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Article



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ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CENTRAL POLICY AND SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGIONS OF THE SOUTHERN AND NORTH CAUCASUS FEDERAL FEDERATION FOR THE SUCCESSFUL ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS SET FOR THEM

Abstract: the object of the research in the article is the analysis of the justified efforts of the heads of the regions of the North Caucasian and Southern Federal Districts for the period up to 2035 for the successful implementation of their plans for effective socio-economic development carried out in relation to the regions of the North Caucasian and Southern Federal Districts. The subject of the research are the elements of the above program, which, conflicting with regional specifics, hinder the achievement of the goals set in government documents. The time frame of the study is from 2018 to 2035. The main goal of the study, therefore, is to form an understanding of how the regional characteristics of the North Caucasian republics should be taken into account when formulating federal policy aimed at the socio-economic development of the regions. In order to achieve this goal, it is necessary to solve a number of problems, namely:

- a) analyze the State Program "Development of the North Caucasus Federal District", identify the main goals and methods for achieving the set goals;
- b) analyze the State Program "Development of the Southern Federal District", identify the main goals and methods for achieving the set goals;
- c) identify specific features of regions that prevent them from achieving their goals;
- c) propose specific ways of including regional specifics in the federal policy model in the North Caucasus and Southern Federal Districts.

Key words: responsibility, priority, technical regulation, certification, standardization, assortment, assortment policy, financial condition, profitability, profit, demand, preferences, relevance, competitiveness.

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Introduction

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Despite all the efforts of the federal center aimed at stabilizing the situation in the North Caucasus over the past almost twenty years, the region is still characterized by an extremely high level of tension between various social groups; and very often the direct consequence of this tension is open violence. The goals of state policy in relation to the North Caucasian republics have changed little over the past twenty years: among them, in one form or another, there have always been the elimination of destabilizing factors and the development of socio-economic infrastructure. 1 The constancy of the goals indirectly testifies to the failure of the policy pursued by Moscow. The conclusion is quite simple: if the policy pursued by the Center does not lead to reconciliation, political stabilization and sustainable economic development, then some extremely important aspects have not been taken into account in the development of the strategy for this policy. Initially, our assumption was that at least one of the factors that, not being included in the model of interaction with the North Caucasian republics, determines the unsatisfactory results of the policy pursued in recent years, is the cultural and ethnic aspect. However, the hypothesis about the failure to take into account the cultural specificity of the region as a reason for the failure of state policy was then rejected due to the fact that federal policy in the North Caucasus is a typical variant of the policy pursued by Moscow in relation to the regions of the Russian Federation: in the strategies of interaction with multi-ethnic regions that differ culturally from the European part of Russia, regional cultural specificity is fundamentally ignored. Thus, ignoring the cultural aspect is not a distinctive feature of the Center's attitude to the problems of the North Caucasus and their solution, but represents an all-Russian model of interaction with the regions. Moreover, it is worth noting that the economic characteristics of the regions, their economic potential, are not taken into account by federal experts to an

adequate extent; such important factors as the specificity of economic and political institutions of a particular region fall out of their field of vision, despite the fact that the existing institutions directly determine the effectiveness of the state policy. The federal center's disregard for local cultural and institutional features, which is a characteristic feature of the center's interaction with all regions of the Russian Federation, in the North Caucasus, however, has more serious consequences: incorrect assumptions and prerequisites laid down in the center's projects in relation to the North Caucasian republics not only fail to achieve the set goals, but also in some situations negatively affect the level of tension in the region. The problem of the study can be formulated as follows: it is assumed that cultural and economic features should be taken into account when forming a federal strategy for interaction with the regions of the North Caucasus and Southern Federal Districts, but how should local specifics be included in the sectoral state policy? The object of the study is the State Program of the Russian Federation "Development of the North Caucasian and Southern Federal Districts" for the period up to 2035 as an expression of the policy of the Federal Center, carried out in relation to the regions of the North Caucasian and Southern Federal Districts. The subject of the study are the elements of the above program, which, conflicting with regional specifics, hinder the achievement of the goals set in government documents. The time frame of the study is from 2018 to 2024. The main goal of the study, therefore, is to form an understanding of how the regional characteristics of the North Caucasian republics should be taken into account when formulating federal policy aimed at the socio-economic development of the region. In order to achieve this goal, it is necessary to solve a number of problems, namely:

analyze the State Program "Development of the North Caucasian and Southern Federal Districts", identify the main goals and methods for achieving the set goals;

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identify specific features of regions that hinder the achievement of set goals;

propose specific ways to include regional specifics in the federal policy model in the North Caucasus and Southern Federal Districts;

the structure of the work corresponds to the set tasks.

The main methodological approach used in this article is normative institutionalism, since it is this approach that allows us to look at the object of study (government documents as formal rules of the game and the practical application of government directives as informal rules) as an existing institution, to analyze the specifics of this institution, its normative features.

In order to successfully implement the objectives set out in the article, it will be necessary to rely on the following provisions of normative institutionalism: A broad understanding of institutions as external frames in which actors operate (It is possible to analyze how formal rules, in case of inconsistency with external conditions / internal inconsistency, turn into informal practices or standard operating procedures). Thus, the starting point for the analysis will be the definition of institutions given by J. March and J. Olsen (an institution as a relatively stable set of rules and organizational practices included in semantic structures, which, at the same time, has the property of invariance in relation to the change of political actors, as well as relative resistance to changes in the external environment and the preferences and expectations of individuals). Relative endogeneity of institutions (institutions are considered as relatively independent of individuals, i.e. are not reduced to the result of a social contract between representatives of the elites), have self-dynamics. Institutions operate not only with resources, but also participate in the creation of meanings, ethics, in the interpretation of life.

Analyzing the degree of development of the problem under study in the scientific community, it is worth noting that there are many studies concerning separately the cultural characteristics of the North Caucasian republics and regions of the Southern Federal District, separately the economic specifics, however, there are no comprehensive works that would link the specifics of the regions with the goals and methods of the state policy. In general, we can

say that the direction of policy analysis in Russian political science is just emerging. The main sources used in this article were the articles by S. Markedonov and E. Muratova, devoted to modernization processes in the North Caucasus and the Southern Federal District and the factors hindering them; articles by M. Eneyeva and I. Starodubrovskaya on the importance and possible directions of institutional changes in the regions, as well as the works of N. Zubarevich, devoted to the features of regional policy in modern Russia.

In this study, we are to formulate recommendations for the federal center regarding what previously unaccounted factors and how exactly should be taken into account when developing and implementing state policy in relation to the regions of the North Caucasus and Southern Federal Districts, first of all, namely:

Firstly, we believe it is important to conduct a high-quality and professional examination at the initial stage of formulating state policy in relation to the regions of the North Caucasus and the Southern Federal District, and it is important that not only representatives of the Moscow expert community, but also experts located directly in the region who know the local specifics, take part in the examination;

Secondly, the national strategy for the development of specific regions, which are essentially all regions of the Russian Federation, should be based on as complete a set of regional characteristics as possible, including economic, social, political and, no less important, cultural specifics. As we have already seen in the course of the analysis, ignoring any of the above factors can lead, at best, to the absence of positive changes, and, at worst, to the emergence of negative consequences that will be difficult to combat. It is characteristic that national strategies have such a mandatory part as a description of the problem situation, the most "acute" moments, but there is no description of regional specifics. It seems advisable to develop a kind of matrix, on the basis of which it would be possible to conduct a uniform expert assessment of the specifics of the regions in the above-mentioned areas;

