



RESEARCH ARTICLE

TRENDS IN POPULATION SETTLEMENT AND THE EMERGENCE OF A MODERN ETHNIC MAP IN THE KABARDINO-BALKARIA DUE TO ITS ADMINISTRATIVE AND TERRITORIAL STRUCTURE

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ABSTRACT

Population resettlement is a complex socio-economic process that reflects many aspects of society, and is the most important spatial form of interaction between society and nature. From these positions, the article considers various aspects of the territorial distribution of the population and the formation of a modern ethnic map in the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic (KBR) in connection with its administrative and territorial structure. The most important components of the population settlement process are three groups of factors: socio-economic, environmental (natural) and demographic. An excursion into the history of the formation of the administrative-territorial structure of the KBR shows that it was based primarily on ethno-political rather than economic and not environmental considerations. The externally imposed scheme of such territory structure did not contain constructive beginning that guaranteed the sustainable development of the Kabardino-Balkarian community. On the contrary, its isolationism has stimulated and continues to fuel the process of political disintegration and national separatism. On the basis of an integrated (historical, ecological, geographical and economic) approach, the archaism of the current administrative-territorial division of the KBR according to the national principle into mountainous "Balkarian", foothill "Kabardian" and flat "Russian" areas is demonstrated. The discrepancy of such an organization of economic life of the modern ethnic map of the Republic is the result of population redistribution within it, as well as environmental standards of preservation of the unique nature in the region. In the light of economic and environmental problems, it seems counterproductive to preserve the modern administrative and territorial structure of the KBR on the ethno-political principle, leading to artificial high-altitude fragmentation of the unified ecosystem of the region. The further improvement of the administrative and territorial zoning of the KBR should be based on the principles of sustainable development with the primacy of economic and environmental priorities. It is settlement that plays a regulating and unifying role in the territorial structure of the productive forces.

INTRODUCTION

The imperfection of the principle of national-territorial federalism is recognized as a national problem of the Russian Federation, and its solution is seen in the gradual abandonment of the national-territorial administrative structure and the policy of administrative consolidation of the subjects of the Russian Federation. Duplication of the specified national principle of the device of the territory on such small and on the area, and on population to the subject of the Russian Federation as Kabardino-Balkarian Republic, so generates the mass of various, sometimes intractable problems. The KBR is part of the North Caucasus Federal district. The occupied area is 12.5 thousand sq. km. Population – 859,9 thousand people, including Kabardians – 490453 (57,03%), Russian – 193156 (of 22.56%), Balkars – 108577 (12,63%), other – 67753 (7,78%).

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The average population density 69,43 people/sq km. The urban population is 52,16%. The administrative center is Nalchik with a population of 239040 people which is located at the foot of the belt of deciduous forests at an altitude of about 500 m above the sea. The Territory of the Republic is divided into three geomorphological zones – mountain (51%), foothill (16%) and flat (33%). The residential area covers elevation from the lowest point of 150 m to 2,144 m above sea level with the population concentrated (over 90%) in the foothill-low-mountainous zone most optimal for life, from 200 to 900 m. The only permanent settlement - Terskol (1,200 people) goes into the high-mountain zone itself (above 2000 m). A substantial part of the plain (the dry-steppe zone) practically devoid of natural hydrographic network also has rare villages, mainly along two main irrigation canals. The vast majority of the population is concentrated in large settlements. There are also small settlements of several tens and hundreds of people in the form of Russian farms on the plain and Balkarian villages in the mountains. The modern administrative-

territorial division includes 3 urban districts (Nalchik, Baksan, Prokhladny), 10 municipal districts, 112 rural and 7 urban settlements. This paper discusses the problem of the national-territorial structure of the KBR in the light of the modern ethnic map of the republic.

Problem Statement: The relevance of the topic of this study is determined by the fact that it runs through the whole life of Kabardians and Balkarians, often provoking mutual claims along land borders and land ownership. The modern ethnic map of the republic demonstrates the fundamental impossibility of both the creation of artificial ethnic territories within the limited area of the region and the return to the original ethnic boundaries of the past. The study showed the inconsistency of the administrative-territorial structure of the KBR on the ethnopolitical principle of the modern realities of the socio-economic life of the republic, when national identity is irreversibly pushed aside by economic and environmental expediency. The new “cross-cutting” division (without high-altitude fragmentation of the territory) will strengthen the feeling of the indivisibility of the territory and the population according to the ethnopolitical principle and increase the overall environmental responsibility for the entire territory of the republic.

