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**INTEGRATION PRACTICES IN RUSSIAN POLITICS IN THE
CENTRAL CAUCASUS DURING IMPERIAL PERIOD**

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Abstract

The study provides a comprehensive analysis of the most important aspects of the domestic policy of the Russian Empire in the Central Caucasus, which aimed to include the region in the State political and administrative space. The administrative practice was used as an example to show the main activities of the government and the Caucasian authorities, which ultimately aimed to standardize the organizational forms of local self-government and to bring them into line with the practice of organizing social life of the Russian peasantry. At the same time, traditional methods of self-organization of local communities used by the Caucasian authorities contributed to relatively consistent introduction of the mountain society into the world of “big society”. Education takes a special place in implementation of the unification policy of the government, where the state (Russian) language served as a key integration factor. On the one hand, ideas of the Russian statehood and civic consciousness were conveyed to the local environment by means of the Russian language. On the other hand, for local communities, both the Russian language and education became a powerful resource of socialization in the common imperial space, the development of which to some extent smoothed excesses of imperial unification and softened the feeling of psychological discomfort inevitable under pressure of the state and its main institutions. The study uses a wide range of sources, including both published legislative materials and unpublished sources taken from central and local archives..

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Keywords: Central Caucasus, Russian Empire, integration policy, administrative practice, primary school, Russian language.



1. Introduction

The problem of relations between the center and the national suburbs of the Russian Empire has always been particularly acute. The ethno-cultural and socio-political mosaic of the Russian state determined the priorities in the government's policy aimed at preserving the unity and integrity of the country. In different parts of the empire, in each specific case, this problem was solved in different ways, but potentially the most important dominant of the unifying policy of St. Petersburg was its orientation towards the integration of a heterogeneous population into the imperial space – administrative-territorial, economic and socio-cultural one – most clearly manifested in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Practical implementation of unifying and integration policy pushed the official authorities towards the development of the policy aimed to form a homogeneous mass of citizens homogenized linguistically and administratively. To perform “homogenization” of the Central Caucasus, it was necessary to adequately solve a set of complex problems, some of which concerned administrative management, and others were related to the educational sphere, where the integration potential of the Russian (state) language was widely used. The governmental measures used to form the state administrative system in the Caucasus and the educational policy pursued in the region were quite effective for the formation of the all-Russian civic identity. However, if the former had eventually a destructive impact on traditional everyday life and often became a source of conflict, the latter corresponded to the needs of the modernized development of the mountain society, where a powerful social demand for education was gradually formed.

2. Problem Statement

The Russian state was historically formed as a social system complex in ethno-confessional, socio-cultural and many other aspects. Peoples, cultures and denominations co-existed in vast spaces within the same administrative and territorial borders. Multiple types of socio-political organization of the population of the country, its cultural and linguistic diversity posed significant difficulties in state management. In order to preserve and maintain the state unity, various strategies were developed based on the general idea of unifying the common imperial space in political, economic and socio-cultural aspects. The arsenal of tools and methods of management used for these purposes was considerably variable and featured its own specifics in each of the Russian regions. The study of the specific mechanisms and practices of relations between the center and national suburbs in the late imperial period on the example of the North Caucasus, which has its own unprecedented experience of entering the Russian statehood, is a relevant problem which solution can explain the difficulties of subsequent federative construction both in the formation of the Soviet state and in the post-Soviet decades. The current topicality of the problems is determined by the demand for historical experience of the socio-political integration of the population of the North Caucasus into Russian society and the state to provide scientific support of the spiritual component of the national security of the Russian Federation, as well as the need to consolidate poly-ethnic and multi-religious Russian society facing the global challenges of the time.

3. Research Questions

The subject area of the study is the transformation processes experienced by the mountain rural society under the unification policy of the government in administrative, legal, cultural and educational aspects.

4. Purpose of the Study

The main goal of the study is to analyze the processes and results of the implementation of the unification policy of the Russian government in the Central Caucasus in administrative management and educational practice at the final stages of the existence of the Russian Empire.

5. Research Methods

The study employed historical, historical ethnographic, comparative, functional and typological research methods. A complex use of these methods made it possible, on the one hand, to consider the problem from different points of view, to identify causal relationships in the eventual framework and to identify priorities in the government's integration policy, and on the other hand, to identify the objectives of progressive development of the North Caucasian society as they were seen and understood "on the ground". In a broader methodological context, the study was conducted based on a situational approach, which made it possible to depart from the traditional problem-chronological principle and present the problem under study unambiguously interpreted.

