

POLITOLOGY - ПОЛИТОЛОГИЯ**ELGUJA KAVTARADZE****Doctor of Political Science, Professor of Sukhumi State University (Georgia)****ISSUES OF ETHNOPOLITICAL CONFLICTS**DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52340/isj.2024.28.13>

Introduction. In the conditions of development of modern society, ethno-political conflicts are its integral attribute. Almost in any state, any socio-political, economic, cultural conflict will always have an ethnic component to one degree or another. The ethnic factor generates many of those acute and crisis situations that arise in the sphere of politics, intercommunity relations, relations between state and intrastate entities. As a result, the line between social, political and ethno-political conflicts is very blurred and difficult to define. In this regard, the article examines various concepts that explain the nature and genesis of ethno-political conflicts, defines the criteria on the basis of which an ethno-political conflict differs from a political and ethnic conflict. The political sphere of life has not only a global but also a national dimension: history preserves memories of the most diverse conflicts between ethnic groups, which have radically redrawn the political map of the globe. Over the past few decades, the system of international relations has undergone significant changes: there has been a rapid emergence and development of new actors, one of which is an ethnic group. At the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries, the scientific community, due to significant geopolitical changes at the forefront of world politics, became interested in a new phenomenon called the ethnic paradox of modern times, characterized by the ever-increasing influence of ethnic groups on socio-political processes of various natures of the system of international relations. In the modern multipolar world, the ethnic factor is one of the most powerful, which can act not only as a creative force, but also as a catalyst for global conflicts. The sphere of

interaction between different ethnic groups, despite its apparent simplicity and some stability, is nevertheless characterized by enormous susceptibility to any historical, socio-political, economic and cultural shifts in the world system of international relations. Today, ethno-political conflicts affect not only the cultural, but also the economic, political, and social spheres of life, and easily change the order of international communication that has been developing for centuries. This article examines the theoretical features of the study of ethnic conflicts arising in the modern international field.

Key words: *ethno-political conflict, ethnos, conflictology, international relations.*

Among the conflicts that are diverse in origin, nature, typology, and methods of resolving them, ethno-political (interethnic, interethnic) conflicts stand out as a special group. They are among the most complex, confusing, protracted and difficult to resolve. As history shows, ethno-political conflicts in many multiethnic countries significantly exceed other types of socio-political conflicts in their scale, duration and intensity. Ethno-political conflict manifests itself to the greatest extent, as a rule, in multiethnic states. The criterion of multiethnicity is considered to be an indicator of 5% or more representatives of non-titular ethnic groups. Currently, most states in the modern world are multiethnic, since the share of ethnic minorities in the population exceeds 10%. This is often associated with the action of two main factors in the political history of mankind:

- 1) territorial expansion and/or conquest and
- 2) migration processes.

- 1) The historical development of many

states was accompanied by significant territorial expansion, the expansion of political borders due to the inclusion of new territories and the peoples inhabiting them. Similar ethnic consequences arose as a result of the conquests of territorial annexations that accompanied successful wars of conquest. To the greatest extent, the effect of this factor was characteristic of numerous empires that existed in different eras (the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Russian Empire, the Ottoman Empire, etc.). In the 20th century, territorial changes following two world wars played a major role, especially in Central and Eastern Europe.

2) The main motives for migration are the search for physical security, salvation from religious and political persecution, or the desire to find more favorable economic conditions for existence in a new place. Migration processes reached their greatest proportions in the 20th century as a result of technical progress in transport (which became widespread and relatively inexpensive), the consequences of political violence, wars and revolutions, and extremely uneven international economic development. This led to the formation of large groups of ethnic minorities permanently residing in the host country. Of course, in the history of many countries one can find the action of not one, but several of these factors. In almost any state, polyethnicity gives rise to a number of problems in the political sphere, such as the formation of a certain model of political coexistence of ethnic groups within a common state, achieving a balance in the distribution of political power between ethnic groups, taking into account the specifics of ethnic interests in the public policy of the state, and others. As a result, space is created for ethnic politics and the possibility for the emergence and manifestation of ethnopolitical conflict. It should also be noted that the impossibility of finally getting rid of negative nationalistic stereotypes, together with the socio-economic stratification characteristic of any dynamically developing society, also determines the inevitability of ethnic conflicts in polyethnic states. Therefore, ethnopolitical conflicts, with all

