

PLACE AND ROLE OF ISLAM IN REGIONS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA

IGOR DOBAEV. MIGRATION AND THE PROBLEM OF
ENCLAVEMENT OF THE TERRITORIES OF THE RUSSIAN
FEDERATION (BASED ON MATERIALS FROM THE MOSLEM
REPUBLICS OF THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA)

*Keywords: enclave; demography;
Caucasus; clan; migration; tribe; clan; Central
Asia' ethnostatism.*

Igor Dobaev,
DSc(Philosophy), Professor,
Expert of Russian Academy of Sciences,
Director of Centre of Regional Studies,
Institute of Sociology and Regional Studies,
Southern Federal University, Rostov-on-Don,
e-mail: ipdobaev@sfedu.ru
© I. Dobaev 2024

Citation: Dobaev I. Migration and the Problem of
Enclavement of the Territories of the Russian Federation (Based
on Materials from the Moslem Republics of the Caucasus and
Central Asia) // Russia and the Moslem World, 2024, No. 2 (324),
P. 30–44. DOI:10.31249/rmw/2024.02.02

Abstract. The article notes that in the post-Soviet period in the
“Moslem” republics of the Caucasus and Central Asia, the clan-
clientelist structure of local societies was partially revived. Against the

background of socio-economic deformations, colossal property-political stratification and, at the same time, demographic growth of the population of these republics, migration processes began to progress, mostly to the territory of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation. Their result was the emergence and strengthening of the so-called "migrant enclaves", and on their basis, an increase in criminal manifestations. Such processes produce the growth of a wide variety of dangers to Russia's national security. The situation requires the development and implementation of a comprehensive system to combat illegal migration and prevent the formation and functioning of alien enclaves on the territory of our country.

The systemic crisis of identity in the post-Soviet space in the 1990s updated ethnic identity, which was most clearly manifested in Central Asia and the Caucasus (North and South). As a consequence, the process of ethnic mobilization that took place within the framework of the national-territorial structure, took the form of state-legal institutionalization (ethno-statism), regenerating the traditional social structures of local societies.

It is known that the traditional social systems of many societies in countries with a predominantly Moslem population (Near and Middle East, etc.), including in the post-Soviet space (Central Asia, some Caucasian republics), are tribal in nature. For example, in Mecca there live representatives of the Quraysh tribe, one of the components of which is the family of the Prophet Mohammad - the Hashim. The state-forming people of Afghanistan - the Pashtuns - consist of three allied associations of tribes (Durrani, Ghilzai, Karani). In turn, each tribe (Kabilya) includes a number of clans (Kaum), each of which is based on the so-called "large families" (heil). Other Afghan peoples have a tribal system, although not so clearly expressed, but still existing¹.

In the sovereign states of Central Asia, there also exists a tribal division of societies. Thus, in Kazakhstan they still distinguish the so-called zhuzes (senior, middle and junior), their

constituent tribes and clans. However, it should be borne in mind that similar traditional social systems exist in other Central Asian countries².

Soviet modernization was never able to resolve the issue of breaking the archaic system of local communities. So, for example, during the investigation under the so-called. the "cotton affair" that shook Soviet Uzbekistan in the 1980s, it was established that in this republic those elements of the social system that were characteristic of the region even before it became part of the Russian Empire were actually preserved and working. Something similar is observed in some states of the South Caucasus, for example, in Azerbaijan, as well as in the national republics of the North Caucasus.

Despite all the differences between the North Caucasian republics, their socio-political system is based on the traditional nature of local societies. The most important element in the functioning of a regional traditional society is the collective solidarity of people, based on a system of social institutions of public regulation (family, clan, community, traditions, morality, customary law, public opinion) and social practices, including, among other things, blood revenge.

