

The Religious Situation in the Tyumen Region: Sociological Analysis

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Abstract. There is a pressing need for an objective study of issues related to the religiosity and religious tolerance of the population in order to effectively implement the state policy in the field of interethnic, interconfessional and socio-political relations. The authors of this article conducted an applied sociological research in the Tyumen region, which is a region with the maximum number of representatives of different nationalities and religions due to historical events. The problems connected with the religiosity's condition studying, the relation to such sociocultural phenomenon as religious fanaticism and extremism were studied. The result of the study was to identify the possibility of preventive measures for averting manifestations of religious fanaticism. The results of this study can be used in the state programs making for interfaith and interethnic relations.

1. Introduction

Global trends in interreligious relations indicate that the problem of religious fanaticism and extremism, being extremely relevant at the present stage of the world community development, against the background of globalization intensive migration processes and permanent political conflicts, requires careful and serious study. It should be made because of the terrorist acts in the world and on the Russian Federation territory. In this regard, the current religious situation in each region is indicative, reflecting the problem areas in the country as a whole. The discourse of modern research uses different terminology and there are different approaches to study the phenomenon of religious fanaticism and religiosity. For example, in social philosophy on the Sanaeva's concept 'fanaticism is a concrete manifestation associated with different activities or with different social life spheres' (Sanaeva 2002: 68). The Sanaeva's principle of classification is based on different spheres of public activities, which potentially may cause fanaticism. M. Yakhyaev distinguishes two main lines of fanaticism transformation. They are the Western fanaticism line and the Eastern fanaticism line. He focuses attention on the Russian fanaticism line separately (Yakhyaev 2005). The basis of P. Konzen's concept is the concept of social identity. In the framework of this theory, the scientist highlights the types of fanaticism in essence and manifestation forms (Konchen 2011). Ch. Lombroso, calling the society at the beginning of the XX century mired 'in lies and reaching to madness in the fanaticism of its economic struggle,' believed that in all historical eras, since the era of barbarism, there were fanatics, people 'with altruistic tendencies' (Lombroso 1907). First, manifestations of fanaticism were carried out on religious grounds, and later this phenomenon began to manifest itself in political parties and conspiracies. In modern sociology, fanaticism is defined as 'a socio-cultural phenomenon, which

is based on religious faith, dogmas and the degree of intensity of which tend to oppose the worldview of its followers to other beliefs or socio-cultural concepts, resulting in categorical social rejection and priority-negative behavior model' [Sharipova 2015].

The situation of social interaction in the sphere of religious relations in Tyumen region is dynamic, but in comparison with other regions of Russia, according to sociologists, quite prosperous. Nevertheless, it should be noted that religious fanaticism is a social phenomenon, and in crisis times, it can arise for society due to various socio-political, socio-economic prerequisites. In order to maintain the current positive trend and correctly form the main directions for regulating relations between religious organizations, it is necessary to study the inhabitants attitude of the region to religious problems. Therefore, the regulation of these issues needs to get the feedback from the population through a variety of sociological monitoring.

2. Methods

The authors of the article conducted a sociological study on the issues related to the state of population religiosity, the attitude to such a socio-cultural phenomenon as religious fanaticism and the possibility of preventive measures for averting manifestations of religious fanaticism in the Tyumen region in 2015-2017 (Stark and Charles 1968). The survey involved 757 respondents (45.5% men and 54.5% women). The empirical object of the study was the population of cities: Tyumen – 506 people (67%); Tobolsk – 86 (11%); Yalutorovsk – 31 (4%) and three municipal areas of the Tyumen region: the Tyumen district – 79 (10%); the Tobolsk district – 26 (3.8 percent), and the Nizhnetavdinsky district – 29 (4,2%).

Historically, the indigenous population in the South of Tyumen region is characterized by socio-cultural diversity. Currently, the majority of the population are Russians (71.6% of the population), Tatars (7.4%), Ukrainians (6.5%), Belarusians (1%), Bashkirs (1.3%). Tyumen region can be called 'region of everyday interactions of migrant population with Siberian Tartars in the South of the region and the indigenous peoples of the North' (Burke 1808: 5). Therefore, it is possible to speak about readiness of the population to 'ethnic and religious diversity and tolerant interaction' (Burke 1808: 5). Intensive migration processes bring certain changes in the religious composition of the studied region, which allows analyzing the dynamics of interfaith relations at the present stage. In general, the population consists of 140 nationalities and ethnic groups, which for a long time, especially since the beginning of the oil and gas deposits development settled on the territory of the Tyumen region, but mainly were able to preserve their ethno-cultural and religious identity (Batson and Ventis: 1982).

