

# Conflict Management in the Sphere of Ethnopolitics: Russian Experience

## Manejo de conflictos en la esfera de la etnopolítica: La experiencia rusa

Evgeniy SUSLOV E [1](#); Iena KARTASHOVA [2](#); Sergey ZHURAVLEV [3](#); Anna ROTAR [4](#); Iana SIRUIKOVA [5](#); Larisa SMIRNOVA [6](#)

Received: 01/12/2017 • Approved: 20/12/2017

### Content

- [1. Introduction](#)
  - [2. Methods and ways of research](#)
  - [3. Content of the article and main results](#)
  - [4. Conclusions](#)
- [Bibliographic references](#)

#### ABSTRACT:

The necessity of writing the proposed article is caused, firstly, by understanding of complexity and ambiguity of ethno-political processes in Russia which are in a state of relative stability nowadays, but may be in a phase of instability if obey to the logic of "ethno-political pendulum"; secondly, by scientific interest in identifying threats for the country coming from ethno-political sphere which is rife with many conflicts, and by the desire to prevent growing of ethno-political conflicts into destructive forms, threatening the state's security; thirdly, by the desire to find out peculiarities of using strategies of conflict management in Russian ethno-political practice; fourthly, by identifying the effectiveness of actions of the subjects of ethno-political conflict management in conflict regulating in the field of ethnicities' coexistence. The results of the author team's work are conclusions that the process of politicization of ethnicity in Russia is suspended nowadays, but ethno-political contradictions are saved at the latent level and they threaten to escalate into conflicts of a destructive nature. It is stated that constitutional conflicts between the Federal center and national subjects of the Federation became the most dangerous for post-Soviet Russia: initially, the normative approach was used to regulate them, but, the power approach in managing

#### RESUMEN:

La necesidad de escribir el artículo propuesto se debe, en primer lugar, a la comprensión de la complejidad y ambigüedad de los procesos etnopolíticos en Rusia que se encuentran en una relativa estabilidad hoy en día, pero puede estar en una fase de inestabilidad si obedecen a la lógica de " péndulo etnopolítico "; en segundo lugar, por el interés científico en identificar amenazas para el país provenientes de la esfera etnopolítica que está plagada de muchos conflictos, y por el deseo de prevenir el crecimiento de conflictos etnopolíticos en formas destructivas, amenazando la seguridad del estado; en tercer lugar, por el deseo de descubrir las peculiaridades del uso de estrategias de gestión de conflictos en la práctica etnopolítica rusa; en cuarto lugar, identificando la efectividad de las acciones de los sujetos del manejo etnopolítico de conflictos en la regulación de conflictos en el campo de la coexistencia de etnias. Los resultados del trabajo del equipo de autor son conclusiones de que el proceso de politicización de la etnicidad en Rusia está suspendido hoy en día, pero las contradicciones etnopolíticas se guardan en el nivel latente y amenazan con escalar en conflictos de naturaleza destructiva. Se afirma que los conflictos constitucionales entre el centro federal y los sujetos nacionales de la Federación se convirtieron en los más

conflict was used to preserve territorial integrity in the case with "rebellious" Chechnya. It is proved that ethnic discontent expressed in the framework of democratic system is always better than appeal to force, violent solutions to ethno-political problems. As a result of the research, the authors came to the final conclusion that danger of the state's disintegration due to the excessive strengthening of the Federal center and the weakening of the Federal's subjects or vice versa continues to be the potential threat to the Federal state in ethno-political sphere.

**Keywords:** ethnicity's politicization, "ethno-political pendulum", "ethnic Romanticism", ethno-political mobilization, federalism, unitarism.

peligrosos para la Rusia postsoviética: inicialmente, el enfoque normativo se utilizó para regularlos, pero el enfoque de poder en la gestión del conflicto se utilizó para preservar el territorio integridad en el caso con Chechenia "rebelde". Está demostrado que el descontento étnico expresado en el marco del sistema democrático es siempre mejor que recurrir a la fuerza, soluciones violentas a los problemas etnopolíticos. Como resultado de la investigación, los autores llegaron a la conclusión final de que el peligro de la desintegración del estado debido al excesivo fortalecimiento del centro federal y el debilitamiento de los asuntos federales o viceversa sigue siendo la amenaza potencial para el estado federal en esfera etnopolítica. **Palabras clave:** politización de la etnia, "péndulo etnopolítico", "romanticismo étnico", movilización etnopolítica, federalismo, unitarismo.

## 1. Introduction

The sphere of relationship between ethnicities is a priori conflict in a multinational country. There is an axiom: the larger and ethnically more diverse the state, the more conflict the relations between ethnic groups are. The breakup of such multinational countries as the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia that happened more than a quarter century ago, tells in favor of ethno-political contradiction of state formations with polynational composition.

