

Gender Issues in the Development of the Vologda Oblast

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Summary

The paper focuses on the trends of social and economic development of the Vologda Oblast (*region*) and their multidirectional impact on gender issues. Due to an improving labour market, gender equalization of employment is taking place; however, the issues of younger women's employment are substantially more serious. Furthermore, women account for a larger percentage of stagnant unemployment. In the Vologda Oblast, gender disparities of industrial and agricultural sectors' employment have reduced while employment of not only men but also women in harmful labour conditions has increased. Incidence of occupational injuries is very high especially among men workers. Underdeveloped market services motivate employment of women in low-pay public sector jobs. Gender inequality of income approximates the national average and is more stable than the gender inequality of unemployment. At the same time, gender disparities of wages and salaries by sectors are somewhat leveled out, especially in the area of management which is explained by less vertical segregation of women in municipal governments. [Gender] inequality of pensions is small and pensions account for a larger percentage of subsistence wage than in other Northwestern regions of Russia, while the share of retirees who keep on working is on the rise. A relatively trouble-free situation in employment and income across the Oblast camouflages strong differences between the centre and periphery while economically weaker *Rayons (municipalities)* experience gender equalization of poverty. In comparison to women, men significantly fall behind in terms of education especially in rural areas. Gender inequality reaches its maximum in longevity; life expectancy of men is decreasing, especially so in rural areas. Alcohol addiction rate and marginalization of men are growing. As a result, the gender structure of social benefits and losses is asymmetrical that precludes a conclusion on unambiguous advantages of men or women in the Vologda Oblast.

Introduction

So far, studies of gender inequality in Russia have failed to fully reflect specific features of regions that are due to substantial social, economic and cultural differences within the country. These differences have emerged through the history of territory development as a result of varying natural conditions and resources, structure of economy and speed of urbanization processes, and ethnic and cultural aspects. The gender topic depends on an array of economic and social factors of inequality that are differentiated by region and fairly stable. Addressing gender issues is impossible unless we understand the region-specific character of social and economic development and how it correlates to gender inequality.

Gender inequality studies in Russian regions have already been undertaken in a number of projects. In particular, in the years 2003-2004 the ILO Subregional Office in Moscow has developed strategies for federal districts of Russia adapted to local conditions that are based on the National Gender Development Strategy. The Russian office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is preparing a publication of Russia's Gender strategy that would include a regional section containing analysis of gender issues of health and longevity, situation of men and women in the labour market and their access to income and political representation. In 2002, UNDP have also adapted the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) including gender equality, for a Russian region. The Samara Oblast was chosen for the pilot project. Among other adjustments made, gender indicators have been adapted for this pilot as their original set under MDG is more suitable for underdeveloped countries and not quite adequate for Russia. Unfortunately the data of this research has not been published and gender issues were considered among a multitude of other issues. As it turned out, international projects have never before set an objective of gender analysis of a specific region and relevant development factors.

The Vologda Oblast located on the boundary of central and northern parts of European Russia has been chosen as a pilot region for WB project. Consequently, the situation in the Vologda Oblast reflects development problems of both central and northern macro-regions of the country. Furthermore, the Vologda Oblast demonstrates significant internal disparities in terms of economic and social development which needs to be taken into account developing an action plan to reduce gender inequalities in the region. In essence, choosing the Vologda Oblast for a pilot region allows to simultaneously address a number of research problems pertaining to geography of gender issues that ensures more data needed for developing adequate recommendations.

A summary analysis of demographic, social and economic factors affecting gender issues in the Vologda Oblast is provided in the first part of this paper. Gender issues *per se* are reviewed in the second part hereof using two scales: first, the Oblast is analyzed against the background of other regions of Central and Northwestern Russia, and second, intra-Oblast inequalities are researched. This analysis has been made possible by a cooperation programme of the Vologda Oblast Committee for Statistics and the Swedish Central Bureau of Statistics that produced Oblast gender desegregated data over 1998-2002. Another source of information was statistical reports "Women and Men in Russia in 2004". The concluding part of this material contains implications and recommendations on improving gender policies of the Vologda Oblast.

1. Social and economic situation in the Vologda Oblast

Geography and demography of population. The Vologda Oblast makes part of the Northwestern Federal District, lying in the Non-Black Soil Belt on the boundary of long developed central Russia and European North of Russia which location makes the Vologda Oblast similar to both regions in terms of social issues. Specific 'northern character' is best demonstrated by the geography of Oblast's population: the degree of spatial displacement of population is low at 9 people per square kilometer, while in the North and East areas of the Oblast this indicator equals that of Siberia (4 people per square kilometer). In 2004, the population of the Vologda Oblast was 1.26 million people.

Compared to most regions of Central and Northwestern Russia, the Vologda Oblast is less urbanized (69%) with a practically nonexistent system of small towns. Of the 15 towns and cities within the Vologda Oblast, 11 are small towns of 5,000-16,000 residents, 2 medium-sized towns (Veliky Ustyug and Sokol with a population of ca. 40,000 each) and only two large cities where industrialized Cherepovets (311,000 residents) exceeds Oblast's administrative centre, city of Vologda (299,000 residents), in terms of population. Existence of two centers is the most vivid feature of population spread in the Vologda Oblast. At some point in the past, Cherepovets was growing at faster pace than the capital city but during transition the situation reversed and between the censuses of 1989 and 2002, the population of Vologda has increased by 4.5% while in Cherepovets it remained largely unchanged. The city of Vologda has become more attractive for migrants including those from northern areas albeit its economic situation which is worse than in Cherepovets. Oblast's capital city offers the benefits of lower costs of living, a developed services infrastructure and an attractive urban environment.

Rural population issues of the Vologda Oblast are generic for the Non-Black Soil Belt. Every decade since the 1970s more than 10% of villages in the Vologda Oblast ceased to exist as remaining residents were abandoning these settlements. During the 1950s-1970s, the main reason for a negative dynamics of rural population was migratory drain and in the past few decades small villages where rare few retirees reside, cease to exist due to natural attrition. An average Vologda village has a population of 49 people which is 20% of the national average. Inviability of small settlements aggravated by demographic issues and limited accessibility has turned rural areas of the Vologda Oblast in a crisis-ridden zone way back in Soviet times. This resulted in halted social modernization of rural areas including its gender modernization.

In the Vologda Oblast, depopulation process commenced later than in neighboring regions of the Non-Black Soil Belt with oldest population (Novgorod, Tver and Yaroslavl Oblasts). Birth rate and natural attrition rate in the Vologda Oblast are somewhat better than in the regions experiencing worst demographic crises (see Table 1 for details). The rate of depopulation however is increasing: in 2003, natural attrition was closing on 1% per annum. Depopulation is witnessed across all municipalities differing only in degree: in the rural areas, death rate exceeds birth rate by 150-200% while in Vologda and Cherepovets, by 50%.

Table 1. Demographic indicators for the Vologda Oblast and neighboring regions experiencing higher depopulation rates (per 1,000 people)

	1999			2002			2003		
	Births	Deaths	Natural Attrition	Births	Deaths	Natural Attrition	Births	Deaths	Natural Attrition
All of Russia	8.3	-14.7	-6.4	9.8	-16.3	-6.5	10.2	16.4	-6.2
<i>Vologda Oblast</i>	7.9	-15.8	-7.9	9.8	-18	-8.2	10.4	-19.8	-9.4
Yaroslavl Oblast	6.8	-18.3	-11.5	8.5	-20.3	-11.8	9.1	20.8	-11.7
Novgorod Oblast	7.2	-19.1	-11.9	8.8	-21.9	-13.1	9.2	23.5	-14.3
Tver Oblast	7	-20.2	-13.2	8.3	-22.9	-14.6	9.2	24.1	-14.9

Age and gender structure of urban population of the Vologda Oblast largely follows general national patterns but in the rural areas many years of migratory drain has resulted in a rapid ageing: in 2002, 27% of rural residents and nearly 36% of rural women were past working age (see Table 2 for details). Demographic degradation and feminization of rural areas have grown into acute social issues in the Vologda Oblast.

Table 2. Age and gender structure of population of the Vologda Oblast, data of 2002 census (percentages)

	Urban population		Rural population	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
<i>Vologda Oblast</i>				
Below working age	19.8	15.9	20.3	17.4
Of working age	67.7	59.8	61.5	47.1
Past working age	12.2	24.0	18.2	35.5
<i>Russian Federation, reference data</i>				
Below working age	18.7	15.4	23.0	20.0
Of working age	68.1	59.0	61.6	50.9
Past working age	13.1	25.5	15.4	29.1

In the 1950s-1970s, the Vologda Oblast served as a migration donor for northern areas of European Russia that attracted younger people from rural settlements and small towns with high wages and salaries. During transition the directionality of migration changed but major surplus was accounted for not by younger migrants from the CIS but reverse migration of those resident in the North, mainly older working age people and the elderly. By early 2000s, stress-induced migration was largely over and migratory growth reduced to a minimal level of (2 to 3 people per 10,000 population), compensating for a meager 3% of natural attrition in 2002-2003. Over the next few year, the situation with migration will further aggravate in the Vologda Oblast as there is just one urban agglomeration that remains attractive for migrants in Northwestern Russia, namely St. Petersburg and the Leningrad Oblast.

Economy. The Vologda Oblast remains industrialized with its industry accounting for a half of GRP and material production sectors, for nearly two-thirds of GRP (the average indicator across Russian regions stands at 47%). Owing to Severstal, a major metallurgy holding company of Russia, the Vologda Oblast has made it into the economically developed regions' group and its per capita GRP is higher than the national average. In Northwestern Russia, only the Komi Republic and the city of St. Petersburg (apart from the oil-producing Nenets Autonomous District) demonstrate better economic performance (see Table 3 below).

Table 3. GRP rating of Northwestern Russia in 2002

	Per capita GRP in thou. RUR	Adjusted* percentage of the national average (n.a. designated as 100%)	GRP percentage accounted for by material production sectors
Neenets Autonomous District	257.8	395	83
Komi Republic	83.9	125	51
City of St. Petersburg	79.7	112	38
Vologda Oblast	63.5	110	64
Archangel Oblast**	59.5	94	52
Leningrad Oblast	61.5	95	65
Republic of Karelia	55.1	88	49
Murmansk Oblast	71.3	85	50
Novgorod Oblast	45.0	75	58
Kaliningrad Oblast	43.6	65	46
Pskov Oblast	31.8	59	40

* adjusted for the cost of living in the region (the ratio for inter-regional comparison of the cost of goods and services provided by the State Committee for Statistics)

** together with the Neenets Autonomous District

Severstal generates over 70% of tax revenues of the consolidated Oblast budget. From the point of view of intergovernmental relations, since the second half of 1990s the Oblast has been a donor region, receiving no transfers from the Regions Financial Support Fund. In the past, there were only 12 or 13 such donors in the Russian Federation. By 2003, their number has reached 18, reflecting the growth of revenues of oil-producing regions.

As ferrous metallurgy was redirected to focus on exports since mid-1990s, a decline of industrial production was less pronounced in the Vologda Oblast against a background of other Northwestern regions of Russia and across the Russian Federation. By 2004, industrial production has been restored to reach 91% of 1990 indicators (up to 72% across the Russian Federation). Nevertheless such reliance on one industry cannot ensure sustainable development. This mono-sectoral structure of economy is due to a still present substantial decline in the forest products and woodworking industry and mechanical engineering and textiles sectors. These findings are confirmed by dynamics of industrial production by municipalities, e.g. in 2003 it reached its highest in Cherepovets (103%), while the city of Vologda experienced zero dynamics (100%) and in 21 municipalities (out of 28) production continued to decline. A positive dynamics was only witnessed in certain towns and Rayons with more stable forest products, woodworking and food processing industries (Veliky Ustyug and Sheksninsky Rayon).

The city of Cherepovets accounts for 75% of Oblast's industrial production which reiterates the leading role played by Severstal in the economy of the Vologda Oblast. Save for the Cherepovets integrated iron-and-steel works, the Vologda Oblast would not be different from its problem-laden neighbors, namely the Kostroma, Kirov and Tver Oblasts. In 2003, Oblast's administrative centre (the city of Vologda) accounted for 13% of industrial output; two Rayons including medium-sized industrial centers (towns of Sokol and Veliky Ustyug), for slightly over 3%, and the remaining 24 rayons aggregately accounted for some 8% of industrial output of the Vologda Oblast. Therefore it is only in industrialized Cherepovets where industry enjoys a stable financial standing due to high concentrations of export-oriented production.