3. Research results

Questions 'Do you consider yourself a believer? Do you think religion plays an important role in your life?' 13% of men and 21% of women said, 'Religion does not play a special role in my life, but in certain circumstances, I turn to God'. The majority of respondents who chose this answer have incomplete higher or higher education – 17%. There are respondents (17%) who also named themselves deeply religious people. 'I am a believer, but I try not to show it externally' – answered 26% of area inhabitants (20% of which are women). Only 5% of respondents position themselves as atheists.

The nature and depth of religiosity can be judged not only because of personal identity, but also based on the respondent's religious activity. D. Batson, E. Burke, and R. Stark were actively engaged in studying of this problem in due time. The participants of the questionnaire were asked questions concerning their observance of religious traditions and visiting the temple or church. To the question: 'Do you observe religious traditions?' 35.5% said: 'Yes, I do, but more formally, because it is in the spirit of our time.' A third of respondents chose the option 'No, it doesn't matter to me'; and the fourth part says, '...it sincerely and by conviction'. Among the 1.5% of respondents who offered their answer were the following: 'Sometimes, depending on the life situation'; 'I do it according to family traditions: Easter, Christmas, but not all'; 'I have my own traditions and ceremonies'; 'I observe only those that do not contradict my spiritual balance'.

It should be noted that the fifth part, which is 20.7% of respondents does not visit the temple at all and only 8.9% attend the temple regularly – ‘Several times a week’. The respondents of 27.2% visit the temple ‘Sometimes, from time to time’ and about the same number – 23.8% attend the temple ‘on the occasion of personal events (baptism, funeral, and wedding)’. Rarely, 14.5% of the respondents visit the temple only ‘religious holidays several times a year’. Individual answers of respondents – 0.5%, contained the following conclusions: ‘On spiritual needs, in temples direct energy channels’; ‘I go there on an excursion’; ‘When my God calls me.’

The questionnaire included questions that focused on identifying the role of religion on the moral qualities of the respondents, namely: ‘do you think that faith in God, visiting the temple help in the spiritual and moral development of a man?’ Answers were distributed as follows: the vast majority – 44.9% chose the option ‘Yes, help significantly’; ‘Help at some point’ also considers a large percentage of respondents – 39.9%. Only 12% said, ‘No, no effect.’ 1.1% has expressed their point of view, proposing a different answer: ‘It depends on who believes’; ‘My God, my mind’; ‘Faith, yes, visiting the temple is not always’; ‘Certainly, if it is an inner urge, not a tribute to fashion or external motives’; ‘Without obedience to God, man cannot be spiritual.’

The study revealed a wide range of respondents’ confessional affiliation. Representatives of the Orthodox faith position themselves – 60.1%, which is slightly less than in the country, and Islam – 20.6%, much more than according to Russia. This deviation from the statistical data on Russia and the region can be explained by the historically formed ethnic composition of the indigenous population of our region and by the intensive migration processes that characterize the current situation that reflects the religious self-identity of the our region inhabitants. Other respondents called themselves (2.9%) Catholic; (1.2%) Buddhists; (0.4%) Jews. The respondents of 14.7% refused to answer the question about belonging to a particular religion. The respondents of 2% said: ‘Protestant’, ‘Adventist’, ‘Lutheranism’, ‘Pagan’, ‘representatives of the Orthodox religion, but do not quite agree’, ‘God is one’, ‘Agnostic’, ‘I cannot refer myself to any religious direction’, ‘Atheist’, ‘We are all alien experiment’, ‘Musician’, ‘Own religion. I am not with them and not with you’, ‘My God’.

