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For God and Country
Essays on Religion and Nationalism

Edited by
Peter C. Mentzel

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About the Editor

Peter C. Mentzel received his Ph.D. in History from the University of Washington in 1994. He was a member of the Department of History at Utah State University for 13 years before joining Liberty Fund as a Senior Fellow in 2008. His research focuses on nationalism and modernization in Southeastern Europe and the Middle East. He is the author of Transportation Technology and Imperialism in the Ottoman Empire and has published chapters in a number of edited collections, including most recently, "Nations, Nationality, and Civil Society in the Work of Edward Shils," in Stephen Turner and Christopher Adair-Toteff, eds., The Calling of Social Thought: Rediscovering the Work of Edward Shils (2019). His other work has appeared in many peer-reviewed journals, including The American Historical Review, Slavic Review, Nations and Nationalism, Turcica, and East European Quarterly. He was on the Board of Editors of Nationalities Papers from 1999–2002. He is currently working on a history of the Principality of Samos.

Preface to "For God and Country: Essays on Religion and Nationalism"

It is my pleasure to present this collection of essays exploring the relationship between religion, national identity and nationalism. All three are complex concepts, and the ways that they have historically interacted, and continue to interact, are the subject of conflicting theories and analyses. The essays in this collection, while not all sharing the same intellectual approaches, are all alike in presenting religion as an important force in understanding the development and articulation of national identity and nationalism.

Numerous people have helped me with this project, but several deserve special mention. Professors Raymond J. Haberski, Director of the Institute for American Thought at Indiana University-Purdue University of Indianapolis, and Vasileios Syros of Jyväskylä University were sources of both encouragement and suggestions for contributors. My colleagues at Liberty Fund, especially Dr. Steven Ealy, shared helpful criticisms and suggestions on various aspects of the project. I would especially like to thank Dr. Steven Grosby, Clemson University, for being such an active and insightful interlocutor in our many discussions about nations and nationalism, and for suggesting me as Guest Editor for the Special Edition of *Genealogy* from which this book originated. Finally, I am grateful to the editors at *Genealogy*, especially Allie Shi and Simi Wang, who were consistently patient and helpful during the entire publication process.

Peter C. Mentzel
Editor

Introduction: Religion and Nationalism? Or Nationalism and Religion? Some Reflections on the Relationship between Religion and Nationalism

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Abstract: This essay is the introduction to the special issue of *Genealogy*, "For God and Country: Essays on Nationalism and Religion." It poses the question of what relationship, if any, nationalism has to religion, and then briefly reviews the history and current state of the scholarship on the topic. This essay then introduces the seven essays making up the special edition. It concludes by observing that, overall, the collection suggests that while religion and nationalism are more closely related than previously held, they nevertheless remain two distinct phenomena.

Keywords: nationalism; religion; Islamism

1. Introduction

Religion and nationalism are both powerful and important markers of individual identity, but the relationship between the two has been a source of considerable debate. Much, if not most, of the work done in nationalism studies has been based, at least implicitly, on the idea that religion, as a genealogical carrier of identity, was displaced with the coming of secular modernity by nationalism. Or, to put it another way, national identity, and its ideological manifestation, nationalism, filled the void left in people's self-identification as religion retreated in the face of secular modernity. While a few perceptive students of the subject (e.g., Anthony Smith, Steven Grosby, and Adrian Hastings) made room in their studies for religion, the dominant narrative was that nationalism was a modern phenomenon that has supplanted religion as the primary carrier of identity for most people. The implications were, of course, that religious self-identifications would eventually completely succumb to more secular ones, especially nationalism.

Since at least the late 1990s, however, it has become increasingly apparent that this has not turned out to be the case. Whereas, in some places (e.g., the Republic of Ireland), religion has indeed gone from being one of the most important aspects of personal identity to one of the least, overall, religious identities have proven surprisingly sticky. Perhaps even more interesting, scholars of both religion and nationalism have noticed that these two kinds of self-identifications, while sometimes in tension (as the earlier models explained), are also frequently coexistent or even mutually supportive. A number of different scholarly projects have resulted. What they all have in common is their interest in complicating our understandings of nationalism as primarily a modern, secular phenomenon by bringing religion back into the discussion.

This short introduction to this collection of papers hopes to make some general observations about the state of the current literature on this subject, say a few words about the essays in the collection, and then propose some additional ideas about how to think about the relationship between religion and nationalism in general, and the concept of "religious nationalism" in particular. While conceding that some of the claims of the secular modernist school were too dogmatic, my brief remarks will

nevertheless conclude that, despite a number of caveats and qualifiers, nationalism remains, essentially, a secular (and probably modern) phenomenon.

2. Religion and Nationalism

The current general understanding about the relationship between religion and nationalism is closely tied to what has been called the "Secularization Thesis." The general outlines of the thesis will be familiar to any student of historical sociology: secularization is one of the main characteristics of modernity, and implies the "privatization" of religion. That is, religion gives way to secular understandings of the public self—primarily, national identity.

This narrative owes its origin largely to the two founders of modern sociology, Emile Durkheim (1858–1917) and Max Weber (1864–1920). Durkheim, in his 1912 study *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, took for granted the process of secularization but argued that modern secular existence would prove to be intolerable without some system of beliefs that would provide meaning and purpose to individuals and, perhaps more importantly, some basis for communal life. In pre-modern societies, these needs were filled by religion. In modern, secular societies, the void left by religion is filled by nationalism. According to this reasoning, in this sense, nationalism is a kind of religion, or is perhaps itself a religion.

Max Weber's ideas about nations and nationalism developed over time, and have sometimes been criticized for being incoherent and self-contradictory, or at the very least, vague. One of the few instances where Weber actually offers a definition of what he means by nation was from 1912: "In so far as there is anything common behind this ambiguous word, it must be in the field of politics. The term nation could probably only be defined as: an emotion-based community (*Gefülsmäßige Gemeinschaft*), whose adequate expression would be a common state, which therefore normally has the tendency to produce just such a state. The causal components however which lead to the emergence of this national feeling can have very different roots." (quoted in Lehne 2010, p. 224) Note that, in this definition, the elements or "components" of the national community are random and undifferentiated. Later, however, Weber moves towards the idea of a nation as having something to do with "culture." "The significance of the 'nation' is usually anchored in the superiority, or at least the irreplaceability, of the culture values (*Kulturgüter*) that are to be preserved and developed only through the cultivation of the peculiarity of the group." (Weber 1978, p. 925)

While Weber's concepts of nations and nationalism were still in the process of formulation at the time of his death, he had already written a great deal about modernity in general, and secularization in particular. For Weber, the central feature of modernity is *Entzauberung*, translated, perhaps somewhat misleadingly, as "Disenchantment." It is a broad term, encompassing the "rationalization" of modern societies, and everything that comes with it: parliamentary democracy, bureaucratic administration, capitalism, etc., are all ultimately results of "Disenchantment" and the relentless secularization of society.

Importantly, while Weber situated national identity and nationalism in the context of secular modernity, he did not necessarily link the two in any clear or binding, to say nothing of causal, relationship as Durkheim had done. Yet, there was *some* sort of connection. In his famous *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, he observed: "The modern man is in general, even with the best will, unable to give religious ideas a significance for conduct of life, culture and *national character* (*Volkscharaktere*) which they deserve." (Weber 1958, p. 183 Italics mine).

In any case, most of the literature about the relationship between religion and nationalism is more or less based on some understanding of Durkheim or Weber or, more commonly, both. Even scholars with different approaches to the question of national identity and nationalism (for example, Eric Hobsbawm, John Breuilly, Ernest Gellner, and Benedict Anderson) who otherwise disagree on various points, all situate nationalism, if not national identity itself, unambiguously within the context of secularizing modernity. For all of them (and others), the understanding is that nationalism, as a modern phenomenon, is tied inextricably to secularism. Religious self-identification,

and especially religion as a primary locus of group loyalty is therefore, by definition, pre-modern (perhaps even anti-modern). To the extent that it continues to exist as a primary site of self or group identification, it is a kind of temporary aberration that must, necessarily, give way in the face of secular modernity.

3. Critiques of the Secularization/Modernization Thesis

The Secularization Thesis and, by extension, the close linkage of the modernist theory of nationalism, have come under increasing criticism over the past couple of decades. At its most extreme, these critiques take the form of perennialist or primordialist arguments. Without going into detail here, these positions argue that nations, and perhaps even nationalism, have existed at least since the Middle Ages, and perhaps even earlier. There are disagreements between the two theories about historical continuities of different nations and their particularities, but they are both in agreement that nations and nationalism are not by any means restricted to modernity. Their relationship to the secularist position of the modernists is also interesting. Again, far from linking national identity and nationalism to secularism, perennialist scholars often link these phenomena explicitly to religious identities. Adrian Hastings, one of the most influential of the perennialist theorists, argues explicitly that national identity, and indeed nationalism itself, emerge (at the very latest) during the Renaissance out of different ethnoreligious communities. Another perennialist, Steven Grosby, pushes nations and nationalism far back into ancient history, and, importantly, ties these ancient nations closely to their religions.

An approach that is perhaps somewhere between the modernists and perennialists is what is known, perhaps somewhat awkwardly, as "ethnosymbolists." The preeminent advocate of this approach was certainly the late Anthony D. Smith (d. 2016). This approach argues against both the modernity of national identities (though it is somewhat more inclined to accept the modernity of nationalism as an ideology) and especially against the "functionalist" approach, in which nationalist elites and intellectuals "invent" or "create" nations and nationalism. Instead, Smith contended that nations emerge out of a pre-existing, perhaps even primordial, ethnic compost. These ethnic identities are very old, and are based on shared myths (especially myths of common origin) and, often, religion. (Smith 2000, pp. 62–64) This latter component is especially important in the development of national identities (and especially nationalism itself) when it takes the form of myths of "election" or "chosen-ness." (Smith 1999) The most famous example of this, of course, are the ancient Israelites as the Chosen People, but Smith (and other ethnosymbolists) have discovered such ethnoreligious myths among many other nations: Armenians, Basques, Poles, Irish, and, importantly, Americans. These nations all have, as part of their national mythologies, powerful myths of religious exceptionalism and election, in which they are divinely chosen to perform a powerful mission, which is simultaneously national and religious.

Once the secular modernity approach to nations and nationalism began to be challenged, there are certainly many examples of cases of religious identity trumping or superseding a secular, national one. The rise of the "religious right" or "Christian nationalism" in the USA during the late twentieth century surprised many scholars of nationalism. The horrible Yugoslavian wars of the 1990s likewise were sometimes characterized as religious conflicts (especially in the case of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina) as were the on-going tensions in places such as Northern Ireland, Lebanon, and Iraq. Perhaps the case of Israeli national identity is the trickiest of all, based as it is on some understanding of a religious identity.

One way of approaching the challenge posed by the seeming persistence of religious identity has been to admit to the general soundness of the Secularization Thesis without tying nationalism to it so tightly. This is the approach of, among others, J. Christopher Soper and Joel Fetzer, who have tried to think of the relationship between nationalism and religion as a kind of "continuum," at one end of which is an ideal-type "secular nationalism" and at the other a fully realized "religious nationalism." Somewhere in the middle, they postulate a "civil-religious nationalism" which partakes of characteristics of both. They have further developed their framework to describe "stable" and

"unstable" examples of each of these types of nationalism. For example, on one end of the spectrum, they posit Uruguay as an example of a polity with a stable secular nationalism, and India as one with an unstable version. On the other end of the spectrum, they argue that Greek nationalism represents an example of a stable religious nationalism and Malaysia an unstable example. In the middle of the spectrum, they place the United States as a country with a stable civil-religious nationalism and Israel as an example of a polity with an unstable civil-religious nationalism. This approach is interesting because, without jettisoning wholesale the Secularization Thesis, it suggests that nationalism may not be as intrinsically connected to secularization (and modernity) as modernist students of nationalism studies would argue. "For many people in those countries [in Africa and Asia] the modernizing, secular state which privatized religion had little purchase because religion provided a stronger basis for self-identification than did secular, nationalist values. The result was the rise of a religious nationalism in much of the developing world that hewed much more closely to the spiritual, cultural, and historical allegiances of the masses." (Soper and Fetzer 2018, p. 6) Furthermore, "ideologically, this form [religious nationalism] of nationalism 'makes religion the basis for the nation's collective identity and the source of its ultimate value and purpose on this earth.'" (Soper and Fetzer 2018, p. 7) Perhaps the most interesting insight of their framework is their "middle" category of civil-religious nationalism, where "nationalism is itself seen as a secularized form of religion" or, to put it another way, "nationalism is itself essentially a form of religion." Yet, importantly, "unlike secular nationalism, civil-religious nationalism was not an attempt to usurp religion, but neither was it simply the marrying of nationalism with a particular religious tradition [which, in their model, they call 'religious nationalism']". As they continue: "Like modernization theory, civil religion presumes that the modern state is in some respects replacing the role traditionally played by the church, but it challenges the secular presumption of modernist accounts in recognizing that the state retains a need for moral legitimacy, something that civil religion can provide." (Soper and Fetzer 2018, p. 9).

If most of the non-modernist theories about nations and nationalism make some room for the Secularization Thesis, if not actual concessions to some of the modernists' claims, Atalia Omer and Jason A Springs in their book *Religious Nationalism* reject almost all of arguments of modernists and secularists. Their central claim is that "it is both analytically inadequate and factually incorrect to claim that secular and religious forms of nationalism are clearly and distinctly separable and stand as opposites to each other." (Omer and Springs 2013, p. 40) In fact, they find (though they do not explicitly say so) that most manifestations of nationalism can actually be described as "religious nationalism." This may be because of their broad interpretation of what it means for "religion" to influence "nationalism." They identify three main ways in which religion "produces and reproduces identity and community [including national communities]." These include "institutional support; social segregation; and how ritual practices, symbol systems, mythic understandings, as well as theological concepts give meaning to, structure, and reinforce social and political identifications." (Omer and Springs 2013, p. 9).

A different approach to the study of religion and nationalism has been proposed by Rogers Brubaker, who, without proposing a categorical architecture himself, has offered "views" or "strategies" for studying this relationship. (Brubaker 2011) These four "approaches" to ways of examining the relationship between nationalism and religion are: 1. Treating religion and nationalism as "analogous phenomena." In its boldest formulation, this would treat nationalism as a kind of religion, or simply as a religion. This seems to correlate to approaches that would map onto the category of "civil-religious nationalism", as developed by Soper and Fetzer. 2. Using religion to *explain* things about nationalism—its origin, its power, or its distinctive character." In the literature, this is more or less the approach of scholars such as Anthony Smith and Adrian Hastings, both of whom argue that modern nationalism, emerges out of a religious compost, especially the category of "chosen-ness." 3. Treating "religion as *part* of nationalism." That is, religion and nationalism are intertwined or imbricated, yet distinct, phenomena. This is probably what most scholars, including Soper and Fetzer, would recognize as "religious nationalism." 4. Posting a "distinctly religious *form* of nationalism." This is the trickiest, but also most intriguing of his categories. This approach claims that "religious

nationalism is a distinctive kind of nationalism." That is, it is not a claim that nationalist symbols and rhetoric often draw upon religious images and language, nor that nationalism and religion can exist in a symbiotic or intertwined relationship, nor even that modern nationalism emerges somehow out of religious culture. Rather, "it is a claim that there is a distinctive religious type of nationalist program that represents a distinct alternative to secular nationalism." (Brubaker 2011, p. 12) Brubaker singles out the work of Roger Friedland as a prime example of this kind of approach. In particular, Friedland argues that "Islamism" constitutes such an example of a "distinctly religious form of nationalism."

4. Review of the Chapters

The seven essays that make up this collection offer some interesting case studies of the relationship between religion and nationalism, onto which we might try to apply some of the above outlined analytical tools.

As it turns out, the kinds of approaches used by the authors map on very easily to those postulated by Brubaker. His first category, in which nationalism is explored as a *kind* of religion, is the approach taken in Spyridon Tegos' essay "Civility and Civil Religion before and after the French Revolution: Religious and Secular Rituals in Hume and Tocqeville." (Tegos 2020).

Most of the contributors in one way or another treated their topics in terms of Brubaker's second category, "using religion to *explain* things about nationalism—its origin, its power, or its distinctive character." This is very clearly at the intellectual core of the papers on Orthodox Christianity and nationalism by Georgios Steiris, and by Dragan Šljivić and Nenad Živković. (Steiris 2020; Šljivić and Živković 2020) These papers are also very interesting for challenging the entire secularist argument that nationalism is necessarily a product of secular modernity. Drawing on Anthony D Smith's "ethnosymbolist" theories, Šljivić and Živković present three case studies examining the different ways that autocephalous ecclesiastical processes and nation building in Southeastern Europe were (and are) closely linked. Interestingly, in their account, the causal arrows are not always pointed in the same direction. In some cases, the autocephalous project seems to precede the nationalist one, whereas it seems to follow from it in others. Prof. Steiris makes an argument that partakes of both perennialism and ethnosymbolism for the Medieval roots of Greek national identity. He argues that Byzantine intellectuals, beginning as early as the thirteenth century, had developed a distinctly Greek national identity based not only on Orthodox Christianity and its rich repertoire of symbols, but on Classical Greek history as well.

A treatment of religion and nationalism that places it firmly in the context of modernity is the contribution of Danielle Ross. (Ross 2019) This important paper is a perfect example of Brubaker's third "approach," in which nationalism (and in this case socialism as well) and religion are intertwined or imbricated. Using very different historical material (and a different religion) Mark Edwards' study of the development of "Christian nationalism" in the USA also seems to me a case of religion and secular American nationalism intertwining to produce the phenomenon of "Christian (American) nationalism." (Edwards 2019) The same approach is evident in Yvonne Chiu's study of Buddhism in Burma/Myanmar. Burmese national identity and nationalism are profoundly intertwined with Theravada Buddhism, while both remain nevertheless distinct sources of identity. (Chiu 2020).

Joyce Janca-Aji gives us a very different look at a possible relationship between Buddhism and national identity, if not nationalism. (Janca-Aji 2020) I do not, frankly, see how this fascinating essay maps onto any of Brubaker's "approaches." Janca-Aji's question is how a "foreign" religion such as Buddhism interacts with American history and culture in the self-identity of converts. She suggests that the process can (or perhaps, might) create a new kind of identity, partaking of both.

Finally, Steven E. Grosby, a leading theorist in perennialist approaches to nationalism studies, offers some ideas about the relationship between nation (if not nationalism) and religion. (Grosby 2019) The main aim of Professor Grosby's essay is to tease out how (or if) national identity (not to say nationalism itself) and religion are related. He finally comes to the conclusion that the category of religion occupies a distinct aspect of human self-consciousness. "The category of religion-for both

the pre-axial and axial ages- represents the configuration of thought . . . and conduct in response to the problem of the ordeal of human consciousness about the mystery of the universe, specifically, whether or not there is meaning to its order, and the place of both the individual and his or her society within it." Further, "the character of religion . . . indicates that it is a distinctive orientation of human consciousness, that is, it is not derivative of another orientation." (Grosby 2019, p. 14) These conclusions seem to call into question the entire category of what we call "religious nationalism" in that the two phenomena are presented as distinct categories. Or, perhaps more accurately, the two categories exist (and have historically existed) in a state of constant tension, representing, as they do, two "autonomous orientations of the human mind, of which religion is one, and the territorial kinship of the nation, is another." Sometimes, as in the monolatrous pre-axial age religions, this relationship is very close, while the distinction is clearer at others (in particular in the monotheistic religions of the axial age).

This line of argument puts Grosby's position more or less in Brubaker's second "approach." That is, in Grosby's account, religion, and especially the crucial development from pre-axial- to axial-age religion, helps explain the development of nationalism. Importantly, however, Grosby's account presents nationalism (or at least national identity) as being as ancient as religion, and not something that develops out of it or from it (as in the accounts of Smith or Hastings, for example). Rather, national and religious identities have always existed, expressing, as they do, two "distinctive orientations of human consciousness."

5. Conclusions

The seven contributions to this collection provide some very different approaches to the central question posed by this volume: the relationship between nationalism and religion. In the process, they also raise some interesting challenges to the pervading "modernist" orthodoxy in the field of nations and nationalism studies. Yet, one is struck by the fact that none of these essays (with the exception of Professor Grosby's contribution) necessarily contradicts the essential features of the "Secularization Thesis." While all of them provide ample evidence of the important linkages and relationships, of various kinds, between religion and nationalism, none of them (again with the possible exceptions of Grosby's and perhaps Janca-Aji's) demonstrate the dominance of "religion" over "nationalism" as a candidate for the decisive site of personal identity. While most of these contributions argue (persuasively, I think) for the tremendous influence religion and religious identities have had in the development of national identities, and even nationalism itself, at the end of the day, we are still left with cases in which a basically secular understanding of the nation is left as the main element in any nationalist narrative. This is certainly not to say that we lack examples of religion's continued capacity to provide symbols or rhetoric to a nationalist movement, but the actual content of a modern nationalist project remains nevertheless basically secular.

This is once again where "Islamism" or "Islamic Fundamentalism" offers such a challenge. Is Islamism a nationalist ideology and are groups such as Islamic State nationalist? These movements are political (like secular nationalist movements) in that they seek to control states, or perhaps more accurately, establish new states. However, the intellectual content of these movements is universal, not national. The foot soldiers of al-Qaeda or the Islamic State were/are a multinational group, all subsumed within the universalist Islamist ideologies of those organizations. As one scholar, writing on Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb (arguably the intellectual godfathers of modern political Islamism), notes "nationalism tends to see the freedom and greatness of the national community as a goal in itself. At least theoretically, this is not the case with the Islamic *umma*, which explicitly points beyond itself, and sees itself merely as a vehicle for facilitating man's relationship with God." (Brykczynski 2005, p. 15) Now, one could argue that the "nation" on which organizations such as Islamic State are built are defined religiously. Indeed, the term "umma," usually translated as the "community of believers (in Islam)," can also be translated as "nation." However, I think that we must be careful here. As Rogers Brubaker has perceptively warned, "nationalism is a useful concept only if it is not overstretched." (Brubaker 2011, p. 14) That is, terms such as "nation" and "religion" are useful

and expansive but they are not infinitely elastic. A religious community and a national one, if they are to maintain any sort of analytical rigor, must be kept conceptually separate. As Professor Grosby points out in his contribution to this collection, this might not always have been the case, as with the pre-axial-age monolatrous religions. However, it does become very problematic when dealing with a universalist, axial-age religion such as Islam (or, for that matter, Christianity). The national identities and nationalist movements of almost all historically Muslim nations (Arabs first and foremost but Iranians, Malays, Turks and others as well) have been tremendously influenced by Islam and have drawn freely and deeply on the rich cultural and symbolic storehouse provided by it. Yet, all of these movements, even the ostensibly "fundamentalist" Iranian revolution of 1979, were ultimately best understood as nationalist in character. They were, inter alia, concerned with issues recognizable to any other secular nationalist movements: the glorification and strengthening of the nation (even if the nation was largely described in terms of religion).

Groups such as the Islamic State are clearly different. Even though its immediate goals, such as those of a nationalist movement, involved the establishment of a state, the motivation for those goals and the ultimate vision of that state were quite different. The membership of the state was not limited to a certain group but was, in fact, explicitly intended to someday account for all people on Earth (who had been converted one way or another to Islam). Similarly, the goals of the state were not the glorification of a nation (even if religiously defined) but the implementation of God's will and law on Earth.

In an essay on the relationship between nationalism, religion, and secularism, Talal Asad wrote: "If the secularization thesis no longer carries the conviction it once did, this is because the categories of politics and religion turn out to implicate each other more profoundly than we thought, a discovery that has accompanied our growing understanding of the powers of the modern nation-state. The concept of the secular cannot do without the idea of religion." (Asad 1999, p. 192) As the contributions to this volume demonstrate, Asad's assertion must be broadly correct. Yet, the "concept of the secular" and the "idea of religion" continue to exist as two distinct, yet complementary, aspects of human consciousness.

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Civility and Civil Religion before and after the French Revolution: Religious and Secular Rituals in Hume and Tocqueville

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Abstract: In his critique of religion, Hume envisages forms of religious ritual disconnected from the superstitious "neurotic" mindset; he considers simple rituals fostering moderation. In this paper, I claim that one can profitably interpret Hume's obsession with secular rituals, such as French highly ceremonial manners, in the sense of anxiety-soothing institutions that bind citizenry without the appeal to a civil religion, properly speaking. Let us call this path the Old Regime's civil ritualism". Overall, Tocqueville conceives rituals in a Humean spirit, as existential anxiety-soothing institutions. Moving beyond the Humean line of thought, he focuses on the ambiguous role of religious rituals in the context of democratic faith and the Christian civil religion that he deems appropriate for the US. Yet, he also detects novel forms of superstition firmly embedded in secular, democratic faith.

Keywords: religious rituals; secular rituals; profane rituals; democratic faith; civil religion; civility; moderation

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1. Introduction

The relation between religion and politics can be conceived in three different ways. One is in terms of strict separation that goes in theory even beyond the separation of the church and the state. This seems to be a common thread in the history of liberalism. Liberals of various stripes agree on the threat that religion poses for a peaceful civic life because even moderate forms of religion easily veer off course and become intolerant. The other two options, theocracy, the supremacy of religion over the state, and civil religion, the supremacy of the state over religion, are considered illiberal scenarios. Yet civil religion projects have historically been associated with liberal projects. In the history of early modern political thought and philosophy ranging from Machiavelli to Rousseau through Spinoza, Bayle, and Hobbes, civil religion critically appropriates the pagan legacy and chiefly refers to "the civilizing/civicizing of religion—the domestication of religion for political purposes." (Beiner 2012, p. 419) providing " ... much of the glue that binds together a society through well-established symbols, rituals, celebrations, places, and values endowing the society with an overarching sense of spiritual unity ... " (McClay 2010, p. vii). The instrumentalization of religion can generate unintended consequences though—as the sacralization of the state and the nation from the 19th century onwards has bitterly proved. Dreams of national world-historic destiny or the doctrine of the chosen people bear witness of a disastrous path of ideological instrumentalization far beyond the early modern secularization projects (Weed and Heyking 2010). This powerful reminder of civil religion's dangers vindicates the liberal project to liberate human society from the yoke of *any* form of religious dogmatism. Undeniably a founding father of liberalism, Hume's subtle assessment of religion and its function in human nature are often overshadowed by his infamous atheism. However, the evolution of his thought betrays a civil religion strand in his thought; Hume thinks that religious rituals can be domesticated if dissociated from other liturgical and ecclesiastical elements. Reading Tocqueville gives the impression

that civil religion and liberalism are not entirely distinct intellectual traditions. There is a liberal civil religion (Beiner 2012, p. 418). Moreover, there is a liberal Christian civil religion insofar as Tocqueville argues that the separation of the church and state are not only compatible but reinforce a genuine Christian civil religion for democratic times. In a post-French revolution context, Tocqueville touches tangentially upon the issue of religious rituals; democratic taste abhors rituals as well as any sign of highly hierarchical and formalized expressions of faith. However, democratic faith needs structuring forces to sustain itself. In the history of liberalism, Hume and Tocqueville unprecedentedly converge in elevating the status of rituals, Tocqueville emphasizing Christian simple rituals while Hume opts for a blend of religious rituals and rituals of civility. In this latter case, Hume more than Tocqueville constitutes an interesting moment in the civilizing process exposed by Norbert Elias in his famous history of manners. Recorded by manuals of civility from the Renaissance onwards, the history of civility in Europe rests on a development of self-control of bodily functions and the expression of emotions (table manners, sexual impulses, and desire for revenge) (Elias 1978, pp. 51–219). Hume gives an original twist in this civilizing process regarding rituals of civility. During the Enlightenment rituals came to imply "insincerity and empty formality, the very antithesis of the Enlightenment values . . . ". (Muir 2005, p. 294), He puts emphasis on the secular rites of manners.

What concerns Hume when he writes about religion? To what problems was he responding to? In the context of the pre-industrial booming market economy of early modern Scotland, Hume is an idiosyncratic proponent of the European Enlightenment built on commerce and the birth of consumerism alongside "French manners and English liberty", as Pocock (1999, p. 20) acutely synthesizes. The main issue remains the catastrophic potential of religious zealotry. The Scottish Enlightenment is conceived as a bulwark against religious fanaticism that caused such bloodshed throughout the wars of religion and the English civil war. And what about Tocqueville? In a post-French revolution context, the triumph of industrial capitalism and the subsequent huge transformations in the social fabric and culture lead to the emergence of the masses in global history. Tocqueville thinks religion can play a key moral and political role provided that concessions will be made to mass democracy and its irreducible materialism. Religion needs to be remodeled and to a certain extent revivified by transforming itself into a civil religion with special emphasis on rituals.

The first point I want to make in this paper is that Hume and Tocqueville converge in emphasizing the cultural and psychological relevance of rituals. Even if we side with Hume in rejecting as misguided any project of civilizing religion for civic purposes, the anxiolytic function of rituals goes beyond the religious dimension and gains prominence more as a cultural asset than a spiritual token. Regardless of the extent to which this position contributes to the secularization process, Tocqueville makes the case even stronger by fusing elements of Protestantism and Catholicism based on simple but irreducible rituals and turning them into indispensable components of a civilized democratic public sphere. The key role of rituals in this watered-down version of Christianity goes often unnoticed. The second point I want to stress regards the problem of authority. Both authors shift the attention to religious and secular rituals in order to preserve a sense of unassailable *auctoritas* amidst modernity's demystifying tendencies. Rituals bolster mild religious or secular authority stripped of its traditionalist, sclerotic hierarchical elements. The disenchantment of the world should not eliminate an even vague sense of sacredness to which religious rituals and rituals of civility allude to.

In this paper, first I assess Hume's critique of religious ritual then I shift the focus, mainly to the *History of England*, on the positive role of ceremonies in popular, e"false" religions. Subsequently, I address the issue of profane rituals. In this vein, I revisit some early Humean texts such as the letter of 1734 on politeness and the *Essay on Chivalry* regarding the importance of secular rituals in the civilizing process—hints of a Humean philosophy of symbolic order—before turning to a crucial historical practice for Hume, i.e., French politeness and its ritualized nature in the Old Regime.

In the second part, I turn to Tocqueville and I first examine his idiosyncratic analysis of the interaction between Protestantism and Catholicism in the US, revolving around the status of rituals. Tocqueville's emphasis on faith communities with solid liturgical backgrounds for the moral regulation

of modern republics goes against the grain of standard republican narratives. He also challenges the core of most narratives about secularization in modernity. In the second section of this part, I further scrutinize Christian civil religion and Tocqueville's interpretation of the modern public spirit and patriotism. In this context, the novel forms of superstition attached to the majority's credos and deference to its authority loom large. Modern civility, in Tocqueville's approach, rests heavily on secular faith and Christian civil religion that bring about a blend of ancient and novel rituals, some of which are charged with superstitious and crypto-despotic elements. Finally, I scrutinize the common ground in the liberalism of Hume and Tocqueville alongside the differences regarding the civilizing role of a ritual-based culture for a stable social order.

2. Hume on the Role of Religious and Secular Rituals in Modern Civility

2.1. The Critique of Religious Rituals in Hume

According to Hume, religion has a practical mission: even in its rudest forms, religion's function is to soothe fears of unknown causes (Hume 2007, chp. 3). To put it bluntly: more than anything else, it is a form of collective psychotherapy. This can be achieved through the poetic and symbolic imagination that invents ways to depict anthropomorphically invisible powers and establish a connection with them. Hume believes that "vulgar apprehension", in rude and civilized contexts (Berry 2018, pp. 102–3), cannot bypass any "sensible representation" of the divine that is "status, images, pictures" (Hume 2007, chp. 5). The privileged path for establishing worship is to avoid abstraction.

Rituals can better organize the direct relationship with a deity or deities and better assume the principal trait of religion as a collective practice. At this point, the vital function of ritual emerges: "[the faithful] considers not, that the most genuine method of serving the Divinity is by promoting the happiness of his creatures. He still looks for some more immediate service of the Supreme Being, in order to allay these terrors, with which he is haunted" (Hume 2007, pp. 14, 81). To be sure, adherence to ritual is self-defeating. As no sure indication of God's intentions can ever be established, "new strains of adulation" (Hume 2007, chp. 6) have to be invented. The faithful become obsessed with ceremonial observances ending up in a religious melancholy: the faithful become "trapped in a neurotic loop" (Lemmens 2011, p. 227).

However, this is not Hume's last word on rituals. Although inherently linked to superstition, rituals are collective practices deeply embedded in the human symbolic order, without which human culture seems inconceivable. Can we envisage forms of religious ritual disconnected from the superstitious "neurotic loop", that is, inconspicuous rituals fostering moderation'?

2.2. Simple Religious Rituals: A Remedy to Superstition?

Doubtless, the "bad influence of popular religions on morality" (Hume 2007, p. 14) can be detected throughout Hume's oeuvre. However, there are instances of an opposite attitude regarding "corrupted" religions, as if there were forces within vulgar religions that can alleviate yet not neutralize superstition.

In the *History of England (1754–1761)*, Hume unambiguously states that "there must be an ecclesiastical order, and a public establishment of religion in every civilized community" to counter the "natural tendency to pervert the true [religion], by infusing into it a strong mixture of superstition, folly, and delusion" (Hume 1983, vol. III, pp. 135–36; Mossner 1980, pp. 306–7). He also asserts, "The proper Office of Religion is to reform Men's Lives, to purify their Hearts, to inforce all moral Duties, & to secure Obedience to the Laws and civil Magistrate. While it pursues these useful Purposes, its Operations, tho infinitely valuable, *are secret & silent; and seldom come under the Cognizance of History*" (my italics). It is telling that Hume removed this preface to the second volume of the *History of England*, mentioning the "simple, unadorned" worship that should be offered to the "infinite mind, the author of the universe . . . without rites, institutions, ceremonies . . . " (Mossner 1980, pp. 306–7).

However, with few exceptions, scholars rarely focus on the practicalities of such "humanization" of conduct. Diverting the attention of believers from less fearful images to more joyful incarnations

of the sacred (Hanley 2013) can be an object of serious consideration as Hume shifts the emphasis to the "nature of incarnate symbols" (Siebert 1995, pp. 486–87) in his later work. More to the point, the importance of the incarnate symbols for the vulgar and the refined mind alike (with very few exceptions) seems to preoccupy Hume; the situation unfolds *as if certain ceremonies properly managed can neutralize the superstitious element*. To be sure, this remains a matter of degree, not of nature.

By and large, Hume's attitude on the importance of ceremonies for religious moderation seems to have evolved from the essay on superstition and enthusiasm to the *History of England*. In the essay "Of Superstition and Enthusiasm", the psychological basis of superstition lies in this "gloomy and melancholic disposition" or even squarely in "ill health" or accidents that debase the human mind and sink it into phobic syndromes: real or imaginary enemies dominate human life[1] (Hume 1987, p. 74). On the other hand, enthusiasm seems innocent and less prone to the servile and self-debasing spirit of Catholics. By contrast, superstitious behavior, routinely associated with Catholicism, cultivates servility and dependence—"an enemy to civil liberties"—and is conducive to institutionalized obsequiousness. Indeed, ceremonies are often linked to expiation from odious crimes committed in order to fulfill frivolous duties to God[2] (Streminger 1989).

Yet, in the course of the *History of England* Hume seems to partly revise this opinion. He ended up opting for a "happy medium" between the superstition of "Romish worship" on the one hand, and the enthusiasm of Protestantism on the other; this hybrid style of worship in which "ceremonies, become venerable from age and preceding use, were retained". On several occasions (Hume 1983, vol. III, p. 95, vol. IV, p. 12 and broadly vol. V, p. 46), often related to Puritans or Scottish Calvinists, he insists on the importance of superstitious ceremonies for the culture of tolerance and the countering of persecution. The emphasis is laid on the abovementioned sensible form of any mediation or ritual[3] (Hume 1983, vol. V, p. 460). Hume regularly discusses the negative stance of Protestant sects towards rituals. Thus, he insists on the more benign role of superstition compared to enthusiasm (Siebert 1995, pp. 486–87). In the *History of England*, King James seems fully aware of the dangers related to the "gloomy disposition" of the sectaries and the introduction of rituals supposedly fulfills the role of g"humanizing" enthusiastic behavior[4] (Hume 1983, vol. V, p. 46). According to Hume, "an invisible spiritual intelligence is an object too refined for vulgar apprehension, men naturally affix it to some sensible representation" (Hume 1983, vol. V, p. 49). Comparatively speaking, a moderate, church establishment (Jordan 2002) is preferable to a plurality of fanatical sects. This comes at a cost: moderate but still superstitious rituals[5]. It is not, therefore, an exaggeration to claim that Hume's late work is

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[1] Essays 74: "As these enemies are entirely invisible and unknown, the methods that taken to appease them are equally unaccountable, and consists in ceremonies, observances, mortifications, sacrifices, presents, or in any practice, however absurd or frivolous, which either folly or knavery recommends to a blind and terrified credulity."

[2] (Streminger 1989): "Because they feel that their moral acts are plainly natural, they have to find something that is done for God's sake: rites, ceremonies, and, sometimes, oppression and annihilation of other people."

[3] (Hume 1983, V, p. 460): 'Whatever ridicule, to a philosophical mind, may be thrown on pious ceremonies, it must be confessed, that, during a very religious age, no institution can be more advantageous to the rude multitude, and tend more to mollify that fierce and gloomy spirit of devotion, to which they are subject. Even the English church, though it had retained a share of popish ceremonies, may justly be thought too naked and anadorned, and still to approach too near the abstract and spiritual religion of the Puritans. Laud and his associates, by reviving a few primitive institutions...corrected the error of the first reformers and presented to the affrightened and astonished mind, some sensible, exterior observances, which might occupy it during its religious exercises, and abate the violence of its disappointed efforts. The thought, no longer bent on that divine and mysterious essence, so superior to the narrow capacities of mankind, was able...to relax itself in the contemplation of pictures, postures, vestments, buildings.'

[4] (Hume 1983, vol. V, p. 46): 'The mind, straining for these extraordinary raptures, reaching them by short glances, sinking again under its own weakness, rejecting all exterior aid of pomp and ceremony, was so occupied in this inward life, that it fled from every intercourse of society, and from every chearful amusement, which could soften or humanize the character. It was obvious to all discerning eyes, and had not escaped the king's, that, by the prevalence of fanaticism, a gloomy and sullen disposition established itself among the people; a spirit, obstinate and dangerous; independent and disorderly; animated equally with a contempt of authority, and a hatred to every other mode of religion, particularly to the Catholic. In order to mellow these humours, James endeavoured to infuse a small tincture of ceremony into the national worship, and to introduce such rites as might, in some degree, occupy the mind, and please the senses, without departing too far from that simplicity . . . '

[5] Regarding religion's benign role in 'every civilized society' see (Costelloe 2004).

concerned with the "nature of incarnate symbols" such as "images of religion and art intertwined" within moral and cultural life (Siebert 1995, p. 487).

It is telling that in one of his countless references to the "violent enthusiasm" of Protestant sects in *the History fo England* VI, Hume dwells extensively on the socio-psychological profile of the Quakers; in this context, he draws a parallel between their rebuttal of ceremonies, a common trait among Protestant sectaries, and their rejection of polite formalism, which he deems hypocritical. It is worth quoting in length,

> All the forms of ceremony, invented by pride and ostentation, Fox and his disciples, from a superior pride and ostentation, carefully rejected: Even the ordinary rites of civility were shunned, as the nourishment of carnal vanity and self-conceit. They would bestow no titles of distinction: The name of friend was the only salutation, with which they indiscriminately accosted every one. To no person would they make a bow, or move their hat, or give any signs of reverence. Instead of that affected adulation, introduced into modern tongues, of speaking to individuals as if they were a multitude, they returned to the simplicity of ancient languages; and thou and thee were the only expressions, which, on any consideration, they could be brought to employ.
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> —(Hume 1983, vol. VI, p. 97)

In his analysis of the Quakers, Hume pushes the dissection of Puritan psychology a bit further and seems to suggest that religious rituals and social rituals such as polite language are intertwined and belong to the same cultural order and, in a certain way, are co-substantial in the civilizing process. Taking a step further, Hume also turns his attention to profane rituals that retain the anxiety-soothing character of religious rituals.

3. Secular Rituals: The Importance of the Symbolic Order in the History of Civility

3.1. Profane Rituals: Secularization or Irreducible Religiosity?

In a series of insightful papers[6], Herman De Dijn has carefully examined the relationship between profane and sacred symbols and rituals in Hume's social and moral philosophy. According to his line of interpretation, Hume often ridicules religious rituals while he makes plenty of room for apparently equally absurd profane, mainly legal, ceremonies. The reason for this double standards rests on a clear-cut divide between sacred and profane rituals (De Dijn 2003, p. 64). De Dijn draws attention to the positive evaluation of secular rituals and symbols such as legal rituals or promises, the operation of which is comparable for Hume with "transubstantiation or holy orders"[7] (De Dijn 2003, p. 64; Hume 1987, p. 200). Hume underlines the importance of some profane symbols and ceremonies, mainly legal, for the well-being of society. In the *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (Hume 1998, pp. 193–95), he asserts that legal rituals concerning property and status play a salutary role in the regulation of secular, ordinary life. Although equally absurd, legal ceremonies, in sharp contrast with superstitious religious rituals, serve the "interest and happiness of human society: But there is an immense difference between superstition and justice, that the former is frivolous, useless, and burdensome; the latter is absolutely requisite to the well-being of society."[8] (Hume 1998, p. 94). De Dijn rightly insists upon the criteria of distinction between sacred and profane rituals: in the second *Enquiry,* Hume rejects religious ceremonies on the grounds of rigidity and futility. By contrast, customs related to property and justice are both necessary and beneficial. The cultural preservation of society is often warranted through

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6   (De Dijn 2003, 2012).
7   (De Dijn, ibid. pp. 63–64); (Hume 1985, p. 200).
8   Ibid., pp. 37, 94.

symbolic systems that "are not as rigid and closed and, therefore, as dangerous as the religions Hume subjects to criticism."[9]

This raises, of course, the issue of the importance of taboos and broadly of cultural symbolic order in the moral life of a secularized society. Religious ceremonies such as burial rituals or wedding celebrations may deeply influence even the life of atheists while ceremonies are indulged in without any expectation of divine intervention[10] (De Dijn 2003, pp. 65–66). The thesis I wish to defend is that the practice of ritualized manners is deemed necessary for the "well-being of society" in the sense of transcending social disharmonies and assuaging conflicts. And this idea seems to captivate Hume's attention from a very early stage. To those early thoughts on the importance of ceremonial manners, I now turn.

3.2. The Letter of 1734 on Politeness and the Essay on Chivalry: Early Thoughts on the Importance of Secular Rituals in the Civilizing Process

Hume's letter[11] addressed to Chevalier Ramsay regards the difference between the French and English expressions of politeness: "politeness" has become so "conspicuous" in France that "it is not only" a common feature among the high but the low, insomuch as the Porters and coachmen (which were commonly described as the worst mannered brutes) "are civil." The young Hume was clearly impressed by the fact that these vulgar men are "not only" polite towards "Gentlemen but likewise among themselves." Although he admits that "the little niceties of the French behavior" can be described as "troublesome and impertinent", they "serve to polish the ordinary kind of people and prevent rudeness and brutality". Hume even goes beyond criticizing Addison's or Shaftesbury's legacy on the "politeness of the heart" (Langford 2002, pp. 311–31). The importance of politeness resides in its *social function*: "men insensibly soften towards each other" while they practice outward ceremonies and "the mind pleases itself by the progress it makes in such trifles", turning into an actual inclination to be polite. Hume's bold thesis consists in asserting that the French are more polite because they scrupulously respect the *ceremony* of politeness, "these outwards Deferences & Ceremonies." (Hume 1932, p. 21).

Likewise, in another of his early texts on "Chivalry and Modern Honour", the young Hume dissects the psychology of chivalric manners and, more broadly, modern honor (Mossner 1947, p. 60). Rehearsing obsessively trivial moves is the core of much of chivalric ceremonies[12]. Hume emphasizes the civilizing role of these ceremonies that regulate social behavior. Quite forcefully, ritualized behavior is considered a crucial operator of civility both in the institutions of religion and politeness.

The gothic rudeness of manners, the unrefined notion of honor proper to chivalry, was conducive to an extravagant, fictitious conception of romantic love and bravery as intrinsically linked. The rituals of single combat, "tilts and tournaments" became social practice thanks to their "outmost civility" (Mossner 1947, p. 60). Here again, Hume does not fail to recall the obvious religious overtones of these rituals of civility. Indeed, Hume asserts that " . . . a Mistress is as necessary to a cavalier or Knight-Errant as a God or Saint to a Devotee" (Mossner 1947, p. 60).

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9   (De Dijn 2012, p. 17). In another paper, [Response to Richard Hodgson, "The Natural History of Religion in Hume and Baron d'Holbach" (19 July 2011—Old College, Lecture Theatre)] De Dijn perspicuously remarks: "He seems to be the first, or among the first, together with Gianbattista Vico and Montesquieu, to pay attention to characteristics of human life which will be theorized about only much later by cultural anthropologists, more particularly the immersion of morality in culture. From our present perspective, one can regret two things. First, that Hume does not seem to apply his insights as to the importance of symbol and ritual or ceremony to the link between morality and culture. He does not sufficiently attend to the degree in which morality as a whole is pervaded by symbol and ritual; and this independently of the fact whether it is the morality of a religious or a secularized society. The morality even of secularized individuals, living today or in the 18th century, is strongly characterized by all sorts of moral taboos.'

10 (De Dijn 2012, pp. 65–66).

11 David Hume to Michael Ramsay, 12 September 1734 (Hume 1932, pp. 19–21).

12 (Mossner 1947, p. 60): " . . . Your Devotees feel their devotion increase by the Observance of trivial Superstitions, as Sprinkling, Kneeling, Crossing &c, so men insensibly soften towards each other in the practice of these Ceremonies."

In his essays and his correspondence, Hume had, after all, gone against the grain of British (including Scottish) moralizing by extolling French manners. Gallantry is one instance of a broader test of civility: treating the powerless as powerful, idem the elder as young, the woman, the foreigner[13], or the ambassador in foreign countries as if they were in a superior position when, in reality, they suffer physical or social weakness and inferiority. This is the crucial test of the progress of civilization: accommodating the powerless in a non-violent way while acknowledging the established social and political status quo[14].

4. Civil Religion in America: Religious and Secular Rituals in Tocqueville

Realistically, according to Hume, vulgar minds will always be in need of religious beliefs and rituals, unfortunately mostly superstitious, to dispel everyday anxieties. In a Humean context, the fading of traditionally conceived public spirit gives way to early modern civility and its rituals. The extent to which this ritualistic civility remains a civil religion of a kind, given the religious overtones surrounding secular rituals, is matter for speculation. Be this as it may, ritualistic civility also enhances the fading civil auctoritas in commercial society.

Tocqueville shows special interest in the status of religion in modern democracies. In *Democracy in America* (Tocqueville 2010), he pays particular attention to religion's crucial role as a check (Kahan 2015) to democracy's individualist and materialist tendencies. He also emphasizes the quest of authority in democratic times, and the subsequent importance of Catholicism as an organized religion that, given its declared abstention from political involvement and respect of the separation between church and state, becomes a civil religion and gains influence in providing solid, coherent responses regarding transcendence within the atmosphere of democratic relativism.

4.1. Protestantism, Catholicism, and Rituals in America

In the chapter "Of religion as a political institution, how it serves powerfully to maintain the democratic republic among Americans", Tocqueville famously asserts that Americans are in possession of a Christian civil religion, more precisely a "Christianity that I cannot portray better than by calling it democratic and republican" (Tocqueville 2010, vol. II, p. 130). The status of this civil religion takes on a somehow idiosyncratic form. It is captured nicely in one of Tocqueville's letters to Count De Kergolay (Tocqueville 1861) regarding the nexus between religion, society, and politics in America. He affirms that: "The religious condition of this country is, perhaps, the most interesting subject of inquiry." (Tocqueville 1861, p. 306). Along the same lines followed in the chapter devoted to religion as a political institution in the *Democracy in America*, Tocqueville develops further in this letter a theme absent from the abovementioned chapter: the socio-psychological component of Catholicism's expansion in the US. The recurrent theme of a blue-collar desire for solid authority lurks behind his reflection.

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[13] There is a striking parallel to be drawn between the treatment of foreigners and strangers through the rites of politeness in Hume and the critique of politeness sketched by Rousseau in Emile. Following the drift of Humean argument, we might suggest that the treatment of foreigners is the most prominent locus of politeness as it regards the outsider par excellence, the one who by his mere presence breaks any habit and custom that informs human intercourse within the frame of a given community. In another essay, Hume evokes that the progress of civility and commerce over ancient times becomes palpable in the modern distinction between the notions of stranger and enemy that ancient ferocious manners used to conflate in the term hostis ('Of commerce', (Hume 1987, p. 259, n.8)).

[14] (Hume 1987, p. 132): "Whenever nature has given the mind a propensity to any vice, or to any passion disagreeable to others, refined breeding has taught men to throw the bias on the opposite side, and to preserve, in all their behaviour, the appearance of sentiments different from those to which they naturally incline ... In like manner, whenever a person's situation may naturally beget any disagreeable suspicion in him, it is the part of good manners to prevent it, by a studied display of sentiments, directly contrary to those of which he is apt to be jealous. Thus, old men know their infirmities, and naturally dread contempt from the youth: Hence, well-educated youth redouble the instances of respect and deference to their elders. Strangers and foreigners are without protection: Hence, in all polite countries, they receive the highest civilities, and are entitled to the first place in every company. A man is lord in his own family, and his guests are, in a manner, subject to his authority; Hence, he is always the lowest person in the company; attentive to the wants of everyone; and giving himself all the trouble, in order to please, which may not betray too visible an affectation, or to impose too much constrain on his guests. Gallantry is but an instance of the same generous attention."

Those among the Protestants in desperate need of certainty, unshaken beliefs and submission to the "yoke of authority . . . throw off with pleasure the heavy burden of reason and become Catholics"[15] (Tocqueville 1861, p. 307). This phenomenon has a twofold explanation: "equality disposes men to want to judge by themselves, but, from another side, it gives them the taste and the idea of a single social power . . . " (Tocqueville 2010, vol. III, p. 30).

At this juncture, the Humean theme of anxiety-soothing religious rituals and ceremonies gains prominence but this time clearly concerns the working instead of the middle class: "Again Catholicism captivates the senses and the imagination, and suits the masses better than the reformed religion; thus the greatest number of converts are from the working classes" (Tocqueville 1861, p. 307). By contrast, Pantheism and Unitarianism appeal to the educated strata and their mentality. In this vein, he sketches the portrait of "Protestants of cold, logical minds, the argumentative classes men of intellectual and studious habits" making an "almost public profession of pure theism" (Tocqueville 1861, p. 308). The lack of partisan spirit and the lack of ridicule are mutually reinforcing within American sects, contrasting similar movements in France such as the St. Simonians, vividly depicted as enthusiast sectarians in their doctrine and worship. Unitarian theists are "unaffectedly serious and their ceremonies are simple" (Tocqueville 1861, p. 308). In other words, there is an irreducible liturgical and functional core that renders this sect viable. On the contrary, mainstream Protestantism, squeezed between Catholics and Unitarians, loses ground among Christians. Tocqueville speculates on the potential shrinking, even collapse, of Protestantism.

Upon several occasions, Tocqueville worries less about secularization per se and more about the domination of atrophic forms of spiritualism incapable of fulfilling religion's function expressed through rituals that crystalize collective sentiments. As has been shrewdly observed, the main distinction in *Democracy in America* is drawn between "institutionalised, regularised, and ritualised religion and episodic, de-ritualised religion characteristic of bucolic gatherings in the West during the Second Great Awakening." (Craiutu and Holbreich 2015, pp. 143–44). The recurring emphasis on forms and formalities (Craiutu and Holbreich 2015, p. 144) regarding "sanctioned rules and practices for religious worship" is a key element. It is clear that for Tocqueville, the function of religion cannot fully play out unless a solid structure comprehending basic elements of dogma and worship, especially rituals, is established. "In all religions, there are ceremonies that are inherent in the very substance of belief and that must be kept from changing in any way. That is seen particularly in Catholicism, where form and foundation are often so closely united that they are one" (Tocqueville 2010, vol. III, n.i, p. 180). Resuming Hume's revisionist gesture regarding Catholicism's emphasis on rituals, Tocqueville makes similar points regarding the civilizing effect of forms and ceremonies. A milder form of Catholicism gains the favor of the middle class in America for the same reasons that an Episcopalian Protestantism, that is a watered-down but more ritualized version of Protestantism, attracts the attention of the "middling rank" in Presbyterian Scotland; it renders abstract truths tangible, therefore, accessible. This is no less an anthropological milestone, expressed by Tocqueville in almost the same terms encountered in Hume,

> I firmly believe in the necessity of forms. I know that they fix the human mind in the contemplation of abstract truths, and forms, by helping the mind to grasp those truths firmly, make it embrace them with fervor. I do not imagine that it is possible to maintain a religion without external practices, but on the other hand I think that, during the centuries we are entering, it would be particularly dangerous to multiply them inordinately . . . ".

—(Tocqueville 2010, vol. III, p. 27)

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15 (Tocqueville 2010, vol. III, p. 30): "You see today more than in earlier periods, Catholics who become unbelievers and Protestant who turn into Catholics."

Indeed, Tocqueville slightly ironically notices that "Protestantism is the government of middle classes applied to the religious world." Tocqueville displaces the abovementioned twofold Humean association between Puritans and liberty on the one hand, and Catholics and servile submission to legitimate authorities on the other, and overhauls the connection between religion and politics. Henceforth, he reclaims the status of civil religion and patriotism. The paradoxical valorization of Catholicism as the most suitable religion for a democratic era contains more substantial elements than those contained in Tocqueville's disillusionment regarding the Catholic Church's obsessive self-destructiveness in its reactionary political options. The recurring point of America's Puritan origins and background, rehearsed ad nauseam ever since, should not obscure Tocqueville's twofold critique of spiritualism and Pantheism, whether individualist or sectarian. He perspicuously detected the civilizing effect of rituals as expressions of collective sentiments and the tensions between "Protestantized" Catholicism or "Catholicized" Protestantism[16] within the frame of tolerance and separation of church and state (Zuckert 2016, p. 497) in the US. In democratic times of equality, no human authority should be suspected as foundational of human dignity and personality. Human rights and human dignity should be perceived as imposed by faith.

The abovementioned interaction and exchanges between Protestantism and Catholicism[17] (Tocqueville 2010, p. 133) are far from being condemned alongside religious dogmatic or ceremonial hybridity. Insofar as any sect avoids the pitfalls of obsessive ceremonials and "small observance", in other words, formalities that recall authoritarian aristocratic manners and the subsequent codified behavior, they should be accepted by democratic people, in need of a saving minimum of religious rituals to "support a general belief in the dignity and rights of all individuals" (Zuckert 2016, p. 497).

