



REGULAR SESSION INFORMATION

Title of Session: "The Stranger" in the Postsecular World

Name of Session Convener(s): *Maria Podlesnaya*, St.Tikhon's Orthodox University, Moscow and Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow;

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Comments: Additional papers will be distributed.

I) "The Generation on the Way" within the Context of Postsecular Changes in Russia

Ryasantsev Igor, St. Tikhon's Orthodox University, Moscow

II) A Home Full of Strangers: Age Arrative and the Elderly

Nisha Jolly Nelson, University of Delhi

III) The Possibilities of the Network Theory and the Theory of the Social Niche in the Study of Religious Communities in Russia and Abroad

Maria Podlesnaya, St.Tikhon's Orthodox University, Moscow and Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow

IV) Religiosity as a Determinant of Behaviour in the "Consumer Society"

Bidikhova Iya, St. Tikhon's Orthodox University, Moscow

V) Religion-Oriented Communities of Social Network in the Internet as a Problem Solution of Marginality in Society

Pisarevskiy Vasily, St. Tikhon's Orthodox University, Moscow

Session description:

The problem of "Stranger" in the modern world becomes one of the most urgent ones. The problem brought up at the beginning of the XX-th century by the German sociologist G. Zimmel hasn't lost its importance today and is becoming more and more topical due to the global changes in the world: including the growth of migration for the recent decades, changes of its character. "The Stranger" today is not only a wanderer doing a breakthrough and breaking of all communications with his community, not only the outcast who is looking for his place in the world and culture as we read it in R. Parka's works, but "stranger" - is the one who is different in fact even in his society, among his group. "The Stranger" can be a child handicapped with whom his age group of children don't want to play, the believer becomes "stranger" in the group of believers, interpreting, for example, the doctrines of his belief differently than the others, "A stranger" is a student who is trained in foreign country. It is obvious that the problem of being alien is connected with the concepts of alienation and the lack of social contacts today in the modern world. Thus the search for consolidating contacts seem today ones of the most topical ones in the policy of different countries including European ones. It is obvious that the problem of "stranger" is not solved only by the policy of tolerance or observance of human rights offering only mechanistic and rational option of actions, it is a problem in the first place of the spiritual sphere, the value of the Men in the modern world. Therefore we suggest discussing this theme within the framework of defining the postsekular society about which Y. Habermas has recently been speaking and writing much.

The such "Stranger" is today this in different countries of the worlds is solved, in different social groups, communities this session is devoted.

This Session is devoted to the problems who "the stranger" is today. How this problem is solved in different countries of the world, in different social group as well as in different communities.

Abstracts:

1) *"The Generation on the Way" within the Context of Postsecular Changes in Russia*

Ryasantsev Igor, St. Tikhon's Orthodox University, Moscow

Contemporary Russia is churchgoing Russia after almost one hundred years of the Church life being stopped.

Unlike Europe secularism in Russia was neither a legal principle of the state nor the ground for waging the war with clericalism nor the choice of the greater part of the population.

Secularism in Russia was first of all the ideological foundation of the policy of communism accompanied by the violent termination of the Church and religious life (even the murdering and imprisonment of thousands of priests); the changing of the cultural and architectural landscapes (the explosions and destruction and robbery of churches, the construction and the erection of the monumental "high-rise tower-like buildings "vysotok" of the Stalin epoch etc.); the bringing up a

particular personality of the Soviet epoch the main values of which were the labour, love for the motherland, the striving for the creation of the public common wealth.

In spite of being a deeply Orthodox country Russia for many decades was left devoid of the opportunity to provide the Church education as it was in tough conditions of secular discourse. Nietzsche's statement "The God is dead" turned into the statement "There is no God" for the Soviet man.

Today we are observing the process of Russia's return to its Religious identity, its actual coming into the Church – being within the Church - which according to U. Habermas is nothing else but post secularism. In other words, "nowadays the modernity is not after secularism, moreover the secular mentality is becoming more and more responsive to the religious influence of the citizens who are believers in God"¹.

The observed process of post secularism in Russia is accompanied by the emergence of the new generation of believers which I called as "the generation on the way". In my opinion this term gives an adequate description of what the contemporary believers are like who are the people of the Soviet and post Soviet epochs for which the Orthodox identity feature from birth was not part of their adaptation to the [socialization](#). The group of those believers who can be described as "the generation on the way" includes both the elderly people and people of younger ages for which the Church and Faith have become part of their living experience only in the recent few decades. Not having the experience of Church practice and behaviour, only starting to gain it, people of this generation form their own religious habitus as if they were on the way from the absence of knowledge or even the contradictory ideas to the acquisition and learning church and Orthodox dogmas. The believers whom we refer to "the generation on the way" differ to a great extent (in terms of their values and life strategies) from those young believers who were born already at the end of the 1990ies, at the beginning of the 2000ies and have had experience of the Church socialization, since their first age. From the theological point of view both of them in their spiritual life are on the way, i.e. they are on the way of learning the truth but from the sociological point of view the second group of younger believers, who were churching and church going since the infancy is more stable and in this meaning it has the position, the place and the status of Orthodox Christian, being brought up in the environment of the restored churches is different from those whom we call "the generation on the way" in terms of the behavioral and cognitive patterns.

