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## **Методологическое основание изучения функционирования религии в обществе**

**Аннотация.** В соответствии с глобальными тенденциями и всесторонним исследованием их собственной религиозной идентичности и уникальности, изучение религии в пространственной перспективе сегодня является актуальным. Статья анализирует структурно-функциональные и эволюционные подходы к динамическому исследованию феномена религии. В частности, на основе обобщения многих принятых теоретических и методологических подходов относительно понимания религии в обществе в рамках философского дискурса, автор предложил создать мультиметодологический аналитический инструмент, нацеленный на выявление восприятия прошлого в текущем состоянии

религиозного пространства. Религия действует как социальный механизм, имеющий целью усилить как светское, так и религиозное чувство в среде верующих, интегрировать социальные группы. Существует возможность идентифицировать структурные уровни религии: священное, конфессиональное и религиозное пространство, где каждая следующая более высокая форма включает предыдущую в сжатом виде. Интерпретация религиозного пространства является синергетической по своему характеру и содержанию, так как это обеспечивает синтез научного исследования при использовании ключевых методологических конструкций. Автор показывает основную возможность применения схем пространственного анализа функционирования религии в обществе.

**Ключевые слова:** религия, функционирование религии в обществе, религиозное пространство, социальный идеал, религиозная идеология



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## **Methodological Basis of the Study of Functioning of Religion in Society**

**Abstract.** According to the global trends and in-depth study of their own religious identity and uniqueness, the importance of study of religion under a spatial perspective is important nowadays. The article analyses structural-functional and evolutionary approaches to dynamic study of the phenomenon of religion. Specifically, on base of generalization of a number of adopted theoretical and methodological approaches concerning the understanding of religion in society in the coordinates of philosophic discourse, the author proposed to construct a multi-methodological analysis tool aimed at detecting reception of the past in the present state of religious space. Religion acts as a social mechanism aimed to strengthen certain secular as well as sacred, the feeling among the faithful, as an integration of social groups. There is the possibility to identify structural levels of religion: sacred, confessional, and religious space, where each next higher form includes the previous one in "shot" form. The interpretation of religious space is synergistic in its nature and content because it provides a synthesis of scientific research on the use of key methodological constructs of its study. The author shows a basic possibility of application of schemes of spatial analysis of the functioning of religion in society.

**Key words:** religion, functioning of religion in society, religious space, social ideal, religious ideology

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**Problem of definition and its relationship with important scientific and practical tasks.** In the context of the study of the functioning of religion in society, method of multi-level and multi-scale research needs to the implementation of several methodological constructs. Therefore, the rationale for the methodological construct of the study of the functioning of religion in society is an important scientific problem of religion, politics, and science of public administration.

Modern scientific discourse for the study of religion in spatial terms creates a fertile ground for developing new theoretical positions of the study of the functioning of religion in society. According to the global trends and in-depth study of their own religious identity and uniqueness, the importance of the study of religion in Ukraine under a spatial perspective is important. In particular, the study of peculiarities of historic development of religion for the solid angle of view is also an important strategy to identify the specificity of the contemporary religious situation in Ukrainian society and trends of its development in the future. The structural elements of the methodological knowledge, which are reflected in the basic subject area of the study we call the “methodological construct”. The creation of a multidimensional methodological construct, which is based on the methodological potential post-neoclassical science, regarding the implementation of the intelligence problem in the field of cultural diversity of religious space of Ukraine are important scientific and practical tasks.

**Analysis of recent publications on issues and sorting out the unsolved aspects of the problem.** In foreign and domestic social-humanitarian science, it is possible to allocate following basic directions of the study of religion as a social institution: the development of theoretical and methodological principles of analysis of religion (E. Durkheim, M. Weber, T. Parsons, R. Bellah, P. Berger, N. Luhmann, P. Sorokin, V. Lubskiy, V. Tancher, etc.); studies of the phenomenon of individual religiosity (Z. Freud, T. Gorbachenko, D. Ugrinovich); the study of models of religiosity, its historical, religious, and socio-cultural forms (Y. Kalinin, A. Kolodny, L. Konotop, N. Kapustin); the elucidation of the religious situation and the state of interfaith relations in Ukraine (A. Onishchenko, Y. Duluman, G. Lobovyk, etc.); scientific understanding of the conflicts in the religious sphere of Ukraine (V. Aristova, M. Babiy, Y. Yelensky, P. Kraliuk, M. Rybachuk, O. Sagan, etc.); analysis of problems of formation and implementation of public policies and the determination of development strategy of humanitarian policy of freedom of conscience and religion (S. Zdioruk, A. Popok, Y. Reshetnikov, etc.).