Thirdly, it seems to us that the reform of law enforcement agencies in the North Caucasus and Southern Federal Districts is inevitable: when more than 90% of the region's population does not trust law enforcement agencies, this is a clear and tangible signal from the authorities to carry

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out active reforms. Further ignoring this problem and removing it from public political discourse will lead exclusively to negative consequences, possibly an increase in violence in the North Caucasus and Southern Federal Districts. We see the main directions of changes in the law enforcement sphere as follows, namely:

It is extremely important to increase the general level of erudition and broaden the horizons of law enforcement officers, they should be familiar with the cultural characteristics of the region through the introduction of mandatory courses on the culture of the North Caucasian republics and regions of the Southern Federal District, taught by civil sociologists and cultural scientists. It also seems to us essential to increase the percentage of "locals" among law enforcement officers. This measure will reduce tensions between the local population and the security forces, who will no longer be perceived exclusively as "external invaders" and enemies, and the problem of ignorance of local cultural traditions is automatically removed. The problem of the emergence of a "fifth column" is supposed to be solved in this case by increasing the general level of education of law enforcement officers, promoting civil rather than ethnic values among them. Law enforcement agencies in the North Caucasus and in the regions of the Southern Federal District should be under greater control of the Center or regional authorities, since in the current not entirely clear situation with the vertical of power, which de jure exists, but de facto does not function, it is often unclear who controls the actions of the security forces, and whether anyone controls them at all. In general, the task of protecting the population from the arbitrariness of the security forces, as in other regions of the Russian Federation, comes to the forefront, replacing the task of combating organized crime, characteristic of the 21st century;

fourthly, it is impossible not to note the need to build relations with regional elites according to new principles, since it is obvious that the existing model of resource distribution between key clans, in order to prevent a war of all against all, is not effective enough. In general terms, the Ministry of Regional Development can begin work on the main areas of interaction with regional elites with the involvement of the expert community;

Fifthly, it seems essential to prioritize funding infrastructure projects rather than aimless cash injections into the regions, and infrastructure projects should be understood in a slightly different way than the current government understands them. The need for infrastructure projects should also be assessed with the involvement of the expert community in various categories, among which there must be such a criterion as the need for the population and the ability of the population to use the new facility. Of particular importance for the regions of the North Caucasus Federal District and the Southern Federal District are social infrastructure facilities (education, medicine, etc.; it is in these indicators that the republics of the North Caucasus Federal District significantly lag behind the average Russian values and the regions of the Southern Federal District, and it is education and medicine that have a significant impact on the attitude of the population toward the government and satisfaction with life). In this context, N. Zubarevich suggests giving priority to social policy measures for the development of regions instead of investments in real sectors. According to the researcher, the state is not able to effectively invest in the real sector, while policies aimed at improving social capital (i.e. increasing the level of education, quality of medical services, etc.) bring truly positive results;

sixthly, the federal center's strategy must be changed in terms of job creation - to move from direct or indirect budget financing of new jobs to creating favorable conditions for entrepreneurial activity and increasing citizens' self-organization. This task is closely connected with reforming law enforcement agencies, and, in fact, is doomed without qualitative changes in the system of law enforcement agencies and legal proceedings, as the main guarantors of private property protection.

In conclusion of this section, we consider it necessary to recall the importance of institutional changes in the region, which are, in essence, fundamental, since no "sustainable development", declared as the main task in the Federal Target Program, is possible without normally functioning institutions. We believe that the most effective and adequate method is the competent combination of traditional institutions with all-Russian ones, so that the new institutions become an organic part of the cultural

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environment of the region and do not cause rejection.

The quality of life and well-being of the population, economic development potential and investment priority of the regions depend on the level of socio-economic development of the regions of the Southern and North Caucasian Federal Districts. Analysis of the socio-economic situation allows us to identify functional areas that are strategically important for the development of the territory, as well as positions for which more active actions should be taken to correct the position of the regions. The Southern Federal District is a federal district in the south of Russia formed by the presidential decree of May 13, 2000. The district included 6 subjects of the Russian Federation: the Republic of Adygea, the Republic of Kalmykia, Krasnodar Krai, Astrakhan, Volgograd and Rostov Regions. In accordance with the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation dated July 28, 2016 No. 375 "On the Southern Federal District", the Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol joined the federal district. The main features of the Southern Federal District are: - an outstanding transport and geographical position on the scale of Eurasia, due to the presence of the Volga-Caspian route from Central and Northern Europe to the countries of Central, South-West and South Asia, as well as the presence of the Trans-Siberian-Black Sea route connecting the countries of the Asia-Pacific region (China, Korea, Japan) with the countries of the Mediterranean basin; - the most favorable natural and climatic conditions and natural resource potential for living, recreation and agriculture; - a fairly strong industrial and production potential, occupying in some sectors of the agro-industrial complex. To determine the socio-economic situation of the regions, it is necessary to analyze the main socio-economic indicators. The population of the Southern Federal District is slightly less than 10 percent of the population of the Russian Federation and, despite some increase in recent years, according to the main demographic characteristics, the district has positive dynamics, although the rate of these changes is slightly lower than the Russian average.

Under the influence of the economic and geopolitical situation, the geographic focus of the food import segment of the Southern and North Caucasian Federal Districts has identified new

trends: — the emergence of new trading partners (import of tomatoes from Senegal, potatoes and onions from Pakistan, cheeses from Argentina, citrus fruits from Mexico); — an increase in the volume of import supplies from individual countries (apples and pears from South Africa, Brazil, Chile, Macedonia, vegetables from Azerbaijan and Iran). Thus, the development of the regions' economies is based on a favorable economic and geographical position, the availability of natural resources, historically favorable development conditions, high labor force availability, and developed transport infrastructure. At present, the economy of the Southern and North Caucasian Federal Districts maintains strong competitive positions in the all-Russian market for a fairly wide range of industrial goods, and also occupies one of the leading places in the production of agricultural products.

Despite all the efforts of the federal center aimed at stabilizing the situation in the North Caucasus and in the regions of the Southern Federal District over the past almost twenty years, the regions are still characterized by an extremely high level of tension between various social groups; and very often the direct consequence of this tension is open violence. The goals of state policy in relation to the North Caucasian republics have changed insignificantly over the past twenty years: among them, in one form or another, there have always been the elimination of destabilizing factors and the development of socio-economic infrastructure. The immutability of the goals indirectly testifies to the failure of the policy pursued by the center. The conclusion is quite simple: if the policy pursued by the center does not lead to reconciliation, political stabilization and sustainable economic development, then some extremely important aspects have not been taken into account in the development of the strategy for this policy. Initially, our assumption was that at least one of the factors that, not being incorporated into the model of interaction with the North Caucasian republics and regions of the Southern Federal District, determines the unsatisfactory results of the policy pursued in recent years, is the cultural and ethnic aspect. However, then the hypothesis about the lack of consideration of the cultural specificity of the regions as a reason for the failures of state policy was rejected due to the fact that the federal policy

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in the North Caucasian and Southern Federal Districts represents a typical variant of the policy pursued by the center in relation to the regions of the Russian Federation: in the strategies of interaction with multi-ethnic regions that differ culturally from the European part of Russia, regional cultural specificity is fundamentally ignored. Thus, ignoring the cultural aspect is not a distinctive feature of the Center's attitude to their problems and their solution, but represents an all-Russian model of interaction with the regions. Moreover, it is worth noting that the economic characteristics of the regions and their economic potential are not taken into account by federal experts to a sufficient extent; such important factors as the specifics of economic and political institutions of a particular region fall outside their field of vision, despite the fact that existing institutions directly determine the effectiveness of the state policy. The federal Center's disregard for local cultural and institutional characteristics, which is a characteristic feature of the Center's interaction with all regions of the Russian Federation, for the Southern and North Caucasian Federal Districts, however, has more serious consequences: incorrect assumptions and prerequisites laid down in the Center's projects in relation to these districts not only fail to achieve the set goals, but in some situations negatively affect the level of tension in the regions. The research problem can be formulated as follows: it is assumed that that cultural and economic characteristics should be taken into account when forming a federal strategy for interaction with the regions of the Southern and North Caucasian Federal Districts, but how should local specifics be included in industry-specific state policy?