By contrast, both Protestants and Catholics engender, especially under the banner of Catholicism for the abovementioned reasons, a Christian civil religion of a novel kind including superstitious elements, the nature of which should be clearly circumscribed.

4.2. Patriotism and Christian Civil Religion in America

Tocqueville clearly asserts that Christian churches without exception are necessary for republican institutions, albeit not in the same degree as we have seen above; this is an opinion running across class or status divides (Tocqueville 2010, vol. II, p. 135) and shared nationwide. According to Tocqueville, it reflects a patriotic stance. Throughout the various occasions upon which he expresses his views on the link between religion and politics, it becomes clear that he has a twofold agenda: seizing the example of the US to show that modern republicanism, therefore liberty, and Christian civil religion are intimately linked while defending the paradoxical position that Catholicism is not only compatible but even more appropriate for a Christian civil religion in a republican context. Indeed in both chapters devoted to the question, "Of religion considered as political institution, How it serves powerfully to maintain the democratic republic among the Americans" and "Indirect influence exercised by religious beliefs on political society in the United States", he obsessively persists in refuting the foundations of French republican atheism and anti-clericalism alongside the alleged intimate link between Catholicism and absolutism.

While Tocqueville insists on the regulating power of religion over mores and family bonds via women, he also pauses on the restraining force of religion amid general permissiveness—religion by restraining imagination and binding conscience calibrates liberty and averts anarchy and anomy Moreover, how to prevent the spread of brutishness and vulgarity of the sovereign people, especially

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16   For a comparison with Rousseau that takes into account this dialectic between moderate forms of Protestantism and Catholicism see (Beiner 2012, pp. 251–52).

17   (Tocqueville 2010, vol. II, p. 133): " . . . and what is more important for society is not so much that all citizens profess the true religion but that they profess a religion. All the sects in the United States are, moreover, within the great Christian unity, and the morality of Christianity is the same everywhere. [In America there are Catholics and Protestants, but Americans profess the Christian religion.]

its most unrefined parts, if "while the political bond grows loose, the moral bond does not become tighter? And what to do with a people master of itself, if it is not subject to God?" (Tocqueville 2010, vol. II, p. 135). A sovereign people without inner restrains is incontrollable and self-destructive. This religious prerequisite of popular sovereignty against the fear of democracy reflects the recurring moral prerequisite of independence and free government in democracy: "Those who are not able to control themselves will inevitably find themselves controlled by others. No one can be independent or self-governed who is not self-controlled" (Zuckert 2016, p. 499).

At the end of the chapter (Tocqueville 2010, vol. II, p. 135), Tocqueville proceeds to an original tableau of political regimes moving beyond Montesquieu—the crucial test being the type of connection between religion and liberty, the latter should be understood broadly as constant motion and restlessness in the social and political world. Despotism does not need faith but sheer repression, republics need religion more than monarchies and democratic republics more than republics (Tocqueville 2010, vol. II, p. 136).

By preserving and expanding religion, Americans believe that they secure republican liberty; "this is how religious zeal in the United States constantly warms up at the hearth of patriotism" (Tocqueville 2010, vol. II, p. 135). In the chapter of the *DA* devoted to the public spirit in the US, Tocqueville draws a distinction between antiquated and modern patriotism that runs parallel to his analysis of the Christian civil religion proper to America's democratic spirit. The old fashion love of country is a "kind of religion, it does not reason, it believes; it feels ... " and binds "the heart of the man to the places where man was born. This instinctive love is mingled with the taste for ancient customs, with respect for ancestors, and the memory of the past" (Tocqueville 2010, vol. II, p. 75). This kind of affective investment has as a prerequisite the simplicity of mores and an uncontested legitimacy of an older order of things. On the other hand, the modern love of country confuses civic spirit with the exercise of political rights. According to Tocqueville, this is a form of rational self-interest. As "each person, in his sphere, takes an active part in the government of society" and having grasped the link between general and personal prosperity, he identifies with general prosperity and develops a civic spirit that rests on non-material interest. As he shrewdly notes, "An American in his country resembles a lover of gardens on his grounds" (Tocqueville 2010, vol. III, p. 76). The lack of traditional civic spirit gives way to an unprecedented secular, patriotic faith. Democratic patriotism exists in a psychological identification with the nation that involves an "alternative spirituality", not radically different from religious spirituality (Kahan 2015, p. 105).

In a parallel move, Emile Durkheim's theoretical intuitiveness does not refrain from detecting a novel "strong" cult (Chriss 1993)—more than a civil religion—having as on object the individual dignity and replacing the gradually eroded traditional beliefs and practices. Durkheim claims that the novel cult of the individual person emerges alongside novel superstitions and dogmas. It is beyond the scope of this paper to draw a parallel between the cult of the individual in Durkheim and the cult of the majority in Tocqueville; be this as it may, the founder of the French school of sociology reaches his most insightful moments regarding the analysis of secular faith, "As all the other beliefs and all the other practices take on a character less and less religious, the individual becomes the object of a sort of religion. We erect a cult in behalf of personal dignity which, as every strong cult, already has its superstitions" (Durkheim 1933, p. 172).

Regardless of the connection between Durkheim and Tocqueville, Tocqueville follows this insight and detects superstitious elements in democratic faith. He observes, "As citizens become more equal and more similar, the tendency of each blindly to believe a certain man ... decreases. The disposition to believe the mass increases, and more and more it is *opinion that leads the world* (my italics) (Tocqueville 2010, vol. III, p. 15). Therefore "faith in common opinion will become a sort of religion whose prophet will be the majority". This assertion shows Tocqueville's concern about the emergence of a novel form of absolute, therefore crypto-despotic *auctoritas* under the cloak of "the absolute power of a majority" that leads to a novel threat to independence, a "new face of servitude." (Tocqueville 2010, vol. III, p. 16). Put bluntly, democratic absolutism rests on a secular, democratic faith of a kind, the ambiguity of which is promised to a long future of democratic triumphs and disasters.

4.3. Hume and Tocqueville: A Comparative Assessment

The difference between religious ritual and civic ritual is crucial, specifically insofar as the former is not just psychological but also individual, whereas the latter goes beyond the psychological and individual to embrace the political and the collective. There is a radical change in ritual and its processes when it is transformed from a set of individual (religious) acts intended to secure individual psychological tranquility, to collective acts with very different intentions. Hume himself does not comment explicitly on this but this opens up an intriguing field of research regarding civic rituals that lies beyond the scope of this paper.

Hume insisted on equating religion with servitude but he seems to mitigate this assessment regarding the function of religious rituals. Tocqueville treated servitude as a result of the cult of the majority by modern societies. In Hume's analysis, the connection between religious ritual and superstition strikes as obvious yet the evolution of his thought calls attention to Hume as a civil–religion theorist; he thinks that we can domesticate and instrumentalize not religion as such but religious rituals insofar as there is no excess of formalist zeal, in tune with Hume's approval of a minimum ecclesiastical hierarchy necessary to guarantee social peace (Beiner 2012, p. 417). Since secular ritual is not devoid of superstition just because it is secular, according to Tocqueville, why must religious rituals be superstitious just because they are religious? Moving beyond the standard association of Catholicism with servile superstition and "enthusiast" Protestantism with anarchic freedom, Hume strikes a via media between hierarchical, sclerotic Catholicism and Puritan disorder in reclaiming the role of rituals. Through the dilution and propagation of ritual elements, he indirectly reinvigorates an element of authority better suited to commercial society. We need to recall that Hume famously holds that "liberty is the perfection of civil society; but still authority must be acknowledged essential to its very existence and in those contests, which so often take place between the one and the other, the latter may, on that account, challenge the preference" (Hume 1987, p. 41). To be sure, the ritualistic element refers less to sacredness than to a certain prestige surrounding persons and acts. On the other hand, Tocqueville subtly rescalizes the democratic public space both in his native France—he desperately attempts to save French Catholic church from its authoritarian outdated traditionalism—and the US Protestantism from a Protestant melting pot and a pantheistic elitism that gradually turn religious authority into nonsense. Simultaneously, he defends the dilution of simple and general rituals as proper to democratic times, Thus, he thinks that minimal deference to authority will be preserved amidst the all too superstitious democratic deference to a majority devoid of genuine prestige and spirituality. Christian civil religion diffuses, faute de mieux, ritualistic deference to authority endowed with minimal stability. "General ideas relative to God and human nature are, therefore, among all ideas, the ones it is most fitting to shield from the habitual action of individual reason and for which there is most to gain and least to lose in recognizing an authority" (Tocqueville 2010, vol. II, p. 418; Kries 2010, pp. 183–85).

5. Concluding Remarks: Civil Religion or Rituals of Civility?

In the first part of this paper, I argue that Hume envisages forms of religious ritual disconnected from superstitious neurotic behavior. Thus, he considers simple rituals fostering moderation, while his obsession with secular rituals, such as French highly ceremonial manners, is due to their anxiety-soothing function. This engenders an affective solidarity that binds citizenry without the appeal to a civil religion properly speaking. Let us call this path the Old Regime's civil ritualism.

In the second part, I illustrate the ambiguous role of religious rituals in the context of democratic faith and Christian civil religion in Tocqueville. Overall Tocqueville conceives rituals in a Humean spirit, as anxiety-soothing institutions. Moving beyond the Humean line of thought, he detects novel forms of superstition firmly embedded in secular, democratic faith.

Hume originally claims that *certain religious ceremonies properly managed could evacuate substantial parts of its superstitious elements*. To be sure, this remains a matter of degree, not of essence[18]. It has been convincingly suggested that "The morality even of secularized individuals, living today or in the 18th century, is strongly characterized by all sorts of moral taboos" (De Dijn 2011). Religious rituals within proper bounds are indispensable for social life, yet necessary *evils* due to their endemic, historically attested, incompatibility with common morality. Yet the "middling rank" in the Enlightenment's vernacular—i.e., the middle class—can potentially develop a different mentality. Undoubtedly, middle-class mores are also in need of "anxiolytic" institutions, the question is whether they could be merely secular. One can take a step further and argue that simple, accessible and inclusive rituals of manners can be considered as rituals transcending religious boundaries and cultural fixed identities (Stasch 2011, pp. 159–74); therefore, they could be further developed as more suitable to middle-class mores within contemporary multicultural communities.

At this juncture, Hume-inspired reflections pave the way to Tocqueville's idiosyncratic views regarding the democratic faith embedded in Christian civil religion. Can we envisage profane rituals that retain the anxiety-soothing character of religious rituals? Arguably "the civilizing qualities of faith communities" are negligible when "religious institutions are absent from or marginal to culture" (De Dijn 2011). Tocqueville locates an underlying trend within the process of gradual erosion of aristocratic distinction. Religious practices gradually drop their sclerotic aspect and transform themselves into watered-down versions of Christian faith, resembling cultural practices with high functional (Craiutu and Holbreich 2015, p. 139) value more than spirituals forms of life per se. According to Tocqueville, parallel to this process a secular faith proper to democratic times emerges: the sanctity of common opinion. Tocqueville explicitly designates the majority as the "prophet" although opinion makers and trend blazers are not yet nominated as messengers of this "prophet". Tocqueville makes an important point here regarding the sacralization of common opinion: "...whatever the political laws may be that govern men in centuries of equality, you can predict that faith in common opinion will become a sort of religion whose prophet will be the majority" (Tocqueville, vol. III, p. 14). Common opinion is erected in modern authority. Yet faith in democratic era carries along unprecedented superstitious elements and the Tocquevillean gaze perspicuously unearths the most insidious of them.

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[18] On the other side of the channel, Rousseau, equally concerned with superstition within religious institutions, inaugurates a different tradition of thought: he famously expresses a wholesale rejection of modern manners while setting forth an idiosyncratic civil religion, see (Rousseau 2012, pp. 263–72). Rousseau rejects manners precisely as empty ceremonial while he sacralises the social contract's basic tenets. Both philosophers, suspicious about progress in religious matters, seek to evacuate superstitious elements from social life without dismissing the affective dispositions of human nature.

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From a Christian World Community to a Christian America: Ecumenical Protestant Internationalism as a Source of Christian Nationalist Renewal

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Abstract: Christian nationalism in the United States has neither been singular nor stable. The country has seen several Christian nationalist ventures come and go throughout its history. Historians are currently busy documenting the plurality of Christian nationalisms, understanding them more as deliberate projects rather than as components of a suprahistorical secularization process. This essay joins in that work. Its focus is the World War II and early Cold War era, one of the heydays of Christian nationalist enthusiasm in America—and the one that shaped our ongoing culture wars between "evangelical" conservatives and "godless" liberals. One forgotten and admittedly paradoxical pathway to wartime Christian nationalism was the world ecumenical movement ("ecumenical" here meaning intra-Protestant). Protestant ecumenism curated the transformation of 1920s and 1930s Christian internationalism into wartime Christian Americanism. They involved many political and intellectual elites along the way. In pioneering many of the geopolitical concerns of Cold War evangelicals, ecumenical Protestants aided and abetted the Christian conservative ascendancy that wields power even into the present.

Was America founded as a Christian nation? Among historians, at least, the best approach to that question has been Robert Handy's *A Christian America* ([1971] 1984). David Sehat and Steven Green, among others, have more recently updated Handy. According to them, the nineteenth century witnessed the construction of a vibrant Protestant Christian "moral establishment" in society, culture, and politics. America then experienced a "second disestablishment" and "spiritual depression" between 1880 and 1940, when the nation's invented as well as actual religious heritage was challenged. Of course, Handy's story parallels traditional secularization narratives which posit a universal declension from an imagined golden age of Christian influence in public life. The problem with taking twentieth-century dechristianization seriously remains what to do with Christian nationalist renewal during World War II and the Cold War as explored by Kevin Kruse and others (including Handy in his second edition). Did the wartime revival suggest America was undergoing some sort of "reenchantment" or entering a "post-secular" age?[1]

A better conclusion might be that Christian nationalism in the United States has neither been singular nor stable. The country has seen several Christian nationalist ventures come and go throughout its history. Historians are currently busy documenting the plurality of Christian nationalisms, understanding them more as deliberate projects rather than as components of a suprahistorical secularization process.

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[1]　(Handy 1984; Kruse 2015). On the idea of a nineteenth-century "moral establishment", see (Sehat 2010). See also (Green 2010).

This essay joins in that work. Its focus is the World War II and early Cold War era, one of the heydays of Christian nationalist enthusiasm in America—and the one that shaped our ongoing culture wars between "evangelical" conservatives and "godless" liberals. One forgotten and admittedly paradoxical pathway to wartime Christian nationalism was the world ecumenical movement ("ecumenical" here meaning intra-Protestant). Protestant ecumenism curated the transformation of 1920s and 1930s Christian internationalism into wartime Christian Americanism. Ecumenical leaders involved many political and intellectual elites along the way. In pioneering many of the geopolitical concerns of Cold War evangelicals, ecumenical Protestants aided and abetted the Christian conservative ascendancy that wields power even into the present.[2]

The world ecumenical movement that helped to renew Christian American nationalism was rooted in the missionary crusades of the nineteenth century. Global Christian youth groups like the international Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), the Student Volunteer Movement (SVM), and the World's Student Christian Federation (WSCF), all headed by the missionary statesman John R. Mott, pursued "the evangelization of the world in this generation" before World War I. Veterans of those agencies joined Mott at the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland, to launch two of the three flagships of twentieth-century Protestant ecumenism, the standing Life and Work and Faith and Order conferences. The third, The International Missionary Council (IMC) led by British missionary veteran J. H. Oldham, was begun in 1921. At the IMC's Jerusalem meeting in 1928, Oldman and Mott imagined an interfaith front against what they called the growing "worldwide spirit of secularism". However, the WSCF, Life and Work, and Faith and Order eventually closed ranks around an intra-Protestant approach to perceived existential religious and political threats, culminating in the creation of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1948.[3]

Ecumenical Protestants were not always wrong to believe that somebody was out to get them. There is ample evidence that America did experience something of a "religious depression" after World War I as charted by Handy, Green, and Sehat. There was remarkable Christian entrepreneurship during the 1920s, to be sure. There were also multiple successful challenges to the public authority of Protestant officials. So whither the Christian identity of the United States? Many theologically liberal Christians within the social gospel and ecumenism welcomed a new age of Protestant-secular cooperation. Conservative evangelicals, meanwhile, wondered if the Bible ever sanctioned such a thing as a "Christian nation". Nevertheless, Protestants as well as Catholics across the theological spectrum began to mobilize for spiritual reconquest during the 1930s—to take America "back" for god.[4]

Beginning in the Great Depression, church leaders partnered with American businessmen to advance what Kruse has termed "Christian libertarianism". Both groups were fearful of what they believed to be the state socialist trajectory of the New Deal, including its possible threats to the racial and gender hierarchy of the country. Convincing people that America had been founded upon god-ordained principles of capitalist morality, free markets, and limited government would be crucial to the success of their cause. Backed by corporate funding and mass advertising, theologically liberal and conservative Protestants flooded the public square with Christian nationalist mottos such as "In God We Trust" and "One Nation Under God"—which implied that true Americans pledged loyalty to god and not to the government. In doing so, they set fresh terms for an ongoing debate about the sanctity of American government and politics. The new Christian nationalists would assert Protestant supremacy over state and society in the guise of protecting religious freedom. The Christian nationalist endgame was always Christian self-determination, even if it often proved a self-defeating strategy.[5]

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[2] In addition to the essays in this series, see (Verhoeven 2018) on Christian nationalism as a contested project from the beginning. See also the edited collection, based on a *Religions* Special Issue (Edwards 2017). On the culture wars, see (Hartman 2019). See (Thompson 2015), who also explores connections between Protestant ecumenism and Christian nationalism.

[3] (Edwards 2015).

[4] See (Smith 2003). For accounts of interwar mobilization by liberal and conservative Protestants, see, respectively, (Cherry 1995) and (Carpenter 1997).

[5] On Christian libertarianism and the Christian nationalist revival, see (Kruse 2015). See also (Greene 2015).

However, the Cold War era libertarian Christian nationalism of Billy Graham, Billy James Hargis or William F. Buckley, Jr. was first witnessed in America among young Christian internationalists with proclivities toward democratic socialism. The graduates of the YMCA, SVM, and WSCF during the 1920s began to establish themselves as up-and-comers in the new international social gospel crusade led by the IMC and Life and Work. Those persons included the promising theologian Henry Pitney Van Dusen (eventually president of Union Theological Seminary in New York), the Christian socialist pastors and professors Reinhold and H. Richard Niebuhr, and the student Christian organizer and political activist Francis Pickens Miller. Fearing the spread of secularism's sister "Humanism" in America, Mott first called those four along with a few dozen other men together to invent a new social Christianity. The resulting Theological Discussion Group would assume leadership positions throughout the country's premier home missions agency, the Federal Council of Churches (FCC). The FCC and Theological Discussion Group members, in turn, would join Mott and Oldham on the frontlines of Protestant internationalism during the 1930s.[6]

Francis Miller's role in shaping both Christian internationalism and Christian nationalism in America has been neglected. As Mott's chosen successor to the chairmanship of the WSCF, Miller was well-placed to give voice to a Protestant counterforce zealous for the integrity of the world church. Miller had served as a private during World War I and so was sensitive to the destructive power of nationalism. Like most of his ecumenical associates, he decided that the deification of the nation-state in fascism, communism, and Americanism was the result of collective unbelief or the "spirit of secularism". The emergence of "national religion" during the 1930s stemmed from what Miller called, in his contribution to the revealing titled ecumenical collaboration *The Church against the World* (Miller 1935), the "domestication of Protestantism". Miller's essay was a good reminder that Christian antisecularism has enjoyed a long and varied history beyond and well before the laments of contemporary evangelical culture warriors.[7]

To save the soul of Western Christianity, Miller and associates looked to give old words new meaning. Their love–hate relationship with the assumed face of secular humanism, John Dewey, began to shine forth during this time of Protestant reinvention. Miller, for one, roasted Dewey as typical of the totalitarian consequences of secularism. As Miller complained of Dewey's book, *A Common Faith* (1934), "the imagination which was supposed to possess universal qualities capable of inspiring flesh and blood men of all lands and races to enter into a common faith is the very stuff out of which religions like the Nazi religion are eventually compounded." Francis endorsed classical theological solutions to cultural catastrophe. "The primary task of the American Protestant church is to recreate among its members belief in the reality of Christendom," he concluded. The most obvious meaning of Christendom involved the enchantment of the North Atlantic Community that he and his wife Helen (a University of Chicago-trained political scientist and atheist) believed was in formation. Given the Millers' anticolonial concerns, which were shared by much of the ecumenical movement leadership, the next Christendom looked to a global realm of self-determination.[8]

Ecumenical Protestants set about effecting Francis's Christendom-beyond-borders at the Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work at Oxford in 1937. Oxford was the culmination of decades of Anglo-American church collaboration and fellowship (over half of the delegates to Oxford were from Britain and America). It was also a beginning, as plans for the WCC quickly followed. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about Oxford, however, was its antisecularist tone—given how much its membership accepted the authority of non-Christian forces like the social sciences. Fear of national and global religious reversal had dominated discussions at the Jerusalem IMC. With Oldham at the helm of Oxford, the conference theme became "the life and death struggle between Christian faith and

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[6] (Warren 1997; Edwards 2012).

[7] (Miller 1935, pp. 82, 96, 106–19). The "spirit of secularism" quotation is from Wilhelm Pauck, "The Crisis of Religion," in (Niebuhr et al. 1935, pp. 47, 64, 69).

[8] (Miller 1935, pp. 111, 118).

the secular and pagan tendencies of our time". The Church and Community committee, of which Van Dusen was a member, reported, "human life is falling to pieces because it has tried to organize itself into unity on a secularistic and humanistic basis without any reference to the divine Will and Power above and beyond itself. Nor is there any hope in the ascription of sacred quality to nation or State or class." Reinhold Niebuhr's theological analysis of the "sins" of secular capitalist culture highlighted Oxford's commitment to weaponizing traditional doctrines in a brewing global culture war.[9]

Bold expressions of Christian supremacy were a way for ecumenical Protestants to assert their freedom from a disintegrating world order. Francis Miller again was not to be outdone. Starting in the "smallest units of society", he had written for the Theological Discussion Group in preparation for Oxford, "the World Christian Community extends outward until it binds in one fellowship of Faith, men and women of every class, race, nation and culture"—becoming by default the "soul of political and economic world society". Did Miller and friends believe a transnational Protestant fellowship possible? That was beside the point. Such declarations were one critical means to strengthen existing unities as well as look forward to new ones. Protestant ecumenism continued to traverse theological and geopolitical boundaries.[10]

Ecumenical spokespersons also invoked the "Christian World Community", which suggested that their faith was predestined to head any planet-rebuilding process. "For increasing numbers of Christians," Oxford attendees reported, "the Christian World Community which possesses no geographical locus, no tangible structure, no unity of language or uniformity of custom, is a reality of far greater meaning and authority than the innumerable local, racial, and national communities which have traditionally claimed human devotion." Many ecumenical Protestants during Oxford waxed wistful for a pre-nationalist past in order to manage a precarious present and future. The Anglo-American contingent accorded itself the luxury of imperial nostalgia. Yet their writings and discussions did point to a shared commitment to post-imperial world order. Christian internationalism was a geopolitically progressive force.[11]

The Oxford conference was equally significant for how it brought foreign policy elites into the fold. There had been an explosion of "nonpartisan" internationalist institutions in the years before, during, and following World War I. Oldham had long wanted to assemble some of the "best men" on behalf of Christian reconstruction, and that included his contacts in Britain's Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIIA) and the Round Table Group. The international relations professor, author, and administrator Lionel Curtis would not attend Oxford like his friend, the British Ambassador to the United States Lord Lothian, but he was like-minded in conviction that Christianity could and must be a globally integrative force. In *Civitas Dei: The Commonwealth of God* (1938), Curtis Christianized the Round Table's longstanding vision of a Commonwealth of Nations. A world of competing nationalisms had to progress toward a genuine internationalism, and Curtis believed that only the British and Americans together could lead the way. His Commonwealth was a fitting approximation and expansion of Oxford's vision of a Christian World Community. *Civitas Dei* would be re-titled *World Order* when it was published in the United States in 1939 to make it more palatable for the country's foreign policy secularists.[12]

Life and Work's imprint on the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) was subtler. The CFR's leadership resisted the religious turn of previously de-Christianized intellectuals during World War II and Cold War eras. Still, fears of Nazi and Soviet dominations moved many CFR affiliates to think twice about the liberating potential of secularization. Several joined Oxford in rediscovering the geopolitical

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[9] (Oldham 1937, vol. 10, pp. 68–69). On the Jerusalem conference, see (Hogg 1952, pp. 241, 246–48).
[10] Francis Pickens Miller, "The Church as World Community", Paper presented before the Theological Discussion Group, November 1936, 3, in The Theological Discussion Group Papers, Yale Divinity School Library (hereafter TDGP), Box 2, Folder 24.
[11] (Oldham 1937, p. 221).
[12] On Curtis's book, see (Lavin 1995).

resources of Western Christianity. CFR researcher and Miller mentor Raymond Leslie Buell (also president of the Foreign Policy Association) became more outspoken in his faith, sparring with Niebuhr over theological matters and working with Van Dusen on ecumenical statements on world order. Buell confessed to the latter that "the two great ideological problems of the future are to bring back both Russia and Germany into the Christian tradition." Helen Miller continued her exit from the church. Nevertheless, in wartime writings, she also confessed that "North Atlantic civilization" and even "democratic procedure" itself had originated in an amalgam of Greek, Roman, and Christian cultures. Common enemies bound her and Francis ideologically even if they rarely shared a pew together.[13]

CFR elders worked with the Millers in war planning but did not undergo such a conversion. The same could not be said of their premier foreign policy journal *Foreign Affairs.* The threat of another continental war had driven some contributors to demand that the "torch of human civilization" be relit with the ideas and values of Judeo-Christianity. A host of public intellectuals calling for re-Christianization began to frequent *Foreign Affairs* after 1934. Among its stronger antisecularist voices were radio personality Dorothy Thompson (called one of the most influential women in America), the Millers' friend Andre Siegfried, and the Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain. While Catholic internationalists like Maritain and ecumenical Protestants generally refused institutional cooperation until the 1960s—there were notable exceptions like the National Conference on Christians and Jews (NCCJ), which had grown out of ecumenical Protestant circles—the Catholic church in Europe and America were reliable partners with the WCC in advancing antisecularism. For his part, Maritain joined the several American Protestants hoping to make theocracy great again. He charged that "the fundamental problem to which a Christian civilization must apply itself . . . is how to construct a Christian system of politics." *Foreign Affairs*'s boldest proponent for a revival of Western Christian civilization was the British macrohistorian Arnold J. Toynbee, a RIIA member, interventionist, and friend of Van Dusen and the ecumenical movement. Any "secular world order" such as Germany and Russia were then advancing would be temporary, Toynbee suggested. The "conversion of the modern world" was at hand. A new ethical world system would soon emerge in tandem with "the gradual triumph of Christianity" in the West and throughout the world. In giving writers like Toynbee a platform, *Foreign Affairs* became an occasional mouthpiece for the ecumenical movement.[14]

Toynbee's optimism found at least one sympathizer among the CFR, John Foster Dulles. Though a Presbyterian since his youth, Dulles did not awaken to the political worth of religion until after Van Dusen (a longtime associate) had invited him to the Oxford conference. Even then, he was initially wary about mixing church and state. His first post-Oxford writing which Curtis wrote the Foreword to, *War, Peace and Change* (1939), offered a Wilsonian critique of nationalism as a form of bad faith. But Dulles at first did not extoll the world-making power of Protestantism as Curtis and others had. He kept his distance from the Millers' and Van Dusen's interventionism out of fear of political religion. "It is indeed difficult, if not impossible," Dulles complained of Century Club work, "to conduct a modern totalitarian war on any basis other than the objectives of God and of State are one." He warned FCC leaders that, in every "so-called 'Christian' country", churches inevitably become the "hand-maiden of national politics". Better to repent of the belief, common during wartime, that the "Nation" can be an "instrument of the Divine will". At the same time, Dulles also accepted leadership of the FCC's Just and Durable Peace campaign, which he boasted that the country's "Christian leaders" (namely FDR's administration) all supported. Dulles would finally pivot to Christian Americanism as the possibilities

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13 Raymond Leslie Buell, to Reinhold Niebuhr, June 14, 1943; Raymond Leslie Buell, to Henry Pitney Van Dusen, December 8, 1943, both in the Raymond Leslie Buell Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Box 11, Folder 13.

14 (Benda 1934; Thompson 1940; Siegfried 1939; Maritain 1939; Toynbee 1939). On Catholic thought, see (Moyn 2015). On the NCCJ, see (Schultz 2011).

of postwar Soviet expansion became evident. He then attempted to rally world ecumenical leaders behind Truman's and Eisenhower's holy war against "godless" international communism.[15]

In other words, Protestant ecumenism was a Christianizing force in geopolitics even as it itself was reshaped by the bipolar world climate of World War II and the Cold War. Dulles's journey from Christian internationalism to Christian nationalism, at least, followed in the footsteps of ecumenical leaders such as Miller and Van Dusen. Francis's Christian Americanism became more pronounced as World War II transitioned into the Cold War. Why did Miller sell out his vision of a nonaligned World Christian Community only to show off his jingoistic colors? Much of the American ecumenical community, of which Miller was a part, reluctantly reconciled themselves to Christian nationalism in the hopes of advancing progressive goals. The American Century, they believed, was a temporary evil to achieve a Christian World Community—a national and world order characterized by self-determination. Miller and other self-professed realists were naive about the coercive dynamics of American globalism for which they served as key Protestant apologists. Their fights for social justice nevertheless persisted well into the age of superpower rivalry.

The ecumenical transit from fomenting Christian internationalism to celebrating Christian America was seen in the interventionist journal *Christianity and Crisis*. The bi-monthly was launched in February 1941 by Miller, Van Dusen, and Niebuhr as an alternative to *The Christian Century*, which remained pacifist. *Christianity and Crisis* was part of the overall pressure group strategy worked out between Lothian, the Millers, and Van Dusen. As such, it should be considered alongside *Foreign Affairs* as a part of the history of public diplomacy (indeed, their audiences overlapped). Niebuhr quickly became the journal's editor and most prominent voice, as Van Dusen and Miller were otherwise preoccupied. Yet all three founders were critical in securing an audience for their publication among the CFR and other Washington insiders.[16]

In fact, it was Miller (not Niebuhr) who penned the journal's first article. His goal was to garner readers' support for lend-lease to Britain—no easy task given that many ecumenical Protestants had outlawed war in 1929. He couched his appeal in the very civilizational terms that he and friends had sworn off. According to Miller:

> For more than a thousand years this civilization of ours has been emerging around the shores of the North Atlantic Ocean. The fact which differentiates our civilization from all others is that here men organized states on the basis of consent rather than on the basis of force—here men made the dignity of human life the test of policy—here men won the right to freedom of speech and freedom of worship. Wherever its waters touched there free men lived.

Miller's memory of the making of the West was selective, but it was in keeping with his and Helen's faith that a North Atlantic Community was something worth fighting for. Francis made a similar appeal in *Foreign Affairs*, arguing that "the survival of the American way of life depends upon the survival of this civilization." His *Christianity and Crisis* salvo equated the defense of the Atlantic area with the "preservation of Western Christendom". He removed overt religious supplications for his CFR readers, however.[17]

Other *Christianity and Crisis* contributors echoed Miller's plea that American power be used to promote Protestant Christian supremacy. They were trying to foster situations of strength in which Oxford's antisecularist ambitions could move forward globally. When writers called for the "rescue

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[15] John Foster Dulles, to Henry Sloane Coffin, May 20, 1940; John Foster Dulles, to Walter Van Kirk, June 13, 1940; John Foster Dulles, Address, FCC Biennial Meeting, December 10, 1940, all in John Foster Dulles Papers, Public Policy Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University (hereafter JFDP), Box 19; John Foster Dulles, to Sumner Welles, August 19, 1942, in JFDP, Box 21. On Dulles's religious life and shifts, see (Toulouse 1985).
[16] See (Hulsether 1999).
[17] (Miller 1941a, 1941b). The author of "The Crisis" is not identified, which is why many scholars have assumed Niebuhr was the author. Given the similarities between the editorial and the Millers' writings in *Foreign Affairs* and in *The Giant of the Western World* (1930), it is evident that Francis was the main author.

of Christendom", they meant both a geographical location but also a hope held by "all progressive peoples". The editors themselves followed older British ecumenicists in asserting that "Christian civilization" had birthed liberal freedom and government. It should be protected against "advancing secularism". The editors also gave opportunity for celebrity thinkers like Toynbee and theologian Paul Tillich to maintain that the secular would ultimately serve the sacred. Reiterating his earlier theory of Protestant secularism, Tillich observed that "without the participation of the secular spirit in the work of spiritual reconstruction nothing can be done."[18]

Christianity and Crisis brethren (most contributors were men) offered up recipes for re-Christianization as a precursor to support for civil and human rights. Contributors made no pretense to infallibility or righteous indignation. Led by Niebuhr's tragic sensibility, the journal regularly explored the theme of "Defending Justice Despite Our Own Injustice". Christians must rail against the evils of totalitarianism all the while aware of the "Unconscious Fascism" within their own societies. The socialist message of earlier ecumenical publications was muted in *Christianity and Crisis*, but the editors still called for social justice at home and abroad. Writers were outspoken in demanding minority rights, including an end to Jim Crow, support for refugees, and the closing of Japanese internment camps. They also adopted a fairly radical version of anticolonialism that rejected paternalism in favor of "full partnership" of subject peoples in their transition to independence. *Christianity and Crisis* had little practically in common with the Christian libertarianism that would prevail as the public face of American Protestantism in the second half of the twentieth century.[19]

Yet ecumenical persons and projects helped to create intellectual conditions in which Christian libertarianism could thrive. Francis, for one, looked upon postwar evangelical attacks on the welfare state with dismay. He and his spiritual opponents occupied the same Christian nationalist space, nonetheless. That became clear in a *Christianity and Crisis* piece that Miller wrote arguing again for the creation of a "real world-wide community of Christians". He asked readers to think of World War II as an "opportunity" to finish what the evangelical and missionary movements of the nineteenth century had started: Namely, the Christianization of the West. Still, Miller believed America needed to play a central role in that endeavor. As he explained, "the destiny of America is not the destiny of a race, or of a class, or of a military imperialism. . . . Our destiny is to create an order within the framework of which all men everywhere can through service to God realize freedom and security for themselves and for their children. That is America's God-given mission." Miller believed the Christian American way of life could be championed without falling into hubris or imperialism. He remained committed to the spread of social rights within and beyond his North Atlantic community. Yet he also confessed that the ends of America and those of the kingdom of god were symbiotic. Christian nationalism and internationalism were no longer binaries for Miller, if they ever had been.[20]

Niebuhr agreed. The venerable critic of personal and group pride backed his way into Christian Americanism. Niebuhr never became a member of the CFR, but his Christianized version of realistic Wilsonianism endeared him to several of its members. In "Anglo-Saxon Destiny and Responsibility" (Niebuhr 1943), Niebuhr made his clearest pitch for Anglo-American union in service of an ideal of world community. "It would serve no good purpose to try to compare the special destiny of the Anglo-Saxon peoples with that of Israel in olden times," he observed. "Nevertheless only those who have no sense of the profundities of history would deny that various nations and classes, various social groups and races are at various times placed in such a position that a special measure of the divine mission in history falls upon them. In that sense God has chosen us in this fateful period of world history." Niebuhr spent most of his time and energy in the article decrying the dangers of national self-righteousness. But, much like Miller, he also accepted that America had been uniquely

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18 (Cairns 1941; Baillie 1942; The Archbishop of Canterbury 2014; Van Dusen 1942; Niebuhr 1944a; Toynbee 1947; Tillich 1942).
19 (Niebuhr 1942; Hough 1941; Parsons 1942; Reid 1942; Wrong 1944; Bates 1942). See (Zubovich 2018).
20 (Miller 1942a, 1942b).

blessed. Neither wanted the United States to go it alone, Niebuhr favoring Anglo-American alliance and Miller wanting a more expansive North Atlantic partnership. Whatever multilateral arrangement developed during the war, however, had to be Christian. Only as Christianity stayed in "sufficiently close relation to the national life" could a people work toward virtuous ends. In *Christianity and Crisis*, thanks especially to Miller and Niebuhr, the American Century found its Christian dress.[21]

Christian nationalists like Miller were vital to setting one of the cornerstones of wartime Christian nationalism: That democratic government was derived from Christian tradition and could not survive without it. The notion that Christianity and republican government were indispensable allies dated back to the revolutionary era in North America, yet it was repurposed in the twentieth century to serve antisecularist, counter-totalitarian causes. "Democracy is not Christianity," Miller wrote, "but it depends upon Christianity. Tendencies toward democratic forms of government will appear wherever the Christian faith is a living reality in the hearts of people. Where the Christian faith disappears, the democratic faith will also disappear and in due course democratic institutions will follow suit." In Miller's rush to define America's world mission, he left Dewey behind.[22]

Miller was far from the only Protestant booster to reinvent the Christian origins of democracy. His ecumenical community quickly abandoned talk of Christendom and Christian World Community when stealing democratic rhetoric back from secularists. In the long run, expressions of Christian democracy proved vital to social criticism by civil and human rights activists.[23] But in the meantime, ecumenical church leaders reinforced the notion that democracy was an ideology to be adhered to rather than a process to be respected.

FDR's "Arsenal of Democracy" had initially generated a lot of dissent, notably from pacifist Christian communities like the *Christian Century.* Yet democratic faith also advanced inter-Christian and interfaith work toward national unity. Catholic and Protestant thinkers alike agreed with Vice-President Henry Wallace that "democracy is the only true political expression of Christianity." They believed that exporting democracy was a worthy aim yet doubted that it could be done on an emaciated foundation of scientific secularism. Maritain, for one, prophesied that the "new Christendom" would be a democracy. Henry Sloane Coffin, the venerable New York pastor and past president of Union Theological Seminary, explained that the democratic way of life rested upon "faith in the capacities of the common man, faith in the self-evidencing power of truth and righteousness, [and] faith in a just Lord of the universe who has fashioned and orders it that men and nations can live together satisfactorily only in brotherhood." Wartime Christian democracy broke with the aspirations of interwar participatory democrats for free discussion. Maritain and company did not find their sentiments at all incompatible with a progressive political platform, however.[24]

The most consistent socialist within *Christianity and Crisis*, the theologian John Coleman Bennett, was also one of its strongest voices for Christian democracy. Admitting the emergence of a "frankly pagan civilization" in America and Europe, Bennett tried to convince readers that "the Christian conception of the human situation seems to fit exactly the needs of democracy." Bennett sided with Catholics in arguing that one of the hallmarks of Western democracy, the "limitation of political power", was the brainchild of medieval theocracy (not Athens) which had kept rulers in check by threats of eternal punishment. Bennett advanced a model for democracy which presupposed substantial Christian interference in public and private life. As adherents to standards that transcended state prerogatives, Bennett concluded that Christians had two supreme tasks: To keep politicians "under the judgment of God" and to bolster respect for "the dignity of all persons regardless of race or class".[25]

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21 (Niebuhr 1943).
22 (Miller 1942b, p. 6). On the tradition of "Christian republicanism," see (Matthew Bowman 2018).
23 (Zubovich).
24 (Wallace 1942, pp. 12, 46; Maritain 1970; Coffin 1940).
25 (Bennett 1940, 1941, 1943).

Christianity and Crisis followed Bennett in outspoken support of Christian democracy. Contributors chided Dewey for not recognizing the "Christian Sources of Democracy". At times, the journal joined in the tri-faith moment of the 1940s and 1950s. Failing to achieve "ecclesiastical unity", one writer noted, Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish leaders might still find moral power together in preaching that "religion and religion only can make democracy safe in a crucial time by undergirding it with spiritual sanctions." "Responsible freedom", as Miller often called it, depended upon American awareness of the "dependence of their political institutions and procedures upon the existence of a living Christian culture at the heart of their national life". Miller criticized the secularist privileges resulting from separating church and state. He called upon public schools to teach Christian anthropology and morality. His *Christianity and Crisis* wedded religious to political consensus in ways that undercut participatory democrats' pleas for inclusive, open dialogue.[26]

Reinhold Niebuhr offered the most famous statement on the need for "Judeo-Christian" over Deweyan democracy in *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness* (1944). More than most ecumenical Protestants, Niebuhr embraced the new ethos of Judeo-Christianity promoted by interfaith groups like the NCCJ. The term Judeo-Christian presupposed Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant unity over and against all forms of irreligion. It was also a reflection of increasing demographic diversity and the search for a post-Protestant religious source of cultural unity. Like Bennett, Niebuhr believed democratic revitalization lay in an understanding of human nature that mediated between sentimentalism and pessimism. A new "religious culture" was needed—one which recognized how man's self-transcendence over natural processes made him both creative and destructive. Niebuhr dismissed Dewey's empirical naturalism as a "covert religion" futilely trying to find fulfillment in the historical process itself. Judeo-Christian political morality instead encouraged greater realizations of social justice without believing they could ever become fully actualized. Democracy, Niebuhr suggested, was the most suitable form of government because it allowed for necessary reassessment, experimentation, and self-criticism. It could restrain oligarchy without itself falling victim to tyrannical rule. While Niebuhr never explicitly endorsed a Christian foundation for democracy, nor did he demonstrate much sympathy for non-Christian or pluralist versions of democratic governance. Niebuhr's ambivalence left his work open to appropriation by libertarian Christian nationalists.[27]

Ecumenical Protestants followed Miller, Niebuhr, and *Christianity and Crisis* in advancing Christian nationalism and Christian democracy during the early Cold War. They brought together the FCC with other home missionary organizations to form the supersized National Council of Churches (NCC) in 1950. With the Christian libertarian banner, "This Nation Under God", literally hanging over their inaugural gathering, the NCC boasted that the "American way of life" was inseparable from Christian faith. American and world church leaders, politicians, and ambassadors united in challenging their audience of four thousand to stand aligned against "atheism", "secular materialism", and other alien worldviews. "We dare to believe," announced Hermann Morse, a chief NCC architect and veteran Christian nationalist, "that a Christian and a Protestant America can be the strongest force in the world against the new and the old paganisms that are contending for the mastery of the world." Morse's declaration was seconded by the NCC's first president. "Together," he concluded, "we shall move forward with renewed resolve and great hope in the building of a Christian America in a Christian world."[28]

The addition of "Christian world" pointed to key differences between ecumenical and evangelical versions of Christian nationalism. Those disjunctions would be lost as the latter subsumed the former. Led by the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), Billy Graham, *Christianity Today*, and groups like Campus Crusade for Christ, the so-called new evangelicals (to distinguish themselves from their

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[26] (Leiper 1943; Robbins 1942; Miller 1947).
[27] (Niebuhr 1944b, vol. xiii, pp. 10, 32, 71, 78). See (Gaston 2019).
[28] (Barstow 1951; Morse 1951; Sherrill 1951).

fundamentalist mentors) looked to triumph over their ecumenical foes. In the years ahead, new evangelicals abandoned cultural isolation and stressed instead that the nation had been theirs all along. They hoped Christian nationalism would be their ticket into the halls of political, financial, and mass cultural power. However, their numbers alone were never enough to explain their extraordinary successes in the second half of the twentieth century. New evangelicals depended upon support from the NCC churches, particularly from the latter's Republican-voting majority with an inclination toward Christian libertarianism.[29]

Henry Luce, the media mogul, Christian Republican, and New Deal critic became one of the new evangelicals' most important boosters from within Protestant ecumenism. Luce was much more willing to support Christian nationalism, especially after the possibilities of Soviet expansion became clear. Following World War II, he became an active member of the New York-based Layman's Movement for a Christian World, an ecumenical project (with NCC support) which aimed at the "building of Christianity into the every-day life of the world". The Layman's Movement reflected the "tri-faith" sensibilities and nonsectarian appeals to "spiritual values" of the International Council on Religious Education that curated it. Its members tended to be businessmen, lawyers, and bankers (including J. C. Penny and Alfred H. Williams, President of the Federal Reserve Bank) looking to roll back what they saw as the creeping socialism of Rooseveltan liberalism. Ecumenical Protestants needed to continue to make real the "Church Universal", Luce told one dinner meeting of Gotham's greatest, but they must also stem the tide of "secularism" in America. "We face a race between Christianity overcoming secularism or Christianity becoming secularized," he warned. The financially chosen needed to invest their wealth in "Christianizing our society". Though not completely shunning celebrity liberal theologians like Niebuhr and Tillich, Luce's media empire tempered its support for the NCC and instead threw in with Billy Graham as the best hope for achieving Christian America. The secularism in his American Century was forgotten as Luce touted Christian and free market revitalization as one in the same aim.[30]

Christian libertarianism and Christian Americanism grew together under the guardianship of Graham's evangelicals. Backed by Luce and a heavenly host of corporate leaders, they would take over the national Christianization program of NCC churches. Evangelicals would develop a reciprocal relationship with the federal government, pledging their loyalty while receiving numerous financial and social privileges. Their antistatist rendition of Christian Americanism continues to yield political influence even into the present.[31] All that is not to say evangelicals stole Christian nationalism away from their ecumenical rivals in any direct or immediate way. Nor was the critical edge of Christian nationalism that ecumenical Protestants had wanted to wield—the ability to stand above their country and judge it for failing to live up to Christian standards—entirely absent within postwar evangelicalism. Yet Christian patriotism, no matter how critical, was easily coopted by the wartime state.

The transition from Christian internationalism to Christian nationalism, from a Christian World Community to Christian America, was especially costly to progressive Christianity. In time, ecumenical quests for expanding civil rights at home and human rights abroad would be attacked by conservatives as un-American and un-Christian. Francis Miller, for one, would complain constantly to friends during the 1950s about libertarian Christian complaints against the NCC and WCC for being too big, secular, and political. He would challenge Graham after one rally to take a stronger stand against

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[29] See (Sutton 2014). I follow Sutton in defining fundamentalism as an interdenominational subset of conservative evangelicalism held together by shared readings of the end times. The new evangelicalism downplayed the eschatological obsessions of their predecessors. However, as Sutton maintains, Cold War evangelicalism actually thrived because of their "politics of apocalypse". See also (Lahr 2007).

[30] John Foster Dulles, to Henry Luce, April 7, 1944; Henry Luce, to Robert Miles, March 23, 1951, both in the Henry Luce Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Box 34, Folder 11; Weyman C. Huckabee, to Henry Luce, March 6, 1946, in HLP, Box 42, Folder 1. A transcript of Luce's address can be found in Weyman Huckabee, to Kipp Finch, December 5, 1949, in HLP, Box 42, Folder 1.

[31] On evangelicals and the state after World War II, see (Schaeffer 2012). On corporate support for conservative Christianity, see (Moreton 2009; Gloege 2015; Grem 2016; Hummel 2019).

segregation. Like Niebuhr, he would be deeply disappointed by the globe-trotting evangelist's special relationship with Richard Nixon. Graham and followers, in turn, would revive the ecumenical slogan "Judeo-Christian" during the 1970s and redeploy it in service of the conservative Christian nationalism of the Reagan, Bush, and Trump administrations.[32]

Ecumenical Protestant contributions to Christian American renewal remind us of the dynamic constructed, inventive nature of all nationalisms.[33] The "Christian" identity of America was never an inherent or assumed possession. It was relative to a myriad of contested theocratic projects from the beginning. Sometimes the Christian nationalist adventures were ironic, as was the case with twentieth-century ecumenical Protestantism. What had started as a campaign for a more peaceful and just—and Protestant—world order would end in support of the patriotic correctness of the postwar conservative movement. Even at the time, some ecumenical Protestants stood in horror at their own creation, worrying that democracy had become a false "religion", an idol demanding uncritical worship. "The best minds and stoutest hearts of our time are putting into the struggle for a democratic world order something akin to the evangelistic fervor of vital Christianity without any conscious support of evangelical faith," one worried. The World Christian Community had come to serve the nationalist cause after all.[34] Yet neither ecumenical nor evangelical expressions of Christian nationalism have been able to counter what is arguably one of the most secular countries in the world today.[35]

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[32] (Hummel 2017).
[33] (Green 2015).
[34] (Johnson 1945; Niebuhr 1947).
[35] (Kidd 2018).

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Whose Dharma Is It Anyway? Identity and Belonging in American Buddhist (Post)Modernities

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Abstract: This study engages some aspects of the conversations, implicit and explicit, between American(ized) Buddhism in non-heritage/convert communities and religious nationalism in the U.S. Specifically, how does a Buddhist understanding of emptiness and interdependence call into question some of the fundamental assumptions behind conflations of divine and political order, as expressed through ideologies of "God and Country", or ideas about American providence or exceptionalism? What does belonging to a nation or transnational community mean when all individual and collective formations of identity are understood to be nonessential, contingent and impermanent? Finally, how can some of the discourses within American Buddhism contribute to a more inclusive national identity and a reconfigured understanding of the intersection of spiritual and national belonging? The focus here will be on exploring how an understanding of identity and lineage in Buddhist contexts offers a counter-narrative to the way national and spiritual belonging is expressed through tribalist formations of family genealogy, nationalism and transnational religious affiliation in the dominant Judeo-Christian context, and how this understanding has been, and is being, expressed in non-heritage American(ized) Buddhist communities.

Keywords: religious nationalism; American Buddhism; God and Country; minority religion in the U.S.; Engaged Buddhism

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It is another chilly morning at 5:45 a.m. I am lingering over the thimbleful cup of tea that has become part of morning practice and fighting the urge to sleep. Candles and incense are lit. The "Heart Sutra" is chanted in English, then the "Great Dharani" is chanted in Korean. As we sit in silence in the temple overlooking the mountains in Eastern Kentucky, the sky lightens and the fog begins to lift from the forests below. All too soon the bell will ring, the retreat will end, and we will return to our homes, our jobs, our children—and all of the pressing social, political, climactic and environmental issues that face us as Americans and as citizens of the world. But Zen practice does not begin and end with sitting on a cushion, and seeing the world through a Buddhist perspective is not limited to the personal and the spiritual. How does this impact a sense of belonging to the larger American culture and nationhood that is largely, and historically, constructed around a Protestant Christian identity?

This study engages some aspects of the conversations, implicit and explicit, between American(ized) Buddhism in non-heritage/convert communities and religious nationalism in the U.S. Specifically, how does a Buddhist understanding of emptiness and interdependence call into question some of the fundamental assumptions behind conflations of divine and political order, as expressed through ideologies of "God and Country", or ideas about American providence or exceptionalism? What does belonging to a nation or transnational community mean when all individual and collective formations of identity are understood to be nonessential, contingent and impermanent? Finally, how can some of the discourses within American Buddhism contribute to a more inclusive national identity and a reconfigured understanding of the intersection of spiritual and national belonging? The focus here will be on exploring how an understanding of identity and lineage

in Buddhist contexts offers a counter-narrative to the way national and spiritual belonging is expressed through tribalist formations of family genealogy, nationalism and transnational religious affiliation in the dominant Judeo-Christian context, and how this understanding has been, and is, being expressed in non-heritage American(ized) Buddhist communities.

1. For God and Country?

To the question, "Why do most American churchgoers proudly display prominent US flags at the front of their sanctuaries and find little or no conflict between devotion to the American state and loyalty to Christ […]?" J. Christopher Soper and Joel S. Fetzer (2018) find no easy answers (Soper and Fetzer 2018, p. xv). In their introduction to *Religion and Nationalism in Global Perspective*, they note that while religious and national affiliations have been, and continue to be, foundational and potent sources of identity and meaning, fostering a sense of belonging "across space and time" (ibid., p. 1), they argue that there is neither a "simple or straightforward pattern" with regard to how religion and nationalism intersect, nor a "continuing nexus between civic and spiritual identities within states". (ibid., p. 2). This is particularly complicated in the context of secularized/secularizing modernities, globalized/globalizing transnationalism, and ways in which religious traditions and cultures have had to adapt. However, they do find that "Americans almost naturally link their nationalistic ideology with their religious point of view. It would seem that it has always been this way; that the relative power of religious traditions wax and wane, new groups emerge and old ones decline, yet the connecting thread between religion of virtually any stripe and the American nation remains strong" (ibid., p. 71).

The conflation of divine and social/political order, with a subtext of supremacy or dominion, seems to permeate the idea of American-ness. *Pro Deo et Patria*, (For God and Country), the motto of the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps, founded in 1775, explicitly links the work of the military and the faith community as though they are serving a common cause. The motto chosen in 1782 by the founders, *E pluribus unum* ("Out of many, one"), was officially replaced in 1956 with "In God We Trust", which echoes the added statement to the Pledge of Allegiance in 1952 that we are one nation "under God." While the expression of the U.S. as a pluralistic whole did not disappear—*E pluribus unum* still appears on most U.S. currency and the Great Seal—it was clearly relegated to a secondary position. In its stead is a vision of a (primarily Protestant) Christian nation, whose fate lies not in the hands of a unified and inclusive collective, but in the providential hands of God, and whose favor depends on the faithfulness of its citizens in carrying out the divine charge of American's unique role in history. Herman Melville seems to sum this up succinctly: "We Americans are the peculiar chosen people, the Israel of our time; we bear the ark of the liberties of the world" (in Guelzo 2019).

This belief is not an artifact of a more religiously homogenous past. A fairly recent article in *Christianity Today* cites research that confirms the continued adherence to the doctrine of American exceptionalism, and by extension the role of religious nationalism in public discourse and identity: "And though the U.S. Constitution makes no mention of God, 53 percent of Americans say they believe God and the nation have a special relationship, a concept stretching back to Pilgrim days. Even a third of atheists, agnostics, and those with no religious preference believe America has a special relationship with God" (Stetzer 2015). Stephen H. Webb (2004) argues that "Americans have never been able to think about their role in the world without relying on some form of the doctrine of providence," (p. 43) and that "Americans tell themselves that they are joined together not by the past but by the future, and not by blood and soil but by a transcendent moral purpose" (p. 45). Furthermore, the fact that "Both ends of the political spectrum—from President Obama to the Republican Party platform—have touted American exceptionalism" further reinforces the paternalist ideology that to be American is, at least in part, an act of faith, as much as it is an official identity on a passport (Green 2015).

