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Confessional factor in migrants' adaptation process

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Abstract

The main objective of the paper is a research of the confessional factor as an important component of the solution of the problem of social adaptation of Muslims in the Russian society. Along with the methods of historico-comparative, statistical analysis of the data was used. As a result, the discussion on Muslims living in Europe has two directions: the multiculturalism theory and the concept of constant integration of Muslims into the European society. In conclusion, the authors emphasize on the existing programmes aimed at the regulation of the social adaptation of Muslim migrants in Russia.

Keywords: migrants, adaptation, confessional, Russia, Islamism.

Factor confesional en el proceso de adaptación de los migrantes

Resumen

El objetivo principal del artículo es una investigación del factor confesional como un componente importante de la solución del problema de la adaptación social de los musulmanes en la sociedad rusa. Junto con los métodos de análisis histórico-comparativo, se utilizó el análisis estadístico de los datos. Como resultado, la discusión sobre los musulmanes que viven en Europa tiene dos direcciones: la teoría del multiculturalismo y el concepto de integración constante de los musulmanes en la sociedad europea. En conclusión, los autores hacen hincapié en los programas existentes dirigidos a la regulación de la adaptación social de los migrantes musulmanes en Rusia.

Palabras clave: migrantes, adaptación, confesión, Rusia, islamismo.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since 1950-s, migration processes have become global, as they are present in all the countries, social groups, spheres of social life. Migration has become one of the main factors of social development. Globalization processes which embraced the end of the 20th century – the beginning of the 21st century, created the preconditions for intensification of migration into other countries. The migration is perceived by the indigenous population as the

phenomenon threatening the national identity. In Russia – the country with its original historically formed culture – a tendency is observed of a negative attitude to migration and migrants. The basis of such negativism is two main categories: “friend” or “foe”. Islamism is perceived in Russia as “foe” which can be explained by significant confessional differences between the Slavic and Muslim religions. Malashenko (2006), in his paper titled “How Islam is perceived by us” points out the following: “In Russia, Islam is traditionally regarded as “friend”, but at the level of mass unconscious Russians perceive it as something extraneous” (Malashenko, 2006: 13). Answering the question: “Which religion is perceived by you as the most extraneous?” the majority (26%) points at Islam. The present paper studies the role of the confessional aspect of a migrant’s identity. There are certain reasons showing the topicality of the chosen subject. First of all, “Modern migrants have at a great extent ethnic and confessional identity” (Neikhts, 2006: 4). Secondly, religion fulfills the sense-making, compensatory, regulative and other functions, and in such a way it may help the more successful adaptation of migrants to new life conditions. Thirdly, migration changing the confessional balance in a region may create instability. Finally, in Russia, interethnic interaction, the interaction of the Russians with migrants to some extent depends on the fact that most of the migrants are followers of Islam and tries to follow all the ceremonials.

2. TOPICALITY

The topic of the presented work was chosen because of interethnic and interreligious relations in the state are of the most important factors, which effect on the society condition. Modern Russia is one of the states which has a variegated ethnic composition. This fact claims to realize measured social policy from the authorities. The disregard of the interests of different ethnic or religious groups could lead to social constraint and conflicts in the future.

3. LATEST PUBLICATIONS

The scientists of different scientific spheres have dedicated their papers to the problem of migration. For example, geographers J. A. Zayonchkovskaya (1994) and V. I. Perevedentsev (1966) aim to explore the rules of nature and social interaction which are reflected in historic migration tendencies. Sociologists L. N. Gumilev (1972) and Z. V. Sikevich (2008) characterize migration from the point of view of ethnic groups. Economists G. S. Vechkanov (1981) and L. L. Rybakovsky (1987) consider labor resources formation, urbanization processes, and the economic structure. There have even been successful attempts in creating migrationology (Denissenko et al., 1989). As for the papers researching religious factors in migrants' adaptation, special attention can be paid to the ones written by N. P. Neikhts (2006) and Yu. R. Galimova. (2005). The papers by many authors are dedicated to socio-cultural adaptation as the migration

