

6. URBAN CENTRES AND THE COUNTRYSIDE

Urban system

In the early 20th century the level of **urbanization** was far lower in Belarus than in Russia or in Ukraine (Ioffe, G. 2004). In the history of Belarus, it is possible to identify different stages of socio-economic development that have influenced urbanization. The first stage – at the time of the agricultural civilization (9th–11th centuries) – saw the emergence of such towns as Polack (862), Viciebsk (947), Turaŭ (980), and Zaslauŭje (985). Those ancient towns played an important political role in Europe and were capitals of such principalities as Polack and Turaŭ. The next stage encompassed the formation of urban settlements during the Early Middle Ages (12th–13th centuries). Most of towns and villages emerged and developed at the time of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Rzeczpospolita, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1569–1795), and the Russian Empire (1795–1917). The interwar period (1918–1941) saw rather modest socialist urban development (Krasovsky, K. 2004).

During the Second World War, 209 towns, 9,200 villages, thousands of industrial plants and 80% of residential dwellings were destroyed in Belarus, and so the first post-war decade was a time of reconstruction. It was only then that urbanization began to accelerate, a process caused by industrialization and the movement of people to the towns. The fastest rates of population growth were recorded in Minsk, in the major regional centres (Hrodna, Homieĺ etc.) and in the major industrial centres (Žlobin, Rahačoŭ, Salihorsk etc.) (*Table 6.1*). The urban population boom in Belarus outstripped even the high rate of urbanization recorded in the entire Soviet Union. Some larger villages became towns and were integrated into the urban network. With the appearance of non-agricultural villages, a differentiation of rural settlements began to occur. Until the 1960s, urban development in Belarus was gov-

erned by the grouping together of major industrial facilities in the largest cities. For this reason, industry and population growth became concentrated almost exclusively in the major cities.

From the late 1960s, the focus switched to the establishment of new “Soviet” towns around the developing industrial and energy centres (Navapolack, Salihorsk and Svietlahorsk). Educational institutions and research and development departments were relocated to small and medium-sized towns, fostering the development of such towns as Žodzina, Dzieržynsk and Lahojsk. Beginning in the 1960s, the emphasis in Belarusian urban planning fell on the newly established compact residential areas, the so-called *mikroraions* (large housing estates), where space could be used more efficiently and where the separation of industrial and residential areas was prioritized. The plans often failed, however, to optimize solutions for the local population and economy. Moreover, their realization was unrealistic and architectural standards tended to slip.

It was only in the mid-1970s that the urbanization rate in Belarus reached 50%. By 2010, however, with an urbanization rate of 75%, Belarus had overtaken both Ukraine and Russia. In the 1960s, the urban population grew at a rate of 4–5% per year, and most of this growth took place in Minsk (*Figure 6.1*). Minsk not only acted as a motor for the urban population explosion in Belarus; it also became the fastest-growing capital city in the Soviet Union (Ioffe, G. 2004). In 1939, there were 237,500 people living in Minsk. In the initial post-war decades, the city’s population doubled. By 1972, it had reached the one million (Polskij, S.A. 1976). Between 1970 and 2009, the city’s population doubled once again. In terms of the dynamics and rate of urbanization, the level of growth was unprecedented (*Box 6.1*).

After 1989, the urbanization rate slowed until the mid-2000s when the process accelerated once more. Since 1989, the average population of most

Table 6.1 Largest urban centres of Belarus (1926, 1939, 1959, 1989, 2009)

Cities 1926	Thousand inhabitants	Cities 1939	Thousand inhabitants	Cities 1959	Thousand inhabitants	Cities 1989	Thousand inhabitants	Cities 2009	Thousand inhabitants
Minsk	124	Minsk	239	Minsk	516	Minsk	1589	Minsk	1814
Viciebsk	91	Viciebsk	167	Homieĺ	168	Homieĺ	501	Homieĺ	477
Homieĺ	83	Homieĺ	144	Viciebsk	148	Mahilioŭ	359	Mahilioŭ	357
Mahilioŭ	47	Mahilioŭ	99	Mahilioŭ	122	Viciebsk	350	Viciebsk	346
Babrujsk	39	Babrujsk	84	Babrujsk	98	Hrodna	271	Hrodna	322
Hrodna	35	Orša	54	Brest	74	Brest	258	Brest	305
Brest	30	Hrodna	50	Hrodna	73	Babrujsk	221	Babrujsk	215
Baranavičy	28	Barysaŭ	49	Orša	65	Baranavičy	159	Baranavičy	167
Barysaŭ	26	Brest	41	Barysaŭ	59	Barysaŭ	144	Barysaŭ	148
Pinsk	23	Pinsk	32	Baranavičy	58	Orša	123	Pinsk	129
Orša	21	Rečyca	30	Polack	45	Pinsk	117	Orša	118
Polack	21	Baranavičy	27	Pinsk	42	Mazyr	100	Mazyr	108
Rečyca	16	Polack	24	Rečyca	31	Salihorsk	93	Salihorsk	102
Sluck	14	Lida	19	Lida	29	Navapolack	93	Navapolack	98
Žlobin	11	Mazyr	17	Maladzečna	28	Maladzečna	92	Lida	97
Rahacaŭ	10	Slonim	16	Mazyr	26	Lida	91	Maladzečna	95
Haradok	6	Vaŭkavysk	15	Sluck	23	Polack	77	Polack	82
		Haradok	12	Žlobin	19	Svietlahorsk	70	Žlobin	76
		Kobryn	10	Kryčaŭ	19	Rečyca	69	Svietlahorsk	70
		Maladzečna	7	Vaŭkavysk	18	Sluck	58	Rečyca	65
				Slonim	18	Žlobin	57	Žodzina	62
				Asipovičy	16	Žodzina	54	Sluck	62
				Horki	15	Slonim	46	Kobryn	51
						Kobryn	45	Slonim	49
						Kalinkavičy	41	Vaŭkavysk	47

Source: <http://www.populstat.info/>

http://www.belstat.gov.by/ofitsialnaya-statistika/solialnaya-sfera/demografiya_2/metodologiya-otvetstvennye-za-informatsionnoe-s_2/

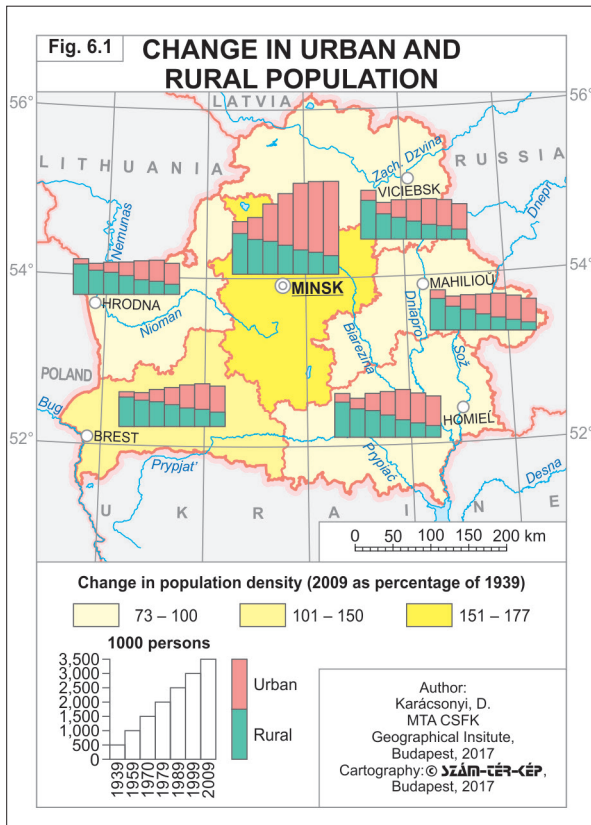
http://demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/ussr59_reg2.php

cities has increased by between 10% and 25%. Some areas (small towns, towns in the Chernobyl zone and cities on the socio-economic periphery) have seen a fall in population. In the 1990s, there were population declines in the three major cities of eastern Belarus – Viciebsk, Mahilioŭ and Homieĺ (Figures 6.2, 6.3, 6.4). In the 2000s, however, the population of these major towns began to increase once more. Still, since 1989, the fastest growth has been recorded in Brest and Hrodna, two cities at the country's western gateway.

Despite a slowdown in population growth in the urban centres, the urbanization rate (Figures 6.5, 6.6) increased after 1989. This was because the slowdown was compensated for by an even faster decline in the rural population. Urbanization's centre of gravity shifted to a degree from the larger cities to provincial areas: in rural areas affected by depopulation, small towns were relatively

more able than villages to retain their position. In some peripheral areas, the urbanization rate increased after 1990 by as much as 20 percentage points. Meanwhile, in the Minsk agglomeration the urbanization rate declined from the 1990s onwards, owing to suburbanization.