their complexity, severity and ambiguity, are not out of the ordinary either for Europe or for the world as a whole. Even in states with a developed democratic system, it is impossible to achieve a final reconciliation of the divergent interests of the ethnic groups living on their territory. An example of this is the situation in Canada (the Quebec problem) and Spain, namely in Catalonia and the Basque Country, where ethnic conflicts have taken the most radical form - the form of armed struggle. Since the territory of the former USSR is multi-ethnic in terms of population (which is also typical for the states that emerged on this territory), then virtually any internal conflict in its content (socio-economic or political) acquires an ethnic tint. On the other hand, there are sufficient grounds for ethnic contradictions proper, both at the personal and group levels. Therefore, the ethnic factor generates many of those acute and crisis situations that arise in the sphere of politics, intercommunity relations, relations between state and intrastate entities.

In the last few decades of the late 20th — early 21st centuries, the scientific community has been interested in a new phenomenon known as the ethnic paradox of modern times, characterized by the ever-increasing influence of ethnic groups on socio-political processes of various natures of the international relations system [1]. Today, issues of national identity affect not only the cultural, but also the economic, political, and social spheres of life. The need to develop mechanisms for explaining, predicting, and regulating conflicts between different ethnic groups has led to the emergence of ethnoconflictology as an independent system of scientific knowledge. Modern ethnoconflictology is an interdisciplinary field of political science that studies conflict types of interethnic interaction that take on a destructive character. In a broad sense, the subject of ethnic conflictology is the causes, sources, and genesis of conflicts between ethnic groups, as well as ways to resolve them peacefully [2]. The process of conceptualizing ethnic conflict in global political and political sciences began in the 1960s and 1970s of the last century. The creation of a

new field of political science is associated with the development of Western scientific knowledge, in particular the American political science school. A characteristic feature of this period is the accumulation of empirical material on the problem of destructive interethnic interaction, the first attempts to analyze flaming interethnic conflicts are made, as a rule, in a simplified form. The growth of interest of the scientific community in the study of this phenomenon, despite its apparent disappearance into the archaic, was facilitated by global geopolitical shifts of the 1980-1990s, associated with the collapse of the largest multiethnic state, as well as the development of newly formed as independent actors in world politics [3]. The actualization of knowledge in the field of interethnic destructive interaction served as an impetus for the creation of a theoretical and methodological general base of scientific knowledge. At the same time, the accumulated empirical material is differentiated, due to which branches are formed in the form of a number of ethno-conflictological schools, each of which has its own methodological basis for studying ethno-political conflicts. In the modern multipolar world, the ethnic factor is one of the most powerful, which can act not only as a creative force, but also as a catalyst for global conflicts. The sphere of interaction between different ethnic groups, despite its apparent simplicity and some stability, is nevertheless characterized by enormous susceptibility to any historical, socio-political, economic and cultural shifts in the world system of international relations. The main theoretical and methodological approaches in the study of ethnic conflictology are [4]: 1) The sociological method of studying interethnic clashes is based on general sociology, characterizing ethnic groups from the point of view of classes, socio-professional strata, etc. and explaining the nature of any interethnic conflict by the influence of social processes of various natures. 2) Instrumentalism, following the traditions of general conflictology, involves studying the genesis of ethnic confrontations through the prism of the struggle of various ethnic elites for the possession of economic

values, the acquisition of political power to lobby their interests. 3) Supporters of the application of biological (evolutionary) see the causes of ethnic conflicts as rooted in the constantly changing ethnic stratification of society.

