

## THE RELIGIOUS FACTOR IN PARTY CREATION OF MODERN RUSSIA

### Abstracts

The problem of religiosity influence on party construction in modern Russia is analyzed within three periods proposed by the author: 1. the nineties of the twentieth century - the period without restrictions on the use of religion; 2. The first decade of the twenty first century – the period of sufficiently strong principles of state secularism; 3. 2012 – present – the period of “primitive secularism” overcoming. Conclusions and generalizations are made within a broad empirical material, including the study of party’s public declaration. The basic trends and features of the religiosity influence on party construction have been determined. It has been analyzed in relation to religion and believers of the leading political parties. Particular attention is paid to political parties that have been using religious ideas in their programs and within party’s ideology construction.

**Key Words:** Modern Russia, party, religiosity, mass conciseness

In 1990 Article 6 of the Constitution of USSR on one party-system was repealed. After this the process of party creation in Russia actively started. In the beginning of 90-s of the 20-st century according to some date there were 260 parties<sup>2</sup>.

The most important component of democratic processes in our country is creation of institutional conditions for political party activities. Modern political relations are impossible without these political institutes.

Under the conditions of serious changes of collective consciousness and de-ideologization enshrined in the modern Constitution of the Russian Federation, special interest is paid to study of factors and meaningfulness in terms of which party practices are realized.

From 1991 party creation has come through the difficult way. It had several tendencies defined by different objective and subjective factors including the religious factor across the spectrum. The importance of religious factor in socio-political life of modern Russia is evident<sup>3</sup>.

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1 E-mail: svb@ssla.ru.

2 *Parties and party systems in modern Russia and Post-war*, M.-Rostov-on-Don: Publ. house SKAGS, 2004, p. 186.

3 Loginov A.V., Modern Russian regionalistics and ethno-politics through the prism of concepts, *Thy power and belief*, FSBEI HPO “Saratov State Law Academy, Saratov, 2013, pp. 149-229.

During the period of 1991-2015 (almost a quarter of century) the religious worldview of Russians changed a lot due to enforcement of the Right for freedom of conscience and religion. The number of confessional parties tripled. This demonstrates that confessional character of religious associations has changed a lot. The number of these associations is constantly increasing and nowadays there are 27,626 registered organizations<sup>4</sup>. Compared with 1991, the number of religious organizations has increased fivefold. 80% of them are religious organizations of Orthodox confession.

Modern Russia according to religious worldview is a Christian country. 85-95 million people consider themselves as Christians. Most of the population consider themselves as Orthodox Christians, not so much in the context of religious practices as in the context of congeniality to spirit and a cultural identity<sup>5</sup>.

The activity of religious organizations of the last several years is connected not only with uniting of believers and forming of their religious worldview, but with determination position according to secular questions, including political ones. For example, 77% of citizens support attendance of priests in Army. 84% of them support participation of political organizations in charitable actions. 73% of respondents are not opposed to the creation of Church children's homes. More than 80% of citizens support the idea to create Church hospitals and old-people's home. 63% of respondents support Church's participation in the process of creation of youth clubs. 66% of respondents say yes to creation of Church comprehensive schools. 82% of them support priest's attendance in places of confinement. 71% of citizens approve creation of Orthodox channel<sup>6</sup>.

The modern poly-confessional structure of Russia is the result of longtime historical development and democratic changes can't be static, finally formed. According to existing and emerging trends in religious and other spheres, this modern condition will face serious difficulties. The religious factor has become a vital part of a "secular" social consciousness that will reflect on spiritual culture and political process in Russia.

The constitution adopted in 1993 declares that "The Russian Federation is a secular state", "No religion may be established as the State religion or a compulsory religion" (Art.14, p.1), "Religious associations are separated from the State and are equal before the law" (Art. 14, p2)<sup>7</sup>. These provisions are vital for a poly-confessional state. Religious organizations work within a legal framework of secular church-state relations specified in the legislation regulating the religious sphere.

4 Structure and number of religious organizations registered in Russia, <http://xn----ptblgjed.xn--p1ai/node/2461> (Accessed date 29.11.2015).

5 Loginov A.V., Modern Russian regionalistics and ethno-politics through the prism of concepts, *Thy power and belief*, FSBEI HPO "Saratov State Law Academy, Saratov, 2013, pp. 149-157, pp. 185-195.

6 Russian newspapers, <http://www.rg.ru/2012/02/08/putin-site.html> (Accessed date 25.02.2014)

7 Constitution of the Russian Federation, M., 2002, pp. 6-7.

Thus, on the one hand, the whole legal system of modern Russia is based on the principle of secularism; on the other hand, the population has seriously absorbed religiosity. Consequently, the number of religious associations, which study religious practices involving a wide range of questions beside faith, has increased significantly<sup>8</sup>.

All the above factors has influenced party activities. First of all, the existence of these political institutes directly depends on the national support. Fighting for voters they have to readily respond to changes of collective conscience. Secondly, this response takes place in the framework of existing legislation, particularly that regulating party creation. According to this we can define three periods in the history of party creation in modern Russia in the context of the religious factor.

**First period.** The nineties of the twentieth century - the period without restrictions on the use of religion

New relationship between state and religion achieved the level of legal implementation within the Law "Freedom of religion" in 1990<sup>9</sup>. The law on the regulation of religious life put on the first place ensuring the freedom of conscience and religion, lifted all restrictions from the religion activities of all religious communities without exception, creating conditions for its diversities, completely suspended the states from the control over the nature of the religious processes in the country. Named features had serious impact on party construction. During this period Russian society "experienced surprising dynamics of the relationship between parties, population and the authorities, and sometimes paradoxical features of the organization of these political structures"<sup>10</sup>.

Nowadays, the independent history of Christian party construction in Russia of the 1990s is rich in the events, and is thereby interesting to the scientific community<sup>11</sup>. At this time in Russia there were parties in the name of which there was religious affiliation, within the fact that religious ideas were proclaimed as basis of its activity: Christian Democratic Union – New Democracy (CDU – ND), Christian Democratic Union – Russian Christians (CDU – RC), Russian Christian Democratic Party (RCDP), Russian Christian Democratic Movement (RCDM), Christian

8 Slobozhnikova V.S., Democracy, government, culture: problem research of political science, Russian association of political science, *Religious practices in the structure of political process of modern Russia*, M. ROSSPEN.: ПОССТІЭН, Saratov, 2007, pp. 498-525.

