



ENCLAVES AND EXCLAVES ON THE WORLD MAP: THEIR DIFFERENCES AND TYPES

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Abstract

This article analyzes enclaves and exclaves on the world map, their types, distinctive features, historical origins, and unique characteristics, particularly the reasons for changes in borders resulting from redistribution and fragmentation during the colonial period. In particular, it highlights the Kaliningrad exclave and its position in the international geopolitical arena.

Keywords: Enclave, exclave, semi-enclave, semi-exclave, pene-enclave, geopolitics, political geography, transit issues, Kaliningrad region, international relations, demarcation.

Introduction

Аннотация: В этой статье анализируются анклав и эксклавы на карте мира, их типы, отличительные особенности, исторические причины возникновения и уникальные характеристики, особенно причины изменения границ в результате их перераспределения и дробления в колониальный период. В частности, освещается Калининградский эксклав и его место на международной геополитической арене.

Ключевые слова: Анклав, эксклав, полуанклав, полуэксклав, пенеанклав, геополитика, политическая география, проблемы транзита, Калининградская область, международные отношения, демаркация.

Introduction

Many enclaves in Europe are considered a legacy of the feudal era, wars, and the disintegration of certain states (such as Yugoslavia and the USSR). In Africa, South and Southeast Asia, as well as in Latin America, enclaves mainly emerged as a result of the formation of colonial empires and their subsequent collapse. They were later



shaped during the process of defining and demarcating borders among newly independent states and between these states and their former metropolises.

There are many enclave and exclave territories around the world, and they face challenges in governance and communication. Their development is slowed due to the high transit costs of goods and cargo¹. In many cases, enclave and exclave territories have ended up in problematic situations as a result of the division of states. In particular, significant difficulties arise when determining borders between countries or when addressing issues of territorial expansion.

The concepts of enclaves and exclaves are interrelated and are analyzed from different perspectives. From an external point of view, a territory is considered an enclave, while from an internal perspective, it is regarded as an exclave. In addition, an enclave generally represents a natural, historical, and geographical area, whereas exclaves are more often viewed in political and administrative terms. Enclaves are typically characterized by transportation and communication challenges, while exclaves play an important role in issues related to state sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Enclaves and exclaves can be located either inland or along coastal areas. A coastal enclave or exclave is called a semi-enclave or semi-exclave. Such a territory borders one or more foreign territories and is also adjacent to a body of water that provides access between it and its main territory. Thus, Point Roberts is actually a semi-enclave or semi-exclave: it is connected by land to Canada, while being surrounded by water elsewhere and separated from the mainland of the United States².

When analyzing semi-enclaves and semi-exclaves, we first observe that they are located in partially separated territories between states. In some cases, these territories can be closely interconnected. For example, if a tourist travels to the Kaliningrad exclave, they can reach it either by land or by sea. The advantages of such territories include access to both land and maritime routes. However, their disadvantages include increased transportation costs, the requirement of visas and permits at borders, longer travel times, and the potential for political tensions along transit routes.

Problems and political decisions have been interpreted precisely on the basis of these geographical scales—that is, at the domestic or international level, but within a global context. Discussions about preserving a state or recognizing its separate parts have

¹ Анклав и эксклав: что это, отличия, виды и примеры // РБК. 2024. URL: <https://www.rbc.ru/base/16/07/2024/668fd7129a7947dc7db80144>

² Enclave and Exclave (Britannica) <https://www.britannica.com/topic/enclave>



mainly been conducted from the perspective that each government possesses absolute sovereignty within its own territory. The world is actively “spatialized,” meaning that territories are divided, named, and ranked according to their significance by political geographers, representatives of other academic fields, and political leaders³.

Access to enclave and exclave territories often creates difficulties in relations between states. Reaching such areas usually requires transit through the territory of another country, which increases transportation and trade costs. In addition, disputes and strict border controls in enclave and exclave regions limit their development.

The origins of political enclaves and exclaves can be traced to major historical events, including colonialism, wars, and treaties that shaped the modern geopolitical landscape. During the period of European colonial expansion, the search for territories often led to the creation of enclaves within colonized regions. Colonial powers drew arbitrary boundaries that did not correspond to local populations, thereby creating politically isolated territories, many of which remained even after independence⁴.

In the 1990s, new enclave and exclave territories emerged, including even large ones. In particular, the collapse of the former Soviet Union led to the appearance of nearly twenty new enclaves in Europe and Asia⁵. However, in countries that contain enclave territories, many enclaves have remained stable despite wars, changes in national territorial boundaries, or shifts in economic systems.

The global distribution of enclaves and exclaves reflects the complex relationship between geography, history, and politics, revealing how historical events have shaped national borders and influenced international dynamics. Understanding these unique territories helps to better comprehend their impact on contemporary global relations. One of the enclave territories, the Kaliningrad region, presents a particularly complex issue in terms of its separation from Russia. This region is not only detached from the main part of Russia by several other states, but is also located in a complicated international environment surrounded by countries such as Lithuania, Latvia, Belarus, and Poland. For this reason, the issue of transit is not a simple bilateral matter, but rather becomes a multilateral international problem. This situation became even more complicated after Poland and Lithuania joined the European Union and NATO. As a result, the Kaliningrad region has effectively become a coastal enclave from the

³ Agnew J. *Geopolitics: Re-visioning World Politics*. London, 1998. – p. 3-13.

