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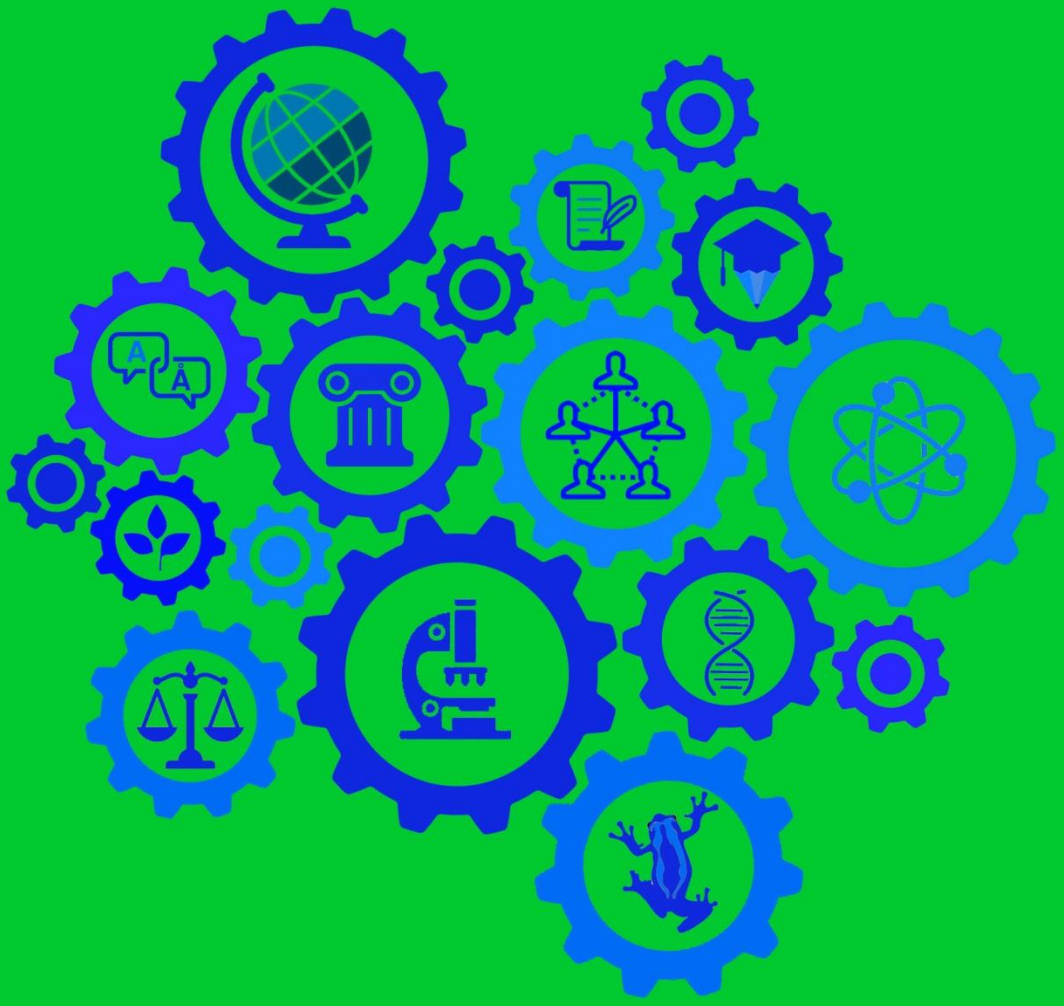

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Religiosity and religious socialization in social-psychological studies of religion

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Abstract: The article presents the relevance of personal religiosity and religious socialization studying in youth environment. The scientific approaches of different authors to the study of religion as a social aspect, as well as personal religiosity and the stages of its development are considered. The concept of religious socialization is given; six types of influences that interact with the development of personal religiosity are demonstrated.

Keywords: religion, religious confession, religiosity, socio-psychological characteristics, religious values, personality, behavior model, indoctrination influence, religious attitudes, religious socialization, social status, agent of religious socialization.

