

## Religious dimension of civilisations value portraits.

Vardan E. Bardasaryan.<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** The role of religious factor in the development of world civilizations is considered in the paper. The author analyses it in three main respects: religion and adaptation to natural conditions, religion and economics, religion and political culture. The conclusion is made that till now despite great transformations human society underwent in XX century religion remains the key factor of civilisations identity conservation.

**Keywords:** civilisation, religion, values.

### 1. Introduction

The paper's object is to fix the role of religion in civilisations genesis and its connection with civilisations vitality. The main research task is to verify the correctness of the chain of dependencies: natural environment – religion – mentality – civilisation specificity. If the countries do can be grouped according to their religion into groups by a) natural parameter b) mental and behaviorist manifestations, the hypothesis is correct.

### 2. Religions as the mechanism of natural and environmental adaptation.

The first verification was made by distributing the European countries by average temperature of January. The assumption that the countries can be grouped by climatic parameter according to their religious affiliation was confirmed. ( Figure 1).

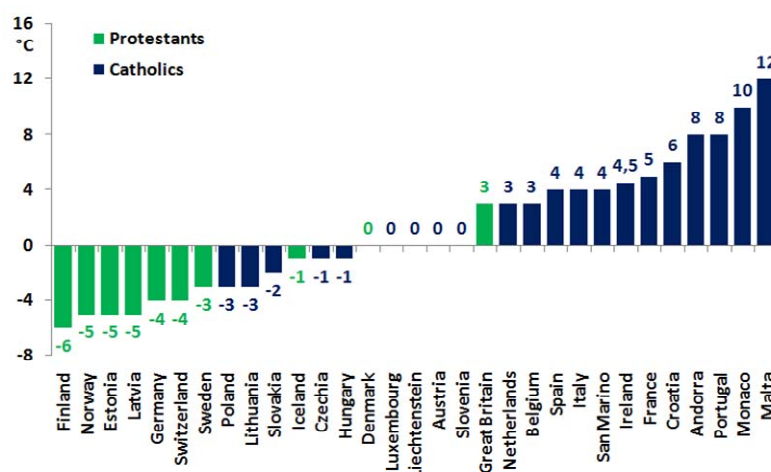


Figure 1. European countries grouping by the average temperature of January (in °C) [5]

<sup>1</sup> Tel/fax: (495) 9815703; E-mail address: frpc@cea.ru

The connection between religious worships and rural cultural is well known. It can be traced even nowadays if one compares the characteristics of rural sector in protestant and orthodox European countries. Let's take the crop capacity (Figure 2)

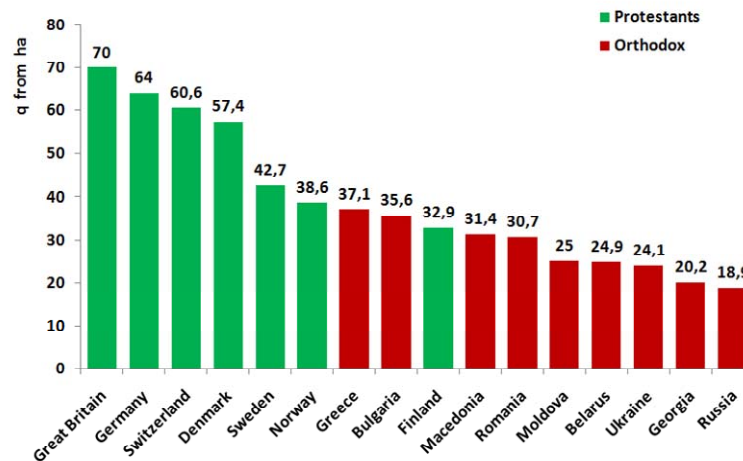


Figure 2. Yield of cereals and leguminous plants in European countries (centners per hectare) [6]

The matter is that religions (and hence civilisations) had been formed is a way of human adaptation to certain natural zone by nonlinear diversity of adaptation processes.

### 3. Religions and economy

The method of countries clustering by religious factor was applied to the sphere of economy. In contemporary Europe Protestants are still more active than Catholics. Index of their economic activity is about 64 %, while that of Catholics is only about 56 % [7]

From the other hand Catholics are still more inclined to collective forms of economic self-organisation. This is the more important as applied to Orthodox countries. (Figure 2). [7]

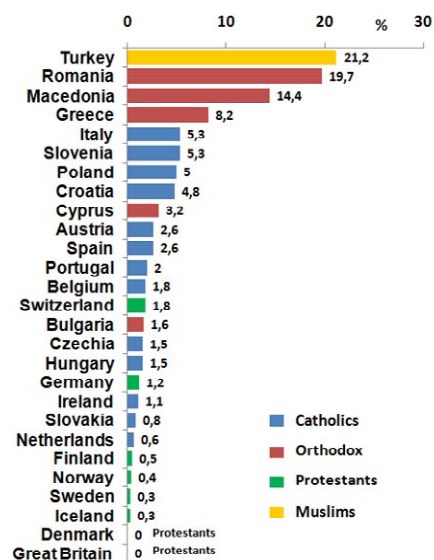


Figure 2. Comparison of number of cooperative workers in the occupational pattern of European countries by religions.

