THE 8TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Religious Education and Religiosity of Young People

SREBRNO JEZERO, 8-9 SEPTEMBER 2023

ORGANIZED BY

The Institute of Social Sciences, Belgrade
Forum for Religious Issues and Center for Sociological and Anthropological Research

The Center for Empirical Research of Religion, Novi Sad

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND RELIGIOSITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE

International Program Committee

Mirko Blagojević, Ph.D. Head of FOREL, Principal Research Fellow, ISS, Belgrade;

Goran Bašić, Ph.D. Director of the ISS, Principal Research Fellow, ISS, Belgrade;

Suzana Ignjatović, Ph.D. Senior Research Associate, ISS, Belgrade;

Zorica Kuburić, Ph.D. Full Professor, Center for Empirical Researches of Religion, Novi Sad;

Zlatko Matić, Ph.D. Associate Professor, Faculty of Orthodox Theology, University of Belgrade, Belgrade;

Željko Pavić; Ph.D. Associate Professor, Vice-Dean for Research and International Cooperation Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia;

Vladimir Bakrač, Ph.D. Associate Professor, Faculty of Philosophy, Nikšić, Montenegro;

Ružica Cacanoska, Ph.D. Principal Research Fellow, Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research Ss. Cyril and Methodius, University in Skopje, Republic North Macedonia;

Sergey Lebedev, Ph.D. Professor, Institute of Social Sciences and Mass Communication, Faculty of Theology and Social Sciences, Belgorod State and Research University, Belgorod, Russian Federation;

Nonka Bogomilova, Ph.D. Principal Research Fellow, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Sofia, Bulgaria;

Emil Hilton Saggau, Ph.D. Research Fellow, Lund University, Lund, Sweden;

Paul Mojzes, Ph.D. Retired Full-Time Professor, Rosemont College, PA, USA;

Nataša Jovanović Ajzenhamer, Ph.D. Assistant Professor, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, Belgrade;

Ivana Arsić, Ph.D. Research Associate, ISS, Belgrade;

Vladimir Mentus, Ph.D. Research Associate, ISS, Belgrade;

Nena Vasojević, Ph.D. Research Associate, ISS, Belgrade;

Ivana Ostojić, Ph.D. Research Associate, ISS, Belgrade.

Organizing Committee

Nataša Jevtić

Emilija Mijić

Ljiljana Ćumura

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND RELIGIOSITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE

(Annual International Scientific Conference)

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS*

FORUM FOR RELIGIOUS ISSUES
OF THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND RELIGIOSITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE

(Silver Lake, Veliko Gradište, Serbia)

Organized by

Forum for Religious Issues and Centre for Sociological and Anthropological

Research of the Institute of Social Sciences, Belgrade in co-organization

with Center for Empirical Research of Religion, Novi Sad

YOUTH RELIGIOSITY:
RESEARCH, RESULTS, TRENDS

Mirko Blagojević, Suzana Ignjatović

Institute of Social Sciences

Belgrade, Serbia

RELIGIOSITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND STUDENTS IN SERBIA – AN OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH FINDINGS AND TRENDS

In the socialist political system of former Yugoslavia, religion was on the margins of society within the framework of a non-stimulating and rigorous general socio-political pattern of the secular worldview. The consequences were numerous: from the decline of religious beliefs and ritual practices to the stigmatization of religion in public life. In the adolescent and student population, a pattern of low religiosity was dominant until the late 1980s, except in predominantly Roman Catholic areas of Yugoslavia, where, both in the general population and youth population, a trend of increased religiosity had replaced the previous atheistic pattern. In predominantly Orthodox Christian areas, the population was predominantly non-religious. Profound changes came later, from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, following the national and confessional homogenization during the socio-political crisis, the dissolution of socialist Yugoslavia, and wartime events. The last two decades have brought new patterns of young people's attachment to religion. In Serbia, young people seem to follow the general population in some aspects of religiosity, but in others, their religiosity surpasses that of the general population, especially in the cognitive dimension of religiosity, as a result of religious education in Serbian schools (introduced in the early 2000s). The last two decades have been marked by the stabilization of religious situation both in the segment of the general population and in the youth population.

Key words: religiosity of the population of Serbia, religiosity of young people, religious beliefs, religious behaviors, atheism, desecularization

Vladimir Bakrač

University of Montenegro, Faculty of Philosophy

Nikšić, Montenegtro

ASPECTS OF INSTITUTIONAL RELIGIOSITY IN MONTENEGRO

Using data from the European Social Survey (ESS) of 2018/2019, the author investigates contemporary religious structure in Montenegro, using the variables included in the survey: religious identification, self-assessment of religiosity, attendance of religious services, and prayer. The paper examines the religiosity of young people up to thirty years old and then compares the data with the surveys from 2013. The comparison includes all three confessions in Montenegro: Orthodox, Roman Catholics, and believers of the Islamic religious community. The main goal of the research is to determine whether there has been a shift in the religiosity of young people and an emphasized distance in the religiosity of the three confessions in this country. Moreover, the goal is to get an insight into the current situation regarding religiosity in Montenegro. The working hypothesis is that currently, there is a stabilization of the religious structure in Montenegro and a discrepancy between religious and confessional affiliations and religious practices. Hereupon, we analyse the dimensions of religiosity with regard to basic socio-demographic characteristics and political orientations. The results have shown that there is no significant discrepancy in gender structure. The connection between the dimensions of religiosity and "right-wing" political orientation is also registered.

Key words: religion, religiosity, Montenegro, young people, secularization, desecularization, European Social Survey

Ivan Blazhevski, Ruzhica Cacanoska

Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje

Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia

THE INVOLVEMENT OF YOUTH IN THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES IN MACEDONIAN SOCIETY

According to the official statistical data, as well as numerous research projects and analyses, a high percentage of Macedonian population declares as religious. At the same time, almost all pieces of research indicate that the religious population is characterized by a high rate of nominal believers, among whom traditionalism in religious practice is emphasized. Such findings have stimulated the interest in determining the religiosity of young population, which, although largely only declarative, has been increasingly emphasized in the past years. In addition, although modest in number and scope, research and analyses of young people's religiosity, their perceptions regarding religion, the influence of religious values on everyday life, as well as practicing of religion, have indeed been carried out. However, in order to get a comprehensive insight into young people's attitudes towards religion in Macedonian society, it is necessary to do research on the opinions and perceptions of the religious communities' representatives about the involvement of young people in the religious communities.

In order to provide a clear overview of the position of young people towards religion, i.e. towards the religious communities to which they belong, this paper is divided into two parts. Thus the first part includes an overview of previous research and analyses on young people's perceptions of religion and their attitudes towards religious communities, as well as a comparative analysis of secondary databases that result from population censuses and research by international organizations. The second part presents opinions and perceptions of the representatives of the larger religious communities in Macedonia regarding the religious life of young people. In addition, their position on the reflections from the numerous initiatives for religious education of young people, as well as

the study of ethics in religions within the educational process, is also indicated. In order to meet this objective, a thematic analysis of the responses from semi-structured interviews conducted with representatives of religious communities in Macedonia was applied. Through sublimation of the data and findings from the aforementioned analyses, a comprehensive overview of the involvement of young people in the religious life of the religious communities in Macedonian society is provided.

Key words: religion, religious communities, youth, religious practice

Robert Cilia

Migrant Learners' Unit (Migrant Induction Hub – Secondary)

Ministry for Education

Malta

RELIGIOSITY OF YOUNG LEARNERS AT THE MIGRANT INDUCTION HUB IN MALTA

The Ministry for Education of Malta launched the Migrant Induction Hub (Secondary) in October 2018 to support migrant learners who did not have the level of competency in the two official languages (Maltese and English) recognised in Malta, to be successfully integrated in mainstream schools. The Hub offers a one-year transition programme with emphasis on these two languages.

The Hub is a multi-faith learning environment since students attending the Hub come from countries that span the whole spectrum of world religions. Presumably there are also those who do not profess a religious faith and come from agnostic or atheist family backgrounds.

This study will observe religiosity patterns of students between 13 to 16 years of age. The research questions will seek to create knowledge regarding the immigration process and how it has affected the way that the students and their parents/guardians express their religiosity.

A quantitative methodological approach will be utilised to garner data and knowledge. The questionnaires that will be distributed to the sample participating in this study will include the whole population of 13- to 16-year-olds at the Hub. Their parents/guardians will also be involved in the study to establish if the family itself, as a structure of orientation and the social formation of young persons in terms of religiosity, has experienced changes pre and post the immigration process.

Key words: immigration, education, adolescents, family, religiosity

Elena A. Kublitskaya

Institute for Demographic Research – Branch of the Federal Center of Theoretical and Applied Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences

Moscow, Russian Federation

RELIGIOUS SITUATION AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF YOUTH IN THE REGIONS OF RUSSIA

This article analyzes the monitored indicators of sociological studies in three regions of Russia (Moscow Metropolitan Area, the Republic of Mordovia and the Belgorod Region), which have been characterized with the involvement of young people in religious and secularization processes over the past 15 years. The analysis is based on the data obtained in the monitoring initiative conducted by the Institute of Socio-Political Research and the Institute of Demographic Research of the Federal Research Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences in 2008-2021. The problematic situation is connected with the fact that the subject of the study is located at the intersection/interaction of two changeable subjects – the youth and society, as well as two cultures – secular and confessional. The methodology of the research is determined by the concepts of post/de/secularization. The direction of the process of post/de/secularization of the youth was determined through a fixed system of indicators, including:

- the level of traditional religiosity and atheism within youth groups;
- the level of "non-clerical", non-confessional religiosity of youth;
- dynamics of post/de/secularization in youth groups;
- the involvement of age groups of young people in cult activity.

It is noted that the materials of sociological data of recent years continue to reveal a trend of gradual decline in the level of traditional religiosity and church going by the younger generations in these regions, but with varying degrees of intensity. Cult activity for religious reasons does not exceed 7-8% among the capital's youth, 8-12% in the Belgorod Region, and 15% in Mordovia.

At the same time, the share of religious "non-confessional" youth has increased in five years. In general, the religious situation among young

people, as well as in society, is characterized by blurring of the boundaries between religious and secular consciousness: a decrease in the rate and degree of religiosity with an increase in atheistic sentiments. It was determined that the most common motives for the manifestation of cult activity have to do with, not religious, but rather ethno-cultural factors. Researchers on the basis of methodological principles notice the continuation of negative dynamics in the development of desecularization, stating the restoration of the process of secularization of youth in some subjects of the Russian Federation.

The research touched upon the problem of the degree of awareness among younger generations, facilitated through the channels of religious education (schools, mass media, interpersonal communication) of the components of religious life: religious traditions, customs and norms of behavior.

