67

DETECTION OF INTERNATIONAL TENSION IN THE STUDENT ENVIRONMENT

DETECCIÓN DE TENSIÓN INTERNACIONAL EN EL ENTORNO ESTUDIANTIL

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ABSTRACT

The article presents an analysis of the political consciousness and value orientations of Russian students on the example of several regions characterized by high levels of multi-ethnicity in the context of growing threats and risks of new acute conflicts. Approaches to developing the predictions and scenarios of regional development and the detection of the causes of the polarization of values in the social space of a multi-ethnic society are examined. Conflict potential diagnostics are defined by the authors based on the analysis of the socially determined attitudes of ethnic and demographic groups to reality, which shape the real sphere of the public multi-ethnic space and reflect the regional specifics, as well as the main trends of political processes under the influence of globalization. It is emphasized that in the conditions of the new challenges and threats brought about by the global pandemic, which has aggravated many social problems, the demand for conflictological diagnostics rises, and youth and ethnopolitical issues of scientific research focus on an axiological agenda related to the identification of the reasons behind the polarization of values in the socio-cultural and political-economic space.

Keywords:

Political consciousness, value orientations of students, radicalism, countering extremism, regions of southern Russia.

RESUMEN

El artículo presenta un análisis de la conciencia política y las orientaciones de valores de los estudiantes rusos en el ejemplo de varias regiones caracterizadas por altos niveles de multietnicidad en el contexto de crecientes amenazas y riesgos de nuevos conflictos agudos. Se examinan enfoques para desarrollar las predicciones y escenarios de desarrollo regional y la detección de las causas de la polarización de valores en el espacio social de una sociedad multiétnica. Los diagnósticos de conflicto potencial son definidos por los autores a partir del análisis de las actitudes socialmente determinadas de los grupos étnicos y demográficos frente a la realidad, que configuran la esfera real del espacio público multiétnico y reflejan las especificidades regionales, así como las principales tendencias de procesos políticos bajo la influencia de la globalización. Se destaca que en las condiciones de los nuevos desafíos y amenazas que trae consigo la pandemia mundial, que ha agravado muchos problemas sociales, se eleva la demanda de diagnósticos conflictológicos, y los temas juveniles y etnopolíticos de la investigación científica se enfocan en una agenda axiológica relacionada con la identificación de las razones detrás de la polarización de valores en el espacio sociocultural y político-económico.

Palabras clave:

Conciencia política, orientaciones de valores de los estudiantes, radicalismo, lucha contra el extremismo, regiones del sur de Rusia.

INTRODUCTION

Amid radical transformations of the contemporary political space caused by the dissemination of new social media and the increasing influence of globalization on all spheres of public life, the problem of conflictological analysis of the value and political orientations of youth in multi-ethnic social environments is gaining relevance. The need for conflict potential diagnostics is due to the complexity of developing and applying new effective administration practices for working with young people and preventing negative trends in the radicalization of political consciousness and extremist manifestations, which are observed in the behavior of certain groups of young people in the context of the ongoing processes of change in the world order. The purpose of this paper is to identify the main approaches to the diagnostics of conflict potential in multi-ethnic regions in the process of transformation of the political consciousness of youth under the influence of information technologies and the geopolitical confrontation between actors on the world stage. The grounds of value and political orientations of young people are diverse needs, motives, interests, goals, and ideals forming stable beliefs and attitudes, which largely determine the socio-political positions and ways of political participation. The socially determined attitudes of ethnic and demographic groups to reality shape the real sphere of the public multi-ethnic space, in which a variety of conflicts of preferences, values, and interests, emotional tensions, peaceful and violent interaction mechanisms, and communication processes often emerge, driven by ethno-confessional, ideological, and demographic factors.

METHODOLOY

The conceptual foundation for political and conflictological research and the development of predictions and scenarios of regional development including the study of the causes of value polarization in the social space of multi-ethnic societies are the theories developed by S. Lipset, S. Rokkan, R. Inglehart, and other scholars, which analyze various theoretical and applied problems of scientific examination of human behavior at the group level. Consideration of the anthropological and mental factors in people's orientation toward different, often mutually exclusive values allows revealing the causes of aggressive consciousness on the one hand, and, on the other, the resources of integration and the specifics of socio-communicative practices prevalent in the youth environment.