Research Questions: The article is devoted to the evolution of the modern ethnic map formation in connection with its administrative-territorial structure and the problems of preserving the unity of the territory and interethnic balance.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study is to show the archaic administrative-territorial zoning of the KBR on the ethno-political principle and to justify the need for a new territorial structure that reflects the modern ethnic picture of the Republic and meets the principles of sustainable development.

Research Methods

The paper uses a set of modern research methods:

- Demographic, allowing to trace the dynamics of the population and its territorial distribution;
- Geographical set revealing patterns of population settlement in connection with the landscape background;
- Environmental set which takes into account the demographic capacity of the mountainous part of the kbr and possible solutions to current environmental problems;
- Historical set showing the evolution of the territorial organization of the population and explaining the formation of the modern ethnic map of the kbr;
- Economic, revealing the reasons of change of the territorial organization of the population now.

FINDINGS

The formation of a modern network of settlements in the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic (KBR) and the emergence of the Russian population in the form of Cossack villages and peasant farms was associated with a period of military colonization (second half of the 18th century) and agrarian (second half of the 19th century) [14]. The alien population —

the Cossacks and peasants of South Russian and Ukrainian — settled in the steppes of the plain landscape of the steppe, protected by a fortified Caucasian line, which separated it from the Kabardian villages for a long time and lost their winter pastures. The process of integration of Kabarda (the historical name of Kabardino-Balkaria before 1922) into the Russian Empire did not stop there: along with cutting down the Kabardian lands, relocating to the plane and enlarging Kabardian villages, it launched an unnaturally fast pace of redrawing land relations, as well as redistribution of the native population - Kabardians and Balkarians within the remaining territory [17]. It is from this time in the resettlement of the “five mountain societies of Kabarda” of the upper reaches of glacial rivers with self-identification on separate gorges (Balkars, Bezengi, Chegemians, Khulams and Uruspians) and a total of about 5 thousand people by the middle of the 19th century (against 42 thousand Kabardians) [2] the tendency of exploration of the lower Kabardian lands, encouraged by the tsarist administration, prevailed. In the historical documents of those years, as the border of these societies, the “Kabardian forest” is usually indicated, the upper limit of which, according to [11], is at a height not lower than 1600-1700 m above sea level. In the instructions on the places of residence of the same societies are also often found ambiguous irony “Black mountains”. The agrarian overpopulation in the conditions of limited capacity of places of residence in separate intermountain basins and the practical absence of its grain economy (being in the “Malthusian trap”) explained the desire of this part of the population of Kabarda to expand its living space. The situation was aggravated at that time by the abolition of serfdom and the formation of a significant number of Balkarian families who lost their lands as payment for their liberation [7].

Since the turning point for Kabarda in 1822, associated with the abolition of the system of local government and a new stage of colonization, mountain societies came out of its influence [2]. At the same time, the latter began to look more and more persistently towards ways of securing their independence, and over time strengthened the requirements for allotting them land [15], including the “liberated” as a result of the flight of Kabardian owners to “rebellious” neighbors [8]. Thus, the narrowing of the territory of Kabardians settlement was accompanied by the division of their land, in fact, on the national principle, which according to the strategic plan of Kabarda conquest was supposed to lead to its weakening and “appeasement”. It was then that the formation of the controversial triad – “mountain Balkars”, “foothills Kabardians” and “plain Russians” began. Such a dismemberment of Kabarda according to the national principle was an instrument and the result of its forced integration into the political and administrative system of the Russian Empire [13], and not the result of the evolutionary self-development of the territory. The revolution of 1917 and the ideas of October gave an even greater impetus to the Balkarian side’s desire to “equalize land with Kabardians” and give territorial increments in the form of land use due to Kabardian lands ethno-territorial status to create their own Balkar autonomy. So, if until that time Kabarda and the “five mountain societies of Kabarda” were part of the Terek region as a single national-territorial entity, and then the Terek Republic, then they entered the Mountain ASSR (1921) as independent Kabarda and Balkar national districts loss of a sense of lack of internal boundaries. This led to a violation of the traditional forms of economic and cultural ties between the two neighboring ethnic groups:

