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Inter-ethnic conflicts in the south of the Kyrgyz Republic

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the causes, forms and types of ethnic conflicts in the post-Soviet region of Central Asia are considered on the example of the Ferghana Valley.

Keywords:

Fergana Valley, causes, forms and types of ethnic conflicts, analysis of interethnic conflicts, to stabilize interethnic relations in the republic: legislative, social support, political, aimed at studying solutions

Introduction

This study examines the specific aspects of the interethnic conflict that took place in the city of Osh of the Kyrgyz Republic in June 2010. Of great interest is the analysis of the causes of this conflict, the mechanisms for its elimination, as well as state policy measures in the field of interethnic relations in the post-conflict period. The main attention in the research process is focused on the variety of causes of the conflict, the actions of state and non-state structures to resolve it, as well as the measures taken to stabilize interethnic relations in the republic: legislation, social support, political decisions are focused on education.

As has been noted more than once, in such a phenomenon as an interethnic conflict, it is quite difficult to single out a single cause of events; it is rather a set of economic, social, demographic, cultural and historical factors that are in a certain political context.

Level of Study of the Subject

An interethnic conflict in Kyrgyzstan occurred on June 10-14, 2010, the clash was caused by a fight in a local casino in the city of Osh between representatives of the Kyrgyz and Uzbek ethnic groups. A special role was played by the rapidly spreading rumors about an attack by Uzbek youth on Kyrgyz students in the dormitory of the Osh State University, located next to the casino, which was subsequently not confirmed (the fact of the attack). Information about the atrocities of one or another ethnic group instantly spread, primarily thanks to modern means of communication. More and more people came to Osh. The riots that flared up after that soon spread to the Jalal-Abad region.

The situation in the sphere of interethnic relations began to escalate after the change of power during the April coup, there were everyday "skirmishes", fights between representatives of different ethnic groups became more frequent. Information about the attacks of one or another ethnic group (Kyrgyz, Uzbeks) spread with unprecedented speed,

which aggravated the already unstable situation. And the attempts of Bakiyev's supporters (the ex-president of Kyrgyzstan, overthrown as a result of the April 2010 coup) to take revenge led to new clashes. So, from the political sphere of the struggle for power, the conflict has flowed into the sphere of interethnic confrontation.

As a result of the clashes, according to official figures, 426 people died, more than 2 thousand people were injured, according to the International Commission of the dead there were 470 people [1], houses, shops, etc. were burned, property was looted, and the total material damage amounted to about 80 million dollars [2], according to various sources, 300-700 thousand people became refugees. Victims and victims are representatives of different ethnic groups.

There are different versions of the assessment of the causes of events and actions of the official authorities and law enforcement agencies during the conflict. The Uzbek side claimed that the security forces were inactive, ignored the attacks, and there were reports of snipers, who, according to a representative of the Kyrgyz security forces, turned out to be foreigners. Regarding the actions of law enforcement agencies in the first days of the conflict, the Kyrgyz side referred to the unpreparedness of the police for such events.

However, there is still much unclear in this conflict, it is alleged that preparations for the riots were carried out long before the collision itself, they talked about unidentified groups driving around in cars without license plates, unidentified instigators and provocateurs in ski masks, cases of distribution of weapons [3], involvement of those IMU militants in Afghanistan and their connections with the Bakiyev clan, who (militants) on the eve of the conflict were transferred to the south of Kyrgyzstan through the Tajik Khorog and Murgab from the Afghan Badakhshan, another route: Isfara-Batken-Osh [4].

Therefore, it is necessary to study the various reasons for the aggravation of interethnic relations, which resulted in the form of violent riots.

In Kyrgyzstan, by the summer of 2010, an unstable situation had developed, caused by a political crisis and a change of power, which served as a catalyst for aggravating tensions in interethnic relations. On the one hand, these events were the impetus for violent actions, on the other hand, contradictions in interethnic relations can be seen as a kind of distraction from the situation of the struggle for power in the country. In this case, it is necessary to explore the fullness of the picture through the analysis of contradictions in all spheres of public life.

Most analysts agree that in the current socio-economic, political situation, the conflict was inevitable: this is due to the deterioration of the social and economic situation of the country's population, the redistribution of economic and political power, the demographic situation, increasing regionalization, the ill-conceived and short-sighted policy of the state in the field of interethnic relations, problems associated with the strengthening of criminal structures and its merging with state authorities in the country, the structure of society itself, its clan structure, which is transferred to the sphere of power relations, etc. Also, the situation began to worsen after the adoption of the "Law on the state language" in 2004, according to which all office work is conducted in the Kyrgyz language, and knowledge of the state language is mandatory for civil servants [5], which excludes citizens of the country who do not speak the Kyrgyz language from active political life.

