



INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN FERGHANA VALLEY

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the socio-economic factors influencing interethnic relations in the Fergana Valley and assesses their role in regional security.

Keywords: Fergana Valley, interethnic relations, socio-economic factors, limited land resources, growing demand for water resources, differences in economic growth

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, Russian and foreign researchers have shown increasing interest in the Fergana Valley, considering it a "powder keg" of Central Asia and, perhaps, all neighboring states.

The Fergana Valley is a specific region of Central Asia not only due to its geographical location and natural features, but also due to the presence of a special culture and ethnic composition of the population. The territory of the valley is fenced by mountain ranges in the north, northeast and south. Such natural isolation was largely the reason for the formation of special economic activity in the region, in particular, trade caravans passed through the valley, a special social environment. Consequently, due to natural barriers, the valley was a relatively calm place compared to neighboring areas, and the standard of living was somewhat higher than in other regions, respectively, all this became the determining cause of migration processes.

LEVEL OF STUDY OF THE SUBJECT

Favorable natural conditions have led to the fact that the population density in the Fergana Valley turned out to be higher than in other territories of the Central Asian region (360 people per 1 sq. km). The population density in the Fergana Valley is 12 times higher than in Kyrgyzstan and 56 times higher than in Kazakhstan. [1]

The territory of the Fergana Valley is distributed among three republics, and in an unequal relationship: the central regions belong to Uzbekistan, and it is here



that about a third of the population of the republic lives, the other two "border" directions are, respectively, Tajik (also about a third of the population lives in the Fergana Valley) and Kyrgyz (about half of the country's population). Moreover, the population growth rate is rapid - more than 2% per year. [2] According to UN analysts, by the end of the 21st century, a "demographic leap" is expected in Central Asia.

Thus, the demographic situation is heating up the situation in the conditions of limited resources and other problems of the Fergana Valley, which will be discussed below, thereby increasing the conflict potential in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, and may also go beyond this territory. The dense population, in turn, has led to a shortage of resources: arable land, pastures, since the bulk of the population is engaged in agriculture, as well as water resources. In this vein, the stumbling block in disagreements between Tashkent and Dushanbe and Tashkent and Bishkek is the issue related to water resources.

The dense population is also the cause of unemployment, which gives rise to such a phenomenon as labor migration and, as a result, an increase in the degree of conflict in the region. The percentage of the population of the Fergana Valley living below the poverty line reaches 40%. [3] This is also confirmed by the high rate of population outflow from the region.

Another dangerous consequence of the demographic situation in the Fergana Valley is the fact that the majority of the population are young people aged 15 to 24, which, of course, is one of the reasons for the sharp confrontations. Thus, in *The Clash of Civilizations*, Samuel Huntington notes that "youth is the personification of protest, instability, reform and revolution."

Migration and unemployment have become the causes of previously uncharacteristic problems for Eastern society - an increase in the number of divorces, single-parent families, and the appearance of an imbalance in the migration flow in terms of gender. [4]

Another problem of the Fergana Valley was the emergence of such a phenomenon as creeping expansion. This phenomenon reflects a change in the ethnic situation in the region, for example, when ethnic Tajiks and citizens of the Tajik Republic move to Kyrgyz villages, that is, enclaves appear populated by residents of another state, differing from the local population also by ethnicity.

Also, the problems of the social order should include differences in the way of life of the peoples living in the area. The ethnic composition of the population of the



Ferghana Valley is very heterogeneous. Of course, every nation has its own culture and language. For example, Tajiks are an Iranian-speaking population, and thus differ from Uzbeks and Kyrgyz as Turkic-speaking peoples. At the same time, the Kyrgyz and Uzbeks have differences in their way of life, they are Islamized to varying degrees. In addition, differences can be found in a single people. So, Pamir Tajiks differ from others in appearance, and there are also linguistic differences.

The influence of the religious factor on the aggravation of conflicts in the Fergana Valley should not be overlooked. Over the past 20-30 years, there has been a new wave of Islamization of the population after the atheistic sentiments of the Soviet era. The ideas of Islamism and the creation of an Islamic state are gaining more and more popularity.[5] This is one of the manifestations of the so-called indigenization of the second generation, a phenomenon described back in the 80s. XX century., In particular, the English sociologist Ronald Dor studied a similar phenomenon in Japan. S. Huntington also notes that "indigenization was on the agenda throughout the non-Western world in the eighties and nineties of the twentieth century."

The indigenization of the second generation (in this case, this is a response to many years of sovietization) manifests itself in a return to one's own culture, when, for example, a secular way of life, as a certain cultural pattern introduced from outside, is replaced by a reorientation towards a religious image life, a return to previously forgotten traditions. What most often results in a conflict confrontation both within society and in relations with external actors, who introduced a secular lifestyle and their own values.

The following list of reasons for the first block is related to economic problems. As noted earlier, the bulk of the population of the Ferghana Valley is engaged in agriculture. And due to the overpopulation of the region, there is an acute shortage of land resources.

With the collapse of the USSR, the level of industrial production in the light industry, which for the most part the region was famous for, fell critically and still



cannot reach the Soviet level. But not only this is connected with contradictions in the economic sphere, the shadow economy and corruption are also a serious problem. Thus, the market in the city of Kara-Suu (Kyrgyzstan) from ancient times occupied an advantageous economic position on the trade route of the Great Silk Road and is currently the largest trading base in the region. Important road arteries pass through this city: the Bishkek-Osh-Urumqi highway and the Jalal-Abad-Andijan railway. According to official data, the monthly market turnover is more than 200 million dollars, and according to unofficial data (shadow market turnover), it is twice as much.[6]

In Tajikistan, in recent years, there has been an intrastate economic “contradiction” between the industrially developed “North” and the agrarian “South”: all industry created in the republic during the years of Soviet rule is located mainly on the territory of the Sughd (formerly Leninabad) region. The influence of the center of the republic on the north is rather weak, due to the capital investments of local businessmen, as well as foreign sponsors, so the region is becoming more financially independent. This is due, on the one hand, to changes in the ruling circles of the republic and the redistribution of power between ethno-regional elites, and, on the other hand, to the fact that Khujand, due to geographical, historical, cultural reasons, is close to Bukhara and Samarkand (now the territory of neighboring Uzbekistan) than the central and southern regions of the country. All of the above is a trend towards the isolation of the Sughd region, in addition, proposals have already been made to create a free economic zone in this territory. [7]

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the problems in contemporary nation-wide relations in Fergana Valley is following a deeper study of the existing problems, based on the opinions, forecast analyzes and interests of researchers-experts outside the region who have expressed their views on this issue. It is necessary to identify the existing problems and not to allow them to pose a challenge for the Central Asian region. The ethnocentric factor in the multinational Fergana Valley is one of the most complex and topical issues of today. Ethnic-territorial problems, resources, linguistic, environmental, demographic, migration and other regional problems both determine and impart the level of ethnocultural relations.



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