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PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY OF DIRECTORS AND FOUNDERS OF AUTO MUSEUMS AS A KEY TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE URAL INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE



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Abstract. *This article examines the professional identities of founders and directors of Ural automobile museums, based on in-depth interviews. The directors of auto museums are divided into three personality types based on their understanding of their museum mission. These personality types differ in their knowledge of automotive industry technologies, their biographical backgrounds, and their interest in the development of their enterprises and territories. The recognition of the need to preserve automobile heritage by these museum directors is determined by various factors (personal experience and interests, social capital, the age of the organization, the unique exhibition parameters, etc.), which influence the choice of museum strategies. The results of the study can be used in the development of state policy in the sphere of culture and the preservation of Russia's technical heritage.*

Keywords: *Russia; Ural region; industrial heritage; automobile museum; sociology of culture, professional identity.*

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Introduction

The history of the domestic automotive industry is more than 100 years old. The first cars in Russia were produced at the Russo-Balt plant (Riga) in 1909, and the Soviet automotive industry was established in the 1920s. At the same time, the first state collections of motor vehicles appeared (for more details, see [Karasev, 2023]). «The first collection of old vehicles, called the automobile museum, was established by a special decree in Petrograd in February 1918... The first Soviet car museum existed until the second half of the 1920s. And after its abolition, some exhibits moved to the first Moscow auto museum, which opened in February 1926 on Bolshaya Sadovaya Street», but it did not work for long – until 1930 (some exhibits were transferred to the Polytechnic Museum) [Auto museums of the USSR era, 2023]. In fact, museum business began to develop within the walls of the country's automobile and motorcycle factories in the 1970s. A striking example was the museum of the Automobile Plant named after Leninsky Kom-somol (AZLK), housed in a specially constructed building on Volgogradsky Avenue in Moscow in 1980. However, it was closed in 1996 (due to the bankruptcy of the enterprise), and in 2022 its building, in the style of Soviet modernism, was demolished.

The interest of the modern audience in the legacy of the domestic automotive industry has increased. Since the 2000s, the number of museums of various road vehicles has been on the rise in Russia, which reflects the general trend of the growing interest of the population in the technical heritage (since 2014, the number of Russians interested in technical museums has almost doubled) [Let's go to the museum, 2024]. Of more than 80 such museums, mostly private, more than half appeared after 2010 [Lyadova, 2023, p. 111]. Although these organizations are more often only museum-type institutions¹ [Yureneva, 2024b, p. 22], nevertheless, they perform an important function in preserving and popularizing the heritage of the USSR and Russia. The preservation of the legacy of engineers, designers, and scientists who have made a significant contribution to the domestic scientific and technological development

¹ A museum-type institution, according to T.Yu. Yureneva, is an organization that does not correspond to the definition of a museum in Russian legislation and the definition of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), but performs certain functions of a museum and practices some types of activities characteristic of museums [Yureneva, 2024b, p. 22].

was also included in the list of instructions from the President of the Russian Federation in 2025 [List of instructions ... , 2025].

The Ural Economic Region (hereinafter referred to as UER or the Urals) is one of the centers of the automotive industry in Russia. As a result of the evacuation of enterprises from the western regions of the USSR to the Urals during the Great Patriotic War, many industries appeared here, including the production of various cars (Miass, Izhevsk, Kurgan), motorcycles (Irbis) and related brands¹.

To date, a national representative office of the International Committee for the Conservation of Industrial Heritage has been established in the Urals [Zapariy, 2019, p. 44–48], and the museum complex of the Ural Mining and Metallurgical Company (UMMC) has been established in Verkhnyaya Pyshma. Fruitful activities on the preservation of industrial heritage are carried out in the Sverdlovsk region². The region also has the largest (after the Central Economic Region) number of motor transport museums (MTM) [Motor transport museums of the Urals..., 2024, p. 96]. However, in most Ural cities, the preservation and popularization of industrial heritage (especially motor transport) remains a matter for enthusiasts.

Theoretical basis and research method

The basis for considering the identity of the directors of the Urals' MTM was the concept of «beruf»³ as a reflection on the sphere of their own professional activity as a «vocation» [Weber, 1990, p. 96]. The preservation of the motor transport heritage is perceived by founders of MTM as a moral task, at first glance due, unlike the Protestants, to a secular rather than a religious motives. However, these motives are based on a belief in scientific and technological progress and technocracy, one of the central characteristics of the discourse of engineering and technical workers⁴ [Lipovetskii, 2010, p. 213]. The accumulated cultural and social capital [Bourdieu, 2002, p. 60–67] of the MTM founders is a significant reason for setting up a museum. The analysis of the «theory of missed opportunities»⁵ that is common among the nostalgic part of the scientific and technical intelligentsia [Abramov, 2017, p. 63] turned out to

¹ In Izhevsk, serial production of motorcycles developed before the Great Patriotic War.

² Including the creation of an industrial park in Nizhny Tagil, the preservation of industrial architectural monuments, holding scientific conferences, publishing educational and methodological literature, etc.

