

The Asymmetry of the Present-day Social and Demographic Conditions of the North

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Annotation

The integral analysis of the current socio-demographic conditions in the North Caucasus, the specific features of natural population development, migration and their influence on the dynamics of the ethnic structure are presented in the article. Substantial regional disparities in the demographic development of the territories have been found. The regional differences in the reproduction and the ethnic composition of the population of the mountain and plain land regions have been shown. The four types of regions with their specific way of population generation have been identified. Special attention is paid to the processes connected with the transformation of the ethnic structure of the population. The increasing number of the areas rapidly changing their ethnic composition, the growth of multi-ethnicity in the plain land regions, derussification and ethnic homogenization in the mountain areas have been noted. A significant asymmetry of the North Caucasus regions in terms of their social and economic development proving the territorial disparities between the republics in the south-east and the relatively developed plain regions in the north-west has been revealed.

Key words: the North Caucasus, Demographic conditions, Migration of the population, Ethnic structure, Interregional disparities, Social and economic processes..

1 Introduction

The North Caucasus is one of the most peculiar regions in Russia in terms of social and demographic issues. Here, quite developed, self-sustaining provincial and falling behind areas adjoin each other on a relatively small territory. Some of them are rather politically stable and characterized by a rapid economic growth, while other regions are inert and inactive and still others are seen to have growing social inequality and deteriorating economic conditions. Among the factors, influencing the social and economic development of the North Caucasus region in the first place is its geopolitical and cross-border position to have gained pace after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In fact, it is the southern outpost of Russia, providing access to the South Caucasus, the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. It is located between two highly differing in terms of socio-cultural, and ethno-demographic processes territories - Slavic, primarily Orthodox (Central Russia, Belarus and Ukraine) and the Caucasus, being intervened in ethnic and religious terms (North Caucasian republics and South Caucasus states).

The North Caucasus is one of the most important and at the same time complex and unstable ethnic and political elements in the structure of the Russian nationhood. The main causes of the political precariousness arise from the ethnic heterogeneity of the geo-space, high multiethnic, overlapping and intersection of ethnic settlement areas, the contradictions in the political and economic purposes of different ethnic, cultural and social groups [5]. Hence, the conditions there are quite loaded and controversial and resolved not only through negotiations but sometimes

with force applied. Often ill-conceived administrative and territorial structure itself proved to be a detonator of the conflict.

Being observed in the last decades growth in the ethnic identification takes place along with the boost in religious consciousness. For many centuries, the North Caucasus is the contact zone of the peoples belonging to two major world religions - Christianity and Islam, the representatives of other religions being present as well. However, one cannot ignore the fact of non-traditional religious movements in the area and their destructive influence, in particular, the Islamic fundamentalist movement (e.g. Wahhabism).

In general, it is no secret that the socio-economic and political situation in the North Caucasus is deteriorated by a number of factors preventing strengthening of the unity of the Russian nation and harm onisation of interethnic relations. It is impossible to understand the nature of these problems without a thorough analysis of the social and demographic processes, which largely influence not only the quality of human potential, but also the quality of life of the population.

2 Sources of Information and Research Methods

In our study the main accent was made on finding answers to the following questions:

1. What is the demographic and migration situation in the North Caucasus as a whole and in its certain regions?
2. How inhomogeneous is the social and demographic extent of the North Caucasus, what are the reasons for this heterogeneity?
3. How is the ethnic structure of the population of the North Caucasus transformed under the influence of the demographic and migration processes?
4. How do ethnic and demographic processes affect the population's standard of living and socio-economic situation in the North Caucasus?

We used the following sources of information in our study:

- Population current record data (mainly demographic and migration records) available on the official website of the Federal State Statistics Service - Rosstat and its regional offices in the North Caucasus;
- Data collected during the census of 1989 (The All-Union 1989 Census), 2002 and 2010 (All-Russia National Population Census of 2002, National Population Census of 2010) on the ethnic structure of the North Caucasus' regions' inhabitants;
- Design and analysis data of the rating agencies RIA-rating and Expert RA on the level of social and economic development of the North Caucasus regions;
- Results of the previous complex and industry (demographic, migration, ethnic, social and economic) researches of the North Caucasus conducted, including the authors of the article [1]-[8].

