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Moscow agglomeration and Greater Paris: Similarities and differences

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Abstract. This study is devoted to a comparative analysis of the Paris and Moscow agglomerations, with an emphasis on their urban, economic and social aspects. In the context of global urbanization trends, both cities face a number of common challenges, such as environmental pollution, transport problems, and social inequality. The research aims to identify successful management practices that can be applied in other agglomerations to improve the quality of life of their residents. The study also examines successful practices in the implementation of large-scale urban development projects and their impact on the development of urban agglomerations, comparing the functioning of large facilities built in Moscow and Paris. In particular, the study highlights the peculiarity of the Moscow agglomeration, which is focused on large-scale infrastructure projects and technological innovations. This circumstance, on the one hand, contributes to its economic growth, but, on the other hand, slows down the process of decentralization. The study also noted that the key difference between the management of both agglomerations is the degree of involvement of local authorities, however, in Paris, mechanisms of inter-municipal cooperation are actively used to develop the territory of the entire agglomeration in a balanced manner, while in Moscow, on the contrary, management is concentrated in the hands of city authorities, which ensures prompt decision-making, but limits flexibility in adapting to local conditions. requests. In addition, the article focuses on issues of economic development, including creating a favorable environment for businesses and start-ups, as well as cultural diversity and integration of various social groups. Strategies for sustainable development and implementation of green infrastructure are considered in the context of climate change. In addition, technological changes related to the concept of smart cities and their impact on data security are analyzed. Considering progressive international experience, the authors have found the promising directions for the development of Moscow agglomeration.

Keywords: urbanization, urban planning, sustainable development, intermunicipal coordination, quality of life, spatial development, integrated transport system, environmental sustainability, urban policy, regional strategy

Contribution. All the authors participated in the development of the concept of this review, data collection, processing and analysis, drafted the manuscript, and formulated the conclusions.

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Московская агломерация и Большой Париж: сходство и различия

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Аннотация. Исследование посвящено сравнительному анализу Парижской и Московской агломераций с акцентом на их урбанистические, экономические и социальные аспекты. В условиях глобальных трендов урбанизации оба города сталкиваются с рядом общих вызовов, таких как загрязнение окружающей среды, транспортные проблемы и социальное неравенство. Исследование направлено на выявление успешных практик управления, которые могут быть применены в других агломерациях для повышения качества жизни их жителей. Также рассмотрены успешные практики реализации масштабных градостроительных проектов и особенности их влияния на развитие городских агломераций, сравнены особенности функционирования крупных объектов, сооруженных в результате таких проектов в Москве и Париже. Выделена в качестве особенности ориентированность Московской агломерации на крупномасштабные инфраструктурные проекты и технологические инновации, способствующая экономическому росту, но замедляющая процесс децентрализации. Ключевым отличием управления обеими агломерациями признана степень вовлеченности местных органов власти, однако отмечено, что в Париже активно используются механизмы межмуниципального сотрудничества, позволяющие сбалансированно развивать территорию всей агломерации, а в Москве, напротив, управление сосредоточено в руках городских властей, что обеспечивает оперативность принятия решений, но ограничивает гибкость при адаптации к локальным запросам. Особое внимание уделено вопросам экономического развития, включая создание благоприятной среды для бизнеса и стартапов, а также культурному разнообразию и интеграции различных социальных групп. В контексте изменения климата рассмотрены стратегии устойчивого развития и внедрения зеленой инфраструктуры. Проанализированы технологические изменения, связанные с концепцией умных городов, и их влияние на безопасность данных. В результате проведенного анализа наиболее успешных практик сформированы перспективные направления развития Московской агломерации с учетом прогрессивного международного опыта.

Ключевые слова: урбанизация, городское планирование, устойчивое развитие, межмуниципальная координация, качество жизни, пространственное развитие, интегрированная транспортная система, экологическая устойчивость, городская политика, региональная стратегия

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Introduction

The selection of the Moscow agglomeration and Greater Paris as objects for comparison is based on their comparable demographic and economic weight, as well as the contrasting nature of their governance models — centralized (Russia) and cooperative (France). This contrast allows for an examination of the influence of the institutional environment on urban transformations.

For both the Russian Federation and France, a clear distinction exists between the function of the capital agglomeration, which serves as the country's institutional center, and peripheral regions. Furthermore, agglomerations emerging around large metropolises such as Marseille and Lyon in France, and Saint Petersburg in Russia, are of significant importance. Both countries are also characterized by a high level of urbanization, approximately 82%. The experience in renovation is no less significant — Paris was the first city in the world to undertake large-scale renovation.

