

Artículo de investigación

The historical role of Islam in the public life of the Central Asian region of the CIS in the XX – XXI centuries**Историческая роль ислама в общественной жизни центральноазиатского региона СНГ в XX–XXI вв**

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The article is devoted to the historical and contemporary aspects of Islam in Central Asia. It shows the confessional policy of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union in Turkestan. The document proves that this policy was based on a combination of “hard” and “soft” management techniques and concludes that regional policies contributed to the transformation process in Central Asia. Furthermore, the article shows the role of Islam in regional modernization processes and the author identifies the key elements of the religious situation in the region, showing the main religious groups in the local Islamic communities. The paper notes the features of government policy in Central Asia in regard to Islam.

Keywords: Central Asia, clergy, confessional politics, Diaspora, hard power, Islam, madrasa, maktabas, parallel Islam, regional elite, soft power, Sufism, Sunnism, Turkestan.

Аннотация

Статья посвящена историческим и современным аспектам ислама в Центральной Азии. Рассмотрена конфессиональная политика Российской империи и СССР в Туркестане. Доказано, что данная политика строилась на сочетании “жестких” и “мягких” методов управления. Установлено, что региональная политика способствовало трансформационным процессам в Центральной Азии. Показана роль ислама в региональных модернизационных процессах. Авторы выделяют ключевые элементы религиозной ситуации в регионе, показывают основные религиозные группы в рамках локальных исламских сообществ. В работе отмечаются особенности правительственной политики государств Центральной Азии в отношении ислама.

Ключевые слова: диаспора, духовенство, жесткая сила, ислам, конфессиональная политика, медресе, мектебы, мягкая сила, параллельный ислам, региональная элита, суннизм, суфизм, Туркестан, Центральная Азия.

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Introduction

The Islamic factor is an integral part of socio-political life in the Central Asian region of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and it has an impact on the cultural and historical specifics of the people's lives, norms of public relations, worldview and national identity. In the modern conditions of globalization, Islam is turning into a factor in world politics, and it is actively used by various world actors in its interests. A great danger is the rise of radical, unconventional Islamist movements, which increase the instability along the perimeter of the borders of the Eurasian continent. In this context, it seems justified to emphasize the humanistic, open and tolerant nature of traditional Islam in the Central Asian region of the CIS, which acts as a natural barrier to the spread of fundamentalism.

Literature review

At present, the study of the Islamic factor in Central Asia is in the center of attention of Russian and foreign researchers. Among the works on this problem, we should highlight the works of E. Abdulaev, B. Babadjanov, R. Izraeli, N. Kirabaev, M. Low, A. Malashenko, G. Mirsky, E. Nurgul, V. Ushakova, Yu. Flygin, E. Mamytova, R. Shamgunov. These authors consider both general theoretical issues and the problems of interaction between traditional and fundamentalist Islam (Mirsky, 1998; Mamytova, 2000; Louw, 2010). Some experts (Ignatenko, 1988) place greater emphasis on the consideration of the Central Asian region as an integral element of pan-Islamic civilization, based on the Arab cultural tradition. Other authors (Matveeva, 1999) emphasize the uniqueness of the Islamic element in Central Asia, which makes it possible to single out a number of unique features that are relevant for this region in particular. According to J. Roy and A. Weiner, a statistical analysis of Islamic practice in Central Asia shows a huge variety of Muslim practices and the versatility of Central Asian Islam (Ro'i, Wainer, 2009). At the same time, some particular aspects of this problem regarding government policy in relation to Islam, the role of the Islamic factor in regional modernization processes and the influence of religious identity on the identity and value orientations of Central Asian society remain poorly understood, which makes the appeal to this topic relevant.