North Caucasian communities are phratrial associations (Dagestanians have jamaats, Chechens have tukhums and teips, Karachais and Balkars have "big families", Adygs have "fraternities"), all of them go back to the adat culture, and still have a certain impact influence on regional political processes. In particular, the authoritative domestic ethno-conflictologist V.A. Avksentyev rightly notes that "structures such as councils of clans (teips, tukhums, etc.), elders, religious fraternities (tarikats) operate on the basis of the rules of law of the era of "military democracy," that is, more than a thousand years ago. We can confidently say that human rights violations in the region committed by traditional social institutions are comparable in scale to the violations responsibility for which falls on the state.

Such a system of law is based on the inferiority of all “strangers,” that is, representatives of other peoples...”³

As is known, the administration system that emerged in its basic outlines in the mid-1990s in the post-Soviet national republics has a clearly expressed clan character, which could not but give rise to a lot of publications on this topic. Indeed, the problem of ethnostatism and ethnocracies inseparable from it in these regions has been growing since the turn of the 80s and 90s of the last century attracts close attention of scientists, although to a lesser extent than these socio-political phenomena deserve⁴. At the same time, ethno-statism, as an ideology for the construction of ethnic states and the ethnicization of power structures, in the late 1980s actually prevailed throughout the entire post-Soviet space. In conditions of a total and systemic crisis of the Soviet political, economic and sociocultural systems, the ideology of ethnostatism received a social base on the basis of the unfolding ethnic mobilization. After a wait-and-see pause, ethno-statism was adopted not only by opposition ethno-national movements, but also by the former party-nomenklatura elite of the now sovereign republics.

At the same time, as some experts believe, “the ethnocratic system cannot be broken at once... ethnocracies and ethnic clans can be transformed gradually by regulating the process both tactically and strategically... reproduction mechanisms of ethno-elites should be filled with modernization content... it is impossible to solve the problem without changes in social economic reality, development of ideological certainty and the formation of a new political culture”⁵.

As a result of the strengthening of ethno-statism, social elevators, do not work in the localities, the majority of the population, especially youth, does not have significant life prospects, which enables radically oriented activists to spread quite successfully in this environment the ideas alien to Russian statehood, involving, among other things, religious grounds.

Although historically there has been observed a gradual decomposition of traditional social institutions of the eastern type, but this process occurs unevenly in different regions and, of course, is not fully completed. As a consequence, the ethnic factor ranks High in the Moslem East. At turning history points it is often politicized, as has been recorded practically since the beginning of the twentieth century. One of the significant trends at the beginning of the new millennium is that there is a repoliticization of ethnicity. Another sharp escalation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, involvement of global and regional political players in it is a clear confirmation of this.

In almost all countries and regions noted above authoritarian and neopatrimonial regimes have emerged, which are known to be quite unstable and unbalanced. The extant traditional social system of local societies, based on clans, tribes and tribal unions, is unable to predetermine the progressive modernization of these states. At the same time, on the basis of the traditional social system of Moslem societies administratively administrative apparatuses, influential political parties and public organizations are being formed. In the first post-Soviet years they, for rare exceptions, were represented by people from the Soviet-perestroika nomenclature of the CPSU and economic nomenclature of the second echelon. In subsequent years, some leaders retained their positions of power (for example, in Tajikistan), in others their children became successors (Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan), in a number of the states representatives of other influential clans have taken leading positions (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan).

We emphasize that almost all power structures of these states were and are still being formed according to nepotistic (i.e., according to relationships of kinship and property) and tribalistic (i.e., ethnic and/or fellow countryman) characteristics and represent clan-cliental formations. The clan bears collective responsibility for the actions of its nominee, and the latter, in turn, ensures the interests of his clan. "An outside man" can only

be included in the sphere of such communities within the framework of the "client-patron" relationship, that is, without pretending to first roles in the community, but providing services to the clan in exchange for patronage.

At the same time, over the past thirty three post-Soviet years, not a single Central Asian republic (to a lesser extent Kazakhstan, to a larger – Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) could not build high income societies. Despite the fact that the region is a treasury of natural resources: there are huge deposits of oil (Kazakhstan), gas (Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan), gold, copper, uranium, more than 100 types of mineral raw materials. However, due to a number of conflict-generating factors, including the clan nature of local societies, as well as historical past, we can talk about sustainable economic development only with a great deal of caution. A consequence of conflict-producing characteristics of this kind is the "fragility" of states of the region, instability of their development, high security risks.

