

Copyright © 2019 by Academic Publishing House Researcher s.r.o.



Published in the Slovak Republic
 Russian Journal of Political Studies
 Has been issued since 2015.
 E-ISSN: 2413-7537
 2019, 5(1): 14-21

DOI: 10.13187/rjps.2019.1.14
www.ejournal31.com



Church-State Interplay in Post-Soviet Russia, and the Image of the West*

Marianna Napolitano ^{a, b, c, *}

^a John XXIII Foundation for Religious Studies, Bologna, Italy

^b Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow, Russian Federation

^c University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Modena, Italy

Abstract

This paper's aim is grasping the issue of tradition-change in the Russian Federation from religious and cultural perspective. In particular, it will consider the return to power of the Russian Orthodox Church in post-soviet era, analysing the ideology on which its role is based on, and its connections with Kremlin's ideology.

After the failure of the Soviet project, a large part of Russia's political elites believe that Russia must adapt its political and religious systems according to its own history and identity: this shift means henceforth the idea that Russia must not be a copy of Western world. One harbinger of this idea was the concept of "managed democracy" developed by V. Surkov and embraced by the Kremlin in 2004. The concept may be interpreted in strict relation with the one of *Russkij Mir*, developed later to identify the community of ethnic Russians, The second harbinger may be seen in the "traditional values" discourse, that present Russia as a different civilizational universe. Although it is difficult to trace the exact moment in which the term traditional values was used for the first time in explicit opposition to liberal values, it is designated to denote the moral sphere, and this field has become the center of the Church presence in the public debate. In 2014, in his annual state of the nation address, President Putin pointed to traditional value as one of the country's policy priorities: this is perfectly coherent with Russia tendency in the public sphere to define its international activity in terms of moral duty. This is true in particular in relation to the liberal – secularized West, appointed as the "antichrist". What are the terms and reasons of this opposition? Which kind of principles allow us to identify the Russian community as different from the western one?

Keywords: traditional values, Russian Orthodox Church, Kremlin, democracy, Soviet legacy.

1. Introduction

The role and the value of Orthodox religion as source of Russian identity have a long history: they tie in with the Byzantine conception of "symphony" kept since the Christianization in 988, that characterized the political space of the "Russian" princes and tzars as a space "enlighten by the faith", and with the messianistic idea of Russia as the "Third Rome", developed after the fall of

* Paper presented at the Fourth Annual Tartu Conference On Russian And East European Studies, *Communities in Flux: Rethinking Sovereignty and Identity in an Era of Change*, 9–11 June 2019, Tartu, Estonia.

* Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: mariannanapolitano@hotmail.com (M. Napolitano)

Constantinople. The idea of Holy Russia was gradually developed from cultural oppositions but maintaining at the same time a strong relationship with the Russian ethnicity. It was based, on one hand, on the “Christian meta-ethic universalism”, that is the idea of “messianism” we referred before, on the other hand it may be recognized in the gradual merging of two dimensions of the Russians; the fact that the term “others” was used in referring both to people of foreign origins and to people of other religions, help us understanding this concept. The transformation of the Orthodox Church into an “autocephalus” national institution corresponded with the raise of its universalistic claims. At the same time, major historical and philosophical debates contributed in constructing the Russian idea and in proclaiming Orthodoxy as the cornerstone of this Russian idea (Agadjanian, 2000). Dostoevsky once stated that to be Orthodox is to be Russian (and we can recognise this tendency in the recent relation of Russian people with religion)*, this strong perception of Orthodoxy as being linked to Russian identity is highlighted by the analysis of the significance of religious factor in Russian history: the Church, throughout the centuries has been the second most important political symbol of Russia after the state: the Russian state assumed the Byzantine legacy of a universal Christian empire and the sense of having a mission. In the history of Russian state the religious factor fulfilled the roles of creating cultures legitimating its social function in foreign policy. This is why, after the fall of the Soviet Union, the State found in the Russian Church the source of a new ideology and of a way to strengthen his mandate overcoming the legitimization crisis (Curanovic, 2012).