Goal and tasks

The article aims to consider the evolution and historical features of the formation of Russian and Soviet policies regarding Central Asian Islam in order to show the main development trends and the impact that the Islamic factor has on modern life in the region. It should be emphasized that the work uses a narrow interpretation of the term "Central Asia", which is traditional for Russian historiography, which actually is an ambiguous concept, interpreted differently in various sources, in Russian and foreign scientific and journalistic literature. Within the framework of this study, it seems correct to use the concepts of "Turkestan", "Central Asia and Kazakhstan", "Central Asia" as synonyms applicable to different historical eras without extensive geographical definition of this region.

Research problem

To date, a consensus has developed in the scientific literature on the importance of the Islamic factor in shaping the identity of the Central Asian region. Islamic values influenced the preservation of moral principles and traditional legal norms, contributed to the development of charity and influenced trade and economic relations among the Muslim population. Islam turned into a consolidating social power, it was the basis of the spiritual and cultural life of the local population and influenced the socio-political situation in the region.

In the Russian Empire in the late XIX - early XX centuries a pragmatic approach prevailed in relation to Islam, and the central government was quite sympathetic towards this religion. The central government regarded Islam as an effective means of overcoming tribal hatred and uniting nomads in the interests of Russian statehood. With the establishment of control of the Russian Empire over the territories of modern Central Asia, changes started to take place in the life of the local population, in the process of modernization of the judicial system and in the education system (Graham, 2004). At the same time, such policy was subject to certain changes, taking into account the views of the governors-general and top officials of the regional administration.

So, during the period of the leadership of M.G. Chernyaev in Turkestan in the mid-1860s, he pursued a fairly liberal course towards Islam. This policy implied the non-interference of the

authorities in the religious issues of the local population and the clergy, preservation in full of the role and influence of Sharia courts, admitting, however, the prohibition of cruel, self-harming sentences and practices.

The period of the governor general K.P. Kaufman (late 1860s – early 1880s) in relation to Islam and his clergy was dominated by the so-called “ignore” approach. According to the point of view of V.N. Ushakov, during this period: “in general, the colonial authorities understood the seriousness of the Islamic factor and did not interfere with the religion of the Muslim population, but Islam was taken under state control” (Ushakov, 2005). In this context, for the Turkestan population it was significantly difficult to perform the Hajj, with the aim of more regulation of the local population, reducing ties and contacts with the Arab Islamic world. The measures taken included the need to guarantee and pay the necessary duties, obtain passports, and bureaucratize the process of obtaining the necessary visas, which made it difficult for pilgrims to have a hajj to Mecca (Litvinov, 2006). The consequence of this was an increase in the number of commitments of the “secret Hajj”, without the necessary supporting documents, which at that time were impossible to completely eradicate, due to the transparency of the external borders of Turkestan.

The creation of courts separately for the settled and nomadic population to solve minor issues stimulated the work on the exact codification of fiqh and customary law, criticized the old things and the development of a “new method” in the education system (Litvinov, 2006).

In the 1890s, and also after the Andijan uprising of 1898, a policy of restricting and controlling Islam by the regional administration was carried out, which was reflected in the active intervention in the spiritual, cultural and social life of the local population (Morrison, 2008). This led to an increase in protest in the region, a refusal to pay taxes and the execution of official orders, as well as clashes between the indigenous people and representatives of the administration. The leaders or active participants in the unrest were religious leaders (Flygin, 2008).

In general, under the conditions of Turkestan being part of the Russian Empire, despite the tightening of official policies regarding Islam, religious values played a large role in the life of the local population of Central Asia. Islamic values influenced the preservation of moral principles and traditional legal norms,

contributed to the development of charity, influenced trade, economic and social relations among the Muslim population. The increasing importance of religious values occurred in the context of the loss of the political status of Islam. Islam turned into a consolidating force of the Muslim Central Asian society, was the basis of the spiritual and cultural life of the local population, and influenced the socio-political situation in the region.