9 RSFSR Law of 25.10.1990, N. 267-1 (rev. Of 27.01.1995) "On freedom of religion", [http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons\\_doc\\_LAW\\_3953/](http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_3953/) (Accessed date 25.02.2015)

10 *Parties and party systems of modern Russia and post-war Germany*, M.-Rostov-on-Don: Publ. SKAGS, 2004, p. 149.

11 Grigoryeve Yu. E., Christian democracy in Russia: problems of formation, *Discussions of philosophy science*, M.: RAGS, Moscow, 1996, p. 156. Haustova N.A., Christian democracy in Russia: soc.-philos.origins and problems of political bias, *Cand. of philos.science*, M., Moscow, 1997, p. 145. Shchipkov A.V., *Christian democracy in Russia*, M.: publ. house «Kluch-S», Moscow, 2004, p. 120.

Social Union (CSU) and so on. Talking about the basis the ideologists, the RCDP, for example, used ecumenism as part of the Russian national-cultural grounds and connected with experiences of Western European Christian parties. RCDU, meanwhile, worked toward unifying all Christians<sup>12</sup>.

These parties played an active role in the political life of the country: they joined the liberal bloc, standing in elections as the members of different parties. That was connected with the fact that their ideological guidelines were borrowed from the West-European Christian-democratic bases and were not widely supported, despite the possibility of participation in cross-party coalition in elections. Thus, interfactional deputy group of the RCDU and RCDP was created in the State Duma in the spring of 1994<sup>13</sup>.

The Christian-Democratic Movement, developed in the period of “perestroika”, was in contact with the Christian Democrats Abroad, was popular among ecumenically minded citizens and focused on Western political and religious examples. All this led to breakups and divisions of movements and parties. Nationally oriented organizations were created in opposition to these parties. A religious component was given a significant place in the program documents of some parties despite the absence of religiosity in its name and secular character of the party.

For example, the National Republican Party of Russia declared to be secular party in the Programme in 1992. On the one hand, NRPR acknowledged the materialistic world perception, considered the confession of traditional Orthodox Christians or Vedic religious beliefs as an individual and free-will matter for each Russian citizen, stood for a resolute stop to the spread of fanatical and aggressive non-traditional sects in Russia (khlysts, krishnaism, Satanism and so on), denied the Russian people were divided according to class, territorial or religious and confessional features. All named above emphasized the secular character of the party.

On the other hand, we should pay attention to two important points in the VII section of the party program “Confession and freedom of conscience”. The first paragraph of this section states: “NRPR considers religion as core and an essential aspect of national life. For centuries the majority of the Russian people features, the nature of culture and everyday life. Therefore, one of the primary concerns of NRPR was canonical freedom of the Russian Orthodox Church. This request goes with the free development of other religions traditionally practiced by people of our country”.

A desired model of church-state relations was described in the second section. NRPR proclaimed the principle of separation church and government, along with non-interference with the Church affairs. It was offered following for gradual implementation of this principle. Firstly, traditional Russian confessions

12 Zabyako A. P., Krasnikova A.N., Elbakyan E.S., Religious studies, *Encyclopedia*, 2006, pp. 1154-1155.

13 Ampleeva A.A., *The Christian-democratic movement in Western Europe and Russia: analytical survey*, M., 2002, p. 47.

should have, the legal right to tax-free economic and financial activities independent of any interference. Secondly, direct or indirect teaching of atheism teaching must be eliminated from the state system of public education. Atheistic propaganda should be separated from the state and declared as a matter of private concernment. Thirdly, public institutions, whose activities are focused on the development of atheistic propaganda and the development of atheistic doctrines, should be closed and disbanded. Property and finances of these institutions go into the share use of the Ministry of Public Education and Health of the Russian Empire. Fourthly, the main religious holidays of the Russian Orthodox Church must be declared as national holidays and non-working days. This requirement would also apply to the main holidays of other traditional faiths in areas of national cultural and economic autonomies. Fifthly, representative institutions of local government authorities at all levels must have a certain number of seats for representatives elected by the Russian Orthodox Church and other traditional Russian confessions<sup>14</sup>.

Material from the program of the Russian National Republican Party vividly illustrates the religious ideas put forth by a political party. The ideologists of this party has presented a model of new religious and political relationships, which are characterized by anti-atheismness, orthodoxy, and religious representatives in the institutions of the local government authorities at all levels. In fact, this project had an anti-secular, pro-orthodox character.

The largest Russian religious organization Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) had serious impact on the religious political parties in the middle - the second half of the 1990s. Since 1994 according to the decision of Bishops' council of the Russian Orthodox Church this organization has regarded "clergy membership as extremely undesirable in political parties, movements, unions, blocs and similar organizations, especially in pre-election campaign". Moreover, laymen were allowed to be members of such organizations and even found them on the assumption of close interaction with church Hierarchy<sup>15</sup>.

ROC turned its attention from the political parties to Church-public associations. It caused the activation of Orthodox organizations. The activities of the World Russian People's Council can be an illustrative example. In 1993 it proclaimed Orthodoxy as "the foundation of our civilization and the Russian state idea"<sup>16</sup>. Third World Russian People's Council (December 1995) laid the organizational foundations of WRPC as the main political structure of the Russian Orthodox Church. This structural unit was aimed to occupy a special, privileged place in the relationship between state and society, to perform as public opinion giver

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14 Old politics, <http://old.polit.ru/documents> (Accessed date 2004 r.)

15 Christians and political parties in Russia, The Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church in the period of November, 29 – December, 2 1994, [http://www.religio.ru/relisoc/postsovspace/15\\_print.html](http://www.religio.ru/relisoc/postsovspace/15_print.html) (Accessed date 30.11.2015)

16 I World Russian People's Council, M., 1993, p. 132.

before the civil authorities and official representatives of the parties<sup>17</sup>. It was assumed that WRPC would become a unique sociopolitical structure.

