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**КОНФЕССИОНАЛЬНЫЙ ФАКТОР ОБЩЕСТВЕННО-ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОГО
И ПАРТИЙНО-ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОГО ПРОЦЕССА СОВРЕМЕННОЙ
РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ**

**CONFESSIONAL FACTOR IN THE SOCIO-POLITICAL AND PARTY-POLITICAL
PROCESS OF THE MODERN RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

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***Аннотация.** Статья посвящена выявлению акцентирования конфессионального фактора в общественно-политическом процессе РФ на фоне его стабилизационно-стагнационных векторов. Прослеживаются тенденции включения конфессионального фактора в официальный дискурс государственных лидеров, позиция главы Российского государства в отношении религии, веры, а также роли религиозных институтов. Анализируются политические программы и дискурс политических лидеров в отношении роли, целей и задач религиозных институтов.*

Ключевые слова: дефициты общественно-политического и партийно-политического процесса, конфессиональный фактор, роль религии и веры, светский характер Российского государства, политические партии, политическая программа, религиозные организации.

***Abstract.** The article is devoted to identifying the accentuation of the confessional factor in the socio-political process of the Russian Federation against the background of its stabilization and stagnation vectors. There are trends in including the confessional factor in the official discourse of state leaders, the position of the head of the Russian state in relation to religion, faith, and the role of religious institutions. Political programs and discourse of political leaders in relation to the role, goals and tasks of religious institutions are analyzed.*

Key words: deficiencies of the socio-political and party-political process, confessional factor, the role of religion and faith, the secular nature of the Russian state, political parties, political program, religious organizations.

Deficiencies of modern socio-political and party political process. The modern socio-political and party-political process in its global and also in Russian terms is marked by significant deficiencies. Among them, the obvious is the lack of effective leaders, optimal organizational technologies, and reliable images. There is a deficiency of attractive programmatic and statutory ideas of political parties and, accordingly, a deficiency of social trust in party political institutions.

Since the 2010s, the Russian socio-political and party-political process has been demonstrating a certain stabilization and stagnation pace, both intrinsically-structural and technical and technological. This is largely determined by the general stabilization of socio-political relations, the strengthening of the political system and the ordering of political governance, the optimization of partogenesis, and the neutralization of conflict-generating factors in relations between the authorities and citizens. At the same time, this is due to a gradual slowdown in the overall economic, social, and infrastructural dynamics of Russian society. The stagnation of the Russian socio-political and party-political process is carried out in parallel with the negative phenomena of the economy and social life. They have been growing since 2014, intensifying since 2018, and manifesting openly since 2019–2020 in the context of the global and Russian economic and financial crisis, falling oil prices, as well as in the context of the COVID-2019 pandemic. The influenza epidemic, in addition to the death of people, causes large-scale damage to the economy and the social sphere (shutdown of enterprises, reduction of the business segment, loss of income and earnings, rising unemployment, social pessimism, uncertainty about the future, etc.). Under these conditions, trends that are relatively new in content occur.

Firstly, further verticalization of power is carried out through its personalization in the person of one leader – the current President of the Russian Federation. The personalization of power has been consolidated since 2018 as a technology of political, managerial and administrative tightening of regions, the fight against corruption and crime, as well as the reintegration of socio-economic ties and strengthening of the ruling positions of the state. Also, the centralization of power through its personalization is due to the increasing role of Russia in the geopolitical architecture of our time. The concentration of power in the functional of the President of the Russian Federation is directly related to the strengthening of the sovereignty of Russian foreign policy in resisting sanctions and hostile actions against the Russian Federation by Western states and alliances.