Moscow gargantuan Cathedral of Christ the Saviour and the giant monument to Vladimir the Great are visible testimonies to the Orthodox Church position in the national, spiritual and political life of Russia. Decreed to be built by Tzars Aleksandr I to commemorate the Russian forces’ victory over –Napoleon in 1812 the cathedral was destroyed by Stalin command forty-eight years later his consecration in 1883. The remnants of the foundation were made into an open-air swimming pool which closed in 1993. In 1994 Mayor Iurii Luzhkov announced that the cathedral would be reconstructed: it was consecrated in September 1997 (Knox, 2005).

On November 2017 a monument was unveiled in Moscow to Vladimir the Great, the Prince under whose rule the Kievan Rus’ was Christianized in 988. In a symbolic perspective, not only is important to note that the monument is placed just outside the Kremlin walls (watching toward the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour), but also the context of the meeting of his inauguration, attended by a number of selected Russian leaders. The group picture shows the Patriarch standing up front next to President Vladimir Putin and the other religious leader lined up in the first row of the audience. This image has made easy understanding the Russian model of church-state relations: the state is Orthodox, the President and the Patriarch are on the top, and other religions are bystanders and minor partners.

2. Discussion and results

Church-State relation in Contemporary Russia

On which principles are based nowadays Church-State relation in Russia?

With the fall of the Soviet Union the Russian Orthodox Church regained freedom but not the privileges it had enjoyed before the Revolution and not a substantial State support. Moreover, soon enough was clear that the benefits of religious freedom and pluralism could have been a threat to the own position of the Russian Orthodox Church. In order to face the growing competition of the other religious communities, the Russian Orthodox Church under Patriarch Alexi II decided to seek a refuge under the wing of a close collaboration with the State. At the same time, as has been underlined before, the Kremlin recognized some privileges in supporting the Russian Orthodox Church as an institution perceived positively by the majority of Russians . Therefore, we can affirm that the complementarity of respective interests, provided the incentives for a Church-State rapprochement in post-soviet Russia (Curanovic, 2015).

The extent of the Moscow Patriarchate’s presence in the political life of the country is indicative in order to understand the influence of the Russian Orthodox Church on civil society as well. We should note that the Russian Constitution affirms: 1) the separation of Church and State, that Russian Federation is 2) a secular state, that 3)no religion may be established as state religion

* We refer here to the phenomenon of “belonging without believing”, post-Soviet sociological variations of the Western of the theme “believing without belonging”.

or a compulsory religion, and that 4) religious associations are separated from the state and equal before the law. This is the article 4.1 of the Russian Constitution. But, in order to grasp Church State interplay in Russia today is important considering that any endeavour to assess the relation of religion and politics on the basis only of the constitutions is reductionist: it is important to consider the political development considering the development of civil society as well. Moreover, it is important to read the principles affirmed in the Constitution not referring to “our” “own” categories, but considering the cultural history of the country and the link between identity and religion to which we have referred before (Knox, 2005).

The set of concrete demands the Moscow Patriarchate developed vis-à-vis the State, with minor variants have remained the same since 1990s: restitutions of Church’s properties, the introduction of an “Orthodox” element to education in all levels of public schooling, the introduction of Orthodox chaplains into the armed forces; and, the restriction of competition from the ROC’s rivals in the religious field, in particular religious organization with foreign support (Papkova, 2011).

The Bases of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church, a document on the Patriarchate’s conception on the Orthodox Church’s political and social role and on the challenges the Church has to dealt with, adopted in mid August 2000, is fundamental in order to grasp this relation. In the document Russian Orthodox Church’ perception of Church-State relations is thus explained: “In church-state relations, the difference in their natures should be taken into account. The Church has been founded by God Himself, our Lord Jesus Christ, while the God-instituted nature of state power is revealed in historical process only indirectly. The goal of the Church is the eternal salvation of people, while the goal of state is their well-being on earth.” (III. 3, mospat.ru). Moreover, it is specified: “the tasks and work of the Church and the state may coincide not only in seeking purely earthly welfare, but also in the fulfilment of the salvific mission of the Church” (mospat.ru). At paragraph III. 4 we read that the historical Church-State symphonia is not compatible with a modern state: “The Orthodox tradition has developed an explicit symphonic ideal of church–state relations. Since church–state relations are two-way traffic, the above-mentioned ideal could emerge in history only in a state that recognises the Orthodox Church as the greatest people’s shrine, in other words, only in an Orthodox state”.

