

CONSEQUENCES OF SOVIET ETHNIC FEDERALISM IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS

Elahch Koolae*

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Abstract

The roots of Islam in the beliefs and thoughts of the people of the Caucasus region go back to the seventh century and have evolved over the centuries through various developments. The creation of the alleged “Green Belt” by the USA during the Cold War also promoted Islamic tendencies in the peripheral regions of the Soviet Union. After the military attack of the Soviet Army on Afghanistan, Islamist movements found greater opportunities to enjoy the support of the USA against the Soviet Union. The resurgence of Islamic trends in the Middle East and West Asia affected the Caucasus region as well. The conditions created by the implementation of Gorbachev’s reform policies were also favorable for Islamism. As the ethnic policies of the Soviet Union and the “ethnic federalism” of the communist system were entering the last stage, Islamism was strengthened by using the space created by the implementation of Glasnost. The study of the effects of ethnic-racial policies of the Soviet Union on the political-military trends in the Caucasus, after its collapse, is the aim of this review. The main question of this paper is: “What effect has the legacy of ethnic policies of the Soviet Union had on the political-military developments of the South Caucasus, considering the factor of “Islam”?” The hypothesis is that: “The legacy of ethnic federalism in the Soviet Union has had a direct and immediate impact on the political-military developments of the South Caucasus, and the Islamic factor is an intervening variable.” The study employs a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical approach, using resources available in libraries and Internet.

Keywords: Ethnic Federalism, Islam, Caucasus, Russia, Afghanistan, America

* Prof. of Regional Studies, Faculty of Law and Political Science, University of Tehran
✉ ekolae@ut.ac.ir, ORCID ID 0000-0001-9655-0995

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Introduction

The Caucasus is divided into two parts by the Caucasus Mountain range, the northern and southern. Many tribes, ethnic and linguistic groups live in the North Caucasus, located in the Russian Federation. The impressive diversity of the Caucasus in terms of ethnicity and language is unparalleled in the world. Islam has been adopted in this area since the 7th century. The spread of Islam in the region was fast and until the expansion of the presence and influence of Tsarist Russia, these areas were always under the control and influence of Iranians.

At the end of the fifteenth century when the Safavid government declared Shiism official in Iran, a major portion of the Muslims of the South Caucasus also converted to the Shia religion. Until the victory of the October Revolution, Islam was dynamic in Central Asia and the Caucasus and large parts of Russia [8: 225]. The Muslims of these regions, like other Muslims, had a similar history and culture and spoke closely related languages. Even on the eve of the 1917 revolution, Baku was more closely connected to Tabriz and Isfahan than to Moscow and Petrograd. These areas were obviously parts of *Dar al-Islam*. Followers of other religions also lived in North Caucasus. In the 16th century, Dagestan became the main center of Islamic education in the Caucasus, where Arabic and Persian were the dominant cultural and literary languages. Despite the conversion of many tribes living in the mountainous areas to Islam, Christians and followers of other religions continued to live in the high mountainous areas [8: 230]. Until the early 19th century, many Ingush still adhered to pagan beliefs or Christianity. By the 19th century, however, Islam was the predominant religion among Chechens and Ingush. In fact, the Islamization of the Caucasus occurred over the course of ten centuries.

Expansion of Russian Influence in the Caucasus

Following the capture of Astrakhan in 1556 by Ivan the Terrible, Russia began to compete with the Ottoman Empire and Safavid Iran for control over the Caucasus region. Each of these states tried to gain the allegiance of local rulers. To ensure their security, local rulers sought the support of competing foreign powers. Russia's influence on the lower parts of the Volga River along with the expansion of the influence of the Shiite government of Iran resulted in the Sunni Muslim world becoming divided into two parts on either side of the Caspian Sea. Soon, the people of the Caucasus faced the intensification of the cultural colonization of the Russians [14: 132]. The Caucasus was one of the arenas of Russia's rivalry with the Ottoman Empire. In response to intensifying activities of Russia in the North

Caucasus, the Ottoman government tried to reinforce Islam among the mountain people. At the end of the 18th century, the Russians had expanded their military garrisons throughout this region[19]. They tried to annex the Caucasus into the empire. In this situation, Islam was an influential force against Russian colonialism and Russification in the region. After the Iran-Russia wars and the secession of the Caucasian regions from Iran since 1813, Iran's influence in this region declined.