The relevance of this study is driven by the fact that with the increasing urban population (according to the UN, over 68% of the world's population will live in cities by 2050), the importance of effective agglomeration management grows.

Research Objective is to develop recommendations for Russian agglomerations on utilizing advanced global practices, particularly in creating a favorable environment for business and startups amidst economic instability and technological change. A comparative analysis will aid in better integrating new approaches to adaptation and management for the Moscow agglomeration.

Materials and Methods

The methodological framework includes comparative institutional analysis, study of development strategies, analysis of national projects, urban planning documentation, statistical data, and the work of researchers. The peculiarities of the

legal status of agglomerations, governance mechanisms, the structure of economic ties, and parameters of territorial coordination were examined.

Results

Agglomerations are complex spatial and social formations that serve as centers of a country's economic development. They require a coordinated management approach from all governing bodies. Currently, the concept is not legally defined in the Russian Urban Planning Code; however, certain norms facilitate its regulation. To this end, national projects are employed, helping to develop strategies for major infrastructural, environmental, and social initiatives that promote territorial integration, improve quality of life, stimulate economic growth, and create avenues for further transformations.

National projects and development strategies have their unique characteristics, shaped by historical, cultural, and economic preconditions. The Moscow agglomeration is characterized by active state participation, manifested in centralized planning and a focus on large-scale infrastructure development. Projects are implemented in conditions of high resource concentration in the core and a clear vertical decision-making hierarchy.

In contrast to Moscow, approaches to managing metropolises in Western European countries are often built on principles of decentralization, inter-municipal cooperation, and citizen participation in urban planning processes. The experience of Greater Paris is particularly illustrative in this regard — an agglomeration where spatial development occurs through a multi-fragmented yet stable balance of interests among numerous municipalities, regional authorities, and the national government. It is essential to remember that comparing the functional dynamics of the Moscow and Paris agglomerations is only possible when accounting for their fundamentally different institutional statuses: one is an administrative reality, the other a statistical construct. Proceeding to analyze this case, attention should be paid to how an institutional architecture based on cooperation rather than hierarchy creates different — more flexible but consensus-demanding — pathways for urban development.

Monocentric System and Polycentric Networks. "The Greater Paris" initiative, launched in 2008 by French President N. Sarkozy, aimed to transform the spatial structure of the capital region [1]. The strategy development involved ten leading architects and urban planners, including J. Nouvel and A. Grumbach. A key feature was the absence of a competitive basis: the

intent was to synthesize proposals into a unified project focused on creating a polycentric agglomeration with distributed functions [2]. Main goals included enhancing connectivity between Paris and its suburbs, decentralizing economic activity, and strengthening the region's global competitiveness[1].

During a comparable period, the Russian Federation also implemented large-scale urban planning initiatives. The "Greater Moscow" project (2012) involved the annexation of territories to the capital, increasing its area by 2.4 times[2]. Simultaneously, major clusters — Moscow City, Skolkovo, Crocus City — developed, formally creating elements of polycentricity. However, unlike the French model where new centers arise from inter-municipal cooperation and functional redistribution, in the Moscow agglomeration, growth points are created on the initiative of capital and federal authorities and remain administratively subordinate to the core [3]. Regarding the agglomeration belts, initial population growth occurred naturally, without a master plan, driven by economic necessity.

This difference underscores a key imbalance: in Paris, polycentricity is a result of strategic planning; in Moscow, it is a byproduct of administrative expansion. This dissimilarity again reminds us that what is being compared are not spaces, but the logics of their production — one through cooperation, the other through hierarchy.

A key methodological question arises: what exactly is being compared under the term "agglomeration"? In the case of Paris, it refers to a functionally and institutionally formalized metropolis (Métropole du Grand Paris), with clear, legally established boundaries and powers in urban planning, transport, and economic development[3]. The Moscow agglomeration, however, lacks a unified legal status: it fully encompasses two federal subjects (Moscow city and Moscow Oblast) and adjacent territories, between which no formalized mechanism for coordination at the agglomeration level exists [4]. Its boundaries are defined statistically — through a threshold of commuting (15–20% of the population) — making them dynamic and conditional[4].

Thus, comparing "Greater Paris" and the "Moscow Agglomeration" faces the risk of conceptual incomparability: one object is an institutionally formalized

[1] Rethinking Urban Sprawl: Moving Towards Sustainable Cities. *OECD.* Paris: OECD Publishing; 2018. https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264300461-en

[2] Decree of the President of the Russian Federation dated 19.11.2011 No. 1526 "On the annexation of territories to the city of Moscow". *Collection of Legislation of the Russian Federation.* 2011;47;6633 (In Russ.).

