

**ORTHODOX CULTURE IN MODERN RUSSIAN EDUCATION:
TO THE PROBLEM OF CULTURAL REFLECTION**

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Abstract. The article presents a theoretical and methodological approach to the analysis of the practice of teaching / studying knowledge about religion from the standpoint of cultural reflection. The article main part structure and content are aligned in accordance with three methodological principles: the coherence of the systems “Society - Education” by E. Durkheim, the sociocultural principle by P.A. Sorokin and the principle of unity and complementarity of function and context. A consistent analysis of the main aspects for the reflection of religion in Russian society and education results in a comprehensive description of the corresponding problem for subsequent empirical analysis.

Religion reflection in education is the understanding of the religious phenomena and processes in terms of functions, goals and the objectives of education. It has complex and potentially controversial character due to the diffusion of the education institutional contexts and other social institutions: faiths, families, the media, etc. The field of their intersection and potential conflict of values / interpretations is the consciousness of the education target subject - the student. The quality of his final reflective correlation between the different versions of religion understanding determines the achievement or non-achievement the educational goals and tasks in terms of its study. In terms of Niklas Luhmann, representations that provide self-referencing and external reference of subjects and practices, and their most profound, universal and sustainable part related to the cultural patterns, can provide the key to the understanding and, based on it, resolving the potential and real conflict situations in this area.

The analytical model proposed for the describing and solving the problem of the religion reflection in the modern Russian education involves three dimensions: the axis “social subject - social structure - semantic pattern”; the axis "function - context"; the axis of "society - education." This approach allows "unravel" the problem node, which is presented as a series of several contradictions.

The subjects in the society take different mindsets / reflective attitudes regarding to the religion, which may not fit into the frame of the dominant reflection program. This creates a dysfunctional potential for interactions in

the field of a religious situation. Accordingly, the education subjects form and express the various orders for the evaluation / interpretation of the religion in education, both in terms of its quantitative presence in the educational communication, and in the qualitative part of the teaching content. At the same time, a number of requests and expected educational results go beyond the proposed reflective frame. The quantitative and qualitative parameters of such a discrepancy still remain largely uncertain.

There is a tension between the political-ideological and objective-scientific intentions of the religion reflection in the structural-institutional relations in the society. In the field of education, it is expressed through the latent or explicit conflict between the teaching (principle of science) and educational (principle of cultural conformity) functions of education, which is complemented by the contradiction between the particular nature of the corresponding educational segment and the large-scale tasks assigned to it.

In the cultural and semantic terms, the initial contradiction is between the religious and secular ideological meanings and values - it is emphasized by the contradiction between the asymmetry of the cultures representation in the society in favor of the secular culture (interpretive modus) and the active revitalization of religion (broadcast modus). The secular culture is not always capable to interpret the religious meanings authentically; at the same time, it generates various, including opposite in content, assessments / interpretations of the religious realities. In the field of education, this contradiction takes the form of a probabilistic conflict between the pro- and counter-religious patterns of evaluation / interpretation of religion in a secular cultural perception matrix, which vary in both the subject and the object plans of reflection.

Keywords: Russian education, religion in education, reflection of religion, cultural reflection, Orthodox culture

Introduction

A set of issues related to the religion in the modern education system is a significant problem field for the world religion sociology, where the corresponding issues are raised and resolved in the interdisciplinary space of sociology - theology – philosophy. In the Russian reality, this issue is most acute due to a number of historical and cultural circumstances. “Religion in education” is accepted by the public and is evaluated by the experts extremely ambiguously, while a radical resolution of this problem is not foreseen in the near foreseeable future (Lebedev S.D., 2014). The main prerequisites and reasons for this situation include: a) the high degree and hard character of the secularization processes preceding it in Russian / Soviet society; b) the post-Soviet radical political and ideological turn

towards religion; c) a confessional-oriented religion teaching project in secondary and high school as the main form of the educational reflection of religion. At the same time, this contradiction remains insufficiently reflected at the system sociological level.

