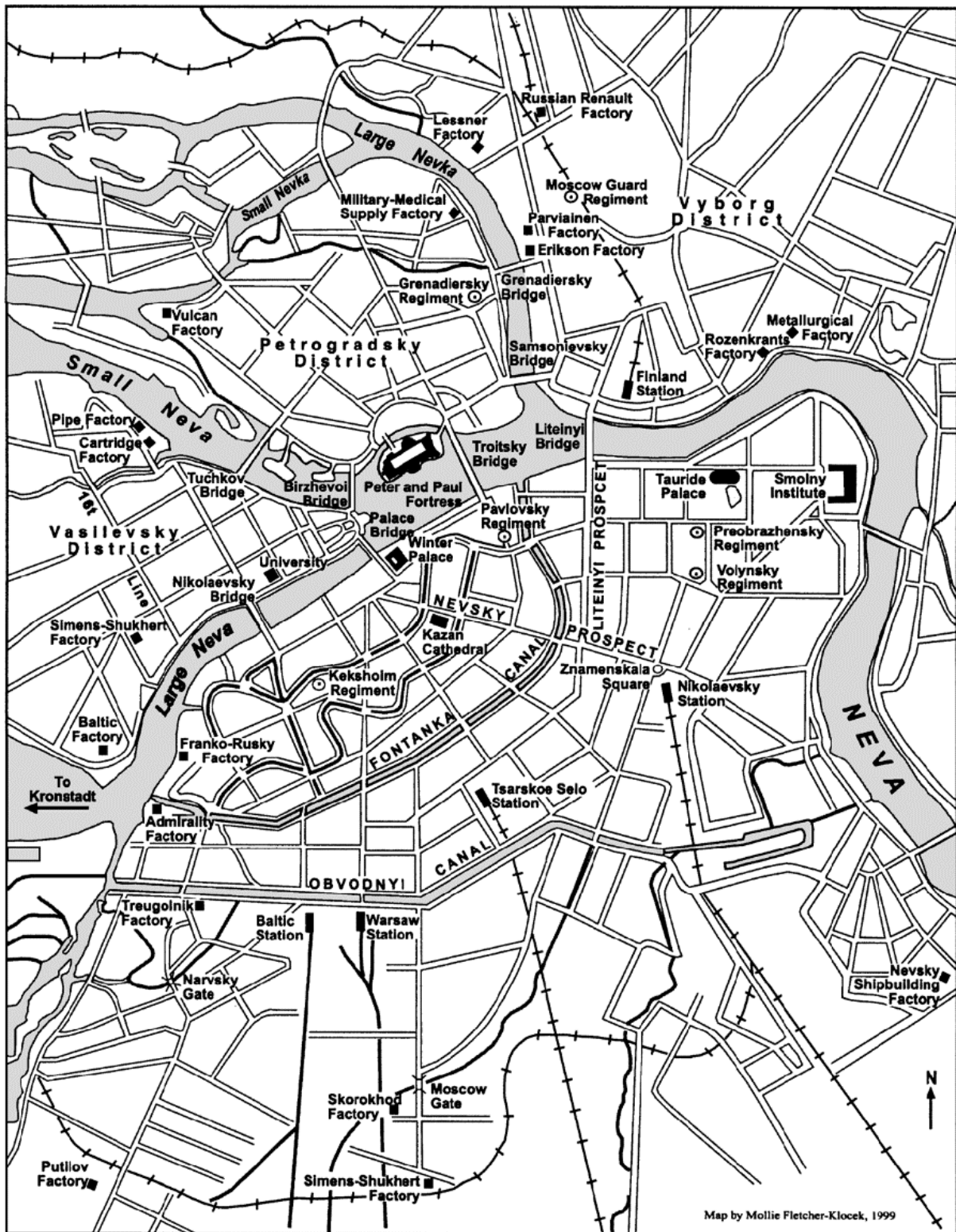


Figure 1. Petrograd 1917, 2000. Near the Admiralty and the Winter Palace lived the aristocracy, and also in the Avenues Nevsky, Ligovsky or Litevsky. Ordinary government officials, bureaucrats, intellectuals, and high-skilled workers lived on the other side of the Neva, in the Vasilevsky and Petrogradsky Districts. The rest of workers lived in the upper, eastern, and southern districts, such as the Vyborg District and below the Obvodnyi Canal. Map by Mollie Fletcher-Klocek (Smith, 2004)



Figure 2. Kitchen in a communal apartment, unknown date. *The kitchen was big, but it was used for different functions: cooking, eating, but also hanging clothes.* Photo by Nikolay Nikitin/TASS (Manaev, 2018).



Figure 3. Kitchen in a communal flat in Moscow, unknown date. *Different families used the kitchen at the same time.* Photo by Oleg Ivanov/TASS (Guzeva, 2018).



Figure 4. Municipal apartment in Moscow, 1983. Soviet childhood. *In the kommunalkas, different generations with different needs had to coexist.* Photo by Pavel Kassin (Kassin, 1983).



Figure 5. Russian phaeton "ZIS-110B" against the background of the main building of Moscow State University on Sparrow Hills, Moscow, 1956. *A photo of the mid-1950s shows the monumental main building of Moscow State University.* Photo by Jacques Dupaquier (Takomm, 2011).



Figure 6. Residential house on Kudrinskaya Square, Moscow, 1956. *One of Stalin's 'Seven Sisters' or high-rises, built in the style of Soviet Classicism.* Photo by Jacques Dupaquier (Takomm, 2011).



