

ROLE OF EDUCATION IN THE EDUCATION OF RELIGIOUS IDENTITY IN THE 21ST-CENTURY RUSSIAN SOCIETY

PAPEL DA EDUCAÇÃO NA FORMAÇÃO DA IDENTIDADE RELIGIOSA NA SOCIEDADE RUSSA DO SÉCULO XXI

PAPEL DE LA EDUCACIÓN EN LA FORMACIÓN DE LA IDENTIDAD RELIGIOSA EN LA SOCIEDAD RUSA DEL SIGLO XXI

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ABSTRACT: The study addresses the directions and priorities of scientific research into the peculiarities of the religious identity of Russian citizens and how it has changed over the past decades. The paper identifies and characterizes the objects of scholarly interest in the study of the formation of the religious identity of Russians. A set of factors affecting religious identity are disclosed, including religious-value norms and attitudes that form in interethnic families. Special emphasis is placed on the importance of taking into account modern trends in the development of religious identity in contemporary Russians in order to determine its prospects in the context of globalization and the development of the market for religious services. The novelty of the study lies in a reconsideration of the conceptual foundations of religious identity development in Russia in the 2000s.

KEYWORDS: Religious identity. Religious education. Family values. Globalization. Market for religious services.

RESUMO: *O estudo aborda os rumos e prioridades da pesquisa científica sobre as peculiaridades da identidade religiosa dos cidadãos russos e como ela mudou nas últimas décadas. O artigo identifica e caracteriza os objetos de interesse acadêmico no estudo da formação da identidade religiosa dos russos. Um conjunto de fatores que afetam a identidade religiosa são divulgados, incluindo normas de valores religiosos e atitudes que se formam em famílias interétnicas. Ênfase especial é colocada na importância de levar em conta as tendências modernas no desenvolvimento da identidade religiosa nos russos contemporâneos, a fim de determinar suas perspectivas no contexto da globalização e do desenvolvimento do mercado de serviços religiosos. A novidade do estudo está em uma reconsideração dos fundamentos conceituais do desenvolvimento da identidade religiosa na Rússia nos anos 2000.*

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PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Identidade religiosa. Educação religiosa, valores familiares. Globalização. Mercado para serviços religiosos.*

RESUMEN: *El estudio aborda las direcciones y prioridades de la investigación científica sobre las peculiaridades de la identidad religiosa de los ciudadanos rusos y cómo ha cambiado en las últimas décadas. El artículo identifica y caracteriza los objetos de interés académico en el estudio de la formación de la identidad religiosa de los rusos. Se revela un conjunto de factores que afectan la identidad religiosa, incluidas las normas y actitudes de valores religiosos que se forman en las familias interétnicas. Se hace especial hincapié en la importancia de tener en cuenta las tendencias modernas en el desarrollo de la identidad religiosa en los rusos contemporáneos para determinar sus perspectivas en el contexto de la globalización y el desarrollo del mercado de servicios religiosos. La novedad del estudio radica en una reconsideración de los fundamentos conceptuales del desarrollo de la identidad religiosa en Rusia en la década de 2000.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Identidad religiosa. Educación religiosa, valores familiares. Globalización. Mercado de servicios religiosos.*

Introduction

For any society, the question of education as a process of creating new members of society remains vital and topical. The formation of religious identity is a special direction of the educational process tied with the acquisition of knowledge about religion as a social institution and a system of norms, traditions, and value orientations that accompany the functioning of a particular social group. However, this direction of educational work is bound up with numerous scholarly and legal debates on the subject of the realization of such an education.

The relevance of appealing to the organization of the formation of religious identity in a secular school is clear not only scientifically, but also socially. In this regard, we can agree with F.M. Kozyrev (2005). The existence of an antinomy between citizens' right to free and open profession of faith and the need to restrict the freedom of religious expression to ensure secularism makes "simple" solutions to the problem of secular education ineffective and raises the need to balance public interests and rights in choosing the ratio between the "confessional" and "secular" in education.

