

CULTURAL POLICY IN TRANSITIONAL ECONOMIES: NEW CHALLENGES

Empirical
study

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Abstract

The article is dedicated to the new conditions of countries' development in the post-crisis period. Challenges to the cultural and socio-economic policy during last decade were analyzed. Religious factors are offered to be considered as important mechanisms of solving transition period problems, and at the same time as the causes of many conflicts in the world. It was offered to include those factors as inevitable elements into modern policy making process.

Introduction.

Changes in the society and economy worldwide are causing new approaches to governing national policies in every country. The challenges we face demand adequate reaction to keep the right way of leading the society and the people. Ukraine as a newly independent state (got independence 23 years ago – in 1991) has many problems to solve and adapt to the EU politics, and a constantly changing situation in the neighbouring countries. Cultural policy of Ukraine has been reformed lately regarding the growing importance of ethnical and religious matters.

The beginning of the XXI century was marked by changes in foreign and domestic policies of the former Soviet Union republics, now included into the Commonwealth of Independent States. Especially, these changes were evident in the countries-neighbours that belong to the family of Slavic nations: Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. Communication (natural and forced) that had lasted for a long time was weakened by the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Ukraine and other post-Soviet countries began the phase of development in the new geopolitical conditions. The processes of globalization and integration involved not only the world's leading nations that dictate their own rules, but also the states that have no direct impact on the world of politics. Ukraine is still in the transitional process: both internally and externally.

Modern conditions of domestic and foreign policy force countries to recognize the factors that were previously not given much importance to. Among them we should select one of the most important at this stage of development – the religious factor. The growing role of religion may be explained by many years of “forbidden” practice, the existence of “state atheism” and the status of religion as “opium” for the people during the Soviet times. Another explanation may consider an

increasingly important role of religious factor in the global world in general.

As we explored international surveys on religion and religiosity of the nations there appeared a fact that countries with transitional economy in cultural and religious matters were among the leading ones in the Euro-Asian space. As can be seen from the Table 1, Poland is among the top-five EU countries by its religiosity – 80% of the people believe in God, Romania – 90%, Slovakia – 61%, other countries: Croatia – 67%, and Turkey – 95%.

The following is a list of European countries ranked by religiosity, based on belief in God, according to the Eurobarometer Poll 2005. The 2005 Eurobarometer Poll asked whether the person believed that “there is a God”, “there is some sort of spirit of life force”, “didn't believe there is any sort of spirit, God or life force”.

Social and religious development of the country is largely caused by a certain set of features that have been formed as a result of the spiritual and material life of the nation. Confirmation of the fact was found when we compared vectors of development of Central-Eastern European countries - former members of the socialist camp. Those countries on the way of their transition reached natural niches along with the religiously and culturally related countries in Western Europe. As Borowik I. (Birowik, 2004) says, the Church became a substrate of civil society, the most organized, clear and consistent opponent of the regime, the institution which with its authority threw communism out of historical and cultural heritage of European nations.

Comparing the results of the above mentioned Eurobarometer Poll (2005) with other researches on religiosity in the Central-Eastern European countries at the beginning of their transition period we would like to demonstrate the results of European Values Study (1999). As we see from the Table 2, religiosity in Poland,

Slovakia, Romania and Hungary was even higher at the beginning of the period of their joining the EU. There could be two explanations: first – methodologies of the surveys were different, second – in transitional periods cultural and religious matters become more important than material ones. Then – when you get your welfare conditions, you leave God and religion behind. It may also be true for the developed EU countries, where religiosity is declining. Table 1 shows that the religiosity in the leading EU countries is lower than 50% – e.g. Germany – 47%, Netherlands – 34%, Denmark – 31%, Sweden – 23%.

In the Central-Eastern European countries, despite the common period of socialist development, a significant difference is traced in such indicators as the declaration of faith in God, religious behaviour, affiliation with a religious organization, the level of trust in the Church, etc. According to the integrated results of 14 indicators (got in the European researches during 1991-2004), all countries have several particular types of declaring religious and social values. Vectors of the CEE countries' development differed in the relationship of the Church and state. Each country chose a model that better met the cultural, ethnic and spiritual specifics of its nation. However, the enlargement enabled these countries to join a common system of values of "big" Europe and became a natural part of it. Figure 1 shows three types of countries in Europe divided according to different interrelations between Church and state.

