

Ethno-cultural Pluralism in European Cities and Policy of Multiculturalism: Global and Local Aspects

Aleksandra Egoreichenko, PhD

St. Petersburg State University

School of International Relations

Department of International Humanitarian Relations Assistant

Alexandra.berson@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: With the increasing urbanization and migration processes in European cities, ethno-political processes have intensified, and cities have become the central place of localization of intercultural contacts. European cities are the objects of multiculturalism policy, developing and supporting ethno-cultural diversity and tolerance. Cities reflect simultaneous trends of globalization and localization. Because of deepening of the processes of globalization, the role of local areas and cultures increases. The modern European metropolis is looking for ways to coordinate the cultures and values of different civilizations. Cities perform a cultural function, enabling cultures to survive. At the local level, cities create mechanisms for involving ethnic communities in social life, and the interests of communities are observed. European political institutions create action programs for the implementation of these mechanisms. The policy of multiculturalism in the metropolis is the search for ways of coordinating the cultures and values of various civilizations.

KEY WORDS: Globalization, localization, European city, multiculturalism, municipal policy, ethnic differences

In today's world, due to the rapid growth of cities and urban population, urban studies are becoming more and more relevant. At the beginning of the XX century, only 10 percent of the world population lived in cities. By the end of the century already 47 percent Earthlings have become city dwellers. Currently, more than half the world's population is concentrated in urban areas - about 3.5 billion out of the current 7. It is expected that by 2030, the proportion of urban population will reach 60 per cents (UN, DESA 2007).

In Europe, the urbanization rate now stands at 74.6 percent (UNEP, GEO 3). In 2004, according to the European statistics agency, population growth in the 25 EU countries amounted to 2.3 million people, including 1.9 million falls on the influx of immigrants. Expanding more and more due to the influx of migrants, cities of our time turn into megacities, complex in structure, both in urban management and planning, and in the ethnic and socio-cultural structure. This concentration of population in urban areas always involves cultural streams that become the main engine of economic and social change.

Cities characterized by the process of ethno-cultural pluralization are "global cities". The hypothesis of the "global city" has been formulated by S.Sassen. Known for her studies of the processes of globalization, international migration and urban studies, Sassen has formulated the idea on the basis of studies in three cities: New York, London and Tokyo. She argues that the modern development of the world economy has led to the emergence of a new strategic role of large cities. Most of them had previously been centers of international trade, but now in their activities got new features:

large cities have become «command posts» - centers that produce political solutions to the global economy (Sassen 2005).

An important criterion for the typology of global cities, along with economic development, the presence of the head offices of global corporations, major transportation hubs, there is a factor —attractiveness to migrants. The migration has been identified as an important factor in the formulation of the hypothesis of global cities by J. Friedman (1986), who argued that cities are attractive for migrants both inside the country and for international migrants.

It is safe to say that all global cities are the destinations of migrants, and for this reason are areas of intense ethnic and social polarization. Absorbing the traditions and lifestyles of people coming, cities become centers of concentration of cultures and places of preservation of cultural heritage of many nations. Absorbing the traditions and lifestyles of people coming, cities become centers of concentration of cultures and places of preservation of cultural heritage of many nations.

Global processes have intensified differentiation of the population, which contributed to the formation of polymorphic urban cultures. Such cultures can enrich and strengthen the city, but also can serve as a source of contention and the basis of social exclusion. Another important impact of globalization on the urban processes is standardization. Cities where culture, infrastructure and organization is concentrated, have long been the engine of progress and civilization centers of opportunity and prosperity. In developed and developing countries, cities offer unique opportunities for its people to raise revenue mobilization of political action and the provision of greater access to education, employment and social services (Khondker 2004).

Thus, we can speak of a certain contradiction, because on the one hand, modern cities are the centers of economic development,

focusing innovation in all spheres of life, cultural centers, but on the other hand, they are centers of social tension and segregation, the centers of economic and social problems, unemployment. Cities are subject to terrorist attacks which dehumanize urban socio-cultural space. Modern cities hold the most important socio-cultural function, proving to place the guardianship of the cultural heritage of nations and peoples living in them. The most important processes in society are manifested at all levels of social and cultural space of cities. Social macrostructure is a system of social relations between demographic, ethnic and cultural communities.