Sufi Tariqats

Sufi *tariqats* in the Caucasus began to form in the 19th century, inspired by the teachings of Baha al-Din Naqshband, who lived in Bukhara during the 14th century. Sufi imams traced their efforts back to the era of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) and continued to search salvation in the world. This *tariqat*, which was primarily widespread in Central Asia and India, began to spread in the Ottoman Empire in the 18th century. An Ottoman sheikh named Sheikh Diya al-Din Khalid al-Shahrazuri lent his name to a new branch of this *tariqat*: the Khalidiyyah *tariqat* tried to spread religious beliefs rooted in spiritual inspiration. Sufi *tariqats* spread northward through the Ottoman territory and the South Caucasus. At the beginning of the 19th century, Sheikh Ismail Al-Shirwani, one of the important figures of the Naqshbandi *tariqat*, found many followers in the South Caucasus. His influence also extended into Dagestan[19]. The Russians faced the increasing influence of the *tariqat* leaders, as the Naqshbandiyyah played a unifying role among tribes of the North Caucasus.

From the late 19th century onward, Muslim armed movements against Russian rule began to emerge. Sufi sects and their leaders played a crucial role in these uprisings, declaring jihad. These movements were led either by the leader of Naqshbandiyyah or Qadiriyyah. They fought not only against the Russians, but also against other “infidels.” The first Sufi uprising, led by Sheikh Mansur, was directed against Russian rule. He was the first Naqshbandi leader who combined religious duties with national interests [16: 206-209]. Many Caucasian clerics recognized his leadership. He spoke about the necessity of returning to Islamic laws and values.

In the mid-1820s, the Chechen Rebellion erupted and soon encompassed other ethnic groups like the Ingush and Kabardians. Its main driver was the political teachings of the Naqshbandi order. This struggle led to a stable union among the mountain dwellers of the Caucasus. The Russian forces, against the expansion of the waves of this movement, adopted a “policy of encirclement.”

Their goal was to isolate the Chechens in the mountains and prevent their influence among the peoples of the Caucasus. However, the Russian policy in the Caucasus failed, and the Naqshbandi *tariqat* network in the region supported Mansur. The second mentor of Naqshbandiyyah was Sheikh Muhammad Effendi al-Yaraghi, who called on Muslims to wage *jihad* against the Russians in the south of Dagestan. This movement known as the “Muridist Movement” continued for 35 years until 1859. In the years of the Chechen rebellion and the Iran-Russia war, with Russia's attention diverted, Naqshbandi Sufis seized the opportunity to strengthen and promote their teachings.

Qazi Muhammad Ibn Ismail Al-Ghimrawi was one of the most influential leaders of the Naqshbandi *tariqat*. He believed that the implementation of Islamic rules leads to the salvation of people. Qazi Mohammad and his representatives had a major impact in turning Chechnya into one of the Naqshbandi centers. The experience of the second Imam of Naqshbandi showed that among the people of the Caucasus, religious legitimacy is very important for gaining political power [19]. Sheikh Shamil also organized new efforts. With the support of the people, he followed the fight against the Russian forces. The Russians inflicted heavy blows on Shamil's forces, which had a severe impact on the Muslims of Dagestan. Shamil consolidated his power in Chechnya in 1840. His reforms were very effective in strengthening and sustaining his power. By creating a regular and efficient administrative system, he reshaped the conditions existing in the Caucasus. He transformed the traditional power structure and limited the power of elites. It created the foundation for the emergence of the concept of citizenship in the region and, for the first time, ensured that both rulers and subjects accountable to the law. He was able to mobilize the Naqshbandiyyah network to gain people's support and sustain military struggle against the Russian forces. He exercised his power in the name of Islamic laws. In the early 1850s, Russia altered its strategy, strengthening the garrisons and forts in the region. Financial restrictions and food shortages fueled public discontent. Following the conclusion of the Crimean War, in 1857, Russian forces launched assaults on Shamil's strongholds. After the occupation of Dagestan by the Russians, the Naqshbandi order became a secret underground organization. After the defeat of Shaykh Shamil, the Qadiriyyah sect was established in the North Caucasus [19]. In contrast to the Naqshbandi approach, the early Qadiriyyah order did not emphasize conflict or struggle. Yet, its isolationist orientation carried the idea of resistance against Russian domination. Consequently, Qadiriyyah soon became one of the centers of armed resistance against Russia.

