

The Perspectives of the Institutional Harmonization of the Interreligious Collaboration in the Southern Russia

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Abstract: The study is devoted to the study of institutional practices for the harmonization of interreligious collaboration with account for the regional specifics of the Southern Russia. It studies the perspectives of using the harmonization of interreligious collaboration in the policy of creating a civil identity. The object of study is the institutional practices for the harmonization of interreligious collaboration in the Southern Russia viewed through the lenses of their real perspectives in the policy of creating a civil identity. The study uses interdisciplinary methodology to study the regional specifics of interreligious collaboration. It reveals the areas of tension in interreligious and interethnic relations and studies the development perspectives of migrant integration policy in a climate of the Southern Russia. Besides, the study finds the harmonization perspectives of interconfessional collaboration between the region's residents. The researcher report that the religious identity of the region's residents is woven into the contexts of an ethnic policy. This leads to additional burdens during the escalation of interethnic conflicts. The study demonstrates the ambivalent role of religious institutions during the creation of civil identity.

Key words: Institutional practices, institutional harmonization, interreligious collaborations, Southern Russia, civil identity, interethnic relations

INTRODUCTION

The creation of an All-Russian identity in the Southern Russia largely depends on the development of religion as a social institution. Besides, it is closely related to the perspectives of institutional harmonization of interreligious collaboration. The harmonization of interreligious collaboration in the Southern Russia is associated with interethnic relations that are largely determined by migration flows. The processes of migration in the region can be subdivided into internal migration flows (mostly from the North Caucasian republics to the Rostov Oblast) and external (conditioned by the inflow of labor migrants from the Central Asian counties in the same direction). Analyzing the relations between three world religions (Christianity, Islam and Buddhism) in the region we can conclude that the number of Muslims begins to exceed the number of traditional Christians or people who refer to themselves as Christians. This is explained by a higher level of demographic indices among Muslims and the inflow of labor migrants from the countries where Islam is a dominating religion. Taking into account the challenges

of international terrorism, the organized religion including all the official confessions that are against extremism are responsible for harmonizing interconfessional relations in the region. Besides, they should elaborate the technologies and institutional practices to assist the state authority in developing a civil identity (Volkov, 2016).

The issue of interreligious collaboration based on the social and cultural specifics of the region touched herein was thoroughly investigated in the researches of A.E. Degtyarev, V.V. Chernous, R.D. Khunagov, F.A. Barkov, A.V. Serikov, I.V. Shevchenko, I.Z. Magomedov, G.I. Yusupova, etc.

The object of study is the institutional practices for the harmonization of interreligious collaboration in the Southern Russia viewed through the lenses of their real perspectives of in the policy of creating a civil identity. The subject of study is the aspects of interreligious collaboration between the residents of the Southern Russia with account for their influence on the policy of constructing an All-Russian identity.

The goal of the study is to consider the perspectives of using institutional practices for the harmonization of interreligious collaboration in the policy of creating

All-Russian civil identity. The degree of scientific elaboration of the topic under study involves the analysis of scientific sources on the sociological study of interreligious collaboration in the Southern Russia in the context of the leading institutional practices for the creation of a civil identity.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study mostly uses an interdisciplinary methodology (Lubsky, 2015). The creation of an All-Russian identity in the Southern Russia largely depends on the development of religion as a social institution. Religion is one of the crucial social institutions. It involves the system of social norms, roles, customs, prescriptions, standards of behavior and organizational forms. It plays a major role in the person's creation of social reality for the most of his history. The study of the place and role of social institution of religion in the development of an All-Russian identity implies the consideration of social conditions for the collaboration between religious confessions in the context of the development of a social system in general and the change of social structure and the interaction of its elements. Sociological theories treat religion as a factor to maintain stability in the society and to stimulate its development. Therefore, we should study the institutional regulation and harmonization of interreligious collaboration as one of the factors to develop an All-Russian identity.

A religious tradition is first of all, a special image of worldview based on person's religious beliefs. However, religion manifests itself in society not only as a personal human belief but also as following family and popular traditions transferred from generation to generation during the education where these traditions are individual's "protective cover" (K.B. Malinovsky) and his constant association with a Russian ethnos and a traditional culture.

