

Church and State in the Orthodox World Today and the Challenges of the Global Age

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Diversity in the Orthodox World

Perhaps most of you know that the Orthodox world, i.e., societies where the majority of the population are affiliated with Orthodox Christianity, is broadly diverse. Some of these countries, such as Greece, Cyprus, Romania, Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Ukraine and Georgia, are already part of the Western political alliance to varying degrees. On the other side is the authoritarian Russian Federation, with its closely allied countries like Belarus, Serbia and Moldova. It is not a unified space, but one of a great variety of types or models of church-state relationships, ranging from “established Church” to “strict separation.” A further difficulty – and even a paradox in our topic – is that, legally speaking, the most secular country with a strict church-state separation model like Russia, is more authoritarian and much less democratic than, for example, Greece, which reflects an imperfect secular model and has an establishment type of church-state relationships.¹ Balkan countries such as Bulgaria, Serbia, Romania, North Macedonia and Montenegro are working democracies that sometimes suffer from economic problems and political corruption, but no one can doubt their democratic regimes. The respect for human and religious rights is part of their political system.² International human rights reports for some of these countries, however, reveal unflattering facts. During the last decade, Ukraine and Georgia left the Russian sphere of influence and still have problems with economic freedom, but they have made some remarkable achievements in securing human rights and political freedom. In all these achievements, however, one can observe features of a crisis in church-state relationships. It is a specific problem in their social life.

With the breakup of the Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires after WWI, the Orthodox Church entered a deep crisis that reflects events

1 See Pantelis Kalaitzidis, “Church and State in the Orthodox World: From the Byzantine ‘Symphonia’ and Nationalized Orthodoxy, to the Need of Witnessing the Word of God in a Pluralistic Society,” in *Religioni, Liberta, otere: Atti del Convegno Internazionale Filosofico-Teologico Sulla Liberta Religiosa*, ed. Emanuela Fogliadini (Milan: V&V Vita e Pensiero 2014), 39–74.

2 Kalaitzidis, “Church and State.”

dating back to the late Middle Ages. To be sure, the dependence on the particular model of complete legal convergence between secular and ecclesiastical law in Byzantium (and its satellite countries like Bulgaria, Serbia, Valahia, Georgia and Armenia³) has left its traces in the particular reflexes of Orthodox Christians to the surrounding world. The obligations of the Orthodox Church in the Ottoman Empire, i.e., to represent Christians before the sultan and to function as a court and tax collector, also had an impact, as did the particular hybrid form of state control, following the Protestant model, of the Russian church by the tsar. The Austro-Hungarian discriminative regime also exerted some influence on the Orthodox Christians in its territory.⁴

The so-called National Churches, which appeared in the new national states in the territories of the old empires, have chosen different constitutional models. Nevertheless, they share some common features. According to Pantelis Kalaitzidis, they share the cultural legacy of Byzantium.⁵ Regardless of their constitutional regime, all these countries exercise state intervention under unwritten laws in the religious affairs in support of the Orthodox Church in a discreet (democratic regimes) or brutal (authoritarian regimes) manner for purely political purposes.⁶ Undoubtedly, behind this political practice lies a certain public mood that politicians take into account.

Religion and National Identity

In May 2017, the Pew Research Center⁷ published a study on *Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe*. The results give a realistic and intriguing picture of the religious self-consciousness of the Christians in the region and emphasize the specific approach of the Orthodox Christians to the relationship between church and state. Here I shall present just some points and elements of the study related to my topic that explain the political practice in question and the problems that may occur in the near future.

3 The Armenian Church is included in this study because of Armenia's social structure and history. Nevertheless, its Church is not part of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

4 See S. Riboloff, "The Orthodox Church in the Ottoman Empire and its Perspectives for Theological Dialogue," *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe* 33 (2013), 7–24.

