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**ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN OPTIMIZING
INTERETHNIC RELATIONS**

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Abstract

The purpose of the paper is to determine the role of local governments in optimizing interethnic relations during the period of globalization processes. The paper discusses the process of globalization and analyzes the problem of interethnic relations. It describes the influence on interethnic relations from the UN to the activities of an individual state and at the level of local governments. Special attention is paid to the relationship of global world politics with state and municipal politics in terms of the settlement of interethnic relations. The analysis of international acts, normative legal acts of the state was carried out, which serve the basis for the settlement of such relations and the protection of human rights. The paper analyzes the current problems, the reasons for their occurrence and suggests solutions. One of the main solutions is the collaboration of state and local governments within the national state policy. To date, the state authorities of the Russian Federation and local governments are recommended to follow the provisions of the Strategy of the State National Policy of the Russian Federation up to 2025. It is emphasized that the joint work of local governments with other public authorities and social institutions will ensure efficient solution to the problems of interethnic relations. Within the framework of the paper, the implementation of municipal policy in the field of interethnic relations is emphasized.

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1. Introduction

The processes of globalization covering all spheres of the world society give rise to new phenomena of the development of civilization (Drotianko & Abysova, 2018). Certainly, the development of civilization and the world community begins with the state, and the state begins with a man. One of the functions of the state is to protect human rights and freedoms, to find ways to mitigate and overcome the existing contradictions between all kinds of social forces and to ensure social compromise between different segments of the society. Increasingly, the causes of asocial phenomena in the multicultural world are interethnic, interracial conflicts, people's rejection of each other, lack of understanding of the need to live in a multi-ethnic environment (Boucher, 1987; Pain, 2007). Besides, irreversible globalization, the general level of political and economic relations implies the strengthening of international ties, the transformation of an individual into a modern tolerant person, which means the possibility of his comfortable stay in any, including a multi-ethnic environment. The state, in turn, is obliged to support and prolong this desire of the individual, moreover, it must ensure the security and peaceful cohabitation of the representatives of different nationalities. The state authority assigns part of the responsibility to municipal authorities in view of the fact that they are the closest to the people. That is why one of the issues of local importance is the resolution of interethnic conflicts, as well as the promotion of peaceful cohabitation and peace in general.

2. Problem Statement

Research is now actively addressing various aspects of the development of interethnic relations within the process of modern globalization. Globalization is a global and objective phenomenon. Its actors, the most important of which are the states, play a critical role in globalization processes. They largely determine the level (scale) of the spread of globalization processes and the direction of their development in the world. Domestic policy plays an important role in this, especially policies governing the interaction of social institutions between themselves and with public authorities. Domestic policy in the Russian Federation is formed by public power. Local governments as part of the public power play an important role in this, in particular, in the settlement of interethnic relations within the country. Ethnic diversity, the formation of civic identity and the strengthening of the social and political unity of the society constitute the main goals of the state national policy.

3. Research Questions

The subject of the study is social relations in the field of resolving interethnic conflicts and settling interethnic relations by local governments in the era of globalization.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the paper is to determine the role of local governments in optimizing interethnic relations in the context of global policy.

5. Research Methods

The study was conducted on the basis of nationwide scientific methods of systematic analysis of Russian and international studies on the impact of globalization and regionalization on the development of the modern society, as well as the role of local governments in optimizing interethnic relations.

6. Findings

In the late 1990s of the 20th century the concept of “globalization” entered the sociological circulation, and began to be used not only by scientists, but also by everyone from politicians to the media. This word literally contains a paradigm that includes an understanding of processes taking place in the world, monumental changes (Volkov et al., 2003). Globalization is an objective reality caused by the isolation of the planet, the formation of the world economy, global communications, etc. Globalization is a historic process of turning the world into a single system with the same characteristics: high level of integration, integrity and interdependence of the world (Ebzeev & Aybazov, 2006).

The process of globalization is linked to the growing interdependence of the world, and to solve global problems it requires continuous international cooperation, including at the regional level.

At the planetary level, the organizational form of solving global problems is the UN and other universal international organizations (Ebzeev & Aybazov, 2006).

In the era of globalization, the current agenda is to strengthen inter-state, interregional and interethnic relations. All these aspects are key to shaping the global policy. The reduction of inequality, as one of the goals of the UN 2030 sustainable development (Goal 10: Reducing inequality within and among countries), is to reduce income inequality, as well as on the basis of ethnicity and other criteria – both within and among countries. It also provides for safe, orderly and legal migration, as well as the solution of issues related to the representation of developing countries in decision-making processes at the global level and development assistance (Goal 10).

Russia, due to its unique geographical location and historical path, has long been a multinational country containing more than a hundred ethnic groups on its territory.