³ Beruf is a concept introduced by M. Weber in his work «The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism», which denotes both a calling and a profession, i.e., the recognition that worldly pursuits, in this case a profession, have the sacred significance of a divine calling (according to Protestantism, God calls a person to service, to achieve a certain goal in life).

⁴ The «engineering and technical discourse» is a concept developed by M. Lipovetskii that describes a form of collective knowledge shared by engineering and technical workers that emerged, along with other discourses, in the 1960s and 1970s in the USSR. This form of knowledge is characterized by a technocracy of thought and a positivist belief in reason, science, and progress, which corresponds to the ideological project of the Enlightenment (ed.)

⁵ According to R.N. Abramov, the «Theory of Missed Opportunities» is a group of ideological concepts and myths characteristic of the post-Soviet scientific and technical intelligentsia, which «experienced the trauma of the rapid contraction of its professional sectors». This theory contributes to «the creation of a multitude of narratives specific to individual professional groups and communities, which use it to describe the reasons for the failures and backwardness of a particular branch of science or industry in the USSR» [Abramov, 2017].

be significant for understanding the motivation of a number of MTM leaders. Nostalgia for the bygone era of the Soviet automotive industry's success takes the form of the museumification of its legacy.

Professional identity is shaped by such professional tools as skills, abilities, and competencies (cultural capital), as well as established social and emotional connections with other professionals (social capital). Closely related to professional identity is corporate identity—the employee's self-identification with the organization—which played a key role in shaping the motivation for MTM directors, who were not trained in the automotive industry. Territorial identity also plays a significant role, confirming the thesis about the mutual influence of tangible and intangible elements of industrial heritage on the self-identification of local communities [Novakovskaia, Val'chak, 2021, p. 103].

The study is based on the analysis of in-depth semi-structured interviews with the directors of nine Ural Auto Museums, drawing on the principles of grounded theory developed by Anselm Strauss and Barney Glaser. Informant data are presented in Table 1¹.

Table 1

Information about the founders and directors of ATM**

№ of Interview	Gender	Status*	Yeas of work at a museum
1	M	F and D	8
2	F	D	2
3	M	F and D	8
4	F	D	No data
5	M	F and D	2
6	M	F and D	11
7	M	F and D	8
8	M	F and D	6
9	M	F and D	21

* Status: F – founder ; D – director.

** Compiled by the authors based on interview data.

The interview questions covered five topics: biography of the MTM director; the history of MTM's emergence and development; MTM's interaction with regional and municipal authorities, government agencies, and commercial and non-profit organizations; attitudes toward MTM as part of the technical legacy; MTM problems and possible action strategies.

Types of auto museum directors

Based on the interview analysis, three types of museum directors and founders were identified. The characteristics of these types were determined based on the following criteria: reasons (motive) for creating the museum, and the cultural and social capital of the director, developed during their professional development or while working at the company (corporate identity). The motive for creating a technical museum for the first two types is linked to professional self-determination and the automotive industry as

¹ Further in the text of the article, quotes from informants are given in italics with the interview number indicated in brackets.

a professional field, while the professional identity of the third type is more likely to influence the chosen formats of museum activities.

I. *Custodians of Automotive Heritage*. This type includes the directors of the following auto museums: the Izhevsk Kozhushkov motorcycle museum, the Irbit state motorcycle museum, the MotoEpoch museum, and the Perm automobile museum «Retro-Garage» (PAM «Retro-Garage»).

The reason for creating a museum was a childhood involvement in automobile construction and repair, as well as auto racing, which influenced my professional and life trajectory:

Cars have haunted me since childhood... there were night trips on a bread truck..., and when in college I was already involved in racing a lot.

I saw magazines in a young technician's club... they published blueprints... I started creating things from the blueprints... at the age of 9 or 10, I could help adults to repair motorcycles... that's where my passion began.

We opened the museum in memory of my father. His hobby was collecting and restoring motorcycles with his own hands... and I've had a love for motorcycle culture and technology in general since childhood.

A similar motive among Soviet-era museum directors stems from the fact that the exhibits evoke happy memories of childhood and adolescence [Morozov, Sleptsova, 2020, p. 201] and reflect the nostalgic orientation of engineering and technical workers.

Experience in the automotive industry helped to form social capital in the industry, to get involved in building professional community:

The environment was so exciting. Firstly, I was always at the races; secondly, it was connections and contacts.

I worked at the plant for over 30 years, in the chief designer's department for over six. «Motorcycle driver» is the first entry in my work record book.

The Soviet system of engaging engineering and technical workers in improving production processes contributed to the formation of this type of social capital in the Urals. In the Perm Region and the Udmurt ASSR, this was influenced by the opening of technical universities and public design bureaus, business trips/internships to related and affiliated domestic and foreign enterprises, contractual relationships between industrial enterprises and research organizations, etc. [Porozov, 2021, p. 49].