6. Findings

6.1. Administrative practice.

The administrative apparatus built on principles of vertical hierarchy served as a bearing frame for the Russian Empire. Its evolution followed the path of increasing rationalization of management, differentiation of the functions of the higher and lower echelons of the administrative system and specialization of subdivisions. The state administrative system of Russia acted as a single mechanism based on the principles of formalization, rationalization and bureaucratization of management ideally ensuring its effectiveness. It was management practices that constituted the general imperial social space reinforcing the statist component in the Russian statehood and proved to be the primary channels of influence of the state on society and its main institutions.

The organizational principles for the administrative arrangement of the North Caucasus were similar to those of the entire state administrative apparatus. Standardization and unification of the whole diversity of organizational forms and ways of the life order of the population and reduction of these to a common denominator that implies the forms of peasant self-government in the central regions of the empire were the key mechanisms for rapid integration of the region into Russia. In practice, this meant the spread of state administrative and legal institutions, the strategies of socio-economic behavior fundamentally different for this region, and related cultural values that characterized a completely different model of social relations. Generally, this implied a different civilization in the mountain society. Such activities (performed in almost all suburbs of the empire) were so pronounced that the notion of "administrative russification" was firmly established in the literature (Thaden, 1990; Weeks, 2004; Miller, 2002).

The pressure of the empire was experienced to the greatest degree by lower social levels – in the mountain rural communities, where focus was initially made on the formation of rural authorities. This is evidenced, for example, by the project of the volost authorities in Ossetia proposed by A. P. Yermolov in 1816, the chapter Instructions for District Principles proposed by the Caucasian governor A.I. Baryatinsky in 1860, and the Provision on the Terek Region written in 1864. The practical results of the reorganization of rural self-government appeared after the Caucasian War and the introduction of the civil government instead of the military-national one in the Central Caucasus in the 1860–1870s. The Provision on Rural (Aul) Societies adopted for highlanders in 1870 was a new administrative model not typical of both the local self-organization and military-national one. This administrative pattern was a copy of the self-government in the central Russian peasantry. The rural community with its local governing bodies, which were formed officially and were assigned functions not characteristic of the former self-government bodies, replaced the mountain rural community, which was a self-governing economic unit. The institutions of rural authorities relied on the unified principles of rationalization and bureaucratization of management and proceeded in their activities from the legal rules borrowed from the provisions developed for the peasants of European Russia. For example, the organizational and managerial functions of the mountain rural society were fixed by the provisions regulating not only public authorities, but also the economic activity of the suburbs included in the state taxation system as a legal entity.

However, intervention in the communal life of the highlanders was fraught with serious problems for local authorities. Impersonal, rational and formal state administrative system were into apparent contradiction with the patriarchal principles of the self-government of the mountain rural community (collegiality, democracy, absence of social stratification, widely understood seniority) and caused conflicts and aversion to innovations in the mountain society. Artificial formation of rural societies, establishment of official administrative institutions at lower levels that acted on behalf of the state and represented its interests, impersonal dependencies in the power-legal framework along with bureaucratization and formalization of management activities affected the integrity of the traditional socio-cultural system.

The Caucasian authorities were aware of this problem and selectively legalized the patriarchal principles of self-organization, using, for example, the practice of popular assemblies transformed into public gatherings to implement a priori unpopular decisions. However, such an appeal to traditional socio-organizing mechanisms, even selective and spontaneous, addressed to external institutional forms of the community self-government only, ensured relative consistency of the integration processes due to the intersection of the “old” and “new” social order. This order in the newly formed rural community with a certain degree of success ensured the achievement of the main strategic goal of the unification policy of the Russian government – inclusion of the mountain society into the common imperial administrative-legal space.

It was administrative practices implemented in the North Caucasus that were probably more relevant than those in other regions of the Russian Empire due to historically established military nature of the relationship, which for a long time determined the domestic policy of the government in the region.

6.2. Education.

One of the components of a broad governmental program to incorporate the territory and population of the North Caucasus into the Russian Empire was education. In the second half of the 19th century after the Caucasian War, the conditions were favorable for integration of the region into the Russian statehood not only in terms of political and administrative, but also socio-cultural aspects. In new conditions, the role of education as the most important factor of state foundations significantly increased: ideological influence on the local population was imposed through educational institutions, mainly through primary school.

The state (Russian) language had a serious resource potential in the formation of the common imperial supranational identity. In other suburbs of the empire, the promotion of the Russian language through education sometimes faced considerable difficulties and resistance from the local population, whereas in the Central Caucasus, the situation was different. We note here that the researchers report the ambiguity of the government's language policy and doubt the established view on the processes of “russification” as a conscious, consistent and long-term policy of denationalization (Pavlenko, 2011).