The objectives of the study were to identify the level of respondents’ religious tolerance. It is an important characteristic for this study and based on the understanding that religious fanaticism and religious tolerance are opposed to each other. Respondents’ responses indicated a high level of tolerance. Most of the respondents, ‘good’ – 43.6% and ‘tolerant’ – 10.2% belong to the representatives of another religion, and 39.4% said that they ‘absolutely do not care’, as they judge people by other criteria. This question revealed the difference of respondents’ opinions because of gender. It turned out that women show a greater level of religious tolerance than men: ‘Well “refers to representatives of another religion 29.4% of women 43.6% of respondents who chose this answer and” absolutely indifferent, judge people by other criteria’ chose 26.1% of women 39.4% of respondents. On the contrary, the negative attitude – 2.3% of 3.4% and even open hostility – 1.1% of 1.6% to representatives of other faiths are experienced in the majority of men.

Another question characterizing the level of religious tolerance of the respondents among the Tyumen region population, did not merely communicate with representatives of other religions, and revealed their attitude towards the possibility of marriage. Indicators of respondents’ answers to this question differ in terms of the religious tolerance level from the answers to the previous question. Nevertheless, we can talk about a sufficiently high level of respondents’ religious tolerance. To the question: ‘What do you think about the possibility of marriage with a person of another religion?’ 28.7% of the respondents said that this opportunity is ‘Good, because the religion of the partner does not matter.’ They show a positive attitude, but with a certain reservation – 41.2%, they choose the answer: ‘Well, but would prefer a marriage with a co-believer’, and 14.5% are negative about this possibility, but allow it. Every tenth is extremely negative and does not accept marriage with a foreign man – ‘Bad, strongly object to this.’ It should be emphasized that women, young people and people with higher and incomplete higher education showed a higher level of religious tolerance when answering this question. It is important to pay attention to the respondents’ answers who shows high tolerance not only in matters related to religious beliefs, but also in have a strong life position. It is ‘If

people love each other there are no problems unsolvable'; '25 years live with a person of another religion, with respect for each other's faith'; 'If it is love, then the wife naturally takes the faith of her husband'; 'God is one'.

In the next question 'Are you able to break the generally accepted norms for the sake of religious beliefs?' the wording was deliberately vague and probably 6.7% of respondents refused to answer it for this reason. Respondents interpreted the term 'generally accepted norms' differently and put their understanding into these words. This allowed us to trace the reaction and characterize the respondents' responses, which was important for our study. The respondents' answers were distributed as follows: every third answered – 'No, never'; about the same 34.1% of respondents also answered negatively, '...but in certain situations I allow such an opportunity.' Every tenth reaffirms its commitment, choosing the answer 'Yes, you can', and 17.8 percent agreed with this probability, but with the caveat '...but only in extreme cases'. It should be noted that this distribution of respondents' answers might characterize the general trend towards 'disobedience' inherent to our citizens. Non-compliance with generally accepted norms-rules-laws, when they are adopted at the highest level in our state, but are not observed at all levels of government, leads to aggravation of the crisis situation in the country, including in matters related to interfaith relations. The study shows that only a third of respondents under any circumstances will not violate the generally accepted norms, which in our opinion requires deep reflection on the part of politicians and scientists.

The last decade of religious activity Russians' resurgence, raise many questions. The question was formulated as follows: 'Do you think that today Russia can be called a secular state?' The overall structure of the answers is such that a significant part of the respondents found it difficult to answer this question – it's only 37% of respondents, 39% believe that Russia is not a fully secular state. And only 26% of Tyumen region' residents confirm the status of Russia as a secular state. From our point of view, we can assume that, in the respondents' opinion, the religious power in Russia, revived in the late 90-ies of the 20th century, has a sufficient impact on the state.

Any state authority is represented to its citizens by a set of laws that must be strictly observed. One of them is the law of the Russian Federation on freedom of religion. We will give data of poll whether respondents consider that in our country this law is observed. It should be noted that a little more than half, 62% of respondents believe that in our country the law of the Russian Federation on freedom of religion is observed. However, it is important to note that 11.6% of respondents claim that the law is not respected and 25.5% found it difficult to answer.