Secondly, the initiative to create an MTM was supported by a community of car enthusiasts, colleagues, or friends:

A large group of friends started riding these vehicles... and said, «You already have a whole museum, go ahead and open it». Six months later, they brought four motorcycles: «This is a gift for you to take to the museum».

In this sense, they are «people's» directors who protect the country's automotive heritage and represent the interests of the community:

The money was donated by entrepreneurs—my friends: former racers, fans, motorsport veterans, and so on. I went around with a hat in my hand: who would contribute?

Social capital is also important to consider in the context of interactions with regional and municipal governments, cultural and commercial organizations. The interactions of all MTMs with government bodies are complex. On the one hand, museums strive to show off their collections and development prospects to officials. Moreover, when planning their activities, they try to focus on regional and municipal priorities:

The authorities decided to create a branch of the Museum of the Siege of Leningrad in this building... We tried to integrate, but they didn't listen. As a result, we're working with St. Petersburg, while the regional authorities have somehow forgotten about this topic.

We want to be helpful, but so far we haven't received any proposals.

On the other hand, the regional and municipal authorities are prepared to actively participate in the work of MTMs in the event of the nationalization of motor transport heritage. This likely depends on the situation in the country. Furthermore, the authorities' plans for the development of MTM often remain unformulated or differ from the vision of the museum founders. Therefore, in many cases, interactions with government authorities leave museum directors with a rather negative impression due to the lack of proper planning of museum and cultural policy, as well as the lack of real support:

Regional authorities' plans change so drastically that we are forced to complete joint projects alone.

The authorities should use the established, ready-made museum. But they don't want to. There has been no support from the authorities.

Often, interaction is limited to support from official tourism agencies of the regional economic zones—through work with Tourism Development Centers or Tourist Information Centers (TICs):

We interacted with the government through a tourism accelerator program to test the museum model and develop the museum's economics. We received some marketing support and funding for website development... We interact with the Ministry of Tourism... and participate in the tour guide certification committee.

At the same time, building constructive relationships with commercial tourism companies is not always possible due to the museums' location outside the city's historic core, the difficulties with transportation infrastructure, and the need for specialized training for travel agencies due to the museums' unique orientation.

We held many meetings with management of tour companies. After the meeting, there might be two or three excursions. We've offered them all sorts of economic models... Nobody agreed.

The directors and founders of MTMs know each other to varying degrees; some of them actively interact, primarily at offsite events outside the district (Moscow, Kazan, St. Petersburg), and are interested in the experiences of their colleagues and neighbors:

Yandex Maps gave us the «Good Place» stickers for our front doors. ... The auto museums of St. Petersburg know about us, ... representatives of the Moscow Transport Museum came to visit. We have good connections with Yekaterinburg: all the auto rallies stop by, as do two motor vehicle museums. People often come from Tyumen... , the Izhevsk Automobile Plant Museum, the Izhevsk Kozhushkov Motorcycle Museum, and from Ufa too.

We participated in a retro festival in Kazan, and in St. Petersburg we attended a large motorcycle forum.

However, due to the unsystematic and fragmented interaction of MTM representatives, directors failed to form a professional association that could lobby their interests, and no museum network has emerged within which they could provide each other with information and expert support.

MTMs form close ties with retro clubs, auto and motorcycle clubs, modelers, and reenactors:

We primarily interact with like-minded communities. We've also learned to integrate into professional holidays: we attend Miner's Day and Metallurgist's Day.

We participated in the Irbit Biker Rally... and held a separate program.

Thus, MTM acts as a link («bridge» between A and B¹) [Granovetter, 2009, p. 35] between organizations and communities that specialize not only in the automotive industry and its heritage, connecting organizations that likely would not have crossed paths otherwise.

Close ties are formed through the collaboration of MTM directors with specialized automotive publications² that cover the history of auto and motorsports, the development of the automotive industry, and the life of the museums themselves:

I was appointed because I was already well-known in the historical equipment department; I wrote for magazines about history and motorsports.

A significant portion of MTM's social capital comes from connections with local cultural and educational organizations (museums, archives, musical groups, schools, secondary schools, and universities). These connections help update the museum's heritage for today's visitors, enriching and diversifying the museum space with new formats and exhibitions, historical data about the city where MTM is located, and the results of conducted research. Including:

¹ A bridge, according to M. Granovetter, is a weak tie that connects two groups of individuals united by strong ties, providing the groups with greater access to knowledge, experience, and other resources.

² Magazines «Avtomir», «Avtorynok», «Moto».

We maintain ties with secondary schools, especially those with an engineering focus... They have a specific educational process: a more in-depth study of the subject «Technology»... We provide our displays to schools, and teachers conduct classes using them.

In turn, medium-sized businesses serve auto museums primarily as information partners:

The head of the «Russia Post» department has been here more than once... because we have the only scooter for postmen¹... Russian Post has issued two postcards dedicated to this scooter model.

We have a restaurant... We openly recommend it if people ask about the gastronomic component. And they recommend us as a cultural entertainment venue, as a technical museum.