A multi-vector foreign policy and foreign economic connections of these states became the dominant factor in the foreign policy. However, this kind of multi-vectorism, especially in relation to collective West, is extremely dangerous. Thousands of Western and pro-Western NGOs and NPOs specializing in preparation and implementation of "color revolutions" operate in the region⁶.

The position of the West in the economies of the countries of the region also turned out to be essential. Thus, in Kazakhstan up to 70 per cent of assets in the oil industry are controlled by Western "partners". Consequently, representatives of the junior Kazakh zhuz living there found themselves in a poor socio-economic situation⁷.

The situation could be improved by economic and political integration of countries in the region. However, movement in this direction is being obstructed due to the absence of a key state in Central Asia and the presence of serious interstate contradictions. Predominantly resource-based nature of the countries' economies

of Central Asian region, stagnation of industrial production do not provide a decent standard of living of the population. Moreover, the entire economy is practically divided between a small number of influential clans. A similar thing may be said about Azerbaijan, where there are, practically, two states – wealthy Baku and poor other territories, especially rural areas, where there is a clear lack of jobs.

As for the republics of the North Caucasus, most of them are subsidized, and the interests of the administrative-management apparatuses are associated with the preservation of the existing situation where the apparatus itself, on the one hand, achieves significant independence and independence from the federal center, and on the other hand preserves financial, and sometimes even political support from the Kremlin. This situation is being corrected gradually, but slowly and not always progressively and purposefully⁸.

During the Soviet period, modernization processes in the Caucasus and Central Asia, especially in the field of industrialization, were not completed, which is explained by regional specifics (archaic economic structures, social institutions, structures etc.). Introduction to the region in the 1990s of market rules of the game, opening its economy for global markets of raw materials, products, manpower actually destroyed many of the achievements of the Soviet era.

The consequences of the events occurred were catastrophic. Suffice it to say, for example, that with an all-Russian industrial production reduction in the second half of the 1990s up to 48–49 per cent (from the 1990 level), this figure in the majority of post-Soviet republics of the Caucasus and Central Asia turned out to be only at around 17–24 per cent⁹. In this regard, experts spoke about a systemic deindustrialization of the majority of not only North Caucasian republics, but also some now sovereign states. It was also noted that the most significant impact over the scale of deindustrialization was made by the process of their complex ethnicization.

The “titular” generation of business executives that replaced the Soviet directorial corps, which consisted mainly of experienced business executives – mainly Russians, for the most part had neither specialized education, nor experience in managing industrial enterprises, nor the desire (ability) to return production taken under control to life in new economic conditions.

Including for this reason, the level of education, health care, culture, and other social spheres of the population’s life has fallen sharply. The socio-economic situation is aggravated not only by the clan system traditional for the regions under consideration, but also by large-scale corruption. It is clear that all this creates a breeding ground for crime and extremist groups.

Against the backdrop of political disagreements and economic problems in the post-Soviet period in these regions, especially in Central Asia, there was recorded an accelerated demographic growth of titular ethnic groups and a simultaneous reduction in the share of the Russian and Russian-speaking population, a decline in the influence of Russian culture. As a result, according to some data, by 2050th, if current trends continue, local elites will no longer speak Russian, with all the ensuing consequences. The serious rejuvenation of the indigenous population is accompanied by the growth of ethnic, religious and political extremism. We are talking, first of all, about expanding the ideology and practice of pan-Turkism and radical Islamism¹⁰.

We emphasize that in the post-Soviet era, Russia entered a period of stable and prolonged depopulation, which was largely due to changes in the basic characteristics of population reproduction, a decrease in the birth rate, the spread of one- and two-child families, an increase in morbidity and mortality in working age, and a reduction in life expectancy, changes in the migration mobility of the population, the crisis of the modern family, etc.¹¹.