Socio-economic problems in a situation of resource scarcity significantly affect other aspects of interethnic relations that take root in society in the form of national myths and stereotypes.

By its specialization, Kyrgyzstan is more of an agrarian country, there are also such industries as energy, mining and processing industries (light and food), but agriculture remains the leading source of income and employment for the majority of the population. Moreover, the share of arable land per person in 2010 was 0.26 hectares, and by 2013 it decreased to 0.22 hectares, and still continues to decline [6]. This leads to a situation of

struggle for land, pastures, etc. resources. But this aspect of the problem should be considered in the context of the current demographic situation in the country. At the moment, the population of Kyrgyzstan is 6106701, the proportion of people aged 15-65 years is 65.4% (working-age population) [7]. The share of the Uzbek ethnic group in the republic is 14.6% [8], and according to the census of the population of Kyrgyzstan in 2009, 27.95% of ethnic Uzbeks lived in the Osh region of the total population of the region, and in Osh itself 44.18% [9].

Roman Vladimirovich Veitsel proposes to consider the reasons for the aggravation of interethnic relations through the prism of the age composition of the population. The author talks about the so-called cycles of protest, which are repeated every 20-30 years. This is due to the succession of generations and the traditional nature of population reproduction, when each of the families, by our standards, is considered to have many children, but the children grow up, they need their own housing, work, etc. On the basis of this, a conflict arises, and this component is exacerbated by stereotypes regarding another ethnic group living in this territory. In addition, the population of another ethnic group is also increasing and needs to meet exactly the same needs. Here the author deduces these cycles of a surge of social discontent, leading to violence and bloodshed. The author examines the recurrence of protest activity, starting with the Andijan uprising in 1898, when the Kyrgyz and Uzbeks opposed the Russian administration and the peasants, Cossacks, and workers who moved to the region. The uprising was brutally suppressed. The next precedent was repeated 18 years later in 1916, also in Andijan. A large number of Russian settlers were killed, and the uprising was also suppressed. A new round of the cycle was to be repeated in the 30s, but this did not happen.

R.V.Weitsel connects this with the Stalinist purges and repressions. The Great Patriotic War that followed made its own adjustments: many died, and the idea of fighting a common enemy worked to unite society, besides, social policy aimed at building

housing, developing new lands, creating jobs in enterprises, etc., contributed to relative stability in the region. However, in 1962 Kyrgyz-Uzbek clashes took place in Jalal-Abad. And less than 30 years later, in 1990, the so-called "Osh massacre" took place, the cause of which was the problem of providing land for the Kyrgyz who came from the countryside, and the subsequent political demands of the Uzbek side of the autonomy, giving the Uzbek language the status of a state language (cultural component conflict). And again, 20 years later, in the same Osh, another conflict [10].

In addition, it should be noted that the nature of the activities of these ethnic groups is different. If we talk about agricultural specialization, then ethnic Kyrgyz are mainly livestock breeders, and Uzbeks are engaged in crop production. But more significant is the dominance of one or another ethnic group in a certain area of employment in society. Thus, Uzbeks dominated in the sphere of trade and business, however, according to Sergey Ponomarev, a member of the Business Club of Bishkek, in the sphere of business "all ethnic groups of the country are represented equally" [11], in the system of public administration - Kyrgyz. This circumstance was addressed both in the 1990 conflict and in the 2010 conflict. However, such "economic dominance" of one ethnic group should be considered in the historical and political context. Thus, the privatization carried out by President Akaev led to a serious gap in the standard of living between the bulk of the population and the group that controlled cross-border trade, and this phenomenon was of a pronounced ethnic nature - in the South of the country it was associated with Uzbeks, some of whom really got rich for it (privatization) account (for example, deputy Batyrov). The actions of the new President Bakiyev, who came to power after the "tulip revolution" of 2005, were also aimed at controlling the economy, which led to the disgrace of some and the rise of other entrepreneurs. Control of the economy in Osh passed into the hands of Uzbeks close to President Bakiyev. All this led to an increase in discontent among the population, reinforcing

already existing ethnic stereotypes and confirming them with relevant examples [12].

The problem of defining borders is also important, which was carried out at the dawn of the formation of the Soviet state. So, now the southern Kyrgyz city of Osh was annexed to the Kara-Kyrgyz Autonomous Region in 1924. Hence the disputes with the Uzbek side over who lived on this land since ancient times. The ill-conceived demarcation of borders, coupled with historical memory and national grievances, is multiplied against the backdrop of economic problems and political instability. This was the case in the conflict of 1990 and in the conflict of 2010. When analyzing the events of the interethnic conflict of 2010, one of the reasons for the outbreak of violence is the lessons that the authorities did not learn twenty years ago, the ill-conceived and ineffective policy in the field of interethnic relations.