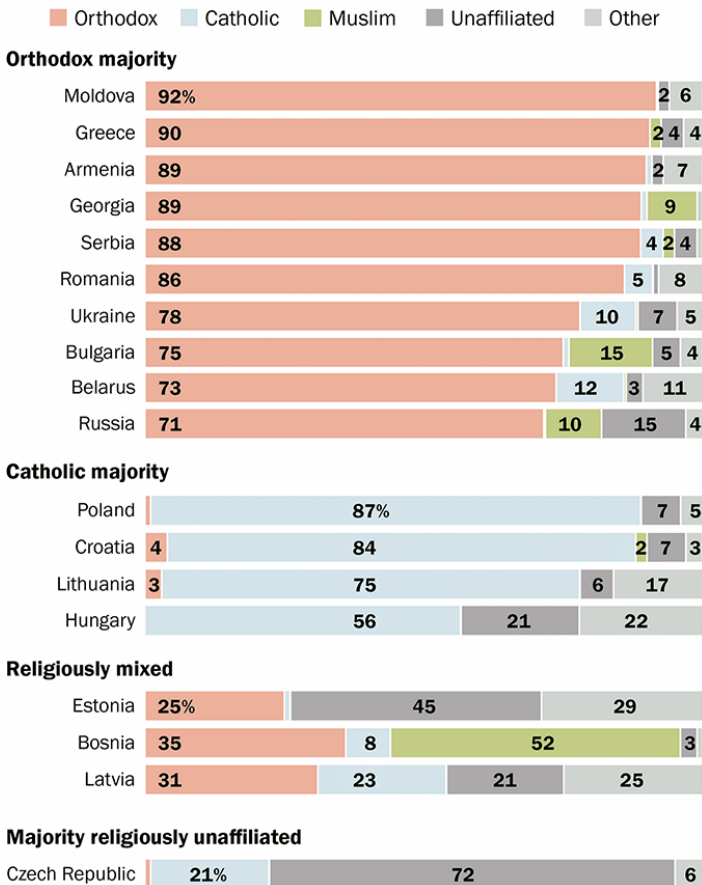
5 Kalaitzidis, "Church and State," 39–40.

6 Kalaitzidis, "Church and State," 39–40.

7 See *Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe* <http://www.pewforum.org/2017/05/10/religious-belief-and-national-belonging-in-central-and-eastern-europe/> (accessed 6 September 2019).

Religious landscape of Central and Eastern Europe

% who identify as ...



Note: 13% of respondents in Hungary identify as Presbyterian. In Estonia and Latvia, 20% and 19%, respectively, identify as Lutherans. And in Lithuania, 14% say they are “just a Christian” and do not specify a particular denomination. They are included in the “other” category. A negligible share of respondents in each country decline to answer the question. They are included in the “other” category. Source: Survey conducted June 2015-July 2016 in 18 countries.

See Methodology for details.

“Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe”

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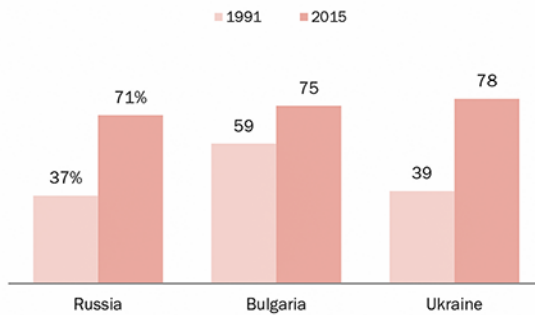
Fig. 14.1 Religious landscape of Central and Eastern Europe⁸

⁸ All figures are taken from the research of Pew Research Center: Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe. *National and religious identities converge in a*

This graph (Fig. 14.1) shows the general landscape in the region – Orthodox, Catholics, Protestants and Muslims. It can also be pointed out that the Orthodox Christianity is the dominant religion in the region but also coexists with considerable Catholic and Muslim communities. Unlike the communist era, when most citizens expressed their alienation from religion, the percentage of the so-called unaffiliated is now very small except in countries like the Czech Republic (72%), Estonia (45%), Latvia (21%) and Hungary (21%). The largest atheistic community is found in Russia (15%). Of the population of countries like Moldova, Georgia, Greece, Romania and Serbia, between 92 and 86% consider themselves Orthodox Christians. The number of those who view themselves as Orthodox Christians in the other countries in the study, such as Bulgaria, Belarus, Russia and Ukraine, suggests a greater diversity of religious ideas.