This circumstance requires the development and application to the study and practical resolution this problem node of the new research approaches using the theoretical and methodological set of modern sociology. As one of those, a cultural-reflective approach can be proposed, schematically presented in this article.

Methodology and methods

The question of religion teaching in modern school goes beyond the private frame of the organizational, pedagogical and legal issues. We see its deep universal foundation in the field of sense-setting, due to close connection with these factors by the relations of mutual conditionality.

The main categorical tools, allowing deep understanding of the problem situation with the religion in education, are the concepts of “reflection” and “culture”, the objective references of which revealed their key importance for the modern social processes in the recent decades (Giddens E., 2011; Alexander J., 2013). The corresponding concepts and their derivatives form the conceptual base of the research.

Religion reflection in education is the understanding of the religious phenomena and processes from the approach of the subject essence (functions, goals and objectives) of education in its specific historical version. It has complex and potentially controversial character due to the diffusion of the education institutional contexts and other social institutions: faiths, families, media, etc., which intersects and collides in the focus of the “knowledge screen” and the individual culture of the target subject of education - the learner (Lebedev S.D., 2014:75).

Cultural reflection is the comprehension of the significant realities (in this case, the complex of the religious references) from the standpoint of the universals and the basic values of a certain culture. In subject matter it corresponds with the most existentially, existentially significant relationships, “the ontological foundations of being” (Dmitriev A.V., Ivanov V.N., Toshchenko J.T., 2018:199). In terms of the religion reflection, the secular and confessional cultural patterns are the most relevant, as well as their relationship and interaction in the public discourses.

As a result, *cultural religion reflection in education* can be defined as a set of assessments / interpretations of religion, formed in the process of educational communication and resulting in the student’s mind under the influence of the secular and religious (confessional) meanings and values.

Research methodology principles:

1. The society sets the frame, the key reflection patterns of the reality, on which the education is oriented (Durkheim E., 1995:254, 261).
2. In every act of the reflection there are: the subject, the structure of the relations, the sociocultural principle “personality – society – culture (Sorokin P.A., 1992:218).
3. Two sides of the reflection: the function (that actively invests in the understanding of the reality) and the context – a social “resource” and the limitations that are associated with it).

Findings

Further we schematically present the description of the religion reflection in Russian education regarding to the current situation in accordance with this model.

Subject modus – *society* – *function*. In terms of the religion reflection and Orthodox culture in particular, the determining social subjects of modern Russian society are the state and the leading religious associations, represented primarily by the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (ROC MP). Their interaction and the established model of the relations form the frame rules of the religion reflection (“reflective program”) in the society. The state request for its stable and complete legitimation in the society is manifested through addressing to the authority of the most influential and historically authoritative religion and confession, represented by the largest and the most significant religious organization (Zaichenko A., 2003:6). The church request is maximally to use the institutional channels for preserving and expanding its influence in the society and on it, including through the education channel (The Foundations..., 2000:94).

Subject modus – *society* – *context*. The resource and the religion reflection limitations and the Orthodox culture as its leading referent in the social-subject dimension are determined by the people contingent, massively involved in such reflection through the thematic social attitudes. They express both the demand and support of the corresponding reflective program, and vice versa – the request for the alternative reflective programs competing with it. The subject context of the religion reflection is determined primarily by the citizens of the Russian Federation, who shares the mass pro-religious mentality, where the “pro-Orthodox consensus” is best known and described in science (Furman D.E., Kaariainen K., Karpov V., 2007:20-25), and who shares the mass counter-religious mentality (Sukhorukov V.V., 2018).

Subject modus – *education* – *function*. It seems to us, it is rightful to consider the situation in the reverse perspective in the institutional field of education. Namely: the determining and the “final” subjects of religion

reflection in education are the potential and the real learners (and in part, until they reach full legal age, their parents / guardians). Accordingly, by introducing religious innovations, such as "Basics of Orthodox Culture and Secular Ethics" and other similar subject disciplines, into the modern mass educational communication, their initiators assume that these proposals should be demanded by the people who shares the relevant religious and pro religious attitudes. This contingent of the students and their family members.