The studies of direct relevance to the topic of the article can be classified along two main directions. The first of these is the development of theoretical and methodological foundations of the study of the functioning of religion in society [Kotelnikov, 2004, 5; Shkurova, 2007, 12], the second is associated with the development of the analysis of religious space as a concept of the latest trends in the study of religious phenomenon is the attraction of schemes for the spatial analysis of the being of religion in society [Ilyin, 1996, 4; Reshetnyak, 2007, 9; Safronov, 1997, 10].

Analysis of the scientific literature on an investigated problem was the basis for the following conclusions: the problem of the functioning of religion is primarily considered in sociocentric aspect, the mechanism of formation of the state policy of management of religious space is almost unaffected. Theoretical construct of Western scholars focused on the study of foreign socio-cultural reality in the relevant concepts, methods, and assessments need to be adapted to the study of the functioning of religion in Ukraine. The above confirms the relevance of research of functioning of social institution in religious space of the state as on theoretical and empirical levels.

At the same time, despite the fact that various specialists has paid enough attention to problems of development and perfection of methodology of functioning of religion in society, many methodological aspects are left out of sight. As a result, even the development of a methodological construct of the study of religious space of Ukraine is at an early stage.

**Formulation of research objectives.** The purpose of this article is to carry out a conceptual analysis of the content of structural-functional and evolutionary-dynamic approaches to the study of the functioning of religion in society as the conditions of application spatial analysis schemas in society.

**The presentation of the main results and their justification.** The religious sphere plays a significant role in the life of mankind. It is common to all peoples (races, ethnoses). Wherever people live, have faith in God, spirits and idols. Many terrestrial objects are transformed into objects of worship, laden with religious symbolism. The study of these phenomena, religious and cultural traditions has not only purely cognitive, ideological, and practical meaning. The specifics of the distribution, a significant differentiation of religious activities or activities of confessions (lat. *confessio* – confession, confession, and religion) affect the livelihoods of people who define their way of life in the space-time dimension.

The fundamental position of the relationship and interdependence of sustainable development and the development of public policy as an open, transparent process of adoption of power-political decisions makes it extremely important problem of the role of public policy in ensuring the functionality of interest groups in Ukraine. Particularly noteworthy are the prospects for the formation in Ukraine of a unified humanitarian space as an identification medium for its citizens [Troschinsky, 2013, 11].

The functioning of a particular model of the relationship of interest groups in the religious sphere and the state depends on many factors. One of the main among them is the nature of public policy in the religious sphere. Cities and regions, the ministries and the government as a whole develop, adopt, and make implementation of “policy”. However, the common methodological and methodical base of real administrative process is absent. This creates difficulties not only for developing specific policies in the religious sphere, but also in the process of analysis, comparison, harmonization, aggregation and the adoption and implementation of decisions at all levels.

In search of the foundations of the state policy regarding religions and churches some researchers are turning to neo-classical, institutional, and evolutionary paradigm of modern social theory. However, regardless of the differences between these paradigms at any level, the management process has a common methodological basis in the immanent form of logical and temporal structures. The logical structure includes the following elements: subject, object, forms, tools, methods of operation, its result. The characteristics of the activities are external to this structure: the features, principles, conditions, standards. The religious space of the state is the object of public policy in religious sphere. The institutionalization of interest groups in the religious sphere of Ukraine is in correct building of a “strategic managerial space”, because the activities of the leading actors of public policies require the availability of strategic positions. The collection of all available to the stakeholder management structures of the strategy object can be interpreted as a system of elements of religious space, with which it must cooperate. In addition, each such actor has its strategic position in the religious space of the state and may have its own strategy.

Religious space is the landscape that means the existing system of arrangement that we need to consider (territory, population, laws, religious organizations, cults, rituals, traditions and so on), and infrastructure – a system for communication with parties and state authorities that control this space.

State management system should include methods and techniques of creation (and destruction) of the landscape infrastructure to change its strategic position according to the strategic objectives of the subject of management – at the level of state and society.

In our opinion, it is possible to identify structural levels of religion: sacred, confessional and religious space, where each next higher form includes the previous one in “shot” form. So, through the studies on the above direction it is possible to identify new ways to create optimal conditions for cooperation of bodies of state and local governments, community organizations, territorial communities and society.