The construction of a conjoined religious and national identity has historically been the norm, and normative to the degree in that it is invisible and perceived as part of the natural order of things. However, both religion and nation are, to use Benedict Anderson's term, 'imagined communities,' in that the affinity of members towards each other is based upon an idea or mental image rather

than actual contact or connection. While these imagined communities do function as established social realities to contend with, it is important to remember that they are forged through narrative, transmitted and granted legitimacy and continuity through collective storytelling and ritual, grounded in physical reality through the marking of textual, historical, and architectural sites, and ultimately legislated through the organization of time and social spaces. They function as both metaphorically tribal and genealogical, while at the same time affirming truth value through universalist claims and aspirations, which obscures their status as ideological constructs subject to challenge and change. Examining them from a distance, however, can be much more revealing, as in the following examples from the nascent nationalism in early medieval Europe, whose echoes can still be heard in the present:

> In a seventh-century Frankish oath occurs the phrase, "Christ so loved the Frank. . . . " This might seem an odd idea. Christ's message had been addressed to all human beings, and not pre-eminently the Franks, a people of whom it is not probable that Christ had ever seen a representative. Yet the Franks had clearly convinced themselves that Christ viewed them with peculiar favor, not accorded to other people. The medieval Church taught that Christendom collectively is the legitimate successor of ancient Israel. But it was already clear, within medieval society, that new claimants to that succession were emerging among particular Christian nations; new chosen peoples, not just in some abstract theological sense but existentially, as peoples actively loved and favored by God in the here and now, above all other peoples. (Panov 2010)

Later, in The Song of Roland, which recounts the Battle of Roncevaux in 778, the Frankish soldiers under Charlemagne (whose flowing white beard suggested an iconic reflection of God) did not merely engage in a battle for territory, but instead fought against Muslim Saracens—designated as treacherous, idolatrous, and infidel—who were to be defeated and slaughtered to save *la douce France* for the civilized Christians, loyal to God and king.

It is clear, though, that identification or affiliation is not necessarily a neutral force, and tends to remain unchanged even when overt religious doctrine is rejected to be absorbed as "values" in a secular state. The narratives constructed from religious nationalism which engender imagined communities can be unifying and inspiring, promote and defend important values, forge positive social change, and create contexts where people move beyond individual needs and interests in service to the collective. However, these narratives also have a long shadow. The belief that "God is on our side" has often served as a prelude and a justification for engagement with violence or exclusion, a shift from a patriotic love of country to a nationalistic strategy reliant on identifying, separating from, and overcoming that which is defined as "Other". Such assertions of identity and affirmations of being "on the right side" of God or history are often so tightly woven into truth claims that questioning them is equated with betrayal. There is ample evidence that weaponization of conflated religious and national loyalties has been deployed across the globe, resulting in discrimination, oppression, incarceration, expulsion, and genocide, even in and at times in conjunction with the contexts of materialist, rationalist, and secularizing discourses of modernity. Furthermore, as documented by Barbara Rieffer (2003), "The stronger the religious influence on the national movement, the greater the likelihood that discrimination and human rights violations will occur" (p. 215). This makes it all the more important to not only examine how power is forged by and funneled through imagined communities, but also to take measures to limit or mitigate possible negative effects, particularly when the discourses of dominate traditions muffle or silence minority ones.

In the U.S., conversations around religion and nationalism have primarily centered on the role of Protestant Christianity, which, despite the official separation of church and state in the Constitution, has been foundational not only to the establishment of the country, but also its development through the 20th century. The inclusion of other religious identities, such as Jewish, Catholic, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and Muslim, has not been without conflict, and has often depended on the degree to which adherents could prove that their religious allegiance did not preclude their national one. (This is particularly true for immigrants, who must also sublimate their belonging

to other heritages or countries of origin.) These religious identities, however, share some of the same fundamental tenets: monotheism, the notion of a chosen people, God working divine will through history, and secular law as a reflection (to varying degrees) of divine law, the nation and the traditional patriarchal family as a reflection of God's rule of "His" kingdom. Considerably less attention has been given to how traditions outside of monotheistic contexts contribute to the conversations around religious and national identity. Furthermore, although Protestant Christianity may still be perceived as the dominant religious tradition in the U.S., and although its values and concerns continue to be played out in the media and public discourse, the reality is that it is no longer the undisputed majority. The October 2019 article, "In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace", from the Pew Research Center cites that:

> The religious landscape of the United States continues to change at a rapid clip. In Pew Research Center telephone surveys conducted in 2018 and 2019, 65% of American adults describe themselves as Christians when asked about their religion, down 12 percentage points over the past decade. Meanwhile, the religiously unaffiliated share of the population, consisting of people who describe their religious identity as atheist, agnostic or "nothing in particular", now stands at 26%, up from 17% in 2009. (Pew Research Center 2019)

> Both Protestantism and Catholicism are experiencing losses of population share. Currently, 43% of U.S. adults identify with Protestantism, down from 51% in 2009. And one-in-five adults (20%) are Catholic, down from 23% in 2009. Meanwhile, all subsets of the religiously unaffiliated population—a group also known as religious "nones"—have seen their numbers swell. [. . .] 17% of Americans now describe their religion as "nothing in particular", up from 12% in 2009. Members of non-Christian religions also have grown modestly as a share of the adult population. [. . .] Meanwhile, the share of U.S. adults who identify with non-Christian faiths has ticked up slightly, from 5% in 2009 to 7% today. This includes a steady 2% of Americans who are Jewish, along with 1% who are Muslim, 1% who are Buddhist, 1% who are Hindu, and 3% who identify with other faiths [. . .].

Similarly, on the issue of American exceptionalism, again according to Pew Research: "Americans believe that their country is great, but a majority would not say it is truly exceptional. A majority of the public (53%) says the United States 'is one of the greatest countries in the world, along with some others. Fewer (38%) say that the U.S. "stands above all other countries in the world' (Heimlich 2011). This loss of faith is only likely to increase, given how many challenges the U.S. is facing both domestically and abroad, politically and economically, and its decreasing status as world power and moral arbitrator.

In light of these trends and changing demographics that continue to favor a more diverse population in terms of race and ethnicity, and somewhat by extension religion and ideology, challenging the myths and myth-making around American religious nationalism seems particularly timely and relevant. Although many of our communities are "imagined," the stories we construct around individual and collective identities and their functions have direct, and sometimes dire, consequences. Since the identities we claim typically determine our motives, methods, and actions in the world, it is all the more important to widen the conversation to include identities and voices that are often considered marginal, but that may have important insights to share.

2. Positioning (Post)modern American(ized) Buddhism

Why focus on Buddhism in America? Although people who specifically identify as Buddhists comprise only about 1% of the population and Buddhism is often perceived to be a form of Eastern spirituality (among many others) and a relatively recent addition to the religious mix in the U.S., the reality is that Buddhism is not marginal, "other," nor "foreign," to Western cultural traditions in general, and America in particular. As a global religion, its origins and development in India and East Asia do not define it, in the same way that Christianity, or any other tradition, cannot be

completely defined by and limited to its points of origin and/or development. Furthermore, Buddhism has been integral to the formation and the evolution of Western culture from its inception. In *Oriental Enlightenment: The Encounter between Asian and Western Thought* (1997), J. J. Clarke calls attention to the long and often suppressed history of influence: trade routes from the Indus Valley to the Mediterranean, the Indian gymnosophes in Rome, Renaissance travels to the exotic East, Jesuits in China and the influence of their writing on Enlightenment philosophers and deism, the Romantic infatuation with India, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche's appropriation of Buddhist ideas, links between Buddhism and positivism, the *japonisme* of the 19th century, and the indebtedness of some of Europe's major writers to Buddhism, including Hugo, Goethe, Baudelaire, Yeats, Tolstoy, the existentialists and the absurdists (Clarke 1997). Less directly obvious influences include phenomenological, existentialist, deconstructionist, and postmodern philosophy, developments in psychotherapy, and accords with neurosciences and physics. Even more to the point, Buddhist influences, in various forms, have been an integral part of the discourses of American-ness, American values, or American cultural and spiritual experience. Alongside the cultural heritage and influences from Europe, Buddhism's history can be traced in the U.S. through Chinese immigrants in the mid-19th century, the writings of the transcendentalists Emerson and Thoreau, the poetry of Whitman, and Theosophy. Buddhism was formally introduced in 1893, at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago, through Buddhist teachers such as Japanese Zen Master Shaku Soen and Anagarika Dharmapala from Sri Lanka. The 1950s and 1960s—following the influential translations and writings of D.T. Suzuki and the postwar wave of Japanese, Korean, and later Tibetan teachers to the U.S.—witnessed Buddhist influences on Beat Poetry, the emergence of counter-culture movements and deep ecology. Joseph Goldstein, Jack Kornfield, and Sharon Salzberg, among others, have been instrumental in translating Theravadan meditation practices taught by Burmese and Thai teachers into Vipassana (insight meditation), which has in turn deeply informed the currently ubiquitous applications of mindfulness to everyday life.

In the last twenty-five years, a significant body of scholarship has documented how "Buddhist" forms and ideas have always been, and continue to be, an evolving part of "American" culture. Some examples include: *How the Swans Came to the Lake: A Narrative History of Buddhism in America* (1992) by Rick Fields, *The Awakening of the West: The Encounter of Buddhism and Western Culture*, by Stephen Batchelor (1994), *The American Encounter with Buddhism, 1844–1912* (2000) by Thomas A. Tweed, *The New Buddhism: The Western Transformation of an Ancient Tradition* (2001) by J. Coleman, *Buddhism in America* (2002 and 2012) by Richard Hughes Seager, *Mindful America: The Mutual Transformation of Buddhist Meditation and American Culture* (2014) by Jeff Wilson, *Buddhism Beyond Borders: New Perspectives on Buddhism in the United States* (2015) by Scott A. Mitchell and Natalie E.F. Quli, and *Buddhism in America: Global Religion, Local Contexts* (2016) by Scott A. Mitchell.

Additionally, Buddhism increasingly permeates American cultural discourse and experience. Practice centers for both heritage and non-heritage Buddhists, once rare, are increasingly common. Instead of maybe one Buddhist group in a major city or college town, as was the case in the 1980s, it is now unusual not to find several, and from diverse lineages and traditions. Teachers like Dalai Lama or Thich Nhat Hahn are revered by many, regardless of religious affiliation. Journals like *Tricycle*, *Buddhadharma*, and *Lion's Roar* (formerly *Shambala Sun*) are readily available in bookstores, as are shelves of publications from both Asian and American Buddhist teachers. Books and audiobooks from Tibetan teacher, Pema Chödron, and Vipassana teacher, Tara Brach, are widely popular among self-help resources. Mindfulness, which is traditionally taught as just one part of the Noble Eightfold Path, has become a secularized movement. Jon Kabat-Zinn's mindfulness-based stress reduction (MSBR) program is regularly offered in a variety of secular community settings in healthcare, schools, and the workplace. Meditation and mindfulness, much like yoga, has been decontextualized, adapted, mainstreamed, and commodified to the point where its relationship to source traditions is either often obscured or completely effaced. Vipassana teacher, Trudy Goodman, refers to this as a kind of Trojan horse or "Stealth Buddhism," where the implicit ethics of mindfulness influence the larger culture (Glieg 2019, p. 72). Stephen Batchelor's complete secularization of Buddhism, and the fact that one

does not have to officially or exclusively "become" Buddhist to practice or to be part of a community, makes it easy to incorporate and assimilate Buddhism within other existing religious or ideological structures. It should be no surprise to anyone that Buddhist images and ideas are ubiquitous in popular culture. However, they can also be found in relatively unlikely places, from movies such as "Star Wars", "Groundhog Day", and "The Matrix" to the Netflix series, "The Good Place", or the music of David Bowie, Tina Turner, Leonard Cohen, Philip Glass, or the Beastie Boys.

Moreover, the forms of Buddhism that have taken root in the U.S. are, in some ways, uniquely their own. Just as the Buddhisms of Japan, Thailand, and Tibet are interwoven with their cultural norms and identity, both heritage and non-heritage Buddhist communities in the U.S. reflect the social realities of the process of creating discursive, and physical space where none had been before. Perhaps even more interesting is that so many diverse forms of Buddhism have never been in such immediate direct contact or mutual dialogue with each other. Practitioners are faced with a multiplicity of Buddhisms, each based on the same core teachings, each reflecting the others, and each in the continued process of individuation and innovation in a globalized postmodern context. As David McMahan (2008) explains:

> It is, rather, an actual new form of Buddhism that is the result of a process of modernization, westernization, reinterpretation, image-making, revitalization, and reform that has been taking place not only in the West but also in Asian countries for over a century. This new form of Buddhism has been fashioned by modernizing Asian Buddhists and western enthusiasts deeply engaged in creating Buddhist responses to the dominant problems and questions of modernity, such as epistemic uncertainty, religious pluralism, the threat of nihilism, conflicts between science and religion, war, and environmental destruction. (p. 5)

Although Buddhism is both an "insider" religion (since it so well assimilated) as well as an "outsider" religion (not foundational to American culture), it is not linked with any single ethnic group, does not represent any form of national identity or project, and does not compete with other religious traditions. Unlike historical conditions where Buddhism and ruling classes were linked in Asia, or modern nationalist movements in Buddhist countries that arose as a response to colonization and the imposition of Western culture, there is no possibility of a Buddhist nationalist sentiment in the U.S. As such, the pluralistic and hybrid American(ized) forms of Buddhism in the U.S. are uniquely positioned to challenge the more dominant discourses of religion and nationalism and related normative cultural views in the U.S., and, as McMahan (2008, p. 259) notes, could "bring novel conceptual resources to the West and the modern world that might indeed offer new perspectives on some of modernity's personal, social, political, and environmental ills."

3. "Original Face"

Belonging, in the Buddhism that the historical Buddha established, was revolutionary. To become part of the community, or sangha, merely required a request and an agreement to abide by the rules established for the well-being and harmony of the group. Caste based on class and color disappeared. Seniority was determined by how long one had belonged to the monastic community. A community of nuns was established as well (albeit later and with more rules and less status), which was perhaps even more extraordinary, in that there was, at the time, no place for women apart from in families, dependent on fathers, husbands, and sons. This radically revised construction of belonging functioned as a rejection of identities and obligations based on family lineage and caste, and the creation of a new one, with the capacity of awakening as a birthright. Besides leaving family, shaving the head, wearing similar saffron robes and receiving a new name, formal belonging was predicated on taking refuge in the three jewels: the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. This meant taking refuge in the willingness to let go of an identity based on ego in order to realize one's own Buddha nature, being willing to follow the path that leads to this realization, and being willing to support and be supported by a community with the same aspirations.

At its core, Buddhism is a radical deconstruction of identity, beyond all personae, social locations, and limits of conceptual thought. This is not meant to serve as a theoretical or philosophical exercise, but rather as a very pragmatic strategy aimed at the elimination of suffering by addressing its root cause: believing in, grasping at, and trying to secure a selfhood that does not fundamentally exist. The Buddha taught that there were three truths about existence: (1) that since everything comes into and goes out of existence due to the causes and conditions which create them, there is no permanence (*anicca*), and (2) thus no separate, intrinsic and essential self-nature (*annata*), and (3) that not understanding this gives rise to all kinds of suffering (*dukkha*). That which we call the self, in a conventional sense, is merely the coming together of five aggregates: form, feeling, perception, impulses, and consciousness, and the sense of self we construct from them is very literally a form of mistaken identity. As one American Buddhist nun describes her spiritual practice:

> I had been studying and practicing the Buddha's teaching and thus had spent years trying to deconstruct my identity, to see it as something merely labeled, not as something fixed, not something I truly was. So many of our problems—personal, national, and international—come from clinging to these erroneous, solid identities. Thus in Buddhism, we are not trying to find out who we are but who we aren't. We work to free ourselves from all our erroneous and concrete conceptions about who we are. (Chodron 1999)

The teaching of no-self (*anatman*) does not imply a nihilistic lack or void, as early Western interpretations of Buddhism suggested. Neither does it support a strictly materialist view, as implied by our secularized and scientific culture. Rather, it points to an understanding that the "emptiness" (as expressed through Mahayana thought) of intrinsic selfhood is another way of understanding the fact that all of existence is not only interconnected, but completely intercausal and interdependent, or as McMahan describes: "the world as a vast, interconnected web of interrelated beings—that is, whose identity is not a priori independent of the systems of which they are part of but is inseparable from those systems" (p. 150). The classical illustration of this is the image of Indra's Net in the Flower Ornament (Avatamsaka) Sutra, composed in the late third or fourth century CE and foundational to the Hua-Yen School of Chinese Buddhism. The sutra describes an infinite and celestial net which extends across all space, time, and dimensions. At every intersection of the net lies a multifaceted jewel which reflects—and is simultaneously reflected by, *ad infinitum*—all other jewels, and the entirety of the net itself. More familiar to contemporary Buddhists in the U.S. and the West is the explanation offered by Vietnamese Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh (2012):

> If you are a poet, you will see clearly that there is a cloud floating in this sheet of paper. Without a cloud, there will be no rain; without rain, the trees cannot grow; and without trees, we cannot make paper. The cloud is essential for the paper to exist. If the cloud is not here, the sheet of paper cannot be here either. We can say that the cloud and the paper inter-are. "Interbeing" is a word that is not in the dictionary yet, but if we combine the prefix "inter-" with the verb "to be", we have a new verb, "inter-be".

> If we look into this sheet of paper even more deeply, we can see the sunshine in it. If the sunshine is not there, the forest cannot grow. In fact, nothing can grow. Even we cannot grow without sunshine. So we know that the sunshine is also in this sheet of paper. The paper and the sunshine inter-are. And if we continue to look, we can see the logger who cut the tree and brought it to the mill to be transformed into paper. And we see the wheat. We know that the logger cannot exist without his daily bread, and therefore the wheat that became his bread is also in this sheet of paper. And the logger's father and mother are in it too. When we look in this way, we see that without all of these things, this sheet of paper cannot exist.

> Looking even more deeply, we can see we are in it too. This is not difficult to see, because when we look at a sheet of paper, the sheet of paper is part of our perception. Your mind is in here and mine is also, so we can say that everything is in here in this sheet of paper.

> You cannot point out one thing that is not here—time, space, the earth, the rain, the minerals in the soil, the sunshine, the cloud, the river, the heat. Everything coexists with this sheet of paper. That is why I think the word inter-be should be in the dictionary. To be is to inter-be. You cannot just be by yourself alone. You have to inter-be with every other thing. This sheet of paper is, because everything else is. Sunshine is also in this sheet of paper. The paper and the sunshine inter-are. And if we continue to look, we can see the logger who cut the tree and brought it to the mill to be transformed into paper. And we see the wheat. We know that the logger cannot exist without his daily bread, and therefore the wheat that became his bread is also in this sheet of paper. And the logger's father and mother are in it too. When we look in this way, we see that without all of these things, this sheet of paper cannot exist.

If an interconnected/nondual understanding of identity is the warp on which belonging is woven, lineage, which articulates spiritual and social connection, is its weft. On the most basic level, as Tibetan teacher Reginald Ray (2005) explains, organizational lineages of teachers and schools and monasteries, which confer authenticity and legitimacy, have functioned to link practitioners in the present to particular traditions or communities, while transmission lineage follows the symbolic and spiritual ancestries of students and teachers back to the historical Buddha. However, of the greatest importance is what is known in some traditions as the primordial lineage: one's own inherent and intrinsically enlightened *buddhanature*—the same capacity for enlightenment as that of the Buddha himself. These forms of belonging, themselves connected both horizontally and vertically in space and time, reinforce the figuration of selfhood as a net of interconnection rather than a discrete entity. Moreover, the experiential realization of the "emptiness" of the phenomenal self directly informs social engagement and ways of being in the world in the form of profound compassion. Mahayana Buddhism exemplifies this in the figure of the bodhisattva who, hearing the cries of the world, vows to forego the bliss of nirvana to work to liberate and save all sentient beings from suffering. From an ordinary dualistic perspective, this work is unending. However, at the same time, and in the same nondual way that "form is emptiness" and "emptiness is form" in the "Heart Sutra," that the absolute completely coinheres with the particular, that each jewel in Indra's Net reflects and includes all others, there are no beings to save and no beings that are unsaved. The well-being and the liberation of one implicates the well-being and liberation of all.

While the notion of ourselves as interconnected with others and the rest of life is certainly not foreign to the West, and has been quite integral to discourses within theology, biology, and ecology, the Buddhist approach aims for a much deeper understanding beyond the conceptual and discursive. American Buddhist poet, Jane Hirschfield (1998), points to the possibility of this through an empathic leap into our own experience, not limited by culture or ideology:

> 'Show me your face before your parents were born, 'says the Buddhist koan [. . .]. For Neruda, that face becomes a poetry of all things: a long praise-song to salt in the mines and in the ocean, to a wrist watch ticking the night's darkness like a tiny saw cutting time, to the dead body of a fish in the market. In the light of the poet's abundance of heart and imagination, we remember the threshold is a place at once empty and full. It is on the margins, where one thing meets another [. . .]. (p. 213)

4. Belonging to the World/Acting for All Beings: Towards a Non-Nationalism

How might this Buddhist understanding of self contribute to a conversation on religion and nationalism in the U.S.? The ways in which we construct a sense of selfhood for the individual is the basis for all constructions of identity and belonging in collective contexts, which in turn creates the causes and conditions of social well-being or unrest. As psychologist and Vipassana teacher, Tara Brach (2001), notes, the emphasis on individualism and self-reliance in the West, and particularly in the U.S., is extreme to the point of being almost pathological:

Never in the history of the world has the belief in a separate self been so exaggerated and prevalent as it is now in the twenty-first century in the West. In contrast to Asian and other traditional societies, our distinctive mode of identification is as individuals, without stable pre-existing contexts of belonging to families, communities, tribes or religious groups. Our desperate efforts to enhance and protect this fragile self have caused an unprecedented degree of severed belonging at all levels in our society. In our attempts to dominate the natural world, we have separated ourselves from the Earth. In our efforts to prove and defend ourselves, we have separated ourselves from each other. Managing life from our mental control towers, we have separated ourselves from our bodies and hearts.

The consequences of this can easily be found in social/political polarization, increasing political and economic inequities, rising religious and ethnic separatism, nationalist rhetoric and policies, and environmental and climate crises. In a similar vein, David Loy (2009) underlines the fact that the suffering engendered by the belief in a separate self is fundamentally no different from the suffering caused by identification with imagined communities:

In fact, many of our social problems can be traced back to this deluded sense of collective self, this "wego", or group ego. It can be defined as one's own race, class, gender, nation (the primary secular god of the modern world), religion, or some combination thereof. In each case, a collective identity is created by discriminating one's own group from another. As in the personal ego, the "inside" is opposed to the other "outside", and this makes conflict inevitable, not just because of competition with other groups, but because the socially constructed nature of group identity means that one's own group can never feel secure enough. For example, our GNP is not big enough, our nation is not powerful ("secure") enough, we are not technologically developed enough. And if these are instances of group-lack or group-dukkha, our GNP can never be big enough, our military can never be powerful enough, and we can never have enough technology. This means that trying to solve our economic, political, and ecological problems with more of the same is a deluded response. [. . .] If the parallel between individual ego and collective wego holds, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the great social, economic, and ecological crises of our day are, first and foremost, spiritual challenges, which therefore call for a response that is (at least in part) also spiritual.

In his 2019 article in *Tricycle*, Bhikkhu Bodhi, an American Theravada Buddhist monk and scholar, emphasizes the importance of moving away from practices that are the result of collective self-making, such as profit-seeking, environmental plundering, and national projections of power, toward a greater vision of inclusivity and care which reflects Buddhist perspectives of identity and belonging:

To achieve real peace, we need a global commitment to protecting people everywhere from harm and misery. This commitment must be rooted in a universal perspective that enables us to see all people as brothers and sisters, worthy of care and respect regardless of their ethnic, national, and religious identity. As Americans we can't go on thinking that American lives are more important than the lives of people elsewhere—in Iraq and Afghanistan, in South America, Africa, and Southeast Asia. We can't think that only the lives of middle-class people count, but not the lives of black youths in Chicago, herdsmen in Ethiopia, rice farmers in the Philippines, or factory workers in Bangladesh. Rather, we must regard all people as endowed with intrinsic value, which we must affirm by establishing greater economic, social, and political justice. (Bodhi 2019)

What Buddhist narratives on self can offer to a larger conversation about national identity and purpose in the U.S. is threefold. First, as Saul Tobias (2018) points out: "The similarity between the core principles of nationalist ideology and the qualities of the doctrinally based self are not coincidental," and that "nationalism provides a secular version of the guarantee of a unitary and immortal soul that both the great Western monotheisms and Hinduism provides" (p. 636). Buddhism, on the other hand, provides an important critical framework that challenges these foundational principles:

> With its distinctive account of the self, the *skhandas* and the afflictions, Buddhist thought provides insight into the basic psychological mechanisms that explain the consistency of certain features of nationalisms across various historical and political contexts, as well as the appeal and pervasiveness of nationalism and the intensity of feeling it evokes, even to the point of violence. To use a traditionally Buddhist distinction between *causes* and *conditions*, one might say that modern nationalism has required the coming together of numerous historical conditions, including modern technology and communications, the emergence of mass societies and the displacement of religion in the West. But from a psychological point of view, the enduring causes of modern nationalism lie in what Buddhism understands to be the very engine of our conditioned existence, namely the relentless process of *ahaṅkāra* or self-making. (Tobias 2018, pp. 640–41)

This approach has the added benefit of clarifying an apparent paradox within the usual paradigms of nationalism used in contemporary scholarship in the West:

> Viewing the nation through the lens of Buddhist psychology therefore helps to resolve one of the principle difficulties with the dominant modernist account of nationalism in Western political theory: how to reconcile an insistence on the 'imagined' or 'ideological', in other words, purely conventional nature of the nation, with the intensity of feeling and commitment that this imputed phenomenon evokes. (Tobias 2018, p. 637)

One might describe the Buddhist approach as a "middle way" between these two positions, a non-nationalist stance that recognizes the real-world effects on a conventional level while at the same time denying any essentialized status to fictitious collective selfhoods. Secondly, the presence of Buddhist perspectives in American culture contributes to the possibility of a re-examination and a dialogue regarding the nature of individualism, self-reliance, and exceptionalism, as well as how they manifest and create specific effects in collective and systemic contexts. Individual, familial, group, tribal, or national agency do not exist in any absolute or neutral way, but as a function of privilege and access to resources, which, in any healthy pluralistic and democratic society or in the interest of global politics, should be a matter of shared concern. Thirdly, a Buddhist perspective which holds that all fixed identity positions, both individual and collective, are fundamentally mistaken assumptions, has the potential to significantly lessen ideological, emotional, and tribal attachments to them. In turn, this lessens the possibility of division and conflict and opens a space for a reconstructed sense of belonging based on interconnectedness in its widest sense, both human and planetary.

How have the "new" Americanized forms of Buddhism in the U.S. contributed to a more "non-nationalist" vision of collective identity and belonging? In an article describing her (then forthcoming) book, *American Dharma: Buddhism Beyond Modernity* (2019), Anne Glieg (2018) highlights what she calls "three emerging turns, or sensibilities, within meditation-based convert Buddhism: critical, contextual, and collective." She notes that:

> First-generation practitioners tended to be very celebratory of "American Buddhism," enthusing that they were creating new, more modern, and "essential" forms of Buddhism that were nonhierarchical, gender-egalitarian, and free of the cultural and religious "baggage" of their Asian predecessors. While the modernization and secularization of Buddhism certainly continues, there is now much more discussion about the problems and pitfalls of these processes, with some exposing the Western ethnocentrism that has operated behind the "essential" versus "cultural" distinction.

She describes the contextual turn as the increased awareness of how forms of Buddhism evolve and are expressed according to surrounding cultural contexts and social locations and conditionings, including around issues of power, globalization, economics, privilege, and marginalization. The collective turn challenges individualism in favor of embracing inclusivity and a sense of "collective awakening" to systemic forms of suffering due to sexism, racism, and economic and environmental

exploitation. Importantly, Glieg finds, "With the 'three turns,' previously excluded, neglected, or entirely new conversations—around critical race theory, postcolonial thought, and cultural studies—are shaping the dialogue of Buddhist modernism." It is precisely this syncretic approach that is a hallmark of Buddhism in America. Christopher S. Queen (2000), a foremost scholar of engaged Buddhism, writes that: "the direction of contemporary Buddhism, like that of other ancient faith traditions, has been deeply influenced both by the magnitude of social suffering in the world today, and by the globalization of cultural values and perspectives we associated with the Western cultural tradition, especially the notions of human rights, economic justice, political due process, and social progress" (p. 23). It is no longer enough, in many Buddhist contexts in the U.S., to be satisfied with a practice or a community that limits itself to "time on the meditation cushion" without addressing how the development of wisdom and compassion can, and should, manifest not only in one's daily life, but also in communal and systemic ways for the well-being of those outside one's direct circle:

> As we begin to wake up and realize that we are not separate from each other, nor from this wondrous earth, we realize that the ways we live together and relate to the earth need to be reconstructed too. That means not only social engagement as individuals helping other individuals, but finding ways to address the problematic economic and political structures that are deeply implicated in the eco-crisis and the social justice issues that confront us today. Ultimately the paths of personal transformation and social transformation are not really separate from each other. Engagement in the world is how our original awakening blossoms, and how contemplative practices such as meditation ground our activism, transforming it into a spiritual path. (Loy 2019, p. 5)

Inspired by the nonviolence of Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, the Thiền Buddhist teacher Thích Nhất Hạnh coined the term, "engaged Buddhism," to describe the efforts he and the Buddhist community made in response to the suffering that surrounded them during the Vietnam War. Since then, it has developed into a movement within American Buddhism and has taken multiple forms and directions. Practices of socially engaged Buddhism in the U.S. have included environmental and antinuclear activism, the promotion of sustainable food production and permaculture, criminal justice reform and prison ministries, hospice projects for AIDS patients, and most recently the ecodharma movement which applies Buddhist teachings and resources to climate activism. Engaged Buddhism has also included the founding of organizations such as the Buddhist Peace Fellowship and Zen Peacemakers, holding conferences on decolonizing the dharma, applying Buddhist approaches to gender and racial discrimination, and incisive self-examinations of power and privilege within Buddhist communities themselves. Ultimately, what the contemporary globalized (post)modern forms of American Buddhism offer to conversations regarding national identity and belonging is an affirmation of American values of inclusivity and mutuality while at the same time calling into question the limitations of a collective ego and self-congratulatory stories of infallibility, chosen-ness, and exceptionalism that can, and have, been used to obscure or efface some of the very real failings whose legacies still pose formidable challenges as the U.S. moves into the next decade of the 21st century.

5. Whose Dharma?

Sitting on a cushion on a chilly morning, in a temple near the Daniel Boone National Forest, the question of what it means to exist in the current contexts of political polarization and rising nationalism, gun violence and mass shootings, extreme economic inequities, and mass extinction and climate crisis, as an American, is not a philosophical question. I understand that the sense of self that I use to navigate the world does not mean that I am separate or that my existence isn't bound up with the rest of the world. My community is not imagined. It is not an ideological affinity or an emotional sense of belonging, but a direct and tangible sense of connection. My community is this rock, that tree, these birds, those clouds, the people and the deer I pass on the highway, the world that I hear about on the radio, everyone in the gas station and grocery store, and everyone in my home. The word,

dharma, in a Buddhist context, means the teachings of liberation from greed, hatred, and ignorance and the realization of profound interconnectedness. However, in its original context within Hinduism, it also means "path" or "duty." As a participant in the "American project" of democracy in a nation forged with the rhetoric and intention of freedom—but built to a large degree on slave and immigrant labor on lands taken from Native populations that were killed or forced to move, that granted women the vote only 100 years ago and passed the Civil Rights Act just 25 years ago, that is experiencing crises in healthcare, education and immigration, and that is not facing the devastating challenges of ecological crisis and climate change—my understanding of interconnection means that it is not only my responsibility to look at the history and the present directly and see what is, but also to empathize and "be with" in order to effectively do the work that needs to be done for the "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" for us all. From a Buddhist perspective, there is no divine being dictating the course of American history from the blueprint of a providential plan from above. However, there is the direct and active agency of individuals and communities paying attention to the present moment, their place in it, and with each other. An understanding of a de-essentialized or non-nationalist "nationalism" is not a play on words, mystic mumbo-jumbo, or a philosophical sleight-of-hand. It is a sense of connection and shared purpose, not in an abstract notion congealed into a collective identity, but in the mutuality of our well-being and the well-being of the natural world that supports us and from which we are not separate. This inclusive and pluralistic approach fully accords with the tenets and values of Christianity, Judaism, Islam and other religions—particularly around questions of human equality, social justice and care of the earth, as well as the foundational aspirations of the U.S. As Teigan Dan Leighton (2019) affirms in "American Buddhist Values and the Practice of Enlightened Patriotism" in the the journal of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship:

> The Buddhist ideal of universal awakening is supported by the American democratic principles of liberty and justice for all, equal justice under the law, and the unalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. And these American ideals are enhanced, in turn, by the Buddhist ideal: May all beings be happy. There can be no true peace and justice, or happiness, which is not somehow shared with all people.

It also serves as a call to return to the "*E pluribus unum*" vision of our founders—but in the fullest way possible. In her entry in *It occurs to me that I am America: New Stories and Art*, Alice Walker (2018, p. 356), a longtime student of Buddhism (who refuses to identify with the label of Buddhist), writes: "Together we move forward. [...] We are here now. In this scary, and to some quite new and never-imagined place. What do we do with our fear? Do we turn on others, or towards others? Do we share our awakening, or only our despair? The choice is ours."

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Non-Violence, Asceticism, and the Problem of Buddhist Nationalism

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Abstract: Contemporary Buddhist violence against minority Muslims in Myanmar is rightfully surprising: a religion with its particular moral philosophies of non-violence and asceticism and with its functional polytheism in practice should not generate genocidal nationalist violence. Yet, there are resources within the Buddhist canon that people can draw from to justify violence in defense of the religion and of a Buddhist-based polity. When those resources are exploited in the context of particular Theravāda Buddhist practices and the history of Buddhism and Buddhist identity in Burma from ancient times through its colonial and contemporary periods, it perpetuates an ongoing tragedy that is less about religion than about ethno-nationalism.

Keywords: nationalism; Buddhism; Theravāda; non-violence; asceticism; polytheism; Burma; Myanmar

What accounts for a non-violent religion's turn to nationalist violence? This question is prompted by persistent and shocking genocidal violence by Buddhist groups in Myanmar (Burma) against minority Muslim Rohingya over the past decade.

In the West, the virulence with which religion and nationalism converge is associated primarily with the fervor of Abrahamic religions, which only heightens the incongruence of Buddhism's teachings of and reputation for non-violence with grotesque uses of force in its name.

I argue that Buddhist nationalist[1] violence in Myanmar should be both more and less surprising than it is, and address two major elements of Buddhist philosophy at the root of this incongruity: non-violence and asceticism. To be clear, Buddhism is not unique in espousing these philosophies—these elements can also be found, singly or in some combination, in various strands of all the other major world religions (Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism)—but Buddhism is the only major religion whose dominant strands make both philosophies the centerpieces of its belief system.

This article first looks at the precept of non-violence in Buddhism and the function of asceticism in overcoming inevitable human suffering and avoiding the entrapment of worldly concerns, and discusses these philosophies in light of historical texts and experiences. Then, it explores these elements within the context of Theravāda Buddhism in colonial Burma and contemporary Myanmar.

1. The Precept of Non-Violence and the Philosophy of Pacifism

Buddhism's first precept is to avoid killing any living being, not just people but even the most insignificant of animals. This pushes adherents toward vegetarianism, of course, as well as pacifism, and this precept is commonly interpreted to prohibit suicide, abortion, euthanasia, and capital punishment. Yet, the resulting positions—vegetarianism, anti-abortion, pacifism, etc.,—are not absolutes. For example, Buddhists are not to intentionally harm animals, but if mendicant monks who

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[1]   In this article, I rely on Anthony D. Smith's definition of nationalism as "an ideology and a movement, seeking to attain and maintain autonomy, unity, and identity for a social group deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential 'nation'" (A. Smith 1999, p. 46).

beg for their food are given meat, they are permitted to eat it so long as the animal was not slaughtered specifically to feed them.

The Buddha's directive of non-violence intends to guide individuals in their moral development: it helps free people's minds from thoughts and emotions that would prompt violence as much as it directs them to act in accordance with empathy that all beings fear death. While the precept of non-violence is commonly interpreted to mean pacifism and the rejection of warfare, the edict is complex. Buddhism does overwhelmingly reject the use of violence; but non-violence as a political and social philosophy—pacifism—is a separate matter, and there, Buddhist doctrine and history are more ambiguous.

Buddhist lore, for example, is not devoid of violence or warfare. The *Ārya-Satyakaparivarta*,[2] an early[3] Indian Mahāyāna Buddhist *sutra* of some influence, describes various kings as righteous, including the legendary Aśoka and King Harṣa who killed tens of thousands of non-Buddhists.[4] After Aśoka, in India, converted to Buddhism in the 3rd century BCE, he rejected future violent conquest, decreeing that:

> all my sons and grandsons may not seek to gain new [military/territorial] victories, that in whatever victories they may gain they may prefer forgiveness and light punishment, that they may consider the only victory the victory of Righteousness, which is of value both in this world and the next ... [From Thirteenth Rock Edict][5]

Yet, domestically, Aśoka never abolished the death penalty.[6]

Other works, including influential Theravāda text *Milinda Pañha* (circa 2nd century BCE), interpret some acts of violence and punishment as resulting from one's karma and consider the actor who imposes violent punishment a mere facilitator of that karma.[7]

Far from being completely pacifist, Buddhist teachings make some allowance for war, albeit under limited conditions, including first attempting to win through intimidation rather than actual force, trying to capture enemies alive, and not harming non-combatants or those who have surrendered or are fleeing.[8]

1.1. Religious Competition, Political Realities, and Geopolitical Pressures

Although the Pali canon recounts the Buddha as a compassionate tamer of animals, the epic poem *Mahāvaṃsa* ("Great Chronicle", written in the 5th or 6th century CE)[9] calls the Buddha a "conqueror" who forcibly expelled the powerful but sometimes dangerous nature-spirits (yakshas, yakkhas,[10] or yakkas) from the Lanka island by cursing them with "devious afflictions", in order to prepare the land for the later introduction of Buddhism; this story is frequently interpreted to justify defensive war to protect Buddhists.[11]

This mythical tale reflects a historical truth, however, that there is vigorous competition between religions for a population's devotion; individualistic religions, too, will attempt to convert adherents and even non-violent religious groups will resort to assault to secure their dominance. The Gelug sect,

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2 Complete name: *Ārya-Bodhisattva-gocara-upāyaviṣaya-vikurvāṇa-nirdeśa Sūtra*.
3 Timeframe of origin is uncertain, but it was cited by another work by 2nd century CE.
4 (Jenkins 2010).
5 (de Bary 1972, p. 53).
6 (de Bary 1972, p. 54).
7 (Jenkins 2010, pp. 64–65).
8 (Jenkins 2010, p. 67).
9 (Geiger 1912) This Pali-language chronicle of Ceylon (modern-day Sri Lanka) was written in the 5th or 6th century CE, and recounts the history of Buddhism.
10 Not to be confused with the Yakkha people, an indigenous ethnic group on the Indian subcontinent (mostly in modern-day Nepal and India).
11 Sinhalese Buddhists will also refer to the canonical *Cakkavatti Sīhanāda Sutta* to justify defensive war. (Bartholomeusz 2002, p. 22).

for example—the prevailing strand of Mahāyāna Buddhism in Tibet and the school of the Dalai Lama, whose contemporary incarnation has a sterling reputation for his teachings on ethics, compassion, and non-violence—fought extensively with competing sects in the 14th through 16th centuries to become the principal religious order in the region.[12] Militancy in Buddhism has, unfortunately, ample historical precedence.

Religious competition can take place at the levels of individual and/or private proselytization and does not have to be political in nature, but the realities of political society and social attachments mean that it often becomes so. Like other religions, Buddhism can both be exploited by political forces or attempt to exploit available political tools, and religious practice commonly intertwines with political goals.

For centuries after Aśoka, in kingdoms run by adherents of Theravāda Buddhism, political and religious elites promoted the interdependence between the political entity's strength and the religion's well-being. To defend the religion, therefore, one must also—perhaps, first—defend the state, and textual evidence can be found for this position and for defensive wars.[13]

To that end, Buddhist monks in many societies throughout history have been known to serve in various political positions, and have sometimes developed prayers and rituals for the well-being of the nation or country.[14]

Buddhism is hardly the first or last religion to be co-opted for political purposes, and like every other faith, it has varied practices and diverse doctrines. So one finds many stories of compassion and pacifism—but militancy and violence are also available in the history and literature for people to draw on if they so wish.

In the contemporary period, Buddhists continue to grapple with the dilemma posed by non-violence in the face of unavoidable geopolitical pressure, which has sometimes led them to massage the doctrine to accommodate.

For example, during the Sino-Japanese war (1930s–1940s) and the Korean War (1950–1953),[15] Buddhism struggled to come to terms with authoritarian government mandates and became entangled with nationalism, for example when the threat from Japanese invasion superseded existing conflicts between Buddhist orders and the Chinese government (including over property seizures, taxes, and religious freedom), and Buddhist survival became dependent on China's national survival. Some Buddhists thought they could better protect Buddhists and Buddhist institutions by working with the government, and were driven by pragmatic calculations of survival to reinterpret sacred texts to argue for compassionate killing.[16]

In the 1970s, communist victories in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia spawned a militant anti-communist Buddhist nationalist movement in Thailand, led by monk Phra Kittivuddho, whose "Nawaphon" movement considered it a monk's sacred duty to defend the Thai nation and religion with violence if necessary. His slogan "Killing Communists is Not a Sin" was an exception due to national emergency, he contended, as communists were "not complete persons" but rather "destroyers of nation, religion, or monarchy who are bestial"; and he also offered a form of "double effect" argument

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[12] As calculating as it may be to put it in these terms, religions compete with each other for "market share," and they will use violence to both expand their presence and protect their membership. For example, (McCleary and van der Kuijp 2010) found that the Gelug religious sect operated like a "club" in that it sought to generate benefits for members through greater participation and size of membership. It utilized doctrinal innovation—including imitating its major competitor the Karmapa sect by creating an incarnate Dalai Lama and developing its own unique practices such as allowing only ordained abbots, in order to reinforce religious activity and monastic community—and, in the absence of a political authority, fought and killed in order to become the monopoly religion and thereafter maintain "club benefits" for its members.
For more on the Gelug school's historical rise to prominence, see also (Maher 2010). On club models of religion and "participatory crowding", see also (Iannaccone 1992).

[13] (Walton and Hayward 2014, p. 21; Bartholomeusz 2002).

[14] See, e.g., (Yu 2005, pp. 54–55).

[15] (Yu 2005; Yu 2010).

[16] (Yu 2005, pp. 52–53).

in advising that monks "must not intend to kill people, only to kill the Devil" presumably residing within the offenders.[17]

1.2. Double Effect

Pacifism does not mean passiveness, for Buddhism mandates not just refraining from evil deeds (*discipline*), but also doing good (*kindness*, *compassion*) and benefitting others through skillful means ("Text of Bodhisattva Disciplines", *Yogācārabhūmi Śāstra*).[18] Acts must be judged by both the motivating intentions (compassion for saving others or even the person being killed) and the ensuing consequences.[19] This opens the door to *properly-motivated* utilitarian calculation: for example, one story of a bodhisattva who saved 500 merchants by slaying dozens of pirates is commonly interpreted to mean that one is permitted to kill "with compassion in order to save many" (一殺多生, *yisha duosheng*).[20]

There remains, however, innate tension between the act of killing (and the politics that often entangle it) and fundamental Buddhist ethics such as non-violence. In a move that should be familiar to scholars of Christian just war theory, resolution is attempted by focusing on the compassionate intent with which one should wage war. There is, various sūtras say, merit in suffering and sacrificing oneself and one's worldly comforts and wealth for the sake of protecting one's family or other living beings: for example, says the *Ārya-Satyakaparivarta*, when "the action [is] conjoined with intentions of compassion and not abandoning", then warfare may become meritorious.[21]

These doctrinal developments do not satisfactorily resolve the inherent tension between violent act and Buddhist principle any more than the doctrine of double effect reconciles the same problem in Christian just war ethics; many adherents of both religions would agree with this statement, even as some of their co-religionists take up arms for various causes. The parallel doctrinal elaborations, however, show that religious creeds have always struggled with the demands of human society, and I will return to this in the discussion of Burma/Myanmar.

2. Asceticism to Overcome Human Suffering

The practice of rigorous self-discipline or self-denial appears in many religions and can take different forms, including meditation, fasting, and isolation; its primary purpose is to overcome the confines of human nature and the suffering that inevitably follows from it.

Of the different Buddhist schools, the Western world is probably most familiar with Mahāyāna, which dominates northern Asia (especially Tibet, Taiwan, Korea, and Japan), or secondarily with Vajrayana, which is mostly practiced in India. Theravāda is the major strand in southeast Asia (Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Burma, Sri Lanka). All three schools share core Buddhist beliefs,[22] including the Four Noble Truths: life inevitably entails suffering, which is caused by ignorance and unsatisfied craving and can breed vices such as anger, hatred, greed, and envy; this suffering can only be alleviated with enlightenment and overcoming of desire, which is achieved "by a course of carefully disciplined and moral conduct, culminating in the life of concentration and meditation led by the Buddhist monk."[23] This process is the Eightfold Path to Enlightenment, which entails right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right

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[17] (Rackett 2014).

[18] (Yu 2005, pp. 48, 224n11–12).

[19] (Yu 2005, p. 50).

[20] ((Yu 2005, p. 48, 224n13: Āgamas, *Fo hai deng* 佛海燈 Land of the Buddha-Sea, v. 2 n. 4 (1937): pp. 3–6)).

[21] (Jenkins 2010, pp. 68, 74n34).

[22] These major branches of Buddhism differ in significant ways, as well. Theravāda Buddhism is grounded in the extensive and varied *Pali* canon, which includes some works of uncertain origin but is generally considered to have derived from the Buddha and his own disciples. The canon is usually divided into "three baskets" (*Tipitaka*): the Basket of Discipline (*Vinaya Pitaka*) covering the rules of the *sangha* and its monks and nuns, the Basket of Discourses (*Sutta Pitaka*) recounting Buddha's teachings, and the Basket of Higher Teachings (*Abhidhamma Pitaka*) providing philosophical and scholastic underpinnings and explanations, each of which consist of multiple works.

[23] (de Bary 1972, p. 9).

mindfulness, and right concentration; these eight paths fall into three different themes—conduct, mental development, and wisdom.

To help one follow the Eightfold Path to Enlightenment,[24] the *Pali* canon advocates *dhutanga* (renunciation), whose accompanying practices include wearing only robes of secondhand clothing, fasting intermittently, eating only food offered as alms, living in seclusion or away from people and distractions, and living simply by sleeping anywhere that can be used as a sleeping place, among other behaviours.

Dhutanga is not required for all people, but it is common for laity to adopt some of its measures temporarily, whether in the letter of *dhutanga* or with actions in the spirit of its guidance. In Theravāda practice, including in Myanmar, many if not most males become novice monks for a period of time.[25]

The path to enlightenment is ultimately a personal one, and the earliest Buddhist monks were "wandering mendicants" and thus more individualistic, as they were not part of "orders" in the sense of being in organized communities.[26] Buddhist monks eventually formed groups, however, which yielded both internal hierarchies amongst the monks as well as a structure for relating to the laity.

With society comes not only social hierarchy but also physical infrastructure such as temples. While Buddhist temples are intended to inspire and promote practices that can lead to enlightenment, they—like most religious architecture—have evolved in ways that inadvertently promote the achievements of men. In part, this is because religion is only one of many claimants on society, and even individualistic, ascetic religions can be used as vehicles for exerting influence on others.

Here, one broad difference between Mahāyāna and Theravāda is worth noting: Mahāyāna doctrine encourages everyone, including lay people, to reach Enlightenment and to follow the Bodhisattva's Eightfold Path by also teaching others, because aspirations for mere personal liberation from earthly impurities and wanderings can be selfish. (This process often includes lay people entering retreats.) Doctrinally, Mahāyāna is more spiritually-egalitarian.

In contrast, Theravāda thought focuses on meditation and one's own achievement of *arhat* and subsequent freedom from rebirth after death, which has the tendency to exclude laity from achieving *arhatta*.[27] In comparison to Mahāyāna practice, these aspects of Theravāda doctrine might lend itself to greater hierarchy and tribalism. (These are relative differences, of course, and we will see how Theravāda Buddhism in Myanmar attempts to bridge the gap between clergy and laity).

3. Limits of Ascetic Withdrawal from Worldly Societal Concerns

Buddhism originated partly in response to existing social and political circumstances: Buddhist doctrine rejected the Hindu caste system by deeming the different classes and castes all equal, because men achieve respect with their moral virtue and spiritual merit, and not by accident of birth. It also denied the divine right of kings and monarchical divinity, as sovereign legitimacy depends instead on one's ability to protect and lead the people.[28]

Obviously, this had limited effect in practice. Buddhist aloofness from society sits in tension with political demands and natural social attachments, and even the Buddha could not escape this dilemma: there is a canon story in which the Buddha, although he had already renounced his place in and ties to the Śakya clan into which he was born, once rushed to the clan's assistance and put himself in danger in order to protect his kin from attack by the kingdom of Vaisana (*Ekottarāgama*, chap. 26), and he was saddened and disturbed when the clan was later destroyed.[29]

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[24] Despite the precept of non-violence in Buddhism, some might interpret certain ascetic practices such as fasting as doing violence to one's body in pursuit of liberating one's mind, e.g., (Olson 2014).

[25] See fn97 on temporary novitiation practices.

[26] (D. Smith 1965, p. 5).

[27] (Katz 1989, p. 280).

[28] (de Bary 1972, p. 45).

[29] (Yu 2005, pp. 53–54).

Both physical and spiritual withdrawal from society should follow from renouncing its existing social and political structure. But despite the apolitical essence of Buddhist doctrine and its emphasis on individual enlightenment, Buddhist monks eventually formed communities with each other and organized over time. In a sense, these monastic communities function as substitutes for familial and tribal communities, and it is not uncommon for monks who give up their family names to consider themselves "sons" of the Buddha—to enter into his lineage, so to speak. Especially in community form, even ascetic Buddhism must come to some accommodation with broader society's social and political arrangements, and sometimes draws from those structures to do so.

3.1. Syncretizing Social Influences

Religious doctrine is often perceived as a Platonic Form—a timeless and immutable idea that transcends and shapes the essence of objects on this earth—but religious insights are also influenced and manipulated by circumstances, and religious doctrines and practices evolve over time as people contest them. One common adaptation is accommodation with existing folk and pagan religions in various ways, perhaps by scheduling major holy days to coincide with events that are already significant (e.g., Jesus was unlikely to have been born on December 25, or even in the winter).

3.2. Functional Polytheism and Its Influences

Buddhism, too, is influenced by external forces: in contemporary practice, Buddhism is a moral philosophy to which a syncretic polytheistic religion became attached. This is more obvious in Mahāyāna practice, for example, in which Bodhisattvas are worshipped in addition to the Buddha. In contrast, Theravāda deifies the Buddha while all others aspire to become *arhats*, but it still acquires polytheistic elements in practice when it mixes with animism, as in Myanmar, where ancestors, spirits, and personified universal forces (*nats*) are given supernatural abilities and worshipped within Buddhism.[30] So even if Buddhist doctrine constitutes a moral philosophy more than a religion, it would be a disservice to ignore the functional polytheism with which it is often practiced.

Given the non-violent and ascetic content of Buddhist credo, one might assume that any such deviation from pure doctrine would largely explain Buddhist turns to nationalist violence. But religions do not operate by doctrinal content alone.

I argue that the merger with folk religion should counter-intuitively mitigate against Buddhist absolutist violence, because an overlying polytheism *may* serve as a structural check. In polytheism, gods come in all different kinds: there are "high gods" who created the universe, gods that look after more or less literal realms (e.g., sky, ocean, winds, hearth, other gods), gods that inhabit even the smallest of things (e.g., trees, reeds, animals), and gods of abstract concepts (e.g., fate, love, wisdom, compassion, justice).

While there have always been gods who accept or advocate violence in their service, the call to arms is even more threatening when it comes from moralizing gods, who will punish moral transgressions between human beings. Moralizing gods appear in some local religions as early as 2800 BCE, but they spread more widely during the Axial Age (1st millennium BCE) and in the post-Axial Age with Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam, in response to the growth of large societies of around one million or more people, and their accompanying social complexity.[31] When violence

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[30] Anawrahta Minsaw, the first king of a united Burma (1044–77 CE), helped ease the imposition of Theravāda Buddhism on his people by officially promulgating the assimilation of 37 *nats* into Buddhist worship. The admixture continues to this day, but recently to the increasingly violent consternation of some fundamentalist Buddhists, bearing some resemblance to ongoing anti-Muslim campaigns there (Economist 2019).

[31] The association between large, complex societies and adherence to moralizing gods has long been noticed, but the causality has been difficult to determine; recent research, however, shows that moralizing gods and their "prosocial" supernatural punishment have followed large increases in a society's social complexity (at around a population of one million), rather than the other way around, perhaps because they help sustain and order those societal intricacies and reduce free-riding (Whitehouse et al. 2019).

is condoned not to appease the gods' personal interests but rather to fulfill some mandate of earthly justice and morality, it can take on particularly dangerous, millenarian forms.

Disagreement among moralizing gods, however, can mitigate this by demonstrating the possibility that one's preferred god (and therefore oneself) might be incorrect in the moral judgment. This is only possible where there are multiple gods within a religion, even if those gods sit in hierarchical relationship with one another.[32]

Monotheism, in contrast, does not require that its one god be infallible, but that is the dominant approach to monotheism.[33] Polytheism's inherently competitive structure permits gods to be mistaken, whether they are moralizing or not; after all, they will disagree with each other, and they cannot all be right all the time.[34]

The syncretic plethora of gods disagreeing with each other and therefore demonstrating reasonable pluralism within the structure of the religion itself *should* naturally raise doubts about the absolutism of any religious proclamation. Gods in polytheistic universes compete and/or overlap in their jurisdictions. Few, if any, of them are omni-anything: omniscient, omnipresent, or omnipotent. As a result, although polytheistic religions have no shortage of moral precepts, no single answer and few absolutes are possible. Both circumscription and circumspection are built into the structure of polytheistic religious belief.

Do polytheistic religions actually yield less nationalist religious violence, however? Knowing the history of Hindu nationalist violence (e.g., pre-partition and contemporary India) and Buddhist nationalist violence (e.g., Myanmar today), it is a difficult claim to make—save for the comparison to monotheistic nationalist violence, which has seen arguably even more brutality against both adherents of other religions and those who interpret their shared religion differently (e.g., sectarian vendettas between fellow Christians or fellow Muslims).[35]

4. Religion as Lived Experience

Circumstances sometimes render it impossible for religion to avoid political entanglement, through no fault of the religious adherents, especially with the effective monopoly of nation-states on forms of legitimate political organization in modern international politics.