factor in Russia: A. D. Gladush (2008) "Socio-Cultural Adaptation of Foreign Citizens to the Conditions of Studying and Living in Russia", S. O. Yelishev (2013) "Youth Policy of Islamic Organizations in the Russian Federation", M. M. Kerimov (2009) "Traditional Muslim Culture of Russia in the Conditions of Modernization: Philosophic and Cultural Analysis", "Social Adaptation and Integration of Migrants in the Contemporary Russian Society", S. A. Lyausheva (2004) "Traditions and Mechanisms of Cultural Adaptation", E. A. Pain (2006) "Ethno-Political Conditions of Civil Integration of the Russian Society", O. Ye. Khukhlayev (2013) "Integration of Migrants in the Educational Environment as a Socio-Psychological Problem", and other. Confessional issues connected with migration have been recurrently raised by the scientific community. The Muslim issue is especially topical in the context of globalization and mass migration of people of other ethnicities to Russia. In connection with that, G. N. Engelgardt (2007) discussed the issue of the formation and activities of Muslim communities in Russia. A. Malashenko, A. Starostin (2015) studied the features of Islamism in Russian regions, in particular, the manifestations of Islam in the contemporary Urals. The problems of fears towards Islamism were studied by Suslova (2012) and others.

Despite numerous problems of study of migration and the impact thereof on the demography make-up of the host country, the issues connected with the processes of socio-cultural adaptation of migrants remain topical. The existence of ethnical and confessional groups inevitably leads to assimilation of one culture into the other by virtue of the interaction of its representatives in different spheres: education,

science, culture, politics, etc. Significant are psychological demotivates which lead to perception of Muslims as “strangers”, and that result in complications of their integration into the Russian society (Golikov, 2007). In this aspect, such sources are important today as an internet resource. The Tatar World which contains information about the population of Muslims in the territory of Russia and their quantitative classification by vethnic groups and peoples (The Tatar World, 2003) and the paper by a foreign scholar M. Dittrich (2006) titled “Muslims in Europe: Addressing the Challenges of Radicalization”, in which factual data is presented about the number of Muslims in different countries of the world (Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and others) in relation to the total population. An important research method which will allow to reveal the tendency of Russia’s population attitude towards Muslims is the method of analysis of contemporary mass media publications and look-back analysis of the changes in the tendencies of attitude towards Islamists migrated to Russia. As an example, the following sources may be given which will be of interest for the study: newspaper of new Tajikistan Asia-Plus “The Role of Islam in the Life of Central Asian Migrants in Moscow” (Asia-Plus, 2014), newspaper Ansar “The Quantity and the Quality. Muslims of Russia in Front of the Challenges of Demography and Migration” (Ansar Newspaper, 2015), and others. In order to reveal the particulars of adaptation of Muslims in Russia, it is necessary to use the comparative approach to the conditions of adaptation in other countries. This will allow to have a clearer view on problems which are faced by the indigenous population and migrants. The comparative approach is especially topical for tracing the reasons and factors

determining the difficulties of social adaptation of Muslim migrants, as well as determining the role of confession differences at that. For comparison of the practices of Muslims' adaptation in different countries of the world, it is expedient to analyze such papers as programs of fundamental studies by Presidium of the Russian Academy of Sciences: "Adaptation of Peoples and Cultures to the Changes in the Natural Environment, Social and Technogeneous Transformations" which is related to the project "Russian Muslims: Contemporary Challenges, Adaptation Mechanisms and Practices"; R. G. Landa (2002) "Muslims in the West", G. S. Solodova (2010) "Muslim Migrants: Attitudes and Practices in the Context of Russian Society", and other. The study of confessional differences and demographic differences presupposes the use of the ethno-demographic method. Here, the following papers may be used: V. N. Arkhangelsky (2006) "Ethnic Differentiation of Birth Rates and Reproductive Behavior in Russia", L. L. Rybakovsky (2003) "Russia and New Foreign Countries: Migration Exchange and Impact thereof on the Demographic Dynamics" S. V. Ryazantsev (2001) "Integration of Ethnic Migration into the European Community: Problems of Administration", "World Religions in the Context of Contemporary Culture: New Prospects of Dialogue and Mutual Understanding" (Spivak & Shenkman, 2011), "Contemporary Russia and the World: Alternatives of Development (Ethno-Confessional Conflicts and Challenges in the 21st Century)".

4. OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the paper is research of the confessional factor as an important component of the solution of the problem of social adaptation of Muslims in the Russian society. Taking into consideration the fact that Muslims are bearers of a certain culture, system of values, and other, the study of influence of one culture on another, of conflictogenity factors which are leading to disturbance of public peace on religious basis, are of interest. The study will be a valuable material for solution of ethno-demographic problems in Russia, further globalization and assistance to migrants in the inclusion into Russian culture.