Another aspect of the social problem relates to the fact that religious life is just as deeply personal a matter as it is socially important. The undesirability and danger of completely exempting religious life from social control and presenting it as an asocial phenomenon are in obvious conflict with the inadmissibility of interfering in a person's private life and attempting

to control their beliefs. A particular problem for public education is religious pluralism, which generates its own antinomies and contradictions. The enhancement of confessional and cultural identity in ethnic and religious minorities within a multi-confessional state does not always reconcile seamlessly with the objectives of civic education and the integration of students into a common culture.

Pedagogically efficient incorporation of the religious component into general education requires in-depth theoretical comprehension of such fundamental problems as compatibility of the religious way of thinking with the principle of scientific learning (the compatibility of the scientific and religious view of the world), reconcilability of the ideals of secular schooling and religious values (the problem of indoctrination, personal autonomy, authority), academic independence of the teacher of religion (the possibility of organizing religious education on non-denominational grounds), etc.

The above calls for resolution of the general pedagogical problems associated with determining learning objectives, designing the content of education, theoretically and methodologically justifying new approaches to the organization of the educational process, and developing the respective conceptual tools. Therefore, the basis for a more thorough reconsideration of attitudes toward religious identity formation is grounded, first and foremost, in the need to:

- Improving the morality of the younger generation. In proclaiming and implementing the principle of freedom of conscience, the state now sees the Church as an equal participant in social transformations, primarily moral ones. The Church's influence on society is growing immeasurably, and its primary focus should be a competent and competitive individual guided by universal moral values;

- Consolidating and developing traditional religions. Although Russia was founded on the basis of Orthodox Christianity, which at its present stage of development remains the religion that shapes the country's socio-cultural space, a number of other religious denominations are also developing, such as Islam, which in some regions is the dominant religion;

- The formation of a "civil religion" (MIROSHNIKOVA, 2004). The core idea of civil religion is that citizens of different religious beliefs are equal in their right to participate in the political life of society, and that the state uses – directly or indirectly – a set of religious ideas, symbols, and rituals for its political purposes. Such a religion ensures the unity of society, allows conflicting groups and communities to find a common language to reach compromise solutions, validates the existing power in society, and offers principles for criticizing it.

The goal of the study is to examine the role of education in the formation of religious identity and identify the range of research on religious identity in modern Russian society to determine the prospects of scientific search.

Methods

The work is based on the identification and analysis of scientific research presented in the form of scientific articles and dissertation abstracts from Russian and international databases.

The criterion for the construction of the source base is the content of the analyzed scientific research focused on the essence and typology of religious identity and analysis of the capabilities of education in the formation of religious identity.

The methodological basis of the study consists of the principles of historicism, scientific objectivity, consistency, and comprehensiveness, which enable the study of the experience of the development of religious identity throughout Russian history.

Results

In the 1990s, the collapse of the Soviet state was accompanied by a systemic crisis that had taken shape in the social, economic, political and spiritual life of society. Its course was largely determined by a sharp decline in the level of security of life in society, which actualized the search for reference points, including axiological ones, providing control over the situation (DYMINA, 2009).

Up to 2007, research had been proving the presence of fundamentalist or nativist reactions in Russian society as a manifestation of the so-called “authoritarian reflex” (INGLEHART, 1997), a striving for the traditional cultural model. This trend was observed against the background of westernization processes, imitation of the patterns of Western culture, the meanings of various religious associations and cults.

Over the next fifteen years, the religious identity of the population resumed its place among the factors taken into account in the response of public administration bodies and representatives of traditional confessions to the challenges they were facing. The authorities’ need for the legitimization of their actions by the church and the need to protect the interests of religious organizations by law had resulted in a blurring of boundaries in the relationship between the state and religion, the mutual participation of state and church structures in major

spheres of society. This can be interpreted as a change in the phases of secular-religious communication and an objective change in the vector of cultural expansion (LEBEDEV, n.d.).

It is important to note that each new transformation of religious identity in the Russian population tends to occur in the midst of economic, social, and political changes, which has been repeatedly pointed out by researchers concerned with this issue (BALICH, 2015). In this light, it becomes clear that the reassessment of values and the vector of self-identification of modern Russians have been greatly affected by the aggravation of social problems in view of the development of market relations (rising social differentiation), crisis of the family institution (many new forms of marriage, devaluation of the values of parenthood and childhood, rejection of the traditional idea of spouses' gender roles), and changes in the traditional goals and principles of education and upbringing.