While the world economic processes have long been of a global nature, the city is trying to find its niche under the new conditions the distribution of labor, production and consumption. The problem of simultaneous globalization of «the local» and the localization of the «global» can be described as a double process of macro-localization and micro-globalization.

In tracing the shift in the understanding of the political, economic and social systems of the “global” to the “local” urban studies are an alternative analysis of the geographical scale, particularly when the nation-state loses its relevance in an increasingly integrates the global space. Global social and economic changes erode traditional identification of people with residence at the same time weakening the role of the nation-state as a source of identification.

In 1970-ies when some states faced with the need to review immigration policies and searched for a new model of interaction with ethnic minorities, the idea of multiculturalism was born. Multiculturalism - concept that refers to the fact of cultural diversity, due to ethnic, linguistic and religious heterogeneity of the population; the practice of social and political organization in a multicultural environment; ideology aimed at the promotion of cultural diversity. Multiculturalism includes several aspects: philosophical, political, legal and practical-political.

The role of cities - the implementation of the policy of multiculturalism is in practical-political aspect, since it is at the level of local government multiculturalism policies are implemented in practice. At the state level there is political - legal process, identifies the main priorities for immigration and cultural policy, to create a legal base.

The social space of multicultural cities is arranged in a difficult way. The internal structure of the city begins to form different levels: regions, communities, neighborhoods. Communities in the cities, which are bringing people together on the basis of shared beliefs and lifestyle, influence the behavior of citizens in the socio-cultural space of the city. There is a dialogue, bringing together representatives of various subcultures, ethnic groups, media differing lifestyles and realized in the discussions in the parliament, schools, churches and other city institutions, and at the household level, families.

The choice of settlement areas and the development of its urban space depend on the residents belonging to a particular ethnic and cultural layer of urban residents. Local changes in the distribution of the urban population affect the intra-communication, unemployment and labor relations, as well as on the development of private property. In general, European city authorities are looking for the appropriate model for themselves the construction of harmonious relations in multi-ethnic societies in the framework of the urban space. Scientists point out two main types of official policy to combat urban social segregation.

City multiculturalism—is a kind of compromise between the city, representing the culture of the majority and the minority—a population of visitors. Thus, we can talk about the integration “from the top» and integration «from below». In urban areas there are all types of integration. On the one hand, immigrants must adapt to the language and traditions of existing urban community. On the other hand, the authorities should help migrants to adapt to new

cultural and social space, creating the necessary conditions for self-identification of citizens.

So, summing up, we note that the multicultural policy in European cities is developing as the implementation processes of globalization and localization at the same time and in a dialectical unity. Modern migration processes have increased due to the growth of megacities influenced by economic trends. Global trends have increased population diversification and intensified cross-cultural interaction (Rex and Singh 2003). In this process, cities are the regulators of multicultural relations, political and cultural "integrators". City multiculturalism - is a compromise between city authorities, representing the culture of the majority population and immigrants.

References

Friedman, J. 1986. "The world city hypothesis." *Development and change*. 17(1): 69-83.

Khondker, H. 2004. "Glocalization as globalization: Evolution of a sociological concept." *Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology* 1(2): 1-9.

Rex, J., and G. Singh. 2003. "Multiculturalism and Political Integration in Modern Nation-States." *International Journal on Multicultural Societies (IJMS)* 5(1): 3-19. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001387/138796e.pdf>.

Sassen S. 2005. "Global Cities: Postindustrial production sites. Journal "Prognosis." <http://www.journal.prognosis.ru/a/2005/04/10/44.html>.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Global Environment Outlook 3. Urban Areas: Europe. <http://www.unep.org/geo/geo3/russian/420.html>

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. (UN, DESA) 2007. World Population Prospects: The 2007 Revision. <http://esa.un.org/unup/>.