Secondly, further nationalization of the socio-political and party-political process is carried out, the embryonic middle class is disavowed, as well as the factors of its formation, as well as favorable preconditions for business initiatives, entrepreneurship, and self-employment. Also, the space of public policy is narrowing and control is increasing not only over the socio-economic and material-financial condition of the population, but also over political and electoral trends (remote voting: voting by mail, electronic voting, etc.) as part of further strengthening the Russian limited “sovereign democracy”, the framework of which is established by the state. The socio-political and party-political process is

becoming more and more formatted, its conservative-protective, distinctive Russian traditional-spiritual agenda is determined by the authorities.

Thirdly, the index of political activity of citizens who are indifferent to direct participation in political organizations and movements and are limited by their electoral presence is decreasing. Interest in politics as an institutional activity and influence on political decision-making is reduced. The general level of political culture and political competence is declining, while non-political forms of self-organization (volunteering, charity, collective humanitarian actions, mutual support) are expanding. At the same time, citizens show traditional patriotism as devotion to the Motherland and in large numbers demonstrate recognition of the glorious military heroic stories, first of all, the Victory in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. The 75th anniversary of Victory was celebrated in the Russian Federation in May 2020 in a special regime due to quarantine measures due to the coronavirus pandemic, but with a high index of sincere participation of the population.

Fourthly, the general dissatisfaction of the population with the government remains, distrust of the Government of the Russian Federation and certain key figures of the ruling and oligarchic establishment, whose names have become common nouns (G.O. Gref, D.A. Medvedev, E.S. Nabiullina, I.I. Sechin, A.G. Siluanov, A.B. Chubais). At the same time, citizens trust the President of the Russian Federation, support the actions of the head of state and express a certain enthusiasm in connection with the amendments to the Constitution of the Russian Federation proposed by the President of the Russian Federation, primarily in terms of their social component. Socially oriented initiatives of V.V. Putin, set out in the Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on January 15, 2020, as well as subsequent measures for social support of the population in the framework of countering the coronavirus pandemic in April – May 2020, were approved by 66–98% of the population [5]. The majority of citizens express their readiness to support the amendments to the Constitution of the Russian Federation by voting under the democratic slogan “Our country. Our Constitution. Our solution”. There is some support for the idea of “zeroing” the normative term of a candidate for the highest post in the state, probably in relation to V.V. Putin.

New perspectives of the confessional factor in the post-secular world. The long-term economic crisis, political performances, the transformation of populism from political technology into political ideology and the “re-discovery” of deep states have had a significant impact on the established political world order, modifying the factors of the socio-political and party-political process. One of the new factors in the socio-political and party-political process is the confessional factor, which indirectly, and in other cases and directly, intrudes into public and political life.

In the middle of the XX century, it seemed that a secular world, that is, free from confessional influence, would only enhance secularism in all planes of human existence. However, at the beginning of the new millennium, the post-secular reality clearly demonstrates and challenges the viability of the victory of a secular society [14].

The revival of the confessional factor in the socio-political and party-political process took place in the course of the reduction of classical democratic civil norms, irresponsibility, lack of will and inactivity of many democratic corporations. Processes and institutions of a socio-political nature take on a religious connotation in some cases, which is manifested in visualized and hidden forms. An objective consideration of the confessional factor indicates that it not only retains its relevance and relevance for many communities, but also stimulates social processes, exerting both constructive and destructive influence on society.

Here we will make a reservation that in this analysis we do not provide for the methodological nomination of the confessional factor. We will use general definitions and popular ideas about the confessional factor not in its worldview expression, but in the expression of social practices and moods, rituals, which are recorded by modern Russian philosophers, political scientists, sociologists. Modern philosophical, socio-political, cultural knowledge reflects latent discussions about the role of the confessional factor, goals and objectives of religious institutions at the stage of metamodernism [4]. Religion not only returned to the public agenda (and did not leave somewhere), but also clearly claims to revenge the positions lost in the course of scientific, technical, sexual, technological, information revolutions and the release of mankind into outer space, which again actualized the problem of integration religious elements, practices and dogmas for naively sincere and cynically targeted use in politics.