Religious identity is influenced by “an active organized integrity of various elements, representing a variety of factors of social reality connected with each other” (GAVRILOVA, 2010). Among the primary factors that affect religious identity in contemporary society, we should note: lack of competencies acquired in the process of theological or religious education by the vast majority of Russians for several generations; the multidirectional intercultural interaction of Russia with other countries and the resulting mobility of Russian citizens; intensification of social activities of religious organizations; rising influence of cyberspace on the formation of both public and individual consciousness of the Russians (IVLEVA, 2015); formation of the fundamentals of theological education in general and higher education in the 2000s.

Aside from the above, a special place in the range of factors that have an effect on religious identity is occupied by religious-value norms emerging in interethnic families, which “combine different types of religions, cultures, and, accordingly, form special religious-value attitudes that are primarily focused on interaction in the vein of tolerance and mutual understanding” (TRIFONOVA, 2013). This may involve both a compromise of religious norms and their conflict or the takeover of one of the religious traditions. Religious identity of the parents is one of the foundations for the formation of religious identity in the young generations (UFIMTSEVA, 2014). Conflict in religious identity is commonly experienced by children from interethnic families, while the scale of such a conflict, its prevalence, and consequences at the personal and group levels point to a qualitatively new challenge for the overall development of contemporary Russian society.

Researchers continue to make attempts to develop a universal typology of the religious identity of modern Russians. To date, their range is quite broad, but the most common typologies are those used as theoretical models to characterize particular religious communities.

One of them relies on the faceted principle of classifying the objects under study and includes civil-religious, religious-centered, and spiritually-oriented types of religious identity of modern Russians (PRONINA, 2015).

The civil-religious type is considered to be the most prevalent among Russians who self-identify as adherents of traditional religions. This type of identity is centered on the pivotal place of religion in socio-cultural discourse and serves as a basis for the construction of ethnocultural and civic identity.

At the core of the religious-centered type lies the intensity of religious practices, ritualistic and religious activity. The primary motive in the lives of representatives of this type of identity, including their day-to-day living, is following value-meaning attitudes and religious norms; the influence of non-religious factors in the formation of religious identity is deliberately minimized.

Those demonstrating the spiritually-oriented type of religious identity are characterized by the rhizomic, syncretic nature of worldview attitudes, which are often borrowed from contrasting religious doctrines, philosophical doctrines, and near-scientific fields of knowledge. Religion is perceived by them as a sphere of “spiritual services,” the quality of which is determined by the degree of satisfaction of the need for new impressions and ideas.

It should be pointed out that this typology preserves the opportunity to account for combinations of various types through subtypes, which means that it cannot be considered static and rather presents an open system for research into the religious identity of modern Russian citizens.

Another typology of religious identity of the population of modern Russia is developed with consideration of such criteria as the degree of socio-religious activity, knowledge of the religious teaching; the level of “churched” and the ratio of external and real religiosity; the degree of susceptibility to religious conversion, as well as the observance of religious practices (IVLEVA, 2017, p. 14). These criteria provide for the following types of religious identity: churched believer; formal-religious believer; pseudo-believer; anti-traditional believer and cyber-believer.

Representatives of the churched believer type are characterized by a high level of religiosity, involvement in the activities of a particular religious group, and the correlation of personal life goals and orientations primarily with religious traditions, principles, and values.

A high level of practicing religiosity also manifests itself in the establishment of a system of requirements in the sphere of religious practice for oneself and one's family members, as well as in the monitoring of their fulfillment.

The external side of religiosity is displayed by representatives of another type, the formal-religious believers. They use their religious identity primarily to advance their own careers, to strengthen their positions in society, and to acquire the necessary social connections. This type of identity is commonly associated with a close interrelation between religious and ethnic identity, which points to the formation of the phenomenon of "religiously determined civic identity" in contemporary Russian society (IPATOVA, 2006). The author of the typology suggests that the risk of religious conversion is possible in this group, but is not prominent in periods of crisis. In this interpretation, this characteristic can apply to virtually all types of religious identity except for the pseudo-believer and anti-traditional believer types. Pseudo-believers are characterized by a constant search for new religious groups and currents, the values and meanings of incompatible religions can be mixed. Syncretism and instability and the construction of one's own religious picture of the world are essential characteristics of this type of religious identity. Representatives of the anti-traditional type, in turn, find themselves in a state of inner dialogue with the higher power, which determines their lives, but the image of God is created by their imagination and can be transformed into any form.

