

## THE BASIN PRINCIPLE OF ADMINISTRATIVE-TERRITORIAL DIVISION AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO MODERN ETHNO-POLITICAL ZONING IN THE NORTH CAUCASUS (ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE KABARDINO-BALKARIAN REPUBLIC)

A.M. KHATUKHOV<sup>1</sup>, F.Zh. BEROVA<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> FSBI VO «Kabardino-Balkarian State University named after H.M. Berbekov»  
360004, KBR, Nalchik, st. Chernyshevsky, 173  
E-mail: bsk@kbsu.ru

<sup>2</sup> Institute of Computer Science and Problems of Regional Management –  
Branch of Federal public budgetary scientific establishment «Federal scientific center  
«Kabardino-Balkarian Scientific Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences»  
360000, KBR, Nalchik, 37-a, I. Armand St.  
E-mail: [ijpru@rambler.ru](mailto:ijpru@rambler.ru)

*The article discusses the problem of administrative-territorial division (ATD) of one of the national republics of the North Caucasus within Russia - Kabardino-Balkar Republic (KBR) based on a comprehensive (historical – demographic, ecological-geographical and economic) approach. Data on population censuses of different years, scientific works on the discussed topic and own materials on Geoecology and demography of KBR were used. The archaic character of the ATD of the region according to ethnopolitical principle is shown, It is argued that such a division of the republic's territory is a legacy of Russia's colonial policy in the North Caucasus in the 19th century and the command and administrative system of the Soviet period in the 20th century. Based on historical information, the sources of dismemberment of the predecessor of the KBR - Kabarda (the name of the KBR until 1922) on the ethno-political principle as one of the tools for solving the military-strategic task of weakening and "appeasing" it are highlighted.*

*The rejection and occupation by the Russian colonists of the plain part of Kabarda and the redistribution by the colonial administration of the remaining territory between the two indigenous ethnic groups (Kabardins and Balkars) with the infringement of one side and the encouragement of the other created a "three-story" contradictory structure: some on the plain, others on the foothills, the third in the mountains. Such a division was finally established as a result of the administrative-territorial reform of the 1920s and continues to form the formal basis of ATD of KBR. This fact, as well as the consolidation of the artificial division of Kabarda in the double name of the republic (Kabardino-Balkaria) periodically becomes the occasion for the demonstration of ostentatious separatist sentiments. The results of this study indicate that by the end of the twentieth century, due to the redistribution of the population and integration processes, the ethnic map of the KBR came into conflict with the ATD on an ethno-political basis. With this in mind, a new version of ATD of KBR based on the basin principle is proposed and justified, removing the interethnic contradictions generated by the previous division and guaranteeing the sustainable development of the republic.*

*The relevance of the study is because of the imperfection of the administrative-territorial division of the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic as the cause of interethnic contradictions has not yet become the subject of a special study.*

**Keywords:** North Caucasus, Kabardino-Balkarian Republic, ethnic map, administrative-territorial division, basin principle, sustainable development.

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#### **Information about the authors:**

**Khatukhov Aubekir Mikhailovich**, Candidate of Biological Sciences, Associate Professor of the Department of General biology, biodiversity and geo-ecology of Kabardino-Balkarian State University named after Kh.M. Berbekov.

360000, KBR, Nalchik, Chernyshevsky st, 173.

E-mail: aubekir\_hatuhov@mail.ru

**Berova Farizat Zhamalovna**, Doctor of Economic Sciences, leading staff scientist in department "Mathematical methods of research of complex systems and processes", Institute of Computer Science and Problems of Regional Management - a branch of the Federal State Budget Scientific Establishment "Federal Scientific Center "Kabardino-Balkarian Scientific Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences".

360000, KBR, Nalchik, I. Armand street, 37-a.

E-mail: berova@list.ru