Religion is a functional universal of the society; therefore, a structural and functional analysis is widely used in our study. T. Parson assumes that a cultural element is crucial in the organization of religion. Religion is part of the model support system. It focuses on values and forms a religious component of culture. When studying interreligious collaborations we cannot avoid the basic principles of institutional sociology. Besides, we should bear in mind that religion as a social and cultural institution did not lose its ideological and political potential of impact on the masses despite a long process of secularization (mostly New European). A. Giddens assumes that social institutions are "practices with the largest spatial and temporal length within a framework of

some communities" (Giddens, 2005). There is another reason why we should take the British sociologist's definition into account. Many religions have the advantage over other institutions in the period of their existence (thus, all world religions in the Southern Russia are certainly older than the Russian state itself).

People's national and cultural identity which is closely related to religion is a crucial aspect of the place and role of religion in a social and cultural process. There is an obvious relation between the national and cultural identity of the Chinese and Confucianism, the Hindu and Hinduism and the Hebrews and Judaism. These ethnic groups protect carefully their religious traditions; therefore an individual is aware of his cultural tradition and roots and can comprehend fruitfully the history of his ethnic group. All basic moral notions, everyday habits, an attitude to parents, patriotism, a family pattern and pedagogical conceptions were developed under the impact of religious imperatives. However, religion is not just a source of spiritual values. It remains a constantly active culture forming factor.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

First of all we should mention the specifics of the interreligious collaboration in the Southern Russia. Interreligious collaboration in the Southern Russia is closely interwoven with interethnic relations, since traditional Russian confessions have a manifest ethnic basis. Therefore, we agree with a modern researcher M.Z. Magomedova who reports that "the specifics of a modern religious space of the North Caucasus is that here, religion is closely related to the notion ethnicity. Therefore, analyzing the ethnic and political situation in the region we should take into account both religious and national factors, since the religious consciousness and the religious forms of life perception entered the social life of North Caucasian ethnic groups" (Magomedova, 2010). It is important that an All-Russian identity (unlike central Russian regions) is created in a climate of concentration and influence of a great number of original political subjects (North Caucasian republics) where the traditions based on local ethnic and confessional identities prevail.

As reported by a modern researcher G.I. Yusupova, it is quite clear "that a dialogue between cultures becomes a prevailing tendency in humanity development in a climate of globalization. At the same time we should note that an open and non-linear globalization process and the increasing role of occasional fluctuations make the perspectives of a modern civilization almost unpredictable" (Giddens, 2005). At the same time, we can

forecast the perspectives of the harmonization of interreligious collaboration in the Southern Russia if we take into account the leading economic, geopolitical and demographic factors.

Besides, we should bear in mind that religion as a social and cultural institution did not lose its ideological and political potential of impact on the masses despite a long process of secularization (mostly New European). This largely concerns the religion of Islam which is mostly a political religion. However, we should not exclude the Orthodox Christianity and Buddhism here, since they still have some political potential. A. Giddens assumes that social institutions are “practices with the largest spatial and temporal length within a framework of some communities” (Giddens, 2005). There is another reason why we should take the British sociologist’s definition into account. Many religions have the advantage over other institutions in the period of their existence (thus, all world religions in the Southern Russia are certainly older than the Russian state itself).

The establishment of a social life in ancient religious traditions ensures state sustainability and social resilience. Therefore, an individual is aware of his cultural tradition and roots and can comprehend fruitfully the history of his ethnic group in the educational and pedagogical activities (Vodenko *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, religiousness as a social phenomenon is often represented as a regional (local) patriotism in the Southern Russia. However, there is still a great potential of confessional politization there. This specific feature is manifested clearly at the level of North Caucasian republics. Here, the traditional Islam is a leading regulatory structure of a social order. It should also be considered as an important resource of the ideological struggle against extremists and separatists under the banners of radical and anti-state Islamism (Salafism, Wahhabism). There are similar tendencies among the Cossacks in the Rostov Oblast, the Krasnodar Krai and the Stavropol Krai. Here, the Orthodox Christianity is perceived as a leading ideological complex of moral notions and the technologies for the patriotic education of young people.