Agriculture remains a crisis-ridden sector of Oblast's economy not unlike other regions of the Non-Black Soil Belt. Over 1990-2003, livestock population has shrunk in the Vologda Oblast by ca. 65% (compared to national average of ca. 55%). In 2003, this trend has survived throughout all Rayons with the only difference in decrease rates: in the most remote Rayons livestock population fell by 20..25% over a year, while in suburban Rayons, by 3..8%. The

Vologda Oblast specializes in dairy production but yield volumes only grow in suburban Rayons in southern parts of the Oblast that are more densely populated with a better developed transport infrastructure. Four Rayons out of 26 (namely Vologodsky, Cherepovetsky, Gryazovetsky and Sheksninsky) account for 55% of Oblast's dairy production. Of other agricultural sectors, only large poultry plants demonstrate steady growth. These plants are located in the vicinity of Vologda or Cherepovets, or halfway between those two cities (in Sheksninsky Rayon). As a result, marketable agricultural production becomes ever more concentrated in a few suburban Rayons while in vast outlying areas the agribusiness falls into decay surviving by means of non-core operations, e.g. lumbering.

In Soviet times and during transition, the economy of the Vologda Oblast was notable for its underdeveloped services sector. Across Russian regions, services account for more than a half of GRP (53%) while in the Vologda Oblast some positive dynamics has been seen only recently: in 1999-2002, the percentage of services in GRP has grown from 26% to 36%. Furthermore, 25% of provided services are non-market services (accounting for over 9% of GRP) which corresponds to all-Russian regional average. Across the Vologda Oblast, market services sector develops at a faster pace only in Vologda and Cherepovets. In terms of per capita sales of paid services to public, cities and peripheral Rayons differ substantially: in 2003, Cherepovets indicators were 80% higher and Vologda, 50% higher than that of Oblast averages, while most Rayons demonstrated services' sales figures that were 50..66% below Oblast averages and in six economically weak and most remote Rayons, sales of paid services to the public were 83..85% below Oblast averages. This is due to the fact that cities provide services to rural periphery and residents' expenditures on housing and utilities, transport and communications services are higher in the cities. Furthermore, city residents spend more on vacations, entertainment and cellular telecommunications services and Internet thereby modernizing their consumption and lifestyle. Residents of peripheral Rayons of the Vologda Oblast lack this opportunity due to their low incomes and a weakly developed urban infrastructure, therefore territorial imbalances in the development of market services are growing. As a result of these imbalances, there are different employment opportunities in the services sector with clear gender implications.

Labour market. Overall in the Vologda Oblast, the situation in the labour market looks favorable with economic activity (67%) and employment indicators exceeding national averages. Employment structure by sectors has underwent certain changes typical of all regions under transition: the share of those employed in retailing has grown more than two-fold while employment in construction fell by nearly 50% and growing employment in the public sector (see Table 4 for details). There are however some unique features. Firstly, the structure of employment in the Vologda Oblast has remained more inclined towards industry: the share of industrial jobs is nearly one-third higher than the Russian average while the absolute number of such jobs reduced only by 16% (compared to more than one-third in the Russian Federation). Secondly, the Vologda Oblast lies in the Non-Black Soil Belt marginally fit for agriculture which resulted in a larger reduction of agricultural employment: the number of agricultural sector employees fell by one-third (against 18% average across the Russian Federation). As jobs are now concentrated not only in industry, but also in the public sector and retail, labor market demand has become more focused on women.

Table 4. Average annual employment percentages by sector

	Vologda Oblast		For reference: Russian Federation
	1990	2002	2002
Industry	32	29	22
Agriculture	12	9	12
Construction	13	7	8
Transport and communications	9	7	8
Retail	8	16	17
Housing and utilities	4	5	5
State-financed sectors*	16	18	18
Other	6	9	10

* education, health care, culture and social security

Employment structure by industry sector does not follow the structure of industrial production due to different labor intensity of industries. In terms of number of jobs, two sectors are prominent in the Vologda Oblast, namely the ferrous metallurgy and forest products industry (including the woodworking and pulp-and-paper sectors), each accounting for 25% of all industrial production jobs (see Table 5 for details). Mechanical engineering ranks third. Considering different economic situations in these industries one can assess intra-regional employment issues and find that these problems are most acute in small towns and settlements where woodworking industries are concentrated, less acute in Vologda specializing in mechanical engineering and the light industry, and practically non-existent in Cherepovets.

Table 5. Percentage structures of employment and industrial output by industry sector of Vologda Oblast, 2002

	Ferrous metallurgy	Chemistry	Mechanical engineering	Forest products industry	Light industry	Food processing	Other
Percentage share of industrial jobs	25.5	5.2	18.1	25.6	5.2	8.1	12.3
Percentage share of industrial output	59.8	6.7	6.2	8.3	0.7	6.8	11.5

On the background of a vast majority of regions in Northwestern Russia and the entire Russian Federation, throughout the transition the Vologda Oblast experienced a lower level of general unemployment assessed using ILO methodology (see Table 6 for details). In 2003, unemployment rate fell to 4.5% which is among the lowest indicators of Russian regions (lower rates are only to be found in federal cities). Does that imply that unemployment is practically not an issue in the Vologda Oblast?

Table 6. General unemployment percentages assessed using ILO methodology in subjects of Northwestern Russia

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
City of St. Petersburg	10.6	9.5	9	11.3	11	6.3	3.9	3.4	4.1
Vologda Oblast	8.8	8	10.7	12.4	11.5	8	8.9	6	4.8
Novgorod Oblast	10.2	8.6	13.3	14.8	14.1	7.8	6.4	6.3	5.0
Kaliningrad Oblast	9.2	14.8	11.5	16.8	15.6	15.4	9.6	7.1	7.5
Pskov Oblast	12.2	13.8	14.1	15.9	13.3	12.5	10.3	8.2	8.1
Republic of Karelia	13.2	11.3	12.1	16.6	15.7	11.5	8.7	7.9	8.5
Leningrad Oblast	10.2	10.7	13.6	14.9	14.6	9.7	6.9	7.0	8.7
Archangel Oblast	11	12.8	13.7	14.6	14.9	12.2	8.8	8.1	9.9
Murmansk Oblast	12.4	15.9	19.5	21.1	16.4	12.8	12.8	10.2	10.0
Komi Republic	10.9	11.2	13.6	17.6	16.1	12.1	14.0	9.1	11.9
Russian Federation	9.7	9.9	11.2	13.5	13.3	10.8	9.5	8.3	8.6

Source: RF Statistical Yearbook for 2004

Favorable Oblast averages camouflage employment issues of local labour markets. Internal inequalities are found between the centre and periphery and can be measured using the data on recorded unemployment (see Table 16). Overall in the Oblast, unemployment continues to shrink (from 2.2% in 2002 down to 1.9% in 2003) and this process is the fastest in Cherepovets where unemployment rate is already minimal. Apart from Cherepovets and its vicinity (0.5..0.6% unemployment), a low rate of recorded unemployment is to be found in Vologda (1.1%). Nearly all other municipalities demonstrate unemployment levels higher than Oblast average, climaxing in 'backwater districts' in the Southwestern areas and a more populated Gryazovetsky Rayon where the economic situation is unfavorable (4..5% unemployment). The key problem of local labour markets in peripheral Rayons is very limited supply of new jobs. Overall in the Oblast, in 2003 there were only 2 unemployed persons per vacancy (in 2002, 3 unemployed persons). In large cities, demand exceeds the number of those unemployed by 30..100% meaning that unemployment has a structural nature to it. However in a half of Rayons within the Oblast the number of vacancies is minimal (between 1 and 15 across the entire Rayon over a year), while in Chagodoshchensky Rayon there was not a single vacancy throughout 2003 and therefore unemployment rate did not fall. As a result, women find competing with men for jobs in labour markets of peripheral Rayons much harder.

Household situation. The Vologda Oblast stands in between leaders and median regions in terms of income buying power of population (i.e. ratio of per capita income and subsistence wage). In the Northwestern Federal District, the Vologda Oblast trails only the Komi Republic and St. Petersburg (see Table 7 for details). Owing to a faster economic growth, by the year 2002 the Vologda Oblast has successfully compensated for the plunge of population incomes after the default of 1998.

Table 7. Percentage ratios of per capita income and subsistence wage in the subjects of Northwestern Federal District of Russia

	1997	1999	2002*	2003*
Komi Republic	266	223	259	304
St. Petersburg	224	148	232	303
<i>Vologda Oblast</i>	206	133	214	254
Republic of Karelia	208	160	213	230
Murmansk Oblast	233	205	200	226
Archangel Oblast	168	115	186	н.д.
Novgorod Oblast	213	157	180	198
Pskov Oblast	164	113	173	196
Kaliningrad Oblast	173	136	157	177
Leningrad Oblast	167	107	143	160
Russian Federation	227	176	246	289

* 4th Qtr data

As in all industrialized exporting regions, wages and salaries account for a large percentage of personal income (53% compared to the average 41% in the Russian Federation). Furthermore, the Vologda Oblast differs from many Russian regions in terms of leveled out wage differences across industry sectors as well as agriculture and management (see Table 18). The only exception is industry where higher wages and salaries in the export-oriented ferrous metallurgy have become the differentiating factor.

A smaller difference of agricultural wages and the Oblast average is due to economic and geographic reasons. In the area between Vologda and Cherepovets where the majority of Oblast's rural population is resident, the agricultural sector is more viable thanks to the proximity of markets and therefore lower transport costs. It is worth reiterating at this point that the four Rayons adjacent to those two major cities account for over 55% of dairy production in the Vologda Oblast. Consequentially, the wages of agricultural workers in these Rayons are higher reaching 80% of Oblast average wage. Furthermore, in certain areas (in Totemsky and Kaduysky Rayons) agricultural producers supply food not only to local residents but also to transport and construction units of Gazprom that ensures more stable revenues. In remote rural Rayons lacking facilities for processing and sale of agricultural produce, wages in agriculture are extremely low at 20...30% of Oblast average while such peripheral farms only employ a very small workforce. In peripheral Rayons, agriculture has long gone unviable but such dramatic imbalance of wages and salaries became evident only under economic growth.

Spatial differentiation of average wages across Rayons is not so vividly pronounced. Among municipalities, only industrialized Cherepovets stands out with its average wage being nearly 40% higher than in Vologda and 200% higher than in remote rural Rayons (see Table 19 for details). Industrial wages in a vast majority of Rayons do not exceed Oblast averages (across all sectors) that implies certain problems in development of the food, textiles and woodworking industries. Only in Vologda industrial wages are higher than Oblast averages. Higher wages in construction are only typical of the two major cities and neighboring Rayons, and the town of Totma that is the operating base of Gazprom's construction units.

A less pronounced sectoral and spatial differentiation of wages (excluding Cherepovets) results in smaller income polarization of population. That combined with a relatively low cost of living allows Oblast government to maintain a low poverty rate since the second half of 1990s (see Table 8 below). Only under major economic shocks, for example a rapid decline of incomes after the default of 1998, such margin of safety did not suffice and poverty rate was growing rapidly, albeit for a short period. Last few years' dynamics proves that achieving a

further reduction of poverty rate is much more difficult as the limiting factors currently are the low income of population compared to other exporting regions and a moderate income growth rate in the past few years. Consequently in 2003 poverty level in the Vologda Oblast has reduced fractionally (down to 20%) and equaled the national average.

Table 8. Percentages of population drawing an income below subsistence wage in the subjects of Northwestern Federal District of Russia

	1997	1999	2000	2001	2002r.	2003
St. Petersburg	23	33	27	23	21	17
Republic of Karelia	20	26	23	24	20	19
Komi Republic	17	22	28	23	21	19
Vologda Oblast	20	37	26	24	23	20
Murmansk Oblast	17	20	26	24	24	22
Archangel Oblast*	25	50	35	29	28	24
Nenets Autonomous District	n/a	50	42	30	31	24
Pskov Oblast	29	51	45	40	31	26
Novgorod Oblast	18	24	35	32	31	29
Kaliningrad Oblast	25	37	35	42	42	35
Leningrad Oblast	25	52	50	47	42	38
Russian Federation	21	30	29	27	24	20.5

* including the Nenets Autonomous District

Social aspects. Low quality of population is one of the major issues in the Vologda Oblast. It would be feasible to isolate health issues and relevant short life expectancy. Reduced longevity is characteristic of all regions within the Non-Black Soil Belt and is largely due to marginalization of life styles, especially of rural population. Furthermore, infant mortality in the Vologda Oblast was reducing slower and now it is on a par with RF average level (12.6% in 2003). This situation is largely due to the issue of availability of health care services under a wide spatial displacement of population and sparsely located cities and towns. As demonstrated by the experience of the Komi Republic, the negative impact of wide spatial displacement can be reduced but this requires additional investment in health care and more doctors.

Availability of qualified medical care in the Vologda Oblast is low at 34 doctors per 10,000 residents (compared to 48 doctors per 10,000 residents across the rest of Russia) which is similar to the situation in other regions of the Federal District not ascribed to Arctic Areas. Assessing the state of health care development on the basis of paramedical personnel or hospital beds' availability is not feasible due to specific features of population displacement in the Non-Black Soil Belt where a multitude of small settlements exist. Availability of primary health care services is ensured by way of a fine net of rural paramedic-midwife stations, dispensaries and divisional open hospitals, therefore relevant per capita indicators are higher than national averages. The quality of services however remains poor.