It is quite logical that, with a decrease in the level of religiosity among young people and the population as a whole, the interest in religious literature and problems of religious life has decreased. Sociological monitoring and assessment initiatives concerning religious education in schools have shown that young people are losing interest in the courses of "Fundamentals of Orthodox Culture" (MIC), or "Fundamentals of Islamic Culture" (OIC) in all the studied regions of the Russian Federation. The interest of young people in these disciplines, for example, in the Moscow Metropolitan Area has been halved in 10 years. At the same time, the capital's youth attach great importance to the course of "Studying the History and Foundations of World Religions" (up to 40% of the respondents). Young people receive basic information and, often, biased information through various media and interpersonal communication with friends and relatives. Religious education in secondary educational institutions also in many cases comes with a straightforward and superficial interpretation of the philosophy and history of religions, and the specific characteristics of religious cultures and traditions. The problems of education are also connected with the lack of qualified religious studies personnel. The task of teachers is to provide the students with the necessary knowledge about religious processes, religion and its role in the national history and culture, as well as its inextricable connection to the "historical memory" of the society, which is still poorly implemented. The task of forming a value-normative system that would develop a spiritual

and moral lifestyle has not been solved. The monitoring has shown that the spiritual and moral education of young people in the studied areas of the Russian Federation remains one of the problematic issues.

Given the difficult situation and different ideological positions of teachers (in relation to religion and atheism) concerning the spiritual and moral education in educational institutions, it can be proposed to include a general education discipline everywhere: "The Fundamentals of Ethics".

Key words: church, religious organizations, secularization, traditional and non-traditional religiosity, "church-going", religious education

Сергей Д. Лебедев

Белгородский государственный национальный
исследовательский университет
Белгород, Российская Федерация

Людмила В. Шаповалова

Белгород, Российская Федерация

ОТНОШЕНИЕ К РЕЛИГИИ В РОССИЙСКОЙ МОЛОДЁЖНОЙ СРЕДЕ

Отношение к религии – комплексное понятие, соединяющее в себе аспекты объективных социальных связей и субъективного смысла. Взятое на уровне основных социальных субъектов, оно представляет собой важнейшее основание религиозной ситуации. Применительно к молодому поколению, отношение к религии в значительной мере определяет возможности, риски и тенденции развития религиозной ситуации в обществе в целом в среднесрочной и долгосрочной перспективе. Традиционно отношение к религии определяется по шкале «религиозные (верующие) – неопределившиеся (колеблющиеся) – неверующие / агностики / атеисты». В Позднем Модерне оно стало более многообразным: помимо достаточно обширной и растущей категории «nones», дифференцируются религиозно-духовные воззрения и позиции. Кроме того, заслуживает выделения в специальный сегмент исследований вопрос оценки / интерпретации индивидами и группами религии как социального и культурного явления, которая в значительной мере автономна от собственно мировоззренческих установок. Растущее многообразие версий отношения к религии, не укладывающееся в описательные схемы классических подходов, рассматривается нами как вызванное влиянием трёх фундаментальных изменений: 1) светского характера культурного мейнстрима, допускающего значительно большую вариативность комбинаций смыслов, чем религиозный универсум; 2) преобладающей рефлексивности, определяющей свободу выбора и комбинирования представлений и позиций; 3) индивидуализации социального субъекта, высвобождающегося из-под контроля

религиозных институций и сообществ. Изучение отношения российской молодёжи к религии, соответственно, предполагает выявление комплекса переменных, описывающих: а) вовлечённость молодых людей в религиозные сообщества и практики; б) их основные мировоззренческие диспозиции; в) самоидентификацию по отношению к религии и г) социальную оценку религии в её значимых референциях. Мы предполагаем, что преобладающим, формирующим отношение молодых людей к религии, является рефлексивный фактор, тогда как влияние механизмов традиции статистически невелико. В этой связи тип религиозного верующего формируется при совпадении векторов позитивного восприятия религии / конфессии, интеллектуально-духовного (размышления о высших ценностях, добре и зле) и культурной самоидентификации личности.

Ключевые слова: отношение молодёжи к религии; Поздний Модерн; религиозная ситуация; рефлексивный фактор; российская молодёжь.

Irina V. Lyutenko

Institute for Demographic Research – Branch of the Federal Center of Theoretical and Applied Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences

Moscow, Russian Federation

SOCIO-CULTURAL ORIENTATIONS OF TUVAN YOUTH WITH NON-TRADITIONAL RELIGIOSITY

The article analyzes the data from a sociological survey of young people in the Tuva Republic of the Russian Federation, conducted in 2022 by the Department of Ethnodemographic, Religious, and Integration Processes of the Institute of Ethnodemographic Research of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Students 17 to 35 years old were interviewed within the survey. The article focuses on a comparative analysis of the socio-cultural orientations of Tuvan youth with non-traditional religiosity. The typological groups in relation to non-traditional religions were constructed according to certain methodological features. The typological groups of "practitioners" and "non-practitioners" analyzed the impact of non-traditional religiosity on some national, religious, ethno-confessional, migration and social orientations and attitudes among Tuvinian youth. The results of the study show that 36% of young people are interested in non-traditional religious teachings. In this group, 35% are involved in the ceremonial activities of these religions and movements. Of these, only 12% have significantly incorporated the practices of religious teachings into their daily lives, and 23% of those surveyed have an average level of involvement in the practices of these teachings. Given the increasing migratory turbulence and the intensely changing religious landscape, the question arises of the need for new methodological developments in studying non-traditional religiosity.

Виктория Ряпухина

Белгородский государственный технологический университет
им. В. Г. Шухова

Белгород, Российская Федерация

СНИЖЕНИЕ УРОВНЯ РЕЛИГИОЗНОСТИ МОЛОДЕЖИ В РОССИИ: АКТУАЛЬНЫЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ И АНАЛИЗ

В последние годы актуальные исследования выявили достаточно низкий уровень религиозности молодежи в России, иногда на уровне статистической погрешности. Будучи в курсе этого, Московский Патриархат стремится к осовремениванию в рамках своей миссии, с тем, чтобы с помощью новых технологий и медиа стать ближе широким массам, особенно молодежи, однако остается открытым вопрос результативности данных усилий. С другой стороны, данная ситуация по определению не попадает в фокус секулярного государственного аппарата, поэтому нет никаких предпосылок к тому, чтобы речь шла о мерах по стимулированию религиозности, таких как, например, введение катехизации в школах, хотя бы как предмета по выбору, как во многих других странах с преимущественно православным населением. Предпосылки к этому, как правило, были заложены в пост-имперском периоде, особенно в скрепах советского государства. Обобщая результаты некоторых уже известных академическому сообществу исследований, мы предприняли попытку их экстраполировать в целях поиска новых причин отторжения религии среди молодежи. Придерживаясь той точки зрения, что религиозность является естественной базовой атрибуцией, мы попытались найти новую форму, в которую транспонируется и в рамках которой варьирует религиозность у молодежи, а также определить влияющие на нее факторы и условия.

Ключевые слова: релизиозность молодежи в России, актуальные исследования религиозности в России.

Неманья Вукчевич

Белгородский государственный национальный
исследователский университет
Белгород, Российская Федерация

ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ РЕЛИГИОЗНОСТИ КАК ФАКТОРА СОВРЕМЕННОЙ СЕРБСКОЙ АКАДЕМИЧЕСКОЙ ЭМИГРАЦИИ

В современном университетском мире Республика Сербия является участником нескольких международных программ обмена студентами. Хотя религия не является первопричиной или мотивацией этих академических миграций, она может быть существенным фактором на подготовительном этапе решения о миграции, во время самой миграции и адаптации в принимающем обществе. Методом опроса мы провели исследование среди сербской академической эмиграции в Русской Федерации с целью определения динамики религиозности нашей целевой группы, развития или застоя, степени актуальности религии в жизни респондентов до и после эмиграции.

Ana Kuburić Zotova

Centre for Empirical Research of Religion

Novi Sad, Serbia

CORRELATION BETWEEN TYPES OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE AND MATURE RELIGOSITY

The paper focuses on examining the hypothesis that a correlation exists between the types and degrees of religiosity, on the one hand, and the types of religious experiences on the other. I will differentiate religious experiences based on the stimuli that initiate them (such as a perception of person, situation, fact, etc.) and analyze the intra-psychological relationships between perceptions, emotions, beliefs, and attitudes in typical examples of religious experiences. The Christian believers who will be discussed describe "an experience with God" as a contact, "an experience of God's guidance (in their life)" in terms of harmony in events, "experience of holiness" of objects, rituals and persons, "experience of heaven", etc. Finally, we will analyze whether there is justification for the two hypotheses based on literature and empirical research: first, that the degree of religiosity is influenced by the type and quality of religious experiences that an individual has gained; second, that the type of religious experiences correlates with the type of religiosity: for instance, pragmatic religiosity with the experiences of God's guidance or a sense of holiness. I will use the correlation between religious experience, or the psychological process of experiencing that creates a religious experience, and mature religiosity as the context for discussing the effects of religious education on religiosity. For example, children experience the content presented in class, religious rituals they attend, etc., in a certain way. Religious education stimulates religious experiences that must be examined in order to determine what they are and whether they contribute to adolescent religiosity.

Key words: process of experiencing, religious experiences, religiosity, religious education

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SERBIA, REGIONS AND SOME EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

Златко Матич

Православный богословский факультет Университета в Белграде
Белград, Сербия

РЕЛИГИОЗНОЕ ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ – ПРАВОСЛАВНАЯ КАТЕХИТЗАЦИЯ В РЕСПУБЛИКЕ СЕРБИЯ НА ОСНОВЕ СТАТИСТИЧЕСКИХ ПОКАЗАТЕЛЕЙ И АНАЛИТИЧЕСКИХ ВЫВОДОВ: НА ПРИМЕРЕ БРАНИЧЕВСКОЙ ЕПАРХИИ СЕРБСКОЙ ПРАВОСЛАВНОЙ ЦЕРКВИ

Автор впервые рассматривает количественные показатели реализации религиозного образования в Браничевской епархии Сербской Православной Церкви. Представлены:

1. реакция (отклик) учащихся на Православный катехизис в последних 10 лет в начальных и средних школах,
2. количественный состав и структура учителей, преподающих данный предмет,
3. изменение численности классов, изучающих религиозные предметы, в разных регионах конкретной епархии.

Во второй части статьи автор анализирует полученные результаты и делает качественные выводы относительно результатов всего проекта по возвращению религиозного образования в школьную систему Республики Сербии.

Ключевые слова: религиозное образование, Религиозное учение (Закон Божий), Православный катехизис, Епархия Браничевская СПЦ, социологический анализ, богословский синтез.