Czechoslovakia was divided into two independent states – the Czech and Slovakia and came out of the process of state's disintegration almost painlessly. The disintegration of an exemplary socialist federation was facilitated by the fact that "initially the legal issues of coexistence of the two main ethnic groups were not resolved in the country" ... The significant discrepancy between ethno-linguistic and state borders and the absence of the idea of the integral nation and effective integrated policy played a fatal role in the Czech History of modern times" (Tishkov, Shabaev, 2011). The attempts to search and find the consensus about the government model and the policy of nation-building by the Czech and Slovak elites were not successful.

Everything occurred by the blood-tragic scenario in Federal Yugoslavia. The well-known Russian researcher A.I. Nikitin notes that "in the 1990's, Yugoslavia showed the whole world what could happen after the collapse of the former Soviet Union in another confluence of political circumstances: protracted and bloody civil wars broke on the territories of the constituent parts of former Yugoslavia with the collapse of the state power vertical, the acute problem of refugees and the forced intervention of the world community" (Nikitin, 2017). Without going into the reasons of the war outbreak, the Serbian General R. Mladich wrote: "You must understand the essence of the conflict. We were attacked by our neighbors, people we have lived next to us all our lives. It is a war of neighbors and former friends which woke up one day and started to kill each other" (Nikitin, 2017).

The only one factor could not be the reason of the civil war in this country, nevertheless we can consider that the "legacy of blood" in the relations between the peoples of Yugoslavia which was burdened with bad historical past was the underlying reason to the incident. Different areas of a future single state were parts of such countries as Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, Byzantium, Greece for a long time, so, in essence, they had nothing common between them. The peoples living in these territories could not identify themselves as citizens of a single state with common historical past and future. The term "Balkanization", understood as the process of repeated redrawing of territories which generates secessionist conflicts up to civil war, precisely characterized the situation in this country.

Fortunately, there were no bloody ethnic wars around the whole perimeter of the state in the USSR, except two Chechen wars which ended by the policy of "Chechenization of the conflict". Thus, the Russian authorities managed to ensure the territorial integrity of the state, however,

the region turned into a kind of “internal abroad” where political order is based on informal personal arrangements between Vladimir Putin and Ramzan Kadyrov and is supported by large investments from Russian budget. Ethno-political experiment is not completed and its result will depend on many factors and, above all, on socio-economic successes of Russia. That is so because ethno-political conflicts often break out in places where people begin to experience some hardships as a result of reducing of the level of their material well-being. Ethnic group’s consciousness responds to the occurring by the search of the guilty and, as a rule, it blames people of another nationality living next door but not people who make illiterate power decisions.

Despite the fact that a certain ethno-political stabilization was set, the process of ethnicity’s politicization was suspended in Russia and national republics, which were former sources of separatism in the country, show a high level of their loyalty to the Federal center, it seems that we should not be seduced by the apparent serenity in the sphere of ethnic relations. Probably, as E. Pain notes, “the epoch of revolutions gave place to the epoch of stability only for a while, and political forces for the future ethno-political conflicts can be accumulated under the cover of current demonstrative loyalty of the national republics’ leaders” (Pain, 2004).

So, it is necessary to refer to the resources of conflict management in the sphere of ethnic policy in order to prevent the accumulation of destructive ethno-political conflict potential. Russia, which is not a pioneer in this area due to various reasons, primarily ideological, amassed certain experience in conflict management, and that deserves analytical evaluation and interpretation.

The team of authors sets such purpose while writing the proposed article: firstly, to assess the current state of ethno-political processes in Russia, secondly, to identify threats for the country coming from ethno-political sphere, thirdly, to clarify the peculiarities of the use of conflict management strategies and prevention of their destructive consequences in Russian ethno-political practice, and finally, fourthly, to evaluate the effectiveness of the subjects’ actions in conflict management in the field of coexistence of ethnic groups.

---

## **2. Methods and ways of research**

It is necessary to interpret some basic notions used in our article to start the consideration of research approaches for the study of ethno-political conflicts. The concept of “ethnicity” is the first in the conceptual row among other equals. The importance of this procedure is explained by the fact that now ethnic differences get very important, if not dominant, role in the political sphere of particular states and at the level of international relationship because of the activation of interaction between representatives of different peoples.

Ethnicity can be considered in various guises, as F. Riggs did: he identified ethnicity as politics, as psychology, as classification and as a research area. Of course, identification of ethnicity as policy is curious for us, according to Riggs this means that “ethnicity often appears as a reaction in the condition of rivalry of different groups or it is formed in the frames of large community, organized in the form of state or empire. Ethnicity as a political strategy is pointed at achieving or exclusion of access to social goods and services, as well as to the resources which are controlled by centralized authorities or dominant groups” (Riggs, 1985). In other words, ethnicity arises as a consequence of a conflict between different groups within large society (state). It can be conjectured that the subjects of conflict interaction resort to the ethnic component as the last argument proving the superiority of one ethnic group over another in conditions of exhaustion of resources in the process of their confrontation.

