

INTERETHNIC RELATIONS AMONG THE STUDENTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF TATARSTAN (ON AN EXAMPLE OF STUDENTS OF KAZAN FEDERAL UNIVERSITY)

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ABSTRACT

This article is an analysis of the data obtained during the sociological study conducted in spring 2016 among the students of Kazan Federal University. The objective of the study was to determine the features of international relations among students, as well as to identify the main problems existing in this sphere. The relevance of the researches conducted is confirmed by a number of circumstances, namely - the multi-ethnic character of the modern Russian state, faced with the problems of growth of nationalism and labor migration from neighboring countries, as well as the problems of increase of the state policy efficiency in the sphere of international relations. In particular, the active use of scientific, in this case sociological, equipment is a necessary prerequisite for sound medium- and long-term prediction of community response to the interethnic conflicts, as well as the search for answers to the possible and acceptable ways to resolve them. The study results suggest that the current interethnic relations in the student youth environment in the Republic of Tatarstan are generally stable, in spite of the problem of tension existing in the society in the area of international relations, which has been marked by the respondents. At that, it can be stated the fact as a positive result of the study that the students are the bearers of culture of peaceful coexistence of different nationalities as a whole.

Keywords: *youth, students, ethnic relations, tolerance, Republic of Tatarstan.*

INTRODUCTION

The modern Russia has faced with new challenges in the field of international relations, which often lead to the acute interethnic conflicts in some regions of the country and a progradation of common social and cultural space. In this regard, the problems of interethnic relations need constant monitoring, especially with the use of sociological tools. A special place in the analysis of international relations, in our opinion, is taken by the study of this problem among the students as a special intellectual, social and psychological category of people. We should not underestimate the importance of the student's society as a particular social group, "the bearer of intellectual potential" in the socio-political and ethnic processes of modern Russia [1]. The students, being the subject of ethno-political and social relations - an active part of the society, can have a significant impact on the course of implementation and, in general, development of the socio-political processes in the country. A common stereotype is the assertion that the modern Russian students have little interest in the issues related to the socio-political aspects of the development of the modern Russian state [2, 3]. It is safe to say that the attitude of students to the policy has always

been relevant for the society, because it is important for the society and the state, how the students perceive the established international relations. The future of social and political development of the society depends on a particular position and appearance of the students, and the moral health and national consciousness of young people determine the fate and future of the state as a whole.

At the same time the Republic of Tatarstan is one of the most important regions of the country, both from an economic and ethno-political point of view. According to the data of population census of 2010, the Tatars prevail in the national structure of the Republic - 53.2%, and the Russians amount to 39.7% [4]. The Republic of Tatarstan is not just an integral part of the Russian Federation (secular state), being in a single legal, informational, cultural field with it, but also the region where, due to the deliberate policy of the authorities, the representatives of different faiths and nationalities leave peacefully. Thus, the study of the views of population of the Republic of Tatarstan about the nature of interethnic relations, which have developed in the region, has showed that just over half of people in the region (52.8% of the respondents) think that they are "normal and calm". According to 41.9% of the respondents, the interethnic relations can be called "friendly and good-neighborly" in the region. Less than 5% of the respondents (3.7%) consider them "heavy and conflict" [5, p. 159-177].

Meanwhile, the interethnic relations, which are developing in the closest connection with the processes of all-Russian national scope, need a constant scientific analysis and understanding even in the most general terms. The crisis socio-economic situation in the country and the drop in real incomes in recent years, which is partly smoothed due to the socially-oriented budgetary policy of the local authorities, is nevertheless one of the significant conflictogenic factors and the natural recondition for the growth of social, political and interethnic tension [6]. Apart from the socio-economic factors, the state of the sphere of international relations is influenced also by the political factors, among which we should highlight the intensification of extremist forces, primarily using the slogans of ethnic and religious intolerance. In this case the Internet (especially the social networks) is an important influence channel [7, 8]. The practice shows that in most cases, young people, who have fallen under the influence of religious extremists, have met them just in the social networks, and their communication on relevant topics has also occurred there. It is believed that the main "risk group" in the majority of cases is young people from small towns and rural areas with a relatively low level of education. However, according to the well-known example of the student of the Moscow State University (MSU) V. Karaulova, young people from large cities with a relatively high level of income, education, and with a high social status in general are not also insured from falling into the sphere of influence of the extremists. Moreover, the emergence of some extremist groups in the Middle East, which slogans proclaim a creation of state structures, the ideology of which is the absolute negation of the prevailing religious, social, political and cultural traditions of the modern civilization, is, in many cases, the object of attracting attention of the young people, whose personal attitudes and values are not formed yet due to some objective (primarily age-related) reasons.

The multinational regions of the Caucasus, the Volga region and Ural, including the Republic of Tatarstan, are located in the area of attention of various extremist forces, since it occurs here the destabilization of socio-political situation in particular.

In connection with the above circumstances, it is relevant for a comprehensive analysis to determine the features and nature of international relations of the students at the example of students of Kazan Federal (Volga) University.

METHODS

As a method of collecting the primary sociological information, it has been chosen a massive questionnaire in the study. The survey was conducted using a questionnaire developed by the authors. The quota sample was formed during the survey, and had a representative nature in relation to sex and age.

The students of the Kazan Federal University, enrolled in full-time education, are considered as the general population. The survey was conducted on the territory of student campus (Universiade Village) and in the University academic buildings. In total, it was surveyed 450 students of the Kazan Federal University in April 2016.

The objective of the study conducted was to determine the attitude of students towards people of other nationalities and cultures.