Educational level of population is also low and only 19% of those employed hold university degrees, while in Russia on the average 25% of workers and employees would have completed third level education. The Vologda Oblast lacks major schools of higher learning (it is in fact true of all regions of Northwestern Russia) as this function has long been monopolized by St. Petersburg. During transition, the process of regionalization of higher learning commenced but the Vologda Oblast did not succeed in closing this gap: in 2003, the number of students of higher educational establishments per 10,000 population was 25% below national average. Coverage of preschool institutions amounts to 78% compared to 58% in the rest of Russian Federation; similar indicators are demonstrated by a majority of other subjects in Northwestern Federal District as in industrialized regions it is typical to have both

parents working. School provision is a little better than across Russia and only 16% of schoolchildren are taking the afternoon shift (19% being national average) but this is due to a large percentage of ungraded rural schools and a low birth rate in the Vologda Oblast.

Regional government follows proactive social policies. Capitation grants on social purposes (adjusted for cost of living in the region) are notably higher than in most neighboring regions excluding the richer St. Petersburg and the Komi Republic (see Table 9 below). These funds however are mainly used to maintain social safety nets and to pay wages and salaries, therefore the social outcomes of larger fiscal expenditure is not substantial. The issue of higher operating cost of institutions is vital for all northern regions and regions within the Non-Black Soil Belt with small settlements, and the Vologda Oblast combines the characteristics of both regional models. Social security reform envisages substantial cuts to the social safety net but these measures have serious gender implications in the form of a dramatic reduction of jobs available to well-educated rural women.

Table 9. Social expenditure of consolidated regional budgets in the Northwestern Federal District of Russia in 2003

	Percentage ratios of per capita social expenditure to national averages*	Percentage breakdown of social expenditure			
		Education	Health care	Housing and utilities	Social policies
Republic of Karelia	89	45	28	13	15
Komi Republic	109	40	25	24	11
Archangel Oblast	87	39	26	19	16
Vologda Oblast	111	40	22	24	13
Kaliningrad Oblast	73	37	22	29	12
Leningrad Oblast	84	35	22	29	14
Murmansk Oblast	77	36	24	26	14
Novgorod Oblast	70	37	19	27	16
Pskov Oblast	84	35	24	26	15
St. Petersburg	117	30	17	32	22

* per capita expenditure is adjusted for the cost of living in the region (using 'the ratio for inter-regional comparison of the cost of goods and services basket' provided by the State Committee for Statistics)

The structure of social fiscal expenditure in the Vologda Oblast does not reflect any clear sectoral priorities and relevant indicators are median against a background of other regions in Northwestern Russia. In 2003, per capita social policy expenditure (adjusted for the cost of living) was higher than the national average; in the Northwestern Federal District, the Vologda Oblast trails only St. Petersburg and the oil-producing Nenets Autonomous District. So far the housing policy reform did not gravely affect the population. While actual housing rent in the Vologda Oblast equals the national average (92%), in 2003 the percentage of families receiving housing subsidies totaled a meager 10.5% (compared to the national average of 15.2%). Oblast government has decided to retain housing & utility benefits received by 42% of Oblast's population (compared to the national average of 30%). From the point of view of gender-sensitive policies this is a protective solution as single elderly women tend to own residential space in excess of the norm that cannot be paid for with the housing subsidy.

Overall, in spite of a [horizontal] fiscal balance and relatively high capitation expenditure, regional government's fiscal policy fails to achieve a significant social effect measurable in improved quality of population. This is discouraged by *objective limitations* e.g. low urbanization, poorly developed system of towns and insufficient social mobility of population and slow modernization of lifestyles. To overcome these barriers, expenditure of a higher

order is required (primarily for education and infrastructure development) which is beyond the capabilities of Oblast budget at this stage. The best potential to modernize social sectors is only found in two major cities but to achieve sustainable development, Vologda requires more financial and human resources while industrialized Cherepovets needs to develop its services sector. The gap between large cities and vast peripheral Rayons of the Vologda Oblast is widening and therefore Oblast's gender issues are becoming more differentiated.

Human development in the Vologda Oblast

In terms of human development the relatively prosperous Vologda Oblast stands 20th among Russian regions but such standing is only due to a higher GRP. Life expectancy is low just as the educational coverage of youth. Oblast's human development is imbalanced and therefore not sustainable which is reflected in relevant gender issues.

	Per capita GRP, dollars of PPP	Life expectancy, years	Educational coverage, %	HDI
Vologda Oblast	7,769	64.4	64.8	0.752
Russian Federation	7,438	65.3	69.8	0.761

Source: Report on human development in the Russian Federation in 2004.

2. Gender issues in the Vologda Oblast

While the Vologda Oblast is somewhat similar to its neighboring regions, it possesses of certain specific social and economic characteristics. The combination of development issues of this Oblast includes depopulation, weak and non-uniform development of territories, predominant industry in the structure of Oblast economy, concentration of agribusiness in suburban areas in parallel to abandonment of vast peripheral areas, poor development of social infrastructure and the services sector, and growing intra-regional differentiation of the labour market and incomes of population. All the above issues have a definite gender aspect to them and influence the formation of different adaptation strategies of men and women.

2.1. Gender aspects of the labour market

Economic activity

Sample employment surveys have demonstrated that the Vologda Oblast is marked for a higher economic activity of working age women that amounted to 78.5% in 2003 (74.4% being all-Russian average). High economic activity is demonstrated not only by people of working age as there are increasing numbers of younger female retirees in the labour market. While across Russia economic activity of women in the 55-59 age group has grown from 30% to 50% of the said group in 1995-2003, in the Vologda Oblast such growth was from 40% to 60% over 1995-2002 with peak growth occurring in 2002. Such higher economic activity of women retirees is normally typical of large agglomerations and northern areas with high living costs, but the Vologda Oblast being neither of the aforementioned yet demonstrates a similar model of women's adaptation. A higher economic activity is also demonstrated by older working age category (50-54) where relevant indicators consistently exceed national averages by 5.10 percentage points and the gap is still growing. At the same time economic activity of younger women (20-24 yrs age group) is falling likewise in the rest of Russia, but nevertheless this activity is still above average. Only the age group corresponding to the highest economic activity of women (25-49 yrs), Vologda Oblast indicators practically equal national averages (more than 90%). Consequently in the Vologda Oblast broader age groups of women are more proactive in their search of paid employment, compared to overall Russian indicators.

At the same time economic activity indicators of working age men are nearly the same as national averages (79.8% and 79.5% respectively). Only younger men are more active, both in the 20-24 yrs age group and in the youngest age group (15-19 yrs) whose economic activity indicators exceed national averages by 4.6 percentage points. For older working age categories (55-59 yrs) the discrepancies are minimal, and in terms of the early retirees group (60-72 yrs) economic activity of men resident in the Vologda Oblast is below the Russian average.

It is obvious that economic activity of both young men and women is motivated by a better situation in Oblast's labour market and a low rate of unemployment, while for the older categories the incentives are different. Women are forced to proactively seek paid employment as surviving spouses need to cover all household costs. Men of older age categories are usually married and household costs (e.g. cost of food, rent etc.) are less of a burden when there are two pensions to rely on.

All the above leads us to conclude that promotion of employment for women within the older working age and early retirees' categories is a vitally important element of gender-sensitive policy for the Vologda Oblast. In many aspects it is a make-shift solution but raising pension

allowances is beyond the competence of local government; on the other hand, local government is directly responsible for payment of social benefits and reduction of poverty. Promotion of employment for women of older working age groups would assist in reducing fiscal expenditure on social benefits (housing subsidies, allowances for the low-income households, etc). In addition, the growth of economic activity of older women is shaping naturally and supporting it would result in a notable positive effect from a point of view of social adaptation.

Employment structure

To analyze the gender structure of employment by sector, one can use two sources of information, namely the data of labour market sample surveys (with each data set based on a relatively small regional sample) and statistical data on large and medium-sized enterprises which is notoriously incomplete. Therefore certain distortions would be present under both scenarios. We believe that sample survey data is more accurate in terms of reflecting the gender structure of employment.

Sectoral structure of employment in the Vologda Oblast deviates from national averages only in certain sectors but these differences are quite substantial, demonstrating an obvious gender aspect to them (see Table 10 below). First, this Oblast remains industrialized and therefore the shares of industrial employment of both men and women are above average. Over the four years of economic growth, the rate of reduction of men's industrial employment was higher than that of women's employment. This was due to modernization of processes in metallurgy and rehabilitation of non-profitable forest products and mechanical engineering facilities. The exit flow of industrial employees largely explains a further increase of men holding jobs in the transport sector. Women would often "stick" to their jobs in industry as industrial wages and salaries are substantially higher.

Table 10. Percentage distribution of employed men and women (aged 15-72) by economy sector

	Vologda Oblast				For reference: Russian Federation	
	1998		2002		2003*	
	women	men	women	men	women	men
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Industry	25	40	23	35	19	30
Agriculture and forest management	5	14	8	11	8	11
Construction	1	12	3	9	3	10
Transport	4	9	2	13	3	11
Communications	3	1	2	1	2	1
Wholesale and retail trade, public catering	16	8	16	9	21	10
Housing and utility services, non-industrial services	3	4	4	5	5	5
Health care, physical education and social protection	10	2	15	2	12	3
Education, culture and arts	23	3	20	4	17	5
Finance, credit, insurance, pension security	2	1	1	0	2	1
Management	5	6	4	10	5	8
Other	3	1	2	1	2	3

* as of November

Another important specific characteristic is the change of gender proportions of agricultural employment. During crisis agriculture has turned into a "men's" sector. When the situation reversed to economic growth, new opportunities have emerged for alternative and better-

paying employment, therefore men in the Vologda Oblast have begun to abandon agriculture for other sectors. To the contrary, employment of women in agriculture kept steadily growing at a pace that was higher than the national average (see Table 11 below). This was due to increased demand for dairy products of Oblast's farms and a more substantial increase of wages in livestock farming. Therefore a gender balance in agriculture is being restored with women concentrating in higher-paying livestock farming with harsh labour conditions.

Third, in comparison with Russia's national averages, market services including trade are less developed in the Vologda Oblast. Consequently women's employment is biased towards state-financed sectors, namely education and health care. These sectors have become a low-wage but stable haven for women who are less competitive in the labour market. In public education this trend is gradually becoming history as since late 1990s jobs in education are shrinking which is caused by a range of factors including the optimization of Oblast school system. One could also remark on a relatively small percentage of men employed in this sector. This is not the case though with the other group of state-financed services (health care and social protection), where old trends survive, whereby specific employment in this sector including women is growing (see Table 11 below). This is in particular due to extended responsibilities of social protection agencies and growing employment in this sector, with practically all jobs taken up by women.

Finally, in the Vologda Oblast there are more pronounced gender differences with regards to employment in management: in this sector, jobs are held by 10% of employed men and a meager 4% of women. One of reasons is a new system of categorizing employment in management (e.g. inclusion of the public safety system, etc.). At the same time gender disparity in management in the Vologda Oblast is growing at a much faster pace than across Russia: while in 1998 the share of women holding management positions was hardly any different from the national average (47.48%), in 2002 this indicator was significantly lower (29% and 36%, respectively) (see Table 11 below).

Table 11. Rating of sectors by percentage shares of employed women aged 15-72

	Vologda Oblast			Russian Federation	
	1998	1999	2002	1998	2003**
Total	49	48	49	48	49
Finance, credit, insurance, pension security	78	67	92	71	68
Health care, physical education and social protection	83	85	88	81	80
Education	88*	82*	82	79*	80
Culture and arts			92		64
Wholesale and retail trade, public catering	65	65	65	62	65
Communications	83	50	57	60	60
Housing and utility services, non-industrial services	45	35	45	46	49
<i>Agriculture and forest management</i>	27	37	42	32	40
Industry	38	36	38	38	38
<i>Management</i>	47	31	29	48	36
Construction	8	30	23	24	20
Transport	28	25	15	26	21

* together with sectors of culture

** as of late November

The specific characteristics of sectoral employment identified all have different outcomes for gender disparities of earned income: a higher rate of employment in industry tends to level out such differences while migration of women to state-financed sectors on the contrary increases gender inequality of earnings.

Labour conditions

Being an industrial region, the Vologda Oblast has a very high employment rate in manufacturing industry with harmful labour conditions. For most regions, this would be a quintessentially men's gender issue while in the Vologda Oblast, 25% of women employed in industry work in such conditions. Dynamics of employment under economic growth is not promising either; over 1999-2003 the percentage of those working in harmful conditions has increased¹ (see Table 12 below). This negative trend is an outcome of structural shifts in manufacturing and related employment towards more hazardous but more profitable exporting sectors (e.g. metallurgy, chemical industry and pulp-and-paper industry). Should a higher industrial employment rate persist, poor labour conditions might long remain a serious gender issue in the Vologda Oblast. This issue mainly concerns men (69%) but during economic growth the percentage of women employed in manufacturing industry with harmful labour conditions was growing at a similar pace. A reversal to positive dynamics is only possible on condition of the regional government cooperating with business, and subject to approval of a more stringent mechanism aimed at improving labour conditions.

