SCTMG 2020
International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural Transformations in the Context of Modern Globalism»

FACTORS OF ETHNOPOLITICAL SITUATION DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTH OF RUSSIA

Yurchenko Inna (a)*, Dontsova Mariya (b), Yurchenko Natalya (c)
*Corresponding author

(a) Federal Research Centre the Southern Scientific Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences (SSC RAS),
41, Chekhova Ave., Rostov-on-Don, Russia, ivyurchenko@mail.ru
(b) Federal Research Centre The Southern Scientific Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences (SSC RAS),
41, Chekhova Ave., Rostov-on-Don, Russia, dontsova_79@list.ru
(c) Kuban State University (KubSU), 149, Stavropolskaia Str., Krasnodar, Russia, nnyurchenko@mail.ru

Abstract

The article considers the factors of the emergence of various ethnopolitical interactions in the space of the Southern Federal District's subjects, in particular, the Krasnodar region and the Republic of Adygea. The importance of the studied region and the latest requirements for management technologies, especially for project management, are noted. The general characteristic of regional ethnopolitical processes developing under the influence of globalization in terms of divergent social trends is given. They also develop in the context of emerging threats to socio-political stability, the sustainability and effectiveness of existing institutions functioning, the reasons for their transformation in the new reality. The complexity of the ethnopolitical conflict problems is emphasized when the political use of ethnic identity a key, essential component of the ethnopolitical conflict. Based on the methodology of predictive analysis of regional ethnopolitical situation, including the identification of criteria of functionality and dysfunctionality of various structural elements of the studied regional community, the ability of detecting sources of possible dysfunctionality is shown. It also shows the possibility of detecting conflict factors, related to the blurring and incompleteness of building a multinational state on the platform of a unified civil identity. In particular, it is noted that most experts consider the regional programs of the Krasnodar region to harmonize interethnic relations, develop national cultures and strengthen the Russian nation to be insufficiently effective, which undoubtedly affects the overall socio-political situation. Based on the analysis, conclusions are drawn on markers of ethnopolitical tension in the studied regions.

1. Introduction

In modern conditions the importance of social project management is increasing. This involves the development of integrated regional development programs based on the preliminary prediction and conflict analysis of the regional situation in the context of identifying threats and risks of sustainable development of the studied territory. Regional ethnopolitical processes under the influence of globalization are characterized, on the one hand, by the erosion of national sovereignty. This is manifested in the increasing role of supranational political and socio-economic institutions. On the other hand, these processes contribute to the rise of ethnic consciousness and manifestations of the peoples' ethnocentrism, the activation of their self-preservative instinct. In these different social trends, there is a phenomenon of incapacitated state entities, unrecognized states, as well as the growth of violence markets and, in some cases, the degradation of statehood in unresolved local-regional conflicts. These processes are exacerbated by the resumption of the Cold War and the emerging trend of a new arms race. It is also exacerbated by the risk of new armed conflicts and their uncontrolled escalation.

In modern Russia, under the influence of the mentioned processes, the problem of ethnopolitical conflict is related, first of all, to the blurring and incompleteness of building a multinational state on the platform of a unified civil identity and all-Russian identity. This poses a risk of growing nationalism and extremism, the use of the "national question" and "national interests" in the struggle of political elites. Ethnicity, therefore, becomes a "bargaining chip" in achieving political goals.

> The political use of ethnic identity is a key essential characteristic of the ethnopolitical conflict. The renewable nature of this resource and the high level of emotional fullness make it difficult to systematically and effectively regulate and localize the confrontation within the constitutional and legal framework. (Semenenko, Lapkin, & Pantin, 2016, p. 70)

Ethnopolitical relations are problematic not only in an ideological but also in a managerial way, especially when it comes to complex ethnically and historically regions such as the South of Russia. According to Shabayev (2015):

> in ethnopolitics regional models and especially in regional political practices, as a rule, there is no clear focus on solving these problems, although conceptual documents in the field of state national policy have been officially approved in many regions and especially in the republics. (p. 95)

Also, in the context of constructing an effective system of ethnopolitical security, there is a problem of center-peripheral relations, in particular the problem of potential destructive relations between the Federal Center and the regions of Russia. Thus, some experts note that "the danger of the state dissolution due to the excessive strengthening of the Federal Center and weakening of the Federal entities continues to be a potential threat to the Federal state in the ethnopolitical sphere" (Suslov et al., 2017, p. 29).

The predictive methodology of the regional ethnopolitical situation includes a functional analysis of the structural elements of the studied regional community. This makes it possible to detect sources of possible dysfunctionality and the presence of a latent course of low-intensity conflicts. They can be dangerous to escalate into a violent confrontation of ethnic, economic or political actors, which can destroy the stability, integrity and dynamic equilibrium of the existing system. In this regard, it is important to emphasize that the study of latent processes that pose additional threats related to the

activities of various social actors with divergent objectives of internal foreign policy is an important methodological aspect of prediction the regional situation.

