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PARADOXES AND CONTRADICTIONS OF SETTLEMENT SYSTEM AND PUBLIC ORGANIZATION OF NORTH CAUCASUS

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Abstract

Over 6.6% (9.775 million people) of the population of Russia live in the North Caucasus whose area is less than 1.0% of the Russian territory. Moreover, this share is increasing. The share of the NCFD in GDP is only 2.6% and remains at the level of the beginning of the century. However, the existing potential (climatic and weather conditions, etc.), enormous financial and material resources allow the region to increase production, raise the level and quality of life. However, efficiency of the existing potential remains extremely low. One of the reasons is the existing structure of settlements, their size, spatial distribution, transport availability, technological and social communication being the most important conditions of development. The study is based on modern statistical materials, considers the issue in the context of the features of North Caucasian urbanization and takes into account the result of a quarter-century "regional policy" in the North Caucasus. The novelty of the results is determined by two indicators of territory urbanization: urbanization depth (the ratio of urban and rural settlements), density of urban settlements per 1000 square km. The article identifies, describes and suggests methods for solving the North Caucasian settlement paradoxes. Official statistical data were used for calculations. The aim of the study is to identify contradictions and paradoxes in the existing system of settlements and public organization of the North Caucasus and suggest methods for their reduction. Differentiation of settlements and analysis of the typological structure of settlements in the North Caucasus was carried out.

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Keywords: North Caucasus, spatial structure of settlements, degree (depth) of urbanization of the territory, Caucasian paradox.



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1. Introduction

In his 2018 Message to the Federal Assembly, the President of Russia defined a new concept of national development - spatial development (Putin, 2018). If earlier it was a priority of development of large cities, now it is a priority of towns and rural settlements. Now large cities, small towns and rural settlements should be involved in the orbit of the overall growth trend of the national economy through active public funding.

For the North Caucasus, the problem of spatial development has a different context which is unusual for other macro-regions. First, the region belongs to border areas with all the resulting status restrictions and opportunities. Second, 50% of its territory is a mountainous area with corresponding restrictions on communication and production and economic development. Third, the region has the highest population density and low labor productivity, a low level of living standards. This determines the specific spatial development of this macro-region, requires new approaches and concepts of the spatial development. Various subjects of the North Caucasus, using domestic and foreign experience (Badenkov, 2017), develop their regional programs.

2. Problem Statement

Today, in the region, there are global trends in the development of territories: migration of people from towns and rural settlements to large cities (administrative capitals or Krasnodar, Rostov-on-Don, etc.), depopulation of mountain and foothill areas, inefficient economy. The article studies global trends, their specificity in the North Caucasus.

3. Research Questions

The basis of modern development of the territories is cities and urbanization. In the North Caucasus, urbanization has recently begun. However, there are old cities (Derbent, Dargavs, Dzhulat, Magas, etc.). Only a few cities (Vladikavkaz, Stavropol, Makhachkala, Grozny and some others.) were founded at the end of the XVIII-XIX centuries as "military fortresses" (Belikov, 2005; Betoeva & Biryukova, 1991; Burayev, 1985; Gaazov & Lets, 2015; Gritsenko, 1984; Kazakov, 1984; Kupriyanov, 1981).

Since most of the North Caucasian cities were founded during the Soviet period, this created peculiarities of urbanization of the territories. In the 1990s, in the North Caucasus, urban-type settlements and regional centers (large and even medium-sized rural settlements) of the Soviet period were transformed into cities. Settlements whose population barely exceeds 10 thousand people, lacking industrial and social infrastructure became cities. Since regionalization is sometimes of national origin, each district (nation) wanted to name its regional center a city. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, new cities appeared. As a result, the total number of urban settlements grew sharply. However, in 2005, there was a sharp decrease in the number of "cities". It seems that in the North Caucasus, as in some regions of Russia, cities became extinct. In fact, one settlement was transformed into another one due to economic reasons (low rural electricity, gas, water tariffs). This feature should be borne in mind when analyzing the dynamics and structure of urban settlements in the North Caucasus. In calculating, artificial cities were subtracted. Thus, the typology of urban settlements in the North Caucasus was built.

4. Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study is to identify contradictions and paradoxes in the existing system of settlements and public organization of the North Caucasus and suggest methods for their reduction.

5. Research Methods

The Federal Law “On general principles of organization of local self-government in the Russian Federation” is a methodological basis for classification of settlements. The article divides all settlements into urban and rural ones. Based on these categories, differentiation of settlements and analysis of the typological structure of settlements in the North Caucasus was carried out.

6. Findings

As of January 1, 2016, in the North Caucasus, the total number of settlements was 1,554, of which 42 cities and 1,512 rural settlements. From 2000 to 2016, the number of settlements decreased by 1.8%, while in Russia, it decreased by almost 28%. Therefore, despite the decreasing number of settlements, their share in the total Russian population increased from 5.8% to 7.9%. Dagestan is the most populated region (706 settlements or over 45% of the total population of the North Caucasus). Stavropol Krai ranks second (698 rural settlements). The number of urban settlements remained unchanged (according to the data of Rosstat, it decreased by almost 60%). The number of rural settlements decreased by 2%; (according to the Rosstat data, the number of rural increased by 2.2%). The decline was observed in Stavropol Krai (-10% or 29 settlements), Dagestan (-3% or - 22 settlements), the KBR and RNO-Alania -8 and -7%), the KCR (-2% or 2 settlements). In two regions (Chechnya and Ingushetia), the number of rural settlements increased. The number of settlements of the Chechen Republic (123.5%) and Ingushetia (102.8%) increased.

It turns out that the number of settlements had its own distinctive typography. In particular, in the North Caucasus, the share of urban settlements (cities and urban-type towns) was 2.7% in 2015, while in the Russian Federation it was 8.1%, i.e. the territory of the NC is less urbanized. It is necessary to emphasize the high level of differentiation of the regions of the Russian Federation by the level of urbanization. The most urbanized areas are the KBR (the share of urban settlements is 5.9%), the KCR (5.7), RNO-Alania (4.9%) and Stavropol Krai (4.6%). In Dagestan, the share of urban settlements is 1.1%, in Chechnya - 1.4%, in Ingushetia - 2.7%.

To assess the state of urbanization of the territories, we used two indicators: the share of urban settlements in the total number of settlements and the number of cities per 1000 square km. According to the first indicator, in 2015, the share of urban settlements was 2.8% (according to Rosstat). It was lower than in the Russian Federation (8.8%) more than three times. Compared with 2000, the share was only 40%. However, these dynamic changes are caused by statistical recalculation. One more issue is territorial features that are both statistical and dynamic in nature. In 2015, the largest number of urban settlements was in Kabardino-Balkaria (6.3%). Karachay-Cherkessia (6.0%) and RNO-Alania (5.2%) demonstrated the same high rate. In Stavropol Krai, the share was 4.9% which was higher than in the North Caucasus Federal District as a whole, but at the same time it was lower than in the Russian Federation as a whole (8.8%). The lowest share was in Dagestan (1.1%) and Chechnya (1.4%). If we compare the dynamics of this indicator

with its value in 2000, in the KBR it declined by almost 60% and in Stavropol Krai it declined by 53%, in Dagestan and Chechnya – by 30%, and in Ingushetia – by 22%. All this is due to statistical features of the accounting of urban settlements and the dynamics of the settlements. In the North Caucasus (2000–2015), a decrease in the number of cities and urban settlements was not observed; a decrease in the number of rural settlements was observed. The value of the urbanization indicator increased in Stavropol Krai, Dagestan and North Ossetia-Alania.