5. METHODOLOGY

Theoretical methods were used in this research. The authors did the analysis of literature and Internet-sources and made a comparison of presented results. The framework methodology of the study of the confessional factor in the process of migrants' adaptation is the method of statistical analysis of the data on migration processes in Russia.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Migrants professing Islam in Russia belong to different Islam branches. For example, the Kyrgyz in their approach to religion are in

some way similar to the Russians. They sometimes may go to mosque, celebrate Muslim feasts. The Dagestani or Chechens tend to follow the ceremonials and in this way, willingly or not, demonstrate their cultural otherness to native people. The Uzbeks and Tajiks are religious as a rule, but they are not inclined to demonstrate their religious ceremonials. However, the peculiarity of the migrants from Central Asia lies in the fact that they do not distinguish between such notions as ethnos, national culture, behavior, religion. Indifferent relation to religion for them means the refusal of their national identity. Such relations with religion are the reason for the fact that the Kyrgyz and Tajiks can be naturalized easiest of all, because their national culture is mostly connected to pagan ideas. The others are very hard to be naturalized. But it is just a general tendency, not a wish to emphasize the original inability of a certain group for naturalization. In general, mass migrant flow and its consequences (the construction of mosques and prayer halls; mass prayers, Muslim clothes, hundreds of Muslim sites on the internet etc.) are negatively perceived by the Russian society.

According to the census of population in 2013-2014, about 2-3 million migrated to Russia. The migration of natives of other countries into Russia is facilitated by the national policy in the sphere of migration issues. G. N. Engelgardt (2007) states that about 2.8 million. Muslims live in Russia, and of them the most Islamized group are natives of Dagestan, Ingushetia, Chechnya, and others. About 800,000 are Turkic peoples. According to statistical data, the percentage of Muslims in relation to the overall population of Great Britain is 2.6%

(55,000,000 is overall population, 1,406,000 are Muslims), in Germany the figure is 3.7% (82,000,000 is overall population, 3,040,000 are Muslims), in France: 8.9% (56,000,000 is overall population, 5,000,000 are Muslims), in Russia: 11% (143,500,000 is overall population, 14,500,000 are peoples adhering to Islamic tradition). The results of statistics can be represented in the form of a diagram (see Figure 1).

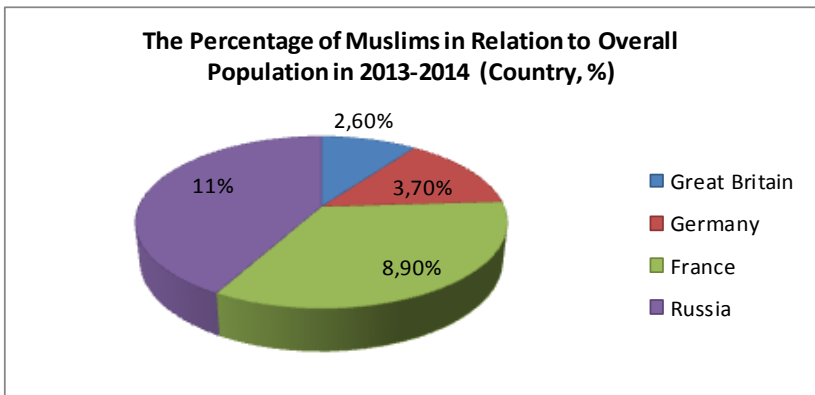


Figure 1. Percentage Ratio of Muslims in Relation to Overall Population (The calculations are based on results presented in works of S. O. Yelishv (2013)

Peoples adhering to Islamic tradition, the total population of which is 14,500,000, the following breakdown into groups is observed: Tatars (5,558 thou. people), Bashkirs (1,673.8), Chechens (1,361.0), Avars (757.1), Kazakhs (655.1), Azerbaijani (621.5), Kabardians (520.1), Dargins (510.2), Kumyks (422.5), Ingushs (411.8) (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. Groups of Peoples Adhering to Islamic Tradition in Russia (The calculations are based on results presented in works of O.Ye. Khukhlayev (2013), A. Malashenko & A. Starostin (2015), S. O. Yelishhev (2013))

