

Macro-regional system development of Yugra cities

A. Vykhodtcev, N. Voitik, I. Akhmedova, Tyumen State University, Russia*

Introduction

Nowadays Khanty-Mansy Autonomous District is the most urban area in Russia and the Eurasian continent. The area with severe climatic conditions and rich oil resources attracts labour migrants. During the resources development no one knew that after a time big cities would grow there, gradually becoming urban agglomerations. Natural, economic and ecological features of Yugra make us looking at the development of the urbanization process.

Historical aspects of urbanization in Yugra

The first settlements appeared on the territory of Yugra in the upper Paleolith, for example, the unique ancient Neolithic hillfort of Amna in the pool of the Kazim River in Northern Eurasia. In the first half of the 1st Millennium BC there were large settlements of 30-40 homes up to 300-350 people in communities (History..., 1999, Essays..., 2000, Yugra... 2001).

War was a constant fact of people's life in the north of Western Siberia. First hillforts – fortified settlements – were being built at the beginning of the 1st Millennium BC.

In the Middle Ages the Principalities of Yugra were formed, quite small groups of peoples close by the origin and language lived nearby one river system. Those times the unfortified settlements – yurtas (in the Khanty language "kurt" - settlement) were being massively built, and inhabited by the bulk of the taiga population. The capitals of the principalities were small towns (Tapar-vosh, Samar-vosh (Samarov Gorodok), Lyapin, Karta-ush, Bardakov Gorodok), as they were located in the inland. The fact allowed them to be protected from unexpected attacks of enemies (History..., 1999, Essays..., 2000, Yugra... 2001). The Prince's residence was not definitely a

town (the Russian term of that time "town" meant any inhabited locality, surrounded by a defensive wall). Most of these principalities and their capital cities-towns ceased to exist by the end of the 16th century.

In the 16-17 centuries the colonization of Yugra by the Russians had a pronounced military character that allowed creating conditions for mass development of the territory by farmers and industrialists. The outposts-cities were built – Obskoy (Mansurov) town (1585, lasted until 1594), Berezov (1593), Surgut (1594) (History..., 1999, Essays..., 2000).

Due to changing trade routes (Mangazeya trade route) and increasing depletion of fur-bearing riches of the Priobskaya taiga these settlements gradually fell into decay.

The Russian Empire policy in the early 20th century tended to preserve the fishing grounds of the North Ob in the possession of the Khanty and Mansy, continued to keep the Russian colonization in Yugra. The population of Berezov and Surgut didn't exceed 1,500 people (History..., 1999, Essays..., 2000).

In Soviet times, 1930, Vogulsky National Okrug was established. The construction of a new settlement for the district centre Ostyako-Vogulsk began 5 km from Samarovo. In 1940 it was renamed in Khanty-Mansiysk town, and, the Okrug was accordingly renamed Khanty-Mansy Autonomous Okrug.

In 1950 Khanty-Mansiysk received the city status. It had become the first city since Berezovo and Surgut lost their importance in the late 19th century due to the small number of population.

In the 1960s, the transformation of rural settlements into urban ones (Igrim, Megion,

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Nizhnevartovsk, Mezhdurechenskiy) began. The Okrug's population numbered 123,9 thousand people (History..., 1999, Essays..., 2000).

Discovering and exploitation of huge oil and gas deposits on the territory of Yugra had become a new point in the development of the urbanization processes since the 1960s. One after another many urban-type settlements began to obtain the status of cities (Surgut, Nizhnevartovsk, Kogalym, Nefteyugansk, Langepas, Megion, Raduzhny), as a result in 1980 the level of urbanization was 89%. This process continued in the late 20th century, when a number of settlements – Pyt-Yakh (1990), Lentor, Pokachi and Yugorsk (1992), Sovietsky (1996) – received the city status (Fig.1.) (Vykhodtcev, 2005).

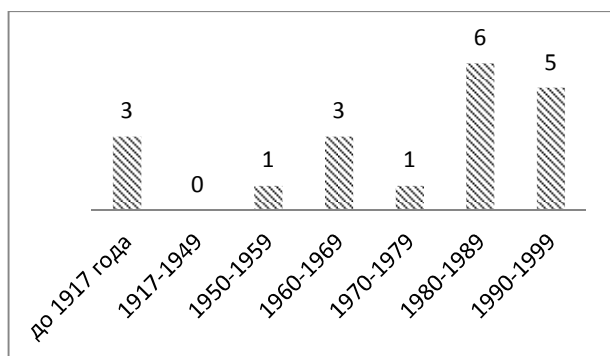


Fig.1. The distribution of cities in Yugra according to the periods of obtaining the city status (Vykhodtcev, 2008)

In the mid-20th century, with the appearance of the first city, Yugra indicators of urbanization were very low, we can say, rudimentary, but firstly they slowly increased, and then faster and faster later on.