Over the past 12 years the population of Minsk has increased by a further half million. In 2000, 1,683,200 people were living in the capital city, whereas the population is rapidly approaching 2 million people (1,893,100 in 2012), or 20% of the country's total population and 26% of its urban population. The Minsk metropolitan area accounts for 37.2% of Belarus's total urban population. This trend will continue in the future, whereby – in consequence of the primate city effect and *macropolization* (on macropolization see Pirozhnik, I.I., Antipova E.A. 2013) – Minsk will account for an even larger share of Belarus's total population.



Urban network. At the time of the most recent census in 2009, the settlement system included 112 cities, 93 urban-type settlements and 23,467 rural settlements. The urban population – in line with the Soviet definition of urbanization – comprises the cities, towns and urban-type settlements (*paselok*). Under legislation adopted in Belarus in 1998, there are three categories of urban-type settlements. In general, urban-type settlements are inhabited by more than 2,000 people and they have industrial enterprises and developed residential infrastructure. Another category covers resorts with more than 2,000 people and with advanced sanatorium and resort/tourism infrastructure. Only one settlement, Narač, is in this category. The third category covers Belarus’s six workers’ settlements, each with a population of more than 500 people.

Belarus’s complex regional organization framework identifies four hierarchical levels: a city of European importance (Minsk); 21 cities of national importance; 75 towns of regional importance; and 16 towns of local importance. The average population size of the five regional centres has increased from 316,100 to 379,300 since the 1970s. The population of medium-sized towns has stagnated, while small towns are the only

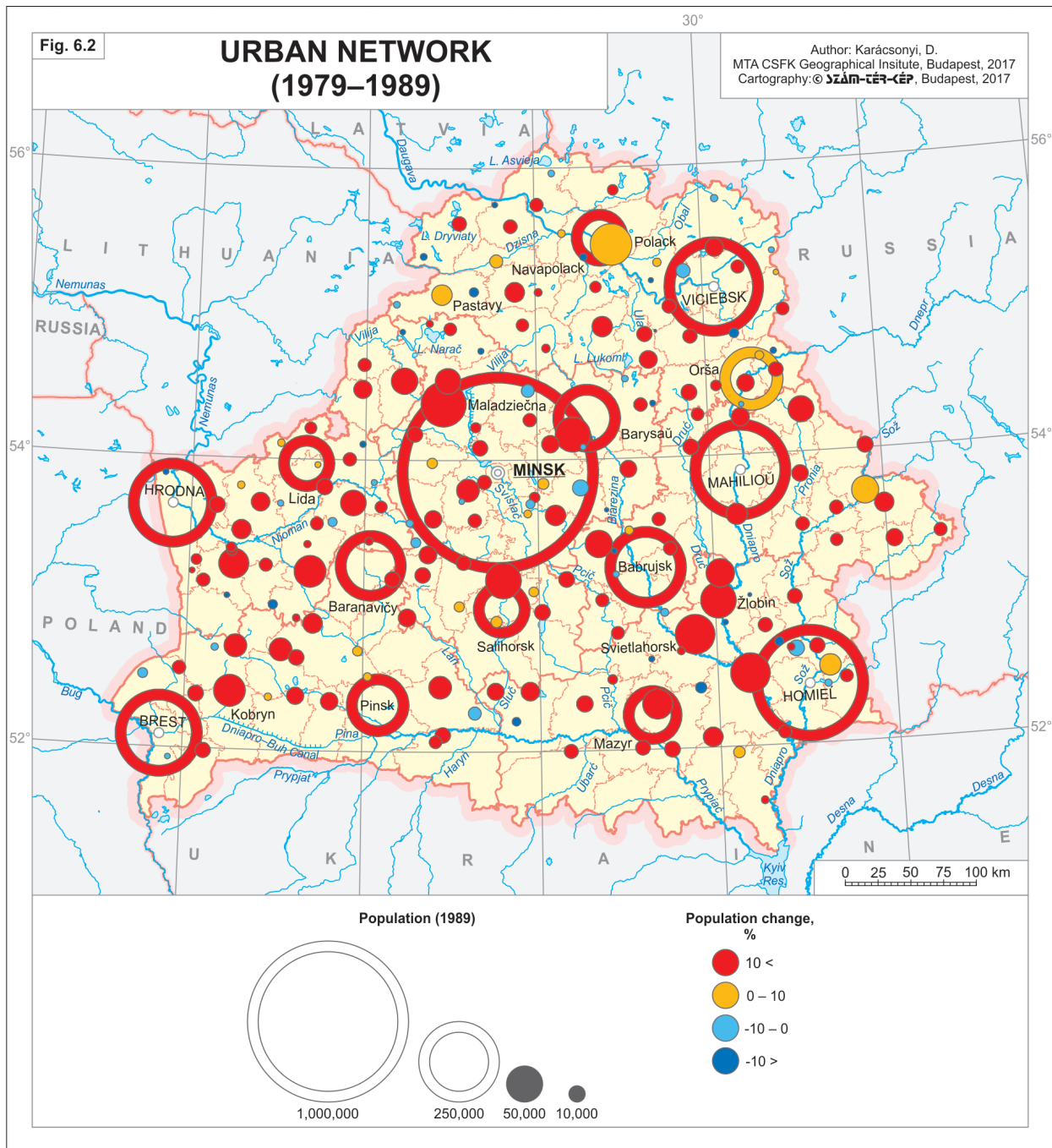
category of urban settlements that have experienced a population decline (of 24%).

Towns with less than 20,000 inhabitants are the dominant category in the structure of urban settlements (accounting for 82% of all urban settlements in the country). They comprise only 17% (2009) of the total urban population (Table 6.2). In the mid-20th century, urban settlements with fewer than 20,000 inhabitants were more common in the settlement network. Currently, several small towns are being impacted by new developments. As their functions become more diverse and their small businesses more active, a process of demographic revitalization takes place. Such revitalization was associated with the implementation of the “State Comprehensive Programme of Development of Regions, Small and Medium Towns for 2007–2010”.

Belarus’s urban network is spatially differentiated. The northern part of the country, the Viciebsk region, has the greatest density of small towns affected by population decline. At the same time, the northern areas exhibit a high level of population concentration in large industrial and multifunctional centres. Examples include Viciebsk, Navapolack and Orša, which together account for 64% of the total urban population in the region. The only medium-sized settlement in the region is Polack. The structure of urban settlements in the Mahilioŭ region is characterized by the absence of medium-sized towns and a very high population concentration in large cities. The cities of Mahilioŭ and Babrujsk account, on their own, for 70% of the urban population. In the Homiel region, the major cities (Homiel and Mazyr) comprise 58% of the region’s urban population, with the regional centre alone accounting for 47%. Meanwhile, medium-sized towns account for 26% of the region’s urban population.

In the western and south-western parts of Belarus, medium size and large urban settlements are more prevalent than in other areas, and these types are also more stable. In the Brest region, there are three large cities (Brest, Baranavičy and Pinsk).

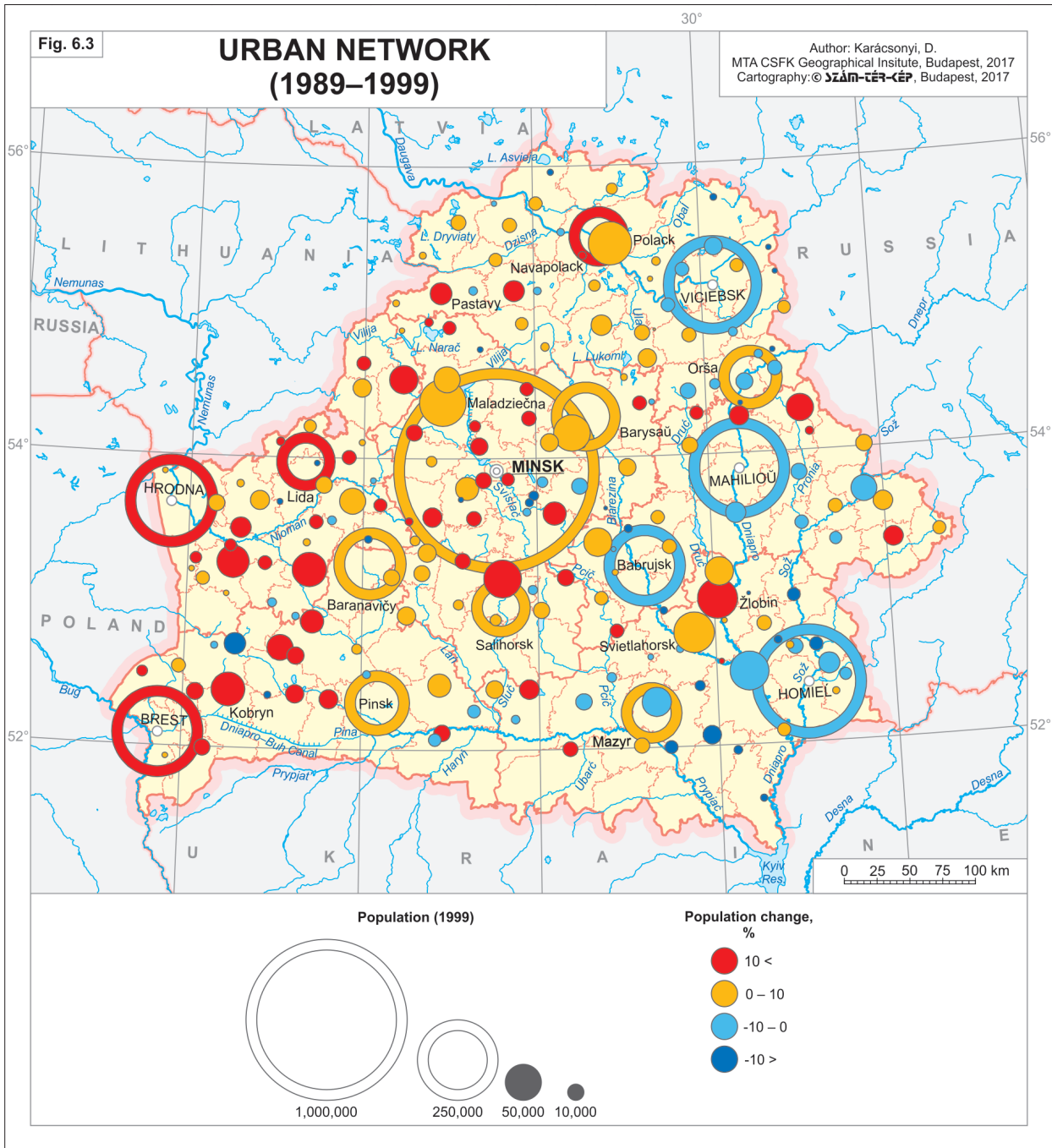
The larger cities account for 66%, and towns for 14%, of the urban population. On average, urban settlements in this region have 31,700 inhabitants. In the Hrodna region, large cities and towns make up almost equal shares in the settlement structure. The only large city in the region (Hrodna) accounts for 45% of the urban population, while