Main part

In this article, we had to analyze the main goals set by the federal center when formulating the development strategy for the North Caucasian and Southern Federal Districts, as well as the methods by which this goal is supposed to be achieved. It should be immediately noted that the main object of analysis here will be the State Program of the Russian Federation "Development of the North Caucasian and Southern Federal Districts" for the period up to 2035, since this program includes the fundamental elements of "industry" federal target programs and local ones (the federal target

program for the socio-economic development of Ingushetia, Chechnya and Crimea), and also represents an adjusted continuation of completed target programs. This state program was adopted by the Government of the Russian Federation in 2020 and has already entered into force. Regional governments of the subjects of the North Caucasian and Southern Federal Districts, as well as the Ministry of Regional Development, took part in the drafting of the Program. The period of the program is supposed to be divided into three stages:

2020–2025 – the “initial stage”, during which legislative frameworks for more comfortable investment activities in the region should be developed and implemented, and the Federal Target Program “South of Russia” should be completed, the implementation of which “will create conditions that ensure financial discipline, transparency of state policy in the North Caucasus, rational use of federal resources, planning and control of budget expenditures”.

2026–2030 – the “main period”, during which it is planned to increase the investment attractiveness of the North Caucasus Federal District, commission the first stage of construction of tourist clusters in the North Caucasus, and create conditions for the transition of the North Caucasus Federal District to innovative socially oriented economic development.

2031 – 2035 – “forecast stage”, the details of which will be determined based on the results of the implementation of the main stage.

Also, the State Program of the Russian Federation "Development of the North Caucasus Federal District" for the period up to 2035 is divided into 11 thematic subprograms, dedicated respectively, namely:

- 1) increasing the investment attractiveness of the region;
- 2) development of the KavMinVody resort, Crimea and adjacent regions of Ukraine;
- 3) development of a tourism cluster in the North Caucasus and Southern Federal Districts;
- 4-10) ensuring sustainable socio-economic development of the regions of the North Caucasus and Southern Federal Districts;
- 11) ensuring the implementation of this state program and “other activities in the area of balanced territorial development.”

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The main objectives of the program are as follows:

Formation of conditions for the development of the real sector of the regional economy, for which it is proposed to attract investments, develop tourism clusters in which to increase capacity and the number of jobs, repurpose unused production capacities of the military-industrial complex and diversify production.

Improving the quality of life and well-being of citizens, which requires ensuring income growth, reducing unemployment, developing social infrastructure, and creating conditions for increasing the birth rate and reducing mortality.

Analyzing this program, the goals and objectives for the development of the regions of the North Caucasus Federal District and the Southern Federal District presented in it, one cannot help but note the "traditional" nature of the goals: to develop the economy through investment and improve the quality of life by increasing wages and building the necessary infrastructure. However, it is important to note here that, for example, the development of real sectors of the economy does not include goals for maintaining and developing small businesses - this goal is present only at the third, forecast stage. Thus, it turns out that the authorities consider the top priority to be increasing the investment attractiveness of the region, i.e. attracting capital from large companies to the North Caucasus Federal District and the Southern Federal District, and creating jobs at the expense of these companies, and not at the expense of developing small businesses and self-organization of citizens. That is why large funds are invested in subprograms for the development of tourist clusters. These are image mega-projects aimed at attracting investment, but the population of the North Caucasus Federal District and the Southern Federal District benefits much less from the implementation of such projects than if comparable funds, and most importantly, efforts, were directed at improving the business climate.

Among other things, it is important to note the vague nature of the methods for achieving the set goals, typical of state programs and strategies: responsibility for achieving the goals is shifted to regional authorities, who will have to report to the management for, for example, the number of jobs created during the planning period, while

regional authorities often do not have not only the resources to implement the set tasks, but also an idea of possible ways to solve the problems. This is one of the key shortcomings of both this state program and other government documents - the lack of clear instructions on what measures and in what sequence should be taken to achieve the results clearly spelled out in the program. Thus, the federal government sets fixed target indicators that regional authorities need to achieve, but does not specify the methods for achieving these indicators.

In other words, the goals of this program seem trivial, equally applicable to all subjects of the Russian Federation, but the adequacy of these methods to the existing problems and general goals should be questioned. Thus, solving the unemployment problem by increasing the number of jobs in the tourism sector seems to be a rather controversial undertaking: this sector of the economy is highly susceptible to seasonal fluctuations, the number of necessary personnel also depends on the occupancy of the resort with tourists. This leads to the key question: what will happen to the population of the North Caucasus regions working in the tourism sector if the resorts are insufficiently occupied? There are two possible scenarios: either employers keep "unnecessary" workers and ask the government for subsidies to maintain the level of employment, or the owners of resorts and service companies reduce the number of personnel. Both options imply a strong dependence of the population on the government in matters of employment, since either a citizen remains unemployed and depends on the benefits issued by the state, or the citizen's salary is paid by the state again, but indirectly - through subsidies to the owners of tourist clusters. In essence, the unemployment problem in this vein is solved through indirect funding of jobs by the state, which can in no way be called an adequate solution to the unemployment problem and the development of real sectors of the economy. In the analyzed state program, priority is given to large companies ready to invest in infrastructure projects, which in return can count on loyalty and various support from local authorities. However, the problem of small business development remains without due attention: in addition to the fact that small business development does not appear among the main tasks for the development of real sectors of the economy of the North

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Caucasus Federal District and the Southern Federal District, such undoubtedly important tasks as improving the business climate, strengthening control over regional law enforcement agencies, whose arbitrariness in most cases (and not only in the North Caucasus Federal District and the Southern Federal District), is the main threat to the development of the private sector in the economy, are also not included there.

In summing up the interim results of the chapter, it is important to note that the program prepared by the Ministry of Regional Development for the development of the North Caucasus Federal District and the Southern Federal District is superficial: the goals are banal and can be applied to any subject of the Russian Federation, the methods are not spelled out, the target indicators differ significantly from the current indicators, and some key features of the regions of the North Caucasus Federal District and the Southern Federal District were not taken into account by analysts when developing the program either due to carelessness or for reasons of political inexpediency.

Specific features of the regions of the North Caucasus and Southern Federal Districts, not taken into account in state policy. First of all, it is worth noting that the socio-economic and political problems characteristic of the republics of the North Caucasus and regions of the Southern Federal District, such as clannishness, corruption, shadow economy, high crime rate, lack of diversification of the economy, low level of productive forces and low qualification of the workforce, unemployment, a large number of officials, are the same for the Russian Federation as a whole, another issue is that all these problems are superimposed on the traditional lifestyle in the region and disregard for Russian legal norms.

