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Methodological Construct of the Religious Situation Analysis: Administrative and Managerial Framework

ABSTRACT

The article is dedicated to examining the framework analysis of the religious situation that are set by the Constitution of Russian Federation and the legislation of the country. The author suggests the construction of distinguishing religious situation that includes a number of positions, in particular: the structure and composition of regional religious community; the dynamics of the number of religious organisations; religious groups; the degree and kind of religious devoutness of the region's population; situation in the religious unions, etc. The suggested approach is targeted at practical activity of the state bodies encouraged to provide the highest level of satisfaction of the population's religious needs together with keeping rule of law, order, peace and consent. The religious situation in Rostov region of 2013-2014 examined in the article is supported by the present methodological construct and the empirical data.

Key words: *religious situation, religious group, religious community, freedom of conscience, control of socio-religious relationships.*

Problem statement. The word combination “religious situation” is frequently met in modern socio-political discourse. Search query suggests hundreds, even thousands of corresponding links. The majority of them deal with religious situations in a country of a country's region. The content variation of religious situations is extremely vast. At the same time there is no uniformity in scientific publications on this topic. Here is the example of the most frequently met approach: “Religious situation is a type of a social situation, such a state of affairs in the society, region, a particular object of exploration, that is characterized by the presence, type, and intensity of religious manifestations, the dynamics and direction of their changes, the pattern and degree of their impact of the society, region and the object under investigation” (Arynin, 2004, p. 200).

The articles and thesis work of Vydrina G.A. are dedicated to the concept-based analysis of a religious situation. She stipulates that: “A religious situation — is a general feature of a set of religious manifestations of the objects under analysis, that are bearers of religious devoutness. It includes a clearly identified in time and space evaluation of the state of devoutness, completed by the information about the factors shaping this situation, i.e. about its structure and inner interaction” (Aspsrova, 2009).

Taking these definitions for the general basis, it should be specially considered that the description and evaluation of the religious situation depends a lot on the social statuses of the observer (researcher), on the aims and goals of the research. No doubts that it's going to have different structure and content, if done by a social scientist, a member of Moscow Patriarchate of Russian Orthodox Church, a follower of the religious union Jehovah's Witnesses, a human rights defender, an atheist or a civil servant. Public administration shapes its own analytical frame of a religious situation. Its main criteria are defined by the constitutional and legislative goals and functions of the state, its bodies and institutions in the society. The basic states of the religious groups and socio-religious relations are regulated by the provisions of law “Concerning Freedom of Conscience and Concerning Religious Associations of Russian Federation” — Federal Law — 125 and other laws. Their assembly defines the legal status of religious communities in Russian society, which is expressed in a particular set of rights provided by the law and indicated obligations. At the same time the totality of all religious people exists more as communities confessing and practicing different religions rather as a single union. This variety of religious communities exercises their legally guaranteed statuses in different ways that influences their true socio-religious statuses. The latter is recorded in a particular religious situation at a particular site, in a particular place and at particular time.

Using the above mentioned methodology, the author suggests a frame-analysis structure of the religious situation relating to Rostov region in period 2013-2014 on the following socio-empirical attributes: confessional and quantity composition of the religious assemblies, their temporal dynamics, territorial expansion, degree and kind of religious devoutness of major religious communities, situation within the religious assemblies, exercising the main types of religious and subreligious activities (religious education, missionary work, international relations, charity, recreation), type of cooperation between the religious unions and the state.

Structure and composition of regional religious community. Religious situation is defined in this text as the condition of the religious community of Rostov region documented for the present time period (2013-2014) according to the following attributes: number of members, degree and pattern of religious devoutness, their dynamics, expansion into different districts, general types of subreligious activity (religious education) and creedless activity (charity), they all define the true general state of religious community in the society. According to the registration agency of the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation on the territory of Rostov region for the period of 31.12.2013, 569 religious organisations were registered, 109 of which were in Rostov-on-Don. They represent 29 confessions, both conventional and non-conventional for the region.