An important issue of the Islamic factor in Central Asia is the religious educational traditions in the region. One of the forms of Muslim education was madrasah, with an independent system of teaching secular and religious sciences. Madrasahs (higher spiritual schools) and maktabas (primary spiritual schools) appeared in Central Asia in the 10th century, but became more widespread in the 15th and 19th centuries, when Islam became the official religion of the Central Asian khanates. According to some experts, in the period from the 9th to the 12th century, Islam formed the way of life of the population of Central Asia not so much as a religious ideology, but as a life path, qualitatively different from the Islamic orientation that took shape in the Islamic world (Haghayeghi, 1995).

The main spiritual and educational centers in Central Asia were Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, Osh, Kokand and other cities of the Ferghana Valley. In madrasahs and in other educational institutions, Central Asia has always adhered to the idea of continuity of education. In maktabas, the course lasted about four years. At this stage of education, the Arabic alphabet, grammar, the basics of the Qur'an, and works of poets and thinkers of the East were studied. Education in the madrasah was carried out according to a well-thought-out curriculum and took place in three stages (primary, secondary and higher levels). The training material at each stage was given according to the principle from simple to complex. The training system first involved the study of Arabic, Persian, Turkic languages, the basics of law and its methods. Theological disciplines and methods for interpreting the Holy Texts, i.e. Quran and hadith, were present only at the end of the training. During the XIX - XX centuries new method schools began to open in Central Asia. The duration of schooling lasted 4 years. In the educational process, traditional religious instruction was combined with secular education, and general educational disciplines were introduced.

Thus, from a historical perspective, Islam influenced various spheres of spiritual and cultural life in Turkestan. As a result of long-term interaction and the fusion of artistic traditions, a common Muslim culture and art was formed in many ways. At the same time, Islamic culture and art in Turkestan had their own peculiarities, emerging from the traditions of the pre-Islamic period, the uniqueness of the historical, socio-economic and ethno-cultural development of the peoples of the region.

In general, it can be noted that the interaction of the center and local Central Asian communities was a complex, ambiguous process, covering a large layer of problems (confessional, linguistic, cultural, administrative, national, etc.). We are talking about the ethnic diversity and diversity of the region's population, about the complex system of relations of the center with local authorities and local communities, the asymmetry of administrative and legal structures and the resources of stability of imperial positions in the region.

The central bureaucracy itself was not a single whole; the central government could have serious contradictions with local officials. But local communities were not consolidated, and regional elites often appealed to the central authorities in order to strengthen their positions and resolve internal conflicts. Various religious and ethnocultural groups could cooperate with each other in the confrontation with the central government, could conflict with each other and try to enlist the support of the imperial authorities in this struggle. The central and local authorities pursued an assimilation policy with respect to various groups of the population, often cooperating, but also opposing each other in these matters. Such interaction of various national and social groups of the population created a variety of mixed and transitional cultural forms in the region.

The process of the collapse of the Russian Empire led to the fact that by the end of 1917 in Turkestan there were many independent governments. The stronghold of Soviet influence in the region was Tashkent. Soviet politics in Turkestan was aimed at carrying out revolutionary and ideological transformations, establishing the power of the Bolsheviks in the region. It is important to emphasize that in Central Asia the Bolsheviks were faced with the task of modernizing a traditional, archaic and conservative society.

Initially, many representatives of regional nationalist organizations and the clergy maintained a benevolent neutrality towards the Soviet government, considering it as a more preferable option than the imperial model of governance. Many Islamic communities supported the establishment of Soviet power in Bukhara and the overthrow of the emir. However, practical measures of the Soviet government, including separation of religion from the state, closure of religious schools, removal of grain and food from the peasants, demolition of traditional governance structures and repression against Muslim clergy and privileged classes contributed to the growth of influence and radicalization of the opponents of the Bolsheviks.