Jadidi Movement

In the middle of the 19th century, all over the Islamic world, efforts were made for Islamic renewal. During communication with European countries, the intellectuals of Islamic societies began effort to answer the question of the causes and factors behind the backwardness of Islamic societies. In the Caucasus region, which was on the way to connect with European societies, this tendency was very strong. Islamic reformism in the Caucasus became a powerful movement among Muslims. Some new-minded Muslim clerics took the leadership of this movement. Abu Nasr Qursawi, who taught in Bukhara schools, and Shihabuddin Marjani were among their prominent figures. They considered Islam to have full capacity to respond to the needs of all people in all periods. Consequently, Muslims in the Caucasus shared experiences similar to those of other Islamic societies. Some have considered the new movement as a response to Russia's modernization programs among Muslims, as well as the impact of the spread of waves of Slavophilism. Jadidis tried to modernize Islamic ideas in the Muslim areas of the Russian Empire [9]. This reform movement was very powerful in the Caucasus and the Tatar-inhabited regions, but it faced strong resistance from the traditionalists.

Muslims and the Revolution of October 1917

With the publication of Lenin's thoughts on the "right of nations to self-determination", the Muslims of the Caucasus also believed that they would be able to establish their desired government in the post-tsarist regime. In their different congresses, they discussed the conditions and means for the establishment of an Islamic government. In these congresses, the importance of Muslim unity was emphasized too [2]. At their 1917 congress in Moscow, the federal system, and the way of distribution of power were also considered. In Kazan, their emphasis was placed on the unity of Muslims and the formation of special institutions for the Muslim population. While Russian Muslims wanted unity, but the Bolshevik government prioritized the creation of small ethnically based states. In the South Caucasus, three independent republics were formed with the division of the Transcaucasian Republic [12]. This policy was also implemented in Dagestan. Although institutions were first established to manage the affairs of Muslims, they soon came under the complete control of the Communist Party. The government of the Soviet Union soon started the policy of unification of all nationalities by using all its tools and facilities. The policy aimed at destroying Islam and all its symbols

and institutions.

During the civil war period, the followers of Sufi *tariqats* found a favorable opportunity to resume their fight against Russia. After the defeat in these confrontations, all Naqshbandis were persecuted and harassed. Later, Stalin arrested and deported many Chechens and Ingush and other tribes in 1944 [11]. Thus, the Soviet Union, like the Tsarist Russia, instead of providing appropriate political and administrative mechanisms to ensure the rights of Muslims, implemented the policy of extermination and Sovietization in the Caucasus. Under the tsarist regime, the policy of “Russification” was imposed on all nationalities, including Muslims. This policy was later continued by the Soviet Union in the form of “Sovietization.”

After Reform Era

With the implementation of political reforms during the period of Mikhail Gorbachev, the last General Secretary of the Communist Party, the conditions for the spread of Islamic trends in the Caucasus were also provided. The removal of obstacles to communication with Islamic societies and participation in Muslim religious activities, as well as the increase in the activities of Islamic countries, helped the process of Islamic renewal among Muslims. This process was very evident in Dagestan, Tatarstan and Chechnya. Separatism in the autonomous republic of Chechnya, which separated from Ingushetia, was one of the most serious problems of the Russian government [12]. The historical background of Islamism among Chechens and the leadership of General Dzokhar Dudayev intensified separatism. Policies of repression and humiliation against Caucasian Muslims greatly contributed to the spread of separatism. Muslims tried hard to preserve their values, identity, and culture despite the persistent policies of the Russian government. Following the August 1991 coup in Moscow, Dudayev raised the flag of independence. In 1994, Russian military forces attacked separatists in Chechnya.

