Formula of Peace in Russian Modern History: Postsecular Symphonia for Pluralized Identity

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June 2022

**DEDICATION**

I would like to dedicate this work to a number of people who have been of great support and encouragement for me throughout this project. First of all, my mother, Mechsherskaya Vera Petrovna. Without her patience and gentle reminders of this project’s worth and value for me it would have been a much greater struggle. This woman of small stature but great spirit and resolve was an example of fortitude and strength the entire time of my prolonged education.

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

List of Tables . vii

Abstract . viii

**I. Introduction 1**

1.1. Thesis Statement 7

1.2. Previous Studies 8

1.3. Methodology of Research

1.4. Contribution of Research 12

1.5. Structure of the Thesis 13

**II. Historiographic Pendulum of Byzantine Symphonia: Methodology**

**of the Research 18**

2.1. Descriptive and socio-political interpretation of Byzantine Symphonia,

its conception and essence in Western Historiography 21

2.2. Historical knowledge: church-state relationships in Russian early

and middle age history 36

2.3. Geopolitical versions of church-state relations in Middle age Russia

by Western and Russian scholarship 41

2.4. Constructive images of Church-State relationships in the modern Russian

context 54

2.5. Soviet Symphonia in Russian historiography 65

2.6. Post-Modern Versions of Symphonia 73

2.7. Conclusion 85

**III. Western and Russian processes of Modernization and**

**Secularization 87**

3.1. Secularizing forces in the social history 87

3.1.1. Classic secularization theories 89

3.1.2. Critical theories 92

3.1.3. Paradigm of Secularization 94

3.1.4. American and European Secularization theories 95

3.1.5. Neoclassical Theories of Secularization 97

3.1.6. Theories of Counter secularization 100

3.1.7. Ideological Soviet Secularization 101

3.2. Modernity in historical analysis 106

3.2.1. Multiple/Entangled Modernities 106

3.2.2. Post-Secular Modernities 108

3.3. Russian Versions of Modernity 116

3.4. Western Secularity versus Russian Postsecularization 121

3.5. Conclusion 138

**IV. Modern Russian Church and State Relations: Encountering**

**Pluralized Post-secularity 141**

4.1. ROC response to Western modernization, secularization and pluralization 141

4.1.1. Reloaded Versions of Symphonia of the 20th century 145

4.1.2. Nationalistic Orthodox Symphonia of the 21st century 154

4.2. Russian managerial plurality conceptualized 171

4.2.1. Dialectic of the Sacred and the Secular in Consciousness – Pluralized

Identity 174

4.2.2. Institutional Pluralization 176

4.2.3. Religious Market 178

4.3. Conclusion 187

**V. National Identity in Modern Russia 189**

5.1. National Identity Struggle in Russia 190

5.1.1. The loss of religious monoculture – the gain of cultural religion 192

5.1.2. The Loss of *Sobornost* – the gain of “service individualism” 195

5.1.3. The Loss of Sovietness – the gain of cultural “civil” society 203

5.1.4. The loss of nationalism – the gain of culturalism 208

5.1.5. The loss of the religious Self – the gain of the cultural Self 213

5.2. Conclusion 216

**VI. The order and ambiguity of the Russian personal identity 219**

6.1. The Order – “The Outside Otherness” 221

6.2. The Ambiguity – “The radical Otherness within” 234

6.3. Russian Formula of peace – the dialectics of pluralities 240

6.4. The Russia-Ukraine Conflict 242

6.5. Conclusion 244

**VII. CONCLUSION** 249

**BIBLIOGRAPHY** 252

**KOREAN ABSTRACT** 272

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Historiographic schools and trends 60

Table 2: Orthodox Christians and their view on church-state relations 142

Table 3: Should the church influence state policy making? 155

Table 4: How big an influence does the church and religious organizations

play on the policy naming in Russia? 169

Table 5: Religious Self-identification 194

Table 6: Collectivism versus Individualism 201

Table 7: National self-identification in historical perspective 203

Table 8: Ethnic groups as Russian nationals 207

Table 9: Ethnic groups identified as Russian citizens 208

Table 10: National self-identification 209

Table 11: Social groups differences 212

Table 12: The poll of general trust in government of Russia 217

Table 13. Russian age group response to the Russia-Ukraine military crisis 242

**ABSTRACT**

Formula of Peace in Russian Modern History: Postsecular

Symphonia for Pluralized Identity

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This study investigates the nature of modern symphonia – the historical modus operandi of the church and state relationship in Russia, within the socio-political context of 20th and 21st centuries driven by forces of secularization in the age of plurality. The relationship of these two socio-political agents as originally defined by this theological concept, were historically designed to achieve a harmonious relationship between church and state, will be here critically investigated both within historical chronological analysis of symphonia and comparative analysis of Western and Russian theological and philosophical traditions that have been the constructive blocks for this historic arrangement. This historic overview, then, suggests that modern-day symphonia is of a nationalistic nature. Furthermore, this dissertation seeks to provide a tentative solution to the issue by arguing that such social forces of modernity as secularization and pluralization are essential for the construction of an alternative modern version of symphonia of a pluralistic nature. This is argued to be feasible by critically employing the nexus of two pluralities – the institutional (the relationship in the secular and sacred arenas) and the individual (the issue of Orthodox identity), which will be explored, respectively.