economic mechanisms, especially land, providing in pre-revolutionary Kabarda and Balkaria ethnopolitical balance, were destroyed [14]. The exit of Kabarda from Mountainous ASSR in connection with the territorial claims of landless neighbors and the proclamation of the Kabardian Autonomous region (KAO) turned Balkaria into a geographical isolate, closed between the mountain ranges and KAO. "Land" discussion of the parties in 1918-1921 ended with a compromise solution - the creation in 1922 of the Kabardino-Balkarian Autonomous Region (KBAO). Common sense and proven over the centuries experience of the coexistence of two peoples took precedence over the baseless ambitions of the national elites generated by the 1917 revolution. As a result, Balkarians had the opportunity to solve the problem of land shortage as part of the administrative-territorial unit of Kabardino-Kabardino-Balkaria, while Kabardians, yielding their lands to the use of Balkarians, preserve the integrity of their national territory. According to the words of the then head of Kabarda, B. Kalmykov, in 1922 the final page of Kabarda closed and a new one, Kabardino-Balkaria, was opened [cited. by: 14]. In connection with the problem under discussion, the issue of ethnic and cultural boundaries cannot be avoided. With the creation of the KBAO, the existence of Kabardians and Balkars as separate peoples was officially recognized, which led to the strengthening of ethno-cultural boundaries between them [18] along with ethno-territorial differentiation [7]. At the same time, a diametrically opposite policy of the elimination of ethnocultural boundaries was carried out with regard to the alien population. At first it was heterogeneous in the relations both linguistic (Russian, Ukrainians), and social (Cossacks, peasants, "nonresident", retired military and others). However, the ethnic identity (Eastern Slavs), religious unity, common purpose for the development of the region, as well as strict national policy in the Soviet period leveled the original differences, unifying all as Russian as opposed to the local population [18].

The national-territorial triad (Kabardians - Balkars - Russians), which was set during the entry of Kabarda into the Russian Empire, was finally consolidated as a result of the administrative-territorial reform of the country in the 20s. Formed in the past, this design continues to form the basis of the administrative division of modern Kabardino-Balkaria, although many processes are difficult to fit into it because of the significant advances that have occurred [6]. Deportation of Balkars in 1944 and their return in 1957 radically reshaped the ethnic map of Kabardino-Balkaria: the Balkars who returned to their historical homeland mostly settled below the places of their former residence [10], i.e. on the "Kabardian" lands. Moreover, according to the 1989 census, 58.7% of Balkarians became city dwellers, losing only to Russians in this. Currently, 44.1% of the Balkar population is located in the urban district of Nalchik. [3] As a result, in the mountainous "Balkar" districts of Elbrus and Chereksky, which were again reproduced in 1994, the population density is several times less than the average republican and amounts to 1 square kilometer. km only 16.6 and 9.4 people, respectively. In other words, the territorial rehabilitation of the repressed Balkar people in accordance with the Law of the RSFSR №1107-1, which presupposed the return of the repressed people to the places of traditional residence, was peculiar: the Balkars preferred to settle in more comfortable conditions than returning to the extreme highlands. The historical movement of the "mountain" Balkars to the underlying territories, including the "Russian" plain, continues. Their share in Kabardian villages adjacent to

the expanded Balkan area is growing. For example, in the large Kabardian village of Kenzhe, numbering 9669 people, the Balkars make up 22.5%. On the plain in the steppe zone, in 1958, who returned from exile, Balkars founded the enclave – the village of Novo-Balkaria on the lands of the Kabardian villages Urozhaioe and Arik. All this is a response to the fact that traditional systems of nature management and production of consumer goods in the mountains are not able to compete with modern innovative technologies of urban plains. The development of the mountains by urban methods did not justify itself (the experience of the former mining town of Tyrmayuz). In General, for the republics of the North Caucasus, where mountains make up more than half of the territory, the share of their participation in the regional economic balance does not exceed 1-5% [5]. The ongoing depopulation of mountains is not something special, because it is a global trend, and in developed countries the only task is to preserve the existing infrastructure, cultural and historical sites, natural monuments, etc. [1]. For the "plain" Russian population of the KBR, the Soviet period was marked by a sharp jump in its number. If in the 20s of the last century the share of the Russian population was only about 17%, in the 70s it exceeded 30%. It was immigration that remained the main factor of population growth in the Republic for many years [4], at the same time providing accelerated urbanization. So, at the peak of urbanization in 1965-1975 the mechanical growth exceeded natural by 1.7 times, averaging 5.8 and 3.5 thousand people, respectively. As a result, for the period 1959-1979, the urban population in the KBR with an average annual growth rate of 4.4% increased 2.4 times mainly due to immigration. The prevailing influence of immigration took place even earlier, when in the hungry 20s there was an increase in the population due to refugees from Ukraine, Siberia and other regions of the country against the background of a decrease in natural growth [18].