In contemporary Russia, the migration of Muslims to eastern and northern regions of the country is observed. In the period of 2000-2010, the number of Muslim communities had increased, which participate in the political and religious activity of Russia. The migration processes raise topical issues of demographic changes, changing the very structure of the society, and leading to the formation of religiously oriented social units made by migrants from the Islamic world (Malashenko & Starostin, 2015). The attitude of the Muslim community in Russia towards migrants-Islamites is two-fold. On the one hand, the President of the Russian Council of Muftis Ravil Gainutdinov often criticizes the authorities: “For several months already we have been observing a mass pumping of negative information background on Islam, Muslims, migrants, inter alia through federal channels” (Baum, 2008: 89) – Gainutdinov reported on

the meeting of the Advisory Council on International Relations and Interaction with Religious Associations. On the other hand, we cannot but pay attention to the attempts of some Islam leaders to distance themselves from migrants-co-religionists, a hostile attitude to whom is often transferred to the native people of the Volga territory and the Caucasus adhering to Islam. “Somebody would consider it strange, but the Caucasians do not always defend migrants because of the only reason that the number of their co-religionists is constantly growing due to it” (Baum, 2008: 92) – a member of the Expert Board of the Russian Council of Muftis Rinat Mukhametov stated – “Though the Caucasians themselves often tend to become inner migrants, they often think the same of migration as the other people of the country, i.e. considering their own interests” (Baum, 2008: 119).

The migration of Muslims started to be regarded as the major problem of European states only with the understanding of a new phenomenon – Islam radicalism in the 20th-21st centuries. Only then the Western society started to understand that Muslim migrants, in general, prefer, under the influence of certain circumstances, not to assimilate. On the opposite, they contribute their own traditions into the culture of the host countries, and ask for special rights in order to preserve their identity. For example, there were cases when the children of Turkish migrants in the third generation living in Germany constantly went to Turkey to find a partner. They did not want to marry ethnic Germans because of absolutely different approaches to marriage, though these people did not consider themselves to be religious. There are two main factors of adaptation of Muslim migrants

in Russia. The first factor includes the fact that Muslims in Russia, as a rule, are representative of indigenous peoples living in the territory of the Russian Federation, and because of that their social adaptation does not cause difficulties. However, the migration of Muslims on the basis of labor interest is a serious obstruction to their adaptation into the Russian society. For comparison, ideological slogans of the Western Europe may be recalled, which proclaim the main principle: "Islamization of Muslims", according to which the European Community blocks any attempts of natives of the Islamic world to integrate into the European Community.

In general, the discussion on Muslims living in Europe has two directions: the multiculturalism theory and the concept of constant integration of Muslims into the European society. Recently, the top-level statements of a crisis of multiculturalism started to appear. For instance, the Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel, the Prime-Minister of Great Britain David Cameron and ex-President of France Nikolas Sarkozy made such statements. However, the acknowledgement of the crisis of multiculturalism cannot resolve the problem of the growing number of Muslims in European countries. Moreover, the inability of the authorities to control the situation suggests a significant change of ethnic and confessional structure of Europe in the future, which finally will end in new ethnic and cultural identity. The process is going to be achy and rather unpleasant, because the driving force of the process will be namely radical Islamists who preferred not the integration, but the intrusion of their own rules to Europeans.

In this case, the main questions are how many radicals there are in relation to all mosque members and whether the refusal to integration is only the choice of migrants or it is the weakness of adaptation politics. Will Europe become Muslim? The statistics and forecasts on European Muslim community growing, everyday communication with Muslims, mosque construction in European countries, women wearing hijab and the other facts of communication between the representatives of the two main religions – Christianity and Islam – worry Europeans. That is why different concepts under which Europe is going to be assimilated by Muslims are becoming popular (Landa, 2002). However, most of the European scientists believe that ideas about future Islamization of Europe are exaggerated. This is proved by some facts of the life of the Muslim community in Europe. Muslims from different countries came, as a rule, to solve their economic, social and political problems. Besides welfare, in the West they get an opportunity to choose the limits of their religiosity which they did not have in their countries. And most of them have chosen Islam as their cultural identity, i.e. they continue to identify themselves as Muslims, but stop taking part in a religious cult which is proven by statistics. For example, according to French sociologists, in France only 5% of the Muslims go to mosque regularly, from 12% to 30% do not go there at all, about a third of them pray every day at least once, 68 % are supporting secularism. These symptoms are similar for European Muslims, which shows of adherence of the majority of them to laic views.

The tendency to weakening or at least changing the depth of religiosity in Islam gave rise to a global phenomenon in European political views: conceptual modernization of Islam aiming at combining European social rules with Muslim standards. Concepts on Islam modernization are proposed not only in Europe, but in Russia as well. All of them represent an ideological component of Islam reforms, which is supposed not to take arms, but to adapt the religion to modern realities as the answer to modern challenges. As an example of Islam modernization, we can propose Turkey after Kemalism Revolution. The father of Kemalism, which is the national ideology of the Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, in 1924 called to stop using religion as a political instrument and to return to it its sacred sense. Such politics in practice turned into the total secularization of the society in all its spheres, including education, justice, marriage and everyday fashion. Turkey became a secular state, following Western standards and being the example for all Islam reformers. Nevertheless, many Europeans are concerned with the threat of Islam, and the concerns are not groundless. It is commonly known that radical Islamists thinking of civilization revenge is open to say that Islam should become the main religion of Europe, that in future Europe and Maghreb should become a united caliphate.