The research displays socio-political forces that influence the nature of the relationships between social and sacred spheres, as well as the essence of national self-identification. The former domain exhibits the particularity of the Russian historically fashioned theological, cultural and social context undergoing modification under the Western processes of modernization and secularization, i.e., managerial and state controlled; the later domain exhibits the –consolidation of nationalistic Orthodox teaching in the modern pluralistic theological market. One can see a strong historically grounded Orthodox identity in the face of flooding forces of modern history. As a result, both domains having being impacted by the pendulum of the modern pluralistic phenomenon, a tentative version of symphonia, in particular its new, appropriate to cultural context elements will be suggested. Finally, as the work argues, modern church-state relationships are to be aware of the significant, growing role of civil society and the self-identification as the novel constructive panel in these very relationships. This modern development allows speaking for church-state-self model, or formula of peace, with design and description analysis suggestive as tentative contextual construct here. In conclusion, after revisiting the centennial historical theological concept of harmonious cooperation and suggesting instead a more sociologically grounded formula of peace founded both in institualization regulation process and the self-identification formation, this work will attempt to model a comparative dialogue between two forms of church-state cooperation, thus creating a space for a plurality of ideas, formulas and dialogues as the means to cure the cursed issue of Russian nationalism.

**The Purpose of the Research**

The focal point of this research is the church-state relationship in the Russian context, as originally conceived in the concept of symphonia, in particular in the modern historical period. The following tasks are focused upon in this dissertation within the framework of this research purpose:

1. Research on the historical evolution of the church-state relationship as presented in Western and Russian scholarship, demonstrating a distinct Russian model of symphonia within the historical perspective, suggesting its different, corresponding versions.

2. Underscore historiographical schools’ differences and peculiarities as essential and formative explicit elements in gaining an understanding of the church-state relation in Russia.

3. Investigate secularization and pluralization processes in Western and Russian scholarship from historical and social perspectives, as well as in the modern theological philosophical thought and praxis of the Russian Orthodox Church as constructive elements of nationalistic postmodern symphonia, demonstrating essential differences between the counterparts.

4. Demonstrate modern Russian postsecularity embraced by both social agents, while warding off plurality by secular Orthodox culturalism via the Russian Orthodox Church’s major official documents and the official pronouncements of Putin’s administration.

5. Reveal the connection of the post-secular in the formation of national identity in the Russian context as one of the expressions of symphonia.

6. Suggest the formula of peace for modern symphonia expression as well as identity formulation in modern Russia.

7. Model a dialogue between nationalistic and pluralistic symphonias in comparative analysis with the help of several elements of the concept in the realities of political conflict.

***Key Words***: Symphonia, Secularization, Pluralization, Historiography, Modernity, Nationalism, Identity, Otherness, *Sobornost*, Dialectic

**I. Introduction**

The recent outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war has been met by both bewilderment and outrage on the part of both national and international communities. It is said to be unheard of to resolve diplomatic conflicts and neighboring disputes via means of armed force in the twenty-first century. General public opinion and larger academic and professional circles have trouble grasping how one’s country political administration could consolidate so much power on the one hand, and suppress domestic confrontation within, on the other hand in order to be able to declare war.[[1]](#footnote-1) How is it feasible for a tangible amount of the Russian population to support such a hostile policy against a neighboring Slavic nation? What contributed to such national support on the one hand and made it possible for the nation to be separated by the conflict on the other hand? How is it conceivable for the opposition within the country that attempts to voice against such warring measures to be suppressed, manipulated, silenced, psychologically abused, and not taken seriously into consideration during public dispute and discussion on the national security issue and international politics? One of the key social instruments that has been contributing to the consolidation of Putin’s power has been the Orthodox Church, having been working together in joining forces to “feed” certain theopolitical messages to the Russian public via the federal mass media stations. In order to obtain public support, the officials of the church have been suggesting that the Russian political establishment is on a quest to save the Russian nation from Western globalization, national eradication, and the influx of Western religious ideas in order to defend national security. Hence, the church is there to support the state in its measures to politically and socially protect the nation as an expression of its immediate role of symphonic arrangement.

This particular arrangement of relations between two agents is historically grounded and has the purpose of legitimizing the political legitimacy of the political agent as well as providing social cohesion in the form of a religious edifice for the identity of the nation by the official Orthodox institution. The relationships of both agents have been conflicting throughout the centuries with either one or the other taking the upper hand, thus either manipulating one another or surviving under the oppression of the other, depending on their collectively individual purposes. Although these relationships were originally construed under the theological concept of symphonia, claiming its goal to be striving towards harmonious coexistence, in practice, history shows the center of power being pulled one way or the other. In either case, history shows that these two agents were the governing socio-political guardians shaping the cultural nucleus of the country and the epistemological ground of national identity.

Investigation of the historiographic trends of the history writing on the subject of the church-state relationships will offer a view through the socio-cultural lenses from which this subject was perceived, that is to imply this very context to be constructive of these very relations. Early, medieval, modern and postmodern trends are investigated in order to identify the constitutive elements of symphonia of the times, demonstrating a number of interpretations of the original theological concept, with different colors of political and social making.

However, their supremacy was challenged at the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the other agents coming into the religious and political markets suggesting the necessity of having a civil society as a restraining entity for the state’s power as well as arguing for the plurality of religious confessions voluntarily chosen by the citizens, having arrived to the troubling Russian society at the end of the twentieth century. One did not have to be Orthodox to be Russian; one did not have to be constitutionally a part of the Russian Federation to be independent. These Western ideas of democracy, plurality, modernization and secularity forced both agents to rethink some of their beliefs and practices, to readjust to the context of new ideas and influences in the society. The scope of this dissertation is restricted to one of the fields of socio-political life undergoing such transformations, namely symphonia, which enables the researcher to take a twofold investigation – the change of socio-political climate as well as the nature of Orthodox national faith on the one hand and the transformations and policies of the church, on the other.

