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**CIVIL SOLIDARITY AND THREATS AND RISKS OF**  
**ETHNOPOLITICAL SECURITY IN SOUTHERN RUSSIA**

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**Abstract**

Based on the analysis of the dynamics of regional conflict factors, the study revealed trends in the development of the ethno-political situation in the South of Russia. It is emphasized that the theoretical and practical interest of the study is the consideration of new aspects of the development of the South of Russia, the characterization of which in the framework of the classical worldview was previously reduced mainly to its description, and later. The paper discusses the problems of finding mechanisms for the formation of general civil solidarity of modern Russian society on the basis of increasing the efficiency of political management of spatial development of the regions of the South of Russia. It is emphasized that one of the most important factors in ensuring ethno-political security and maintaining general civil solidarity is the patriotic and ethical activities of regional political elites. It is noted that the specificity and intensity of the threats and challenges that the world is currently facing, starting from 2020, testify to both traditional and fundamentally new conflict factors of the modern socio-political process. Since the problem of inter-ethnic harmony directly depends on integration policies, the paper gives priority to a comparative analysis of the migration situation in the regions of the South of Russia. In theoretical and practical terms, conclusions are drawn on the most important factors of the socio-economic and spiritual-moral direction in regional security policies and the strengthening of general civil solidarity.

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*Keywords:* Ethnopolitics, security, South of Russia, conflict, transformations, civil solidarity



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## 1. Introduction

The problem of inter-ethnic harmony is gaining theoretical and practical interest both in Russia and around the world. Its actualization is related to the crisis of globalization and the internal processes taking place in many countries, i.e. the factors that determine the integration or disintegration of the country's citizens ensuring the preservation of its integrity and the possibility of further sustainable development. The South of Russia represents a set of multi-ethnic territorial entities with a variety of political, ethnic and confessional problems. These components are closely interconnected and are in dynamics (some factors may temporarily lose their relevance, but if there are internal and external stimuli, their role may increase). Therefore, it is important to take into account the multi-ethnic environment, the social status of the interacting ethnic groups, the economic situation in the regions, the significance of historical factors, etc.

Besides, one of the main vital objectives of the modern state is the preservation of territorial integrity. One of the main threats in this direction is separatism, which may destroy the intercultural dialogue and integration, lead to the destabilization of the general political situation within the country, to the decline of its international authority, and undermine the country's military-power system. Separatism in ethno-political conflicts contains many dangerous factors that may seriously affect Russian statehood and security – these are terrorism, extremism, and the radicalization of religion, as well as the problems of migration.

## 2. Problem Statement

The problem of inter-ethnic harmony and general civil solidarity in the South Russian dimension is of particular importance due to the high migration activity, and, accordingly, the constant variability of the ethnic structure and nature of inter-ethnic communications. A feature of the migration situation in the Southern Federal District is that the constituent entities of the Federation included not only most of the migration flows from the CIS countries (mainly from Central Asia and Transcaucasia), but also the main flow of internal migration. The Southern Federal District has become some buffer zone providing settlement for multinational flows of refugees and internally displaced persons, bearing a significant conflict challenge. The Krasnodar Territory, Astrakhan, Volgograd and Rostov regions are experiencing a particular migration burden. Currently, the most relevant and significant global factor that has a significant impact on the intensity of the most important factor of regional development, i.e. migration, is the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to the usual approaches to the analysis of the socio-economic sphere a political and conflictological study of the modern regional situation involves a comprehensive study of the most important aspects of the development of the spiritual sphere of society. In particular, the processes of transformation of value ideological orientations under the influence of changes in the arrangement of political forces both in the country and in the world, and the characteristics of specific regions with their socio-cultural characteristics. In this regard, from the point of view of monitoring threats and risks to ethno-political security an urgent political and conflictological problem in the South of Russia at the present stage of global socio-political transformations is the analysis of the trends in the development of

the Cossacks and the nature of their interaction with various actors in the political process, and ethnic communities (significant in number, and minorities).