In Eastern Europe, sharp rise in share of adults who describe themselves as Orthodox Christians

% who identify as Orthodox



Note: 1991 data are from "Pulse of Europe" survey conducted by Pew Research Center's predecessor organization, the Times Mirror Center for the People & the Press. The 1991 survey in Russia excluded the eastern part of the country, which represents approximately 33% of the population. However, a survey conducted by the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) in all parts of Russia in the same year found the share of Orthodox in Russia to be roughly the same as the Times Mirror survey (31%).

Source: Survey conducted June 2015-July 2016 in 18 countries. See Methodology for details.

"Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe"

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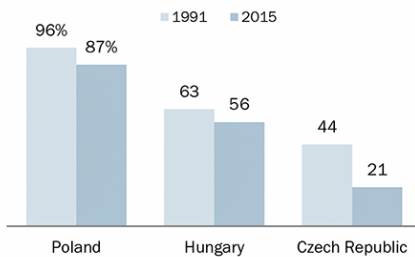
Fig. 14.2 In Eastern Europe, sharp rise in share of adults who describe themselves as Orthodox Christians

region once dominated by atheist regimes. May 2017, <https://www.pewforum.org/2017/05/10/religious-belief-and-national-belonging-in-central-and-eastern-europe/> (accessed 23 October 2021).

According to the study in question, after the fall of the atheist regimes in the early 1990s, interest in religious beliefs rose sharply, and the authority of the traditional social structures as a whole increased (Fig. 14.2). One can observe a considerable difference between 1991 and 2015 in Russia, Bulgaria and Ukraine. If Bulgaria experienced a rise of about 16%, in Russia and Ukraine it was huge – almost 40%.

Catholic shares declining in parts of Central Europe

% who identify as Catholic



Note: Data from 1991 for Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic are from a 1991 survey by Pew Research Center's predecessor, the Times Mirror Center for the People & the Press. In Hungary, the 1991 survey used a two-step religion question (respondents were first asked if they identify with a religion; those who said "yes" were then asked to identify their religion). Typically, two-step questions yield a considerably lower share of people identifying with a religion than one-step questions, suggesting that in Hungary, the decline of the share of the Catholic population may have been steeper. Czechs were polled as part of Czechoslovakia in 1991. Only results for Czech speakers are shown.

Source: Survey conducted June 2015-July 2016 in 18 countries. See Methodology for details.

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Fig. 14.3
Catholic shares declining in parts of Central Europe

This graph can be easily explained. In these three cases, the rise in interest is a result of political conflicts. In Bulgaria in the 1980s, the communist regime was carrying out a strongly nationalistic and anti-Muslim propaganda programme and used the Orthodox cultural heritage of the Bulgarian people to this end. So the state mobilized people in accordance with their affiliation with the Orthodox Church and the trauma of the Ottoman past of the country. On other hand, after 1989, the Russian state started searching for a new ideology to replace the communist one.⁹ At the same time, Ukraine was implementing a

9 See S. Riboloff, "Η Αγία και Μεγάλη Σύνοδος και ο Όρθόδοξος Νεοσυντηρητισμός" [The Holy and Great Council and Orthodox Neoconservatism], paper presented at *The 8th International Conference of Orthodox Theology: The Holy and the Great Council of the Orthodox Church:*

People in former Soviet republics see their countries as more religious today than in 1970s and 1980s

% who say ...

Post-Soviet republics	Their country is very/somewhat religious today	Their country was very/somewhat religious in 1970s & 1980s	Difference
Georgia	87%	25%	+62
Ukraine	59	15	+44
Russia	55	15	+40
Armenia	81	52	+29
Belarus	57	29	+28
Latvia	43	23	+20
Estonia	23	11	+12
Lithuania	53	49	+4
Moldova	46	56	-10
<i>Other countries</i>			
Serbia	69%	46%	+23
Bosnia	75	53	+22
Bulgaria	53	33	+20
Croatia	73	64	+9
Hungary	51	47	+4
Czech Republic	22	30	-8
Greece	60	87	-27
Romania	59	86	-27
Poland	56	86	-30