To achieve this objective, the following tasks were consistently being solved during the study:

1. To assess the role of national identity in the process of interpersonal communication among students;
2. To identify attitude towards representatives of other nationalities;
3. To analyze the basic attitudes of students in the sphere of international relations.

In the study, prior to processing the primary data, the entire collection has previously been checked for the quality of filling in of tools, bug fixing and rejection of poorly completed questionnaires. As a result, 437 out of 450 questionnaires were submitted to the treatment.

The data preparation for processing included encryption, encoding and transferring data in .xls file format (Excel table). The encryption was made in the number identifications, scale item in each question corresponded to the cipher of answer options to the question in the introductory program. The data processing and analysis were carried out in the form of models, tables and groups, using the code indicators. The data processing was carried out in the program SPSS Statistics, where the standard methods of information processing were used: simple distributions, percentages, averages, mode and variance of deviations, coefficients of association of qualitative features, rank and paired correlation coefficients.

RESULTS

According to the survey results, the national person origin, with whom the respondent contacts, is not a significant factor for half of those surveyed (46%). At the same time - 38% said that this characteristic acquired sometimes a definite value for the respondents. It is worth noting that this factor is very important for more than 12% of the respondents.

Some concern is also caused by the answers to the question "How can you currently evaluate the interethnic relations among the youth?". Only 26% of the respondents noted that the situation is peaceful; 42% feel some tension in the interethnic relations in the youth society; 19% declare a tense situation that may cause conflicts.

Despite this, 36% of the respondents believe that in general there are no interethnic conflicts among young people; 42% think that the problem exists, and 26% of the respondents are undecided (Question: "How do you think, is there a problem of international conflicts among student youth?"). According to the respondents, the most popular manifestations of negative attitudes towards people of other nationalities are abuses (52%), diminution of dignity of other nationalities (35%), lack of gratitude for living on "their" land (23% of the respondents have agreed with this).

At the same time it can be assumed that the answers to the first set of questions are not caused by the interethnic problems, with which the students encounter in their daily lives, but by the general sentiments

that exist in today's society. Since, Levada Center poll in June 2016 has showed that 52% has said that they feel a strong tension in the society, and 60% believe that there are differences, and they can cause tension between different nationalities in the future, answering to the question "How strong is now tension between people of different nationalities in Russia?" [9].

The results of the study conducted revealed also a potentially conflicting component in the international relations of the students. More than half of respondents (62%) have stated that their national values are not adversely affected, 20% are faced "sometimes" with it and 14% have indicated that their national interests are adversely affected, answering to the question "Do you think that your national interests are adversely affected by the representatives of other nationalities?" At that the majority of students are ready to defend their national interests, if they are even slightly violated, in the activities of the national-patriotic movements and at the household level.

Overall, 78% of the students surveyed have said that they respect people of other nationalities, and only 5% have a negative attitude to them. The answers to the question of whether the students believe that their ethnicity is better than others evidence on personal commitment to tolerance of the younger generation. 76% - do not think so, 11% - believe that their ethnicity is better than others, 13% - were undecided.

At the interpretation of the results, we shall take into account that the study of features and nature of international relations of student youth has been held against the background of an active policy of both federal and regional authorities concerning celebration of the regular Victory Day (May 9), when it has been extensively declared of the contribution of all the peoples of the USSR in the case of the Great Victory [10; p. 162]. In addition, the Republic of Tatarstan has always been and remains one of the leading regions in the field of development of tolerant attitude towards other nationalities. This reflects the uniqueness of the Republic of Tatarstan as the territory of multicultural, tolerant and multi-religious diversity that distinguishes it among the regions of the Russian Federation in some ways.

Therefore, the next group of questions has concerned the necessary and possible measures, promoting the development of tolerance among the student youth. Most respondents surveyed continue to assign a major role in the ethnic policy to the state. Thus, 50% believe that the solution of the problems of international relations depends on the behavior of sound national policy and tolerance promotion (38%). More than half of the respondents (58%) believe that the proximity of different nationalities among young people gives certainly more benefit, 53% would like to learn more about the customs, traditions and history of the nations, whose representatives live and learn with them.

SUMMARY

An important result obtained in the course of the study is the fact that for the majority of those surveyed (a total of 84%) the nationality is not a determining factor in communicating with other people. Moreover, almost half of the respondents do not highlight this factor as a significant. Indirectly, the low significance of the national factor for the respondents is evidenced by the unusually large (26%) percent of the respondents, who found it difficult to answer the question "How do you think, is there a problem of international conflicts among student youth?". The attention shall also be made to the fact that a total of 82% of the respondents do not feel the regular impairment on ethnic grounds, which also indicates that the interethnic relations are currently stable among the students in the Republic of Tatarstan. It is particularly noteworthy that the majority of respondents believe that the government's role is crucial in ensuring the stability of international relations.

Meanwhile, the lack of awareness of young people about the problems in the sphere of interethnic relations in the Republic of Tatarstan should not be seen as a calming factor. Today's realities force us to

pay more attention to the formation of spiritual values, tolerance and development of culture of interethnic relations. Especially it concerns the young generation. At the same time the situation in the student's environment can hardly be considered as "cloudless" as more than forty percent of the respondents have noted an existing tension in the interethnic relations in the youth society. All these facts point to the need of active monitoring of the current situation, with a purpose to track the emerging negative trends, on the one hand, and to strengthen the educational work in the student's youth environment for the formation of a tolerance culture, which is the key of sustainable development of the multinational Russian society, on the other hand.

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