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Weaknesses of the Post-Soviet Religious Model: The Kremlin and "Traditional" Religions in face of Interethnic Tensions in Russia

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Abstract: This article examines interethnic tensions in Russia within the framework of the "post-Soviet religious model." This term is understood as a set of mechanisms of cooperation between the state and representatives of "traditional" religious organizations. The article includes an analytical overview of the state of interethnic relations in Russia and how this issue is approached by the state and "traditional" religions. Based on this analysis, the author tries to expose weaknesses of the model and point out possible future problems.

INTRODUCTION

From the chaos of the early years of the Russian Federation, a certain mode of interdependent relations and mechanisms of cooperation between the state and religious organizations have emerged. The Russian Orthodox Church (hereinafter called: the ROC) calls it simply the "Russian model" (*rossiskaja model*).[1] I will refer to it as "the post-Soviet" (not just Russian) religious model because relations between the state and religious organizations in Russia display many similarities with those of some member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)[2] (Curanović 2013). For the purposes of this article, this expression (i.e., the post-Soviet religious model) denotes a set of empirically observed characteristics of state authorities' relations with religious institutions as well as solutions adopted by the state in managing religious issues.

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One of the main goals of the established *modus operandi* between state authorities and religious institutions is to manage interfaith and interethnic relations, which are traditionally strongly connected in Russia. The post-Soviet religious model is an element of a more complex system of state control over societal religious life. In case of the Russian Federation, this system rests on two pillars. One is the Federal Security Service[3] (*Federal'naya sluzhba bezopasnosti*; hereinafter called: the FSB) which keeps an eye on religious communities and investigates signs of extremism and possible links to terrorism. Organizations representing "traditional" religions are the other pillar. They depend on state support and act as an intermediary between citizens and the state. Organizations associated with "traditional" religions can promote views and behaviors favored by the state. They enable and help the Kremlin to influence the potentially unstable domain of societal religious life.

In this article, I concentrate on the latter of the two mentioned pillars, i.e., "traditional" religions, or more specifically, on the two most active representatives of "traditional" religions: the ROC and Russian muftiates.[4] They are the main partners of the Kremlin within the framework of the post-Soviet religious model. In this article, I will use the example of interethnic tensions to determine weak points of this religious model as it functions now in Russia. In short, I will try to establish if the cooperation between the "altar" and the "throne" in Russia and the growing involvement of religious organizations in state ethnic policy can really be effective and beneficial for solving the problems of a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society. As Russia's future social stability partly depends on the success of the solutions invented and adopted within the post-Soviet religious model, the importance of this issue can hardly be underestimated.

The article starts with a presentation of the features of the post-Soviet religious model, followed by a short overview of interethnic relations in Russia. The next two points deal with the Kremlin's ethnic and immigration policies and the activity of "traditional" religions in this field.

THE POST-SOVIET RELIGIOUS MODEL: MAIN FEATURES

The post-Soviet religious model exhibits three features. The first is the secular character of state guaranteed by the Constitution. The second is the particular category of the so-called "traditional" religions, i.e., religions distinguished by authorities due to their special role in shaping

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national culture and identity. In case of Russia, these are Orthodox Christianity (represented by the ROC), Islam, Buddhism (the Gelug school), and Judaism. In this context, it is important to note that the practice of distinguishing "traditional" religions already narrows the constitutional principle of secularism. Acknowledging a religious organization as "traditional" is *de facto* a political decision since no legal definition of this expression has been so far adopted in any of former Soviet republics.[5] Obtaining the status of a "traditional" religion is very desirable, as it results in concrete privileges, e.g., state subventions[6] or access to mass-media.[7] However, these privileges (granted by the state) are not without consequences — in return, the authorities demand loyalty. "Traditional" religions are expected to support the official policy and strengthen the legitimacy of holders of power, which is so important for many of the post-Soviet non-democratic regimes. If a religious organization loses the trust of the state, it risks weakening its presence in the public sphere.[8]

Since it is not the law but political will which determines the status of "traditional" religions, it can be said that in the reality of the post-Soviet religious model states grant a sort of "license to preach" which can be limited or in extreme circumstances even taken away. That is, the third feature of the model. I use this metaphor ("license to preach") in order to emphasize the vulnerability of religious organizations to the pressure exerted by the authorities. The character of the regime has an impact on the religious model, as does the fact that none of the CIS countries is a properly functioning democracy.

State-church relations in the CIS countries are still being shaped; the model is *in statu nascendi*. Therefore, if we try to compare it to other models, we can notice the hybrid nature of solutions applied in the former Soviet republics. In the typological framework of six models set by Winfried Brugger,[9] the post-Soviet religious model would fit somewhere between the model "Division and Cooperation" (model No. 4, the case of Germany) and the model "Formal unity of Church and State, with Substantive Division" (model No. 5, Greece, Israel, the United Kingdom). With model No. 4 the post-Soviet religious model shares "partial cooperation and mutual coordination" of church and state despite the declared separation (Brugger 2007, 38). The considerably strong identification of political community with a particular church (or to be more precise — religious tradition) brings the post-Soviet religious model closer to model No. 5. With respect to this particular feature, Igor Ponkin classifies Russia as "identification type," a secular state which

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cooperates with selected religious communities in order to guarantee citizens' rights to cultivate their culture identity.[10]

As mentioned, religious organizations considered "traditional" in the former Soviet republics enjoy certain privileges in comparison to other religious communities without this status. This difference between the "traditional" and non-traditional religions in the CIS is more significant than in Germany (Brugger's model No. 4), where the religious minorities' rights are respected and protected by a system of independent courts. In CIS states, the judiciary — despite its legally guaranteed independence — can *de facto* still be influenced by the actual holders of power. Due to the abovementioned privileges "traditional" religions in the CIS countries resemble "national/state religions," characteristic of the model of "formal unity of Church and State." However, such a formal unity is expressed in the legal order; also, in these cases, state and church are, typically, closely linked organizationally (Brugger 2010, 169–170), which is not the case for "traditional" religions in the CIS countries.

This asymmetry in church-state relations does not mean that "traditional" religions are forced to cooperate with the state. As a matter of fact the initiative for cooperation often comes from them, e.g., when they look for support in order to deal with challenges presented by non-traditional religious groups. However, although the state-church cooperation is mutually beneficial, it is nevertheless the authorities who hold the reins. The state treats "traditional" religions instrumentally, i.e., as an intermediary in achieving certain goals. One of the most important ones is soothing interethnic and interreligious tensions by promoting dialogue and offering a good example for their adherents.

As has been said before, the post-Soviet religious model is, at its core, a system of state control over religious institutions, and with their help, society. Naturally, democratic countries supervise religious organizations too. In the case of most post-Soviet republics, however, the difference stems from the undemocratic dominance of politics over law. The post-Soviet regimes' interest in controlling this area of social life is understandable, as it is, one could say, in accordance with the regime's systemic logic. The less obvious interest, however, is the surprisingly fruitful cooperation between authorities and "traditional" religions in the CIS countries, especially in the Russian Federation.

The rapprochement between the state and religious organizations (most notably between the ROC and the Kremlin) can be observed in recent years in Russia (Malashenko and Filatov 2012) and manifests itself in cooperation taking place in selected areas of the public sphere, in education

and social care. This cooperation is usually referred to as social partnership. It also has an international dimension — I wish to call this form of cooperation "religious diplomacy" (Curanović 2012). However, religious diplomacy has a lesser impact on interethnic relations and I will therefore not examine it in this article.

In the system of control over religious activity, of which the post-Soviet model is a part, the state disposes over two main instruments: on the one hand, it encourages "traditional" religions to promote interfaith dialogue and foster mutual understanding among different ethnic groups; on the other hand, the FSB takes — often quite harsh — measures to fight signs of religious extremism.[11] Figuratively speaking, this is essentially a stick and carrot approach. These two elements create the basis for a system whose intended goal is to provide social stability without actually activating the society. In other words, the state establishes supports and controls official institutional frames within which citizens can express their religious identity and fulfil their spiritual needs. The whole system, as well as the post-Soviet model itself, is marked by the top-bottom approach.

These systemic solutions and the way in which the Russian state currently conceptualizes the presence of religion in the public sphere are in certain aspects reminiscent of practices of the USSR and the Russian Empire. Without underestimating crucial differences between them and the Russian Federation we can note some elements of continuity. The first one is a strong link between ethnic and religious identities. This is a feature of most multi-ethnic empires and was, albeit modified, preserved also in the Soviet Union.

The second one is the dominance of the state over the Church which dates back to the reforms of Peter the Great. Russian emperors turned religion into an instrument of politics, which created incentives for institutionalization of religious communities; once created, religious institutions became a part of the state administrative structure. Instrumentalization and rigid institutionalization also marked the Soviet approach to religion. Despite the initial attempt to destroy "harmful" religious influence, the Soviet authorities eventually decided to use it. In 1944, the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults was established; its purpose was to control and use, if necessary, religious groups.