Table 12. Percentages of manufacturing employees working in harmful labour conditions, as of respective year end

	1998		1999		2002		2003	
	women	men	women	men	women	men	women	men
Vologda Oblast	31	47	22	34	22	36	26	38
Russian Federation	n/a	n/a	15	26	16	28	16	29

The Vologda Oblast experiences a dramatic problem of industrial injuries. In all sectors, the incidence of injuries at work is 100%..200% higher than the Russian averages for both men and women (see Table 13 below). In spite of a two-fold gender disparity, the sheer volume of injuries grants this issue a common aspect. This issue is not exclusively caused by the structure of economy and higher employment in potentially hazardous sectors such as logging, production involving high temperature processes or harmful effluents. There is a more deeply rooted cause: low quality of population and a widely spread asocial lifestyle. Only this can explain a 150% higher rate of injuries in agriculture compared to the national average. Furthermore, in rural areas alcohol addiction and related injuries have become common not only among men but also women.

Table 13. Number of injuries at work by sector in 2002-2003, per 100,000 of working population

	Vologda Oblast		Russian Federation	
	women	men	women	men
Total	502	1197	227	530
including:				
industry	408	1132	247	607
agriculture	1459	1978	462	698
construction	362	1295	188	548
transport	453	806	170	330
Other sectors	266	817	155	343

However nearly all fatal injuries at work are sustained by men, and the incidence of men's lethal trauma in the Vologda Oblast does not differ from the national average (21 and 22 per 100,000 population respectively). There is no simple solution to eliminate injuries at work as

¹ The accuracy of data showing a radical decline in 1998-1999 is highly questionable.

this issue reflects extreme forms of social marginalization that are extremely difficult to overcome.

Working pensioners

As noted above, sample surveys of employment have demonstrated that in the Vologda Oblast, economic activity of women of pre-retirement age and early post-retirement age is higher than across Russia. The data on working pensioners supplied by the Pension Fund however contradicts this statement. Employment of pensioners in the Vologda Oblast increases from year to year, but it is still lower than the national average (see Table 14 below). Most employed pensioners are found in northern regions where retirement age is lower, and residents of major agglomerations and highly urbanized Oblasts.

Table 14. Percentage shares of working pensioners, by gender*

	2002		2003	
	women	men	women	men
Russian Federation	15.7	19.2	17.5	20.5
Murmansk Oblast	31.0	41.4	33.3	41.7
Nenets Autonomous District	30.5	34.2	32.8	37.3
Komi Republic	26.0	30.6	28.5	33.1
Republic of Karelia	22.4	25.4	24.5	27.2
Archangel Oblast	21.8	23.7	24.5	26.2
St. Petersburg	19.1	25.4	21.5	27.0
Kaliningrad Oblast	19.0	21.9	21.8	24.4
Leningrad Oblast	16.8	17.8	18.4	21.0
Vologda Oblast	14.8	16.7	16.2	18.3
Novgorod Oblast	13.3	18.0	12.7	14.2
Pskov Oblast	10.9	11.9	13.0	13.4

* measured for the age groups 55-59 (women) and 60-64 (men)

While we do understand the inevitability of certain discrepancies in comparing sample and continuous data from different sources, we would still specifically note the growing dynamics of employment of elderly population. The trend of "reliance on one's own resources" and search of pension-supplementing income has already taken shape in the Vologda Oblast and local government should proactively support it. This policy has a gender aspect to it as for retired women many of whom are single, supplementing income is even more important than for men.

Unemployment

Analysis of *general unemployment* (using the ILO methodology) demonstrates that the Russian labour market substantially protracts responding to changes in economic situation. Prior to the 1998 default, a range of controls were used that prevented growth of unemployment rate (many months' back pay, long unpaid 'leaves', etc). The growth of unemployment rate climaxed in 1998-1999. During this labour market crisis, gender disparities of unemployment in regions were insignificant. During the economic growth period that followed, men's unemployment prevailed in 75% of regions. Gender disparities of unemployment at regional level are not always easily interpreted as there is a multitude of factors involved. One of the least known factors is that in their search of employment, women are less demanding in terms of method and level of remuneration.

During the first years of economic growth, equal or higher women's unemployment rates (compared to men's unemployment) were found in the regions falling under these three categories:

- Most prosperous RF subjects with minimal unemployment rate (federal cities and Moscow and Samara Oblasts). These regions, in spite of a better situation in the labour market, demonstrate a lower competitiveness of women compared to men (especially women lacking vocational training and older women).
- Major agricultural regions of Southern Russia with favorable climatic conditions (Krasnodar and Altai Territories and Rostov Oblast). In these regions, a percentage of women were employed in personal subsidiary economy due to a difficult situation in the labour market and stringent competition for jobs; this notwithstanding, they did not abandon hope of finding paid employment and did not move to the economically inactive category.
- Certain regions in Northern and Eastern Russia with predominant export-oriented mineral resources producing sectors employing mainly men and lacking jobs for women.

In most regions specializing in resource production and processing, however, men's unemployment was higher than women's, and the Vologda Oblast was one of such regions. During the economic crisis of 1998-1999 the situation in Oblast labour market was worse than the RF average, as was the case in most regions of the Northwestern Federal District (see Table 15 below) and a lower rate of women's unemployment was due to better adaptability of women and their fewer aspirations in search of employment. After several years of economic growth the situation has anyway changed. As noted above, in terms of general unemployment the Vologda Oblast now stands most prosperous against the background of other regions of Northwestern Russia, having no obvious gender disparities in unemployment. The Oblast is closing the gap separating it from the most successful "leader" regions.

Table 15. Rating of regions within the Northwestern Federal District by unemployment rate (using ILO methodology), percentages of economically active men and women

	1998		2001		2003	
	women	men	women	men	women	men
<i>Vologda Oblast</i>	10.2	14.5	8.2	9.5	4.7	4.7
Novgorod Oblast	16.6	13.1	4.6	8.2	5.3	4.8
St. Petersburg	11.6	11.0	3.9	4.0	4.0	5.2
Republic of Karelia	17.2	16.1	6.8	10.4	8.8	8.2
Kaliningrad Oblast	17.6	16.1	8.9	10.2	6.5	8.5
Leningrad Oblast	14.4	15.3	6.6	7.1	7.8	9.7
Murmansk Oblast	19.8	22.2	12.9	12.6	10.7	9.6
Archangel Oblast	14.7	14.6	9.2	8.4	9.6	10.0
Pskov Oblast	14.7	17.0	7.0	13.4	5.4	10.7
Nenets Autonomous District	6.5	15.9	6.5	7.9	5.3	11.4
Komi Republic	21.0	14.8	15.0	13.2	11.3	12.4
Russian Federation	12.9	13.3	8.6	9.5	8.0	8.6

Sample surveys of employment help identify the years when women's unemployment differed most from men's² (see Figure 1). The sharpest disparity was in place in 1998 when the conditions for developing metallurgy and other export-oriented sectors that constitute the core of Vologda Oblast economy have been the worst (during the pre-default period). Such transition experience is very important and should be considered in the future. Single-industry

² With a view at relative reliability of a small Oblast-wide sample.

economy and a narrow specialization in natural resources and semi-finished products cannot ensure a stable labour market. There is always a possibility that world market prices for metals might decrease that would result in growing production costs (in recent years, the growth of prices for raw materials, natural gas, electricity and transport services has accelerated). This increases the risk of declining employment in foreseeable future. The risks involved will definitely have a gender aspect to them: those predominantly are the risks of men's unemployment localized in the main industrial centre of the Vologda Oblast, i.e. the city of Cherepovets.

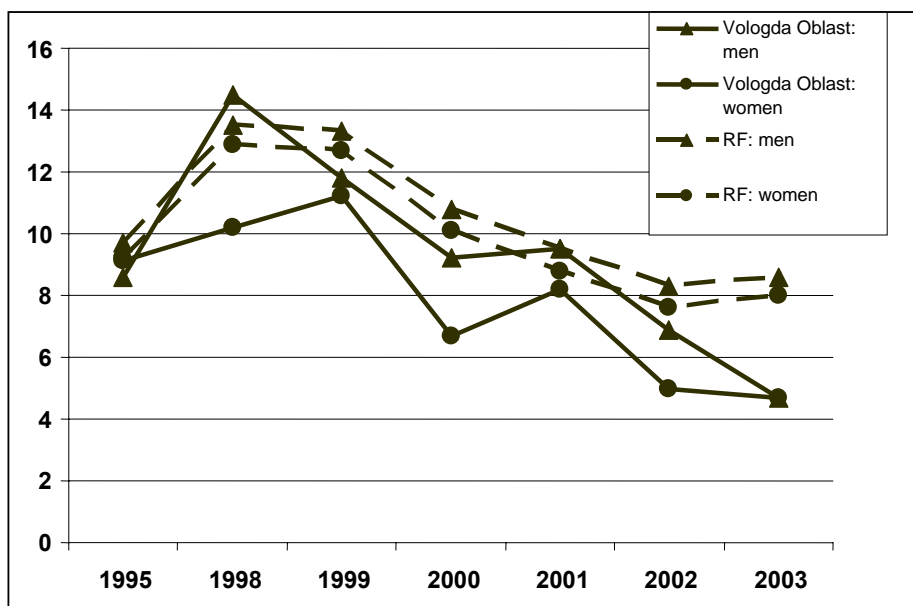


Figure 1. Dynamics of unemployment rate (using ILO methodology), %

The current specific feature of the Vologda Oblast and other regions with a low unemployment rate is the bias of unemployment towards the younger age categories with a clear gender disparity: finding employment is much more difficult for young women. Throughout Russia, the rate of unemployment among the economically active young men and women within the 20-29 age group is 11% across the board compared to the average unemployment rate of ca. 8% (as of 2003). In the Vologda Oblast, these figures are 12% for young women and 6% for young men within the 20-24 age group while the average unemployment rate is below 5% (in 2002). Difficulties in finding employment encountered by young women is another gender issue of the Vologda Oblast.

In the Vologda Oblast, the educational barrier does not have a gender dimension. Men and women lacking vocational training equally risk unemployment, accounting for some 60% of the unemployed of each sex. This means that under a low unemployment rate women's vocational training allows them to equally compete with men in the labour market. Across Russia, these barriers are more differentiated: among unemployed women, the share of those lacking vocational training is lower than among unemployed men (44% and 53% respectively) which means that even having vocational training, women lose their jobs more often. Consequently at the national level vocational training is a lesser bonus for women competing in the labour market if competition is more intense. But for a successful regional labour market that the Vologda Oblast has become over the past few years, it is exactly vocational training (including additional training) that makes a difference, significantly increasing women's chances of employment. Under a low rate of unemployment, positive outcomes of vocational training are less evident in the case of men as they would be employed anyway.

A more favorable situation in the labour market also manifests itself in causes of unemployment. In 2002, among the unemployed men and women of Vologda Oblast the largest category were those who had left their jobs of their own free will (about 50% of both men and women), while national averages were just 22% of women and 30% of men.

Population surveys fail to provide a full picture of gender disparities in terms of duration of unemployment due to a small size of sample for the Vologda Oblast. Certain disparities in the duration of the search of employment can still be found. The rate of stagnant unemployment is higher among women: 30% would have spent over a year looking for job, while among men only 23% seek employment for more than a year. To the contrary, short duration of the search (1..3 months) are more typical of men (26%) than women (19%). Against the background provided by the Vologda Oblast, the rate of stagnant unemployment across Russia is higher and relevant gender disparities are minimal (37% and 35%). This is another manifestation of a consistent pattern: whenever labour market situation improves, men are the first to benefit. This can be seen in the dynamics of general unemployment in the Vologda Oblast in 1998-2000 (see **Figure 1**) and in disparities in stagnant employment that women find more difficult to overcome than men even under growing supply of jobs in the labour market.

Recorded unemployment has always been "feminine". Predominance of women is typical for the Vologda Oblast (68% as of late 2002) and Russia as a whole (67% as of late 2003). This disparity is due to the fact that women encounter more difficulties using pro-active strategies of job search and they would more often turn for assistance to government employment agencies, seeking help with employment or measly unemployment allowance. The situation in women's recorded unemployment changes depending on condition of regional labour markets. In regions with a low unemployment rate the share of women in recorded unemployment can exceed 80%. As economic situation in the region aggravates and tensions grow in the labour market, the share of women in recorded unemployment would normally reduce.