[3] Loi n° 2010–1563 du 16 décembre 2010 de réforme des collectivités territoriales. *Journal officiel de la République française.* 2010;0292:21930

[4] The population of the Russian Federation by municipality as of January 1, 2024. *Rosstat. Federal State Statistics Service.* URL: https://rosstat.gov.ru (accessed: 02.08.2025). (In Russ.).

territorial unit, the other is a functional zone of influence without a single governing entity [5]. This does not negate the possibility of comparative analysis but requires a clear declaration of its limitations: the comparison should be conducted not as "two agglomerations" but as "two models of managing metropolitan development"[5].

Institutional Architecture of Governance: Hierarchy vs. Cooperation. Comparing the governance models of the Moscow and Paris agglomerations reveals a fundamental difference in approaches to territorial coordination. In the Russian Federation, there is currently no unified legal status for an agglomeration as a subject of planning and management. The Moscow agglomeration encompasses two federal subjects — Moscow, a city of federal significance, and Moscow Oblast — between which no formalized mechanism for joint decision-making at the agglomeration level exists[6]. Coordination of individual projects (e.g., Moscow Central Diameters) is achieved primarily through administrative agreements between executive authorities, not through an institutionalized body[7]. In other Russian regions, examples exist of creating agglomeration coordination councils including regional heads and governors of individual cities, and the possibility of using municipal associations as a tool. However, implementing these possibilities encounters problems related to targeted budget use due to the lack of legal codification.

The situation in France is fundamentally different. According to the territorial reform law of 2010 and the subsequent NOTRe law (2015), metropolises — inter-municipal associations with expanded powers — were established in major agglomerations[8]. The Metropolis of Greater Paris (Métropole du Grand Paris), established in 2016, unites 131 communes and holds competencies in urban planning, housing policy, economic development, and environmental protection[9]. Its representative body — the Metropolis Council of 210 deputies delegated from municipalities — approves strategic documents, including the Territorial Coherence Scheme (SCoT) [2].

This difference determines the distinct nature of urban development: in France, new satellite towns are created as elements of a coordinated decentralization

[5] *World Urbanization Prospects 2025.* New York; 2025. URL: https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/world-urbanization-prospects-2025 (accessed: 13.10.2025).
[6] Decree of the President of the Russian Federation dated 19.11.2011 No. 1526 "On the annexation of territories to the city of Moscow". *Collection of Legislation of the Russian Federation*. 2011;47:6633. (In Russ.).
[7] National Project "Housing and Urban Environment". *Government of the Russian Federation*. 2018.
[8] Loi n° 2010–1563 du 16 décembre 2010 de réforme des collectivités territoriales. *Journal officiel de la République française.* 2010;0292:21930.
[9] 8 villes, une commune déléguée et 1 projet. *Plaine Commune.* URL: https://plainecommune.fr/qui-sommes-nous/ (accessed: 28.08.2025).

strategy, whereas in Moscow, clusters (Skolkovo, Moscow City) emerge as points of attraction, administratively subordinate to the center. It is important to remember that comparing governance practices is only valid when focusing on functional outcomes, not formal structures.

The Moscow agglomeration resorts to mechanical administrative enlargement approximately every 20 years, while Greater Paris uses syndicates to implement strategy within the agglomeration's territory, utilizing its right to form inter-municipal associations between large cities and suburbs — in other words, metropolises or agglomerations since 1966. The metropolis's boundaries are discussed at the national level and approved by law, limiting the possibility for settlements to enter or exit.

Examining institutional architecture, it is important to note its influence on urban planning. For example, new satellite towns in the Paris region [8] were realized using precise planning aimed at reducing population density in the agglomeration's core and creating polycentric centers in the zone of immediate suburbs.

This planning was linked to a decentralization policy strategy aimed at transitioning the region from a national center model to an international city [9]. Within this framework, non-competitive production capacities were relocated; however, a high density of industrial headquarters remains, granting the city advantages in organizing, managing, and controlling external assets. As a result of relocation, territories become available for implementing new clusters. Thus, the La Défense financial and business district, the Paris-Saclay research cluster were created, and the historical core was partially freed from residential functions to perform cultural, touristic, and financial roles.

This difference leads to distinct decision-making natures. In Moscow, federal and capital authorities play the key role, ensuring high speed in implementing infrastructural projects but limiting the consideration of local interests and reducing decision sustainability in the long term[10]. An example is the annexation of New Moscow territories in 2012, where the opinions of local communities and Moscow Oblast authorities were insufficiently considered, causing social tension in the initial stage [4].