In one of their studies, R.D. Khunagov and I.I. Imgrunt focus on the fact that “the Southern Russia differs from other Russian regions, since it became an arena of geopolitical conflicts between the leading countries of the world. Here, ethnic and social problems became international. Besides, political speculation aims at disintegrating the brotherhood of the peoples in the Southern Russia (Khunagov and Imgrunt, 2015). Therefore, the attention to interreligious collaboration as a factor that directly affects the creation of the civil

identity of the region’s residents increases. Therefore, an interreligious dialogue in the region is often discredited by outside interference. This is caused by a direct geopolitical impact of regional and global powers and the intensification of uncontrolled processes of communication in the information society.

When considering the relations of world religions in the region, it is important to know the structure of the authoritative centers of certain traditional confessions. This enables to forecast the degree of their loyalty to official state authority. In this respect, we should note that the Orthodox Christianity and Buddhism have these obvious authoritative centers where the symbolic power of a Patriarch or a Dalai Lama is focused. The Muslim religious community, unlike the confessions above, has no such centers of a symbolic power. To some extent, this makes the risks of a deviant behavior among its believers higher.

Let us find the main areas of tension in interreligious and interethnic relations in the Southern Russia. Conflict situations within a framework of interreligious collaboration in the region, especially in the Rostov Oblast and the Stavropol Krai, are largely caused by growing migration processes that involve the representatives of various ethnic and confessional groups. Barkov and Serikov, the researchers of the ethnic and institutional factors of interethnic tension, report that for example in the Rostov Oblast, higher “conflict potential is accompanied by the discursive creation of accusations against migrants that they do not want to observe local customs and traditions. Migrants, in turn, accuse local residents of being trapped in stereotypes and xenophobia. Besides, they accuse mass media of distributing only negative images of migrants” (Barkov and Serikov, 2014).

This situation of mutual distrust and accusations concerns the representatives of various confessions. However, the most concentrated images of distrust and xenophobia are formed in many ethnic Russians of the Rostov Oblast mostly toward Muslim migrants. Besides, recently we can see the growth of Russian ethnic identity in the region. It is traditionally related to nationalism with clear anti-emigrant attitudes (Serikov, 2013).

Having analyzed the answers of respondents, F.A. Barkov and A.V. Serikov conclude that “...in most cases, local residents dislike migrants because they do not want to observe local customs and traditions (72%). The differences in a lifestyle and behavior patterns are quite significant in the development of dislike (58%). Only 18% of respondents report that dislike is largely caused by the competition in the labor market” (Lubsky *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, the results of research refute a thesis that

conflicts between locals and migrants are largely caused by the competition in the labor market. On the contrary, local representatives of small business in the Rostov Oblast are interested in the inflow of low-cost workforce from the former USSR republics. Both entrepreneurs and the representatives of other segments of the population are ready to hire migrants for season works.

At the same time, local residents do not trust the migrants from the central asian republics. They fear that migrants will further establish “their rules” in the oblast. It is no secret that in the Rostov oblast, local residents have the highest level of distrust and xenophobia to Muslim migrants. This situation is largely caused by the ambivalent activity of mass media. In this respect, O.M. Shevchenko emphasizes that “world and regional media play their role in the activation of islamophobia. The press and TV quickly transform real difficulties in the relations with a Muslim world into a frightening mass media product. Therefore, a Muslim factor became hyperbolized. There emerged a representation of Muslim threat instead of Islamist threat (which really exists) in the social consciousness” (Ibid and Shevchenko, 2015). In the result an interreligious dialogue in the region and oblast is largely mediated by the impact of an informational content developed by mass media. This content creates much difficulty between the participants of communication and largely prevents the harmonization of interreligious collaboration.