The Don archdiocese of Russian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate consists of three dioceses and has 357 organisations. According to the Don archdiocese data, Rostov-on-Don dioceses includes 130 laities, Volgodonsk — 94 and Schakhtinsk — 110. 23 organisations

comprise various religious organization of Russian Orthodox Church, 2 friaries, 1 nunnery, orthodox educational establishments, spiritual centres, etc.

Seventh Day Adventists (SDA) have 33 organisations, 3 of which are in Rostov-on-Don. They all are members of the religious union of SDA in the Republic of Kalmykia and Rostov region.

Evangelic Christian Baptists (ECB) – 32 communities, 30 of which are members of Evangelic Christian Baptists Churches Union in Rostov region and the Republic of Kalmykia, one is a member of Regional association of Russian evangelic Christian Baptists Union, another one is a member of Russian union of independent evangelic Christian Baptists Churches.

Christian of Evangelical Faith (CEF) (Pentescotals) – 23 organisations and various trends. 13 of which are members of the Sothern diocesan administration of Russian amalgamated union of Christian of Evangelical Faith (Pentescotals), 7 are members of the Christain Association of Evangelical Faith “The Church of Faith”, 2 are members of North-Caucasian Union of Christians of Evangelical Faith (Pentescotals), 2 are members of the Russian amalgamated union of Christian of Evangelical Faith of Pentescotals and 2 are members of the Centralized religious organisation Association of Independent Churches of CEF, one is included into the Transregional Administrative Centre of Christian Evangelic Faith Pentescotals Churches in Russia and one more into the Russian association of Missions of Evangelical Faith Christians (Pentescotals).

Christian of Evangelical Faith (CEF) possess 25 various organisations, 17 of which are members of the Centralized Religious Organization of Russian Church of Evangelical Faith Christians.

Jehovah’s Witnesses – 17 communities.

Islam is represented by 17 organisations of Sunni trend, 10 have a membership in Central Spiritual Governance of Muslims of Rostov region and 7 – in Spiritual Governance of Muslims of Rostov region (The Don Muftiat).

Evangelical Christians – 10 organisations with 4 in Rostov-on-Don.

Armenian Apostolic Church has 10 laities, 3 of which are in Rostov-on-Don.

Roman Catholics have 7 laities, 2 of which are in Rostov-on-Don.

Old believers – 5 organisations.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (the Mormons) – 5 communities.

Judaists – posses 4 communities, 3 of which are members of the “Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia” of Habad Hasid and 1 is a member of the Congress of Jewish Religious associations and organisations in Russia.

Buddhism – 3 communities, Krishna’s consciousness – 2, The Molokans – 1, Evangelical Christians in the Apostol’s spirit – 1, the New Apostolic Church – 1, Presbyterian Church – 1, Salvation Army – 1, Mother of God Church “Sovereign”, Church of Christ – 1. Other confessions – 2.

Temporary quantity dynamics of the largest registered religious organisations in Rostov region. Starting points are year 1988, when CPSU and Soviet State political attitude towards religion started changing, and year 1997, when the new law “Concerning Freedom of Conscience and Concerning Religious Associations” was adopted.

Type of confession	1988	1997	2000	2010	2013
Russian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate	70	211	237	265	334
Evangelical Christian Baptists	1	30	40	35	30
Seventh Day Adventists	7	25	33	32	32
Jehovah’s Witnesses	0	14	28	17	16
Muslims	1	1	5	16	17
Judaists	1	2	5	4	4
Total, including other organisations	93	324	398	467	569

Religious groups. According to the author’s expert evaluation, besides religious organisations there are about 100 legally authorized religious assemblies functioning as religious groups.

Part of them have never been registered: the Jews in favour of Jesus, Baptists “the Separated”, the Dukhobors, the Slavs motherland-believers, Slav-Ynglings, the Violet flame brotherhood, Moonies, the School of further energetic-informational development, Brahma-Kumaris, Anastasia, Falun Gong, Rerikhovsky movement, Sant Mat Surat Shabd Yoga, transcendental meditation, etc.