The bloody war in Chechnya ended in 1996 with thousands of dead and wounded. However, it also led to the strengthening of radical Islam in the Caucasus. After the death of Dudayev, the president of Chechnya, Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, paid attention to the implementation of Sharia law. Islamism intensified in Chechnya with the rise of Aslan Maskhadov. Chechnya sought to reach the Caspian Sea and integrate with Dagestan. The Russian government feared of repeating the collapse scenario, especially in the Caucasus [10]. Maskhadov banned the Wahhabi activities in Chechnya and expelled their

missionaries. He accused them of spreading division and interfering in the affairs of the country. In the summer of 1999, a major conflict erupted in the Caucasus, during which Chechen forces sought to separate Dagestan from Russia and establish an Islamic government.

According to some local reports, they were accompanied by rebels from Central Asia and Arab countries [3: 83-102]. Maskhadov condemned the rebellion, while Shamil Basayev and Khattab assumed leadership. The Russian federal forces under the management of Vladimir Putin severely crushed their resistance. Chechens also turned to guerrilla warfare. Among these actions were the bombing of a shopping mall in Moscow, an attack on apartment blocks in Moscow, an explosion in a residential military complex in the Buynaksk in Dagestan, and a military building in Volgodonsk. The hostage-taking at the Dubrovka Theater in Moscow and at a school in Beslan opened Putin's hand to crack down on radical Islamists. In all the mentioned cases, the Chechen fighters acted with martyrdom and sacrificed their lives in this operation [7: 293-311]. The rise of anti-Caucasian sentiments among the Russian people threatened the country's integrity.

Moscow supported Ramzan Kadyrov's Islamization policies in this autonomous republic. The issue of transferring Caucasus energy resources from Russia or other routes has influenced Chechens' Islamism and separatism. To use its territory to transfer energy from the Caucasus to world markets, Russia desperately needed stability and security in the Caucasus. Chechnya was the main transportation route of Russia in the Caucasus [4]. In contrast, Turkey, with the support of the United States, sought to establish itself as the primary route for energy transfer from the Caucasus to the West. It was very important for Russia to stabilize the situation in Chechnya. Moscow even accused Ankara of helping Chechen fighters [17]. The conquest of Chechnya strengthened the Islamic tendencies in the Caucasus, but it led to people's fear of Islam and the strengthening of centralism for the benefit of Moscow. Putin ended the policy of decentralization in the Russian federal system. The terrorist attacks of 9/11 caused an increasing rapprochement between Russia and America. Moscow continued to suppress the Chechens more easily in the light of the announcement of the US policy for the global fight against terrorism.

The Republic of Azerbaijan

Since the introduction of Gorbachev's policy of Glasnost, Islamic tendencies have grown significantly in the Republic of Azerbaijan. Approximately 85% of the

Azerbaijani population are Shia Muslims, making it one of the countries with the largest Shia populations worldwide. Soviet assimilation policies severely undermined the Islamic beliefs of its people; however, diverse perspectives on political Islam have existed within the country. Moreover, the Islamization of the North Caucasus has had a notable impact on Azerbaijan.

Three main groups can be distinguished among the people of the Republic of Azerbaijan: the group that has put Islam on the sidelines of their lives due to the policies of the Soviet Union. The second group who consider Islam as the most important indicator of their identity [15: 116]. The third group consists of those who intertwine their Islamic identity with political activism. It appears that the largest portion of the population belongs to the first group, while the smallest portion falls within the third group. The Spiritual Administration Muslims, a legacy institution from the Communist period, continues to function in religious matters and maintains close coordination with state policies. In 2001, the government of Azerbaijan established The State Committee on Affairs with Religious Associations to control effectively the activities of religious institutions and organizations. Another key institution is the Ministry of National Security, which monitors matters related to Islamist activities. Following the terrorist attacks of September 2001, the role and significance of such institutions increased considerably.