At the same time, we emphasize that depopulation was a significant feature of Russian reality in the 1990s, however, already in the new millennium, the measures taken by the country's leadership led to a positive result – an increase in the birth rate, a reduction in mortality, and a slight increase in average life expectancy. They spurred reproductive activity, first of all, among the population of the North Caucasian republics, which traditionally consider demographic dynamics as one of the central priorities of their development. Indeed, the North Caucasus, to a lesser extent than other regions of Russia, experienced the process of depopulation, although during this period the birth rate among local peoples also dropped significantly. According to experts, "by 2000, a natural population decline began in Adygea, Karachay-Cherkessia and North Ossetia-Alania. The demographic indicators of Kabardino-Balkaria have dropped to zero (simple reproduction). The increased rate of natural reproduction persisted only in the east of the region. But even there it was significantly inferior to the level of the 1970–1980s. Only the Chechen Republic (represented almost exclusively by the titular ethnic group) retained its position – vital statistics remained almost at the level of 1990¹².

However, the insufficient labor market in the North Caucasus region of Russia triggers migration processes: from mountainous regions to foothills and lowlands, and from there to other regions of Russia.

As experts emphasize, migration processes are facilitated by the agrarian-semi-subsistence type of economy as the dominant one, cemented by traditional family-tribal, clan-corporate, ethnic-oriented relations, which also reproduced its characteristic type of employment – agrarian overpopulation, characteristic of the era of early capitalism, the era of primitive capital accumulation, the first stage of industrialization with its attendant stagnant unemployment, migrant workers, low standard of living, closed farms, and underdeveloped

communications. "Without recognizing this," writes an authoritative southern Russian economist Yu.S. Kolesnikov, "it is impossible to explain the general labor surplus of the region's population, the fact, that due to agricultural overpopulation, the most educated and qualified part of the population is washed out of the republics (a negative migration balance is typical for Dagestan, Karachay-Cherkessia, Kabardino-Balkaria), depriving the region of the main resource of modernization – young innovators." Development of the recreational complex, tourism, ethno-economics and energy, reflected in the "Strategy of Socio-Economic development of the North Caucasus Federal District for the period until 2025th" is not capable of radically changing the employment problem in the North Caucasus republics. Moreover, it does not solve one of the most important problems of the region – the restoration of the full multi-ethnicity of the republics, in particular the re-emigration of the Russian population, without which the transition to innovative development is problematic¹³.

As is known, in the post-Soviet period, due to total demodernization, military and terrorist actions, and a wide variety of conflicts, including domestic ones, a mass exodus of a significant part of the Russian population from Central Asia and the Caucasus was recorded¹⁴. In general, according to expert estimates, the study of "the dynamics of the number of Russians in the North Caucasus in the last 40–50 years leads to the conclusion that the almost two-century process of ethnocultural integration of this region into Russia through the rooting of the Russian (and, more broadly, Russian-speaking) population in it, failed on the whole"¹⁵. The trend of reduction in the Russian population in the region in the late Soviet period was already quite stable, but after the collapse of the Soviet state it increased significantly.

Chechnya and Ingushetia have almost completely lost their Russians, having turned into almost mono-ethnic entities. However, in other republics the number of Russians has

decreased significantly. Experts believe that “the federal center is not able to undertake targeted and large-scale (i.e. effective) efforts to resolve the “Russian issue” and, more broadly, the systemic modernization of the North Caucasus. This means that the process of outflow of Russians from the regions will continue to proceed in a self-regulation mode”¹⁶.

Without a comprehensive, targeted program to resolve the “Russian question” in the Caucasus and Central Asia, the scenario of a continued complete exodus of Russians from the region by the middle of the 21st century seems almost inevitable.

So, it is socio-economic problems and demographic growth of the population in the regions under consideration that are steadily leading to powerful migration processes, primarily to Russia, which has become the reason for the emergence and strengthening of ethnic enclaves in the most developed regions of the Russian Federation. However, it should be noted that the average population density of, say, the Central Asian region is not that high. Here, on an area of about 4 million square km the population is just over 70 million people. For comparison: in Türkiye with an area of about 780 thousand square km the population exceeds 80 million people, the situation is about the same in Iran with an area of slightly more than 1 million 600 thousand square km. It means that the powerful migration flows of the titular population of the Central Asian states are not associated with an overabundance of population, but with their disastrous economic situation as a result of economic degradation, primarily industrial production, and the lack of a sufficient number of jobs.