Both Alexei and Kirill stated that Church wishes to be separated from the State* and they clarified as well that “The principle of the secular state cannot be understood as implying that religion should be radically forced out of all the spheres of the people’s life, that religious associations should be debarred from decision-making on socially significant problems and deprived of the right to evaluate the actions of the authorities. This principle presupposes only a certain division of domains between church and state and their non-interference into each other’s affairs”. Moreover, the document made explicit Church’s perception of church state cooperation in a long list. At paragraph III. 8, we can read:

The areas of church–state co-operation in the present historical period are as follows:

- a) peacemaking on international, inter-ethnic and civic levels and promoting mutual understanding and co-operation among people, nations and states;
- b) concern for the preservation of morality in society;
- c) spiritual, cultural, moral and patriotic education and formation;
- d) charity and the development of joint social programs;
- e) preservation, restoration and development of the historical and cultural heritage, including concern for the preservation of historical and cultural monuments;
- f) dialogue with governmental bodies of all branches and levels on issues important for the Church and society, including the development of appropriate laws, by-laws, instructions and decisions;
- g) care of the military and law-enforcement workers and their spiritual and moral education;
- h) efforts to prevent crime and care of prisoners;
- i) science and research;
- j) healthcare;
- k) culture and arts;

* [Kirill, the Russian Orthodox Church and the third millennium, and Patriarch Alexei’s statement in many interviews that “Church is separated from the state but nor from society” (Knox, 2005; Papkova, 2011).

- l) work of ecclesiastical and secular mass media;
- m) preservation of the environment;
- n) economic activity for the benefit of the Church, state and society;
- o) support for the institution of family, for motherhood and childhood;
- p) opposition to the work of pseudo-religious structures presenting a threat to the individual and society.

I would ask to point out attention to points C, F, and G, that clearly refers to the historical Orthodox role in the country. The cooperation with the State declared at point f, is then perfectly clarified at points I, l, and p (which clearly refers to the 1997 religious law and to the “managed pluralism”) (Knox, 2005).

Now, I will briefly refer to the main issues that I think may help to understand what is underlined in the document, that are the concepts of: managed pluralism, sovereign democracy, traditional values/modernity, spiritual security.

Managed pluralism

Nikolas Gvosden has pointed out that there exist an important connection between the post Soviet “managed” or “hierarchical” pluralism and the role of the ROC in Russia’s identity (Wharola, 2006). The problematic question of Russian identity firstly has surfed with the new law on freedom of conscience adopted in 1990. The law asserted freedom of conscience and religion as an inalienable right of the citizen, proclaimed the equality of forms of religious belief, affirmed the separation of Church and State; moreover religious movements were granted the right to practise all religious activities, and the procedure for registration which enables religious communities to acquire the status of legal entity was very simple. As we already said, this religious pluralism was soon perceived by the ROC as a threat and it undertook an effective lobbying to amend it. In 1997 a new federal religious law, drafted under pressure from the Russian Orthodox Church, was issued. In its preamble it affirms: “the special role of Orthodoxy in the history of Russia”. The affirmation in law of the existence of a dominant religion is accompanied by the specification of the so-called “traditional religions” and by a concern in classifying the various religious groups, distinguishing sects from the other religious movements. The distinction reminds the system of classification used by the Council for Religious Affairs: moreover, in the present law to the Soviet distinction between Russian and foreign religions as well as to the distinction between religious groups having relations with the State and those groups outside its control, has been added the criteria of “tradition” (Rousselet, 2000). This is confirmed by the restrictions to the registration of “non-traditional religious groups” and by the cases of some religious groups appointed as extremist as Jenovah Witnesses*. The Russian attitude toward religious pluralism may be understood referring also to the Basic Principles of Attitudes to the Non-Orthodox, in which is affirmed that the Orthodox Church is the true Church of Christ’, and is claimed that Russia’s church is the Church of the “canonical territory” and minorities have the right to work only in the territories that belong to them (Anderson, 2016). Indeed the administration of religious pluralism has been assimilated by Putin administration to the strengthen of the State, as confirmed by the new national security concept which see the “moral and religious education” as a matter of the State and the “harmful influence of foreign missionaries” to be controlled. This is confirmed by the agreements between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Federal Government regarding army and education (Doklad v rabochey gruppe: Doklad Predsedatelya Uchebnogo Komiteta pri Svyashchennom Sinode arkhiepiskopa Vereyskogo Yevgeniya, cooperation agreement between the ROC and the ministry of Education signed in April 2000 (Curanovic, 2012; Rousselet, 2000).