Note: Statistically significant differences are highlighted in bold.
 Source: Survey conducted June 2015-July 2016 in 18 countries. See Methodology for details.
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Fig. 14.4 People in former Soviet republics see their countries as more religious today than in 1970s and 1980s

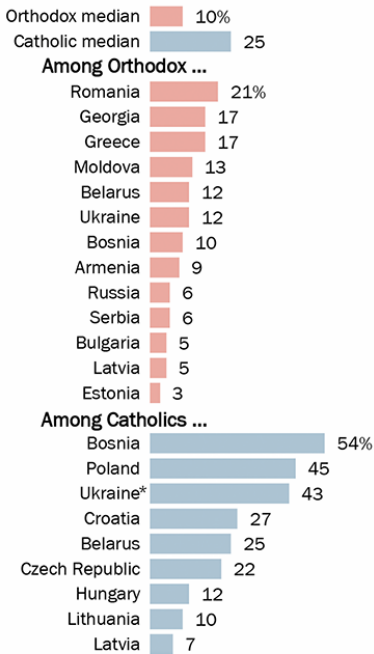
new national identity programme also closely related to Orthodox Christianity. Its Orthodox Church became a very important element for distancing the nation from aggressive Russian interventionism. Simultaneously, a considerable decline in interest in religious practices can be detected in the countries with a Catholic majority population (Fig. 14.3).

Orthodox Theology in the 21st Century, ed. Dimitra Koukoura, Anna Nikita-Koltsiou and Anna Karamanidou, Thessaloniki, 21–25 May 2020, 65–71.

If one compares the results for the whole region, the countries that are closer to Moscow – in line with pro-Russian sentiments – indicate an intensification of interest in religion since the 1970s. In the countries where Russia has more influence, these tendencies are related to Orthodox Christianity to a greater degree (Fig. 14.4). Pro-Western countries display an obvious tendency towards less interest in a nominal declaration of religious affiliation. In these countries, faith appears less intense and less politicized. Nevertheless, the people in these countries are better informed about religion and appear to be more interested in active practice (fewer people, but more active).

Relatively low shares of Orthodox across Central and Eastern Europe attend church weekly

% who say they attend church weekly



* In Ukraine, most Catholics identify as Byzantine Rite Eastern Catholics, whereas in most other countries, Catholics are Roman Catholics.

Source: Survey conducted June 2015-July 2016 in 18 countries. See Methodology for details.

"Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe"

Fig. 14.5
Relatively low shares of Orthodox across Central and Eastern Europe attend church weekly

The opposite is true of the Orthodox. As a whole, there is a tendency towards less interest in church services and mission, i.e., the active practice of religion (Fig. 14.5). The graph here shows the weekly attendance at church services. Orthodox Christians are less active than Catholics. This strongly contradicts the canon law of the Orthodox Church because anyone who does not receive the Eucharist at least four times per year excludes himself or herself from the Church. On this point, already it is obvious that, for the majority of nominal Orthodox Christians, national affiliation transforms into a religious one. In their minds, Orthodoxy is already a *political religion*. This graph shows us the level of importance religion has in someone's life. As we see here, personal faith is less important in the countries with atheist regimes in the near past. Religion then becomes social loyalty rather than personal spirituality.

Just 15% of Russians say religion ‘very important’

% who say religion is ____ in their lives

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not too/not at all important
Greece	55%	28%	17%
Bosnia	54	31	14
Armenia	53	34	13
Georgia	50	42	7
Romania	50	40	10
Croatia	42	34	24
Moldova	42	44	13
Serbia	34	47	18
Poland	29	48	20
Ukraine	22	45	30
Belarus	20	45	32
Bulgaria	19	49	31
Lithuania	16	43	40
Russia	15	42	38
Hungary	14	31	55
Latvia	10	34	53
Czech Republic	7	15	76
Estonia	6	25	68

Note: Don't know/refused responses are not shown.
 Source: Survey conducted June 2015-July 2016 in 18 countries. See Methodology for details.
 "Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe"

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Fig. 14.6 Just 15% of Russians say religion ‘very important’

‘Personal faith’ just one reason people identify as Orthodox, Catholic

% who say that to them personally, their religious identity is mainly a matter of...