A significant part of both conventional and non-conventional religions for the region were registered at first but later cancelled registration and continue functioning as religious groups. That is the reason of decrease of some organisations presented in the chart.

Many religious organisations have had “subsidiary” religious groups along with the registered religious organisations: numerically insignificant laities of Moscow Patriarchate of ROC, old believers, Baptists, Pentescotals, Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Evangelical Christians, Adventists, the Salvation Army, etc. Besides there are over 10 Muslim religious groups, founded by the North Caucasian descendants under the supervisory control of the representative of the North Caucasian Muslims Coordination Council.

The main reason of the communities being reformatted into religious groups is the burden of the legal body responsibilities, firstly escaping regulatory inspections and verifications held by the law-enforcement and supervisory agencies, etc.

Level and type of the regions’ population religiosity. According to the sociological research held following the rule of the representative selection of the urban and rural adult population in February 2014 in Rostov region, the answers of those surveyed are the following: 81,0% called themselves Orthodox, 0,2% – Old believers, 1,1% – Catholics, 0,3% – Greek Catholics, 0,2% – Protestants, 0,7% – belong to other Christian confessions, 2,2% – Muslims, 0,3% – Buddhists, 0,2% – Judaists, 0,5% – pagans, 0,2% belong to other confessions, 6,3% consider themselves to be religious, but haven’t referred themselves to any confession, 7,9% – unreligious.

According to the author’s expert evaluation, based on the 2010 population Census, which was analysed by the attribute of a confession being traditional for this or that religion and by the method of personal supervision, the region is inhabited by over 70,000 of Muslims; approx. 500 of Judaists; Baptists, Pentescotals, Adventists comprise 2,000 to 4,000 each; Jehovah’s Witnesses are represented by 5,000 to 7,000 people.

Religious organisations and groups are geographically unequally distributed. Orthodox laities function in all cities and more or less

large boroughs. Judaists communities are in the regional centre, in Taganrog and Novocherkassk. Muslim organisations are in Rostov-on-Don, Novocherkassk, Schakhty and in the south-eastern parts of the region. Non-conventional religions for the Don area are mainly concentrated in Rostov-on-Don and in the neighboring towns.

Situation in religious assemblies is the result of both religious and nonreligious activity. All religious assemblies minister, perform religious rituals and ceremonies, celebrate various special occasions with no restrictions. Religious organisations of Orthodox, Muslims, Baptists, Adventists, Pentecostals, Jehovah's Witnesses and others exercised their right of performing their religious ceremonies in preventive medical institutions and hospitals, residential care facilities for the seniors and handicapped. Orthodox, Muslims, Judaists, members of Armenian Apostolic Church, Jehovah's Witnesses, Krishna followers and others exercised their right for public church services, rituals, ceremonies and assemblies in cultural centres, cemeteries and other public places. All regional religious organisations had the opportunity to produce, buy, import and distribute religious literature, audio, video and printed material and the rest objects of religious sense.

Almost all religious assemblies are involved into missionary activities. Some of them have been institutionalized as missionary centres (mission agencies, departments, services): Orthodox, Judaists (Habad), ECB, CEF, Mormons, The Salvation Army. The missionaries of Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons and "Youth with the mission" of Pentecostals are especially active and well-organised.

International relations. The majority of religious organisations maintain contacts and relations. The main ways of interaction and cooperation of confessional assemblies with the foreign countries are:

- Holy pilgrimage done by Orthodox, Catholics, Judaists;
- Back-to-back visits of religious delegations, private visits of representatives of Orthodox, Old believers, Judaists, Baptists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Pentecostals, Methodists, Presbyterians, Krishna followers;
- Invitation for a certain period of priests, prophets, missionaries, Sabbath school teachers done by Catholics, Judaists, Baptists, Evangelical Christians, Pentecostals, Methodists, Mormons, Church of Christ;
- Participation in modern Russian and international conferences, seminars dedicated to the freedom of worship, religious legislation and interdenominational relations.