MTMs sometimes even provide financial assistance with repairs and organizing trips:

We have a private factory... they help us with finances, promotion, and manufacturing of parts.

This has become fashionable these days. Entrepreneurs have money to spend, and their best investment is in vintage technology.

Large businesses rarely provide assistance to MTMs. An exception is one museum's project in collaboration with Russian Railways:

No one is as deeply involved with Russian Railways as we are... Automobile enthusiasts are separate, while railway workers have their own clubs based on their interests... But we have both automobiles and a railway with a steam locomotive, a historic train, and even a provincial orchestra.

Summarizing the characteristics of the «custodians of automotive heritage» type, it should be noted that they view the preservation of auto heritage as a calling and a moral duty. Most of them are nearing or reached retirement age. Nevertheless, they actively plan for the future and formulate proposals (which don't always resonate with regional and municipal authorities), soberly assess the situation regarding resources and opportunities, decisively work to build a solid foundation for the museum's future work, and create multiple horizontal connections. They should present their ideas and projects at the federal level (participating in All-Russian forums, creating a community) to unite the efforts of like-minded individuals.

II. *Automotive technology enthusiasts*. This type is represented by the directors of the Y. Kuznetsov retro motorcycle museum, the Ets classic cars museum of classic vintage cars, and the NGO «Firefighting equipment always in service».

The motivations for creating this type of museum are as follows:

1. The vivid impressions of visiting foreign and domestic MTMs or the threat of losing an important exhibit:

There is a car and motorcycle museum in Vienna. I was very surprised to see children aged 6-9 sitting there with easels, drawing motorcycles.

I saw an old fire truck being sent for scrap and wondered why not preserve it for history.

¹ A special series of postal scooters (mopeds) created to assist female postmen after WWII.

2. The founders' connection to their professional field, which is also a source of funding for the MTM's activities, but is not considered a source of income:

As an engineer, I am interested in all technological and design solutions... I have been involved in the automotive business for the past 25 years.

I used to restore various types of cars.

Essentially, for this type, cultural capital in its incorporated state (expertise in vehicle repair) becomes objectified—a collection. For this type, the historical and geographical specifics of the motor vehicle heritage are irrelevant, as there is no selectivity in the criteria of the country of origin of the exhibits or the time of manufacture. The exception is the «Firefighting equipment always in service» museum: *I thought of preserving old fire trucks for history.* Such collectors often position themselves not as a museum, but as a personal collection.

3. The main interest is in communication with like-minded people:

There's a retro car club... I've always been a member... Friends and acquaintances come here... a lot of bikers, to talk about our biker affairs.

We meet in seven clubs... as friends. ... We have great conversations, attend exhibitions and events.

The director of the nonprofit organization «Firefighting equipment always in service» relied on his colleagues for communication, which led to the closure of the MTM after his retirement.

The role of the automotive community in the establishment and development of museums, as noted by informants, indicates their functioning as «resources of collective mobilization, a source of group identity» [Kononenko, 2010, p. 10]. Motorist clubs perform the function of communication (in our study, within the community and with external actors, such as various authorities) and the accumulation of social capital through participation in the cultural life of citizens, encouraging participants to take collective action. The social capital of directors of this type:

– interaction (at the level of individual events, without reimbursement of participation costs) with the authorities of the constituent entities and municipalities occurs more often through associations of motorists and clubs: *representatives of our club communicate with the authorities... This is club work, not mine;*

– they perform educational functions, but this work is not systemic, so there is no long-term cooperation with other actors (educational and cultural institutions). The only museum that could not build interaction with regional and municipal authorities and various organizations and institutions was the NGO «Firefighting equipment always in service». All activities (educational classes on fire safety and restoration of equipment) were carried out using their own funds. This was also due to unwillingness to talk about the local technical heritage and fully engage in it, so the club failed to attract supporters and sponsors. This situation arose due to a lack of skill in museum and exhibition work, fundraising, and promo-

tion. The focus was only on firefighting equipment and its restoration, without taking into account the history of the local automotive industry.

The above characteristics of the directors can be explained by their work in the field of maintenance and repair of road equipment. Such obvious life passion brings them closer to the directors of the first type, but the vocation is not the preservation of the motor transport heritage, but the restoration activity. They identify themselves as collectors, a greater focus on close interaction with car enthusiast clubs and a weak interest in interacting with the authorities as an MTM, as well as in generating income from patrons and visitors.

III. «Ideological» managers. This type is represented by the directors of the Museum of the Izhevsk automobile plant and the Museum of the history of automobile manufacturers JSC AZ «URAL». The establishment of museums is not within their competence. Unlike the first two types, they lack specialized knowledge in the automotive industry or in car repairs. For people of this type, professional and corporate identity is formed by their experience of working in the museum and excursion sphere, advertising and PR: *I previously worked in other museums..., I worked in the media for 20 years.*

Professional experience determines the choice of other formats of events and promotion through the development of various cultural functions:

The museum should perform broader tasks. I want to attract all creative people to our museum. There is an idea to create a club of ambassadors, a media school, which will recruit talented writers, who will be taught by coaches and teachers ... so that small concerts, musical evenings and dance events can be held in our museum ... You can install circus equipment ... This will attract even more young people.

