

## Baltic sea region studies: current trends (based on publications in the Baltic Region Journal)

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**BALTIC SEA REGION STUDIES: CURRENT TRENDS**  
**(Based on Publications in the Baltic Region Journal)**

The Baltic region is a traditional research subject for scholars from Saint Petersburg and Kaliningrad — the two Russian research centres on the Baltic coast. In 2009, the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University in collaboration with Saint Petersburg State University established the *Baltic Region* academic journal. The journal's editorial council and editorial board bring together prominent experts from Russia and the other Baltic region states — Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Finland.

The journal has become a platform for expert commentary on Baltic issues with a focus on the geopolitical, socioeconomic, cultural, and environmental processes taking place in the macroregion. The journal publishes findings of national and international experts in regional economy, human geography, political regional studies, history, and geoecology. Theoretical works appear on the pages of the journal alongside contributions dedicated to the Baltic region.

The *Baltic region* is published both in Russian and in English. In 2010, it was included in the list of Russian journals recommended by the Higher Attestation Commission, a national advanced degree awarding organization. In the beginning of 2015, the journal became part of the *Core Collection (Emerging sources citation index)* of the *Web of Science* system.

Twenty-nine issues of the journal have been published so far (autumn 2016) with a total of 327 articles, including reports and review and excluding editorials. The IKBFU researchers have authored 134 and co-authored 12 contributions. Scholars from Saint Petersburg State University have published 75 articles and co-authored seven. Forty-one articles have been contributed and 12 co-authored by Moscow experts. Researchers from other Russian cities have prepared 13 and co-authored two publications. International scholars have authored 47 and co-authored eight articles (table 1).

*Table 1*

**Geography of Authors Contributing to the *Baltic Region* (29 issues)**

Research centre	Number of articles	Additional information
Kaliningrad	134	—
Kaliningrad and Saint Petersburg	2	—
Kaliningrad and Moscow	3	—

*End of table 1*

Research centre	Number of articles	Additional information
Kaliningrad, Moscow and other Russian centres	1	Rostov-on-Don: 1
Kaliningrad and international centres	6	Germany: 3; Poland: 3,
Saint Petersburg	75	—
Saint Petersburg and Moscow	1	—
Saint Petersburg and other Russian centres	2	Nizhny Novgorod: 1; Omsk: 1
Saint Petersburg and international centres	2	Germany: 1; Netherlands: 1
Moscow	41	—
Other Russian centres	13	Pskov: 3; Murmansk: 1; Petrozavodsk: 2 + 1; Nizhny Novgorod: 2; Rostov-on-Don: 2; Ekaterinburg: 1; Orenburg: 1; Krasnoyarsk: 1
International centres	46	Poland: 11; Lithuania: 9; Latvia: 9; Estonia: 2, Germany: 6; Sweden: 1; Denmark: 1, Finland 5; Belgium: 1; Spain: 1
International centres (three countries)	1	Germany, Latvia, Estonia

A given issue of the journal includes an average of ten research articles focusing on the methodological and applied problems of the development of the Baltic macroregion, as well as theoretical works in relevant areas of regional studies.

The major research topics of the journal's articles are as follows.

1) Theoretical works examining the development of countries and regions, providing materials on economic theory, human geography, and political science (table 2). Special attention is paid to the process of international regionalisation, new spatial forms of economic organisation and trans-boundary cooperation, and the emergence of a new system of international relations. The authors also contribute to the development of a promising area of regional economic and economic geographical studies — national and international clustering. Most theoretical works are authored by scholars from Moscow, Saint Petersburg, and Kaliningrad. The others are contributions from Ekaterinburg, Rostov-on-Don, and various international research centres — Warsaw and Olsztyn (Poland), Tallinn (Estonia), Daugavpils (Latvia), and Leuven (Belgium).

Table 2

**Distribution of Theoretical Articles by the Author's City of Residence**

Topic	Number of authors				
	Kaliningrad	Saint Petersburg	Moscow	Other Russian cities	International locations
Economic theory	3	1	3	Ekaterinburg: 1	Daugavpils: 2; Tallinn: 1
Theory of human geography	2	3		Rostov-on-Don: 1	—
Theory and methodology of regional studies	11	9	4	—	—
Political theory	1		1	—	Olsztyn: 1
International relations	4	9	2	Nizhny Novgorod: 1	Warsaw: 2; Leuven (Belgium): 1

2) Articles on the economy of Russia and northwestern Russian territories, primarily those situated in the Baltic region (table 3).

Table 3

**Distribution of Articles on the Economies of Baltic Region States and Territories by the Author's Place of Residence**

Topic	Number of authors				
	Kaliningrad	Saint Petersburg	Moscow	Other Russian cities	International locations
Russian economy	3	—	1	Nizhny Novgorod: 1	Turku: 1
North-West Russia (excluding the Kaliningrad region)	3	10	—	Pskov: 1; Petrozavodsk: 3; Krasnoyarsk: 2	—
Kaliningrad region	28	1	8	Nizhny Novgorod: 1; Omsk: 2	Olsztyn: 2; Vilnius: 2
Baltic states	9	3	3	—	Riga: 2; Daugavpils: 2; Vilnius: 1; Klaipeda: 3; Olsztyn: 1; Tallinn: 1

End of table 3

Topic	Number of authors				
	Kaliningrad	Saint Petersburg	Moscow	Other Russian cities	International locations
Germany	4	—	—	—	Greifswald: 1
Poland	3	—	—	—	Lodz: 1; Gdansk: 2; Olsztyn: 1
Sweden	2	—	—	—	—
Finland	—	3	—	—	—
Belarus	—	—	—	—	Turku: 1

The works of five Russian and one international (Turku, Finland) authors have been dedicated to the current problems of Russian economy.