In order to prevent the threats of separatism, the emergence and aggravation of ethnopolitical conflicts in southern Russia, as well as to identify terrorist and extremist sentiments, spread of nationalism, radical ideologies and extremist religious teachings, a whole range of technologies is needed to ensure ethnopolitical security at the regional and federal levels. The priorities include the improvement of public administration; promotion of the intercultural dialogue and integration among ethnic groups; cooperation in the field of national policy, creation of conditions for social and cultural adaptation and integration of migrants, economic assistance and development of economically depressed territories. The issues are civil-patriotic education in the region, improving a dialogue between the authorities and society seem quite relevant.

Another problem that has a significant impact on the development of the situation is the ethical aspects of elites. In today's tough conditions, when our society urgently needs social consolidation, political elites are required to understand the moral priorities in the process of exercising their public power. This means the understanding that the moral life involves the creation of conditions under which people have not declarative, but a natural opportunity to choose, as well as the ability to interact with each other in accordance with values approved in the society and contribute to its integration, and not disintegration. In this regard, it is especially important to analyze the ethical aspects of social and political trust in the context of solving the problems of the formation of all-Russian social solidarity by the political class.

### **3. Research Questions**

The subject of this paper is the main trends in the development of the ethnopolitical situation in the South of Russia and the problems of maintaining general civil solidarity in the face of worsening threats and risks to ethnopolitical security. The rationale for the need to maximize the use of intellectual and organizational resources in the process of forming integrative ties of multi-ethnic communities united by common views, values and beliefs, within the framework of which an integration potential is created, which ensures the coordination of the interests of various ethnic, demographic and socio-cultural groups on the basis of recognition of the priority of patriotic beliefs, understanding of the state not only as a political institution, but also as a spiritual and moral space.

- The substantive field of this paper includes the issues of the migration situation in the South of Russia, which directly affect the internal stability and ethnopolitical security.
- One of the most important areas in this study is the threats of extremism and separatism in the modern political process in the context of the widespread distribution of social networks and the latest information resources.

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to determine the trends in the development of the ethnopolitical situation in the South of Russia in the context of identifying threats and risks to ethnopolitical security

and solving problems of strengthening the general civil solidarity. Besides, there is a need to identify the main trends in the dynamics of regional conflict factors, to detect significant problems in the process of finding mechanisms for the formation and strengthening of general civil solidarity.

## 5. Research Methods

Considering the main trends, the development of the ethno-political situation in the South of Russia, the research process used the method of event analysis, the axiological approach to the study of socio-political transformations, the conceptualization of media texts and the method of descriptive statistics. The identification of regional specifics in the process of conflict analysis of activities of political actors to solve problems of maintaining ethno-political stability in relations between ethnic groups was based on the methods of comparative analysis. The study of trends in integration and conflict in the multicultural social environment of the region, the definition of challenges to ethno-political security and threats to the emerging new general civil community (in conditions of freedom of enterprise, economic competition and political and ideological pluralism in the post-Soviet period) involves the consideration of a number of problems in the aspect of historical procedurality. Therefore, the paper takes a retrospective approach to determine the role of individual social groups in ensuring the integrity of the state and analyze further transformations of their functional activity. Focusing on the modern problems of preserving a common civil identity, social solidarity and the need to counter destructive processes in the information space, the method of social network analysis was used when studying media content.

## 6. Findings

The analysis of the migration of foreign citizens and stateless persons (MVD of Russia, 2020) showed that the majority of citizens entering the Russian Federation are the citizens of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine. The indicators of labor migration of foreign citizens and stateless persons are noticeably declining compared to 2018, but there is a huge increase in the acquisition of Russian citizenship, especially in Rostov region. In January-September 2020, the number of foreign citizens that received citizenship of the Russian Federation increased by 58.2 % compared with the same period in 2019. At the same time, the number of foreign citizens with the residence permit has not changed significantly. More than half of those who received Russian citizenship in January-September 2020 are the citizens of Ukraine (54.7 %). In Rostov region, the number of foreign citizens that received the citizenship of the Russian Federation increased by 3 times compared to 2019. For comparison, in other regions of the Southern Federal District, the dynamics of labor migration varies from 60 % (Republic of Kalmykia) to 150 % (Republic of Crimea).