After the establishment of Soviet power in Central Asia, the Bolsheviks, in addition to the task of maintaining power in the region, sought to modernize the traditional Central Asian society. In addition to traditional groups of supporters (workers, peasants, intellectuals, women, youth...), an important social element in supporting Soviet politics in Central Asia in the early 1920s was the reformist clergy. In the 1920s reformists received a number of managerial functions within the Islamic community: control over religious courts, oversight of the collection of waqf income, certification of religious judges and teachers, etc. However, the liberalization policy towards Islam was not consistent in the late 1920s. A tightening of religious policies regarding Islam was taking place. Since this period, Soviet policy aimed at undermining the influence of religion in society: anti-Islamic propaganda was intensifying; Muslim spiritual leaders were being arrested; activities, religious educational institutions and religious justice system were being limited; and taxation of religious objects was increasing.

Thus, the problem of the interaction of Soviet power in Central Asia with the Islamic clergy remains extremely controversial. It is important to emphasize that the Islamic clergy was split into fundamentalists who rejected cooperation with the Bolsheviks and reformists who recognized the Soviet regime and supported some of the transformations, substantiating them from an Islamic perspective. In general, the Soviet regional policy in the religious sphere was aimed at solving two main problems. In the long run, the most important factor was the complete elimination of Islamic influence in the region. However, in the short term, the goal of Soviet politics was to create a broad base of support among representatives of the reformist and

progressive clergy. This was supposed to be achieved by splitting the Islamic community into various groups, strengthening the positions of reformists through administrative and financial support, transferring to them part of the ideological powers, and the arrest of some rival fundamentalist leaders. This policy was generally implemented during the first ten years of Soviet influence. Tighter anti-Islamic approach in the late 1920s - early 1930s was connected with the strengthening of Soviet positions in the region, with a common line for toughening the domestic political and economic course, with solving the problems of radical transformations (the fight against illiteracy, collectivization, alphabet reform, industrialization...), in which representatives of the clergy acted as moral and ideological competitors of the Soviet government.

Educational and gender changes led to profound changes in the Central Asian society at different levels: social, psychological, legal and political. However, during the implementation of these transformations, they met strong resistance from the conservative clergy, representatives of the clan and tribal community. Many places of worship transferred to illegal status. So, in 1945, about 600 unregistered mosques operated in Uzbekistan, and in Tajikistan by 1960 there were 6 thousand of such mosques (Makarenko, 2003). Women's equality, which had widespread support in cities, was seen in the countryside areas as a violation of centuries-old foundations, as an attack on Islam. Many women were punished by communities and family members, some were attacked, and there were cases of killings. Schools where women studied were set on fire. There were raids on the buildings of local authorities.

Some representatives of the tribal elite and the clergy used the issue of gender equality in order to strengthen their positions, legitimize their status within the community, and rally around them all dissatisfied with Soviet influence in the region. Some religious leaders supported the creation of special religious clubs and classes for women as measures to counter gender equality. Other representatives of the clergy advocated solving the problem of women's inequality from an Islamic perspective in the context of the struggle against tribal, pre-Islamic survivals. From their point of view, an important outcome of such campaigns would be an increase in Islamic sentiment among women and the neutralization of Soviet influence in this area.

Thus, the formation of a model of Soviet politics in Central Asia was a long, controversial process, the form and content of which at various stages were seriously modified. It is important to note that the Soviet modernization model in Central Asia was not a repetition of the Russian imperial policy in the region, but was radically different from it, although it borrowed some forms and methods of governance (Abdullah, 1988). The result of the transformations was a radical change of the socio-social system and large-scale changes in various aspects of life.

At the same time, traditionalist, sociocultural elements that were integrated into the Soviet model in Central Asia were preserved, determining its features and originality. In general, Central Asian society has demonstrated a high degree of adaptability. Islam continued to exert a great influence on various aspects of society (legal proceedings, education, legal norms, traditions...), and after the tightening of the anti-religious campaign, this influence continued, although it narrowed sharply. The traditional clan system reproduced itself within the framework of the new administrative structures, repressions contributed to a change in the balance of power within the system, but did not lead to its undermining.