Throughout the history of mankind the consequences of the religious factor influence on social life have been and still remain different. Religions have united and divided people, improved their lives, and worsened them, and in general contributed to either progress or regression of society.

The geopolitical transformation of society at the present stage pushes many young people, whose worldview is in the process of formation, to seek the meaning and values of life in all available spiritual teachings and practices. And these days, many print and television media, as well as Internet resources, contain not only dogmatic religious products, but also near-religious content.

It should be emphasized that despite the fairly large number of publications, programs, videos and films about the history of world religions, religious traditions, speeches by representatives of confessional movements, as well as counter-extremist materials, the interest of the young generation is mainly concentrated around pseudoscientific, occult topics. Moreover, the mass media offer programs with a magical orientation, programs about extrasensory individuals, mediums and contactees with aliens**,** places of magical power, newspapers and magazines publish astrological forecasts, articles about the other world… This information is presented by the media in such a way that for young people it seems more interesting and exciting than, say, a speech by a representative of confessional Islam or Christianity with a sermon or a popular science film with a religious theme.

In such an abundance of religiously colored information with a lack of media competence, religious socialization of modern young people occurs. Fragile personal religiosity, built on the basic foundations formed by the family, often does not withstand the onslaught of media products and gives way to false beliefs. It is on their basis xenophobia, religious prejudices of a sectarian or religious-extremist orientation

are subsequently formed. Due to age characteristics and susceptibility to indoctrination, young people sometimes find it difficult to navigate and distinguish confessional dogmas of faith from pseudo-religious ones. That is why the study of personal religiosity of young people and the role of society in the formation of religious beliefs are topical issues in modern social psychology.

Religion as a whole and its components - personal religiosity and religious socialization - are the object of study of many sciences, each of which considers these aspects from its own angle, using its own specific methods to study individual elements, relationships with various spheres of reality.

Social and psychological studies of religion and religiosity are based on general theoretical foundations and methodology of cognition and address many current issues about the origin, structure and function of religion in the life of human and society. Many questions – about the role of religion in the formation of social identity, the influence of personal religiosity on the integration of the individual into social processes, the agents of religious socialization – still remain open, and the answers given to them by psychologists and sociologists, representing different methodological approaches to the study of this area, are controversial. This is due to the fact that it is quite problematic to give an unambiguous and meaningful definition of religion.

In particular, French sociologist and philosopher Auguste Comte argued that religion is an integral part of human society. It serves the good of humanity, its unity, concentrating in itself all the aspirations of human nature (activity, love), governs politics, art, philosophy [1].

English philosopher and sociologist Herbert Spencer considered religion as one of the regulators of social life, which acts through the maintenance of certain models of behavior, but is less significant than the market or politics [2].

According to German sociologist, philosopher, historian Maximilian Weber, the subject of the sociology of religion is not the “essence of religion”, but the psychological stimuli created by religious belief, which indicate the direction in human behavior and keep him in obedience [3].

French sociologist and philosopher, founder of the French sociological school and precursor of structural-functional analysis Emile Durkheim, analyzing the concept of the sociology of religion, proceeded from the fact that religion acts as a social factor and a structural element of any society. Society needs religion, since it is public consciousness, which, in turn, serves as the basis for ensuring the integrity of society. E. Durkheim considered that it is the spread and strengthening of religious beliefs that contributes to the stability of the social system [4].

Austrian psychologist, psychoanalyst, psychiatrist Sigmund Freud qualified religious teachings as illusions, and associated the religiosity of the individual with the father complex [5]. The scientist’s position was that religion as such leads to the

fact that a person does not bear full responsibility for his development, for improving his own life, hoping for the help of the Higher Powers.

Swiss psychologist and psychiatrist, teacher, founder of analytical psychology Carl Jung held different views about religion. Scientist supposed that the religiosity of the individual contributes to mental health and the meaningfulness of life. By religious experience he understood the submission of a person to the Higher Powers, reducing religion to a psychological phenomenon, and saw the function of doctrines and ceremonies in serving as protection from the dangers that lurk in the unconscious. C. Jung assumed that the religiosity of the individual, being a psychological phenomenon, is worthy of study regardless of the question of the truth or falsity of religious faith [6].