The orientation of museum directors to expand the formats of events with the participation of other cultural organizations corresponds to the post-industrial paradigm of museumification of industrial heritage, which involves «the creation of special types of urban spaces that attract cultural resources (industrial heritage) in order to develop the territory» [Kuzovenkova, 2015, p. 10]. In museum practice, this paradigm is implemented in the form of a bundle «museum of industrial heritage – cultural event (festivals, including scientific, exhibitions of contemporary art, theatrical performances, concerts, educational and educational projects) – lectures and design schools and creative industries» [Kuzovenkova, 2015].

Promoting the enterprise is the main task set for the directors of corporate MTMs. Therefore, they create their own forms of attracting tourists: automobile tourism and thematic events related to automotive technology (rallies, car races) – being included in the marketing strategy of auto manufacturers. In addition to brand recognition, creating a reputation and increasing sales of enterprises, museums within automotive companies bring additional profits [Michnicka, Kołodziejczyk, 2022, p. 130, 150]. In comparison with the first type of directors, who are also characterized by the desire to diversify event formats, for the third type, although this is due to their professional background, it is strictly regulated by the goal of enterprise promotion. If the MTM's parent company produces vehicles not for everyday use, the mu-

seum's purpose is to improve the company's social image and demonstrate its importance in regional development:

It's important to show people the essence of the plant; a museum is a window into the employer, the company's past, and its future. Not everyone can visit the plant today and see..., but we are building its positive image. There's a need for such museums today to promote the employer's brand, conduct career guidance, and attract talent to the plant.

Engagement in studying the plant's heritage, despite a lack of technical education, leads to immersion in the history of the automotive industry:

For the first time, I appreciated the contribution of resettled workers to the outcome of the Great Patriotic War, their heroism. Now I understand how powerfully wars influence economic development and the development of entire countries. We see this in the development of the automobile industry.

A tour around our auto museum is a tangible history lesson.

Combined with a desire to demonstrate the significance of the museum as part of the company and territory's heritage, this makes them «ideological» managers. The strong territorial and corporate identity characteristic of this type focuses on working with the intangible component of industrial heritage (memories, the social life of workers), managing the identity of the local population, and maintaining cultural continuity. Meanwhile, their cultural and social capital, associated with museum work, PR, and the organization of cultural events, facilitates the active expansion of museum formats.

Conditions for preserving the automotive heritage

Based on the axial coding method of the grounded theory [Strauss, Corbin, 2001, p. 83–89], we note that the driving idea (calling) of all MTM managers (with some differences) is the «need to preserve the automotive heritage» (phenomenon¹). Several causes, i.e., events leading to the recognition of this need, can be identified:

A. Love and respect for the automotive enterprise as a place of work:

I worked at the plant for over a quarter of a century: in the chief designer's department, as a test driver, and eventually as the head of one of the production shops... . When I learned of the privatizers' intention to sell the motorcycle collection..., I began to resist.

I worked at the plant for 10 years, building my career here... . The plant became my home, and I conveyed my love for the company to museum guests.

B. Childhood impressions, passion for technology and design in the family or among close friends, which determined the field of activity (auto-, motorsports, auto business):

¹ A phenomenon in Grounded theory is an object that is analyzed using coding procedures for qualitative data (in this case, interview transcripts). It denotes «the central idea, event, or instance in connection with and for the management of which a series of actions or interactions are undertaken» [Strauss, Corbin, 2001, p. 84].

My environment shaped my entire future... I was fortunate to be born on a street where almost in every house lived a driver.

Since childhood, I've been passionate about motorcycles and tinkering with things. I started driving early, and as an adult, I wanted to collect and restore things I'd seen as a child.

Parents' passion for technology had a similar effect:

My grandfather was an incredibly tech-savvy man, and my dad was too... My love for motorcycles and the philosophy of motorcycle travel has been with me since childhood... I had my own motorcycles, and I supported my dad's passion for collecting in every way.

Adult impressions are associated with visiting other MTMs, and hobbies revolve around restoration, which are reinforced by interactions with retro-vehicle enthusiast clubs and collector communities, or through regular collecting.

C. Working with cultural heritage in a related field (media and tourism):

We used to come..., covered cultural landmarks, historical sites, and natural landscapes. I saw how beautiful our region is, and I always deeply regretted that other people didn't know or see it... It's impressive: the history of technology and design developments.