One more indicator of urbanization is the number of urban settlements per 1000 square km. It also changes. If in the Russian Federation its value was 0.09 in 2015 and 0.17 in 2000, in the North Caucasus it was 0.25 and 0.60, respectively. Comparison of these values is incorrect due to peculiarities of the territory of Russia. It is more correct to compare the territories with similar climatic conditions. We will analyze this indicator in the territories of the North Caucasus. The highest density of cities was observed in the RNO-Alania and the KBR 0.63 and 0.56, respectively; the lowest density was in Dagestan - 0.16, Chechnya - 0.19 and Stavropol Krai - 0.20. In general, in the North Caucasus Federal District, the value of this indicator was 0.25.

The dynamics of the population structure deserves attention. In the North Caucasus, the share of urban population was 49.1% in 2015; in the Russian Federation, it was 74.1%. At the same time, in 2000, these shares were 47.5% and 73%, respectively. Thus, there is an increase. In 2015, the largest share of the urban population was in RNO-Alania (65.2%) and Stavropol Krai (58.3%). The lowest share was in Chechnya (34.8%). In Dagestan, Karachay-Cherkessia, and Ingushetia, the share of urban population was less than the share of rural population.

The analysis identified the following paradox: the most urbanized urban settlements in the total number of KBR settlements is only third in the proportion of urban population in the total population; RNO-Alania which is only the third by the number of urban settlements ranks first by the urban population. The paradox is due to the fact that in RNO-Alania, in contrast to the KBR, there is a greater concentration of population in cities, while in KBR a large number of people live in rural settlements. In RNO-Alania, rural settlements are smaller than in the KBR, and in the KBR, cities are smaller than in RNO-Alania.

If in 2015, about 7,413 people lived in one Russian settlement, in the North Caucasus, only 6,253.5 people lived in one settlement. At the same time, the share is decreasing in comparison with the average Russian one. Thus, in the Russian Federation settlements are increasing more rapidly (141 against 135%) than in the North Caucasus, although the population of the North Caucasus is growing at a higher rate than the average for Russia - 132.7% against 101.8%. This is due to the fact that in the Russian Federation, the number of settlements decreases at a higher rate than in the North Caucasus; the ratio of these indicators was 72.3 and 98.2%. At the same time, it was more than fifteen times ahead of the rate of a decline in the number of settlements in the Russian Federation compared to the North Caucasus, the latter responded with more than eighteen times ahead of population growth. Therefore, formal comparison of these indicators does not solve the second paradox: with a high decrease in the number of settlements and a low population growth in Russia, there was an outpacing growth in the size of settlements compared to a higher population growth and a lower rate of the number of settlements in the North Caucasus. This paradox can be solved under the condition that the population in large Russian settlements is concentrated, while in the North Caucasus the population growth is “smeared” over the broader settlement structure, i.e. population growth

is more evenly distributed across settlements - the population is growing in cities (capitals) and villages, farms, etc. This feature is observed when eliminating capitals and large cities of the North Caucasus.

7. Conclusion

The path of development of the North Caucasus has been discussed by many researchers (Starodubrovskaya et al., 2014; Ra & Eneeva, 2010; Eneeva & Ulbasheva, 2010). The spatial development of the North Caucasus and mountain areas depends on the transport system. The existing radial system of transport communication between the central city and mountain settlements inhibits the development of territories. The connection of the transport system of the mountain valleys and gorges through passes could reduce the transport load. The problem could be solved through the development of natural mountain passes and construction of the artificial transport system mountain valleys and ravines.

However, even under these conditions, it is possible to get only a “shake-up” of the socio-economic life of the North Caucasus and its mountainous territories. Looped mountain valleys and ravines fall into a larger localized transportation system that does not have a wide and free exit. Direct access to domestic and foreign markets can solve the problem. Kadyrov suggested connection of the North Caucasus to the high-speed railway system. The solution may turn out to be more productive if this highway is launched along the Rostov – Baku route. This will expand the space of the North Caucasus region. There is one more direction which does not contradict the first one: to “pierce” the transport corridor to the sea, connecting all the territories of the North Caucasus Federal District and the neighboring SFD. Development of transport logistics in the North Caucasus will contribute to social and economic development of the territory.

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