Buddhism has other-worldly and inner-worldly, as well as world-rejecting, principles and practices,[36] and while it advocates freeing oneself from natural desires and earthly temptations and suffering, it does not fall into nihilism,[37] so its practitioners must find a way to live in this world.[38] All non-nihilistic philosophies of asceticism (e.g., Buddhism, Stoicism) advise people on how to live in

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[32] Because monotheistic religions' gods tend to be both "high gods" and moral arbiters, they are more easily co-opted for extreme moralistic judgments, and the violence that can accompany them.

[33] Fallible monotheism is a decidedly heterodox approach. For example, (Segal 2007)'s interpretation of the Old Testament is considered radical, because he portrays God himself developing, learning, and changing his ways through the course of his struggles with humanity, e.g., when Abraham tries to persuade God to uphold a justicial principle of sparing the innocent and challenges God to be a just deity, both of which God does not immediately take onboard (*Joseph's Bones*, pp. 58–69).

[34] For example, both deities and demons fought wars against each other in ancient Greek, classical Roman, and Hindu mythology.

[35] Theocratic political rule is likelier to emerge when the religion in question is monotheistic. (Coşgel and Miceli 2013) found that theocracies are more likely to be established where religion can serve to legitimize the state and where the society's religious market is monopolized by one dominant religion. They found that monotheism alone seemed to be a robust (but not necessarily statistically significant) factor in contributing to the development of theocratic rule; although, unsurprisingly, if the ruler was also considered a god, then the results became significant. They speculate that the insignificance of monotheism alone as a factor may result from the scarcity of monotheistic religions in their sample, constituting only 8% of the ancient polities in their dataset, as the effect of monotheism became clearer and more consistent when looking just at contemporary societies, after the development of the major monotheistic religions.

I would maintain that one reason monotheism becomes a significant factor once it develops as a serious competitor to polytheistic religions is because the structure of monotheism functions equivalently to monopolizing the religious market.

[36] Weber's traditional ideal types of religion would put Buddhism in the class of mysticism, but this does not encapsulate the complexities of Buddhist thought and practice. Furthermore, in practice, Buddhism can manifest as polytheistic, monotheistic, pantheistic, or not theistic at all.

[37] For example, it does not advocate suicide.

[38] Mahāyāna doctrine especially advocates trying to improve the world and help others along the path to enlightenment.

and engage with the world, and that generates internal tensions that are perhaps easily exploited by political interaction.

So it should disappoint, but not surprise, when non-violent religions resort to force: they, too, compete not only within themselves, as we have seen, and with other religions, but also with other objects of allegiance and centers of power, including familial, tribal, and political units.

For example, during Cambodia's short-lived Khmer Republic (1970–1975), general-turned-president Lon Nol, who seized power in a military coup, cultivated a reputation as a devout Buddhist,[39] and his regime sought legitimacy against both monarchical and communist challengers by employing Buddhist iconography and public displays of Buddhism and by claiming support from the country's two major Buddhist sects (Mohanikay, Thommayut).[40] A crucial difference between Myanmar today and Cambodia then, however, is that Buddhist monks in Cambodia during that time were only "passively" important politically,[41] as "it was mostly the army that did the killing then—Buddhist monks were not leading the charge there",[42] in sharp contrast to present-day Myanmar.

Other examples of militant, nationalist Theravāda Buddhism include aforementioned Thai monk Kittivuddho's anti-communist Nawaphon movement in the 1970s, as well as the ongoing persecution the largely-Hindu Tamil population in Sri Lanka by the predominantly-Buddhist Sinhalese, especially by Bodu Bala Sena (BBS) and other nationalist organizations. Sri Lankan Buddhists sometimes interpret the epic *Mahāvaṃsa* to claim that the island of Sri Lanka itself is sacred because the Buddha made three "magical" visits, clearing and unifying the island by force in anticipation of the introduction of Buddhism there after his death, and therefore, the island is the Sinhala sacred home in a way that ties the territory to Buddhist religion.[43]

4.1. Religion, Nationalism, and Modernity

All religions can be manipulated for nationalist purposes. Ironically, Donald Eugene Smith argues that Buddhism's lack of worldly attachments may render it more susceptible to nationalism: while Hinduism and Islam, for example, have their own primary loyalties (Hinduism to caste, Islam to the caliphate), Buddhism has none.[44] All three religions have been exploited in various nationalist struggles, but perhaps Buddhism's doctrine does not save it from that fate as one might expect, because it does not offer any worldly alternatives to nationalism.

As Peter Mentzel notes, scholars of nationalism have long debated its relationship with religion, and the very definition of "nation" remains contested.[45] Despite modern nationalism originally arising partly as an anti-religious force, and despite the most influential early sociologists (Durkheim and Weber) placing nationalism in a secular, modern context, the modern nation-state has been far from necessarily or primarily secular[46] and its nationalism is often intimately connected with religious belief even when it is not explicitly religious in nature.

Modernity does not secularize society by ridding it of religion, but rather transforms the objects and purposes of religion as ways with which people search for meaning.[47] Some theorists of nationalism conceived of it as a distinct and secular "civic" or "primordial" identification (Geertz 1973) and thought that it would lead to the marginalization or disappearance of religious worldviews (Gellner 1983). However, nationalism and its object, the nation, have turned out to be more contingent and malleable. Instead of nationalism being "engendered by nations" as "enduring collectives", nationalism

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[39] (Kann 1970).
[40] (Whitaker 1973, p. 188; Harris 2008, p. 166).
[41] (Whitaker 1973, p. 188).
[42] (Kiernan 2019).
[43] (Bartholomeusz 2002, p. 20).
[44] (D. Smith 1965, pp. 82–83).
[45] (Mentzel 2020).
[46] (cf. Gellner 1983).
[47] (Weber 1978).

operates more as a "practical category", "as contingent event", or "as cognitive frame" (Brubaker 1996).[48] Nations emerge out of a complex of elements, including shared myths and religious beliefs (A. Smith 2000), and some have traced nations and nationalism to pre-modern origins (Hastings 1997; Grosby 2005), which would tie them even more closely to their associated religions.[49]

In practice, nationalism can be and certainly has been religiously-based,[50] but conceptions of religious nationalism can vary widely, ranging the spectrum from civic religion to radical religious nationalism. Entanglement between religion and nationalism in modern nation-states can blur the distinctions between civil identity and primordial identity[51] (especially if the civil identity is not itself fully secular in practice), and can lead to conflating these two identities.[52]

4.2. Modern State Capacity

Another factor to consider is that the rigidity of territorial boundaries in a geopolitical landscape dominated by modern states can combine with modern religious nationalism to tie that religious sentiment to territory in a more inflexible manner; it is not an actual return to pre-Axial age "monolatry", in which each nation and its land has its own distinctive god,[53] but it can be experienced that way and can enhance the mutual influence that religion and polity have on each other.

The modern state's greater *capacity* to exercise more extensive reach into the lives of its population[54] than traditional or pre-modern polities possessed, as well as its monopoly on the use of legitimate violence within its borders, will lend itself to greater political and cultural separation between people of different states, and it will tend to funnel societal issues through a nationalist lens that may coincide with state boundaries. When religious impetus is further added to a state's potential reach and parameters (whether the state is a full-fledged theocracy or merely has strong associations between religion and politics, e.g., legislation that favors certain religious doctrine, overlap between religions and political authority/officials, etc.), it can generate a flammable combination. Nationalist sentiment does not inevitably lead to violence, and the violence has never been solely motivated by nationalism; but there is an undeniably strong historical correlation between nationalism and the use of violence, as well as between religion and the use of violence.

Religiously-based nationalism in general is no longer a surprise, but the content of Buddhist tenets means that Buddhist nationalism still confounds and Buddhist nationalist violence especially continues to shock. Pure doctrine is often overcome when it meets societal phenomena, however, and organized violence in the Buddha's name in Myanmar is partly accounted for by some particular characteristics of Theravāda Buddhism as practiced there and the history of the phenomenon of religion as lived experience in political society.

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48 Explains (Brubaker 1996): "We should focus on nation as a category of practice, nationhood as an institutionalized cultural and political form, and nationness as a contingent event or happening, and refrain from using the analytically dubious notion of 'nations' as substantial, enduring collectivities". He adds that "a strong theoretical case can be made for an eventful approach to nationness." (pp. 19–20, 21).

49 While this article takes "national" identity and "nationalism" to be modern ideological constructs, it also follows A. Smith's "ethnosymbolism" in the belief that nations arise from existing ethnic foundations (with differing relative emphases on shared language, religion, culture, history, race, etc.). What matters for the purposes of this article, however, is how Burmese Buddhist nationalists tend to view their "nation": they justify their nationalism by reference to "perennial" or "primordial" origins (along the lines of Hastings 1997; Grosby 2005).

50 (van der Veer 2015).

51 cf. Geertz.

52 While distinct civil identities are most commonly found in secular, democratic states, they are possible in every type of state, including theocracies, if there are citizens who do not share the dominant religion. (In Iran and Saudi Arabia, for example, there are citizens of minority religions who have civil identities such that they can still say they are Iranian or Saudi).

53 (Jaspers 1953).

54 While the capability is not always used to its full extent (e.g., in more decentralized liberal democracies, and for principled reasons), modern technology and bureaucracy give every state—even weak ones—a greater capacity to enforce on and intervene in their populations.

5. Contemporary Myanmar

Religion can play a key role in "the ritual legitimacy of traditional states",[55] as modern religion both is shaped by nationalism (as the nation-state is now the primary form of political organization) and shapes national identity (for example as a base for anti-colonial mobilization).[56] Burmese Buddhist nationalism presents both these dual phenomena.

Buddhism has long been an integral force in Burmese society. After Aśoka's son Mahinda, a Buddhist monk, converted Sinhalese king Devanampiya Tissa, it expanded Buddhism's political and social/ethnic reach and solidified its place in Sinhalese national identity. When Theravāda Buddhism was established centuries later (11th century CE) by Anawrahta Minsaw in the kingdom of Burma,[57] it looked to Ceylon's example for its role in society.[58]

Since then, for over a millennium, Theravāda Buddhism has been the dominant religion in Burma, and there have been close ties between political and religious authority through to modern colonization. Over time, Buddhism in Burma abandoned its individualized monastic form in favor of more organized communities, which led to greater political control of the *sangha*, the Buddhist clergy.[59] Kings appointed the head of the *sangha*,[60] many kings were considered Bodhisattvas,[61] and kings' special role in defending and supporting Buddhist faith buttressed and confirmed their own political legitimacy.[62] Kings built monasteries, provided food and other patronage, and appointed and supported the *sangha* and settled its controversies, as well as suppressed internal schisms and heresies.[63] The *sangha*, in turn, was involved in political life, writing the most prominent lawbooks; some monks had governance duties; and the religious orders used their position in society to legitimize the king.[64] Overall, there was an "interdependence" between the king and the *sangha*,[65] although Donald E. Smith deems that the king interfered in religion more than the *sangha* was involved in politics.[66]

5.1. Colonial Rule and Buddhist Activism

In the 19th century, Buddhists more broadly, not just in Burma, became more activist, and "anticipat[ed] the much more overtly political Buddhism that emerges in the mid-twentieth century.... the line between lay Buddhist activism and the *sangha* was increasingly blurred over the course of the twentieth century (Seneviratne 1999; Tambiah 1992)," and this represented an "important shift in the public role of Buddhism," says Harshana Rambukwella.[67]

Even before Burma's colonial occupation began in 1824, the idea that Buddhism was being "restored" to its rightful place in Burmese society had emerged. For example, Pali, which is Theravāda Buddhism's liturgical language, appears in and influences much of Burmese language, which only augments the association of Burmese identity with Buddhism.[68] This does not mean that Buddhism is

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[55] (van der Veer 2015, p. 11).

[56] (van der Veer 2015, p. 19).

[57] King Anawrahta Minsaw founded the first united Burmese kingdom and empire in 1044 CE (Lewy 1972, p. 19).

[58] (D. Smith 1965, pp. 9, 11).

[59] (D. Smith 1965, p. 15).

[60] Political domination over religious matters continues to this day, with the government's appointment of monks to Mahana (State Saṅgha Mahā Nāyaka Committee), which was formed in 1980 to regulate the clergy.

[61] (D. Smith 1965, p. 22).

[62] (Lewy 1972, pp. 20–21; D. Smith 1965, p. 23).

[63] (D. Smith 1965, p. 27).

[64] (D. Smith 1965, pp. 31–32).

[65] (D. Smith 1965, p. 37).

[66] (D. Smith 1965, p. 36).

[67] (Rambukwella 2018, p. 42).

[68] (D. Smith 1965, p. 83).

the root cause of Burmese nationalism, but "rather, it provided an essential component in a national self-concept which helped differentiate the Burmese from the foreigner", says Donald E. Smith.[69]

Argues D. Smith, Burmese nationalism was more than simply anti-British and anti-colonial, as "traditional Burmese nationalism was based, among other things, on a common race, language, and religion."[70] Historically, non-Buddhists in Burma were considered alien, thus excluding them from Burmese identity, even under colonialism and into the periods of secular nationalism associated with Marxism or with Aung San's Thakin movement.[71]

During colonial rule, Buddhism remained an integral force in civil society and took on a different form, as politically-oriented monks engaged in strikes, political agitation, and other independence-minded action—both peaceful and violent—from the 1920s onward, and continued alongside the more secular nationalist movement that emerged in the 1930s.[72,73] Anti-colonial parties, which included Buddhist monks, sometimes targeted Muslims and Christians under British colonial rule (which began in 1824, but formally lasted from 1886–1948) as well as the ensuing short-lived parliamentary government (1948–1962), and during the military dictatorship (1962–2012).[74]

Buddhist identity was also co-opted to bolster political legitimacy: for example, the ostensibly socialist military junta that came to power in 1962 via coup tried to ground its socialist platform in both Marxist dialectics and vaguely-Buddhist doctrine,[75] especially with its references to man's relationship with nature and its three material, animal, and phenomenal worlds.[76] So ethnic conflict with religious overlay is not new to the recently-parliamentary Myanmar.

Post-dictatorial Burmese nationalism further conflates with Buddhist religious identity by justifying violence against non-Buddhists as fighting ethnic insurgency and eliminating illegal immigrants.[77]

Thus, Burmese nationalism emerged both gradually under British colonial rule and in response to an event (democratization), to use Brubaker's framework, and has long intertwined with Buddhist religion as an identifying marker.

5.2. Religious Nationalism Under a Constitutional Republic

In the contemporary period, Theravāda Buddhism continues to provide a significant framework through which Burmese view politics.[78] Today, nearly 90% of Myanmar's population is Buddhist, almost all of them Theravāda, although Buddhism has only briefly been Burma's official state religion. In 1961, Burma's constitution was amended to make Buddhism the official religion and to provide significant financial support to Buddhist institutions, and Prime Minister U Nu passed the State Religion Promotion Act which mandated the teaching of Buddhist scriptures in schools and prisons;[79] but this was largely undone shortly afterward by General Ne Win's military coup.

Myanmar's new constitution (2008)[80] provides for freedom of conscience and the free profession and practice of religion "subject to public order, morality or health or the other provisions of this constitution" (Art. 34), and it "recognizes" that some of its population currently practice Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, or Animism (Art. 362).

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[69] (D. Smith 1965, p. 86).
[70] (D. Smith 1965, pp. 84, 112).
[71] (D. Smith 1965, pp. 113, 115–16).
[72] (Lewy 1972, pp. 25, 28–37, 37–40).
[73] Due to their interest in religious rule, many politically-active monks sided with the Japanese during World War II, to their detriment after the war (Lewy 1972; Hobbs 1947).
[74] (Walton and Hayward 2014, p. 6; Hobbs 1947).
[75] (Walton 2016, p. 30).
[76] (Burma Socialist Programme Party 1963).
[77] (Walton and Hayward 2014, p. 6; Walton 2013; Ibrahim 2016).
[78] (Walton 2016; Schober 2011; Jordt 2007; Houtman 1999; Spiro 1970; Sarkisyanz 1965).
[79] (Crouch 2015). U Nu deemed it a governmental responsibility to care for the population's present *and* future existences, which required that Buddhism be made the state religion (D. Smith 1965, pp. 25–26).
[80] (Constitution of the Union of the Republic of Myanmar 2008).

At the same time, Buddhism occupies a "special position" in Myanmar as the religion of the overwhelming majority (Art. 361), and the religious freedom accorded does not extend to religiously-related "economic, financial, political or other secular activities that may be associated with religious practice"[81] and the government may curtail religious freedom in accordance with "public welfare" (Art. 360).

In 1998 and 2007, groups of Buddhist monks mobilized politically against the military government, and they have continued to be active on a variety of issues (e.g., illegal land seizures, environmental protection) since the latest transition to more democratic rule. Unfortunately, this activism has included pogroms against Muslims (and especially the Rohingya)[82] in what is called the "969 movement", driven by a variety of forces but most prominently by the Patriotic Association of Myanmar, commonly abbreviated as MaBaTha (*A-myo Batha Thathana Saun Shauq Ye a-Pwe*, "Organization for the Protection of Race and Religion" or "Committee for the Protection of Nationality and Religion").[83] Their claims about not just personal safety but also the security of the Buddhist religion and Buddhist community (*sasana*), and therefore the state as a political entity as required for enlightenment,[84] echo historical Burmese conceptions of Buddhism's place in politics and the status of non-Buddhists as discussed above.

Despite nearly 90% of the Burmese population professing adherence to Theravāda Buddhism, the perceived Muslim threat from its 4.3% of the population is often couched in existential terms, as a menace to the very existence of Buddhism. "If a man dies, it is acceptable, but if a race or religion dies, you can never get it back", some Burmese Buddhists will say as they justify their fears that Muslims will ultimately "swallow our country" as they expand beyond the borders of Rakhine state.[85] In this way, Muslim Rohingyas are seen and portrayed as a dual existential threat to both polity and religion.[86]

To date, the Myanmar government rejects the existence of "Rohingya" as an ethnic group and does not mention their name in denying genocide attempts against them. In State Counsellor (prime minister) Aung San Suu Kyi's address to the International Court of Justice (Hague) on 11 December 2019, she rebuffed charges of genocide, arguing that, at most, any violence might constitute "disproportionate force" but that it was part of "cycles of inter-communal violence going back to the 1940s".[87] In addition to government-sanctioned pogroms and gender-based violence against the

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[81] I.e., freedom of conscience under the Myanmar constitution only covers the ability to hold a belief in one's own head, but does not come with freedom of associated actions (e.g., the right to set up a religious charity or welfare association).

[82] Myanmar's 2014 census identified 4.3% of its population as Muslim; up to 2% are Rohingya, whose "non-enumerated" population was controversially only estimated rather than counted by the census. (Republic of the Union of Myanmar—Department of Population, Ministry of Labor, Immigration, and Population 2016; Lynn 2016) Until 2017, the total Rohingya population, which has borne the brunt of the anti-Muslim attacks, was approximated to reach 1.3 million. Since recent government-sanctioned pogroms against the Rohingya began in 2016, however, up to 1.1 million have fled to refugee camps in neighboring Bangladesh.

The long-Muslim Rohingya claim that they are indigenous to the area, while the Myanmar government says they illegally migrated during the colonial period from now-Bangladesh, considers them Bengalis, and denies them citizenship and proper documentation, thus rendering them effectively stateless. About 80% of Rohingya lived in the state of Rakhine, on the western coast. (There are other Muslims—including some Indian, Chinese, Malay, and others—as well as most Kaman, who also primarily live in Rakhine but are formally recognized as an ethnic group by the Myanmar government and who hold citizenship.)

[83] While the Association may mean "ethnicity" where it says "race", its context is Myanmar's peculiar classification of races and ethnicities. Myanmar recognizes eight "major national ethnic races" that are grouped primarily by geographic region, with each race comprised of a subset of the 135 recognized "ethnic groups". Along with several others, the Rohingya are not among the recognized ethnic groups.

[84] (Walton and Hayward 2014, pp. 17–23).

[85] (Beech and Nang 2019; Freeman 2017).

[86] Even religions that reject worldly constraints will develop practices for adherents to demonstrate the sincerity of one's convictions (Weber, "Religious Communities", *Economy and Society*), and that necessarily injects social functions, practices, and institutions into those religions. Unfortunately, social reinforcement around bigoted and discriminatory movements often involves engaging in violence as ritualistic proof of commitment, such as is commonly found, for example, in criminal gangs everywhere, such as The Lord's Resistance Army (central Africa), etc.

The communal action (*Gemeinschaftshandeln*) of religion (Weber 1978, p. 399) has its own structures and laws (*Eigengesetzlichkeit*) with a logic of their own (Klaus Lichtblau, Hans Kippenberg) and whose rationality does not necessarily reference justice or correctness.

[87] (Simons and Beech 2019; Birnbaum and Mahtani 2019).

Rohingya, the 2015 Population Control Healthcare Law permits local authorities to enforce a mandatory 36-month "birth spacing" between children that is understood as an attempt by Buddhist nationalists to prevent a "takeover" by Muslims, who have higher birthrates.[88]

As a country, Myanmar has endured harsh oppression by colonial and domestic rulers alike and substantial upheaval in the transitional interstices, including recently. International observers often focus on the religious identities espoused in the conflict between Buddhist and Muslim Burmese, and while it is important to take the agents' own claims at face value initially, the repeated and persistent violence by Buddhists against minority Muslim Rohingya over the past decade appears to be less about religious competition strictly speaking, and rather seems inseparable from ethno-nationalist motivations. The former should prompt serious attempts at converting others to one's religion, for example, while the latter would provoke feelings of existential danger that lead more to expulsion, pogroms, and/or genocide, as we are seeing there.

Breaching Buddhist precepts of non-violence in defense of Buddhism has historical, liturgical, and doctrinal precedent, and the need to prevent Burmese Buddhist social and cultural erosion or elimination in the face of modernity and political change[89] can operate in the minds of its proponents somewhat like "supreme emergency" justifications in contemporary just war theory—the idea that one must sometimes violate the principles in order to save them.

Buddhist doctrine adds its own twist to that "supreme emergency" problem, however, because doctrinally, the fate of the *sasana* is to slowly disappear. That does not do much to alleviate worldly anxiety now about *sasana*'s future disappearance,[90] but this is the least of the inconsistencies between doctrine and practice.

One pressing question is why ethno-nationalist Buddhists groups in Myanmar have systematically waged violence against minorities *to such an extent*. A large reason has been the role of clerics in Myanmar in legitimating and encouraging nationalist sentiment, and especially the MaBaTha organization, which appeared to operate not only in conjunction with but also as a front for the military.[91] Some recruits to MaBaTha were, ironically, monks who had been arrested during the 2007 Saffron Revolution,[92] and were paid in money and state patronage to join and promote MaBaTha's anti-Muslim campaigns.[93]

Here, too, the state is not monolithic: there is an ongoing power struggle between the former dictatorial ruler (the military), which supported MaBaTha, and the new political parties for which it reluctantly (and incompletely) stepped aside. MaBaTha was banned in 2017 after three years,[94] by Aung San Suu Kyi's administration on the grounds of hate speech, and an arrest warrant was issued for extremist Buddhist monk Ashin Wirathu for sedition against Suu Kyi. At the same time, the military, MaBaTha, and Suu Kyi's administration seem to find common cause in the denial of Rohingya ethnic identity and their marginalization as illegal immigrants who cannot be Burmese citizens.[95]

To further complicate Myanmar's situation, the people themselves are not unified: there are Buddhist groups on both ends of the spectrum from MaBaTha, such as Buddhists who have assisted and protected Muslim Rohingya, as well as the Arakan Army, comprised of lay Buddhists in Rakhine

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88 (Republic of the Union of Myanmar 2015; White 2015; Deutsche Welle 2015).
89 Modernization can corrode traditional communities and their values, while political change such as globalization, secularization, and economic development may eventually challenge Buddhism's primacy in Myanmar society. See also, e.g., (Gravers 2015).
90 (Walton and Hayward 2014, p. 25).
91 (Ibrahim 2016, p. 70).
92 From August through October 2007, there were broad, non-violent protests (including by monks, whose colored robes came to represent the movement) against the ruling military junta's removal of subsidies on the fuel supply it monopolized.
93 (Ibrahim 2016, p. 70).
94 MaBaTha reconstituted itself as the Buddha Dhamma Charity Foundation, which was similarly outlawed in 2018.
95 (Ibrahim 2016; Beech and Nang 2019; Radio Free Asia 2017).

state fighting against the government and other Buddhists for an autonomous state and who officially welcome those of other races and ethnicities to join their nationalist insurgency.[96]

Here, recall Theravāda Buddhism's *tendency* toward excluding the laity in pursuit of enlightenment. In Myanmar, monastic orders attempt to alleviate Theravāda's lesser attention to the laity and to create a bridge to them by playing a significant role in male education: in Theravāda practice, many if not most males become novice monks for limited periods.[97] The *shinbyu* ceremony, which inducts young males into temporary monkhood, "both exalts the ideal of the monastic life and denies it absolute separation from the life of the laity", says D. Smith.[98] As he describes it, this practice of temporary monkhood does as much to keep the Burmese population attached to Buddhist religion as the other way around, to keep Buddhist elites tied to the population. It is somewhat ironic that this widespread ritual of temporary monkhood meant to alleviate the hierarchical tendencies of Theravāda also broadens and strengthens the Myanmar population's investment in the Buddhist aspects of its identity, which are now being used to violently expunge non-Buddhists from the Burmese nation.

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Buddhism is hardly the only moral philosophy and religion whose practices can deviate violently from its tenets. Religious doctrines can and usually do differ from religion as a lived experience, as every religion has demonstrated many times over. Even similarly ascetic moral philosophies such as Stoicism have seen their adherents struggle terribly with their duties, perhaps most famously Marcus Aurelius.

One reason those internal contradictions get lost is because most religious adherents, having been raised in a particular religious faith, are immersed in their own inconsistencies between doctrine and practice, such that they usually do not notice them or have found practical accommodation with them. When they encounter other religions, however, the gap between doctrine and practice can seem glaring, because the alien religion's precepts are treated as reified doctrine instead of living philosophy and evolving practice.

Buddhism's non-violent and ascetic principles are fundamental to the religion, and their peaceful effect should only be reinforced by its functional polytheism in practice, so it can be especially difficult (for many Buddhists as well) to acknowledge that Buddhism plays a role in Burmese nationalist violence against the Rohingya.

A muscular Buddhism is not unheard of, but attempts at genocide are especially shocking. Some would try to explain this by making "problematic distinctions between 'true' Buddhism and Buddhism corrupted by its contact with politics."[99] Yet, the resources for violence—including in defense of the religion and associated polities—are available in Buddhist canon and history from not long after its birth, so if corruption is to blame, then the thread of that defect is long.

This combines with the particulars of Theravāda practice in Myanmar and the role and exploitation of Buddhist identity from ancient Burmese history through colonial and contemporary times to contribute to the ongoing atrocity. The persistence of current anti-Rohingya campaigns show that even non-violent religions and moral philosophies are not immune to and can be overtaken by political influence and nationalist sentiment and the violence they can engender.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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[96] (Emont 2019).
[97] Males become temporary novitiates (*sāmaṇera*) in these societies for many reasons, including to accumulate religious/spiritual "merit" for themselves and for others, and there is variation within Southeast Asia on the practice. In Burma/Myanmar, for example, usually boys will novitiate, sometimes for only a few days, and they can temporarily return to monkhood later as married men, whereas in Thailand, older boys or young men will commonly become monks for three-month periods. This practice is far less common in Sri Lanka (Gombrich 1984; Samuels 2013).
[98] (D. Smith 1965, p. 19).
[99] (Rambukwella 2018, p. 42).

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Article

The Age of the 'Socialist-Wahhabi-Nationalist Revolutionary': The Fusion of Islamic Fundamentalism and Socialism in Tatar Nationalist Thought, 1898–1917

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Abstract: This article examines the relationship among radical socialism, Islamic balanced reform and Tatar national identity in early twentieth-century Russia. In contrast to previous studies, which either have studied these various intellectual strains individually or have positioned Islamic legal and theological reforms as precursors to the emergence of a secular national identity among Kazan's Tatars, I will argue that Tatar intellectuals' positions on theology, socio-economic organization, and national identity were mutually reinforcing. Supporters of nationalism also embraced socialism and Islamic balanced reform because they saw all three ideologies as egalitarian and liberating.

1. Introduction

Writing in protest of new madrasa curricula in Russia's Volga-Ural region, Ishmuḥammad Dīnmuḥammadov (1842–1919), the director of Tūntār Madrasa in the early twentieth century, lamented that Muslim education was besieged by "socialist-Wahhabi-nationalist revolutionaries" (*sotsialist wahhābī millātche inqilābiyun*) (Dinmuhammadov na.). At first glance, this amalgamation of terms might appear problematic. How could a single individual be a socialist, a theological literalist, a Tatar nationalist, and an agitator for the violent overthrow of the Russian autocracy simultaneously? Could Russian socialism, which is often associated with a materialist, atheist worldview, coexist with fundamentalist Islamic legal reform? (Walicki 1979; Manchester 2008; Roslof 2002; Frede 2011; Michelson 2017). Did not the locally specific aspirations of ethnic nationalism necessarily contradict the transnational identities posited by late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century socialism and Islamic reform movements? (Smith 2014; Aydin 2007; Karpat 2001; Meyer 2014). What place did religious law and doctrine have in a project to replace religious identities with secular nationalist ones? (Rorlich 1986; Tuna 2016).

It is tempting to write off Dīnmuḥammadov's accusation as a flight into hyperbole. Indeed, he was known to get carried away by his passions when he wrote on his most hated subject: the Volga-Ural region's Muslim cultural reformers and their students (Fäkhreddin 2010b). However, Dīnmuḥammadov was a highly educated theologian, who, at the time he penned his complaint, was the former disciple of one of the most powerful Sufi shaykhs of the mid-nineteenth-century Volga Basin, the director of a prestigious madrasa, and connected by marriage and patronage into a power social network of scholars, students, and merchants (Dinmökhämmätov Ishmökhämmät Dinmökhämmät uly 2006; Fäyzullin Säetgäräy Mostafa uly 2006; Zaripov 2002). As a scholar, he was well-versed in debate, speculative theology, jurisprudence, and Arabic grammar (Fäkhreddin 2010a; Tüntäri 2003; Zaripov 2002; Akhmetianov 2011a, 2011b). Dīnmuḥammadov dedicated his life to studying words and built a successful career around deploying them. As such, it seems reasonable to suggest that,

even as he wrote in anger, he understood the meanings of the words he used, and he chose them for a reason: they were the words that most aptly described the phenomenon he found so objectionable.

This article examines the relationships between Tatar nationalism, Islamic reform, and revolutionary socialism in Russia's Volga-Ural region from the 1880s to 1917. It will argue that it was this fusion of ideologies (rather than promotion of education reform and "modernity") that distinguished the most politically radical factions in Volga-Ural Muslim society. For these factions, the formation of a national community, the modernist/balanced reform of Islamic law and theology, and the violent overthrow of economic and political oppressors were mutually reinforcing goals. The marriage of various aspects of these ideologies can be found in the writings of early twentieth-century Volga-Ural Muslim writers, jurists, and national leaders, figures often categorized as Jadid modernist reformers. Likewise, this fusion is reflected in the writings of these intellectuals' critics (jurists and teachers such as the much-maligned Dīnmuḥammadov) who reproduced this entanglement of nationalism, Islamic reformism, and socialism in their own writings even as they denounced it.

Within the field of Russian Muslim history, this essay seeks to complicate the *Jadid* versus *Qadim* (reformer versus conservative/traditionalist) dichotomy that has long dominated the study of Muslim cultural and intellectual history in the Volga-Ural region and Central Asia. Within that narrative, the Muslim populations experienced a period of national awakening and secularization from the 1880s to the 1910s as a result of the arrival of "European modernity" and/or Russian conquest (Rorlich 1986; Zenkovsky 1960; d'Encausse 1988; Wheeler 1964; Bennigsen 1964; Lemercier-Quelquejay and Chantal 1967). The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the subsequent opening of the libraries and archives of post-Soviet states to scholars generated a counternarrative that turned away from national and/or secularizing elites to focus on continuities in Islamic legal, culture, and popular religiosity (Frank 1998, 2001, 2012; Kemper 1998; Kefeli 2014). Most recently, historians of Islamic reform in Central Asia have examined participation in discourses on Islamic legal theory by historical figures previously identified as nationalist and secular; and the Salafist aspects of early-twentieth-century Muslim cultural reform (Eden Jeff and DeWees 2016; Sartori 2016b; DeWeese 2016; Sartori and Eden 2016a). These new turns have introduced welcome complexity into our understanding of the evolution of Islamic culture under Russian rule and underscore the point that Islam in Russia belongs to the global history of Islamic legal and theological movements. However, in the process of returning the Islamic element to Russian Muslim history, the subjects of nation and nationalism are often pushed to the margins. Likewise, at least in the case of the Volga-Ural region, scholarly examinations of ethno-nationalism, national intelligentsias, and the role of Muslims in Russian civil society tend to de-emphasize Islam. They often set jurists/religious-legal scholars ('ulamā'/Qadimists) and nationalists/modernists/education reformers (Jadids) in ideological opposition to one another and present nationalists' engagement with Islam as the adoption of "Islamic ethics," morality, and/or cultural practices intended to bolster a secular national identity (Tuna 2017; Naganawa 2012; Garipova 2016). This division between religious and non-religious actors gives the impression that cultural reform and nationalism in the Volga-Ural region unfolded more or less the same way as in the Ottoman Empire, where "progressive," secularizing elites clashed with and eventually displaced "traditional" or "conservative" religious authorities in the legal field, education, and cultural production.

I will argue that none of these approaches accurately captures the trajectory of Volga-Ural Muslims' intellectual debates in the early-twentieth-century. The use of the term 'ulamā' to designate a particular faction of legal scholars (rather than the madrasa-educated population as a whole) obscures the fact that nearly all participants in the debates over Tatar nation, faith, and revolution had madrasa educations, came from legal/scholarly families and/or held posts as imams, qāḍīs, or madrasa teachers at some point in their careers. Unlike the case of Russian Orthodox priests' sons (popovitchy), there was no significant migration to atheism among Volga-Ural madrasa students (Manchester 2008). Even as madrasa-educated individuals left imam postings for careers in journalism, publishing, or politics, they continued to take part in discourses on the practice and future of Islam, albeit, they embraced strains of Islamic legal and theological interpretation that suited their views on Russian imperial rule, colonial politics, and socio-economic relations. Their commitment to a particular kind of Islam was a defining

aspect of their vision of the Tatar nation. So too, was their understanding of historical progress and class conflict, which they borrowed freely from Russian socialist discourses.

Outside the field of Russian history, drawing attention to Volga-Ural Muslims' interweaving of Islam, nationalism, and revolutionary socialism contributes to wider scholarly discussions of Islam in colonial and post-colonial contexts. The Volga-Ural Muslims' vision of both Islam and nation as egalitarian communities complicates Wael Hallaq's argument that Islamic law, with its inclusive, grassroots nature, is fundamentally incompatible with the vertical power relationships imposed by the modern nation-state (Hallaq 2013). Also, Volga-Ural Muslim nationalists' understanding of Islam and socialism as complementary forces for socio-economic equality presents an alternative to the antagonistic relationship between proponents of sharī'a-based governance and socialism seen in the better-studied societies of the Middle East and South Asia (Kuran 2004; An-Na'im 2010). Finally, examining the fusing of Islam and nation in the Volga-Ural region contributes to the study of how minority groups turned to Islam to express self-identity, separateness, and resistance to the potentially hostile societies within which they found themselves (Curtis 2012).

2. Background

2.1. The New Intellectual Life of the 1880s–1890s

Beginning in the mid-eighteenth-century, the Muslim community of Russia's Volga-Ural region underwent what has been termed an Islamic revival (Frank 2012; Sartori 2016c). From the 1780s to the 1880s, mosques and madrasas proliferated. The establishment of Arabic-script presses—first the government-run Asiatic Press, founded in St. Petersburg in 1785 and relocated to Kazan in 1801, and later, various private, commercial presses—facilitated the circulation of mass-printed Qur'āns, Islamic law books, and popular devotional and mystical texts (Karimullin 1992; Rezvan 2004).The expansion of educational institutions and printed books contributed to an increase in literacy. By the 1860s, some observers estimated the literacy rate for women in Volga-Ural Muslim communities to be as high as 60% (Fäezkhanov 2006).

This rise in literacy had complex effects on religious practice and intellectual life in the Volga-Ural Muslim community. For common believers, the late-eighteenth-century and the nineteenth-century were characterized by very public displays of popular religiosity and an increasingly entexted popular religious culture (Fuks 2005; Kefeli 2011, 2014). For the local scholarly elite, this period was one of unprecedented intellectual activity, with more scholars and students having access to a wider range of theological, legal, and literary texts than ever before. Such abundance fueled new trends in theological and legal thought, but also engendered intellectual conflicts within educated society and anxiety over the proliferation of what some scholars considered unorthodox or incorrect views on Islamic law and doctrine (Kemper 2015; äl-Bolgari 1996a, 2007; Spannaus 2019).

In response to this intellectual environment, madrasa-educated legal scholars and theologians positioned themselves as interpreters, curators, and disseminators of sacred knowledge. They became compilers of books of "correct" Islamic knowledge, especially collections of hadith ('Abdarraḥīm Ūtiz-Īmānī al-Bulghārī na.; al-Qūrṣāwī 1903; Amirkhanov 1883; Aqmulla 1892; Tüntäri 2003). They penned primers and translations for non-madrasa-educated Muslims, and by the 1860s, they increasingly promoted vernacular-language religious instruction in the madrasas (Bayazitov 1880). Those scholars who were Sufi shaykhs spread knowledge of basic Islamic doctrine and rituals among the rural population through public gatherings and the compilation of handbooks for their disciples (al-Ūriwī na.). Within their own ranks, Volga-Ural Muslim scholars used public debates (munāẓara) of theology to build their reputations and promote particular theological interpretations (Bigiev 1991b; Validov 1998).

The intellectual and cultural world of the Volga-Ural Muslim community from the 1780s to the 1880s was dynamic, but also rigidly hierarchical. Meritocracy existed insofar as men from humble origins who distinguished themselves as especially intelligent and who gained powerful patrons could

join the ranks of the madrasa-educated, and perhaps, even aspire to a career as a Sufi shaykh or Muslim jurist. However, multi-generational scholarly families tended to dominate educated society. The educated, to the extent they were able, mediated the transmission and interpretation of Islamic knowledge. This arrangement created social relationships that were strictly hierarchical: master–disciple, teacher–student, and imam–parishioner. These hierarchies of religious knowledge and authority were reinforced by socio-economic hierarchies; in the absence of any state or governmental mechanism for collecting and deploying Muslim charity (zakāt, sadaqa), Islamic scholars, especially Sufi shaykhs, became the recipients and redistributors of community wealth (S. Dudoignon 2001; Ross 2017).

The Islamic revival and the class of scholarly rural gentlemen that dominated Muslim community life for much of the nineteenth-century were the results of an emerging global colonial order. The Volga-Ural Muslims' merchant wealth that financed the expansion of mosques and madrasa was earned importing Chinese tea and British calicos (Khrulev na.; Anonymity 1862; Devjatykh 2005; Fäkhreddin 2010c; Iskhakyi 2011b). The Russian conquest of the Kazakh Steppe and Central Asia allowed Volga-Ural Muslim traders and industrialists to increase their activities in these regions and opened the way for Volga-Ural Muslim peasants to migrate into the South Urals, western Siberia, and the Kazakh Steppe (Denisov 2006; Zubov 1996). (These Muslim settlers would serve as precursors of the much larger Slavic migration into Siberia and the steppe in the 1870s–1910s (Cameron 2018a, 2018b).) However, Volga-Ural Muslims did not experience the most negative aspects of colonialism and do not appear to have drawn a connection between their society's prosperity and other Muslim societies' misfortunes.

This situation began to change in the 1870s. Several factors spurred this change. The Russian conquest of Bukhara, an important center of Islamic culture and education for the Volga-Ural Muslim population, in the late 1860s led some Islamic scholars to re-assess the value and relevance of Bukharan education and to begin to seek alternatives, either by developing local madrasas or looking to education centers in the Ottoman Empire and Egypt. Travels to the Arab world (especially Mecca, Madina, Damascus, and Cairo) for pilgrimage and education (and, to a lesser extent, to India) brought Volga-Ural Muslim scholars into contact with Muslims under British colonial rule and political exiles from the Ottoman Empire (Gabderashit Ibrahimov 2001; Khayrutdinov 2005). Finally, closer to home, the Russian ministries of Education and Internal Affairs took measures to impose greater state control over the Volga-Ural madrasas, including requirements that they offer Russian-language courses and submit to state inspection (Tuna 2016).

By the 1880s, all these developments fueled an internal critique of Volga-Ural Muslim society. Volga-Ural Muslim scholars had previously critiqued the clannishness, arrogance, and questionable moral behavior of their colleagues (äl-Bolgari 1996a, 1996b). However, the critics of the 1880s and 1890s lent new urgency to these complaints by arguing that scholars' self-interested claims to sole authority over Islamic knowledge had set Volga-Ural Muslim society on the path to destruction. From Zahir Bigiev's novel, *Great Sins* (*Gonāh-i kaba'īr*), in which a young madrasa student descends into a life of crime and depravity, to Ayāḍ Isḥāqī's *Extinction after 200 Years* (*Ike yoz yildan song inqirāḍ*), in which a Muslim community that failed to embrace science and proper morality was annihilated by infectious diseases and economic depression, 1885–1905 witnessed the rise of a generation of young writers who were educated within the most prominent madrasas in the Volga-Ural region, but turned against the scholarly networks within which they had come of age (Bigiev 1991a; al-Isḥāqī 1904). These writers, who began their careers in their teens and early twenties, attacked their older colleagues, targeting their social privilege, exploitation of common Muslims, and refusal to engage with knowledge beyond the confines of Islamic law and doctrine (Ross 2015; Tuna 2016; Karīmī 1898; Maqṣūdī 1900).

While these writers used prose fiction to critique Muslim society, other madrasa graduates called for a return to the Qur'ān and hadiths to construct an Islamic law appropriate to the conditions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As the fiction writers called into question the moral fitness of Islamic scholars to lead their community, this new generation of jurists questioned the authority and reliability of the accepted legal canon, which was the culmination of one thousand years of Islamic scholarship (Būbī 1904–1910, 1902; as-Sulaymāniyya 1907). The literati and their legist

colleagues found a common cause in undermining powerful Islamic scholars and creating a system in which personal merit counted for more than age or family connections. The realization of such a system, according to them, was the only sure bulwark against the decline and disappearance of Muslim society in Russia and across the colonial world.

Historical studies of Jadidism, as these late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century movements for legal, cultural, and social reform in Russia's Muslim communities have been dubbed, have portrayed their participants as reacting to the arrival of "modernity" (or "European modernity") in Muslim society (Tuna 2016). However, this treatment modernity as an outside force to which Muslims chose to respond or not blurs the distinction between modernity as a lived condition and modernity as an intellectual construct. It was Volga-Ural Muslim writers and jurists' encountering the latter (through Russian, French, and German writings on nation and empire and through Ottoman and Egyptian writings on cultural and religious reform), that transformed their discourse on nation and faith. The concept of "modernity" as a condition that some societies had reached and others had not, enabled Volga-Ural Muslim intellectuals to forge a historical narrative that presented the European colonization of Muslim societies as the inevitable consequence of Muslim elites' resistance to social and ideological change. Using this narrative, the young writers of the 1880s–1900s claimed the high moral ground and cast all who disagreed with them as the enemies of Islam and Muslims in general (Cooper 2005). To be an advocate of "modernity" was to be with the reformers (iṣlāḥchilar); to oppose them was to make a futile stand against historical forces beyond the control of any single human being and to place Muslim society at risk of being crushed by those forces. However, the implementation of "modern" or "European" technologies and ideas alone would not have satisfied those reformers. They sought, rather, the complete overthrow of hierarchy and social privilege.

Three ideologies arrived in the Volga-Ural region in the midst of this social conflict: (1) nationalism, (2) Islamic modernism or "balanced" reform, and (3) socialism. None of these sparked that conflict, but as they arrived, they were drawn into it, nativized, and deployed within it.

2.2. The Nationalists

When Dīnmuḥmmadov spoke of nationalists (millātchelar), he referred specifically to the proponents of Tatar nation. The roots of Tatar nationalism have been traced to theologian Shihābaddīn al-Marjānī (1818–1889) and his two-volume history of the Volga-Ural Muslim community, *A Book of Elaboration of News on Affairs in Kazan and Bulghar* (*Kitāb Mustafād al-Akhbār fī Aḥwāl Qazān wa Bulghār*) (Schamiloglu 1990). Marjānī penned *Affairs in Kazan and Bulghar* not as a declaration of the existence of the Tatar nation, but as a contribution to a dispute among Volga-Ural Muslim scholars of the 1860s–1870s over the sources of legitimate knowledge and the precedence of empirical observation over transmitted and canonical knowledge. (These same themes appear in Marjānī's legal and theological writings.) Since the early nineteenth century, Volga-Ural Muslim jurists and theologians had embedded opinions on disputed legal and theological questions into texts on regional history, and Marjānī wrote within this tradition (Frank 1998). However, as European and Russian views on a modern nation reached the Volga-Ural Muslim community by the 1890s and early 1900s, educated Muslims turned to his *Affairs in Kazan and Bulghar* as raw material for creating a Tatar national historical-narrative (Ross 2012). The dualistic character of Marjānī's work as both history and part of a broader legal-theological argument meant that, from its beginnings, Tatar nationalism was closely interwoven with a specific set of views on Islamic law and theology.

The peculiar aspect of nationalism as it evolved the Volga-Ural Muslim community was the ability of Muslim intellectuals to agree that they belonged to and acted on behalf of a nation without agreeing on the geographic boundaries and name of that nation. This was, in a part, a function of the diffuse nature of Volga-Ural Muslim communities, scattered from Finland to China, and in part, a result of the ongoing intellectual exchange among Turkic-speaking peoples in Anatolia, the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Volga-Ural region, Siberia, the Kazakh steppe, and Central Asia during the previous centuries. The most limited national visions expressed by Volga-Ural writers were confined to the Muslims of

inner Russia (the Volga Basin, the Urals, western Russia, and Siberia). The most expansive included Turkic-speakers across the Eurasian landmass (ar-Rāmzī 1908; al-ʿAbashī 1909; A. Z. Walīdī 1915; Maqṣūdī 1906; Akchura-ogly 1909; Ibrahimov 1984a). Despite these disagreements, the concept of nation proved highly attractive to young Muslim reformers seeking an alternative to the hierarchical relationships of nineteenth-century Muslim society. Their vision of a Tatar nation was utopian. As one writer to the journal *Consciousness* (*Ang*) put it in 1913, "[The nation] has Tatarness in its past and bright Tatarness in its future; that is to say that I turn my gaze forward. We see troubled times now. But I see strength in the past and light in the future" (Ḥanīfa 1913). At the same time, they viewed the emergence of nations as a natural part of the evolution of human society, something that was both empirically observable and historically ordained. This latter quality made the emergence of nations unstoppable by individual or governmental resistance (J. Walīdī 1914; ʿAzīz 1913a).

Finally, in place of a small group of spiritual authorities who controlled access to arcane knowledge, the nation, as the reformers imagined it, offered the possibility of creating a community in which all members were empowered. Collectively, this community could act as a single, unified force as "the people" or "the nation" (ʿAzīz 1913a, 1913b). Individually, every Volga-Ural Muslim man, woman, and child, having achieved national consciousness (millī wöjdān), could contribute to this community by becoming literate in their native language, reading national literature, attending national cultural events, and donating money for the promotion of popular education and the support of the poor. Each of these acts had a predecessor in nineteenth-century Islamic culture, in which Muslims who took part in Sufi gatherings and religious holidays, were encouraged to learn to read in Arabic, pursued Islamic knowledge through reading and recitation, and made charitable donations to support Islamic institutions and impoverished community members. However, in the hands of the reformers, these acts were now positioned toward building a nation of equal citizens rather than establishing and reinforcing a hierarchy between the scholarly and the less learned.

As Rozaliya Garipova has pointed out, a wide range of Muslim scholars and intellectuals, including some of Dīnmuḥammadov's colleagues and friends, identified themselves as protectors of the community or nation (millāt) (Garipova 2016). However, to be identified as a nationalist (millātche) in the Volga-Ural Muslim community was to be associated with a very specific set of values and activities. As the nationalists' critics saw it, the most notable of these was the willingness to pander to the ignorant masses in return for their support by offering them things forbidden by Islam, such as musical performances, theater, and unrestricted socialization between men and women (Anonymous 1909; Anonymous 1912). Where the Tatar nationalists saw empowerment of common Muslims through these activities, their critics saw encouragement of un-Islamic behavior.

2.3. Wahhabism

The term "Wahhabis" requires the greatest explication of all the terms Dīnmuḥammadov invokes. "Who are the Wahhābīs?"—an article published in the Orenburg journal *Religion and Life* in 1910, clarifies his use of the term. At the beginning, the author, ʿAīd Muḥammad Aḥmarov, cites a section from another Orenburg periodical, *Time* (*Waqt*), which described the Wahhabis as "tribes who wish to return to the pure Islam of the past and devote themselves to the Qurʾān and the Sunnah" (Aḥmarov 1910). Aḥmarov proceeds to explain that such a description was inaccurate; far from renewing or improving Islam, the Wahabbis were "destructive and bloody" and sowed conflict through their rejection of classical theology (kalām), their primitive understanding of God's oneness (tawḥīd), and their ability to convince their "ignorant" coreligionists to commit unspeakable acts of violence against non-Wahhabi Muslims and holy sites, including Mecca (Aḥmarov 1910, 1911b, 1911a). For Aḥmarov, Wahhabism was a virus (mikrūb) that, once loosed upon the world by Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (1703–1792), had spread through the Arabian peninsula, India, and Egypt, infecting pure-hearted scholars and turning them into violent, irrational beings intent on destroying Islam (Aḥmarov 1910).

There is no evidence of contact between Volga-Ural Muslim scholars and the eighteenth-century Wahhabis. When Dīnmuḥammadov, Aḥmarov, and other Volga-Ural writers used the term, they,

in fact, referred to those of their colleagues who identified as disciples of nineteenth-century scholars Jamāladdīn al-Afghānī (1838–1897) and Muḥammad Abduh (1849–1905). Afghānī became especially popular among Volga-Ural Muslim scholars during his visit to Russia in the late 1880s. 'Abdarrashīd Ibrahīmov (1857–1944), who later became an advocate of legal reform, a supranational Muslim identity, and anti-colonial rebellion, served as Afghānī's interpreter (Keddie 1972). Muhammadnajīb Shamsaddīnov at-Tūntārī (1862–1930), editor of the scholarly religious journal *Al-Dīn wāl-Adāb*, circulated Afghānī's views in his correspondences with his colleagues (at-Tūntārī na.). Riza'addīn b. Fakhraddīn (1859–1936) declared Afghānī one of the three most important Islamic scholars of the nineteenth century and wrote a biography of him (Fakhraddīn 1915; S. A. Dudoignon 2006). The generation of Volga-Ural Muslim jurists who came of age in the 1880s and 1890s similarly idolized Muhammad Abduh. Reformist theologians Mūsā Bīgī (1875–1949) and Dhākir al-Qadīrī (1878–1954) and jurist 'Abdullāh Būbī (1871–1922) studied at al-Azhar or visited Abduh during their travels in the Arab world (Khayrutdinov 2005; Bubyi 1999; Kadyri 2006).

The Islamic legal and theological reforms promoted by Afghānī and Abduh have been given multiple names by historians since the 1980s. Albert Hourani refrains from assigning their philosophy a name in his *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age* (Hourani 1983). Charles Kurzman identified their program as modernist Islam, highlighting the prominence of discussions of modernity and progress in their writings (Kurzman 2002). By the 1990s, historians increasingly identified Afghānī and Abduh as early Salafis (Lauzière 2016). Bernard Haykel has challenged this identification by pointing out the significant differences between Afghānī and Abduh's views and those of later Salafis (Haykel 2009). Most recently, Henri Lauzière, in *The Making of Salafism*, has used the term "balanced reform" (al-iṣlāḥ al-mu'tadil) to describe the views of Abduh, Afghānī, and their followers. His choice of term reflects the reformers' terms of self-identification, suggests the moderate goal of their project (i.e., finding a "balance" between Islamic and European cultures), and emphasizes what bound them together (dedication to legal and cultural reform, and not promotion of Salafi theology, which some embraced and others did not) (Lauzière 2016). In this essay, I will follow Lauzière's convention of referring to the adherents of Afghānī and Abduh as balanced reformers.

As balanced reform spread from Egypt to the Volga-Ural region in the last years of the nineteenth-century, it comingled with the views of Kazan scholar, Marjānī, who, in addition compiling and debating local history, had written extensively on questions relating to Islamic law and ritual. Like Afghānī and Abduh, he sought ways to integrate potentially useful aspects of European science and technology into Islamic society. In *Nāẓurat al-haqq fī farīḍiyya al-'isha' wa in lam yaghib al-shafaq* (1870), he turned to Qur'ānic citations to argue that God created everything in the natural world for human beings to use and gain knowledge from. Muslim scholars were obligated to observe the natural world and use the knowledge they gained from it even when such knowledge contradicted previously-accepted legal opinions (al-Marjānī 1897; Kemper 1998). This was consistent with his call to embrace knowledge from a range of sources when writing regional history (discussed above). Marjānī was involved in a project to correct typographical errors in the Kazan edition of the Qur'ān, in the restructuring of madrasa curriculum and administration in the 1860s–1870s, and witnessed Orenburg mufti Salimgarey Tevkelev's campaign to reform the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly (Kemper 1998; Zagidullin 2014). In this environment, Marjānī came to champion efforts to update and correct all aspects of Volga-Ural Islam. In Islamic legal practice, that meant questioning canonical legal commentaries and encouraging scholars to return to the primary sources of the law: the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, the consensus of scholars (*ijmā'*), and deductive analogy (*qiyās*) (al-Marjānī 1870).

There is little evidence that Marjānī interacted with Afghānī or Abduh, but subsequent generations of Volga-Ural Muslim scholars identified all three as their intellectual fathers and saw them as proponents of the same ideals:

(1)   The rejection of the classical legal and theological schools (madhhabs) and any other affiliations (teacher-student relations and Sufi discipleship) that divided the *ummah* into rival units (Karīmī 1898; Anonymous 1904);

(2)   The creation a single Muslim community united by correct belief, based upon direct readings of the Qurʾān and the Sunnah, in which all Muslims were to engage;

(3)   A return to the Qurʾān and the hadith in the field of Islamic law and the reinterpretation of these sources with reference to the conditions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Volga-Ural balanced reformers heavily promoted the view that Islamic legal interpretation was historically and culturally contingent (Būbī 1904–1910). This approach opened most topics in the field of furu' al-fiqh for reinterpretation, and Volga-Ural balanced reformers used that to mediate the adoption of European and Russian technologies, clothing styles, and values (such as the rejection of polygamy) into Muslim society (al-Makhdūmī 1901; Karīmī 1898). At the same time, they all but extinguished debate in the field of theology by promoting a literalist view on commonly-debated questions such as the divine attributes (Būbī 1911; Kamali 2010; al-Qadīrī 1909).