Since the need to preserve heritage in all these cases took the form of museum creation, it is also important to highlight the context, i.e., conditions and strategies chosen to manage the museum. The following can be attributed to context:

1. The time of museum creation shapes the motivation. Ural MTMs emerged at different times (Fig. 1, section of the legend «Period of foundation»). Three periods can be roughly distinguished:

– the first museums (1960s–1980s) on the premises of automakers emerged thanks to the efforts of chief engineers or production veterans [Kolesnikova, 2024, p. 12]. The museum was assigned the educational role for young people through the example of older colleagues, and the function of preserving heritage was integrated into the development of work ethic and support for the creative endeavors of young people;

– in the 2000s, the creation of museums stopped the plundering of enterprise heritage (sale of collections of experimental equipment of enterprises, collections of foreign equipment in design departments);

– from the 2010s to the present – preservation of heritage taking into account local specifics in a context of economic recovery, the availability of funds and opportunities to transform passion for the automotive heritage into a museum or exhibition of the collection.

2. The industrial specialization of a city (automotive or related) in the past or in the present creates the potential for the establishment of the MTM due to the presence of material (exhibits) and intangible (traditions of professional holidays, historical archives on factory establishment, mass media coverage,

etc.) elements of the automotive heritage, specialists in this field and their network of professional contacts, specialized educational institutions (Fig. 1, legend section «City population»).

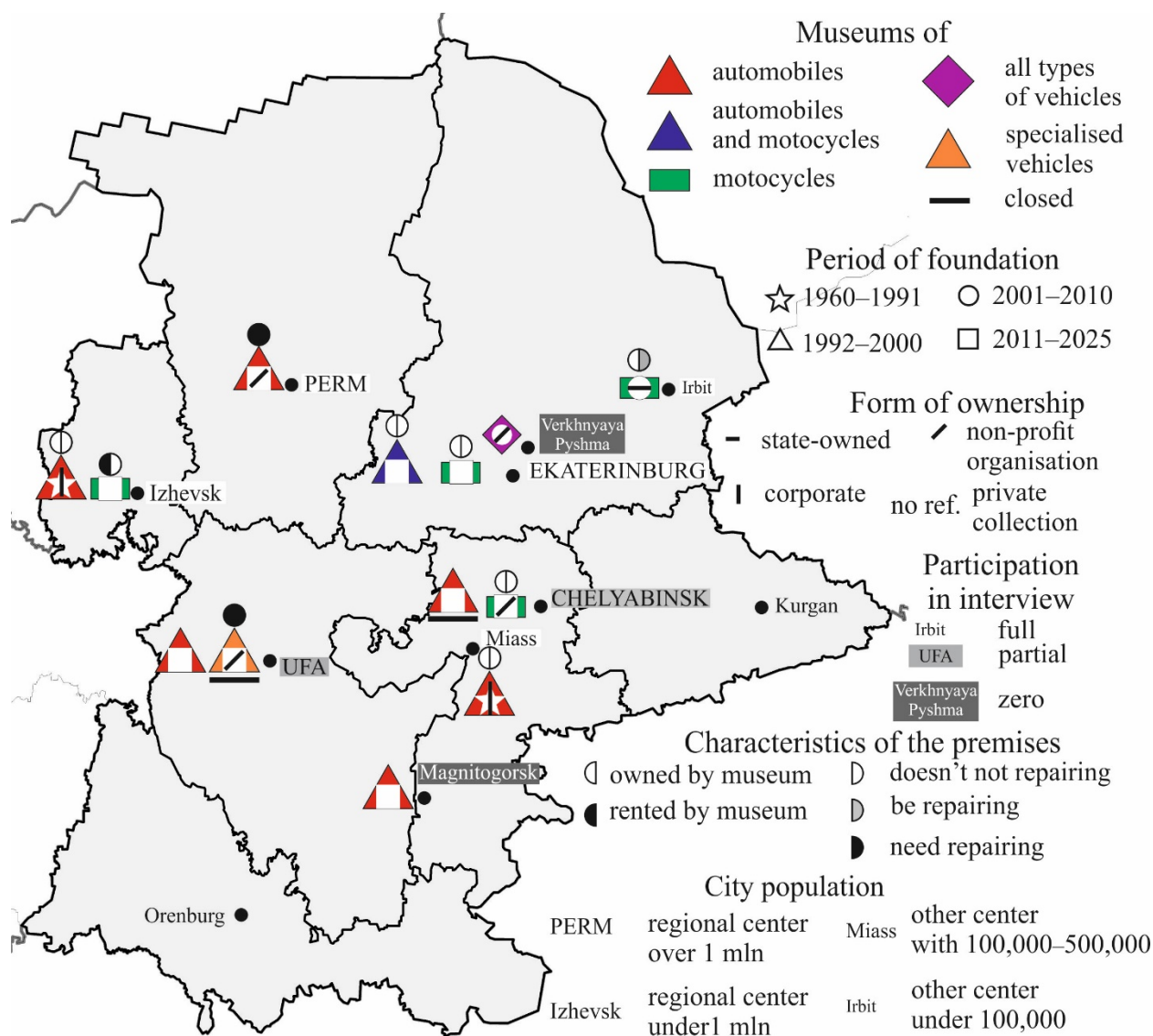


Fig. 1. Motor transport museums of the Ural economic region.

Compiled by the authors based on the results of the study.