In the structure of women's recorded unemployment, two age groups stand out: young women aged 18-24 without a previous job record, and women of pre-retirement age. This is also typical of the Vologda Oblast (with 19% and 13% unemployed in these two categories, respectively) and of the entire Russian Federation. In fact, recorded unemployment points at the gender categories that lack resources to successfully compete in the labour market and are therefore most vulnerable. It should also be noted that the share of young men aged 18-24 among the unemployed is also quite high: 10% of recorded unemployment in the Vologda Oblast and 15% across Russia.

Intra-Oblast labour market disparities can only be assessed using recorded unemployment for an indicator which is certainly incomplete. The main disparity between centre and periphery is still clearly reflected: employment climate is best in the two major cities and adjacent Rayons (see Table 16 below). A higher rate of unemployment is found in peripheral Rayons of two types: *underdeveloped agricultural* Rayons (Ustyuzhensky and Chagodoshchensky Rayons in the South-West) and *single-industry logging* Rayons (Vashkinsky, Verkhovazhsky, Vozhegodsky and Syamzhensky Rayons in the North, and adjacent Rayons). In Gryazovetsky Rayon, unemployment is more evenly distributed between rural and urban areas.

To what extent is the rate of unemployment correlated with its gender structure in municipalities? Official data on recorded unemployment state that there is no direct correspondence (see Table 16 below). However in municipalities with the lowest unemployment rate the share of women among the unemployed is notably higher (74..79%) than in municipalities with the highest unemployment rate (56..67%). Research by S.Yu.

Roshchin has found similar correlation of the gender structure of recorded unemployment and rate thereof: the higher is the rate of unemployment, the more men are among the unemployed.

Table 16. Rate of recorded unemployment and share of women in recorded unemployment by Vologda Oblast municipalities

Rayons, cities and towns	Recorded unemployment rate (in %)	Percentage of women in recorded unemployment		
		1998	1999	2002
	2003			
Total	1.9	60	70	68
City of Cherepovets	0.5	56	67	76
Cherepovetsky Rayon	0.6	62	73	79
City of Vologda	1.1	64	71	74
Babayevsky Rayon	1.8	70	81	82
Babushkinsky Rayon	2.0	72	91	82
Kichm.-Gorodetsky Rayon	2.2	58	71	86
Nikolsky Rayon	2.3	72	89	79
Sokol (with Sokolsky Rayon)	2.3	57	68	65
Nyuksenitsky Rayon	2.5	64	79	63
Sheksninsky Rayon	2.5	76	72	73
Tarnogsky Rayon	2.6	68	80	72
Vytegorsky Rayon	2.7	78	94	78
Veliky Ustyug (with Velikoustyugsky Rayon)	2.9	49	58	57
Vologodsky Rayon	2.9	75	76	67
Kirillovsky Rayon	2.9	58	64	49
Ust-Kubinsky Rayon	3.0	46	56	51
Totemsky Rayon	3.1	58	72	60
Kaduysky Rayon	3.4	67	73	62
Kharovsky Rayon	3.4	56	65	68
Belozersky Rayon	3.5	60	68	59
Vozhegodsky Rayon	3.5	64	78	74
Mezhdurechensky Rayon	3.5	65	73	67
Vashkinsky Rayon	3.6	58	68	59
Verkhovazhsky Rayon	3.7	79	93	84
Syamzhensky Rayon	3.9	84	91	81
Ustyuzhensky Rayon	4.6	29	68	65
Chagodoshchensky Rayon	4.8	56	73	67
Gryazovetsky Rayon	4.9	56	64	56

Based on numerous researches of labour market as well as official statistics on recorded unemployment, we can conclude the following. Against the background of a low unemployment rate and absence of gender disparities across the Oblast, there are significant internal disparities in the rate and structure of unemployment by gender. In large cities unemployment is minimal and affects mainly women while in economically weak agricultural and logging Rayons the percentage of unemployed men is higher. These disparities need to be taken into account during development of gender programmes.

2.2. Incomes and wages

The disparity of *wages* paid to men and women is due to unequal distribution of men and women by trade and sector (horizontal segregation), and unequal distribution of wages within trades and activity types (vertical segregation). One can point out four gender disparity factors that explain regional wage disproportions:

- sector structure of employment
- economic development of the region and level of population' income

- educational level of population
- age structure

The resulting impact of these factors is as follows:

- In the regions with older population specializing in manufacturing industry as well as economically weak and agricultural rayons where educational level of population is low, the disparity of wages drawn by men and women is leveled out;
- In the regions where export-oriented sectors prevail and the population is younger with a higher income and better education, gender disparity of wages is increasing.

Therefore all regions of Russia can be categorized into several types by degree of gender disparity of wages (see Table 1 in Appendices).

In the Vologda Oblast, gender disparity of wages and dynamics thereof closely follows the national averages, and within the Northwestern Federal District, the Vologda Oblast has also been holding a median position over the past few years (see Table 17 below). This median position however can be misleading as it reflects the resulting vector of highly different intra-regional trends. In the city of Cherepovets and to some extent, in the town of Sokol where export-oriented heavy industry is concentrated, wage differentiating factors are more pronounced. On the other hand peripheral rural areas with older, poorly educated population are marked for leveling of gender disparities. Overall sectoral (i.e. horizontal) disparity of wages is more visible. Speaking of vertical wage disparity, we can only proceed from the level of wages in management (see below).

Table 17. Rating of regions in the Northwestern Federal District by wages drawn by women expressed as percentage of men's wages*

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Russian Federation	70	65	63	63	66	64
Pskov Oblast	80	77	75	74	77	74
Republic of Karelia	68	64	65	67	72	71
Kaliningrad Oblast	75	71	69	71	73	70
St. Petersburg	71	64	64	64	66	65
Archangel Oblast	73	67	65	65	69	64
Vologda Oblast	70.5	65	63,5	64	65	64
Novgorod Oblast	74	68	67	66	70	64
Leningrad Oblast	70	63	57	61	63	62
Komi Republic	65	56	56	56	65	60
Murmansk Oblast	67	59	58	58	62	60
Nenets Autonomous District	69	62	59	57	61	58

* based on data on large and medium-sized enterprises

Gender disparities of wages are much more stable than disparity of unemployment rates. This phenomenon significantly complicates following a policy of gender equalization. As an example, we can use a short-term reduction of gender disparities occurring in all regions in 2002 that was due to wage increases in state-financed sectors where mostly women were employed. Subsequent economic growth driven by exporting sectors employing predominantly men has once again motivated growing gender disparity of wages throughout all regions of the Northwestern Federal District.

Research of gender economy (*M. Baskakova, S. Roshchin et al.*) has identified the associations that are characteristic of the entire country: the higher are wages in a sector, the less women would be employed, and the bigger gender disparity of wages. Exceptions are posed by agriculture which is due to low mobility of employed population, and finance where a very high percentage of women were employed historically and subsequently a stringent

vertical wage segregation has taken shape very rapidly. In the Vologda Oblast, both all-Russian "rules" (concentration of women in less-paying sectors and of men, in sectors with higher wages) and "exceptions" (agriculture and finance) are visible (see Table 18 below).

Table 18. Employment and wages of men and women by sector in 2002 (based on data on large and medium-sized enterprises)

Sectors of economy	Wage in sector expressed as percentage of national average		Women's wage expressed as percentage of men's wage		Percentage of women's employment
	Vologda Oblast	RF	Vologda Oblast	RF*	Vologda Oblast
Total	100	100	65	64	54
Finance, credit, insurance, pension security	209	285	62	66	79
Industry	126	118	67	63	39
Transport and communications	121/95	136	65	74/60	39
Construction	111	120	86	82	23
Management	100	118	101	80	54
Housing and utility services, non-industrial services	85	85	83	79	47
Trade and public catering	73	70	52	62	77
Health care, physical education and social protection	71	74	87	71	86
Education	72	67	85	77	85
Agriculture and forest management	63	40	100	94	45
Culture and arts	60	66	83	67	80

* as of late November 2003

There are however two specific features that distinguish the Vologda Oblast from other regions. First, there is a high gender disparity of wages in trade combined with predominance of women in this sector. It would be prudent to claim that in conditions of a poorly developed trade services sector, a stringent vertical disparity has taken shape, whereby 'women work but men earn'. Second, the Vologda Oblast stands out for absence of gender disparities of managerial wages. At the same time wages in management do not differ from Oblast averages while in a vast majority of Russian regions such wages exceed average wage. On the one hand, a relatively low wage in management is explained by multiplicity of lower level government agencies (village administrations) in a vast territory of the Oblast where wages are historically low. On the other hand, the policy of regional government plays a certain role as the said government is not inclined towards massive fiscal expenditure on management and promotes career advancement of women. Employment surveys confirm these findings: while across Russia the percentage of women leaders was 39% (in 2003), in the Vologda Oblast this figure was higher at 53% (in 2002), and among top level managers, 62% and 71% respectively. Therefore in the Vologda Oblast vertical gender segregation in management is lower than across Russia.

Accuracy of data on wages paid to men and women by municipality is often challenged for a good reason: indicators of several Rayons for 1999-2002 fluctuated very widely (see Table 19 below). Gender disparities depend on several factors e.g. size of cities/towns, sectoral specialization of urban/rural economy, and proximity of Rayons to major cities. Industrial

cities and the capital city of the Vologda Oblast demonstrate the largest gender disparity of wages. These disparities are higher in Rayons with developed timber industry (Vytegorsky, Nyuksenitsky and Totemsky Rayons, etc.) than in suburban southern Rayons where agriculture is in a somewhat better shape and higher wages are paid (in the table, italics is used to denote such Rayons³). In economically weak Rayons, both specializing in the timber industry and agriculture, gender equalization in poverty reaches its maximum. Breaking municipalities down into three categories by level of wages confirms the principle: the lower are wages in a municipality, the higher is the degree of gender equality, and vice versa. However gender equalization in poverty can hardly be considered a successful method of addressing gender issues.

Table 19. Rating of municipalities by level of wage and ratio of wages paid to women and men

Rayons, cities and towns	Wage expressed as percentage of Oblast average	Women's wage expressed as percentage of men's wage	
	2003*	1999	2002
<i>Average across the Oblast</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>65</i>	<i>65</i>
<i>Cities with higher income and strong gender differences</i>			
Cherepovets	144	58	56
Vologda	103	71	69
Sokol	н.д.	60	73
<i>Towns and Rayons with average indicators</i>			
Veliky Ustyug	н.д.	68	81
Kaduysky Rayon	97	59	65
<i>Cherepovetsky Rayon**</i>	85	76	73
<i>Totemsky Rayon</i>	82	63	83
Nyuksenitsky Rayon	82	66	68
<i>Vologodsky Rayon</i>	<i>81</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>88</i>
<i>Gryazovetsky Rayon</i>	<i>77</i>	<i>69</i>	<i>71</i>
Vytegorsky Rayon	77	52	62
Chagodoshchensky Rayon	76	75	65
Babayevsky Rayon	76	68	71
<i>Sheksninsky Rayon</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>72</i>	<i>82</i>
Velikoustyugsky Rayon	70	80	85
Kirillovsky Rayon	70	75	83
<i>Sokolsky Rayon</i>	<i>68</i>	<i>87</i>	<i>92</i>
Belozersky Rayon	67	57	70
Kharovsky Rayon	64	81	80
Syamzhensky Rayon	63	110	74
Vozhegodsky Rayon	59	71	70
<i>Rayons with minimal indicators and gender equalization</i>			
Mezhdurechensky Rayon	64	86	102
Ust-Kubinsky Rayon	57	102	81
Ustyuzhensky Rayon	54	98	109
Vashkinsky Rayon	54	83	86
Nikolsky Rayon	50	116	89
Babushkinsky Rayon	49	108	94
Tarnogsky Rayon	48	89	95
Verkhovazhsky Rayon	48	81	96
Kichm.-Gorodetsky Rayon	48	133	86

* January-November 2003

** *italics*: denotes Rayons with higher wages in agriculture (i.e. exceeding or equaling average agricultural wage across the Vologda Oblast).

³ Data on wages in agriculture broken down by Rayons of the Vologda Oblast is set forth in Appendices (see Figure 1).

Gender inequality of *pensions* is relatively small, closing on national average (see Table 20 below). Compared to other regions of Russia's North-West, the Vologda Oblast is marked for a better correlation of pensions and pensioner's subsistence level for both men and women. This is a substantial advantage especially if considered in comparison with northern regions where pensions are below the subsistence wage. It should be kept in mind though that in the case of pensioners, subsistence level is estimated far too low: it is some 33% lower than subsistence wage of able-bodied population which in turn can hardly be found acceptable. Therefore more and more pensioners are forced to seek any employment to supplement their incomes.