The heterogeneity of public policy space in a transparent information society creates a conflict potential for autonomization and sovereignty, the strengthening of dominance, and the reproduction of ethno-territorial disagreements up to and including violent confrontation. These problems are exacerbated by tensions in center-periphery relations and uneven regional development, which have a significant impact on political processes within the institutions and structures of regional communities and worsen external and internal conflicts. Pointing out the commonalities of radicalism and extremism, M. Lipset highlights that "They appeal to the disgruntled and the psychologically homeless, to the personal failures, the socially isolated, the economically insecure, the uneducated, unsophisticated, and authoritarian persons at every level of the society. As Heberle puts it, such movements are supported by 'those who for some reason or other had failed to make a success in their business or occupation, and those who had lost their social status or were in danger of losing it'... It is often men from precisely such origins who give the fanatical and extremist character to these movements and form the core of believers" (Lipset, 2016, p. 211, 212). Unhealthy sociality is the context, cause, and consequence of internal personality processes of a pathological nature, when the understandable desire for significance to maintain self-esteem and self-assertion for these people is lost, "the individual shifts his attention to different, and often perverted or neurotic, forms of power to get some substitute for significance" (May, 2001, p. 39).

Practically the only remaining option for them then becomes outbursts of cruelty, aggression, and extremism. In the sphere of public policy, in group consciousness and behavior, this takes the form of radical views, statements, and other actions stemming from social deprivation and frustration, which lead to aggression and destructive manifestations primarily targeted at those viewed as responsible for the injustice and all the negative things that keep the desired significance out of reach (Iurchenko, 2015, p. 385). Radical and extremist movements and aggressive behavior based on the demonstration of superiority in strength or emotional state arising as a reaction to adverse circumstances become in today's public space the most dangerous threats to the strategy of development, digitalization, and environmental innovation of all spheres of society and its improvement in the direction of social justice and mutual trust.

In this regard, the most relevant are the studies devoted to the technologies for countering extremism and radicalism in compound multi-ethnic societies and the diagnostics of conflict potential. The term "hybrid war" was developed in scientific literature to describe the processes reflecting the chaotic nature of the modern world encompassed by

a variety of conflicts. According to P.A. Tsygankov, they cover "all niches of the information space, including printed and electronic media, cyber-attacks, organization of seminars and training courses with lectures for supporters of opposition movements", and their target is "the mental component and the very system of the social organization of the opponent" (Tsygankov, 2015, p. 21).

In the current conditions, the main content of confrontation is value and political, i.e. related to issues of value identity. The predominance of chaotic processes in the economy, culture, politics, and the information sphere leads to the disorientation of individual representatives of youth. At the same time, there is a tendency to usurp the right to information and use the dominant position of certain actors who maintain their positions in the social network space and in the implementation of political and economic transformations and reforms that do not account for the real problems of young people related to employment, opportunities for free education, and many other social issues. In this flow of predominantly uncontrolled social processes, the conflict potential is accumulated. Thus, quite reasonable for this study appear to be the methods of comparativism, situational analysis, as well as conflict potential diagnostics in the form of continuous monitoring with the use of the intent- and event-analysis.

DEVELOPMENT

Analysis of social processes allows tracing fluctuations in the intensity of protest in various social and ethnic groups of youth. From the standpoint of political analysis, it is important to characterize the style of behavior of the subjects of this activity and the motives and intentions of stakeholder groups, opinion leaders, and decision-makers.

In the meantime, the conflictual confrontation of actors in ethnopolitical relations is alternately intensifying and weakening. This confirms the trend of the interest in the social construction of reality on the part of internal and external subjects of interaction and counteraction by means of influence on young people, their tendency to adolescent maximalism and avant-gardism. One of the dangerous scenarios, as noted by Ia.I. Glinskii, is the model of separation into the "included" and "excluded": "polarization of the very wealthy and powerful minority of the 'included' and the very poor and disenfranchised majority of the 'excluded' (with a gradual erosion of the 'middle class,' which, as we have known since Aristotle, is the guarantor of the stability of social and political systems). In the conditions of globalization of the economy, politics, and information processes, this leads to the separation of both the states and the population of each country into the so-called 'included' and 'excluded, which is dangerous

for the entire humanity. That is, some people are included in the functional systems while others are excluded from them. The 'excluded' are the ones that constitute the main social base of terrorism (as well as crime, drug abuse, and the like)" (Gilinskii, 2004, p. 21-22). The "excluded" are the breeding ground for extremism in all its forms. They have no choice but to oppose themselves to others – this is their essence and a great danger to society.

Information and psychological wars are always turned against the moral potential of the country, when many media and educational institutions find themselves in a state of spiritual crisis, having turned into a mere "service industry," having lost their understanding of the importance of forming moral values in the minds of young people. As a result of the gradual rebirth of mentality, focus on the values of consolidation and social solidarity weakens, which creates the risks of internal splits and deepening socio-political contradictions and requires prompt, effective scientific support for the state authorities in the field of spiritual, moral, educational, and information policy accounting for the regional specifics and demographic characteristics of a multi-ethnic society in the development of transformational socio-political processes.