First of all, the Central Caucasus was the region where the Russian language initially occupied the dominant position. At first, the state language penetrated into the local environment through orthodoxy. Pursuing mainly missionary undertakings, the Orthodox Church intended to consolidate the positions in educating the population of the Caucasus. A specially created Ossetian Spiritual Commission, which became the center of the Russian Orthodox missionary work in the region, had been engaged in the enlightenment since the middle of the 18th century. In 1764, the Commission established an Ossetian missionary school in Mozdok. In the first years, Ossetian children were taught in their native language, but in 1767, the Russian language was prescribed by a special decree of the Holy Synod (Materials, 1942, p. 40). In St. Petersburg, training in parochial schools in the Russian language was regarded as a reliable tool of familiarizing the highlanders with the Russian culture and “civic consciousness”. Considering “the education of youth” as an effective tool of ideological influence on the highlanders, the government and local authorities contributed to the expansion of educational activities of the Ossetian Spiritual Commission.

The ideas of the Russian “civic consciousness” could be heard in the sermons of Caucasian clergymen, who received education in both local and Russian religious schools in the Russian language, mastering not only the dogmas of the church, but also the ideas of the Russian statehood and legality. Also, the curriculum of specialized educational institutions such as regimental and mountain schools, which were established in 1840–1860 for children of the mountain nobility and of the officers and officials serving in the Northern Caucasus, were in the Russian language.

After the bourgeois reforms of the 1860–1870s, the expansion of education became a priority, and the school for “common people” was declared to be the basis for economic well-being of the region. Primary schools, especially in the suburbs of the Caucasus, were established to contribute to the formation of the all-Russian identity in the local population based on the state (Russian) language. Primary education for “common people” was managed by the Society for the Restoration of Orthodox Christianity in the Caucasus, which replaced the Ossetian Spiritual Commission and brought together most of the religious departments.

Nominally being under the authority of the Georgian Exarchate, church institutions in the Caucasus always correlated their activity in spreading literacy among the highlanders with the government's policy.

The curriculum of parochial schools was also approved by the secular educational department. The educational activity of the Society was supervised by the higher Caucasian authorities. The practical activity of the Society was under the authority of the governor himself until the liquidation of the Caucasian governorship in 1882, which emphasized the state significance of the tasks performed by the Society. In 1885, it was finally entrusted to the Exarch of Georgia and transferred to the jurisdiction of the Holy Synod (Complete collection of laws of the Russian Empire III, 1884-1916). But even then parochial schools of the Society were under special supervision of the Caucasian education district. Only in 1886, the functions of supervision of primary schools of the religious department were finally transferred to the jurisdiction of the Synod since it was the period of clericalization of education (Complete collection of laws of the Russian Empire III, 1884-1916).

At first, local specifics were still taken into account in the Caucasian primary school. First of all, it concerned the language of instruction. For example, in the first years after the establishment of the Society, its Council believed that collective self-consciousness in highlanders can be raised based on the national language only (Materials, 1942, p. 123). Therefore, the native (“natural”) language became the language of instruction, while the Russian language was taught as a separate subject only after the students had reached a certain level in mastering the literacy of their native language, which was specified in the Rules for Parochial Schools of the Society for the Restoration of Orthodox Christianity in the Caucasus and approved by the governor Mikhail Nikolayevich in 1863 (Materials, 1942, p. 118).

By the second half of the 1860s the situation had changed. The Regulations on the Education in the Caucasus and Outside the Caucasus specially developed for Caucasian schools in 1867 reported the idea of the need to bring together the educational systems in the Caucasian suburbs and other parts of the empire (Complete collection of laws of the Russian Empire II, 1830-1884). However, there were some compromises in terms of languages: an increase in the teaching hours allocated for the Russian language was compensated for by the permission to teach local languages, which were included in the primary school curriculum as a subject.

During the reforms of the 1870s implemented by the Ministry of Public Education (MPE), the role of the Russian language in the educational process of all Russian primary schools was finally specified. According to the Regulations on primary public schools of the 1874s, the Russian language became the language of instruction for all Russian primary schools without exception. In practice, among 32,708 primary schools of the MPE, every fifth school (21%) used the local language in the educational process

In the Caucasus, the reform was regulated by the Rules on the application of the general school regulations of MPE to the Caucasian educational institutions (1874). According to the Rules, the general public law on compulsory teaching of all subjects in all educational institutions of the Caucasus in the Russian language, including history and geography at schools where these subjects were included in the curriculum, was compulsory for lower state, public and private schools (including parochial schools of non-Orthodox religion) (Complete collection of laws of the Russian Empire II, 1830-1884).