The main research methods used are quantitative ones. They are conventionally applied for this kind of work. The focus is made on the multilateral statistical analysis of demographic, migration, ethnic and socio-economic processes, ratios and indicators of birth rate, death rate, natural population increase, net migration, the share of the various ethnic groups in the general population being calculated.

The main qualitative methods used in this research are aimed at identifying the territorial disparities of the social and demographic processes in the North Caucasus combined with the analysis of the temporal trends over the last 15 - 20 years. Those methods are widely applied in social and economic geography. The method of multi-immensity is based on the classic geographical papers and it is understood as the manipulation of scale - ranks of the territory within the particular object of the research to find the spatial patterns of events and processes. Multi-immensity of this study includes the following territorial "steps": federal (comparison of

the North Caucasus with the processes of the Russian Federation as a whole), regional (the subjects of the Russian Federation in the North Caucasus), intra-regional (municipal districts).

The typological method deals with the development of such groupings of geographical features used to identify the qualitative differences. We have proposed a typology of the North Caucasus regions according to the nature of the population. This method allowed us to conduct the zoning of the North Caucasus territory in terms of socio-economic development and living standards. In general, finding the territorial disparities of the processes was carried out through the intensity vectors in the directions of North - South and West - East. The main spatial heterogeneity is the asymmetry of the mountain land (south or more precisely south-east) and plain and (north-west) parts of the North Caucasus. The mountain part of the republic includes Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia and the plain part includes Rostov, Krasnodar and Stavropol Regions, and the Republic of Adygea.

3 Main Results and Their Discussion

Specifics features of the processes in the mountainous and plain land parts of the North Caucasus.

Demographic processes. In the 60 – 80s of the 20th century, the plain land and mountainous parts of the North Caucasus “changed” their features of the demographic conditions. In the plain land part, the high level of natural growth inherent in it fell to the population replacement level since the second half of the 19th century and currently to the restricted population replacement level. In the mountainous area, on the contrary, the restricted population replacement level of 1960s turned into the expanded one and even population explosion” was observed there.

At the present time, the North Caucasus differs greatly for the better in terms of birth and death rate from the rest of Russia and the region can be quite clearly divided into “relatively successful South” (mountainous area) and “disadvantaged North” (the plain land). The range of the crude birth rate (CBR) is from 25 - 29 to 10 - 11 ‰. In all the republics, the CBR is quite high. For example, in Chechnya it is 25 - 29 ‰, in Ingushetia - 21 - 27 ‰, in Dagestan - about 19 ‰. When moving to the north-west, the birth rate falls and reaches its minimum in Rostov Region (10 - 11 ‰). At the same time, since the 2000s, the slow growth of birth rate is quite obvious in all regions of the North Caucasian plains (from 9 - 10 and 11 - 12 ‰) being a consequence (as will be proved below) of change in the ethnic and demographic structure and increase in the share of non-Slavic, more demographically active population.

However, it should be noted that in most regions of the North Caucasus, as well as in the whole country, in the 1990s - early 2000s the birth rate was significantly lower than it is today. The particular negative peak at the border of the centuries was due to the widespread protracted demographic crisis caused by the serious political and socio-economic disturbances.

The second most important demographic process is population mortality. In Rostov Region, its indicators are the highest and even slightly higher than the national average ones, they are slightly lower in Krasnodar and Stavropol Regions. In the republics, the crude death rate (CDR) is not high. As is known, the value of CDR is highly dependent on the age structure of the population and life expectancy. In mountainous republics, the age structure of the population is much younger than in that in the plain land regions. For example, in Stavropol Region, the share of young people is 18%, older people is 22%, and in Chechnya, these figures are 35 and 9% respectively, in Ingushetia they are 31% and 10%, in Dagestan they are 27% and 11% respectively. At the same time, the republics show the highest average life expectancy: in Ingushetia it is almost 81 years old, in North Ossetia - 79 years, in Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachay-Cherkessia it is 78 years (in plain land regions it is lower than 70 years).

As a result, the North Caucasus republics show the highest natural population growth in Russia: in Chechnya it is 19.9 ‰, in Ingushetia – 17.7 ‰, in Dagestan – 13.3 ‰. In the plain land regions, the natural population growth is slightly positive or even negative.