The strategies above served several larger purposes. First, they allowed the reformers to call for sweeping social and cultural changes, while simultaneously presenting them as contiguous with the existing Muslim intellectual tradition. Second, they emphasized practical and applied knowledge over the theoretical, supporting their new vision of the village imam as a public servant rather than an elitist intellectual (Ross 2020). Finally, by reducing the quantity of literature required to master Islamic law and greatly simplifying theology, these strategies fulfilled the goals of making Islam comprehensible to a wider, less scholarly audience and facilitating popular participation in upholding sharīʿa.

Dīnmuḥammadov and many of his fellow teachers criticized these balanced reformers for de-emphasizing theology, logic, and philosophy in the madrasa curriculum and doing away with the debate (munāẓara) as a teaching tool because they believed that students who were not exposed to logic and debate made poor jurists and teachers (Garipova 2016). However, these critics' recurring use of "Wahhabis" as a descriptor for balanced reformers highlights the aspects of the balanced reform program that most defined it in the eyes of its opponents: its combination of simplified theology; distain for the canonical legal and theological works; seemingly free interpretation of Qurʾānic verses; and mobilization of less-educated Muslims under the banner of "purifying" Islam. Dīnmuḥammadov repeatedly emphasized these aspects of balanced reformers' writings in his critique of the works of Marjānī and Muhammadnajīb Shamsaddīnov at-Tūntārī (at-Tūntārī 2002). Where balanced reformers preached unity, purity of faith, and the full engagement of believers, their critics saw crude popularization of Islamic theology, ignorant misinterpretation of Islamic law, and an inevitable descent into violence and bloodshed that would pit Muslim against Muslim. Even if the Wahhabis and the balanced reformers did not strictly share an intellectual pedigree, they did share certain strategies and goals; for Dīnmuḥammadov, this made them essentially the same.

2.4. The Socialists and the Revolutionaries

The first and last terms of Dīnmuḥammadov's formulation—socialists and revolutionaries—are best addressed together. Volga-Ural Muslim intellectuals who opposed socialism do not seem to have envisioned any version of socialism that did not involve a revolutionary restructuring of Muslim society. Among proponents of socialism, even those who did not advocate physical violence against political and socio-economic oppressors articulated visions of a Muslim future in which certain "privileged" classes would cease to exist.

The writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels first attracted the attention of ethnic Russian intellectuals in the 1840s (Walicki 1979). From there, the ideas expressed in these two writers' works were nativized, elaborated upon, and became interwoven into various political movements by the 1860s (Walicki 1979). The first documented Volga-Ural Muslim socialists appeared in the early 1900s. Political leanings in early-twentieth-century Russia were often expressed through membership in one or another political party and Muslim socialists turned to the programs of two: the Socialist Revolutionaries (SR) and the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDRP).

The RSDRP was formed in 1898. Its members were those who understood the failure of the 1870s' "Going to the People" movement as a sign that Russian Populist ideology was flawed: the

peasants were not the class that would bring revolution to Russia and revolution could not be rushed or engineered through human intervention. As staunch followers of the works of Marx and Engels, the members of the RSDRP supported the principle that industrial workers would be the class to lead the revolution and that such a revolution was historically inevitable once Russia reached the requisite stage in its economic development (Walicki 1979).

The Socialist Revolutionary Party was founded in 1901 in response to the rise of Russian Marxism. Its founder, V. M. Chernov (1873–1952), sought to revive aspects of 1860s–1870s Populist ideology (narodnichestvo), especially that ideology's focus on Russia's peasants. The SR program viewed peasants, agrarian life, and rural communes as part of modern economic life rather than as historical relics that would disappear as Russia industrialized. Peasants and their communal tendencies would be key to establishing socialism throughout Russia. In contrast to the Marxist RSDRP, the SR party's members believed in the ability of the individual to affect the course of history. This ideology led some members of the party to turn to political terror as an tool for bringing about social change (White 2010; Hildernmeier 2000).

Very few Volga-Ural Muslims became members of Russia's revolutionary parties, but they engaged with Russian socialist writings. Muslims' early encounters with revolutionary socialism occurred through contact with ethnic Russian students and co-workers in the empire's cities, most notably Kazan. ʿAyāḍ Isḥāqī, Fuād Tuqtārov (1880–1938), and Ḥusayn Yamāshev (1882–1912), all studying in Kazan and influenced by their encounters with underground revolutionary life, organized the manuscript newspaper *Progress* (*Taraqqi*) in 1895 and created the "Student Society" ("Shakīrdlär jamʾiyyati") in 1903 (Iskhakyi 2011a). *Progress* closed in 1900, but after the Revolution of 1905, Isḥāqī and Tuqtārov opened the newspaper *Dawn Tāng* (later changed to *Morning Star* (*Tāng Yuldūzi*)) in which they called for Muslims to violently resist autocratic rule and the imperial bureaucracy. The socialist-leaning young writers who formed the newspaper's staff became known as the Tāngchīlar (Iskhakyi 2011c; Validov 1998; Ibrahimov 1984b; Rämi and Dautov 2001). This advocacy of force to bring about political change was very similar to the doctrine preached by the more violent members of the SR party and likely derived from it. Isḥāqī's view in *Extinction after Two Hundred Years* that human action would determine the future of the Tatar nation was also very much in line with SR views on the role of human agency in history. However, the adoption of SR political doctrines did not necessarily preclude Islamic piety. Isḥāqī later recalled how his friend Tuqtārov never missed a prayer or violated a fast while they studied in Kazan. The socialist Tuqtārov's adherence to Islamic ritual was so all-consuming that some of his classmates dubbed him "the fanatic" (Iskhakyi 2011a).

RSDRP political philosophies entered Volga-Ural Muslim society through another circle of Kazan madrasa students. Fātiḥ Amirkhan (1886–1926), student activist and self-identified socialist who became acquainted with Marxism through a Russian friend, revived the manuscript newspaper *Progress* in 1901 as part of his underground student movement at Muḥammadiyya Madrasa in Kazan (Ibrahimov-Alushev 2005; Ämirkhan 1985b). The dismantling of the imperial censorship by the October Manifesto, combined with the disorder that spread through most of Russia in autumn 1905 as a result of the Revolution of 1905, facilitated the more rapid transmission of radical socialist views through Tatar periodical press and student gatherings. One example of such public dissemination of radical Marxist views occurred in 1906 when former madrasa student ʾAliasgar Kamāl opened the newspaper *Free People* (*Azād Khaliq*) and used it to publish Tatar translations of the RSDRP party program (Rämi and Dautov 2001; Anonymous 1906).

Marxist theories of class conflict left a deep imprint on Volga-Ural Muslim intellectual culture as it evolved from 1900 to 1917, especially among young writers and activists. Isḥāqī, a former imam, envisioned Volga-Ural Muslim society as being dominated by an exploiter class of wealthy, obscurant Islamic scholars (ʾulamāʾ) who would sooner destroy their own people than renounce their privileges (al-Isḥāqī 1904). Sentiments of class struggle provided a framework within which radicalized madrasa students made sense of intergenerational conflicts with their parents and teachers (Ross 2015). Marxist narratives of historical evolution were equally important in shaping reformers' views on the present

and future state of Islam and the Tatar nation. Amirkhan's futuristic novel, *Reverend Fatḥullāh* (1910), and Jamāladdīn Valīdov's explication of the evolution of nations, *Millat wa Milliyat* (1914), were both built upon Marxist understandings of the stages of human history and the view that progress was driven by macro-level social and economic factors that were beyond the capacity of human beings to control or alter (Ämirkhan 1984; J. Walīdī 1914). Rebellious madrasa students' songs of how they would inherit the future when their "backward" teachers and parents died express a more popularized version of Marxist views on historical progress (Sibġatullin 1910).

Dīnmuḥammadov had a deeply personal reason to dislike revolutionary socialism. By the early 1900s, both revolutionary-socialist-allied Muslim intellectuals and their Marxist colleagues used the classical Muslim scholar ('alīm) as a literary and visual symbol of the classes that they believed exploited Volga-Ural Muslim society. When Dīnmuḥammadov criticized them, they singled him out for special abuse, dubbing him "Ishmi the Donkey" and "Ishmi Ishan," and mocking him in the Tatar-language press (Tukai 2011b, 2011f, 2011g, 2011n). However, Dīnmuḥammadov was not alone in his anxieties over socialism and its incompatibility with Islam. His concerns were shared by balanced reformer Dhākir al-Qadīrī, who translated Syrian Rafīqbek al-'Aẓīm's *Life and Religion* from Arabic into Tatar in 1911. Qadīrī's translation laid out the case for socialism being antagonistic to Islam far more articulately than Dīnmuḥammadov managed to. The book argued that socialism, by proposing class struggle as a necessary step on the journey to achieving happiness (*sa'adat*) for all humanity, set itself in opposition to Islam. In Islam, the salvation of humanity was not the task of any single class, but of every human being, and it was a collective project in which the more learned were obliged to help the less learned regardless of wealth or class (al-'Aẓīm 1911). Though a translation by one of Dīnmuḥammadov's intellectual rivals, those sentiments summarize, in a more diplomatic manner, Dīnmuḥammadov's aversion to socialism's violent and divisive aspects.

3. Discussion: Bringing the Three Ideologies Together

By the early twentieth century, young reformers combined Tatar nationalism and Islamic balanced reform with Russian revolutionary socialism and Marxist political philosophies to create a single narrative, a set of goals, and a plan for action.

In approaching both Islam and nation, the nationalist reformers adopted and adapted from European orientalist literature a narrative of golden age and decline. That narrative began with a pristine past—for Islam, the first three generations of Muslims, and for the Tatar nation, the state of Bulghar, and later, the Kazan khanate—in which people enjoyed justice and prosperity. This idyllic era was ended by a fall. For Islam, this fall was precipitated by the civil wars (*fitna*s) and the rise of the Umayyad and 'Abbasid caliphal dynasties, which preceded the emergence of the complex culture of Islamic legal commentaries and theological debates that twentieth-century reformers so despised (al-Qadīrī 1909). For the Tatar nation, this fall was the conquest of Kazan by the Muscovites, which reformers saw as having deprived their ancestors of sovereignty and the resources required to maintain their faith and culture (al-Marjānī 1897; Ghafūrī 1907; al-Jalālī 1908).

For both Islam and nation, this decline was reversible through a combination of socio-economic evolution and human intervention. Such a fusion of social revolutionary and Marxist thought was in no way unique to Volga-Ural Muslim reformists. It also appears in the concept of revolutionary vanguard laid out in V. I. Lenin's *What is to be Done?* (1902), which many of the young reformers active in the 1900s–1910s had read or were, at least, familiar with (Lenin 1902; Äkhmädullin 1981; Ibrahimov 1984b). By achieving political and national consciousness and spreading that consciousness to others, reformers believed that they could bring about a future for the nation and Islam that combined the justice and cultural flourishing of the imagined past with the most useful technologies of the present (Gafuri 1980a, 1980b; Rämiev 1980).

For the reformers, the end goal that Tatar nationalism, balanced reform, and socialism, for the promise of a society in which social inequality would at last be eliminated and hierarchy would be replaced with a community of autonomous, equal individuals who would have equal access to

material resources, knowledge, and political power. This vision finds its most elaborate expression in Amirkhan's *Reverend Faṭḥullāh*, a novel that depicts a highly technological society in which all members recognize themselves as Tatars, are united in Islam, have open access to Islamic knowledge, and experience no poverty or conflict. Although *Reverend Faṭḥullāh* is a Tatar nationalist novel, a balanced reformer's ideal vision of Islam plays a significant role in the future society that Amirkhan envisions. This society's legal system contains a *sharīʿa* court run by a combination of legal scholars and common citizens. The city in which the plot unfolds possesses only one giant mosque capable of holding over 100,000 worshipers, an architectural embodiment of the unity of an ummah no longer divided by madhhab or sect (Ämirkhan 1984).

While Amirkhan fused together Tatar nationalism, Islamic balanced reform, and Marxist views of historical progress in fiction, his close friend, the poet 'Abdullāh Tūqāyev (1886–1913), did the same through poetry-writing and performatively. Inspired by a combination of fictional re-workings of Marjānī's *Affairs in Kazan and Bulghar* and Marxist views on history, Tūqāyev gradually worked out a theory that every nation evolved to a point when its own foundational national author appeared; Tūqāyev believed himself to be this historically predestined author for the Tatar nation (Tukai 2016a, 2016b, 2016c, 2011j, 2011k).

As Tūqāyev worked to create what he imagined would become the foundation of the Tatar national literary canon, he simultaneously made a point of commenting on Islamic belief and practice in the nascent Tatar nation. Unlike Qadīrī, Bīgīev, and Būbī, Tūqāyev was not a jurist or theologian by profession and he did not compose theoretical tracts or textbooks on Islamic law and theology in the same way that he did for national literature. Nor did he produce vernacular translations of the Qur'ān as did his friend, Kāmil Mutī'ī. However, Tūqāyev had received his education at Ural'sk Madrasa from Kāmil's father, Mutī'ullāh Tukhfatullīn, an al-Azhar graduate and a student of Muḥammad Abduh (Mutigi 1986), and balanced reform formed a significant part of the intellectual scaffolding upon which Tūqāyev built his image of the Tatar nation. So too, did theories of Marxist class struggle, which Tūqāyev was first exposed to through his contact with Russian youths at an early job at a Russian newspaper and his reading of the works of Muslim-socialist novelist Ayāḍ Isḥāqī (Gladyshev 1986; Rämiev 2005). In his poetry, Tūqāyev developed a vision of Islam as a religion that was foundational to Tatar national identity, was practiced and experienced in the Tatar language, and was indispensable to the realization of social justice. In the poem "Native Tongue," he presents the Tatar language as the medium in which children address their first prayers to God (Tukai 2011p). In another poem, "A Mother's Prayer," he exalts an elderly woman praying late at night for the wellbeing of her son and implies that there is no way that God will fail to answer her prayer (Tukai 2011a). In these poems, Tūqāyev simultaneously celebrates the piety of humble Muslim believers and the power of a national vernacular language to enable those believers to experience a meaningful connection with God and Islam.

By contrast, Tūqāyev regularly calls out the wealthy and powerful for their lack of piety and meaningful knowledge of Islam. In, "A Little Story Set to Music," he tells the story of how Safi, a disciple of a powerful Sufi shaykh, is thrown into crisis when faced with his wife's demand for a divorce. Despite Safi's public displays of piety, he is revealed to be ignorant of sharī'a (Tukai 2011d). In another poem, "A Student, or an Encounter," Tūqāyev relates how wealthy Muslims praise madrasa students for their pure faith. However, when informed that the students are starving, the same wealthy people recommend that they pray to God for assistance (Tukai 2011m). In both these narrative poems, Tūqāyev explores the theme of outward piety versus inward ignorance. Both Safi the disciple and the wealthy onlookers behave in ways that suggest that they are good Muslims, but, when faced with a test of their knowledge of Islam (i.e., how to get a divorce; the need to donate money to help the poor), they fail miserably. Both of these poems reflect Volga-Ural balanced reformers' call for all Muslims to become knowledgeable about Islamic law and diligent in their application of it. At the same time, Tūqāyev's focus on social and economic privilege in these poems is very much inspired by his socialist colleagues' and friends' emphasis on class conflict and exploitation. This element is most obvious in

the contrast Tūqāyev draws in "A Student, or an Encounter" between wealthy citizens of the nation and impoverished students. However, Marxist values are also implied, if less obviously evident, in, "A Little Story Set to Music," with Tūqāyev's deliberate characterization of Safi as a Sufi, an identity that binds him into what Tūqāyev viewed as an exploitative socio-economic relationship between privileged shaykhs and their ignorant followers. Tūqāyev viewed Islamic scholars who exploited the ignorance of common Muslims as corrosive not only to Islam, but to the health of the Tatar nation (Tukai 2011h, 2011l).

Not content to confine his promotion of the Tatar nation and Islam to his writings, Tūqāyev acted out his view of proper Islam and national citizenship in his daily life. He presented his own childhood as a story of overcoming callousness and exploitation by the ignorant and impious, relating, among other things, how the woman charged with caring for him instead left him outside in the winter cold until his bare feet froze to the doorstep (Tukai 2016d). By re-telling this story, he meant for those who read or heard it to draw a comparison with how the Qur'ān mandated that Muslims should treat orphaned children. Tūqāyev lived frugally, eschewing fine clothes, comfortable housing, and female company, all things that he associated with the lifestyle of the exploitative, irreligious classes (Tukai 2011e, 2011c, 2011l, 2011o). Even among his socialist-leaning friends, he became infamous for his penchant for ragged, ill-fitting clothing (Āmirkhan 1985a; Kamāl 1986; Rämiev 2005). He projected a commitment to Islam and the Tatar nation that was total and unwavering. Following the closure of Izh-Būbī Madrasa by the Russian police in 1910 and the subsequent investigation of its teachers for evidence of their participation in anti-government agitation, he cursed Dīnmuḥammadov (who he believed had denounced Izh-Būbī's teachers to the police) and vowed that if the Tatar presses were closed down (which would have amounted to the Russian government's suppression of both Islamic knowledge and Tatar national culture), he would tear his new clothing from his body and go out barefoot into the street (Tukai 2016e). In reading Tūqāyev's Tatar-language adaptation of Russian poet Mikhail Lermontov's "The Prophet," it is not difficult to see parallels between the poem's main character, a divinely-chosen messenger unappreciated and abused by his own people, and Tūqāyev's image of himself as someone destined by divine or historical forces to be a blindly devoted, ill-treated promoter of the Tatar nation, defender of pure Islam, and champion of the exploited (Tukai 2011i).

Not all Tatar nationalists and balanced reformers committed to their mission with Tūqāyev's zeal and not all combined their quests for nation-building, Islamic legal reform, and social justice in quite the same way. In fact, more of them focused primarily on one field while publishing in the same newspapers, moving in the same social circles, and voicing support for their colleagues' work. The themes of social equality and the overthrow of hierarchy were consistent across their work. For balanced reformers employed in the fields of Islamic law and theology, achieving equality among community members meant making Islamic knowledge accessible to a wider audience by translating key Arabic-language texts into vernacular Tatar-Turkish (Fakhreddinov 2005; Ross 2020) and challenging the relevance and validity of the traditional madrasa textbooks and legal commentaries (Bīgīev 1909a; Būbī 1909). Tatar nationalists saw themselves as promoting the same goal of equality and supporting their friends and colleagues in law and theology by using poetry, prose fiction, and drama to praise behaviors and individuals that advanced the causes of the Tatar nation, socio-economic equality, and the full engagement of all community members with Islam; and by condemning those who did not. Becoming a Tatar in no way meant abandoning or neglecting Islam. As G. 'Azīz argued in his analysis of nation, it was possible for a nation to have a special historical relationship with a religion that made that religion a key part of that nation's culture and identity, even if the religion was practiced by multiple nations. The Chinese nation enjoyed a distinct and important relationship with Buddhism. Why could the Tatar nation not enjoy similar relationship with Islam? ('Azīz 1913b).

4. Conclusions

When Dīnmuḥammadov accused certain Muslim scholars and intellectuals within the Volga-Ural Muslim community of being "socialist-Wahhabi-nationalist revolutionaries," he vented his anger

and anxiety about a group of people who, from his perspective, seemed to advocate political and social upheaval, debasement of Islamic law and theology, and violence against their fellow Muslims. However, he also described a very real phenomenon in early-twentieth-century Volga-Ural society: Muslim intellectuals' fused Tatar nationalism, Islamic balanced reform, and Russian revolutionary socialism to imagine a society in which all members would enjoy equal access to knowledge and economic resources and take part equally in the maintenance of Islamic law and Tatar national culture.

Dīnmuḥammadov and other critics of this vision often focused on its violent and destructive aspects, and ultimately, they were not altogether wrong in this focus. The revolutions that toppled the Romanov dynasty and facilitated the rise of the Soviet regime were driven by visions of utopia achieved through violence. Those visions sprang from the same intellectual soil as the imagined egalitarian Muslim Tatar nation. Dīnmuḥammadov himself died in 1919, dragged from his home and shot in a nearby field amid the chaos of the Russian civil war (Fäkhreddin 2010b). After a lifetime of railing against revolutionary violence, he became one of its victims.

The project of creating a state that brought together Tatar nationalism, Islam, and socialism, also fell victim to that violence. At the 1917 Union of 'Ulamā' in Kazan, as part of the broader preparations for the establishment of an autonomous Turko-Tatar state in the Volga-Ural region, participants proposed a political order in which a collection of mandatory sadaqa payments would be instituted across society to fund the salaries and upkeep of legal scholars. They also called for the publication of a bulletin that could be used to disseminate information to their colleagues posted in villages across the nation about accepted legal rulings on various issues to help them resolve local disputes (Anonymous 1917). Both of those resolutions suggest that Islam was intended to play a significant role in the emerging Tatar nation-state. However, in March 1918, shortly after the declaration of the Turko-Tatar autonomy, its leaders were arrested by the Bolshevik-dominated Kazan city soviet and the Volga-Ural Muslim community was absorbed into what would become the Soviet Union. In the late 1920s, the Soviet godless campaigns drove Islam out of public life and out of the Soviet-approved version of Tatar nationalism. Nonetheless, Volga-Ural Muslim intellectual life in the early twentieth century demonstrates the creative ways in which colonized Muslims adapted and combined seemingly conflicting ideologies to imagine a post-colonial future.

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Self-Ruled and Self-Consecrated Ecclesiastic Schism as a Nation-Building Instrument in the Orthodox Countries of South Eastern Europe

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Abstract: The Orthodox concept of autocephaly, a formerly organizational and administrative measure, has been a powerful nation-building tool since the 19th century. While autocephaly could be granted—from the perspective of the Orthodox canon law—in an orderly fashion, it was often the case that a unilateral, non-canonical way towards autocephaly was sought. This usually took place when the state actors, often non-Orthodox, intervened during the nation-building process. We investigated the effects of unilateral declarations of autocephaly (through a schism) by comparing Bulgarian, Northern Macedonian, and Montenegrin examples. We contend that the best success chances are to be expected by the ecclesiastic body that is less willing to make major transgressions of the canon law, than to radicalize the situation after the initial move. This is mostly because autocephaly's recognition requires a global acceptance within the circle of the already autocephalous churches. We also suggest that the strong political backing of the autocephaly movement can paradoxically have a negative impact on its ultimate success, as it can prolong the initial separation phase of the schism and prevent or postpone the healing phase, and with it, the fully fledged autocephaly.

Keywords: Orthodox Christianity; autocephaly; religious nationalism; schism; canon law; church–state conflicts

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1. Symphony, Autocephaly, and Nation: Orthodox Church's Challenges of Maintaining Unity in Diversity

One of the most visible traits of the contemporary Orthodox Church is its organizational pattern. A non-informed observer may quickly establish that what is nominally one global church, actually consists of a network of quite independent jurisdictions, with their activities' focus often bound to a specific nation (cf. Linz and Stepan 1996, p. 260). Its most important bishop, the Patriarch of Constantinople, has much less authority than the Pope of Rome over the Roman Catholic Church. Although he is styled "the Ecumenical patriarch", he has very little power or influence over the way any of the autocephalous (i.e., independent) Orthodox Churches runs its internal affairs. Without understanding what autocephaly really means and how it relates to different nationalisms, one can hardly understand many identity conflicts that have taken place in the Orthodox world during the previous few centuries. Moreover, without understanding the scope and limitations of the concept of autocephaly, one can hardly predict the possible outcomes of the ongoing frictions.

The origins of the contemporary Orthodox ecclesiastic nationalisms are probably related to transformations of the relationship between Orthodoxy and the modern nation, where "the meaning of religious affiliation [was turned] into the equivalent of de facto national belonging" (Roudometof 2014, p. 85; cf. Kitromilides 2019, pp. 32–39). The Orthodox Church traditionally has tended to establish a cooperative arrangement with its host state, something often criticized in the

West (cf. Huntington [1996] 1997, p. 70; Makrides 2004, p. 17). Even though it is open to debate, to say the least, whether it ever existed in its ideal form (cf. Makrides 2019, p. 236), the principle of *symphonia* (συμφωνία—which may mean accordance, agreement, but also musical harmony) has left a very deep imprint on Orthodox political thinking. Ideally, it requires the state to express its political will to take care of the Church's interests, while the Church is expected to refrain itself from statements that might be related to the daily political life (Gerogiorgakis 2013, pp. 175–76). The Church thus appears as the moral force, or state's conscience in political life (cf. Papanikolaou 2012, p. 27). For as long as the government is not bound to commit some major transgression of Orthodox dogmas, morality or canon law, the Church is not expected to challenge the government's authority or intervene in daily politics. However, although often perceived as docile, the Orthodox Church's history offers many examples of the Church's vigorous resistance to authorities, once such transgressions took place.

Even if one was to argue that there was indeed a clear symphonic orientation on the behalf of the Orthodox Church, it must be discerned between the earlier, imperial, and later, national, character of such arrangements. Instead of having an agreement with the Emperor of the Universal (Roman) Empire, modern local Orthodox Churches often made one with their nation's leaders, provided they were in position to make such choice in the first place. By helping homogenize and mobilize the nation, the Orthodox Church could further its relevance and influence. This was made possible through the Orthodox Church's role in ethnogenesis, indigenization, and vernacularization of the faith (Makrides 2013, pp. 338–40). The historical closeness between Church and state and emerging amalgamation of the concepts of "Church, people and (home)land" (Makrides 2013, pp. 330–49) have only amplified the sense of apparent necessity of the Orthodox Church's national orientation.

In Fr. Alexander Schmemann's view, the specific Eastern idea of "nationalism" simply merged with its Western prototype, thus converting medieval desire for the one, universal Orthodox Empire into a number of conflicting nation-states. This Eastern "nationalism," characterized by a strong Church–ethnicity bond, was, in his view, born from the decaying Eastern Roman sense of universalism, the demise of which was facilitated first by Hellenization of the late Eastern Roman Empire and then by the Slavic and Arab resistance to complete Hellenization of the Orthodox clergy during the Ottoman rule. By the 19th century, the Orthodox world had already been fractured along the ethnic lines, shattered in a number of provincial traditions, already facing a steep theological decline. The Orthodox Church (and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople in particular) was seen by its flock as the keeper of the pre-Ottoman political traditions and in charge of their preservation until political independence could be restored. While this turned the Church into the bearer of national ideals, its byproduct was the emergence of hostility towards other Orthodox peoples (Schmemann 1992, pp. 277–91, 319; cf. Hastings 1997, p. 202), with conflicting national ambitions. The (local) Orthodox Church and the nation state basically grew to represent different aspects of the same collective. Therefore, since the emergence of nationalism, it has frequently been the case that one nation's desire for self-determination could also manifest itself through its struggle for ecclesiastic independence.

A process of nation-building could not always unfold in a harmonious way. The nation-states and their respective Orthodox churches quite often played dissonant tones. In cases when no agreement with the local Church jurisdiction could be reached, the nation-builders would often attempt to create a schism, hoping that if they persisted for long enough, the change in political circumstances would lead to eventual fulfilment of their initial goal.

The concept of Orthodox autocephaly often appeared to the would-be nation-builders as complimentary to political independence. In this regard, it transcended its initial administrative, technical, and canonical meaning. In the 19th century Balkans—according to Cyril Hovorun—it gained its current political, sociological, and cultural significance. In many Orthodox societies autocephaly was elevated on par with other symbols of statehood, such as flag, currency, or national anthem (Hovorun 2009, pp. 31–32). Yet, it rarely got the attention other components of national identity or national discourse received, especially when evaluating nationalisms in predominantly Orthodox countries after 1989 (Zabarah 2013, p. 47). Neophytos Loizides claimed

that the issue of religion's adaptation to nationalism (and vice-versa) still needs to be adequately addressed in the Balkans (Loizides 2009, p. 203) and we believe that this is especially the case with the autocephaly–nationhood link.

We would like to contribute to the current debates by examining the cases in which neither nationalist nor religious goals were successfully achieved by declaring autocephaly—namely, those of North Macedonia and Montenegro. Since resolution of these ecclesiastic conflicts is not in sight, we will include the third case, that of the Bulgarian Exarchate[1] (1870–1953, in schism 1872–1945). Our decision to begin with the Bulgarian example is motivated by the ambition to demonstrate some important limitations of ecclesiastic nationalisms in the Orthodox context. In order to realize our aims, it will not suffice to describe the motivations behind these schisms and methods by which these ecclesiastical conflicts were initiated and managed. It is also important to address the causes of failure to achieve the ultimate goal by employing radical means. Their application was not problematic in the ecclesiological sphere alone, as schismatic status introduced major limitations for the uncanonical hierarchies. These projects also suffered in their political dimension as well, often to an extent that undermined achieving the proclaimed goals of nation-building in the first place. Our considerations could therefore also contribute to discussions on whether autocephaly is a necessary component, or just a welcome addition, of statehood in the predominantly Orthodox societies of the 21st century. By exploring the trajectories of such schisms, we want to establish what conditions are necessary for a dissonant opening to become a harmonious conclusion. The cases we chose represent three different levels of radicalization (dissonance) of the conflict between the nascent nation and the local ecclesiastic jurisdiction: (1) the Bulgarian schism (1872–1945), (2) the North Macedonian schism (1967–present), and end by analyzing the most radical of our cases, that of (3) the Montenegrin Orthodox Church (1993–present). The last one is particularly interesting from the perspective of Orthodox ecclesiology, as it cannot be described by the word "schism" itself, but rather as an example of the nationalist ecclesiastic alchemy, i.e., an attempt to create ex nihilo the new national church. What also sets all these cases apart from other national autocephalies is that they all predated the actual political independence of their titular nations.

After introducing the reader to some of the important notions related to the concepts of autocephaly and symphonia, we shall proceed by discussing the phenomena of nation and nationalism in the Orthodox context. We shall than examine our three cases and present our perspective of the interdependence of levels of radicalization of the ecclesiastic conflict these produced and the levels of success their attempts had. By doing this, we want to demonstrate that by refraining from continuously transgressing the limitations of the Orthodox canon law, the Orthodox Church seeking autocephaly increases its chances of becoming fully autocephalous. This means that its ecclesiastic independence is recognized as canonical by the rest of the "One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church" (Article 9 of the Nicene Creed), something that nationalist leaders, who initiate ecclesiastic schisms, often overlook.

2. The Concept of Autocephaly in the Orthodox Context

In organizational terms, the Orthodox believe that no single bishop can replace Jesus Christ as the Church's Head. The highest decision-making authority can therefore rest not in the hands of the single one bishop, even with the lofty title of the Ecumenical ("universal") Patriarch, but in the bishops' councils, which are believed to be inspired by the Holy Spirit and guided by the Church's Head.

Many current debates related to the concept of autocephaly are easier to follow after one is introduced to the history of its application. The decentralized structure of the Orthodox Church has its origins in the ways the apostolic churches operated. They were organizationally independent from one another in their own affairs and led by their local bishops, who communicated with other bishops and tried to maintain consensus on basic tenets of their faith. After the persecution of

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[1]   From Greek *exarchos* (ἔξαρχος), meaning governor, vicar, deputy, representative, envoy.

Christians was finally ended by the Edict of Milan in 313, a more elaborate hierarchical structure could emerge. Due to historical or administrative reasons, some bishoprics got the metropolitan status (of the metropolis)—and with it, certain authority over other bishops within their jurisdiction. The metropolitan bishops presided over the bishops' councils on their territory, which usually overlapped with that of a given Roman province. On a higher level, some metropolitan bishops got the authority over others within their region and presided over the regional councils. On the level of the entire Empire, however, no unified hierarchical structure was established, as several bishops' councils could elect their own supreme bishop, without any external interference from other sees. The Greek word for this status, *autokephalia* (αὐτοκεφαλία, originally as an adjective), which came into use much later, literally means "self-headedness," as autocephalous churches did not have any higher ecclesiastical jurisdiction to regulate their internal affairs. This system, along with the one where one metropolitan bishop had a supra-provincial jurisdiction, was sanctioned already at the Council of Nicea in 325 (cf. Jevtić 2005, pp. 69–70; cf. Milaš [1902] 2004, pp. 315–17), and was reaffirmed at the Council of Ephesus in 431, with confirmation of the autocephaly of the Archbishopric of Cyprus (Canon VIII of the Council of Ephesus).

Any autocephalous church has the right to independently elect its own supreme and other bishops, without the necessity to obtain consent or ask for confirmation from any other jurisdiction. This enables it to hold its own local councils in order to resolve its internal issues without any interference from another local Orthodox Church (cf. Bogolepov [1963] 2001, pp. 7–8). This status is based on the canons of the Ecumenical and other universally accepted local councils within the Orthodox Church (Jevtić 2005, pp. 45, 86, 98–100, 257)[2]. In other words, the autocephalous Orthodox Church has its own "internal source of power," which is reflected in its capacity to promote its own bishops from within its clergy ranks (Troicki 1933, pp. 193–94). To Alexander Schmemann this served as proof that the church these canons described was not what it is today—a network of, conditionally speaking, "sovereign" or independent entities. It was rather the organization that allowed every local community to reach its full potential, while maintaining a strong sense of unity (Scmemann 1971, pp. 7–8).

Christianization of Bulgaria in our opinion represents a watershed event in the evolution of the concept of autocephaly. Khan (or *Knyaz*) Boris I Michael (ruled 852–889), who reigned over probably the third-largest realm in Europe of his age, also provided refuge to students of Ss. Cyril and Methodius after 885. These brought the codified Slavonic liturgy to Bulgaria, which served as a means of solidifying both Christianity and *knyaz's* authority, after Boris's heirs expelled Greek-speaking clergy from the then autonomous Bulgarian Archbishopric in 893 (Makrides 2013, p. 340). After Slavic became the main liturgical language in the country, Slavic literature began to flourish, not only in Bulgaria, but also in other Slavic Orthodox countries as well, thus playing an important role in their ethnogenesis. The fate of the Bulgarian Church was also intertwined with the political fortunes of Bulgaria itself. A series of victories against the Eastern Roman Empire also forced the Patriarchate of Constantinople to recognize an autocephalous Bulgarian Patriarchate in 927 (previously declared on a local council in 919). Bulgarians thus created a precedent which enabled a powerful ruler of a Christian realm to ask for autocephaly (or take it among the other spoils of war) on behalf of his local hierarchy. This development also facilitated granting autocephaly to the Serbian Orthodox Archbishopric in 1219, although the political landscape was much more complex at that time due to the temporary

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[2] The Orthodox Church has its own way of counting the Ecumenical councils, which might appear somewhat confusing to a reader with a Roman Catholic background. The relevant canons include: the 2nd canon of the 2nd Ecumenical Council (Constantinople 381), 8th canon of the 3rd Ecumenical Council (Ephesus 431), 9th canon of the Council of Antioch (341) and a letter of the Council of Carthage (424) to Celestine, the Pope of Rome. A very important, probably fundamental canon is the 34th apostolic canon (rephrased in the 9th canon of the Council of Antioch): "The bishops of every nation [not in its modern meaning, but rather "people"] must acknowledge him who is the first among them and account him as their head, and do nothing of consequence without his consent; but each may do those things only which concern his own parish, and the country places which belong to it. But neither let him (who is the first) do anything without the consent of all; for so there will be unanimity, and God will be glorified through the Lord in the Holy Spirit."

disintegration of the Eastern Roman Empire, than it was three centuries before. The Russian case was somewhat different, as there was no immediate political threat from Constantinople. What is today by far the largest local Orthodox Church became autocephalous in 1589/1593, although it was de facto autocephalous since the election of a new archbishop of Kiev and All Russia (residing in Moscow), conducted in 1448 by the council of Russian bishops.

Already in the 13th century there was some evidence that the idea of dualistic political-ecclesiastic sovereignty existed among the Southern Slavs (cf. Blagojević 1999, p. 52). According to one of St. Sava's biographers, his aim was to have his Serbian Fatherland self-consecrated (*samoosvećeno*) after it became "by God's help self-governing" (samodržavno, also: sovereign; Domentijan 1988, p. 137). Being fully independent meant that one was free from foreign interference in both political and ecclesiastical matters. Given the authority of the Church in the middle ages, especially in legal and education matters, this tendency of the state to limit foreign influences over its hierarchy should not come as a surprise. Similar desires were present among the political elites of the Christian West at the time, where investiture controversy had profound historical consequences (cf. Cantor 1958, pp. 6–9). The Orthodox solution to the problem did not result in a long-lasting conflict between the Church and state, but rather recognition of their joint interests and necessity to support one another within their symphonic relationship (cf. Gerogiorgakis 2013). Already during the middle ages, the decentralized character of the Orthodox Church facilitated to some extent replication of the Eastern Roman model to Bulgaria and Serbia.

Within the Ottoman Empire, one's legal status was defined primarily by one's religion. Belonging to a religious denomination thus became the most important identity marker. The Ecumenical Patriarch was the overseer of the *millet-i Rûm*, (the Roman *millet*), which took care of legal affairs and taxation of much of the Empire's Orthodox population. Since most Christians who had access to the rare privilege of education were clergy members, these often became community organizers. In functional terms, the Church often fulfilled some of the state's functions, by providing a framework for collective decision-making and polity's representation. After the great Serbian migration of 1690, some elements of the *millet* model were transplanted by the exiled bishops of the Patriarchate of Peć (1557–1766) into the Austrian Empire as well. This arrangement of religious tolerance predated Josephinism (and Emperor Joseph's edicts of 1781) by almost a century. In Montenegro, after 1516 (or 1519, cf. Pavlovic 2008, p. 32), the Church did become the state, after the local bishops gradually became the Prince-bishops (*vladika*, pl. *vladike*). By the dawn of the 19th century, the Orthodox Church in South Eastern Europe had already become the political institution *par excellence*.

It is therefore hardly surprising that the national liberation in the Balkans could not leave the ecclesiastical matters as they were. Nevertheless, it was anything but easy for the Ecumenical Patriarchate to accept and sanction the fragmentation into small local, national, churches. Indeed, to do so meant a break with the ecumenical tradition, which, despite all challenges, was followed and promoted by the Patriarchate well into the 19th century (cf. Kitromilides 1989, p. 184; Roudometof 2008, p. 71; Makrides 2012, p. 32). Several factors have contributed to the proliferation of granting autocephalies in the 19th and 20th centuries, most important being the rise of nationalism and national romanticism, which often aimed at restoring both political and ecclesiastic sovereignties. The new nation-states also wanted to curb the influence of the Ecumenical Patriarch on the grounds that he was the subject of the hostile Ottoman Empire. As such, he was regarded aspolitically unreliable, if not outright dangerous from the perspective of national interests. It could be argued that the Petrine reforms in Russia and his subjugation of the Orthodox Church (resembling the actions of the Protestant monarchs of his age) made an important mark on the way other Orthodox countries treated their local hierarchies and consequently, the issue of autocephaly. Most autocephalies in the previous two centuries were declared in a unilateral or "sovereign" manner (cf. Shishkov 2016) and then got recognized by Constantinople, in a move that asserted the sovereignty of the state in the ecclesiastic matters, reminiscent of the way Emperor Peter did.

The proliferation of national autocephalies in the 19th and 20th centuries transformed the way in which this concept became perceived. While autocephaly had previously been considered as a rather marginal issue—from the perspective of the Orthodox Salvation narrative—it has nonetheless in the previous two centuries gained a national, "mythical" (Hovorun 2009), and often emotional character. Its rising importance also revealed that there was no pan-Orthodox consensus over every aspect of the procedure necessary for granting autocephaly. The point of view according to which it was the sole prerogative of the mother church (the jurisdiction from which the new local Church should be created), did create certain problems in pan-Orthodox recognitions of the newly established jurisdictions—especially regarding the Orthodox Church in America after 1970.

Attempts to regulate the procedure of awarding autocephaly to the local Church culminated in the late 20th century. Since the high middle ages, the Orthodox world has oscillated between its sense of universalism and movements for more autonomy of its individual churches. When the sense of universalism became stronger, it helped the Ecumenical Patriarchate strengthen its authority. The phases of growing particularism also led to proliferation of the independent local hierarchies and reduction of the actual influence bishops of Constantinople had.

It was during one of the phases of a growing sense of universalism and affirmation of conciliarity that the Inter-Orthodox Pre-Conciliar Commission met in the Swiss town of Chambesy and agreed on the procedure for granting autocephaly in November of 1993. The procedure may be initiated by the region requiring autocephaly, by its requests to the mother church. Upon its positive answer, the mother church should send a proposal to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which then seeks the pan-Orthodox consensus among the synods of the local Orthodox Churches. After Constantinople establishes that the consensus has been reached, it can proclaim the new autocephalous Church by issuing a document called *Tomos*. The *Tomos* must be signed by the Ecumenical Patriarch and the primate of the given jurisdiction's mother church (IOPC 1993, Art. 3). This procedure was further clarified in 2009, at the Russian Church's behest, by adding that the primates of all the autocephalous churches should co-sign the *Tomos*. Unlike autocephaly, granting autonomy remained in the exclusive purview of the local churches (cf. mospat.ru 2010). It appeared that this issue had finally been settled, until in 2018 the Ecumenical Patriarchate granted autocephaly to the Church of Ukraine. The actions of the Ecumenical Patriarchate indicated that it decided to at least formally revert to some of the principles agreed in 1993 (cf. IOPC 1993), as it maintained that in 1686 it only agreed for Moscow to become the caretaker of its Ukrainian dioceses. Apart from different interpretations of the jurisdictional issues over Ukraine, Constantinople's decision not to seek consensus *before* the move added to the overall controversy. The obvious reluctance of other local Orthodox Churches to accept this move (so far it has been accepted by the Archbishopric of Greece) might indicate both fear of Moscow's retaliation and contempt for Constantinople's decision, considered politically unsavvy, if not outright illegitimate.

2.1. The Orthodox Church and the Orthodox Nation

Unlike the issue of autocephaly, which only recently began to receive broader attention among scholars, the issue of Orthodox nationalism has been extensively studied in the past. When viewed from the perspective of its two-millennia-long history, national orientations of many contemporary local Orthodox Churches may appear as a relatively recent development. The Church in the Eastern Roman Empire aimed at overcoming divisions among its many peoples (cf. Romans 10:12, Galatians 3:28) in a way that has never been replicated since its demise. With the emergence of culturally distinct local Orthodox Churches, a specific bond between (local) people and (local) church was created (Makrides 2013, pp. 342–49) Arguably, over time, a strong, organic connection between faith and ethnicity, and in modern times, religion and nationalism, emerged (Rogobete 2004, p. 287), thus creating a specific "church–nation link" (Roudometof 2014, p. 84ff). As Vasilios N. Makrides suggested, the nationalization of the Orthodox Churches was facilitated by the ease with which their pre-modern orientations, structures, and practices could be refitted into the modern framework of nationalism. Moreover, this unfolded in a way that made the whole process appear as traditional, endogenous,

and natural. Even the Eastern Roman Empire's messianic narrative evolved into similar missionary ideologies among different Orthodox nations (Makrides 2013, pp. 329–30, 343–44).

Among the pre-modern orientations that facilitated increased engagement of the Orthodox Church in the national cause was its symphonic tradition (cf. Makrides 2013, p. 330). In a modern context, in which the sovereignty of the people has replaced that of the Emperor, the nation-state as the political expression of this sovereignty simply inherited some of Emperor's obligations. The powers that be may be ordained by God, but through the popular legitimation, nonetheless. As Bulgarian journalist Goran Blagoev once framed it in the official newspaper of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church (BOC), the nation-state, its army, and the local Orthodox Church represent reflections and embodiments of the same collective—the Orthodox people (Blagoev 2008). Even if the actual symphonia in predominantly Orthodox societies is nowadays out of the question, there is still something that could be understood in terms of Kristen Ghodsee's "symphonic secularism", the state of the contemporary church–state–nation relationships in which modern secular and traditional-religious notions of the Orthodox past coexist (Ghodsee 2009, pp. 227–52).

The nationalization of the local Orthodox Churches took place mostly in an age when there was little objection to the notion that the nation was something eternal, primordial, ancient, and organic. The case of St. Nikolaj of Ohrid and Žiča (bishop Nikolaj Velimirović), who in the 1930s portrayed the founder of the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) St. Sava (1174–1236) as the first nationalist in Europe, might demonstrate how easy it was for an Orthodox thinker to blur the differences between the modern and pre-modern and between nationalism and proto-national ideas. What in St. Nikolaj's hindsight made St. Sava a nationalist were his contributions to establishing Orthodox people's church, state, dynasty, education, culture (with language), and defense (Nikolaj 2013, pp. 86–91). While a closer investigation of his claims might lead to different conclusions, it is likely that he saw the concept of *national* autocephaly as something normal and legitimized through St. Sava's saintly authority.

In the second half of the 20th century—especially since the early 1980s—several paradigm-changing concepts of nation and its formation gained traction and influenced the way in which it became perceived. The nation was considered as something invented (cf. Hobsbawm and Ranger 2003), imagined (Anderson [1983] 2006), or constructed (Gellner 1983, p. 1). Within their approaches, the nation was treated as a modern phenomenon and, notwithstanding specific differences among them, as something constructed. Hence, these theoretical frameworks received the labels "modernist" or "constructivist". Perennial and primordial approaches figured as their opposites and, despite their different answers to questions of how and why nations emerged, both regarded them as a pre-modern phenomenon, i.e., existing before the modern age (cf. Rakic 1998, p. 599). Anthony D. Smith's approach, known as ethnosymbolism, was critical of the modernist but aligned neither with the primordial nor with the perennial approach. In his own words, it sought "to link modern nations and nationalism with earlier collective cultural identities and sentiments" (Smith 2000, pp. 62–63). Smith (2003, pp. 9–18), like Adrian Hastings, acknowledged the formative role of religion and, more specifically, of religious affiliation in the process of nation's creation, which is something most modernist approaches either completely ignored or, at best, sparsely mentioned. For instance, both Smith and Hastings took into consideration some factors that were documented already in the Old Testament and that influenced the emergence of many contemporary nations—common territory, language, and religion (Hastings 1997, p. 18, cf. p. 196; Smith 2003, pp. 52–66). This does not mean that Smith and Hastings attributed a religious component to every nationalism, since they differentiated between their religious and secular types. Yet, some of their observations on the interplay between the two could be seen as relevant when discussing bids for autocephaly we are about to present. A formerly religious nationalism may give way to other national identity markers and evolve into a secular one (cf. Hastings 1997, p. 65). Secular nationalisms can coexist with their religious counterparts, while drawing upon their myths, symbols, and traditions, as was the case with secular nationalisms in Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, and Greece (Smith 2000, p. 59).

Given that "nationalism could be expressed in both secular and religious ways, whose relations can be either complementary, neutral, or opposite" (Makrides 2013, p. 329), it is hardly surprising that multiple modes of nationalisms were competing with one another within every Orthodox society. The Orthodox clergy could support national narratives that insisted on a given nation's antiquity and presence on certain territory. It could also develop or recreate myths of ancient glory, downfall, suffering under foreign yoke, trials, heroic sacrifice, and political resurrection, which could then be further exploited by the secular elites as well, in the form of "political religion", a phenomenon akin to "civil religion" in the United States (Payne 2007, p. 833). The first major ecclesiastic condemnation of nationalism came at the expense of the Bulgarians. In 1872, their hierarchs were condemned of the heresy of ethnophyletism, or phyletism (from Greek ethnos/ἔθνος—people and phyletismos/φυλετισμός, which can be translated as tribalism or loyalty to one's tribe), although it is difficult to find the evidence that the Ecumenical Patriarchate fought other nationalisms with the same vigor (Makrides 2013, pp. 325–26). Even today, there is no consensus on the actual scope of this condemnation. The interpretations may range from condemning nationalism within the church as such (cf. Amfilohije 2017) to condemning only Bulgarians for establishing a parallel ethnically-based church hierarchy (cf. Thornton 2007, pp. 152–56) besides that of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. There was certainly little political will to condemn nationalism within the Orthodox Church in the late 19th century among Bulgarians, Greeks, and Serbs, especially after they realized that the presence of one nation's clergy could also influence the national preferences of the local population. This was best observable in the religious component of their scramble for Macedonia. After the Bulgarian Exarchate (a precursor to the contemporary BOC) had been established, the Serbian government lobbied both the political as well as the ecclesiastic authorities in Constantinople to appoint Serbian bishops in the regions of the present-day North Macedonia. During the Balkan wars, WWI, and WWII, the Serbian clergy was targeted by the Bulgarian occupying forces. Whenever the Bulgarian army retreated from these areas, it would also have consequences for the Bulgarian clergy, who either had to sign an oath of allegiance to the Serbian/Yugoslav state or flee to Bulgaria (Borisov 2007, pp. 47–50). In both cases, coreligionists from all the countries involved were more than ready to put their nationalist aspirations ahead of their presumed Orthodox unity.

The *Realpolitik* has also played its role in instigating and maintaining ecclesiastic nationalisms. The nation-state sanctioned by the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 promoted the sovereignty of the state in religious matters as well (first affirmed by the Treaty of Augsburg in 1555). In its Protestant form, this sovereignty allowed for the creation of (national) churches, headed by the Monarch. The wave of proliferation of autocephalies in the 19th and 20th centuries among the Orthodox was closely linked to the emergence of the new nation-states in Eastern and Southeastern Europe. These often asserted their sovereignty and pursued ecclesiastic autocephaly even by the uncanonical means, that is, by creating a schism with the mother church. The would-be nation-builders realized that the autocephalous Church, regardless of its canonical status, could be a powerful tool of internal homogenization and differentiation from the neighboring nations. Whether established before or after the creation of the nation-state, national autocephaly became an important piece of the overall nation-building project.

2.2. Limitations to the State's Sovereignty in Orthodox Ecclesiastical Matters

The problem with asserting the nation-state's sovereignty in ecclesiastic matters is that the independence of the nation-state is not entirely analogous to autocephaly. This can best be illustrated by pointing at differences between these concepts in their respective legal frameworks. In the realm of international law, any given state can exist in its full capacity as a state without being universally recognized by other countries, provided it has a permanent population, defined territory, (legitimate)

government, and capacity to engage in relationships with other countries[3]. The autocephalous church cannot enjoy its status unless it is universally, in an ideal case through a pan-Orthodox consensus, recognized as such. Every Orthodox Church, regardless of its canonical status, repeats in its constitution Article 9 of the Nicene-Chalcedonian creed, and claims that is a part of "the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church". In the ideal case, no local Orthodox Church should remain unrecognized by the others as such.

This pan-Orthodox recognition does not depend on following the formal canonical procedures (i.e., legalism) alone, but also their *spirit* (morality), which, by following Christos Yannaras, can never be reduced to legalistic interpretations (cf. Yannaras 1984, pp. 26–27). Apart from strict adherence to the letter of canons (*akribeia*, ἀκρίβεια), the Orthodox decision-makers can implement the principle of leniency, or *oikonomia* (οἰκονομία). The latter term can be found already in the Greek versions of the New Testament (Ephesians 1: 10, 3:2, 3:9; I Timothy 1:4), in relation to God's dealing with the World. *Oikonomia* can be applied in the interest of salvation, and the schismatic hierarchy may eventually get its autocephaly granted, usually under condition that, being the party accused of transgression, it also shows signs of repentance and will for reconciliation. In other words, the schismatic hierarchy would have to demonstrate its understanding that to unilaterally declare autocephaly was an uncanonical act and transgression against the ecclesiastical and canonical order of the Orthodox Church, in the first place. In practice, calculations of the schismatic hierarchies and their political backers may also include the eventual application of *oikonomia*. The expected roadmap includes a brief period of severing relations, followed by reconciliation and acceptance by the rest of the Orthodox world. Brevity of the severed relations to the mother church reduces the waiting time before reaching the desired fully-fledged autocephaly. However, when demands of the schismatic hierarchy become too radical, this period might get extended way more than expected and can become a burden that several generations have to bear.

3. Three Bids for Autocephaly and Their Limitations

We shall now investigate three examples of declaring national autocephalies, with different levels of subsequent radicalization. In all three cases, the initial move was triggered by the existence of (1) strong nationalism, (2) favorable (geo)political circumstances, and (3) interventionism by a non-Orthodox actor. The churches that emerged were all initially considered uncanonical by the rest of the Orthodox world and accused of blatantly transgressing the Orthodox canon law. The levels of radicalization that followed were different. While the BOC eventually agreed to the terms of reconciliation and could eventually fully realize its ambitions of autocephaly and restore its long-desired historical patriarchal dignity, the Macedonian Orthodox Church (MOC) made its position more difficult by rejecting the previously agreed canonical settlement with the SOC. The Montenegrin Orthodox Church (MnOC), created in canonical terms ex nihilo, supported by the self-declared atheists, led by the excommunicated former clergy members, due to the radicalization of its transgressions of the canon law brought itself in a situation in which no pan-Orthodox solution deemed favorable from its point of view seems possible. As we shall demonstrate by drawing on these examples, no fully-fledged autocephalous Church can emerge by state's fiat alone. The schismatic Church's capacity to reconcile with its mother church is the critical factor for the overall success of the autocephaly project.

3.1. The Bulgarian Exarchate's Schism (1872–1945)

The Bulgarian patriarchate was abolished in 1393, after the Ottoman conquest of the Bulgarian capital of Veliko Tărnovo. The Archbishopric of Ohrid (abolished in 1767) kept Bulgarians mostly

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[3] Convention on Rights and Duties of States adopted by the Seventh International Conference of American States. Signed at Montevideo, 26th December 1933. Articles 1, 3. *LEAGUE OF NATIONS Treaty Series Treaties and international Engagements registered with the Secretariat of the League of Nations, VOLUME CLXV 1936* (Nos. 3801–3824), Convention No. 3802. pp. 19–45.

as its lower clergy, while its upper ranks were filled by the Greeks. Bulgarian culture and language in some predominantly Bulgarian areas thus remained suppressed for centuries. The year 1762, in which Paisiy of Hilandar (canonized as an Orthodox saint in the second half of the 20th century) published his "Slavo-Bulgarian History", often serves as the starting point of the Bulgarian revival. St. Paisiy apparently rediscovered to him previously unknown Bulgarian history, after his encounter with the medieval sources at Mount Athos. He criticized not only the Greek clergy, but also the strongly Hellenized educated Bulgarians. He contended that the Bulgarians of his day were the rightful heirs of a glorious tradition, and as such should not be ashamed of asserting their identity. St. Paisiy's main contribution to Bulgarian liberation was that by writing about Bulgarian past (although lacking scientific rigor), he created the mental framework within which the nascent Bulgarian elites could imagine a future in a liberated country (cf. Tsankov 1918, pp. 24–25). Thanks to St. Paisiy, Bulgarian clergy members became instrumental in shaping and spreading the ideas and institutional networks that fomented Bulgarian nationalism, which grew much in opposition to the policies of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

During the late 18th and early 19th century, Bulgarian nation-building effort and "awakening" were focused on pressuring the Ecumenical Patriarchate into acknowledging specific Bulgarian identity and consequently giving concessions to its Bulgarian flock (Markovich 2013, pp. 232–34). Bishop Sofroniy of Vratsa (1739–1814) printed some of the first books in Bulgarian vernacular (Hopkins 2008, pp. 122–30) and his student Neofit Bozveli (1785–1848), upon returning from Serbia, where he had been acquainted with the ideas of the Serbian Enlightenment, began openly advocating for a Bulgarian Church. To this end, he traveled to Constantinople in order to help establish a Bulgarian parish in the Ottoman capital (Hopkins 2008, pp. 171–76). His activities were not viewed in a positive light by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which resulted in his banishment to Mount Athos, where he died in 1848. The generation of Bozveli's students, to which bishop Hilarion of Makariopolis (Ilarion Makariopolski) belonged, would nonetheless live to see the creation of the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870.