Azerbaijan Islamic Party was granted official registration in 1992; however, its license was revoked in 1996. Its activities were primarily concentrated in Nardaran and the southern areas of Baku. Some sources estimated its number of followers at around 70,000, mostly drawn from the lower strata of society. One of the most important Shiite activists in this country, is İlqar İbrahimoglu. After eight years of studying in Iran, he returned to Azerbaijan and became the imam of the Friday Mosque in the old part of Baku. He successfully blended religious teachings with modern ideas, attracting many young people to Islam. However, in 2004, he was prohibited from continuing his activities at the Baku Mosque and was subjected to significant restrictions. By 2003, 65 new Salafi-controlled mosques had been established in Azerbaijan [18: 7], and they expanded their activities too.

In 2011, the pressure on the Islamists in the Republic of Azerbaijan intensified. The government increased various repressions and restrictions against Islamists. The handling with women's hijab, approval of anti-religious bills by religious leaders sparked protest. Some defenders of the model of the Islamic Republic, demanded the dismissal of the government in Baku and cutting relations with Israel. Many of them were arrested and imprisoned. The arrest of the leaders and members of the Islamist party has had a negative impact on the relations

between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Iran. It is worth mentioning, that training of thousands of Shiite clerics from Azerbaijan in the Islamic Republic of Iran demonstrated the level of influence of Iran in Azerbaijan.

In the context of the Iranian influence, in the early 1990s, the People's Front of Azerbaijan, led by Abulfaz Elchibey, made significant efforts to align the country more closely with Türkiye and the United States. This tendency persisted during the administrations of Heydar Aliyev and his son.

The Azerbaijani government's pro-Western orientation has encountered opposition from both Russia and Iran. Meanwhile, Türkiye, with strong backing from the United States, has actively worked to influence Islamist movements in Azerbaijan since the country's independence. Türkiye has built mosques in Baku and has had extensive cooperation with universities in Azerbaijan. Turkish *tariqats* have also found favorable conditions to extend their influence in Azerbaijan. The Nurji *tariqat*, influenced by Fethullah Gülen's teachings, has been particularly impactful. This moderate approach and orientation toward the West align closely with the policies of the Azerbaijani government. The convergence of these ideas with the needs of Muslims, especially within a framework of cooperation with the West, has created a conducive environment for the country's secular government. In Gülen's thoughts, religious modernization and a new movement have been shaped. The Shiites and the secular population of Azerbaijan saw the Gülen movement as a real enemy, accusing it of trying to advance its Islamic political agenda that was mainly Turkish Sunni driven and, in fact, acted as an agent of the Turks in their efforts to advance Sunnism against the Shi'a identity [5: 410].

Due to the presence of a Sunni minority in the Republic of Azerbaijan, Salafi Islamic extremism found a significant base of support. Thousands of Salafis resided in border areas adjacent to Chechnya and Dagestan. These individuals were involved in recruiting fighters and engaging in terrorist activities connected to international jihadist movements. They actively facilitated the dispatch of volunteers to conflict zones such as Chechnya, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Azerbaijan's border with Dagestan and Chechnya further eased the movement Salafists.

However, the Karabakh war made the further expansion of these tendencies difficult. At the same time, the war in Chechnya and Russia's military operations contributed to strengthening jihadist connections, particularly through increased migration flows. Financial and institutional support from some Arab countries in the Persian Gulf was impressive in fostering these activities. Wahhabi centers were involved in training a number of Azerbaijani volunteers.