medium-sized towns (Lida, Slonim, Vaŭkavysk, Smarhoń and Navahrudak) account for 34%. Urban settlement in the central part of the country has been strongly influenced by the closeness to Minsk. Consequently, in this region small towns are the main components in the settlement structure.

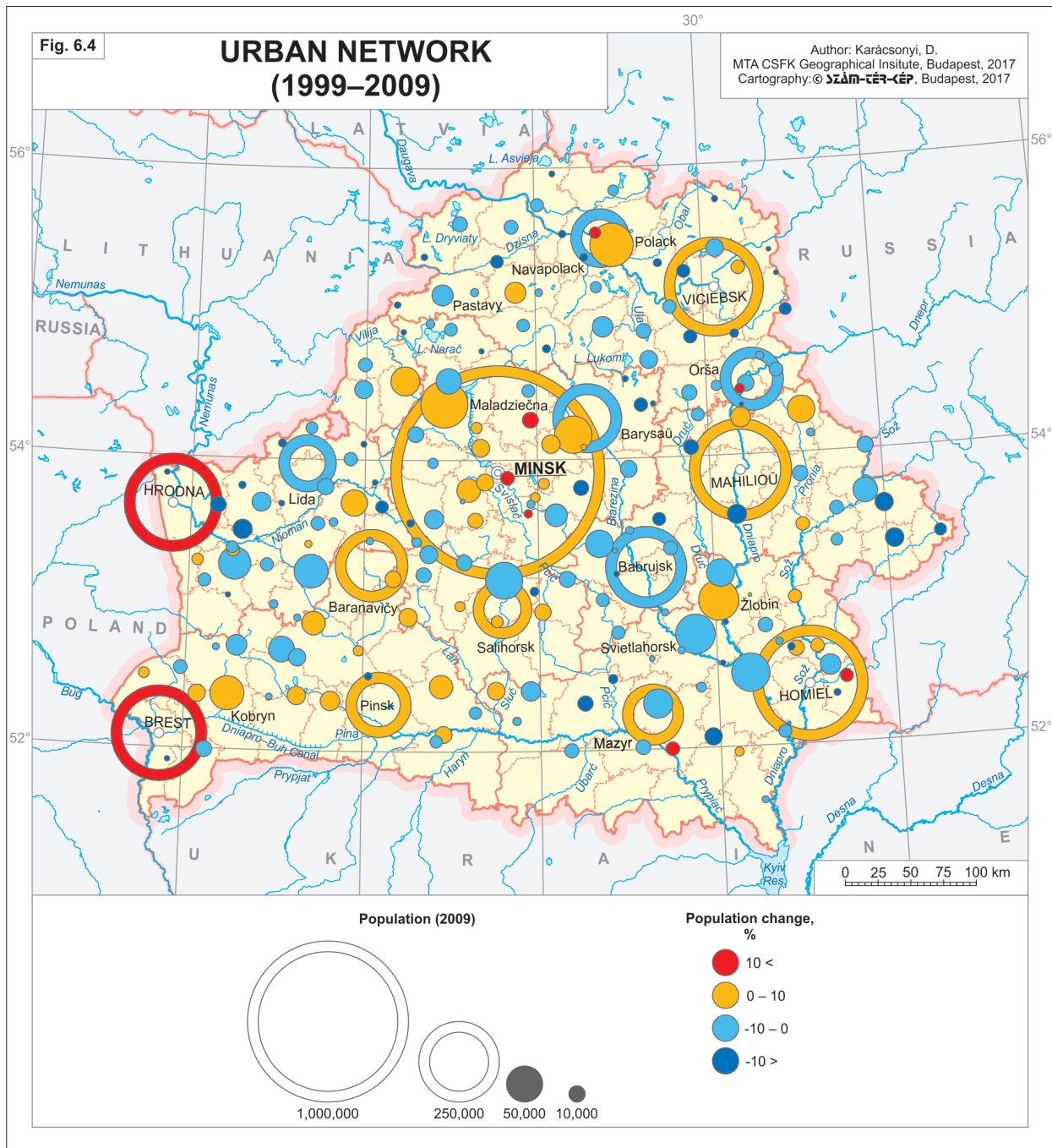
Functional types of cities. Under Belarus's complex territorial organization plan (adopted in 2007), cities are categorized into six types: multifunctional (e.g. Minsk), industrial (e.g. Pinsk,

Orša), agro-industrial (e.g. Ivanava, Dubroŭna), agricultural (e.g. Svislač), tourist-recreational and nature-oriented (e.g. Miadziel, Drahičyn), and scientific (e.g. Horki). Minsk and the regional centres are multifunctional cities. Industrial cities account for 40% of cities, as do also agro-industrial cities. Finally, every tenth city is in the tourist-recreational and nature-oriented category. Such cities have rich cultural and historical heritages as well as recreational resources.



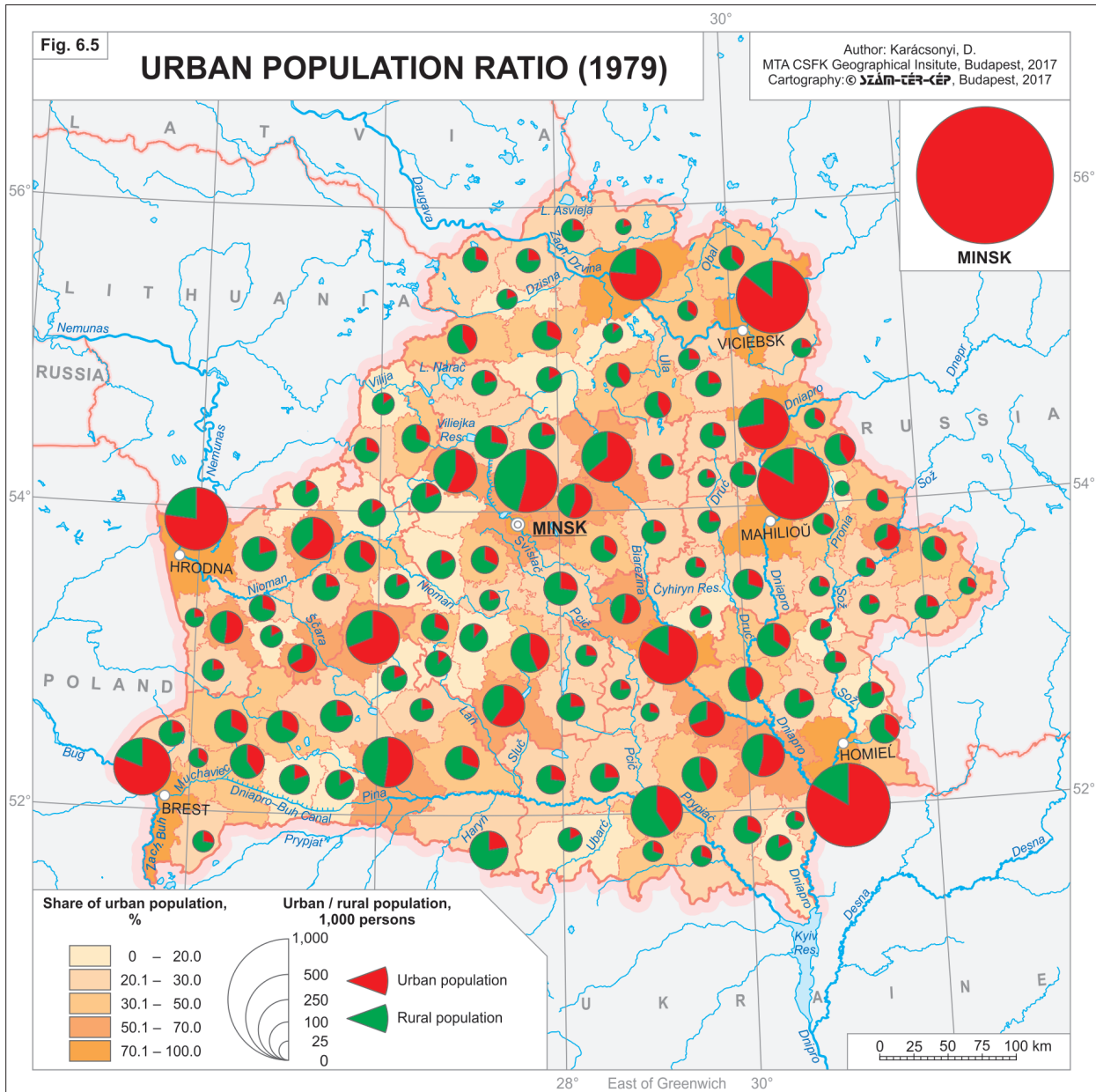
Box 6.1 Development of Minsk and the influence of Soviet urban planning