German sociologist, philosopher, social psychologist, psychoanalyst Erich Fromm gives a broad definition of religion, understanding it as any system of views that is the basis of a meaningful existence for an individual and an object of devoted service. Thus, E. Fromm proposes to take religion beyond its confessional forms and present it as a universal human phenomenon, a property of any culture [7].

French psychologist, author of works in the field of social psychology; head of the laboratory of social and psychological research at the School of Advanced Studies in Social Sciences at the University of Paris Serge Moscovici considers religiosity in the context of social psychology not only as the influence of society on the formation of an individual's religiosity, but also as the influence of religiosity on socio-psychological processes. The scientist notes that religiosity can serve as a source of psychic energy not only for an individual, but also for a group or a crowd. Religiosity can trigger mechanisms of contagion and imitation [8].

In the context of studying religiosity, American psychologist, developer of the theory of personality traits and the scale for describing the behavioral component of prejudice Gordon Allport put forward the idea of its various types depending on the nature of motivation. From his position, religiosity can be external and internal. Moreover, the advancement of research in this direction led to the conclusion that external and internal religiosities are not so much two poles of one continuum as two independent dimensions [9].

In the process of socialization religiosity is included in a complex system of socio-psychological characteristics of the individual and has a certain logic of development and formation, consisting of a consistent change in the stages of religious development identified by Professor of educational psychology at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland Fritz Oser [10].

The first stage characterizes children's ideas about the divine. At this stage the prevailing ideas are that the Divine Powers directly influence human, nature and society. The Higher Powers are characterized by omnipotence, they can punish and reward.

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The second stage is associated with the idea that human can interact with the Higher Powers and influence them through prayer, religious rituals and by observing religious rules. In this case the Higher Powers grant human happiness, health and success. Individual can influence the Higher Powers or not, this depends on his needs and free decision.

The third stage of religious judgment development is based on a more complex structure. At this stage the individual assumes that he himself is fully responsible for his life. Such categories as meaningfulness, freedom, hope depend on human's personal decisions. The Divine Powers have their own field of activity, not connected with human existence.

The religious judgment, attributed by F. Ozer to the *fourth stage*, has the following grounds. The relationship between the personality and the transcendent is not direct, and the individual is seen as responsible for his own life. At this stage, the Divine Powers are seen as necessary transcendental conditions for freedom, responsibility, and hope.

At the *fifth stage* judgment is made on the basis that the Divine Powers are simultaneously inaccessible to knowledge, beyond experience and at the same time immanent – remaining within the boundaries of possible experience. This stage is rarely reached by people without special theological or philosophical training.

Empirical data obtained within the framework of approaches that study the development of religiosity indicate the absence of confessional differences in the underlying patterns of religious consciousness. The religiosity of the individual has common psychological features for representatives of various religious faiths. It should be noted that we are talking about representatives of traditional religious faiths and not about followers of various religious sects, where people can fall into altered states of consciousness.

Religiosity develops with age in the process of religious socialization – interaction, during which religious norms, values, and beliefs are passed on from one generation to another. The main agents of religious socialization are the family, social networks of friends and relatives, religious organizations and the educational system. In the process of religious socialization, six types of influences are considered that interact with each other to develop personal religiosity.

Influence of parents on children. Most studies confirm the hypothesis that religious beliefs or prejudices of parents have a significant impact on the religiosity of children, and the primary family is the main agent of religious socialization. Some psychologists in the field of religion note that it is the norms, values, and beliefs that are transmitted. Other researchers believe that children inherit social status from their parents, which contributes to the emergence in the child's life of the same conditions and experiences as those of the parents, which forms his worldview, close to the worldview of the parents, including the religious component. High religiosity of the primary family plays an important role in the religious socialization of children. The

child, unconsciously imitating the actions and behavior of religious parents, assimilates religious patterns of behavior, religious norms and values. Religiosity is formed with a greater degree of intensity in those families in which parents consciously use methods of religious education of children. The more a child loves and identifies with his parents and has a close relationship with them, the greater the influence of the religion of the parents. Parents are the main source of social rewards and punishments, they are also the main reference group.