Dragana Radisavljević-Ćiparizović

Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade

Belgrade, Serbia

Siniša Mitrić

Mathematical Grammar School

Belgrade, Serbia

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SERBIA TODAY: THE ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS TOWARDS RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN TWO SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BELGRADE

In the introductory part of the paper, two key terms are defined; religiosity (of the youth) and (confessional) Religious Education, which was re-established as an elective course in the Serbian educational system (2001/02) after fifty years of prohibition. In the following school year (2002/03), Religious and Civic education became required electives (students have to choose one). At that time, some sociologists viewed Religious Education in public schools as an "indicator of the deatheization of society". Today, after more than two decades, there are still dilemmas and disagreements about the status that Religious Education should have, which has also been contributed to by its renaming from an elective course to an elective program. The subject of the research are the viewpoints of the 4th grade students who attend Religious Education at two secondary schools in Belgrade: the Mathematical Grammar School and the School of Geology and Hydrometeorology "Milutin Milanković". The research aims to examine whether the students know and practice religious customs and rituals; what the motive of their determination to attend Religious Education was; whether their expectations have been met. The research is conducted on a random sample of 93 respondents – students of the mentioned schools. The survey was realized in April 2023. The paper analyzes and presents its results, containing the experiences and approaches of theologians and (former and current) religious teachers on this topic.

Key words: religious education, confessional religious education, youth, religiosity, Serbia

Davor Žabarac

Faculty of Orthodox Theology, University of Belgrade*

Belgrade, Serbia

RELIGIOSITY IN CHILDREN AND RELIGIOUS TEACHING: AN EXAMPLE OF THE FIRST GRADE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL

The fundamental assumption of the research work is that man is a *homo religiosus*. Even before entering the educational system, children are introduced to the process of creating a "system man". Religious education, as well as any other education, strives to give a concrete form to what has been primordially present in the human being and what will try to break away from every system, and that is freedom. The research should indicate the reaction of the child upon the encounter with concrete religious concepts. At the beginning of the implementation of a religious teaching plan and program, fundamental questions that children ask arise: who created the world, what is death, why do people go to heaven, why do we not see God, etc. The rigid educational system tries to mold those primordial fragments that have been present in the child, according to its own measure. Christian religious education resists established pedagogical forms by calling the human being to freedom, which is the icon of God in man.

Key words: religiosity, child and God, life and death, freedom and authority

* PhD candidate

Zorica Mršević

Institute of Social Sciences (retired)

Belgrade, Serbia

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF JEWISH YOUTH IN SERBIA

Religious education of Jewish youth in Serbia happens in activities of synagogues, Jewish communities and non-governmental education organizations such as Haver*. They foster two basic lines of approach to Judaism, learning about the religious basis of the Jewish holidays and about the Holocaust. On this year's Holocaust Memorial Day, the youth section of the Jewish Municipality of Belgrade, joined the initiative launched by the European Union of Jewish Students "Make Their Memory Shine" – to install Stolpersteine in their cities as a sign of remembrance. "Stolpersteine", (Stumbling Stones), are placed as memorials for the Jewish victims of Nazism in front of the houses where they last lived. In Belgrade and Zrenjanin they are installed at five locations for the families of Kon, Brill, Dajč, Elek and Ivanji. The project was conceived in 1993, and so far 80,000 stumbling blocks have been installed. Stumbling Stone commemorates an individual, thus symbolically also commemorating the collective that suffered from Nazism. Referring to the words contained in the Talmud that a man is forgotten when his name is forgotten, the Stumbling Stones make us remember the holocaust victims. Symbolically, this fulfills one of the Torah commandments *shmirat haguf*, the obligation to preserve the body, by preserving the memory of specific persons, whose bodies disappeared.

Key words: Judaism, Jewish students' activities, Stolperstein, remembering Nazi victims, schmirat haguf

* Haver Srbija is a non-profit, non-governmental, educational organization

Nebojša Stevanović

Faculty of Orthodox Theology, University of Belgrade*

Belgrade, Serbia

DE-ONTOLOGIZATION AND DE-ECCLESIALIZATION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM – ORTHODOX CATECHESIS: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SPECIFIC INDICATORS

The aim of this work is to examine the matter of revision of religious education curriculum – Orthodox Catechesis, which now abounds in fluidly ethical, familiar and religious subject matters, with a tendency to marginalize its intrinsic path towards the Church as a space of the new mode of existence. The author upholds the position that it is necessary to critically examine such change, by following methodological and contentual tenet that the aim of Religious education is to make people become members of the Church. By pointing out to concrete examples of such change, using methodology of comparative analysis of the initial and the new curriculum for elementary schools, the focus of the work is directed to the basic question: whether the changes in certain teaching units hide the danger of deontologization and de-ecclesialization of the religious education curriculum. The answer to the question posed, finally, opens the perspective of the place and significance of religious education in the contemporary school education system.

*   PhD candidate

Vuk Jovanović

13th Gymnasium

Belgrade, Serbia

RELIGIONS & CIVILIZATIONS AND (ORTHODOX) RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – A TROUBLING AND PROMISING NEW COUPLE IN THE SERBIAN HIGH SCHOOL SYSTEM

Three years after the new school program, Religions and Civilizations (*R&C*), was introduced, we should be able to make some assessments of its impact. Its place and function become clearer in comparison to Religious Education (*RE*). Are the two *per definitionem* opponents, simple strangers or allies? Given their shared subject, i.e. religion, *R&C* and *RE* are natural neighbors, with all the complex intertwining that goes with it. From the onset, *RE* had its secular counterpart in Civil Education (*CE*). Taken conceptually, *CE* was to offer students normative humanistic values, as a worldview alternate to the ones promoted by traditional Churches and religious communities. By introducing *R&C*, new element is being added to the equation, the secular optics now examining the very core of its opposite – religiosity. I will try to shed some light on what are its benefits and shortcomings, evaluating it from three perspectives: 1. Primary goals of Serbian educational policy, 2. Students' personal *bildung* and school life as a whole, and 3. Serbian Orthodox Church (and other Churches and religious communities).

Key words: religious education, religions and civilizations, secularity, multiculturality, Serbian school policy

Danica Igrutinović

The Faculty of Media and Communications

Belgrade, Serbia

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SERBIAN SYMBOLIC STRUGGLES

This paper will strive to address how the issue of religious education in public schools has figured in the symbolic battles waged in Serbia after October 5, 2000 over which current has the indisputable right to form its post-socialist collective identity. The paper will first offer a short introductory overview of the history of public debates regarding the (re)institution of religious education in the Serbian public education system. It will then focus on a recent incident surrounding the St. Sava celebration in the Aleksa Šantić elementary school in Sečanj, which rekindled the debates about religious education, the place of religion in public education, and broader theoretical issues such as modalities of the secular state – revealing deep divisions.

The sample for the main part of the paper will include texts in news portals available online, as well as a selection of comments on social networks, and this corpus of empirical material consisting of media content will be contextualized and subjected to discourse analysis. Of special interest will be the ways in which positions and arguments pertaining to the presence of religion in public schools serve to draw lines around respective collective identities, in symbolic divisions usually closely corresponding with geopolitical ones.

Key words: religious education, symbolic boundaries, religion and collective identity

Marijana Maksimović, Neven Cvetićanin

Institute of Social Sciences

Belgrade, Serbia

RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SERBIA IN THE XXI CENTURY – FROM FORMAL TO INFORMAL AND VICE VERSA*

Christianity represents a two-millennia old heritage which in its long period of origin and development often determined social (educational, cultural, but also political) and personal (people's activities, perceptions, level of consumption) aspects of life. For centuries in Serbia, through tradition and experience, knowledge, beliefs and rituals have been acquired and transmitted by the Church as an institution. However, religious teachings and rituals were also passed on by families, observing Orthodox Christian holidays and practicing customs in their households. In Serbia, the first schools were founded in monasteries, and one of those schools was attended by the famous educators Dositej Obradović and Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, who would become the main reformers of culture and education and who contributed to the development of literacy, as well as to the general enlightenment in Serbia. In addition, the first copies of books were made in these very same monasteries, and they today represent valuable testimonies of medieval culture in this region. From the 19th century until the Second World War, religious education had been compulsory in schools, after which it was abolished and atheism was advocated as a substitute for religion, although the Yugoslav liberal version of socialism was not as rigid towards religion, as some other communist regimes. However, religious education was not taught in Serbia for many years, until the renewed wave of re-traditionalization of Serbian society at the beginning of the 21st century, returned religious education courses into the system of formal education, i.e. into schools. Therefore, today it is possible to acquire general formal religious education through primary and secondary schooling, but also to acquire professional knowledge through specialized educational

institutions, such as, for example, The Orthodox Faculty of Theology. The same applies to other traditional religious communities in Serbia (Catholic, Protestant, Islamic and Jewish), as they are able to implement their own religious education programs without hindrance in Serbia. However, the accelerated technological development and many social changes brought into question the currentness of the religious teaching in its existing form, but also opened up the following question: "Is it possible to acquire religious education through other social disciplines?", that is, the issue of modernization of religious education and its adaptation to the spirit of time, which will be the topic of our scientific work.

Key words: religious education, educational system, society, Serbia, modernization

Gordana Nikolić

Faculty of Education in Sombor

University of Novi Sad

Novi Sad, Serbia

WHY HAS EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA NEGLECTED THE ROLE OF ORTHODOXY IN THE CONTEXT OF INCLUSION?

The heritage of including children with learning difficulties into kindergartens and schools has been invaluable. This heritage reached its full potential in Serbia in 2011 when the enrolment of all children into kindergartens and schools was legally regulated. Good legal solutions did not make a significant difference in real life. It turned out that contemporary didactic tools, training practices, using successful and dominant methods, assistive technologies and pedagogical assistants have proved to be an insufficient stimulus for harmonizing the family, increasing motivation and unlocking the potential of these children's development. Parents, at some point, under the burden of social, economic and emotional challenges, and in search of meaningful solutions, tend to resort to the Copernican twist – reconciling with fate, getting a divorce, withdrawing, giving up. The same way the virtual and visual world reigns supreme over space and time, the (ultimate) importance of early development reigns over the educational process. Where can possible solutions be found? In Italy, the first country in Europe to systematically regulate inclusion, experts ascribe its success to the openness of kindergartens and schools towards Christian values and Church. In Russia, since the 1990s, kindergartens and schools have been established within churches and founded on Christian values. Familiarizing children with the Orthodox culture, tradition and the Christian way of life has been one of the priorities of the Russian Orthodox Church. If we take a look at our immediate surroundings, in Zagreb alone there are 13 kindergartens founded by the Catholic Church (11) and the Jewish community (2).