Since the mid-1990s new forms of organizations have appeared. They were generally focused on the interaction with church authorities and fact participation in government work. There was some confrontation between All-Russian Christian Union (RCU) and the "Council of Christian organizations" (CCO) on the one hand, and between "Rossiya pravoslavnyaya" and "The Union of Orthodox citizens".

As a result Christian politics in Russia changed a lot in 1996-1997. Parties and organizations, which have been established before, focused on commercial and charity activity finding no support in elections in 1993 and 1995. Christian-democratic parties, appeared in the end of 80-s of 20-th century, existed for only a short time. They were either disintegrated or had no more influence on sociopolitical life of the country. The Christian Democratic Party had the longest existence (1990-2002). In whole these parties didn't solve the problems of social support and have strong authority over general population.

Western Christian and Orthodox ideas along with ideas of other confessions were used in dynamic party construction of 1990-s. Muslim organizations activated intensively in the second half of the 90-s. Thus, "Nur", one of the first legally registered Muslim movements, earned 0.6% of the votes. The Muslim movement, "Union of Muslims of Russia", aims to promote and defend interests of Muslims at all levels of government. This movement within Parliamentary elections sided with the movement "Our home – Russia" in 1995, supported actively B.N. Yeltsin in the presidential elections in 1996. "Refakh" movement was the only socio-political organization that stood for State Duma per the list of "Edinstvo". "Medzhlis" is another socio-political bloc. It was formed at the premises of such socio-political movements as "Nur", "All-Russian Muslim congress", "Russia's Muslims" and "Our home – Russia" fought for elections. It didn't get into State Duma<sup>18</sup>.

Along with all-Russian organizations, a lot of regional socio-political Muslims' associations were set up, for example, "Ittifaq" Islamic Democratic party, Muslims of Tatarstan (Tatarstan), "Jamaat Muslimi" Islamic party (Dagestan), "Islamsky put" (Chechnya). Most of the North Caucasian national movements and organizations over the years became nationalistic, propagandizing separatism and construction of independent Islamic State in the North Caucasian republics. Such organizations were Congress of Caucasian Nations, The All-National Congress of the Chechen People, National Council of the Balkar People, "Democratic Organization Jamagat", "Birlik", "Tenglik" and so on<sup>19</sup>.

Talking about other confessions, it must be pointed out that they did not

17 III World Russian People's Council, M., 1995, p. 177.

18 Malashenko A.V., *The Islamic Alternative and the Islamic Project*, M. 2006, p. 26, p. 34, p. 40, p. 47.

19 Kovalchuk A., Muslim sociopolitical organizations in the Russian Federation: reference, *Otechestvennye zapiski*, № 5, Vol. 13, 2003, p. 7.

have party constructive features. Ideas of the rule-of-law state were at the first place among Protestants. Activity of Russian Catholics was devoted to the defense of the rights to freedom of conscience and freedom of religion. They didn't aim to construct their own party<sup>20</sup>.

Thus in the 90-s of the 20-th century there were no restrictions on religious use in party construction. This period can be considered as the beginning of party construction history in Russia, both all-Russian and regional. Proreligious forces participated actively in this process under the conditions of absolute freedom and wide development of religious sociopolitical movements, especially of Christian, Orthodox and Muslim orientation. These forces used actively bloc strategies participating in election process. In the first period of 1990-s Christian and Orthodox items were actively used in party construction. This process came to nothing when the Russian Orthodox Church stopped participating in party construction.

In the second half of this decade promuslims forces are taking an active part in sociopolitical life of Russia. By the end of the 90-s of the 20-th century, political parties constructed on the religious foundations haven't received wide support among the population, thereby they were not politically tenable and long term. Some of them even jeopardized national security.

**Second period** – first decade of the 21-st century – party construction under the conditions of strict compliance with the principle of secularism

This constitutional principle formed the basis of party construction and religion legislation<sup>21</sup>. A new federal act "On Political parties" of 2001 played significant role in use of religious ideas in a new light<sup>22</sup>. Its provisions had a serious influence on the use of the religious factor in party construction, especially regarding increase of quantitative criteria and putting the ban on regional party constructions according to religious affiliation and the use of religious names and symbols.

In 2002 political parties had to pass re-registration on the act entering into force. Religious organizations that underwent this procedure were faced with difficulties. Under the conditions of new act some parties were refused the registration because they didn't meet the requirements to the official all-Russian political parties. Parties, which had religious features in the names, also had problems in the process of registration.

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20 Christians and political parties in Russia, The Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church in the period of November, 29 – December, 2 1994, [http://www.religia.ru/relisoc/postsovspace/15\\_print.html](http://www.religia.ru/relisoc/postsovspace/15_print.html) (Accessed date 30.11.2015)

21 Political and legal foundations of religious practices in modern Russia, *Modern Russian political regionalistic and ethnopolitics through the prism of concept*, pp. 158 -184.

22 Legislation Bulletin of the Russian Federation, *Federal Law "On political parties" of 11.07.2001*, Issue № 29, art. 2950, <http://www.rg.ru/2001/07/11/partii-dok.html> (Accessed date 09.09.2001);

Thus in 2002 Russian Christian Democratic Party (RCDP) was refused the registration by the Ministry of Justice because of its confessional nature. That's why in 2002 RCDP had to be renamed as All-Russian Great Power Party (ARGPP). By the way, the party didn't refuse to struggle for its previous name. The new name had some questions too. According to the press service "great power" "does not contain any negative sense" and it doesn't mean that party will oppress other nations. The phrase "great power" is used in the meaning of "owner of the great, immense territory" according to the Explanatory Dictionary of the Living Great Russian Language by Vladimir Dahl<sup>23</sup>. At the end of 2002 two more Christian parties with the same programs tried to register. These were Russian Orthodox Party (ROP) and Orthodox Party of Russia (OPR)<sup>24</sup>. Only one year after the Law on Political parties had come into force, ten parties were refused registration by the Ministry of Justice. According to the interview for RIA Novosti, Deputy Minister of Justice pointed out once more that the law banned the use any feature of religious affiliation in party name. He also explained the refusal to register the Christian Democratic Party under these conditions.