It is not uncommon for Bulgarian historians to write about a dual yoke—the political one of the Ottomans and the ecclesiastic one of the Phanariot Greeks (after the Constantinopolitan quarter of Phanar; cf. Hopkins 2008, p. 131). Decline of the administrative structures of the Ottoman Empire was followed by the increased corruption within the higher clergy of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, with clientelist networks, cronyism, and nepotism becoming rampant (cf. Clewing 2011, p. 511). The Orthodox Church became one of the battle lines in Bulgarian nation building, especially after the reforms, known as *Tanzimât*, were initiated by Sultan Abdülmecid I (1839–1861). He attempted to reorganize and democratize the *millet*-system, by demanding increased laymen participation in their councils. The first such "ethnic" council (Εθνοσυνέλευση, Ethnosynéleusē) took place in 1858. Although hardly representative in terms of delegate numbers, this council was dominated by the laypeople (Stamatopoulos 2004, pp. 243–45), thus heralding some degree of secularization of such councils' agenda. The church, in effect became a representative institution, which gained political weight and importance in Bulgarian elites' eyes. Given the situation that until WWI the non-Muslims in the European part of the Empire dominated trade and commerce, it is hardly a surprise that the Empire's Christians wanted not only economic, but political influence as well. Having a say within the Church also affected many other areas important for the nation-building process: language use, education, and de facto political representation. With the exception of the Albanians, the nation-building process in the Balkans usually unfolded as a transition from a religious towards a national community. Parallelly, as the ideas of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution were gaining traction within the small, but influential Ottoman Christian middle-class, the church councils got an ever-greater number of the secular issues on their agendas (Clewing 2011, pp. 511–12). By the mid-19th century, there was a visible radicalization of tensions between the Phanariot bishops and their Bulgarian Orthodox flock. The non-Orthodox actor, the Ottoman Sultan, maintained his role as the supreme arbiter in such situations, and gave some concessions to Bulgarians, mentioning them as a separate millet for the first

time in his *firman* of 1849, which sanctioned the construction of the Bulgarian church in Constantinople (Hopkins 2008, p. 175).

Political and geopolitical factors had begun to align positively for the Bulgarian cause only after the Crimean war (1853–1856), when the triumphant France, Great Britain, and Sardinia imposed conditions on both their enemies, the Russians, and their allies, the Ottomans. The Empire on the Bosporus won a Pyrrhic victory and Sultan's government had to agree to give equal rights to his subjects, regardless of their creed. The Ottomans were further financially crippled by the loans taken, with interest rates ranging from 4% to 9% (cf. Stoyanov 2018, pp. 432, 434–35). The change in Russian foreign policy came as one of the consequences of the Crimean disaster. If in the decades before, Russia acted as a defender of the status quo in the Ottoman Empire and supported the Ecumenical Patriarchate (Hopkins 2008, pp. 182–85), she realized that her interests could be better served if she acted as an intermediary in the Bulgaro–Greek conflict. Other Christian powers had also been present with their influence in modern Bulgaria. France, for example, acted as a protector of the Catholics at the Sublime Porte, a status which she had since the 16th century. France also supported anti-Russian activities of the Polish emigrants in Paris, who in turn worked towards influencing the situation in Bulgaria as well. The Poles believed that by weakening Russian influence over other Slavs, they could soon see their homeland liberated. To France, the creation of the independent Bulgarian Church, in the best-case scenario under Rome's aegis, would deliver a serious blow to Russian positions within the Ottoman Empire. In 1850, the Slavic Catholic institute was established in Paris (Hopkins 2008, pp. 177–81). There was a politically significant wave of Unions with Rome or conversions to Roman Catholicism, like the Union of Kukush (Kilkis) of 1861, promoted by, among others, Dragan Tsankov, who would later become a prominent politician in the Principality of Bulgaria. These unions and conversions were often fomented by disappointments with both the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the ambivalence of Russian support. After realizing that there was a serious crisis looming, Russia became more supportive of a settlement that would meet Bulgarian demands.

Russian envoy Nikolay Pavlovich Ignatyev pressured both the Sublime Porte and the Ecumenical Patriarch Gregory VI to find a way to properly respond to Bulgarian demands. Ignatyev also organized meetings between the Patriarch and bishop Paisiy, the leader of the moderate faction within the Bulgarian movement for an independent Church. To Gregory VI, some Bulgarian demands were in collision with the Orthodox canon law, which eventually resulted in the failure of these negotiations. Russo–Greek relationships also cooled down, which turned Russia into the main promoter of the Bulgarian cause (Hopkins 2008, pp. 193–99). A change in policy became due in Constantinople after the Cretan uprising (1866–1868), when the Ottomans realized that a prolonged ecclesiastic conflict between the Greeks and Bulgarians might provoke more unrest. In 1870, the Ottoman government established the Bulgarian Exarchate by Sultan's *firman*, that is, by the intervention of a non-Orthodox factor in the dispute.

The Exarchate was conceived as a self-governing structure, representing a separate Bulgarian ethnicity, but still under the spiritual authority of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. From the perspective of the Orthodox canon law and the ecclesiastical order, its creation was problematic from the very beginning. The Exarchate could assume its jurisdiction in regions where two thirds of the population opted for the Bulgarian Church. In ethnically-mixed areas, such as Macedonia, it created unrest, which the Ottomans used to act as mediators and regulators of the conflict. The Exarchate represented a parallel structure to that of the Patriarchate, something the canons discouraged (cf. Canon 8 of the Nicaean Council of 325). It was established by a fiat of the Sultan Abdülaziz and without genuine consent of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Adding insult to the injury, the seat of the Exarch was in Constantinople, the city which the Archbishop of Constantinople and the Ecumenical Patriarch considers his own jurisdiction *par excellence*. The Patriarchate attempted to pressure the newly elected Exarch Antim (former bishop of Vidin) not to accept his election as the Exarch. After Antim refused, tensions escalated and in 1872 the Bulgarian Exarchate severed its relationship with the Patriarchate.

The Patriarchate convened a council in 1872 which condemned the actions of the Bulgarian Exarchate as heretical. A new type of heresy was defined—ethnophyletism. Article I of their condemnation reads, in its English translation: "We censure, condemn, and declare contrary to the teachings of the Gospel and the sacred canons of the holy Fathers, the doctrine of phyletism, or of the difference of races and national diversity in the bosom of the Church of Christ" (Eastern Churches 1873, pp. 270–71). In the following article, this heresy is described as "[. . .] unlawful, unprecedented Church assembly upon such a principle [. . .]," which is, "[. . .] foreign and absolutely schismatic to the only holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church." The last piece quoted could also be interpreted that the way in which the Exarchate was structured, as a parallel ecclesiastic organization to that of the Patriarchate, was actually condemned, not the concept of the national Orthodox jurisdiction as such.

Six years into the schism another Russo–Turkish war ended by the Treaty of San Stefano in 1878. The creation of the Principality of Bulgaria, which would roughly occupy the extent of the Bulgarian Exarchate, was also one of its provisions. The treaty was rejected by other Great Powers, and at the Berlin Congress that same year a much smaller Bulgarian state was agreed. It also resulted in the formation of another Bulgarian entity, the autonomous Principality of Eastern Rumelia, with significant non-Bulgarian minorities. The Exarchate became the official Church in the Principality of Bulgaria (although with a Catholic monarch), but also served as the pan-Bulgarian institution, linking the Principality with those Bulgarians that awaited liberation, especially in Macedonia and Thrace. The Exarchate organized the network of Bulgarian schools, also as an attempt to counter similar policies funded by Greece and Serbia. These institutions not only fostered religious upbringing, but also spread Bulgarian national ideals. After 1878, both the Ottomans and Bulgarians asserted sovereignty in ecclesiastical matters. This forced the Exarchate to operate from Constantinople, where the Exarch resided, and Sofia, from where the BOC was run by the Holy Synod. The success of the Exarchate in national matters paradoxically resulted in its organizational and political decline. The Exarchate was perceived as an instrument of Bulgarian foreign policy (Ramet 1998, p. 279), rather than an important national institution. While successive governments were ready to subsidize the BOC's clergy in the Ottoman Empire, they were eager to save on their salaries at home. There was no ambition to invest in the clergy's education. The Samokov seminary created by the initial Russian administration of the Principality was closed in 1886 without even asking the Holy Synod for opinion. In the Ottoman areas, more radical Bulgarian nationalist grew dismissive of the Exarchate, due to its links with the Ottoman authorities (Hopkins 2008, pp. 221–24, 246–50).

Although in a schismatic status, the Bulgarian Exarchate has never been completely isolated from the canonical Orthodoxy (Kalkandjieva 1994, p. 101). This despite the view that the conduct of Bulgarian troops during WWI towards the non-Bulgarian Orthodox clergy members was particularly atrocious. For example, the SOC recently canonized as Orthodox martyrs bishop Vikentije Krdžić (who was tortured, killed, and burned in 1915; Sava 1996, p. 76) and abbot Vladimir Protić, both presumably killed by Bulgarian soldiers. Like other Orthodox Churches in the Balkans, the BOC could not remain insulated from nationalist policies of its country (Hopkins 2008, p. 259). After the war ended, the Orthodox world had to readjust to new realities. Many Bulgarians were expelled from Macedonia, Dobruja, and Thrace. The Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) was suffering the consequences of the revolution, while communist influence grew stronger throughout Europe. The Ecumenical Patriarchate lost most of its flock in Asia Minor as the consequence of the Greek defeat in war with Turkey. After the Ecumenical Patriarchate declared its jurisdiction over Greeks in America in 1922, the edge of its 1872 condemnation appeared blunter.

On one hand, these developments opened the way for gradual restoration of official relations with the canonical Orthodoxy. On the other, they initiated a process of gradual acknowledgment of the universally acceptable limits of canonical jurisdictions. It was the Romanian Orthodox Church that first entered into the full sacramental communion with the Exarchate in 1922 and supplied it with its Myron oil. Not surprisingly, it was also Romanians who advocated lifting the schism and cancelling

the condemnations altogether (Döpmann 2006, pp. 60–61). By the mid-1920s, relations were restored with the SOC and the Church of Greece. The Patriarchate of Jerusalem offered to mediate between the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Exarchate (1932–1936), but since the Bulgarian government insisted on keeping the Exarchate as it was, including keeping the Exarch's throne in Constantinople, the negotiations broke down. After 1915 no new Exarch could be elected, as the Turkish government decided not to give its approval (Kalkandjieva 1994, p. 102).

This all changed after another Bulgarian defeat, this time in WWII. The new government wanted to end the schismatic status of the Exarchate and put an end to its governance without the Exarch. Metropolitan Stefan of Sofia was elected the first Exarch after 1915 on 21 January 1945. The Ecumenical Patriarchate lifted the schism the following month, after more than 70 years. The mediation of the Russian Orthodox Church (backed by the political leverage of the USSR) was important in this situation, as were changes in Bulgarian foreign policy. After the new government withdrew its remaining forces from Macedonia and Thrace and joined the Allied cause, it also renounced any territorial claims regarding Greece, Yugoslavia, and Romania (Kalkandjieva 1994, p. 103). The Exarchate had to do the same, and consequently move its seat from Constantinople to Sofia.

The reconciliation process would be difficult to imagine without the BOC's acquiescence to demands of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, its mother church, solidly grounded on the Orthodox canon law. Yet, recognition of autocephaly does not mean a secession and independence analogous to the concepts of the international law. It is often desired that the new local church maintains a respectful relationship with its mother church, even after it is granted the desired autocephaly. When the BOC could not secure the timely blessing of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for its elevation to the highest dignity and rank in 1953, another crisis in their relationship broke out. This move was approved from Moscow and the "brotherly states", but not from Constantinople and several other Greek-dominated churches. Patriarch Athenagoras refused to participate in the ceremony by claiming in his letter to Metropolitan Kiril (Cyril), among others, that "[t]he Bulgarian Orthodox Church had, in accordance with the ecclesiastical order established in ancient times, to attest in advance its maturity in church life and ability by unswerving constancy and devotion in the canonical order [. . .] and only then ask through us for its elevation to patriarchal dignity [. . .]" (Kalkandjieva 1994, p. 105). Almost six centuries after St. Euthymius (Evtimiy) of Tǎrnovo witnessed the end of the Bulgarian Patriarchate, and nine decades after the beginning of the schism, Constantinople recognized the BOC's patriarchal dignity after yet another reconciliation in 1962. While it should not be forgotten that the non-Orthodox factors did play an important role, there would be no successful resolution of the schism without the BOC's readiness to accept the most important terms of reconciliation. After overcoming its internal schism of the 1990s, the BOC became a part of what Alicja Curanović dubbed the "antischismatic alliance" (Curanović 2007, p. 311), a joint effort with the ROC and the SOC to prevent further proliferation of uncanonical autocephalies.

3.2. The Macedonian Orthodox Church

In our next example, the Orthodox hierarchy in question has hitherto failed to reach its desired goal. Although it unilaterally separated from the SOC in 1967, more than half a century later, it is still struggling to get recognition. The failure of the overwhelming majority of its hierarchs to reconcile with the SOC resulted in indefinite postponement of fulfilment of its ambitions and aggravation of its canonical problems.

The history of Slavic Orthodoxy in North Macedonia is closely interwoven with those of Bulgarian and Serbian churches. The traditions of the contemporary Macedonian Orthodox Church are strongly embedded in those of the Archbishopric of Ohrid, established by an imperial decree most probably in 1018/1019. It originated in the state church of the defeated medieval Bulgarian Empire, which was re-organized by the Eastern Roman Emperor as an autocephalous archbishopric, directly subjugated to the imperial office. It may be said that it was de facto autocephalous, although it probably never received such acknowledgment from an ecclesiastical body (neither the Patriarchate nor a council).

In the Bulgarian national narrative, the Archbishopric of Ohrid represents one of the historic Bulgarian churches. The contemporary BOC also sees itself as the legal successor (*pravopriemnitsa*) of the Archbishopric (Ustav 2008, Art. 1). The contemporary SOC also has historical ties to Ohrid. Its precursor, the autocephalous Archbishopric of the Serbian lands and the littoral (first in Žiča, later in Peć) was established in 1219, after St. Sava's negotiations with the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The see of Žiča received mostly territories formerly under Ohrid's jurisdiction. The Ecumenical Patriarchate also accepted the creation of the Bulgarian Patriarchate of Tărnovo at the Ohrid's expense in 1235. Despite decreases in its territory and Serbian conquest of the area, the see of Ohrid had never been annexed by the Serbian Patriarchate. Even the most powerful of the Serbian medieval rulers, Stefan Uroš IV Dušan (1331–1355), decided not to interfere in its status. For more than seven centuries this archbishopric weathered the storms of the turbulent political events in the Balkans. However, it was abolished by the Ottoman Sultan, who, influenced by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, annexed Ohrid's jurisdiction to that of Constantinople in 1767. The historical path of this ecclesiastical see was by no means straight. Contrary to claims of different national historiographies (Bulgarian or North Macedonian, for instance), its ethnic and cultural composition was far from homogenous throughout its long history. At least since the second half of the 11th century its higher clergy became predominantly Greek and would remain so until its very end in the 18th century.

The Bulgarian national revival of the 19th century was strongly felt throughout the former territory of the Archbishopric of Ohrid. After 1870 the Slavic speaking population was claimed by the Bulgarian Exarchate. According to the Article 10 of the Sultan's *firman* on the creation of the Exarchate, where two-thirds of the population of a town/village opted for the Exarchate, it would empower it to install its hierarchy there (cf. Firman 1870, Article 10; cf. Roudometof 2014, p. 82). However, the clash of the Serbian and Bulgarian geopolitical interests and national aspirations arguably contributed to the emergence of the third, and today dominant, Slavic Macedonian identity (cf. Marinov 2013, p. 276; cf. Markovich 2013, p. 237). Many early leaders of the Macedonian autonomy movement considered themselves ethnic Bulgarians (cf. Marinov 2013, pp. 296–313). They tend to, nonetheless, be appropriated by the contemporary North Macedonian national narratives (for an extensive discussion on the North Macedonian narrative we suggest: Roudometof 2002, pp. 83–117). It is quite interesting and on point that Krste Misirkov, one of such figures, proposed in his 1903 work "On Macedonian Matters" that one of the primary goals of the Macedonian intellectual elite should be to reestablish the Archbishopric of Ohrid—as the independent "Macedonian" church (Misirkov 1903, pp. 22–23). Although Misirkov's proposal had probably little to do with the 1967 unilateral proclamation of Macedonian autocephaly, it did, as it had been noted, reveal much "about the tactics of Balkan nation-building" (Maxwell 2007, p. 172), which continues to this day. It is, however, interesting that Misirkov was not the only one to espouse similar concepts. The exarchist bishop of Skopje, Teodosije (Gologanov) broke away from the Exarchate and attempted to reestablish the Archbishopric of Ohrid in 1891, although under the aegis of the Roman Catholic Church. This attempt failed and bishop Teodosije was suspended but was later reactivated by the Exarchate.

Serbian national propaganda was also present in this region. At the end of the 19th century the Ecumenical Patriarchate agreed to appoint Serbian bishops to the sees located in what today is the Republic of North Macedonia. This is why already after the Balkan wars of 1912–1913, although officially still under Constantinople, this territory could de facto be administered by the Serbian church. After WWI this became an unambiguous reality, which was recognized by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in its *Tomos* issued to the SOC in 1922 (cf. CPC Tomos 2010). The see of Constantinople officially ceded its bishoprics in Bosnia and Macedonia to the newly unified Serbian Orthodox Church and recognized it as an autocephalous Patriarchate. Although bishoprics of the Ecumenical Patriarchate were ceded to the SOC, those parallel, belonging to the Bulgarian Exarchate, were not. However, as long as these remained in Yugoslavia, there was little the BOC, still remaining in schism, could do to challenge the status quo. The situation briefly changed in Bulgarian favor during WWII, when the contemporary North Macedonia was divided between Bulgaria and the Italian protectorate of Albania.

The clergy of the Exarchate returned once again during the occupation and assisted the Bulgarian state in its assimilation policies in the region, although there was a chronic lack of the exarchist clerics, who were expected to promote the Bulgarian national conscience (Opfer-Klinger 2005, pp. 285–88). At the same time, SOC's bishops and clergy were expelled, mostly towards Serbia under German occupation (Opfer-Klinger 2005, pp. 284–85). After the war, the BOC gave up its jurisdiction claims, but it continued to maintain the traditions of the Archbishopric of Ohrid as its own.

Shifting ecclesiastic jurisdictions caused shifting loyalties between either pro-Bulgarian or pro-Serbian sentiments. This was a kind of defense mechanism for those who had found themselves between two (or more) assimilatory currents (cf. Duklevska Schubert 2013, pp. 73–74). After the war, the only nationalism that remained acceptable in the region was the Slavic Macedonian one. According to Eric Hobsbawm, "[t]he only form of constitutional arrangements which socialists states have taken seriously since 1917 are formulas for national federation and autonomy" (Hobsbawm 2000, p. 180). In both Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union this commitment often went far beyond constitutional or legal interactions and territorial autonomies. A considerable effort was made to standardize identity markers of the smaller ethnic groups, like language, script, national costumes, and folklore. Unlike in the USSR (with the notable exception of Georgia) and Romania, where the state supported a policy of the unified Orthodox jurisdiction, their Yugoslav comrades saw an autocephalous Orthodox church in Macedonia as a marker of its national emancipation[4]. After all, creation of the Bulgarian Exarchate had been equated to recognition of the Bulgarian nationhood as well (cf. Matanov 1999, p. 400). Already during the war, in 1943, the decision to create Yugoslavia on federal principles was made by the anti-fascist assembly for the national liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ). The AVNOJ's decision, through provisions of its Articles 2 and 3, became the basis for creation of the post-war federation of six republics, envisioned mostly as the national homelands for each of its peoples. The Macedonian anti-fascist assembly (ASNOM), first convened in 1944, became the stem of the future national administration. After the war, under strong influence from Lazar Kolishevski, ASNOM rejected any form of Macedonian separatism from Yugoslavia. Kolishevski also denounced pro-Bulgarian and pro-Serbian cadres within the Macedonian party and asserted Macedonian national identity. Among the signs that "greater-Serbianism" was dealt with in the newly established republic, he emphasized the decision to ban bishops of the SOC from returning to their pre-war sees in 1945 (Kolishevski 1962, pp. 23–25, 47). The ASNOM was also supportive of establishing a Macedonian national church. An Initiative Committee (originally called "the Initiative Committee for the organization of church life in Macedonia", but soon renamed the "Initiative Committee for the foundation of the independent church in Macedonia and the renewal of the Archbishopric of Ohrid") was set up as a coordinating body which was de facto running ecclesiastical affairs in the southern-most member of the Yugoslav federation. In March 1945, the Initiative Committee organized the so-called First Church–laity council, or Macedonian Church–laity council (Zečević Božić 1994, pp. 27–28; Radić 2002a, p. 284; cf. Janjić 2018, p. 642).

This council represented the first major instance of a series of interventions by the non-Orthodox factor. At this assembly not a single Orthodox bishop was present, whereas it included members of the local lower clergy, high-ranking local and federal communist party officials, but also representatives of the Catholic Church and the Islamic community (Dimevski 1989, p. 1029). At that point, there

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[4] Despite not allowing its members to express "any form of religious beliefs" (Janjić 2018, p. 313), the League of Communists of Yugoslavia earned a reputation of being less repressive to religion than most other Eastern European communist regimes. Whereas it could be said that the communist persecution of the Orthodox Church and believers never ceased, its forms and severity evolved over time. The regime never lost out of sight its goal of having the Church under control or at least its activities checked. Jovan Janjić wrote of three distinct phases in Yugoslav communists' dealing with the SOC. The persecution phase lasted from 1945 until 1953, when, partly due to foreign pressures, a somewhat liberalized policy of State's oversight over the ecclesiastic affairs was introduced. This second phase lasted until 1984, when "the faith triumphed over ideology", and Serbian authorities allowed the construction of the St. Sava Cathedral in Belgrade (Janjić 2018; cf. Timotijević 2009, pp. 144–97; cf. Timotijević 2012, pp. 392–95). Edvard Kardelj, the main ideologue of Yugoslav Communists, believed that the Church that abandoned its links with the "antisocialist forces" could operate freely within the Yugoslav system. He was also convinced that in 1977 this was yet to happen (Janjić 2018, p. 314).

was an interesting idea espoused, that the Macedonian church should join the envisaged Yugoslav patriarchate, which would be created out of the SOC or in its stead (Janjić 2018, p. 129). Although on this occasion the independent Macedonian church was proclaimed as the restored Archbishopric of Ohrid, such a declaration was soon replaced by a much more moderate resolution, adopted in May 1946 at the Conference of priests of the People's Republic (PR) of Macedonia (Zečević Božić 1994, pp. 38–40; Ilievski 1973, pp. 78–79). As in the meantime the BOC resolved its schism with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the only bishops who could claim jurisdiction in the Republic were metropolitan of Skopje Josif (Cvijović) and bishop of Zletovo-Strumica Vikentije (Prodanov, future patriarch of the SOC), who were not allowed to return to their posts. The Initiative Committee hardly even considered the Orthodox canon law and administered the affairs of the Orthodox Church without any influence from the SOC's Patriarchate whatsoever (Radić 2002a, pp. 288–99). Owing to the effort of publishing documents from that era, mostly by Radmila Radić and Predrag Puzović, there can be little doubt today that the Yugoslav communists initiated and were heavily involved in the entire process (Radić 2002a, pp. 279–99; Puzović 1997). Radić mentioned that she had been told in 1989 by Petar Stambolić (1912–2007), who served as the Yugoslav prime minister (1963–1967) and chairman of its Presidency (1982–1983), that the creation of the Macedonian church was linked to the overall resolution of the national question in Macedonia (Radić 2002a, p. 282, fn. 1041).

Apart from enraging the SOC, the declarations of 1945 and 1946 did not bring the desired effect. The communist authorities apparently realized that some kind of reference to the canonical order of the Orthodox Church still had to be made. The Second church–laity council, held in 1958 at Ohrid, declared restoration of the Archbishopric of Ohrid as the Macedonian Orthodox Church (Dimevski 1989, p. 1056), which was nominally established as an autonomous structure within the SOC. Despite Patriarch's ban, his vicar bishop Dositej (Stojković or Stojkovski, lived 1906–1981) accepted the committee's invitation and came to Ohrid (cf. Čairović 2018, pp. 168–80), where he was declared "the Archbishop of Ohrid and Skopje and Metropolitan of Macedonia" (Zečević Božić 1994, pp. 94–95). This could hardly take place without the significant involvement of the highest members of the Yugoslav political apparatus, not only at the Council itself, but also during the entire process that preceded it (cf. Čairović 2018, p. 168ff; Radić 2002b, pp. 203–43; Puzović 1997, pp. 48–53). For instance, roughly ten days before the Council was opened on October 4, the president of the Federal committee for religious affairs Dobrivoje Radosavljević gave a speech before the third annual gathering of the regime-sponsored Association of the Orthodox priests of Yugoslavia, saying: "The Macedonian people have achieved national freedom for the first time. There were various aspirations and oppression, but now, the Macedonian people are the master in their own home. . . A unity of the church is needed, but on a brotherly, equal basis. It [the issue of the Macedonian Church—note by the authors] has been solved for 13 years now. The state must show its interest, because the [unspecified—note by the authors] others are interested in this issue and would like to get involved" (Radić 2002b, pp. 231–32, translation by N.Ž.). The organization of the council, as well as the decision of the SOC to ratify its proclamation in 1959, may have also coincided with the death of metropolitan Josif Cvijović in 1957, who, as the canonical bishop of Skopje, opposed any compromise with the communists on this matter.

The solution adopted at the 1958 council provided enough maneuvering space for both sides. As an outcome of a complex set of circumstances, two new MOC bishops were consecrated in 1959 by three SOC bishops and Patriarch German (1958–1990) himself, who by that time had already been styled "the Serbian and Macedonian Patriarch" by the regime (cf. Petrov and Temelski 2003, pp. 155–63). The new bishops' names (Kliment and Naum) were highly symbolic and reflected ideas of continuity, restoration, and the new beginning for the see of Ohrid—all at the same time. Ss. Kliment (Clement) and Naum (Nahum) had laid the foundations of Slavic Orthodoxy in Ohrid more than a thousand years before. This SOC's attempt, aimed at appeasing the MOC, resulted in the complete loss of Belgrade's organizational leverage, as from then on, the MOC could ordain its own bishops. The MOC became a de facto autonomous church after this *fait accompli* (cf. Radić 2002b, p. 246). As of 1961,

all candidates for priesthood in the MOC had to pass a test in Macedonian language, national and ecclesiastical history (ibid., pp. 246–47), thus conforming to the existing nation-building policy.

The third church–laity council symbolically commemorated the second centenary of the abolishment of the Archbishopric of Ohrid in 1967. MOC's unilateral declaration of autocephaly represented a culmination of a long crisis in its relationship with the SOC and a reaction to SOC's refusal to positively respond to requests made by Yugoslav authorities and Macedonian hierarchs (cf. Nikolić and Dimitrijević 2013, pp. 196–97; Risteski 2009, pp. 163–65). As expected, the SOC did not recognize the self-proclaimed autocephaly of the MOC, which has been treated as the uncanonical organization by the canonical Orthodoxy ever since. Although Macedonian authorities regarded the Bulgarian national narrative with hostility, the MOC attempted in 1968 to secure the BOC's recognition. The BOC decided neither to condemn nor support the MOC, while Patriarch Kiril assured the MOC of both the BOC's love for "brothers in Macedonia" and its "love and respect towards the Serbian Church and the Serbian people" (Petrov and Temelski 2003, pp. 155–63).

Although Yugoslav authorities and the MOC failed at actually reaching their goal, the proclamation of autocephaly in 1967 was celebrated as the final victory in both ecclesiastical and national causes (cf. Ilievski 1973, p. 116ff.; Dimevski 1989, pp. 1086–87). The creation of the national church was more important to the MOC and its communist benefactors than receiving the actual canonical recognition, since they regarded this issue primarily as a part of the solution of the Macedonian national question (cf. Radić 2002a, p. 296). The price paid was to remain for decades in a schism that outlived both Yugoslavia and the communist elites that supported it.

Being unrecognized by the canonical Orthodoxy is a situation any Orthodox hierarchy should struggle to overcome. The SOC and the MOC did have their moments of rapprochement after Macedonia became an independent state, although not without controversies (cf. Raković 2015, p. 225). Being embroiled in a name dispute with neighboring Greece and forced to accept a provisional name "the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" (FYROM) in the UN, the country became particularly sensitive to identity issues. In order to demonstrate its support for the MOC, the government in Skopje banned Serbian clergy from entering the country in cassocks in 1994 (Raković 2015, p. 227).

The SOC's Patriarch Pavle (1990–2009) actively pursued a policy of healing all the schisms that were initiated between 1945 and 1990. The SOC in the 1990s attempted either to install its own infrastructure, or to negotiate some kind of canonical settlement. Attempts to end the Macedonian schism had their apogee in the "Niš Agreement" signed on 17 May 2002. It represented a long-negotiated draft accord on the restoration of ecclesiastical unity between the SOC and the MOC. The SOC required the MOC to return to the status of the autonomous Church within the SOC, while assuring the MOC that it accepted affirmation of Macedonian national identity and usage of the term "Macedonian" in their communication. In order to secure a pan-Orthodox recognition of the settlement, especially from the influential Greek-speaking churches, the representatives of the SOC and the MOC agreed to externally use the Archbishopric of Ohrid as the MOC's designation[5]. This agreement, expected to herald the final resolution of the issue, faced vehement rejection in Skopje (deleted for the purpose of peer review) and was rejected by MOC's Synod on June 6. The rejection was grounded on two rather nationalist and maximalist demands. Neither the adjective "Macedonian" nor swift recognition of autocephaly could be accepted as negotiable. The government in Skopje apparently expected from its Orthodox hierarchs what it itself could not achieve in its dispute with Greece.

The SOC responded furiously by asking individual bishops, clergy members, and believers to return to canonical Orthodoxy. The call was answered by the Metropolitan bishop Jovan (Vraniškoski) of the MOC, who initiated these negotiations in 1998 (Vraniškoski 2008, pp. 86–87). This decision proved to bear far-reaching consequences, since in 2004 the SOC, following the provisions of the

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[5] Draft Agreement on Establishing Church Unity. 2002. In *Zaradi Idnoto Carstvo,Tom I/For the Kingdom to Come*. Edited by Borjan Vitanov. Ohrid: Pravoslavna Ohridska Arhiepiskopija. pp. 106–11, vol. I. Cf. pp. 106–7.

"Niš Agreement" and having bishop Jovan on its side, created the Orthodox Archbishopric of Ohrid (OAO) as an autonomous church under its aegis. Ever since in 2005 the SOC issued its *Tomos* of autonomy, two parallel ecclesiastical structures have existed in North Macedonia. The unrecognized MOC represents the majority Orthodox denomination, while the OAO is the only canonical church. Neither the MOC nor authorities in Skopje took Vraniškoski's enthronement as the head of the OAO lightly. The state prosecutors charged him with embezzlement and instigating ethnic and religious hatred, for which Archbishop Jovan served multiple prison sentences. The government also denied the OAO registration, with some officials vowing never to allow such a thing to happen (Payne 2007, pp. 838–40, 846). The Serbian government reacted by introducing sanctions to its southern neighbor, while several Orthodox Churches, Russian and Bulgarian included, openly demonstrated their support for Archbishop Jovan at different occasions (cf. Raković 2015, pp. 240–49).

The MOC rejected a very promising chance for reconciliation not only with the SOC, but also the rest of the canonical Orthodoxy as well. For the second time in less than 150 years there is a situation that two hierarchies officially operate in North Macedonia. Unlike the BOC, which in 1945 accepted reconciliation under, from the perspective of the Bulgarian national narrative, much harsher conditions, the MOC decided to remain in schism under the pretext of defending national interest (deleted for the purpose of peer review). Truth be told, at least since 2002, the voices within the SOC opposing the MOC's eventual autocephaly have become marginalized. There have been disagreements on whether this should be a rapid process (bishop Lavrentije) or should include a prolonged trial period (bishop Irinej), in order to leave the impression that the canonical crime of schism is not rewarded (cf. Raković 2015, pp. 236–37).

The MOC invested a significant effort in bypassing the SOC in its autocephaly bid. The government officials of North Macedonia have recently attempted to acquire recognition by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, emboldened by its actions in Ukraine. However, from the canonical perspective, there is little resemblance between these cases, other than similarities in the political sphere. Constantinople agreed to completely transfer its jurisdiction to SOC over this area in 1922 and is unlikely to assert a similar claim like the one regarding Kiev, where it maintained that the ROC was only in charge as the caretaker. Constantinople might demonstrate more initiative regarding the MOC after the long-standing name dispute was settled, but the Ecumenical Patriarchate has so far demonstrated no intention to bypass the SOC. The BOC's traditional attachment to places in contemporary North Macedonia and the Bulgarian public's well-known emotionality over Macedonian issues also encouraged the MOC to once again ask the BOC to declare itself for Ohrid's mother church. The BOC had previously accepted concelebrating liturgies with the MOC, and unlike other canonical churches, was not keeping the MOC in isolation, much like the Romanian Orthodox Church did with the Bulgarian Exarchate in the 1920s (cf. Döpmann 2006, p. 60). After facing demonstrations in Sofia, the BOC agreed in 2017 to set up a committee to deal with this request. According to some media reports, the committee was silently dissolved under Russian pressure (Faktor.bg 2018). In January 2020, North Macedonian prime minister Oliver Spasovski and his predecessor Zoran Zaev visited the Ecumenical Patriarch in Istanbul. The Ecumenical Patriarchate agreed to "invite both sides, the Serbian Orthodox Church as well as the Church of Skopje, to a joint meeting, in an attempt to find a mutually acceptable solution to the country's major ecclesiastical issue" (Orthodox times 2020).

If the Orthodox canon law were to be applied without much leniency, the bid for the autocephaly almost entirely depends on avoiding further canonical transgressions and resuming negotiations with the SOC and the OAO. This is the necessary condition for negotiating the SOC's initiation of the final procedure with the Ecumenical Patriarchate for awarding the MOC with autocephalous status. Since 2002 there have been some positive developments that might facilitate such a process, including the already mentioned resolution of North Macedonia's name dispute with Greece. After the Niš Accords of 2002, and especially by supporting the OAO, the SOC also demonstrated that it abandoned Serbian expansionism and denial of the specific Slavic Macedonian national identity.

If the history of the Bulgarian Exarchate schism were to repeat itself in the North Macedonian case, no individual recognitions of the MOC would amount to its full autocephaly. Any attempt to bend the canonical procedures or bypass the SOC might result in complicating the situation further and a prolonged schismatic status, with negative impact fort both the Orthodox Church in North Macedonia and the pan-Orthodox affirmation of its cherished identity. MOC's reconciliation with the SOC, on the other hand, would probably represent the fastest road to its full ecclesiastic affirmation.

3.3. The Montenegrin Orthodox Church

The last case in this study is about an organization that is least likely to join the ranks of canonical Orthodoxy, but the context in which it emerged can be used as an interesting study of contemporary nation-building in progress. In canonical terms, it was created ex nihilo by the Committee for restoration of Autocephaly of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church in 1993 (reminiscent of the Initiative Committee of the MOC in 1945), within which not a single canonical bishop was present. It declared an abbot from the Russian Orthodox Church outside of Russia (ROCOR), Antonije Abramović, for its first bishop. Since Abramović had not previously been consecrated a bishop, the apostolic succession became problematic from the very beginning. When Abramović died, he was succeeded by the former priest of the Ecumenical Patriarchate Miraš Dedeić (self-styled metropolitan Mihailo). Both Abramović and Dedeić were defrocked and later excommunicated by their original jurisdictions in 1995 and 1997, respectively. Dedeić was even anathemised in 1998 (Šistek 2015, pp. 177–78; Aleksić and Krstajić 2005, pp. 66, 104–5, 110, 122–23, 138–41; Raković 2015, p. 82). From the perspective of canonical Orthodoxy, there is one very important difference between this and the MOC case. While the MOC represents *a schismatic hierarchy* with claims to Orthodox apostolic succession, the leader of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church (MnOC) is neither a regular bishop, nor recognized as an Orthodox believer by the canonical Orthodoxy (cf. Bartholomew 2019; cf. N1 2019). The very push for the MnOC's creation came from a group of Montenegrin nationalists whose Orthodox credentials were, to say the least, difficult to establish (cf. Raković 2015, p. 171).

The Montenegrin Orthodox Church reinforces Montenegrin nationalism in opposition to the traditional pro-Serbian identity of the Church of Montenegro. This organization claims that in 1993 it only restored the autocephaly of the Metropolitanate of Cetinje, which, in its narrative, was illegally and illegitimately annexed to the SOC by regent Alexander's decree in 1920 (cf. Ustav 2009). This claim, like many others of the MnOC, can hardly sustain deeper scrutiny, as it was the bishops of the Church of Montenegro themselves who had initiated the process of joining with other Serbian jurisdictions in 1918 (Zapisnik 1918). This took place years before the mentioned decision (see below) or *Tomos* of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1922, which canonically sanctioned the jurisdiction of the SOC over what used to be Yugoslavia. However, by drawing on the narrative of Montenegro's forceful annexation to Serbia in 1918, the MnOC derives its claims that it should be compensated for the pre-1920 Montenegrin Church's loses, which should, not surprisingly, take place at the SOC's expense. Today, despite having a strong backing from the Montenegrin state and especially its strongman Milo Đukanović (cf. Politico 2016), it can hardly claim allegiance of more than 30% of the Orthodox believers within the country (cf. Venice Commission 2019, p. 4). The actual figures are probably much lower. In 2014, MnOC printed some 10,000 household calendars (Kalendar 2014), items that every Orthodox household is expected to have, thus reaching hardly more than 50,000 believers. Its leader claimed that same year that the MnOC had between 100,000 and 120,000 "registered" believers. This would account for 22% to 27% of the country's 450,000 Orthodox (cf. Duma 2014). Emil Saggau estimated that MnOC has 5000 active believers, ca. 47,000 people who might feel they belong to it, and 150,000 that somewhat sympathize with the MnOC, while the opinion polls he analyzed might indicate a downward trend in this regard (Hilton Saggau, pp. 38–40). By comparing public opinion surveys, it could be estimated that in reality the MOC does not have the allegiance of significantly less than 8% (ISM 2011, p. 44) and significantly more than 10% of the population (IC 2020). However, due to its strong nationalist disposition, it represents an interesting case for analyzing contradictions that may

arise when nationalist fervor and actions of the state instrumentalize the concept of autocephaly while completely disregarding the Orthodox canon law.

Unlike in North Macedonia, the SOC represents the majority of the Orthodox believers within the country. The SOC's Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral (MML) is the largest diocese of the only canonical Orthodox Church. It claims unbroken continuity with the bishopric established in 1219 by the founder of the SOC, St. Sava himself. The region around Cetinje was among the last pieces of the former Serbian Empire that fell to the Ottoman onslaught in 1496, several decades after the Despotate of Serbia. The inhospitable geographical features of this area enabled the Prince-Bishopric of Montenegro to emerge after 1516. The locally elected bishop (*vladika*) acted as a mediator among the chieftains of Montenegrin clans and represented the highest authority within this statelet. After the Sultan incorporated the Patriarchate of Peć into the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1766, the bishops of Cetinje found themselves in a position analogous to that of the Metropolitanate of Karlovci (Karlowitz). Being beyond the Sultan's reach, both metropolitan sees could simply ignore Ottoman's decision. After the Ottomans recognized the breakaway territory in 1789, the Ecumenical Patriarchate could do little to contest Montenegro Church's de facto independence. The title of the Montenegrin Prince-bishop had after 1697 become hereditary and was passed from uncle to nephew within the Petrović-Njegoš clan. This situation was formally abolished in 1852, when Danilo Petrović became the first secular Prince of Montenegro.

The bishops of Cetinje maintained that they kept the traditions of the Serbian Church after 1766 alive, which they indicated by using the historical title of "the Exarch of the throne of Peć" (turk. İpek, alb. Pejë), i.e., of the Serbian Patriarch. The famous prince-bishop and poet Petar II Petrović-Njegoš believed that in the event of Serbian unification, it would be his prerogative to return to Peć, as the Serbian Patriarch (Raković 2015, p. 50). The last King of Montenegro, Nikola I Petrović, also believed that it was his country's right to appoint the Serbian Patriarch, and was furious when, in 1920, the Metropolitan bishop of Belgrade was elected instead (Glas Crnogorca 1920, p. 1). The Church of Montenegro was not the only one that claimed succession to the Patriarchate of Peć. Maybe even stronger claims of continuity could have been made by the metropolitan bishop of Sremski Karlovci, who was a direct successor of the Serbian Patriarchs that oversaw two great Serbian migrations to what was then southern Hungary in 17th and 18th centuries. Since 1848 the metropolitan of Karlovci also styled himself as the Serbian Patriarch. Furthermore, the Metropolitan bishop of the capital city of Belgrade could expect that he might become the new Patriarch, in line with the common practice in the Orthodox world. The council, presided by the Montenegrin metropolitan Mitrofan Ban, reconciled all these claims by bundling them together into the official title of the SOC's primate: "the Metropolitan of Karlovci–Belgrade, Archbishop of Peć and the Serbian Patriarch." In 1920, Dimitrije, the metropolitan bishop of Belgrade, got elected (twice), and thus became the first Serbian Patriarch of the united jurisdiction since 1766.

Contrary to MnOC's claims, the Church of Montenegro from the canonical perspective simply continued to exist within a broader framework of the SOC. It was not abolished by the decree of Prince-regent Alexander (cf. Ustav 2009, Art. 4), since the Prince-regent only acknowledged the decision of "all the Orthodox bishops" of the newly established Kingdom, and gave the executive order to his ministers to implement it (cf. Rastoder 2016, pp. 5–6). It was a decision initiated and approved by all the bishops of the Church of Montenegro (Zapisnik 1918) and atop of it, even the exiled Montenegrin King (Glas Crnogorca 1920). The Ecumenical Patriarchate issued a *Tomos* confirming both the SOC's unification and its territory, while the final integration was completed by the SOC's constitution of 1931. Subsequent claims made by the MnOC's promoters and acolytes that Metropolitan bishop Mitrofan did this under pressure (Brković 1991, p. 4) are, to say the least, difficult to confirm and strongly contradict his other statements and actions during the same period.

Another interesting debate is whether the Church of Montenegro could be considered as canonically autocephalous prior to 1918. It is a historical fact that the see of Cetinje was not subject to any higher jurisdiction, apart from its symbolic adherence to the defunct Throne of Peć, implied by the honorific

usage of the title "Exarch." It was occasionally listed as an autocephalous Church by several other local Orthodox Churches in the 19th century (cf. Rallis and Potlis 1855, p. 529). However, since Montenegrin bishops depended on consecration and/or confirmation by either Austrian Serbs' or Russian bishops, the Metropolitanate of Cetinje would not meet the contemporary criteria of autocephaly. Until well into the 19th century, the bishops of Cetinje could not convene their local councils of bishops, and consequently, could not consecrate bishops on their own. The Church of Montenegro defined itself as autocephalous in its Constitution (Ustav 1904, Articles 1 and 2). However, as neither the mentioned "Throne of Peć" nor any other jurisdiction had previously issued a *Tomos* of autocephaly to Cetinje, this claim is seldom considered as a valid one today. This is the current position of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (cf. Bartholomew 2019) and the Russian Orthodox Church (cf. Nedeljković 2007, p. 281; Raković 2019, p. 172). On the level of political narratives and current debates, however, this distinction does not play any major role. In our view, this is mostly due to indiscriminate application of the secular legal terminology to a very different framework of the Orthodox canon law by both the Montenegrin politicians and the media. More importantly, without being able to assert its claim that the Church of Montenegro was fully autocephalous (and not de facto independent), the MnOC can hardly defend its bid to *restore* Montenegrin pre-1920 autocephaly in the first place.

Montenegrin nationalism grew mostly through differentiation from and the othering of the previously predominant Serbian national affiliation in that country (cf. Raković 2015, pp. 47–50). The pieces of evidence that might support the claim that Montenegro prior to its unification with Serbia in 1918 understood itself as nationally distinct from a broader concept of Serbdom are quite difficult to come across. As the final operations of 1918 were unfolding, even Montenegrin King Nicholas I wrote that in his country, "live the best among the Serbs and Yugoslavs." In the same proclamation, he expressed his support for Yugoslav unification on federal or confederal principles (Glas Crnogorca 1918, p. 1). Many among his predecessors from the Petrović-Njegoš line also expressed similar national sentiments (cf. Pavlovic 2008, pp. 48–57). The Roman Catholic Church also used to consider Montenegro as a kind of Serbian entity. The honorific title of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Bar (Antibari) is *primas Serviae* (the primate of Serbia).

Paradoxically, it appears that the very unification of Serbia and Montenegro initiated a major divergence of their populations' identities. Already in the fall of 1918 there were hastily organized elections for what would become known as the Assembly of Podgorica. This body voted in favor of unconditional unification with Serbia and dethronement of the exiled Montenegrin king. The loyalists to the Petrović-Njegoš dynasty (*zelenaši*) were the losing side and organized a rebellion in January 1919 (December 1918 old style), which would have far-reaching consequences. With Italian support, they mustered some 4000 insurgents (cf. Pavlovic 2008, p. 111), which was roughly the equivalent to 8% of the total Montenegrin forces mobilized for the operations of the WWI. This rebellion was crushed by the Serbian troops, who were aided by the local volunteers from the Montenegrin clans (*bjelaši*). Since Italy vied for control over Dalmatia with the nascent Yugoslav state, she supported the uprising and offered refuge for the exiled loyalists in the town of Gaeta. Until 1989, this country was the final resting place of the exiled King, who was the father-in-law of the Italian monarch. Although Serbian nationalism had for a long time been fueled by, among others, romantic depictions of Montenegrins as "the Serbian Spartans", the observers from Serbia soon became aware that different political cultures evolved in these countries. They criticized what they saw as a lack of democratic spirit among the Montenegrins, their particularism, and intricate clan loyalties, which could override devotion to the broader national community (cf. Raković 2019, pp. 17–21).

Within the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Montenegrins were counted among the Serbs. King Alexander, himself born in Cetinje in 1888 and one of King Nicholas's many grandchildren, also took pride in his maternal lineage connecting him to the Petrović Njegoš clan. In the 1920s, he restored the Mausoleum-chapel of Prince-bishop and poet Petar II Petrović Njegoš, linking this event to the birth of the future King Petar II of Yugoslavia. He also made peace with his Petrović relatives, by including the Montenegrin crown-prince Mihajlo in his civil list.

Meanwhile, the goals of the former zelenaši confederalists were adopted by the Communist party of Yugoslavia on its Congresses in Vienna (1926) and Dresden (1928). The communists believed that Serbian domination had to be thwarted in order to enable the emancipation of other Yugoslav ethnicities. Many members of the *zelenaši* families became prominent communists during or after WWII (Raković 2019, pp. 23–82), like generals Nikola Popović and Jovo Kapičić. Already during the war, Montenegrin communists earned their reputation of being particularly loyal to Stalin and the USSR. After Tito's split with Stalin in 1948, a Gulag was established on the Croatian island of Goli otok (lit. barren island), designated mostly for the Stalinists within the party. The smallest Yugoslav constituent nationality (2.4% of the population) was disproportionately represented by 21.5% of the inmates. The number of Montenegrins arrested with charges of collusion with the Cominform and the USSR was around 1% of the Republic's total population (Balkan Insight 2014; Previšić 2014, pp. 27, 58, 67, cf. 50). On the other hand, this Republic outcompeted the other five in its declarations of loyalty to Tito, as between 1946 and 1992 its capital was officially known as Titograd (Tito-city). However, no major attempt to create the MnOC was made before 1990s, probably as a consequence of two converging factors.

First of all, instead of addressing the church issue the way the PR Macedonia did, Montenegrin authorities opted to diminish any Orthodox Church's influence in their republic. Montenegrin communists were particularly ardent and effective in their struggle against the SOC. The war-time Metropolitan St. Joanikije Lipovac (canonized as a martyr in 1999) was executed by the communists in 1945, under charges of collaboration with the Yugoslav royalists and the Italians. His successor Arsenije Bradvarević (1947–1961) spent most of his time in office either in prison (in his 70s) or in monastery confinement, due to his protests against persecution of the clergy and reluctance to recognize the pro-regime priests' associations. During his show-trial he was also ludicrously accused of celebrating Dwight D. Eisenhower's victory in the US elections of 1952 (Đurić Mišina 2000, pp. 153–66; Sava 1996, pp. 37–38). It was only after 1961, when Metropolitan Danilo Dajković (1961–1990) was enthroned, that the most basic conditions for proper management of the diocese were met. However, by the mid-1970s, there was a sharp decline in religiosity—back then Montenegrin administration estimated that only some 10% of the population believed in God's existence (Raković 2015, p. 68). In neighboring Serbia, there were still complaints over religion's resilience (e.g., Timotijević 2009, pp. 375–87). Montenegrins were the least religious ethnic group of Yugoslavia in the late 1980s (Bakrač 2012, p. 31). While the Berlin wall was crumbling, there were some 15–18 active priests left in the Republic, a fraction of the pre-WWII ca. 300 (cf. Hilton Saggau 2017, p. 36; cf. Novosti 2014; Amfilohije 2017).

Another possible explanation for the lack of schism in Montenegro after 1945 is the gradual character of the post-war differentiation from Serbia, as visible on the symbols of the People's (later Socialist) Republic of Montenegro. Its flag was indistinguishable from that of Serbia and the coat of arms depicted Mount Lovćen's summit with Njegoš's Mausoleum-chapel. Several prominent Montenegrin communists only emphasized that Montenegrins were basically a different kind of Serbs, who won their nationhood through centuries of political independence (Raković 2019, pp. 83–84). There was little doubt in the West that this statement was basically true. Eric Hobsbawm, for example, even in the 1980s linked Montenegrin ethnogenesis to Serbian and Vlach elements, which coalesced during the Ottoman domination of the Balkan peninsula (Hobsbawm 2000, p. 64). Stronger differentiation became visible after 1967, with Veljko Milatović's ascent to power among the local communists. Milatović openly instructed historians to reexamine the existing narratives of Serbian origins of the Montenegrin nation (cf. Raković 2019, pp. 95–105). At the same time, other policies also aimed at creating a new kind of Montenegrin identity. In 1972, the Chapel depicted on the Montenegrin coat-of-arms was destroyed in order to build a new, secular mausoleum to Njegoš. It was the work of the famous Croatian-American sculptor Ivan Meštrović, who was inspired by the pagan aesthetics of the Hellenistic antiquity. The SOC tried to legally halt this project and keep its chapel in place. However, the court in Cetinje rejected the initiative by claiming that the Montenegrin Orthodox Church was abolished by King Alexander's decree, and that therefore, it had no legal representative to file the lawsuit, especially

not the one embodied in the SOC (Raković 2015, pp. 61–62). The court thus rejected the SOC's claims of legal continuity with the pre-1918 Church of Montenegro. This was probably the first time that such an argument had actual legal and material consequences[6].

The policy of Montenegrin differentiation from Serbia and Serbs only added fuel to the already burning fire of the SOC's indignation. The enthronement of Amfilohije Radović as the metropolitan bishop of Cetinje in 1991 also represented an act of the SOC's defiance, as he had hardly been the preferable choice of his homeland's Communist Party (cf. Raković 2015, pp. 71–72). This was also the time when the 600th anniversary of the battle of Kosovo was commemorated, which was coupled with rising feelings of solidarity with Serbia and Serbian nationalism. While the SOC tried to return to the public sphere after decades of marginalization, Slobodan Milošević's "anti-bureaucratic revolution" was already in full sway. Milošević's support propelled Momir Bulatović and Milo Đukanović to Montenegro's top offices, thus securing the continuity of communist cadres' hold on power from 1945 until the present day.

At the same time, a new brand of ardent Montenegrin nationalism got its political wing in Slavko Perović's Liberal Alliance of Montenegro (LSCG). The circle linked to LSCG created The Committee for Restoration (*vrtanje*) of Autocephaly of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church in 1990. In their rhetoric, they labeled the SOC as the occupier of Montenegrin churches and monasteries and organized violent takeover attempts of places of worship (Hilton Saggau 2017, p. 41; Raković 2019, pp. 119–20, 171–72) together with parallel religious ceremonies. Both sides made it clear that they were prepared for further clashes, yet the Committee itself did not gain sufficient traction. Its petition to Montenegrin parliament could gather only 8000 signatures (cf. Rastoder 2003). They managed to convince Antonije Abramović to become the first bishop of the MnOC (Morrisson 2018, pp. 89–90). After his death, the MnOC appointed Miraš Dedeić (Mihailo) as the new Metropolitan. After being excommunicated by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Dedeić contacted the "Alternative Synod" of the BOC, which consecrated him as a bishop in 1998. Although the canonical BOC considered this an affront to Orthodoxy and even attempted to provoke Bulgarian government's reaction, Dedeić's consecration came at a politically convenient moment. The government of Bulgaria supported the Alternative Synod, while Slobodan Milošević resented the SOC's metropolitan Amfilohije, after his outspoken support for Milo Đukanović, Milošević's former protege (Duma 2014; Raković 2019, pp. 173–75).