At the beginning of the XXI century the Church faced one of the most important factors that determined the development of socio-economic processes not only in the world, but in Ukraine in particular. Since the late 80s when the Church was allowed to resume its missionary and educational activities, the share of believers and the influence of the Church on social and political development of Ukraine have significantly

increased. According to various experts, for the past five years the level of trust in the Church as a social institution has been the highest: According to the nationwide poll conducted by the Institute of Social and Political Psychology (January 2006), the credibility of the Church by the citizens of Ukraine is 57, 9%. The results of the Razumkov Center survey show constant high level of trust in the Church (Table 3).

Research is conducted by the Razumkov Center from 1 to 5 April 2011. It polled 2,009 respondents aged over 18 in all regions of Ukraine for the sample representing the adult population of Ukraine by main socio-demographic indicators. The survey was conducted in 132 towns (including 79 urban and 53 rural settlements). The error margin (excluding design effect) does not exceed 2.3% with probability of 0.95. The latest survey on the trust issue was conducted 20 - 24 December 2013; 2010 respondents aged over 18 from all regions of Ukraine. The error margin – 2,3% (Razumkov, 2013).

The results of the Public Opinion Poll conducted by the Sociological Service of Razumkov Centre confirm the steadiness of a tendency towards an increase in the number of citizens who identify themselves as believers. In 2000-2002, the share of believers grew from 57.8% to 60.2%. The poll was carried out on October 18-28, 2002. 2,000 respondents over 18 and above were polled. The sample was selected by geographic location and represented a cross-section of basic socio-demographic groups. Given that the reliability level is 95% and the ratio between variables ranges from 0.1:0.9 to 0.5:0.5, the standard deviation is within 1.34%-2.24% (Dudar, Shangina, 2001).

Confessional situation in Ukraine now gives reason to state that all major religions and movements are represented in our country. The confessional map of Ukraine (2005) may be submitted as

follows: 95% of all religious organizations consider themselves Christian, 1.6% - Islamic, 0.9% - Jews, 0.44% Buddhist and of other Eastern religions, 0.9% - other religion. The Christian denominations are divided into: 51.8% - Orthodox, 29.1% - Protestant, 11.5% - Greek Catholic, 3.3% - Roman Catholic community. Each of these denominations is represented by numerous faithful communities abroad and in the EU in particular.

Regarding the increasing importance of religion we should remember that it can have two different roles in the society – positive and negative. Most of the regional and local conflicts during the past decades were caused by religious misunderstanding: former Yugoslavian republics, Kosovo, Caucasian region, Sector Gaza etc. and led to a long war status in the countries. It ended into political destabilization, economic crises and social problems in the regions. Most of the current conflicts started as religious ones, then transformed and became little wars, where everybody forgot about the original reasons. When there is a permanent conflict or a war in the oil producing countries, it is usually a huge economic problem that results into the world's problems with oil, gas, or petrol, but it originally started as a conflict between different ideologies, religious bases or confessional counteractions. Figure 2 depicts locations of conflicts, including terrorist attacks, ethnical and religious oppositions.

Another form of religions influence on the society and economy – positive effect that moral-ethical principles have in the society. All the religions (if they are not newly founded) have positive ethical statements as their bases. Every religion (most of the world ones) encourages following the rules, loving the others, behaving as you want the others to behave, don't kill or rob, respect all the people and their property etc. And it is a perfect guide to live in the society and have economic activity that is

of common good. Keeping to the main religious postulates leads to working hard, responsible and fair, respecting the others and living in peace. Originally all those principles if they are kept and promoted should provide a better life to a single person, a family, a country and a whole society.

While following the rules concerning economic behaviour the believers are more efficient economic agents, and form human resource of higher quality. Though believers of different religious movements behave differently in economic relations, and it needs to be studied deeply to find the reasons of those differences and understand their motivation.

As it is obvious that governments should consider religion as strong power in the society, we would like to emphasize the importance of including the Church as institution into the process of developing the concept of national security, participation in campaigns against corruption, decreasing the shadow economy level. Russia realized this idea many years ago and, for example, a series of materials "Anti-corruptionists' Library" was prepared by the state authorities in coordination with representatives of religious denominations: Orthodox, Judaism and Islam.