The 2018–2020 dynamics shows the decrease in the rate of labor migration of foreign citizens and stateless persons under the influence of a pandemic and entry restrictions (in general, in the Southern Federal District, the number of people who entered the country for the purpose of work in January-September 2020 is 46.7 % of the number of people who entered in the same period in 2019). The most significant rates of labor migration decreased in Sevastopol, in Volgograd region and the Republic of Adygea. It is supposed that with the removal of restrictions on the entry of foreign citizens in the coming

years, the level of labor migration in the Southern Federal District will be restored at the level of 2018 (MVD of Russia, 2020).

The situation in the Krasnodar Territory remains tough, where more than 1 million people have arrived over the past 10 years. Almost every fifth resident of the region is visitant, and the migration growth is 5–6 times higher than all-Russian indicators. Krasnodar Territory occupies a special place in the Southern Federal District and in the country in terms of the number of registered internally displaced persons, (since 1998) there has been a constant decrease in the number of indigenous people. The social infrastructure of the region not designed for such a population is experiencing significant overloads. The influx of migrants leads to an increase in real estate prices, increased competition in the labor market, a decrease in living standards, an aggravation of problems in the fields of education and health care, and negatively affects the criminal situation. The local population is displaced from small and medium-sized enterprises, trade, etc., which, together with national characteristics, traditions and ways of life, creates the ground for aggravating interethnic relations. The commercial environment is dominated mainly by Armenians, Kurds, Meskhetian Turks, Azerbaijanis, Chechens, Georgians, Greeks, and Gypsies.

This caused a difficult situation when a significant number of migrants dissatisfied with the conditions created for their placement have accumulated on the southern borders of Russia. This heterogeneous social mass, which is largely forced to lead a downgrade lifestyle, in a certain situation, may act as a factor destabilizing the socio-political situation in the region. An important feature in the arrangement of migrants arriving in the region is their focus on compact settlement. A significant part of migrants (Armenians, Georgians, Azerbaijanis, Greeks, Crimean Tatars, Meskhetian Turks, etc.) settle in the most strategically important areas: along federal roads, main product pipelines and on the Black Sea coast. The compact resettlement of migrants has led to an intensive increase in the number of some ethnic groups, both due to the high birth rate and the tightening of new migrants seeking to settle in an ethnically related environment. Although the migrant labor is an important resource for regional economies, for example, for agriculture (primarily vegetable production), construction, housing and communal services, Russians do not welcome the influx of foreign labor. As Pronina (2020) notes, the attitude of Russians towards migrants now reveals a tendency toward deterioration. Local residents often tend to blame visitors for existing socio-economic problems. It seems that the reasons for this attitude are hidden in the significant socio-cultural distance between migrants and the receiving community, which makes it difficult to establish constructive interaction and form common civil solidarity. Since the main migration flow is circular, most migrants are not oriented towards integration at all (Pronina, 2020).

From a geopolitical point of view Rostov Region, Krasnodar Territory, the Republic of Adygea and other entities of the Southern Federal District and the North Caucasus Federal District are significant areas with pronounced identity, some of which in the initial period of democratic transformation were considered the so-called “red belt”, since being traditionally conservative, they slower than others switched to market rails, but then, on the contrary, especially the Krasnodar Territory, demonstrated the rapid dynamics of economic development on the basis of entrepreneurial abilities of a significant proportion of the region’s population. At the same time, it is impossible to consider a particular region in isolation from the whole country, especially on such an issue, which reflects the complex non-linear process of forming and developing the discourse of patriotism in the media space as multidimensional,