Before joining the MnOC, Dedeić had a reputation as a Serbian nationalist, who in the early 1990s collected funds for the Bosnian Serb Army (Nedeljković 2007, p. 279). He would later become quite vocal in his condemnations of Serbian war crimes and war conduct in general. Yet, the man of peace abroad (cf. Šerbo Rastoder for: RTS 2019, 6′56′′–7′27′′) was not a pacifist at home. Between 1995 and 2002 over 40 violent attacks against the SOC's believers and property were reported, including those with Dedeić's involvement (Raković 2015, p. 83; 2019, p. 176).

The intervention of the non-Orthodox factor came with Đukanović's acceptance of the LSCG's ideas. Đukanović's policies towards the SOC in Montenegro appear analogous to those of Bulgarian governments that supported the Alternative Synod, which is why it deserves some space at this point. This Bulgarian schism was initiated with the support of the governing structures in the early 1990s. The government later adopted a position that there were *two legitimate* Orthodox Churches in the country, only to express a clear preference for the non-canonical one (Hopkins 2008, pp. 334–63). The non-canonical Church thus attempted to overpower the canonical one and eventually take the canonical hierarchy's place. Đukanović's DPS (Democratic Party of the Socialists) probably had a similar trajectory in mind. MnOC was registered as an NGO (Non-government organization) at the Cetinje police station in 2000. That same year, Đukanović, who according to metropolitan Amfilohije

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6 Previously it had been attempted by the WWII "Independent State of Montenegro", an Axis puppet entity organized along the ideological concepts of the Croatian fascism (promoted mostly by Sekula Drljević), which declared the Montenegrin Orthodox Church autocephalous in the Article 4 of its "constitution", however with little to no practical consequences (cf. Raković 2019, p. 65).

had never been baptized (N1 BiH 2018), lectured the SOC's Patriarch Pavle on "basic Christian values" and demanded that the SOC stops calling "thousands of believers" of the MnOC "a religious sect and godless people" (Raković 2015, pp. 83–84). After legitimizing both organizations as Orthodox, Đukanović then gradually added more support for the MnOC. This does not mean that his involvement has always been direct and that it excluded periods of *détente* with the SOC. The Montenegrin government supported the completion of the Podgorica Cathedral and took part in 1700th anniversary celebrations of the Edict of Milan (Portalanalitika 2013). Montenegrin police also prevented Dedeić and his supporters from occupying the monastery of Cetinje in 2007 (Raković 2015, p. 99), but it banned the SOC's bishop Filaret from visiting part of his diocese in Montenegro during that same year.

One of the reasons for the government's ambivalent support for Dedeić's cause is that MnOC's standing within the general population has never made it a force that could support a stable governing majority. Although during the 1990s the Montenegrin–Serb identity differentiation was finally completed (Džankić 2015, p. 132), the census data clearly indicated that the Montenegrin ethnic identity markers were still far from majority acceptance. If in 1991, Montenegro appeared as a country homogenized around the Montenegrin identity, the 2003 census documented a visible upsurge in Serbian identity markers. Whereas only 22% stated their mother tongue was Montenegrin (at the time recently introduced, cf. Brković 2013, pp. 135–37), 63% opted for the Serbian language. At the same time, there were some 70,000 ethnic Montenegrins more than the ethnic Serbs, or 43% versus 32%, respectively. In 2011, Montenegrin identity was still far from the majority one. In terms of ethnicity there were 45% Montenegrins, 29% Serbs, and 12% Bosniaks and Muslims. The Montenegrin language was spoken by 37%, Serbian by 43%, Bosnian by 5.3%, and other derivatives of Serbo–Croatian accounted for almost 4%. In terms of religion, Orthodoxy accounted for 72% of the respondents, Catholicism for 3.4%, and Islam for 16% (Monstat 2011, pp. 8, 12–13, 15; cf. Monstat 2004). The adherence to MnOC thus became the least prominent among the Montenegrin identity markers.

The SOC on the other hand has not only remained the majority denomination of the country but has in the meantime developed a strong activist base, which enables it to organize protest actions and blockades when necessary (cf. Raković 2015, p. 99). It adopted a policy of accepting the Montenegrin ethnic identity as a personal choice (and even punished high-ranking clerics who discredited it; cf. Novosti 2011; Pravoslavlje 2011), rendering its public image more immune to accusations of being anti-Montenegrin and exclusively Serbian.

A radical anti-Serbian rhetoric is a common feature of MnOC's discourse and commentators that support it. The polarization usually unfolds around the narrative that the SOC illegitimately took something away from the Montenegrins (church, historical figures, property, money, etc.). The state should kick the SOC out of the churches and monasteries it currently uses (Popović 2019; cf. Duma 2014). More recently, the discourse moved towards declaring the SOC a security threat. It is now routinely accused of being a problem in Montenegrin security or an anti-state agent, mostly by Milo Đukanović himself (Politico 2016). While such rhetoric serves to homogenize Đukanović's powerbase before his further attempts to intervene in the ecclesiastical matters, it also provokes a strong reaction by the opposition (cf. Todorović 2016, p. 333), thus only expanding the activist base at SOC's disposal. Đukanović's policies thus added a volatile mixture of political, ethnic, and ideological conflicts to the issue, which even without these had already been laden with strong emotions and explosive potential.

For about a decade now, there have been visible signs that the Montenegrin state might go well beyond levels of interventionism seen in the Bulgarian Alternative Synod schism of the 1990s. In 2011, Đukanović stated that his party should advocate "unification of the Orthodox Church in Montenegro", while at the same time accusing MML of not aligning with the interests of the state. This is because it operated as a part of the SOC, which in Đukanović's view, did not hold Montenegro's independence in high regard. That same year the ruling Democratic Party of the Socialists (DPS) included Đukanović's vision in its party program (Raković 2019, pp. 189–90). In 2013 Đukanović announced that he would initiate the final stage of his bid to create a separate Montenegrin Church, when he stated that in Montenegro there should exist only one Orthodox Church with its seat in that country. The reporter of

the German *Deutsche Welle* saw in this nothing less than an attempt to create "a tailor-made Church for the Party" (Canka 2013). The ruling DPS has put the creation of one Orthodox Church in Montenegro, independent, unified, with its jurisdiction adjusted to the internationally recognized borders of the country on its seventh congress priority list (DPS 2015, p. 13). In his most recent appearances, Đukanović also demonstrated that his vision is not grounded in even the most basic knowledge of the matter he would like to regulate. He made a ludicrous statement that Montenegro is being denied the "canonical right [. . .] in line with **the principle of ethnophyletism**, i.e., that the Orthodox Church's organization all over the world follows the organization of the state" (N1 Pressing 2019, 18′30′′–18′58′′). When asked whether he expected Constantinople's recognition of such a church he replied: "Of course I do. Of course, I do, as I would be surprised if one thought the other way. I repeat, it would be contrary to the canon law, it would contradict **the fundamental principle of ethnophyletism** [. . .]" (N1 Pressing 2019, 19′00′′–19′13′′); translation and emphasis by D.Š.). As one might guess, the heresy of ethnophyletism has since its condemnation of 1872 not been accepted as the fundamental principle of the Orthodox canon law, quite contrary to Đukanović's claims.

The SOC has also been subjected to legal pressures. It has never been registered as a religious denomination in that country, simply because no previous legislator demanded it did so. Therefore, since 2011 the state administration expelled SOC's clergy members (and, in effect, their families) who did not hold Montenegrin citizenship, after they failed to produce the legally required confirmation of their denomination's registration. The state also appropriated the same level of subsidies to the SOC and the much smaller MnOC (Raković 2019, p. 190). When, in 2015, the government published its draft law on freedom of religion, the SOC reacted with a high level of suspicion. There were several provisions that to the SOC-linked commentators appeared as if they had been specifically designed to target the country's only canonical Orthodox Church. A provision that banned a denomination from "(. . .) political activity or abusing religious feelings to political aims" resonated with the discourse employed by the Montenegrin nationalists. Furthermore, there was a provision that demanded that the "territorial configuration" of the registered community has to fit Montenegrin territory. A denomination ought to have a seat in Montenegro. A denomination may not use in its name the name of another country or the colors of its flag. Places of worship built before December 1, 1918 by the state or by a joint effort of individual citizens were to be nationalized (Raković 2019, pp. 192–96), despite already being listed in cadaster as the property of the SOC. This draft was withdrawn after criticism from the Venice Commission (The European Commission for democracy through law; cf. Venice Commission 2019, p. 3). In 2019, the Montenegrin government adopted a lighter version of this draft, which still envisioned nationalization of the most important holy sites in the country[7], as most among them were erected well before 1918. This would also mean confiscation of the sacral objects that have never even been the subject of the Kingdom of Montenegro's legal system, e.g., the Bay of Kotor (Cattaro). The SOC claimed that the state should not be allowed to nationalize objects that even before 1918 had never been listed as the property of the state (Kračković 2019). The Venice Commission did not reject the idea altogether, but demanded clarifications, compensations for the religious communities, and defining procedures for proving ownership over the sacral objects (Venice Commission 2019, pp. 15–23). How this law is going to be implemented, and how Montenegrin authorities will evaluate medieval and early modern charters in the SOC's possession, as well as the more recent entries in cadaster, remains to be seen. The SOC feared that the law was drafted with an intent to enable the MnOC to use these objects as well (something that to many believers might amount to sacrilege), which is why it organized a protest rally in the capital city (supported by the

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[7] *Predlog Zakona o Slobodi Vjeroispovesti ili Uvjerenja i Pravnom Položaju Vjerskih Zajednica.* [the Draft law on Freedom of Religion and Convictions and on Legal Position of the Religious Communities]. Adopted at the Government of Montenegro's session on 6 December 2019 (No. 07-7592). Available online: http://zakoni.skupstina.me/zakoni/web/dokumenta/zakoni-i-drugi-akti/884/2178-12812-23-3-19-7.pdf (accessed on 3 April 2020). Cf. Article 62 of the Draft.

Montenegrin opposition) during which retired bishop of the SOC Atanasije (Jevtić) even threatened to evacuate the relics of the highly revered St. Vasilije of Ostrog (Atanasije 2019, 1′57′′).

At this point, one could claim that this Đukanović's strategy backfired and that it resulted in the biggest crisis his regime had to face during the previous 30 years—that due the long mismanagement of the country was long in the making (cf. Bardos 2020). After the law was adopted in the last days of 2019, a series of protests erupted in the country, probably to an extent never witnessed before. The SOC chose to organize a series of mass religious processions, in order to keep the protests non-violent and to reduce the chances of them being connected to the opposition parties. According to a recent survey (January 2020), 62% of Montenegrin citizens rejected this law, while only 20% endorsed it. This latest tension affected the public standings of the SOC's and the MnOC's leaders in different ways. According to the same survey, the SOC's metropolitan of Cetinje, Amfilohije, is currently the mostly approved public figure in the country, followed by the SOC's bishop of Budimlje-Nikšić, Joanikije. The MnOC's leader on the other hand, had approval below that of the least popular leaders of the neighboring countries (IC 2020). Another survey, conducted in December 2019, as the outbreak of the crisis was anticipated, marked the SOC as the institution with the highest trust in Montenegro—46.4% (second only to the education system's 52.8%). The MnOC, on the other hand, was the least trusted Montenegrin institution on the list, with the approval of only 17.6% of the population—less than Montenegrin political parties and the parliament (CEDEM 2019), usually the least trusted institutions in Southeastern Europe. Even if Đukanović manages to somehow survive the most recent wave of unrest and manages to assist the MnOC in getting access to some of the property currently owned by the SOC, the MnOC will probably remain tarnished by its participation in activities that the majority of Montenegrin citizens now perceive as unjust.

From the canonical Orthodoxy's perspective, MnOC's chances of getting recognition, without major changes in its internal structure, attitudes, and leadership, even under a very lenient interpretation of the canons, are next to non-existent. While this statement might appear a bit strong to a person unfamiliar with the Orthodox canon law, one should be reminded that Dedeić would have to require that the very Patriarchate that excommunicated him decides to support his bid. Unlike his main opponent in Montenegro, Metropolitan Amfilohije, who is considered an apt theologian, Dedeić has done next to nothing to initialize meaningful theological production. Supportive of this claim is the situation on the MnOC's website, on which ever since it became public in 2010 not a single item under the submenu "theology" has been uploaded (cpc.org.me 2010). The MnOC is also known for being notoriously ethnophyletist. It even cleansed its liturgical calendar by applying ethnic criteria (cf. Kalendar 2014), which represented yet another affront to Orthodox universalism. It went so far as to remove even the saints venerated by the 15th century Montenegrin Crnojević dynasty (cf. Mijanović 1994). Unlike the MML, which has been very active in building new places of worship, the MnOC made a rather modest effort in this regard. Unlike the MOC, which at least is able to maintain contact with other local Orthodox Churches, the MnOC was disavowed even by the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (Epiphanius's Synod, established by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 2019), which until recently was in communion with it (Press-Service of the Kyiv Metropolia 2019). Dedeić also faced backlash at home, after a schism within the MnOC's ranks erupted. In 2018, archimandrite Vladimir Lajović created an organization that claims to be the true MnOC (frequently referred to as the MnOC-2018 for disambiguation purposes) and that currently operates under the aegis of the uncanonical "Italian Orthodox Church" (Eparhija Podgoričko-Dukljanska 2019; cf. RTCG 2019).

Dedeić was also disavowed by the bishops of the Bulgarian Alternative Synod that returned to the canonical BOC. The Alternative Synod also consecrated Antonio de Rossi of the Italian Orthodox Church, that from the dogmatic perspective is difficult to categorize as an Orthodox denomination (cf. Raković 2019, p. 175). Even though the Alternative Synod ceased to exist, Dedeić still considers himself a member of the Bulgarian episcopate (RTS 2019, 10′19′′–10′56′′). This claim was refuted by BOC's metropolitan Kiril of Varna, who concelebrated a liturgy with Metropolitan Amfilohije in

Cetinje and reassured him that from the BOC's point of view, there is only one Orthodox Church in Montenegro (Vestnik 2007, p. 2).

The canonical Orthodoxy's unequivocal support for the SOC and the MML in Montenegro might have already provoked Đukanović's change of course. As rumors began to circulate that Đukanović might attempt to convince the SOC's hierarchs to make a move similar to that of the MOC in 1967 and thus create a unified Montenegrin Church, Dedeić declared that "Montenegrins won't kneel before its [i.e., such a church's] altars" (RTS 2019, 4′59′′–5′07′′). Even if the Montenegrin hierarchy of the SOC were to secede, which is not likely, it would probably not accept Dedeić to its ranks, as this afront to Constantinople might seriously threaten its recognition perspectives. However, given the SOC's lack of trust in Đukanović and that the MML's separation from the SOC would probably be a long process, such a scenario remains highly unlikely. The SOC will remain the only canonical church in the country and probably the majority denomination in the post-Đukanović Montenegro. If it succeeds in accommodating both ethnic Serbs and Montenegrins in a rather equal measure, it might become an example that the national autocephaly is not necessary for Orthodox nation's full affirmation after all.

4. Reconciliation with the Canons—Reconciliation with the Rest of Orthodoxy

Few nascent nation-states would decline the opportunity to tap into an additional source supplying them with more affection, legitimacy, and the sense of purpose. However, regardless of the way its autocephaly as received or won, every Orthodox Church needs to meet the condition of belonging to the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. This is a non-negotiable part of the bid for becoming an autocephalous Church in its full capacity. Although since the 19th century it has become difficult to ignore one nation's desire for its autocephalous or autonomous church for a long period of time, the non-Orthodox players still cannot create autocephalous churches by relying on their power alone. Any solution that was not sanctioned by the Orthodox Church's hierarchy is very unlikely to reach its ultimate goal for as long as it cannot be framed within the Orthodox canon law. Therefore, regardless of how the procedure got initiated, it requires the eventual consent of the original jurisdiction. From the perspective of Orthodoxy's ecclesiology, which always presupposes that there is a general ecclesial order (its occasional transgressions notwithstanding), every local Orthodox Church is expected to maintain the same canonical and sacramental provisions. In comparison to the secular framework of the international law, reaching independence within the Orthodox canonical order is a more demanding process.

We may argue that declarations of autocephaly since the 19th century have followed a similar pattern, or even something that might be dubbed as a methodology. In an attempt to reinforce their national(ist) claims through (from the ecclesiological perspective) controversial identification of civil (political) and ecclesial sovereignty, the elites in different predominantly Orthodox societies took part in instigating ecclesial separatism for the same purpose. However, whereas civil authorities have the means to successfully argue in favor of their political independence before the international community, the ecclesial authorities seldom have the same instruments at their disposal, regardless of how much they might try to imitate their secular counterparts.

The extreme trajectories we chose to investigate were a part of the larger nation-building projects, that could be initiated under favorable (geo)political circumstances, such as Great Power rivalries, decline of multi-ethnic states, demands for recognition of a separate identity, appeasing nationalisms, etc. In Bulgarian case, it was the alignment of the Great Powers' policies, in North Macedonia the drive of the local communists to differentiate from Bulgarian and Serbian nationalisms. In Montenegro, it was motivated at first by a desire of the minority to separate from the same country with Serbia and later, by the state policy of nation-building in a direction that would secure its long-term differentiation from Belgrade.

The Orthodox Church will probably continue to face nationalist challenges, as one cannot exclude the emergence of new territorial loyalties or even new nations in the future. As (geo)political circumstances are anything but stable or predictable, possibilities of new ruptures within the Orthodox

world should never be excluded. The Orthodox Church has yet to develop mechanisms for successful dealing with prospective demands for autocephaly, and especially for reducing the possibility of non-Orthodox players' interventions. These often can, due to the nature of their intentions or lack of understanding of the way the Orthodox Church operates, aggravate the already existing conflicts in a way that often leaves it as a burden for the next generations of believers. It is therefore an important task for the pan-Orthodox community to settle the criteria for awarding autocephaly in a consensual and satisfactory manner.

The trajectory of the Bulgarian Exarchate shows that ultimate reconciliation with the mother church and the canons is a necessary pre-requirement for a schism to end. Like the MOC, it too did have contact with other churches, but until this reconciliation phase, its diplomatic efforts resulted in little more than the realization that the key negotiations have to take place with the see of Constantinople. The same will probably be the case with the MOC, which will become autocephalous only after full reconciliation with the SOC. The MnOC also demonstrates that the capacity of the non-Orthodox players to create an autocephalous Church has its limitations. No really effective Orthodox Church can be created without the adequate hierarchy to assume its posts (like in the MOC's case), and radical pushes against the canonical church on a given territory, provided its presence is perceived as legitimate by a significant part of the local population, can result in a backlash against other pieces of the nation-building project as well. Not every independently organized church structure can claim its true ecclesial legitimacy. In schismatic situations, it is not unimportant whether the independent structure in question separated itself from a larger, and more importantly, canonical hierarchy (e.g., MOC), or was created without any kind of universally accepted sacramental and canonical references by the rest of the Orthodox world (e.g., MnOC). The former has, even though in an irregular state of schism, its undeniable origin in the canonical hierarchy and Apostolic succession, which, for as long as it remains dogmatically Orthodox, still motivates other Orthodox actors to engage in different kinds of reconciliation efforts. The latter, however, is regarded as a threat to the very foundation of the ecclesiastic order, which thus motivates the canonical Orthodoxy to resist its recognition attempts. From the perspective of national affirmation, this is exactly the situation the would-be nation-builders should avoid. The most recent protests in Montenegro also represent the fresh case in point. Disappointment with the regime was also manifested by an eruption of pro-Serbian symbolism from the Montenegrin past. When the police got involved in removing the red-blue-white tricolor of the Kingdom of Montenegro, some protesters even started using the image of Papa Smurf (red cap, blue face, white beard; cf. RTS 2020) in order to ridicule such attempts to reassert the dominance of the official symbols of the state.

The non-Orthodox actors have frequently attempted to model the borders of the Orthodox jurisdictions according to their preferences. The ecclesiastical order of the Orthodox Church, however, could not be bent to meet all their wishes. If pushed too far, it can reduce the chances of a successful resolution and even result in a long-term exclusion of the schismatic organization from the pan-Orthodox fora. The Orthodox canon law was designed to work against prolonged radicalization. Depending on circumstances, this can be regarded as Orthodoxy's positive trait. While nationalism motivated these communities to seek separation, the restoration of the ecclesiastical order might drive both sides to seek reconciliation in the proverbially volatile web of interethnic relations in the Balkans.

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History and Religion as Sources of Hellenic Identity in Late Byzantium and the Post-Byzantine Era

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Abstract: Recently, seminal publications highlighted the Romanitas of the Byzantines. However, it is not without importance that from the 12th century onwards the ethnonym Hellene (Ἕλλην) became progressively more popular. A number of influential intellectuals and political actors preferred the term Hellene to identify themselves, instead of the formal Roman (Ῥωμαῖος) and the common Greek (Γραικός). While I do not intend to challenge the prevalence of the Romanitas during the long Byzantine era, I suggest that we should reevaluate the emerging importance of Hellenitas in the shaping of collective and individual identities after the 12th century. From the 13th to the 16th century, Byzantine scholars attempted to recreate a collective identity based on cultural and historical continuity and otherness. In this paper, I will seek to explore the ways Byzantine scholars of the Late Byzantine and Post Byzantine era, who lived in the territories of the Byzantine Empire and/or in Italy, perceived national identity, and to show that the shift towards Hellenitas started in the Greek-speaking East.

Keywords: Romanitas; Hellenitas; Graecitas; Hellene; Greek; Byzantine Empire; identity; consciousness

1. Introduction

The question of Modern Greek identity is certainly timely (Steiris et al. 2016, p. vii). Recently, the Greek Minister of Education Niki Kerameus stated that History in primary and secondary school curricula "should be aimed at shaping national consciousness" (https://www.keeptalkinggreece.com/2019/09/06/education-minister-history-textbooks/). Her comment caused a heated debate between rival political parties, because the question of what it means to be Greek today is of prime importance not only for academics but also for the entire Greek society. Two hundred years after the Greek war of Independence (1821), the discussion surrounding the so-called ελληνικότητα (Greekness) is crucial. Although the term was introduced in 1851 by Constantine Pop (1816–1878), a Greek novelist, and was used extensively by scholars in the 1930s, there is no consensus on the conceptual content of the term (Tziovas 1989, pp. 31–38). There is a dispute whether, in order to define Greekness, we should focus on national consciousness or identity. In this paper, I shall adopt the analytical distinction between national consciousness and national identity according to Natia Tevzadze (Tevzadze 1994). She has argued that national consciousness refers to an inherent process of self-identification and absorption in a given community. It is an introverted and defensive mechanism of self-acknowledgement. Those who seek a national consciousness presuppose the existence of distinct cultural characteristics and genealogies, i.e. a mix of history, memories and sentiments that people are called to adopt. Consequently, those who perceive Greekness as a kind of consciousness presuppose likeness and identification. On the other hand, national identity is based on the sum of differential characteristics, such as otherness, the sum of features that differentiate a nation from others (Gellner 1983, pp. 6–7; Tevzadze 1994, pp. 437–40). This is an extroverted process of hetero-identification. National identity is a cultural or institutional construction, which is rather fluid. As a result, consciousness and identity represent two different approaches on nations.

As well as the term Greekness, I would like to propose the term Hellenitas to describe the ethnocultural identification with ancient Greeks that appeared in Late Byzantium. I deem the introduction of this term necessary, as I contend that Hellenitas is different from Graecitas, the self-identification as Greek (*Γραικός*), which was common throughout the Byzantine period. Hellenitas represented an attempt to create a new connection with the ancient Greeks that stressed the emphasis to the most illustrious period of Greek antiquity, from the Greco-Persian wars until Alexander the Great, in an attempt to assist the Greek-speaking population of the Eastern Roman Empire, the so-called Byzantine, to regain their pride, when the Westerners disputed their Romanitas. Vacalopoulos' thesis, according to which the origins of Greek nationhood are to be traced to the Late Byzantium, since the sack of Constantinople and the partition of the empire after 1204 did instill the idea of a Greek "nation" in Byzantine hearts and minds, serves as the starting point of my views on Hellenitas (Vacalopoulos 1970). Contrariwise, Graecitas was a different notion, established during the long Roman period, focusing on the diachronic presence of the Greeks as a *populus* and not as a *genos* or nation. Meanwhile, Graecitas represented an attempt to undermine whatever would be connected with the pagan element of the ancient Greek culture. There is no evidence that the ethnonym *Graeci* signified any kind of self-identification with the ancient Greeks. It was an identity, which could easily coexist with Romanitas, while Hellenitas represented largely a break with Romanitas. Romanitas is a set of political and cultural concepts by which the inhabitants of the Eastern Roman Empire attempted their identification with the ancient Romans in the broad context of the *translatio imperii*.

My aim is not to discuss common views on a supposed diachronic Hellenic identity or consciousness (Vryonis 1978, pp. 237–56). To the contrary, I intend to show that, predominantly from the 13th to the 16th century, Byzantine scholars attempted to recreate a collective identity based on cultural and historical continuity and otherness (Vacalopoulos 1970, pp. 126–35). To my view, they shared common memories and cultural traits and they felt a connection with Greece (the territory, the memory and the ideal) as their homeland. Despite the fact that this endeavor took place before modernity, I claim that it was a discussion focused primarily on identity and not on consciousness, as the majority of modern scholars would expect. During the late Byzantine centuries, a major shift occurred in the East, and prominent members of the Byzantine intelligentsia challenged Romanitas and Graecitas in order to revisit their collective identity.

In my view—since I accept the ethno-symbolist approach, according to which the pre-modern ethnic views contributed heavily to the configuration of modern national identities—the debate about Hellenitas in Late Byzantium proves that the Byzantine intelligentsia sought to shape a proto-national community (Smith 1991, pp. vii–x; Smith 1995, pp. 3–23; Smith 2004, pp. 33–61; Smith 2005, pp. 404–15; Smith 2009, pp. 23–59). Their goal was a new nationhood, the identification with a community culturally and territorially circumscribed (Stouraitis 2018, p. 126).

In these terms, I attempt to scrutinize the ways Byzantine scholars of the Late Byzantine and Post Byzantine era, who lived in the territories of the Byzantine Empire and/or in Italy, perceived national identity, and to challenge Lamers's views (Lamers 2015) by showing that the shift towards Hellenism started in the Greek-speaking East. The Byzantine scholars attempted to redefine their identity based on the ethnonym Hellene (Ἕλλην), a common cultural and historical awareness, Hellenic language, and their perceived otherness predominantly from the Latins and the Turks (Smarnakis 2015, pp. 222–25). My aim is to show that the Late Byzantines used the Hellenic label in an ethnic way, as they did not afraid to refer to the Hellenic γένος or ἔθνος, despite the ambiguities of the terms in the pre-modern period. Kaldellis argued, "the Byzantines' view of their own Roman identity was a national one, making Byzantium effectively a nation-state. Being a Roman was premised on common cultural traits, including language, religion, and social values and customs, on belonging to the ἔθνος or γένος on that basis, and on being a 'shareholder' in the polity of the Romans" (Kaldellis 2017, p. 173). On the contrary, Stouraitis held that the Roman identity pertained to an intellectual and political elite in Constantinople (Stouraitis 2014, pp. 175–220). While Kaldellis criticized Stouraitis's argument and presented a rather persuasive defense of his position, I think that

Stouraitis's argument is more accurate regarding Hellenitas in Late Byzantium and the Post-Byzantine era. Taking Stouraitis's view as a starting point, I would like to support that principally in the 15th century the intellectual elite shifted, for several reasons, towards a Hellenic identity. Kaldellis anyway agreed that Hellenitas was an elite pursuit (Kaldellis 2017, p. 197). Although the elites used the ethnonym in other instances and not just for themselves, I admit that there is no evidence so far that Hellenitas was a movement embraced by the masses. However, I would like to revisit dominant views, in contemporary Greek and international bibliography, according to which the modern Greek identity was a byproduct of the Age of Enlightenment and represented a major departure from the previous tradition (Kitromilides 2009, pp. 21–32; Myrogiannis 2012, pp. 83–130). This article expands and supplement my views that were initially presented a few years ago (Steiris 2016, pp. 173–99).

2. Modern Scholarly Debate on National Identity in the Late Byzantium

Kaldellis recently summarized the modern scholarly debate by asking the question "Who were the Byzantines, then?" (Kaldellis 2019, pp. 29–32). Seminal publications shed more light to the discussion, attempting to reinterpret and highlight the Romanitas of the Byzantines (Constantinidou and Lamers 2019, pp. 1–25; Kaldellis 2007; Kaldellis 2019; Page 2008; Rapp 2008, pp. 27–147; Smythe 1996, pp. 26–36). It is common knowledge that the official appellation of the inhabitants of the Eastern Roman Empire was Romans even after the fall of Constantinople. However, it is not without importance that from the 12th century onwards the name Hellene (Ἕλλην) became progressively more popular. A number of influential intellectuals and political actors preferred the term Hellene to identify themselves, instead of the formal Roman (Ῥωμαῖος) and the common Greek (Γραικός) (Livanios 2008, p. 240; Vryonis 1991, pp. 5–14). According to the prevalent view of modern scholarship, the shift should not be interpreted only as a statement of proto-nationalism but also as the outcome of growing archaism (Hobsbawm 2012, pp. 46, 59, 71–77). As Vryonis pointed out, the historian Critobulus (ca. 1410–ca. 1470) used to call the Balkan nations with their archaic names: Byzantines became "Hellenes", Albanians became "Illyrians", etc. (Vryonis 1991, p. 7). Laonikus Chalkokondyles (ca. 1430–ca. 1465), the prominent Late Byzantine historian, had the same approach (Akışık-Karakullukçu 2013, pp. 101–2). The same tendency was observed in Western Balkans and Central Europe. Bibliography on Byzantine Hellenization is extensive (Beaton 2007, pp. 76–95; Kaldellis 2017, pp. 173–210; Akışık-Karakullukçu 2019, pp. 1–30; Magdalino 1991; Page 2008; Papadopoulou 2015; Rapp 2008, pp. 127–47; Smarnakis 2015, pp. 211–34; Stouraitis 2017, pp. 70–94; Stouraitis 2018, pp. 123–39; Vryonis 1999, pp. 19–36). Furthermore, in lamenting the decline of their Empire, Byzantines tended to compare their sad present to the glory of ancient Greece (Ševčenko 1961, p. 173). In this context, it is noteworthy that Byzantine scholars, who fled to Italy, deliberately chose to describe themselves as Greeks (*Greci/Γραικοί*) or Hellenes (Ἕλληνες) and not as Romans (Ῥωμιοί/Ῥωμαῖοι), according to the Byzantine official terminology. While I do not intend to challenge the prevalence of the Romanitas during the long Byzantine era (Kaldellis 2007, p. 349; Kaldellis 2019, pp. 3–80), I suggest that we should reevaluate the emerging importance of Hellenization in the shaping of collective and individual identities after the 12th century. Collective identity is the awareness from which individuals in a social group derive values and worth (Abrams and Hogg 1990, p. 2).

Lamers—while acknowledging the shift towards "Greekness"—held that it started and flourished in Italy, among the Byzantine scholars who fled there in the 15th century (Lamers 2015, p. 1). Lamers makes a distinction between Greekness—the ethnocultural identification with the ancient Greeks—and Hellenism, the study and imitation of ancient Greek culture (Lamers 2015, pp. 2–3). While Lamers's viewpoint is interesting, I contend that the shift towards the Hellenitas started in the Greek East, rather than being a product of the Greek community in Renaissance Italy. For example, Scholarius (ca. 1400–ca. 1472), an illustrious philosopher and Patriarch of Constantinople, and Pletho (ca. 1355–1454), the legendary Platonist of Mystra, should not be considered as members of the Greek intelligentsia in Renaissance Italy. Moreover, the discussion about Hellenitas, as an identity feature, had started long before the 15th century. As a result, I hold that Lamers's argument is partial, overestimating the role of Greek scholars in Italy (Lamers 2015, pp. 270–72). Akışık-Karakullukçu—referring to Pletho—admitted

that in the 15th century there was "an ongoing conversation on identity that was anchored in the politically fragmented world of the eastern Mediterranean" (Akışık-Karakullukçu 2019, p. 15). This conversation, in which Pletho participated, was introduced even before the 15th century, due to the obvious decline of the Eastern Roman Empire. Furthermore, Lamers's and Akışık-Karakullukçu's insistence to separate the community of the Greek scholars in Italy, which, according to them, was oriented towards *Hellenitas*, from the community of Greek scholars in the Ottoman regions, which was attached to *Romanitas*, is not based on stable ground, since we know that, in the 15th and 16th century, scholars traveled extensively and did not cut their ties with mainland Greece and the Minor Asia. In addition, they exchanged views and texts with their fellows, no matter where they stayed. In the following pages, we will have the opportunity to realize that, despite of their whereabouts, Late Byzantine scholars shared a genuine interest on *Hellenitas*. For example, Theodorus Gaza (ca.1398–ca. 1475), a seminal Aristotelian of the 15th century in Italy, was closer to Scholarius's views and did not share Cardinal Bessarion's (1408–1472) philosophical viewpoint.

3. Mid-Byzantine Views on Identity and Consciousness

After the 6th century AD, the Christianized Greek populations around the Mediterranean avoided to identify themselves as Hellenes (Ἕλληνες) since the term denoted the pagans. The formal Roman (Ῥωμαῖος) and the common Greek (Γραικός) became the standard appellations. The first was common among the inhabitants of the Eastern Roman Empire, while the latter served to separate the Greeks from people without Greek origin, without any identification with the ancient Hellenes (Svoronos 2004, pp. 54–62; Stouraitis 2018, p. 29). The historian Priscus (5th century) referred to someone who identified himself as Greek: "he said that he was Greek" (ἔλεγε Γραικὸς μὲν εἶναι τὸ γένος) (Priscus 1979, Fr. 8, l. 476). However, in the 15th century, Theophanes, bishop of Medea (1467–1474) and skilled rhetorician, was annoyed by the fact that Pope Eugenius IV called the Orthodox delegates in the Council of Ferrara of Florence (1438–1439) Greeks (Γραικοί): "He insults us; he calls us Greeks and that is an insult" (Ὑβρίζει ἡμᾶς· καλεῖ γάρ ἡμᾶς Γραικούς καί τοῦτό ἐστιν ὕβρις) (Laurent 1971, p. 124). Furthermore, the historian Ducas (ca. 1400–ca. 1462) characterized the supporters of the Union of the Orthodox and Catholic Churches as priests of the Graeci (Γραικοί) (Smarnakis 2015, p. 222). Cassius Dio (ca. 155–ca. 235), a statesman and historian of Greek and Roman origin, and the historian Procopius (ca. 490–ca. 565) also mention that the Romans used the term *Graecus* to degrade the Hellenes (Papadopoulou 2007, p. 219). Despite Theophanes's furor, the Latin-speaking elites of the West, from the 9th century onwards, called the Byzantines Greeks and not Romans, predominantly for political reasons. Namely, they attempted to dispute the Byzantine Emperors' claims to the Roman legacy. After the 12th century, *Graecus* refers predominantly to someone of the Orthodox faith.

During the reign of the Comneni (1081–1204), the term Hellene regained progressively its prominence (Kaldellis 2007, pp. 283–300). It signified people of Greek origin, who also shared a common Hellenic education, meaning classical education. John Tzetzes (ca. 1110–ca. 1180), a Byzantine poet and grammarian, declared proudly that he was a pure Hellene (ἐκ δέ γε πατρὸς καθαρῶς τυγχάνοντα Ἕλληνα) (Tzetzes 1972, Ep. 6, 10.5). In an anonymous text of the same century, the author described the common people as native Hellenes (αὐτόχθων ὄχλος καὶ ἰθαγενής ... Ἑλλήνων τῶν ἀπανταχοῦ) (Romano 1974, l.117–118). Another passage of seminal importance is found in a letter written by John III Ducas Vatatzes (ca. 1193–1254), Emperor of Nicaea, and addressed to the Pope. The Emperor supported that "among our Hellenic *genos* wisdom prevails" (ἐν τῷ γένει τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἡμῶν ἡ σοφία βασιλεύει) (Krikones 1988, l.178–186). His son and Emperor Theodorus II Ducas Lascaris (1222–1258) also felt a cultural and genealogical connection with the Hellenes. He proudly stated that philosophy belongs to Hellenes. Furthermore, in the first person plural, he claimed that the Hellenes were the fathers of all sciences. The ancient Hellenes and the Hellenes of Theodorus's era breathed the same air and shared the same language and blood: (Festa 1898, CIX, l. 48–49).

In addition, when he referred to the army, he chose to speak of Hellenic troops (οἱ ἀκαμπεῖς τοῖς Ἑλληνικοῖς στρατεύμασιν) (Festa 1898, CCIV, l. 56–59).

It is obvious that Vatatzes's shift towards Hellenitas was pushed onto by the Latins (Kaldellis 2007, p. 371). Theodorus Metochites (1270–1332), a Byzantine statesman and philosopher, in a sermon at court, asked the Emperor Andronicus III Palaeologus (1259–1332) to save the Hellenes (Metochites 1996, p. 38–40; Metochites 2007, pp. 128–420). Later, in the *Chronicon Morae* (14th century) we read that the inhabitants of the Eastern Roman Empire, the so-called Romans, tenaciously preserved for centuries the name Hellenes, because they were arrogant (Διαβόντα γὰρ χρόνοι πολλοὶ αὐτεῖνοι οἱ Ρωμαῖοι, Ἕλληνες εἴχαν τὸ ὄνομα, οὕτως τοὺς ὠνομάζαν, —πολλὰ ἦσαν ἀλαζονικοί, ἀκομὴ τὸ κρατοῦσιν,— ἀπὸ τὴν Ρώμη ἀπήρασιν τὸ ὄνομα τῶν Ρωμαίων) (Schmitt 1904, l. 794–797).

The same time the term Greek (*Γραικός*) and its derivatives were used within the context of the conflicts between members of the Orthodox and the Catholic faith (Papadopoulou 2014, pp. 172–73). After 1204, Byzantine Romanitas received a serious blow. As a result, the emphasis on Hellenic ethnocultural identity was an interesting alternative for the ruling elites (Stouraitis 2017, pp. 85–86). Kaldellis remarked that Hellenitas, after 1204, "no longer revolves around high culture but has moved down the social scale. Linguistically, "Hellenes" are now no longer those who have mastered Attic rhetoric but those whose language is Greek" (Kaldellis 2007, p. 368).

4. Hellenitas in 15th Century Byzantium: from Chrysoloras to Pletho

4.1. The Conciliatory Stance

At the turn of the 15th century, Manuel Chrysoloras (ca. 1350–1415), a seminal Byzantine scholar who contributed to the spread of Greek literature in Renaissance Italy, referred to the twofold identity of the Byzantines, highlighting the Hellenic and the Roman elements. The Byzantines would equally trace their heritage to the ancient Greeks and the Romans. Chrysoloras admitted that the Byzantines forgot their original name and adopted the ethnic name Romans. Despite his efforts in favor of shared identity, his conciliatory stance was not popular. Hellenization gradually gained ground among the Byzantines elites. Namely, Chrysoloras, in an epistle (1414) to the Emperor Manuel Palaeologus (Patrinelis and Sofianos 2001, p. 117, II. 4–13), stated:

> Let us remember from what men we are descended. If someone would like, he could say that we descended from the first and age-old, I mean from the most venerable and ancient Hellenes (no one has remained ignorant of their power and wisdom). If you please, you could also say that we descended from those who came after them, the ancient Romans, after whom we are named and who we are now named and who we, I suppose, claim to be, so that we even almost erased our ancient name. Rather both of these races came together in our times, I think, and whether someone calls us Hellenes or Romans, that is what we are, and we safeguard the succession of Alexander and that of those after him (Lamers 2015, p. 32).

Chrysoloras entitled this part of his text *Exhortation on behalf of the genos*. Chrysoloras suggested that the Emperor revive the study of ancient literature, both pagan and Christian. He added that the Byzantines should not neglect their cultural inheritance, all the while the Italians were meticulously studying Greek texts (Patrinelis 1972, p. 501).

A few years later, namely in 1429, Isidore (1385–1463)—bishop of Kiev, humanist and theologian who promoted the Union of Orthodox and Catholic Christendom—entertained similar views. The Eastern Empire had two constitutive elements: the Hellenic and the Roman. He praised the Emperor Constantine the Great for mingling and uniting the best of the Romans with the best of the Hellenes, creating the Romellenes (Ρωμέλληνες), the best and most distinguished people (Lampros 1926, pp. 151.29–152.17). Not long after, Makarius Melissinus (d. 1585), bishop of Monemvasia, referring to the speech of Constantine XI Palaeologus (1405–1435) just before the fall of Constantinople, attested that the Emperor addressed the people as descendants of the Romans and the Hellenes (Grecu 1966, pp. 414.21–420.33).

However, Chrysoloras's and Isidore's syncretism was not popular in the next centuries and the shift towards Hellenitas was further reinforced.

4.2. Pletho's Radical Hellenitas

It is well documented that in the 15th century several intellectuals and political figures among the Greek-speaking communities of Eastern and Western Europe chose intentionally the term Hellene (Ἕλλην) to identify themselves, instead of the formal Roman (Ῥωμαῖος) and the common Greek (Γραικός) (Livanios 2008, p. 240; Vryonis 1991, pp. 5–14). Pletho's famous quote set the framework for those who investigate the shift towards Hellenitas in late Byzantium: "we, over whom you rule and hold sway, are Hellenes by *genos*, as is witnessed by our language and ancestral education" (Pletho 1926a, pp. 247.I.14–248.I.3). Pletho also stressed the continuity of the Hellenes by saying that they have always inhabited mainland Greece and no other people before them had inhabited the same area. It is obvious that matters of historical and geographical continuity are core identity issues (Pletho 1926a, 248.II.2–10). Pletho's insistence in autochthonism could also be interpreted as a byproduct of his classicism, since the ancient Athenians were also proud of their autochthony. Woodhouse's view (Woodhouse 1986) that Pletho was the last of the Hellenes is disputed and most modern scholars prefer to denounce him as the last of the Byzantines and the first and foremost Modern Greek (Linardos 2010; Geanakoplos 1984, p. 436; Hladky 2014, pp. 269–86; Nikolaou 1974, pp. 98–102; Peritore 1977, pp. 173–77; Svoronos 2004, p. 78; Bargeliotes 2009, pp. 44–61; Harris 2000, pp. 25–44). Pletho thought of the Hellenes as a *genos* with common culture, heritage and ancestral territory. Pletho's views on identity have been analyzed thoroughly in the last two centuries, namely his thoughts on *genos*, *ethnos* and *homophylon* (Garnsey 2009, pp. 327–40; Siniossoglou 2011, pp. 327–84; Siniossoglou 2014, pp. 415–31; Woodhouse 1986, pp. 79–118). Admittedly, it is difficult to understand the essence of these key concepts and it is rather challenging to shape a coherent understanding of his national consciousness and identity (Zakythinos 1932, pp. 365–76; Webb 1989, pp. 219–49). The terms are vaguely used and the texts do not allow us to provide definitions. Furthermore, Pletho was not always consistent. For instance, in *Monodia in Helenam Palaeologinam*, a public official speech, Pletho declared that the Byzantine Emperor reigned over the Romans (Pletho 1926b, p. 271).

In order to understand Pletho's contradictory views, I propose a different approach. Since identity is largely based on the internalization of otherness, we would better comprehend his Hellenism by analyzing his position concerning others, namely the Muslims and the Latins.

In his philosophical treatises, Pletho scorned the Arabic philosophers, particularly Averroes and Avicenna, on several occasions (Lagarde 1973, pp. 321.3–8, 322.36–38; Steiris 2017, pp. 309–34). It is obvious that he deliberately adopted an anti-Averroist approach, which was common, as many other, to 15th century European humanists. Whilst his criticism is not philosophically accurate, it served his broader anti-Muslim and anti-Latin agenda. He contended that medieval philosophers outside of the Greek-speaking world overrated the significance of the Arabic philosophical texts. Pletho held that the Arabic and Scholastic scholars did not properly understand ancient Greek philosophy and distorted it (Mavroudi 2013, pp. 198–99). Pletho urged his fellow Byzantine scholars to rely on the Greek philosophical tradition—especially Platonic and Neoplatonic—and condemn the Scholastic's Aristotle. It is well known that in 14th century Byzantium, a circle of scholars around the Cydones brothers—Prochorus and Demetrius—translated and commented on Aquinas's and other Scolastics' texts in order to promote a different philosophical approach among the Orthodox. In the 15th century, Georgius Scholarius, Pletho's principal opponent, continued on the same path and further promoted Thomism. Pletho felt contempt for Aristotelian philosophy, which he considered inherently problematic, and he was annoyed by the prevalence of Aristotelianism among the Muslims and the Latins. Pletho did not aim at a detailed study of Arabic philosophy and its Jewish and Latin interpretations. He agreed with the view that ancient Greek philosophy was preserved only in Byzantium (Karamanolis 2002, pp. 260–63). Hence, Pletho's Hellenitas was a key element in his effort to safeguard the Hellenes from the expansion of Latin culture in the Greek speaking East.

5. The Next Generation: In the Footsteps of the Giants

Laonikus Chalkokondyles followed Pletho's example by considering Hellenism a cultural and political identity (Vacalopoulos 1970), although he did not hesitate to apply the name Hellene to Orthodox Christians (Akışık-Karakullukçu 2013). He studied with Pletho in Mystra and he became one of the most important historians of the 15th century. He thought of the Byzantines as Hellenes and rejected any kind of Romanitas:

> [They] guarded their (Hellenic) language and customs until the very end because they (Hellenes) were much more numerous than the Romans. However, they (Hellenes) no longer called themselves according to their (Hellenic) hereditary tradition and the name was changed. And, thus, the Emperors of Byzantion were proud to call themselves Emperors and Autocrats of Romans and never found it appropriate to be called Emperors of Hellenes" (Kaldellis 2014a, vol. 1, pp. 6–7).

The Greek-speaking inhabitants of the Eastern Roman Empire were Hellenes, not Romans, despite the fact that the Emperor was officially called "Emperor of the Romans". Chalkokondyles consistently referred to the Byzantines as Hellenes. According to him, Romans are the followers of the Pope (Akışık-Karakullukçu 2013, pp. 238–300). To the contrary, he considered equally Hellenes the inhabitants of Peloponnese, Constantinople, and Trebizond (Ἕλληνάς τε ὄντας τό γένος) (Chalkokondyles 1922–1928, p. 219, II. 4–5, 248, II. 17–23), and aspired to a union of the Hellenes under a new Hellene king, who would govern them according to the Hellenic mores:

> And the present fame of the Hellenic language will be greater in the future, when an Emperor will rule over a sizeable Hellene Empire and he will have imperial descendants. The children of the Hellenes will be attached to these emperors according to their own customs and will be ruled in a manner pleasing to them. And they will rule over others forcefully (Kaldellis 2014a, vol. 1, pp. 4–5).

It is also noteworthy that Chalkokondyles narrates the Greek history in a way that stresses the continuity of the Greeks. He saw the Byzantine period as another period of the long Greek history, which had nothing to do with the Romans (Chalkokondyles 1922–1928, p. 4, II.3–16). According to him, the Byzantines were Hellenes and preserved their culture during the centuries (Chalkokondyles 1922–1928, p. 4, II. 3–16). Moreover, he de-Romanized the Byzantines with the argument that besides officially calling themselves Romans, their language and religion differed (Kaldellis 2014b, pp. 171–96). Whilst Chalkokondyles's Hellenitas claims are bold, I would not agree with Akışık-Karakullukçu's argument, that "Laonikos is unique in the long and illustrious Byzantine historiographical tradition for having abandoned the traditional Roman identity and to have consistently referred to the protagonists of his narrative as Hellenes and to have located the Romans in the West since the time of Charlemagne, referring to the Papacy, the Carolingians, the Holy Roman Emperors, their political culture, and customs as Roman institutions" (Akışık-Karakullukçu 2019, p. 3). In fact Chalkokondyles was one among many others, who in the Late Byzantine centuries focused on Hellenitas. He was neither an exception nor an innovator, and his work presented a concrete narrative to support the claims about the continuity of the Hellenic *genos*.

Michael Apostolis (ca. 1422–ca. 1478), a faithful adherent of Pletho's philosophy and ardent copyist in Italy and Greece, supported similar views on the threat of cultural—hence, national—alienation. Apostolis held that Greek philosophy and Greek cultural tradition in general were in danger of alienation. According to Apostolis, Theodorus Gaza and some other members of Bessarion's circle did not respect the interpretative patterns of ancient Greek philosophy. Instead, they read it through the lens of the Scholastics, who misinterpreted and transformed the original thought of not only Plato and the Platonists but also that of Aristotle and his commentators. Apostolis shared Pletho's contempt for Latin philosophy (Apostolis 1967, pp. 159–69). Particularly, Pletho accused Scholarius that he followed the Averroistic Aristotelianism and neglected the Platonic philosophy, which represented

the best aspect of Greek thought. Apostolis also disapproved of Scholarius's admiration for Aquinas (Scholarius 1936, p. 5.22–26; Scholarius, 1935, p. 153.23–24). It is noteworthy that, while Apostolis openly rejected Aristotelianism, he avoided relying on the Byzantine literature concerning the preponderance of Platonic or Aristotelian philosophy. Instead, he resorted to Pletho, Plato and several ancient commentators. Apostolis, as Pletho before him, preferred the ancient Greek texts and did not rely on Christian philosophy and his contemporaries. Pletho and Apostolis attempted to draw a line between Greek philosophy—which is purely Platonic—and Scholastic philosophy, which is attached to Aristotle and the Arabs. He was annoyed by the fact that the Latins thought of themselves as more important in comparison not only to the ancient Greek philosophers, namely Socrates, Pythagoras and Plato, but also to the Hellenes of the 15th century (οἱ τῶν νῦν ὄντων Ἑλλήνων οὐ μόνον οἴονται σοφότεροι γεγονέναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ Σωκράτους αὐτοῦ καὶ Πυθαγόρου καὶ Πλάτωνος) (Apostolis 1967, p. 168). Moreover, he did not hesitate to call himself and his contemporaries "sons of the Hellenes", without questioning the compatibility of Hellenism with Christian religion (Apostolis 1967, pp. 168–69). According to Apostolis, there was no dividing line between ancient and modern Greeks (Apostolis 1967, p. 168). Apostolis proudly declared that he is an offspring of the Hellenes and he followed in their path (Apostolis 1967, p. 169).

It is noteworthy that even Theodorus Gaza, Apostolis's main opponent, blamed his ancestors, the ancient Greeks, for being reluctant to accept the Roman calendar. Moreover, he accused them that they preferred to call themselves Romans, instead of Hellenes, a disastrous choice that was still in use in Gaza's times (Lamers 2015, p. 60). Gaza, as Pletho and Apostolis, considered the cultural alienation caused by Latin influences in both antiquity and Late Middle Ages as a major threat for Hellenism. Furthermore, Gaza's associate Nikolaos Sekoundinos (1402–1464) emphatically stressed that the Byzantines were sons of the Hellenes and imitated their ancestors (Boissonade 1833, v.5, p. 386).

Although Apostolis thought of himself as heir of the ancient Greek philosophers and his mother tongue gave him the opportunity to study the original Greek texts, it may be rather simplistic to interpret Pletho's and Apostolis' anti-Aristotelianism as a reaction of "Hellenism" against "Christianity" (Livanios 2008, p. 267). It is well known that Pletho was an anti-unionist and did not hesitate to support the Orthodox position in the council of Ferrara—Florence against the Latins (Kyros 1947, v.1, pp. 103–7; Laurent 1971, pp. 366.29–368.7). Pletho and Apostolis did not aim to confront Christian religion. They aimed at the refusal of the imperialism of Latin culture, which threatened to alienate the Greeks. Cultural opposition to the Latins and the Turks was the only way to safeguard the Hellenic *genos* from extinction (Siniossoglou 2014, p. 418). It is noteworthy that Apostolis complained to Bessarion that his compatriots in Crete did not send their children to his school because they were afraid of turning them to Romellenes (Stefec 2010, pp. 129–48). It is obvious that cultural alienation was somehow connected to religious and ethnic identity in 15th century Crete.

On the other hand, whilst modern research thought of Georgius Scholarius as a proponent of Orthodoxy, he did not unconditionally disapprove of Hellenism (Livanios 2004, pp. 23–40). It is well known that in a dialogue with a follower of the Jewish faith, Scholarius replied to the hypothetical question "Who am I?" by stating that he considered himself to be a Christian. Whilst he spoke the Greek language, he claimed that he did not think like the Hellenes (Scholarius 1930, p. 253). Scholarius's response obscure his views on identity and consciousness. Namely, he frequently considered himself and his fellow Byzantines as "Hellenes" and their motherland as "Hellas" (Angelou 1996, pp. 1–19). Moreover, he admitted that he and his compatriots were offspring of the Hellenes ("Ἑλλήνων γάρ ἐσμέν παῖδες") (Scholarius 1930, p. 13) and Constantinople was the motherland of the Hellenic *genos* at his time (πατρίδος τῷ νῦν ἑλληνικῷ γένει) (Scholarius 1935, p. 211). He also felt frustrated about the possible extinction of the Hellenic *genos* because the Hellenes were the best among the human race (Scholarius 1928, p. 285). Moreover, the Hellenic genos prevailed in wisdom and lawfulness. The Hellenes were the best among the rest of the human races (Scholarius 1928, p. 285).

Scholarius, contrary to Pletho and his followers, did not share his skepticism towards Latin philosophy (Livanios 2006, pp. 74–86). He did not refrain from comparing Scholastic philosophy to

ancient Greek, since he appreciated the progress made in Western Europe after the end of antiquity (Scholarius 1928, p. 386; Scholarius 1935, p. 406). Scholarius dedicated a large part of his career studying and commenting on works of major Scholastics, because he appreciated the originality of Latin thinkers. He was persuaded that the diffusion of Latin philosophy would benefit the Greeks, because the Latins further developed ancient Greek philosophy (Scholarius 1928, p. 386; Scholarius 1935, p. 406). Therefore, Scholarius did not share Pletho's fear of cultural alienation of the *genos*; his fears concentrated rather on the physical extinction of the *genos* (Scholarius 1935, pp. 406–7). Scholarius supported that the Byzantines should not exclusively study the ancient Greeks. Instead, they ought to study and incorporate the enhanced version of Greek philosophy that the Latins would offer them. Scholarius did not reject Hellenitas on grounds that have nothing to do with Christian religion. It seems that he felt a connection with the Hellenes of classical antiquity and thought of himself as a Hellene, besides a Christian and a Roman. However, he did not perceive Hellenitas as an imitation of classical antiquity. Rather, he aimed at an upgraded Hellenism, enriched by the best aspects of the Latin culture. Scholarius's views prove that Lamers's argument—according to which "the Hellenic identifier was used especially by Byzantine Latinophrones, who often settled in the Latin West or in the Latin-ruled parts of the Greek-speaking world" (Lamers 2015, p. 31)—is not accurate. Scholarius was the leading figure of the anti-Unionist party and he served the Ottoman rulers after 1453.