The National Security Concept of 1997 stresses on "... the crucial role the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) and the churches of other denominations have in the preservation of traditional spiritual values." The threat from destructive religious organizations are also separately registered in the Concept, "... we must take into account the destructive role of various religious sects that cause significant damage to the spiritual life of Russian society, presenting a direct threat to life and health of Russian citizens and are often used to conceal illegal activities" (Verkhovsky, 2001). In the new Concept of 2000 the emphasis is shifted from the impact and responsibility of the Church to

the role of the state: not the ROC, but the state defends the "cultural, spiritual and moral heritage, historical traditions and norms of public life," forms a "state policy in the field of spiritual and moral education of the population "and opposes" negative influence of foreign religious organizations and missionaries" (Verkhovsky, 2001).

Active position of the Church on the main issues of socio-economic development, problems and threats to society and the national security may become determining. Some steps in this direction have been done by the major Churches in Ukraine: the Orthodox and Greek Catholic. Ukrainian Orthodox Church (in communion with the Moscow Patriarchate) is guided by official documents of the ROC, including Fundamentals of social vision and Set of moral principles, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Kiev Patriarchate has developed and adopted its social doctrine, "The Church and the World" (2001), the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church is guided by the social doctrine of the Catholic Church. In addition, at the Council in 2002 it adopted the "Public roadmap of the believer". They include 10 principles that should guide the faithful in their daily activities.

At the moment potential support of the Church in solving social problems, participation in the development and implementation of strategic documents (including the concept of national security) remains unclaimed by the state. The Concept (Principles of State Policy) of the national security of Ukraine (1997) includes one paragraph devoted to religious and spiritual development, which refers to the "providing development of the religious identity of all nationalities" (Concept 1997).

The decree of President of Ukraine from 12.02.07 "On National Security Strategy of Ukraine" paid more attention to the religious development. Paragraph 2 among the priorities of protecting national

interests identifies "limited government interference in the affairs of religious organizations." Among the strategic priorities of national security policy, Paragraph 3.1. emphasizes "achieving the consolidation of society through the resolution of ...confessional conflicts." Paragraph 3.4. gives a "prevention of spreading religious intolerance in the media" as one of the state policy priorities in humanitarian sphere (Decree 2007).

Conclusions.

As we see, religion and religious values became important not only for the lives of individuals, but for the society, state development, economic relations and even national security. Those countries of Central-Eastern Europe that at their transitional periods included religious factor into decision making policy successfully became members of the EU. Now Ukraine is on the way of joining European economic and political community, and the importance of newly appeared challenges to the social life should be taken into consideration while developing state documents and improving state policy in cultural sphere.

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Table 1: Religiosity in the European countries

Country	"I believe there is a God"	"I believe there is some sort of spirit or life force"	"I don't believe there is any sort of spirit, God or life force"
Malta	95%	3%	1%
Cyprus	90%	7%	2%
Greece	81%	16%	3%
Portugal	81%	12%	6%
Poland	80%	15%	1%
Italy	74%	16%	6%
Ireland	73%	22%	4%
Slovakia	61%	26%	11%
Spain	59%	21%	18%
Austria	54%	34%	8%
Lithuania	49%	36%	12%
Germany	47%	25%	25%
Luxembourg	44%	28%	22%
Hungary	44%	31%	19%
Belgium	43%	29%	27%
Finland	41%	41%	16%
United Kingdom	38%	40%	20%
Latvia	37%	49%	10%
Slovenia	37%	46%	16%
France	34%	27%	33%
Netherlands	34%	37%	27%
Denmark	31%	49%	19%
Sweden	23%	53%	23%
Czech Republic	19%	50%	30%
Estonia	16%	54%	26%
EU25	52%	27%	18%
Romania	90%	8%	1%
Bulgaria	40%	40%	13%
Croatia (not in EU)	67%	25%	7%
Switzerland (not in EU)	48%	39%	9%
Iceland (not in EU)	38%	48%	11%
Norway (not in EU)	32%	47%	17%
Turkey (not in EU)	95%	2%	1%

Source: Eurobarometer Poll, 2005 at <http://www.gallup.com/se/Social-Economic-Analysis.aspx>

Table 2: Indicators of religiosity of the Central-Eastern European countries

Country	Consider themselves as believers	Believe in God	Attend church every month or often	Pray often during a week
Average (33 countries), %	66,5	77,3	35,5	37,3
1 Ukraine	77,0	81,7	17,9	36,6
2 Poland	93,9	97,1	78,1	68,4
3 Slovakia	81,6	82,9	49,8	49,5
4 Hungary	57,5	67,3	17,8	38,9
5 Romania	84,8	96,3	46,5	69,6
6 Moldova	82,3	90,6	22,6	---
7 Russia	66,9	71,3	9,6	23,7
8 Belarus	27,5	82,9	14,5	26,6