Consequently, the published Social Doctrine of the ROC in 2009 claiming its impelling and driving role in Russian society is intending to contribute to the formation of a modern socio-political Russian climate battling off the influx of westernization and globalization. Indeed, the earlier theory of secularization in the middle of the last century, which argued for the privatization of religion and a decrease in the religious institutes’ influence in society, empirically proved to be false. Respectively, social studies of religion have been boasting a number of new theories taking into account the phenomena of plurality and multiplicity as constituent building blocks of modernity, which will be elaborated on in this work and will find their practical application. Hereby investigation of the secularization process in Russian society will suggest a more positive outlook and impact onto the national Orthodoxy, in contrast to church officials’ warnings. Yet, these processes are to be managed and regulated, for, as it will be displayed, historically, they have been manipulated by various political bodies and religious actors for their own purposes. This work will argue that the individual, the civil society to be and is becoming the central, significant actor in these complex relationships.

The assertive and laudable voice of the Russian Orthodox Church underscores its changing role in the society, as well as its transforming relationships with the state. Claiming its historic precedence, the church, elaborating on the conceptualization of space, argues for its superior role and legal status on the religious market. Due to the majority of Russian citizens professing Orthodox faith, the postulates and teachings of this institution are to be reckoned with when assessing the church and state relationship. Yet, the growing presence and influence of other religious bodies and representatives cannot be ignored or underestimated in the world of plural religious ideas. Hence, it is only right and timely, to take into account the plurality of ideas, which only will secure instead of damaging Orthodoxy.

The plurality of ideas as the essential element of the modernization process allowed fostering the process of Russian modernization in society. Grounded in the theory of Post-secularity, the researcher suggests the secularizing process to spawn a distinct modern Russian Orthodox identity of Russian citizens. In this regard, in addition to the church and state agendas, policies and methods of response toward modern social forces, and also contextualized modernization, will be a focal point of study in the dissertation. The dissertation seeks to explore the nature of Russian modernity and to explain how secularizing forces contributed to the rising role on the political and social arenas of the Russian Orthodox Church and to suggest the significance of the pluralization phenomenon on the institutional levels and in the formation of Orthodox identity. This study examines the Social Doctrine of the Russian Orthodox Church, how its leaders respond to the modern socio-political and cultural forces, and analyses its theological instruments in arguing its supreme role in the cultural heritage of Russian identity. Exploring the concept of symphonia both as a subject (its essential theological and social elements) and a policy maker (by its major producers actors), as well as both a generating force of social change (secularization force) and an acted upon, influenced-on phenomenon (deprivatization, institutionalization process) is attempted in this work in order to suggest a more comprehensive, relevant context that will lead to an improved understanding of this subject.

Diving into historiographic presentations, theological, socio-political and philosophical peculiarities and particularities of relations is helpful in comprehending the reasons behind present-day political international conflict, i.e., we will argue that modern Russian nationalism is partially to contribute to the conflict and it is dealt with by means of the suggested formula of peace, it could be avoided.

**Key Terms**

From the onset of the study it is necessary to designate the meaning of symphonia, the object of this study, as it has undergone modification both due to two century year span, and both institutions under investigation transformation. The original perception of symphonia as synonymous with a state of “harmony” between two major social entities – the church and the state – is now conceived as more of a “cooperation” in the present day, and, as such, is thought to be beneficial for both actors. This concept has been equally influenced by historiographic science development as opposed to the descriptive historical knowledge of late modernity, as well as due to a paradigm shift in the understanding of modernity itself. Historical science has seen significant development throughout the twentieth and beginning of the twenty- first centuries, and Patrick Manning rightly underscores an ongoing dialogue between traditional methods of world history writing, staging civilizations, nation-states and social history on par with “scientific cultural” ones, including novel archival resources, linguistics, neurosciences, chemistry and others, thus evolving into a global history.[[2]](#footnote-2) According to S. N. Eisenstadt, the denial of Western hegemony on modernity, acknowledgment and celebration of diverse civilizations that was feasible due to the clash of modernity’s new language of essentialistic, totalistic and absolutist terms with political, military and economic debates, spurred diversified understanding of modernity or multiple interpretations of modernity.[[3]](#footnote-3) Hence, it is possible to discourse on the nature of symphonia in times of Russian Modernity. The researcher thus presents a tentative investigation to the nature of modern-day symphonia with a suggested solution to the Russian cursed issue of nationalism by means of constructing a formula of peace deriving from such fields as church history, social history, and theological philosophy within the framework of the history of ideas from these academic disciplines. Such an approach, though complex, is yet is to be heard within the plethora of postmodern history studies, where the researcher, their academic, linguistic and cultural background, and training all contribute to the fabric of history that they are writing.

The modern understanding of the term “secularization” is rather wide. It presupposes the process of the waning of religious influence in all spheres of society: in politics and economics, in culture and the arts, and in the spiritual life of every person. Yet, as the research will demonstrate, it is only a simplistic understanding of a more complex socio-historical process that is to be thoroughly investigated within different cultural contexts. Hence, European, American and, in a larger scope, Russian processes of secularization will be addressed, underscoring differences and constitutive elements for each.

The desecularization and deprivatization of public religion is the other term, and phenomenon as argued by José Casanova,[[4]](#footnote-4) David Martin, Robert Bellah,[[5]](#footnote-5) which is the changes in collective representations and institutions, which in turn transforms society’s material substrata.[[6]](#footnote-6)

Post-secularization in the context of modern Russian society will be studied in the work as well, as a distinct socio-cultural, socio-political framework where church and state collaborate and the church enjoys a visible social presence.