According to the results of the study conducted by political geographers V.A. Kolosov and J. O'Loughlin, "the economic situation and unemployment occupy, in the opinion of respondents, the main place in the list of the most serious problems of the North Caucasus and the regions of the Southern Federal District. This is the opinion of 47.5% of survey participants. The state of the economy causes people more concern than armed conflicts and terrorist acts (17.0%), although it is these problems that receive especially much attention

in the media. The high level of corruption, closely related to the state of the economy, also occupies a more important place in the opinion of residents among the problems of the region than terrorism (21.0%). Quite a few people expressed concern about crime (8.9%). Interethnic strife and the desire of radical forces to withdraw their republics from the Russian Federation do not seem to respondents to be a pressing problem or seem to be a derivative of the unfavorable economic situation (only 3.5%)." However, it is precisely the problem of unemployment in the region that is being solved, perhaps, the least effectively: jobs are created by the efforts of the state, essentially through the increase in the already expanded bureaucracy and an indirect increase in the number of public sector employees. At the same time, a large percentage of the population (about half, according to Kolosov and O'Loughlin) considers itself poor and cannot afford to buy basic material goods. All this speaks to the need for a targeted fight against unemployment in the region, and not through the indirect creation of jobs by the state and placing the costs of maintaining new public sector employees on the shoulders of taxpayers, but through stimulating entrepreneurial activity, creating safe and comfortable conditions for running a small business. According to Irina Starodubrovskaya, "the problem is not so much unemployment (after all, there are enough jobs in agriculture, but young people are flocking to the cities), but the lack of social mobility, which, among other things, is one of the reasons for the spread of extremism. Obstacles arising from clannishness, from the closed nature of the social system - this is indeed a very serious factor." Thus, many researchers, mainly economists, pay attention to the specific institutional structure in the Caucasian republics, the combination of traditional institutions and modern rules and practices imposed from outside, while there are often cases when all-Russian institutions serve only as a cover for truly functioning traditional institutions, especially in matters of property. The infusion of funds into the region will not be effective without appropriate institutional reforms aimed at fundamentally changing the rules of life and creating truly functioning channels of social mobility, which, however, is impossible without taking into account local specifics - institutions imposed from above will not take root at best. According to the results of

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the study conducted by Kolosov and O'Loughlin, "The overwhelming majority of respondents do not trust federal government institutions and are much more skeptical about them than the Russian population as a whole." 92.1% of respondents do not trust the police, 93.3% do not trust the courts, and 95.7% do not trust the State Duma. As in other regions of Russia, including Moscow, people do not trust public organizations associated with instruments for achieving power by self-interested politicians (92.3%). Residents of the North Caucasus also have a strong distrust of international charitable organizations (93.3%).

Returning again to the topic of developing tourism clusters in the North Caucasus and Southern Federal Districts, it is necessary to pay attention to the economic feasibility of financing such projects, as well as to the premises from which the Ministry of Regional Development proceeded, justifying the need to support tourism in the North Caucasus. The investment attractiveness of tourism clusters in the North Caucasus and Southern Federal Districts is explained by officials by the presence of primary (natural) competitive advantages, i.e. certain natural and climatic characteristics, however, in world practice, secondary and tertiary advantages have a higher priority, for example, transport infrastructure, safety, and the presence of communications. According to these parameters, the resorts of the North Caucasus and Southern Federal Districts can be assessed ambiguously: the plenipotentiary representatives in the North Caucasus and Southern Federal Districts, commenting on the need for an integrated approach to the development of the region, spoke about the unbalanced development of the Caucasian territories, when tourism and social facilities are built in one place, and transport infrastructure and communications - in another, and it turns out that it is impossible to get to a school or a sanatorium. Experts call the demand for the resorts of the North Caucasus an even more problematic issue, since the Federal Targeted Program for the development of tourist clusters is apparently being implemented only on the basis of the availability of favorable climatic conditions, but not on the basis of ideas about who will be the end consumer of the provided sanatorium and ski services, and whether there will be demand for them at all. The question of where to get sufficiently qualified personnel for

sanatoriums and resorts also remains open, given the insufficient availability of educational institutions in the region, as well as the reluctance of qualified personnel from other parts of the Russian Federation to migrate to the North Caucasus and Southern Federal Districts due to the unstable and unsafe situation.

In terms of unrealisticness, the project to develop tourist clusters in the North Caucasus and the Southern Federal District is close to the goal of turning the region into a safe transport corridor linking the Russian Federation with Asia. This goal is specified in the analyzed state program for the development of the regions of the North Caucasus and Southern Federal Districts until 2035. Nevertheless, the threat of terrorist attacks, even if we consider that the real level of threat is much lower than the ideas disseminated by the media, as well as the high probability of inadequate behavior on the part of law enforcement officers in relation to transit transport, make the prospect of turning the North Caucasus and Southern Federal Districts into a transport artery of federal significance very vague. Federal policy to increase the investment attractiveness of the region faces similar difficulties: the lack of security guarantees, non-transparent business conditions, as well as repeated high-profile murders associated with the establishment of control over tourist clusters do not make the North Caucasus and Southern Federal Districts more attractive to private investors. The lack of initiative on the part of private investors, combined with the need to somehow develop the region, led to the emergence of the "North Caucasus Development Corporation", which finances regional infrastructure projects, such as the already mentioned tourist clusters, as well as the development of production capacities, using private investors' money and budget funds (and therefore with state guarantees). 26 100% of the corporation's shares belong to Vnesheconombank, which negatively affects the independence and efficiency of this corporation. The lack of transparency in the distribution of budget funds in the regions, coupled with the clan system of organizing society, which is deliberately supported from Moscow, continues to be a serious problem for the North Caucasus and Southern Federal Districts. Orders and resolutions of the federal center are not executed, budget funds are spent inappropriately - the

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situation is generally typical for all regions of the Russian Federation. Nevertheless, a distinctive feature of the Caucasian regions and the new regions of the Southern Federal District in this matter is an even lower level of control from Moscow: the myth of the omnipotence of the vertical of power, its effectiveness as a method of governance, is especially noticeably destroyed in the Caucasus. Federal control over the region is weaker than over other subjects of the federation, which is complicated by the need to find a compromise with disparate and conflicting regional elites, the need for financial support for these elites within the framework of the next stage of the "policy of pacification". According to N. Zubarevich, in the Russian Federation there is no unified strategy for interaction between the Center and the regions on all issues, but this problem especially concerns issues of financing. Thus, the greatest financial support is not always received by the regions in greatest need, but by those regions that have managed to build "special" relations with Moscow, such as Tatarstan or Chechnya, and whose leaders have the opportunity to convey their wishes to the Center.²⁸ The "personal relations" regime also has a negative impact on the effectiveness of social mobility, competitiveness and economic efficiency of regions. In addition, experts are unwilling to engage in assessing the regulatory impact in the regions of the North Caucasus and Southern Federal Districts, due to concerns for their own lives and safety in the event of financial and legal inconsistencies. At first glance, it may seem that clannishness is the only socio-cultural characteristic that is taken into account in the model of interaction between the federal center and the regions of the North Caucasus and Southern Federal Districts, however, this is not entirely true. Focus on the clan system is typical of Moscow's policy towards all Russian regions and is not a distinctive feature of the "Caucasian" and Southern Federal District policies, since the practice of appeasing regional elites is widespread not only in the Caucasus, but also in other constituent entities of the Russian Federation. In other words, the fact that Moscow takes into account the traditional structure of Caucasian societies and regions of the Southern Federal District does not indicate exclusively a consciously adopted model of interaction, since such a practice is widespread throughout the country.

Among the cultural features of the region that are not taken into account in the state policy, we suggest taking a particularly close look at the factor of regional political culture. This factor influences not only the specifics of voting in the region, although it is also worth paying attention to.²⁹ Thus, the Caucasian republics are characterized by a more conformist vote, expressed in high support for the current government, as well as the widespread use of administrative resources and other "dirty" election technologies, even violence, especially at the municipal level. A large percentage of unemployed people and the overwhelming majority of the population employed in the public sector are also very convenient social groups from the point of view of governance. Such characteristics of regional political culture as lack of trust in the government, unwillingness to participate in the political life of the country allow us to characterize this political culture as patriarchal (traditional). It is curious that today we can say that the federal government, in principle, does not take into account the peculiarities of regional political cultures, preferring to shift this non-trivial task onto the shoulders of regional authorities, who are much more familiar with the specifics of the region.