Emphasizing the importance of ethnicity, N. Glazer and D. Moynihan insist that it is “a more fundamental source of stratification” than class nature of society and that is why ethnicity and ethnic conflict will not lose their relevance today or in the future” (Tishkov, Shabaev, 2011).

Russian view of ethnicity is somewhat different in contrast to the Western ethnological point of view. So, famous Russian ethnologist Y. Bromley wrote on the basis of materialist views on the

world that "ethnic self-consciousness, like any form of consciousness, is a secondary phenomenon derived from objective factors, because consciousness can never be anything else but conscious being. Among all the variety of human communities, ethnic groups, certainly, have to be attributed to those which arise not by the will of people but as the result of objective development of the historical process" (Bromley, 2009). Bromley's ideas were continued in the S. Cheshko's "The Man and Ethnicity" in which the author states that "A man feels its belonging to a particular ethnic group but his "ethnic" activity – communication is mostly focused in the local ethnic community, national-cultural center or a folk ensemble... In everyday life a man, as a rule, does not build his social relations, does not select his partners in activity and communication deliberately, based on the ethnicity" (Cheshko, 1994). In other words, ethnic and social origins permanently compete in a man and often engage in sharp conflict relations, so the level of ethnicity tends to change wavelike, reacting to the manifestations of external forces and factors.

The politicization of ethnicity is another important basic concept in the framework of the proposed article, and we consider it as a political resource used by different subjects of ethno-political processes, such as ethnic movements, ethnic elites and the state. The politicization of ethnicity is manifested in such forms as ethnic nationalism, which, according to G. Rothschild, is ethnicity's transformation from socio-psychological and cultural factors in the "actually political power with the purpose to change and stabilize current specific systems of inequality among ethnic groups in society" (Rothschild, 1981). Ethnicity in mono-ethnic state or national republic is accompanied by the dominance of the more numerous ethnic group over the less numerous one, and this is manifested in the appeal to ethnic sentiments of a particular ethnic electoral majority, but "ethnicity performs as a local political resource in poly-ethnic states because nationwide political consolidation is possible only on the basis of common civil ideas and symbols" (Tishkov, Shabaev, 2011).

There is no doubt that both variants of ethnicity lead to inter-ethnic conflicts, the difference is only in the intensity of these conflicts. Too much attention of researchers is paid to ethnic conflicts, though they are not frequent phenomena in reality. As a rule, only a small part of ethnic community from both sides take part in inter-ethnic conflicts. The extent of the conflict can grow in the case of ethno-political mobilization, the meaning of which is not in formulation of the ethnic group's problems but in focusing on ethnic myths and symbols, in exploitation of tragic pages of the historical development of ethnos. The appeal to ethno-political mobilization in Russian conditions was typical of the epoch which we would call the epoch of "ethnic Romanticism", when people without their own public education or dissatisfied with their status of, for example, autonomous national union, move in the direction of acquisition of state independence or improvement of their autonomous status. That is why ethnic Romanticism is the prelude to the ethnic Renaissance which is closely linked with the well-known doctrine about the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples. This concept, created by American president W. Wilson, decided the destruction of the Imperial world order in Europe during the First World War, but did not become creative in the years between the First and the Second World Wars. The concept has always been in great confrontation with the principle of inviolability of frontiers and territorial integrity of the state, so that has become a stable source of interstate ethno-political conflicts. The collapse of the Soviet Union as the greatest geopolitical tragedy of the twentieth century was largely predetermined by this contradiction.

Another side of ethno-political conflicts is their internal variation when one of the parties to the conflict is also a state and the other is ethnocracy (ethnic elite) or national movements. There are situations when ethnocracy and national movements act together, making ethno-political demands to the center. These claims can have national-separatist nature and can be confined to the requirements of state independence, as it was in Tatarstan in the early 90s of the XX century. In addition, indigenous peoples can uphold their rights to territories and sources rich in hydrocarbons and other minerals, their cultural and linguistic self-sufficiency.