In terms of its development and structure, Minsk is a classic example of Soviet urban planning. As Ioffe stated, Minsk is a symbol of Soviet-style success (Ioffe, G. 2004). Minsk became the seat of a governorate only in 1793, and until the 1880s it did not stand out from the other Belarusian



cities. In terms of population size, Minsk lagged well behind other Eastern European cities that are now similar in size, such as Odesa, Kyiv or even Kharkiv. Minsk began to develop at the very end of the 19th century, owing in large part to the construction of the Moscow-Warsaw railway in 1871. At the time, industrialization was limited to small-scale factories or workshops, craft industries, and light industry (Bohn, T.M. 2008). During the ensuing thirty-year period, Minsk's population more than doubled. At the time of the 1897 census, Minsk (90,000 inhabitants) was already the largest city in the area of today's Belarus.

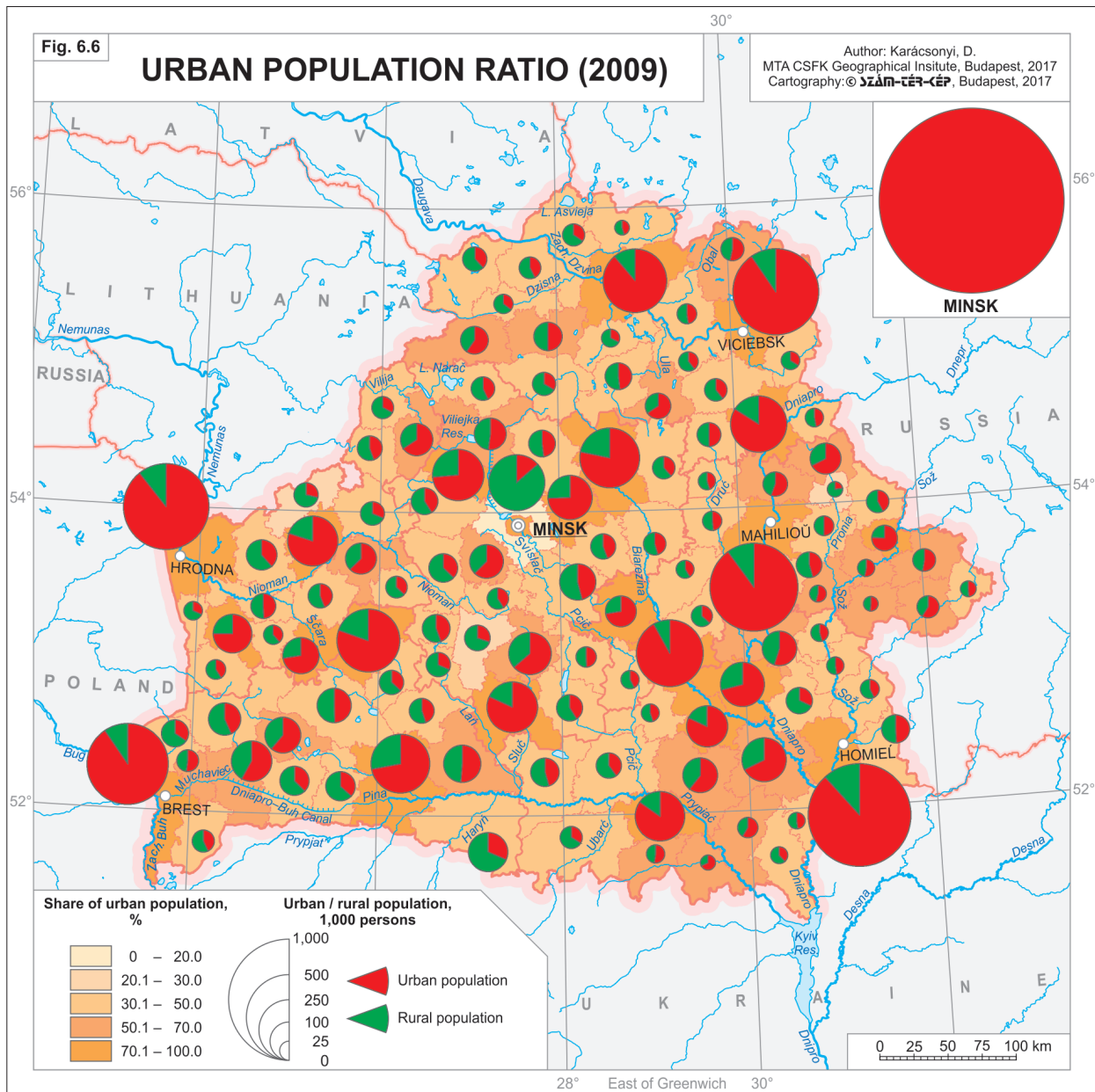
Between 1926, shortly before the era of Stalinist industrialization, and 1939 the city's population doubled once more (to 238,000). Such dramatic growth still lagged somewhat behind population growth in the Soviet worker metropolises (Harkiv, Stalino – now Donetsk and several



cities on the River Volga). Not until the latter half of the 20th century did Minsk become Eastern Europe's fourth largest metropolis after Moscow, Saint Petersburg and Kyiv.

During the Second World War, Minsk was almost completely destroyed. During the period of post-war reconstruction, the city received its present form, which largely reflects Moscow's General Plan of 1935 with its radio-concentric urban structure (Figure 6.7). In the absence of strong urban features (the River Svislač and the railway were the only exceptions in this regard), large-scale urban development transformed Minsk into a "classic" Soviet city. In view of the lack of private capital, land ownership rights did not prevent this process.

The destruction of the Second World War was soon eclipsed by the city's explosive post-war growth. The number of inhabitants at the time of the 1959 census (509,000) was twice the figure for 1939. In the post-war period, Minsk, which had been a largely Jewish and middle class city before the war, became a kind of "rural metropolis", in consequence of the rapid inflow of Belarusians from rural areas. Many of these new inhabitants became factory workers



(Bohn, T.M. 2008). Soviet urbanization took place so rapidly – especially in the case of Minsk – that the newcomers proved incapable of establishing an urban milieu. Instead, provincial (or rural) culture remained paramount for a long period (Ioffe, G. 2004).