In Paris, conversely, the decision-making process involves a wide range of actors: besides commune mayors, business representatives, environmental organizations, and civic initiatives participate in discussions [7].

However, another methodological question arises here: can "agglomeration governance" be considered a comparable category if in one case it refers

[10] *Moscow City Development Strategy for the period up to 2035.* Moscow; 2021. (In Russ.).

to a single legal entity with a budget and powers, and in the other — de facto interaction lacking an institutional basis? Comparison becomes possible only if the analysis focuses not on formal structures, but on functional outcomes of coordination — for example, in transport or housing construction [8].

Transport Integration and Mobility: Two Pathways to Agglomeration Connectivity and the 15-Minute City. Transport infrastructure is a key tool for forming agglomeration integrity. However, in the cases of Moscow and Paris, it is implemented within fundamentally different strategies: in Paris — as a means of decentralization and strengthening a polycentric structure; in Moscow — as an extension of the center's radial logic aimed at absorbing the periphery.

The Grand Paris Express project, initiated within the "Greater Paris" strategy, is a circular and semi-circular network of automated metro lines over 200 km in total length, fully electric [7; 8]. Its goal is not merely to connect suburbs to the historic center, but to create new inter-peripheral links allowing suburban residents to travel between clusters (La Défense, Saclay, airports) without passing through Paris [7]. This approach reflects a paradigm shift: the focus moves from the center-periphery connection function to full-fledged territorial connectivity without a designated center in the transport network framework. In other words, transport becomes a tool for equitable territorial development, not subordination of the periphery to the center.

This approach involves developing concepts engaging all urban infrastructures. One of them was the "15-minute city" concept [7; 8], proposed by Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo. This approach was applied for the first time. It is based on the idea of decentralization to concentrate all life processes in spaces proportionate to humans and within walking distance, applying non-standard and innovative territorial zoning methods. However, its implementation faces the risk of gentrification: low-income neighborhoods may not receive sufficient job opportunities, exacerbating social inequality.

The concept is also based on ideas of chrono-urbanism, implying that the quality of urban life can be interpreted as a value inversely proportional to the time spent moving from point A to point B[11]. The value of urban space can only be determined by studying it together with the temporal dimension — the smaller it is, the higher the value. According to C. Moreno's research, reducing it to a quarter of an hour balances demand and supply for urban amenities. A settlement should consist of a mosaic of urban neighborhoods organized on the "hyper-proximity" principle,

[11] Le programme d'Anne Hidalgo. *Paris en Commun*. URL: https://annehidalgo2020.com/le-programme/ (accessed: 25.06.2025).

each capable of performing all functions, services, and amenities: living, jobs, retail, healthcare, education, leisure. To implement this concept, Paris rethought the combination of density, proximity, diversity, and ubiquity parameters [9]. In this context, density is considered in terms of the number of people whose needs can be met without degrading the neighborhood's quality of life. Proximity is crucial for reducing transit time and increasing accessibility to vital amenities. Diversity stems from mixing urban functions, stimulating economic activity, social capital, and connectivity. Ubiquity, in turn, minimizes inequality.

Besides the above positive characteristics, the 15-minute city also positively impacts the region's ecological, psychological, and economic state. Distances allow for non-automobile transport like walking, improving quality of life not only in terms of proximity but also through increased physical activity, similar to using cycling infrastructure. Time saved through "soft" mobility is redistributed into economically effective work time and leisure/recreation time (including health-promoting walking practices, considered by some scholars as a positive "by-product" of the 15-minute city). In the newer versions of the concept, the parameter of digitalization appears[12], implying a shift from the technological "smart city" model to an anthropocentric one, characterized by a human orientation. That is, a move away from rigid technological determinism and assigning importance to services demanded by residents [9; 10].

One problem with implementing the 15-minute city concept is the difficulty of replanning existing urban infrastructure. In Paris, many districts have complex layouts, and adding new pedestrian and bicycle zones requires significant costs and changes to the transport network. Low-income neighborhoods may face insufficient jobs and educational opportunities if the city's economy and social structure do not support the needs of all resident categories.

The "smart city" concept[13] receives separate attention in French national projects and initiatives, and recently, the country has actively been integrating technology into urban development. Thus, innovative solutions for continuous coordination of all city systems are being developed: smart grids, traffic management systems, air quality monitoring, and AI use. One example is the national initiative "La French Tech", supporting startups in smart city technologies [11].

Furthermore, within Greater Paris, state grants and funding programs are provided. Depending on the project, support can range from tens of thousands

[12] Le programme d'Anne Hidalgo. *Paris en Commun*. URL: https://annehidalgo2020.com/le-programme/ (accessed: 25.06.2025).