Stages of urbanization in Yugra

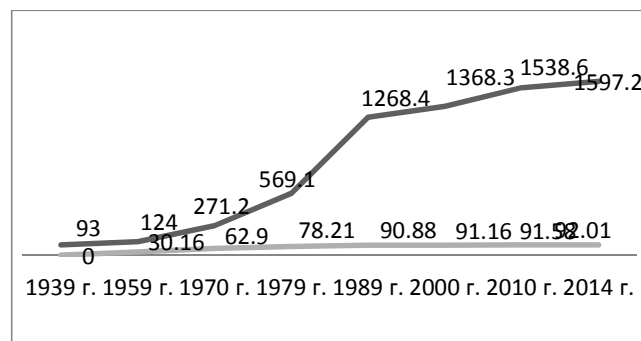


Fig. 2. The number of the urban and rural population of Yugra from 1939 to 2014 (the top graph – the urban population, a thousand people, the bottom graph – the rural population, a thousand people)

The analysis of Fig. 2 allows allocating three stages in the process of Yugra urbanization. Its first phase covered the beginning of Russian colonization from the 16th century until the first city was the administrative centre of Khanty-Mansy Autonomous Okrug. The second stage took place in the second half of the 20th century, this stage was characterized by faster growth of urban population (the share of urban population increased three times from 40 thousand to 1200 thousand people in 1960- 2000), and the spread of urbanization in almost all areas of the Okrug. This stage is characterized by accelerating the pace of growth of urban population (increased by more than 1 million people), but the emergence of such new factors of development, as the appearance and dramatic growth of cities and urban-type settlements, transfer towns to cities, spread of urban lifestyles in rural areas (Fig. 3., Fig. 4.). At this stage, urbanization has become completely territorial process, covering the whole Okrug.

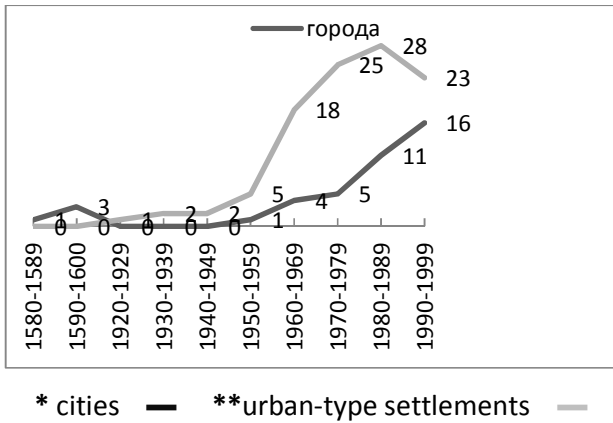


Fig. 3. The change in the number of cities and urban-type settlements in Yugra in 1580-1999, (Vykhodtcev, 2008)

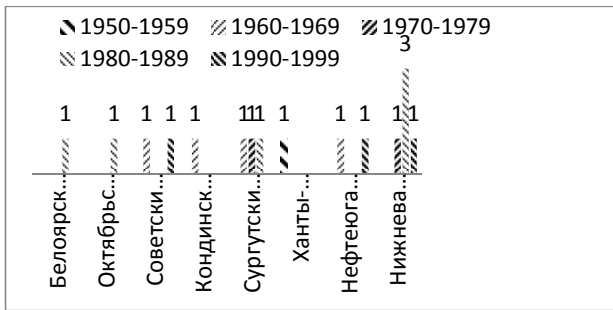


Fig. 4. The distribution of cities in Yugra on administrative areas available in 2014, according to the periods of obtaining the city status (Beloyarsky district, Oktyabrsky district, Sovetsky district, Kondinsky district, Surgutsky district, Khanty-Mansy district, Nefteyugansky district, Nizhnevartovskiy district) (Vykhodtcev, 2008)

The second stage can be completely called "urban explosion" in Yugra. It is easy to notice that it coincided with the development of oil fields and the migration (population growth of the Okrug was carried out mechanically, through the employment of temporary, shift and permanent migration from the regions and republics of the USSR).

The characteristic features of the "urban explosion" in Yugra can be determined as follows: first, it is the growth rate of the urban population. Over the last forty years of the 20th century it was annually increased in the Okrug by 1.48%, and only in the early 21st century, this rate dropped to 0.06%. Secondly, there is the rapid

increase in the number of large cities and their shares in total and urban population. Statistics shows that the Okrug had 2 cities with the population over 100 thousand people (Surgut, Nizhnevartovsk), which were home to 38% of the total population in 1979. The number of such cities increased to 3 (Nefteyugansk joined), and their share in the district population rose to 43.5% in 2003. Thirdly, there is the rapid growth and the role of urbanised territories (future urban agglomerations – Surgut and Nizhnevartovsk), which have already actually, in the current stage, replaced a "separate" city (Vykhodtcev, 2007, Vykhodtcev 2008, Vykhodtcev, Sokolov, 2009).

Finally, the third stage refers to the beginning of the 2000s and in our days, is characterized by slow but steady growth of population, and the share of urban population (the population increased in about 200 thousand people in 2000-2014, and the share of the urban population was 0.85% up to 92,01%).

Conclusion

Despite the fact that urbanization has become a process, which has many similar features, modern urbanization could not be characterized as homogeneous. On the contrary, it is characterized by a very large diversity, different conditions peculiar to their composite features – areas.

Yugra embarked on the path of urbanization only in the second half of the 20th century, focuses largely on a different model than the Russian one, combining demographic growth and growth of the urban population. The urbanization in Yugra is defined by the high rates of urban population growth; it spreads predominantly, covering new territories. And its main driving force remains the migration to the host cities which cannot fully provide neither housing nor employment, as migrants have low labour skills, lack of knowledge of the Russian language, poor social adaptation in the city society.

The main objective is sustainability in the development of macro-regional urban system in Yugra, the application of individual approach to the Development Concepts of municipalities with maintaining balance between the natural, social and technical subsystems of the urban areas.

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