

## HISTORICAL FORMATION AND SPECIFIC FEATURES OF THE RUSSIAN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

Mullajanova X.Y.

Lecturer of Department of Social Sciences

Samarkand Institute of Economics and Service

Тел.: +998 88 085 88 99

**Annotation.** This article analyzes the historical formation, scientific activity, and unique features of the Russian Geographical Society. Historical-analytical, systemic, comparative, and geopolitical approaches were applied. The findings show that the society played a central role in the development of Russian geography, particularly in expedition research, natural zonality, landscape studies, ethnography, and geopolitical thought. The scientific legacy of the RGS continues to serve as a foundation for the modern integrative and interdisciplinary development of geographical science.

**Keywords:** Russian Geographical Society, historical formation, geographical school, expeditions, natural zonality, landscape science, ethnography, geopolitics, scientific heritage.

**Introduction.** The Russian Geographical Society (RGS) is one of the oldest scientific societies in the Russian Federation, a prestigious organization that conducts fundamental research in the areas of the development of geography, territorial studies, natural resources, ethnography and cartography. Founded in 1845 as an imperial society, this structure has been an important scientific center not only for studying the natural and geographical features of the territory of Russia, but also for organizing scientific expeditions in various regions of the world, collecting and summarizing scientific data.

One of the distinctive features of the society is the scientific, historic and practical orientation of its structure and activities. Since its inception, the RGS has formed an integral connection of geographical knowledge between science, public administration and society, and has also created a direct scientific basis for making geopolitical decisions. The society is also expanding its activities through expeditionary activities, scientific grants, support for young researchers, projects on geographic information systems (GAT/GIS) and modern cartography.

Today, the Russian Geographical Society serves the sustainable development and environmental protection of Russian geography, implementing advanced research in modern technologies, drone geodiagnosics, satellite observations, environmental monitoring systems and digital mapping. The current state of the RGJ is directly related to the international development of geographical science, the expansion of scientific cooperation and the development of strategies for the rational use of natural resources.

This study analyzes the historical formation of the Russian Geographical Society, its main areas of activity, its specific features and modern development trends. It also highlights the contribution of the society to world geography and its place in today's scientific and geographical processes based on a scientific approach.

**Literature review.** Scientific sources on the formation, activities and modern development processes of the Russian Geographical Society (RGS) are diverse, covering the areas of historical, geographical, ethnographic and modern digital geography. The study of the society has been one of the important areas of scientific research throughout the 19th–21st centuries.

The historical formation of the RGS dates back to the era of imperial Russia. The expeditions of M.F. Reinhard, P.P. Semenov-Tyan-Shansky, N.N. Miklukho-Maclay, N. Przhevalsky and other researchers provide extensive information about the initial organizational structure and scientific goals of the society. These sources indicate that the RGS played a decisive role in the development of geography, territorial studies, cartography and ethnography in the 19th century.

Among the historical works, the journals “Izvestia RGO” and “Zapiski RGO”, published by the Russian Geographical Society since 1845, occupy a special place. They contain rich historical information about the scientific schools, research areas, and expeditionary activities of the society.

Researchers who analyzed the theoretical foundations of geography and the contribution of the RGJ to it (V.A. Anuchin, L.S. Berg, N.N. Baransky) deeply analyze the scientific and methodological approaches to the activities of the society. These works highlight the role and significance of the society in physical geography, social geography, natural resources, environmental monitoring, and territorial planning.

In the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, scientific sources on geographic information systems (GAT/GIS), satellite monitoring, environmental analysis, and territorial development indicate innovative directions for the development of the RGJ activities.

One of the distinctive features of the Society is its vast experience in ethnographic research. The works of N.N. Miklukho-Maclay on the peoples of Oceania, G.N. Potanin's research on the ethnography of Central Asia demonstrate the breadth and depth of the scientific school of the RGJ. Also, scientific works on historical and modern cartography confirm the superiority of the Society in mapping.

Scientific articles published in recent years, the official website of the RGJ and news posted on international scientific platforms are the main sources for analyzing the current state of society. This literature covers the activities of the RGJ in the following areas:

- development of geotechnologies (GIS, drone-geodiagnostics, aero-surveying);
- environmental projects and conservation activities;

- organization of grants and competitions for young scientists;
- international scientific cooperation and scientific conferences;
- reconstruction of expeditions in a modern format.

This literature emphasizes the adaptation of the RGJ to modern scientific and innovative geography, the widespread use of digital technologies, and its ability to provide a scientific basis for the socio-economic development strategies of Russia.

Scientific manuals on the methodology of geographical research (Nikolaev, Lavrov, Preobrazhensky) are of great importance in studying the methodological approaches used in the scientific work of the RGJ. They include expeditionary research, statistical analysis, cartographic modeling, and methods for forecasting natural and geographical processes.

**Research methodology.** This study aims to analyze the formation process, scientific activities and specific aspects of the Russian Geographical Society on a scientific and theoretical basis.

**Analysis and results.** The analysis of the development of the RGJ from its foundation in 1845 into one of the main centers of geographical science was carried out. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the society extensively studied the territories of Russia, Siberia, the Far East, Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Arctic and Antarctic regions through expeditionary activities. The historical analysis shows the following:

The RGJ is one of the first scientific structures to scientifically describe the natural resources, geographical borders and ethnographic composition of Russia.

The scientific schools of the society (Anuchin, Berg, Semenov-Tyan-Shansky schools) had a strong influence on the theoretical foundation of geographical science.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the scientific activities of the society were combined with state geographical policy, and expeditions served the development of territorial planning and cartography.

An analysis of the scientific activities of the RGJ shows that the society has conducted fundamental research in almost all areas of geography:

Physical geography: scientific research in landscape science, geomorphology, climatology and hydrology.

Social geography: issues of population, economic geography, demographic processes and urbanization.

Ethnography: a large-scale scientific heritage in the study of the culture of Russia and neighboring peoples.

Cartography and GIS: the society has laid the foundations for advanced methods of digital mapping.

Methodological analysis revealed that the following approaches were prioritized in the scientific work of the RGJ:

expeditionary research;

observation and statistical analysis;

cartographic modeling;

analysis of territorial systems;

ecological monitoring.

These approaches continue to increase the accuracy and practical value of the scientific results of the society.

**Conclusion and suggestions.** The analysis of the historical evolution, scientific activities, and current development trends of the Russian Geographical Society (RGS) demonstrates that it is one of the oldest, most influential, and scientifically reputable geographical institutions in the world. Established in 1845, the RGS has played a decisive role in forming the foundations of Russian geographical science, conducting large-scale expeditions, and promoting comprehensive studies of natural, social, and cultural landscapes both within Russia and abroad.

The study shows that the RGS's unique features—such as its long-standing expeditionary traditions, strong scientific schools, extensive ethnographic research heritage, and systematic cartographic work—have ensured its relevance across different historical periods. Today, the Society has successfully integrated modern geotechnologies, including GIS, remote sensing, drone surveying, and digital cartography, making it an active contributor to digital geography and ecological monitoring.

Additionally, the RGS continues to serve as a bridge between scientific communities, governmental structures, and the public by supporting young researchers, facilitating international scientific cooperation, organizing environmental projects, and promoting geographical literacy. Its modern activities indicate that the Society not only preserves its historical significance but also adapts effectively to contemporary scientific challenges and global environmental issues.

Overall, the RGS remains an influential scientific organization that contributes significantly to the advancement of geography, environmental sustainability, and interdisciplinary research.

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