

The Attitudes of Poti Population Concerning the Urban Development Trends

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ABSTRACT

Poti is a Black Sea port in Georgia. After dissolution of the Soviet Union, Poti became a transport hub of the South Caucasus Region. The Port of Poti is the transit point of oil and gas. At present, a mega-port of Poti is being built, which will be used for transit of the energetic resources from the East to the West direction.

Despite economic potential Poti is exempt from the intra-regional development trends and can not overcome the regional imbalance and ensure intra-regional development of the country. Moreover, the function of the port of Poti can not affect its urban development.

The aim of the research is to study attitude of the population of Poti towards urban development of the city. The research questions are the following – What are the attitudes of the Poti city dwellers towards the urban development trends? How do locals perceive the role of local and central governments in developing process? What are the main factors determining the public opinion?

In order to answer the questions I used the qualitative and quantitative research methods. Public opinion survey was conducted in 2016. The target population were the adult dwellers of Poti. The size of the sample was 300 respondents. From qualitative methods I used the literature review, analysis of documents, interviews with local population, and representatives of city and port administration.

According to the survey, the urban development trends are not recognizable for the population, who point to the central and local governments not caring for development of the locality. The port is not perceived by the population as a factor of development of the city.

Furthermore respondents estimated 14 projects that are carried out in the city and port. The level of awareness is high towards “visually visible” projects that are carried out in the city and projects that directly affect their living standards. Awareness of the population is low towards the projects that bring long term economic benefits.

Main findings of the research are that regional transport hub, which can potentially become important part of one of the offshoots of the new “Silk Road” is in fact detached from the locality and is not perceived by the population as an active factor of urban development. The skepticism of the population toward the development of the port might be explained by two reasons: 1) the port does not really give direct economic affect neither on the city nor on its dwellers; 2) the public opinion towards the central and local government is formed in relation to the direct efficient results of their actions and the long-term projects has insignificant importance.

Key words: Regional development, port, city, urban development.

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