One of the important elements was the rise of reformist movements in Islam in the late Soviet period. The first reformist and modernist religious movements in the territory of the former Russian Empire (various forms of Jadidism) arose under the direct influence of similar movements that took place in Egypt and Turkey in the 1920s. Since the 1970s the revival of reformist Islam in Central Asia begins, the formation of which is greatly influenced by the ideology and works of M.Kh. Rustamov, M. Abdo, A. Maududi, J. Afghani, H. Al-Banna and S. Kutb. A number of external factors contribute to the intensification of Islamic sentiment: the Islamic revolution in Iran, the entry of Soviet troops into Afghanistan in 1979 and Moscow's policy of sending inspired people from Central Asia to Muslim countries to establish ties in the Islamic world, among others. The Islamic renaissance of the late 1980s and early 1990s, taking place against the backdrop of an ideological vacuum, led to the fact that the population of the Central Asian region began to turn to the cultural and religious traditions repressed in the past. This was facilitated by an increase in the number of mosques, the development of religious education and the strengthening of the interaction of the Central Asian countries with the Islamic world. Activists

and religious figures from Turkey, Pakistan, Iran, Arab countries, who provide financial, ideological, educational support in spreading Islamic ideology in the region rushed to the Central Asian region in large numbers.

These processes, along with positive aspects, gave rise to certain social and political problems (Niyazi, 2013).

One of them, which enhance the conflict potential of the region, is the export of unconventional Islamism, the emergence of radical religious groups like «Hizb ut-Tahrir». Under their direct or indirect influence, some local religious and political communities began to form, which borrowed ideas about the caliphate (or Islamic state) and the methods of conspiracy of Hizb ut-Tahrir. The religious renaissance has affected all sectors of society, including young intellectuals, among whom (especially in the marginal part) the phenomenon of "return to the religion of the fathers" has acquired special features. A important characteristic of these groups was that the religious upsurge was largely based not on the study of traditions and knowledge of the ideological and dogmatic system of Islam, but on a spontaneous, emotional impulse to gain a new ideological orientation. This environment gave birth to «Akramiya» and similar radical groups («Marifatchilar», «Mahdi groups» in Uzbekistan).

In general, we can say that in «Akramiya» the religious component was adapted for those young people who received secular (mainly technical) education, and who began to perceive religion in its more modern forms, without restriction by strict ritual duties and regulations. It was the lack of strict religious purism that became attractive to the first members of «Akramiya», who remained influenced by the secular education of the Soviet era. Interestingly, this religious ideology was negatively perceived by most of the ulema of Uzbekistan and the entire Central Asian region, and among radical Wahhabi groups.

According to various researchers, a number of social factors have made «Akramiya» a rapidly growing and dynamic group. In Uzbek society (especially among the marginal part), there is a desire for special "micro-community" integration in various forms: kindred, clan, local (territorial), commercial, and for some time religious and ideological. The inefficiency of official ideological guidelines, the uncertainty of identity, the dependence on power and the

shortcomings of official Islam were some of the factors that stimulated the search for "micro-ideologies" within small communities. Within the framework of the new religious groups («Akramiya», «Marifatchilar»...) a community identification developed, which led to a rapid increase in their number. It is especially noted that a purely repressive policy rather strengthens Islamic fundamentalism than weakens or destroys it (Goble, 1998).

At the present stage, the Islamic factor has a strong influence on various aspects of society in Central Asia. One of the most striking examples here is Uzbekistan. In Uzbekistan, a unique manifestation of religious spirituality has developed: secular religiosity. Remaining a state with a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional composition of the population, the country represents a unique kind of secular state, whose population retains religious consciousness as priorities. The main factors that influenced its features are: the historical combination of many faiths in this state and their mutual influence, the transformation of the religious consciousness of the population in the Soviet period, political changes at the global and regional levels and the growing influence of Islam in public and political life (Louw, 2010). The increasing influence of the religious factor in Uzbekistan is confirmed by the results of sociological studies. According to some statistics, about 93% of the country's population practice Islam. According to some experts' estimations, the indicators of religious self-awareness are significantly higher than the indicators of ethnic self-identification, although there are tendencies of growth of national self-consciousness (Toktamysov, Grebenichenko, 2016). The attitude of the Uzbek ruling elite towards Islam remains ambivalent. On the one hand, Islam is regarded as a historical and cultural heritage, the basis of moral and spiritual values. On the other hand, there are fears that Islam will become an instrument of political struggle (Malashenko, 2012).