Russian scientists note that “the influence of the religious factor is expressed in the incorporation of religious foundations (including in a transformed form) into the political process and in the formation of new forms of collective identity.” It is obvious here that “religious and confessional coloring becomes a marker of political events, that a religious element is often introduced into political ritual in order to give political events and persons acting in them ontological status and legitimacy” [19].

The actualization of the confessional factor in the socio-political and party-political process is also manifested in the Russian Federation. After the political atheistic ideology of Marxism-Leninism has lost its dominant position, the state and society are trying to fill the gap. The society continues to search for ideology that could unite society, for some spiritual foundations designed to unite citizens, including through the strengthening of the Russian state identity [1].

Institutional tendencies of the confessional factor in the Russian socio-political and party-political process

First. Inclusion of confessional topics, attributes in official texts, regulatory documents of the secular Russian state. It is directly proclaimed in the Constitution of the Russian Federation that “no ideology can be established as state or obligatory” and that “ideological diversity is recognized in the Russian Federation” [15]. The basic law of the Russian Federation indicates the secular nature of the Russian state, which, in our opinion, is an uncontested legal and

political basis for strengthening the national civic consciousness of Russian citizens. However, recently, some state and political figures, public activists, literary and artistic figures have been making attempts to include the postulates of the main religions of the Russian Federation as integrative ideological clamps in socio-political and party-political contexts.

The confessional factor is manifested in the content of the National Anthem of the Russian Federation, where God has been mentioned since 2000, which is explained by the cultural and historical peculiarities of Russia [34]. At the same time, it is obvious that the citizens of the Russian Federation with an atheistic worldview are forced to show special loyalty to the text of the National Anthem of the Russian Federation, which emphasizes that "the native land is protected by God."

In this regard, one of the problems of the socio-political and party-political process is the problem of relations between the state and religious institutions, as well as the place of religion in the general system of ideological and ideological attitudes, but also in the system of relations between political and bureaucratic institutions. There are obvious questions about a possible state religion, about the optimal confessional policy, as well as about some signs of clericalization of the state and balancing the state between the secular nature of the state and the needs of religiously minded and church citizens. At the same time, the Russian state has taken under legal protection the "feelings of believers", which raises many doubts and creates dubious law enforcement precedents, since it is extremely difficult in legal terms to define what "feelings" are and who "believers" are, not to mention discrimination of feelings atheists who also need protection [16 and 38].

The presence of the confessional factor in the socio-political and party-political process of the Russian Federation from 2020 can be fixed in the amendments to the Constitution of the Russian Federation, proposed during the discussion of «The 2020 Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly» on January 15. The amendments contain the following thesis: "The Russian Federation, united by a thousand-year history, preserving the memory of ancestors who passed on to us the ideals and belief in God, as well as the continuity of the development of the Russian state, recognizes the historically established state unity" [23 and 35]. At the same time, DS Peskov, in connection with possible amendments to the Constitution of the Russian Federation, noted that "the state in no way loses its secular character" [29].

The fixation of "confessional motives" in the regulatory and political-doctrinal documents of the Russian Federation, as experts note, is based on "the presumption of the importance of the religious factor in public life" [17], which in itself cannot be interpreted as inevitable and necessary.

Second. Public positioning of statesmen and political leaders in relation to religion and belief in interaction with religious institutions. When asked whether religion should play an important role in national culture, Russian President Vladimir Putin, in an interview with the «Financial Times», answered: "It should play the role that has developed today, it should not be pushed out of this cultural space. ... Have we forgotten that we all live in a world based on biblical values? Even atheists. But we all live in this world. You don't have to think about it every day and not go to church, there you shouldn't hit your forehead on the floor, showing what kind of Christian or Muslim you are, or a Jew, but in your soul, in your heart there should be some fundamental human rules and moral values" [26]. During his speech at the World Congress of Russian Compatriots V. V. Putin addressed representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church, as well as other religions: "Many of the representatives of these confessions ... I want to thank them for strengthening the cultural and humanitarian ties with Russia of our compatriots abroad" [28].

