Systematic Analysis of The Religious Factor In Historical Processes

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Abstract: This article discusses the religious factor, its role in the policies of states, particularly its historical and current significance in the countries of Southeast Asia, its place in international relations, and how religion serves as a link between the individual and society, and an important factor in achieving consensus in the political system of the global community. Attention is paid to the fact that the cultural and religious factors in international politics are no less important than other factors.

Keywords: Religion, Tolerance, Southeast Asia, Malaysia, Secularism, Law, Organization, Politics.

Introduction

World politics is a complex and multifaceted relationship arising from the national interests of states, due to conditions and factors associated with the uniqueness and customs of a particular state.

A systematic analysis of historical processes requires a holistic picture with the dialectical interaction of subjective and objective conditions, aspects, and factors. Generally, factors that define the history of a given society can include nature, ethnic elements, religious aspects, and historical events. All these factors are universal in nature and can be applied to all types of societies.

Although the system influencing political factors may take various forms based on certain directions, it is generally related to the following: economic, geographical, ethno-national, religious, cultural, socio-political, and historical (Pereyashkin, 2015).

The perspective of "factor" as a scientific phenomenon has formed and enriched during the process of historical and spiritual development of society. We can see this in the works of Herodotus' "History," N.Machiavelli and F.Bacon, T.Hobbes, T.Carlyle, M.Weber, O.Spengler, G.Günther. The active stage of this development is currently evident in the scientific works of prominent political scientists such as J.Corm, J.Reynes, I.D.Zvyagelskaya, A.I.Fursov, A.V.Mitrofanova, and others (Korm, 2012).

Recent globalization processes, the disappearance of borders, and attempts to eliminate national characteristics have led to discussions about the "human factor" in world politics, which in turn caused the formation of the concept of "anthropology of international relations." In many cases, this is explained by the disregard for social problems intrinsically linked to the well-being and spiritual state of society. The aim of political anthropology is to study the impact of international relations on individuals and their status in the state and the world (Batalov, 2010). One of the prominent phenomena in political science was the work "Globalization of World Politics" by J. Baylis, S. Smith, and P. Owens. In this work, they expand the term "human factor" and examine it as a complex structure (Lis et al, 2008).

Methodology

The role of religion in international relations is not considered as important as economy and politics. However, conflicts and disagreements emerging in the world under the guise of various religions repeatedly remind the global community how important the religious factor is, that this factor knows no borders, and does not remain confined to the territory of a particular state.

The negative attitude towards religion in the 20th century radically changed by the 21st century. Religion began to be seen as a connector between individuals and society, and an important factor in achieving agreement within the political system of the world community.

From the mid-20th century, terrorism began to emerge as one of the important factors in the international community. While not a direct consequence of globalization, it is technically linked to globalization, as terrorism utilizes numerous methods and technologies in its operations. It is no secret that the global community has been fighting this, but to eliminate terrorism, its material and spiritual roots must be destroyed. Expert A.K.Cronin has also conducted a few studies on this matter (Cronin, 2002). It is no secret that today terrorism carries out its activities under the guise of religion. Several international organizations are contributing to this fight, including the International Civil Aviation Organization, the Hague Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft adopted in 1970, the establishment of the Public Security and Counter-Terrorism Department within Interpol in 1985, and the emergence of anti-terrorist coalitions, which are clear evidence of this (Chalk, 1996). From 1948 to 1993, 12 major international human rights documents were adopted.

Currently, the cultural and religious factors have begun to gain no less importance than other factors in international politics. Any society forms its own linguistic, literary, and artistic culture, as well as rules and regulations that reflect its social life. Culture stands above ideology, and it is precisely culture that determines who a person is in society. Religion is considered the greatest force in human history. While world religions can spread widely among humanity, national religions are the opposite, existing only within a narrow scope. Despite their activities under various pressures throughout different periods of history, it should not be forgotten that religions possess significant influence today. In the

Southeast Asian region, the influence of Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism is significantly noticeable.

The strengthening of the religious factor in world politics is directly related not only to the process of globalization but also to the centuries-old process of secularization in international relations.

By the 20th century, the religious factor began to manifest itself fully in the expression of international relations within the framework of religious traditions, and various theories and views emerged about it. The religious factor is, first and foremost, the active involvement of religious institutions, structures, and non-governmental organizations with a transnational character in political processes. The manifestation of the religious factor is seen in the charitable activities of religious associations in various parts of the world and in the influence of religion on international legal norms. In some cases, it has manifested itself in the strengthening of religious fundamentalism against the West and the global community.

According to J. Corm, "the conquest of religiosity by politics" occurred (Korm, 2012). In his opinion, "religious decorations" evoke the idea of "religiosity present everywhere," while a new form of ideology has emerged.