#### 4. Political value types

Empirical data for political behaviour analyzing was taken from World Values Survey polls [8]. The attitude of the countries' population towards politics and political behaviour was correlated with dominating religious group. The results exceeded all expectations. It was revealed that the countries could be grouped by all the measuring indicators according to religious factor. Among the Orthodox the number of people for whom politics is absolutely unimportant is on average much more than in Protestant and Catholic countries (30, 23 and 12 % correspondingly). The Figures showing the scale of population's political activity and the spread of statist ideas are similar to previous one (Figures 3, 4).

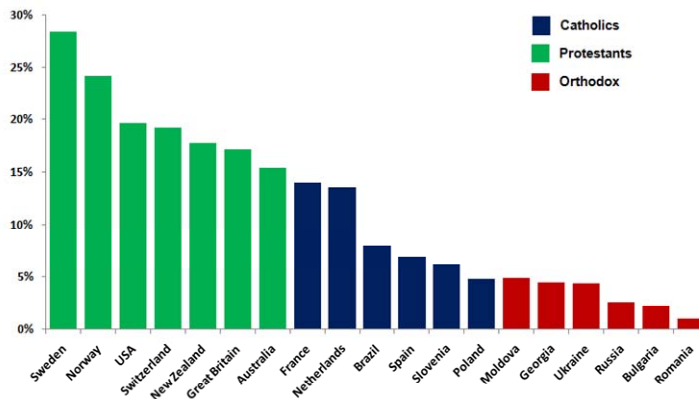


Figure 3. Political activity of population regarded by participation in political strikes: the share of people participating in political strikes (in %)

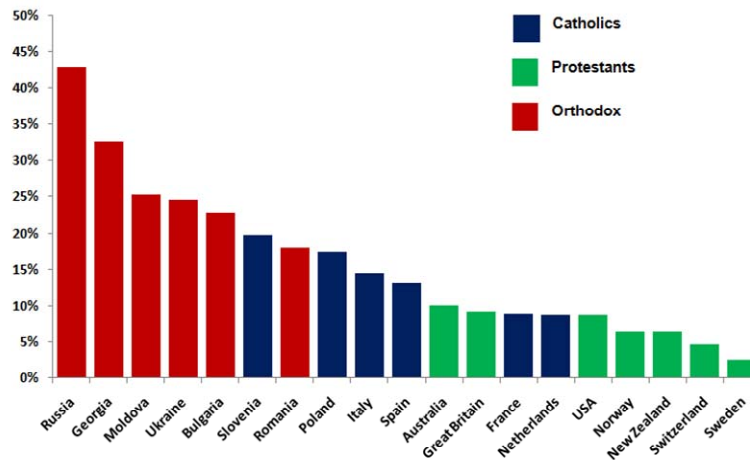


Figure 4. The spread of statist ideas in population by world countries: the share of people considering the more active role of state in socio-economic processes indispensable (in %)

It is indicative that Orthodox and Protestant countries are antipodes from political and axiological points of views, occupying the opposed positions of value spectrum by all the measuring indicators.

Thus, mental particularities correlate with country's religious tradition. It is impossible to abandon religion, even when rejecting it. A man can consider himself to be an atheist, but despite this his behaviour and mentality remain influenced by religious paradigm. That is why contemporary Russia, remains the Orthodox civilisation in spite of the fact that the number of people attending divine services does not exceed a few percents. Despite of the atheism of the considerable part of the population, China is still the Confucian civilisation. As for Europe, it does not cease to be Western Christian civilisation regardless of its secularity.

## **5. Conclusions**

The analysis showed the basic role of religions in maintaining vitality of civilisations. They conserved their potential even during the period of secularism. Religions are nothing but the optimal type of civilisations existence shaped during centuries. They are inseparably linked with certain territory and climatic features as well as with certain nation and its mental particularities. Nowadays civilisations are being destroyed. Their reconstruction is possible first of all by the reestablishment of civilisation-forming religions.

## **6. References**

- [1] Toynbee A. A Study of History. Moscow, 1990.
- [2] Toynbee A. Civilisation on Trial. Saint-Petersburg, 1996.
- [3] Huntington S. Clash of Civilisations. Moscow, 2003.
- [4] Weber M. The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism // Selected Works. Moscow, 1990.
- [5] The World Countries. Contemporary Reference book. Moscow, 2006.
- [6] Russia and the World countries. 2008: Statistical collection. Moscow, 2008.
- [7] Tendencies in the countries of Europe and North America. Statistical yearbook of UN Economic Commission for Europe, 2003. Moscow, 2004.
- [8] <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>