Subject modus – education – context. To tell generally, all other education subjects involved in the design, preparation, organization and broadcasting of the relevant material, act as “support services”, performing the preparatory, instrumental stages of the reflective process. As a result, the resource and the limitations of the corresponding reflective agenda are determined by the “providers” of such educational programs – in the case under review, these are also the partner institutions "state-church" represented by the respective organizational structures. The agreement between them forms the prevailing official agenda (“frame”) of the religion reflection in education, which conceptually defines, model, identifies the “unorganized hum of voices” of the main subject of such reflection, allowing it to comprehend its position regarding to such programs.

Structural-institutional modus – society – function. "Functional consensus" about the reflection object, adopted in the society, sets the course of its practical orientation. In the context of the post-Soviet religious situation, the peculiarities of the reflection of religion determines the sociopolitical request for the legitimizing function of the latter in a “spike” with a socially integrated function. In the context of the post-Soviet religious situation, the peculiarities of the religion reflection determines the sociopolitical request for the legitimizing function of the latter together with a socially integrated function. We can talk about the dominance of the political-ideological concept, positioning the traditional Russian religion, led by the Orthodox Christianity, as a public "good", it contributes the strengthening of the society unity and its moral regulatives, which is coupled with the positioning a number of alternative, mainly non-traditional religions and faiths as "non-good" (Lunkin R.N., 2012). Corresponding value-ideological attitudes define the frame of the officially demanded and socially approved religion reflection in Russian society. The request for the expert, scientific reflection is therefore satisfied selectively.

Structural-institutional modus – society – context. Resource, i.e. the institutional possibilities and reflection religion limitations in the society, on which the level and the qualitative characteristics of such reflection depends, are determined in this modus by the development of the main

institutional reflexivity of the elements – the counterparties of the religious situation: secular and religious. In this connection M. Rosati proposes a simple and heuristic four-position classification scheme for such ratio, based on the criterion of the “mutual complementary training” of the “religion” and “modernity” institutions (Rosati M., 2014:284-288). To our opinion, the Post-Soviet religious situation in Russia is characterized by the contradictory combination of the features of the two intermediate options, which the author designates as the “authoritarian contemporaries” (non-reflective secular institutions with the reflexive religious ones) and the “paternalistic pacification of religion” (vice versa). At the same time, the state, as a more modernized agent, uses the authority of the main religious tradition (Orthodox Christianity represented by the ROC MP) as its political resource, based on “common traditions, ethnic, cultural and religious affiliation” (Zaichenko A., 2003:6).

Structural-institutional modus – education – function. Based on the fact that the education system provides the constant systematic reflection of the congruence of the society ideals and realities (Sharonova S.A., 2011:85-87), its activity can be represented as the display of the public demands in the development, modification, implementation and realization of the educational standards and programs aimed at drawing together of the realities and ideals. Objectively, in modern Russian education, during the recent decades two important requests have been expressed but still not fully satisfied: a) the request for the strengthen and qualitatively new religious component of the educational content; b) the request for the general educational, value-oriented component of the educational content. The most common variant of the complex response of the education system to these requests became the project of the “confessional-oriented education”, supposed a combination of the introductory religious studies and the traditional bringing program / value orientation program, the integration of which is based on mono-confessional accent of the content of the relevant education segment (Metlik I.V., 2000:150), first of all, the Orthodox culture (Metlik I.V., 2000:139).

Structural-institutional modus – education – context. The educational system in the modern society is an institution of the specially organized communication aimed at the reproduction of its social code. The condition for such reproduction is the systematic “congruence reflection” of the society ideals and realities, which determines the content of the educational standards and programs. The basis of the educational communication are the principles: text as a form of translation; polydisciplinarity; Institutional role matrix "teacher – student"; scientific legitimization of the disciplines; classroom mode of the educational activities (Sharonova S.A., 2011:135-

137). The study of the religion in the Russian school is limited by the only one academic subject of the humanities cycle, it is taught in 4 classes of Russian secondary schools (modules of “Basics of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics” except for “Secular Ethics”) or for several years (“Orthodox Culture”, “Islamic Culture”, “Spiritual study of local lore” and similar disciplines in secondary and higher educational institutions in a number of Russian regions).