	Personal faith	National culture/family tradition	Personal faith and family tradition/national culture	None/DK/ref.
Among Orthodox				
Armenia	34%	55%	8%	3%
Belarus	34	55	6	5
Bosnia	25	55	19	1
Bulgaria	34	37	27	2
Estonia	28	55	10	7
Georgia	57	29	13	2
Greece	41	26	32	1
Latvia	31	58	4	6
Moldova	50	41	6	3
Romania	32	48	19	2
Russia	35	52	8	6
Serbia	23	48	28	1
Ukraine	36	46	12	7
Among Catholics				
Belarus	40%	42%	18%	1
Bosnia	31	30	39	1
Croatia	34	36	29	1
Czech Republic	37	49	12	1
Hungary	13	76	7	4
Latvia	30	62	3	5
Lithuania	32	48	17	3
Poland	50	27	20	2
Ukraine	36	40	16	8

Note: Figures may not sum to 100% because of rounding.
 Source: Survey conducted June 2015-July 2016 in 18 countries. See Methodology for details.
 "Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe"

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Fig. 14.7 ‘Personal faith’ just on reason people identify as Orthodox, Catholic

As we can see in these graphs, personal belief does not play that important a role for the Orthodox majority. For instance, just 15% of Russians say that religion is very important in their everyday lives (Fig. 14.6). This point, i.e., that faith does not play an important role in personal life, leads to the conclusion that the most of the Orthodox Christians in Russia and the countries in the region view their Orthodox Church much more as a communal organization for social mobilization, i.e., the political element is much more important than the spiritual one (Fig. 14.7). For instance, there is also a graph regarding faith *in life after death*. Here the results, as seen in Fig. 16.8 are also very discouraging. Moreover, only 25% of Russians believe God exists, and only 30% of Bulgarians do so – much less than the Greeks, Georgians or Romanians (59 to 73%) (Fig. 14.8). As we have stated, a large section of Orthodox Christians view their religious identity as national and vice versa. In Central Europe, one can see a similar picture among the Catholics but to a lesser extent (Fig. 14.9).

While most believe in God, fewer are absolutely certain

% who say they ...

	Believe in God, absolutely certain	Believe in God, fairly certain	Believe in God, not too/not at all certain	Do not believe in God
Armenia	79%	15%	1%	4%
Georgia	73	22	2	1
Bosnia	66	24	4	4
Romania	64	28	2	4
Greece	59	26	7	6
Serbia	58	26	3	10
Croatia	57	24	5	10
Moldova	55	35	5	3
Poland	45	35	3	8
Lithuania	34	34	7	11
Ukraine	32	45	6	9
Bulgaria	30	40	7	17
Latvia	28	34	7	15
Belarus	26	47	11	9
Hungary	26	26	7	30
Russia	25	38	10	15
Czech Republic	13	13	3	66
Estonia	13	24	7	45

Note: Respondents who say "don't know/refused" as to whether they believe in God, or say "don't know/refused" as to how certain they are about their belief in God, are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted June 2015-July 2016 in 18 countries. See Methodology for details.

"Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe"

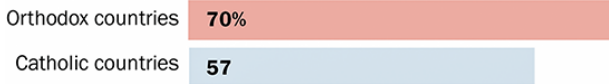
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Fig. 14.8 While most believe in God, fewer are absolutely certain

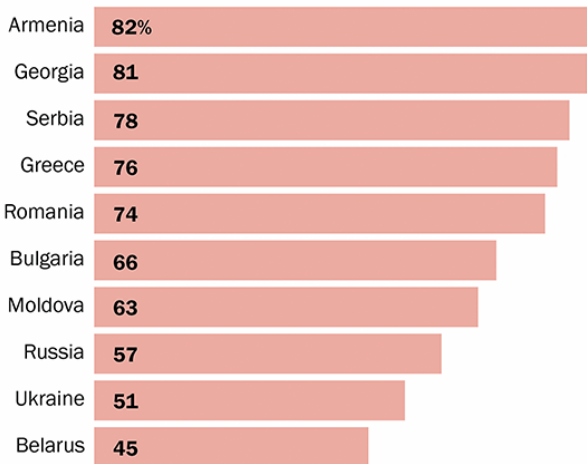
Strong association, especially in Orthodox-majority countries, between religion and national identity