According to the 2013 report of the Department of the Directorate of the Federal Migration Service of Russia in Rostov region, the area was visited by 96 foreign citizens with the purposes of "religious affairs" upon the application of such religious organisations as: Evangelic Christian Baptists Churches Union in Rostov region and the Republic of Kalmykia – 1 invitation, Christians of Evangelic Faith "Youth with the Messiah" – 30 invitations, Roman-Catholic Church – 2 invitations, Church of the last days of Jesus Christ (Mormons) – 61 invitations, Rostov Christ Church – 3 invitations. The foreign citizens mostly come from the USA – 77, Germany – 5, the Netherlands – 5, Switzerland – 2, Norway – 2, Great Britain, Pakistan, Vietnam, New Zealand are represented by one visitor each.

The Department of the Directorate of the Federal Migration Service of Russia informs about the annual number of issued invitations to foreign citizens to enter the territory of Rostov region with the purpose of "religious affairs". In 2009 – 134 invitations were issued, in 2010 – 156, in 2011 – 112, in 2012 – 128, in 2013 – 96.

Situation with exercising the right of worship and freedom of religion. Exercising the right of worship and freedom of religion in Rostov region is fully guaranteed by Russian legislation. In the period of 2013-2014 the government has not been officially addressed by the citizens, religious organisations and state bodies concerning the issues of violation of these rights or impeding exercising these rights and freedoms on the territory on the region. The exception is the complaint of the Azov Cossack community about the city administration. They believe that the city council doesn't credit them with a land plot to restore the church on Petrovskaya Square.

The main difficulty of all religious organisations, orthodox laities especially, is shortage of building and reparatory activities budgeting, underfinancing of upkeep of real and personal property and conducting statutory activities.

Interaction of the state and religious assemblies. The region follows the rule of religious assemblies being separated from the state. Which means that state bodies don't interfere into the way citizens establish their relations with religion, define their religious affiliation, they don't interfere into the activities of religious organisations even if it contradicts the legislation in force.

Alongside with the general Russian laws regulating activities of religious organisations, there were laws passed in Rostov region, that effect the interests of religious assemblies: Rostov regional law dated June 15, 2010 № 441-3C "Concerning moral and spiritual education and development of pupils in educational establishments of Rostov region". There was a rule adopted by the government of Rostov region dated December 15, 2011 № 243 "Concerning the committee on the transfer of religious purpose property arising of religious organisations' reports."

Integrated course of study "The basis of religious cultures and secular ethics" has been implemented since September 1, 2012 and is run till present moment in all educational establishments of Rostov region. The course is compulsory and is a part of the 4th year framework curriculum and is held once a week. In 2013-2014 parents of the 4th year pupils chose the following modules: "The **basics** of general religious cultures" was chosen by 10% of parents, "The **basics** of secular ethics" – by 24%, "The **basics** of Orthodox culture" – by 65%, "The **basics** of Islam" – by 3 pupils.

Besides, the educational course "The **basics** of Orthodox culture" was introduced as an independent, elective, optional course and a module within the framework of other subjects in 1041 state schools in all municipal entities (93,6% of all schools in Rostov region).

The main trends of cooperative activities between the state, religious assemblies and the local authorities in 2013-2014 were:

- Issues connected with the economic needs of religious organisations (exploitation, maintenance of building and premises, utility rates, rent, etc.);
- Legal issues on registration of religious organisations, their property and land;
- Maintaining order by the law-enforcement authorities while public events on holidays, sacred processions, annual meetings, congresses, etc.;
- Issues of spiritual and moral enlightenment, upbringing and education of children, teenagers and adults in educational establishments as well;
- Charity and mercy;

- Work in custodial facilities of Rostov region;

It should be noted that the tightest connection of the state authorities is with the representatives of traditional religions. The dioceses of the Don Metropolis have over two dozens of contracts of cooperation with various ministries, departments, and regional health, cultural, educational and social work establishments. The heads of Rostov region officially congratulate the Orthodox, Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Armenian Apostolic Church followers with the major religious events. The head of the above listed religious streams are regularly invited to socially important public mass events such as Victory Day celebration, liberation of Rostov region from the Nazi aggressors, National Unity Day, etc.