¹ From the article "On the nature of modern secularism and its national peculiarities" by Podlesnaya M, the collected works "The Sociology of Religion in the post modern society". Belgorod, 2012, 55.

II) A Home Full of Strangers: Age Arrative and the Elderly

Nisha Jolly Nelson, University of Delhi

Aim

The present paper studies residents in an institution for the aged. The same place may be a different experience for different people depending on their background, needs and capacity to adjust. Also there are many differences between one home for the aged and another. So generalisations may be misleading. Keeping this in mind the study looks into the various aspects of elderly women living in a home for the aged or according to a resident own words "living in a home full of strangers". After living an integral part of the family the old person now faces a painful separation. Also the old never know what the home will be like. Is it a place to live or a place to die? Will the old person be able to spend those final years among strangers in a strange place?

Data and Method

The paper is based on intensive fieldwork done primarily over two years (2009-2011) in an old age home in Delhi, India. All the elderly women in this home participated in the study.

Results

The present study found that the life experience of the aged women delineates a sense of ennui, a stasis of loneliness, maladies and death wish. In addition to the personal disenchantment of the residents, the politics of scrutiny, restriction and authority play upon the space of the old age homes, a site juxtaposing security and denial. To the elderly women moving into 'Home' means far more than simply moving from one physical place to another. Here the elderly women adjust to the 'Home' than the 'Home' was to the elderly. I also argue that the Home though provide security needed for survival, it takes away so much out of the control of the individual like privacy, intimate relationship and previous identity. After all, all of them are waiting for a smooth death to come staying with people who they never know or are strange to them.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that old age home living is not a simple proposition and the perspectives and experiences of those living in the new 'Home' for elders are varied and much more complex. Although old age home provides security needed for survival, it takes away so much out of the control of individual.

*III) The Possibilities of the Network Theory and the Theory of the Social Niche in the Study of Religious Communities in Russia and Abroad**

Maria Podlesnaya, St. Tikhon's Orthodox University, Moscow and Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow

We have been studying the life of Orthodox parishes for several years in Russia and abroad and as a result of this research we have come to the conclusion that the contacts, the place in the social structure of the society, the very active participation of parishioners in case of the existence of the parish in a different confessional environment or in the confessional environment natural for it can be explained by two different sociological theories. By describing the Orthodox parishes as an example in the country where Orthodox is the main religion we speak about the need of using the network approach in sociology, especially in its version the actor-the network. Speaking about Orthodox parishes abroad where Orthodoxy is an alien religion the network approach is less effective while the theory of the social niche becomes more effective in explaining things.

The network approach in its version of the actor-the network proved to be especially effective in the research study of Orthodox parishes at the monasteries. While studying peculiarities of the life of contemporary Orthodox monasteries we discovered its dependence on numerous pilgrims and religion-oriented tourists who regularly visit monasteries all year round. It is due to pilgrims and tourists who visit monasteries that make it necessary to establish the network structure. The units of this structure arise from the interaction of the monastery with various actors and social institutions. Monastery hotels, refectories, book stalls, and icon stalls, shops for the sale of church utensils, call-centres, monasteries' own publishing houses, web sites etc. are set up in this way. In turns out that quite different actors such as representatives of the diocese, representatives of the local authorities, businessmen, education institutions, tourist industry, mass media, parisheners of the monasteries, hired workers, pilgrims themselves who stay over to live and help the monastery etc. Peculiar actors who organize the life of the monastery community and its parish are the saints and the shrines of the monastery (caskets with relics, holy places of worship) for the sake of which and because of which a great number of pilgrims are interested in visiting monasteries. According to the terminology of the network approach there are human actors and non-human actors i.e. there are things which can't be referred to the living human nature and its action. Saints and the shrines (miracle icons, a piece of the Cross of Jesus Christ, the Belt of GodMother etc.) act in this case the force which consolidates and unites a great number of people around it without being at that active participants in social life in its usual meaning. As a result we are observing the actual and well-arranged network of Orthodox monastery parishes.

Speaking about the Orthodox approach in a different confessional environment where Orthodoxy is not the main but alien religion we observe the reverse effect: if the network structure arises it occurs on the level of parishes which belong to one Church while in all other aspects the Orthodox parish abroad remains a peculiar social niche both in relation to parishes of churches of different confessions and . Here several restrictions for the Orthodox parish as a social niche arise and there is

a definite competitive struggle for the possession of resources including symbolic and material ones. Not laws of the network theory but laws of the niche approach become valid.

This report contains a detailed analysis of processes occurring in the two cases researched by us. The report covers in detail two researches of Orthodox parishes carried out both at parishes abroad in different confessional environment and in Orthodox parishes of Russia and monasteries of Belorussia.