Key words: inclusion, upbringing, education, church, Orthodox culture, faith

Suzana Ignjatović, Vladimir Mentus

Institute of Social Sciences

Belgrade, Serbia

POST-SOCIALIST DESECULARIZATION AND ABORTION AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN SERBIA AND CROATIA

Post-socialist desecularization has directly or indirectly shaped the patterns of socially acceptable norms of sexuality and reproductive behavior. However, the impact of religion on public attitudes towards sexuality and reproductive culture is not monolithic. This paper explores abortion attitudes as the most debated reproductive issue, commonly associated with the opposed secular and religious worldviews. We hypothesize that the revival of religion and religious organizations in the public sphere has shaped the dominant social norms concerning sexuality and reproductive behavior, especially abortion attitudes, but not in the same direction in Serbia and Croatia, despite similar trends of desecularization. We compared abortion attitudes of young people aged 16-29 in the two countries over the twenty years of post-socialist transformation. We used data from Round 3 (1995-1999) and Round 7 (2017-2022) of the World Values Survey. The converging patterns of non-religious and religious attitudes toward abortion indicate a trend of significant social change in these two societies. In further analysis, we looked at the differences between dominant religious denominations in Serbia and Croatia (Orthodox Christians and Catholics, respectively) and their dogmatic and social implications on social control and moral order in these two societies. Historical generations of young people (mid-1990s and 2020s) are compared to see if there has been a long-term impact of liberal or "emancipative" values on abortion attitudes, despite the prevailing desecularization.

Key words: abortion, young people, religion, Serbia, Croatia

Željko Pavić, Nadja Lazić

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek

Osijek, Croatia

RELIGIOUS TRANSFORMATION AND RELIGIOUS SOCIALIZATION IN CROATIA

The dilemma of whether secularization or some kind of religious transformation is taking place in Western societies has long preoccupied sociologists of religion and researchers from other disciplines. In this presentation, an attempt will be made to answer the question of whether religious socialization at an early age affects the later intensity, but also the type of religiosity, with the hypothesis that more recent forms of religiosity and spirituality will most often be the result of weaker religious socialization in childhood. In other words, the authors start from the premise that newer forms of religiosity and spirituality are not the result of intragenerational changes, but of (the lack of) intergenerational transmission of religion. From this hypothesis follows the idea that what we consider a religious transformation is actually the initial phase of secularization. The stated assumptions and ideas are tested by cohort analysis of religiosity research in Croatia.

Key words: religiosity, religious socialization, secularization, age cohorts

Nena A. Vasojević

Institute of Social Sciences

Centre for Sociological and Anthropological Research

Belgrade, Serbia

Petar Nurkić

Institute of Philosophy, Faculty of Philosophy

University of Belgrade

Belgrade, Serbia

RELIGIOUS STUDY AND OPEN SOCIETY – ANALYSIS OF THE MEDIA DISCOURSE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGION AND EDUCATION IN SERBIA, CROATIA AND B&H*

We are witnessing, both in our country and around the world, an increasing number of research and pilot projects that deal with the inclusion of religious teaching in primary school education, by examining the quality and implementation of the teaching curricula of the proposed religious programs. Such research studies, first of all, focus on the ways in which individuals or groups understand the plans, programs and goals of religious education in the educational process. It can be seen that in the research studies dealing with educational topics, different epistemological approaches and different research methods have been combined for some time. In this paper, we will present the results obtained by applying qualitative content analysis and epistemic network analysis. We considered available newspaper articles from electronic sources that had been published in the relevant media of the countries of the region (Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina), and had the relationship between the education system and religion as their topic. By following the discourses represented, we constructed epistemic models that show similarities and differences between each of the three researched countries. The criterion for selecting the countries of the region is based on a multi-confessional perspective (Orthodox, Catholic, and Islamic dimensions

of religion), which must be assumed when considering the mentioned topic. By applying these methods, we tried to identify media narratives and publicly presented arguments *for* and *against* the implementation of religious teaching in the educational systems of the countries in the region.

Key words: religion, education, society, media contents, countries of the region

Zorica Kuburić

Centre for Empirical Research of Religion

Novi Sad, Serbia

THE USE AND ABUSE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN STATE SCHOOLS: RESULTS OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The experience of the war that hit Bosnia and Herzegovina in the late 1990s can be understood in the context of religious pluralism, which manifested itself in religious education within the public educational system. The connection between religion and nation has divided the territory, social community, and even the time that children spend in the same space, where children that belong to different religions in the same schools do not interact with each other in these so-called *two schools under one roof (Dve škole pod istim krovom)*. Religious education was introduced as a symbol that connects the historical thread of belonging, correcting the injustice of its expulsion under the influence of political ideology. Religious education has the power of social integration, and making a community homogeneous. It also has the potential to promote universal values that ensure an inclusive policy of love towards others. On the other hand, the abuse of religion is possible when, instead of acceptance and love for others, fear and rejection begin to develop.

In the study conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where religious education has a longer tradition than in Serbia, we have come to significant findings through questionnaires and interviews that we would like to present. The norm was still that religious teachers were not welcome in schools. Resistance to religious education was rooted in an earlier image of religion as a dogmatic, conservative, closed, and intolerant system and religious education was described as a step back to patriarchy and gender inequality. Affirmative attitudes were based on moral messages helping the individual to instil peace and respect for their tradition. The theoretical layer of religious teachings is ideal and sets the demand for daily work on one's morality. Religious teachings call for good, not evil. The educational role reflects through the personality of the religious teacher, who is expected to set an example of an integrated personality

that lives what they teach. The personality of the religious teacher should awaken those values that every religion teaches, such as love, under-standing, respect, tolerance and forgiveness. When it comes to science, religious education allows freedom of thought. Religious education in schools contributes to nurturing freedom, understanding science not as a dogma, and reconciling religion and science. Religious education serves to build a sense of personal freedom in how we understand life and death. Religion seeks answers to questions about the origin of life, death, love and hate. Therefore, religious education and religion might take away the monopoly of science over existential questions and answers.

Key words: religious education, religion, moral lesson, nationalism, Bos-nia and Herzegovina

Danica Lazović

Institute of Social Sciences

Belgrade, Serbia

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – A MOVE TOWARDS BUILDING PEACE OR A TOOL FOR MAINTAINING ETHNIC DISTANCE IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA?

The religious education model in Bosnia and Herzegovina reflects its institutional and political heterogenization, based on ethnic and religious determinants. The importance of religion in the process of peacebuilding is manifested in the extensive trust that the citizens show to their respective religious leaders and institutions, as well as in the fact that religious affiliation is among the main distinguishing factors between constitutive nations – thus, representing the core element of these national identities. Therefore, it is indisputable that religious leaders have a significant potential to guide the peacebuilding process towards a positive outcome through the affirmation of ideas that promote peaceful coexistence and mutual respect between their religious Others. The current religious education model envisages that the students learn only the teachings and sacred scriptures of the majority religion of their own communities. The author will conduct an analysis of religious textbooks for high school students in B&H with the aim of determining the way in which the religious Other is presented, and identifying overlapping ideas about peace, common to all dominant religions. The author will further discuss the reasons why the initiative to introduce a religious course of a broader scope wasn't widely accepted and why such model didn't materialize.

Key words: religion, religious education, Bosnia and Herzegovina, peacebuilding process, identity

Nonka Bogomilova
Institute for Philosophy and Sociology
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
Sofia, Bulgaria

TEACHING "RELIGION" IN BULGARIAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

The paper will analyze the religious education debates and solutions in Bulgaria in a comparative way: it will identify similarities and differences both within the countries of this cultural zone and cross-country trends in Western Europe. The comparison between confessional and non-confessional teaching of religion (Programa Religiya-nekonfesionalno 2018), which is included in the new study programs and for which textbooks are currently being prepared in Bulgaria will be addressed within a variety of national contexts in Europe and in the Balkans. The "philosophy" of non-confessional subject "Religion" prepared by the MES will be analyzed in a comparative way. The main trends and future developments will be foreseen.

Valentina Milenkova

South-West University "Neofil Rilski"

Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria

ASPECTS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN BULGARIAN SCHOOLS

The article is aimed at presenting religious education in Bulgarian primary schools in the context of biblical teaching. The constructed Orthodox model of education, focused on the development of worldview and value thinking of students, is followed. The Christian worldview is one of the general frameworks through which a person can look at the world around them.

In Bulgaria, the subject Religion, after decades of absence from the curricula of public schools, has found its place in teaching in the last 20 years. In 2020 a serious impetus for its development was given by the textbooks on Religion for primary school newly approved by the Ministry of Education. Analyzing these textbooks allows us to consider modern religious education in Bulgarian conditions. Modern religious education must orient itself to the requirements of the postmodern child, and at the same time uphold authentic Christian principles. On this basis, the role of Orthodoxy in Bulgarian education is examined.

The article indicates that religious education becomes an important precondition for the development of multiculturalism, discussing various issues of religious knowledge and the formation of individuals capable of accepting the other in the context of their own mindset.

Ljiljana Ćumura

Malta Sociological Association (MSA)

Msida, Malta MIGREC, Serbia

Evelina Barbanti

University of Padua, Faculty for Psychology

Padua, Italy

THE IMPACT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ON THE RELIGIOSITY OF STUDENTS FROM ITALY AND SERBIA

Numerous studies and practices have shown that religious education significantly affects young people's lives, attitudes, and mental health. In Serbia, religious education occurs within schools (as an optional subject), while in Italy, apart from the context of formal education, it also occurs in some other religious-type institutions. Introducing religious education in schools (either as a compulsory or optional subject) has opened numerous debates. Some of the questions are: whether religious education affects the attitude of young people towards religion in terms of their greater religiosity, and whether religious education positively affects the personality of young people. In search of answers, the authors conducted research with students from various universities in Italy and Serbia.

Ayman K. Agbaria

Haifa University

Haifa, Israel

book of abstracts

REFORMING ISLAMIC EDUCATION: ESCAPING THE NATION STATE POLITICS AND THE POLITICAL ISLAM MOVEMENTS' PRESSURES

Drawing on theoretical and empirical studies, my presentation examines the potential and limitations of reforming confessional Islamic education in Middle Eastern countries, with a particular focus on Israel. In these countries, governments have constructed generic and homogeneous versions of Islam within the educational curriculum framework, aiming to establish legitimacy of their political regime while promoting civic ideals of discipline and conformity. These ahistorical and idealistic versions of Islam often present the faith as a monolithic entity, disregarding sectarian differences and intellectual and religious debates within Islamic theology and jurisprudence. On the other hand, various political Islam movements have endeavored to offer competing understandings of what it means to be a Muslim, cultivating notions of homeland, peoplehood, sovereignty, and governance through Islamic religious language. Despite these opposing approaches, my presentation outlines new theological directions and pedagogical strategies to transform confessional Islamic education into a more critical, reflective, and open type of education

Key words: reform of Islamic education, confessional education, Islamic political movements, Middle East, Israel

Marko Jovanović

Institute of Social Sciences

Belgrade, Serbia

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE ARAB WORLD: A CASE STUDY OF EGYPT AND TUNISIA

In recent years, empirical research has identified a significant increase in the levels of religiosity within the Arab world, with the youth being particularly affected by this trend. At the same time, there has been an observable rise in support for political Islam, indicating a growing desire for religion to play a more prominent role in politics. Against this backdrop, this paper aims to investigate attitudes toward religious education in Arab countries, drawing upon nationally representative data from the Arab Barometer Wave 7, the largest public opinion survey in the region. This study focuses on Egypt and Tunisia as primary case studies, offering an in-depth analysis of the current state of religious education, relevant regulations, and the socio-political context within which it is imparted. By exploring these aspects, this paper seeks to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics surrounding religious education in the Arab world.