The influence of children on parents. Socialization is a mutual process, not a one-way one, so it is necessary to consider not only the influence of parents on children, but also the reverse influence - children on parents. For example, Professor of the Department of Sociology and Research Associate in the Population Research Center at the University of Texas Jennifer Glass showed that the influence of children's religious attitudes on their parents' religious attitudes is statistically significant [14]. A clear example is the situation when children who have joined a religious sect gradually involve their parents in it.

The influence of the extended family. In addition to parents other members of the extended family can also have an influence. Particularly important is the transmission of values and beliefs through generations, that is, the influence of grandparents on their grandchildren. For example, this channel for transmitting religious values and beliefs turned out to be very significant in the Soviet period, since only representatives of the older generation were allowed to be believers.

The influence of spouses. One of the important moments in a person's life, in which religious issues again become relevant, is the creation of own family. In general, people tend to choose a spouse within their own religion, and in a situation where wife or husband belongs to different religions, there is a high probability that one of them will change religious affiliation to the religious affiliation of the spouse. There is a so-called law "Greeley's Law", which describes in what direction the change of religion occurs. In connection with marriage, there is such a tendency for religious changes that within the family, changes usually occur in the direction of the religion of a more religious partner. It is also necessary to note the destructive influence of spouses on the process of religious socialization. For example, more than 50% of repatriates returned to Uzbekistan within the framework of special projects "Mehr"[1] went to the Syrian-Iraqi military zone, following their husbands recruited by members of international terrorist organizations.

Influence of religious organizations and institutions. Organizations that manage religious life (mosque, church, community) as a social institution are also agents of religious socialization. The methods of transmitting values and norms can be

[1] a special operation of Uzbekistan to repatriate hundreds of compatriots (children and women) from military conflict zones in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, and their successful integration into local communities

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religious texts, books, films on religious themes, or participation in certain practices (listening to a sermon, participating in a church service, etc.).

Influence of education. It is traditionally believed that with an increase in the level of education the level of religiosity should decrease, since science provides explanations (alternative to religious ones) of various phenomena, that is scientific and religious worldviews are incompatible. However, there are a number of studies that refute this statement. Thus, a scientific survey of the Carnegie Commission, conducted in the United States in 1969 with a sample of more than 60 thousand university professors, showed that the level of religiosity of the teaching staff is quite high and varies depending on the specialty. Representatives of the natural sciences, mathematics and statistics turned out to be significantly more religious people than representatives of the social and humanitarian sciences. This can be explained by the fact that many theories within the social sciences were based on the refutation of religious ideas and openly opposed themselves to religion. A separate area is the study of changes that occur with a student during their studies at a higher educational institution. Studies conducted before 1990, in most cases, recorded a decrease in religiosity in connection with obtaining higher education, while more modern studies record an increase in religious convictions, clarification and rethinking of religious beliefs.

To summarize the above stated, it should be noted that, according to various estimates, more than two hundred definitions of religion as a social phenomenon are distinguished. This is due to the versatility and complexity of this aspect, as well as the subjective research perception of various authors. But all scientific sources agree that religion influences the formation of ideas about the meaning of life, the development of society and is one of the factors in determining social guidelines and the picture of the world.

Religion, being a universal social phenomenon, determines the acceptance or rejection of certain values and development goals in a particular society. The religious factor influences, directly or indirectly, all spheres of society, creating the effect of “imposition” of religious relations on all other social connections. At the same time, we can also state the reverse influence of various spheres of society on religion.

The effectiveness and degree of influence of religion on society depend on place and time and are largely determined by what processes dominate in it - sacralization or secularization. Sacralization leads to the fact that both public and private life fall under religious sanctions. Secularization, on the contrary, leads to a weakening of the regulatory function of religion.

The role of religion in the life of society can be assessed differently. There is no consensus on what awaits religion in the future. Nevertheless, one thing is certain: without religion and taking into account its influence the development of history and social relations of any civilized society is impossible.

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