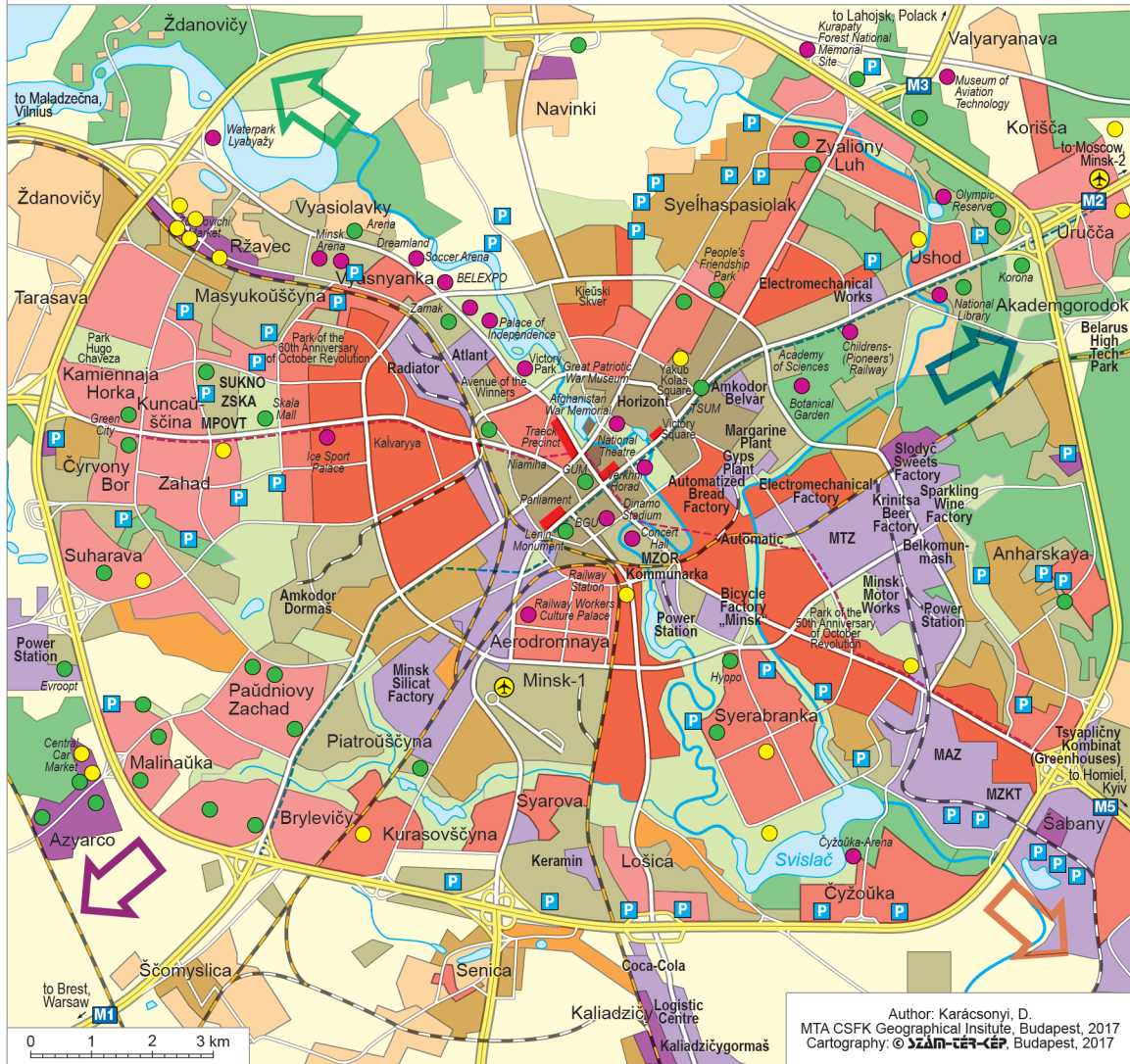
This period saw the construction of the city's north-eastern sector as the continuation of the 45-metre wide Independence Avenue (Lenin Avenue during the Soviet times). The focus of another area of construction and development was the tractor factory and its adjacent area, which became a further secondary centre in the city.

The 1960s marked the beginning of the large scale population boom. By 1970, the population of Minsk had reached 907,000, which meant an average annual increase of almost 36,000! It was, however, during the 1970s that the growth rate peaked – at an annual increase of 40,000. That decade saw the fastest rate of construction of high-rise housing estates (e.g. Syerabranka).

The main (north-south) axis in the Belarusian capital, Lenin Avenue (now called Independence Avenue), began to take on its current appearance – with many large and

Fig. 6.7

MINSK – FUNCTIONAL-MORPHOLOGICAL STRUCTURE



Author: Karácsonyi, D.
MTA CSFK Geographical Institute, Budapest, 2017
Cartography: © SZÁM-TÉR-ÉP, Budapest, 2017

FUNCTIONAL-MORPHOLOGICAL SYSTEM

City Centre

- Reconstructed historical core
- Business area, shops, admin., main universities (4-6 floors Stalin-era architecture)
- Representative places and buildings

Residential areas

- Inner residential areas with 4-5 floored houses (khrushchevka)
- High rises in city center on main roads and 8-10 floored housing estates from the Brezhnev-era in the suburbs
- Residential suburbs with 10-12 floored housing estates (mikrorajions)
- Garden cities (dachas, detached houses)
- Former villages
- Detached houses, villas (kotedzhi), mostly suburban

Recent and future development axes of urban growth

- Scientific-IT-foreign investment
- Recreation-leisure-higher ranked residential
- Mass residential (housing estates)

Open areas

- Public green areas, parks
- Open fields, agriculture
- Forests
- Waters

Other functions

- Industry
- Logistics, depots
- Mixed functions built-up areas

Service sector

- Sport, cinema, exhibition
- Market (rinok)
- Shopping centres, supermarkets, hypermarkets
- Guarded parking lots

Transportation

- Circle highway (MKAD) and other highways
- Other circle roads (kolco) and avenues (prospekt)
- Main railway lines with commuter train (elektrichka) service to the suburbs
- Other railway
- Metro line 1 (Maskoŭskaja)
- Metro line 2 (Aŭtazavodskaja)

- Industrial-investment

spacious squares – after the war. The start of the boulevard is the location of Independence Square and the site of The House of Government (building of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus), which was built in the 1930s in the Soviet Constructivist style. Beneath the square, an enormous underground shopping centre with high-standard facilities has been built, extending over two-three floors. Department stores reflecting traditional Soviet forms are also to be found in Minsk, including the Central (CUM) and State (GUM) Department Stores on Independence Avenue.

Victory Square, with its huge obelisk (the symbol of the city), as well as the Mašeraŭ Avenue (named after the popular leader of Soviet-Belarus in the 1970s and former partisan leader during the Great Patriotic War) performs representative functions. The outer part of Independence Avenue is the site of the ultramodern national library (inaugurated in 2005), which is the latest symbol of the country's modernization. In the surrounding area, a new secondary centre is being established. Various major construction projects are underway in this as well as in the north-western area of the city (around Minsk Arena), and many of the projects (shopping centres, office buildings, residential areas) are being funded by private (foreign, e.g. Russian, Turkish) capital.

The city's former medieval core on the banks of Svislač is currently being reconstructed; it is limited to a few blocks in the Niamiha area. The main historical sites are as follows: the old city hall (the renovation of which was completed in 2003) and the 17th century Cathedral of St Peter and St Paul in the Niamiha area.

The main railway station, which was modernized in the early 2000s, lies to the south-west of the city's core at the former edge of the city. The railway lines in this area determined the direction of residential growth until as late as the mid-20th century, given that residential areas could only be established to the north-east of the urban core. A whole series of industrial areas were established along the railway lines to the south of the city. For instance, this area was the location of the Minsk Tractor Factory (MTZ), the automotive factory (MAZ), the radiator factory and many other plants. Moreover, the city's first airport (Minsk-1) was established in the south-western part of the city.

Moving outwards from the city centre, the more decorative buildings of the 1950s give way to three-five storey blocks built in the 1960s, the so-called *khrushchevkas*, named after the Communist Party general secretary (Khrushchev). As the buildings were all owned by the state, boundaries of plots lost their significance, and so the buildings tended to be constructed between streets in a loose fashion. The outer residential areas of Minsk are therefore characterized by the lack of clearly defined street fronts. Rather, the multi-storey buildings are loosely arranged in a park-like setting.

Service facilities in the outer residential areas, which are divided into various housing estates (micro districts or *mikroraions*), have improved significantly in recent decades, owing to the construction of numerous privately funded shopping malls and centres (e.g. "Hyppo"). Recently development of hypermarkets and shopping malls along the circle highway (MKAD) came to fore (e.g. "Korona", "Evroopt"). Houses with gardens are concentrated in the villages that were placed within the present city limits in earlier periods. Even today, this residential type is far less significant in Minsk than in Central Europe. Modern housing estates (interspersed with enormous garages) are being built to the west and south-west of the centre, while houses with gardens (smaller *dachas* as secondary homes during summer time or the so called *kotedzhi* – derived from English cottage –, larger luxury detached houses) are being built to the north of the centre in the wooded residential areas that line the River Svislač.

Suburbanization has begun in the area surrounding capital city, but the satellite cities (e.g. Žodzina) that were built to lessen the burden on Minsk were the results of central planning. Spontaneous suburbanization has occurred mainly along the suburban railway lines (*elektrichka*) leading to and from the city.

Table 6.2 *Distribution of urban settlements according to size (2009)*

Administrative status of urban settlements	All size categories of urban settlements	Population size categories of urban settlements							
		<5,000	5,000–10,000	10,000–20,000	20,000–50,000	50,000–100,000	100,000–250,000	250,000–500,000	1,000,000<
		Number of urban settlements							
Cities and towns	112	4	26	44	15	10	7	5	1
Urban type settlements	94	64	28	2	–	–	–	–	–
		Thousand persons living in urban settlements							
Cities and towns	6,708,552	10,892	210,829	604,226	472,730	757,522	989,382	1,826,163	1,836,808
Urban type settlements	355,977	145,500	189,183	21,294	–	–	–	–	–

Source: <http://census.belstat.gov.by/Reports.aspx?page=174122>

Rural settlements

Historically, the rural settlement structure in Belarus has been characterised by a spatial distribution that accords with the natural terrain. The original site and size of the villages were determined by the small patches of clearing in the huge forests which had covered most of Belarus. In the Soviet era, such factors were pushed aside by socioeconomic policy, but they continued to make an impact. At the time of the Soviet Union, major land reclamation and drainage projects were undertaken in the Paliessie area. Their significance was far greater than that of similar projects in other Soviet republics (Ioffe, G. 2004). The impact was felt on the settlement network and – in view of the declining population – on the availability of even more land (Ioffe, G. 2006).