A good investment If you have a museum, then ... it is an opportunity for the enterprise to promote its history.

An important topic in the specialization of cities and districts of the Russian Federation is the evacuation of enterprises to the Urals during the Second World War.

Tractors were used in the war ... and during the economic recovery of the country after, ... when extinguishing the fire at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant If the state does not pay enough attention to such things, ... then it only loses from this. This is all the great history of the country.

3. Type of exhibition. The complexity and duration of the creation of a museum is determined by the type of vehicles that form the basis of the collection (small and large), the cost of restoration, the in-

clusion of historical context in the exhibition, and demonstrations of exhibits from other collectors. The museums under review offer different exhibitions – history of the automotive industry, special vehicles, thematic museums – and directions of their work (when, in addition to the exhibition of models, there is a demonstration of the restoration process, as well as household items of the Soviet period). Since some types of road equipment are smaller than others, it is easier for museums specializing in them to organize storage, exhibition and restoration (Fig. 1, section of the legend «Museums»).

4. Type of premises. The museum founder's ownership or lease on favorable terms of premises that meet the requirements for the storage of the collection (in emergency/non-emergency condition, whether there is enough space or not) greatly simplifies the creation of a museum. The rent of the premises is a significant expense for the museum, which often exists at the expense of the founder. The emergency condition of the rented premises is an obstacle to receiving visitors, obtaining official permission for conducting museum activities and protecting valuable exhibits. Even in relatively prosperous cases, MTMs can complain about the lack of space if they have long-term plans to expand the exhibition (Fig. 1, legend section «Characteristics of premises»).

5. Organizational form. The process of creating a museum also depended on the involvement of relevant enterprises or authorities. If a museum is founded solely on the initiative of an enthusiast, it faces the need to register as an NGO or a private cultural institution. The museums in question are mainly private collections, and only two of them have the status of an NGO. In addition, two museums are corporate or are registered as subsidiaries (JSC automobile plant «URAL», JSC Izh-Lada).

Interestingly, the Urals is a home to the only state museum of motorcycles in the country (in Irbit). Since it does not function as a corporate museum with an operating production facility (Irbit motorcycle plant LLC), the latter does not contribute to its maintenance (Fig. 1, legend section «Form of ownership»).

6. Sources of funding. Almost all corporate museums have stable sources of funding in the face of their enterprises (Izhevsk automobile plant history museum, Automobile manufacturers history museum of JSC AZ «URAL»), state museums – in the face of the state budget (Irbit state museum of motorcycles). The rest are structures that do not always generate income and are financed from the funds of the founders (Izhevsk motorcycle museum of the Kozhushkovs, Retro-Garage museum, MotoEpoha museum, Y. Kuznetsov retro motorcycle museum, «Firefighting equipment always in service», Ets classic cars museum of classic retro cars). The only museum that is fully funded by ticket sales, the Presidential grants fund and the Governor's grants fund of the Perm territory is the Retro-Garage PAM. None of the private museums has a third-party sponsor, although they would like to (Fig. 1, legend section «Form of ownership»).

Operating conditions and strategies of managers

It is necessary to consider what other external conditions influence the choice of strategies for action and interaction among the leaders of the MTMs. These include the following.

1. Lack of legal regulation in the field of private, corporate museums and museum-type institutions [Yureneva, 2024a; Yureneva, 2024b, p. 22]. As a result, regional and municipal authorities cannot pursue their own museum policy (for example, transfer private museums to municipal ones):

It is necessary to create conditions, legislative, first of all... For example, to provide benefits in relation to compulsory motor third party liability insurance.

However, a number of managers see legislative regulation as a potential limitation on their work: *on the one hand, we receive support; on the other, we seem to lose our uniqueness.*

An appropriate strategy would be to create an MTM association to lobby their interests in legislative bodies. However, with the exception of two informants, most MTM directors do not see this as a problem and continue to operate within the existing legal framework.

2. Financial constraints. As non-profit organizations, MTMs can receive support through grants, but their applications do not guarantee success. And even if they receive grants, there are restrictions on expenditure items. For example, most foundations do not allow expenditure on real estate acquisition (including land) or capital construction of new buildings.

As a result, the main strategy is to maintain the museum through independent fundraising. Another strategy is applying for grants. Each new application must meet the current needs of society and the government (not all informants rely on this strategy).

3. Lack of support from regional and municipal authorities. Museum directors expect government support in addressing key issues, such as purchasing or leasing premises and land, the necessary space, and meeting requirements for exhibit placement and storage:

Our exhibits are quite large... and we need somewhere to wash them, ... so we need a large area. Where gasoline and electricity are available, ... we need certain fire safety measures.

Museums also need support in ensuring a constant flow of visitors, for example, through the Pushkin Card system¹. This requires meeting a number of requirements, including registering a portion of the collection in the state catalog of Russian museum collections [Zyuzichev, 2022].

We actively supported the Pushkin Card for two years, which significantly improved our financial situation. Then the Russian Ministry of Culture tightened the regulations. The most important requirement we are unable to meet is the creation of a safety passport for the premises. The premises do not belong to us.