The federal government also generally ignores the religious characteristics of the regions when formulating state policy. The ignoring of the religious characteristics of the North Caucasian regions is especially evident in regular conflicts between believers and law enforcement agencies, and, as has been said earlier, the problems of arbitrariness on the part of the security forces are hushed up on principle, and the issues of reforming the management of the security forces in the North Caucasus Federal District are not raised in the public space. The discontent of the population of the Caucasian republics is caused by the fact that the employees of the security forces are mainly ethnic Russians who do not know local traditions, customs, and religious norms, which leads to many problems. At the same time, the leadership of the security forces is not eager to accept a large number of local residents into their ranks, fearing the emergence of a "fifth column" among law enforcement officers. In summary, it is important to note that there are many economic, social, political and cultural factors that are not taken into account in the state policy towards the

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regions of the North Caucasus and South Caucasus Federal Districts, which in turn leads to at least failure to achieve the set goals, and at most to an escalation of the conflict, exacerbated, for example, by the confrontation between local residents and culturally alien security forces. The quality of life and well-being of the population, the economic development potential and investment attractiveness of the region depend on the level of socio-economic development of the regions of the South and North Caucasus Federal Districts. An analysis of the socio-economic situation allows us to identify functional areas that are strategically important for the development of the territory, as well as positions for which more active actions should be taken to correct the position of the region.

The Southern Federal District is a federal district in the south of Russia, formed by the presidential decree of May 13, 2000. The district included 6 subjects of the Russian Federation: the Republic of Adygea, the Republic of Kalmykia, Krasnodar Krai, Astrakhan, Volgograd and Rostov Oblasts. In accordance with the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of July 28, 2016 No. 375 "On the Southern Federal District", the Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol joined the federal district.

The main features of the Southern Federal District are:

an outstanding transport and geographical position on the scale of Eurasia, due to the presence of the Volga-Caspian route from Central and Northern Europe to the countries of Central, South-West and South Asia, as well as the presence of the Trans-Siberian-Black Sea route, connecting the countries of the Asia-Pacific region (China, Korea, Japan) with the countries of the Mediterranean basin;

the most favorable natural and climatic conditions and natural resource potential for living, recreation and agriculture;

a fairly powerful industrial and production potential, occupying leading positions in the country in some sectors of the agro-industrial complex, agricultural engineering, metallurgy, chemistry and petrochemistry, and the food industry.

To determine the socio-economic situation of the region, it is necessary to analyze the main socio-economic indicators. The population of the Southern Federal District is slightly less than 10 percent of the population of the Russian Federation and, despite some increase in recent years, the district has positive dynamics in terms of its main demographic characteristics, although the rate of these changes is slightly lower than the Russian average (Table 1).

Table 1. Population dynamics of the Southern Federal District for 2018–2023

	2018	2020	2021	2023
Population, thousand people	13910	13964	14044	16434
Absolute change, thousand people	-	54	80	2430
Relative change, %	-	100.38	100.57	117.01

According to regional statistics, the population of the Southern Federal District in 2016 was 16,434 thousand people. As can be seen from the data obtained, the region has positive dynamics and the population is growing every year. A particularly striking indicator of such dynamics is observed in 2016, when the population increased by 17 percent, mainly due to the annexation of the Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol to the region. However, the dynamics of real monetary incomes of the district's population in 2018 was ahead of the Russian average, but in 2020 the indicator decreased by 2.5%.

The industrial and agricultural sectors have a positive impact on the overall economic situation in the Southern Federal District. The Southern Federal District, being in more favorable natural and climatic conditions compared to other regions of the country, plays a key role in ensuring food security of the Russian Federation. Almost one sixth of all the country's sown areas are concentrated here, where about a quarter of the all-Russian gross harvest of grain crops, half of the total sunflower seed harvest, and almost a fifth of the vegetable harvest are grown.

The data obtained show that the Southern Federal District ranks 3rd in terms of agricultural

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production in 2023. The annual dynamics of the share over the past three years are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Dynamics of the Southern Federal District's share in agricultural production

	2018 year	2021 year	2023 year
The share of the Southern Federal District in the total volume of agricultural production of all agricultural producers in Russia, %	15.3	15.2	19
Absolute change	-	-0.1	3.8

The data obtained show positive dynamics. The sharp increase in the share, in the amount of 3.8 percentage points in 2023, probably occurred due to the inclusion of agriculture in the Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. But as before, the main, leading agro-industrial complex in Russia in the Southern Federal District remains the Rostov Region. In terms of agricultural land area, the region ranks third, in terms of crop area - second, in terms of rural population - fourth in the Russian Federation.

The development of the region's agro-industrial complex requires large infusions of funds and financial flows aimed at developing the industry. Having analyzed the strategy for the socio-economic development of the Southern Federal District until 2023, we can identify the main problems of developing the agro-industrial complex:

low rate of introduction of modern technologies into crop production and agriculture;

deterioration of soil fertility and ecology;

low yields of agricultural crops.

The external economic activity of the Southern Federal District with the world economy is determined by its geostrategic position. The vector of development of foreign economic activity of the district is characterized by the dominant export of raw materials and primary processed products and the import of goods with higher added value. The successful adaptation of the district to the conditions of Russia's membership in the WTO was largely due to the improvement of the quality of manufactured products, R & D, industry diversification of production, improvement of mechanisms of interregional economic interaction, and the effective establishment of various forms of international cooperative production. The external trade turnover of the Southern Federal District has a downward trend. Compared to 2018, the turnover decreased in 2021 by almost 10 billion US dollars, in 2023, the foreign trade turnover increased by 1% compared to 2021.

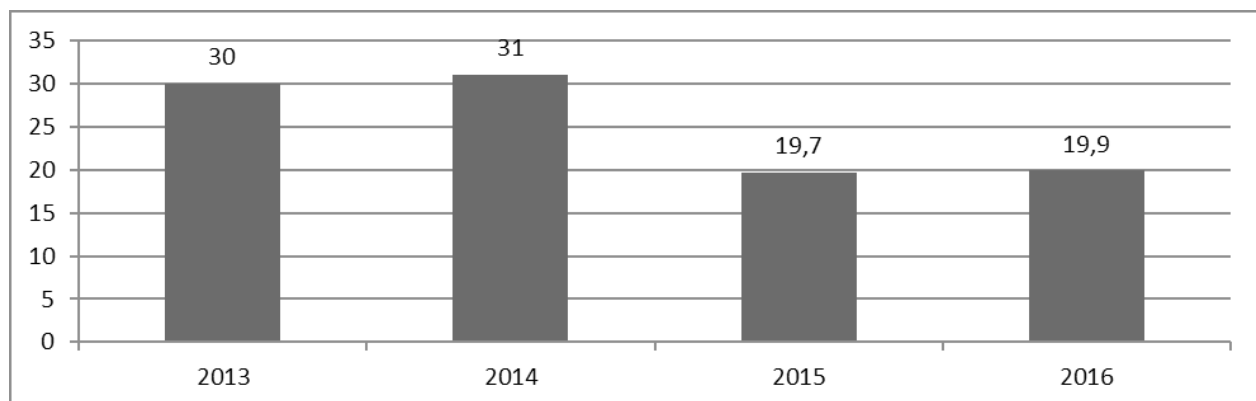


Figure 1. Foreign trade turnover of the Southern Federal District, billion US dollars

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 JIF = 1.500

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The volume of foreign trade export transactions carried out in the district in 2021 increased by 4% compared to 2018. In 2023, the value of exports from the Southern Federal District is estimated at \$12.8 billion, including \$10.7 billion to non-CIS countries (in 2021:

\$10.2 billion), and \$2.1 billion to the CIS countries (in 2021: \$1.6 billion). The largest trading partners in the export of the Southern Federal District are: Turkey, Italy, Ukraine, Egypt, Korea, Israel, Malta, Switzerland, Saudi Arabia.