The third important similarity is an implicit assumption of the Russian political tradition that religion is not just a private affair of an individual but also a matter of state security and stability. Consequently, authorities strived to form and control this area of social life. The Imperial and Soviet legacies have created a specific set of constraints for the Russian

Federation's efforts (as well as for other states which used to be a part of both the Russian Empire and the USSR) to develop her mode of managing religious affairs.

The post-Soviet religious model has been used as a tool for managing not only interreligious but also interethnic relations — a matter of great importance to Russian internal stability and security. However, the almost exclusive reliance of the state on loyal institutions reveals the first serious weakness of this model. The "elitist" club of "traditional" religions is not fully representative of the increasingly complex Russian society. This is especially evident in the case of *muftiates*, which are weak, internally conflicted,[12] fractioned, and with diminishing authority among young Russian Muslims.[13] In these circumstances, a number of questions can be posed about the limits of the model in its current state: Can ethnic stability and religious concord really be achieved with these measures? What could be an alternative solution for the Kremlin? Does the religious model reflect the Russian regime itself? If so, would a change in the model first require reforming the regime?

In order to answer these questions and determine the weaknesses of the post-Soviet religious model in the Russian socio-political reality, I will use the test case of interethnic tensions.

"DISTURBING STRANGERS": CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERETHNIC RELATIONS IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Undoubtedly Russian nationalism and the shape of interethnic relations in the multi-ethnic Russian state (in each of its historic forms) are issues of great complexity (Laruelle 2009; Allensworth 1998; Hosking and Service 1998; Duncan 1998; Rancour-Lafarriere 2001). In the Russian Federation, a country still forming a narrative of its identity, interethnic tensions present a serious challenge to internal security. Distinguished scholars, e.g., Emil Pain (2007), Alexander Verkhovsky (2007), and Viktor Schnirelman (2011), agree that xenophobia has risen significantly in Russian society in recent years.

Xenophobia could be defined as "various expressions of intolerance towards groups which are perceived in the public consciousness as strangers" (Pain 2007, 895–909). And strangers in today's Russia do seem disturbing to many.[14] In a multi-ethnic country, strangers are of two kinds: foreigners and fellow-citizens from ethnic groups other than the dominant one — in other words, immigrants and ethnic minorities. The latter force

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the majority to face the question of national identity, while the former bring along the challenges of assimilation. These two issues, i.e., national identity and immigration are crucial for understanding interethnic relations in the Russian Federation. In this article, I focus on immigration, since it, in my opinion, better exposes the weaknesses of the post-Soviet religious model.

Culturalism

After the fall of the USSR, Russian nationalism — with support of the authorities — has emerged in the civilizational/imperial form (Verkhovsky and Pain 2007, 170–210). Proponents of civilizational nationalism claim that Russia is not just any country but a unique civilization with a distinctive cultural and spiritual identity. According to them, one of the things which differentiate Russia from the West as well as its Asian neighbors is its "know-how" in creating circumstances for harmonious and peaceful coexistence of many ethnic and religious groups. A characteristic feature of imperial nationalism is an essentialist approach to culture (mentality, national character, etc.). Culture is thought to be an objective factor which determines behavior and development of nations. Each individual is said to be born into a concrete culture; as a consequence, identity is not a matter of an individual's choice but is an objective condition which marks the individual for life (Schnirelman 2011, 33). This set of views is called culturalism or cultural racism (Hunter and Lewis-Coles 2004, 209; Schnirelman 2011, 16–17). Instead of race, this type of racism uses culture as a main differentiating criterion (Schnirelman 2011, 21). While it does not deny pluralism of cultures and civilizations, it does, however, evaluate and rank them according to "excellence." According to this narrative, civilizations, viewed as complete, closed entities, can either clash or agree on a dialogue, but they should not influence each other or intermingle because this erodes their cultural identity (Schnirelman 2011, 310–311). In the narrative of culturalism, cultural differences are emphasized and politicized; and since culture is deemed as an important factor of internal and national security, the protection of national culture and identity should be one of the objectives of government policy.

Ethnisation

Culturalism has dominated the discourse on identity in Russia since the mid-1990s (Schnirelman 2011, 291). However, having analyzed the

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sociological data from the last years, Alexander Verkhovsky argues that Russian nationalism has been evolving from an imperialistic/civilizational type to ethnic nationalism, i.e., a nationalism whose identifying feature is a desire for an ethnically homogenous state and having an anti-immigration edge.[15] According to surveys conducted by the Levada Center in 2013, the slogan "Russia for Russians" (*Rossiya dlya russkich*) was accepted ("fully" or "under certain circumstances") by 66% respondents, while 71% have sympathized with the slogan "Enough of feeding Caucasus"[16] — these numbers have been the highest since polling on these issues began. In the report from 2012, 29% admitted having experienced interethnic tensions in their hometown, while 18% expressed feelings of animosity toward people of different ethnic origin.[17]

In general, Russian society is characterized by a tendency for ethnisation of relations (Schnirelman 2011, 234–288). Ethnisation is a part of the phenomenon of culturalism. According to it, people are born in an ethnic group and this fact determines their lives, character, and mentality. Ethnisation sharpens division lines between groups and exaggerates the differences; it thus influences the way strangers are perceived and provides fertile ground for xenophobia. In Russia, ethnisation of "home-born" strangers, i.e., non-Russian ethnic groups, manifests itself most prominently in caucasophobia,[18] while ethnisation of foreigners is evident in some aspects of migrantophobia.[19]

Immigration: Social Attitudes

According to official estimates, there are around 7–9 million immigrants in the Russian Federation; half of them stay illegally.[20] Russian citizens react to this with growing concern. In 2011, 53% of Russians stated that there were "many immigrants" and 28% that there were "too many" (Mukomel 2011, 37). According to the 2012 Levada Report, 47% of respondents declared a negative attitude toward immigrants,[21] while 70% expected the state to take measures to limit immigration. Data obtained by the Levada Center two years before show that when asked about emotions evoked by immigrants, 57% of respondents answered having "no particular emotions"; however, 15% declared unfriendliness and 6% — fear (The Levada Report 2010, 192). Especially interesting is the fact that respondents had more negative emotions toward some ethnic groups than others, which clearly indicates existence of a hierarchy of minorities. Respondents interviewed by the Levada Center demanded

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limiting first of all the presence of immigrants from the Caucasus (37%), followed by Chinese (36%), Vietnamese (33%), and Romani people (30%). Interestingly, 10% fewer people were bothered by immigrants from Central Asia than those from the Caucasus (The Levada Report 2010, 190) Also, 16% supported limiting the presence of all nations apart from ethnic Russians; 21% were against creating a census on the basis of ethnic criteria (The Levada Report 2010, 191); 58% of Russians would like to close their region to immigrants, while 46% approve of deportation (Bavin 2007, 56–77). In the 2012 ranking of societies' openness toward immigrants which included 59 states, Russia came up in 44th place.[22] This tendency will probably continue in the near future since projections are that the number of immigrants in the Russian Federation will rise to 10.5 million by 2030 (Mukomel 2011, 35).

Traditionalisation

Ethnisation is just one manifestation of culturalism in Russia. The other one is traditionalisation. Its main assumption is that the essence of each nation's culture is captured in its tradition. Therefore, in the narration of culturalism, nations have to protect this legacy, especially from foreign influences. They have to guard its purity in order to maintain their identity and civilizational sovereignty.

In the logic of culturalism, nations should integrate around their traditional values which are understood in an essentialist way, i.e., they are considered definable and permanent. Cultural racism demands protecting traditional values in face of strangers who come with their own culture, customs, and habits and pose a threat to the national culture of the dominant group. Significant in the context of this article is that tradition is often associated with religion. In the case of Russia, national tradition is increasingly often identified with Orthodox tradition.[23] Traditional Russian values — which traditionalists present as a main moral reference point for society — are thus virtually equated with Orthodox values. Moreover, these values are said to serve as the basis for renewal of the ethnic Russian "core" of *rossiyskaja nacja*; this revival should be achieved through a process referred to as "spiritual up-bringing." It is telling that both traditional values and spiritual upbringing are high on the social agenda of the ROC.

Traditionalisation is the ideological phenomenon which plays the main role in bringing "traditional" religions to the Russian public sphere. In the

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Russian Federation (as well as in the CIS area), religious organizations are perceived (and they also consider themselves) as repositories of national tradition and identity, which survived Soviet times. Since the mid-1990s the Kremlin has turned to tradition in its attempts to rebuild national identity and strengthen its own legitimization. Boris Dubin (2011, 79) underlines the fact that it was the state which initiated and supported neo-traditionalisation in Russia. Within society the focus on tradition, inspired by the state, fosters great power nostalgia, isolationism and last but not least — xenophobia (Dubin 2011, 80).