The rural population bore the brunt of several years of foreign occupation during the Second World War and of the partisan war, but the effects were successfully overcome in the post-war period. In the Soviet era, the main aim was to concentrate the population in major village centres. Meanwhile, tiny villages were starved of state investment in development. In rural areas of the country, the two major problems are depopulation and reduction in the average size of rural settlements (Box 6.3). Both phenomena exert an ever-increasing influence on changes in the rural settlement pattern.

Compared with the situation in the Soviet era, independent Belarus has prioritized the development of rural areas (Balmaceda, M.M. 2014). The “State Rural Development Program”, which was adopted in 2003, devotes special attention to

technological improvements in agricultural production and specifies changes in the agricultural cooperative sector using private capital. A further objective of the program has been the construction of 68,000 apartments for young people (Ioffe, G. and Yarashevich, V. 2011). The year 2005 saw the launch of the *agrorodok* program, which seeks to promote the development of villages with more than a thousand inhabitants (Box 6.2).

Rural depopulation is not only a phenomenon in regions affected by the Chernobyl disaster but also an ongoing process in the northern regions with their tiny villages. In 2009, almost a half (42%) of villages affected by depopulation were in the Viciebsk region, while 17% were in the Homiel region. Rural depopulation calls for life-sustaining environment optimisation and the rational use of rural areas.

In the 1990s and between the last two censuses, there were drastic population decreases in several raions. The rural population fell by 30–50% (Figure 6.8). All such areas were affected by the post-Chernobyl evacuations: Mazyr, Naroŭlia, Chojniki and Brahín in the Homiel region, as well as Krasnapollie in the Mahilioŭ region.

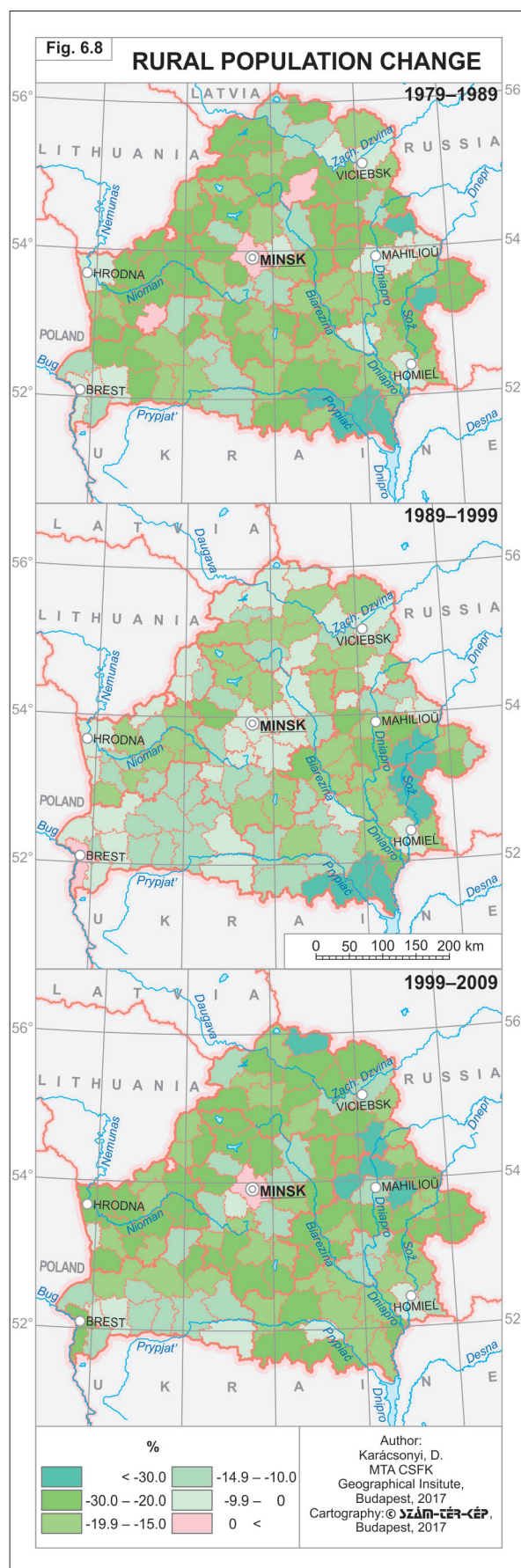
The process of depopulation began to accelerate in the 2000s when there were drastic population decreases in other regions of the country, caused by population ageing in rural areas (Figure 6.9). The sole exceptions in this regard were the western regions where post-war collectivization had not been so destructive on the well-being of rural communities as it had been in the east of the country (Ioffe, G. 2006). Moreover, in the western regions, wartime destruction had been somewhat less acute. Indeed,

in these regions, the post-war period had seen a real baby boom, a phenomenon not generally experienced in other regions (Ioffe, G. 2006). The population-retaining capacity of villages not only varies by geographical region but also depends on the distance from major towns. This is due in part to nascent suburbanization near the major cities – the county seats and Minsk.

Two demographic factors – natural decline and rural-urban migration – have resulted in a reduction in the average **size of rural settlements** (Figure 6.10, Table 6.3). In northern areas of the country, a dense network of tiny villages has arisen in the Belarusian Lakeland. Meanwhile, in Paliessie in the south of the country, there is a relatively sparse network of villages in flood-ridden areas. The Brest and Homiel regions constitute the only area with large villages (rural settlements with large populations). Overall in Belarus, the average size of villages has decreased by more than the half since 1959. Thus, in 2009, the average village had only 103 inhabitants. The decline in the number of inhabitants was significantly greater in eastern areas of the country than in the western half.

While most of the rural population is concentrated in larger villages, tiny villages are now more numerous in the settlement network, as many smaller villages have diminished in size and have been placed in the category of tiny villages. In 2009, a fifth of the rural population lived in villages with fewer than 100 inhabitants, while another fifth lived in villages with more than a thousand inhabitants. Fifty years previously, in 1959, only 12% of the rural population lived in the villages with more than a thousand inhabitants, while around 40% resided in medium-sized villages – the same percentage as in 2009, but the number of such villages has fallen significantly.

Demographic factors have also resulted in a reduction in **rural population density** (Figure 6.11). Rural areas that were densely populated in 1959 have since become sparsely populated. Moreover, a formerly contiguous demographic space now exhibits fragmentation. The rural areas affected by Chernobyl became, after 1986, the country's most sparsely populated areas. The greatest change occurred in the raions lying to the north of Homiel, which in 1979 (i.e. before the accident and the evacuations) had been relatively densely populated areas in Belarus. However, by 2009, these areas had been completely emptied of their population.