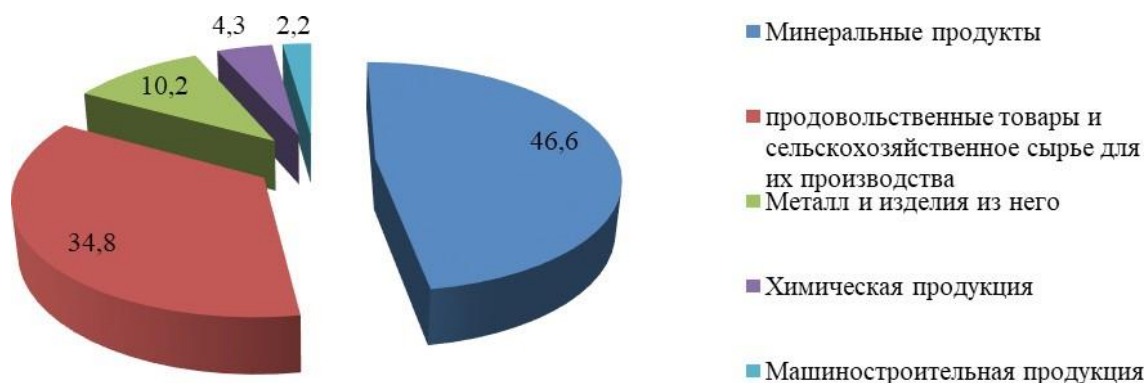


Figure 2. Commodity structure of the value of exports of the Southern Federal District in 2023, %

The commodity structure of exports is mainly represented by mineral products, food products and agricultural raw materials for their

production, metals and metal products, chemical and engineering products.

Table 3. Dynamics of the value of exports of the Southern Federal District

	2018	2021	2022	2023
Import value, billion US dollars	16.6	15.1	8.9	7.1
Change compared to previous year, %	-	-9	-41.3	-20.2

The sharp decline in imports in 2021 and the continuing trend occurred due to the instability of the national currency exchange rate. The Russian ruble during this period has a greater chance of weakening than growing, due to which imported goods have become more expensive in

proportion to currency fluctuations. As a result, the district's total imports have decreased by more than 50% over the past 3 years.

The commodity structure of imports is presented in Figure 3.

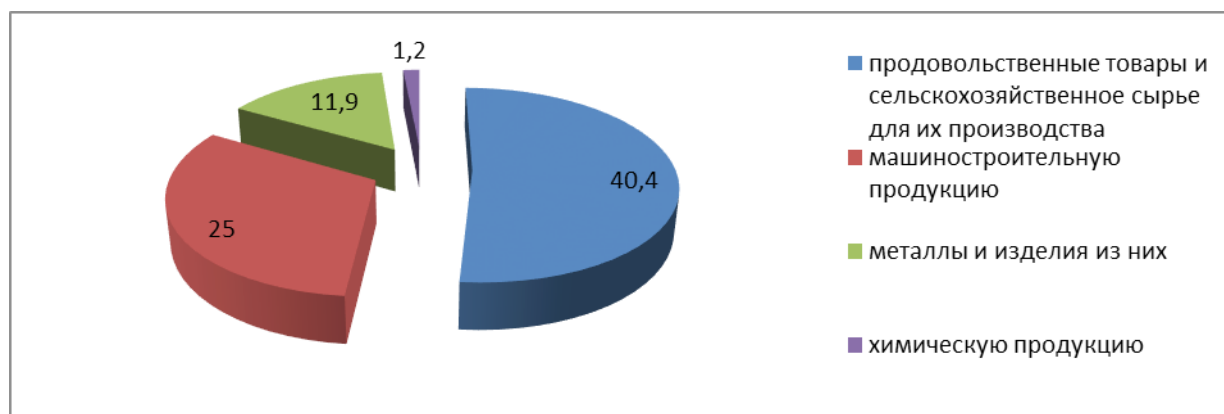


Figure 3. Commodity structure of imports in 2023, %

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Under the influence of the economic and geopolitical situation, the geographic focus of the food import segment of the Southern Federal District has identified new trends:

the emergence of new trading partners (import of tomatoes from Senegal, potatoes and onions from Pakistan, cheeses from Argentina, citrus fruits from Mexico);

increasing the volume of imports from individual countries (apples and pears from South Africa, Brazil, Chile, Macedonia, vegetables from Azerbaijan, Iran).

Thus, the development of the region's economy is based on a favorable economic and

geographical position, the availability of natural resources, historically favorable conditions for development, a high level of labor resources, and a developed transport infrastructure.

At present, the economy of the Southern Federal District maintains a strong competitive position in the all-Russian market for a fairly wide range of industrial goods, and also occupies one of the leading positions in the production of agricultural products. Light industry, oriented to a large extent towards deliveries to other regions of the country, has developed significantly in the district (table 4, figure 4).



Figure 4 – Federal districts of the Russian Federation

Table 4. The number of permanent population of the Southern Federal District as of 01.01.2024.

	Area of the territory, thousand sq. km	Population as of 01.01.2024, people
Central Federal District Center – Moscow	650.2	39 104 400
Northwestern Federal District Center – Saint Petersburg	1,687.0	13 901 069
Southern Federal District Center – Rostov-on-Don	447.8	16 434 898
North Caucasian Federal District Center – Pyatigorsk	170.4	9 997 336
Volga Federal District Center – Nizhny Novgorod	1,037.0	28 844 264
Ural Federal District Center – Yekaterinburg	1 818,5	12 294 961
Siberian Federal District Center – Novosibirsk	4 361,7	16 889 404
Far Eastern Federal District Center – Vladivostok	6 952,6	8 091 244

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Table 5. Area of the territory and population of the regions of the Southern Federal District as of 01.01.2024

Area of the territory, thousand sq. km		Population as of 01.01.2024, people
Republic of Adygea Center – Maykop	7.8	468 340
Republic of Kalmykia Center – Elista	74.7	267 756
Republic of Crimea Center – Simferopol	26.1	1 896 393
Krasnodar region Center – Krasnodar	75.5	5 687 378
Astrakhan region Center - Astrakhan	49.0	989 430
Volgograd region Center – Volgograd	112.9	2 449 781
Rostov region Center – Rostov-on-Don	101,0	4 153 763
Sevastopol city City of federal significance	0.9	522 057

Table 6. General results of migration of the population of the Southern Federal District as of 01.01.2024

	Number arrivals	of	Number dropouts	of	Migration increase, decrease (-)
Southern Federal District	57 065		61 331		-4 266
Republic of Adygea	2 866		3 564		-698
Republic of Kalmykia	1 352		1 522		-170
Republic of Crimea	6 514		6 496		18
Krasnodar region	21 297		20 577		720
Astrakhan region	2 526		3 185		-659
Volgograd region	6 348		8 045		-1 697
Rostov region	13 739		15 019		-1 280
Sevastopol city	2 423		2 923		-500

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Table 6. Area of the territory and number of permanent population of the North Caucasus Federal District as of 01.01.2024.