Nuri Tinaz

Marmara University, Department of Sociology

Istanbul, Turkey

THE UNSETTLED CONTENTIOUS RELATIONS BETWEEN SECULAR STATE POLICIES AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES IM MODERN TURKEY

There is no doubt that the secular political debates regarding religion have been around and centered on two issues since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923; one was how to regulate the relations between religion and state, the place and role of religion in the public and private sphere. The second was religious (Islamic) education, that is, how, where and who would give or provide it to pupils in primary and secondary education, students in higher education, and the public in general. During the one-party period 1923-1950, due to the authoritarian and radical secular and laic state policies, both the place of religion and religious education were cleansed from the public sphere as it was completely reduced to a private matter. Eventually, formal (official) and common public religious education systems and programs were greatly and negatively affected by those policies. Ever since Turkey introduced a multi-party system in the early 1950, the strict and assertive secular policies on formal and common education systems, as well as the place and role of religion in the public sphere were relaxed, and accordingly, the number of official institutions that provide both formal and common religious educations and their programs and curricula were diversified, with the number of students gradually increasing. From the mid-1970s onward, their growth gained momentum over time and reached its peak in 1997 when the soft *coup d'etat* took place and interrupted their expansion. In the current government period of Justice and Development Party from 2002 to the present, all aspects of religious education, common (in mosques and the Qur'anic Courses), and formal (primary and secondary education including Imam-Hatip Schools as well as higher education) regained momentum and expanded their institutions and programs, as well as religious education providers. This paper attempts to examine

how religious education has become a putty/toy and a matter of debate in both secular and conservative policies and evolved in the course of time and the development of events. It analyses how both secular and conservative political, social, and cultural policies have changed, modified, and shaped the contents and programs of the curriculum of religious education and its practices. The paper also explores and shows how educational policies, particularly of religious character, exclude and isolate some segments of society, namely, religious and ethnic minorities (both Muslims and non-Muslims) from the opportunities, and facilities that the state is supposed to provide fairly and impartially. In addition to that, it further speculates whether it is possible or not to implement plural religious or multicultural religious education policies, as far as regular and irregular migration –namely of Syrians, Afghans, and Africans – and religious diversity are concerned, and how to cope with the emerging multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-faith society.

Key words: secular state, religious education programs, religious practices, modern Turkey

Сергей В. Трофимов

Факультет журналистики МГУ

Кафедра социологии массовых коммуникаций

Москва, Российская Федерация

РЕЛИГИОЗНОЕ ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ И ТРАНСМИССИЯ ВЕРОВАНИЙ В СОВРЕМЕННОМ ОБЩЕСТВЕ

В традиционных обществах религиозная идентичность строится в значительной мере на передаче основных институтов и ценностей одного поколения следующему, как в процессе социализации, так и посредством инициации. И в том, и в другом случае, религиозность носит «наследуемый» характер, а её принятие отмечает переход подростка в мир взрослых, которые разделяют общие религиозные установки.

Д.Эрвьё-Леже отмечает, что идеальная передача приводила бы к тому, что на месте отцов возникала бы их точная копия в лице сыновей, что в действительности не происходит вследствие социокультурных изменений, происходящих в обществе. Однако эти изменения происходят относительно медленно, а также скрашиваются различного рода социальными механизмами, обеспечивающими постоянный характер преемственности между поколениями.

Анализируя современное развитие религиозной идентичности, Д.Эрвьё-Леже противопоставила два вопроса, касающихся преемственности между поколениями и эффективности традиционных способов такого «наследования»: «всегда ли дети "практикующих" родителей остаются "практикующими"» и «могут ли дети "не практикующих" родителей становиться "практикующими" верующими»? Исследования показывают, что чёткой зависимости между религиозной практикой родителей и детей проследить не удаётся, но выявляется гораздо более сложная картина. Эти вопросы можно распространить на случай религиозного образования в целом.

Религиозное образование может приносить неожиданный эффект. С одной стороны человек может сохранить как неприятие, так и восторженное воспоминание занятий «религии в школе» или в

родителями или восприемниками. Далее эти обе возможности будут изменяться с «исчезновением» юношеского максимализма с возрастом и повседневными заботами. Напротив, человек не получивший религиозного образования в детстве ни со стороны родителей, ни в школе может, и часты тому свидетельства, в зрелом возрасте глубоко обратиться к религии и стать верующим.

Ключевые слова: религиозное образование, трансмиссия верований, наследуемая религиозность, обращение.

RELIGION AND (RELIGIOUS) EDUCATION: ANALYSIS OF METHODS, EXAMPLES AND CONSEQUENCES

Dragana Stojanović

Faculty of Media and Communication

Singidunum University

Belgrade, Serbia

HALACHIC PERSPECTIVES OF LEARNING AND THEIR METHODS OF USE IN CONTEMPORARY CLASSROOM

The halachic sum of knowledge is, in itself, built on a tradition of Jewish teachings layered from the Torah to the present times, which makes it a lively and transformational, yet precisely defined and meticulous system that covers the range of topics – from historical and conceptual, to contemporary and practical. Its educational strategies are greatly based on methods of an interactive classroom, and besides that, its focus on (inter)active learning without the domination of frontal approach makes it a wonderful and useful source of teaching and learning techniques that can effectively be applied to contemporary classrooms and contexts, even outside of purely religious learning.

In this paper I will try to map halachic perspectives on learning, and to explore traditional Jewish teaching/learning techniques such as hevruta, interactive questioning, contextual thinking and interpretation, which can be useful in both the informal and formal settings of a contemporary classroom. However traditional it may be, and tied to Jewish religious and everyday life, halachic system, in this view, can carry a wide range of possibilities and potentially become a huge source of inspiration for teachers and students of our time.

Igor Ustyuzhyn

Karazin Kharkiv National University

Kharkiv, Ukraine

Boris Ziselman*

Kharkiv, Ukraine

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION THROUGH LITERATURE: THE CASE OF 'AZAEL'

The paper is an attempt to decode and explain Denis Sobolev's enigmatic *Azael* (2003). It is argued that the story can (and should) be read according to the rules of the traditional Jewish "pardes" (*pshat – remez – drash – sod*) hermeneutics and is worthy of being included into university level Religious Education or Jewish / Israeli Studies courses.

Key words: Azael, *bnei ha-Elohim* (*Genesis* 6:2), Denis Sobolev, religious education through literature

*   Independent scholar.

Aleksandar Milanković*

University of Belgrade

Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Pedagogy

Belgrade, Serbia

THE POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE INTERACTIONIST CONCEPTION OF EDUCATION AND ACTIVE LEARNING-TEACHING

The aim of this paper is to examine the possibility of further development of religious education from the perspective of the interactionist conception of education as well as the basic assumptions of active learning-teaching. We analyze religious education curriculum (specifically, Orthodox Christian Catechism) – learning objectives, outcomes and recommended ways of realization. After that, we analyze learning instructions in one of the representative Orthodox Christian Catechism textbooks. In the end, we derive didactic implications and suggestions. The results confirm the possibility of further development of learning-teaching methods, teaching tools, modes of formative assessment and general theoretical presuppositions, aims and objectives of religious education. Religious education has potential for new didactic operationalization in order to bring complex theological formulations closer to pupils and their immediate experience, and create transformative links with new, future experiences. Religious education is suitable for interactive teaching (cooperative preparation and realization of instructional tasks, cooperative creation, exposition and publication of learning-teaching products in school environment), as cooperative learning-teaching contributes to developing the sense of communal, cooperative engagement, and the sense of moral appreciation, empathy and solidarity. Besides, further development of religious education can create new meaningful connections with other elements of curriculum, just as with other sciences, arts and culture in general.

Key words: religious education, interactionism, active learning-teaching, cooperative learning

*   PhD student, Independent researcher.

Antoaneta Nikolova

South-West University "Neofit Rilski"

Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria

RELIGION AND ECOLOGICAL EDUCATION

The article aims at revealing the ecological implications of different religions and their possible usage in developing of ecological consciousness. The main accent is on the positive and negative ecological implications of Christianity. The main methodology is comparative analyses on an inner and outer plane. The outer plane involves comparison between Christianity and Eastern religions that are usually provided as examples of an ecological worldview, underlining the Christian idea of love which is missing from those other religions. The inner plane is dealing with differences in the attitude to nature within different Christian denominations. Revealing that each religion has its own ecological potential, the article leaves open for discussion the question of whether and in what way this could be used in education.

Nebojša Radovanović

Milan Đ. Milićević Elementary School, Belgrade, Serbia

Digitizer Ltd, Belgrade, Serbia

Bojan M. Tomić

University of Belgrade Institute for Multidisciplinary Research

Belgrade, Serbia

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND EDUCATION IN SERBIA

Artificial intelligence (AI) has rapidly emerged as a transformative technology with potential applications in various fields, including education. With the increasing number of tools powered by AI technology and especially with the launch of the artificial intelligence-based language model, the ChatGPT, the issue of using AI has come to the center of interest for researchers in different fields, including social sciences and humanities, such as sociology, philosophy, pedagogy and religion studies, but also for students and teachers. We consider the potential of AI in education, including its ability to individualize learning, improve assessment and feedback, and enhance educational research, as well as the concerns about depersonalization of teaching, privacy, equity, quality of human interactions, and so on. Relying on the experience of education in Serbia and the UNESCO Education 2030 Agenda, we analyze the practice of using AI by teachers and students in Serbia.

Key words: artificial intelligence, education, individualized learning, Serbia

Milena Škobo

Faculty of Philology, Sinergija University

Bijeljina, Bosnia and Herzegovina

THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE COURSES IN SHAPING RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

This paper explores the relationship between education and religiosity, with a particular focus on the role of language and literature courses in shaping religious beliefs and practices. Drawing on a range of theoretical and empirical literature, the paper argues that language and literature courses can play a significant role in shaping religious beliefs and practices, both positively and negatively. Specifically, the paper examines the ways in which language and literature courses can shape religious discourse and narratives, and how they can be used to challenge or reinforce religious beliefs and practices. The paper also explores the relationship between education and religiosity more broadly, including the role of education in promoting religious tolerance and pluralism, as well as the challenges that arise when religious beliefs clash with secular norms and values. Ultimately, the paper highlights the need for a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between education and religiosity, and suggests avenues for future research in this area.