At the same time in the beginning of the 21-st century party construction was actively conducted on the Islamic foundations. In 2001 (before enactment) "Re-fakh" converted to Eurasian Party of the Russian Federation. Later in October 2002 it was named "The Eurasian party – Union of Patriots of Russia". Islamic party of Russian Federation (IRP), whose founding congress was held on March 25, 2011, wasn't able to pass re-registration in the Ministry of Justice. It was connected with the fact that its public declaration considered Islamic ideology as the best for civil society. More than that, its party leader declared that it was the party of Russian Muslims<sup>25</sup>. The potential of Islamic Party of the Russian Federation was used to form two new parties. In 2003 these parties were formed into electoral bloc True Patriots of Russia in order to participate in the forthcoming elections to the State Duma. Both Islamic associations crushingly failed in the elections in the 2003<sup>26</sup>. Party construction based on Islamic foundations was stopped due to elections fail and use the prohibition on regional party construction. According to specialists Islamic organizations are now focused on the cultural promotion of Islam.

As a whole, by the beginning of 2003, 20 organizations have been refused reregistration. Eight of them have resolved all complaints and passed through reregistration. Ministry of Justice of Russian Federation has registered about 40 political parties by the September 2003<sup>27</sup>.

23 Russian Christian Democratic Party (RCDP), <http://www.rcdp.ru> (Accessed date 2004).

24 Korgunyuk Yu. Multiparty system in Modern Russia, [www.polit.ru](http://www.polit.ru) (Accessed date 2005).

25 Islamic party of the Russian Federation, <http://www.ipr.party.ru/> (Accessed date 2005)

26 Kovalchuk A., Muslim sociopolitical organizations in the Russian Federation: reference, *Otechestvennyye zapiski*, № 5, Vol. 3, <http://www.strana-oz.ru/2003/5/islamskie-obshchestvenno-politicheskie> (Accessed data 01.12.2015); Ustinkon S., Timofeev G., Shchunina A., Ivanova V., The evolution of the activity of Islamic political parties and social movements in modern Russia, [http://refereed.ru/ref\\_495999699d97b47cbc0c40687decb74f.html](http://refereed.ru/ref_495999699d97b47cbc0c40687decb74f.html) (Accessed date 01.12.2015).

27 *Parties and Party system in modern Russia and New Germany...* p. 192, p. 245.

During 90-s of the 20-th century collective consciousness towards religion changed a lot. This fact is proved by the people's relation to religion that was discussed at a "round table" devoted to "Historical memory of Russian people" in 2002. 11.7% of respondents identified themselves as believers and followers of the religious rituals. 53.5% of respondents saw themselves just believers without following the religious rituals. Only 5.3% of respondents were indifferent to a religion theme. 5.3% of respondents called themselves die-hard atheist. 9.7% of respondents found it difficult to define their religion attitude<sup>28</sup>. The research of the ROMIR center has shown that 73.6% of respondents identified themselves with Orthodoxy, 4% - with Islam, 3.2% - with non-traditional confessions<sup>29</sup>. At the beginning of the 21-st century there were religious organizations of 69 religious trends. In 2003 Ministry of Justice registered 21 448 religious organizations, 137 ecclesiastical educational institutions, 506 monasteries and metochions<sup>30</sup>.

We suppose that today's popularity of religiosity can be explained by the following reasons:

The first one is vigorous activity of the religious organizations and associations on the back of the democratization of social processes, their struggle for influence over the population.

The second reason is the tight situation in the country and the people's need for new forms of socialization and security. In 2002 the number of people whose life has worsened was less than 50%. People are informed about existing poverty problem along with level of mental health.

The third reason is ideological and political pluralism, the absence of a clearly formulated state ideology, aspiration of political forces toward the support of religious electorate.

Thus religiosity of modern Russia is really existing fact which cannot be ignored. It is challenge of time for active participants of the political process. What is the reaction of political parties, which passed through re-registration?

Almost all parties began to pay their attention to religion and believers responding to the modern situation.

"Union of Right Forces" (SPS) in its program "Challenge to human rights from ethnic and religious clans" has declared that in modern Russia there is practice of violations of personal rights and freedoms because of the existing privileges for certain ethnic and religious groups. More than that, some religious confessions tend to become state institutions. This fact reveals direct intervention into freedom of conscience of believers into the rights and freedoms of all citizens.

In response, a new absolutely secular party formulates its attitude to faith in the following manner: "We equally respect all religions and Churches on the territory of our country. We strongly believe that peaceful coexistence of all the Rus-

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28 NG-RELIGII, January 12, 2000; August 20, 2003.

29 Encyclopedic Dictionary, *Religions of Peoples of Modern Russia*, M., 1999, p. 58.

30 *Religious associations in Saratov*, Short reference book, Saratov, 2004, pp. 13-18.

sian peoples and all believers can be implemented on the condition that we all agree to consider each fellow-citizen as human person enjoying essential rights and freedoms”<sup>31</sup>.

“YABLOKO” had almost the same position. According to its program this party on the one hand called for unity and solidarity between people of different faiths, on the other hand – for interactions with “traditional” confessions. Nevertheless, according to some researchers “YABLOKO” doesn’t pay close attention to the religious sphere. This can be seen by its program that is opposed to “attempts of some politicians and officials to use Church in their political interests”<sup>32</sup>.

X Congress Decisions of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) necessitated choosing between secularism and religiosity. Party Leader G.A. Zyuganov in its Political report of the Central Committee<sup>33</sup> declared that “CPRF is the party that most consistently represents the interests of working people, the interests of believers”. Nowadays CPRF is often the only one of the political parties opposed to government initiatives provoking indignation of believers. Only CPRF has the right to represent interests of believers due to the following reasons. Firstly, Communists’ Leader realizes that “some bishops and church organizations don’t aim to join efforts in the fight for the country, for national traditions and spirituality in the name of Russia”. Secondly, “believers are divided into exploiters and oppressed the same as atheists”. The party pays its attention to oppressed believers.