The heads and the representatives of the Don Metropolis of Russian Orthodox Church, Rostov region's Central Spiritual Governance for Muslims, Rostov religious Jewish organization take part in "Rostov regional antiterrorism program" and "Complex preventive plan for extremism in ethnic and religious environment in Rostov region in 2013-2015". They participate in thematic media programs, meetings with the young people, scientific conferences and seminars, touch the above mentioned problems in their sermons.

Violation on religious legislation in 2013-2014. In May 2013 in accordance with the decision of Zimovnikovskiy Court it was declared to stop building of a mosque by a private person in a private courtyard in the town of Zimovniki. In September 2013 with decision was left unchanged by the regional court.

On October 18, 2013 in the farmstead Sovdya of Zavetinsky Region a conflict arose because of a 7th grade pupil of a state school wearing a hijab at the lesson. She was later supported by two other girls and four boys who came to school in hijabs and side-locks. On October 22 and 23, representatives of the regional government hold preventive measures such as consultations, meeting with parents and public meeting. The conflict was settled down as a result.

In November 2013 a criminal case under part 1 of article 282 of the Criminal Code of Russian Federation was initiated and imam khatib of Rostov cathedral mosque was accused of religious hatred incitement.

Religious education. There is 1 establishment of higher professional religious education in the region with 300 of full- and part-time students. This is Don Spiritual Seminary of Rostov-on-Don Archdiocese of Moscow Patriarchy of ROC.

Almost all religious assemblies offer a Sabbath schools model of teaching for their followers.

There is a department of theology on the faculty of philosophy and culture in Southern Federal University (major 033400). There are 68 part-time students in the department.

Situation in the social field of activity of religious organisations. Almost all religious assemblies are involved in the charity mainly targeted at the co-religionists in need. The Don metropolis is engaged into the most variable and mass-scale charitable activities. These are 11 Orthodox sisterhoods (328 sisters of charity) in hospitals, over 100 diet kitchens visited by up to 6,000 people annually, "Critical pregnancy" advisory centre in Rostov-on-Don, "Drugs-free Rostov" metropolis rehabilitation centre. 170 people underwent a rehabilitation course there in 2013. Besides, four children's summer camps provided accommodation for over 600 people.

Other religious organisations have their own rehabilitation centres as well. The Church Union ECB have 2, "The Exodus" CEF — 8, Pentecostals — 2. Judaists, Baptists, Adventists and Pentecostals organize summer camps for their children. Catholics work with ICP and mentally challenged children. The Salvation Army is engaged in helping IHV positive people. Orthodox, Baptists, Adventists and Muslims are involved in charitable activities for prisoners.

Orthodox, Protestants, Judaists and Muslims participated in fundraising in favour of those affected by the flood in the Far East of Russia.

Interreligious relations are characterized by the absence of legally registered conflicts between people of various confessions. In November 2013 several dozens of Cossacks picketed the building accommodating the religious organization Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (the Mormons).

Conclusions.

1. The suggested frame-analysis structure of studying religious situation from the perspective of providing religious and civil rights and regulating the way socio-religious relations are functioning, the latter guaranteed by the state, includes supervising the following components: the structure and composition of regional religious community; the dynamics of the number of religious organisations; religious groups; the degree and kind of religious devoutness of the region's population; situation in the religious unions; international relations; situation with exercising the right of worship and freedom of religion; cooperation of the state and religious assemblies; religious education; situation with social activity of religious organisations.
2. The current analytical frame can be applied of the level of a settlement, district, territorial entity of the Russian Federation or the whole country. It can serve as a recommended model of investigation, comprising several modules, each of which can be used separately or combined with other depending on the tasks and objectives of studies.
3. The suggested image of the religious situation allows the state authorities do purposeful planning and modify their activities in religious sphere in order to meet the population's needs to the full and maintain order, rule of law, peace and harmony.
4. The analysis of the religious situation conducted on the data gathered in Rostov region in 2013-2014, demonstrates its stability and dynamics within the legal framework.

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