% who say being Orthodox/Catholic is very or somewhat important to truly share their national identity

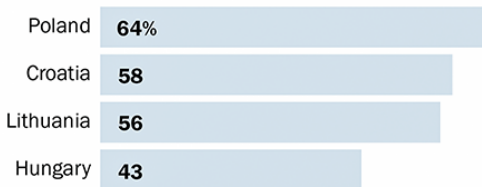
Median results of **surveyed countries**



Among those in **Orthodox-majority countries**, % who say being **Orthodox** is very or somewhat important to truly be a national of their country



Among those in **Catholic-majority countries**, % who say being **Catholic** is very or somewhat important to truly be a national of their country



Source: Survey conducted June 2015-July 2016 in 18 countries. See Methodology for details. "Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe"

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Fig. 14.9 Strong association, especially in Orthodox-majority countries, between religion and national identity

This is closely connected to the next phenomenon. A general mood of *cultural superiority* can be observed among Orthodox Christians (Fig. 14.10). While this is not strange to other Christians in Eastern Europe, it is very strong among the Orthodox. As this is characteristic of the whole region, even Greece, which has been part of the Western world for the last two centuries, it is perhaps a feature of a delayed modernization in the whole area. I really do not know if it has something to do with Byzantium. That these societies in Eastern and Southeastern Europe cannot at least admit to a true secularization speaks of a strong inertia on their part that is rooted in the past. Thus, it will not come as a surprise that the majority of Orthodox Christians do not support the freedom of expression of the different minority groups. Perhaps the only exception in this respect is Greece.

The next graph shows that the identification between nation and church naturally leads to mass support for governments promoting religion (Fig. 14.11). The people view the Church as a power for the consolidation of society and part of the governing elite. Another graph gives a paradoxical picture of Orthodox parents who are not inclined to offer religious education to their children.¹⁰ So here we again encounter an image of a political Orthodoxy that has nothing to do with spirituality. The study on the support for democracy among the people in the region is related to this topic. Orthodox Christians are deeply divided on this issue. Greeks traditionally support democracy, and Serbians, Russians, and Moldavians do not. As a whole, the Orthodox do not like democracy.

The support for Russia in the next graph is also disturbing (Fig. 14.12). A considerable percentage of the people in all the countries of East Europe consider Russia to be an equal counter to the West. It is not just sympathy but a widespread feeling for the presence of Russians in the region. In my opinion, this means that Russian media has created a broad imaginary propaganda space, and the so-called “Russian Worlds” is considered an alternative to the West.¹¹ If we delve deeper into the details of this topic, it seems that the countries that were longer under Russian influence and strong Russian propaganda during the last two decades are more susceptible to this propaganda. In these countries, we can find more Russian investments in the media business and more political representatives of the Russian interests – Belarus, Bulgaria, Hungary, Serbia, Bosnia, etc.

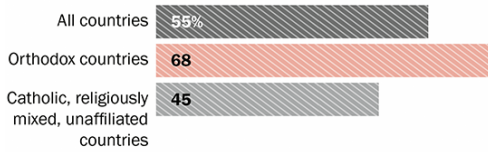
10 See *Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe* <http://www.pewforum.org/2017/05/10/religious-belief-and-national-belonging-in-central-and-eastern-europe/> (accessed 6 September 2019), 68, 78.

11 Sveto Riboloff, “Neo-Konservativizmat i choveshkite prava” [Neo-Conservatism and Human Rights], *Hristianstvo i kultura* 124 (2017), 35–47 (in Bulgarian).

