

**ISCKMC 2020**  
**International Scientific Congress «KNOWLEDGE, MAN AND CIVILIZATION»**  
**OLD AND NEW VLADIKAVKAZ: EVOLUTION OF THE URBAN**  
**SOCIOCULTURAL ENVIRONMENT**

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### Abstract

The article studies the evolutionary processes of the social and cultural landscape of Vladikavkaz. A historical and comparative analysis identified features of development of the urban environment in different periods of Russian statehood. The factors of development of the pre-revolutionary social, cultural, scientific and educational environment as the basis for the further development of urban society were studied. On the example of specific achievements, the integration nature of activities of the multi-ethnic and multi-confessional urban society was described. The Soviet period was described in terms of development of science, education, economic and social spheres, and attractive urban environment. The aspects of development of the scientific and educational spheres as well as the archival department of the republic were analyzed. Vladikavkaz is considered to be a scientific, educational, cultural center of the region, and the modern urban environment is a center for the dialogue of cultures, characteristic of a multinational and multi-confessional society. The research material was structured and analyzed to study historical and cultural memory, continuity, application of the experience of generations of citizens in the new socio-economic conditions of the modern urban environment and innovative practices. The sources allow us to draw the following conclusion: modern citizens of Vladikavkaz, like previous generations, are focused on the development of a comfortable environment, peaceful coexistence, intercultural dialogues and good-neighborly relations. Coordinated actions and an integrated approach can improve the urban environment and create new "growth points".

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*Keywords:* The North Caucasus, city, Vladikavkaz, social and cultural environment, multi-ethnic and multi-religious society, development



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## 1. Introduction

Vladikavkaz is one of the oldest cities in the North Caucasus. In 1784, it was founded as a fortress. For almost a century, it performed fortification, defensive and protective functions. A short time later, he tuned into an economic and socio-cultural center.

By the first half of the 19th century, Vladikavkaz was gradually turning into a settlement with urban characteristics. In 1860, by the Senate decree, Vladikavkaz officially received the status of a city: Due to the development of trade and industry in the Caucasus and peace brought among the submissive mountain tribes, according to the proposal of our Caucasian governor, to turn Vladikavkaz fortress with an adjacent serf forstadt into the city and grant various benefits and advantages to persons wishing to settle in this city. We approved the regulations on the administration of the city of Vladikavkaz and the staff of its administration, drawn up by the governor and considered in the Caucasian committee. After three years, the Caucasian governor has the right to make changes and additions to these provisions, which will be indicated by time and experience (Betoeva & Biryukova, 1991; Tuaeva, 2013).

The city developed dynamically, soon becoming the regional, economic, cultural and socio-political center of Terek region. The socio-cultural and economic space was formed through various processes, including migration, industrial, trade, construction, scientific and educational, cultural and leisure ones. The city had an attractive force for different categories and strata of the population. The multi-ethnic and multi-confessional environment developed. The second half of the 19th – early 20th century became the starting point for the development of the socio-cultural urban environment as an accumulator of innovative processes, a keeper of ethnocultural traditions, a translator of national policy.

Transforming and using the accumulated experience of several generations of citizens, the Soviet period formed its own unique scientific and intellectual, industrial, artistic and theatrical, multi-ethnic environment.

Today Vladikavkaz is one of the oldest cultural and scientific centers in the North Caucasus region. Over the past 160 years, the city has been able to preserve its flavor, cultural and historical layers; orientation towards peaceful coexistence and mutual respect of the multinational population; fulfillment of geopolitical and geostrategic tasks of the state.

The present study involves the identification of development mechanisms for the socio-cultural environment of Vladikavkaz in different periods of the Russian statehood.

## 2. Problem Statement

The article aims to study the history of Vladikavkaz in social, ethnocultural, polyconfessional, scientific and educational dimensions. Founded as a fortress, Vladikavkaz turned into a city with an attractive economic, social and cultural landscape. Today the city is not only a capital of the region. It is a center of all innovative practices, preserving traditional ethnocultural features.

The article aims to identify features, factors, mechanisms and conditions for the development of the urban environment in different periods of Russian statehood.

The study analyzes the experience of different generations of citizens, their contribution to the progressive development of the urban environment. Accordingly, modern ethnocultural, scientific,

educational, social trends and processes are studied through the connection between generations, accumulated experience of economic and socio-cultural life of the multiethnic population of Vladikavkaz.

### **3. Research Questions**

The object of the research is the social and cultural environment of the city of Vladikavkaz. The subject is as follows:

1. Factors of development of the pre-revolutionary socio-cultural environment. Determination of the basic characteristics of the urban cultural landscape and their transition to a new quality in the Soviet period of Russian statehood.

2. Features of development of the modern urban environment, including scientific, educational, ethnocultural, socio-economic characteristics and processes.

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this article is to study the development of the social and cultural environment of Vladikavkaz through the continuous connection of generations, accumulated experience of citizens, cultural values and innovative practices.