Semantic (cultural) modus – *society* – *function*. The semantic dimension of the religion reflection in the modern society is formed in the interaction of the two types cultural and symbolic universes: the secular, representing the dominant of the actual culture in the modern societies, and the religious (confessional). The crisis situation of the post-Soviet society and its culture led to the sharp transition from the strategy of confrontation and religion suppression to its reception, which, in conditions of the insufficient formation of the institutional and cultural mechanisms of the latter, resulted in the situation characterized by J.T. Toshchenko as a paradox (Toshchenko J.T., 2008:356-361). Religious cultural traditions and sociocodes, in turn, are designed to preserve their semantic (creedal) and ritual-behavioral (religious) grounds, but at the same time adapt to the secular modern mainstream by means of three-fold reflection: intentional maintenance by the religion of the cognitively dissonant relations with the other religions / confessions, taking a certain position regarding the authority of sciences that have a monopoly on the worldly knowledge, and embedding them in the conditions of the constitutional statehood and profane morality (Habermas Y., 2002:120).

Semantic (cultural) modus – *society* – *context*. The possibilities and limitations of the semantic dimension of the reflection of religion are associated with the expressed quantitative and qualitative asymmetry of the representation of secular and confessional cultures in the secularized society. This circumstance objectively makes the secular discourses the main source of the religious and cultural reflection. This puts the secular semantic patterns in the preferential position of the interpretative, and the confessional into the interpretable. The religious content of the culture is perceived by the majority only through the filter of the secular values and knowledge. Here we can talk about the actualization of the cultural broadcasting and ideological functions of religion, but only to the extent and quality allowed by the patterns of the secular culture.

Semantic (cultural) modus – *education* – *function*. The main function of the cultural modus of reflection in the institutional frame of education is the socializing influence of the corresponding subject-specific segment on the target subject of education. It is carried out through the broadcast and

assimilation by the latter of some generally accepted sociocode (Sharonova S.A., 2011:65-66). In this connection, the society broadcasts through the school at least three blocks of the sociocode related to the religion reflection: a) the block of basic values, where the certain normative religion concept plays the role of the additional legitimacy for the certain ideas and norms of behavior (“scrap”); b) the block of values and knowledge of the cultural and historical heritage, where the religious culture is one of the important content components; c) the block of the theological knowledge, where the religion acts as an independent object of the social reality which a member of the society should be familiar at the level of the “theoretical minimum”.

Semantic (cultural) modus – education – context. The indicated meaningful moments are perceived by the students through the prism of the previously acquired thematic values and ideas, so that the students are called upon to seek and find the model for their agreement. As D. Hervieu-Leger notes, “the social logic of the spiritual“ self-made ”(*spiritual do-it yourself composition*) cannot be comprehended, if we disregard both the social conditions of the access to the symbolic resources of this particular individual and the cultural conditions in which these resources are used ”(Hervieu-Leger D., 2015:258). This refers not only to the religious choice, but it also characterizes broader and more varied process of the worldview understanding. As a result, the cultural-semantic resource of the religion reflection in education is, first of all, the certain pattern of the educational knowledge (Zborovsky G.E., 2012:18-20), broadcast during the educational process. This knowledge has a worldview, suggesting the cultural reflection.

Conclusion

The contradiction here takes the form of a probabilistic conflict between the pro- and counter-religious patterns of evaluation / the religion interpretation in the secular cultural matrix of perception, which vary in both the subject and the object plans of reflection. The identification of the content and structure of such a conflict, its main factors, assessment and the forecast of the relevant risks are presented by the tasks of the specific research in the relevant field.

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