The instability of the political situation in Kyrgyzstan during the entire period of its independence contributed to the deepening of the crisis in the republic. The change of presidents during the so-called Tulip Revolution of 2005 brought neither political stability nor an improvement in the quality of life of the population. During the presidency of K. Bakiyev, the Constitution was changed three times, more and more weakening the system of checks and balances of presidential power. And the existence of nepotism and clannishness, characteristic of the Eastern society of neopatrimonialism in the upper echelon of power, led to the fact that relatives of the president were appointed to key government posts, and representatives of other elites were removed from the levers of state administration [13].

In such conditions, there was an increase in criminality and its merging with state power. According to published data, "one of the main sponsors of the change of power in 2005 was a member of parliament, and concurrently the owner of the Kara-Suu market, which (the market) only according to official data brings in more than 200 million dollars [14], and a criminal the authority of B. Erkinbaev" [13].

And the change of power in April 2010 led to the loss of positions of power and control over the economic resources of Bakiyev's supporters. The struggle of criminal gangs for power and influence began, which, in particular, provoked inter-ethnic tension in the south of the republic, where such structures were ethnic in color [15]. Drug trafficking from Afghanistan controlled by the Bakiyev family (according to the State Drug Control Service of the Kyrgyz Republic) was left unattended after they lost power, which provoked a fight for it. In Osh, there was a series of arrests, murders and raider seizures of property of persons associated with the drug business (Uzbek businessman Aibek Mirsidikov, who was associated with the family of the ex-president and controlled the drug flow from Afghanistan) [12].

French anthropologist and analyst Boris Petrik believes that such a redistribution of power among criminal and mafia structures has become a catalyst for inciting interethnic conflict. This circumstance is also referred to in the "Report of the UN Office for Drug and Crime Control" [15], speaking of the interethnic conflict in Osh as a way to divert attention from the struggle for drug transportation channels.

The incitement of inter-ethnic confrontation was intensified by certain politicians, ethnic leaders, whose slogans were widely covered in the press. Broadcast on the Uzbek-language TV channels Osh-TV, Mezon-TV, Smart-TV, the speeches of Kadyrzhan Batyrov, who headed the Uzbek national cultural center of the Jalal-Abad region, were of a nationalist nature [10]. The former deputy urged the Uzbeks to be more active in politics: "If it weren't for the Uzbeks, the Kyrgyz and members of the Provisional Government would not have been able to repulse the Bakiyevs in Jalal-Abad when he (the ex-president) tried to act against the Provisional Government" [3], "if the Provisional Government is unable to establish order in the country and justify the trust of the people, then we will sweep away this power" [15]. On the other hand, publications in May-June in the newspapers Alibi, Zhany Zaaman, and Apta became a nationalist message [16]. Also, the situation

was aggravated by the statements and actions of the mayor of Osh, Melisbek Myrzakmatov, who took a clearly nationalist anti-Uzbek position.

R.V. Weitsel believes that the same K. Batyrov, by his actions, contributed to the retention of power by the Provisional Government: organizing rallies in support of the VP, liberating several administrative buildings from Bakiyev's supporters. In order to balance the forces of the ex-president in the south of the republic, the Provisional Government relied on local Uzbeks, which prompted them to put forward political demands [3]. However, the "leader" of the Uzbeks did not achieve the desired benefits (share of power in the republic) [10].

Some analysts see the influence of external actors as the cause of interethnic conflict. It is assumed that the conflict was provoked in order to prevent the strengthening of Russia's position in the region, which was conducting preparatory actions for the construction of the Kant military base in the Osh region. However, the authors do not provide evidence.

Conclusion

Thus, in this conflict, several levels of participants can be distinguished:

1. Ordinary citizens dissatisfied with their economic and social situation, conflicts between which occur due to material inequality and are complicated by subjective factors: stereotypes of thinking and historical grievances;[17]

2. Power structures;

3. Individual political and ethnic leaders;[18]

4. Mass media as a repeater and provocateur of events;

5. Criminal structures;

6. Drug business;

7. Geopolitical players.[19]

Corresponding contradictions existed at each of the levels, which, on the one hand, aggravated during the interethnic clash, or provoked it, if one adheres to the version of the involvement of the ex-president's clan in organizing the interethnic conflict, in order to

discredit the Provisional Government and seize power.

As can be seen, economic inequality in the context of an agrarian economy, resource shortage, inequality in access to benefits, the activities of political leaders, the criminality of power relations, the spontaneous spread of rumors, most of which remain rumors and have no confirmation, generates a powerful social protest, resulting in acts of a violent nature. Political instability in the country, the struggle for power of criminal and mafia structures became a catalyst for the aggravation of interethnic relations, which first manifested itself in individual domestic clashes, the number of which became more frequent in May 2010 and reached its climax in June.

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