The political report also identifies possible bases for mutual understanding and the basic problems of joint actions with religious organizations and associations. We are talking about “moral protection, the Russian language defense, the health of the nation protection, mother and child care”. “At last, we like other people consider work as sacred thing. We must protect workers. We must provide security of employment and decent life. Work must be regarded as something respectful. Worker must have the right to decide its own destiny...”<sup>34</sup>. In conclusion Communist Party has declared that it will have to do a great job. Moreover, the life by itself will lead CPRF and religious activists to intercommunicate in order to solve together vital problems of nations protection and its spiritual renewal.

According to its practical activity CPRF actively interacted with “traditional” confessions. Its representatives promoted interests of the Orthodoxy. Its Leader G. Zyuganov published brochure “Faith and Faithfulness. Russian Orthodoxy and the Problems of Revival of Russia”. CPRF believed that faith in God is compatible

31 Party program of “UNION OF RIGHT FORCES” (Russian Liberal Manifesto); Addendum No 7 to the Record of the Congress of ARPO “UNION OF RIGHT FORCES” from the December 14, 2001; *Russia and Challenges of the 21-st century*. M., 2002, <http://www.budgetrf.nsu.ru/> (Accessed date 2005)

32 Kovalchuk A., Muslim sociopolitical organizations in the Russian Federation: reference, *Otechestvennyye zapiski*, № 5, Vol. 3, <http://www.strana-oz.ru/2003/5/islamskie-obshchestvenno-politicheskie> (Accessed data 01.12.2015).

33 Political report of the Central Committee of CPRF before X Congress of Communist Party of the Russian Federation, [http://f.forum.msk.ru/news/party\\_news/24785.html](http://f.forum.msk.ru/news/party_news/24785.html) (Accessed date 2005)

34 Ibid.

with Communist party membership<sup>35</sup>.

Political parties were at crossroads between legislated secularity and confessionality, particularly a real need to choose and support some confession or represent the interests of all believers. LDPR's position pointed to this contradiction.

In the past this party took vivid pro-orthodox position, pushing and supporting relevant bills. It even issued a brochure "Orthodox bastion". Emergence of a new civilization was seen by LDPR leader through the prism of Orthodoxy. Due to this model only orthodox Christians can be God's favored people. New community can be formed as part of Orthodox corridor of 8 countries like Russia, Belorussia, Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Greece. Orthodoxy can become the basis of our solidarity and unity. Economic, political, moral and military assistance can form the community. Similarly, the union of Iran and Iraq was formed within Islam and anti-American sentiments. Finally, V. Zhirinovskiy built global plans, which were not directly connected with this problem.

XII Congress of LDPR (in 2001) discussed formation of new civilization under specific conditions. The party talked about his active participation in this process. He even addressed a letter to the president proposing to consider Orthodoxy as state religion. He offered to introduce the concept of "Orthodox Russian citizen" and new information field in passport "Confession" (Orthodox Christian, Muslim, Judaist, Buddhist and so on). Thus 90% of population will be Orthodox Christians. This fact can form the basis for national integration.

Nevertheless his further position was more obscure. At the end of 1990-s he said that he had no fatal sympathy to any "traditional" confession. For example, he has pointed out that Knyazh Vladimir decided on "cheaper" religion; many priests are KGB representatives. He by himself tends to Pentecostalism. The brochure of LDPR of the beginning of 2000-s contains the information that religion plays positive role. But no religion can be named as ideal; it must be some kind of synthesis of the best<sup>36</sup>. It seems that future development of human civilization was seen by LDPE leader through the prism of religions.

According to the practices of SPS, CPRF and LDPR that were the leading Russian Parties of the beginning of the 21-st century and had different ideological orientation, parties had to choose between secularity and religiosity and between religions and Churches. In any case they will be faced with difficulties. Supporting one religious party will lose the support of the people of another religious orientation. Appeals to all believers within concrete religious orientation are futile in the context of earning voter support.

At the beginning of 2000-s the most important problem for the creation of state-confessional relation model was connected with religions' divisions into traditional and non-traditional and further classification of religion according to this principle. How did it affect the activities of political parties and party con-

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35 NG-RELIGII, July 2, 2003, p. 39.

36 Ibid, p. 59.

struction? According to some researchers a party's popularity was connected with its ability to support and promote interest of "traditional confessions"<sup>37</sup>.

The position of the People's party was the most consistent. Its representatives regularly introduced bills into the State Duma reflecting these positions. It also initiated the creation of inter-faction deputy association (MDO) "In support of the traditional spiritual and moral values in Russia". Membership of this association was represented almost by one third of the "People's party" members. "People's party" suggested using new calendar with increased number of Orthodox national holidays. Some parties had doubts about making Orthodox Christmas national holiday in the context of freedom of belief.

Alliance of "The Eurasia party" and "Russia's patriots union" focused on traditional confessions. It conducted round-table conferences on election and religious confessions theme. In addition it must be said about "National great-power party". Its leader A. Chuev supported "traditional" confession<sup>38</sup>. Thus, founding congress of "Conservative party of Russia" (NCPR) was held in December 21-22, 2002 in Moscow. Its delegates took unanimous decision on the party creation. More than that, it was decided that Orthodoxy would underlie the party construction under the conditions of corporate agreement of all political and social forces, institutions of rule of the people and Church. Party aimed to revive the empire with a powerful nationwide and autocratic leader<sup>39</sup>. Such statements were typical to parties with patriotic changes.

Thus, site of "Popular-patriotic party of Russia" (PPPR) had His Eminence Metropolitan John of St. Petersburg and Ladoga address to people: "I pray hard and firmly believe that Russia will rise up and revive..." The party aimed to recreate the great Russia and confront the current lawlessness, chaos and perdition, betraying national interests. The basic principles of the party are patriotism, democracy, justice, spirituality and statehood. One of the main political missions is the state support of the Russian Orthodoxy and other traditional religions (Islam, Buddhism). At the same time they propose to repress any form of religious expansion from abroad. The popular-patriotic party of Russia admits freedom of belief. Popular-patriotic party of Russia admits freedom of belief considering wide variety of official religious denominations and philosophies, the multinationality of Russia. It will seek, for the return of relics to believers. According to multiculturalism PPPR believes that Russia is a unified, indivisible, multi-ethnic and multi-sect country<sup>40</sup>.