[13] Property prices in Paris suburbs soar as Parisians continue to flee the city. *The Local France.* URL: https://www.thelocal.fr/20210217/property-prices-in-paris-suburbs-soar-as-parisians-continue-to-flee-the-city (accessed: 14.10.2025).

to several million euros — for example, up to €10 million can be allocated for autonomous bus development. Grants often cover only part of the costs — 50–70% — with the remainder funded by companies or local authorities, and project timelines are limited to 2–5 years. Through such funding, a digital management platform in Lyon was created, unifying citizen services: parking payment, waste management, traffic forecasting.

In Paris, projects are implemented to expand pedestrian zones and increase bicycle lanes, aiming to introduce the concept of a pedestrian and bicycle city. This concept is similar to the "15-minute city" but is more narrowly focused and simplified for implementation. It primarily emphasizes convenience of movement without private cars, actively developing not only bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure but also public transport and car-sharing. Physical activity and creating a safe, comfortable environment are important.

Such grand national projects have a drawback: increased real estate prices. For example, in 2020, in Paris suburbs like Villejuif, real estate prices rose by 6% per year, linked to improved transport accessibility due to the Grand Paris Express project. Furthermore, in 2025, Paris observes moderate real estate price growth, with a 2.1% increase compared to the previous year, which may also be related to improved urban infrastructure and increased neighborhood attractiveness [11].

The core of Moscow is comparable in population and area to the entire Paris agglomeration. For the Moscow agglomeration, development occurs within federal programs such as "Housing and Urban Environment", "Ecology", "Digital Economy", and "Transport Infrastructure". Main tasks include creating a comfortable urban environment, increasing housing accessibility, modernizing the transport network (including construction of Moscow Central Diameters and metro expansion), and introducing digital technologies and environmentally sustainable solutions.

Unlike France, in Russia, the consideration of capital development plans was integrated with economic and social planning, serving merely as an auxiliary tool for achieving production goals, and until recent decade, the dynamics of productive forces placement predetermined settlement patterns. Conversely, in France, under a market economy, the localization of economic activity is concentrated in several privileged regions. This has led to significant territorial development imbalance, where the capital and large agglomerations like the Île-de-France region receive the main share of investments and resources, while less developed regions remain isolated[14]. The French urban planning system, despite striving for decentralization

[14] *Loi portant sur la nouvelle organisation territoriale de la République (NOTRe).* URL: https://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/politiques-publiques/loi-portant-nouvelle-organisation-territoriale-republique-notre (accessed: 30.10.2025).

and leveling regional differences through "growth pole" policies, still faces challenges of excessive concentration of economic activity and population in a few urban cores. This process differs from the Russian experience, where the emphasis on centralized planning long facilitated a more even distribution of production capacities.

In Moscow, a different logic dominates. Despite the declared goal of "integrating the capital and the oblast", projects like the Moscow Central Diameters (MCD) and the Moscow Central Circle (MCC) functionally reproduce a radial model. MCDs, built on existing Russian Railways lines, connect peripheral cities (Lyubertsy, Odintsovo, Krasnogorsk) primarily with central Moscow, not with each other[15]. Although they formally cover the "first belt" of the agglomeration, their routes and fare integration aim to strengthen pendulum flows towards the core, not to create autonomous transport corridors between peripheral centers[16]. This logic reinforces commuting migration, contradicting the idea of polycentricity. Here, a key consequence of the absence of unified agglomeration governance is evident: transport is built in the interests of Moscow, not the agglomeration as a whole.

This difference is conditioned by the institutional environment. In France, transport planning is carried out by the metropolis as a unified agglomeration body, allowing for the balance of all communes' interests[17]. In Russia, the lack of a single agglomeration management entity leads to transport policy being formed in the interests of Moscow city, with Moscow Oblast playing the role of a "passive recipient" of infrastructure[18]. This is evident, in particular, in bureaucratic complexities with extending metro lines beyond the capital's administrative borders — a problem MCDs aim to solve technically, but not institutionally.

Besides rail transport, both agglomerations develop alternative mobility modes. In Paris, since 2019, a "pedestrian and bicycle city" strategy has been implemented, including expanding bike lanes, creating "meeting streets", and introducing electric micromobility systems (over 15,000 e-bikes in 2024)[19]. These measures are

[15] Report on the work of the Moscow Central Diameters for 2024. *Moscow Department of Transport.* Moscow; 2025. (In Russ.).

[16] *Moscow's transport system development strategy for the period up to 2035. Approved by the Decree of the Government of Moscow dated 10.08.2020 No. 987-PP.* Moscow; 2020. (In Russ.).