In Russia, religion functions as a criterion of identity, an additional standard of belonging to a particular ethnic group and even to a particular culture. For an example, according to a survey conducted by the Levada Center in 2012, 69% of respondents agreed that "real ethnic Russians should be Orthodox."[24] Thus religion, so tightly connected to ethnic identity, strengthens ethnic divisions and reduces understanding of religion and ethnicity to mere culturalism (Schnirelman 2011, 313). Ethnisation also influences the image of religion and its adherents. An example of this is the distrust among the Slavic population toward Muslims which is growing on the basis of prejudices against immigrants from the Caucasus.[25] The tendency to associate ethnic identity with religion is relatively strong in Russia in comparison to the sense of community created by citizenship (*rossijskost'*).[26] The fact that authorities involve "traditional" religions in managing interethnic affairs does not help to reverse this trend, on the contrary — it reinforces it. It also creates the impression that the tensions arise from cultural differences, while, as is evident from surveys, the main causes of tensions are of a socio-economical nature (challenging Labor market, uncertain economic outlook, etc.) (Schnirelman 2011, 45).

Already at this point, it becomes evident that bringing a religious factor into interethnic affairs can be risky — and herein lies another weakness of the post-Soviet religious model. It preserves the tendency for ethnisation of religious identity and thereby sharpens division lines within Russian society. Furthermore, it casts "traditional" religions as representatives of not only religious but also ethnic communities, which show up in public opinion polls. More and more ethnic Russians consider religion an inseparable element of national identity; 30% of Russians would like Russian Orthodoxy to be granted the status of a state religion; and while 48% still support the separation of church and state, the trend is decreasing.[27] The surveys also show that believers tend to be less tolerant toward minorities and immigrants (Dubin 2000, 45–46; Verkhovsky 2007; 2004, 127–143). Adherents of "traditional" religions are more

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likely to claim that although Russia is a multi-ethnic state, ethnic Russians should have a better, privileged status (Karpov and Lisovskaya 2008). Furthermore, in recent years another phenomenon can be observed — a number of ethnic Russians tend to consider themselves a majority under threat in their own country.[28]

Symbolic racism in Russia has still not reached the level where it would have an impact on legal regulations or the political programs of parties. However, it can already be found in mass-media and political debates (Schnirelman 2011, Vol. II, 462). The moods revealed by the surveys eventually manifested themselves violently on the streets of Kondopoga in 2006.[29] The so-called Kondopoga riots together with the riots in Moscow Manege square in 2010[30] have been considered a wake-up call for Russian elites. The new policy of preventing interethnic clashes assumes involvement of "traditional" religions within the framework created by the post-Soviet religious model. Interestingly, this is not contrary to people's expectations: 77% of respondents want the ROC to help the state in the field of interethnic and interreligious relations, only 8% are against.[31]

THROUGH DIALOGUE AND CULTURAL ADAPTATION: THE KREMLIN'S POLICY IN FACE OF INTERETHNIC TENSIONS

The main plank of the state ethnic and immigration policy were presented in one of Vladimir Putin's articles[32] during the presidential campaign in 2012, which later on were included in "The State Strategy on Ethnic Policy until 2025" (December 19, 2012).[33]

Russian Civilization, Russian Nation

Both texts contend that keeping civil and ethnic peace is the highest priority for the Kremlin in the face of the observed growth in tensions. Multi-culturalism as well as the "melting pot" approach have been rejected as ways of managing interethnic tensions due to their inefficiency and unsuitability for Russia's ethnic situation.[34] Putin's definition of the Russian national and state identity fits the ideological frame of culturalism. In the article, Putin presented the following understanding of the Russian nation: "We are a multiethnic society but one nation"; and of Russia — a unique civilization with a unique experience of coexistence of different ethnic groups, founded on Russian (*russki*) language and culture. In this multi-

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ethnic society Putin distinguished ethnic Russians who in the past were the "state-builders" (*gosudarstvoobrazoyushchiy*) but who should now consider themselves a part of a "multi-ethnic civilization integrated by the Russian cultural core." The great contemporary mission of ethnic Russians, according to Putin, is to sustain Russian (*rossiyskaya*) civilization; ethnic Russians are also responsible for developing the potential of *rossiyskaja nacija* (multi-ethnic nation of the Russian Federation).

To find a role for the ethnic Russian majority within the multi-ethnic and multi-religious state is indeed a major challenge for the Kremlin. The difficulty of this task becomes obvious when one considers how dissonant the authorities are about the national narrative. On one hand, politicians declare their commitment to the idea of a multi-ethnic, multi-religious state, while at the same time they acknowledge the special role of ethnic Russians, e.g., by making Russia's future development conditional on ethnic Russians' spiritual revival etc.[35] Worryingly, the Kremlin does not seem to know how to solve this problem in practice, which results in further ambivalence. Thus, the authorities of the Russian Federation are likely to repeat the mistakes made by the decision makers of the Soviet Union, who tried to create one Soviet nation, but one which would, at the same time, enable the development of all nationalities and ethnic groups (Schnirelman 2011, 288).

In Vladimir Putin's vision, presented in his article, an individual living in the Russian Federation can develop a strong sense of patriotism and civil duty, but should at the same time be able to cultivate one's particular ethnic and religious identity. This could be a basis for the Russian authorities' modern approach toward building sense of citizenship. It contrasts, however, with the suggested solutions, which are acutely anachronistic. What Putin calls "sophisticated culture therapy"[36] for Russia's multi-ethnic nation is turning out to be nothing more than blown-up patriotism with very traditional methods of promoting Russian language, literature, and history (e.g., by creating a canon of 100 "must-read books"[37] or by organizing national knowledge quizzes for youth).

Immigration Policy

Putin has highlighted illegal migration as one of the reasons for the growth of xenophobia. In his article, from the presidential campaign he called for a positive selection of immigrants (based on immigrants' skills and merits)

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and the adoption of harsher legal measures for illegal immigrants. The comparison of the two official strategies for immigration policy (2003[38] and 2012[39]) shows that this issue is still strongly connected to security, linked to terrorism and treated as a possible source of instability, as it may disturb the demographic as well as ethnic balance in Russia.[40] One of the indicators of securitization of migration is the character of the Federal Migration Office (FMO) which, as Marianna Fadicheva argues, it is becoming increasingly similar to a police force since it started reporting directly to the Ministry of Internal Affairs.[41]

In comparison with the new strategy (2012), the authors of the 2003 document paid less attention to the issue of adaptation. It was mentioned mostly in a socio-economical context[42] and never in connection to culture. Meanwhile, the reverse is a very characteristic feature of the strategy from 2012.[43] This document contains a whole section on supporting cultural adaptation and integration of immigrants. In practice, adaptation means teaching the Russian language, basis of Russian law, and traditional culture in centers for cultural adaptation specially established for this purpose in Russia as well as the immigrants' country of origin.[44]

Another element of the Kremlin's immigration policy is significant involvement of Russian diplomacy. Since 2003 Russia has been trying to share the burden of dealing with illegal immigration with other CIS countries. Moscow started bilateral and multi-lateral initiatives, e.g., in 2004 the "Concept of cooperation of the CIS countries against illegal immigration in 2005–2007" was issued.[45] Russia's diplomatic activity in this field is important because it is supported and complemented by "traditional" religions (see below).[46]

"Cultural Therapy" and "Traditional" Religions

The most interesting element of the "cultural therapy" prescribed by Vladimir Putin is cooperation with "traditional religions" in the field of ethnic and immigration policies. In the article, Putin states that he "counts on active participation of traditional religions in this kind of dialogue on values" and that "the society should welcome the participation of traditional religions in the sphere of education."[47] The Kremlin justifies the religious institutions' involvement as a means of dealing with the "erosion of traditional values and morality" which is also stated as one of the reasons for the growth of xenophobia.[48] In the

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Russian authorities' plans, "traditional" religions would also be responsible for preventing the growth of extremism and interethnic tensions by promoting interfaith (inter-civilizational) dialogue with different ethnic and religious communities in the Russian Federation as well as beyond its borders.