Dejan Petković

Institute of Ethnography SASA

Belgrade, Serbia

INTERNET MEMES AS A METHOD OF PREACHING AND A RELIGIOUS PROPAGANDA

The Internet allows a wide range of communication, and memes, a type of cyber language that often circulates on social media in the form of pictures and short videos, providing (most often) a humorous way for people to express their feelings, beliefs, and opinions. Originating from the Ancient Greek word *mīmēma* (μίμημα, meaning "imitated thing"), memes have their own way of replicating and spreading their cultural ideas through the evolution of their form through sharing and also act as a model for mimicking behavior and opinions. Because of their nature, the way they create a sense of community, and their availability to the (mostly young) masses, memes have been used as a propaganda tool, and recently, as a way to propagate religion and religious ideas. Preaching found its new language in memes. We will analyze how religion is used in a digital context through memes to teach, preach, propagate, reinforce, and encourage religious beliefs to younger audiences. For our context, we will pay special attention to Orthodox-oriented content, especially in Serbian cyberspace.

OTHER TOPICS

Dejan Masliković

Institute of Social Sciences

Belgrade, Serbia

SOCIAL SUPPORT OF CHURCHES AND RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

The work of churches and religious communities in Serbia is regulated by law, as is the work of citizens' associations, foundations, and endowments. All churches and religious communities, in addition to performing religious ceremonies and missionary activities, engage in charitable and humanitarian work. Humanitarian and charitable work is often carried out through the work of registered citizens' associations, foundations, and endowments. It is noticeable that some of these activities are also carried out through unregistered entities, i.e., entities that are not registered in the state registers of legal entities. Registered associations, foundations, and endowments established by churches and religious communities, directly or indirectly, always include work with marginalized and vulnerable social groups in their statutory objectives.

Starting from the fact that churches and religious communities have the need to establish new ones in addition to already registered legal entities, it opens up space for research and discussion about the real purpose of these organizations. The Serbian Business Registers Agency includes the data about which associations, endowments, and foundations were established by the church or religious communities.

The key issue is the transparency of this system, i.e., whether the state as well as the users have knowledge and complete information about the organizations that provide humanitarian aid. Therefore, the work will deal with the issues of transparency in the work of associations, foundations, and endowments established by churches and religious communities; it will try to explain the need to establish legal entities for the performance of humanitarian activities, as well as the demarcation between humanitarian and missionary activities, especially with marginalized and socially sensitive groups.

Key words: social support, missionary work, foundations, associations, humanity

Svetlana Janković

Center for Encouraging Dialogue and Tolerance

Čačak, Serbia

THE SERBIAN ARMED FORCES' RELIGIOUS SERVICE

Religious service in the Serbian Armed Forces is a way of enabling primarily the practice of religious customs, but also education regarding the basics of catechism, especially for younger members of the Armed Forces, soldiers, cadets, and non-commissioned officers. The introduction of religious service is regulated by special agreements between the Ministry of Defense and the Serbian Orthodox Church, as well as six traditional churches and religious communities – among which are four Christian churches, and the Islamic and Jewish Community of Serbia. With the signing of these agreements and the first introduction of priests in units in 2013, members were enabled to exercise freedom of religion "according to their own will and conviction" during their service in the Army. It is significant to participate in events in which, together with the priests of the Serbian Orthodox Church, members of the Armed Forces appear, so uniformed officers, soldiers, and cadets can be seen at processions, religious celebrations, and in ritual events under the auspices of the Church. Members of the armed forces have become an indispensable part of the decor of religious ceremonies where they often wear church props, while Church officials are regular guests at all important ceremonies organized by the Serbian Armed Forces. This increasing religious sensibility of the army is explained by the effort to restore the former tradition and strengthen the morale of officers and soldiers. But in this way, the Armed Forces and the Church, as the most trusted institutions in society, as is often pointed out in public opinion surveys, join forces in spreading religious education among the people.

Key words: Serbian Armed Forces, youth, catechism, religious freedom, renewal of tradition

Svetlana Chervona

Kharkiv State Academy of Physical Culture

Kharkiv, Ukraine

RELIGIOUS VOLUNTEERING AND SOCIAL SERVICE

The potential of social service and volunteering in the religious sphere is realized through the distribution of humanitarian and psychological and spiritual assistance to affected people. The renewal of the social activity of religious groups resulted in an increase in the credibility of religious groups and a partial replacement of state functions, especially against the backdrop of a larger civil volunteering movement. An indicative example of social service, which reflects broader trends in inter-religious and state-confessional relations, is the military chaplaincy, which fulfils three typical roles: volunteer, psychologist and pastor. Military pastors perform basic functions such as spiritual, therapeutic, social, and informational. The activities of the chaplains have led to a close cooperation between religiously-motivated and community initiatives, which developed in the form of volunteering. There are several ways to attract religious values of a higher order. Such mechanisms are the principle of the rule of law; direct preaching or teaching, or indirect methods are the facilitation of humanitarian or charitable assistance, as well as the mobilization of internal resources in the form of volunteering. That is, religion can act as a kind of "divine motivator". The most acceptable intervention may be at the level of public organizations, volunteering initiatives and movements in order to build a stabilization system aimed at peaceful coexistence. The instrumental-constructivist approach points to the resource nature of the conflicts with the religious component, as well as the destructive influence (through the manipulation of the ethno-religious factor and increased religious competition), and the constructive influence (through peacemaking and social service with civil society) of the religious component on social dynamics.

Key words: volunteer movement, chaplaincy, religious component, humanitarian aid, ethno-religious factor

Teodora Gojković

Institute for Criminological and Sociological Research

Belgrade, Serbia

RELIGION AND MENTAL HEALTH DURING THE PANDEMIC – ADAPTATION OF THE RELIGIOUS DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE OF MUSLIM AND ORTHODOX BELIEVERS IN BELGRADE

The main goal of this paper is to examine the influence of religion on the preservation of mental health of Muslim and Orthodox believers in Belgrade during the COVID-19 virus pandemic. Relying on Emile Durkheim's theory of anomie and the integrative social function of religion, the research tested the hypothesis according to which religion has favorably affected the preservation of the mental health of Muslim and Orthodox believers in Belgrade during this pandemic. Religion was operationalized through life in accordance with the principles of religious doctrine, the frequency of visiting religious objects and the frequency of following religious practices, while mental health was measured using the Kessler scale of psychological distress, whereby the characteristics of their positive and negative symbiosis were taken as indicators of the mutual connection between these two dimensions. Using a semi-structured interview on a non-probabilistic sample, made up of a total of 20 believers chosen deliberately, the main hypothesis of the article was confirmed. Bearing in mind the methodological limitations of the findings obtained through the qualitative research regarding the possibility of their generalization, the general conclusion is that worsening mental health and increasing stress would lead to an increase in religiosity and suppression of the negative effect of stress on health, where mediating factors must also be taken into account, the effect of which on mental health depends on the degree of religious involvement.

Key words: religiosity, mental health, mental hygiene, social ties, COVID-19 pandemic

Yuliia Semenova

Kharkiv State Academy of Physical Culture

Kharkiv, Ukraine

RELIGIOUS SECURITY AND HUMAN HEALTH IN PANDEMIC CONDITIONS

The Coronavirus pandemic has become a threat to the health and life of the population of many states, radically affecting the public and private life of people. As for the social component, the consequences of the pandemic have affected various spheres of society, including religious organizations, and the system of state-confessional relations. The Coronavirus pandemic, having "shaken" today's civilization and changed interstate and interpersonal relations, introduced unprecedented restrictive measures and, by limiting one's constitutional right to freedom of religion and movement, reformatted their life activity into the information and virtual space. Rationality (manipulative, affective rhetoric began to overwhelm criticism and argumentation) and morality (an ethical problem arose when the question of the different "costs" of a person's life was raised) fell under the pandemic influence. Undoubtedly, these changes, reflecting on religious security, turned out to be a catalyst for a number of problems inherent in the modern religious space. Religious organizations found themselves in a dilemma – either to completely submit to the authorities and stop the functioning of their places of worship, or to partially restrict the access to their believers in such a way that sanctions were not applied against them, and they were at the same time protected from a large number of infections, while the lives and health of the believers were saved. On this basis, religious security is undergoing a certain reformatting, its peculiar algorithm is being formed, the factors of which are the worldview and value crisis, which is most pronounced in ritual and cult practices. Actually, the problem of "religion-security-church" becomes the vector on which a number of other practical problems related to the physical, mental and spiritual health of a person are strung.

Key words: religious security, ban, pandemic, church, human health

Gyulnara Gadzhimuradova

Institute for Demographic Research

Federal Center for Theoretical and Applied Sociology, Russian Academy
of Sciences; MGIMO University, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia

Moscow, Russia

THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN THE PRESERVATION OF TRADITIONAL VALUES

Today, in the era of transformation of values, religion plays an important role in preserving traditional human values. At a time when such confessions of Christianity as Catholicism and Protestantism have bent in favor of liberal morality, Orthodoxy and Islam firmly stand on the positions of the Holy Scriptures and the denial of the values of the Western liberal world based on permissiveness and denial of the highest humanistic ideals. Such phenomena as rabid feminism, propaganda of same-sex relationships, sex change by children, denial of traditional family relationships, love and respect for parents, and sometimes outright sodomy, which can destroy one's personality, are the object of criticism and rejection for traditional religions. The deliberate destruction of the spiritual principle in a person and the propaganda of base instincts lies at the heart of most of the so-called liberal values. We see how churches in many European countries are closing due to the lack of a flock, their place is taken by Satanic cults and a huge number of "new" religions, which are based not on love for man and compassion, but on cruelty and death. In these difficult conditions, preserving a person through true faith and love is the main task of traditional religions. Russia, being a multi-confessional country, has consolidated most of the provisions outlined in traditional religions at the level of the constitution and legislative acts. This is the recognition of marriage as a union between a man and a woman, taking care of parents and children, etc. Muslim communities in Europe have stopped integrating into the host societies because they do not accept the morals and values that European countries offer them. The role of religion and society today is to prevent people from losing their human appearance and preserve the humanistic ideals of traditional society.

Key words: traditional and liberal values, confessions, "new" religions, spirituality, traditional religions

Natalia Saltan

Kharkiv State Academy of Physical Culture

Kharkiv, Ukraine

SPIRITUAL POTENTIAL OF RELIGIOUS FEELINGS

Religious feelings activate the processes of self-reflection and self-knowledge of a person, act as a driving factor in attracting their personal structures, changing the system of their meanings. The spiritual potential of religious feelings is most clearly seen in a state of holiness. Holiness is understood as such a consciousness where religious feelings predominate, becoming the core of spiritual life and determining the entire life of a person. For the carrier of holiness, faith, hope and love are synthesized, turning into a single alloy, thus forming spirituality. Holiness includes such moral foundations, the observance of which, on the universal scale, could change the world. The role of the saints for the world is to create and disseminate goodness and moral virtues. Holiness is inspired by the religious principle in the true sense of the word; it increases the amount of moral energy, kindness, harmony and happiness in the world. Religious feelings expand the inner life of a person, contributing to the creation of new spheres of manifestation of the essential forces of the person who has decided to "risk faith". A saint loves a person not for their dignity, but because they are a person, and due to their human nature, they are the concentration of a special kind of spirituality that can turn the soul to religious feelings and the moral filling of the inner "I". The state of holiness opens up new semantic possibilities – acting in accordance with them, its bearer realizes their human essence. Thus, the sensory experience of a saint integrates spiritual dominants into a system of moral guidelines and self-understanding, and acts as a means of self-construction of oneself as a spiritual person. Moreover, having a cumulative effect, these experiences contribute to the formation of humanity.