As it was noted above, the factor of ethnicity may vary: decrease or increase. This tendency

was aptly noted by famous Russian ethnopolitologist E. Pain, who called it "ethno-political pendulum". Assessing the contemporary state of ethno-political processes in Russia, we appeal to the theory of "ethno-political pendulum" as a methodological basis which, of course, needs some adjustments. The concept of "ethno-political pendulum" means that a curious pattern of "alternation of protest activity, anxiety of ethnic minorities and ethnic majority" was revealed in the post-Soviet Russian history which is conventionally divided into "the Yeltsin Era" and the "the Putin Era", respectively the "age of revolution" and the "age of stabilization" (Pain, 2004). Under ethnic majority the author understands Russians who are in the majority in Russian regions and even in national republics. Pain's term "ethnic minority" is not the same as this term accepted in international law, and it is used to determine not only diaspora but also indigenous peoples of national republics of Russia. E. Pain says that the first period of post-Soviet history is characterized by the activity of ethnic minorities. The situation changes and ethnic majority becomes active in the second period. That is why the author considers that the periods of increase and decline of ethnicity of different ethnic groups are closely connected and have a pendulum nature. It is also assumed that there is a dependency between the alternation of ethnic communities' activity and the processes of modernization in post-Soviet Russia. However, there is no answer to the question how it affects conflict management and the sphere of ethnic policy.

As it was said, Russian researchers of ethno-political conflicts follow Western theories of ethno-political conflict, taking into account specific Russian realities. We should note that penetration into the essence of ethno-political conflict was at the level of general political theories (relative deprivation and resource mobilization), as well as at the level of special complex theories of ethno-political conflict: J. Rothschild's ethno-political stratification, D. Horowitz's socio-psychological theory, T. Gurr's theory of ethno-political actions and neo-institutionalists theories of H. Linz and S. Newman. In the theory of relative deprivation, we accept the position according to which collective dissatisfaction with their position, perceived by ethnic community as a threat to the future, is the decisive factor of ethno-political mobilization. It appears that this factor was decisive in the period of "ethnic Romanticism", which coincided with the epoch of early Yeltsin when he proclaimed the slogan "Take as much sovereignty as you can swallow". And activity of ethnic minorities was exceeded. Ethnic majorities on the Russian national territories were not perceived as perpetrators of the situation, except Tatarstan, Bashkortostan and Yakutia, but in the former Soviet republics, especially Central Asian, representatives of Russian ethnicity were in various degrees guilty as well as totalitarian government, which infringed upon their national self-sufficiency.

The theories of relative deprivation are combined with socio-psychological theory of D. Horowitz, which challenges theories of modernization and neo-Marxist theories primarily focused on the search of socio-economic causes of ethnic conflicts. Whereas, according to Horowitz, "this is not enough for adequate explanation of the nature of ethnic conflict of group behavior", so "ethnicity has some special unique dynamics because of the interaction with collectivist emotions, experienced deep and intensively, so it allows to prevail over rationally perceived economic and political interests" (Aklaev, 2005). The consequence of this postulate is his statement that "we can speak about ethnic conflicts in the full sense of the term only in relation with traditional societies of Asia, Africa and Latin America" (Horowitz, 1985). Another American politologist M. Marshall estimated ethnic conflicts identically, he claimed that "the term of ethnic conflict has become an euphemism for internal conflicts of the country which we cannot understand and explain" (Marshall, 1997). These studies show that ethnic conflicts, as a rule, involve segments of another types of conflicts in the field of their attraction and do not exist in their pure form in real life.

As it seems to us, the theories of resource mobilization are much less popular in Russian conditions because they are based "on a rational calculation of leaders to mobilize group resources as the response to the opening possibilities in political context" (Aklaev, 2005). It is connected, first of all, with the predominance of emotional-psychological component in ethno-

political conflicts on the Russian territory and, also, with legislative ban on creation of political parties on ethnic and religious basis in the country, that, in our opinion, contributes to limit extremist and separatist sentiments of national movements' leaders. Another theory from the same series is the theory of ethno-political mobilization of M. Esman, it significantly contributes studies of the reasons of ethnic conflicts, it "examines interaction between ethnic groups and the government as a process of the "challenge – response" model". As the challenge to the persisting status quo in the modern state often occurs because of the activity of ethno-political movements, "governments have to learn how effectively manage political conflicts, occurring on the basis of ethnicity minorities' requirements, in such a way so that to save existing order of things at the least cost" (Aklaev, 2005).

It would seem that the lack of obvious challenges of ethno-political nature is a sign of prosperity in the sphere of national policy of the state. The sense of such a provision exist in Russia nowadays, however, national movements are in a state of "hibernation" due to the "pendulum" nature of ethnicity, namely the reduction of activity of ethnic minorities. The question is: how long will they be in this state? Therefore, Esman tells how to interpret ethno-political conflicts to decision-makers. According to Esman, "ethno-political conflicts are rarely resolved or finally settled, so it is more correct to speak not about tasks to resolve a conflict but about the art of its management" (Aklaev, 2005).