multi-directional communicative interaction of various actors of the political struggle for the right to impose their vision on the society in the context of determining the development strategy of Russia as a sovereign state with prospects for strengthening its influence in the international arena. In a retrospective aspect, there was such a problem as the so-called “Cossack separatism”, which in the early 90s, according to experts, took place in the Stavropol Territory and the Kuban. In the fall of 1991, several Cossack “state” entities were self-proclaimed: Don Cossack Republic, Terek Cossack Republic, Armavir Cossack Republic, Upper Kuban Cossack Republic. At the Great Cossack Circle of the South of Russia convened by the Union of Cossacks of the South of Russia in Novochoerkassk (November 20, 1991), the unification of these republics into the Union of Cossack Republics of the South of Russia was proclaimed with its capital in Novochoerkassk and with the status of a union republic in the proposed Union of Sovereign States. The authorities of the Union were established, the Embassy Village was formed in Moscow, an ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Union of Cossack Republics of the South of Russia was appointed. The creation of Cossack “republics” was supported by the II Great Circle of the Union of Cossacks of the South of Russia held on November 7–10, 1991 in Stavropol. However, all separatist and secessionist attempts were soon stopped as a result of the active position of local regional elites (Bredikhin, 2016) and, in fact, as a result of patriotic all-Russian strategy for the development and protection of the interests of a single statehood.

Already in our time, in 2010, a Cossack meeting took place in Armavir, which brought together 267 representatives of Cossack associations, including the elders of the Cossacks of the Kuban, Don, Terek, Stavropol and Karachay-Cherkessia. The Ataman of the Don Cossack Republic A. Yudin spoke about the need to restore Cossack national-territorial formations. Besides, he expressed the opinion that the authorities consider the Cossacks inclined to separatism, although, according to him, they are one of the forces that oppose modern separatism and extremism in Russia, including Islamist. The delegates voted to create the so-called “Cossack Caucasian Line” in southern Russia. Soon a new chieftain was elected – Yuri Churekov – the former chieftain of the register Pyatigorsk district of the Terek Cossack army. In the summer of 2013, at the Meeting of Cossacks of the Terek Military Cossack Society, Yu. Churekov said that “Cossacks most consistently advocate the maximum integration of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan and that “Cossack separatism” is madness and provocation (as cited in Bredikhin, 2016).

In recent years, it is difficult to talk about any separatist sentiment among the Cossacks. Now they are rather assistants in the field of law and order, a vivid example of southern cultural spirit. In the Kuban, Cossacks have become a landmark: Cossack classes and Cossack museums are created (Koshik, 2016), Cossacks help the police patrol the streets, etc. In 2018, a single Cossack army was created, and the chieftain has since been personally appointed by V.V. Putin. Cossacks participate in various patriotic actions, in supporting traditionalist values, and perform their cultural functions. For example, in 2018, the state Kuban Cossack Choir traveled with V.V. Putin to Vienna for the wedding of Austrian Foreign Minister Karin Kneissl (Golos Kubani, 2018). In March 2020, Stavropol Governor Vladimir Vladimirov said that “we know well from the experience of the 1990s what danger, for example, even talk of separatism poses” and emphasized the importance of combating this phenomenon (STRC Stavropolye, 2020). In this regard, it is important to note that in the last 2–3 years there have been repeated detentions

of militants and radical Islamists (including from the territories of Chechnya and Dagestan) in Stavropol (Belyaev, 2019) and Krasnodar Territory (Belova, 2020).

In the modern political process, with the increasing role of the Internet and social networks, it is the network space that increasingly calls for separatism, terrorism and extremism. It is important to note that these practices are engaged not only in terrorist and extremist organizations, radical religious organizations, but also ordinary users of the network confident in their anonymity and impunity (Ryazanov & Kurbanov, 2015). Law enforcement agencies do not lose sight of such cases. For example, in the Kuban for the first half of 2017, 62 cases were started for extremism in social networks (Golos Kubani, 2017). The danger of separatism, terrorism and extremism in the Internet and social media continues to exist and even grows. As part of the prevention of Internet content and obstacles to the distribution of extremist materials there are such organizations as the League of Safe Internet (<http://ligainternet.ru>), Cossack Cyber-Squad (<http://cossackcenter.mgutm.ru/kazachya-kiberdrujina-il>), etc.