Table 20. Indicators of pension support in the Northwestern Federal District in 2003

	Average monthly pension granted, RUR		Average pension granted to women expressed as a percentage of average men's pension	Average pension expressed as a percentage of pensioner's minimum subsistence level*	
	women	men		women	men
Russian Federation	1,697	1,844	92.0	104	113
Pskov Oblast	1,674	1,767	94.7	125	131
Vologda Oblast	1,786	1,950	91.6	118	129
Novgorod Oblast	1,716	1,770	96.9	111	114
Leningrad Oblast	1,764	1,841	95.8	108	112
Republic of Karelia	1,943	2,129	91.3	105	115
Archangel Oblast	1,981	2,081	95.2	105	111
St. Petersburg	1,980	1,944	101.9	105	103
Kaliningrad Oblast	1,629	1,775	91.8	96	105
Komi Republic	2,004	2,122	94.4	95	101
Murmansk Oblast	2,149	2,136	100.6	87	87
Nenets Autonomous District	2,261	2,434	92.9	75	80

* minimum subsistence level in the 4th Qtr of 2003

Prevalence of women among elder population results in social and demographic factors beyond the labour market taking the gender inequality one step further. Women have a higher probability of joining the poor categories of population while wealth and economic resources are mainly concentrated in control of men. At the same time men are more represented both among the rich and the poorest marginalized categories, especially in logging camps and rural areas. Consequently the social and economic policies aimed at reducing gender disparity must be targeted and cannot focus only on overcoming the negative social and economic outcomes for women.

2.3. Gender equality and health

International comparisons use *life expectancy* of population as an integral indicator of health status. Regional differences in life expectancy for both men and women are caused by a range of factors. During transition, the climatic factor (the so-called northeastern descent gradient of life expectancy related to worsening climate) has become less pronounced, and the impact of social and economic factors (quality of population⁴, quality of life and lifestyle) has increased. A low life expectancy of population of the Northwestern Federal District is mainly due to social and economic causes. In this respect the Vologda Oblast demonstrates a somewhat better standing than the most problematic regions: Novgorod and Pskov Oblasts, Karelia and the Nenets Autonomous District, but like elsewhere in the Russian North-West, life expectancy of both men and women is way below national averages and

⁴ according to V. Shkolnikov and Ye. Andreev, each additional year of training translates into 0.7 years of potential life (*'Inequality and mortality in Russia'* [Неравенство и смертность в России]).

still falling, while the gender disparity of life expectancy has reached 15 years (see Table 21 below).

Table 21. Life expectancy of men and women, years

	Women			Men		
	1998	2001	2003	1998	2001	2003
Russian Federation	72.9	72.3	72	61.3	59.0	59
St. Petersburg	74.4	72.3	72	63.8	60.2	61
Murmansk Oblast	74.0	71.9	70	63.7	60.4	57
Archangel Oblast	72.7	71.5	70	60.4	57.7	56
Vologda Oblast	72.7	72.2	71	61.1	57.9	56
Komi Republic	72.2	71.2	69	61.0	59.4	55
Kaliningrad Oblast	71.4	69.8	69	60.3	57.2	55
Leningrad Oblast	72.6	70.2	70	60.4	55.2	55
Republic of Karelia	72.2	70.5	69	59.7	56.6	54
Novgorod Oblast	71.2	69.8	70	59.2	56.0	54
Pskov Oblast	71.0	68.9	69	58.1	55.5	54
Nenets Autonomous District	70.3	70.9	68	61.0	55.8	52

The issue of abnormally high mortality of men is well researched in the materials of the Centre of Human Demography and Ecology at the Institute of Economic Projections of the Russian Academy of Sciences (*The Population of Russia*), so we can compare specific characteristics of the Vologda Oblast with Russian averages. These specific characteristics are fairly obvious: mortality of older female population is more often caused by diseases of circulation system, while in the case of men the second-ranking cause of death is accident and trauma, the incidence of which is 20% higher in the Vologda Oblast. Unfortunately the data on causes of death in active working age is not included in Oblast gender statistics published, but we can maintain that in the Vologda Oblast, mortality of able-bodied men caused by external factors (accident, poisoning and trauma) is similarly higher than across Russia.

Table 22. Mortality by major causes in 2002-2003

	Vologda Oblast, 2002				Russian Federation, 2003			
	Per 100,000 population		Per 100,000 able-bodied population		Per 100,000 population ¹⁾		Per 100,000 able-bodied population	
	women	men	women	men	women	men	women	men
Total deaths (all causes)	1580	2065	n/a	n/a	1081	2253	340	1254
Including:								
Diseases of circulation system	1079	986	n/a	n/a	674	1181	96	394
Accidents, poisoning and trauma	103	450	n/a	n/a	89	376	97	463
Neoplasms	165	246	n/a	n/a	136	282	62	109
Diseases of respiratory system	31	126	n/a	n/a	30	127	14	70
Diseases of digestive apparatus	49	101	n/a	n/a	38	77	27	65
Infectious and parasitic diseases	3	25	n/a	n/a	9	44	11	55

¹⁾ Standardized mortality rates used.

Gender issues of rural men in the Vologda Oblast

Dynamics of life expectancy of Vologda Oblast population demonstrates that longevity of women hardly depends on place of residence while longevity indicators of men resident in urban and rural areas differ more substantially and these differences are growing (see Figure 2 below). Health status of men in rural areas has long become an issue that is due to extreme social degradation of rural regions in the Non-Black Soil Belt. Many years' exodus to cities has been eroding the more active and younger population, and logging camps were historically marked for the "scouring" migration mode resulting in a continuous replacement of population. Educational level of those employed in agriculture and forest industry is very low, social environment is not developed and alcohol addiction is spread very widely. As a result, villages and logging camps in the Vologda Oblast have become places of concentration of marginalized men's population. Another factor of low life expectancy is prevailing hard manual labour in agriculture and logging operations. During transition, another negative factor has emerged: a worsening situation in labour markets, especially in rural Rayons. All the aforementioned has turned rural areas of the Vologda Oblast into a territory of abnormally high mortality of men – much more so than cities.

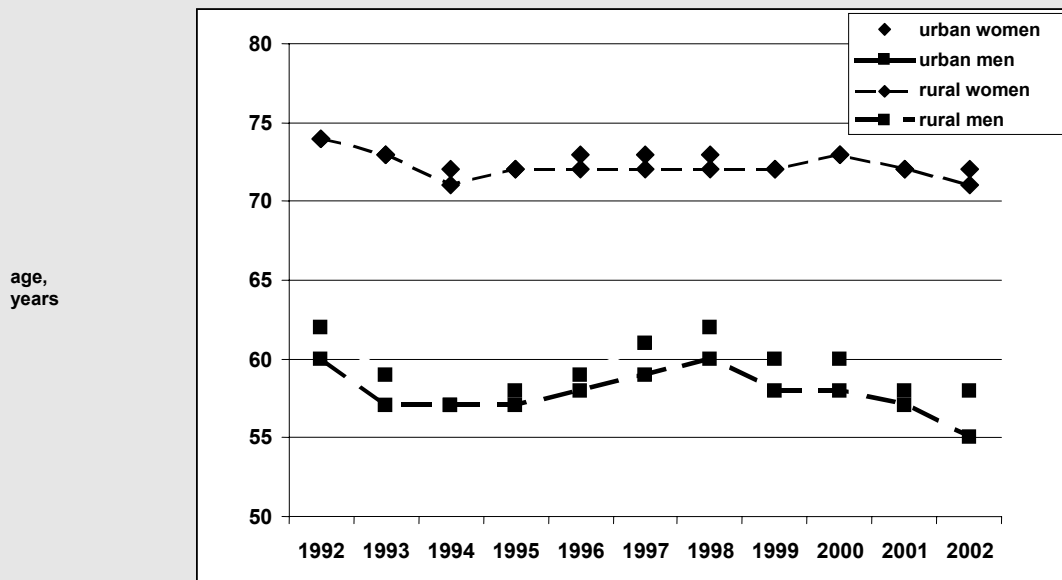


Figure 2. Life expectancy of Vologda Oblast population by sex and place of residence

Another gender issue of Russian men, social diseases, are less widespread in the Vologda Oblast than across Russia, but the accuracy of medical statistical data need not be overestimated. The incidence of active tuberculosis in the Vologda Oblast is 50% lower than the national average for women, and some 33% lower than the national average for men (see Table 23 below). In terms of this criterion the Vologda Oblast is second only to St. Petersburg in the Northwestern Federal District which can be considered an achievement. What is more important though is that the growth of incidence of active tuberculosis that continued throughout the 1990s has finally stopped both among men and women. Another specific characteristic of the Vologda Oblast is the relatively low percentage of women among the active tuberculosis cases compared to other regions in the Northwestern Federal District.

Table 23. Incidence of active tuberculosis among men and women in 2003 by RF regions, per 100,000 population

	2001		2003		Gender distribution, percentages	
	women	men	women	men	women	men
Russian Federation	42	141	43	128	28	72
St. Petersburg	28	64	24	59	33	67
Vologda Oblast	24	100	20	93	20	80
Leningrad Oblast	42	108	39	103	31	69
Murmansk Oblast	20	95	30	105	23	77
Republic of Karelia	38	118	42	118	29	71
Archangel Oblast	26	149	31	118	23	77
Novgorod Oblast	32	128	37	118	28	72
Pskov Oblast	39	148	48	120	32	68
Komi Republic	38	147	46	138	27	73
Kaliningrad Oblast	59	145	73	164	33	67

Statistics on the incidence of alcohol addiction by regions is least credible and can only be used for comparison of gender disparities and dynamics. Unfortunately there is nothing on the bright side as alcohol addiction is growing among women and especially among men in the Vologda Oblast. In terms of relevant incidence rate the Oblast ranks on a par with the national average but this data is anything but credible (see Table 24 below).

Table 24. Incidence of alcohol addiction and alcoholic psychosis among men and women in Russian Federation regions in 2000-2003 (per 100,000 population)

	2001		2003		Gender distribution, percentages	
	women	men	women	men	women	men
Russian Federation	52	241	61	272	21	79
St. Petersburg	39	146	44	183	23	77
Archangel Oblast	27	121	49	192	22	78
Murmansk Oblast	44	168	69	230	24	76
Kaliningrad Oblast	68	205	66	231	24	76
Vologda Oblast	56	199	71	253	25	75
Leningrad Oblast	94	336	96	330	25	75
Pskov Oblast	98	323	103	372	25	75
Komi Republic	90	291	143	402	28	72
Republic of Karelia	92	304	133	433	26	74
Nenets Autonomous District	99	446	85	461	16	84
Novgorod Oblast	81	400	120	528	22	78

Gender analysis of health statuses of population in the Vologda Oblast demonstrates that negative health outcomes equally affect both men and women, but in the case of men, negative health outcomes more often cause lethality and women, a worse health status⁵. Ultra-high mortality of working age men also has negative connotations for women as there is a higher probability of widowhood, narrow nubile market for re-marriage and a growing number of single-mother families. Negative health outcomes for men result in aggravating social and economic status of women.

2.4. Education and gender

Statistical data and various surveys demonstrate that in Russia, there are no gender issues in access to education as women are predominant among higher and secondary vocational

⁵ Ye.M. Andreev, V.M. Shkolnikov and M. McKee. Expectancy of Good Health ('Prodolzhitel'nost' zdorovoy zhizni') in Voprosy statistiki, 11, 2002, pp. 16-21.

training establishments and their percentage keeps growing (*M. Baskakova*). In this area, gender issues can rather be viewed at the other angle, i.e. as issues of lower educational attainment of men. Data of the 2002 educational census of working population are fairly compatible with this conclusion.

The Vologda Oblast is one of the regions characterized with a lower educational level of working population compared with the national average, with rural men having the lowest educational attainment. In this Oblast, the percentage of working men with higher and incomplete higher education is some 33% lower than that of women and of the national average for men (see Table 25 below). In urban areas, the percentage of men with third-level education is 25% higher and closing on women and the Russian average for men. Rural areas are marked for scarcity of men with higher education; their share among those employed is 75% less than in urban areas (in the case of women, 41% less) and compared to the national rural averages, the Vologda Oblast falls behind by more than 33%. Despite their worse education, men fairly successfully compete in the Oblast labour market and this situation cannot possibly motivate a desire to advance one's education. The educational level calculated for all population above 15 years of age is even lower due to an old age structure of Oblast population (see Table 2 in Appendices).

Table 25. Educational level of employed population according to the 2002 census data (per 1,000 employed population)

	Vocational			General		
	Higher and incomplete higher	Secondary	Elementary	Complete secondary	Basic	Elementary or lower
All employed population						
<i>Vologda Oblast</i>						
Men	168	352	197	171	95	16
Women	233	441	127	138	53	7
<i>Russian Federation</i>						
Men	240	318	181	178	70	13
Women	287	397	122	145	42	7
Urban population						
<i>Vologda Oblast</i>						
Men	204	392	158	162	74	11
Women	260	444	113	136	40	6
<i>Russian Federation</i>						
Men	274	337	157	167	55	10
Women	316	398	111	137	32	6
Rural population						
<i>Vologda Oblast</i>						
Men	75	249	301	195	151	29
Women	149	432	171	145	92	11
<i>Russian Federation</i>						
Men	118	254	265	216	122	26
Women	171	396	167	174	80	12

More than 60% of working women in rural areas of the Vologda Oblast would have secondary or elementary vocational training (having graduated from specialized secondary educational establishments or vocational schools) which is above averages for women resident in rural areas across Russia and women resident in urban areas of the Oblast. For this reason, marginalization of women in rural areas is weaker. Vocational training of men has a bias towards elementary education and in urban areas, towards secondary vocational

education (from specialized secondary educational establishments). Nearly 40% of working rural men lacks any vocational training (in cities, 25% of employed men). A low educational level is one of the reasons for degradation of men in rural areas. Furthermore, low educational attainment of men put together with predominantly manual labour form a traditionalistic framework of gender roles becoming one of the reasons for violence in families.