A new type of religious identity that has emerged in modern society is the cyber-believer type, the representatives of which find their value not in the social but in the virtual reality, endowing computer technology with the attributes of divine entities. Typical features of this type of identity is the striving to constantly be online and the dichotomy of anthropomorphization and disanthropomorphization of digital technology. Here it is worth noting that this type of religious identity is especially dangerous to both the individual and society as a whole, not only because of its specificity but also because of the rate at which it spreads.

Thus, the presented typology is distinguished by its multifacetedness, complexity, and inclusion of the many essential characteristics of the phenomenon of religious identity. Furthermore, it can be applied to the population of other modern states.

What continues to be an independent vector in scientific inquiry is the striving to establish the main trends in the formation and development of the religious identity of modern Russians with regard to the phenomena of globalization and the market for religious services, which are inherent in the current stage of development of the state and society (SHCHETININA, 2018).

This refers to the providers of “a specific service that operates within the framework of traditional market forces” (ROZANOVA, 2005) and the consumers of this service, demand and competition in its market, the quality of the service provided, and other economic phenomena.

An objectified service on this market takes the form of an opportunity to find harmony in life, achieve happiness, master spiritual practices, etc. The sellers of such services are religious organizations, representatives of both traditional confessions and new religious movements whose tenets are not firmly entrenched in the traditions of the peoples of a state, ethnicity, or region.

Moreover, researchers of the "anti-cult" direction point exclusively to the negative effects of the new religious movements, their pseudo-religiousness (DVORKIN, 2002; VASILEVA, 2007). Adherents of the “protectionist” trend, on the other hand, emphasizing the principle of religious freedom, note the potential of such movements and stress that their religious practices directly reflect the needs of modern people and are aimed at meeting them (ASTAKHOVA; ASTAKHOVA, 2010).

A common theme for sellers of religious services is the desire to adapt to the needs of consumers in order to form a high level of competitiveness.

According to researchers (VASILEVA, 2014), the presence of a market for religious services actualizes such a trend in the formation and development of the religious identity of modern Russians as following religious fashion, which largely shapes religious and moral behavior.

Characteristic features of this trend include the rise in the popularity of religious cult activities and attributes, the discussion of religious issues and inter-confessional relations in the secular media, and the formation of a particular fashionable religious style of dress. Following the trends of religious fashion allows a person to become part of some religious group, however, there is also a risk of one’s own meanings and values being displaced by a system of external cultural-religious codes.

The emergence of the market for religious services comes as a result of the influence of globalization as a process of world-wide integration and unification in the socio-economic, political, and religious spheres. The opinions of scholars engaged in the study of the effects of globalization on the formation of religious identity vary dramatically: some believe that globalization has led to a loss of traditional religious identity (GAVRILENKOV, 2008), others view globalization as a factor in religious revival (IZLUCHENKO, 2015).

Conclusion

The formation of religious identity in educational institutions in Russia today is at the intersection of several mutually contradictory trends: both a revival of classical religious education in church-based organizations, which had to be limited in part during Soviet times, a partial return to pre-Soviet practices of religious education outside of church-based organizations, and more recent trends of the formation of religious identity in a multi-confessional society. These trends can be considered conditionally autonomous, having their own internal logic, pace of development, and goals. At the same time, the formation of religious identity in society must not be chaotic in nature. In any event, the state must deal if not with harmonizing the ways of religious identity formation between various religious and non-religious organizations, then at least prevent the sectarian tensions and conflicts that inevitably arise when public policy in the field of education is unclear.

The analyzed studies present a wide array of conclusions on the evolution and specific characteristics of religious identity in Russian society in the last few decades. Its essential characteristics are actively studied. Several types of typologies of religious identity in modern Russian citizens are developed, which can provide grounds for the universalization of research in this area. Special research attention is paid to the factors affecting changes in the population's religious identity and the dynamics of these factors in the socio-cultural context.

In addition, prospects for further study lie in the development of comparativist aspects of religious identity of the population, among other things, as one of the crucial factors that define prospects for the development of modern society.

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