Figure 7. Архитектура времени, April 2020. *Joseph Stalin holding the Moscow State University, a colossal building of Soviet Classicism.* Mashup by the_inversion_of_colors (@the_inversion_of_colors, 2020).



Figure 8. Five-storey Khrushchyovkas in the district of Frunzensky, Saint Petersburg, May 2020. *A great part of this district is made up of these identical Khrushchyovkas, making the landscape monotonous.* Own photo.



Figure 9. Five-storey Khrushchyovka in the district of Frunzensky, Saint Petersburg, May 2020. *Some of the existing Khrushchyovkas are damaged and works are much needed.* Own photo.



Figure 10. Архитектура времени, April 2020. *Nikita Khrushchev holding a five-storey 'Khrushchyovka'.*
Mashup by the_inversion_of_colors (@the_inversion_of_colors, 2020).



Figure 11. Nine-storey Brezhnevka in the district of Frunzensky, Saint Petersburg, May 2020. *This kind of constructions was built in the mandate of Brezhnev, and thus, they were baptised after him.* Own photo.



Figure 12. Nine-storey Brezhnevka in the district of Frunzensky, Saint Petersburg, May 2020. *Following the aesthetical example of Khrushchyovkas, Brezhnevkas were minimalistic and based on the repetition of prefabricated modules.* Own photo.

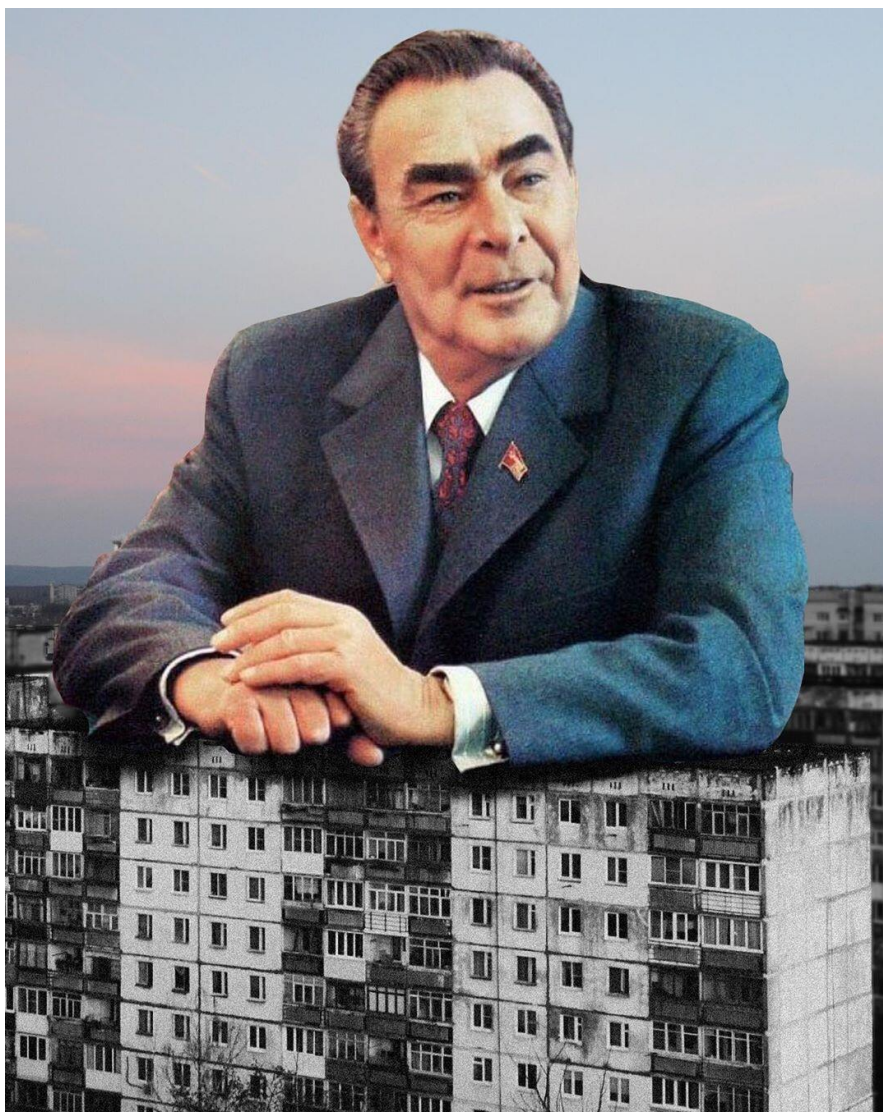


Figure 13. Архитектура времени, 2020. *Leonid Brezhnev leaning on a 'Brezhnevka', probably a nine-storey construction.* Mashup by the_inversion_of_colors (@the_inversion_of_colors, 2020)



Figure 14. Ленинград. Дом Советов, 1940. *The House of the Soviets built in the 1930s in the new Stalinist urban centre in Moskovsky Avenue.* Photo by N. Trotsky (Novosibdom.ru, n.d.).



Figure 15. Nochlezhka's shelter for homeless people in the district of Frunzensky, Saint Petersburg, June 2020. Homeless people wait in a line to get into the homeless shelter that opens from 8 PM to 8 AM. Own Photo.



Figure 16. Inside of Nochlezhka's shelter for homeless people in the district of Frunzensky, Saint Petersburg, June 2020. The interior of the shelter for homeless people. Hygienic conditions are maintained, and the service Nochlezhka offers is remarkable. Own photo.