According to learned material in the first decade of the 21-st century there were parties that actively used the religious factor in their aims, circumventing

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37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

39 Oip.ru, <http://olmer1.newmail.ru/> (Accessed date 2005)

40 The political portrait of the political parties of national-patriotic forces of the Russian Federation - the "third force", <http://www.nps-rf.ru/about.asp> (Accessed data 2005)

the law. One can understand the activity of believers who are convinced that only faith can save Russia and its people. At the same time political strategists can use religious ideas for their purposes. For example, the United Russia Party (URP) "Rus" is purposefully built on religious values.<sup>41</sup>

Its predecessor Russian Stability Party (RSP) was created in 1992. It was re-registered by the Ministry of Justice under the same name after the new law had been introduced. It held unpopular liberal views. In March, 2003 this party was officially renamed URP "Rus" and its ideology was based on Russian patriotism. One of its leaders has told that "Rus" can be considered as business-project that can be successfully sold. "Rus" leaders are little-known among big-time politicians and nationalists. The last named believe that this project was created with the help of the Presidential Administration of Russia.

As it happens, "Rus" experience is unusual for modern Russian politics. According to experts this party was not created for a particular leader (however initially it was so), but for concrete members. Moreover, ideological niche could be occupied by fully controllable system. One can say that it was a process of "party turnkey construction" for potential customers. More than that, leaders of the party were PR experts.

Party creation "Rus" was connected with the confidence in political technologies. Tonnage media, promotion of a few simple and populist successful ideas were actively used. The party aimed to capture votes of Russian nationalists by means of different marginal political forces involving strong extremists (electoral association "Spas", Barkashov's "Russian National Unity", National great-power party). Government failed to build relations with it.

"Rus" organized by political strategists-pragmatists aimed to regenerate the nation in order to construct just and safe society in Russia and to protect interest of titular ethnic group. Leaders of the party were members of writing staff of "Orthodox and educational project" "Great Rus. Facts and fictions". Its PR campaigns were still unsuccessful. Only 1% of Russians supported this Party according to WCIOM's July and August of 2003 data.

One of the results of such political life of modern Russia during this period was the keen struggle for the electorate, including religious. This struggle was especially tight under the conditions of close elections. The importance of the religious factor in the election campaign was clearly shown by the activities of parties and associations on the eve of elections to the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of Russia in 2003<sup>42</sup>.

According to researchers there are several stages of the struggle for religious electorate. The first one is connected with gaining the affection of the Russian Orthodox Church representatives. Then some political strategists understood

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41 Politcom.Ru, <http://politcom.ru/> (Accessed data 2005 r.); [http://www.compromat.net/page\\_13540.htm](http://www.compromat.net/page_13540.htm) (Accessed data 01.12.2015)

42 NG-RELIGII, Oct. 1 2003, Dec. 3.

that Russia is a multi-set country. Thus second stage is connected with focus on other “traditional confessions”: Islam, Buddhism, and Judaism. “Non-traditional” believers still stayed unaffected<sup>43</sup>.

Believers and confessions with clear belief system were not understood by political leaders, which aimed to get more votes. This fact predetermined the emergence of new trends in the use of the religious factor in the political struggle and party construction.

Thus, one of the leaders of the National-Republican Party of Russia, talking about his political and religious sympathies, suggested creating the alliance of Indigenous Peoples of Russia with traditional Orthodox ethno-religious positions. It meant the union of Orthodox and Muslims. This leader had told before about his strong Orthodox positions<sup>44</sup>. As shown above in search of religious voters, and the LDPR and CPRF Party actively participated in the process of attracting religious electorate.

Thus, the “religious renaissance” of modern Russia can be considered valid and religiosity turned to be political reality. Pro-religious political parties were faced difficulties during the process of re-registration and registration of political associations claiming the status of All-Russian political party. By January 1, 2012 it had registered 464 centralized religious organizations and 7 political parties. The decrease of the number of political parties in 2000 in comparison with 1990s was connected with strict adherence to the principle of secularism in relation to religious organizations and political parties.

Religious organizations hardly participated in the process of party creation.

To our opinion under the conditions of adherence to the principle of secularism party creators appealed to Christian (especially Orthodox) and Islamic ideas but not so much on the stage of the party creation and in the program documents (these documents strongly pointed to secularism) as in party practices.

Political process and party creation involved the religious factor as the vital moment of election struggle and sociopolitical life. Political parties under these conditions had to choose between secularism and religiosity. According to study of party public declarations in the period of party creation, no party ignored this problem.

**Third period** – 2012 – our times – period of “primitive secularism” overcoming<sup>45</sup>

We started to consider new period from the year of 2012 because of the following reasons:

43 NG-RELIGII, July 2 2004, p. 29.

44 Portal-credo.ru, <http://portal-credo.ru/site/print.php?act=authority&id=121> (Accessed data 01/04/2015)

45 Slobozhnikova V., Modern Russia is in Search of a Secular Model of Relationships between Religions and the State, *Balkan journal of philosophy*, Vol. 6, Issue 2, 2014, pp. 147-154. Slobozhnikova V.S., Government attitude to religion and politics in modern Russia (2012 – 2014), *Quarter century political science in Russian province: collect. of scient. papers*, Saratov, Povolzhsky Institute of Management of RANEPa named after P. A. Stolypin, 2015, pp. 55-60.

1. On April 2, 2012 to the law "On political parties" was altered, simplifying the procedure of registration by reducing the requirements for the number of members to 500 people<sup>46</sup>. Intensive party creation was stimulated by citizens' participation in the political life of the country. This is evident from the fact that during the short period more than 70 parties were created<sup>47</sup>. In 2012 it was registered 47 new parties<sup>48</sup>, in 2013 – 28 political parties<sup>49</sup>, in 2014 – 8<sup>50</sup>. By January 1, 2015 it has been 76 parties, at the end of the year – 78. During the period of 2012-2014 it was registered 83 parties. Above data testify to active process of party creation in modern Russia.

2. V. Putin has stated that Russia is in need of its own model of secularism different from strictly liberal<sup>51</sup>. This statement essentially changed the role of religious factor in party creation.