The leaders of the Russian state and the subjects of the Russian Federation often use religion to retain the sympathies of citizens, who, according to general data, for the most part belong to Orthodoxy and Islam [30]. At the same time, the researchers note "Orthodox-centered rhetoric of officials and a demonstration of the Kremlin's special disposition towards the Russian Orthodox Church", but emphasize that such rhetoric has "a fairly rigid spatial reference and is successful in territories with a predominance of ethnically Russian population", in contrast to other territories where the majority of the population belongs to Islamic or Buddhist religious tradition [17].

Often state and municipal employees openly demonstrate their religious beliefs by visiting temples, church services, and also work closely with ministers of confessions. Thus, the President of the Russian Federation V.V. Putin, as well as the former President of the Russian Federation and the former Prime Minister of the Russian Federation D.A. Medvedev, regularly attend Orthodox services, primarily Christmas and Easter [27], open churches and mosques [7], interact with Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill, taking into account the expansion of social service of the Russian Orthodox Church. The first persons of the country's political elite systematically congratulate believers on confessional holidays, for example, Christians Merry Christmas (it is a public holiday not only in the Russian Federation, but also in many other states) and Easter, as well as Muslims with the beginning of the month of Ramadan and its end (Eid al-Fitr), Jews with Passover [22] and Buddhists with the onset of the New Year according to the lunar calendar [11], etc.

In the modern Russian Federation, several government organizations and departments are engaged in state-religious relations: the Commission on Religious Associations under the Government of the Russian Federation, the Committee of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation for the Development of Civil Society, Issues of Religious and Public Organizations, the Council under the President of the Russian Federation for Interaction with Religious Associations, which reflects the multi-confessional nature of Russian society. At the same time, "the presence of representatives of the clergy near the authorities is considered by the authorities as desirable" [17]. The hierarchs of religious institutions, in turn, publicly support the positions of secular leaders, which, in fact, is traditional for relations between the state and religious institutions that periodically compete with each other ("the war of the scarlet

mantle and blue mantle"), but most often act together in managerial and organizational impact on society at the sites of many councils, commissions, collegia [32].

In different regions of the Russian Federation, there is a public performance by officials and politicians of the Russian secular state of religious rituals, as well as the wearing of religious attributes and symbols of faith in public places. At the same time, in some cases, the leaders of religious organizations seek to impose religious dogma on politicians and statesmen as the basis for resolving contradictions. Extreme plots are conflicts between politicians and religious leaders, in which the latter seek to apply measures of "religious influence" to officials and politicians (excommunication, condemnation, etc.). In some regions of the Russian Federation, belonging to the traditional tribalist segment (in particular, in the North Caucasus), there are attempts to preserve religious and cultural rituals and radical opposition to modern forms of leisure (shows, concerts, disco parties, flash mobs, competitions), some methods of "reverse emancipation of women", as well as the widespread use of ethno-religious attributes in external appearance (public wearing of symbols of faith).

A peculiar manifestation of the confessional factor was the protest of some religious leaders and their followers (both traditional and reformist) against the quarantine policy of the Russian state in the context of the COVID-2019 pandemic and bans on visiting places of worship. Suppose that the COVID-2019 pandemic, which showed distrust of government and other government institutions, spawned an attempt by citizens to find consolation in the pillars of faith and increased the influence of the confessional factor.

Third. Inclusion of the confessional factor in the functioning of educational, security and military structures. In Russian schools there is a variable academic discipline "Foundations of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics" [10]. The introduction of this discipline, taking into account its various modules, on the one hand, gives parents the right to choose a specific module for students, and, on the other hand, in a sense, divides students according to different worldview and cultural positions. In general, the choice of a module presents some difficulties, but in any case, each of the modules does not presuppose the propaganda of religious views, but the transmission of information about the historical development of religious systems and institutions in the general historical and cultural context. At the same time, there is some risk of violation of ideological neutrality when teaching modules on world and traditional religions, which are widespread in Russian communities [20].