### **5. Research Methods**

The main methodological principle of the study is consistency – the study of the socio-cultural environment of the city of Vladikavkaz in conjunction with economic and socio-political processes. The application of the principle of a historical-comparative analysis is intended to ensure the identification of facts and phenomena in the context of social, cultural, multi-ethnic development of society. The principle of objectivity presupposes a comprehensive consideration of the issue from the point of view of objective laws, using sources and materials.

### **6. Findings**

The pre-revolutionary urban landscape of Vladikavkaz was represented by residential, industrial, park, and temple buildings, restaurants, hotels, theaters, schools and fairs. The quarters of the old city were divided by the ethnic, handicrafts and confessional principles. The Quarters of the Armenian, Ossetian, Molokan communities were large (these conventional names have been preserved in modern Vladikavkaz). Voluntary non-governmental organizations and charitable, educational, and social societies have become widespread. The advanced strata of active townspeople created associations to help poor families, students, etc. Representatives of the diasporas (Greek, Armenian, Tatar, Polish, Georgian, Jewish, etc.) were involved in these events. The urban environment of Vladikavkaz has developed in line with all-Russian trends (Kanukova et al., 2019; Tuaeua, 2013). The first Russian drama theater in the North Caucasus, an elementary school for girls, vocational schools, parish schools were opened; banks, administrative institutions, and factories were built.

Cultural, scientific and educational development, social and economic achievements formed the basis for the national intelligentsia. Doctors, researchers, artists, writers, teachers, engineers, composers, architects, etc. made their invaluable contribution to the social and socio-cultural development of the region and the country.

In the Soviet period, many undertakings continued, although they underwent transformations and were focused on new demands of society. On the basis of the scientific and educational foundation laid in the pre-revolutionary era, in 1919 the Ossetian Historical and Philological Society was founded. It was "the first scientific institution of mountain peoples aimed at collecting and studying historical monuments". One of the important directions of its activities was the collection of monuments of oral folk art, folklore and ethnographic materials. Famous singers-storytellers were invited from mountain villages to record their songs. The society developed a competent and professional methodology for collecting field materials and laid the foundation for scientific Ossetian studies. Much attention was paid to the collection and harmonization of Ossetian folk songs (melodies), the study of Ossetian theatrical art, folk music and works of fiction. The society has made a significant contribution to the development of nart science (Kanukova, 2010). In 1923, the Ossetian Historical and Philological Society was officially registered "as a scientific institution subordinate to the Main Science of the RSFSR", and in 1925 it received a full-fledged scientific status – the Ossetian Scientific Research Institute of Local History (the North Ossetian Institute for Humanitarian and Social Research named after V.I. Abaev, NOIHSR).

The NOIHSR is a scientific institution of the Russian Academy of Sciences; the scientific and methodological guidance is carried out by the historical and philological department of the Academy. The main scientific directions were approved by the Presidium of the Russian Academy of Sciences and include the study of sociocultural history of the Caucasus; preservation and study of historical and cultural heritage; socio-economic, political and ethnocultural development of Ossetia during the social modernization; monitoring of the social and ethnopolitical situation in the North Caucasus; fundamental and applied research of the theory, structure and historical development of the Ossetian and other languages of the peoples of the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania; spiritual and aesthetic values of literature and folklore of the peoples of Ossetia; historical and comparative studies of the mythology and folklore of the Iranian peoples (Kanukova, 2010).

The Ossetian Historical and Philological Society laid the foundation for the scientific, educational and cultural infrastructure of Ossetia. In August 1920, the Terek Regional Archive Administration was founded in Vladikavkaz. The Ossetian Historical and Philological Society took an active part in its creation. The first head of the Main Archival Directorate for the Terek Region was the Scientific Secretary of the Society Grigory (Gubadi) Alekseevich Dzagurov. Realizing that "without archives containing original historical documents, the history of the Terek Region and its peoples is difficult to study," he began to select and preserve materials that formed future archival funds (Kanukova, 2010).

On September 12, 1924, at a meeting of the Revolutionary Committee of the North Ossetian Autonomous Region, the North Ossetian Regional Archive Bureau was created. It consisted of four people: the chairman Dzagurov Grigory, the deputy chairman Nikolai Viddinov, the archivist and secretary Goshchinsky Albin, the clerk Burak Ivan. On October 15, 1939, the Council of People's Commissars of the North Ossetian ASSR adopted Resolution No. 795 "On the transfer of the Archival

Administration of the North Ossetian ASSR to the jurisdiction of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the North Ossetian ASSR". Under the PCIA of the Siberian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, the Archive Department was established, and the Central Archive Department of the Siberian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic turned into the State Archive of the Siberian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. During the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945, archivists saved the most important documents (SOGU, 2020).

In the Soviet and post-Soviet periods, the archival department performed its functions, carefully preserving the historical memory of the peoples. In 1997, the Law of the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania "On the archival fund of the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania and archives" was adopted. (SOGU, 2020).