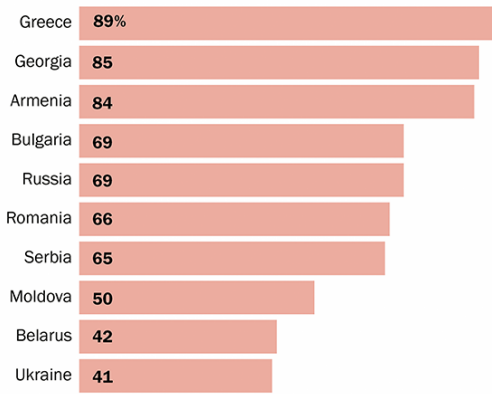
In Orthodox-majority countries, majorities say their culture is superior

% who completely/mostly agree with the statement, "Our people are not perfect, but our culture is superior to others."

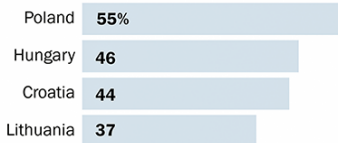
Median results of surveyed countries



Among those in Orthodox-majority countries



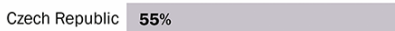
Among those in Catholic-majority countries



Among those in religiously mixed countries



Among those in majority religiously unaffiliated countries



Source: Survey conducted June 2015-July 2016 in 18 countries. See Methodology for details. "Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe"

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Fig. 14.10 In Orthodox-majority countries, majorities say their culture is superior

Higher support in Orthodox-majority countries for governments promoting religion

% who say governments should support the spread of religious values and beliefs in their country



Source: Survey conducted June 2015-July 2016 in 18 countries. See Methodology for details.

"Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe"

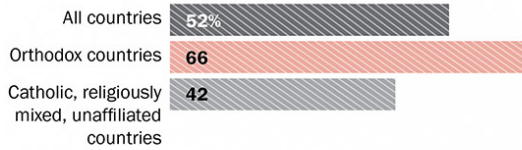
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Fig. 14.11
Higher support in Orthodox-majority countries for governments promoting religion

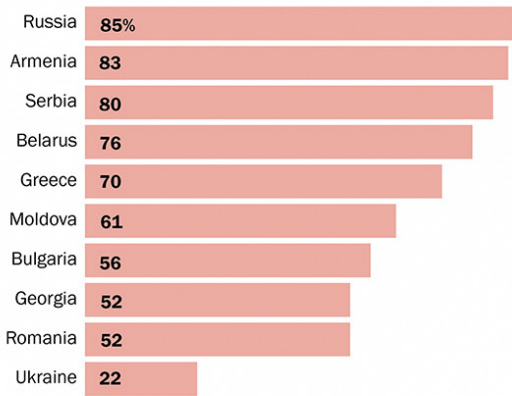
Majorities in Orthodox countries look to Russia to counter the West

% who completely or mostly agree with the statement, "A strong Russia is necessary to balance the influence of the West"

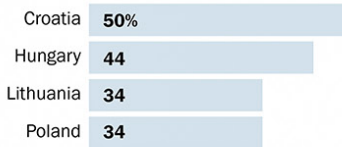
Median results of surveyed countries



Among those in Orthodox-majority countries



Among those in Catholic-majority countries



Among those in religiously mixed countries



Among those in majority religiously unaffiliated countries



Source: Survey conducted June 2015-July 2016 in 18 countries.

See Methodology for details.

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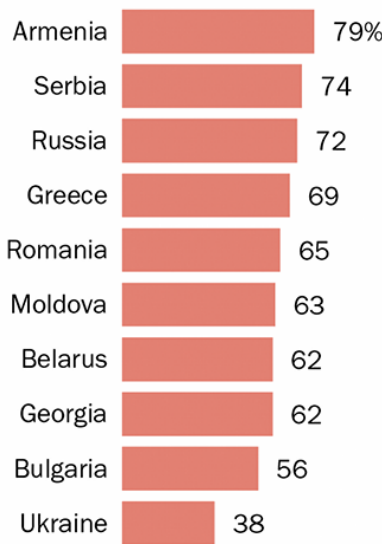
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Fig. 14.12 Majorities in Orthodox countries look to Russia to counter the West

I believe that the next graph is the most disturbing. It shows that most Orthodox Christians – at least in 2017 – support Russia as a protector of Orthodox Christians worldwide (Fig. 14.13). We can assume that in the last three years this influence has been diminished due to the conflict in Ukraine and the multiple attempts of the EU and NATO to tackle the information war.