Plurality as one of the social phenomena will also be argued to be a curing force for Russian nationalism purported by the official Orthodox church. Peter Berger’s argument of the institutional differentiation in the age of globalization, which is “a social situation in which people with different ethnicities, worldviews, and moralities live together peacefully and interact with each other amicably.”[[7]](#footnote-7) It is suggested that pluralization is a major necessary constructive element to be employed in the nexus of church-state relations, if the nationalistic mode of church-state relations is to be dealt with.

The concept of a national identity is very textured. In the opinion of Paul Gilroy, such ties overlap, yet there are different concerns too: identity – self; identity – sameness; identity – solidarity. Yet, a socio-cultural construct of identity, which is the modus operandi of this research, is understood according to the definition proposed by Reber and Hellberg-Hirn[[8]](#footnote-8) – “A mental operation whereby one attributes to oneself, either consciously or unconsciously, characteristics of another person or group.”[[9]](#footnote-9) Furthermore, the notion of national identity suggested by Miller will be pivotal and central in this research, which is “a proper part of personal identity and a specific form of collective identity – is a community constituted by shared belief and mutual commitment, extended in history, active in character, connected to a particular geographic place, and thought to be marked off from other national communities by its members’ distinct traits; these five different elements serve to distinguish nations from ethnic groups and other collective sources of personal identity.”[[10]](#footnote-10)

All these socio-historical and cultural concepts will be examined within the context of the Russian political situation and as such will be revisited, elaborated upon and reconstructed so as to tentatively suggest another workable version of modern-day collaborative symphonia.

***Thesis Statement***

The pivotal argument of this research is that modern nationalistic symphonia excludes pluralism at the institutional level at the expense of cultural Orthodox identity. The philosophical framework of pluralized identity is suggested to be a constructive platform for both levels of institutional – modern-day Russian pluralized post-secular symphonia as well as the modern pluralized Orthodox soul.

***Previous Relevant Studies***

Indeed, there is an ongoing and prolific research on the subject of the church-state relationship in modern Russia; yet this study first of all seeks to analyze its nature from a historical perspective within an almost two thousand-year span, focusing on major documents and key leaders practicing symphonia; and second, with the assistance of modern-day sociological research, that is argued to be essential in the historical theological field, to propose another platform of relations, that is to attempt to weave such forces of modernity as secularization and pluralization into modern church-state relations, which objectively include the civil society as well in the realities of modernity. It is necessary to be aware of the fact that the church-state relationship during different historical periods had been practiced under theological, theopolitical, geopolitical, imperial, Soviet and democratic maximums and precepts, thus giving various names to these relationships.

Socially viable investigation of this concept is represented in the works of Western scholarship, in particular under the study of Zoe Knox, **who** expounds on the church’s leading role in promoting democratic values in the Russian state via civil society, focusing more on the institutional influence of the Moscow Patriarchate on Russian politics as significant and growing in a largely negative direction. The idea of a civil society is a part of an ongoing conversation between entities in the democratic state and is indeed a significant contribution on the subject matter; yet the research considers only socio-cultural aspects, thus completely omitting the Orthodox tradition, suggesting a perceived negative influence of the latter, which is only one angle of the comprehensive relations.

**In** *The Mystical as Political* *The Mystical as Political: Democracy and Non-Radical Orthodoxy*, Aristotle Papanikolaou suggests the biblical concept of *theosis* from the Orthodox tradition as a constructive concept that is helpful in strengthening the church-state relationship in the modern quasi-democratic Russian state, arguing that theosis – divine-human communion, the central principle of Orthodox thinking –is coherent and appropriate for Orthodox political theory. The fact that theology is discussed and found to be applicable to the socio-political situation is nothing but a modern genius of the author, yet his propositions of the sacramentality of creation – its “capacity to embody the divine” and the need for this capacity to be further developed and shaped by ascetic practices “aiming at learning to love,” “discerning what gets in the way of loving,” and his pole God-in-extension, God-in-self-revelation, which is “God’s love, which is always on offer” could be more specific and elaborated on for social practice’s sake. This work carries presents a huge contribution to the theological heritage of the Orthodox tradition, yet without its socio-political implications, it is only of theoretical genius.

In her work *The Orthodox Church and Russian Politics*, Irina Popkova underscores the role of the church in forming national and historic identity and thus legitimizing Putin’s political ambitions, while having little to say about the political arena . Her historical research accentuates the political aspect of relationships with an additional insight into modern Russian identity; however, the Orthodox tradition is overlooked and has nothing to propose to the modern-day church-state cooperation. The work is more devoted to socio-political aspects of the church-state-identity nexus in modern Russia without providing any insights into religious tradition.

In his work *The Russian Orthodox Tradition and Modernity*, Andreas Buss investigates the influence of the Western ideas of individualism and capitalistic economics upon the Orthodox tradition, which is grounded in homogeneity and ideology, claiming that new socio-political institutions are difficult to develop and the necessary tension between the form and the “spirit” are not practiced. His study on a dialogue between the theological tradition and the socio-political context is insightful and will have place in this study to stage this research in terms of the symphonia concept. This research includes a more complex approach towards church-state relations from the elements of religious traditions and modernity, providing a proper understanding of the subject matter, yet without directing toward possible solutions.