Thus, the modern period in the North Caucasus is characterised by the increase in the inter-regional disparities in demographic development - the south shows an impressive multi-ethnic human potential increase, and the north the mono-ethnic Slavic community of nations is aging, weakened and eroded.

Migration processes. It is obvious that the demographic processes govern the vector of the interregional migration. From the 1960s the population of the mountain areas as accumulating a powerful demographic potential was actively drawing upon the labour deficient plain territories.

Plain land areas are, on the one hand, a powerful accumulator of the North Caucasian migration flows, and on the other hand, they are a kind of "a corridor of the migration winds" between the North Caucasian republics and the rest of the country.

Being at the forefront of the Caucasus problems, Krasnodar, Rostov and especially Stavropol Region appeared to be the Russian base in the Caucasus and at the same time the buffer against the acuteness of the ethno-political and socio-economic crisis. The location next to the hot spots of Chechnya, Dagestan, and the zone of the Osset-Ingush conflict, etc. and what is more as acute hearths of inter-ethnic tensions in the countries of the South Caucasus (Georgia-South Ossetia, Azerbaijani-Armenian, Georgian-Abkhazian) resulted in a mass influx of the forced migrants to Stavropol, Don and Kuban Regions. Gradually the stressful migration factors have lost their significance.

The current quiet geopolitical conditions have exacerbated the impact of economic and demographic factors on the migration process. The inter-regional migration growth in the plain land regions will remain positive due to the high demographic potential in the republics. The North Caucasian peoples have high demographic potential growth rates and are actively advancing on the plain land, adjacent to the Caucasus territories. The population and young people in the first place, will be leaving to choose new places of residence in the economically developed regions. At the same time, the Ukrainian instability hearth is heading toward the renewed stress migration flow in the regions of the plain land part of the North Caucasus. Territorial heterogeneity of demographic and migration processes in the North Caucasus can be divided into four types of the regions with their specific features of population formation:

- Regions, where natural population growth exceeds the total one (Chechnya) and has a steady migration outflow;

- Regions, where the excess of the natural and total growth alternate (Dagestan, Ingushetia, North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia) and at certain periods they either accept or give a large number of migrants;

- Regions, where natural growth is negative or very low, and the total one is almost always positive or higher than the natural growth (Stavropol and Krasnodar regions), the population growth is achieved due to the migrants. Here we can also observe the growth of the intra-regional disparities in demographic development in the form of the formation of areas of high positive and high negative population growth being the consequence of the transformation of the population ethnic structure.

- Regions, where the total population growth is negative or slightly positive (Rostov Region, Adygea). Migration there does not overlap the natural population decline.

Ethnic processes. The ethnic structure of the North Caucasus population is largely dependent upon the correlation of the three groups of ethnic groups to be the Russians, the title nations of the national entities (the Adygei, Karachai, Cherkesses, Kabardin, Balkar, Ossetian, Ingush, Chechen and the peoples of Dagestan), and a number of non-indigenous peoples (the Greeks, Armenians, Azerbaijani, Germans, Meskhetian Turks, etc.).

The dynamics of the ethnic structure is dependent upon the balance of the natural and mechanical population growth. From the beginning of colonisation to the present time, two trends are observed: at an early stage, it is "slavyanization" and at present, it is strengthening of the Caucasian characteristics.

For nearly two centuries, the two main ethnic groups – the Slavic people (mostly Russians) and the title nations of the republics had been changing roles in the course of their interaction. Initially, the main ethnic group to ensure the inclusion of the mountain peoples in the Russian economy and social sphere were Russians. Currently, the North Caucasian peoples having high demographic growth rates are actively “attacking” the plain land part of the North Caucasus, which is seen not only in expanding the settlement territory but also in active participation in the economic activity [6]. At the same time, the expansion of the title ethnic groups of the republics originally was seen in the rural districts and the agricultural sector, and now the expansion takes place in the cities and in the new sectors of the economy (including business, management, etc.) and more young people are found to be engaged in the educational sphere.

Simultaneously, the title ethnic groups are concentrated in “their” original regions, whereas the “aliens” are pushed to leave. The main factor of ethnic homogenisation of these republics’ population is not an ethnic incompatibility and hatred, but growing competition for becoming scarce job and study placements, comfortable living conditions, water and land. These processes often turn into covertly or overtly confrontational and they are accompanied by the change in the settlement of the ethnic groups [5].