These processes contributed to the transformation of the Russian population mainly in the urban population (70%, including 31.8% in Nalchik) and the approval of the urban lifestyle in the KBR. "Urban" Russian and "rural" locals as a variant of the ethno-cultural border existed before the urbanization of the local population, which also accelerated over time. As a result, by 1979, for the first time the urban population exceeded the rural population, reaching 61.5% by 1991. The participation of small cities-district centers in this process of urbanization was very modest compared to the absolutely dominant role of the capital city of Nalchik. All ethnic groups of the population to the industrial and cultural center - the capital of the republic (27.7% of the population of the KBR in 2018) continues to persist. This is facilitated by a significant reduction in demand for labor in agriculture due to the change of form of management and the introduction of increasingly advanced technologies. The trend of depopulation of the periphery of the region has largely affected the arid plain and mountain zone. The observed redistribution of the population in the KBR is quite natural. One of the most important guidelines for the directed development of the human population in the next 20-30 years is the increase in the level of well-being of each person in voluntarily chosen places [16]. In the modern world, the majority lives where it was not born, since the geographical factor determines the spatial changes in the level of real incomes and expenses due to the advantageous location. This thesis is largely implemented in the KBR, where spatial distribution is already determined not by ethnic identity, but by economic, environmental and

cultural factors. As a result, the considered period of time from the beginning of the formation of a modern network of settlements was characterized by an intensive process of "thickening" of the population in the geographical and economic optimum – the center of the Republic. It so happened that in the middle zone, in the range of heights of 200-900 m, concentrated about 90% of the population, regardless of the pre-existing ethnic boundaries. Judging by the data [10], in recent times compared with 1889, the share of the plain zone (up to 200 m) in the total population decreased by 1.6 times, and the mountain (over 1000 m) – 3 times. In the process of depopulation of mountains, a certain positive aspect is seen from the position of preserving the ecology of mountains and taking into account their planetary role as foci and refugiums of biodiversity – a source of necessary habitat quality and sustainable development. The excessive presence of the population and its economic activities are a powerful stress factor for the vulnerable nature of the mountains. For example, the return to the highlands in 1957 of the deported in 1944 Balkar population significantly reduced, increased during his absence, the number of endemic Caucasian tour [9].

Therefore, while maintaining the pasture function for traditional cattle breeding and developing a new recreational industry of national importance within the framework of environmentally permissible, it is advisable to establish the Midlands-highlands of the KBR as a reserve zone of environmental stability. In this regard, it is advisable to limit the residential area to a height below 1000 m, as it develops recently. In conclusion, it should be noted that in the modern integrated Kabardino-Balkarian society the issue of ethno-territorial borders has lost all meaning, and it can be raised only for the purpose of destabilizing the situation and forcing interethnic relations. On the way to the information society, the strategy of isolation is absurd [12] and contradicts the idea of sustainable development. The further task is seen in the development of civil identity and improvement of forms of implementation of cultural autonomy in a single territorial entity, as the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic, the preservation of the unique nature – the main asset of its people.

Conclusion

- The administrative-territorial division of the modern Kabardino-Balkar Republic according to the ethno-political principle is the legacy of the policy of national-territorial fragmentation of the historical Kabarda, initiated by the tsarist administration as one of the mechanisms for the accelerated entry of the region into the orbit of the Russian Empire and finally completed in the Soviet period of the command-administrative system formation.
- The once-defined national-territorial triad — the "mountain" Balkars, the "piedmont" Kabardians, and the "lowland" Russians — ceased to correspond to the modern ethnic map of the KBR and outlived itself due to the exhaustion of the problems and integration processes within the region.
- Against the background of the accomplished transformation in the placement of ethnic groups, when national identity is irreversibly pushed aside by economic and environmental expediency, the preservation of the national principle of the administrative-territorial structure of the KBR is an anachronism that prevents the formation of civil

identity, violates the principle of sustainable development of the region and provokes groundless disputes about imaginary national borders.

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