Managed democracy

The issue of managed pluralism lead us to focus more on the concept of “managed democracy”.

Politicians, the experts serving the government and the party United Russia have produced several documents, statements, formulations on the issue of “sovereign democracy”. In order to grasp the concept, central among them is the speech that Vladislav Surkov made in 2006 to

* Art. 9 of the 1997 law on freedom of conscience.

students of United Russia's Center for Party Personnel Training, and his article titled "The Nationalization of the Future".

The time and place of the publication prove that the concept should be viewed as an attempt to formulate Putin's discourse in the form of a textual/contextual political quintessence of the current era, not as a mere ideological party platform (Okara, 2007). The basic features of sovereign democracy may be considered: the primacy of sovereignty over democracy and a sovereign Russian democratic institutional development which does not correspond to Western standards (Petrov, 2005). In order to understand this system is important to identify the coordinates of sovereign democracy on the map's of Russian intellectual culture: an analysis of Surkov's document reveals that the author borrowed the bulk of his ideas from the conservative/revolutionary ideology and political philosophy (Okara, 2007). Indeed, the term refers to three central findings of the system: first, this system has enabled Russia's leaders to govern more by a non-participation pact with society than by outright repression. Second, the more centralized this system becomes, the more likely political outcomes are to diverge from social ideals, and the more vulnerable the regime becomes to shocks. The survival of the regime depends heavily on the personal reputation and skills of the top leaders, who must increasingly exercise manual control over the system. And third, political outcomes in a hybrid regime are closer to social ideals and the system is less vulnerable than would be the case in a regime that relies primarily on outright repression—allowing no political opposition to exist and creating no substitutions to serve any of the functions of democratic institutions. But the authors conclude that while overmanaged democracy may be stable in the short term, it will not last in the long term. I think it is not possible to say if this system, in Russia's case, will survive Putin himself (Petrov et al., 2010). The system has been qualified as a "democracy that accords with Russian traditional values", Religion's role in the evolution of the political system may be recognized in the scepticism about liberalism that the Church and the political system saw as characterizing Western society. I quote here Metropolitan Kirill: "the fundamental contradiction of our epoch...is the opposition of liberal civilised standards on the one hand, and the values of national, cultural and religious identity on the other" (2000), and Fr Vsevolod Chaplin, one of the Moscow Patriarchate's leading spokesmen on public affairs, who stated that a government that 'rejects religious authority and declares the government independent from God... it is rooted in competition... The Church's ideal is the nation as a living organism, a unified body that sees disagreements as unnatural and unhealthy'. Moreover, in terms of priorities, the primary aim of the church should be less with democratic development than 'uniting its forces in service to the fatherland and the nation'(Chaplin 2004 in Anderson 2015). So, the objection to the idea that Western European norms should be depicted as universal and determinative for Russia, and this approach dovetailed nicely with the evolving Kremlin's ideas about 'sovereign democracy' (Anderson, 2015).

Now, I would focus more on the concepts of traditional values, human rights and liberalism, concepts which came from the foregoing discussion.

Tradition/traditional values/modernity

As we explained before, the concept of "sovereign democracy", embraced by the Kremlin after the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004–2005, although later disappeared from its agenda, showed the logic that Russia must stay true to its political tradition, and not be judged according to Western standards. Indeed, the term "sovereign democracy" was followed by the concept of *Russkij Mir* (community of ethnic Russian in and outside the territory of the Russian Federation). A logical consequences of presenting Russia as a distinctive civilization universe was to define Russia's own set of values, set of values different from the Western ones. A good example of this tendency may be found in Putin's speech delivered to the participants of the Valdai Discussion club in September 2013. In his speech Putin went to identify traditional values exclusively with religious values, declaring that defending Christian values is the only right thing a state can do, and stated that if one wants to learn about true Russian tradition, one should refer to Russian Orthodoxy. This has been the main thesis of the dynamic conservatism promoted by the United Russia's party and, of course, by the Moscow Patriarchate that, in 2011 issued a document entitled "The Basic Values: the Fundamentals of National Unity". The document provides a catalogue of 17 values which combined with some laws enacted in recent years in the Russian Federation, illustrate Russian Federation's efforts to shape public morality in an increasingly rigid manner. We can affirm that what exactly