[17] *Paris en Commun. Le programme d'Anne Hidalgo.* URL: https://annehidalgo2020.com/le-programme/ (accessed: 13.06.2025).

[18] *National project "Transport Infrastructure". Project passport.* Moscow; 2019. (In Russ.).

[19] *Mobility for more liveable urban spaces. Highlights Report 2024.* URL: https://www.eiturbanmobility.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/EXT_EIT-Urban-Mobility-Highlights-Report-2024_Digital.pdf (accessed: 06.07.2025).

integrated into the "15-minute city" concept, where reduced distances make "soft mobility" not just an ecological choice but a daily practice [5].

In Moscow, the development of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure remains fragmented and local, failing to form a unified network at the agglomeration level. Moscow and Moscow Oblast are different federal subjects, so regional projects within them differ. Within Moscow territory, the Moscow Urban Forum was held from 2011–2023, involving roundtables for international specialists, research, and development of the city's strategy[20]. In 2018, Moscow's achievements were reviewed according to PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) data to determine the subject's readiness for a technological future in areas such as transport, digital economy, construction, healthcare, education, virtual services, culture, security, and utilities. Transport, in terms of accessibility, ranked 3rd globally; the subject also ranked 3rd in public Wi-Fi coverage, 2nd in the quantity and quality of recreational green zones, and 1st in virtual services, portal creation, and mobile apps for solving urban problems. It is important to note that these results were obtained in the second year of implementing the "Moscow 2030" development strategy, encompassing five areas: transport, healthcare, education, urban environment, business, and innovation. There is no unified regional development concept; the strategic approach is inductive from the directions.

Thus, the transport direction aims to create a convenient environment for all user types, develop transport, make it more ecological and faster, which also positively affects the agglomeration. Within this program, special attention is paid to projects aimed at integrating the capital and the oblast, such as launching Moscow Central Diameters (MCD) and expanding the metro network. These initiatives ensure more efficient connection of the agglomeration's core with peripheral areas, promoting increased population mobility.

Moscow has a huge advantage in its actively developing metro system, but recalling that the agglomeration spans different federal subjects, bureaucratic complexities arise with extending metro lines into Moscow Oblast. This problem is currently being addressed via so-called "surface metro" — the MCD diameters. The city buys part of Russian Railways' property, upgrading both the transport used on these lines and the stations and rails. In five years of operation, MCD stations have connected Lyubertsy, Krasnogorsk, Zelenograd, Skhodnya, Odintsovo, Dubna, Skolkovo, and many other cities and districts in the first peripheral belt,

[20] Gerashchenko N. Moscow in a new key: what gives the city the absorption of the Moscow region. *RBK*. 20.07.2011. URL: https://www.rbc.ru/society/20/07/2011/5703e9c69a79477633d35916 (accessed: 07.10.2025). (In Russ.).

particularly secondary cores. By 2030, the city plans to extend the diameters to nearby larger cities in the third peripheral belt — Tula, Tver, Voronezh, etc.

Moscow has actively developed water transport since 2022, after the territory of the Moskva River, Yauza River, and reservoirs came under the subject's jurisdiction. In the Russian Federation, all rivers and other water resources are not under regional control but are federal property.

The Skolkovo cluster mentioned earlier deserves more attention within the Moscow agglomeration. Starting with this project, initiated in 2010 by decree of Dmitry Medvedev, scientific clusters began gaining popularity in Moscow. Skolkovo is not only a business center for innovative startups with significant tax benefits[21]; it is a city within a city, with its own infrastructure including residential development exclusively from developers using innovative technologies in construction and apartment equipment (smart home technology), as well as hospitals, schools, kindergartens, and a public transport station. The creation of this cluster also initiated reverse pendulum migration from the core to the first peripheral belt, improving the imbalance in transit flows.

In 2016, train service began on the Moscow Central Circle (MCC), using railways that previously connected the capital's industrial ring. This served as an impetus for redeveloping territories of obsolete factories into residential areas, demand for which had long exceeded supply.

Through a similar mechanism, peripheral centers in Moscow began appearing in the form of food courts based in unused tram depot buildings, decompressing central areas and rethinking the concept of shopping malls, which had already become youth hangouts.

In 2023, Moscow began more actively apply integrated territory development; 50 projects in 11 administrative districts were approved during this period[22]. These projects include housing stock renovation, construction of public and business facilities, development of production facilities, and other measures aimed at meeting urban needs. Furthermore, implementing these programs will create 104,000 new jobs. These projects are implemented on industrial zone territories, transforming outdated zoning into mixed-use, aligning the agglomeration's development trajectory with the Parisian "15-minute city" project.