A gender bias of educational level in favor of women demonstrates that equalizing investment in human development *per se* does not ensure equality of economic and social status of men and women. Hidden discriminatory mechanisms of the labour market decry the higher educational level of women. Higher educational attainment of women results in its redundancy and make educational signals work differently for different gender categories in the labour market. Employers would put forth increased requirements to educational level or other quality characteristics of women compared to men.

Gender disparities in educational level have other negative social outcomes. Unfortunately the most conservative views on gender roles in a family are upheld by young men of workman trades who do not have higher education and are committed to the traditionalist model of family⁶. Thus gender disparities in educational level can reproduce and settle men's views that inhibit an effective social policy aimed achieving gender equality.

2.5. Violence

There are very few statistical indicators that allow measurement of violence in the regions, and the available few are far from being reliable. Data on crime very often depends on the volition or unwillingness of law enforcement agencies to register offences. Lacking alternative data, we are compelled to use this highly questionable statistics. In particular it demonstrates that in the Vologda Oblast, under a high crime rate the percentage of women among those committing crimes is minimal (see Table 26 below).

Table 26. Women and men committing crimes in 2003, by regions of the Russian Federation

	Per 100,000 population		Gender distribution, percentages	
	women	men	women	men
Russian Federation	142	713	17	83
St. Petersburg	95	415	19	81
Leningrad Oblast	84	519	14	86
Archangel Oblast	78	655	11	89
Kaliningrad Oblast	119	730	14	86
Murmansk Oblast	117	731	14	86
Novgorod Oblast	265	740	26	74
Republic of Karelia	240	799	23	77
Pskov Oblast	152	819	16	84
Nenets Autonomous District	134	897	13	87
Vologda Oblast	121	917	12	88
Komi Republic	161	961	14	86

Data of the Main Penal Directorate for the Vologda Oblast for 2002 allow assessing the gender structure of convictions. The percentage of women was the highest among drug trafficking convictions (40%). Among those convicted of murder, women account for nearly 20%, grievous bodily injuries, 13% and theft, 10%. The structure of female crime *per se* in the Vologda Oblast is slightly different: of all convicted women, 27% were sentenced for murder (mainly impulsive murder); 25% theft, and drug activities 15%. Compared to Russian averages, the Vologda Oblast manifests a 130% higher percentage of women sentenced for

⁶ N.E. Tikhonova. Urban poverty phenomenon in today's Russia. M.: Letni Sad, 2003, p. 198.

murder that attests to the commonality of men's violence in families resulting in women committing impulsive crimes.

Another gender issue is posed by the penal jurisdiction. Approximately 38% of convicted women were freed from penalty through inclusion in the amnesty and for other reasons, while among convicted men only 2% followed suit, but 56% of men were given conditional sentences. As a result, 61% of convicted women and only 36% of convicted men were sentenced to imprisonment in 2002. Lacking special qualifications in this area, it is hard to explain such gender disparities but some attention needs to be paid thereto anyway.

2.6. Gender inequality of access to decision-making process

In this area, the main gender issue is the stringent vertical segregation of women. No one challenges the necessity of a more proactive participation of women in government of all levels and political process. In real life, however, the gender inequality of access to decision-making survives. Furthermore, the possibilities for statistical analysis of women's participation in government are growing thin (see table below).

Women are predominant in governments of all subjects of the Russian Federation including regions within the Northwestern Federal District (see Table 27 below). In the Vologda Oblast women account for 69..82% of those employed in all executive and judicial agencies and local governance bodies. Looking at specific municipalities within the Vologda Oblast, the situation is the same with women accounting for 69..89% of staff.

Table 27. Women and men holding positions with government agencies and municipal governments as of September 1, 2003 (percentages of all staff employed by relevant branch of power)

	Federal government agencies in regions				Regional governments of RF subjects			
	Executive agencies		Judicial power and prosecutor's office		Positions with regional government agencies		Positions with municipal governments	
	women	men	women	men	women	men	women	men
Russian Federation	72	28	70	30	75	25	66	34
Republic of Karelia	73	27	70	30	74	26	70	30
Komi Republic	74	26	70	30	78	22	68	32
Archangel Oblast	74	26	69	31	78	22	63	37
Nenets Autonomous District	69	31	67	33	69	31	65	35
Vologda Oblast	82	18	71	29	81	19	69	31
Kaliningrad Oblast	65	35	72	28	75	25	72	28
Leningrad Oblast	73	27	70	30	83	17	71	29
Murmansk Oblast	72	28	69	31	80	20	68	32
Novgorod Oblast	83	17	74	26	86	14	66	34
Pskov Oblast	67	33	75	25	81	19	69	31
St. Petersburg	73	27	76	24	68	32	76	24

The issue however is not the percentage of women but their access to decision-making processes. Senior positions with regional governments of RF subjects (excluding the bodies of judicial power) are mainly held by men⁷. In the Vologda Oblast, the situation is similar (see

⁷ This is obviously the reason why the most recent compilation of statistical reports lacks data on the proportions of men and women among government officials of the 'Category A' broken down to executive, legislative and judicial bodies both at federal and regional level. The reports only contain data on the general proportion of genders among government officials of the 'Category A' thereby "camouflaging" a sharp disparity

Table 28 below). Available statistical data only allows comparing the percentages of women by categories of municipal government officials. Compared with Russian averages, municipalities of the Vologda Oblast demonstrate a notably better access of women to decision-making processes as the percentage of women holding "category A" positions amounts to 37%. This is not solely due to the gender-sensitive employment policies followed by Oblast government but also a substantial shortage of men managers who would have a high educational level and motivation for career advancement. In fact, municipalities of the Vologda Oblast are offering a better opportunity for advancement of women and gender equalization in decision-making because of lower competition with men. At Oblast government level these factors are not operational and therefore there is no talking about a steady trend of advancement of women to power.

Table 28. Percentages of women holding various government positions by category, as of September 1, 2003

	Government officials, legislative branch		Government officials, executive branch		Government officials, judicial branch		Municipal government officials	
	«A»	«B»	«A»	«B»	«A»	«B»	«A»	«B»
Vologda Oblast	18	80	25	79	66	93	37	83
Russian Federation	n/a*	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	27	78

* In terms of all government officials across all subjects of the Russian Federation, the share of women holding "category A" positions amounts to 51%, and "category B" positions, 72%. This high percentage is due to the inclusive methodology of calculation whereby all branches of power are taken into account including the bodies of judicial power.

The percentage of women in representative bodies of legislative power of RF subjects remains low at 9% and unchanged throughout the last three years. In this respect the Vologda Oblast stands a little better among regions of the Northwestern Federal District (see **Figure 3** below). Unfortunately in Russian regions the access of women to decision-making is limited by two negative factors. First, a *lower competition on behalf of men* that is typical of territories and areas of activity with shortest financial resources and most difficult socio-economic situation. An example here is posed by peripheral municipalities of the Vologda Oblast, legislative bodies of underdeveloped autonomous districts and non-viable agribusinesses run by women, etc. Second, the *leftovers of Soviet norms and stereotypes* in regions with a more autocratic government tacitly using regulated representation quotas for women who in reality do not partake in decision-making.

by adding bodies of judicial power into calculations (in the judicial branch, there are many women holding most senior positions).

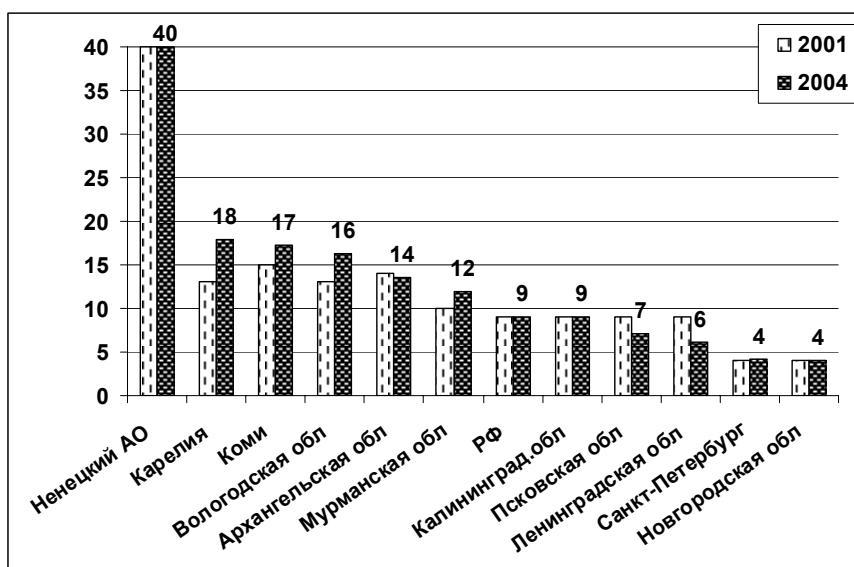


Figure 3. Percentage of women in representative legislative bodies of subjects of the Northwestern Federal District

Legend, left to right:

Nenets Autonomous District

Republic of Karelia

Komi Republic

Vologda Oblast

Archangel Oblast

Murmansk Oblast

Russian Federation

Kaliningrad Oblast

Pskov Oblast

Leningrad Oblast

St. Petersburg

Novgorod Oblast

Growth prospects for political representation of women in the Vologda Oblast including bodies of legislative power, are more promising. First, there are already a substantial number of women leaders in municipalities who have the requisite management experience. Second, the regional political system has largely abandoned the more 'ornamental' forms of women representation in bodies of power. Third, one should consider the historic aspect, as the status of women in the North has always been more dignified and women have had substantial economic independence. It is for a good reason that women are better represented in bodies of legislative power of all northern regions within the federal district (see Figure 3 above). All these positive factors however can only accelerate modernization of government subject to following an adequate gender policies.

Conclusions and recommendations

The research demonstrates that gender issues of the Vologda Oblast are largely explained by specific features of its social and economic development. Oblast's industrial economy with export-oriented and resource-oriented sectors prevailing ensures a better situation in the labour market, and average and above-average incomes and pensions. Older population is characterized with a high degree of depopulation and a low educational level. Vast

territory of the Oblast is characterized with a low density of population, few cities and towns and a poorly developed infrastructure: the Oblast lacks large higher educational establishments and availability of qualified medical aid is low. The services sector is underdeveloped concentrating in two major cities (in Oblast's administrative centre, Vologda, and the industrial Cherepovets); disparities between the centre and periphery in terms of income, employment and consumption are huge; remote timber-producing and agricultural regions suffer from economic degradation and exodus of population.

Social and economic benefits and issues of the Vologda Oblast have a gender aspect to them but it is not always the case where we can clearly distinguish between men's and women's issues. In certain areas (labour market, incomes, health statuses etc.) gender issues account for widely varying shares.

1. The most pressing gender issue of men is shorter life. Compared to other Russian regions, the Vologda Oblast manifests the largest gender disparities in longevity under a lower life expectancy of men that continues to decrease. Longevity of women is practically independent of their place of residence while the indicators of men resident in rural areas are worse than in urban areas due to a low quality of rural population and growing marginalization.
2. Social diseases largely remain a men's gender issue but while the growth of active tuberculosis incidence rate that continued throughout the 1990s, has finally been reversed, the rate of alcohol addiction in the Vologda Oblast increases for both men and women, thereby aggravating marginalization. In addition, men's health status is negatively affected by their high and growing employment in jobs with harmful labour conditions.
3. Under the overall low educational level of Vologda Oblast population, men are falling behind especially in the rural areas. A low educational level is one of the main reasons of rural men's degradation. In addition, low educational attainment of men put together with predominantly manual labour form a traditionalistic framework of gender roles becoming one of the reasons for violence in families.
4. A favorable labour market situation has resulted in gender equalization of employment and a minimal unemployment rate among both men and women. This was also aided by high economic activity of women in the Vologda Oblast compared to the national average. Due to a better market situation, unemployment problem is affecting younger people harder with a clear gender disparity: for young women, getting employment is much more of a problem. Like in other regions, the level of stagnant unemployment is higher among women.
5. Against the background of a low unemployment rate and absence of gender disparities overall in the Oblast, there are significant internal disparities in the rate and structure of unemployment by gender. In large cities unemployment is minimal and affects mainly women while in economically weak agricultural and logging Rayons the percentage of unemployed men is higher.
6. The Oblast likewise the rest of the country is characterized with high concentrations of women in low-paying sectors while men tend to be employed in sectors paying higher wages. During economic growth two trends coexisted for changing the structure of employment that differently affected women's access to income. First, the gender structure of employment in industry and agriculture has become more balanced, albeit at the cost of a growing percentage of women employed in jobs with hard and harmful labour

conditions. Second, due to underdevelopment of market services women's employment has shifted towards the low-paying state-financed sectors, namely education and health care.