The post-perestroika period and the emergence of democracy in the Russian state have caused significant changes in the religion and interreligious relations spheres. In addition to traditional religious teachings, which have experienced a period of 'revival', there is a significant number of non-traditional religious cults, the origin and financing of which mostly comes from foreign countries. The questionable activities of these newly minted cults are often controversial in the scientific community and in the media, as they are often fanatical in nature. So, to the question 'Do you think that the emergence of non-traditional religious organizations in Russia is connected with the activities of foreign religious organizations?' 45.7% of respondents answered in the affirmative; 21.5% denied the relationship; and 30.8% were undecided. The respondents (2%) who gave a different answer, we quote the following: 'Now in Russia *Ivan* lives, not remembering kinship, cultivated 'foreign' culture (Western)'; '...in Russia, they act on the orders of the United States and the West, we intend to destroy.'

According to the results of the survey, approximately the same number of respondents – 46.1% and 45.6% answered 'Yes' and 'No' to the question whether they had to communicate at least once in their lives with religious fanatics. 7.7% were undecided, and 0.6% are of the following opinion: 'Yes I have, it seems to me they are mad'; 'They can be found in monasteries, they are against the progress of humanity, as disturbed the ecology of the Earth'; 'Almost a cult hit!'; 'Not a fanatic, but a believer.' Several people stressed that they had to communicate 'very often, but I try to avoid communicating with them.'

From the point of view of our study, the question of what kind of social phenomenon is religious fanaticism was raised. The studied respondents' answers revealed the following trend. Almost half of the respondents are inclined to believe that religious fanaticism is a social phenomenon of a negative nature – 46%; only 3% believe that this is a positive phenomenon; 26.3% suggest that fanaticism can have positive qualities in certain circumstances and 23% found it difficult to answer. Meanwhile, 1.7% responded differently: 'This is an inadequate state'; 'This is a complete delirium of lazy weak people'; 'Mental illness'; 'This is the end of life'; 'Fanatic does not feel someone else's pain'; 'In different denominations of their fanatics, it has a negative impact on the personality of man'; 'In modern conditions, religious fanaticism leads to negative consequences'; 'Always causes suffering, fanatic does not hear the voice of God (conscience) and the opinion of others'; 'in faith should be'; 'A positive character, if faith is based on love, but not so much as to sacrifice for the sake of friends.'

We present the survey data on how closely the respondents relate the phenomena of religious fanaticism, extremism and terrorism among themselves. Thus, 39.9% of respondents said that religious extremism and terrorism are inextricably linked with religious fanaticism, 21.3% of them are people with higher or incomplete higher education. At the same time, one third of respondents do not link these phenomena, and one in four found it difficult to answer the question. Among those who could not answer – 19.7% with secondary general and secondary special education. 2.5% of respondents answered: 'These are two different situations, a believer can not hurt others'; 'a person without faith is like a house without a roof, so does not have the fear of God, controlled by Satan'; 'They are connected 50 by 50'. 'Not fully, in the political practice of trying to link Islamic fundamentalism and religious extremism;' 'Sometimes, depends on the situation'; 'Depends on faith'; 'Yes, but not always'; 'I do not know what religious extremism, so hard to say'.

Reflections on the psychological impact on people in the media most often illustrate examples of the activities of special services and religious sects. At this stage, scientists, religious leaders and politicians warn against the rash introduction of the law on responsibility for the manipulation of the people psychological consciousness. They are arguing that in its formulation it is quite difficult to determine the definition, while realizing that the unpunished impact on the psyche and consciousness of people leads to a violation of human rights. The respondents' opinion about the possibility of introducing this article into the criminal legislation of the Russian Federation was revealed.

So, on a question 'what do you think, whether it is necessary to bring in the criminal law article about responsibility for manipulation of psychological consciousness of the person?' Three-quarters of respondents – 70% answered in the affirmative and believe that such an article is needed; 12.4% do not think that there is such a need; 16% found it difficult to answer, and 1.6% gave a different answer. They believe: 'It is a time, because there are a lot of sects of destructive and totalitarian character'; 'Yes, but you need a definition of what consciousness is and what is manipulation'; 'No, everyone is responsible for themselves, but if it is dangerous for society, it is necessary to punish'; 'Yes, but you need to have evidence of psychological impact.'