⁴ Alaev, E. B. 1983, *Social'no-ekonomicheskaja geografija. Ponjatijno terminologicheskij slovar'* [Social and economic geography. Conceptual and terminological dictionary], Moscow, Mysl 69 p.

⁵ Vinokurov, Ye. Yu. 2007, *Teorija anklavov* [Theory of Enclaves], Kaliningrad, Terra Baltika. 7-8 b



perspective of these organizations and is regarded as an important territory in terms of both economic and military policy⁶.

Some Russian politicians and experts have suggested that the Kaliningrad region could potentially be lost either through gaining independence or by becoming part of Germany. However, due to Russia's strong economic, political, and communication ties with the region, ideas of separatism are not widely supported there. In this regard, Kaliningrad occupies an important strategic location and is considered one of the key regions for trade and commerce. Through this territory, interregional political and economic relations can be observed, particularly those between Russia and European countries.

Historians emphasize that the elimination of enclaves can occur not only through territorial exchange, but also through annexation, the creation of special transport corridors, or by granting independence. The main difference is that an enclave is often regarded as a separate or independent territorial unit, whereas an exclave is always a non-sovereign territory, meaning it is part of another state's territory⁷. In particular, the presence of divided territories within other states can be considered one of the sources of geopolitical conflicts.

Pene-enclaves are territories that are not formally separated from the main part of a state, but in practice are most often accessed through the territory of another country. Typically, such areas are connected to the mainland by a very narrow and difficult-to-traverse corridor. In particular, access to pene-enclaves located in mountainous regions is often achieved not directly through their own country, but by passing through the territory of a neighboring state⁸. Although such territories are not full enclaves, they face almost the same issues as enclaves in terms of transportation, economic relations, and border crossings. Examples of such areas include the Strait of Gibraltar, Brunei, and other similar territories. While these regions resemble enclave states, they often depend on other countries for transportation, trade, and various services, whether by land or by sea. For this reason, many pene-enclave territories are located in maritime settings, which clearly illustrates their dependence. Another major and ongoing disputed conflict in world politics is the Kashmir region, where the territories of India, Pakistan, and China intersect. In this enclave-like

⁶ Klemeshev, A. P., & Vorozheina, Ya. A. (2024). Exclavity of the Kaliningrad Region: Experience of Explication. Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University. 6 p.

⁷ Klemeshev A. P., Vorozheina Ya. A. Exclavity of the Kaliningrad Region: Experience of Explication. — P. 8

⁸ <https://vfokuse.mail.ru/articles/69436157-anklav-eksklav/?ysclid=mo1bxwrka765128919>



region, the situation remains extremely tense. In particular, issues such as discrimination against the population and conflicts based on religious affiliation continue to intensify.

Three resolutions adopted by the United Nations in 1948 and 1949 formally introduced a third-party element into this issue, stating that the will of the population living in the disputed territory between India and Pakistan should be taken into account. Despite this, successive Indian governments may have expressed regret over the involvement of an international organization in discussions regarding the future of the state of Jammu and Kashmir; however, United Nations resolutions have continued to keep this issue on the agenda.

Later, regardless of the agreements reached between India and Pakistan at various summits—such as the Tashkent Agreement (1966), the Simla Agreement (1972), and the Lahore Declaration (1999)—the trilateral nature of the issue remained, particularly the idea of determining the political status of the territory through a plebiscite, which had already been approved by the United Nations in 1948⁹. Such agreements gradually strengthen over time and begin to reduce risks between states. In particular, when these types of agreements and diplomatic cooperation are facilitated under the initiative of the United Nations, they help ensure stability, leading to peace in territories that were previously in conflict or dispute.

Pakistan's interest in (or aspiration toward) Kashmir has continued since its independence. At the core of the Kashmir conflict lies the issue of national identity. Pakistan was established as a homeland for Muslims in South Asia. Therefore, it considers Kashmir—where the majority of the population is Muslim—as a territory that rightfully belongs to it¹⁰. The Kashmir region is also important for India, as history shows that many invasions and wars conducted via land routes have been linked to this area. Therefore, India approaches the issue with strong concern for national security. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the Kashmir conflict acts as a barrier between Hindus and Muslims. In an effort to prevent further deterioration of these relations, the states involved are seeking to resolve the issue through peaceful means.

⁹ Schofield V. *Kashmir in Conflict: India, Pakistan and the Unending War*. – London: I.B. Tauris, 2003. 12-13 p.

¹⁰ Greeshma G. Kashmir: A Territorial Dispute // *International Journal of Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary Studies (IJIMS)*. – 2015. – Vol. 2, No. 5. – P. 54–55.



In conclusion, the study of enclave and exclave territories on the world map helps us better understand the processes of nation formation and the significance of geopolitical roles within regions. The distinction and classification of enclaves and exclaves are closely linked to geopolitical as well as socio-economic relations. Therefore, in studying them, it is important to consider not only their geographical and historical location, but also interstate diplomatic relations, transport systems, and international legal mechanisms. Moreover, the existence of such unique territories in many countries around the world continues to generate interest in their natural conditions, historical development, and cultural characteristics. Indeed, the increase or expansion of such separated territories within a region may lead to national, religious, and ethnic conflicts across borders. To prevent this, it is essential to establish stable diplomatic relations between states, clearly define borders through delimitation, ensure the free and secure functioning of transport and communication corridors, and strictly adhere to international legal norms.

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