The ethnopolitical situation in various regions of the world is currently almost the most conflicting factor of social development (Achkasova & Trokhinova, 2018). The problem of interethnic relations in the Russian Federation has always been urgent and has recently become especially acute, which is caused not only by the historically established close territorial neighborhood of various ethnic groups, but also by new processes and phenomena. The increase in migration flows against the backdrop of the global transformation of economic, social and political ties led to a multiple complication of relations between different ethnic groups (Trofimova, 2014). Despite the fact that social and political effects of these processes are noticeable, first of all, on a global scale or, at least, on a country scale, their greatest severity is manifested at the local level, in the process of everyday life, in the course of interpersonal relations. In this regard, the subject of regulation of interethnic relations is not only the state, but also society, mainly the local community (Trofimova, 2014).

Many international documents were created to protect the rights of national minorities at the international level, namely, on the UN platform. Russia, as a party to these agreements, undertakes to

fulfill the requirements of these documents. Thus, the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992) defines the fundamental rights of minorities, in particular: the right to protection of the existence of minorities and the protection of their cultural identity by the state, the right to profess their religion and use their language both in private and in public, the right to participate in the public life of the state, to create their own organizations and associations, and to participate in decisions regarding minorities. States undertake measures for proper realization of these rights.

Minority rights are enshrined in the International Bill of Human Rights, which obliges states to take measures to ensure the rights of their citizens to work, education, health care without discrimination on any grounds. In accordance with the General Comment No. 23 of the Human Rights Committee on the rights of minorities, the decision to recognize the existence of different groups within a state is not the prerogative of the state alone.

The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ratified in 1970) obliges signatory states to ensure equal rights for the representatives of all races and nationalities living in their territory and to promote an equal dialogue among nationalities. The Convention obliges the signatory states to criminalize incitement to hatred and the language of hostility, as well as membership in racist organizations.

The current practice of developing interethnic relations at the international level led to the need for national legislation regulating the aspects of interaction between municipalities, state and social institutions in order to optimize interethnic relations.

In the Russian Federation, the Constitution, as the basic law of the state, guarantees the rights and freedoms of all nationalities living in the Russian Federation.

For example, the Constitution guarantees “the right to use the mother tongue, to freely choose the language of communication...” (Article 26, Chapter 2); Article 30 Chapter 2 establishes the rights of citizens to unite and guarantees the freedom of activity of public associations, including national ones.

In addition to the Constitution, the legal basis for regulating interethnic relations is as follows:

- Federal Law No. 184-FZ of 6 October 1999 *on general principles for the organization of legislative (representative) and executive bodies of state power in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation*;
- Federal Law No. 131-FZ of 6 October 2003 *on General principles of the organization of local governments in the Russian Federation*;
- Law of the Russian Federation No. 1807-1 of 25 October 1991 *on languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation*;
- Federal Law No. 82-FZ of 30 April 1999 *on guarantees of the rights of small indigenous peoples of the Russian Federation*;
- Federal Law No. 114-FZ of 25 July 2002 *On combating extremist activities*;
- Order No. 57 of 29 June 2007 of the Ministry of Regional Development of the Russian Federation *on the organization of monitoring activities in the field of interethnic relations*.

Guided by the legislation of the Russian Federation guaranteeing the development and protection of interethnic relations, it can be concluded that the state as the municipal authority has certain obligations

to improve these relations and prevent conflicts. Globalization is taking place at the same time as modernization and includes the strengthening of interethnic ties within the state and the interaction of cultural and linguistic aspects in order to create a multicultural society. We can agree with Potashinskaya (2012) that “in order to achieve civil and interethnic harmony, it is necessary to ensure real pluralism and multipolarity, rather than unification, respect for ethnic, national, religious and linguistic rights of minorities”.

Regulations and by-laws govern the work of public authorities to optimize interethnic relations.

In order to coordinate the activities of federal government bodies, state authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, other state and local governments in the field of state national policy thus ensuring their interaction with civil society institutions the Presidential Decree No. 1666 of 19 December 2012 approved the State National Policy Strategy of the Russian Federation up to 2025.

State authorities of the Russian Federation and local governments are recommended to follow the provisions of the State National Policy Strategy of the Russian Federation up to 2025 in the implementation of their activities in this area. In turn, the strategy serves a platform for local governments to exercise their powers, in particular in optimizing interethnic relations.

The timely and peaceful resolution of interethnic contradictions and conflicts by state and municipal authorities is one of the paragraphs of the Decree. Due to the fact that the Russian Federation is a multinational country, ensuring security and peace is its priority.