The idea of using "traditional" religions for working with immigrants became the main part of the Kremlin's agenda after the Manege riots. On February 3, 2011, at the meeting with the Council of Bishops of the ROC, president Medvedev said: "the ROC is the most respected social institution in modern Russia … [T]ogether, we are solving the most pressing problems and tasks in the lives of our people, one of them being interethnic and interreligious dialogue. The ROC, during all her history has been protecting our fundamental values." President was convinced that the state and Church must cooperate because "religious/moral up-bringing ... prevents hatred. Today much depends on [the ROC's] stand, preaching, approach ... The real instrument to prevent interethnic conflict is interreligious dialogue, in which the Church is a permanent participant and very often the main initiator."[49] On this occasion the president announced establishing working groups for interethnic tensions with the representatives of religious communities.[50] In November of the same year, during the meeting with muftis in Ufa, Medvedev asked the Muslim clergy for greater involvement in process of immigrants' adaptation and welcomed mufti Gaynetdin's suggestion on establishing Islamic culture centers for Muslim immigrants.[51] In July of 2011, Prime Minister Putin confirmed the intention of including "traditional" religions in initiatives aimed at soothing interethnic tensions.[52]

In face of growing xenophobia, the Kremlin wants to make use of the religious factor. According to the official narrative, the remedy for tensions between ethnic Russians and other Russian citizens of different ethnic origin should be the dialogue promoted by religious communities. Issues involving immigrants should be solved with the assimilation program in which "traditional" religions would participate. To standard instruments of ethnic and migration policies (such as the legal solutions, oversight by the FSB or common measures within the CIS), Kremlin thus added cooperation with "traditional" religions. This area is relatively new and a potentially extensive field of state-church cooperation in Russia. It expands the previous frames of social partnership and has concrete consequences for the discourse about Russia's identity. It

fosters already relatively strong traditionalisation and what comes along with it — ethnisation of social relations.

Russian "Traditional" Religions in Managing Interethnic Relations

Among representatives of Russian "traditional" religions the Moscow Patriarchate and *muftiates* are the most active in cooperating with the state in the field of interethnic relations. They both agree that Russia is a separate civilization whose unique legacy lies in peaceful coexistence of different ethnic and religious groups.[53] They are also both attached to the essentialist understanding of culture. This manifests itself especially in the strong connection between ethnicity and religion still cultivated by representatives of "traditional" religions which basically maintain that in Russia ethnic groups are traditionally adherents of a particular faith (ethnic Russians are "traditionally" Christian Orthodox, Tatars are Muslims, Buryats are Buddhists, etc.). And "traditional" religions are keen on preserving these ties.[54]

Interfaith Dialogue

If in defining Russia as a unique civilization the Orthodox clergy and muftis coincide, the issue of interfaith dialogue, which according to the Kremlin is of crucial importance, reveals a source of potential conflict among these two "traditional" religions. The ROC's understanding of the dialogue was explained thoroughly by the deputy-chair of the Department for External Contacts of the ROC, father Philipp (Riabykh).[55] He explained that the main condition for the success of such a dialogue was that it was moderated in accordance to a set of principles and values shared by all the "traditional" religions of Russia. One of the most important is the principle of justice, i.e., of fair proportions, which in the understanding of the ROC means that each "traditional" religion's presence and activity in the public sphere should be proportional to the number of its adherents. Thus the key to a successful dialogue is obeying the existing ethno-religious spheres of influence[56] by all the "traditional" religions.

Not all muftis, however, approve of such an interpretation of the interfaith dialogue presented by the ROC. Among muftis, the sharpest critic of the growing ROC's dominance is Ravil Gaynetdin, the chief of the

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Council of Muftis of Russia, who demands equal partnership of the ROC and *muftiates* in the public sphere, a kind of spiritual condominium rather than agreeing on the role of a "younger brother."[57]

It could be argued that promoting interfaith dialogue moderated by "traditional" religions as a remedy for growing tensions could be problematic, since there is no real consensus regarding the understanding of this concept. In Russian socio-political reality, interfaith dialogue means that "traditional" religions respect each other's ethno-religious sphere of influence and refrain from theological disputes. Thus, the interfaith dialogue does not in fact address essential problems and seems too formal and rigid to have the potential to sooth tensions inside society. Also, ethno-cultural nationalism of the ROC and its expectations that all "traditional" religions should accept its dominance does not provide fertile ground for a real understanding and trust among Russian "traditional" religions (Verkhovsky 2012, 148–149).

Immigration

The Kremlin's call for involvement of "traditional" religions in interethnic affairs did not come as a surprise to its main addressees. As a matter of fact, Patriarch Kirill, head of the Department for External Contacts, was among the first to declare in 2007[58] the readiness of the ROC to work with immigrants. In Patriarch's opinion, migrants were partly responsible for the tensions since, as he said, "the immigrants from other regions of Russia, from the near and far abroad, are not always sufficiently acquainted with the necessary knowledge of tradition, culture, and law for successful adaptation" and that together with the state, the "traditional" religions carry the responsibility for "de-radicalization of the sphere of potential interethnic tensions."[59] The leader of the ROC declared that the Church could get involved in the process of teaching Russian language and tradition to immigrants as a part of their cultural adaptation. Furthermore, in Kirill's opinion, it was necessary to provide Russian citizens with spiritual up-bringing and to stimulate the interfaith dialogue.[60] The patriarch thus defined the most important tasks of the ROC: cultural adaptation for immigrants, dialogue in relations with religious institutions and spiritual up-bringing for Russian citizens**,** reviving Russian traditional values.[61]

In the Moscow Patriarchate, the department responsible for this particular field is the Synodal Department for Church and Society Relations

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(OVCO), led by Vsevolod Chaplin. He is notorious for placing a bigger part of the blame for the tensions on illegal immigrants, while at the same time tending to turn a blind eye to ethnic Russian nationalists. Right after the Manege square riots, he called upon the state authorities to start working on a new law and new, stricter immigration policy.[62] Chaplin claimed that "some representatives of some diasporas behave in a provocative way; they disrespect the law and moral norms."[63] On another occasion the chair of OVCO proposed working out a code of behavior for immigrants.[64] He also said that the role of the Russian nation (*russki*) should be acknowledged on the political as well as legal level.[65] However, one condition should be fulfilled first: the Russian (*russki*) nation, according to Chaplin, needs a revival of its system of values, its faith and culture — Russians need "spiritual upbringing."[66]

The head of OVCO is not alone in the ROC with his views on ethnic issues. Results of the research published in 2011 by the Sova Center show that Orthodox priests tend to sympathize with Russian nationalists and put the blame for interethnic tensions mostly on illegal immigrants. Priests increasingly voice their opinion that the rise of nationalism among ethnic Russians is a natural reaction to the failure of multi-culturalism,[67] that the discrimination of the Russian nation is a fact and that a further weakening of it will collapse the state.[68] Some priests hold that only "spiritually similar, close to us" people should be invited as immigrants; the majority consider an exam on the language and culture for immigrants as absolutely necessary.[69]

Importantly, Russian Muslims share many of ethnic Russians' concerns about immigrants. This was also evidenced by reactions to the events in Kondopoga in 2006. Mufti Ravil Geynudtin supported decisions of the local authorities and denied that riots had a religious origin.[70] The same opinion was expressed by the representative of the *muftiate* of Karelia, Visam Ali Bardvil[71] and the mufti of Saratov, Mukaddas Bibarsov,[72] Mufti Talgat Tadjudin underlined that immigrants should respect local traditions and adapt.[73] The most radical in its judgment was the National Organization of Ethnic Russian Muslims which put the blame for the riots on immigrants who "behaved like occupants."[74]

Among Russian muftis Ravil Geynudtin is known for occasional controversial statements concerning immigration. For example, he once stated that ethnic Russians didn't want to work and after getting paid they would disappear and immigrants were needed who were more disciplined and hard working.[75] This does not, however, reflect the general

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views of mufits on immigration. Most of the Muslim clergy agree that Russia needs immigrants and that they should be assisted with a program of cultural adaptation. They also underline that immigrants are obliged to respect local law, tradition, and order. In fact, *muftiates* and the ROC coincide in their views on how to deal with immigration.[76]

Kremlin and "Traditional" Religions: Common Views

The Kremlin and "traditional" religions agree on many issues connected to ethnic relations and immigration. Both parties' views fit the current of culturalism with strong tendencies toward ethnisation and traditionalisation. For both, their main priority is reviving and protecting tradition; they disfavor multi-culturalism and claim that unique Russian civilization has the cultural *savoir-faire* to bring together different ethnic and religious groups. The ROC and the Kremlin, additionally, have one more thing in common: they realize the reality of the multi-ethnic state but emphasize the role of ethnic Russians.

Such similarity of views enables coordinated action. The Russian state and "traditional" religions agree on solutions for dealing with immigration, i.e., cultural adaptation which includes introducing immigrants to the religious traditions of Russia and promoting interfaith dialogue to integrate Russian citizens of different origins. The strategic coherence of the state and "traditional" religions can be seen in the document on migration issued by the Interfaith Council of Russia in 2010[77] or the recommendations for ethnic and immigration policy published by OVCO in 2011.[78]

What the Kremlin calls "cultural therapy," the ROC and *muftiates* refer to as "spiritual up-bringing." In practice, this translates into a state supported process of socialization and adaptation to "traditional" Russian values. While politicians use the term "traditional Russian values," albeit without clear reference to its actual content, it received a more concrete shape due to religious organizations; a good example is the document[79] prepared by the ROC "The Basic Values — the Fundaments of National Unity," issued in 2011, in which 17 such values were specified.[80]Since the values are defined mostly by "traditional" religions, this implicitly increases the role of religious organizations in the public sphere, first of all in the educational system.[81] Furthermore, such a narrative could strengthen the tendency to equate Russianness with Orthodoxy, thus further solidifying the ethno-religious bond. The scope of social

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partnership has expanded with spiritual up-bringing offered to Russian citizens and cultural adaptation directed towards immigrants.