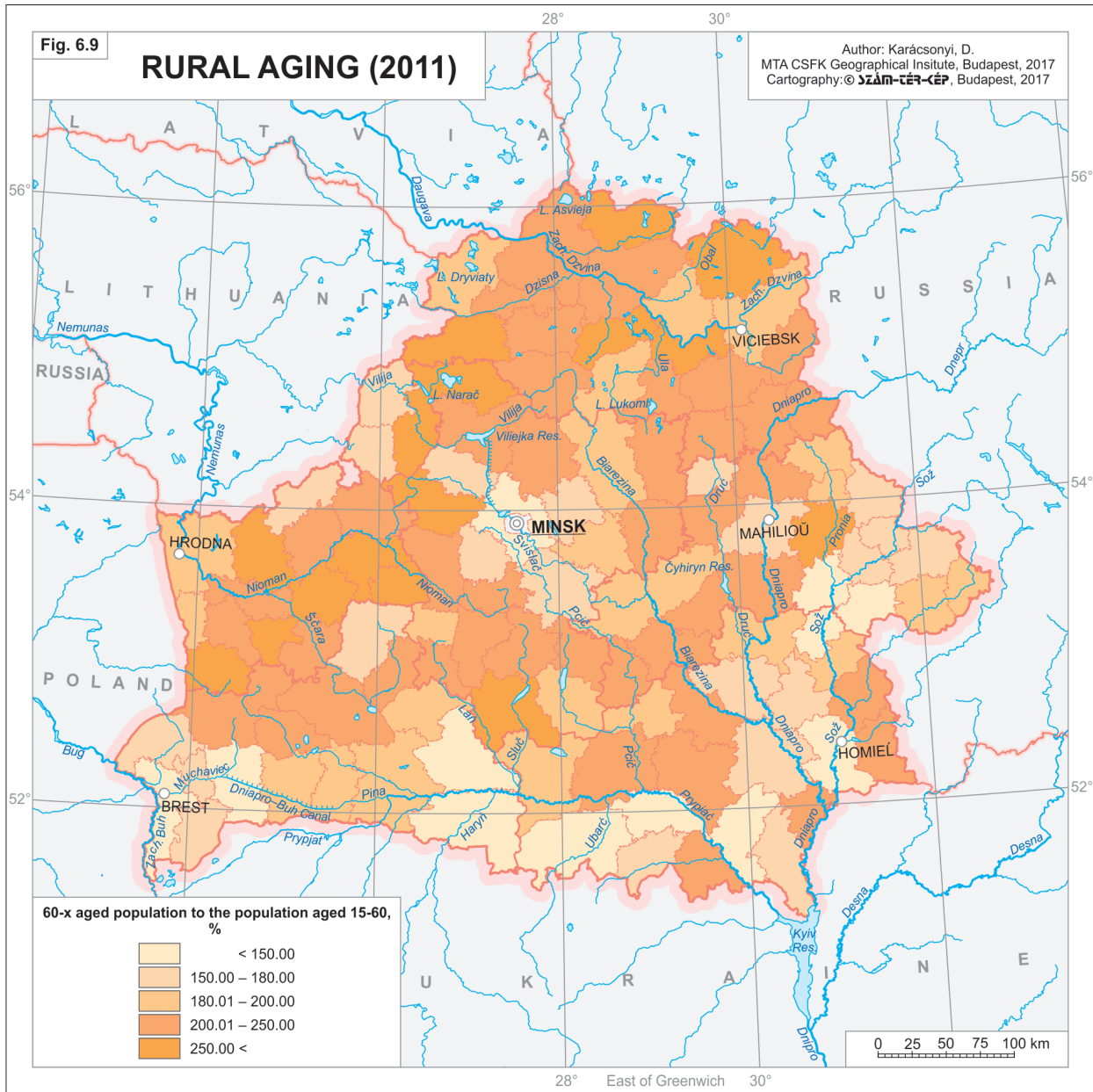
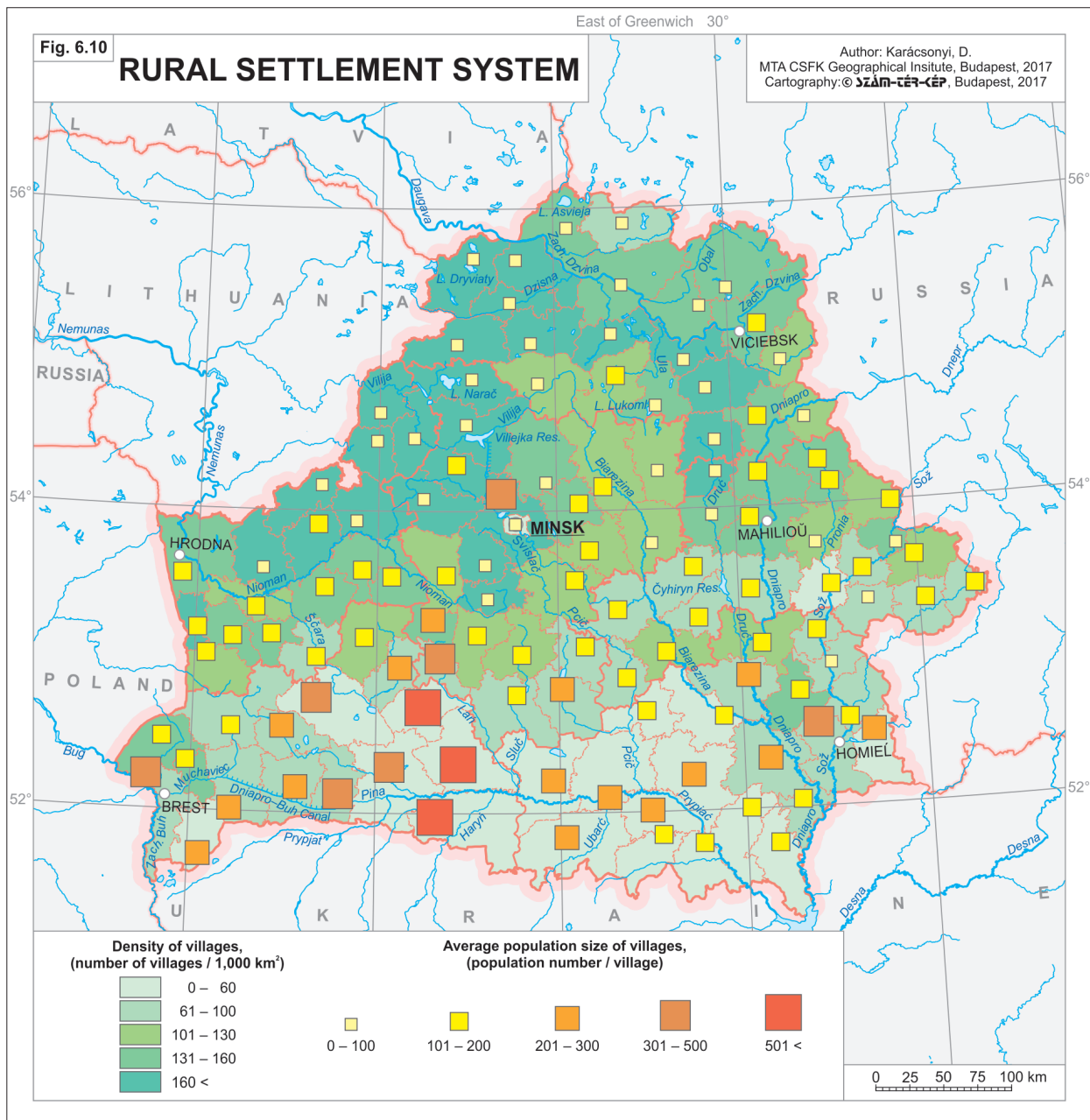


Table 6.3 Distribution of rural settlements according to size (1959, 2009)

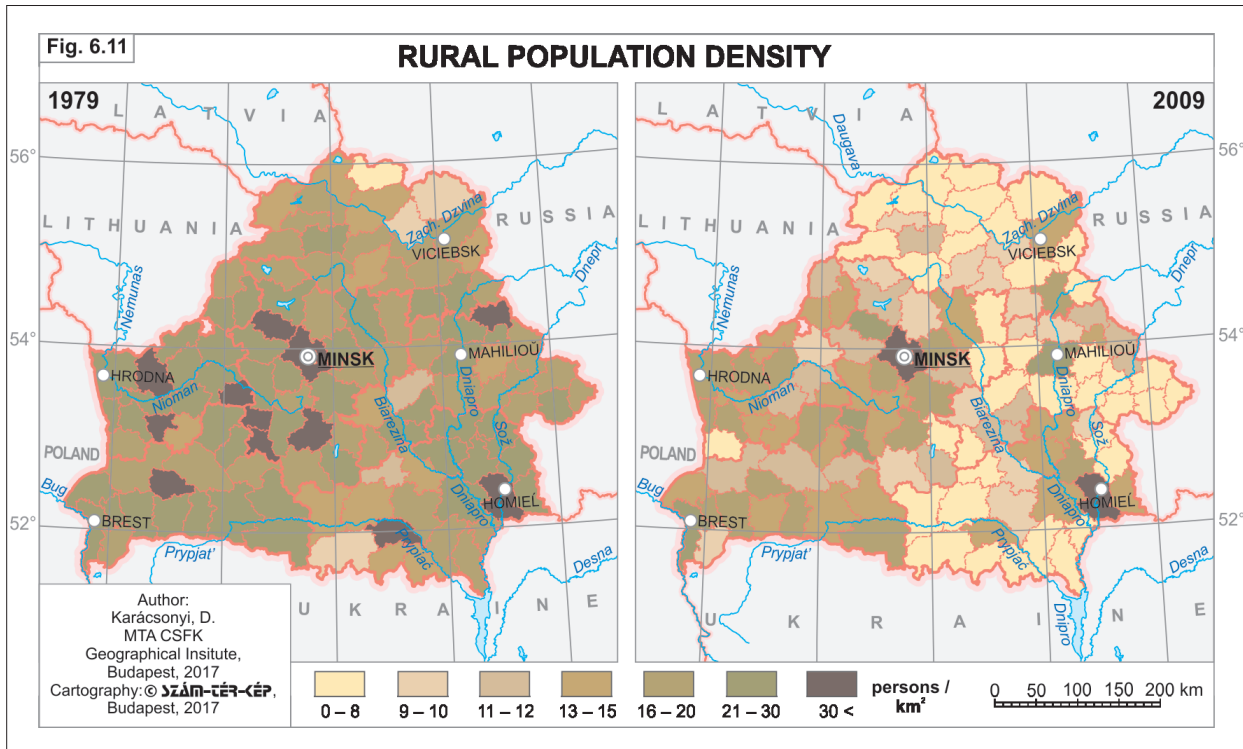
Population size categories of rural settlements					
Uninhabited	<50	51–100	101–200	201–500	501–1000
Number of rural settlements					
0	5,855	6,889	10,333	8,266	2,411
1394	14,323	2,918	1,894	1,921	797
Thousand persons living in rural settlements					
0	111,505	446,017	1,115,040	2,118,577	1,115,040
0	247,853	207,321	268,225	616,412	537,187

Source: <http://census.belstat.gov.by/Reports.aspx?page=174122>



Box 6.2 Types of agrorodoks and the national program for rural revival and development

The social and economic crisis experienced by rural areas in the early 1990s inspired the elaboration of “The National Program for the Rural Revival and Development for 2005–2010”. To promote stable development in rural areas, the program provided for the formation of a new type of settlement. The agro-settlement, or *agrorodok*, was conceived as a comfortable rural settlement with industrial and social infrastructure. It was foreseen that such infrastructure would be at the disposal of residents and the inhabitants of adjacent areas too. Indeed, the *agrorodoks*



were conceptualized as new rural centres that would provide social services and employment opportunities to the inhabitants of villages in a 15-kilometre radius and perform administrative functions as agricultural centres. Under the program, the agro-settlements were placed in two groups, based on the extent and levels of their functions as rural centres. Overall, 1,481 *agro-rodoks* were created in the Republic of Belarus. More than half million people, or 20% of the country's rural population, live in *agro-rodoks*.