Therefore, cross-cultural conflicts used to invade the sphere of interconfessional difference. Belligerent parties try to use these differences in the indirect dispute with their opponents. Besides, many conflicts are caused by symbolic contradictions that often have opposite associations in the representatives of different ethnic groups. Here, we should bear in mind that there are different models of patriotisms that are quite legal in the Southern Russia. They represent several regional identities at once based on the values of kindred and confessional unity. Moreover, civil patriotism associated with the position of the official authority in mass consciousness is often overshadowed. This leads to a growing schism among the citizens who belong to different religions (confessions).

Most conflicts caused by interethnic and interconfessional contradictions take place among young people. First, the identities of an ethnos and a confessions are more important for this group of population compared to the representatives of older generation. Second, young people are more involved in the leisure activities that imply a much higher risk of facing a conflict situation. Besides, religious doctrines are

attractive for young people during the crisis in the humanitarian branches of Russian science because they give them a holistic worldview.

Modern studies often report that the confrontation between ethnic and civil identities among Russian youth is closely associated with the deficit of trust and religious tolerance in society. Various religious ideologies that often teeter on the edge of extremism directly feed the radical forms of ethnic nationalism and separatism. Thus, it is no secret that separatist and nationalist tendencies of young people, especially in the North Caucasus are fed by the ideas of radical Islamism. “Neopaganism” performs almost the same function for young Russian nationalists (Chernykh and Nikiforov, 2015). Let us dwell on the perspectives of development of migrant integration policy in a climate of the Southern Russia. Analyzing the above we can see that interethnic conflicts in the Southern Russia are directly associated with religious differences, since the host society resists migrant’s values and religious culture that violate its habitual associations, life mindsets and interpersonal and everyday relations. Besides, many conflicts are caused by symbolic contradictions that often have opposite associations in the representatives of different ethnic groups. Here we should bear in mind that there are different models of patriotisms that are quite legal in the Southern Russia. They represent several regional identities at once based on the values of kindred and confessional unity. Moreover, civil patriotism associated with the position of the official authority in mass consciousness is often overshadowed. This leads to a growing schism among the citizens who belong to different religions (confessions).

Therefore, an interreligious aspect of interethnic relations is also associated with the migrant integration policy in the Southern Russia. Such policy should first of all correlate with the tasks set in the state management. Now a days we can formulate three basic variants of the migrant integration policy in the host environment. They meet three tasks of state management (Bedrik *et al.*, 2016): assimilation policy aimed at preserving the current national and cultural identity of the region; Multiculturalism policy aimed at creating a multicultural society with small closed national and cultural enclaves, which often have implicit mutual dislike; the policy of social integration and cultural and linguistic adaptation aimed at creating common civil identity based on a traditional culture.

The three variants of the migrant integration policy have been used in different European countries and the USA for several decades. Now a days, social science enables to analyze the results of this policy and forecast the reasonability of their use in Russian regions. We will

mention some negative effects of the policy of strict multiculturalism in the developed countries throughout several decades herein. The experience of multiculturalism in Australia demonstrates that it rather leads to the growth of xenophobia, since it highlights differences instead of common things. There emerge isolated national communities that are reluctant to integrate into the traditional culture. "Ethnic" districts appear in large cities. Therefore, the cultural identity in Australia had been determined by the right to free choice since the end of the 1980's (SungurovA, 2011).

The French variant of multiculturalism was distinguished by the political assimilation of migrants where identity had to be defined by "a national political order instead of ethnic and cultural or religious roots. <...> the riots and turmoil in Paris suburbs in 2005 have shown that this policy is inefficient. Migrants did not disappear because their problems were ignored. Instead they became radical <...> taking into account modern Russian reality we note that in some places, local residents dislike the fact that migrant Russian citizens from the North Caucasus become integrated in policy. They think that the deputies of local councils elected from migrants begin to violate the rights of native population" (Ibid and Shevchenko, 2015).

Multiculturalism in great Britain is based on "unity in variety". There emerged cultural and religious centers of Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sikhs, etc. in cities and towns. National minorities delegated their representatives in the system of education and health care. However, an increased terrorist activity which has religious roots, makes people doubt in the policy of multiculturalism. Now a days, British politicians often say that this policy needs to be revised.