№	Флаг	Субъект Федерации	Площадь (км²)	Население (чел.)	ВРП, млрд.руб. (2016 ^[1])	ВРП на душу населения, тыс.руб./чел. (2016 ^[4])	Админ. центр и его население (чел.)
4		Карачаево-Черкесская Республика	14 277	↗469 865 ^[1]	73,2	156,6	Черкесск (113 226 ^[1])
6		Ставропольский край	66 160	↗2 907 593 ^[1]	651,9	232,6	Ставрополь (547 443 ^[1])
3		Кабардино-Балкарская Республика	12 470	↗904 200 ^[1]	132,7	153,7	Нальчик (247 054 ^[1])
1		Республика Дагестан	50 270	↗3 182 054 ^[1]	597,1	197,1	Махачкала (623 254 ^[1])
2		Республика Ингушетия	3123	↗509 541 ^[1]	50,9	106,8	Магас (15 271 ^[1])
7		Чеченская Республика	16 171	↗1 510 824 ^[1]	166,7	118,7	Грозный (328 533 ^[1])
5		Республика Северная Осетия — Алания	7987	↘687 357 ^[1]	125,5	178,4	Владикавказ (295 830 ^[1])

Table 7. General results of population migration in the North Caucasian Federal District as of 01.01.2024

	Human			Per 1000 population		
	born	dead	natural increase (+), decrease (-)	born	dead	natural increase (+), decrease (-)
Russian Federation	320376	584652	-264276	8.9	16.3	-7.4
North Caucasian Federal District	31099	25798	+5301	12.6	10.5	+2.1
Republic of Dagestan	10055	5072	+4983	12.9	6.5	+6.4
Republic of Ingushetia	1900	556	+1344	14.7	4.3	+10.4
Kabardino-Balkarian Republic	2370	2633	-263	11.0	12.3	-1.3
Karachay-Cherkess Republic	1040	1530	-490	9.1	13.4	-4.3
Republic of North Ossetia - Alania	1835	2694	-859	10.8	15.9	-5.1
Chechen Republic	7831	2431	+5400	20.9	6.5	+14.4
Stavropol Krai	6068	10882	-4814	8.9	15.9	-7.0

Table 8. Results of population migration in the North Caucasian Federal District as of 01.01.2024

	Number of arrivals, people	In % to Q1 2023	Number of people who left, people	In % to Q1 2023	Migration increase (+), decrease (-), people
Russian Federation	855695	92.5	906370	104.1	-50675
North Caucasian Federal District	36133	96.2	40513	99.8	-4380
Republic of Dagestan	9638	105.0	10695	101.5	-1057
Republic of Ingushetia	1593	88.2	1170	88.1	+423
Kabardino-Balkarian Republic	2276	105.8	3017	120.6	-741

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Karachay-Cherkess Republic	2772	101.6	2717	97.8	+55
Republic of North Ossetia - Alania	1533	115.0	2240	97.9	-707
Chechen Republic	2996	94.5	3795	106.5	-799
Stavropol Krai	15325	89.1	16879	95.9	-1554

Table 9. Migration flows with the countries of the Far Abroad and the CIS member states and with the regions of the North Caucasian Federal District as of 01.01.2024

	With foreign countries			With CIS member states		
	number of arrivals	number of dropouts	migration increase (+), decrease (-)	number of arrivals	number of dropouts	migration increase (+), decrease (-)
Russian Federation	13987	23657	-9670	141120	182125	-41005
North Caucasian Federal District	772	1434	-662	3352	5859	-2507
Republic of Dagestan	35	68	-33	818	1195	-377
Republic of Ingushetia	10	4	+6	111	55	+56
Kabardino-Balkarian Republic	388	606	-218	156	406	-250
Karachay-Cherkess Republic	18	24	-6	270	139	+131
Republic of North Ossetia - Alania	65	122	-57	182	179	+3
Chechen Republic	15	39	-24	198	289	-91
Stavropol Krai	241	571	-330	1617	3596	-1979

Table 10. The number of unemployed citizens registered with employment service agencies for the purpose of finding suitable work for the regions of the North Caucasus Federal District as of 01.01.2024

	Number of citizens unemployed, thousand people	IN %		Of these, registered unemployed	
		by March 2023	to sum it up	thousand people	in % of the total
Russian Federation	838.3	41.9	100	665,0	100
North Caucasian Federal District	149.8	42.6	17.9	141.7	21.3
Republic of Dagestan	29.2	38.5	3.5	26.8	4.0
Republic of Ingushetia	35.3	76.2	4.2	35.1	5.3
Kabardino-Balkarian Republic	10.3	22.4	1,2	9.6	1.4
Karachay-Cherkess Republic	4.1	79.5	0.5	2.9	0.4
Republic of North Ossetia - Alania	4.6	27.8	0.6	4.1	0.6
Chechen Republic	53.0	50.6	6.3	52.0	7.8
Stavropol Krai	13.1	23.1	1.6	11.1	1.7

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	GIF (Australia)	= 0.564	ESJI (KZ)	= 8.100	IBI (India)	= 4.260
	JIF	= 1.500	SJIF (Morocco)	= 7.184	OAJI (USA)	= 0.350

Table 11. Migration flows with the countries of the Far Abroad and with the CIS member states and with the regions of the North Caucasian Federal District as of 01.01.2024

	With foreign countries			With CIS member states		
	number of arrivals	number of dropouts	migration increase (+), decrease (-)	number of arrivals	number of dropouts	migration increase (+), decrease (-)
Russian Federation	13987	23657	-9670	141120	182125	-41005
North Caucasian Federal District	772	1434	-662	3352	5859	-2507
Republic of Dagestan	35	68	-33	818	1195	-377
Republic of Ingushetia	10	4	+6	111	55	+56
Kabardino-Balkarian Republic	388	606	-218	156	406	-250
Karachay-Cherkess Republic	18	24	-6	270	139	+131
Republic of North Ossetia - Alania	65	122	-57	182	179	+3
Chechen Republic	15	39	-24	198	289	-91
Stavropol Krai	241	571	-330	1617	3596	-1979

As the main methodological approach, we use normative institutionalism, since it is this approach that allows us to look at the results of research (government documents as formal rules of the game and the practical application of government directives as informal rules) as an existing institution, and to analyze the specifics of this institution. For the successful implementation of the tasks set, it will be necessary to rely on the following provisions of normative institutionalism:

1. A broad understanding of institutions as external frames in which authors act (it is possible to analyze how formal rules, in case of inconsistency with external conditions / internal inconsistency), turn into informal practices or standard operating procedures. Thus, the starting point for the analysis will be the definition of institutions given by J. March and J. Olsen (an institution as a relatively stable set of rules and organizational practices included in semantic structures, which at the same time has the property of invariance in relation to the change of political authors, as well as relative stability to changes in the external environment and the preferences and expectations of individuals)

2. Relative endogeneity of institutions (institutions are considered as relatively independent of individuals, i.e. they are not reduced to the result of a social contract between representatives of the elites, they have self-dynamics). Institutions operate not only with resources, but also participate in the creation of meanings, ethics, and in the interpretation of life.

3. Analyzing the degree of development of the problem under study in the scientific community, it is worth noting that there are many studies concerning separately the cultural characteristics of these regions

of the two districts, separately the economic specifics, but there are no comprehensive works that would link the specifics of the region with the goals and methods of the state policy being conducted. In general, we can say that the direction of policy analysis in Russian political science is only just emerging. As the main sources, we used the works of S. Markedonov⁴ and E. Muratova, devoted to modernization processes in these regions and the factors hindering them; articles by M. Eneyeva and I. Starodubrovskaya⁷ on the importance and possible directions of institutional changes in the regions, as well as the works of N. Zubarevich, devoted to regional policy in modern Russia.