tradition means for Orthodox and political rhetoric (in a secular sense) is that the efficiency of Russian modernization is conditioned by the revival of tradition, that is identified with religion (Curanovic, 2015). In broader term, we should understand the use of tradition here as associated with “morality”, the field that is become the main focus of the church’s presence in public debate*.

But, coming back to our paper Alexander Agadjanian recognises in the capitalistic, libertarian and legalistic moral options the connection with western values and the link to new post-soviet freedoms. According to Agadjanian these spheres have created a new interpretation of community and of individual subjectivity. Proceeding from Zigon’s theory of multiple moralities or Stoeckl’s theory of the Russian Orthodox Church as moral norm entrepreneur, we can affirm that Russian Orthodoxy gradually shaped itself into an opposition to the moral programmes of the new era, therefore we should note that while the 90s was the time of the church and the country’s liberation from the communist grip, traditional values so the Russian Orthodox Church, serves as a channel to transmit continuity with the Soviet past in the sphere of conservative ethos and morality. Of course, referring to the transmission of the moral Soviet package requires a complex analysis, but we could find in the rhetoric of the solid and traditional family, in the inequality of the gender roles, in the emphasis on responsibilities rather than rights, in the ones on intra-collective social control and solidarity, on the priority of the ‘spiritual’ over the ‘material’; on sexual (self)restraint; homophobia; and the subjugation of individual interests and expressions to the collective good, the main pillars which constituted this moral programme: inherited from the Soviet past, they have been sacralised and subsumed in a longer continuity of the Russian history (Agadjanian, 2017).

This attitude toward morality and traditional values should be considered from what Kristina Stoeckl named “norm entrepreneurship”, term used in international relations to describe the “normative agency of actors in transnational governance regimes”. Stoeckl underlines that focusing on the internal multivocality is crucial in order to understand the role of the Russian Orthodox Church in Russian society today. The position of the Russian Orthodox Church as defender of traditional values in and outside the country, means also that the position of the Russian Church with regard to human rights changed from a total rejection of human rights as a western invention to endorsing human rights as concept, but using it in a way that was different from the liberal and egalitarian evolution of the international human rights system. The ROC confronts itself with the international human rights system in a non-static way in order to “expand and grant freedom and equality to individuals and groups that are not, at least not in the eyes of those protagonists, representative of the traditional majority population or culture of a country”. This resentment may be sensitized in a quotation from a representative of the Moscow Patriarchate in Strasburg: “The Russian Church believes that state and society should secure rights of all citizens and not only some of them. Minorities’ rights shouldn’t be secured at the expense of majority’s rights’ (Ryabykh 2010a in Stoeckl, 2016). Therefore, we can say that the ROC opposes not human rights tout court, but the gradual egalitarian evolution of the human rights system. In particular, what the Russian Orthodox Church opposes is the “norm diffusion” doing this thanks to the “discover of article 29” of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which allows the church “to position itself no longer simply in opposition to a western progressive understanding of human rights, but instead to actively present itself as the vanguard of a more original understanding of human rights, an understanding which emphasises the importance of morality, duties and community”. This shift was the precondition for the ROC to become moral norm entrepreneur in the field of the international morality politics: the ROC coupled its traditional values agenda with article 29 in order to universalize the message of traditional values (Stoeckl, 2016). We may affirm that this concept, together with the relation with the state that derives from the Social Doctrine testifies of how the Russian Orthodox Church deals with secularism and religious pluralism, with believers, politics and society and, widely, they also concern the idea of the Church’s position in the world. Relation between Russian Church and Russia in general, may be well understood referring to this question by at that time still Metropolitan of Smolensk and Kaliningrad Kirill: “..The question arises here: Can human rights as set forth today really claim to be universal? (Metropolitan Kirill of

* Outside this paper is the debate, widely important, about the clash between conservative East and liberal West with regard to traditional values on which, in particular, D. Ulzner and Kristina Stoeckl’s project on post-secular conflicts works. The recent World Family Congress held in Italy last March offers an important angle from which considering the debate.