[21] Gerashchenko N. Moscow in a new key: what gives the city the absorption of the Moscow region. *RBK*. 20.07.2011. URL: https://www.rbc.ru/society/20/07/2011/5703e9c69a79477633d35916 (accessed: 07.10.2025). (In Russ.).

[22] In New Moscow, in the 1st quarter of 2024, more than 362 thousand square meters of housing were commissioned. *Urban Development Complex of Moscow.* URL: https://stroi.mos.ru/press_releases/v-novoi-moskvie-v-1-kvartalie-2024-ghoda-vvielibolieie-362-tysiach-kvadratnykh-mietrov-zhil-ia (accessed: 04.10.2025). (In Russ.).

Moscow's urban planning policy program also plays a key role in the city's changes. Its main task is creating multifunctional public spaces and modernizing urban districts. In 2012, as part of this policy, parts of Moscow and Kaluga Oblasts — New Moscow — were annexed to Moscow, increasing the capital's area by 2.4 times [2]. Initially, key goals included relocating some federal government buildings and assigning the territory a government-administrative status, but this goal was later abandoned.

9 new metro stations are open in this territory, connecting areas with the highest population density to the core. In 2024, within the Troitsky and Novomoskovsky Administrative Okrugs (TiNAO), 2 million square meters of energy-efficient housing were commissioned as part of an integrated approach involving simultaneous construction of schools, kindergartens, clinics, businesses, and recreational zones[23]. It is projected that by 2035, the population of Moscow's new territories will exceed 1.5 million, creating over 1 million jobs[24]. Such active development of the district leads to an equally active influx of population from Moscow Oblast and contributes to the degradation of the remaining peripheral belt [12]. Although the severity of territorial disparities in Moscow Oblast in the early 2000s reached extreme values — according to Governor B.V. Gromov's estimate, up to 200-fold differences in key indicators — in the 2020s, the emphasis is gradually shifting to differences in infrastructural, investment, and transport development between central and peripheral districts. Modern regional policy seeks to mitigate these differences through a comprehensive approach to territorial development and investments in "provincial Moscow Oblast". Regarding Moscow Oblast, healthcare is also a focal point of regional policy, aimed at modernizing medical institutions and improving accessibility and quality of medical services.

The improvement and ecology of Moscow Oblast aim to enhance recreational zones, implement water body cleanups, recultivate unused landfills, and offer incentives for creating "green" factories. According to the national project "Housing and Urban Environment", housing for the middle class is being built, with a designated percentage of apartments for residents whose houses are under renovation.

Transport infrastructure, under the national project "Safe and High-Quality Roads", is developed not only to improve connectivity with the agglomeration's

[23] Gerashchenko N. Moscow in a new key: what gives the city the absorption of the Moscow region. *RBK*. 20.07.2011. URL: https://www.rbc.ru/society/20/07/2011/5703e9c69a79477633d35916 (accessed: 07.10.2025). (In Russ.).

[24] In Moscow, 50 decisions were made on the integrated development of territories in 2024. *Urban Development complex of Moscow*. URL: https://stroi.mos.ru/news/v-moskvie-priniato-50-rieshienii-o-komplieksnom-razvitii-tierritorii-v-2024-ghodu (accessed: 04.10.2025). (In Russ.).

core but also to alleviate congestion in the capital; active cooperation with the core also exists in developing public transport, both MCDs and buses that often operate routes across both regions, utilizing vehicles from the core's existing fleet or those decommissioned during its renewal. Smart technologies regulating traffic light phases are being implemented across the entire agglomeration.

Transport in both agglomerations performs not only a technical but also a spatial-political function. In Paris, it contributes to dispersing centripetal forces; in Moscow — to consolidating centrifugal flows. This difference confirms the thesis that infrastructure is not a neutral technical object but a carrier of a governance model.

However, methodologically it is important to consider: comparing transport systems is only valid when comparing not projects, but their functional consequences for the agglomeration's structure. Otherwise, there is a risk of comparing "integration mechanisms" (Paris) with "expansion tools" (Moscow) as equivalent phenomena, distorting the analytical picture.