2. Problem Statement

The analysis of the current state of research on the studied issue demonstrates a high level of knowledge of the ethnopolitical tension problem and conflicts. It shows a well-developed theory and research methodology of ethnosocial and ethnopolitical processes in modern society. At the same time, gaps remain in the analysis of factors and mechanism for ensuring ethnopolitical stability in the conditions of growing international tension. Moreover, there are gaps related to the scientific search for ways to increase the level of trust in polyethnic society, the use of effective prevention technologies and conflict resolution, and counteracting threats of destabilization.

3. Research Questions

The subject of study is the factors determining the ethnopolitical situation in the South of Russia, in particular in the Krasnodar region and the Republic of Adygea. These factors are of high geopolitical importance for ensuring the national security of the Russian Federation and interstate cooperation in the Black Sea region.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to determine the level and factors of ethnopolitical tension in the South of Russia on the example of the geostrategic coastal zone (the Krasnodar region and the Republic of Adygea).

5. Research Methods

Methods of expert survey, event analysis and mapping of tension zones were used in the research process. The event analysis included 70 sources (media reports, statements of official bodies), which mentioned conflicts cases with the ethnic component, covering the period from 2017 to 2019. The expert survey was conducted in the Krasnodar region in May 2019. The experts were scientists, employees of state and municipal administration, representatives of public organizations (n=39).

6. Findings

An expert survey conducted in the Krasnodar region (n = 39) in May 2019 showed that the level of interethnic trust and readiness to enter into relations of cooperation with people of a different faith and nation will increase in the region over the next 10 years. Currently, according to experts, the level of civil identity development and interethnic trust corresponds to the minimum essential level for stable and conflict-free region development. In the future, experts note, although a weak, but the increase in these integration indicators. However, amid rising levels of civic identity, there is a certain increase in ethnopolitical tension. In the case of the Krasnodar region, it is determined mainly by intensive migration

flows and the high ethnic fractionalization of the region. Herewith, based on the expert opinion, the level of extremism and xenophobia tends to decrease. This is one of the main markers of the integration process.

Also, the ethnocultural barrier related to the population's insufficient awareness of the real interethnic situation, the number of immigrants and the specifics of their integration into the labor market has not been overcome. Moreover, they are poorly aware of the insufficient development of the interethnic communication culture, although there is a steady improvement of the situation. Positive changes, including in the field of interethnic communication ecology, are due to the public organizations' activities (non-profit organizations, diaspora, national and religious associations). They are intended to become one of the main elements in the process of ethnocultural integration of ethnic minorities. Based on the most experts' opinion, these organizations act more as a consolidating factor. Although, it should be pointed out that there is no experts' consensus on this issue (Table 01).

Table 01. Expert assessment of the activity direction of public organizations in the Krasnodar region on the scale of "integration" - "disconnection"

Types of public organizations	Activities are integrative, abs. (%)	Activities are disconnecting, abs. (%)	Total experts, abs. (%)
Socially oriented NPO	29 (74.4)	10 (25.6)	39 (100)
NPO of interest to ethnic groups	25 (64.1)	14 (35.9)	39 (100)
Cossack societies	23 (59)	16 (41)	39 (100)
Religious organizations	24 (61.5)	15 (38.5)	39 (100)
Political Organizations	22 (56.4)	17 (43.6)	39 (100)

Based on the expert community's opinion, there are managerial problems in the field of interethnic relations regulation. In particular, most experts consider the regional programs of the Krasnodar region to harmonize interethnic relations, develop national cultures and strengthen the Russian nation to be insufficiently effective, which undoubtedly affects the overall socio-political situation. Also, the information background, which is more adversarial, has a negative effect. Therefore, the level of information security tends to decrease.

According to the analysis, the places of tension are concentrated in the coastal zone and central regions of the Krasnodar region and the Republic of Adygea. Calm background is present in the coastal zone of the Sea of Azov and in municipalities bordering the Rostov region. In the Republic of Adygea, the facts of conflicts with the ethnic component are recorded only in the capital (Maykop) (Figure 01).

Figure 01. Cartography of conflicts with an ethnic component in the Krasnodar region and the Republic of Adygea in the period 2017-2019 (event analysis results)

Based on the analysis, we can conclude that the main markers of ethnopolitical tension in the Krasnodar region in the sphere of security and migrant and local residents' labour competition. The process of ethnicity's politicization in the region is not expressed, however, intensive migration processes create a competitive environment, that impedes the successful integration of ethnic groups in the region. This sets the stage for extremism and increases the likelihood of conflict.