Today the archival department of RNO-Alania includes several institutions, including two head ones:

1) the Central State Archives of North Ossetia-Alania – the funds (879 funds with 308.620 documents) are structured according by the chronological principle: 1786 – 1920 – documents of the department of the pre-revolutionary period; 1920-2001 – documents of the department of the Soviet and post-Soviet period.

2) the State Archives of the Contemporary History of North Ossetia-Alania. The Center for Historical and Political Documentation was created. It is “the former archive of the North Ossetian regional committee of the Communist Party, which until 1991 was engaged in the acquisition of documents for the party and Komsomol organizations" (Archive Service of the North Ossetia-Alania (SOGU, 2020).

All universities of the republic are located in Vladikavkaz. The oldest of them is the North Ossetian State University named after Kosta Levanovich Khetagurov, which will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2020. The Tersk Institute of Public Education, the Gorsk Pedagogical Institute, the Gorsk Practical Institute of Public Education, the North Caucasus Pedagogical Institute, the Gorsk Agro-Industrial Pedagogical Institute, the North Ossetian State Pedagogical Institute were founded in different periods. On November 2, 1969, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR signed a decree on the opening of the North Ossetian State University in Ordzhonikidze. The functions of educational and consulting centers of the All-Union Law Institute of the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education of the USSR and the Correspondence Institute of Soviet Trade were transferred to this university. Professor Khristofor Chibirov became its first rector. The North Ossetian State University became the fortieth university in the USSR (SOGU, 2020)

Over a century, a galaxy of outstanding scientists, statesmen, teachers, employees, artists, doctors, and writers graduated from the university. Scientific schools founded at the beginning of the Soviet period are being replenished with new achievements and researchers. Fundamental studies of such scientists as Totoev M.S., Skitsky B.V., Tsutsiev B.A., Tedtoev A.A., Chshieva T.A., Blied M.M., Tmenov V.Kh., Chipirova L.A., Uarziati V., Bzarov R.S., Kanukova Z.V., Tuallagov A.A., Darchiev A.V. and others (Tsorieva, 2015; Kanukova, 2020) made it possible to speak about the continuity of generations and development of the Caucasian historical school.

Realizing the need to preserve the cultural code of the people, to resist attempts to distort historical facts and rewrite history, the North Ossetian (regional) branch of the Russian Historical Society (RIO) was opened in 2020. On the site of the North Ossetian State University, representatives of the scientific and educational community and advanced public of North Ossetia (scientific institutes, universities, archival service, libraries, museums, autonomous non-profit organizations, schools) have united. Special attention will be paid to the popularization of culture and history of the peoples and educational activities.

The special microclimate of Vladikavkaz is formed by the townspeople representing more than a hundred ethnic groups and nationalities. For almost two centuries of history, the townspeople have developed mechanisms for peaceful coexistence, harmonization of interethnic and interreligious relations. Today, social and cultural experience of generations of different peoples has its own foundation, dating back to the 18th-19th centuries. One of the most successful consolidating and integrating public projects is activities of non-profit voluntary associations of citizens. During the Great Reforms in the Russian Empire, educational, charitable, artistic, corporate-professional and other voluntary societies and committees were founded. They helped the poor, disseminated scientific knowledge and introduced it to Russian and world culture. In Vladikavkaz, activities of a large number of charitable, cultural and educational societies were a vivid example of the state integration policy.

Today, the House of Friendship of the Peoples of the Republic operates in Vladikavkaz, uniting national cultural centers, including the Russian national-cultural society "Rus", the Armenian national-cultural organization "Erebuni", the Jewish cultural and educational organization "Mir-Sholom", the Greek society "Prometheus", the Georgian national-cultural society "Unity-Ertoba", the Azerbaijani national-cultural society "Azeri" named after Heydar Aliyevich Aliyev, the Tatar National Cultural Society named after G. Tukai, the Assyrian National Cultural Center "Nineveh", the Kabardino-Balkarian National Cultural Center "Adyg Council-" Adyghe-Khase", etc. The rich cultural and educational program of the societies is designed to preserve the traditional elements of ethnic cultures, ethnocultural ties with the historical homeland.

## **7. Conclusion**

In the 19th – early 20th centuries, the urban environment of Vladikavkaz developed during the urbanization, capitalization of the economy, migration and socio-cultural processes. During this period, the foundations for the development of a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional urban landscape were laid.

In the Soviet period, industrial, agricultural, and trade sectors developed in the city; scientific, educational, medical, artistic and theatrical institutions were founded. Traditional ethnic elements of culture were transformed to meet new challenges.

In the post-perestroika period, people became interested in cultural and ethnic identities, social and cultural experience of previous generations; a new communication environment began to develop. The city as an accumulator of new trends and a generator of ideas developed new aspects of urban life, remaining a center of attraction for internal and external migrations.

If the modern urban environment is not focused on solving economic and social problems, graduates of Moscow universities will not return to their homeland, new industries will not develop, and

financial and human investments will not be attractive to business or society. ... This is a problem for small towns and entire regions.

Despite the problems, citizens of Vladikavkaz have remained focused on creating and developing a comfortable environment, an intercultural dialogue and good-neighborly relations.

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