According to available data, the total number of external migrants in Russia exceeds 10 million people. The largest number of them are citizens of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Labor migrants also arrive from Kazakhstan, but there are relatively few of them. There is practically no labor migration from Turkmenistan, but this is explained by the preference for

Turkmens to travel to Türkiye due to the simplified visa regime, linguistic proximity and ethno-confessional kinship.

Migration processes of the titular population of the Caucasus and Central Asia to Russia lead to ethnic enclavization of a number of Russian regions. Moreover, by ethnic enclaves we mean any compact communities of an ethnic group within a territory historically inhabited by representatives of another people. Such territories have linguistic, cultural and economic systems that are different from the surrounding society. Migrant enclaves are a special case of ethnic ones. Their localization leads to a decrease in the motivation of foreign migrants to integrate into local communities, the implantation of their own ethnoculture into the society of the host country, the rejection of the values of the local community, and the emergence of conflicts on national and religious grounds.

However, the emergence of ethno-confessional enclaves may not be directly related to external migration. For example, by 1996, on the territory of Dagestan (as well as Chechnya), a kind of territorial bridgeheads with a formed infrastructure had been created that ensured its cultural, theological and even political expansion – the so-called “Wahhabi enclaves” (the most famous is the “Kadar zone”, which included the Dargin villages of Kadar, Karamakhi and Chabanmakhi in the Buinak region of Dagestan). The specificity of these enclaves was that they were supported by “sponsor money” coming from abroad and were initially means of geopolitical expansion on the part of the Moslem world. The implementation of the doctrine worked out by the “Wahhabis” was supposed to be carried out in two stages: in the first, “enclave” formations were to be formed on the territory of all the republics of the North Caucasus, and in the second, it was planned to launch activities for the political unification of the “enclaves” into a single fundamentalist state “from sea to sea”¹⁷.

As a result of the events of August-September 1999, these plans were not destined to come true.

However, within the framework of this article, we mainly highlight external migration, as a result of which migrant enclaves have appeared and strengthened in some Russian megacities, as well as in oil and gas production regions. However, such “enclaves” have long been established in the United States (for example, “China towns”)¹⁸, as well as in some European countries, say, in France, and therefore their experience may be useful for Russia¹⁹. Let us emphasize that neither the German “guest workers”, nor the French assimilation project, nor the British concept of multiculturalism could become a panacea that prevented migrants, mainly Moslems, from creating their own enclaves and integrating them into their communities. European realities indicate that ethnically and religiously homogeneous migrant communities are actively and quite successfully forming an “enclave” habitat, which tends to be localized within the corresponding territorial boundaries, and the centers of their concentration, as a rule, are mosques or prayer rooms.

At the same time, one of the consequences of the emergence of such “enclaves” is the criminalization and religious and political radicalization of some of the migrants, which inevitably leads to the emergence of latent centers of socio-political conflict in a fairly long term, to their inevitable confrontation with the local population. In our opinion, in this case there is no need to talk about tolerant “Euro-Islam”; rather, we are talking about the Islamization of Europe, and in the most dangerous forms.

The events of the new millennium in Spain, Great Britain, France and other European countries clearly confirm this thesis. As a result, in recent years, European politicians have spoken in unison about the failure of existing adaptation practices for the integration of migrants in Europe, about the incompatibility of Islamism and Western liberal values. However, the migration flow to European countries, especially as a result of the Arab Spring, has only intensified, with all the ensuing consequences.