The multi-component, multicultural nature of Russian society in general, and especially of the South of Russia, creates serious social and ethnocultural problems (Lijphart, 1977). In the face of new challenges, external and internal threats to the ethnopolitical stability of Russian society and its regions, it seems necessary to study the interactions of various actors of the ethnopolitical process involved in different role characteristics in regional conflict interactions. At the same time, they have different interpretations of security threats to the country and the mechanisms for ensuring it. This is manifested in discursive practices in the conditions of transforming social space under the influence of new social

media, tension due to external influences, in particular through media technologies. In this regard, the actual and informative direction of modern science is the use of framing analysis to study conflict frames of ethnic groups (Adisa, Rosli, & Ahmad, 2016).

The practice of using media technologies is actively implemented in the actions of political actors in the Republic of Adygea. There, in contrast to the Krasnodar region, the ethnopolitical situation is determined by ideological processes affecting the problem of historical memory and Circassian national mobilization. The results of the event analysis confirm this conclusion showing that the information messages in the sample are dominated by the references to events in which the "Circassian question" is raised. Thus, the detention and trial of the well-known activist Ruslan Gvashev in connection with the holding of an unauthorized rally in the Golovinka village on 21 May, 2017 received a great response. The reaction of national activists was to make political demands on the Russian leadership, including the official recognition of the "genocide" of Circassians.

> The detention of the activist and the court decision, causing a wide public response in the Circassian environment, was interpreted as a deliberate attempt by the Russian authorities to apply the law on unauthorized rallies to the traditional mourning prayer of the Circassians (as part of ethnic ritual culture). Thereby, they intimidated the Circassians and forced them to abandon the commemoration of their ancestors on their own lands. (Tsibenko, 2018, p. 42)

In the same context, the conflict between the Circassian public and the Sochi authorities over the name of the new international airport should be mentioned. Within the framework of the project "Great names of Russia", one of three variants of the name was the name of Admiral Lazarev (commander of the Black Sea Fleet in 1834-1851). It caused "the protest of Circassian activists not in itself, but as a "mythologized figure of imperial, revanchist sentiments" (Caucasian Knot, 2018, para.7). "Some modern Circassian activists (Asfar Kuek, & Madzhid Chachukh) accuse Lazarev of indiscriminate use of force during the landing, including against Circassian civilians" (Caucasian Knot, 2018).

Thus, despite the fact that in the Republic of Adygea the interethnic situation is generally characterized as calm, it is possible to talk about latent tensions with ideological background.

7. Conclusion

The study shows that the main markers of ethnopolitical tension in the Krasnodar region are present in the sphere of security and migrant and local residents' labour competition. The process of ethnicity's politicization in the region is not expressed, however, intensive migration processes create a competitive environment that impedes the successful integration of ethnic groups in the region. This sets the stage for extremism and increases the likelihood of conflict. Serious social and ethnocultural problems are caused not only by the complex nature of the South Russian social space, but also by the risks' emergence of rising nationalism and extremism as a result of insufficient effectiveness of project management methods. Issues of national self-determination and historical memory are highly relevant in the conflict interaction of political elites of the Republic of Adygea. So, if the interethnic situation can be described as calm, the danger of latent tension cannot be ignored. As expert diagnostics have shown, this tension has an ideological component, and therefore it is difficult to reduce and fully resolve emerging conflicts, including at the domestic level.

Acknowledgments

References

Adisa, R. M., Rosli, M., & Ahmad, M. K. (2016). Issues and Consequences of Newspaper Framing on Ethnic Conflict: A Qualitative Study of Ethnic Group Leaders' Conflict Frames. *J. Komunikasi: Malaysian J. of Communicat., 32*(2), 294–316. https://doi.org/10.17576/JKMJC-2016-3202-16

Caucasian Knot. (2018). *The choice of the name for Sochi airport reminded of the merits of Circassian Kalmykov.* Retrieved from https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/327679/

Lijphart, F. (1977). *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration.* Yale University Press.

Semenenko, I. S., Lapkin, V. V., & Pantin, V. I. (2016). Classifying ethnic conflicts: challenges for political theory and methodology. *Polis. Political Studies, 6,* 69–94. https://doi.org/10.17976/jpps/2016.06.06

Shabayev, Y. P. (2015). Ethnopolitology and ethnopolitics in modern Russia: theory and political practice. *Human. Culture. Educat., 1*(15), 92–131.

Suslov, E., Kartashova, L., Zhuravlev, S., Rotar, A., Siruikova, I., & Smirnova, L. (2017). Conflict management in the sphere of Ethnopolitics: Russian Experience. *Espacios, 38*(61), 29.

Tsibenko, S. N. (2018). Media Technologies in the Circassians' National Mobilization. *Bull. of the Instit. of Sociol., 3*(9), 42–62. https://doi.org/10.19181/vis.2018.26.3.523