Influence of Demographic Factors on the Development of Capital Agglomerations. The aspect of the average population age in these agglomerations is important, determining demographic dynamics, social priorities, and economic activity. In Moscow, the average age is 42.88 years[25], higher than the Russian average of 40.97 years. In Paris, it is 40.3 years[26], indicating similarity in the age structure of both capitals. However, differences in social policy and infrastructural approach shape different adaptation trajectories to these demographic conditions. In Moscow, the influx of working-age migrants from Russian regions and neighboring countries plays a substantial role, creating pressure on healthcare, education, and housing infrastructure. Young families often choose housing in peripheral districts due to affordability, but high demand exacerbates the problem of insufficient transport connectivity. In Paris, despite a relatively close average age, there is a structural deficit of workers in labor-intensive and low-paid sectors, related to a nationwide aging trend. This pushes the state to develop programs for attracting migrants and supporting young households through social housing and suburban development reform.

In Paris, youth actively use micromobility (11.2% of trips by bicycle[27]), whereas in Moscow, transport choice is primarily determined by metro and MCD

[25] *Mobility for more liveable urban spaces. Highlights Report 2024.* URL: https://www.eiturbanmobility.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/EXT_EIT-Urban-Mobility-Highlights-Report-2024_Digital.pdf (accessed: 06.07.2025).

[26] Ibid.

[27] The Ministry of Finance explained what benefits apply to IT companies with the status of a participant in the Skolkovo project. *Federal Tax Service of the Russian Federation.* URL: https://www.nalog.gov.ru/rn77/news/activities_fts/10126116 / (accessed: 08.07.2025).

availability. This difference reflects not only infrastructural but also cultural models of urban lifestyle — another aspect that cannot be ignored in comparison.

It should be remembered: demographic data are comparable, but their interpretation depends on the institutional context — social support systems, housing policy, and migration management.

Paris also emphasizes ecological and mobile transport solutions: the younger generation more frequently chooses bicycles and e-scooters, while the older population relies on public transport — as of 2024, 11.2% of trips in the city are by bicycle, and 30% by public transport[28, 29]. Furthermore, in 2024, the operator TIER-Dott deployed 15,000 e-bikes in Paris, providing 10,000 free rides and serving 500,000 users, indicating growing micromobility popularity[30].

Conclusion

A comparative analysis of the Moscow agglomeration and Greater Paris leads to the conclusion that, despite differences in governance models and urban planning approaches, the most significant problems requiring immediate solutions are similar for both capital agglomerations. These problems include developing transport infrastructure, reducing environmental impact, ensuring a comfortable urban environment, and efficiently utilizing territorial potential.

However, the main conclusion lies in the methodological plane: a correct comparison is only possible if we analyze not territories, but governance models. Only in this way can false analogies be avoided and truly transferable practices be identified — not in the form of copying, but as adaptation to the Russian institutional reality.

Paris's experience demonstrates the success of implementing a polycentric model and active municipal cooperation. The "15-minute city" concept plays a key role in improving quality of life by reducing time spent on travel and creating a balanced urban environment. The region faces low indicators in innovative development and environmental sustainability, but due to advantages in cultural capital, the creative industries sector, and a special quality of broadly understood urban environment — which serves as a vivid identity — Greater Paris has

[28] Bilan du Plan Vélo 2023. *Ville de Paris*. Paris, 2024. URL: https://www.paris.fr/pages/le-plan-velo-a-paris-34549 (accessed: 07.10.2025).

[29] Les déplacements dans Paris — Données 2023. Agence d'urbanisme de la région parisienne, 2023. *APUR.* URL: https://www.apur.org/fr/nos-travaux/deplacements-dans-paris-donnees-2023 (accessed: 07.10.2025).

[30] Moscow Urban Forum 2023. *DECORNEWS.ru.* URL: https://decornews.ru/editors-choice/moskovskiy-urbanisticheskiy-forum-2023/ (accessed: 18.09.2025). (In Russ.).

consistently occupied top positions in the hierarchy of world capitals over the last decade, typically ranking in the top 5 global cities and characterized as a multifunctional center of global significance, continually expanding its sphere of competencies, despite methodological differences in studies.

Meanwhile, the Moscow agglomeration is oriented toward large-scale infrastructure projects and technological innovations, promoting its economic growth but slowing the decentralization process.

A key difference in agglomeration management is the degree of involvement of local authorities. In Paris, mechanisms of inter-municipal cooperation are actively used, allowing for balanced development of the entire agglomeration territory. In Moscow, conversely, management is concentrated in the hands of city authorities, ensuring decision-making efficiency but limiting flexibility in adapting to local demands.

Thus, analyzing the practices of both agglomerations allows for identifying promising directions for Moscow. These include forming new points of attraction on the periphery, implementing "15-minute city" principles, developing a governance system based on inter-municipal interaction, and strengthening environmental sustainability. A comprehensive approach considering international experience can contribute to the balanced development of the Moscow agglomeration and improve the quality of life for its residents.

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