Alexander Ponomariov’s *The Visible Religion: The Russian Orthodox Church and her Relations with State and Society in Post-Soviet Canon Law (1992–2015)* is closest in research method to this work, though it is concerned mostly with the modern period and its respective document from the Orthodox tradition that deals with socio-political issues. According to Ponomariov, the Russian Orthodox church is a model of modernity, playing a significant role in social realities and responding to its ills with centennial actions grounded in the “combination of transcendence and immanence, theological and social reasoning, an afterlife strategy and cooperation with secular partners”.[[11]](#footnote-11) The research gives serious consideration to the theological tradition impacting themodern social context, yet we suggest a more constructive approach as substantiated in social elements rather than a descriptive analysis based on Canon Law.

There is a large body of scholarship on the subject of secularization that explores its mechanisms, typology, and perspectives. For instance, Harvey Coxin his work *The Secular City*, suggests such types of secularization as political, social, and cultural, demonstrating interconnectedness between secularization and urbanization.[[12]](#footnote-12) P. Berger distinguishes between the “subjective” and “objective” sides of secularization.[[13]](#footnote-13) David Martin shows the differences between the processes of secularization in major Christian traditions, such as Catholicism, Protestantism, and Orthodoxy.[[14]](#footnote-14) Bryan R. Wilson investigates the condition of religion and the ongoing critical processes within it, and also the desecularization of social institutions, connecting these processes with the disintegration of traditional social ties.[[15]](#footnote-15) Karel Dobbelaere distinguishes between the major trends of secularization, and studies its influence on integration social processes.[[16]](#footnote-16)

Pitirim Sorokin demonstrates the waning of the religious aspect and the increase in secularization tendencies in the arts, philosophy and morality beginning in the sixteenth century.[[17]](#footnote-17) According to Zenkovskiy, Russian theoretical thinking, both in secular and religious philosophies, starts with the secularization processes in the seventeenth century.[[18]](#footnote-18)

This work will seek to combine essential elements and aspects from theological, social and political perspectives and fields when first of all analyzing and then constructing the comprehension of church-state relationships for modern-day realities. Such an approach allows not only makes it possible to follow in the path of the previously mentioned studies in order to investigate church-state relations from the aspect of secularizing forces, thus underlying a unique Russian context and modern Russian civil society, but also to suggest that the pluralization process is the manifestation of secularizing tendencies which could be explored and implied to the nexus of church-state-identity relations. Our concern on the one hand, is to identify how historical schools contributed to the interpretation of the church-state relationship, and on the other hand to identify theological and socio-political elements that contributed to the essence of symphonia during different historical periods, as well as to tentatively suggest a version of symphonia that could be applicable to modern relationships of two agents finding themselves amidst pluralization forces.

***Methodolog***

This dissertation approaches the research subject from the constructive perspective, thus it includes the analysis and findings from the various fields of study. Consequently, a selective number of works from the history of philosophical, theological, social and historiographical scholarship is presented in a comparative investigation of both Western and Russian respective developments. As a result, the researcher suggests a postmodern version of the church-state relations in Russia within a historic framework. The dissertation gleans on the collection of historical documents in various periods of time issued by the official representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church, as well as official statements and interviews of the Russian state administration, in order to identify the elements of symphonia at the different time periods. In general, external socio-political, historical as well as internal – theological aspects of this concept will be investigated. Thus, for this investigation historical comparative analysis will be employed, looking into both Western and Russian scholarship. Major works are as follows: Artur Mrowczynski-Van Allen, *Beyond Modernity: Russian Religious Philosophy and Post-Secularism*,which suggests socio-political aspects of modern symphonia; Peter Berger’s *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion,* will be pivotal from the theological perspective, as well as N. I. Solntzev, *Works of Russian Historians of the Church in National Historiography of XVIII–XIX*,andGeorg G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century*, *which* exposes historical tenets of this concept interpretation that are crucial and constructive*.*

Having gathered the information on the components of symphonia, the researcher will draw from the work of Peter Berger, *The Many Altars of Modernity*, with his proposed formula of peace, applying it critically to the modern Russian context in order to suggest that pluralization has been constructive for both the institutional and identity levels. As this nexus takes into account the issue of identity, this dissertation will also critically inspect this phenomenon, working through the concept of “Otherness” by Emmanuel. Levinas within the framework of D. Tracey’s methodology of pluralization. Finally, the suggested formula of peace in the form of postsecular symphonia for pluralized identity will be juxtaposed in a comparative dialogue with a currently practiced nationalistic symphonia.

***The Original Contribution of this Research***

This dissertation contributes to the study of the church-state relationship of Russia in the following ways. First of all, it suggests the historical analysis of the relationship, defining how the interpretation of these very relationships by various periodical schools subtly contributed to the essence of the concept. Many researches concentrated either on the connection with the Canon Law, Social Doctrine of the Russian Orthodox Church, the study of the concept of the Third Rome or Byzantine Symphonia, thus missing the historical overview of the church-state relationships taking into consideration the combination of theological, socio-political, historical, biographical aspects as expressed in respective documents throughout history. Thus, while other works separately investigated the concept of symphonia as it was practiced within different historical periods, under different names, this work suggests a single study on the concept that takes into consideration the respective internal and external factors influencing the essence of symphonia.

Secondly, while most of the previous researches concentrate on the church-state relationships in Russia from historical, geopolitical, theological and social perspectives, this dissertation juxtaposes the findings from all of these perspectives with the idea of national identity, which in our opinion should be one of the platforms to undergo change in a modern pluralistic society ethnoswise and in terms of the religious market.

Thirdly, the work demonstrates the significance and architectural nature of secularization and pluralization both for church-state relations and identity construction as well as the role of religion in society and individual lives.