Platforms of Cooperation between the State and "Traditional" Religions

It is important to note that "traditional" religions in their activity in the field of ethnic relations are complementing state strategy. On a practical level of state-church cooperation, two platforms should be mentioned: the first is collaboration with the FMO in Russia and the second is activity in the CIS area (both on a bilateral and multi-lateral level). The activity in the CIS area is a good example of parallel efforts of the Kremlin and Russian "traditional" religions. The ROC prefers to use the forum of the Interfaith Council of CIS, while *muftiates* focus on bilateral relations.

The CIS Area: Bilateral Contacts

In recent years, Russian *muftiates* have shown much interest and initiative in working on immigration issues together with their counterparts from other Islamic post-Soviet countries. In 2011, Shafig Psihatschev, from the Coordination Centre of the Northern Caucasus, suggested including muftis from Central Asia in the process of cultural adaptation of immigrants coming to Russia. In the same year, this Northern Caucasian muftiate together with muftis of Kazakhstan announced the introduction of special seminars for immigrants at the Islamic universities of Russia and other CIS countries.[82]

Similar steps have been taken by the Council of Muftis of Russia in relation to Tajikistan, which is important especially after the tensions in Russian-Tajikistan relations caused by the expulsion of immigrants in 2011.[83] The Council has also been trying to start cooperation with muftis from Kazakhstan and Kirgizstan to work with immigrants in Russia as well as in their homelands before they emigrate, which is in accordance with the Kremlin's strategy.

The CIS Area: The Interfaith Council of CIS

The main platform for multi-lateral contacts of "traditional" religions in the post-Soviet area is the Interfaith Council of CIS, a body established in 2004 to integrate "traditional" religions from the CIS countries.[84] The

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ROC uses this forum to garner support and mobilize other religious organizations around its projects and initiatives. It was no coincidence that the annual session of the Council in 2011 in Erevan was dedicated to the problem of immigration. The ROC took steps parallel to the Kremlin's activity in other CIS institutions. In his speech in the Armenian capital, Kirill stated that "religious communities should show initiative in up-bringing immigrants in order to help them to adapt to a new cultural environment, so they would develop awareness focused on cooperation instead of isolation, because isolation from the majority sooner or later results in confrontation."[85] In the Conclusions of the Erevan Interfaith Council of CIS, it was stated: "Relations between immigrants and local people, minority and majority are one of the most important issues. On the one hand, immigrants show no respects to local tradition and order. On the other hand, xenophobia occurs along with attempts to exploit cheap migrant labour.... State, society and business are to help immigrants to learn the language, culture and religious tradition of the host country. Our religious communities are ready to help and they are already doing it."[86]

Inside the Russian Federation: Cooperation with the FMO

Of all areas, the cooperation between the FMO of the Russian Federation and "traditional" religions is the most advanced. In the case of the ROC, one of the first meetings took place in 2009, which was a round table on immigration. A breakthrough happened a year later when, "on the initiative of the FMO and with the blessing of patriarch Kirill," the Common Commission was established with the ROC is represented by Vsevolod Chaplin.[87] In February 2011, the commission initiated organizing eparchy centers for cultural adaptation of immigrants. Just a year later, Vsevolod Chaplin reported that three eparchies provided Russian language courses for immigrants; 45 common bilateral agreements had been signed and there were further plans to start courses in 27 other locations.[88] Satisfied with the results, in April 2013 both sides signed a Memorandum on extending cooperation on adaptation programs. Two months later common efforts of the FMO and the ROC bore their first fruit: a textbook for Russian language and culture adapted for immigrants.[89]

Although the ROC is the main partner of the FMO among "traditional" religions, the FMO is also keen on cooperating with others. In March 2011, the Council of Muftis of Russia presented an initiative to

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prepare — together with FMO — leaflets for Muslim immigrants from Central Asia who could collect it after prayers in mosques.[90] Finally, in 2012, the first agreements between local *muftiates* and the FMO were signed.[91]

Interestingly, the FMO has even reached out to Buddhists. In 2011, the Traditional Buddhist Sangha of the Russian Federation and the FMO signed an agreement on cooperation in the Republic of Buryatia with the aim of taking care of immigrants from Mongolia.[92]

This dynamically developing cooperation between the FMO and "traditional" religions is one of the most telling indicators of the growing participation of religious organizations in managing interethnic relations in Russia. So far, the ROC and *muftiates* are the most active in this field, which is not surprising since the relations between ethnic Russians and Muslims (both Russian citizens and immigrants) present the biggest challenge to the state's future stability.

CONCLUSIONS

There is something puzzling in the fact that the authorities of the secular Russian state consider religious institutions their partner in managing interethnic relations, especially in the field of adaptation programs for immigrants. As a result, "traditional" religions turn out to be more than just religious communities; they act as representatives of ethnic groups. The involvement of "traditional" religions carries concrete consequences for defining such issues as national identity, culture, or tradition. The impact the Moscow Patriarchate has on the public debate in Russia has already started to show. A good example is the notion of traditional values, which, vague before, has been recently specified by the ROC. This strengthens the impression that Russian traditional values are synonymous with religious ones and thereby increases the tendency for equating "Russianness" with "Orthodox Christianity." What is more, according to the ROC, these traditional values should be revived in society through the process of "spiritual (moral) up-bringing" managed by "traditional" religions. This concept was originally initiated and promoted by the ROC, but is now increasingly used in the political debate in Russia. Among Russian "traditional" religions the Moscow Patriarchate is in fact the only one capable of influencing the debate at the state level. This is a recent tendency but it undermines the main principle of the post-Soviet religious model, i.e., the instrumental approach of the Kremlin to religion.

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The post-Soviet religious model as a tool of soothing interethnic tensions has several weaknesses. First, while the presence of "traditional" religions in the public sphere is a symptom of traditionalism, it is also a factor which fosters it within Russian society. Culturalism with its rigid understating of culture, tradition, and identity does not provide suitable ideological frames for a modern multiethnic and multi-religious society. Meanwhile, it is culturalism which legitimates the expansion of the social partnership of state and "traditional" religions in Russia.

The attachment of "traditional" religions to the clear ethno-religious division lines reveals the second weakness of the post-Soviet religious model. In fact, "traditional" religions preserve the logic of ethno-religious identity and thereby contribute to the ethnisation of relations within society. They act as representatives not only of the believers but *de facto* of ethnic groups which are considered their "traditional" adherents.[93]

Third, surveys show that some groups of Orthodox clergy lean toward nationalism. The ROC and the *muftiates* present rather strict views on dealing with immigration, tend to shift the blame for tensions on immigrants and call for stricter legal measures, which do not bode well for future interethnic concord.

Finally, and most importantly, despite the official rhetoric, organizations representing "traditional" religions have still not worked out a durable mechanism of harmonious cooperation. While it is true that the Interfaith Council of Russia, a flagship institution of successful interfaith dialogue, functions as a platform of contacts between representatives of "traditional" religions, it rarely influences interreligious relations at the local level. One of the most serious challenges to the effective cooperation of "traditional" religions is the growing dominance of the ROC in the public sphere. The Kremlin, as the only actor able to preserve the balance among "traditional" religions (foremost the Moscow Patriarchate and *muftiates*), has so far decided for a hands-off approach in this regard.

The post-Soviet religious model has a vertical nature. In this respect, the religious model partially reflects the Russian regime dominated by the vertical of power (and by extension reproduces certain features of the Soviet approach to religion). The very efficiency of the model is in doubt. The state prefers the top-down approach: it cooperates with religious institutions which are loyal and cooperative rather than representative of society. The methods, at least some of them, of managing interethnic relations are surprisingly awkwardly conceived (e.g., the cultural adaptation programs for Muslim immigrants organized *inter alia*

by the ROC). Within the logic of the model, society is just a passive receiver of the initiatives brought by the state and church. This is another serious weakness of the model.

Despite assurances of the Kremlin and religious institutions, the truth is that none of the representatives of Russian "traditional" religions has a clear concept of how to deal with interethnic tensions in an efficient way. Public debates are often concluded with general statements about the interethnic and interfaith dialogue, supported by the Kremlin and initiated and moderated by organizations representing "traditional" religions. However, no specific coordinates of this dialogue have so far been mentioned. The ROC argues that the main ideological foundation for cooperation of "traditional" religions should be provided by common "traditional" values, such as family or patriotism. This may sound well on a general level, but when it comes to details, it must turn out that many of these values are understood and interpreted differently by each religious tradition.