Key words: holiness, religious feelings, spiritual harmony, moral foundations, self-knowledge of a person

Gennady Goncharov

Kharkiv State Academy of Physical Culture

Kharkiv, Ukraine

RELIGION AS A SPECIAL HUMAN MENTAL STATE

The most important of the religious experiences of a Christian is "reverence for God," from which all other religious feelings arise. Reverence is the feeling of quivering surprise that a person experiences when faced with something big and something that lies beyond our comprehension. Reverence has the power to transform a person, and to evoke religious feelings. At the same time, the feeling of reverence consists of deep compunction and complete devotion to God. In reverence unite: the exaltation of the spirit, humility, hope and selflessness. Reverence is a special mental state of a person in which their inner world expresses the object of worship. In the phenomenon of reverence, both the experience of unity with the Divine and the state of surprise, trembling, are recorded. Reverence exalts the soul, pleases it, saturating it with beauty. Moments of reverence make a person morally better. The moral rebirths of many, as the biographies of the saints testify, often began with moments of reverence. A rather quivering and poignant gamut of feelings is revealed precisely in the feeling of Easter joy: bright joy, spiritual unity, "bright cosmism" – this is a feeling of taking part in Easter. Among other religious feelings, the feeling of reverence (veneration of the Mother of God, angels and holy men, approaching God in their moral perfections) is of particular importance; religious joy (a state of abundance, peace and spiritual silence, which is born in it either as a result of the general mood of all life, or as a result of the accomplishment of any Christian feat); humility as the basic condition for the salvation of man. So, the functionality of the religious feeling of reverence acts as a form of preservation and generation of sacred meanings, characterizes the degree of a person's religiosity.

Key words: religious feelings, reverence, sacred meanings, salvation, joy

Đurđica Stanković, Marko Mandić

Institute of Social Sciences

Belgrade, Serbia

THE PUBLIC STANCE NEXUS BETWEEN RIGHT-WING SERBIAN POLITICAL PARTIES AND SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH: ANALYISIS OF POLITICAL AND SOCIETAL DISCOURSE

In the paper, the authors provide an analysis of the relationship between the public stances between right-wing political parties and the Serbian Orthodox Church in the Serbian public discourse. The role of political parties in the political and social arena is *per se* fundamentally significant. Besides their importance, the role of religious institutions should be taken into consideration. The Serbian Orthodox Church is one of the most influential public actors and an institution that enjoys large support among the population within the Serbian borders, and its activities cannot be disregarded. The nexus between political and social beliefs, values and norms of these actors are enhancing the internalization of beliefs among general population and specifically those who are regarding themselves as Orthodox Christians. The basic research question to which the authors will try to offer an answer is: How right-wing political parties and the Serbian Orthodox Church are trying to affect the re-formation of Serbian political culture through their political and societal public activities? In their research of this phenomenon, the authors use discourse analysis method.

Key words: religion, political parties in Serbia, right-wing politics, discourse analysis, Serbian Orthodox Church

Nikola Perišić
Institute for Political Studies
Belgrade, Serbia

Petar Čolić
Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Belgrade
Belgrade, Serbia

POSITION AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS RELIGION IN THE CAMPAIGN FOR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN MONTENEGRO IN 2023

In the last few years, one of the key socio-political topics in Montenegro has been the status of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the attitude of political actors towards it. The event that can be considered the most significant to put this topic in the spotlight of social and political life is the decision of the Parliament of Montenegro to adopt the Law on Freedom of Religion in December 2019, which stipulated that the state of Montenegro would become the owner of all religious buildings that had been built before December 1918. That decision caused several months of litanies. As a consequence of all those events, this law and other religious issues and rights were becoming the key topic of the election campaign ahead of the parliamentary elections in August 2020. At the same time, the Metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral, Amfilohije Radović, publicly supported the list "For the Future of Montenegro" and influenced that the leader of that list, Zdravko Krivokapić would be a non-partisan person. Following those elections, after almost 30 years and for the first time in the history of independent Montenegro, a government that the DPS was not a part of was formed. It was clear that the Serbian Orthodox Church had a significant role in that process. This paper will examine the attitudes towards religion and religious issues by the presidential candidates at the 2023 election and their tone when they spoke about these topics. The analysis will include two presidential debates shown on Montenegrin national TV.

Key words: political science of religion, presidential elections in Montenegro, election campaign, political communication, presidential debate

Olena Orlenko

Kharkiv State Academy of Physical Culture

Kharkiv, Ukraine

RELIGIOUS FANATICISM AS A TYPE OF WORLD PERCEPTION

The phenomenon of religious fanaticism involves a wide range of religious feelings. The activity of a fanatic often affects the interests of other people, as well as fanatics themselves. The "divine" locus becomes dominant in the worldview and actions of a fanatic. A believing person fully or partially transfers responsibility for their life and actions to God, to those who act on their behalf, because this rehabilitates them and protects them from negative manifestations of being. If a person's religiosity is not included in the cultural context, then their existential situation is discordant with the cultural situation. In the manifestations of religious fanaticism, motivational factors are formed that are devoid of personal responsibility. The relationship between personal and social levels of responsibility protects a person from the loss of identity and fanatical actions. Usually dependent individuals who are unable to take responsibility for their lives become members of religious fanatical groups. Everything that does not fit into the fanatic's worldview, and moreover, provokes doubt and criticism, is subject to eradication. Intensifying religious feelings to the maximum tension and extreme forms of expression, religious fanaticism can manifest itself in any religion and can be used as a means of solving various political goals, as well as psychological problems caused by both social conditions and spiritual needs of a religious person. Religious feelings, strengthening religious faith, form a special worldview of a fanatic, in which there is no critical-reflexive component of thinking. Religious fanaticism allows its bearers in some cases to demonstrate the ultimate possibilities of human personality, religiously motivating it both for a feat of self-sacrifice and a crime in the name of faith.

Key words: religious faith, religious fanaticism, human self-identity, manipulation, responsibility

Emilija Mijić

Institute of Social Sciences

Belgrade, Serbia

POLITICAL USE OF ICON PAINTING TRADITION AND/OR COMMON CHURCH PRACTICE: SYMBOLISM AND MEANING OF THE NEWLY COMPOSED CUSTOM OF COMMEMORATING OF FOUNDATION IN MODERN SERBIA

In September 2016, a piece of news resounded on social networks and in traditional media that the former Minister of Defense Bratislav Gašić and his brother Boban were portrayed on a fresco in the Church of Sveti Jovan in Kruševac. The Gašić family were donors of the construction of this place of worship. That this is not an exception in contemporary material religious practice is also shown by some examples like the one from the Šumadija Diocese where the initials of the former First Lady Dragica Nikolic were forged on the church's pole. Her husband, former President of Serbia Tomislav Nikolić was a donor of the church. A few years earlier, Miodrag Nikolić and Radoslav Milenković, businessmen from the municipality of Jagodina, were immortalized on frescoes of the village churches in Rakitovo and Majuna. Milenko Kostić, businessman from the municipality of Čačak did the same and this year's case from neighboring Montenegro, where the figure of the former Prime Minister Zdravko Krivokapić was painted on a fresco in a church in Podgorica indicates continuity of this recent political–ecclesiastical practice.

This paper will try to point out the multi-layered meaning of the newly emerging practices, while emphasizing the importance of including the analyses of the social context when interpreting and explaining examples that shape contemporary reality and send latent messages to the society through various mediators. Are the new founding practices on church frescoes an example of the cult of rule and capital, or a common church procedure when private persons donate funds for the construction of a church building? The backbone of this research are attempts to find replies to the questions of what kind of messages the portraits of

politicians in churches send to the local population and wider community and where the boundaries between the primarily secular state and the formally apolitical Orthodox Church are.

Key words: church, politics, social context, frescoes, founding

Liliya Sazonova

Institute of Philosophy and Sociology

Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

Sofia, Bulgaria

TOLERANCE, ACCEPTANCE, RECOGNITION: RELIGIOUS IMPLICATIONS

Both in the interfaith and in the multicultural discourse, different definitions of the stages or degrees of positive interaction between the representatives of dissimilar identities may be noticed. Thus, at the bottom of the hierarchy is *co-existence*, followed by *tolerance*, *acceptance*, *respect,* while the final manifestation of public affirmation is the *recognition* of otherness. However, there are different interpretations of these concepts. Thus, some of the terms are overburdened with meaning, while others overlap, making each other appear obscure. That is why the main objective of the paper is to elaborate more on these concepts' definitions and the ways they refer to the principles of inter-religious dialogue.

Key words: religion, interfaith dialogue, tolerance, recognition

Mihail Beilin

Kharkiv State Academy of Physical Culture

Kharkiv, Ukraine

MERCY IN THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION

Christian teaching elevates mercy to the rank of the ultimate normative foundation. Here, mercy is a universal requirement based on an understanding of the community of people in love, and this love for everyone is endowed with the sense of value of being. The phenomenon of mercy in the Christian tradition is that: 1) mercy does not cancel justice, but is not limited to it either; 2) the basis of God's mercy is faith, and its source is the loving heart of Christ, but not the merits of those by whom it is done; 3) mercy is alien to greed, it has no limits, conditions and restrictions, since there is no such sin that could not be forgiven; 4) mercy appears as the highest, ultimate form of justice.

A person's perception of their neighbor presupposes the need for a metaphysical perception of the image of God in each person. That is, before you love the Other (fellow Christian), you must first understand that the image of God is embodied in them. Through the law of love for a fellow Christian, a person is humanized, thanks to which a benevolent person becomes more righteous, acquiring ontological human properties, i.e. becomes fully humanized. From the point of view of Christianity, mercy is combined not only with love, but also with other Christian virtues, including forgiveness and non-judgment of one's neighbor. "Dear in heart" is one who is able to forgive a fellow Christian out of love for them. In general, the ability to forgive acts as one of the most important Christian virtues and the main sign of God's mercy towards man.

Key words: Christian virtues, mercy, love, humanization of man, Other (fellow Christian)

Iryna Soina

Kharkiv State Academy of Physical Culture

Kharkiv, Ukraine

THEOPOETS AND RELIGIOUS-PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSE

The relevance of the research topic is connected with the analysis of attempts to overcome the marginalization of theology and religion. In such a scenario, theology is restored in a search of relevant and adequate responses to the experience of man and modern society, not only through the revival of the dogmatic dimension, but through a dialogue of mutual understanding of man and society itself. In other words, the ecclesial community has the opportunity to participate in an open space of exchange in order to understand the needs, problems and questions that the socio-political reality lives in, with the aim of developing a theology that can understand, speak and respond to the needs and challenges of the times.