Smolensk and Kaliningrad, 2006, in [Stoeckl, 2011](#)). This statement from Kirill obliges to think from a multiple modernities perspectives Russia's relation with human rights and with West: and to consider that what have found in the West an adequate interpretation may be not the same adequate elsewhere ([Stoeckl, 2015](#)). The argumentation on human rights put in the centre of the debate the relationship between secularity and religion in the West and therefore, the debate on modernity. The issue not only concerns the process of redefinition of Orthodox religion inside the society, but also the debate we referred before about conservatism and liberalism in the West and in Russia.

In a recent talk to Aljazeera, Metropolitan Hilarion confirmed that the "ROC is in a battle with liberalism, clarifying that this is not a battle of theological and religious reasons only, not related to the issue of whether God exist and how we understand God, it is by large a battle for human life and for the future of humanity, so it is not so much a theological dispute as it is an anthropological dispute. When we speak about liberal values we understand the liberal society as happens in many countries of the West", therefore is important clarifying the relation of the Church with same sex unions, for instance, pointing out on the importance of the meaning of the word "marriage" in a religious/theological perspective ([Aljazeera, 2014](#)).

Indeed we have seen that the ROC has had a crucial role to play in legitimizing the Kremlin's role as defender of "traditional values", and, for this reason, the ROC has become an indispensable instrument in the Kremlin's foreign policy strategy, in particular in defending and promoting the idea of the Russkij Mir that, according to the Russian state and the Church's narrative, must resist Western liberalism and preserve traditional values as a way to achieve its own sphere of influence considered as a power status to be defended and strengthened: this is view as an essential component of Russian identity ([Curanovic, 2015](#)), – and, as Minister Lavrov recently noted, should be common for all leading religions – (Lavrov, 2018 in [Curanovic 2015](#)).

3. Conclusion

Finally, proceeding from this analysis, we can state that the restored church-state symphonia, in post-soviet period assumed different characteristics from the ones on which were based church-state collaboration in the soviet period*: its main features is the major presence of the Church in Russia's internal and foreign affairs[†] met up with the Kremlin's task "to preserve and maintain the status quo in Europe that emerged after the breakup of the Soviet Union... – as far as – Russia is not seeking to revise the existing balance of power, but nor will it tolerate attempts to stamp out its regional influence, which is the West's principal goal". For this reason, Russia "cannot but considered itself a social phenomenon different from the West; in other words, a special "civilization" with its own orbit and power of attraction. Naturally, Russia can explain its right to a special "sphere of influence" by its special sense of belonging to Europe and its greater sense of enlightenment with regard to the countries to which such influence could be applied. We call this policy "delegated hegemony" (a situation where the "right" to international hegemony in the near abroad is delegated to Russia by the collective "West" in exchange for its loyalty on matters of global politics)". This has been the main policy on post-soviet period. But, considering that from the moment when Russia used all the possible means of integration with the West for geopolitical reasons, all hope for the revival of delegated hegemony have been dropped, this just left to Russia the appeal to "civilizational rhetoric" as a marker of its distinction from the Euro Atlantic world. The meaning of this distinction may be understood referring to this quotation by President Putin of the by prominent nineteenth-century Russian thinker Nikolai Danilevsky: "it is impossible to imagine the history of humanity without such unique civilizations as India, China, Western Europe, America, and many others. It is really a multifaceted complexity where each facet supplements and enriches the others...No civilization can call itself supreme, the most developed one. Today the understanding of the complexity of civilizational development provides the foundation for building a multipolar world and defending the principles of international law. The weight and the influence

* See Roccucci, Stalin e il Patriarca, Riccardi, il Vaticano e Mosca.

[†] This may be linked according to some scholars to the arrival of metropolitan Kirill at the Department for External Relation of the Moscow Patriarchate, to his leadership, his presence in the media, his relations with the outside world and in the way he lobbied the state to defend the interests of the Church (see in particular [Papkova, 2001](#)).

of its poles on the common development will, of course, be determined by their economic, scientific, cultural, spiritual, and human potential” (Putin, 2018 in [Mezhuev, 2019](#)).