4) Primordialism (from Latin - original) suggests that the deep sources of conflicts are rooted in the cultural characteristics of peoples, in their value systems; supporters of the sociobiological trend consider many components of human behavior in ethnic conflicts as normative, determined by human nature. The complex structure of interaction between different ethnic groups determines. Despite the diversity of theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of destructive interethnic relations, a reductionist tendency is clearly visible in modern conflictology. Thus, although ethnic and ethno-political conflicts have a long history, researchers turned to their study relatively recently. In modern scientific knowledge, the experience of foreign scientists has become the basis for the development of world ethnoconflictology. In view of the peculiarities of historical development, as well as established scientific traditions, theoretical and methodological approaches to the interpretation of ethno-political conflict in foreign ethnic conflictology are presented more extensively than in Russian. The essence of the concept of «ethno-political conflict» The basic unit of ethnoconflictology as an independent field of scientific knowledge is the concept of «ethno-political conflict», which, due to its particular complexity, has never received a universal interpretation. According to the definition of Aklaev A. R., ethno-political conflict is one of the varieties of social conflict, which has specific features [1]: - The participants in the conflict are various social groups, each of which identifies itself as a single ethnic group. - Their activities in the process of interaction with each other have a pronounced ethnic coloring. - The root causes of this type of conflict are the contradictions between ethnic groups associated with the political and social structuring of reality. - High significance of the retrospective factor, which

determines the need to study the root causes and genesis of interethnic conflict for its settlement in the period of escalation. - Ethnopolitical conflict, due to its multifactorial nature, usually affects several spheres of public life at once. As a result, the analysis of this type of interethnic interaction is complex due to the presence of many of its root causes. The basic structural model of a modern ethnopolitical conflict includes the following elements [9]: - Spatial boundaries of the conflict localization - Temporal framework of the conflict - Systemic boundaries of the conflict, determining the place of the opposing parties in the social and political systems. To study an ethnopolitical conflict, it is important to correctly identify the parties involved. The following participants in interethnic conflicts are distinguished in the subject composition of ethnopolitical ethnic confrontation [2]: Depending on the level of organization of the opposing parties, individual, group or institutional types of actors in an ethnopolitical conflict are distinguished. The main actors in ethnopolitical conflicts are various social groups, the defining feature of the creation of which was the factor of common ethnic origin. Modern ethnopolitical scientists distinguish ethnoterritorial and ethnodiaspora groups as the main subjects of interethnic conflicts. Ethnoterritorial groups are social groups whose members are representatives of one ethnic group (usually ethnic minorities). The main condition for identifying this type of actors is residence in a territory that is "original" for this ethnic group.

In most cases, the role of an ethnoterritorial group in an ethnopolitical conflict is limited only by its aspirations to enhance the political status of its region or complete territorial demarcation from the state and the creation of a new sovereign subject of international relations. Ethnodiasporalist groups are ethnic associations created as a result of migration processes of various natures, living and operating in a foreign ethnic environment. The activity of this type of political takes the most active forms and is aimed at acquiring the right to political integration in the new host state while maintaining its ethnic

identity. Due to the emergence of a new global trend towards an increase in the number of participants in the system of world political processes, international non-governmental organizations and transnational companies are becoming direct parties to interethnic confrontations, provided that representatives of various ethnic groups predominate in their structures. Another significant participant in modern ethnopolitical conflicts is a sovereign state: often the peculiarities of its domestic and foreign policy activities determine the nature of the relationship between different ethnic groups. Depending on the determining factors and the ultimate goals of the conflict between ethnic groups, researchers present the following classification [1]: - Socioeconomic, which are based on the struggle for the redistribution of the results of social labor in favor of one of the parties to the conflict. - Cultural and linguistic, arising in connection with the need to protect the native language and features of the national culture from disappearance or destruction. - Interethnic conflicts of a territorial-status nature are accompanied by the struggle of an ethnic group for control over the territories that are "original" in the view of the ethnic group, a change in political status, a struggle to protect their rights and their full implementation. Within the framework of separatist conflicts, an ethnic group struggles for separation from a state where other nationalities predominate and for the formation of its own sovereign state.