Also, obvious problems can be traced in the formation of the content of the direction of training "Theology" in state universities, which is aimed at the formation of secular specialists in the field of state-confessional relations. However, expert and bureaucratic discussions at the level of ministries, departments and the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation indicate that the ratio of informational, educational and ideological components in the implementation of the corresponding curriculum and the formation of relevant competencies is highly controversial [31]. Here it is appropriate to highlight the opinion of Vladimir Putin, which also gives rise to a large-scale problem field. So, V.V. Putin noted, "As for the activities of religious confessions, representatives of religious confessions in educational institutions, I repeat once again – my personal opinion is that we should support and preserve the secular nature of our state, but, of course, the activities of religious confessions in educational institutions, as well as in the army and in places of imprisonment, is not prohibited, it will only be welcomed" [37].

The Russian Armed Forces are also subject to the influence of the confessional factor. Thus, a new position appeared in the staffing table – military priest (chaplain) [13]. Clergy often bless conscripts and approve of individual military-political operations.

The symptomatic media story of 2020 was the construction of the main temple of the Russian Armed Forces, which was erected in honor of the 75th anniversary of Victory in the Patriot Park in Kubinka near Moscow on the initiative of the Russian Defense Ministry. The side-altars of the cathedral are dedicated to the holy noble Prince Alexander Nevsky, the holy prophet of God Elijah, the holy apostle Andrew the First-Called, the holy great martyr Barbara, who are patrons of various types of troops. "Along with the faces of the saints, the images of the legendary commanders Suvorov, Minin and Pozharsky, Shuisky will be placed on the panel of the temple." [21] ... On the walls of the cathedral there are compositions "depicting the victories of Russia from ancient times to the present day: from the Battle of Kulikovo to the operation in Crimea", first of all, the composition "Victory Parade" and the composition "Bloodless joining of Crimea in 2014" "Crimea is ours!". Other topics include "the fight against international terrorism in Southeast Asia, Africa, Central America, Central Asia, the Caucasus and Syria." At the same time, along with the heroes of the historical past, the panel should have depicted government officials, military leaders, the leaders of the power structures of the modern Russian state (V.V. Putin, S.K. Shoigu, N.P. Patrushev, V.V. Volodin, V. I. Matvienko, V. V. Gerasimov, A.V. Bortnikov). At the same time, the rector of the main temple of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, Bishop Stephen of Klin, said that "the depiction of historical events and historical figures on the walls of churches is a tradition" [2].

Fourth. The manifestation of the confessional aspect in the party programs and in the party discourse. It is natural that the confessional factor began to manifest itself in the content and technologies of party functioning. There is no doubt that for a political party its program is the most important basis for ideological and organizational activity. Program ideas, program goals, corresponding events and actions, as follows from the paradigms of classical partology and from the algorithms of practical revolutionary or reformist activity, form the basic foundations of party functioning and provide parties with either success or electorate indifference.

The 2016 elections to the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation showed that the programs of Russian political parties lost their individuality, conceptuality, and also attractiveness. The programs of the

main political parties of the Russian Federation are monotonous and do not reflect the individual face of the parties, as in fact, and do not imply a prominent inter-party competition. At the same time, modern Russian political parties are looking for new program ideas that meet the needs of the social base, the electorate and that can revive the party design, both essential and technological, and, in particular, resort to using the confessional factor [33].

Researchers emphasize that the 2001 Federal Law "On Political Parties" "does not allow the creation of political parties on the basis of, among other things, "religious affiliation," that is, a party has no right to proclaim and protect religious interests" [36] ... However, the accentuation of the confessional (primarily Orthodox) factor for expanding the social base of parties occurs in parallel with the accentuation of the correlation of national and ethnic in the Russian – Russian dichotomy in the general context of culture, spirituality, security, national and migration policy [9].