If we consider theopoetics as a discourse of the connection between theology and the poetic word, or the poetization of the divine, then one can try to think of theopoetics as a certain poetic Christian tradition, since the poetic and aesthetic aspects are always quite tangible by the features of the tradition of theological reflection. The study will consider theopoetics in a narrower sense, specifically referring to a mode of theologization and reflection on the divine. Despite the fact that theopoetics has its historical and methodological boundaries, nevertheless, within its conditional boundaries, it is a rather vague and multifaceted phenomenon. The themes of speech convention, imagination, sensuality and corporality, mysticism and paralogicality are noted as a certain reaction to the dominance of the "scientific method" in theological discourse. It analyses how exactly theopoetics contributes to the development of a discourse about the divine, which becomes a point of interweaving of various discourses that can add value to public discussions through a dialogic approach.

Key words: theopoetics, dialogism, cosmopoetics, ontotheology, radical ethics

Lidia Gazniuk

Kharkiv State Academy of Physical Culture

Kharkiv, Ukraine

CONSUMPTION CULT AS A NEW CIVIL RELIGION

The main threat to freedom is seen as the triumph of the cult of consumption as a new civil religion that claims to dominate the public space, leaving traditional religiosity even in private space as its life world. Endless consumption is a cult in postmodern society. Opposition to postmodernism acquires the features of religious humanism, which is designed to resist forces of destruction and violence. The new secularization of postmodernity, caused by the cult of consumption, legitimizes the universal public discourse – the element of the market. The cult of consumerism is pushing genuine Christians into the niche of a minority. Formally belonging to the church, the people are in reality captivated by the mass culture of consumerism. Christianity appears as a counter-cultural phenomenon in relation to consumer culture, but not to postmodernity in general. Theological futurology is a creative search for the adaptation of Christianity to the challenges of the postmodern era, and a tool for identification of new opportunities for the development of religion in social life, in connection with the crisis of modern theories of secularization. Instead of supporting the authorities or the opposition, the church must theoretically and practically prove the possibility of a social life in accordance with the highest values. The ideal of Orthodox political theology is to present to society the eschatological reality of the kingdom of God as an alternative to the strategies of domination and violence, the projects of forming a Christian civil society. Society needs a transcendental ideal, from the height of which a critical analysis of the existing socio-political structure is possible. In its practice, the church must represent a new social reality, acting as "real" in relation to the "illusory" reality of society. An alternative to such enslavement is the return to the forms of solidarity that are typical of early Christianity.

Key words: political theology, Orthodoxy, social teaching of the church, freedom, eschatological reality
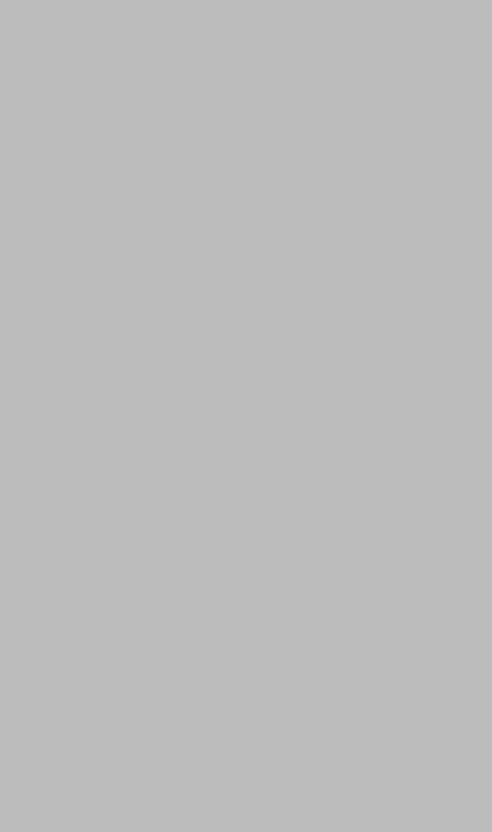
Александр Желтобородов

Харьковская государственная академия физической культуры

Харьков, Украина

КОНЦЕПЦИЯ ТРЕТЬЕГО РИМА КАК ИДЕОЛОГЕМА – ИСТОРИЗМ БОГОСЛОВСКИХ ИДЕЙ ХРИСТИАНСКОЙ ЭСХАТОЛОГИИ

Возможность существования историософии как отдельной познавательной сферы деятельности обусловлена христианской традицией. Первые попытки постичь смысл истории были связаны непосредственно с распространением и утверждением христианства как нового мировоззрения на территории Римской империи. Именно христианство способствовало переходу от циклического к линейному пониманию исторического процесса. Это было связано с тем, что мир был создан Богом, то есть он имеет начало, а соответственно он может иметь и конец. Идея о Москве как «Третьем Риме» является идеологемой, на современном этапе своего функционирования она представляет собой концепт, структура которого актуализирует идеологически маркированные концептуальные признаки, сочетающие в себе коллективное, мифологизированное представление о власти, государстве и политических институтах. В иудейской традиции «Мессия» может проявляться как личность и как народ, а идеологема «Москва-Третий Рим» на разных этапах функционирования как сочетает, так и разграничивает эти проявления. Личностным воплощением мессии выступает царь, ответственный за судьбу богоизбранного царства и верующих. Христианское царство удерживает мир от прихода Антихриста и Апокалипсиса. Мотив ответственности царя за чистоту православной веры и судьбу последнего православного царства является основной интенцией возникновения идеологемы (послание Филофея), впоследствии функции сохранения чистоты веры переносятся от царя к избранному народу – тех, кто сохранил верность традиции. Идеологема «Москва – Третий Рим» отражает такое понимание государственно-церковных отношений, когда царская власть ставится выше церковной и сакрализируется,

что способствует утверждению самодержавной модели государственного управления и предполагает ответственность царя только перед Богом.

Ключевые слова: христианство, линейность исторического процесса, власть, сакральность, богоизбранность.

Authors' email addresses

Agbaria K. Ayman: aagbaria@edu.haifa.ac.il
Bakrač Vladimir: bvladimir@t-com.me
Barbanti Evelina: barbantievelina@gmail.com
Beilin Mihail: mysh_07@mail.ru
Blagojević Mirko: mblagojevic@idn.org.rs
Blaževski Ivan: ivan.blazevski@isppi.ukim.edu.mk
Bogomilova Nonka: nonka_bogomilova@mail.bg
Cacanoska Ružica: ruzica.cacanovska@gmail.com
Chervona Svetlana: nesveta@ukrnet.com
Ćiparizović Radisavljević Dragana: dcipariz@yahoo.com
Cilia Robert: Robert.cilia@ilearn.edu.mt
Čolić Petar: petar.colic.1017@gmail.com
Cvetićanin Neven: nevencveticanin@gmail.com
Ćumura Ljiljana: ljcumura@yahoo.com
Gazniuk Lidia: lgazn@mail.ru
Gadzhimuradova Gyulnara: gadzhimuradova7@gmail.com
Gojković Teodora: teodoragojkovic9@gmail.com
Goncharov Gennady: gonchar09@meta.ua
Ignajtović Suzana: signjatovic@idn.org.rs
Igrutinović Danica: danica.igrutinovic@fmk.edu.rs
Kublitskaya A. Elena: eakubl@yahdex.ru
Kuburić Zotova Ana: anarzotova@gmail.com
Kuburić Zorica: zoricakuburic@gmail.com
Janković Svetlana: svetlana.jankovic.cacak@gmail.com
Jovanović Marko: marko.slavko.jovanovic@gmail.com
Jovanović Vuk: mastervuwoo@gmail.com
Lazić Nadja: nadjalazic12@gmail.com
Lazović Danica: d.lazovic96@gmail.com
Lebedev Sergey: serg_ka2001-dar@mail.ru
Lyutenko Irina: blodrein@mail.ru
Maksimović Marijana: mmaksimovic@idn.org.rs
Mandić Marko: mmandic@idn.org.rs
Matić Zlatko: zlatkomatic@yahoo.com

Masliković Dejan: dmaslikovic@idn.org.rs
Mentus Vladimir: vmentus@idn.org.rs
Mijić Emilija: emijic@idn.org.rs
Milanković Aleksandar: radujtesetrgovi@gmail.com
Milenkova Valentaina: vmilenkova@gmail.com
Mitrić Siniša: mitricsinisa20@gmail.com
Momčinović Popov Zlatiborka: zlatiborka.popov.momcinovic@ff.ues.rs.ba
Mršević Zorica: zorica.mrsevic@gmail.com
Nurkić Petar: petar.nurkic@f.bg.ac.rs
Nikolic Gordana: gocadra@gmail.com
Nikolova Antoaneta: tonishan1@yahoo.com; anikolova@swu.bg
Olena Orlenko: helen.m.orlenko@gmail.com
Pavić Željko: zpavic@ffos.hr
Perišić Nikola: nikola.perisic.fpn@gmail.com
Petkovic Dejan: dejan.petkovic@ei.sanu.ac.rs;
                dejanpetkovic7520@gmail.com
Radovanović Nebojša: nebojsa.radovanovic@gmail.com
Rjapuhina Viktorija: viktorer_r@mail.ru
Saltan Natalia: nataliiasaltan@gmail.com
Semenova Yuliia: semenova.yuliia.a@gmail.com
Soina Iryna: soinairina2003@gmail.com
Sozanova Liliya: liliya.sazonova@gmail.com
Stanković Đurđica: djstankovic@idn.org.rs
Stevanović Nebojša: stevanovicgnebojsa@gmail.com
Stojanovic Dragana: dragana.stojanovic@fmk.edu.rs
Škobo Milena: milenanikolic86@yahoo.com
Tinaz Nuri: nuri.tinaz@marmara.edu.tr
Tomić M. Bojan: bojantomic@imsi.rs
Trophimov Sergey: troph@mail.ru
Vasojević Nena: nvasojevic@idn.org.rs
Vukčević Nemanja: vukchevich@bsu.edu.ru;
                nemanja.vukcevic2021@gmail.com
Ustjužin Igor: ustyuzhyn@karazin.ua; ustyuzhyn@i.ua
Zheltoborodov Alekandr: reskator2132@gmail.com

The Forum for Religious Issues (FOREL) is a research group at the Institute of Social Sciences that explores contemporary religion from an interdisciplinary perspective by bringing together researchers from the Institute of Social Sciences and external scholars from sociology, philosophy, anthropology, political studies, and legal studies. The Forum informs the scientific and the general public about its findings based on research evidence and organizes international scientific meetings, conferences, roundtables, and panels discussions.

Center for Sociological and Anthropological Research specialises in the fields of sociology, gender studies, sociology of religion, political sociology, and political anthropology. The Center has a long tradition of research in the sociology of religion and religious studies, focusing on religion in post-conflict and post-transitional societies, secularization and desecularization, religious identity, and religious organizations.