By the nature of their expression, latent, at the stage of emergence and accumulation of contradictions, and actualized ethnopolitical conflicts are distinguished, which imply active actions of the opposing parties, the motives of which are based on ethnic factors. Based on the subject composition, single-order and multi-order interethnic crises are determined. The concept of single-order ethnic conflicts is used to describe clashes, where the main participants are different ethnosocial groups, while the term multi-order appears when characterizing a conflict between an ethnic group and a state or

organization. By the nature of the instruments used, the typology distinguishes between violent and non-violent interethnic conflicts. Both types of clashes between ethnic groups have colossal destructive potential, which is capable of disrupting the established world order. In this regard, within the framework of modern political science thought, three paradigms for resolving interethnic contradictions are distinguished [1]: — The paradigm of macropolitical conflict regulation, which assigns the state a key role in the process of resolving interethnic contradictions. Depending on the specifics of the functioning of power institutions, two strategies for resolving contradictions between different socio-ethnic groups are distinguished — strategies for depoliticizing the phenomenon of ethnicity and managing persistent ethnic differences. — The model of depoliticizing the phenomenon of identity, which assumes the role of ethnic differences in interethnic interaction when influencing national processes by coercive institutions with the aim of its subordination or degeneration. (genocide, ethnic deportations, artificial assimilation). — The strategy of managing persistent ethnic differences is aimed at smoothing out the «sharp edges» in the process of interaction between ethnic groups in order to prevent escalation and resolve conflicts that are in their active phase. This model is more flexible and involves the use of tools necessary for the protection and proper implementation of the rights of individuals who belong to different ethnic and religious groups, as well as the creation of a fair political system based on the proportional participation of ethnic groups in the political process of the state [10]. - The model of preventive regulation of ethnopolitical conflict consists of a preventive impact on the elements of the conflict structure in order to destroy all determining factors that can become a catalyst for escalation, even before its first destructive manifestations. This method of regulating interethnic conflicts assumes to a greater extent the creation of national autonomies within the state to provide ethnic structures with the

opportunity to obtain the right to resolve the most important national issues [9]. However, the bulk of power remains with the central government of the country, which significantly limits ethnic groups in making foreign policy decisions, resolving issues affecting the general security of the state, etc.

Models of restorative regulation of ethnic conflicts are aimed at prohibiting the use of violent methods of resolving contradictions. Within the framework of this paradigm, the restoration of peace and harmony between ethnic groups occurs through positive transformations of structural contradictions, the use of instruments permitted by international law and is aimed at strengthening relations between ethnic groups. The key role in the settlement of ethnopolitical conflicts is given to the state and its institutions. The choice of one of the strategies involves the use of a certain instrument, the qualitative content of which will change not only in accordance with the genesis of the conflict, but also with any changes in the political system of the state that takes direct part in the conflict. The influence of globalization on the emergence of ethnopolitical conflicts

One of the main trends in the development of the world is globalization. This is a unique process of integration and unification, which by its force is capable of influencing the course of world development in the present and future. Globalization has also affected the sphere of interethnic interaction, without which it is difficult to imagine the development of mankind. In this regard, previously separated, isolated ethnic groups are now in constant and almost inevitable contact. The ever-increasing development of the global context of communication results in the emergence of new interethnic and intercultural ties [3]. However, the currently observed trend of unification leads to a radical transformation of the foundations of society, which is manifested in the rejection of national tradition, in the absorption of one culture by another, and causes an increase in tension in interethnic relations. Most modern states are characterized by a multiethnic structure of the population with the dominance of one or several