The scientific study of religious space primarily involves the analysis of the general and confessional features of the religious discourse. It is necessary to investigate its structure and content both as diachronic and synchronic positions. Conducting such a study, it is necessary to consider that the methods of analysis of religion are designed mainly to address the problems of religion that is not focused on solving problems of public administration. Therefore, there is a need to adapt scientific and methodological apparatus of relatively specific features of the religious space. Under these circumstances,

there is a need to examine the modern approaches to the interpretation of the methodological constructs of the study of the functioning of religion in society.

A modern approach to the study of social and religious phenomena is systematic. A systematic understanding of religion is based on a certain range of conceptual representations. Today there is a sufficient number of models that explain and give a comprehensive vision of religious phenomena, among which there are functional, structural and evolutionary approaches. However, in addition to the analysis of structural and functional relations, it is necessary to study the content aspect and mechanism of action of religious phenomena that can be realized on the base of the theory of religious space. Thus, there is proposed a system of descriptions of religion on the basis of the analysis of such methodological concepts as: structural and functional aspects of the study of religion and the evolutionary dynamic approach.

**Structural-functional methodological construct** of study of religious systems involves the study of functions, which has religion as a social institution within the social organism, and it performs in order to save it. This direction in the study of religious subsystems is oriented to a large extent focused on the disclosure of mechanisms of action and reproduction of social structures. Structural-functional approach is represented by the ideas of E. Durkheim, B. Malinowski, T. Parsons, R. Merton.

The following provisions of the structural-functional construct have heuristic value for the purposes of our study.

1. The elementary forms of the religious life allow us to select the main religion is constant in all its modifications, to identify its functions in public life. The society itself is a source of religion; therefore, religion meets important social needs solidarity in society.

Religious phenomenon is considered a kind of social action oriented to specific objects, which are called "Holy things". System of these things constitutes the sphere of the sacred world, separated from the profane world. "Sacred things," differing from ordinary, "profane" become the special objects of ritual activities. The role of religious rituals is that they provide access to sacred sites and allow the subjects to identify with their society. So, E. Durkheim defines religion as "a coherent system of beliefs and practices that applies to Holy, i.e. separated, forbidden things – beliefs and practices which unite into one moral community called a Church, all who follow them" [Durkheim, 2003, 3]. The religious system creates a social feeling and organizes collective presentation.

2. Religion as a symbolic system. The main component of religion is not its dogmatic part, but the practical religious activity, which is reflected in the collective ceremonies. Expressing some social needs, religion performs essential social functions. Therefore, the cult aims to observe the dualism of sacred and secular in people's behaviour. In general, the rituals that occur in the gathered groups are designed to solidarity with members of the group and create its unity.

3. Religion should be analyzed not from the point of view of its features, but from its institutions. Institute as the primary organizational unit is a collection of tools and methods to meet varying needs, primary or derivative. The main function of religion in society are cultural and integrative one, which "eliminate obstacles and inconsistencies that inevitably arise in those areas of practice that are of great social importance, where the person is not able to fully control the course of events" [Malinowski, 1996, 6, 38–39]. The function of religion is to help people cope with hopeless situations over which they have no power, thus integrating the group members together and securing the tradition, to maintain order within society.

4. The role of religion should be investigated in human action. In such case, it should be considered at the level of the overall system operation, including the theory of social systems, cultural systems, personality systems, and behavioural organisms. For this analysis, the dichotomy between the sacred and the secular, which in a religious context is "the equivalent of a dichotomy between moral authority and the passage of the utilitarian or instrumental interests in the secular sphere has a great importance" [Parsons, 1996, 8, 109]. The central system consists of sacred religious, moral and categorical a priori components of religion which are the core principles of systems of human action.

5. A functional view of religious systems and their role in public life. Systems of religion influence the behaviour and partially act as its independent determinants.

At the same time, religions can act as factors that motivate and direct the modification of social structure. “That is why, says Merton, – it would be a mistake to assume that all religions everywhere have only one function, namely, to create apathy of the masses” [Merton, 1996, 7, 438].

Religion acts as a social mechanism aimed to strengthen certain secular as well as sacred, the feeling among the faithful, as an integration of social groups.

**Evolutionary-dynamic methodological construct** of study of the religious systems associated with analysis of changes in religious phenomena from two perspectives: first, with consideration of their interaction with the external environment, and secondly, with the study of peculiarities of their internal transformation and restructuring. This aspect makes it possible to trace regularities of historical development of religions and it is associated with the names of M. Weber, R. Bellah and K. Dawson. Max Weber's conceptual scheme involves two categories of analysis of religious phenomena: on the one hand, the study of religious determination of social action, when religion is seen as a factor of social change, on the other hand – a study of the dependence of religion from social conditions and relations that defines the individuality of a particular religion, due to the system of social relations in society.