The Nagorno-Karabakh war has had a direct impact on the policies of the

Republic of Azerbaijan. [13]. By accusing Iran and Russia of supporting Armenians, the government of this country has followed the expansion of relations with Turkey, Israel, and the US. The internal goal of this policy has been to intensify the pressure on the Islamist currents and strengthen the Jordanian tendencies in this country. Israel has also responded to these security concerns by implementing an active policy and has strengthened its security influence in the north of Iran's borders. Israel's foreign policy, which continues to be governed by Ben-Gurion's Doctrine, pursues alliance with its second circle neighbors [6: 125-142]. The Caucasus is a part of Israel's Middle Eastern foreign policy. According to the ruling view of this country, it is important to help reduce the effects of underdevelopment through economic cooperation, because Islam exploits these deficiencies to intensify the fight against Zionism. Israel has paid attention to the expansion of economic cooperation with the Republic of Azerbaijan on this basis. On the other hand, the issue of the unresolved issues between Iran and America has been effective in strengthening the nationalist tendencies in the Republic of Azerbaijan. Israel and the anti-Islamic Republic groups in America have aimed to strengthen Azeri nationalism to intensify the pressure on the Islamic Republic of Iran [1: 68-72]. Azerbaijan has tried to acquire the necessary levers to put pressure on Armenia by positioning itself within the strategic framework of European energy supply. The internal reflection of this approach in the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan has been to limit the field of activities of Islamists. The important point is that, like all the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus, in this country, the ruling elites consider Islam and its institutions as their most important serious political rivals.

Conclusion

Islam entered the Caucasus from the late 7th century AD. The spread of Islam in this region was rapid. Until the expansion of the presence and influence of Tsarist Russia, these regions were under Iranian control and influence. The Muslims of these regions, like other Muslims, had a similar history and culture and spoke closely related languages. Even on the eve of the 1917 revolution, Baku was more closely connected to Tabriz and Isfahan than to Moscow and Petrograd. Despite the conversion of many tribes living in mountainous areas to Islam, Christians and followers of other religions continued to live in the high mountainous areas. Tsarist Russia entered the Caucasus in the second half of the 16th century, although at that time it had mostly commercial and military objectives. From the late 18th century, they expanded their military garrisons

throughout the region and pursued the annexation of the Caucasus to the empire. They also aimed for cultural assimilation. After the Russo-Persian Wars and the separation of many Caucasian regions from Iran, Iranian influence in the region declined. The Russians were confronted with the increasing influence of the *Tariqa* leaders, as the Naqshbandiyyah united the tribes of the North Caucasus. In the mid-19th century, efforts were made throughout the Islamic world for religious renewal. Islamic reformism in the Caucasus became a powerful movement among Muslims. The “Jadidis” were able to modernize Islamic ideas in the Muslim-populated areas of the Russian Empire.

With the publication of Lenin’s ideas about the “right of nations to self-determination,” the Muslims of the Caucasus also came to believe that in the post-tsarist regime, they would be able to establish their desired government. Russian Muslims wanted unity, but the Bolshevik government prioritized the creation of small ethnically based states. In the South Caucasus, three independent republics were formed by the disintegration of the Transcaucasian Republic. This policy was also implemented in Dagestan. Although institutions were initially created to administer Muslim affairs, they soon all came under the control of the Communist Party. The Soviet government soon adopted a policy of homogenizing all nationalities and destroying Islam and all its symbols and institutions. Like the Tsarist Russian government, the Soviet government implemented a policy of assimilation in the Caucasus, instead of providing appropriate political and administrative mechanisms to ensure the rights of Muslims.