«titular» ethnic groups. The erasure of national borders, the mixing of cultural characteristics makes it necessary for each participant in the modern system of international relations to face the need to determine their civilizational and national affiliation. The «struggle for identity» has become a key area of political mobilization in the modern world. In the modern scientific research environment, there is an increasing interest in the study of ethnopolitical conflict as a destructive form of interethnic interaction. Today, this multidimensional category is perceived by many social groups as an effective tool for determining their ethnic affiliation, as well as defending their rights and interests [4]. The emergence of ethnic processes at the global level as a result of diverse globalization trends actualizes the significance of ethnopolitical conflict for the process of social construction of a new reality: at present, interethnic conflicts are the most acute and difficult to resolve, and also have colossal destructive potential, influencing not only the life of ethnosocial groups that are the opposing parties, but also the political system of the state, determining the general domestic political course and the contours of national policy, the attitude of the power center to ethnic minorities and setting patterns of behavior on the world stage. Being the result of the process of global development, ethnic identity is a new category reflected in the public political science discourse. Ethnopolitical conflict is one of the most radicalized forms of interethnic interaction that arises in a crisis situation, the significance of which is steadily growing in the modern world. Today, it is not just an indicator reflecting the nature of relations between different ethnic groups, but also a significant factor capable of significantly changing some areas of the political system of the state.

Thus, an ethnopolitical conflict is a clash of interests of different ethnic groups, arising as a result of mutual rejection of ideological paradigms. This phenomenon of historical social interaction is a relatively new category, reflecting the development trends of the modern system of

international relations. Modern political scientists have devoted many scientific works to ethnic conflict, in which they have analyzed in detail the practical and theoretical aspects of this problem. Interethnic interaction, being a part of social processes that influence the architecture of the social sphere, becomes a dangerous phenomenon when it acquires a destructive character. The significant conflict potential of an ethnic conflict can easily change the conditions of functioning of participants in world political processes.

Rapid changes in the socio-economic position of some ethnic groups in relation to others inevitably create a certain tension in their relationships. Those who see their privileges diminishing are likely to feel threatened by the changes taking place, while those whose positions are improving will feel threatened if the pace of changes that are advantageous to them slows down, which very often happens. Of course, we are not talking about the absolute standard of living here, but about the ratio of the standards of living of different ethnic groups, which plays a decisive role in the emergence of a feeling of deprivation. But even in the presence of relative inequality, a conflict may not develop for a long time if the existing situation is perceived as part of the established order of things and if there are social and political means to limit the interaction of different ethnic groups. In the event of a struggle between ethnic groups for material resources, among which the most important are land and its mineral wealth, each of the conflicting parties seeks to justify its “natural” right to use the land and natural resources; such “resource” conflicts are deadlocked and, as a rule, can be resolved by peaceful means only in the early stages of their development, until interpersonal clashes on this basis begin. It should be noted that the inequality of ethnic groups is due to objective circumstances - numbers, lack of a resource base, level of socio-economic development, etc. That is why the ideal of any close equality of ethnic groups can hardly be considered a realistic and quickly achievable goal. Speaking about the reasons that give rise to conflicts on ethnic grounds, one cannot help

but mention the division of labor between ethnic groups that has developed in most multi-ethnic societies. Ethnic consciousness becomes the basis for the selection of personnel, and in some republics, work collectives are formed on the basis of ethnic, regional, clan solidarity. Entire social and professional strata acquire an ethnic coloring (for example, commerce, as the most profitable occupation in the current conditions), entire professions are monopolized. Since different spheres of labor application provide different incomes, an unspoken competition, a biased comparison of labor contribution and remuneration develops between them. When there is a certain dependence between the spheres of labor and ethnic communities, this competition is transferred to the ethnic groups themselves, automatically giving any social and political contradiction or clash of economic interests the explosiveness and ferocity of interethnic confrontation, resulting in tension in interethnic relations - the first harbinger of conflict. For purely objective reasons (number, contribution to the development of the economy, culture, geographic conditions, etc.)

Ethnic groups are and will probably be in unequal conditions in the foreseeable future.