E.A. Pain, establishing the cause and effect links between xenophobia and extremism, emphasizes that "at the level of society and ethnic and religious communities, manifestations of extremism begin to escalate in the periods of historical change and modernization that have begun but have not yet been completed. Under such conditions, the so-called identity crisis associated with the difficulties of social and cultural self-identification of individuals is almost inevitable. The desire to overcome this crisis generates several consequences, which can become prerequisites for political extremism, namely: the revival of people's interest in settling down in primary, natural, or, as they are also called, 'primordial' communities (ethnic and confessional); intensified manifestations of xenophobia; the increasing influence of traditionalist ideology, which often develops into fundamentalism (the idea of 'purification from innovations and return to the roots')" (Pain, 2022, p. 114).

In the study of modern socio-political processes, among the most demanded is the conflictological paradigm, which allows developing the fundamental aspects of the prognostic characteristics of political transformations in the public sphere and the information and social network space. This gives opportunities for the development of theoretical and practical aspects of scenario and situational analysis of the conflict and integration potential in various spheres of social life, as well as for the search for new effective technologies of conflict management and

the formation of conflict resolution and settlement mechanisms accounting for regional specifics. In the face of new challenges and threats brought about by the global pandemic, which has aggravated many social problems, the demand for conflictological diagnostics rises.

In particular, youth and ethnopolitical issues of scientific research focus on an axiological agenda related to the identification of the reasons behind the polarization of values in the socio-cultural and political-economic space. Furthermore, the regions under examination are facing the problem of interaction and mutual influence of cross-border language communities, which are formed and exist in the form of a special compound spiritual space of logic and content that transcends the state community and compromises the soundness of the mental and cultural framework, making society even more open, unstable, and subject to external influences, separating subregional mono-ethnic language communities from the multi-ethnic statehood in mental terms. This can also be seen in the pluralism of worldviews and in the contradictions of ethnic diasporas, in particular, the Armenian and Azerbaijani diasporas in the context of the armed conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh and some other aspects.

Value and political orientations of youth in the conditions of ethnic diversity are a serious socio-political problem requiring constant study from the point of methodological approaches and a reliable empirical database. As secondary sources, let us give examples based on the results of S.P. Potseluev's research on the topic "Cognitive and ideological matrices of students' perception of contemporary socio-political crises" (Potseluev, 2021, p. 147-153), in which the author studies certain aspects of students' political consciousness at the level of ideologems and ideological concepts and analyzes the assessment of socio-political problems of contemporary society by the youth of the South of Russia. In collaboration with scholars from the Southern Federal University, in 2018-2020, he conducted surveys among students of universities in Rostov-on-Don, Novocherkassk, Nalchik, Pyatigorsk, Astrakhan, Stavropol, and Krasnodar. The provided data on the overall state of Russian society show that two-thirds of the respondents see it as a crisis or pre-crisis situation. Moreover, the author of the article reporting the results of this sociological study notes that "according to the results of the interviews, about a third of the respondents consider the sharp social stratification and poverty of the population one of the most dangerous problems of modern Russia. The same applies to several features of the Russian economy ... a significant number of the respondents are concerned about the lack of a

constructive political opposition and civil society in the country" (Potseluev, 2021, p. 152).

In characterizing the political consciousness and value orientations of Russian youth, the authors of several scientific publications emphasize that Russian citizens, but especially youth, on the whole, demonstrate indifference, mosaicism, contradiction, heterogeneity, "diversity," a certain "tornness," eclecticism, pluralism, and hybridization of ideological values, "ideological omnivorousness" (Polivaeva, 2014, p. 15-21), which leads to disintegration tendencies in society. According to the 2019 survey as part of the study of the mass political consciousness of young people conducted by O.V. Popova in several regions of the Russian Federation, orientation on the interests of one's ethnic group is of certain importance for young people. "A primary focus on the interest of one's ethnic group, naturally, cannot be considered as an indicator of proneness to nationalism. The attitude to this statement captures not an ideological value but an attitude, which indirectly tells us about the level of ethnic identity. In total, the interests of 'their own' ethnic group are significant for 42.5% of the young people and very significant for 19.3% of the respondents" (Popova, 2021, p. 134-140), the author notes.

The level of danger of radical sentiments in the regions has grown. By some estimates, trends of radicalization are present in certain social groups of society, creating favorable grounds for extremism. In this regard, state authorities face a task of particular importance – timely prevention of extremism among young people through effective methods of upbringing work. Particularly concerning are the negative processes unraveling on social media: the use of the Internet for the propaganda of extremist ideas, recruitment to terrorist organizations, the spread of calls for anti-government rallies, the creation of radical-oriented communities, etc. State agencies and various non-profit organizations (e.g., the National Center for Information Counteraction to Terrorism and Extremism in the Educational Environment and on the Internet) combat such manifestations in the Internet space. The leading role in the prevention of terrorist and extremist ideology among youth belongs to the educational system.