Local governments create conditions to strengthen the state unity, to develop the all-Russian civic identity, to ensure ethnocultural development of the peoples of Russia, to provide harmonization of interethnic relations, to foster an interethnic and interreligious dialogue and prevent conflicts for the social and cultural adaptation and integration of migrants. As indicated in the Concept of State Migration Policy of the Russian Federation up to 2025 (approved on 08.06.2012 by the President of the Russian Federation), local governments should conduct large-scale actions of legal education, inform about cultural traditions and norms of behavior by establishing appropriate infrastructure in their countries of origin and regions of the Russian Federation experiencing the largest influx of migrants, as well as actively use the potential of the media and the opportunities of cultural and adaptation centers in the countries of origin of migrants, as well as Russian language education through migrant support programs.

Events, exhibitions and dialogues between the representatives of various ethnic communities is also part of the powers of local governments in the field of culture.

The creation of a municipal system for monitoring the state of interethnic relations and early warning of conflict situations is also part of the system of powers of local governments.

Summing up the powers of local governments, according to the Decree of the President, municipalities shall give support of activity of international public associations, associations, funds, national and cultural autonomies as important means of identification and satisfaction of ethnocultural requirements of citizens, achieve stability of international relations, prevent conflicts on the national level, ensure openness and publicity of situations connected with conflicts in the sphere of international (interethnic) relations.

In the current hierarchy of the State National Policy in the field of interethnic relations, an important place is given to the Federal Law No. 131 *On general principles of the organization of local governments in the Russian Federation*.

According to the amendments to the Federal Law No. 131-FZ of 06.10.2003 *On general principles of the organization of local governments in the Russian Federation*, the Federal Law No. 284-FZ of 22.10.2013 *On amending certain legislative acts of the Russian Federation in terms of determining the powers and responsibilities of state authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, local governments and their officials in the field of interethnic relations*, the powers of local governments in the field of interethnic relations include “creation of conditions for the implementation of measures aimed at strengthening interethnic and interfaith harmony, preservation and development of languages and culture of the peoples of the Russian Federation, social and cultural adaptation of migrants, prevention of interethnic conflicts”. Local governments of municipal and urban districts develop and implement these measures. The main areas of activity of local authorities in the field of regulation of interfaith and interethnic relations and conflict prevention include:

1. Ensuring interethnic peace and harmony, harmonization of interethnic relations.
2. Promotion of national and cultural development.

3. Establishment of a system of social and cultural adaptation and integration of migrants (Astafieva & Reva, 2018). The efficiency of local governments in regulating ethno-confessional relations is affected by the expertise of their interaction with both state authorities (primarily regional ones) and with public and religious organizations, as well as with local media and educational organizations.

The following forms of such interaction can be distinguished:

- support of such associations and organizations by local authorities; participation of public and religious organizations to develop and implement municipal programs or their specific activities, in accordance with existing legal norms;
- involving the representatives of national and confessional minorities (which are often the same) in the discussion and examination of socially relevant draft legislation; joint actions and activities aimed at strengthening harmonious interfaith and interethnic relations; organization of systematic information exchange, methodological, advisory, organizational assistance to public and religious associations;
- participation of religious and public organizations in citywide events and their media coverage.

Local government is a unique social phenomenon, which, due to its specificity and the presence of a number of unique features, in many countries acquires a special public legal status different from both the state and civil society institutions. The uniqueness of local government lies primarily in the synthesis of elements of civic initiative, social self-organization and regulation inherent in civil society entities (non-governmental organizations, movements) with state powers, which mainly belong to state bodies. This synthesis helps to best solve the most pressing issues in a certain territory, including the issues of resolving interethnic relations (Larichev & Chikhladze, 2019).

In Russian society, local government is based on the issues of local importance (Article 14 of the Federal Law 131, Paragraph 7.2), which determines the priorities for ensuring the life of society, preserving the social and socio-cultural environment. In the context of the national policy it is important

to create conditions for the interests of the local society, equal access to social, legal and cultural resources.

7. Conclusion

Thus, it can be noted that in the process of implementing national policies in the era of globalization the local government perhaps plays one of the key roles. The municipal acts concerning ethnic minorities, as well as the development strategies foster the creation of the roadmap for municipalities to achieve universal equality between all nationalities in Russia and prevent discrimination, as one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Secondly, it is necessary to ensure a constructive dialogue between the authorities and civil associations in the field of interethnic relations.

Globalization presupposes interethnic integration, but it is a long-term, uneven and paradoxical process (Jan, 2000). Its development is only possible through the interaction between states, municipal authorities and public institutions, expansion of social cooperation and elimination of inequality (Jan, 2000). Global policy is a complex process that provides a platform for the creation of national policies. It can be concluded that interethnic relations play a key role in the national stability and development of the state. Inequality negatively affects the eradication of poverty, socio-economic development and deprives people of a sense of satisfaction and self-esteem thus causing negative public sentiments and environmental degradation.

The sustainable development of the local government in the development of interethnic relations is particularly important. It is the local governments interacting with other bodies and institutions that solve problems within the territory of the municipality. In the context of the national policy it is important to create conditions for the interests of the local society, equal access to social, legal and cultural resources.

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