The Russian North-West and its regions (excluding the Kaliningrad region) is intensively studied by scholars from Saint Petersburg. Several works have been published by authors from

Kaliningrad, Pskov, Petrozavodsk, and even the remote city of Krasnoyarsk.

Naturally, most works focus on the development problems of the Kaliningrad region since the journal is published in Kaliningrad and the surrounding region — a Russian exclave with unique natural and socioeconomic conditions — is an area of special research interest. There are dozens of different strategies for the region's socioeconomic development prepared by both Russian and international experts. Kaliningrad regional issues have been examined in the works of 28 authors from Kaliningrad, eight from Moscow, one from Saint Petersburg, four from other Russian cities, and four from abroad.

The Baltics account for most international publications. Current problems of the Baltics development have been studied by both Baltic and Kaliningrad scholars. Several articles have been published by researchers from Moscow and Saint Petersburg. There are articles focusing on Germany, Poland, Sweden, Finland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Belarus, the latter sometimes considered part of the Baltic region. The only two countries that have not been examined yet on the pages of the journal are Denmark and Estonia.

### 3) Individual aspects of Baltic development

Table 4 shows the geographical distribution of the authors of articles dedicated to different processes taking place in the Baltic region. Particularities of the transnational regional formation are most often addressed by Kaliningraders. Scholars from Saint Petersburg, Daugavpils, and Bonn, each published an article on the issue. Industry-specific topics, including energy

security, education system development, demographic changes, environmental problems, and regional development strategies, account for most articles authored by contributors from different cities and countries.

*Table 4*

**Distribution of Articles on the Baltic Region by the Author's Place of Residence**

Topic	Number of authors				
	Kaliningrad	Saint Petersburg	Moscow	Other Russian cities	Foreign cities
Baltic region: state knowledge, history, economy, spatial organisation	9	1	—	—	Bonn: 1; Daugavpils: 1
Baltic region: energy and energy security	6	7	5	—	Vilnius: 2; Kaunas: 1; Arnhem (Netherlands): 1
Baltic region: educational system	12	6	—	Murmansk: 2	Greifswald: 1; Daugavpils: 3
Baltic region: tourism	3	—	—	Petrozavodsk: 1	—
Population: theory	1	—	1	—	—
Baltic region: population	4	7	6	Pskov: 3	Daugavpils: 1; Gdansk: 1; Wiesbaden (Germany): 1
Europe: migration	—	3	—	—	—
Latvia: migration	—	—	—	—	Bamberg (Germany): 1; Riga: 1; Tartu: 1
Kaliningrad region: migration	3	—	—	—	—
Ecology and environmental protection	4	12	7	—	Berlin: 1; Kiel: 1
Baltic region: development strategy	4	5	3	—	Bonn: 1; Copenhagen: 1; Gdynia: 1

4) Special attention is paid to innovative aspects of economic development

This is explained by not only a result of the conceptual relevance of this topic but also the need for the Russian economy to embark on the path of innovative development. Guided by the latter consideration, the IKBFU has launched several research projects aimed to assess the innovative potential of the Baltic region. The findings have been published in the *Baltic region* journal. Thus, a number of articles by Kaliningrad authors address the issues of innovation.

Theoretical and methodological aspects have been discussed by nine Kaliningrad authors. The same number of authors focus on innovations in the Baltic region. This aspect has been examined by two authors from Saint Petersburg, one from Moscow, and one from Turku.

Innovations in the Kaliningrad region have been studied by seven Kaliningrad authors and the potential of international innovative cooperation in the Baltic by eight. One article has been published by a contributor from Kiel (Germany).

#### 5) International cooperation

Strengthening of intergovernmental and interregional cooperation in the Baltic region is a major topic, which has been addressed in the journal by both national and international authors (table 5). In this context, contributors examine acute problems adversely affecting the development of transnational and transboundary relations. Russian scholars stress that Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia are severing economic ties with Russia even at the expense of their own economies. Their proportion in Russia's international trade is constantly decreasing. There are social problems and ethnic tensions. The Baltics are deploying new NATO objects, which produces an expectedly negative reaction from Russia. All this has complicated the introduction of new forms of economic organisation as per previous proposals.

Table 5

**Distribution of Articles on Baltic Cooperation  
by the Author's Place of Residence**

Topics	Number of authors				
	Kaliningrad	Saint Petersburg	Moscow	Other Russian cities	International locations
Russia's relations with the other Baltic region states	3	3	1	—	Klaipeda: 1
International cooperation	12	3	6	—	Augsburg: 1; Warsaw: 1; Barcelona: 1
Transboundary cooperation	16	11	5	Nizhny Novgorod — 1	Gdansk: 1; Olsztyn: 1; Klaipeda: 1; Turku: 2; Stockholm: 1; Kiel: 1



Despite certain political tensions between Russia and the other regional countries, the journal keeps contributing to cementing ties between scholars studying the Baltic Sea region. A series of research conferences and workshops on the Baltic issues have been held, including the ‘Baltic studies in Russia’ international conference (April 22—23, 2016), the proceedings of which have later been published in the *Baltic Region*. In collaboration with Saint Petersburg State University, the IKBFU is carrying out a number of international research projects encouraging mutually beneficial transboundary ties. Two recently established non-profit organisations — The Russian Baltic and The Russian Association of Baltic Studies — are actively contributing to the development of research. Enhancing knowledge on the Baltic Sea region, one of the most dynamic macroregions of international cooperation, creates prerequisites for forging mutually beneficial ties between the region’s states.

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