Source: *European Value Studies, 1999*

Table 3: Level of trust in the Church in Ukraine (2000-2011), %

Period	Trust totally	Rather trust	Rather don't trust	Totally don't trust	Difficult to answer
December 2013	22.6	41.9	13	11.9	10.5
April 2011	32.1	38.9	13.8	6.6	8.5
October 2009	25.1	40.9	11.9	11.7	10.3
March 2009	29.7	34.6	11.8	12.8	11.0
December 2008	26.2	36.8	13.2	10.5	13.4
February 2008	32.0	35.1	13.1	7.2	12.6
December 2007	30.8	35.0	12.4	11.1	10.6
March 2007	31.2	36.1	13.9	8.8	9.9
December 2006	27.8	32.5	15.2	10.7	13.9
May 2006	26.4	33.2	16.7	10.5	13.3
November 2005	26.3	33.7	13.2	11.8	14.9
February 2005	29.9	31.2	14.9	12.7	11.2
December 2004	31.1	29.7	14.5	14.0	10.7
March 2004	28.2	32.1	16.0	15.9	7.8
December 2003	28.0	33.5	14.9	12.9	10.7
February 2003	27.2	30.1	14.5	17.7	10.5
November 2002	30.9	30.9	14.4	14.4	9.4
June 2002	30.0	30.0	15.4	15.9	8.7
February 2002	29.9	29.7	15.4	14.2	10.7
December 2001	31.0	29.6	11.6	15.7	12.2
February 2001	29.0	33.8	11.5	15.8	9.9
December 2000	30.6	33.8	14.3	14.5	6.8
July 2000	33.7	29.4	14.3	14.9	7.7

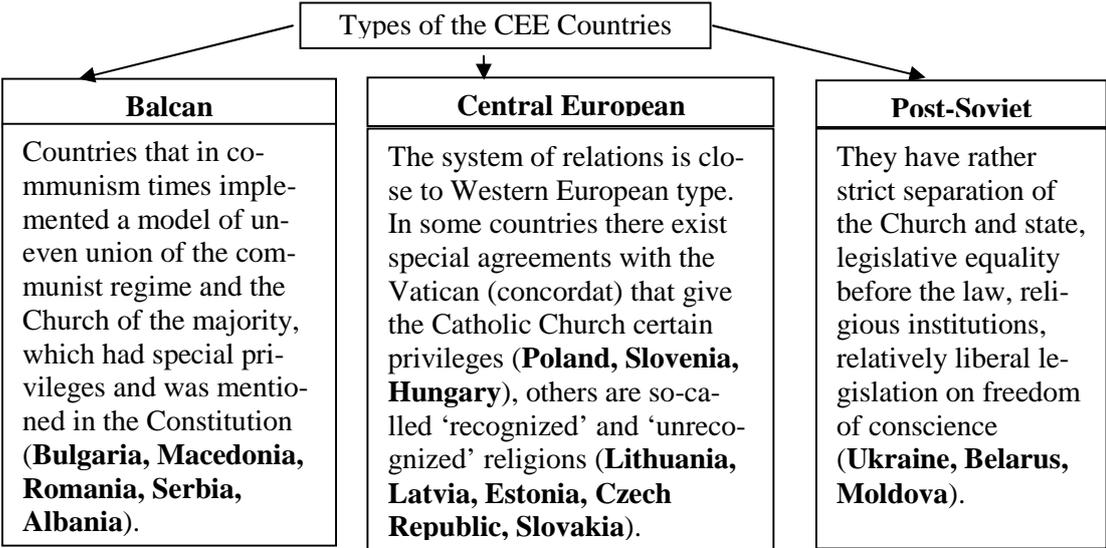


Figure 1. Types of countries according to social-religious relations



Figure 2. Allocation of conflicts, including religious ones, 2007

Source: *The Economist*. Nov 1st 2007. Special report: *The new wars of religion. An old menace has returned, but in very different forms* – *The Economist*. Nov 1st 2007, available at http://www.economist.com/specialreports/displaystory.cfm?story_id=10015219