*This report is prepared within the project «Theory of social niche in investigation of orthodox community abroad (on an example Russian orthodox parishes in Berlin, Munich, Stuttgart)» (YC-1415.2013.6), which conducted on resources of fund grant's support of young scientists of President of Russia.

IV) Religiosity as a Determinant of Behaviour in the "Consumer Society"

Bidikhova Iya, St. Tikhon's Orthodox University, Moscow

Modern society is often referred to as a "consumer society", one of the main distinguishing characteristics of which is the exaltation of material needs and the approval of consumerism to be the highest social and moral values². With the current rate of productive capacity and in the environment where continuous technological progress leads to the perpetual emergence of new products, it is vital to make a person consume beyond necessary and to be "permanently" on the crest of the wave of fashion trends.

Adverts promoting consumerism as the sole path to success through the possession of prestigious objects suggest that a good quality of life can only be achieved through the continual accrual of material things. With this the spiritual needs, which are already not the number one priority for everybody, become pushed even further aside. Once the spiritual needs are already pushed out of one's soul there will be no grounds for the seeding of religious values and no basis for raising a person in the light of high spiritual ideals. The Parable of the Sower, Matthew 13:1-23, talks of the seed, which "fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them"³. People who have adopted consumer ideals are like those for whom "the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful."⁴, as stated in the interpretation of this Parable.

Indeed, consumer and Christian religious ideals are in conflict with each other. Christianity is associated with self-denial, abstinence and limiting the pleasures of life. At the same time and on the contrary, the ideals of consumer society are calling for an individual to be surrounded with pampering, fulfillment of desires, and to indulge in the pleasures of life. On the other hand, one can make a different parallel conclusion: the more one is leading the religious life, the more one is guided

² See, for example: Baudrillard J. *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*. - Moscow: The Republic, 2006. Bauman Z. *Globalization: The Human Consequences*. - Moscow: Publishing House "All the World", 2004. Fromm E. *To have or to be*. - Moscow: AST, 2010. Ilyin V. *The Consumer Society: A Theoretical Model and Russian reality // World of Russia*. - Moscow, 2005. - № 2. - P.3-40.

³ *The Gospel of Matthew / Holy Gospel*. - Moscow.: Mite Book, 2011. - P. 51-52.

⁴ *Ibid.* - P. 53-54.

in life by religious values, the less one will be susceptible to being swayed by consumer values, and the less one will demonstrate patterns of behaviour typical of the "consumer society".

Therefore, we might assume that the higher the level of religiosity, the less people will adopt the patterns of behaviour typical of the "consumer society". In order to evaluate this assumption, the author intends to conduct a study, namely, to survey the parishioners of several Moscow churches, to assess their level of religiosity, along with their consumer behavioural tendencies in order to analyze how the level of religiosity determines the degree of internalization of behaviour patterns attributed with the "consumer society".

V) Religion-Oriented Communities of Social Network in the Internet as a Problem Solution of Marginality in Society

Pisarevskiy Vasily, St. Tikhon's Orthodox University, Moscow

Jean Baudrillard's quasi-reality which describes modern society, contributes to person identification as an outsider towards historical and cultural codes of his country, spiritual values of the society he lives in.

Historical and cultural codes step by step displace so called signification code (Jean Baudrillard's) and to be more exact they do not displace, but use and entirely change its meaning according to consumption values and arising quasi-reality. As it's known this signification code is created and controlled by mass media and communication means during peculiar society marginalization process as well as during the process of its overcoming.

The study of the latter seems to us especially important since at modern stage of society development, when many say about problematics and flow of modern reality in our opinion it's necessary to pay careful attention to processes and mechanisms promoting to consolidation and strong social bonds birth. One such example is religion oriented communities of social network in the Internet. For me as a researcher from Russia this is primarily orthodox online community since main and historically significant Russian confession is Orthodoxy as well.

This report represents detailed review of orthodox online community of social networks, their structures, bonds, those mechanisms which promote marginalization and society segregation overcoming and which create new communication environment with strong social bonds.

Distributed papers:

The following papers will be made available by the session conveners during the session:

Secular and Religious Identity of Contemporary

Lebedev Sergey, Belgorod National Research University

Forms of Social Exclusion in Youth Subcultures: "Goths" and "Gopnics"

Gavrilyuk Vera, Tyumen State Oil and Gas University,

Latysheva Tatyana, Tyumen State Oil and Gas University,

The Problem of Religious Identity: "Personal" or "Stranger" in the "Post-Secular" World

Akulich Maria, Tyumen State University

"The Problem of Stranger" in the Study of Educational Opportunities to Children with Disabilities **

Melnikova Valentina, Russian Academy of Science, Moscow

Melnikov Alexander, Russian Academy of Science, Moscow

Orthodox Believer: Estrangement Forms in the Postsecular Society

Pakhar Anna, St. Tikhon's Orthodox University, Moscow

"Stranger" as a Social Type in Sociological Theories: From G. Simmel to G. Bauman ***

Kuznetsova Anastasia, St. Tikhon's Orthodox University, Moscow

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