Fourthly, a tentative formula of the relationship between both agents will be suggested as a socially applicable construct taking into account issues of pluralism in the context of national identity.

***Structure of the Thesis***

The study is divided into six chapters. Chapter one outlines the research question, its methodology, resources, approaches and its fashion, while proposing a tentative constructive answer to the research issue. In addition, previous works on the subject together with essential concepts and terminology are also succinctly presented.

Chapter two is dedicated to the comparative analysis of the historiographic schools in the West and Russia, suggesting that there are differences between the two as well as underscoring major periods of historical science development, then representing these relationships, firstly within the bounds of historical knowledge and later within the more developed historiographic trends of both counterparts. In particular, the historic investigation is concerned with the origins of the church-state relationship, and its further development in the Middle Ages within the framework of socio-political realities, geopolitical objectives and further on within the classic and postclassic historical schools. The distinctions of both Western and Russian trends will be underscored, and the socio-political environment of the respective periods as influencing the original objective of the church-state relationship will be analyzed. This analysis will be constructed based on various historical methods that are appropriate for a separate historic period in order to demonstrate how both the object and the subject of historical research within the two schools had been on the one hand evolving and on the other hand has played a constructive role in producing distinctive elements of the subject matter.

Chapter three attempts a deeper analysis of the dominant socio-cultural force of modern history as secularization. The phenomenon will first of all be explored from within the paradigm of “multiple modernities,” and secondly it will be investigated in the evolvement of the theory of secularization, again in the light of comparative analysis of Western and Russian scholarship. Historic analysis of this theory will suggest the theory of plurality to be the most plausible one in the modern social context of Russia. The secularization process, its characteristics, evolvements and contextual differences between the Western and Russian socio-political realities will be argued to be central elements of both church and state agents’ policy making in their respective spheres of influence, which in turn will does not take into account an emerging civil society, thus proving that their actions are counterproductive for both. Space will be given to the Russian socio-political context, investigating modern forces as constituent processes in the construction of Russian Orthodox modernity and the essential forces that are required for opening up secularizing public discourse in Russia. In the outcome, Russian secularity is found to be post-secular as opposed to the Western project of secularization, which failed only demonstrating secularity having been the maturing aspect of Western Christianity that is to be acknowledged and not to be overlooked at the expense of the secular-sacred divide. The chronological representation of this modernizing socio-political force and its comparative analysis between Western and Russian contexts will demonstrate the distinct nature of modern-day postsecularity that the researcher will argue Russia finds itself in, while highlighting the positive aspect of such a development as being contrary to its Western counterpart. Moreover, postsecularity will also be argued as having been an essential constructive element in the modern church-state relations.

The following chapter seeks to present the constructive methodology of pluralization, as a means for obtaining a more objective understanding of modern symphonia, as well as to suggest the other plurality – the civil society, the collective identity to be essential in church-state relations. On the one hand, there would be represented a critical analysis of the modern Russian church and the state’s reactionary responses to modernity’s pluralization when examining official documents, pronouncements and statements of both agents, while on the other hand Peter Berger’s theory of two pluralities, of which the institutional level is theorized upon and the notion of self-identification in the national identity formulation is suggested as the other axis of plurality.

The fifth chapter will mainly focus on an investigation of the suggested axe of the relationship – the national identity, and in particular its employment by fundamental Orthodoxy and by a purported systemic critically constructed approach to the matter in the form of a suggestive pluralized identity – the individual consciousness is to be the expression of both pluralizing and secularizing forces.

The chapter will focus on the quantitative and qualitative data and analysis of the elements of national self-identification as propagated by the state in order to promote cultural national identity, a working phenomenon of a modern democratic government as the substitute for the previous centennial Orthodox identity. The researcher will suggest a tentative descriptive representation of the nature of the Russian modern Russian identity, its losses and gains as the process of identity struggle is implemented as the process of culturalism has been implemented. This constructive dialogue will argue for the ongoing, negotiable and critical self-referent to be the bedhead to pave the better version of symphonia. In particular a policy of culturalism and the “soft power” of the church-state cooperation on the matter of national identity construction as well as an argued in this work a more critically constructed pluralized notion of identity that takes into account the cognitive, moral and ethical claims of modernity. If plurality is allowed on both institutional and individual levels, it would produce multiple religious identities constituting the civil society and as such allowing for individual identity to be of pluralized ongoing construct in the democratic state.

The final chapter will suggest how through the tentative dialectics of a plurality, i.e., the dialogue between the models of the Byzantine version of modern nationalistic symphonia and the suggested formula of peace modern relationship, could be not only better interpreted and understood within the history of symphonia but also how it could be more critically constructed in realities of post-secularity. Such representation is the means to demonstrate the possibility for the other versions of church-state relations models to have existence if external socio-political, theological and cultural substrata and its elements are taken into consideration, as well as the necessity of the dialectic, respective, ethical dialogue between sacred and the secular discourse are to take place. The researcher argues that there is no one particular answer and solution to the Russian cursed issue of nationalism, but the opportunity for the space of respective discussion to be searched for and purported to.

We are aware of the propositional and tentative nature of the conclusions of this study, however it is hoped that the selected and analyzed data of this project will contribute to the social approach of the study of religion, giving a better understanding of historical analysis and the socio-political arena of modernity in general and the Russian Federation in particular. Additionally, it is hoped that the study of Russian identity –i.e., not the monolithic but rather the fluid nature that itself proves the nature of plurality will be taken seriously by both social agents in the modern age. Finally, the tentatively constructed and advocated images of post-secular symphonia and pluralized identity are believed to be a better modus operandi for modern-day Russian church-state relationships, as well as being more invigorating for engaging in personal faith profession. It is hoped that this will be a working compromise of the visible Orthodox religion. Both postsecularity and pluralization allow for the civil society to be an active agent in church-state relations as well as to suggest the space for a respective dialogue.