The *agro-rodoks* are expected to be the locations of demographic growth in rural areas, while the population of other rural localities declines. Evidently, the agro-settlements have specific demographic development potentials.

Agro-rodoks with a favourable demographic status (1% of these settlements and 3% of the population) form part of the Minsk agglomeration; they are mostly situated in Minsk district. These settlements are growing thanks to natural population increase and inward migration.

Agro-rodoks with a relatively favourable demographic status (42% of the population) are located primarily in the southern part of Belarus and close to major cities. The main source of their demographic growth is expected to be the natural population increase.

Agro-rodoks with a conditionally favourable demographic situation (25% of the population) are those in peripheral southern areas with a large population size and in central-western areas with a medium and small population size. These agro-settlements may, subject to certain conditions, experience natural population increase. Those settlements that lie near a major city may experience population growth due to a slower natural decrease, while other agro-settlements may grow by attracting young people.

Agro-rodoks with an unfavourable demographic situation (30% of the population) are situated in the rural periphery or at isolated locations in other areas. These settlements are incapable of demographic growth based on natural population increase. Migration (if supported by the state) could enhance their potential for demographic growth.

Box 6.3 Typology of raions based on demographic characteristics of rural population

Based on demographic conditions and the nature and dynamics of the settlement network, various **types of rural raions** were identified by means of cluster analysis (Antipova, E.A. 2008) (Figure 6.12, Table 6.4). The three main types reflect demographic conditions (stable, limited growth, instable), while the nine subtypes are categorized based on regional features or attributes.

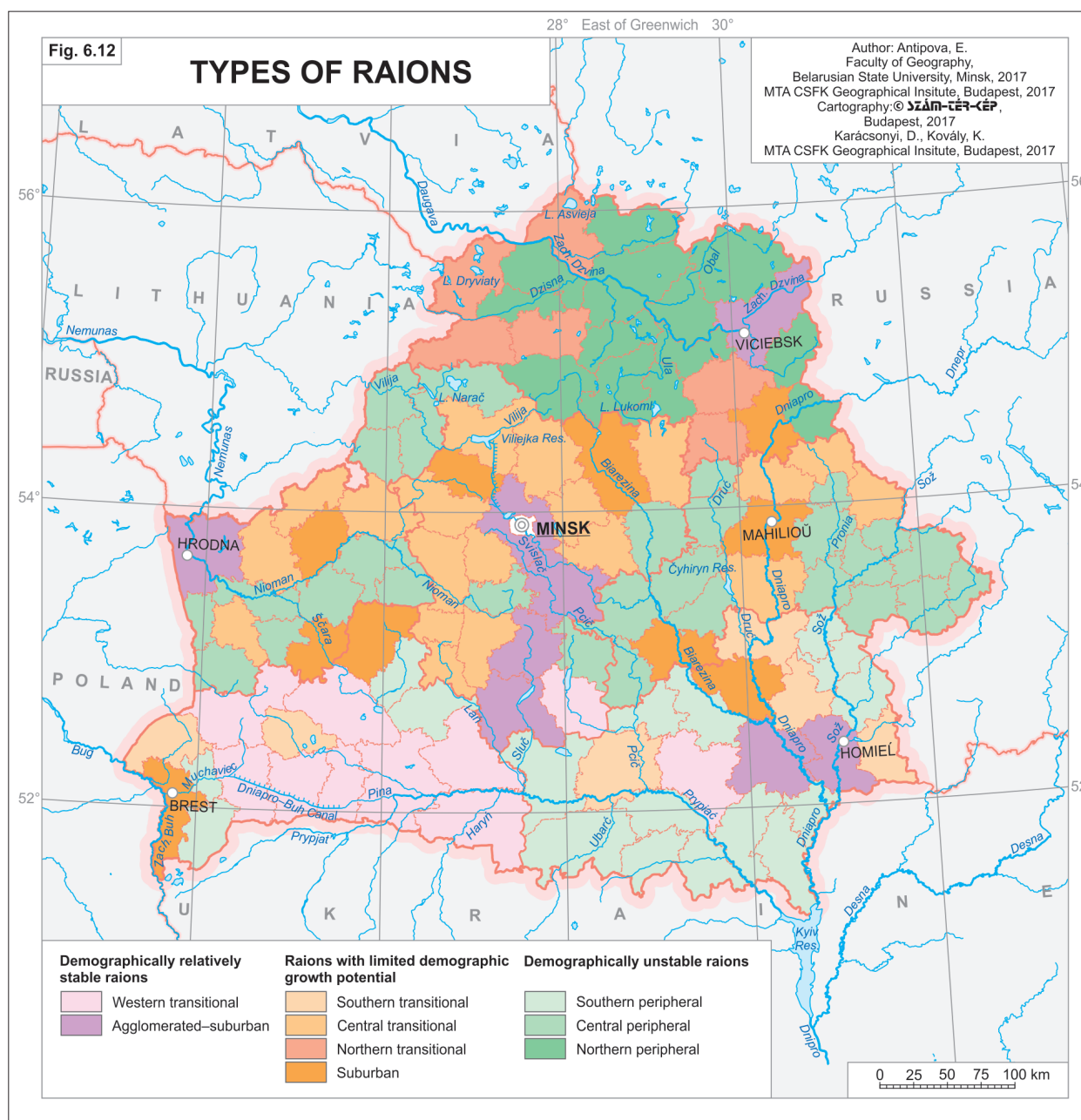


Table 6.4 Types of raions by demographic characteristics of rural population

Type, subtype	Number of raions	Total area of type, subtype		Population		Rural settlements		Average population number (persons)
		km ²	%	Persons	%	Total number	%	
Type 1 Relatively stable raions	18	44.1	21	804,564	30	3,537	15	277
Subtype 1A Western transitional. Medium and large settlements with high population density and high demographic potential, lower than average natural decrease, medium labour potential, uneven spatial population distribution with stable settlement structure.	10	22.5	51	344,345	43	1,355	38	338
Subtype 1B Agglomerated-suburban. Medium and large settlements with high population density and high demographic potential, lower than average natural decrease, favourable labour potential, and highly uneven spatial population distribution with stable settlement structure.	8	21.6	49	460,219	57	2,182	62	216
Type 2 Raions with limited demographic growth potential	40	72.4	35	1,065,092	39	10,551	43	138
Subtype 2A Southern transitional. Medium and large settlements with average population density, average or low demographic potential, average population decrease, favourable labour potential, and significantly unequal spatial population distribution with stable settlement structure.	6	11.3	16	157,938	15	1,022	10	197
Subtype 2B Central transitional. Small and medium settlements with low population density, average or low demographic potential, average and over average population decrease, unfavourable labour potential, and even spatial population distribution with relatively unstable settlement structure.	19	30.8	42	448,622	42	4,753	45	118
Subtype 2C Northern transitional. Small and medium settlements with very low population density, average or low demographic potential, average and over average population decrease, unfavourable labour potential, and relatively even spatial population distribution with relatively stable settlement structure.	6	11.8	16	114,675	11	2,465	24	60
Subtype 2D Suburban. Small and medium settlements with low population density, average or low demographic potential, average population decrease, average labour potential, and uneven spatial population distribution with relatively stable settlement structure.	10	18.5	26	343,857	32	2,311	21	175
Type 3 Demographically unstable raions	60	89.9	44	823,355	31	10,132	42	123
Subtype 3A Southern peripheral. Medium and large settlements with very low population density, low demographic potential, over average population decrease, unfavourable labour potential, and relatively even spatial population distribution with relatively stable settlement structure.	17	27.6	30	235,668	29	1,629	16	186
Subtype 3B Central peripheral. Small settlements with very low population density, low demographic potential, over average population decrease, unfavourable labour potential, and relatively even spatial population distribution with relatively stable settlement structure.	29	38.6	43	394,359	48	5,004	50	112
Subtype 3C Northern peripheral. Small settlements with the lowest population density, low demographic potential, over average population decrease, unfavourable labour potential, and relatively even spatial population distribution with relatively unstable settlement structure.	13	23.7	26	193,328	23	3,499	34	70

Source: Antipova, E.A. 2008