The religious factor began to manifest itself in world politics starting from the 1980s. A few years after the Islamic Revolution, R. Reagan, in his opposition to the former USSR, spoke about "the struggle between good and evil," referring to biblical images. The newly elected John Paul II intensely engaged in the fight against the socialist system.

The utilization of all manifestations of the religious factor is characterized by its sufficient influence on human consciousness. In the Middle East, Arab nationalism, which initially formed the basis of the Palestinian movement's ideology, was ideologically enriched, but later displaced by politicized Islam.

In 1969, King Faisal of Saudi Arabia founded the international World Islamic Conference Organization (now the Organization of Islamic Cooperation) based on Islam. In the 1970s, a system of Islamic banks began to form in most Islamic countries and in Great Britain. Religious parties played an important role in Israel's political life. The fact that 80% of India's population adheres to Hinduism allowed religious parties to become leaders on the political stage. In Turkey, at the beginning of the 20th century, the activities of religious organizations were strictly controlled by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, but by the end of the century, the religious factor became an important element of domestic politics. The disintegration of Yugoslavia and the processes in Serbia and Kosovo also played a significant role in the religious factor (Polivyanniy, 2020). As a vivid example of the use of the religious factor in domestic politics, one can cite the policy pursued by King Fahd of Saudi Arabia in 1982-2000. As a result of reforms, this state became a modern economy based on Islam and a state with a developed social sphere. In response to the revolutions in Iran and with the aim of raising the kingdom's prestige in the Arab world, Fahd, first of all, focused attention on the preservation of holy places. These processes, of course, benefited those who opposed renewal in the country, who stood against such processes, and

movements of Islamization – politicization of Islam aiming to establish an Islamic caliphate – began to emerge.

The use of the religious factor in political life can also be seen in Latin America. According to the declaration adopted at the second Latin American Bishops' Conference held in Colombia in 1968, injustice prevails in most parts of Latin America, and existing systems violate human rights. Such situations lead to fundamental restructuring (Leyn, 1997). This was the first step towards liberation movements. Colombian priest C.Torres called on people to participate in liberation movements, stating that any Catholic who was not a revolutionary was living in sin (Leyn, 1997).

In recent years, Protestantism has succeeded in expanding its activities in Eastern countries. Many people are attracted by the type and form of worship – energetic and open, allowing the inclusion of elements of mass culture. They also allow modern song lyrics to be changed into prayer words during worship, adapting them to their needs (Malashenko et al, 2009).

Non-governmental organizations also try to use the religious factor in solving modern problems. The Rhodes Declaration of the World Public Forum "Dialogue of Civilizations," held on October 8-12, 2009, states: "4.1. In times of global financial crisis, world religions play an important role in distinguishing spiritual and human values, reminding people of their responsibility for the interests of humanity. 4.2. Religions are capable of perfectly fulfilling this task and complement each other, stemming from universal interests... 4.5. We call on everyone, regardless of whether they adhere to a religion or not, to study a particular religion, the customs, religious teachings, traditions, and rituals of representatives of other religions living side by side, so that humanity can understand each other better, respect each other, and live in harmony" (Rodosskaya deklaratsiya 2009 goda).

Another vivid example illustrating the role of the religious factor in international relations can be the proposal by Pope Francis during his visit to Jordan in May 2014 to hold peace negotiations between Israel and Palestinians in the Vatican.

The objective influence of the religious factor, loyalty to the traditional system of values, or indifference towards it, manifests itself in determining the worldview of every person in society, above all barriers, and distinguishes them based on their attitude to traditions. Religious institutions, regardless of the increase or decrease in people's religious needs, continue to operate based on their teachings, as before.

The religious factor also manifests itself in the relations of religious organizations with the state. Church-state relations are changing, as is society's attitude towards belief, religion, and religious institutions. The state, based on its interests, can exert its influence on religious institutions it can resolve interreligious and interfaith conflicts, and society has the opportunity to turn to famous clergy in difficult situations.

Dialogue between religions and cultures is currently being conducted within the framework of secular or interreligious projects. Nevertheless, this can also be called a "permanent truce." Religion, as before, remains an important indicator of social development, and the religious factor is becoming a reality of modern politics (United Nations Human Development Report).

Throughout centuries, religious conflicts have influenced the foreign policies of various states. Religious slogans were widely used in foreign policy and foreign economic processes on the path to conquering new lands and trade routes. The religious factor has caused many religious conflicts and wars. Interfaith conflicts continue to cause not only international but also military conflicts to this day. The founders and participants of movements that cause religious conflicts have resolved not only interfaith but also socio-political and financial-economic problems.