7. The issue of industrial injuries in the Vologda Oblast is very grave especially in the case of men. This is explained by the structure of economy but there is also a more deeply rooted cause being low quality of population and widely spread asocial lifestyles. In rural areas, alcohol addiction and related trauma are common not only among men but also among women.

8. Gender disparities of wages and dynamics thereof are practically copying the national averages with a somewhat more persistent disparity of wages than the disparity of unemployment rates. This median situation however is deceiving as it reflects the resulting vector of highly different intra-regional trends. In the areas where export-oriented heavy industry is concentrated, wage differentiating factors are more pronounced. The peripheral rural areas with older, poorly educated and low-income population are marked for leveling of gender disparities. Poverty and lower competitiveness of men have caused a "forced" equalization in the labour market and in the area of distribution.

9. Compared to other regions in the Northwestern Federal District, the Vologda Oblast is marked for a better correlation of pensions and pensioners' subsistence level, and the gender disparity of pensions is small. It should be noted though that subsistence level is estimated too low and a steadily increasing number of men and women past retirement age are forced to seek any employment to supplement their incomes.

10. The Vologda Oblast is distinguished for the absence of gender disparity of managers' wages. In this sector, there is less vertical gender segregation owing to a wider representation of women in municipal governments. Women's advancement and gender equalization in the area of decision-making is not solely explained by gender-sensitive staffing policies of Oblast government, but also by a lower competitiveness of men especially in economically weak municipalities ridden by a multitude of social problems.

Overall, the analysis of issues of the Vologda Oblast has again demonstrated that gender is not limited to women's issues; those are issues vital for both genders. In the Vologda Oblast likewise rest of Russia, a complex pattern of social gender inequality has taken shape. Men are better off from the economic point of view but their lives are substantially shorter. Women to the contrary live longer but suffer from a lower quality of life. The framework of social benefits and losses is asymmetrical in terms of gender groups that excludes one-sided benefits, be it for men or women.

This research can be used as a basis for developing a gender strategy for the Vologda Oblast in all areas of social and economic development affecting the status of men and women. Many recommendations entail the conclusions made, in particular those pertaining to improvement of labour conditions and bringing further anti-alcoholism activities. It is also necessary to maintain the positive trends of gender equalization in decision-making and employment already taking shape in the Oblast. Gender analysis has also identified a trend for growing employment of women of older working age and past retirement age, therefore it is vital that gender policies include assistance in job search. Yet another area is assessment and prevention of gender risks in the labour market, in particular the risk of growth of men's unemployment in industrial centers under possible deterioration of economic situation. The analysis also allows differentiating gender policies with a view at social and economic situation in municipalities and differences in the framework of their gender issues.

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APPENDICES

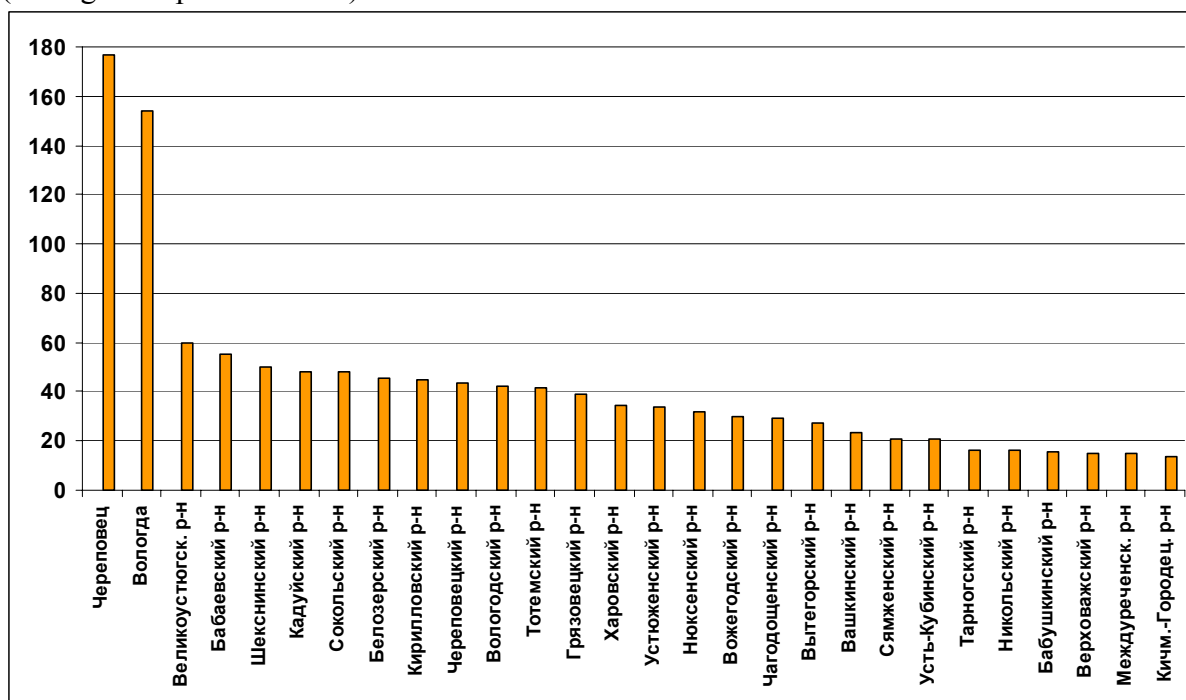
Table 1. Types of RF regions by level of gender disparity of wages

Wage drawn by women expressed as percentage of men's wage	Type of region by a combination of gender disparity factors	Regions
Highest disparity (56-64)	a) Northern and eastern regions with predominant export-oriented primary sectors and a relatively young population	Nenets, Yamalo-Nenets and Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Districts, Kemerovo, Murmansk, Tomsk, Tyumen Oblasts; Krasnoyarsk Territory; Komi Republic; Khakassia
	b) Regions in the European part of Russia with predominant export-oriented sectors, higher incomes and average educational level of population	Astrakhan, Belgorod, Vologda, Lipetsk, Samara, Sverdlovsk and Orenburg Oblasts; Tatar Republic; Bashkir Republic
Close to national average (64-69)	Predominantly average in term of economic development with varying educational level and age of population	Over 30 regions
Less disparity (69-80)	a) Most economically developed with highest educational level of population	City of Moscow
	b) Below average in terms of income with older population and a lower educational level	Bryansk, Vladimir, Voronezh, Ivanovo, Kostroma, Kirov, Penza, Oryol, Pskov, Tambov and Tver Oblasts
	c) Semi-agrarian with a lower educational level and income of population	Krasnodar, Stavropol and Altai Territories; Kurgan Oblast
	d) Eastern regions with income below average and a younger population	Evenki Autonomous District; Chita Oblast and most regions in the Russian Far East
	e) Semi-agrarian republics with weakly developed economies and a younger population	Adygeia, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachayevo-Cherkessia, North Ossetia, Kalmykia, Mari El, Mordovia, Chuvashia
Gender equality or disparity in favor of women (82-113)	Less developed regions	Altai Republic; Tyva; Komi-Perm, Aginsk Buryat and Ust Orda Buryat Autonomous Districts

Table 2. Educational level of 15+ y.o. population (per 1,000) according to the 2002 census data

	Vocational			General		
	Higher and incomplete higher	Secondary	Elementary	Complete secondary	Basic	Elementary or lower
All population above 15						
<i>Vologda Oblast</i>						
Men	128	271	172	165	169	94
Women	157	315	102	140	151	135
<i>Russian Federation</i>						
Men	187	250	157	187	141	78
Women	194	289	101	166	135	115
Urban population						
<i>Vologda Oblast</i>						
Men	162	313	140	172	150	63
Women	189	340	95	153	133	89
<i>Russian Federation</i>						
Men	223	273	138	184	123	59
Women	229	307	95	166	117	76
Rural population						
<i>Vologda Oblast</i>						
Men	54	181	243	150	211	160
Women	81	257	119	108	193	242
<i>Russian Federation</i>						
Men	85	187	209	196	193	130
Women	90	236	119	165	188	202

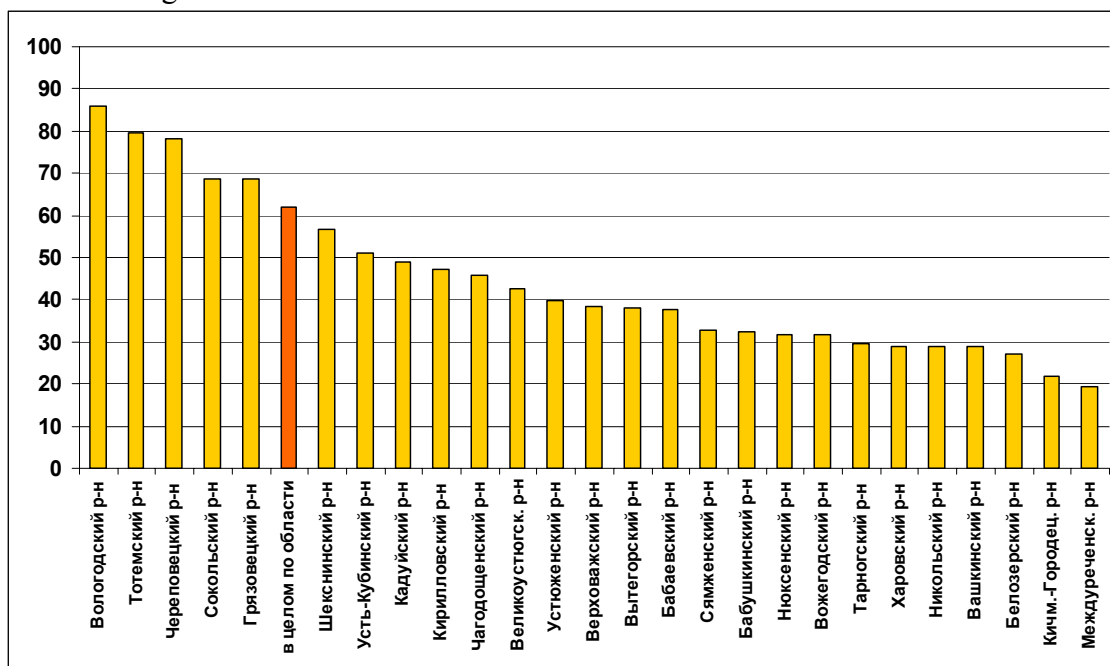
Figure 1. Per capita sales of paid services shown as percentage of Oblast average (average accepted as 100%)



Legend, from left to right:

- Cherepovets
- Vologda
- Velikoustyugsky Rayon
- Babayevsky Rayon
- Sheksninsky Rayon
- Kaduysky Rayon
- Sokolsky Rayon
- Belozersky Rayon
- Kirillovsky Rayon
- Cherepovetsky Rayon
- Vologodsky Rayon
- Totemsky Rayon
- Gryazovetsky Rayon
- Kharovsky Rayon
- Ustyuzhensky Rayon
- Nyuksensky Rayon
- Vozhegodsky Rayon
- Chagodoshchensky Rayon
- Vytegorsky Rayon
- Vashkinsky Rayon
- Syamzhensky Rayon
- Ust-Kubinsky Rayon
- Tarnogsky Rayon
- Nikolsky Rayon
- Babushkinsky Rayon
- Verkhovazhsky Rayon
- Mezhdurechensky Rayon
- Kichm.-Gorodetsky Rayon

Figure 2. Wages in agriculture (in municipalities) shown as percentages of the Vologda Oblast average in 2003



Legend, from left to right:

- Vologodsky Rayon
- Totemsky Rayon
- Cherepovetsky Rayon
- Sokolsky Rayon
- Gryazovetsky Rayon
- Oblast average
- Sheksninsky Rayon
- Ust-Kubinsky Rayon
- Kaduysky Rayon
- Kirillovsky Rayon
- Chagodoshchensky Rayon
- Velikoustyugsky Rayon
- Ustyuzhensky Rayon
- Verkhovazhsky Rayon
- Vytegorsky Rayon
- Babayevsky Rayon
- Syamzhensky Rayon
- Babushkinsky Rayon
- Nyuksensky Rayon
- Vozhegodsky Rayon
- Tarnogsky Rayon
- Kharovskiy Rayon
- Nikolsky Rayon
- Vashkinsky Rayon
- Belozersky Rayon
- Kichm.-Gorodetsky Rayon
- Mezhdurechensky Rayon