There is a revival of interest in the consideration of religion from the standpoint of neo-evolutionism. R. Bellah gives a functional definition of religion as a set of symbolic forms that relate the person with the ultimate conditions of existence. Differentiation of the system of religious symbols is represented by such forms: primitive, archaic, historic, and modern stages [Bellah, 1972, 1, 268–281].

Religious-symbolic system at its primitive level is characterized by the coherence of the mythical world of ancient person with “parts of the real world”. Primitive religions are not institutionalized and do not form a separate social structure. Church and society function as a whole, and religious roles are merged with other social roles. Feature of archaic religion is the emergence of this cult with the complex of gods, priests, worship, sacrifice, and in some cases with deified royal power.

Historical religions are transcendental; they “reject” the world, as compared to the Supreme value the transcendent real world is impaired. The main feature of historical religions is the demythologization of the world and the idea of one God greatly simplifies the cosmological ideas of ancient religions. On the historical stage in the development of religion we differentiate religious organizations from other forms of social organization, in particular from political structure. Religion in some sense becomes a factor of legitimization of the political life.

Early-modern religion was characterized by a shift towards here and now world as the main areas of religious action. Salvation must be sought directly in secular activities. Thus, Early-modern reformulated the ideas of the historical religious systems to add the religious motivation for secular activities.

The growing secularization of society causes the emergence of a new religion – a modern form of which is not entirely clear, but it is a consequence relativizing person's place in nature and the universe through the development of science and relativizing human in the cultural world through the expansion of knowledge about history and other cultures. The process of secularization entails not the elimination of religion itself, but changing its structure and role. Religion is individualistic in its nature, and religious symbols are used for understanding personal and social action. However, at the same time, even in the most developed societies is kept quite powerful lower layer of primitive and archaic.

There is a “civil religion” in modern society that is the agreed basis for the religious unity of society. Defined concept is similar to the concept of “national faith”, which implies the recognition of common characters, “sacred objects” that often have purely secular nature.

The basic idea of K. Dawson's concept is that changes in culture are determined by the changes of religious beliefs, spiritual values [Dawson, 2000, 2]. Accordingly, there are such elements of religion: the element of the transcendent (religion acts as a channel of communication between human society and the spiritual world); the idea of salvation based on faith in the immortality of the soul; the revelation, which acts as a source of religious truth because the last one is the basis of the ordering of life and the preservation

of tradition for the believer. The importance of religion in the dynamics of the society is to perform two functions: first, it is conservative because religious doctrine means saving and sanctifying traditions, and secondly, it is dynamic because it integrates various social elements in a culture based on a common goal.

The structural elements of religion are theological and sociological ones. On the one hand, it is a system of beliefs, on the other – it is embodied in people's behaviour, objects of religious practice and ritual ceremonies. Sociological form of religion is seen in the categories of social relations, activities and places. First, a specific form of religiosity corresponds to a specific social organization. Second, every religion is corresponded to certain territories, even in religions there are "Holy places" to which pilgrimages are made.

**Conclusions.** In this article, the author comes from the fact that the development of any theory about the functioning of religion in society is based on a critical rethinking of existing theories, consideration of their individual provisions with new methodological approaches. There is shown a basic possibility of application of schemes of spatial analysis of the functioning of religion in society. The interpretation of religious space is synergistic in its nature and content because it provides a synthesis of scientific research on the use of key methodological constructs of its study.

The methodological construct of the religious discourse is a set of communicative actions or events aimed at the transfer, preservation and development of religious beliefs and taking into account the interdependence and coherence of structural changes of religious phenomena, considering them as a system, internally organized in space and time.

**Problems for further study.** The specific of the current situation in Ukraine is that the post-Soviet religious space was semi structured, developing in the absence of any control by state structures. Only in the late 90s of the 20th century there began the attempts of building the strategy of relations between religious space and political power through the allocation of the sphere of "traditional religions" and other religious associations that were classed among the sects (often with the phrase "destructive direction"). Thus, trends in the development of post-secular society in Ukraine are forced to critically consider the methodological potential of the constructs functioning of religion in society, paying the attention to the historical context of relations between the state and religious organizations, as well as their place in the structure of religious space. Such scientific exploration could be called promising by definition the methodological possibilities of the category of "religious space" and establish the causes and mechanisms of the relationship of religious and political space.

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