The T. Gurr's theory of ethno-political action is the most suitable for resolving our problems among special complex theories of ethno-political conflict. It represents a synthesis of two paradigms of conflict analysis – theories of relative deprivation and collective mobilization, which we have already reviewed. However, the value of T. Gurr's book "Minorities at risk" is in the fact that his theoretical calculations are verified by rich empirical material – a comparative study of ethno-political behavior of 233 ethnic groups in the period from 1945 to 1989. Gurr pays attention at contextually conditioned nature of the processes of transformation of ethnic discontent and potential of mobilization into ethno-political protest. Contextual factor has played and continues to play an important role in Russian ethno-political processes. For understanding ethno-political conflicts, it is useful to recognize that present norms of pluralism, tolerance and moderation in political culture "contribute to the understanding of authorities' necessity to make certain concessions to the wishes of indigenous and territorially concentrated peoples to have a collective status. In advanced industrial democracies, the groups of ethnic minorities, as a rule, do not face to insurmountable obstacles to political organization and presentation of their claims to the central government. Hence there is a strong probability that they will follow, first of all, the tactic of protest, not rebellion in their political activities" (Akalaev, 2005). In other words, ethnic discontent, expressed in the context of a democratic system, is always better than appeal to force, aggressive solutions to ethno-political problems. As you can see, theoretical idea sufficiently interprets the essence, causes of ethno-political conflicts and ways to reduce their level. Practical political conflict management is guided by them, but it reserves the right to doubt and their reinterpretation.

---

### **3. Content of the article and main results**

As we have seen, ethno-political processes in post-Soviet Russia are a very complicated and contradictory picture, the dynamics of which, however, is not devoid of reserved optimism in case of effective conflict management. A complex kaleidoscope of ethno-political relationship in Russia is characterized by the presence of conflicts at least of four types:

1. Internal ethno-territorial conflicts;
2. Conflicts that develop outside Russia but in which it is involved to some extent and form: conflicts in Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Tajikistan;
3. Conflicts (problems) coming from uncertainty of international legal status of the state border between Russia and Georgia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, as well as controversial issues of protection of external border of the CIS;

4. The problem of "divided" peoples and protection of Russian compatriots in the CIS countries" (Pain, 2004).

Time has made some adjustments over the past ten years. Ukrainian conflict, officially recognized as a domestic in Russia, but went out of its boundaries and acquired an ethnic color to some extent, was added to the conflicts developing outside Russia. Mutual rejection of the Russians and Ukrainians reached unprecedented level in the history of former brotherly nations. Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Tajikistan conflicts passed the phase of activity and began to decline. Currently they are in a "frozen" state but may reappear under certain circumstances. Possible secessionist (territorial) conflicts between Russia and Azerbaijan, Russia and Kazakhstan, fortunately, did not happen, and the problem of protection of external borders of the CIS was eliminated altogether because of the amorphousness of this confederation, created artificially. The problem of "divided" peoples stopped to be relevant in the decade, because the program of resettlement of compatriots in Russia is largely implemented, and ethnic Russians settled quite comfortably in their ancestral home, coming back to Russia. The acuity of the problem of protection of Russian compatriots in the CIS countries also decreased. The conflicts between Russian communities and the authorities continue to sporadically erupt in the Baltic States, that, in general, reflects the decrease in the activity of national minorities. They are connected with cultural and linguistic problems and difficulties of preserving Russian language. The attempts to save Russian ethnic identity coupled with inertia preserved thinking of Soviet citizens are in the basis of the conflict.

There is always a question in the framework of conflict management as a major component of conflictology: is it possible to put an equal sign between conflict management and its regulating? Some researchers do not see any difference between them. We follow A. Aklaev, who is a recognized authority in the field of ethno-political conflictology, so we agree that "the concept of "conflict regulation" is broader in terms than the concept of "management". Generally, the term "conflict regulation" involves activity at the macro-political level, which means creation of certain institutes within the political system, procedures and practices of regulation of the recurring conflicts... In addition to the management of individual conflicts, regulation includes activity on prevention or warning of destructive, that is violent, forms of conflict, which is called conflict prevention" (Aklaev, 2005).

However, there is a need to clarify relations between conflict regulation and its management. The management contour is only important, but not an integral part of the process of homeostasis, that is ability of spontaneous self-adaptation of complex system to rapidly changing situation, different types of threats. The contour of self-organization is another equally important part of the process of homeostasis, it provides delicate balance of vertical and horizontal links as a condition of existence and development of any complex system, including macro-political, together with the management contour. The concept of "management" is ingrained in the mass consciousness, it is pleasant to the ear, appealing to human self-satisfaction, whereas self-organization remains in oblivion, damaging the process of regulation.