The Russian cultural "know-how" of managing interethnic and interfaith relations, so often emphasized by the Kremlin, does not have much to offer when it comes to practical solutions. As Viktor Schnirelman rightly points out, the slogan of "harmonizing interethnic relation" in Russia often simply means tightening control (Schnirelman 2011, 45). The post-Soviet religious model cannot be an answer to the challenges of interethnic tensions which the Russian Federation could face in the future. As a matter of fact, it arguably just adds to the problem in the long run — it namely preserves the link between identity and religion, reinforces ethnisation and, additionally, encourages the ROC to play the role of a repository of "Russianness" and so disturbs the important balance between "traditional" religions. The post-Soviet religious model ignores the pluralistic reality, neglects the role of society and equates tradition with religion. Meanwhile, in the context of a strong tendency for traditionalisation, it is crucial to define tradition in other ways than only by associating it with Orthodox Christianity. Russia needs a new patriotism which would not be so strongly connected to Russian Orthodoxy.

Answering the question posed in the beginning of the article, it does not seem probable that ethnic stabilization and confessional peace could be achieved with these measures. Thinking in terms of efficiency, tackling them in the long term would require the actual involvement of society, e.g., including other social institutions and allowing greater pluralism of religious organizations. However, since the functioning of the post-Soviet religious model is connected to functioning of the regime, it can

be argued that this change would require some sort of change also within the regime as well. Keeping a model which implies a growing involvement of "traditional" religions in the public sphere is an obstacle on the way to achieving the strategic goal of ethnic stability in Russia, i.e., redefining the formula of national identity and creating a modern sense of citizenship beyond ethnicity and religion.

Emil Pain rightly notices that when Russian leaders talk about the necessity to recognize Russian culture as the dominant one, they in fact appeal to mono-culturalism. What Russia needs, according to the Russian ethnologist, is inter-culturalism directed at creating conditions which would encourage ethnic groups to cooperate. He proposes reviving the idea of fraternity of peoples (*druzhba narodov*) in which political identity is more important than ethnic identity (Pain 2011). Even if one assumes that this is a realistic alternative for Russia, the post-Soviet religious model in its present shape will not help to achieve it.

NOTES

1. See for instance, *"Dialog v khristiansko-evreyskikh otnosheniyakh v sovremennoy Rossii i v mire». Doklad zamestitelya predsedatelya OVTSS igumena Filippa (Ryabykh)."* http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/1285461.html (Accessed on November 6, 2012). *"Svyateyshiy Patriarkh Kirill: Model' tserkovno-gosudarstvennykh otnosheniy ne svoditsya isklyuchitel'no k otnosheniyam Russkoy TSerkvi i Pravitel'stva RF."* http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/702161.html (Accessed on August 18, 2013).

2. The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is a regional organization established in 1991 by former Soviet republics. There are nine full member states: Russia, Belarus, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Turkmenistan is unofficially associated.

3. The FSS is the main successor agency to the Soviet KGB.

4. A common name for Russian Islamic Spiritual Boards.

5. There is no abstract legal definition enumerating criteria differentiating a "traditional" religious community from "non-traditional" ones. Instead, there is a "catalogue" of religions, which a particular state considers "traditional."

6. For instance, for renovation of the holy sites.

7. The ROC can use two Orthodox TV-channels, *Spas* and *Soyuz*. Russian *muftiates* are also trying to establish a channel for Muslims.

8. This happened for instance to Mufti Talgat Tadzhuddin who called for a jihad against the United States, following the invasion of Iraq in 2003. This and other awkward statements resulted in the loss of the authorities' favor.

9. The six models of State-Church Relations are: Aggressive animosity between State and Church (1); Strict separation in theory and practice (2); Strict separation in theory, accommodation in practice (3); Division and Cooperation (4); Formal Unity of Church and State, with Substantive Division (5); Formal and Substantive Unity of Church, and State (6). (Brugger 2007, 31–48).

10. With the use of two criteria, i.e., the extent of the state-church cooperation and impact of religious norms on law, Igor Ponkin distinguishes four types of secular state: that of equipotential (complete isolation of the religion, e.g., Japan), preferential (soft separation, e.g., European Union countries), conjunctive (very blurred division lines between state and religious organization, e.g., Israel), identification (cooperation of state and church motivated by the role of religion in national identity, e.g., Russia, Ukraine) (Ponkin 2005).

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11. A good example is the massive inspections of the religious communities which took place in the spring of 2012. See Geraldine Fagan, *Why Were Hundreds of Religious Organisations Checked?* http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=1839 (Accessed on August 17, 2013).
12. *Avgustovskaja vojna v muftijatah*. http://www.ng.ru/ng_religii/2013-08-21/4_muftiyaty.html (Accessed on January 3, 2014).
13. As Roland Dannuther noticed "For many Russian Muslims, 'traditional Islam' can appear more as a defense of a particularize cultural tradition than as the expression of a universalist and transnational religious faith. The traditional religious establishment is also seen as being compromised by its unseemly competition for political support and its willing cooption into federal or republican state-approved structures" (Dannreuther 2010, 122).
14. "The Other" triggers in Russians concern, uncertainty, even aggression (Dubin 2011, 28).
15. *Kuda idet "russkoye dvizheniye."* http://www.sova-center.ru/racism-xenophobia/publications/2011/11/d22920/ (Accessed November 4, 2012).
16. "*Russkij marsh" — otvet na nastroenija v obshhestve*. http://www.levada.ru/06-11-2013/russkii-marsh-otvet-na-nastroeniya-v-obshchestve (Accessed on November 5, 2013). *Rossijane o migracii i mezhnacional'noj naprjazhennosti*. http://www.levada.ru/05-11-2013/rossiyane-o-migratsii-i-mezhnatsionalnoi-napryazhennosti (Accessed on October 3, 2013).
17. 23% of respondents rejected the slogan (The Levada Center 2012, 179).
18. A. Malashenko, *What the North Caucasus means to Russia*. Russie.Nei.Visions, ifri, No. 61. A. Verkhovskiy. *Religioznaya ksenofobiya: mezhkonfessional'ny i vnutrikonfessional'ny aspekty*. http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/publications/2003/04/d351/ (Accessed on April 4, 2012).
19. V. Mukomel, *Problemy migratsii v sovremennoy Rossii*. http://www.antirasizm.ru/doc/publ_067.rtf (Accessed on November 4, 2012).
20. *V. Putin poruchil vvesti ekzamen po russkomu dlya migrantov*. http://top.rbc.ru/society/07/05/2012/649542.shtml (Accessed on November 4, 2012).
21. 42% claimed to have a neutral attitude and, 14% — positive (The Levada Center Report 2012, 163).
22. *Rossiyane stali luchshe otnosit'sya k migrantam: ne lyubyat, no terpyat*. http://top.rbc.ru/society/30/05/2012/652793.shtml (Accessed on November 4, 2012).
23. According to the Annual Levada Center Report for 2012, 48% respondents agree with the opinion that the only way for Russian society to experience moral revival is in coming back to the ROC. (The Levada Center 2012, 163).
24. *Byli «sovetskie," stali «pravoslavnye»*. http://www.levada.ru/21-11-2012/byli-sovetskie-stali-pravoslavnye (Accessed on October 4, 2013).
25. In 2011, 40% of Russians acknowledged associating Islam with terrorism. *43% rossiyan ne usmatrivayut svyazi mezhdu ponyatiyami "islam" i "terrorizm."* http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/authorities/religion-general/2011/06/d21861/ (Accessed on November 5, 2012).
26. According to the data provided by the Levada Center: in order to be a real Russian (*rossijanin*), one should be a citizen of Russia (88%), a Russian Orthodox (69%) (The Levada Center 2012, 17).
27. *Dolzhna li byt' tserkov' otdelena ot gosudarstva?* http://sreda.org/opros/pravoslavie-i-gosudarstvo (Accessed on November 4, 2012).
28. A "canonical" example of such views is a publication by Andrei Savielev, the leader of unregistered party Velikaja Rossija (Savielev 2010).
29. On the last day of August 2006 riots broke out in the town of Kondopoga after the incident in which two ethnic Russians were killed by Chechens. In revenge, a mob demolished and set on fire kiosks and shops which belonged to people from Caucasus. The police or town authorities failed to react properly.
30. After the killing of a fan of the Moscow Spartak soccer club by a young man from northern Caucasus, thousands of Russian football hooligans and members of nationalistic groups started riots in Moscow, beating people who did not look as ethnic Russians. As a result, 1300 people were detained and 30 seriously injured.
31. *43% rossiyan ne usmatrivayut svyazi mezhdu ponyatiyami "islam" i "terrorizm."* http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/authorities/religion-general/2011/06/d21861/ (Accessed November 5, 2012).
32. Vladimir Putin. *Rossiya: natsional'ny vopros*. http://www.ng.ru/politics/2012-01-23/1_national.html (Accessed on November 12, 2012).