Programs of the newly formed political parties considered as official documents necessary for the Ministry of Justice reveal the admissibility of religiosity use on the official level of modern party creation.<sup>52</sup> According to our calculations a little more than 40% of political parties don't define their attitude to religiosity in modern Russia.

Study of party public declarations has shown that there is no there is no relationship between the ideology, criticality of country situation assessment and giving consideration to religiosity. Parties conventionally named as "specifically oriented" don't touch religiosity sphere. We are talking about the "Russia's Internet Party", "Part of Russian Taxpayers", "Young Russia", "Cities of Russia", "Automobile Russia". There is no mention about religiosity in the programs of deep social-oriented parties, like "The Russian Socialist Party", "Russian Labor Party", "The Will", "Russian United Labor Front", and "Democratic choice".

All registered political parties undertake to act within the constitutional law of modern Russia. Nevertheless, only three parties (LDPR, "Civic Platform", "Citizen's Power") pay special attention to secularism of modern Russian statehood. For example, "Citizen's power" considers itself as "Party of socially active, successful, independent-minded citizens", who "create intellectual wealth of the country". This party has 17 program purposes, among which on the third place

46 Federal Law No 28 "On amending Federal Law "On political parties" of April 2, 2012, <http://www.rg.ru/2012/04/04/partii-dok.html> (Accessed date: 19.04.2015)

47 There are 78 names in the list of registered parties in the Ministry of justice, <http://minjust.ru/ru/nko/gosreg/partii/spisok> (Accessed date: 17.11.2015)

48 Public associations and organizations registered In the Russian Federation on 1 January 2013 D.1) [http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b13\\_13/IssWWW.exe/Stg/d1/02-10.htm](http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b13_13/IssWWW.exe/Stg/d1/02-10.htm) (Accessed data : 17.11.2015)

49 "Russia 2014. Statistical Pocketbook", [http://www.gks.ru/free\\_doc/doc\\_2014/rus14.pdf](http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/doc_2014/rus14.pdf) (Accessed date: 18.11.2015)

50 Ibid.

51 Russian Newspaper. Hear the voice. Vladimir Putin called on religious organizations to cooperate closely, <http://www.rg.ru/2012/02/08/putin-site.html> (Accessed date 25.02.2014).

52 Further program's provisions of registered political parties will be provided in accordance with programs' text posted on the website of Ministry of Justice, <http://minjust.ru/ru/nko/gosreg/partii/spisok> (Accessed date 25.07.2013 - 17.11.2015)

is "secular rightful society" that follows after democracy and developed civil society, federalism and pluralism.

Many parties consider the diversity of the Russian people as the value of modern Russia.

Some political parties show the importance of religious values in the context of devotion to modern democratic rights, freedoms and also especially to traditions. All this is used to strengthen spiritual and moral state of population based on traditional confessions.

For example, "The Cossack Party of the Russian Federation" declares that its activity is based on "potential of civil society institutions, the Russian Orthodox Church and other religious organizations of traditional confessions. Using all this it works toward strengthening of spiritual and moral foundations, developing of culture-historical traditions of Russian Cossacks and harmonization of interethnic relations, inter-faith and interchurch dialogue".

Many parties, especially oppositional, are concerned about current status of culture in whole, spirituality and morality in particular.

More than that, political parties consider religiosity as a vital factor of national and migration policy in the process of strengthening of morality in society. Party "Motherland" ("Rodina") party pays special attention to this factor in its program<sup>53</sup>.

Study of political party programs reveals the relationship between the form of government, favored parties and religiosity. The absolute majority of registered parties prefer republican government in one form or another. Strange to say but "The Monarchist Party" makes no reference to religion and belief despite its declaration about "the restoration of the monarchy in Russia by peaceful constitutional means, in compliance with generally accepted democratic procedures, in strict accordance with current legislation".

It has been revealed that a definite relationship exists between the period of the party creation and the assessment of the role and value of the religious factor in modern Russia, rather the use of a religious vocabulary.

It must be pointed out that political parties of the period of "primitive secularism" started to use religion vocabulary in its programs.

For example, All-Russian political "Party of Renaissance of village" provides an example of Bible scripture: "Farmers labor is acceptable to God" in its program. Talking about national relations the party declares that "every nationality - is a gift of God or nature ..." We suppose that party tends to be closer to believers and agricultural people.

"For Women" party is the most shining example of the use of religion vocabulary<sup>54</sup>. Such miracle as "Heavenly powers" helped Russia to overcome numerous

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53 Slobozhnikov V.S., Political parties about ethnic problem in modern Russia, *Ethno-national processes in political space of the region: problems and tendencies*, A.F. Bichevost and L.V. Loginova (eds.), Saratov: Publishing House "KUBIK", 2015, pp. 75-111.

54 Program is approved by Founding congress in April 22, 2012.

troubles. Nowadays Russia "is crucified and put in the selfishness pillory". People have betrayed God "worshiping the golden calf". Only women-myrrhophores like Blessed Virgin Mary can help to overcome the conscience crisis, social conflicts and thus can calm a country and give encouragement to people, preventing disaster. The program of this party gives an example of H. Ibsen words: "A woman is the most powerful creature in the world, and she is to lead a man where Lord wants to guide him". Only woman can do God's will. "God guides us through the Hell", in prospect "Sooner or Later something inevitable will happen: balance will be restored by peaceful way or, God forbid, by another way".

We gave the example of the most outstanding party's use of religion vocabulary. As is evident from the foregoing party "For women" actively uses such concepts as "Heavenly powers", "God", "The Creator", "The Lord God", "Christ", "faith", "hell". All these concepts define a Christian worldview that is poly-denominational. Through the prism of religion vocabulary and religious worldview, Party forms its compositionality. It has a critical attitude to realities of modern Russia and works for achieving the "balance".

Is this active use of religion vocabulary compatible with Russian legislation? We suppose that no. "For women" party does not proclaim and does not protect the religious interests, does not incite religious discord. All named above is prohibited by the law. The party assesses the situation in the country, using the language and semantic content of religion. It attracts pious women among all Christian denominations by the means of all-Christian vocabulary.

Newly created parties demonstrate different attitude towards particular religion.