The main reasons for the fanaticism manifestation respondents call 'the aggravation of interethnic relations' – 47.8% and 'the aggravation of social tension caused by the crisis in various spheres of human relations' – 47.7%. 'Unresolved employment problems and unemployment' are considered the reason for the activation of religious fanatics by 32.9% of the respondents. Approximately the same number of respondents – 29.3% and 27.6% – are inclined to believe that these factors can be 'criminalization of various public life's spheres' and 'illegal trafficking in weapons and other means of committing crimes'; 'The growing scale and social danger of organized crime and drug trafficking.' 'The economic and political advantage of some religious organizations to the detriment of others' can cause the activation of religious fanatics, such is the opinion of 28% of the respondents, and men who are inclined to this opinion almost twice as much as women. 'Differentiation of the population on material grounds' and 'aggravation of political struggle' is the reason for the outbreak of religious fanaticism according to an estimate of 26.3% and 25.5%. The respondents (23.1%) named the activation of foreign destructive organizations as the last important factor. We will also give other options for the respondents' answers formulating the reasons for the activation of religious fanatics:

‘Fanatics are people with mental disorders, the impetus for the manifestation of fanaticism can serve any reason’; ‘First of all, it is a crisis of spiritual development, delayed education in the child tolerance’; ‘Crisis of the family institution’; ‘Deep faith in God’.

Prevention of the social situation can be much more effective than the solution of a certain political or social problem. Religious fanaticism is a socially dangerous phenomenon that can lead to serious consequences in society and affect its stability. Therefore, it is important to determine what measures for preventing religious fanaticism could be most effective now. Among the proposed options, the respondents identified the following activities by their degree of importance: ‘Amendments on the Russian Federation legislation to toughen the requirements for registered religious organizations’, 57.7% of respondents believe. ‘Lectures, explanatory talks in educational institutions’ can be most effective, 50.2% believe. 43.1% claim that ‘social advertising in the media (social networks, newspapers, magazines, radio and television) can have the proper effect for the fanaticism prevention. According to 42.1% of need introduction to a course of school education’s subject “Religious studies”. 39.4% of respondents rely only on ‘vigilance and personal participation of every Russian Federation citizen’ in solving this problem. However, 34.2% think that only ‘a special program of law enforcement agencies to enhance the prevention of religious fanaticism’ is able to stabilize the situation. ‘Distribution of social booklets on the streets’ can contribute to solving the problem, according to 24.2 % of respondents. 2.4% did not choose any of the proposed options and found it difficult to answer this question, and some respondents believe: ‘you need to have a head on the shoulders’. All of the above will have a negative effect (on the example of the United States); ‘can help to increase the cultural and educational level’; ‘promotion of healthy lifestyles, prohibition of advertising alcohol, cigarettes, debauchery’; ‘Improving the quality of life’. There are several opinions of a pessimistic nature – ‘Nothing will help’.

To the final question: ‘How can you describe the religious situation in our region?’ – more than half of the respondents said: ‘normal’ – 65.1%; ‘safe’ – 18%; ‘crisis’ – 8.7%, and the options – ‘very safe’ and ‘catastrophic’ chose about the same number – 2.6% and 2% of the respondents. From other answers we will highlight: ‘the situation is tolerant’; ‘many more unbelieving people’; ‘people only call themselves believers’; ‘believe not in what is needed’.

4. Conclusion

The results’ analysis of sociological research showed that the peculiarity of the current state in the religious sphere is the ‘blurred’ lines between believers and non-believers, and observance of religious traditions and visits to religious institutions is often formal and there is no reason to talk about the high religiosity of the Tyumen region residents. In the Tyumen region now, there is a relatively stable religious situation, as evidenced by a high level of religious tolerance of respondents.

While defining religious fanaticism as a negative phenomenon, not all respondents put it in a single chain with concepts such as religious extremism and terrorism, most argue that they are interrelated. Based on the opinion’s study of the Tyumen region residents on the prevention of religious fanaticism, the most effective were noted: amendments on the Russian Federation legislation, to tighten the requirements for the registration of religious organizations and explanatory work in educational institutions. Empirical research has shown that the phenomenon of religiosity and religious fanaticism, which is closely related to the inner world of man, but which is socially significant, requires a delicate attitude on the part of politicians, sociologists and public organizations.

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