33. *UKAZ Prezidenta RF ot 19.12.2012 N 1666 "O strategii gosudarstvennoy natsional''noy politiki rossiyskoy federatsii na period do 2025 goda."* http://graph.document.kremlin.ru/page.aspx?1;1644521 (Accessed on June 2, 2013).

34. Putin wrote: "The historical Russia was neither an ethnic state nor a melting pot; for hundreds of years Russia was growing as a multiethnic country, where hundreds of ethnic groups were intertwining." *Vladimir Putin. Rossiya: natsional'ny vopros*. http://www.ng.ru/politics/2012-01-23/1_national.html (Accessed on November 12, 2012).

35. See Vladimir Putin's speech during the meeting with the representatives of "traditional" religions. *Vladimir Putin obsudil problemy migratsii s predstavitelyami religioznykh i obshchestvennykh organizatsiy*. http://www.1tv.ru/news/social/180914 (Accessed on June 5, 2013).

36. *Vladimir Putin. Rossiya: natsional'ny vopros*. http://www.ng.ru/politics/2012-01-23/1_national.html (Accessed on November 12, 2012).

37. The list of 100 Russian books which should be read by young people is being prepared by the Council for Interethnic Relations. The Council was established in 2012 as one of the projects within the framework of the Kremlin's new, harsher approach toward immigration. Vladimir Putin, who is the chair of the newly established body, named its two main tasks: the first is to strengthen Russia's position as a unique world civilization. The second task of the Council is to work out a successful way of integrating migrants. *Zasedaniye Soveta po mezhnatsional'nym otnosheniyam*. http://news.kremlin.ru/news/16292/print (Accessed on November 5, 2012). Alexander Verkhovsky called the council "a symptom of ethnoreligious communitarism" which preserved traditional bond between religion and ethnicity (Verkhovsky 2012, 157).

38. *Kontseptsiya regulirovaniya migratsionnykh protsessov v Rossiyskoy Federatsii*. http://www.mid.ru/bdomp/ns-osndoc.nsf/e2f289bea62097f9c325787a0034c255/036aa5d55070cf9943256ce2002bdee8!OpenDocument (Accessed on November 6, 2012).

39. *Prezident utverdil Kontseptsiyu gosudarstvennoy migratsionnoy politiki Rossiyskoy Federatsii na period do 2025 goda*. http://kremlin.ru/acts/15635 (Accessed on November 4, 2012).

40. This is confirmed also by "The Strategy of National Security until 2020" issued in 2009. *Strategiya natsional'noy bezopasnosti Rossiyskoy Federatsii do 2020 goda.* http://archive.kremlin.ru/text/docs/2009/05/216229.shtml (Accessed on November 6, 2012).

41. M.A. Fadaicheva, *Migratsionnaya politika i migratsiya v Rossii: «vyzovy» ili «ugrozy»*. www.politex.info/content/view/478/30/ (Accessed on November 6, 2012). Vladimir Mukomel emphasises that in Russia immigration is an instrument of domestic and foreign policy (e.g., issuing visas and granting citizenship) and therefore strongly depends on the current political situation. V. Mukomel, *Migratsionnaya politika i politika intetigratsii: sotsial'no izmereniye.* http://www.isras.ru/files/File/publ/year-2008/Migracionnaya%20politika%20i%20politika%20integracii.pdf (Accessed on November 4, 2012).

42. The main postulates were: shaping immigrants' skills and habits for intercultural communication; creating necessary circumstances for adaptation and integration of migrants, including teaching Russian language, basis of the legal order, cultural tradition and norms of behavior due to programs applied in Russia as well as in immigrants' homelands; creating centers for cultural adaptation; promoting Russian language abroad.

43. "The State Strategy on Ethnic Policy" also emphasizes necessity for "civilizational integration and socialization of migrants."

44. President Putin ordered introducing the language, legal basis and Russian history exam for working migrants, with the exception for high class specialists until November 2012 *V. Putin poruchil vvesti ekzamen po russkomu dlya migrantov.* http://top.rbc.ru/society/07/05/2012/649542.shtml (Accessed on November 4, 2012).

45. V. Mukomel, *Problemy migratsii v sovremennoy Rossii.* http://antirasizm.ru/doc/publ_067.rtf (Accessed on November 4, 2012).

46. See subchapter 4 of this article.

47. However, Putin made it clear that the state should keep its secular nature. Vladimir Putin. *Rossiya: natsional'ny vopros.* http://www.ng.ru/politics/2012-01-23/1_national.html (Accessed on November 12, 2012).

48. In the article also other reasons were mentioned like the fall of the USSR, social injustice, legal nihilism, discrimination, negative stereotypes, flawed regulation of migration processes.

49. *Dmitriy Medvedev vstretilsya s uchastnikami Arkhiyereyskogo sobora.* http://kremlin.ru/news/10220 (Accessed April 2, 2012).

50. *Prezident RF Dmitriy Medvedev prizval usilit' otvetstvennost' za razzhiganiye natsional'noy i religioznoy i privlech' religioznyye organizatsii k uregulirovaniyu konfliktov.* http://www.sclj.ru/news/detail.php?section_id=242&element_id=3213 (Accessed on November 4, 2012).

51. *Medvedev: Migranty dolzhny soblyudat' rossiyskiye zakony.* http://er.ru/news/2011/11/19/medvedev-migranty-dolzhny-soblyudat-rossijskie-zakony/ (Accessed on November 4, 2012).

52. Putin's words met with immediate positive response from patriarch Kirill. *Svyateyshiy Patriarkh Kirill prinyal uchastiye vo vstreche predsedatelya Pravitel'stva Rossii s predstavitelyami religioznykh, natsional'no-kul'turnykh i obshchestvennykh organizatsiy.* http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/1579641.html (Accessed on November 24, 2012).

53. However, they differ in putting accents. The ROC underlines the absolute dominance of the Orthodox tradition and tends to equal Russianness with Christian Orthodoxy, while *muftiates* try to balance the Orthodox and Muslim factor in Russia's past. See *Vystupleniye Talgata Tadzhuddina, Verkhovnogo muftiya Rossii i Evropeyskikh stran SNG.* http://eurasia.com.ru/tadjuddin3005.html (Accessed on June 5, 2013).

54. *Predstoyatel' Russkoy Pravoslavnoy Tserkvi prinyal uchastiye v zasedanii Prezidiuma Mezhreligioznogo soveta SNG.* http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/1787386.html (Accessed on June 23, 2012). *Muftiy TSDUM vystupil protiv prinyatiya islama slavyanskoy molodezh'yu.* http://ansar.ru/society/2013/04/26/40182 (Accessed on June 4, 2013).

55. "*Dialog v khristiansko-evreyskikh otnosheniyakh v sovremennoy Rossii i v mire." Doklad zamestitelya predsedatelya OVTSS igumena Filippa (Ryabykh).* http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/1285461.html (Accessed on November 6, 2012).

56. In practice, this means that "traditional" religions don't proselyte among ethnic groups which are considered traditional adherents of a particular religion, i.e., the ROC doesn't proselyte among Tatars or Buryats, muftis don't appeal to Slavic people.

57. *R.Gaynutdin: "Islam — eto religiya ne prishel'tsev, ne migrantov, a korennykh rossiyan.* http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/authorities/religion-general/2011/02/d21016/ (Accessed on November 5, 2012).

58. *Tratit' den'gi na rebenka dolzhno byt' estestvenno, a na dorogiye veshchi - stydno.* http://www.rg.ru/2007/03/09/mitropolit.html (Accessed on November 4, 2012). Earlier, the issue of ethnic tensions was brought up in 2004 by the Alliance of Orthodox Brotherhoods which demanded from Putin and Luzkov to set a special visa regime for "Caucasian nationality" (*kavkazskaya natsional'nost'*).

59. *Tratit' den'gi na rebenka dolzhno byt' estestvenno, a na dorogiye veshchi - stydno.* http://www.rg.ru/2007/03/09/mitropolit.html (Accessed on November 4, 2012).

60. *Svyateyshiy Patriarkh Kirill: Mezhnatsional'nyy i mezhreligioznyy mir nedostizhim bez aktivnogo uchastiya Russkoy Pravoslavnoy TSerkvi.* http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/1346655.html (Accessed on November 3, 2012).

61. *Vystupleniye Svyateyshego Patriarkha Kirilla na otkrytii XIX Mezhdunarodnykh Rozhdestvenskikh obrazovatel'nykh chteniy.* http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/1392562.html (Accessed on November 3, 2012).