How can the European Union cope with a potential threat of Islam and preserve its ethnic and cultural identity? This idea gives rise to a certain social message backed by the adherents of the theory of civilization clash, which leads to Muslims' dissatisfaction of their position and in return to their struggle for rights. The other parts of the

Europeans having liberal views are ready to make concessions in rights and freedoms for religious confessions. These concessions usually result in Muslims' taking these concessions for granted and giving nothing instead. In such a way, Russia and Europe have a common problem of Muslim migration. Moreover, Russia and Europe can do nothing to solve the problem. The inability to solve the problem roots in the civilization essence of the European and Russian society. Confessional differences in the Russian multi-ethnic society remain the problem of racial discrimination. The fears of representatives of other ethnicities, especially of natives of the Oriental world, become the reason of Islamophobia, which creates a barrier for the integration of Muslims into the Russian society. It should be mentioned that the concerns of Russians are not ungrounded. Thus, let us recall major acts of terror which resulted in numerous victims: "Nord-Ost", "Beslan" etc. Terrorists especially demonstratively emphasized the religious motivation of illegal actions. Herewith, residents of Russia have not shown a response religious motivation in the form of open demonstrations and protests. For comparison, in Holland, after the assassination of a film director famous for criticism of Islam, Theo van Gogh, of which Mohammed Bouyeri was accused, who had double nationality, Holland and Morocco, mass demonstrations against Muslims took place. This is how Daniel Pipes describes the events after the assassination: "Over the next two weeks, over 20 arsons, blasts and responsive attacks on mosques, churches and other institutions took place. All that, along with the large-scale action of the police created an atmosphere of a little civil war in the country" (Pipes, 2002: 75). A. Ponamareva (2013) expediently states the following

confessional difficulties of adaptation of Muslims: Russians perceive any native of the Islamic world, irrespectively to the country or region, as a representative of Muslims, to which they ascribe such phenomena as radicalism, aggressiveness, propensity for terrorism, etc. In such a way, the confessional component becomes more important as compared to racial, labor, and other kinds of motivation. Certainly, the prejudicialness of the Russian-speaking population towards the Islamic society is a serious problem, without the extirpation of which no full-fledged adaptation of Muslims is possible. Despite the threat which may be imposed by radical Islamists, a strict control over migrants can result in aggravation of Russians' attitudes towards Muslims. Thus, the raids by law enforcement authorities may result in confrontation with Islamists who do not back the ideology of one or another Muslim community, for example, the ideology of Wahhabis, but do not demonstrate open aggressive actions, and especially acts of terror.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The confessional side of migrants' identity is extremely important in defining the cultural image of any person. It is even more important if we take into consideration the fact that confessional characteristics of the Muslims are very different from mental orientations of the European society. Moreover, at present, in the migrants' environment, the main rivalry is not between traditional confessions, but between them and new religious movements which pretend to be traditional. In this sense traditional, non-radicalized

confessions are allies in the struggle for the migrant's identity and have all the grounds for fruitful and effective dialogue with the representatives of other confessions which may become one of the conditions of migrants' adaptation in other linguistic and cultural environment. In order to help Muslim migrants to adapt to the Russian society, the government of the Russian Federation took active steps for establishing cooperation with the Organization of the Islamic Conference. In Russia, there is a Center for Legal Assistance and Social Adaptation of Migrants which was opened in 2011 under the auspices of the Region Spiritual Board of Muslims of Perm Krai which is part of the All-Russian Muslim Spiritual Council. Also, a Program of Three-Weeks Express Courses of Russian Language was created. For comparison, an example of a successful practice of integration was the first in the history of Germany party of Muslim migrants "The Union for Progress and Justice" which advocated the interests of Muslim immigrants, their advancement and integration into the German society. For the extirpation of religious prejudices, which preclude the adaptation of Muslims in Russia, it is necessary to solve the issues of overcoming religious radicalism. The efficient in this respect seems the prophylaxis work among Russian youth, the arrangement of events at which representatives of different ethnical groups and ethnicities could communicate and get to know about the culture and traditions of other ethnicities. Of further interest for the research are main factors of conflictogenity and cultural differences which cause difficulties of social adaptation of Muslims in Russia.

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