Up to now, the Netherlands were considered a model to follow in a multicultural policy. In the result about one fifth of the country's population was of non-Netherlandish origin by 1990's. All cities became like ethnic ghettos. There was a perspective of full islamization of the country. In 2005, the Netherlandish government commission reported that the state multicultural policy failed.

Thus, the historical experience of developed countries has shown why strict multiculturalism is so dangerous in migration policy. The point is that migration turns into a bloodless conquest of the countries attractive for migrants. In the result, they create their national and cultural enclaves in the accepting territory and began to claim political, economic, social and territorial rights. Native people perceive national and cultural enclaves as the violation of their religious, cultural, economic and political rights and the loss of their territory without

a war. They feel that the notions patriotism, community, brotherhood, etc. are devaluated. Therefore, the policy of social integration and cultural and linguistic adaptation of migrants is relevant in Russia. A secular state implies a pluralism of beliefs. However, a society conditioned by the frameworks of a specific territory always has one value and cultural model with implicit roots in a culture-forming religion of the region. We cannot deny this fact. Besides we know that it is impossible to destroy a traditional culture of the society without destroying a sustainable life of society. Therefore, it is important to develop an integrative component in the migration policy. Thus, we should teach the language and culture of the host community to migrants. Besides, we should develop tolerance in them. In this case we should "make efforts to acquaint migrants with the specifics and traditions of the country and region of their residence. It is also important to develop interreligious contacts to acquaint newcomers with the customs and beliefs of the country and regions they come to (even if they come there for a short time). We should acquaint migrants with the specifics of the relations between men and women, women equity and the inadmissibility of home violence in the accepting culture". In a climate of the active migration of the representatives of another culture who consolidate in religious and ethnic communities, the honor and dignity of historical, cultural and religious traditions of the host society should be protected by the state.

Let us reveal the main perspectives of the harmonization of interconfessional collaboration of the Southern Russia's residents. The backbone of the development of a civil society in the Southern Russia involves creating a positive civil (All-Russian) identity in the region's residents as an obligatory point. This requires modernization resources based on organic and in Durkheim's terms, social solidarity. At the same time, we should also take into account different (sometimes quite opposite) influence of some components of a religious doctrine on social life. We cannot but bear this influence in mind in the theory and practice of state management, especially taking into account the tendencies of modern extremists to give their criminal activities a religious basis (Vodenko, 2015a, b).

Therefore, it is important to note that the role of religious institutions in structuring civil identity is ambivalent. They affect the structures of citizen's legal consciousness and often shift them to ethnic segregation and particularism. This prevents the creation of a positive civil identity (and in some cases, resists it openly). The reason is that a "true believer" (a model to follow from the standpoint of any religious doctrine) should prefer his own community and perceive it as an expanded family

which can confront the state in some situations. This is especially important, since there is a Soviet period in the Russian history when the state distanced openly from confessions and an official science treated religion only as a false form of social consciousness.

Therefore, we can find a contradiction between the authentic reproduction of a social experience of an old religious tradition and modern secular and in some substantial points, secularized environment in the Russian modernization (Vodenko, 2015a, b). Therefore, we can argue that an actual conflict between modernization and a tradition is manifested, first of all in religious relations. This is explained by the fact that religion claims for the socialization of various forms of social life more frequently than other institutions.

Some researchers even reject the possibility of the positive experience of religious institutions in the policy of structuring civil identity. In this respect, A.K. Degtyrev and V.V. Chernous assume that “complicated relations of ethnic nationalisms in the Russian Federation, the revival of the orthodox christian, muslim and buddhist integrations in the objective process of the development of a Russian (political, legal, social and cultural) identity leaves no positive perspectives for the project of constructing the Russian nation. Therefore, we need to elaborate a theory to describe and explain adequately the modern processes of religious, ethnic, national and political interaction in a climate of globalization”.

Now a days, institutional practices of religious establishments related to the education of their members do not have special courses of civil tolerance. At the same time, the summons for peace are the essential part of official sermons of the representatives of traditional confessions in the Southern Russia and throughout the country. However, it is still quite difficult to imagine that a sermon for believers promotes openly the values of a civil society. Besides, a pursuit of greater modernization of religion can be met negatively by the believers and lead to a rapid degradation and selularization of traditional confessions. Therefore, they will lose their influence.

