

# Political and historical factors of the degradation of human capital in the Russian Altai

V A Dolzhikov<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Altai State University, 61 Lenina props., Barnaul 656049 Russia

E-mail: dolshikov@yandex.ru

**Abstract.** The article analyzes the causes and factors that cause the socio-demographic depression in the Russian part of the contemporary Greater Altai. The main conclusion is that the broader and sustainable development of human capital in the region is hampered by the crisis of the regional policy “center,” which has not been overcome to date.

**Keywords:** human capital, factors, region, Siberia

## 1. Introduction

The scientific relevance of studying this topic is associated with negative trends in the economy and demography of the region that have emerged in recent years (an outflow of highly educated, best-trained elite labor resources, rising death rates, declining birth rates, growing discontent and protest attitudes in society, etc.). In other words, there is a clear socio-demographic degradation in the region [1], [2], [3]. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to identify political and historical factors that have hindered and continue to hinder the sustainable expanded reproduction of human capital in the Russian Altai.

## 2. Land and Liberty

It seems that no matter what's the ruling regime in Russia, an attitude of the central government to the Altai region does not change. I note that there is a certain successive political constant in the striving of the bureaucratic “center” which all means prevents the dynamic development of the region. At the same time, the strategic importance of the territory designated for national self-realization is not taken into account. It is not surprising that the Russian folk mythology associated with Altai has its own ideal of alternative statehood in the form of a legend about the country of Freedom, also called “Belovodye” [6].

However, in their time, the Russian peasant pioneers, instead of the Land and Liberty, received from the Altai authorities a feudal socage obligation, which they were forced to work for centuries in favor of the illegitimate dynasty of the Royal House of Russia, the false Romanovs (Holstein-Gottorp). A dream of the Russian regional patriots about the future “Altai California” was not destined to be realized [4]. But even in the post-imperial period, when the Bolshevik Party usurped power in the country, the position of the peasants in the region changed for the worse.

Today, a few compatriots realize that the Stalin regime initiated the restoration of the formerly destroyed imperial system of serfdom (in the form of “collectivization”) immediately after his visit to

Altai in the winter of 1928 [5], [7]. Since that time, the region had been turned into a test site. And its residents had become the subject to experiments in this area.

To see this, just look at the current geographical map of the country. The administrative-territorial border in the western part of the region is marked by a straight line, similar to the former colonies of Africa. In 1937, the Stalinist regime separated from the region a part of the Kuznetsk Altai (now Kuzbass) and Rudny Altai, along with part of the steppe plain (now this land belongs to another country – the Republic of Kazakhstan).

It was during the period of total domination that the ruling elite of the Communist Party turned the Russian Altai into an ecologically unfavorable territory for life. Thus, the totalitarian communist power inflicted irreparable harm to the indigenous peoples of the region, and to Nature itself by its thoughtless placement near the “Pearl of Siberia” of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test and launch site for launching super-powered space rockets (Baikonur).

In post-Soviet Russia, a new generation of the Russian bureaucracy has emerged, which is just as cynical about the population of this territory as the previous generations of the “nettle seed.” In my opinion, today the main problem in the region is the barbaric attitude to the Russian Altai, which is settled somewhere deep in the subcortex of the bureaucratic nomenclature. This is evidenced by the “large-scale” projects of building a gambling center in Belokurikha, the construction of a whole cascade of hydropower stations on the beautiful Altai River (Katun), and the main gasline with a wide highway leading to communist China.

### **3. Colonial Regime and Economic Limitations**

The decision to build the Altai gas pipeline across the Ukok plateau with the simultaneous laying of a broadband highway in the PRC was made by the high-ranking Moscow officials. According to the established tradition, they are not accustomed to reflect on the possible environmental consequences for the region and for the country as a whole. I think it is still possible to understand the meaning of such actions of the state “center.” However, it is necessary to consider their long string in the general historical context of the regional policy of the domestic state power, carried out for decades and even centuries. The last of the above initiatives deserves close attention from the public. It is necessary, taking into account the realities and in the context of modern geopolitics, to decode the hidden meaning of this project. It would be more correct to talk about the upcoming laying of the trans-Eurasian highway, which does not lead from Russia to China, but quite the opposite, from China to the interior of Russia.

To a greater extent, this project is beneficial to the Chinese “comrades.” It is important for the further expansion of the transport infrastructure, designed to facilitate commodity, economic expansion. But its scale today should be cause for serious concern. It is not a secret that in the sales networks of the region and all of Siberia, products of Chinese, rather than domestic industry, dominate sales. A politico-demographic expansion will be possible very soon, which implies the growing reproduction of relevant communication opportunities. The experience of world history suggests that the cross-border expansion of any superpower begins with the construction of spacious and convenient roads leading to the object of the proposed seizure. Therefore, it is important to understand the historical reason for the long-standing situation in the region, which is fraught with seemingly even more tragic consequences.

Today, the reality is that all regions of Siberia, including Altai, do not have enough population. The demographic “hole” appeared in the central part of the country is not accidental (Western Siberia is the “Heartland” of the country). Practically all the regimes that have ever ruled in Russia, with rare exceptions, consciously or unconsciously, prevented the free development of the people of the Eurasian core of the country. The state power pursued here the policy of the so-called “penal colonization.” In Siberia were exiled all those who opposed the imperial regime. Such considerations guided the imperial bureaucracy and the communist nomenklatura that ruled in the USSR, which created the GULAG for penal labor. Controlling the movement of people to Siberia, representatives of the state power of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, who inherited the same “cannibalistic

policy,” hardly thought about its possible future consequences.

#### 4. Conclusion

So, the self-realization of human capital in the region is mainly hindered by the factors of the political and, in part, mental, psychological character. The problem of preservation and expanded reproduction of the main wealth of the region – the human capital, – first of all, is not solved due to the fact that the crisis of the regional policy of the state center has not been completed for many years.

#### References

- [1] Bogoviz A V, Lobova, S V, and Ragulina J V 2019 The cost and value of human capital in the modern digital economy *Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems* **57** pp 1224-1230
- [2] Bogoviz A V, Ragulina Y V, Alekseev A N, Anichkin E S, and Dobrosotsky V I 2018 Transformation of the role of human in the economic system in the conditions of knowledge economy creation *Advances in Intelligent Systems and Computing* **622** pp 673-680
- [3] Bogoviz A V, Ragulina, J V, Barcho, M K 2019 Influence of innovations on regional socio-economic development *Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems* **57** pp 1200-1207
- [4] Otpetyj V 1882 *Altai, the future California of Russia and the order reigning in Altai. Continued to the book “Northern Lights”* (Leipzig, Germany: Printing House Bera and Germanna)
- [5] Ozerova O A 2012 From the history of the trip I.V. Stalin to Siberia (1928) and its consequences for the region and Northern Kazakhstan *Omsk Scientific Herald (Historical sciences)* **3**(109) pp 19-22
- [6] Ostrovsky A B, and Chuvyurov A A 2011 Belovodye Old Believers of Altai *Bulletin of the Russian Christian Academy of Humanities* **12**(3) pp 8-14
- [7] Pavlova I V 1995 Stalin's trip to Siberia: Why to Siberia? *EKO* **2** pp 133-155