In Orthodox-majority countries, widespread support for Russia protecting Orthodox Christians

% who say, “Russia has an obligation to protect Orthodox Christians outside its borders”



Source: Survey conducted June 2015-July 2016 in 18 countries. See Methodology for details.

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Fig. 14.13
In Orthodox-majority countries, widespread support for Russia protecting Orthodox Christians

Inferences and Forthcoming Challenges

According to this study, the following can be concluded.

1. A small number of Orthodox Christians practise their religious obligations and have interest in religious education, mission and spirituality.
2. In most Orthodox majority countries, the public image of Orthodoxy coincides with the nationalist party or the communal national organization with an anti-Western character. It explains the unwritten support of the states for the Orthodox churches.
3. In most countries, there is strong sympathy for the Russian authoritarian regime and Orthodoxy is seen as an anti-Western ideology to replace communist ideology. This explains the religious interventionism of Russia in all these countries. This certainly creates a problem between the church and state for countries that are now part of NATO and the EU.
4. Minority groups and human rights are also a problem for the Orthodox majority. This again creates a problem for the governments of the countries allied with the West because the Church starts looking like the defender of the values of the native peoples and the state starts looking like the external power that fights against them.
5. Support for democracy is generally very weak. This again turns into a serious problem for governments because many local Orthodox churches sometimes flirt with anti-democratic organizations.

It turns out that there are several points of concern between the Church and state in the Orthodox world today. Bearing these data in mind, we can conclude that no one government in the region, unless it is extremely reformist, can actually make the separation of Church and state a reality. The strong identification between Church and nationality confounds every single attempt by every government to interfere in Church policy on the field. Thus, despite their constitutional arrangements, countries with a dominant Orthodox majority will continue to support their local or “national Churches,” despite the inconvenience and problems they cause.

This is a serious problem as democratic regimes have to and will have to comply with strongly pre-modern attitudes among the Orthodox population. This is cleverly used by the authoritarian Russian regime, which aims everywhere and, in every way, to discredit democracy as a way of governing. Orthodoxy is used in these countries as the main weapon of propaganda to this end, and the pre-modern attitudes in question are reinforced and even brought to extremes through the media and digital networks. This constantly leads to microcrises and church-state disagreements in these societies. Greece and Romania seem to be happy exceptions to the Orthodox countries in this respect, but they are not immune to such developments either.

In my opinion, the biggest challenge facing the Orthodox world today is the maintenance of democratic regimes in Orthodox countries in the Western Alliance and the preservation of public security and human rights in these countries. In the near future, Moscow-sponsored far-right nationalist parties, affiliated with ideological Orthodoxy, will try to divert these countries from their European and democratic path of development and seek cohesion with Moscow. For decades, Russian Orthodoxy has been the official ideology of the Russian Federation and its main ideological weapon for expansionism. As a result, democratic regimes with a majority Orthodox population will have to constantly face internal sabotage by figures in their Orthodox churches.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that the relationships between church and state represent an unstable system in most of the countries in Eastern Europe. They are the reason for a number of crises in these societies. Only strong reformist governments deeply integrated into the Western political system can carry out profound reforms to free the churches from political exploitation. Also, all these churches need courageous and determined bishops to carry out such reforms on the part of the Church. On the other hand, an eventual lack of state control over some of these churches in countries that are allied with the West may lead to uncontrolled influence by the Russian Federation on their clergy. It will lead to a kind of asymmetry between the political obligations of the state and the political implications of the actions of certain representatives of the churches. One encounters such a case in the refusal of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the Georgian Orthodox Church to take part in the Pan-Orthodox Council in 2016. Both churches are often opposed to the political course of their governments and their highest-ranked clergy openly oppose NATO and the EU. In addition to clear expectations of a deepening crisis in the Orthodox churches in the region, with the exception of the churches of Greece and Romania, we can add the persistent lack of vision for the development of these relationships between church and state. This instability and the inability of these societies to modernize these relations opens up space for the influence of extreme ideas promoted by authoritarian regimes such as the Russian.