If it is quite difficult to achieve equality, then achieving their equal rights is possible, necessary and quite feasible. As for the various (economic, political, cultural) aspirations of the ethnic groups themselves, they cannot be limited in this. Each ethnic unit has a desire to preserve its territory, language, culture and identity. In many states, the rights of national minorities are not respected, thereby indirectly provoking the growth of national self-consciousness. In many cases, the desire of certain ethnic groups to gain political influence was stimulated by permanent aggressiveness on the part of the state striving for national unification. Russian scientists are inclined to cite the historical part of Georgia, Abkhazia and Northern Kartli, occupied by their own country, as an example, as if Georgia did not respect the rights of ethnic minorities and that is why the Abkhazians began their struggle for their independence. In this way, Russian scientists are trying to show the world community that they are not guilty of anything in their aggression against the Georgian state and people. With their «scientific» works, Russians are misleading their own population and these works certainly have no scientific value and serve only Russian propaganda.

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ЭЛЬГУДЖА КАВТАРАДЗЕ

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ВОПРОСЫ ЭТНОПОЛИТИЧЕСКИХ КОНФЛИКТОВ

Резюме

Среди многообразных по происхождению, характеру, типологии, способам разрешения конфликтов в особую группу выделяются конфликты этнополитические (межэтнические, межнациональные). Они относятся к числу наиболее сложных, запутанных, затяжных и трудно разрешимых. Как показывает история, этнополитические коллизии во многих полиэтнических странах по своим масштабам, продолжительности и интенсивности значительно превосходят иные типы социально-политических конфликтов.

Этнополитический конфликт – форма межгруппового конфликта, в котором группы с противоположными интересами различаются по этническому признаку. Под этнополитическим понимается конфликт с определенным уровнем организационного политического действия, общественных движений, массовых беспорядков, сепаратистских выступлений и даже гражданской войны, в которых противостояние происходит по различиям в этнической общности.

Существует сложность в определении этнополитических конфликтов. Дело в том, что этнополитический конфликт в “чистом” виде бывает редко. Бывают случаи обратного политического камуфляжа, когда этническая природа конфликта подменяется иными политическими мотивами. Таким образом термин “этнополитический конфликт” в действительности охватывает широкий круг ситуаций. Они показывают, что чисто этнического конфликта как такового практически не бывает.

В этнополитологии обычно различают и неранговые системы межэтнических отношений, хотя встречается и множество пограничных ситуаций. В неранговых, но все же строго под-раздельных системах этнополитические конфликты могут возникать между группами, обладающими относительно равными долями богатства и власти, когда одна или несколько групп боятся или чувствуют, что их положение по сравнению с другой этнической группой имеет

тенденцию к ухудшению. Подобный конфликт может происходить в локализованной и узкой форме без вовлечения центра политической власти. Однако большинство этнополитических конфликтов связано с ранговой или стратифицированной системой межэтнических отношений, в которой не только различные этнические группы занимают место в соответствии со шкалой власти, престижа и богатства и обычно поставлены относительно друг друга, но, что еще важнее, в которой центр политической власти и государственный аппарат более или менее контролируются господствующей или составляющей большинство этнической общностью, а подчиненная общность или общности остаются в маргинальном положении.

По устойчивости такого рода конфликтов в течение довольно длительных периодов и размаху насилия, которое может их сопровождать, различают “конфликты интересов” и “конфликты ценностей”, или “конфликты идентичности”, где первая форма конфликтов относительно легче поддается преодолению или урегулированию, нежели вторая. Этнополитические конфликты обычно принадлежат ко второму типу, в котором задачи или цели участников конфликта имеют тенденцию быть взаимоисключающими или несовместимыми. В результате такие конфликты гораздо труднее поддаются урегулированию.

Для того, чтобы классифицировать этнические группы, участвующие в конфликте, необходимо обозначить различные виды ситуаций, при которых этнические группы взаимодействуют. Многие этнополитические конфликты в мире фактически являются следствием проблем, возникающих из изменения положения этнической группы в обществе. Именно эти вопросы рассматриваются в данной работе.