Considering the political program of "United Russia", it is important to note that this party does not have a main political program, but puts forward a number of theses of support for the "Putin doctrine." Therefore, the topic of religion is not directly raised in the political texts of "United Russia", except for the election program for the presidential elections in 2012, where the block "Spirituality and Unity of the Russian People" states: "We will contribute in every way through the development of culture to the revival and strengthening of these values cooperation with traditional Russian religions. We welcome and will support the work of the traditional religions of Russia in the education and enlightenment system, in the social sphere, and in the Armed Forces. At the same time, the secular character of our state must, of course, be preserved. Any person living in our country should not forget about their faith and ethnicity. But he must, above all, be a citizen of Russia and be proud of it. No one has the right to put national and religious characteristics above the laws of the state. However, the laws of the state themselves must take into account national and religious characteristics" [24].

A number of prominent party figures use the confessional factor in their speeches and statements. For example, the Chairman of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation V.V. Volodin notes that "Strengthening the institutions of family and marriage, counteracting the erosion of moral and ethical norms is our common task, which requires joint efforts of the state, the Russian Orthodox Church and our entire multinational society." [8].

The position of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation is also symptomatic, in the political program of which the strengthening of the confessional factor is not directly recorded. However, the leader of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, G.A. Zyuganov, links the idea of socialism with certain pillars of Orthodoxy, which became the basis for the development of such properties of the Russian people as conciliarity, responsiveness, collectivism, and mutual assistance. At the same time, the party cooperates with religious organizations in spite of the doctrinal incompatibility of the ideology of socialism of the 21st century with religious ideology [3].

In the political program of the Liberal Democratic Party in paragraph 7, it is explicitly stated that it is necessary "to ensure the protection of Christians throughout the world" [18]. The opinion of the LDPR leaders on the confessional factor has a pronounced emotional and subjective component. Thus, the chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party V.V. Zhirinovskiy noted: "You see, the Orthodox do not win! Atheists are in power. Atheists win! For me, for the Orthodox – they do not vote! I am the only Orthodox Christian, and they don't vote for me!" [6]. But later he said: "Religions are the past of mankind. Today the states are secular. Laws and constitution are in force." [12].

In the political program of "Fair Russia" in the section "National Policy" it is noted: "Russia is a country that, in the course of centuries of history, has managed to organically unite different peoples, religions and cultures. The unity of the multinational people should be strengthened by common values, ideas, common civic ideology, which firmly bind people of different nationalities and confessions living in Russia." Therefore, the party proposes: "To intensify educational work among the population, aimed at understanding the characteristics of national cultures and religions of the peoples inhabiting our country" [25].

Some generalizing considerations

Optimization of the socio-political and party-political process in the modern Russian Federation provides for further research efforts to understand the invasion, application and use of the confessional factor. They are important both in the essential structural and technical and technological vectors. The problematic field of such efforts, as it seems to us, can be constituted by the following points:

- the possibility of neutralizing the contradictions between the secular nature of the Russian state and the ideological demand of a part of Russian society, as well as contradictions between its secular and clerical parts;
- the legitimacy of the inclusion of confessional ideological, figurative and plot content and the corresponding thesaurus in the normative-legal and political-doctrinal texts of the authorities, political organizations;
- the need to declare the significance of the confessional factor not so much by default in the framework of the high landmarks of Russian history and culture, as well as the attractive moral and mental properties of Russians, but in the framework of correlating and opposing different interests of different groups of citizens;
- the admissibility of the use of the confessional factor in the practices of political management and bureaucratic rhetoric of state and municipal employees, as well as the use of ethno-religious attributes in the organizational and administrative impact on the population;
- the relevance of combining traditional religious views and rituals with modern practices in education, sports, leisure, communication, show business, entertainment, self-presentation in the course of social modernization of Russian society, the degree of which is significantly differentiated by region.

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