Similar “enclaves” appeared in Russian cities, and the results were not slow to appear. Huge flows of migrants caused a sharp deterioration in the crime situation and led to a sharp increase in criminal crime associated with thefts, assaults, drug trafficking, etc. At the same time, an increase in corruption is recorded in the Russian structures responsible for migration. It is quite obvious that ethnic enclaves complicate the adaptation of migrants to Russian society and cause a negative reaction from the Russian population. As a result, the federal authorities are taking some measures to block the negative consequences of poorly controlled migration processes, especially illegal migration. Individual regions are implementing their own programs in this direction. However, life urgently requires the development and strict adherence to a comprehensive all-Russian program aimed at streamlining migration processes and preventing the creation and strengthening of migrant enclaves on Russian territory.

Notes

1. Dobaev I.P. The internal political and ethno-confessional situation in Afghanistan on the eve of entry of Soviet troops (12/27/1979) // *Russia and the Moslem world*. 2022. No. 3 (325). P. 32–39.
2. Dobaev I.P. Central Asia at the crossroads of geopolitical tensions // *Russia and Moslem world*. 2023. No. 4 (330). P. 37–49.
3. Avksentyev V.A. Protracted ethnopolitical crisis in the South of Russia as a systemic threat to regional security // *Regional conflicts and security problems of the North Caucasus*. Rostov-on-Don, 2008. P. 63.
4. See: Garkusha E.V. Ethnocratic regional elites // *Elitological studies*. Yearbook 2005. Rostov-on-Don, 2006; Toshchenko Zh.T. *Ethnocracy M.*, 2003; Thagapsoev H.G. *Ethnostatism as otherness of Russian federalism* // *Scientific thought of the Caucasus*. 2002. No. 2 and others.
5. Chernous V.V. Ethnostatism and ethnocracies: on the way to regional ideology and regional elites in the South of Russia // *Ethnostatism and ethnocracies in the South of Russia* / *South Russian Review*. Issue No. 37. Rostov-on-Don NCSC HS publishing house, 2006. P. 7.
6. Dobaev I.P. “Color revolutions” in geopolitical transformations in the post-Soviet space // *Russia and the Moslem world*. 2023. No. 1 (327). P. 9–18.

7. Dobaev I.P. Central Asia at the crossroads of geopolitical tensions // Central Asia in the system of geopolitical coordinates / South Russian Review. Issue No. 103. Rostov-on-Don – Taganrog: Southern Federal University Publishing House, 2023. P. 11.
8. Dobaev I.P. Geopolitical transformations in the Caucasus region in the post-Soviet period // Russia and the Moslem world. 2010. No. 1. P. 42–55.
9. Sushchi S.Ya. Northern Caucasus: realities, problems, prospects of the first third of the 21st century. M., 2013. P. 127.
10. Dobaev I.P. The ethno-confessional factor in the geopolitics of Russia and the Black Sea an Caspian region countries // Russia and the Moslem world. 2022. No. 4 (326). P. 9–23.
11. Belozerov V.S. Demographic and migration security of Russia in the North Caucasus // Regional conflicts and security problems of the North Caucasus. Rostov-on-Don, 2008. P. 99, 104.
12. Sushchi S.Ya. Northern Caucasus: realities, problems, prospects of the first third of the 21st century. M., 2013. P. 16.
13. Kolesnikov Yu.S. What “Strategy” does the North Caucasus need (a view from the provinces) // South Russian Forum: economics, sociology, political science, socio-economic geography. 2010. No. 1. P. 24.
14. See, for example: Russians in the North Caucasus: challenges of the 21st century. Edition 2nd expanded /South Russian Review. Issue No. 10 / resp.ed. Chernous V.V. Rostov-n/Don, 2002.
15. Sushchi S.Ya. the above mentioned. op. P. 32.
16. Ibid. P. 53.
17. Dobaev I.P. Traditionalism and radicalism in modern Islam in the North Caucasus // Islam and politics in the North Caucasus. Rostov-on-Don: NCSC HS publishing house, 2001. P. 23.6 Ibid. P. 53.
18. Dobaev I.P. Islamic extremist groups in the USA // Russia and the Muslim world. 2007. No. 5, P. 112–119.
19. Dobaev I.P. Islamization of Europe: myth or real threat? // World economy and international relations. 2008. No. 4. P. 50–56.

Received: 10.01.2024.

Accepted for publication: 25.01.2024.