In the traditional life of the local population, family, family ties, the feeling of belonging to the local community and the social relations were of great importance. The merging of the ethnopsychological views of the Uzbek people and local traditions with Islamic religious beliefs and traditions can be observed in many family rites (parenting, marriage, funeral...). An important role in religious beliefs, customs, and culture of the Uzbek society was played by the attitude to the environment, animal and vegetal life. Pre-Islamic rituals gradually intertwined with Islamic views, which ultimately gave rise to

special traditions, such as the veneration of the most important elements of nature or ritual prayers and sacrifices in honor of a plentiful harvest. Moreover, rituals performed in the family circle or with the participation of the general public, as well as traditions of good neighborliness, were observed at the level of laws. A kind of social supervision of an individual and the constant participation of a person in the life of the community are considered as evidence of their observance of general moral standards. The separation of a person from the life of society was regarded as his social exclusion.

When considering the characteristics of the religious situation in Uzbekistan, an important element is to overcome the simplified mainstream approach, which considers religious confrontation in Central Asian Islam as part of the “traditionalists/fundamentalists” dichotomy (Babajanov, Muminov, Kugelgen, 2007). At the local level, religious differences are often caused by different kindred, economic, community-territorial, administrative relations, which create in each particular Muslim community a completely special alignment of forces, group interests, and methods of legitimation. As a result, the appeals to various interpretations of Islam, the attribution to themselves and the conflicting side of various positive or negative traits are often not elements of a theological and ideological discussion. Religious confrontation acts as an instrument in the struggle for the influence of intra-Islamic groups and religious figures, in competition for resources, in the legitimization of their status within the local community.

Moreover, no matter what kind of Islam is considered in Central Asia, it is important to understand that in all countries of the region the state controls religious life to a high degree. Regional leaders retain many structures and working methods taken from Soviet experience. They are trying to support the “official” state-recognized religious structures and to suppress the religious life and activity that goes on outside these structures. Central Asian leaders support loyal representatives of the traditional Islamic clergy. At the same time, those who can be called “reformers, informals, and politically unreliable elements” are being persecuted and going underground.

When analyzing the religious situation in Kyrgyzstan, it is important to emphasize that Islam in this state has less deep historical traditions than in Uzbekistan, and the indigenous

population assimilated Islam superficially, borrowing external ritual aspects. As a result, in local Islam, elements of numerous pre-Muslim forms and beliefs (totemism, animism, fetishism, shamanism, the cult of ancestors) are closely intertwined and coexist along with the orthodox provisions of the Sunni sense. Another feature of Kyrgyz Islam is its relative homogeneity and lack of diversity (Junisbai B., Junisbai A., Zhussupov, 2017). There are two main schools (madhhabs) of the Sunni trend, united in one religious organization: the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan (SAMK), headed by the mufti. The main Islamic sects in the republic are Sufism, Ahmadiyya and the Baha'i faith. Despite the presence of various ideas and basic principles, they are united by the fact that they all relate to modernist, reformist movements in Islam. At the same time, Sufism was one of the early Islamic movements in the territory of Kyrgyzstan, and the missionary activity of Sufi sheikhs and tariqas played an important role in the spread of Islam and Islamic values in the mass consciousness of the local population (Nurgul, 2016). The Baha'i faith and Ahmadiyya appeared on the territory of Kyrgyzstan in the 1990s as a result of global socio-political, cultural and ideological changes. Examples of the above sects prove that Islam, despite the inviolability of its foundations, is subject to certain changes, and the spread of new intra-Islamic sects and currents in Kyrgyzstan indicates a noticeable tolerance of Kyrgyz society.