Some parties pay special attention to traditional confessions. It is typical for "Cossack's Party of the Russian Federation". "Agrarian party of Russia" declares about profound respect for the activity of "the Russian Orthodox Church, Muslim organizations of Russia and other traditional confessions" in its program section about organizational principles and work methods.

Actualization of the problem Russian-owned-Russian<sup>55</sup> in the political party programs has led to emphasizing Orthodoxy among traditional confessions. It is most clearly observed in the program of "Russian All-People's Union"<sup>56</sup>. Party declares that "...Russia - is the country of Russians in its own right, and in fact. We are talking about Russians not only by blood (Great Russians), but on the perception of the world, language, and way of life and relation to their own country, its history, faith, holy places and traditions".

The party explains the necessity of its existence by "consistent growth of the patriotic, national statist sentiments among the indigenous population, especially among Russian Orthodox people, that were the result of deterioration of

55 Slobozhnikov V.S., Political parties about ethnic problem in modern Russia... pp. 89-90.

56 Was approved by the Congress of All-Russian social movement "Russian All-People's Union" about transformation into political party "Russian All-people's union" in December 17, 2011.

the crisis in Russia. This led to the idea that our country can overcome economic, social and political gridlock under the conditions that Russians will really get back the historical status related to national development, will return to policy and economy on equitable basis, will be under true national power”.

Actively using religion vocabulary “Party of Renaissance of village” does not emphasize any particular confession despite the fact that it describes itself as a defender of traditional values, justice, spirituality, family, conciliarity, Russian land, Russian culture, Russian language. All this clearly indicates about its Orthodox orientation.

Religious factor plays a great role in the process of party creation in modern Russia. LDPR as a parliamentary party “opposes attempts to dent Orthodoxy, which is one of the most popular religions in Russia, in consequence of supporting equal rights of all confessions”.

Program of “National course”<sup>57</sup> presents the most distinct gradation of religious organizations. Considering “Russian People” (Great Russians, Little Russians and Byelorussians) as state-forming nation the party divides religious organizations into three groups according to its program’s section “2.7. Cultural, educational and religious policy”. 1. “The Russian Orthodox Church as culture-forming national institute is granted the status of Public law Corporation (special legal status within the secular state)”. 2. All traditional confessions in Russia must be respected and supported by the government and under the local specifics must be attracted to culturological and educational projects. We also support the idea to use help of traditional confessions in the Army, hospitals, shelters, social and charity projects, places of confinement. 3. Non-traditional religious organizations should obtain registration with due diligence. This is the case of destructive sects, banned in certain countries, with “totalitarian” character or views radically contrary to the traditional values of Russia or promoting religious radicalism and extremism. According to its program this party divides religious organizations in order of importance and government attitude.

“National course” as many others (LDPR, “Patriots of Russia”) is concerned about spread in Russia of alternative and fanatical sects and religious fanaticism and extremism.

Religious factor is concerned in the context of national security. Thus, “Party of National Security of Russia” as part of patriotic Russian society consider it necessary to “provide traditional Russian confessions with national security and support”, because “Spirituality is the foundation of Russia Federation. Government and society have no future without Faith, at the present time public mind and sentiment are in chaos leading to civil strife”. “Strengthening the state and social control over the non-traditional confessional organizations and sects leads to social conflicts and threaten stability in the country”.

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57 Accepted by Founding Congress at 05.07.2012

Some parties emphasize special role of religiosity describing the international situation and foreign policy objectives (LDPR, "Defenders of the Fatherland", "Democratic Choice", "Party of Spiritual Transfiguration of Russia", "Russian All-People's Union").

Due to significance of religious organizations, political parties consider them as allies in achieving declared aims. More than that, parties declare intention to cooperate with them. All this is evidenced in programs of such political parties as CPRF, "Party for Justice", "Party of Renaissance of village", "The Greens", "Russian United Agriculture and Industry Party".

Thus, party creation significantly reflects a change of collective consciousness towards religiousness happened during last quarter of century. Political parties started to consider religious factor in 2012. The increased impact of religiosity in party creation depicts its significance in modern Russia and parties' tendency to increase its membership by believers. To our minds all this leads to active use of religion vocabulary. Moreover, some parties see solving of culture, spirituality, security, national and migration policy problems by means of religious factor.

Religious factors use in the process of party creation has changed in modern Russia, from absolute freedom to legal restrictions. In 1990-s under the conditions of no restrictions on religious theme there were two tendencies: active use of religiosity by political society and participation of religious forces in policy and party activities. In 2000 political parties acting under secular legislation had to use the religious factor to increase their authority among the population, especially among its electorate due to changes of collective consciousness towards religiousness.

From 2012, political parties consider religiosity as a resource both for attracting supporters and solving the problems of foreign policy and domestic problems of the country. Political parties and their leaders will continue to use attractiveness of religious ideas. We will witness not only serious and careful use of religious ideas by political parties, but also the creation of pseudo-religious organizations. In our opinion, it is impossible to create any true religious alliance and association under the leadership of any political party at the moment. We suppose that none of the influential confessions will have the will to be in alliance with only one party.

Religious associations and organizations are rather independent in themselves; they have a wider range of sources to impact the population, especially believers. Due to this fact religiosity must be treated carefully without undue manipulation.

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Валентина Слобожњикова

## ВЕРСКИ ФАКТОР У ФОРМИРАЊУ ПАРТИЈА У МОДЕРНОЈ РУСИЈИ

### Сажетак

Проблем утицаја религиозности на формирање партија у модерној Русији је анализиран кроз три периода: 1. Деведесете године двадесетог века – период без рестрикција у вези употребе религије, 2. Прва декада двадесетпрвог века – период у којем је доминирао принцип јаког државног секуларизма и 3. Наше време, од 2012. године – период „примитивног секуларизма“. Закључци и генерализације су изнети на основу широке лезе емпиријских података, укључујући и анализу партијских јавних декларација. Означени су основни трендови и особине утицаја религије на формирање партија. Анализиран је и однос између верника и главних политичких партија. Посебно је обрађена пажња на оне партије које користе верске идеје у њиховим програмима и идеологијама.

**Кључне речи:** модерна Русија, партија, религиозност, јавна свест

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