¹ A cultural education program for Russian youth aged 14 to 22, launched in 2021. Participants can attend certain cultural events (museums, performances, concerts) at the expense of state funds (up to a special limit, replenished annually).

We are a fully private organization, and are automatically excluded from all state programs... When we opened, the Pushkin Card was also valid for private museums. After a year, funding ceased, and it was recommended that the exhibition be transferred to state storage.

Municipal authorities are expected to improve the urban area near museums:

There was a discussion with the head of the district administration about allocating a park for equipment. Then there was a discussion with the city's designer¹... things didn't go further than that, as there weren't enough funds.

These characteristics do not apply to state-owned and corporate MTMs that receive support from government agencies or enterprises.

The initial strategy of MTM leaders was to approach local and regional authorities with specific proposals for cooperation or solutions to specific problems. In this study, only one case proved completely successful (the creation of a state museum). Two cases involving establishing cooperation with regional tourist information centers were partially successful. In all other cases, support was either inconsistent or nonexistent. As a result, MTMs either minimize their interactions with government agencies, relying solely on their own resources, or plan to approach government agencies when their leadership changes (hoping for greater interest in the automotive industry's heritage).

4. Lack of sponsorship support from large and medium-sized businesses outside the automotive industry. A possible strategy would be for MTMs to develop business proposals. However, only one museum plans to pursue this strategy. Another possible strategy could be fundraising (using resources from Planeta.ru, Boomstarter, creating a museum foundation, or conducting fundraising events).

5. Lack of personnel with expertise in museum operations (exhibit restoration, archival management, etc.) and museum management (museum mediation, souvenir production, etc.). Moreover, the number of people already working at these museums is insufficient to ensure its day-to-day functioning. Often, the manager's family and friends are involved in MTM work:

The biggest problem is staffing, which I don't yet know how to solve... because it's related to salaries.

Museums either don't know how to solve these problems (due to a lack of funds and expertise), or are just starting to search for solutions «blindly». However, for corporate MTMs, this isn't a significant issue. Often, staffing shortages in museum management are resolved by borrowing successful organizational models from other specialized and non-specialized museums.

6. The museums are located in peripheral urban areas. With the exception of the Kozhushkov motorcycle museum, located in the historical core of Izhevsk, the remaining museums are located on the outskirts of the city center or in the outer zones (in warehouse and industrial areas) of large cities and cities with over a million residents.

¹ The informant probably meant the city's chief architect.

Since relocating the MTM to the city center is difficult due to the nature of its premises, the chosen strategy is to establish a city navigation system with directions to the museum in coordination with the authorities. Another option is to include it in guidebooks and tour itineraries through collaboration with the Tourist Information Center (TIC) and travel agencies.

Conclusion

All the museums examined in this article, except one («Firefighting equipment always in service»), are currently operating successfully, regardless of the type of director. However, their strategic development goals vary depending on both the type of museum and the type of director. For the first type, the goal is to preserve the museum's automotive heritage; for the second, it is to restore the collection and maintain and expand the automotive community; for the third, it is to expand the format of events to promote the company.

Directors who are custodians of industrial heritage and «ideological» managers are experienced museum leaders with their own development plans and the intention to implement them. For the second type, the museum represents a stable (organizational) form of their passion and interaction with the automotive community. Therefore, they do not always consider long-term plans for the museum's development as a full-fledged organization and do not consider alternative strategies for overcoming existing and future problems.

The key to MTM success under both types of leaders is the professional education (cultural capital), inclinations, and established contacts (social capital). The third type of MTM managers are hired employees and lack specialized expertise in the field of automotive transport. However, they are dedicated to the enterprise and well-versed in the history of the region, which allows them to leverage their experience in promoting the museum externally (social and cultural capital of a different nature).

The first two types of museum managers focus on supporting their activities through their own resources and grant support, while the third type focuses on supporting the enterprise. For corporate museums, state aid is not a priority, whereas for private museums, it is essential. The specific characteristics of these museums, as well as their managers, should be taken into account when developing appropriate government measures.

In a historical and national context, it should be noted that the successfully developing European automotive market (localized production in the region, a large sales market, high product quality, and in-house research and development facilities) has facilitated the emergence of numerous automobile museums with rich and diverse collections [Karasev, 2025, p. 40; Michnicka, Kołodziejczyk, 2022, p. 133]. The emergence of these museums stems from the «abundance» of existing models and the desire to showcase them, to promote brands and the country's technical achievements. In Russia, the creation of MTMs occurred when the country's motor vehicle heritage was threatened to be lost. Interviews revealed

that the museum founders were preserving the country's technical heritage under historically and structurally unfavorable conditions, at a time when interest in it from public institutions, the government, and business was extremely low. Therefore, it is important that efforts to preserve the motor vehicle heritage of the Urals and the Russian Federation, which began as a private initiative, find support from the state and society. MTMs must find a sustainable foundation for their continued operation and development.

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