To conclude, it can be noted that by the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, separatist and terrorist underground in the North Caucasus turned into a whole system. A large structure was formed, based on political, religious and ethnic extremism, separatism and terrorism, using criminal methods. Young people were actively integrated, factors of historical memory and weak socio-political development of economically depressed regions were used. The North Caucasus is an extremely unstable and ethnopolitically “explosive” region, terrorist and extremist actions in which have been committed for almost 30 years (Baranov, 2017).

One of the most important conflict factors in the field of modern public policy is the disregard by the elites of the ethical component in their activities, which are unaware that the state is formed and effectively functions due to the moral communication of citizens and their joint desire for the common good (Yurchenko, 2020). Currently, there is a decrease in confidence in the media, in individual power institutions, including at the regional level, as well as in some ethnic groups to each other, especially dangerous in the multi-ethnic environment of the southern macroregion. Social tensions arise and increase in a situation of mistrust and the dissemination of false information, inciting inter-ethnic and interfaith discord. These circumstances require mechanisms to maintain an atmosphere of creativity and inter-ethnic social harmony based on moral relations and the formation of an information space of undistorted communication. The ethical component in determining the nature of a “political person” is a priority, since value orientations and preferences do not contradict rationality and are not an obstacle to identifying factors of human development in modern crisis reality. Today, it is important to determine what place ethical thinking occupies in the field of public policy and whether it can be considered the main means of improving the “sick” society, as well as the uniqueness and moral meaning of the structural and functional challenges of the political class faced with a new reality. At present the works of domestic and foreign thinkers, who pose ethically significant problems about human consciousness and responsibility in the construction of their political system, are particularly interesting. They have not lost their relevance as they provide an opportunity to find some genuine social tools for improving modern society.

The basic political and psychological study of the essence of the power in the context of ethical thinking was offered by Tikhomirov (1993), considering what he calls “a social system”, i.e. the entire

most difficult complex of valid vital relations between the citizens of the state organism. Since the state is not just a territory, population and power, but also a phenomenon of mental order, the importance of the ethical factor in the process of reforming managerial practices is a priority. During the crisis of the Soviet system the party nomenclature played a significant role in the degradation dynamics, and the country quickly lost its strategic initiative. The degeneration of the top Soviet elite occurred as a result of the rejection of ethical guidelines and the loss of the ability of everyday interaction with citizens in an open discourse to reproduce statehood while deepening the systemic crisis and external pressure that accelerates the internal split. In modern conditions, a combination of conflict factors has an equally dangerous destructive force. All available resources must be used to ensure manageability. But it is possible to achieve the true productivity of all efforts of the ruling class in order to overcome the crisis due to the reproduction and maintenance of moral order, as well as the implementation of the principles of humanistic ethics and social justice. The improvement of the effectiveness of public power should be based on maintaining an atmosphere of creative competition and mutual social trust in accordance with moral imperatives.

## **7. Conclusion**

The analysis of the threats and risks of the development of the ethno-political situation in the South of Russia shows the significance not only of the socio-economic factors of the formation of all-Russian solidarity, taking into account the challenges and threats in the context of the growing regional conflict, but also the importance of understanding the state not only as a political institution, but also as a spiritual and moral space.

In modern conditions, there is increased importance of socio-humanistic education on the problem of the correlation of national traditions and universalist knowledge, and in the process of educating citizenship – the concentration on the problem of finding an image of the future in order to resolve the contradiction between morality and law, freedom and justice.

The method of diagnosing the socio-political process and trends in the development of the ethno-political situation shows that the problems of patriotism as a value phenomenon of the political life of society prevail in modern media discourse.

In order to effectively ensure ethno-political security in the region, it is necessary to purposefully overcome mass unemployment, corruption, low confidence in state authorities, timely prevention and forecasting of possible ethno-political conflicts. The spiritual, moral and value components in the activities of regional elites, leaders of public opinion, decision makers responsible for implementing a balanced, effective migration policy, preserving the identity of all ethnic groups historically living in these territories, as well as implementing a comprehensive policy of patriotism as the most important condition for the harmonious development of a multi-ethnic Russian society are of paramount importance for ethno-political security and general civil solidarity.

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