The subject of our research interest is, primarily, the regulation of internal ethno-territorial conflicts, which can be also classified. The most painful for post-Soviet history of Russia became constitutional conflicts between the federal center and the authorities of autonomous republics, promoted by the desire of heads of national-territorial entities to enhance their political status and acquire the powers of former sector ministries and departments, and also have an opportunity to control the property which belongs to the collapsed Soviet state.

According to the T. Gurr's theory of ethno-political action, constitutional conflicts in Russia developed in the context of the crisis of union statehood when the leadership of the USSR and RSFSR were in a state of strong confrontation. In these circumstances, conflicting parties declared the urgent need to improve political and legal status of autonomous republics in exchange for their support. The supremacy of the constitutions and laws of the autonomies over the constitutions and laws of the Russian Federation and the Soviet Union, the rights to

determine their own fiscal policies, to carry out independent foreign economic activity and determine national-state structure, to solve the issue of self-determination up to secession and creation of independent state, were proclaimed in the Declarations of sovereignty. Of course, these points were inconsistent with the federal structure of the state but centrifugal tendencies were so great that many people predicted the USSR's fate to Russia. It should be noted that constitutional claims of the autonomous republics were far unequal. Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Chechnya, Tuva and Yakutia were the leaders of conflict ethno-political mobilization. Thus, the Republic of Mari El followed the footsteps of nation-building, and it has never claimed for secession from Russia and personalized financial-economic relations. It is explained by the fact that "the time of adoption of the Constitution of Mari El was relatively quiet, because the most important provisions of Russian constitutionalism had already been formulated, so this determined moderate nature of the Mari Constitution" (Suslov, 2015).

The federal center was aware of its weakness in terms of disintegration of the USSR, and it used the normative approach which "entails the resolution of conflicts with a particular set of legal and moral norms. It was important to have consent between parties to the conflict regarding to the admissibility of these norms" (Tishkov, Shabaev, 2011). The result was a compromise between Moscow and the leadership of autonomous republics, embodied in the Federal Treaty signed on 31 March 1992. The leadership of Tatarstan and Chechnya did not sign this Treaty. Additional concessions from the Federal center were required, so they were done after Tatarstan had recognized its sovereignty within the Russian Federation. Kazan got preferences on increasing of quotas for export of extracted oil and on tax incentives. Such actions of the Federal government caused dissatisfaction of the heads of other subjects, but it helped to save national republics in a single constitutional field of Russia.

Later, the situation began to develop in the spirit of implementation of the model of "truncated" federalism, when republics began to lose some of their special powers after B. Yeltsin had been secondly elected as the president of the Russian Federation. The new Russian leadership created the Federal districts in 2000, brought the Constitutions of the national republics in accordance with the Constitution of the Russian Federation, and it also launched a number of mechanisms ensuring state's territorial integrity by limiting the regions' rights. In particular, contractual practice between the Federal center and subjects of Federation was eliminated, and the existing treaties on the delimitation of subjects of competence and powers were cancelled. This agreement continued only with Tatarstan up to July 2017.

The discussion between supporters of strengthening of a unitary state and supporters of a truly Federative state flared up in the expert community and in government structure after the expiration of the treaty's terms. The termination of the treaty between Moscow and Kazan seems logical within the limitation of federalism in Russia. Return of a large and ethnically diverse country to the unitarism is justified when the Federal center has a development program, which implementation requires accumulation of all forces and means. And only a unitary state can provide mobilization of the state and society for realization of specific projects. Federalism means multi-speed movement of the regions to their well-being, but there are some leaders of the country's economic development with their donor budgets and they "pull" the whole state to the desired economic prosperity, as for example, Tatarstan.

Former president of Tatarstan M. Shaimiev said that the Treaty on delimitation of powers between Moscow and Kazan "decided the fate of all Russia" at the time when he spoke at the World Congress of Tatars. Legal collisions may arise in the absence of the Treaty because the first article of the Constitution of Tatarstan says that the Treaty cannot be changed by Parliament, but only by referendum. With reference to the already mentioned Gurr's theory of ethno-political action which advises how the authorities can avoid ethno-political shocks, we can assume that the extension of the Treaty with Tatarstan would be the best way out of the situation and the demonstration of the Russian leadership's preferences to the normative approach of conflict resolution. Moreover, the Treaty on delimitation of powers of 2007 has no economic preferences for Tatarstan now.



Thus, conceding in small, you can win more. In obedience to the action of "ethno-political pendulum", however, the decision-makers at the Federal level do not hurry to strengthen Federal unity of the country proceeding from their objectives of a short-term nature.