An important aspect of the religious situation in Central Asia is the level of Islamic control by regional political regimes. Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan pursue the most stringent policy of state control over the religious sphere. In Turkmenistan, members of the clergy are appointed and removed by government officials, and are prohibited from interfering in government affairs. In this state, the distribution of unofficial religious literature and the creation of religious parties is prohibited by law. In Uzbekistan, as in Turkmenistan, the state oversees the training of religious leaders and has the authority to appoint and dismiss them. In the framework of the existing tough approach, there is a ban on religious radical practices, as well as tight control over the activities of the official clergy.

In all Central Asian countries, restrictions on religious life have a political connotation: political loyalty is the main criterion for evaluating a religious figure. As a result, the phenomenon of “parallel Islam”, the existence of

officially unrecognized religious associations and groups, is being revived (Israeli, 1995). At the same time, “parallel Islam” as a whole does not compete with secular authorities; it is an affordable alternative to inefficient state administration.

Some experts subdivide Central Asian Islam into three categories, each of which is to some extent determined geographically. Thus, the “steppe” Islam of the nomadic peoples of Central Asia (Turkmenistan, a significant part of Kazakhstan) gravitates toward simplicity and syncretism, it integrates many pre-Islamic practices. “Oasis” Islam (the south of Kazakhstan, Tashkent, Bishkek) assigns a large role to the clergy, it combines dogmatism with a rather pragmatic and tolerant worldview. “Mountain and valley” Islam (Tajikistan, a significant part of Kyrgyzstan, the Ferghana Valley) is less dogmatic, but at the same time less tolerant and more politicized (Abdulaev, 1998). At the same time, there is a process of increasing “nationalization” of Islam, blurring the line between Islam and nationalism (Roy, 2002). The presented classification largely reflects the characteristics of political and social activity in the region.

Conclusion

Thus, the Islamic factor plays an extremely important role in the political, economic, and social life of the Central Asian society: Islam is professed by a large part of the region’s population, and the moral standards of Islam largely determine the behavioral norms of a significant number of the indigenous people of the Central Asian region of the CIS.

The consideration of the adaptation of Central Asian Islam to the processes of modernization in the region is very interesting issue. An analysis of historical transformations in Central Asia (socio-economic, political, educational, ideological, technological...) indicates the ability of Islam to exist in modernization, adapting to it and transforming it for its own purposes. This phenomenon of positive adaptation is associated with the pragmatism of the Central Asian population, with the flexibility of Central Asian Islam and its ability to modify and adapt to current socio-political conditions. Islam also influenced the adaptive abilities of the peoples of Central Asia in an unconventional environment and helped to preserve the cultural, family, educational, ethnolinguistic traditions of migrants.

However, the threat of discrediting Islamic values by religious extremism remains an important issue. In an extremist interpretation, the emphasis is exclusively on the aggressive nature of Islam, its protest potential, and the cultural and spiritual values of religion are ignored. The revitalization of radical Islamist groups, the export of terrorism and its support by some external players, the spread of the ideology of global jihad and the creation of the Caliphate are some of the key security threats in the Central Asian region.

In this context, the study of the phenomenon of Islamic tolerance, its cultural and historical heritage, and the humanistic traditions of Islamic philosophy and culture, which played an important constructive and socially consolidating role in the history of the peoples of Central Asia, is very relevant. The identification of the humanistic potential of Islam is of great importance in the harmonization of the religious and secular segments of modern Central Asian society and the establishment of interaction within Muslim civilization (Kyrabayev, 2011).

An important element of the religious life of Central Asian society is the preservation of elements of traditional, pre-Islamic religions. This plays a special role in studying the historical features of traditional life in the region, and makes it possible to understand the uniqueness of the Muslim religion in the way of life of the local population.

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