At the same time, the Southern Russia accumulated quite a large experience of intercultural collaboration. It can also be considered as a factor for harmonizing interreligious relations in the region. Round tables and various civil activities with the representatives of traditional confessions may harmonize interconfessional relations within a framework of social interaction. The representatives of the orthodox christianity and Islam as the main traditional religions in the North Caucasus have the experience of these institutional practices.

These issues are regularly discussed within a framework of the largest orthodox Forum of the Southern

Russia the Annual Dmitrievskiye Readings in Rostov-on-Don. Thus, a section “religious security of Russia in a climate of modern geopolitical challenges” (“Church and Society”) took place on November 12, 2015 within a framework of the XX Dmitrievskie Educational readings. The archpriest Valery Voloschyuk, the head of the department on the relations between Church and society in the Rostov-on-Don eparchy became the chairman of the section. The meeting took place in the South Russian Institute of Russian Academy of National Economy and State Service under the RF President (Degtyrev and Chernous, 2015).

The key topics under discussion were state and confessional relations and religious security; the Orthodox Christianity and Islam in the Southern Russia: a dialogue of civilizations; sects in a climate of a network war against Russia. The participants adopted a resolution based on the results of the section. It says, among other things that religious security is a state of protection of vitally important interests of an individual, a society and a state from the threats in the religious sphere of a social life. It is provided by state confessional policy and social and political activities of traditional confessions. Russia’s religious security can be treated as the state of stable and original development of the confessional traditions of all Russia’s peoples that constitute a Russian nation.

For more efficient religious security we should initiate the adoption of the Federal Law “on religious security” and specially reflect here the historical and cultural meaning of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) Islam and other traditional religions in the development of the Russian state. We should also find and enumerate the threats to the religious identity of Russia’s peoples, describe the methods of a theological expertise and enumerate the signs of sects. Besides, we need to fix the principles of interaction and cooperation of the Church and the State and the forms of their mutual support, the mechanisms of legal provision of Church’s activities in a modern Russian society and the guaranties of the ROC independence and its participation in the political and legal life of society.

The representatives of Islam also have the experience of the institutional practices for the harmonization of interconfessional collaboration. Thus, a meeting with Muhammad Haji Rakhimov, the mufti of the Stavropol Krai, took place in Pyatigorsk on March 3, 2016. All the mufti of the North Caucasus as well as the republics of Kalmykia and Adygea took place in the meeting. They came in Pyatigorsk to discuss the relations and cooperation between state authorities and the Muslim religious institutions (Tishkov and Denisova, 2015). The issues of security and interethnic and interconfessional

relations in Stavropol and throughout the Caucasus are discussed regularly at the meetings of the Council on Interethnic Relations under the governor of the Stavropol Krai and the Council on Interaction with Religious Associations under the heads of the North Caucasian Federal District subjects. Thus, “the complex program for opposing religious and political extremism in the republic of Dagestan for 2012-2016” and the Republican Target Program “On the Interaction with Religious Institutions in the Republic of Dagestan and their State Support for 2012-2016” have been elaborated. They largely concern the establishment of a dialogue to overcome a conflict and a search for the ways of national conciliation. Obviously, the believers are the most active and organized force that supports many initiatives of the government. This is quite expected, since the threats to Russia from both the West and the East have a manifest religious component.

CONCLUSION

Interreligious collaboration affects directly the creation of the civil identity of the Southern Russia's residents. The relations of world religions in the region are structured around the authoritative centers of traditional confessions. This knowledge enables to forecast the degree of their loyalty to the official state authority and the possibilities of deviant, revolutionary and anti-state strategies. However, the role of religious institutions in the construction of civil identity is generally ambivalent. The areas of tension in the sphere of interreligious and interethnic relations in the region are largely related to the cultural integration of labor migrants. Besides, we cannot deny the role of xenophobia which is largely a media product. At the same time, the Southern Russia accumulated a cultural capital of interethnic collaboration that involves the representatives of traditional confessions with a spiritual authority.

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