Another way to preserve the internal status quo in Russia, namely the retention of "rebellious" Chechnya within the Russian state, was the power approach in conflict managing "when the stronger party imposes its own conditions of conflict resolution to the weak one, which, in fact, do not resolve a conflict situation but only make the weaker party to withdraw its claims to the strong one" (Tishkov, Shabaev, 2011). The Chechen precedent was the case when a constitutional conflict was accompanied by secessionist conflict which was caused by several factors: "historical memory of own statehood of the Chechens, repeated clashes with the Russian state center, mass deportation of the Chechen population to Kazakhstan, prevention of the republic's transformation from the autonomous into the union one by the Russian leadership" (Modern Russian Policy, 2013). The collapse of the USSR became a contextual factor which caused the phenomenon of "ethnic Romanticism" which activated separatist and national-cultural movements in the autonomous republics.

The use of the power approach in conflict regulation was preceded by a vague policy of the Russian government towards separatist movement which was headed by retired General D. Dudaev. As a result, Chechnya was declared an independent state and its leaders urged Chechens to the "sacred" war against Russia. The Russian government realized the futility of the policy of concessions in the conflict regulation and started coordinated actions to neutralize conflict and, thus, the rebellion was suppressed and the Chechen gangs were eliminated. However, the counter-terrorism strategy based on the power ways of conflict management could not resolve basic causes of the conflict, brought from the spheres of politics, economy and religion into the real life.

Therefore, we observe the process of transformation of the national movements of the peoples of the North Caucasus, including Chechnya, into the Islamist ones with elements of jihadism which nowadays is the breeding ground for the armed underground which is the main source of instability and violence in the North Caucasus. Along with large-scale post-war restoration of the Republic, the hard-authoritarian regime is established there, the head has a monopoly on power and the force of Russian laws is extremely limited. However, we must admit that the number of human victims had decreased considerably, though the quality of governance in a climate of disregard for the rule of law is much to be desired.

The role conflicts over ethnic representation in public authorities of national republics, caused by the problem of disproportionate allocation of the positions and power between the individual ethnicities, became a continuation or a part of constitutional conflicts. We should note that role conflicts were mostly characteristic of the first decade of post-Soviet Russia. They had their most visible manifestation in Tatarstan and the North Caucasus republics, especially in multinational Dagestan. Ethnic peace in Dagestan was saved through an appeal to the Soviet practice of informal division of power in the republic and important government positions between representatives of different ethnicities. The practice of Dagestan and some other republics showed that it is a justifiable form of representation of ethnic interests and division of power among ethnic communities, which provides effective regulation of ethno-political contradictions and prevention of destructive ethno-political conflicts.

Nevertheless, some of the challenges of destabilization of interethnic relations remain in Russia with a deviation of "ethno-political" pendulum in the direction of activity of the ethnic majority, as it was demonstrated by the holding the meeting of the Presidium of the State Council of Russia in February 2011 in Ufa, where a complex of measures and state's actions in maintaining interethnic peace in the country was developed. The problems of formation of tolerance, humanistic relations of citizens to each other, harmonization of interethnic and international relations became the problems of highest priority for public authorities of federal and regional levels. Formation of the Russian identity on the basis of preserving the ethnic and cultural diversity became the most important purpose.

The course of further actions on creation of full-fledged Russian nation preserving the identity of Russian peoples was confirmed and filled with new meanings in the Strategy of state national policy of Russia until 2025, adopted in December 2012. The Strategy involves improvement of state management in the sphere of national policy of the Russian Federation, provision of citizens' equality to exercise their constitutional rights in ethno-political sphere, formation a climate of intolerance to the dissemination of ideas of extremism, xenophobia, national exclusiveness in Russian society, establishment of state and municipal monitoring systems of the state of interethnic relations and early warning of conflict situations.

The Meeting of the Council for Interethnic Relations under the RF President, held in the capital of Mari El in July 2017, confirmed the fact of existence of national regions in Russia where peaceful coexistence of Russian, Mari, Tatar, Chuvash, Udmurt, Belarussian peoples had become a reality. It was not darkened even by incidents that had happened over the years of L. Markelov's governance, who had ethno-political prejudice as a fragment of his picture of the world in relation to the titular ethnic group, and therefore disoriented in regional ethno-political processes, which prevented him from building an adequate dialogue with the representatives of the Mari community. Acting head of the republic A. Evstifeev came to his place in April 2017, and one of his first decisions was introducing of the first President of Mari El V. Zotin to the Public Chamber of the Republic. Zotin was elected the head of the Chamber at one of its first meetings. That decision has already recognized with respect to the acting head of the region from the Mari population. Thus, the choice of the venue of the Presidential Council for Interethnic Relations was more than successful.

Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke at the Council meeting and payed special attention to the importance of Russian language as the language of interethnic communication, as a means of harmonization of interethnic relations, but at the same time urged not to lose the ethnic culture and languages of different peoples. In essence, it was spoken about the need to balance the ratio of state-civil and ethnic identities of Russians and representatives of the titular nationalities of the autonomous republics. This is the dominant factor providing effective conflict management in the sphere of ethnic policy.

---

## **4. Conclusions**

Our analysis of ethno-political situation in Russia, the level of conflict management aimed at stabilization of interethnic relations, provides a basis for formulating the following conclusions:

- the contemporary state of ethno-political processes in Russia bypassed the phase of maximal escalation in the last decade of the twentieth century and moved into a phase of relative stability, however, according to the theory of "ethno-political pendulum", the process of activation of ethnic minorities is replaced by activation of ethnic majority, also leading to exacerbation of ethno-political situation;
  - nowadays, the process of politicization of ethnicity is suspended in Russia, but ethno-political contradictions can thicken at the latent level, accumulating a destructive potential;
  - ethnic conflict, as a rule, involves the segments of the other types of conflicts in the field of its attraction, and it does not exist in its pure form in real life;
  - the constitutional conflicts between the Federal center and the authorities of the autonomous republics became the most dangerous for post-Soviet Russia, initially, the normative approach was used to regulate them, but, the power approach in managing conflict was used to preserve territorial integrity in the case with "rebellious" Chechnya;
  - ethnic discontent expressed in the framework of democratic system is always better than appeal to force, violent solutions to ethno-political problems;
  - danger of the state's disintegration due to the excessive strengthening of the Federal center and the weakening of the Federal's subjects or vice versa continues to be the potential threat to the Federal state in ethno-political sphere.
-

# Bibliographic references

- Aklaev A.R. (2005) Ethno-political Conflictmanagement: Analysis and Management. M.: Delo press, P. 213, 220, 239, 322.
- Bromley Y.V. (2009). Essays on the theory of ethnicity / Afterword N.Y. Bromley. Ed. 3 – cor. M.: LIBROCOM, P. 48-49.
- Cheshko S.V. (1994). The Man and Ethnicity. Ethnographic Review. №6. P. 43.
- Horowitz D. (1985). Ethnic Grups in Conflict. Berkley, Cal., etc. P. 19.
- Marchall M.G. (1997). Systems at Risk: Violence, Diffusion, and Disintegration in the Middle East. Wars in the Midst of Peace: The International Politics of Ethic Conflict .Ed. By Carment DJames P. Pittsburgh, P. 82.
- Modern Russian Politics. Under general editorship of V.I. Kovalenko. M.: Publishing House of The Moscow State University, P. 350.
- Nikitin A.I. (2017). International Conflicts: intervention, peacekeeping, settlement. M.: Publishing House "Aspect Press", P. 306.
- Pain E. A. (2004). Ethno-Political Pendulum. Dynamics and Mechanisms of Ethno-Political Processes in Post-Soviet Russia. The Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences. M., P. 3, 131.
- Riggs Fred F. (1985). Ethnicity. INTERCOSTA Glossary. Concepts and Terms Used in Ethnicity Research. Honolulu: International Social Science Council, P. 14.
- Rothschild J. (1981). Etnopolitics: A Conceptual Framewoork. N.Y., P. 2.
- Suslov E.V. (2015). The Dynamics of Changes in the Constitution of the Republic of Mari El as an Indicator of the Socio-Political Order. The Mari Law Bulletin. T. 1. №3 (14). P. 33.
- Tishkov V.A., Shabaev V.P. (2011). Ethnopolitology: Political Functions of Ethnicity. Publishing House of The Moscow State University, P. 100, 199.

- 
1. Mari State University, Yoshkar-Ola, Russian Federation; E-mail: [esuslov@mail.ru](mailto:esuslov@mail.ru)
  2. Mari State University, Yoshkar-Ola, Russian Federation; E-mail: [elena.karta@mail.ru](mailto:elena.karta@mail.ru)
  3. Mari State University, Yoshkar-Ola, Russian Federation; E-mail: [urfin\\_zhur@mail.ru](mailto:urfin_zhur@mail.ru)
  4. Interregional Open Social Institute, Yoshkar-Ola, Russian Federation; E-mail: [anyarotar@outlook.com](mailto:anyarotar@outlook.com)
  5. Kazan Federal University, Kazan city, Russian Federation; E-mail: [janellin@mail.ru](mailto:janellin@mail.ru)
  6. Mari State University, Yoshkar-Ola, Russian Federation; E-mail: [Slg1923@mail.ru](mailto:Slg1923@mail.ru)
- 

Revista ESPACIOS. ISSN 0798 1015  
Vol. 38 (Nº 61) Year 2017

[\[Index\]](#)

[In case you find any errors on this site, please send e-mail to [webmaster](#)]