62. *Doklad protoiyereya Vsevoloda CHaplin, predsedatelya Komissii po voprosam garmonizatsii mezhnatsional'nykh i mezhreligioznykh otnosheniy Soveta po vzaimodeystviyu s religioznymi ob"yedineniyami pri Prezidente RF.* http://www.ovco.org/2012/07/4079 (Accessed on November 3, 2012).

63. Ibidem.

64. *Protoiyerey Vsevolod Chaplin prizyvayet gosudarstvo i biznes aktivizirovat' rabotu v sfere adaptatsii migrantov.* http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/1676498.html (Accessed on November 6, 2012).

65. *Protoiyerey Vsevolod CHaplin: Bez samoorganizatsii russkogo naroda stranu zhdet vechnyy khaos.* http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/1440002.html (Accessed on November 3, 2012).

66. *V Russkoy Pravoslavnoy Tserkvi prizyvayut k nemedlennym meram po profilaktike mezhnatsional'nykh konfliktov.* http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/1340591.html (Accessed on November 4, 2012).

67. *Dukhovenstvo o natsionalizme.* http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/discussions/society/2011/11/d23016/ (Accessed on November 4, 2012).

68. *Mneniya moskovskogo dukhovenstva o "russkom voprose."* http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/discussions/society/2011/09/d22555/ (Accessed on November 4, 2012).

69. *Svyashchennosluzhiteli ishchut sposob integrirovat' migrantov v rossiyskuyu kul'turu.* http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/discussions/society/2011/08/d22415/ (Accessed on November 4, 2012).

70. *Glava Soveta muftiyev Rossii prizyvayet naseleniye Kondopogi k miru.* http://i-r-p.ru/page/stream-event/index-7453.html (Accessed on June 5, 2013).

71. *Muftiy Karelii prizyvayet zhiteley Kondopogi k spokoystviyu.* http://www.newsru.com/religy/05sep2006/muftij.html (Accessed on June 4, 2013).

72. *Saratovskiy muftiy solidaren s pozitsiyey Natsional'noy organizatsii russkikh musul'man po sobytiyam v Kondopoge.* http://www.interfax-religion.ru/?act=news&div=13833 (Accessed on June 3, 2013).

73. *V Kondopoge zabyli o Boge.* http://ruskline.ru/monitoring_smi/2006/09/22/v_kondopoge_zabyli_o_boge/ (Accessed on June 3, 2013).

74. *NORM obvinyayet v kondopozhskikh sobytiyakh "massy priyezzhikh musul'manskogo proiskhozhdeniya."* http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/extremism/violence-incitement/2006/09/d9010/ (Accessed on November 4, 2012).

75. Tadjudin and Chaplin criticized Gyanetdin for that comment.

76. *Muftiy Krasnoyarskogo kraya vystupil na kruglom stole, posvyashchennom problemam integratsii migrantov v Rossii.* http://www.muslim.ru/articles/116/4135/ (Accessed on June 6, 2013). *Muftiy Mukhammedgali KHuzin o nelegal'noy migratsii v Rossii.* http://www.vestikavkaza.ru/video/Muftiy-Mukhammedgali-KHuzin-o-nelegalnoy-migratsii-v-Rossii.html (Accessed on June 3, 2013). *SHafig Pshikhachev: Migrantam dolzhny pomogat' adaptirovat'sya religioznyye deyateli - ikh zemlyaki.* http://www.vestikavkaza.ru/news/SHafig-Pshikhachev-Migrantam-dolzhny-pomogat-adaptirovatsya-religioznye-deyateli-ikh-zemlyaki.html (Accessed on June 3, 2013).

77. This body was established in 1998 with the purpose to create a platform of dialogue and cooperation for "traditional" religions of the Russian Federation.

78. *Opublikovany rekomendatsii OVTSO v oblasti mezh·etnicheskikh otnosheniy i migratsionnoy politiki.* http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/authorities/elections/2011/01/d20780/ (Accessed on November 3, 2012).

79. This document was presented at the World Russian People's Council (*Всемирный русский народный собор*) in 2011, prepared by the Synodal Department of Church-Society Cooperation. The head of the department, Vsevolod Chaplin, claimed the text to be a result of a discussion with political parties and different social groups. *OVTSO sostavil spisok vechnykh rossiyskikh tsennostey.* http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/authorities/religion-general/2011/01/d20827/ (Accessed on March 15, 2012).

80. As "traditional" Russian values were mentioned: faith; justice (meaning "the right place of a nation in international relations"); peace; freedom (limited by moral obligations); unity (of different ethnic groups, social classes, political groups); morality; dignity; honesty; patriotism (defined as love for the Homeland, nation, culture, respect for history; readiness for self-sacrifice); solidarity; mercy; family; culture and national tradition (characterized as respect for one's own culture and the tradition of others); prosperity (material and spiritual); diligence; self-limitation (not indulging in consumerism) and devotion (to the Motherland and nation). *Bazisnyye tsennosti — osnova obshchenatsional'noy identichnosti.* http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/1496038.html (Accessed on February 3, 2012).

81. Members of United Russia stated for example that "secular state should not be isolated from the ideological influence of the Church" and expressed the opinion that Russia had to rely on its traditional values in order to preserve its identity of a unique civilisation. *V Dume proshli konsul'tatsii predstaviteley RPTS MP i KPRF.* http://www.religare.ru/2_80693.html (Accessed on February 4, 2012). Interestingly, also communists emphasize their contacts with the Orthodox clergy and claim that traditional values of Russian civilization are necessary to restore social justice and solidarity. *Zayavleniye po itogam vstrechi predstaviteley partii «Edinaya Rossiya» i Russkoy Pravoslavnoy TSerkvi.* http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/1172003.html (Accessed on February 4, 2012).

82. There is even an initiative to create a special consortium. *Religioznyye deyateli RF i Kazakhstana prizyvayut migrantov uvazhat' rossiyskiye traditsii.* http://www.interfax-religion.ru/kaz/?act=news&div=42669 (Accessed on November 4, 2012).

83. *Tajikistan: Migrant workers must not be held hostage to the Russian-Tajik political crisis.* http://www.fidh.org/Tajikistan-Migrant-workers-must (Accessed on June 3, 2013).

84. The Council of Muftis of Russia expressed the will to establish the Council of Muftis of CIS, which could serve as an important platform for tackling the problem of migration. If it happens, Russian muftis would dispose over their own institution to influence processes in the CIS area.

Damir Mukhetdinov: Sozdaniye soveta muftiyev SNG pomozhet reshit' problemy s migrantami. http://top.oprf.ru/news/10722.html (Accessed on June 4, 2013).

85. *Svyateyshiy Patriarkh Kirill: Vospitaniyem migrantov dolzhny zanyat'sya religioznyye obshchiny.* http://www.patriarchia.ru./db/text/1788919.html (Accessed on November 5, 2012).

86. *Itogovyy dokument zasedaniya Mezhreligioznogo soveta stran SNG.* http://www.patriarchia.ru./db/text/1787369.html (Accessed on November 4, 2012).

87. It is important to note that the Commission started to work before the Manege square riots: the first session of the commission took place on June 18, 2010 and the next one on November 18 of the same year. The foundations state-church cooperation in the field of immigration had thus been laid before the Kremlin's new immigration policy.

88. *Doklad protoiyereya Vsevoloda CHaplina na tret'yem zasedanii Sovmestnoy komissii Russkoy Pravoslavnoy TSerkvi i FMS Rossii.* http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/2468512.html (Accessed on November 5, 2012).

89. *V rezul'tate vzaimodeystviya TSerkvi i FMS Rossii razrabotan uchebnik po osnovam russkogo yazyka i kul'tury dlya trudovykh migrantov.* http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/3079945.html (Accessed on August 18, 2013).

90. *S podderzhkoy muftiyata" Ravil' GAYNUTDIN.* http://www.fms.gov.ru/press/publications/news_detail.php?ID=42825&sphrase_id=952219 (Accessed on November 5, 2012).

91. The muftiate of Adygeia and Krasnodarski Krai together with the muftiate of Mordova were the first ones to organize seminars on culture and law for migrants.

92. *Federal'naya migratsionnaya sluzhba Respubliki Buryatiya i Buddiyskaya traditsionnaya Sangkha Rossii podpisali soglasheniye o sotrudnichestve.* http://www.fms.gov.ru/press/news/news_detail.php?ID=44460# (Accessed on November 4, 2012).

93. Again, this is the best seen with the Moscow Patriarchate which in the document with recommendations for ethnic policy (2011) claimed that the ROC had the right to act as one of the most legitimated representatives of ethnic Russians in the interfaith dialogue and demanded for ethnic Russians (*russki narod*) to play a role proportional to its numerical strength in this dialogue. *Opublikovany rekomendatsii OVTSO v oblasti mezh·etnicheskikh otnosheniy i migratsionnoy politiki.* http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/authorities/elections/2011/01/d20780/ (Accessed on November 3, 2012).

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