These changes are particularly well seen in the geography of the displacement of the Russian ethnos, having gone through several stages in its evolution in the republics of the region. At the initial stage, they chose the administrative, metropolitan and industrial centers as their place of residence, as a rule. At the next stage, there occurs a slowdown in the growth of the Russian population and the outflow of the Russians from the rural areas. Later the inclusion of the title ethnic groups of the republics in the urbanisation process in the conditions of expanded reproduction was accompanied by their active resettlement in the rural areas by means of “pushing out” and displacement of the Russian population living there.

The third stage is characterised by the sustained reduction in the absolute and relative indicators of the Russians in both rural and urban areas. The outflow of the Russians was seen throughout all the settlements and especially the cities, including the capital ones in the conditions of the deep economic crisis and the lack of effective national policy, high ethnic tensions, actively propagating xenophobia and actual civil insecurity of the Russian and Russian-speaking population.

The structure of the non-indigenous population of the North Caucasus is changing rapidly. The active outflow of some nations (particularly the Germans emigrating to Germany) combined with the increasing inflow of other nations (the Armenians) and the emergence of the new nations (the Azerbaijanis, Meskhetian Turks). Some of them, first of all, the Armenians and the Greeks, and in recent years - Meskhetian Turks have formed the compact settlement areas. Especially noticeable is the increase in the proportion of the Armenian ethnos. If in the national republics the Armenian population was declining (except Adygea Republic), in the steppe areas of the North Caucasus the influx of the Armenians has increased dramatically, primarily in Stavropol Territory and Kuban [3][4]. New in their resettlement was the settlement, along with the cities and suburbs, in the rural areas. The indicator of the concentration of the Armenian population in areas traditionally inhabited regions of the steppe Ciscaucasia dropped significantly. A new feature about their resettlement was the settlement in the cities, suburbs, and rural areas. The indicator of the Armenian population concentration in the traditionally inhabited areas has significantly reduced.

Contrasting zones of socio-demographic area of the North Caucasus.

The course of the modern demographic, migration and ethnic processes in the North Caucasus depends on both political and geographical changes and socio-economic conditions in the Caucasus as a whole in the post-Soviet years. The active migration of migrants from the crisis regions resulted in a more stable transformation of the ethnic structure of both receiving and giving territories has changed the trends of their social and economic development.

The North Caucasus regions occupying the peripheral position in the Russian socio-geographical space, form a rather complex discrete conglomerate, its parts being contrasted with

each other on the main socio-economic characteristics [10], The inter-regional disparities in terms of welfare, development of social and cultural infrastructure and other indicators have reached here enormous values. The comparative analysis of the socio-economic situation in the North Caucasus regions show a close correlation between the parameters of ethno-demographic and socio-economic processes [16].

The discrepancy between the level of the socio-economic well-being and demographic prosperity of the population is becoming a source of the key contradictions adding to the instability of the regional development. The crisis of the early 1990s led to the considerable deterioration of the population's living conditions in all areas of the North Caucasus, but the economic boom of the 2000s manifested itself in many ways and led to a significant socio-economic differentiation of the regions and to the formation of depression areas and areas of socio-economic growth. Currently, the North Caucasus can be divided into three contrasting zones, differing in the nature and pace of socio-economic development and the living standards of the population [15].

The Western Zone is represented by Krasnodar Territory and Rostov Region being stable leaders, developing in the most dynamic way in economic and social sphere. However, the falling migration growth there does not compensate for the natural population decline.

The Central Zone includes one region – Stavropol Territory, where a living standard is going up due to the economic growth, unemployment reduction, income increase and decrease in the proportion of the poor people. Demographic and migration conditions are relatively favorable there.

The western and central zones are characterised by multi-ethnicity strengthened through active, sometimes a point settling of the title peoples of the North Caucasus republics of the South Caucasus states, “pushing out” the Russians from the old Russian regions. Many traditionally “rural” ethnic groups (Dargin, Chechens) having settled in the eastern agricultural areas are gradually shifting to the west and to the cities [2]. The influx of Dargin, Chechen, Karachay, Cherkess in large cities and towns is growing due to educational migration, which is becoming a real channel of social mobility and transformation of the ethnic villagers into townspeople [1][14]. All this increases the inter-ethnic tensions, forms a hostile attitude of the local population to the ethnic migrants and raises domestic aggression.