The recognition by experts of the return of religion to modern society has become widespread. American political scientist Samuel Huntington states that the end of the 20th century witnessed the revival of various religions (Zemlyakov, 2006). This implies that the religious factor influences not only personal life but also human activity, including politics.

Result and Discussion

As a dynamic system of religious-philosophical views, the religious factor requires the coordination of religious organizations and associations in modern society and the state and influences the life of society. By custom, it determines the loyalty of citizens to the state, unites representatives of one religion, and introduces elements of integration and stabilization into the social life of the state.

Historically, at various stages of the transitional period, when the power of the state weakened, the religious factor also caused the exacerbation of social relations and the emergence of interfaith and interethnic conflicts.

Ideas, values, and instructions associated with religion usually become an integral part of political life. Religion, appearing as an integral part of the people's national and historical traditions, encompasses its cultural heritage.

Currently, we can determine the role of religions in the regions and the attitude towards them from the existing religious organizations and their activities.

The Constitution of the Federation of Malaysia contains articles prohibiting discrimination on a confessional basis. Furthermore, among Muslims, propaganda to another religion or to Islamic denominations other than Sunnism is strictly prohibited. It is also emphasized that every officially recognized religious community can freely use its personal property, conduct internal affairs, establish charitable, missionary organizations and educational institutions, and operate them in accordance with the law. State institutions can financially cooperate in the work of religious organizations, and at the same time, control their income and expenses. Muslim spiritual leaders are recognized as the provincial sultan, and in places where a monarchical system does not exist, they are recognized as the highest state leader. The main task of provincial leaders is to control the implementation of Sharia laws.

The constitution adopted in Sarawak in 1963 contains an article stating that three members of the local council for Islamic affairs must be included in the supreme administration of the province. The governors of Sabah and Sarawak have the right to provide financial assistance to local Muslims from the federal government. The law stating that Islam is the state religion does not apply to these two provinces of Malaysia.

In the 20th century, state-religion relations changed several times. In the legislation of the Philippines, East Malaysia, South Vietnam, Singapore, and Burma, the state's attitude towards religion was secular (separation of state and religion) in five out of ten cases. In Brunei and West Malaysia (in particular, the Malay states), Islam was the state religion. In Cambodia and Thailand, Buddhism was adopted as the state religion, but first, the law on freedom of conscience was proclaimed, and only then was agreement with religious belief recognized. The situation in Indonesia is distinguished by its hermeticism (its ability to easily change its form). As a result, this state can be called both secular and religious.

In some countries in the region, Muslim communities are treated according to their past and present demands.

In Selangor, Pahang, Negeri Sembilan, Malacca, conversion to Islam was carried out by order of the local assembly. In Selangor, Islamic education was only possible with the written permission of the qadi. In Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan, Pahang, Negeri Sembilan, Penang, the right was also determined by the assembly, but in Terengganu, it was determined by the religious department. Here, those who carried out propaganda to other religions in mosques, those who violated Islam in Selangor, Kelantan, Negeri Sembilan, Kedah, Perlis, Pahang, and those who quoted from the Quran in stage plays were fined and imprisoned. All violations were recorded by special inspectors. They punished criminals in cooperation with the police. In Terengganu and Kelantan from 1915, Perlis from 1930, Johor from 1934, Negeri Sembilan from 1957, Sarawak from 1967, those who did not pay zakat began to be punished. In several provinces, those who did not attend Friday prayers and did not fast were fined.

In Perak, the Department of Islamic Affairs and Malay Customs had almost banned "disturbing" clothing; such clothing included European-style trousers and skirts.

Currently, Islamic countries in Southeast Asia are trying to solve a very important issue, such as the issue of entering the international arena. In this regard, the Islamic direction acquires important significance in foreign policy. Indonesia's and Malaysia's attempts to solve issues related to the Islamic Ummah on the international stage and to resolve shortcomings in the Islamic world are not particularly pleasing to the Arab world.

It should also be considered that currently, Christian missionaries have increased in this region, and they carry out their activities mainly by providing social assistance to the poor sections of the population. Therefore, Christianity is growing in this region. This, of course, does not mean looking down on or discriminating against representatives of other religions.

Conclusion

The conducted studies show that representatives of several religions live simultaneously in this region. There is no mutual enmity, hostility, or conflict between them. A representative of one religion does not view a representative of another religion as an enemy, but rather as a brother or a representative of their own religion, and they do not discriminate against each other.

In conclusion, it is worth noting that we can draw lessons and examples from the fact that no conflicts arise in this multi-ethnic and multi-confessional situation in this region. We also believe that in developing scientific principles of tolerance, comprehensive study and research of this region is of great importance.

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