The policies of repression and humiliation of Caucasian Muslims were very influential in the spread of separatism in the Caucasus. Following the August 1991 coup in Moscow, General Dudayev raised the flag of independence in Chechnya. The bloody Chechen war ended in 1996 with thousands of deaths and injuries, but it strengthened Islamism in the Caucasus. The Chechens launched a major war in the Caucasus in the summer of 1999 to separate Dagestan from Russia and establish an Islamic state. They were joined by rebels from Central Asia and Arab countries. They then turned to guerrilla warfare and also to terrorist acts, causing great panic among the Russian people. Vladimir Putin considered the suppression of separatism in Chechnya to be a fundamental necessity for preserving Russia’s territorial integrity. He supported Ramzan Kadyrov’s Islamization policies in Chechnya. The transfer of energy resources from the Caucasus to Russia or other routes has influenced Chechen Islamism and separatism. Russia desperately needed stability and security in the Caucasus in order to use its territory to transfer energy from the Caucasus to world markets. The people of the Republic of Azerbaijan

have also accepted Islam as the main form of their identity. However, there are different views among them regarding political Islam. Fear of extremist activities has led society and the government towards secular tendencies. The Islamic Party of this country was granted a license to operate in 1992, but its license was revoked in 1996. However, it has continued its activities. In 2011, pressure on Islamists in the Republic of Azerbaijan intensified. The government increased various repressions and restrictions against Islamists. Members of this party called for cutting relations with Israel. The arrest of its leaders and members has had a negative impact on Azerbaijan's relations with Iran.

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Էլահե Քոլաի

Հիմնաբառեր - էթնիկ ֆեդերալիզմ, իսլամ, Կովկաս, Ռուսաստան, Աֆղանստան, ԱՄՆ

Ամփոփում

Կովկասի տարածաշրջանի ժողովուրդների շրջանում իսլամի արմատները հասնում են 7-րդ դար: Հետագա ժամանակաշրջանում իսլամի դիրքերն ավելի են ամրապնդվել տարբեր զարգացումների հետևանքով: Սառը պատերազմի տարիներին ԱՄՆ կողմից այսպես կոչված «Կանաչ գոտու» ստեղծումը նույնպես նպաստավոր էր ԽՍՀՄ ծայրամասային շրջաններում իսլամական միտումների համար: Խորհրդային բանակի Աֆղանստանի վրա ռազմական հարձակումից հետո, ԱՄՆ սկսեց ավելի լայն աջակցություն ցույց տալ իսլամիստական շարժումներին՝ ընդդեմ Խորհրդային Միության: Մերձավոր Արևելքում և Արևմտյան Ասիայում իսլամական միտումների վերածնունդը իր ազդեցությունն ունեցավ նաև Կովկասյան տարածաշրջանի վրա: Գորբաչովի բարեփոխումների քաղաքականության իրականացման արդյունքում ստեղծված պայմանները նույնպես նպաստավոր էին իսլամիզմի համար: Երբ Խորհրդային Միության էթնիկ քաղաքականությունը և կոմունիստական համակարգի «էթնիկ ֆեդերալիզմը» իրենց վերջին շրջանն էին ապրում, իսլամիզմը ամրապնդվեց՝ օգտագործելով «Գլասնոստ»-ի իրականացման շնորհիվ ստեղծված հնարավորությունը: Այս ակնարկի նպատակն է ուսումնասիրել Խորհրդային Միության էթնիկ-ռասայական քաղաքականության ազդեցությունը Կովկասի քաղաքական-ռազմական միտումների վրա՝ ԽՍՀՄ փլուզումից հետո: Հոդվածում ներկայացվում է հետևյալ հարցադրումը՝ ի՞նչ ազդեցություն է ունեցել Խորհրդային Միության էթնիկ քաղաքականության ժառանգությունը Հարավային

Կովկասի քաղաքական-ռազմական զարգացումների վրա՝ հաշվի առնելով իսլամի գործոնը»։ Հոդվածի հեղինակը պնդում է, որ «Խորհրդային Միության էթնիկ ֆեդերալիզմի ժառանգությունը ուղղակի և անմիջական ազդեցություն է ունեցել Հարավային Կովկասի քաղաքական-ռազմական զարգացումների վրա, և իսլամական գործոնը միջանկյալ փոփոխական է»։ Ուսումնասիրությունը կատարվել է որակական մեթոդով՝ նկարագրական-վերլուծական մոտեցմամբ, օգտագործելով գրադարաններում և համացանցում առկա նյութեր։