The political implication that determined the content of the primary school reform was perceived by the Caucasian authorities. The new Rules for the Primary Parochial Schools of the Society for the Restoration of Orthodox Christianity in the Caucasus (1874) contained the basic idea of the Provision on primary public schools: inculcation of the concepts of the Orthodox religion to children and the spread of

the Russian language (Materials, 1942, p. 132). The Russian language was introduced into the parochial school curriculum in the first year of study. In the second year, the entire training course was taught in Russian only, and the native language became an academic discipline (SA NO Archive documents, 1800-1913). Thus, school education in the North Caucasus approached the education system of the Russian schools, which was supposed to ensure the spread of "civic consciousness" with the European conception among the local population.

In 1897, MPE published the exemplary programs of disciplines taught in primary schools and finally approved the Russian language as the only possible language of instruction. In 1903, Russian was the language of instruction in 1,928 schools (92.3%) out of 2,086 primary schools of the Caucasian district, and only 158 schools allowed the native language to assist in mastering the Russian language (Miropiev, 1905).

A parochial school played the key role in the spread of the Russian language among highlanders. Local diocesan authorities strongly emphasized its significance as a center of missionary propaganda among highlanders and the only educational institution in the mountain village that provides an opportunity to learn the Russian language (SA NO Archive documents, 1800-1913).

As a result, the Caucasus stood aside the controversy about primary education of "foreigners" that rose in 1870-1880. Thus, the Rules On Measures for Education of Foreigners Inhabiting Russia were not introduced there due to multiethnic and multireligious population of the region and the utmost reluctance to "intensify tribal and religious differences" in case of the primary school nationalization (Miropiev, 1905).

Meanwhile, despite the violent imposition of the Russian language in the Caucasian primary schools, this process was treated by the population from a purely practical point of view. In the 1990s of the 19th century, there was a powerful social demand for education and, accordingly, for the Russian language in Ossetia. Besides the fact that education became a reliable resource of socialization taking the community members beyond the traditional bounds and opening up opportunities for entering a different civilization, career prospects became quite real at the local level. The Russian literacy increased the social significance of a person as a member of society. Highlanders who knew the Russian language could improve their social status by taking up a position as an administrative employee, a teacher, a clerk or even a priest. Therefore, the population of the Ossetian villages manifested a desire to have a Russian teacher arguing that in this case their children would rather learn the Russian language.

At the same time, in the poly-ethnic suburbs of the North Caucasus, the Russian language served not only as the state language, but also as the language of interethnic and intercultural communication. This linguistic function manifested itself most vividly in plain settlements adjacent to Cossack villages and cities, as well as in the North Caucasian cities, where urban culture and other forms of urban activities were rapidly developing. Active processes of assimilation of new patterns of life and values involved people in modern relations and significantly expanded their social intercourse in the context of a different culture (Tuaeva et al., 2017; Kanukova, & Gutieva, 2013).

The population of Ossetia showed positive attitude towards the Russian language, and most of the locals willingly took their children to Cossack schools for learning the Russian literacy. Ingush and Ossetian children often worked as servants without any payment, but with the indispensable condition to learn the Russian language (CSA RNO Archive documents, 1800-1913). By the middle of the 19th century, S. A.

Sheremetev, the commander of the civil part in the Caucasus, noted that the success of his predecessors in the field of civil administration of the region was so impressive that most parts of the North Caucasus became similar to the indigenous parts of the empire due to the “predominance of Russians” and a significant spread of the Russian language among the Caucasian highlanders (CHA of Georgia Archive documents, 1800-1913)..

7. Conclusion

Thus, in the late imperial period, the priorities of the unification policy of Russia were largely dependent on the nature of the Russian statehood and specific problems of preserving the unity and integrity of the country in the context of the ethno-cultural and socio-political mosaic of the Russian society.

The administrative practice took the leading role in solving integration problems in the Central Caucasus, and the local communities were involved in the rapidly changing system of horizontal and vertical public relations. The regional specificity of these processes implied partial preservation of the patriarchal forms of self-organization with simultaneous unification of the whole diversity of social systems.

The government educational policy in the region was based on the integration potential of the state (Russian) language, which mainly fulfilled social and political functions. The local population did not impede the introduction of the Russian language into school practice as a language of instruction. On the contrary, there was an urgent need to study this language, because mastering the Russian language opened up new horizons of going beyond the limits of traditional space and familiarizing with a different civilization, and therefore provided the economic perspective. The tendency to master the Russian language was an adaptive response to new and acute social challenges, which aimed to soften the sense of psychological discomfort in terms of the pressure of the state and its main institutions on traditional life.

Overall, a set of tools and methods for implementing the government’s unification policy in the Central Caucasus and its population was sufficiently diverse, but at the same time it exhibited imperial pragmatism based on the idea of strengthening the Russian statehood in the North Caucasian regions and expanding a single common imperial political and socio-cultural space.

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