**6.5. Conclusion**

This research has analyzed historical versions of symphonia – the Russian concept of church-state relations – establishing that such social forces of modernity as nationalism, secularization and pluralization have been the construing blocks of these relations. Though surviving the Western project of secularization due to the deeply theological Russian thought and as such it has been distinct in its continuous collaboration with the state, still the church is strongly resisting pluralism due to nationalistic interests and the agenda of the state. Russian intellectuals as well as church officials and modern government administration are cautious of pluralism to be destructive to the very fabric of the Russian “Orthodox soul.” Indeed, the research suggested that Western theological and social sciences are inappropriate for the Russian context due to its divorce of the sacred and the secular and, as such, its model of church-state relations is inapplicable. This demonstrates the fact of the continuous collaboration and cooperation between church and state. As such, the modern church-state relationship can be defined as *Nationalistic Orthodox Symphonia*. In this modus of relationship the underlining principle of mutual-self agendas are preserved and met. For the state, nationalistic pursuits are gained through advocating for cultural historical Orthodox culture in modern Russia as nationalistic identification so necessary to survive in the global world if one is not to be overwhelmed by it. As such, Orthodoxy serves the nationalistic agendas of the state. For the church, on the other hand, the state is employed for the anti-pluralistic purposes of globalization and it gains a major, decisive institution that curbs, restricts and manages the religious pluralization in modern Russia. As such, the state is employed by the church in order to preserve its historical religious precedence in the country. For both agents it is a suitable arrangement as, on the one hand, they are both attempting to manage external forces of modernity in order not to be integrated into the globalization process, and on the other hand they preserve leading social forces for constructing Russian society. Therefore, instead of secularization and pluralism and modernity to take over the Orthodox soul and destroy it, they substitute those with nationalism and cultural Orthodoxy, which allows withstanding the process of globalization and preserves its identity, allowing for both institutions to dictate to the Russian population as they choose. Therefore, this research underscores the fact that church-state relations are to be explicitly studied within the framework of national identity as Russian modern symphonia is shown to be deeply nationalistic. Thus, a separate chapter is devoted to the study of the issue of Russian religious identity, which, as was found, is mostly of cultural, not spiritual, essence. For these purposes, the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas was found to be appropriate for modern Russian citizens to undergo another conscious self-identification instead of just accepting non-critically the nationalistic program infused with Orthodoxy. It is possible that there are still some people who would still subscribe to what is provided by the church and state in terms of nationalistic self-identification, as they were probably not given a chance to exercise the right for identity construction for self-identification. Still, at least it will be their conscious and deliberate decision. However, we believe that most of the modern populace has a right to choose for themselves their religious and national identification without being afraid of losing their souls, historical heritage and being damaged by the globalized Western world. As the research suggests, there is a path for self-identification where the Orthodox soul will only be renewed and strengthened if it undergoes the influence of pluralization. Regarding the Orthodox soul’s self-search in the modern global arena, Levinas’s concept of the “Other” is eye-opening, providing the way to see a different perception of the Russian Orthodox citizen. This cultural monism and Orthodox heterogeneity instead of been solidified and preserved is instead to be broken if it is to survive globalization by allowing pluralizing forces of the otherness to be encountered. To be open towards other religions and ethnic groups and minorities without managing their presentation in the society would launch Berger’s construction of institutional plurality and pluralized identity. If social institutions are given space by the state and the church to exist and advocate and present their programs freely without any managing restrictive policies, it would allow the individual to safely and freely choose their religion and nationalistic belonging. Surely it would cause social and religious shifts, where people would freely choose their country of residence and their religious belonging by making a deliberate choice without facing the pressures of nationalism or anti-pluralism. Hence, the fear of losing of national and religious identity is non-substantial as the presence and acknowledgement of the otherness would, on the contrary, allow for an identity preservation with the only difference being that this choice would be made not by the church or the state but by the citizens themselves. The Russian people would choose for themselves which values they would want to preserve and which to modify as well as which to leave behind as they are finding themselves on the verge of a new globalized modern world. In such self-identification, the church and state would only provide a platform for this process of self-identification, allowing a plurality of institutions. Consequently, it is not Orthodoxy’s ethical ideals of humanism and respect that would be necessary for the society to manage well. Instead, the acceptance of the otherness would only birth these ethical relationships without religious teaching. The self encountering the Otherness would be able to be ethically respectful and kind towards the other. Acceptance, facing the other is ethically grounded. This is the base of the Christian teaching, where God is recognized in the person and the person recognizes the same godhood. Regarding the other is to fulfill Orthodoxy’s teaching to have respect for life, preserve peace and show responsibility towards the others. Moreover, the nationalistic egocentrism that is satisfied in order to provide the freedom and independence of the nation and the person is not the only scenario that is available. On the opposite the person’s responsibility for the Other would fulfill these personal and social ideals as only people pursuing happiness and egocentric hedonism would be able to put the needs, the freedoms of the Other, first and would search for their fulfillment. If instead of pursuing harmony – symphonia between the church and state – hese agents would first of all recognize and allow for their interests, no pursuit would take place. It would only be natural to see their respective interests fulfilled without inflicting mutual interests at the sake of the other one. The sobornost of the church, society and institutions could be achieved without Orthodox teaching if the egocentric interests of the self and institution are acknowledged.

