

Destructive factors of interethnic relationships in a multicultural region: The position of the host population of Tatarstan

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Abstract

In the last decades of the 20th century, liberal western society recognised the problem of minority groups as a social problem of discrimination. As a rule, the titular ethnic group (e.g. the Tatars of Tatarstan) of the constituent territories of the Federation and the Russians living there have, until recently, been the main targets of academic research. The nature of the relationship between these groups within the regional community has been the subject of research. Recent years have seen a rise in tension between the ethnic majority, which comprises the titular ethnic group and Russians living a region, and minority ethnic groups, who play an increasingly significant role in the social and economic life of the regions. Tatarstan is no exception, as is proven by frequent displays of intolerance towards representatives of ethnic minorities. Despite the fact that the bulk of these displays are declarative or latent in character, real manifestations of xenophobia also occur. From the results of this empirical study, various factors influencing the formation of attitudes amongst representatives of the ethnic majority towards ethnic minorities were distinguished. These include (in order of the importance they were given by respondents) the behaviour of the ethnic minorities in the host society; the ethnic background of the representatives of the ethnic minorities; changes to the socio-demographic situation in the region; and the opinion of representatives of the ethnic minorities about the new place of residence and the host society. In any situation the influence of these factors may be multifaceted or combined, but determinant in any case. Thus, the process of intergroup polarisation has not yet caused permanent perceptual defects and may be amenable to change depending on the particular nature of ethnic contact and the specific migration situation.

Keywords

Discrimination, Ethnic majority, Ethnic minorities, Interethnic relationship, Multicultural, Multiethnic, Region