The Southern Zone—the North Caucasus republics can be divided into two subtypes. The first one the least affected in the 1990s - early 2000s Karachay-Cherkessia, North Ossetia and Kabardino-Balkaria, which currently are having deep economic and social problems, but having several high indicators in the social sphere (e.g. housing, the number of students, health indicators).

The second subtype of the southern zone includes Chechnya, Ingushetia characterised by the low levels of socio-economic development and a large number of unresolved issues negatively affecting the quality of life in general. These republics are the outsiders as regards the difficulties in the labour market, observed for a long time, despite the efforts of the federal and regional authorities. The highest unemployment rate has been recorded in Ingushetia: almost half of its inhabitants do not have a permanent place of employment. In two regions - Chechnya and Dagestan - the unemployment rate is over 10% [16]. It is believed that these figures are not reliable as the population of these republics have shadow employment [9], existing at least, in two forms. The first form of employment is non-incorporated entrepreneurs engaged in farm households and producing products for sale. The second form is work for private individuals [13]. In this subtype, the Russian population in Chechnya is declining fast: from 1989 till 2010 it has fallen 11 times, in Ingushetia the figure is almost 8 times, in Dagestan it is 1.6 times. There has been a rapid reduction in long-time territorial expansion of the Russians in the Caucasus. The most dramatic was the fate of nearly 300-thousand Russian population of the Chechen Republic from which the forced exodus has exceeded 90%. The most striking change in the ethnic structure of the population is observed in the “old Russian” regions of Chechnya, Ingushetia and

Dagestan. Over the last 50 years, not only the dominance of the Russian population but also the prevalence has been lost and in the 1990s, these trends increased significantly and in a number of "old Russian" areas almost complete exodus of the Russian population is observed [6].

4 Conclusions

1. The North Caucasus having a high population size is gradually losing its demographic advantages. The territories with both natural population decline and a negative migration balance are expanding. In the plain land regions, the falling migration gain does not compensate for the natural population decline.

2. Multi-ethnicity and derussification of the migration growth has considerably increased. The area of the positive migratory growth of the Russians and Armenians is falling rapidly. The migration of the rural ethnic groups into the cities is growing and the ethnic structure of those groups is being transformed.

3. The regions of the North Caucasus, being at the crossroads of inter-regional and cross-country migration flows fulfil the function of integration of different nations. Here, numerous ethnic cultures of numerous language groups interact (Slavic, Armenian, Iranian, Greek, German, Nakh-Dagestani, Abkhazian-Circassian, Turkic, etc.). At the same time, Russian population in all regions of the North Caucasus is rapidly going down.

4. Strengthening of multi-ethnicity in the plain land regions of the North Caucasus owing to the active settlement of the title peoples of the North Caucasus republics of the South Caucasus states, "pushing out" of the Russians from the old Russian regions, enhances inter-ethnic tensions, forms the hostile attitude of the local population to the ethnic migrants and growth of domestic aggression.

5. The Russians outflow from the republics prevents from the rapid revival of the industrial economy sectors. Areas of the Russians' mass exodus are a risk zone for the integrity of the Russian state and indicators of ethnic tensions proving the propagation of nationalist sentiments and actions, extremism and other extreme forms of ethnic tensions manifestations. The most negative result of this situation is the Russian center influence weakening and the spread of political, economic and religious expansion of the Muslim countries.

6. The impact of migration and ethno-demographic processes on the development and socio-economic stability in the North Caucasus regions is evident. The discrepancy between demographic and socio-economic well-being becomes a source of political instability in the republics. However, per capita income is falling behind the population growth, despite some economic recovery. High birth and life expectancy rates raise dependency burden on the economically active population, whose structure is now dominated by the unemployed. The location of regions with high birth rate and younger age structure of the population in one place requires the adequate response from the federal authorities. The socio-economic policy is to be set taking into account the regional conditions and specific measures aimed at eliminating contrasts in socio-economic development of the population are to be proposed taking into account the ethno-demographic characteristics.

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