Levinas’s ethics having being first and foremost a relational and not ontological one are very helpful in modern Russia that struggles with the identity issue, hoping to define and signify it ontologically by means of returning to its historical roots, Orthodox faith and modern cultural values. Such an approach unfortunately deprives the nation from external global processes, preventing it from being relational, inclusive in the modern processes of pluralization. By providing freedom in the religious and social context Russia would not only gain its “existence,” and “recognition” but also ethical relationships at the same time would submit to the non-violation of the other. Here also, pluralization is proved to be ethical and not destructive, as is propagated by the Russian state-Orthodox church alliance. The ethical aspect of the relationship does not include comprehensive forgiveness and passivity in the face of the endangerment of others. On the contrary, each life is precious and valuable and is to be treated as such, which is the principal preserved by the system and the realm of justice. The issue is that in Russia this social aspect is under the management of the state. There is no civil society that would allow an agent to facilitate democratic processes in the country. Hence the violence of the other is neglected and is supported by the state for its nationalistic purposes. As the research demonstrated, the civil society in Russia is also monitored, but by the government institutions. The Russian government oversees the work of both the civil society and the church, thus organizing platforms for propagating its cultural nationalistic agenda.

Therefore, this research challenges the purposes and legitimacy of the Orthodox concepts of symphonia and sobornost in modern-day pluralized realities. At present they do not assist the nationalistic and religious self but on the contrary only stifle it from recognizing the institutional interests and making their own choice in the modern pluralized world of opportunities. This process presupposes that conflict between institutional interests and agendas and is to have a place to be for the Orthodox souls and culturally Orthodox society to be rebirthed and renewed.

**VII. Conclusion**

Within the scope of this research the elements of the church-state relationships that had contributed to its nature and essence have been discovered. Thus, historiographical schools’ approaches, the hermeneutical aspect, together with the social forces of modernity, and the phenomenological aspect have been constructive to the nature of relations at certain historical periods over in terms of the relations between these agents, that have been principally initiated under the theological, theo-political concept of symphonia. The historical analysis of this work made it possible to trace the evolvement of this concept, in order to, on the one hand, understand the dynamics of the relations and, on the other hand, to assess its present-day nature. Thus, it has been established that modern-day dynamics is of same direction where both players attempt to pursue mutual interests, which is integrity of the unity of the nation and solidification of its nationalistic sentiments in the society. Such a dynamic and purpose of pursuits sprouted the nationalistic essence of the symphonia. Besides the internal nature and dynamics of elations, this work took a modern approach to academic research, integrating social sciences into historiographic research of theo-political relations, where social forces of secularity and plurality were investigated within both Western and Russian contexts. Hence, it was demonstrated that on the external social expressions nationalistic symphonia is found to be postsecular, with the official church still partaking actively in the life of the nation, proving the church having being visible in social strata.

Having demonstrated the nature of the modern-day symphonia, the work attempted to demonstrate that by avoiding the plurality of modern social realities the symphonia is doing a disservice to both the state and the church, but above all to its nation, people, civil society, marginal religious and ethnic groups, and individuals. The present-day conflict with Ukraine highlights this issue on all of these levels. The other voices, the other pluralities, are suppressed, ignored and dismissed for the sake of the nationalistic agendas of the both. To solve the issue that is not only of a theoretical type, of relevance purely to the domestic socio-political area but is now surfacing on the international stage, this dissertation proposed to include the plurality at the level of identity, arguing that it is the people’s identity’s that is to be construed freely without any external pressure on the part of the state, employing the “soft power” of culturalism, or on the part of the church, laudably preaching and declaring the solidified power of religious Orthodox tradition. If both hermeneutics and phenomenology, historical writing and the historian, the self-referent and the object referent are to be considered at the platform of plurality, then plurality at the level of national identity construction would be feasible. Pluralized society would be able to contribute to a formula of peace, advocated by this work, which is built on the dialectics of nationalistic and pluralistic versions of postmodern symphonia. Returning to the Byzantine tradition, the church officials could be more open towards other traditions, not with the agenda of self-asserting apologetic hermeneutics, but to construct interreligious symphonia, allowing other religious traditions to be active in developing church-state relations. The suggested critical approach allows for an inclusive, dialectic dynamics of church-state relations. In particular, on the nature of domestic and international issues it is not only the Orthodox patriarch and officials but also a delegation of other religious traditions who could be present in order to propose various approaches to issues, creating understanding and solutions based on many other religious and ethnic groups involved. Grounded in their respective religious traditions they could come up with a more balanced approach to social matters. To be more specific, the issue of the Ukrainian war could be approached from this constructive stance, not to focus on decisions of hostile defense of national borders but to make a dialogue between other religious traditions on the understanding of war. Therefore, if Orthodoxy is to welcome plurality it could be more open towards other religious traditions in its relationship with the state, leaving the space of a controlling, dominating religious voice in the society. It could also revisit its religious tradition and be more critically constructive instead of historically apologetic and defensive, which would allow it to be open towards modern-day realities as well as to be a modern social voice for a nation struggling with the ongoing quest for meaning and purpose collectively and individually. Thus, a change of tradition from the pursuit of a grandiose “Third Rome,” dominating force and agent in the society and in the world, towards the pursuit of peace in the plethora of pluralized globalization would be a better underlying policy making for the church when revisiting its historical religious heritage. Indeed, instead of pursuing nationalistic, imperialistic, geopolitical or theological dominance, the Orthodox soul might search for its “harmony” within a critical otherness facing the external otherness of the global world.

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