And, of course, the enlisting of Orthodoxy in shaping this new nation has been natural in Russia, given its link with the dominant ethnos, but we should also pay attention to which may be considered the real weight of the role of Russian Church in Russian society ([Agadjanian, 2000](#)) and considering this “special separate civilization” starting from the revival of identities which has led the process of inclusion into the global world ([Rousselet, 2000](#)). Starting from these consideration we can better grasp the relation of Russia with the West and with “western modernity”.

References

- [Agadjanian, 2000](#) – *Agadjanian, A.* (2000). Religious Pluralism and National identity in Russia in Religious Diversity in the Russian Federation. *International Journal on Multicultural Societies (IJMS) – United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*. Vol. 2, No 2, pp. 97-124.
- [Agadjanian, 2017](#) – *Agadjanian, A.* (2017). Tradition, morality and community: elaborating Orthodox identity in Putin’s Russia. *Religion, State & Society*. 45(1): 39-60.
- [Anderson, 2016](#) – *Anderson, J.* (2016). Religion, state and ‘sovereign democracy’ in Putin’s Russia. *Journal of Religious and Political Practice*, Vol. 2, pp. 249-266.
- [Curanović, Leustean, 2015](#) – *Curanović, A., Leustean, L.N.* (2015). The Guardians of Traditional Values. *Russian and the Russian Orthodox Church in the quest for Status, Transatlantic Academy Paper Series No. 1*. Washington, DC: Transatlantic Academy, pp. 1-26.
- [Curanovic, 2012](#) – *Curanovic, A.* (2012). The religious factor in Russia’s Foreign Policy. London and New York, Routledge Contemporary Russian and Eastern European Politics Series.
- [Federal law no. 125-FZ of September 26](#) – Federal law no. 125-FZ of September 26, 1997. On the freedom of conscience and religious association [Electronic resource]. URL: www.legislationonline.org
- [Knox, 2005](#) – *Knox, Z.* (2005). Russian Society and the Orthodox Church: Religion in Russia After Communism, London and New York, Routledge Curzon.
- [Metropolitan Hilarion](#) – Metropolitan Hilarion: Unholy conflict. [Electronic resource]. URL: www.youtube.com
- [Mezhuev, 2019](#) – *Mezhuev, B.V.* (2019). Civilizational Realism”, Russia in Global Affairs.
- [Okara, 2007](#) – *Okara, A.* (2007). Sovereign Democracy: A New Russian Idea Or a PR Project? *Russia in Global Affairs*. Vol. 5, No 3.
- [Papkova, 2011](#) – *Papkova, I.* (2011). Russian Orthodox concordat? Church and state under Medvedev. *Nationalities Papers*. Vol. 39, N° 5, pp. 667-683.
- [Petrov et al., 2010](#) – *Petrov, N., Lipman, M., Hale, H.E.* (2010). Overmanaged Democracy in Russia: Governance Implications of Hybrid Regimes. *Carnegie papers*, Russia and Eurasia program, N° 106.
- [Rousselet, 2000](#) – *Rousselet, K.* (2000). The Challenges of Religious Pluralism in Post-Soviet Russia in Religious Diversity in the Russian Federation. *International Journal on Multicultural Societies (IJMS) – United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*. Vol. 2, No 2, pp. 55-75.
- [Stoeckl, 2011](#) – *Stoeckl, K.* (2011). European integration and Russian Orthodoxy: Two multiple modernities perspectives. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 14(2), pp. 217-233.
- [Stoeckl, 2016](#) – *Stoeckl, K.* (2016). The Russian Orthodox Church as moral norm entrepreneur. *Religion, State & Society*. Vol. 44, No. 2, pp. 132-151.
- [The Basis of the Social Concept](#) – The Basis of the Social Concept. [Electronic resource]. URL: mospat.ru
- [Warhola, 2006](#) – *Warhola, J.W.* (2006). Religion and Politics Under the Putin Administration: Accommodation and Confrontation within “Managed Pluralism”. *Journal of Church and State*, Vol. 49, pp. 75-95.