In 2018, ten educational and methodological centers for the prevention of negative manifestations were created based on federal universities, which became reference sites for work in the sphere of countering terrorist and extremist ideology in federal districts. Important information about the preventive activities carried out based on educational organizations is posted on the Internet resource "Interactive map of anti-terrorist activities in educational organizations and academic institutions of the Russian

Federation" (map.ncpti.ru). The presented previews show the main results of about 1.5 thousand events of different levels. More than 70 specialists in science and education are registered on the specified resource as experts in the study of these topical problems. At the annual forum "Safety in Science and Education", experts present their research materials on such topics as "Information Security", "Prevention of illegal content in the youth environment", and others. Here we will review one of the reports based on the materials of a sociological survey on the issue of young people's perception of extremist ideologies, which was conducted among students of universities in the Southern Federal District and the North Caucasian Federal District (Kutsenko, 2020, p. 47-56).

This survey covers over 5,000 students at the average age of 19. In terms of the definition of "extremism", opinions of the students of the Southern Federal District and the North Caucasian Federal District mainly concur. A major part of the respondents classify as extremism the acts of insulting the feelings of believers and belittling the dignity of representatives of other nations. It is important to note that in the students' minds, funding of extremist communities is equated with extremist activities. The majority of the surveyed students in the South of Russia also agree that administrative and criminal liability are adequate measures for distributing illegal materials on the Internet. However, a certain percentage of the students believe that online users are in their right to post absolutely any information on the Internet (13.3% of the respondents). Destructive ideas among online users come in various forms of inciting social, racial, or religious discord. Surveys show that to the least extent students see the manifestation of extremist activity in the publication of Nazi symbols on the Internet and the postulation of nationalist ideas. At the same time, about 40% of the students surveyed have not encountered such information on the Internet (Kutsenko, 2020, p. 51).

One of the most complex poly-ethnic and densely populated regions demonstrating high migration activity is Krasnodar Krai. In 2020 (according to the Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia in Krasnodar Krai), there was 30 terrorism-related crimes, 10 related to participation in the activities of a terrorist organization, 9 associated with training for terrorist activity, three of each – related to financing terrorism and inducing a person to join a terrorist organization, two crimes associated with preparation for a terrorist act motivated by religious hatred, one related to public calls for terrorist activity or justification of terrorism, one related to public calls for terrorist activity, and one related to public calls for the exercise of terrorism. Of these, 9 crimes were detected by the Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia in Krasnodar Krai and 21 – by the Krasnodar Krai Directorate of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (Informational and analytical note…, 2020).

CONCLUSIONS

The territories of the Southern Federal District, the North Caucasian Federal District, and the Volga Federal District bear some potential for international tension, which can sometimes lead to very violent conflicts. The socio-political, economic, and ethnocultural situation in these regions is to some degree affected by the socio-political and economic processes taking place in neighboring countries, as well as the global pandemic and its consequences for the political and economic, and socio-cultural spheres of life. The unevenness of socio-economic development of regions together with the varying ethnic structure of the population of Krais, Oblasts, and Republics make them vulnerable to macroeconomic processes (e.g., inflation, rising food prices, budget employment cuts, etc.). In this context, organizing a system of continuous ethnopolitical monitoring in the regions is critical for anti-crisis management, conflictological diagnostics of interethnic and interconfessional relations, and timely de-escalation of socio-political tensions.

The socio-political and ethno-confessional situation in the Southern Federal District is defined by several processes: the continuing political instability in the southeastern part of Ukraine, which is a source of the continuing problem of refugee settlement in the host regions of the Southern Federal District, particularly in Rostov Oblast and Krasnodar Krai; the continuing international policy of sanctions against Russia, which has entrusted the regions of the Southern Federal District with significant responsibility for ensuring import substitution in the production of agricultural products; changes in working conditions in situations of forced "self-isolation", remote work, migration flows, and the employment of immigrants. In the face of the existing external and internal threats, the reliability of functioning and the stable development of the socio-political system are determined by numerous factors, but especially by the state of the value and political mental support for the all-Russian civil identity, which is largely contingent on the attitudes and positions of the young generation of citizens, on the interaction of many youth groups in the multi-ethnic society open for information flows. In the face of escalating geopolitical and socio-economic conflicts, intensifying information confrontation, as well as the impact of a variety of factors of local and international nature, the regions of southern Russia present a complex conflict-prone space, which largely determines

the security of the entire state, which raises the need for situational analysis and conflict potential diagnostics in the form of continuous monitoring.

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