4. Analysis of the State Programs "Development of the North Caucasus and Southern Federal Districts" until 2035.

Conclusion

As a result, we will have to formulate recommendations for the federal center regarding what previously unaccounted factors and how exactly they should be taken into account when developing and implementing state policy in relation to the regions of the Southern and North Caucasian Federal Districts:

first of all, we think it is important to conduct a high-quality and professional examination at the initial stage of formulating state policy in relation to the regions of the Southern and North Caucasian Federal Districts. It is important that not only representatives of the Moscow expert community take part in the examination, but also experts located directly in the regions, who know the local specifics;

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secondly, the national strategy for the development of specific regions, which are essentially all regions of the Russian Federation, should be based on as complete a set of characteristics of the region as possible, including economic, social, political and, no less important, cultural specifics. As we have already seen in the course of the analysis, ignoring any of the above factors can lead, at best, to the absence of positive changes, and, at worst, to the emergence of negative consequences that will be difficult to combat. It is characteristic that national strategies have such a mandatory part as a description of the problem situation, the most "acute" moments, but there is no description of regional specifics. It seems advisable to develop a kind of matrix, on the basis of which it would be possible to conduct a uniform expert assessment of the specifics of the region in the above-mentioned areas;

Thirdly, it seems to us that the reform of law enforcement agencies in the regions of the Southern and North Caucasian Federal Districts is inevitable: when more than 90% of the region's population does not trust law enforcement agencies, this is a clear and tangible signal from the authorities to carry out active reforms. Further ignoring this problem and removing it from the public political discourse will lead exclusively to negative consequences, possibly an increase in violence in these districts. We see the main directions of changes in the law enforcement sphere as follows: it is extremely important to increase the general level of erudition and broaden the horizons of law enforcement officers, they must be familiar with the cultural characteristics of the region through the introduction of mandatory courses on the culture of the North Caucasian republics taught by civilian sociologists and cultural scientists. It also seems to us significant to increase the percentage of "locals" among law enforcement officers. This measure will lead to a decrease in tension between the local population and the security forces, who will no longer be perceived exclusively as "external invaders" and enemies, in addition, the problem of ignorance of local cultural traditions is automatically removed. The problem of the emergence of a "fifth column" is supposed to be solved in this case by increasing the general level of education of law enforcement officers, promoting civil rather than ethnic values among them. Law enforcement agencies in the regions of the Southern and North Caucasian Federal Districts should be under greater control of the Center or regional authorities, since in the current not entirely clear situation with the vertical of power, which de jure exists, but de facto does not function, it is often unclear who controls the actions of the security forces, and whether anyone controls them at all. In general, the task of protecting the population from the arbitrariness of the security forces, as in other regions of the Russian Federation, comes to the forefront, replacing the task of combating organized crime,

characteristic of the noughties of the 21st century. In this regard, one cannot fail to note the need to build relationships with regional elites according to new principles, since it is obvious that the existing model of distributing resources between key clans in order to prevent a war of all against all is not effective enough. In general terms, the Ministry of Regional Development can begin work on the main areas of interaction with regional elites with the involvement of the expert community.

Fourthly, finally, it seems essential to prioritize funding infrastructure projects rather than aimless cash injections into the region, and infrastructure projects should be understood in a slightly different way from the current government's understanding. The need for infrastructure projects should also be assessed with the involvement of the expert community in various categories, among which there must be such a criterion as the population's need and the population's ability to use the new facility. Of particular importance for the regions of the North Caucasus Federal District and the Southern Federal District are social infrastructure facilities (education, medicine, etc.; it is in these indicators that the regions of the Southern Federal District and the North Caucasus Federal District significantly lag behind the Russian average, and it is education and medicine that have a significant impact on the population's attitude to the government and satisfaction with life). In this context, N. Zubarevich suggests giving priority to social policy measures for the development of regions instead of investments in the real sector. According to the researcher, the state is unable to effectively invest in the real sector, while the policy aimed at improving social capital (i.e. increasing the level of education, quality of medical services, etc.) brings truly positive results. The strategy of the federal center must also be changed in terms of job creation - to move from direct or indirect budget financing of new jobs to creating favorable conditions for entrepreneurship, increasing self-organization of citizens. This task is closely related to the reform of law enforcement agencies, and, in fact, is doomed without qualitative changes in the system of law enforcement agencies and legal proceedings, as the main guarantors of the protection of private property. We believe it is necessary to recall the importance of institutional changes in the region, which, in fact, are fundamental, since no "sustainable development" declared as the main task in the Federal Target Program is possible without normally functioning institutions. We believe that the most effective and adequate method is the competent combination of traditional institutions with all-Russian ones, so that the new institutions become an organic part of the cultural environment of the region and do not cause rejection.

In conclusion, I would like to note that the strategic government documents on interaction with the regions of the North Caucasus and Southern

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Federal Districts can be called insufficiently developed and of insufficient quality, namely:

Firstly, the degree of possible regulatory impact is reduced due to the absence of specific methods for achieving the set goals in the national program, despite the fact that the goals are very specific. Such a combination of specific goals and "vague" methods leads to the shifting of responsibility for achieving the goals exclusively to regional authorities, which are forced to independently develop methods for achieving target indicators;

Secondly, a characteristic feature of government strategies is the fundamental disregard for regional specifics: despite the presence in program documents of a description of key regional problems, an analysis of regional specifics (institutional, cultural, social) is present only at the level of a "brief reference" about the region, which is certainly not enough to develop an adequate strategy for socio-economic development.

It is curious that the analyzed strategic documents ignore not only the cultural characteristics of the North Caucasus region, which have a very serious impact on all spheres of life of these societies through existing institutional structures, but also socio-economic characteristics, such as the causes of unemployment and the specifics of employment in the region or the presence of demand for health resort and tourist services. All the factors listed above, as well as many others, have a significant impact on both the process of implementing the strategy and the possible results of its implementation. In other words, without a comprehensive preliminary analysis of regional specifics, the development of a national strategy for the socio-economic development of the regions of the North Caucasus Federal District and the Southern Federal District looks like a political adventure.

Initially, we were guided by the assumption that some important factors are not taken into account in the state policy towards the regions of the North Caucasus Federal District and the Southern Federal District, which negatively affect the results of the policy. It was assumed that the Center ignores cultural specifics because of their complexity and ambiguous influence on socio-economic processes, or because culture is not a "sphere of interest" of the Ministry of Regional Development, which is responsible for territorial development, however, it was discovered that the institutional characteristics of the region are also not taken into account in strategic documents. As a result, the results of applying the same measures in the North Caucasus and in other parts of the Russian Federation may differ significantly, at least due to differences in the informal rules of the game, in stable working procedures. However, the socio-economic characteristics of the North Caucasian republics, which are directly related to the jurisdiction of this department, are analyzed by the Ministry of Regional Development in strategic documents that are far from exhaustive. Ignoring regional specifics is not a distinctive feature of the Center's policy exclusively in relation to the Caucasus: regional cultural and institutional characteristics are not taken into account in the development of federal strategies and target programs in principle, in relation to all regions of the Russian Federation. Another thing is that in the case of the North Caucasus and the regions of the Southern Federal District, disregard for cultural and political-economic specifics is superimposed on significantly more complex conditions and leads to significantly more serious consequences – in the North Caucasus, in Sochi and in Crimea, regional characteristics simply cannot be ignored.

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