Nonetheless, the discussion of Greek consciousness and identity in the 15th century should not be limited to Pletho's entourage and his rivals. There is a rather interesting confrontation between Georgius Trapezuntius (1395–1472), a renowned translator and Aristotelian of the 15th century who migrated to Italy, and Cardinal Bessarion, who studied in Mystra with Pletho and then became a Cardinal in the Papal Curia. Despite his first Platonic steps in philosophy (Hankins 1990, p. 180; Geanakoplos 1989, p. 55; Gilbert 1968, pp. 463–500; Monfasani 1976, pp. 18–19, 73, 102, 167–68; Monfasani 2002a, pp. 220–21; Syros 2010, pp. 473–77), Trapezuntius gradually became the strongest critic of Plato and a fervent defender of Aristotle (Monfasani 1976, p. 19). His most influential book was *Comparatio Philosophorum Platonis et Aristotelis* (1458). In his work, Trapezuntius attempted to provide an explanation of how he came to disown Plato and become a supporter of Aristotle (Kristeller 1972, pp. 86–109; Monfasani 1976, p. 201; Monfasani 2002b, pp. 179–202). Trapezuntius occasionally refers to ancient Greece in ways that allow readings related to issues of consciousness and identity. Namely, he expressed his disapproval of Plato's attack to the four liberators of Greece, namely Miltiades, Themistocles, Pericles and Cimon (Trapezuntius 1523, O5r-P2r). In his dialogue *Gorgias* Plato sketches out a scornful Socrates against Themistocles, Cimon and Miltiades because did not care to properly educate the Athenian people when they were in power. According to Socrates, these four politicians recklessly filled the city with projects without any concern for the citizens and their education (Plato, 503c–519e).

Trapezuntius discussed the same subject in a chapter entitled *On Plato's hatred and attack of Plato over of the four saviors of Greece* (Trapezuntius 1523, O5r-P2r). He felt discomfort for the scale of ingratitude and hatred of Plato against the saviors of Greece (Trapezuntius 1523, O5r). Trapezuntius was furious because Plato did not find any other reason to write about the liberators of Greece, except only to blame them. In order to defend Miltiades, Trapezuntius stated: "For those who saved our country and forefathers, saved us as well" (Trapezuntius 1523, O6v). It is evident that he felt a connection with the ancient Greeks and considered them as his ancestors. Moreover, he admitted that they saved the Greek *genos*, when he projected the consequences of the four liberators' actions up to his epoch. Trapezuntius was proud of his Greek roots and he treated the Persian wars proportionally to the Turkish threat (Trapezuntius 1523, O6v). It is indicative of the way Trapezuntius perceived the Greco-Persian wars that—in his exhortation (1452) to Pope Nicholas V (Monfasani 1984, p. 435)—he compared them to the threat posed by the Turks to the Byzantine Empire and Christian Europe during his times. Trapezuntius considered the Platonic text to be dangerous because it was able to challenge the moral of the Greeks who, at the same time, were threatened by the Turks (Monfasani 1984, pp. 435–42). It is noteworthy that Trapezuntius conceptualized the combat between Turks and Christians through the

lens of the ancient Greek historian Herodotus, as Chalkokondyles did (Akışık-Karakullukçu 2013, pp. 189–94). Furthermore, when Trapezuntius referred to Greece, he chose the word *patria*. In my view, the word *patria* enhances the bonds of the Greeks of antiquity to the Greeks living during the end of the Byzantine Empire, because there is a sense that they shared something. Moreover, Trapezuntius's interpretation of ancient Greek history and his parallelisms with the dangers that the Greeks faced in the 15th century, proved his sense of connection to the Greek past.

In the exhortation to Pope Nicholas V, which he wrote in order to motivate the Latins to help repel the Turks, Trapezuntius identified himself as *Graecus* and *Christianus* (Monfasani 1984, p. 435). It is obvious that he does not perceive the two terms as identical. A *Graecus* is not necessarily Christian, according to him. Trapezuntius clearly states that he did not adhere to the doctrines of the Greek Orthodox Church when he wrote the letter: someone could be *Graecus* without being Orthodox. Trapezuntius's reference questions Angelou's argument that the word 'Hellene' in the 15th century means "Greek Orthodox" (Angelou 1996, pp. 1–19). Trapezuntius's reference is accompanied by the identification with Christianity and reflects his perspective. While elsewhere in this same letter, as well as in other Trapezuntius's texts (Monfasani 1984, pp. 529, 570), the term Greek (*Γραικός/Graecus*) seems to indicate the Orthodox, the above passage from the preface clearly distinguishes the national identification from the religious one. "Hellene" (Ἕλλην) is sometimes used to designate ethnic origin (Monfasani 1984, pp. 539, 550), but also as a synonym of pagan (Monfasani 1984, p. 550). However, Trapezuntius chose the words ἐθνῶν (Monfasani 1984, p. 572) and Ἑλλήνων (Monfasani 1984, p. 550) to refer to pagans (Monfasani 1984, p. 572). In addition, the term Ἀνατολικοί (Orientals) is used for religious purposes (Monfasani 1984, p. 531). Trapezuntius's plea to the Pope to guarantee the salvation of Europe against the Turks is particularly interesting (Monfasani 1984, p. 435–42). He attempted to separate the Greeks from their Eastern neighbors and connected them to the fate of the "Catholic Europe". According to him, Greece and the rest of Europe share a common future. If Greece fell, the rest of Europe would follow. We should bear in mind that Greek scholars show a preference to words that mean West (Ἑσπέρας, Ἑσπερίων) in describing Europe.

Trapezuntius read ancient Greek history—especially the Greco-Persian wars—under a new spectrum and enthusiastically associates himself with the Greek past. He felt a connection with the ancient Greeks, a *generis coniunctio* in his own words (Monfasani 1984, p. 435). He also proudly declared that he belonged to the Greek *genos* (Monfasani 1984, p. 351). Trapezuntius perceives himself as a Greek, as a person connected to the Greek land and the Greek past. In his argument against the Italian humanist Andrea Agaso, Trapezuntius asserted that his opponent could not praise the ancient Greeks and despise modern Greeks. Trapezuntius's claim presupposes that the ancient and modern Greeks belong to the same *genos* (Monfasani 1984, p. 383, 393). At the same time, he declares that he is also a Christian, believing that someone who is connected and inspired by the Greek past can be a Christian, without one identity negating the other. He is concerned about two positions that created a synthesis which, in the eyes of Pletho, seemed to be at least strange. As a result, Siniossoglou's claim that "Byzantine humanists were Hellenes, not because they revived the religion of the ancients, but because they deviated from Orthodoxy by experimenting in varying degrees with 'pagan' philosophy and especially Platonism" (Siniossoglou 2011, p. 26) is untenable in view of Trapezuntius's own writings. Trapezuntius was a proponent of Hellenitas, despite the fact that he used frequently the term *Graecus*. His predilection was the result of the fact that he wrote the vast majority of his works in Latin.

Cardinal Bessarion replied to Trapezuntius's *Comparatio* in his own *In Calumniatorem Platonis* (1469). Bessarion sought to defend Plato from Trapezuntius's attacks (Mohler 1923–1942, v. III, p. 546). According to Bessarion, Plato did not discuss the military successes of these men. He expressed a judgement on whether they rendered the citizens better or they learned to win over themselves first and then their opponents. Bessarion's answer was that the four saviors were demagogues because they used the average, demagogic rhetoric with the intention to please rather than benefit the people (Mohler 1923–1942, v. III, pp. 546–48). He supported that Greece was not saved in the naval battles of Salamis and Artemisium; rather, it was rescued in the infantry battles of Marathon and Plataea

(Mohler 1923–1942, v. III, p. 548). While the four liberators of Greece contributed militarily, they did not benefit their city on any other level. (Mohler 1923–1942, v. III, pp. 548–52).

In his magnum opus, the *In Calumniatorem Platonis*, Bessarion refers rarely to Greece and Hellenism. Bessarion intentionally keeps a distance from the topic under consideration. On the contrary, in a letter to the Emperor Constantine Palaeologus XI, Bessarion congratulates him personally and the Hellenes (ὅλως τοῖς Ἕλλησι) on the construction of the fortifying wall in Corinth (Mohler 1923–1942, v. III, p. 440). In the same letter, he refers to the Hellenes as our *genos* (ἡμέτερον γένος) (Mohler 1923–1942, v. III, p. 547) and he declares that he is Hellene by *genos* (Mioni 1973, pl. XX). According to Bessarion, the Hellenes are a praiseworthy *genos* (Mohler 1923–1942, v. III, p. 445). Palaeologus had the privilege to rule the offspring of the people who defeated the Persians at the battle of Plataea (Mohler 1923–1942, v. III, p. 443). Moreover, he calls Pletho "the glory of Hellas" (Mohler 1923–1942, v. III, p. 469). Addressing Theodorus Gaza, Bessarion expresses his fear for the fate of the Hellenes, since the decline of education would lead to the extinction of Greek language and *genos* (Mohler 1923–1942, v. III, p. 486). Furthermore, in his treatise "In illud evangelii: Sic eum volo manere, quid ad te?", Bessarion names the Hellenes (Ἕλληνες)—the Orthodox—and the Latins as the two opposing sides on doctrinal issues (Mohler 1923–1942, v. III, pp. 70–87). According to Bessarion, someone could be Hellene and Orthodox at the same time. This is a major departure from Pletho's interpretative scheme. Finally, he presented the history of Trebizond as a direct line from classical Athens to his times (Bessarion 1984, pp. 3–75). In his Encomium to Trebizond, he stressed the continuity of the Hellenes, both ethnically and culturally.

Bessarion, when addressing a Greek audience, preferred the ethnonyms Hellenes and *Graeci*, in opposition to the Latins and Romans of the Western Europe. *Graeci* was used mainly in religious contexts. Whilst Bessarion was not preoccupied against the Latins, he shared Pletho's fear about the future of the Hellenes, and the potential cultural alienation of his compatriots. As a reaction to this, he established his famous library, he collected manuscripts and hired scribes to safeguard the continuity of the language and values (Mohler 1923–1942, v. III, p. 479).

From his part, Andronicus Callistus (ca. 1400–1476), a professor of Greek language in several European cities and Bessarion's associate, also called the Byzantines Hellenes (Migne 1866a, p. 1020; Migne 1866b, p. 1131). Arsenius Apostolis (1465–1535), bishop of Monemvasia and son of Michael Apostolis, Marcus Musurus (1470–1517), a Cretan publisher and famous humanist in Venice, and Janus Lascaris (ca. 1445–1534), a noted Greek scholar in Renaissance Italy, followed the same path (Lamers 2015). Along the same lines, Christopher Kontoleon (first half of the 16th century), a scribe and scholar, argued that his compatriots would never improve as long as they prefer to use the ethnonym Romans instead of Hellenes (Lamers 2015, p. 58). We should admit that this is a rather quick escalation of Hellenitas. While all the aforementioned scholars discussed identity and consciousness predominantly on cultural and political grounds, Michael Tarchaniota Marullus (1453–1500)—a poet, soldier and humanist –put forth the concept of the bloodline. Namely, in one of his poems he wondered about the glory of the Pelasgian blood. He held that the survival of the Greek language was the only way to preserve the glory of the Pelasgian blood (Lamers 2015, p. 211). It is noteworthy that he chose to refer to Greeks with a rather obsolete term. Nevertheless, he felt that the connection with ancient Greeks is also biological and not only cultural. Therefore, Marullus considered the Byzantine Empire as an Hellenic empire. Hellenes possessed the *Imperium Romanum* for centuries (Lamers 2015, p. 221).

Finally, John Argyropoulos (ca. 1405–1487)—a leading Aristotelian of the 15th century in Italy (Steiris 2015)—was a fervent supporter of Hellenitas. His approach includes the continuity of Hellenism from antiquity to his epoch (Runciman 1985, p. 120). Namely, he stated to the Emperor Constantine Palaeologus XI that his kingship should be in advantage of the Hellenic *genos* and the common household of the Hellenes: (τοῦ δ' ἡμετέρου τουτουί γένους καί τῆς κοινῆς ταύτης τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἑστίας) (Lampros 1910, pp. 27–28, 66). Moreover, he implied that ancient and modern Greeks love to reflect on their passions; they are emotional (Lampros 1910, p. 10). Argyropoulos's views are better described in an oration addressed to the Emperor John VII Paleologus (1392–1448) (Lampros 1910, pp. 1–7). In this oration, he frequently refers to the inhabitants of the remaining Eastern Roman Empire

as Hellenes (Lampros 1910, pp. 1–7) and calls John "the King of Hellas" (Ὦ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἥλιε βασιλεῦ) (Lampros 1910, p. 7). After the Emperor's death, Argyropoulos praised the late Emperor for managing to save the lands, the cities and the language of the Hellenes (Lampros 1910, p. 6). According to Argyropoulos, Constantine XI Paleologus, the last Byzantine Emperor, was, like his predecessor, also king of the Hellenes (Lampros 1910, pp. 29, 37, 47). Argyropoulos did not hesitate to identify himself as a Hellene (Lampros 1910, pp. 30, 66). In addition, he repeatedly interpreted the historical events of his times in connection to the ancient Greek history. Argyropoulos's works are characterized by an intense patriotism, which is in fact a type of Hellenism different from that of Pletho. Although Argyropoulos shared with Pletho a strong archaism (Lampros 1910, pp. 7, 32, 36, 41, 44), he did not oppose *the genos* of the Hellenes to the Orthodox dogma and remained a Christian, even a Catholic (Lampros 1910, pp. 22, 35; Monfasani 1992, pp. 56–57).

6. Conclusions

In conclusion, Greek scholars in Late Byzantium and the Post-Byzantine era contributed to the quest of a Greek identity by synthesizing various elements in the formation of Hellenitas. Namely, Pletho and Apostolis aimed at the refusal of the imperialism of Latin culture in order to safeguard the *genos*. Scholarius felt a connection with the Hellenes of classical antiquity and thought of himself as a Hellene, not just a Christian and a Roman. However, he did not approve of the idea of Hellenism as an imitation of classical antiquity. Rather, he aimed at a renewed Hellenism, enriched by the best aspects of the Latin culture. Trapezuntius perceived himself as a Greek and as a Christian, believing that someone who is connected and inspired by the Greek past can also be a Christian. In addition, Bessarion held that someone could be Hellene and Orthodox at the same time. All the aforementioned scholars based their views of identity on cultural continuity and history. They felt the need to clarify the bonds that unite the Greeks, namely common history. It is obvious that the basis of the philosophical elites's Hellenitas after the 13th century was not only common language and literary tradition but also historical continuity and cultural otherness, in contrast to Mango's interpretative pattern (Harris 2000, p. 34.; Mango 1981, pp. 48–57). Therefore, commonly held views (Koubourlis 2005, p. 54; Pizanias 2009, p. 14)—according to which Hellenism, as cultural and historical identity, and Christian religion were incompatible in the Post-Byzantine era—are not supported by the writings of the most prominent Greek scholars. Late Byzantine scholars lamented the decline of the former Eastern Roman Empire and sought pride in ancient Greece. Hellenitas was the core concept in their attempt to reshape their national identity. The Greek scholars in the last centuries of Byzantium and after the siege of Constantinople, no matter of their whereabouts, their personal career and their lords, agreed that the shift towards Hellenism would safeguard the existence of the *genos*. Romanitas and Graecitas remained influential and the debate was heated between proponents of different perspectives on identity. In contrast to commonly held views that the early modern Hellenic identity flourished only in the Latin West and was later introduced in mainland Greece, I suggest that gravitation towards Hellenic identity commenced from the work of Byzantine luminaries who, in some way or another, resided in or were related to the Greek East. Hellenitas is something that cannot be attributed solely, or even mainly, to Byzantine communities in Western Europe. The debate still lasts among Greek intellectuals and the questions posed in Late Byzantium are still open. Hellenitas, from the 15th century onwards, remains a constitutive element of Modern Greek identity. However, Hellenitas is not a process of mere imitation. It is rather a creative reconnection with ancient Greece, enriched by certain Byzantine elements, because its' roots are traced back in Late Byzantium.

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Once Again, Nationality and Religion

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Abstract: An examination of the relation between nationality and religion calls for comparative analysis. There is a variability of the relation over time and from one nation and religion to another. At times, nationality and religion have clearly converged; but there have also been times when they have diverged. Examination of this variability may lead to generalizations that can be achieved through comparison. While the generalizations achieved through a comparative analysis of the relation are heuristically useful, there are complications that qualify those generalizations. Moreover, while further refining the comparative framework of the relation between nationality and religion remains important, it is not the pressing theoretical problem. That problem is ascertaining what is distinctive of religion as a category of human thought and action such that it is distinguishable from nationality and, thus, a variable in the comparative analysis. It may be that determining that distinctiveness results in the need for a different framework to analyze the relation between nationality and religion.

Keywords: axial age; kinship; monolatry; monotheism; nation; priest; religion; territory

1. Introduction

Examination of the relation between nationality and religion calls for comparative analysis. It does so for two reasons: one, the variability of the relation over time and from one nation and religion to another; and two, the generalizations that may be achieved through the comparison. Over the years, I have several times turned my attention to clarifying the relation between nationality and religion, both through examining a particular expression of the relation, for example, ancient Israel and the worship of Yahweh (Grosby 2002) or nationality and the Catholic Church (Grosby 2016), and by providing a comparative framework (Grosby 2001, 2005, pp. 80–97). I shall again offer here a comparative analysis, but now with a different focus. While the generalizations achieved through a comparative analysis of the relation are heuristically useful, I shall concentrate on the complications that qualify those generalizations. Moreover, while further refining the comparative framework of the relation between nationality and religion remains important, it is not the pressing theoretical problem. That problem is ascertaining what is distinctive of religion as a category of human thought and action such that it is distinguishable from nationality and, thus, a variable in the comparative analysis.

2. Territorial Kinship and Monolatry

We begin with a historical episode that allows us to ascertain what is characteristic of the convergence of nationality and religion. For about one hundred and fifty years during the Early Dynastic Period of southern Mesopotamian history (2500–2350 BC), there was an ongoing war between the city-states of Lagash and Umma. One inscription describing this conflict reveals clearly the convergence between religion and the respective territorial kinships of these societies (Cooper 1986, pp. 54–57).

> Enlil, the king (god) of all the lands, upon his firm command, drew the border between Ningirsu (god of Lagash) and Shara (god of Umma) . . . Eannatum, ruler of Lagash . . . made the border by extending the Inun-canal to Gu'edena (to the edge of the plain) . . . At that

boundary-channel he inscribed new boundary-stones . . . If the man of Umma, in order to carry off fields (takes the fields or their produce by force), crosses the boundary-channel of (the god) Ningirsu (Lagash) . . . be he an Ummaean or a foreigner, may Enlil destroy him!

Clearly observable from this inscription is the conception that the city-state Lagash has its own diety, Ningirsu, as does the city-state Umma, the deity Shara. Moreover, these deities have a demarcated territorial jurisdiction, as Enlil, the king or father of the gods, is described as having designated the geographically precise border between the two deities and, thus, their respective societies. We also note that even as early as during the third millennium BC those boundaries are not solely determined by geographically natural frontiers such as mountains or rivers, but may be borders designated with precision by, in this example, boundary-stones.[1]

The evident corollary conveyed in this inscription of the distinction of the territorial jurisdictions between the deities Ningirsu and Shara and the societies of their respective city-states, Lagash and Umma, is the existence of the recognition of territorial kinship. One individual is distinguished from another individual depending upon where the individual is from, so a "man from Umma", or an "Ummaean", in contrast to both an individual from Lagash and a "foreigner." The categories "man from Umma", or "Ummaean", and "foreigner" indicate territorial location to have been a reference in self-classification, hence, the existence of territorial kinship that corresponded to a distinction between the deities' jurisdiction. Needless to say, the, for example, "Ummaean" would have also understood himself as being a member of a family; thus, there was a co-mingling of two forms of kinship: descent within a territory, Umma, also, in this example, the deity Shara's territory; and descent within the family. Lest one wrongly posit some kind of historically early, primitive or archaic mentality, by which the distinctiveness of the individual, qua individual, was dissolved into the territorial kinship of being a "Ummaean", numerous Sumerian and Akkadian inscriptions, including collections of laws beginning with those of Ur-Namma (c. 2100 BC), clearly refer to the autonomous individual, as indicated by the legal categories of the Sumerian *lú* and the Akkadian *awīlum*, who, as such, possessed authority over himself and his property (see Roth 1997; Von Dassow 2011).

Now, clearly in this inscription concerning the conflict between Lagash and Umma, we are dealing with city-states, although their territorial jurisdictions encompassed other, smaller villages and towns (Kuhrt 1995, p. 43). During the Early Dynastic Period, the populations of these respective city-states were between approximately 20,000 to 30,000 individuals (Steinkeller 2017; Kuhrt 1995, p. 32). The purpose of beginning this examination with an inscription describing the lengthy conflict between the city-states of Lagash and Umma is to introduce the concept of territorial kinship: the self-classificatory category of relation between individuals derived from descent within what is recognized to be a common territory (see Grosby 1995, 2018a). The latter is susceptible to geographical expansion, from the city-state to the nation. The nation is a geographically extensive, yet bounded society of territorial kinship (Grosby 2005, 2018a).

The distinction between city-state and nation is primarily one of geographical extent. The territorial kinship of the nation encompasses individuals from numerous cities who understand themselves not only as residents of those cities but also related to others within the national territory as members (Akkadian, *awīlum*) of the nation, for example, as a "Babylonian", an "Assyrian", or as a "son of Israel"—to be a "native of the land", as this latter category of legal anthropology appears nineteen times in the Hebrew Bible as a descriptive equivalent or modifier of "Israelite." The national state is the organization of relations of power within the borders of the territorial kinship of the nation.

There is an unavoidable analytical ambiguity or categorial imprecision in the distinction between an expanding city-state, for example, Babylon, the population of which reached several hundred thousand (Van de Meiroop 1997, p. 95), nation, and empire (see Hutchinson 2017, p. 120), as one term, for example, "Babylon", could refer to city-state, nation, or empire depending upon the particular

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[1]   For the distinction between frontier and border, and the relation of each to the formation of the state, see (Grosby 2019).

historical period. The same multiple references of one term over time applies to "Assyria", *Aššur*: the city-state; the territory encompassing the triangular area bounded by the cities of Aššur, Arba'il, and Ninevah; and, later beginning with the reign of Adad-nirari II (911–891 BC), when its borders expanded depending upon military advantage, empire. While acknowledging this imprecision, nevertheless analytically significant is the ubiquitous evidence of terms that designate territorial kinship: "a man from Umma"; "son (or people) of x", where x is the designation of a territorially extensive yet bounded society, as in, for example, "people of Hatti", "people of Babylon", "sons (or people) of the land of Assyria", and so forth; or the use of gentilic adjectives, for example, *Aššurāyu*, "Assyrian man", *Aššurayītu*, "Assyrian woman."[2] This evidence from throughout much of the history of the ancient Near East is analytically significant because it indicates that territorial kinship in general and nationality in particular cannot be confined to the historical period of "modernity" with its modern state, industrialization, democratic citizenship, and modern means of communication, as wrongly argued by too many fashionable analyses, as if there were not states, markets, long-distant trade, and collections of laws recognizing individuals with control over their property in antiquity (see Grosby 2019).[3] Territorial kinship and its variations, for example, city-state, nation, and empire, are found throughout all historical periods.

Not only did a city have its god, but so, too, a land of broader geographically scope had its god. For example, the god *Aššur* was the god of the land of Assyria (Machinist 1993; Postgate 1992); the storm god Taru/Teshub was the god of the land of Hatti (Hoffner 1990); Marduk was the god of Babylon/Babylonia; Kemosh was the god of the land of Moab, and so forth. Any territory, as distinct from merely a geographical area, requires symbolic representation which conveys meaning to that area such that it is a territory, so that there is not merely an individual who dwells within an area, but also where an individual who understands himself or herself and is understood by others to be from that area, thereby recognized as embodying certain territorially bounded characteristics, to be, for example, a Ummaean, Hittite, Assyrian, or Moabite. Those characteristics, while they vary, are often worshipping a particular god or speaking a particular language; they convey the conceptual boundaries of the relation of territorial kinship.

The existence of a bounded area of land infused with meaning, that is, a territory (Grosby 1995), certainly exists for small city-states. Our earliest archaeological evidence of urbanism, from the early Ubaid period (c. 4500 BC) and manifestly so during the Uruk period (c. 35000–3000 BC), reveals not only stamps, seals, and bullae for recording items of property and their amounts in exchange for other items, but also the appearance of monumental architecture of a temple complex, known at the city-state of Uruk as Eanna, "House of Heaven" (Van de Meiroop 1997, chp. 2). That temple complex represented the symbolic center of the city around which its territory and its people were ordered; it conveyed the cultural characteristics or properties—recognition and worship of the god of the city-state—that contributed to the formation of that geographical area into a territory and the individuals in that area into the territorial kinship of a people. Thus, the formation of a city, qua city, has never been merely utilitarian; it has always also been symbolic (Wheatley 1969).

If this is so for the city-state, it is also necessarily even more so for the territorially more extensive nation. An individual may have direct experience of the entire territory of a city-state, so that the familiarity of neighborly co-residence co-exists with, and is expanded by and within that experience to encompass the territory of the city. It is possible for the individual to have a relation of face-to-face encounters with the population of the city-state. Although the individual's direct experience with, and attachment to, both the city and the residents within it will have been increasingly difficult to sustain when the city-state has become a large metropolis of several hundred thousand residents,

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2   For the phrases "land/people of Aššur", "land/people of Babylon", "land/people of Hatti", and so forth, see (Moran 1992); for the gentilic adjectives *Aššurāyu* and *Aššurayītu*, see (Parpola 2004) and (Roth 1997, p. 170, ¶44).

3   For examples of analyses restricting nations to modern times, see (Anderson 1983; Gellner 1983; Breuilly 1982). For analyses supportive of the appearance of nations earlier, see (Hastings 1997; Smith 2004; Roshwald 2006; Hirschi 2012; Gat 2013).

for example, Babylon, the individual's participation in periodic religious festivals, for example, the Babylonian new year festival (*akitu*), at its symbolic center, *Esaglia*, the temple complex, would have facilitated the existence and stabilization of the relation of the wider territorial kinship of even the metropolis. However, the territory of the nation will generally be too geographically extensive to have been experienced directly by many of its individual inhabitants. Thus, especially crucial for the existence of a national territory will be its symbolic expression which, as such, can be experienced through the cognitive capacities of the individual, that is, by incorporating the image of the nation as a part of the individual's self-understanding. The vehicles for this symbolic expression are developing forms of tradition—language, history and, above all, religion—which contribute to the formation of the boundaries of the nation and its territory, and obviously so when the deity worshipped is the god of the land.

The borders of the geographically more extensive, national territory marked the jurisdiction of the deity. Thus, the location of temples of the god of the land often designated the boundaries of the national territory, for example, as recorded in I Kings 12–29, King Jeroboam built temples at Dan, the northern border of Israel, and at Bethel, the southern border of Israel. And it was evidently believed, before the ascendancy of monotheism, that to leave the native land of one's nation and dwell in another was to worship the god of the land of one's new residence, as seems to be implied by I Samuel 26:17–20.

In the study of religion, the category "monolatry" signifies this conceptual state of affairs, where each nation and its land has a god distinctive to that people and its territory. Thus, with monolatry there is recognition of a multi-polar world of numerous nations in contrast, as Hirschi (2012) observed, to a bi-polar imperial vision, where the world is divided between the civilized inhabitants of the empire and those outside the empire who, as such, are often considered to be barbarians dwelling in an unorganized, chaotic space. In the Hebrew Bible, this multi-polarity of numerous nations was seen to be legitimate, as it was evidently a continuation of creation, "these are the families of Noah's descendants (Shem, Ham, and Japheth), according to their origins (languages and land), by their nations (*gôyim*)" (Genesis 10:32; see 10:5, 20, 31). It appears that the biblical narrative intends for its readers to contrast this proper, heterogeneous multi-polarity of nations, as conveyed in Genesis 10, with the improper, homogeneous empire of Babylon, where there was "one people with one language", as described in Genesis 11. Perhaps the *locus classicus* of this national, multi-polar monolatry appears in the otherwise monotheistic Hebrew Bible, "When the Most High gave the nations (*gôyim*) their homes ("inheritances" = respective territories), when he divided humankind ("sons of Adam"), he fixed the borders of the peoples (and their territories) according to the number of gods", as Deuteronomy 32:8 appears in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint (where the Greek for "nations" is ἔθνων) but not the Masoretic Text.

National misfortune was understood to be a consequence of the national deity's anger toward, or even abandonment of, his land and people. For example, the so-called "Moabite stele" of King Mesha (c. 830 BC) recounts how Omri, King of Israel, was militarily able to conquer Moab because "Kemosh (the god of Moab) was angry with his land" (Chavalas 2006, p. 313). And the Babylonian "Marduk Prophecy" (Foster 1995, pp. 215–17) describes how over the years the defeats of Babylon by the Hittites, Assyrians, and Elamites took place when the god of Babylon, Marduk, had deserted Babylon for those respective places. The prophecy further describes how Marduk will return to Babylon when a future "King of Babylon (presumably Nebuchadnezzar I, c. 1125–1103 BC) will arise (who) will renew the marvelous temple (of Marduk in Babylon)" ushering in a time of prosperity and peace, when "the harvest of the land will be plentiful, market prices will be favorable, wickedness will be rectified . . . (and) brother will have consideration for brother . . . (as) there will always be consideration among the people" (Foster 1995, pp. 216–17). However, Marduk did not, in fact, leave Babylon for those places, as his statue was taken from Babylon by those respective, victorious armies, that is, Marduk had been taken captive.

National prosperity was believed to be dependent upon the appropriate propitiation of the god of the land, as described, for example, in 2 Kings 17:24–27. These verses recount how the individuals

from the Assyrian empire who were resettled in (northern) Israel during the reign of the Assyrian King Sargon II (721–705 BC) did not know

> the laws of the God of the land, therefore He let lions loose against them which are killing them, for they do not know the laws of the God of the land. Then the King of Assyria gave an order, "send (return) there one of the (Israelite) priests whom you have deported; let him go and dwell there, and let him teach there the laws of the God of the land.

And the re-establishment of the sovereignty of a previously defeated people was represented by the return of the statue of the god of the land where it belonged (see Cogan 1974), as recounted, for example, in the Babylonian "Marduk Prophecy." The return of the statue of the god of the land allowed for the renewal of the native cult, for example, as described in the "Cyrus Cylinder" (Chavalas 2006, pp. 428–29), where Cyrus (c. 538 BC) is portrayed as returning the statues of the foreign gods, previously held in captivity in Babylon, to the sanctuaries in the god's native homelands.[4] As the "kidnapping" of the deity's statue represented the shattering of the nation's symbolic center, thereby endangering the continuation of its territorial kinship, the return of the statue of the god of the land and the renewal of the native cult represented the re-establishment of its symbolic center.

This monolatrous relation, where a deity is described as having a special regard for a particular people and land, was by no means confined to the history of the ancient Near East. For example, Athena was the god of Athens, and Japan was the home of the sun-god Amaterasu. Hinduism, as Michael Cook (2014, p. 67) observed, "possesses a remarkably sharp territorial sense", as conveyed by the geographical terms "Āryāvarta", the land within which Aryans may dwell, and "Bhāratavarsa" which expands the former to include the southern area of India. Thus, the "conception of (India's) territory was both clear and, once the south had been incorporated, stable", encircled by the sea on the east, west, and south and bounded on the north by the Himalayas, designating "a Hindu Idea of India as a domain of religious activity distinct from the rest of the world" (Cook 2014, pp. 68–69). It is the assertion of a domain (pattern) of religious activity that is distinctive to, or even confined to, a particular territory that is of interest to us as it indicates a convergence between religion and nationality.

This territorial jurisdiction of religion, conveyed explicitly by the monolatrous idea of the god of the land throughout the history of the ancient Near East and the varying expressions of it elsewhere, lends support to the functionalist understanding of religion, however not, as we shall see and which should be obvious, religion per se but religion of the pre-axial age. The functionalist analysis of religion examines how the beliefs and practices of religion contribute to the stability—the coherence and continuity—of a society by affirming and strengthening the attachments of individuals to society (Radcliffe-Brown [1935] 1965; Radcliffe-Brown [1945] 1965). Emile Durkheim's *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (Durkheim [1912] 1995) represents the logically consistent formulation of the functionalist perspective by arguing that religion is actually the worship of society by society, as the deity is nothing other than the symbolic representation of society. The clearest examples of the merit of the functionalist perspective are the pre-axial age religions, where the primary deity is a god of the land and its people; thus, the worship of the deity is the worship of the society because the deity is the god of that territorially bounded society. For example, *Aššur*, as the god of the land of *Aššur*, that is, Assyria—where the very term indicates a monolatrous conflation between deity and society—conveyed an Assyrian understanding that the land of Assyria was an extension of, or identical with, the territorial jurisdiction of the deity (Tadmor 1986, p. 205; Machinist 1993, p. 81), thereby facilitating, as we have seen, the territorial kinship of being "Assyrian."

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4   For a recent re-evaluation of Cyrus' policies, see (Kuhrt 2007).

3. Comparative Framework and Its Complications

This monolatrous, conceptual conflation between deity, land, and people was disrupted, so argued Karl Jaspers (1953; see also Eisenstadt 1982, 1986, 2003; Bellah 2011), by the axial age revolution: those civilizations that took shape from the sixth century BC to the first centuries of the Christian era—represented by ancient Israelite prophecy, Second Temple Judaism, Greek philosophy, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and, later, Islam. In contrast to the monolatry of antiquity, characteristic of the axial age was the religious development of a sharp disjunction, or fundamental tension, between the mundane and trans-mundane worlds, with a concomitant emphasis on an other-worldly ethical order, for example, the Christian conception of *agape*. The existence of this ethical order was a consequence of what Max Weber [1921] (1978) referred to as the rationalization—the doctrinal and moral coherence—within the conceptual sphere of religion that appears with the so-called "religions of the book": scriptures that either contain dogma or set into motion a religion's theological development.

This conceptual heterogeneity that is characteristic of the axial age monotheistic world religions —the reality of this world and that of the other world—stands in contrast to the homologous conception of the pre-axial age religions, where the distinction between these two worlds is either undeveloped or blunted by the monolatrous god of the land and nation. For the monotheistic religions, the vision of what humanity ought to be, represented by heaven or by an eschatology, stands in sharp tension with what humanity is. Thus, *contra* the functionalist analysis of religion, the monotheistic religions of the axial age bear the potential for being disruptive of the stability of the social and political order by subjecting that order to the expectations of what humanity ought to be or will one day become. For the pre-axial age religions, the image of the proper order of divine justice did not exist in sharp tension with the reality of this world; rather, it was viewed as being inseparable from, hence, a factor contributing to, social cohesion, as was seen above in the discussion of the dependency of national prosperity and sovereignty on the god of the land.

Institutionally, the representatives of the axial age tension between this world and the other word were the religious intellectuals—the prophet, the cleric—organized into a distinct profession. As a separate, organized profession, the clerics became a locus for the development and continued existence of ideas that are potentially disruptive of the stability of the social and political order. In contrast, for the pre-axial age, the religious sphere is inseparable, at least superficially, from the social and political order, the obvious example of which is divine kingship, as in ancient Egypt and Japan.

Obviously, the conceptual development of the axial age revolution poses a decisive challenge to the functionalist analysis of religion, because while religion may and often does contribute to social cohesion by being a bearer of morality, the monotheistic religions of the book may also be disruptive of a social relation, for example, of a nation and its social order of custom, tradition, and law. Thus, Durkheim's analysis is actually applicable not to religion *per se*, but only to a subset of religious experience, specifically the pre-axial age religions. However, as well shall see, even for the pre-axial age religions, complications arise that qualify the merit of the functionalist analysis of even those religions. We will briefly postpone further discussion of the limitations of both the functionalist argument of the relation between nationality and religion and the historicist disjunction posited by the contrast between the pre-axial age and the axial age by accepting for now the acknowledged merits of both. Accepting those merits will allow us to formulate a comparative framework for analyzing the relation between religion and nationality. Even so, that framework cannot avoid being over schematic, indicating not only those limitations but also that a different analytical framework is called for.

As we have observed, the convergence between nationality and religion is obvious where there is a monolatrous god of the land and of the people who, as a territorial kinship, are of, that is, native to, the land. Throughout the history of the ancient Near East, this convergence has been conceptually explicit precisely when the jurisdiction of the deity is confined to the national territory; or, if not explicitly confined, there is an explicitly formulated, particular and enduring relation between the deity and a land and its people, for example, in Babylon mythology, the divine Marduk's home, as described in the *Enuma Elish*, is Babylon. An evidently similar explicitness is found in early Japanese Shintoism, as

Japan is the home of Amaterasu, and in the Hindu conceptions of Āryāvarta and Bhāratavarsa. The relation between nationality and the monotheistic religions is, as noted above, more complicated.

For the religion of the ancient Israelites and Jews, the relation between nationality and religion is explicitly complex. On the one hand, we find in the Hebrew Bible seemingly monolatrous assertions that the bounded land of Israel (see Numbers 34) is Yahweh's land, as explicitly stated in Joshua 22:19, 2 Kings 18:33, Hosea 9:3, Isaiah 14:2 and 25, Jeremiah 2:7, Jeremiah 16:18, and Ezekiel 36:20. And a particular and enduring relation between Yahweh and the land of Israel is expressed in Deuteronomy 11:11–12,

> The land that you are crossing over to occupy is a land of hills and valleys, watered by rain from the sky, a land that Yahweh your God looks after. The eyes of Yahweh your God are always on it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.

However, on the other hand, possession of Yahweh's land was dependent upon the Israelites living a life worthy of occupying that land by obeying Yahweh's commandments—a condition characteristic of the axial age distinction between what life ought to be and the way it is. If the Israelites abandoned Yahweh's laws, both the "sons of Israel" and the land of Israel (note the terminological conflation, conveyed by the term "Israel" referring to both people and land, characteristic of the territorial kinship of nationality) would become defiled, the result of which would be that the "land will vomit you out" (Leviticus 18:24–30). Moreover and signifying the complication posed by monotheism for nationality, the very uniqueness of Israel before the one, monotheistic God, is called into question in, for example, the magnificent formulations of Amos 9:7,

> To me, O Israelites, you are just like the Ethiopians, declares Yahweh. True, I brought Israel up from the land of Egypt, but also the Philistines from Caphtor and the Aramaeans from Kir.

This complexity of the Hebrew Bible's formulation of the relation between nationality and religion is captured succinctly by the tension-filled juxtaposition of universal monotheism with monolatry in Deuteronomy 10:14–16 (see also Exodus 19:5–6).

> Even though heaven and the heaven of heavens belong to Yahweh your God, the earth with all that is in it, yet Yahweh set his heart in love in your ancestors alone and chose you, their descendants after them, out of all of the peoples, as it is today.

The complexity of the conceptual tension is explicit: Yahweh, as the one, true God whose jurisdiction is the entire world, has, despite this universal jurisdiction, an enduringly narrowed focus on a particular people and land.

The religion of the ancient Israelites and Judaism represent a conceptually rich combination of pre-axial age monolatry and axial age monotheism that over time developed further in different ways, for example: the Rabbinic, universal conception of the Noahides, where anyone, irrespective of nationality, who is faithful to the seven laws of the covenant between Yahweh and Noah will achieve future salvation (see Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 56–59); or the Christian attempt to eliminate altogether the tension-filled combination of monotheism and nationality. The characterization "combination of" is to be preferred to "transition between", as the latter term may imply an unequivocal, progressive development. The latter, despite the rationalization in the development of religion from the ritualistic mythology of monolatry to the legal and ethical doctrines of monotheism, is, as we shall observe, unwarranted because of the de facto continuing existence of a kind of monolatry within the monotheistic civilizations and modern world.

From monolatry and the complex combination of monolatry and monotheism in the religion of ancient Israel and Judaism, we now turn to monotheism. The logic of the monotheistic religions is explicitly universal; for, as there is only one god, his jurisdiction is (or should be!) the entire world. Thus, at least doctrinally (or scripturally), monotheism is indifferent to, or even stands in opposition to, the territory and territorial kinship of nationality. For example, the ultimate, true home for a

Christian is not a national homeland, so not the Jerusalem of the land of Israel, but instead a "heavenly Jerusalem", as stated in Galatians 4:26 (see also Hebrews 11:16, 12:22, Revelations 21). The distinction that matters for monotheism is not between one territory and territorial kinship from another, but between the faithful and the unfaithful. Numerous quotations from the New Testament confirm the rejection of territorial kinship in favor of a territorially indifferent, hence, universal community of the faithful, for example and most famously, Romans 10:12,

> For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on (believe in) him. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (see also Galatians 3:28, Colossians 3:11).

And not only in scripture but also later in the Catholic Church's *Corpus iuris canonici* (Canon Law) is this divergence between nationality and universal monotheism explicitly affirmed, as the jurisdiction of the Church's law was applicable to all Christians irrespective of their nationality (Helmholz 1996, pp. 1–5, 33–36). Similarly, for Islam, the Ummah is the territorially indifferent community of believers, as appears to be asserted in the Qur'an (23:51–52, 2:213) and subsequently manifestly so. Many of the consequences of this explicit, scripturally asserted monotheism are so well known that I only allude to them in passing: the monotheistic religions are missionary; they travel from one area to another; and anyone, irrespective of their origins, can convert to them by these acknowledging their respective, doctrinal truth.[5]

Once one puts aside the fashionable, functionalist understanding of the attachments constitutive of nationality as religion, or categories that obscure the tension between nationality and religion, such as "civil religion", the historical expressions of the tension between nationality and monotheism are easily recognized. Perhaps the most obvious is the Investiture Controversy at the end of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth centuries CE. After the reforms of Pope Gregory VII, the Christian Church demanded its autonomy in affairs understood by the Church to be solely those of the Church, that is, "spiritual affairs" (Berman 1983). Shortly thereafter, from 1162 to 1170, there arose the conflict between the English King Henry II and the Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Beckett, later portrayed by T.S. Eliot in his 1935 play *Murder in the Cathedral*. And, as is well known, the independence of the Church from the national state was reaffirmed by Thomas More (d. 1535) in his conflict with the English King Henry VIII. The opposition of Becket and More in England or, especially but not only in France, the Ultramontanism of the first Vatican Council, for example, the assertion, in *Pastor aeternus* (1870), of the primacy of the Pope, should not be understood to represent merely the independence of the Church from the national state. It was that; but it was more. It represents the defense of the Church as a catholic, that is, universal institution.

Indifference or opposition to nationality is also found in the Protestant tradition, for example, among the Mennonites, Anabaptists, the Puritan Roger Williams, and in the writings of Karl Karl Barth (1961, pp. 285–323). After all, Christians have recognized, in Augustine's formulation, "two cities", of God and of man. The national state receives only a qualified support—the extent to which the state secures earthly peace—as both the nation and national state are subject to the judgment of the Church, specifically, its universal recognition that all human beings are the children of God (see Grosby 2016).

There are, however, obvious complications to this schematic, comparative framework ranging from the monolatrous convergence of religion and nationality to the monotheist indifference or opposition to nationality, because there are ubiquitous examples of convergence between all of the monotheistic religions and the territorial kinship of numerous nations. The crucial problem before us has already been raised: do these convergences between monotheism and nationality represent a re-emergence of monolatry? As these convergences between nationality and monotheism run counter to the doctrinal indifference, or even opposition, to territorial kinship that appears in the respective scriptures of

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5   The classic examination of conversion remains (Nock 1933).

the monotheistic religions and their respective theological developments, we may characterize the convergences as "de facto", "implicit", or "historically contingent." In contrast, the monolatry of the pre-axial age was explicit, as it did not exist within, or alongside, doctrinal indifference or opposition to territorial kinship.

As noted, convergences between nationality and monotheism are numerous. Most obvious is the convergence arising from the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), legally codifying nationality by insisting upon one religion for a territory and its people. This particular convergence within Christendom was made possible because of the Protestant Reformation's undermining of the independence of the Catholic Church, as a mundane institution, and, above all, its Canon law, as the Protestants rejected the doctrine of the two swords, initially formulated by Pope Gelasius in his letter (494 CE) to the Emperor Anastasius II and subsequently elaborated upon by Pope Boniface VIII in *Unam Sanctam* (1302 CE), which explicitly recognized two, different and competing mundane institutions (the two swords). Instead of the doctrine of the two swords, Protestants adopted the doctrine of two kingdoms, which required, so the interpretation of Romans 13 and 8, Christian obedience to the national state, as the Christian kingdom was spiritual.

However, the Treaty of Westphalia did not mark the origin of the convergence between nationality and religion in western Christendom. For example, already several centuries earlier the Pope had territorially segregated Poland from the aspirations of the Teutonic Knights. Furthermore, the distinctions of the Council of Constance (1414–1418) between *nationes princiales* (France, Italy, England, Germany, Spain) and *nationes particulares* (Poland, Bohemia, Hungary) indicate that the term *natio* (nation) had come to signify both an ecclesiastical and secular territorial jurisdiction (Hirschi 2012, pp. 81–88).

Various and early examples of activities contributing to the convergence between nationality and monotheism are well known to scholars of religion but too often ignored by scholars of nationalism. One is the translation of scripture into native languages, for example, Cyril's and Methodius' (d. 885) translation of the Bible into Old Church Slavonic and the establishment of a Slavonic liturgy, Wycliff's translation of the Bible into English (c. 1380), Hussite translations of the Bible into Czech and Hungarian (c. 1430), and Luther's translation of the Bible into German (c. 1520). These translations and liturgies in native languages contributed to the convergence between nationality and monotheism by stabilizing the vernacular of a national language and by rendering scripture accessible to the laity. Note that these activities contributing to the formation of nationality were not state-directed. There have been times when the traditions of a monotheistic religion have been important, if not decisive, bearers of nationality in the absence of a national state, for example: the Catholic Church for Poland during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; and the Romanian Church which followed the Byzantine rite, under the supervision of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, as a source of unity for the Romanians, who were otherwise divided among the territories of Moldavia, Wallachia, and Transylvania until the formation of the modern Romanian state in 1918.

Of course, activities contributing to convergence between a monotheistic religion and nationality could be and often were state-directed, for example, the translation of the Qur'an into Persian by the tenth century CE, as Persian, albeit in Arabic script, had been declared by the Samanids to be the language of the land of Iran. Another, better known example was the English government's decisions both to have translated scripture from Latin into English and to make more consistent the liturgy in the national vernacular, respectively, the *King James Bible* (1611) and the *Book of Common Prayer*. Less well known activities contributing to the formation of nationality were other expressions of the territorial organization of Christianity pre-dating the papal recognition of a Polish territory and the divisions of the Church at the Council of Constance, for example, the English King Edgar's monastic reforms at the end of the tenth century (Banton 1982), where he established forty monasteries throughout England, thereby facilitating the development of a religiously relatively homogeneous territory and population—a development reminiscent of the placement of temples at the borders of a territory as one finds in antiquity.

Two other developments clearly indicate the convergence of nationality and an otherwise doctrinally universal monotheism. The first is the peculiar phenomenon of national saints, for example, Olaf for Norway, Louis IX for France, Patrick for Ireland, George for England, Sanisław for Poland, and Sava for Serbia.[6] Here, we observe the transformation of a deceased human into a divine protector, similar to the ancient Greek apotheosis of the hero (see Nock [1944] 1972). These saints were both expressions and protectors of the territory of a particular nation and its people. The peculiarity of a Christian in heaven embodying and protecting a nation is understandable as these figures had been kings and/or military heroes of their respective, developing nations. Thus, their apotheosis accords with the functionalist analytical framework.

The existence of these saints is the medieval anticipation of what explicitly appears organizationally in Eastern Orthodoxy and with the Protestant Reformation: the national church, as in England or Sweden, where religion is also a bearer of national tradition. But the phenomenon of a heavenly protector of a nation within monotheism is manifestly peculiar when no less than Mary, mother of God, is recognized as the divine protector of a nation, specifically, when Mary as the "Queen of Poland" was believed to have putatively saved Poland at the Battle of Częstochowa (Davies 1982, pp. 172, 401). Why should Mary be Polish and not Swedish? Moreover and importantly, here, it is not the individual who is saved from death through eternal life, as is expected in Christian belief (so, for example, I Corinthians 15), but it is the nation as a corporate body that is saved from death.

The second development indicating the convergence of nationality and monotheism is the appearance, especially during the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries, of the "new Israels" in European history. Here, the problem confronting Christendom was how to legitimate nationality within otherwise universal Christianity. To do so, European Christians drew upon the symbolic repertoire available to them, namely, the Israel of the Bible, however, not the "true Israel" of the new Church of their New Testament but the nation of Israel of their Old Testament (Grosby 2011; Smith 2007). By doing so, the conceptual move was made from an implicit convergence between nationality and monotheism, for example, in the Church's de facto territorial administration at the Council of Constance, to a doctrinally justified, hence, explicit, convergence, even though that movement required the retrieval of the image of the nation of ancient Israel in the service of applying that image to different nations of Europe. Needless to say, this adaptive resurrection, if you will, of the image of the nation of ancient Israel of the Old Testament into the life of early modern Europe also revived the tensions between the Old and New Testaments that had been suppressed by the Christian tradition of metaphorical and allegorical interpretation, as found, for example, in the early work of Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* and Irenaeus' *Against Heresies*. Those tensions continue to haunt Christianity today, namely, the problem of the place for patriotism within the territorially indifferent brotherhood of all believers. Be that as it may, rekindled in the Western, Christian tradition was the idea of a nation being a "chosen people", of national providence—an idea found not only in the American tradition (Goldman 2018) but also in the tradition of the New or Third Rome of Russian orthodoxy as the territory of "Holy Russia' was viewed as inseparable from the orthodox religion (Cherniavsky 1958; Carleton 2016), albeit within a developing imperial context.

It may be that these and other examples of the convergence between universal Christianity and nationality were conceptually possible because of Christianity's doctrinal recognition of two realms: God's and Caesar's, so Matthew 22:21, Mark 12:17, and Luke 20:25. Within the Christian tradition, the earthly realm is accorded the legitimacy to develop in various ways, including, but not necessarily, as nations. The latter possibility garnered support through the appeal to the Old Testament, for example, the "New Israels" of early modern Europe and America, even though the relation, for Christianity, between these two realms was and remains necessarily tension-filled. It seems that phenomena roughly similar to the development of this convergence are to be found outside Christendom, even where

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6   The classic work on the saints is (Brown 1982).

the conceptual arena for "what is Caesar's" or "the city of man" to develop is lacking. Within the Buddhist tradition, despite the indifference to earthly attachments in pursuit of Nirvana, recognition of a distinctive territory developed, of a holy land, that is, Sri Lanka, as described in the fifth century CE *Mahāvamsa*, which recounts how the island became transformed into a holy territory because of the putative, three visits of the Buddha to Sri Lanka, subsequently marked by Buddhist stupas (shrines). Irrespective of how the *Mahāvamsa* has been ideologically exploited by Sinhalese nationalists today, it is an example of how an axial age religion has contributed to the formation of a nation, the Sinhalese, Buddhist territorial kinship (in contrast to the Tamil Hindus). Iran is another example, where, in this case, despite the universal Ummah of all believers, Shi'ite Islam, while not confined to Iran, has contributed to the continuation of the long tradition of a distinctive Iranian culture and nation, and assuredly so with, and subsequent to, the adoption of Shi'ism by the Safavids (1502–1736 CE), thereby further distinguishing the Iranians from the Sunni Ottomans.

Now, the problem arises how to evaluate within the monotheistic civilizations developments such as: the institutional distinctions within both the Catholic Church and Eastern Orthodoxy that correspond to national territories, national saints, the "New Israels" throughout European history, and a seemingly national Buddhist Sri Lanka and Iranian Islam. Do we have the re-emergence of a, de facto, monolatry?

The reason for the qualification of the seemingly modern appearance of monolatry as "de facto" or, as referred to earlier, as "implicit" or "historically contingent" is that it appears within the religious tradition of monotheism. As such, the convergence cannot be justified scripturally or doctrinally. Once again, there is an explicit tension between nationality, on the one hand, and Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism, on the other. Nevertheless, as has been observed, there are numerous examples of the convergence between nationality and monotheism, despite the latter's doctrinal universalism, and, therefore, the evident need to characterize that convergence as de facto, implicit, or historically contingent. As noted, Judaism represents an explicit, that is, scriptural and theological, combination. The exception to this implicit or historically contingent convergence within the Christian tradition is when that tradition explicitly appealed to its Old Testament—an appeal that resulted in the "New Israels" of the conceptually paradoxical Christian Hebraism (Grosby 2011).

A schematic, comparative framework of the relation between nationality and religion emerges, ranging from convergence to divergence. The convergence clearly and explicitly appears with pre-axial age monolatry. Next is the complex combination of monolatry and monotheism of the religion of ancient Israel and Judaism. Finally, the convergence between religion and nationality is less likely with the other world, monotheistic religions. However, within the latter, the convergence is more likely within the conceptual heterogeneity of the Christian tradition than with Islam and Buddhism. Although there are differences within the Christian tradition, for example, the caesaropapism of Eastern Orthodoxy, or the doctrines of the two swords and two kingdoms, Christianity conceptually has an arena, viewed as legitimate even if sinful, for the earthly attachments of the territorial kinship of nationality to develop: the city of man. In contrast, for Islam, the Ummah is to be realized in this world, thereby, at least doctrinally, leaving little conceptual space for nationality to develop. For Buddhism, earthly attachments are devalued. Nonetheless, even with the Islamic and Buddhist traditions, de facto monolatrous convergences between nationality and religion are found.

However heuristically useful, even with its qualifying complications, this schematic comparative framework of the relation between nationality and religion may be, historically it is manifestly superficial. In antiquity, there were not only city-states and national states but also empires with universal aspirations, specifically but not only neo-Assyrian and Roman. It seems that for all historical periods, beginning with the Akkadian Sargon (2288–2235 BC), the organization of humanity has gravitated between nationality and empire. In antiquity, the consequences of empire were associated with different religious developments: the expanding territorial jurisdiction of the previously monolatrous, national god; some kind of syncretism; or even, as is clear from the conclusion of the Babylonian *Enuma Elish*, where Marduk is described as having incorporated the names and attributes of fifty other

deities, a kind of proto-monotheism. These kinds of complications render any comparative framework superficial, as it is overly abstract. Furthermore, because, for Islam, the Ummah is the community of all believers to be realized in in this world, Islam has historically been conducive to empire. The logic of monotheism, when applied to the realm of politics, is imperial. But Christianity disrupts a consistent application of that logic, as it recognizes two cities, two realms. Thus, Christian monotheism has, throughout its history, been a fertile ground for empire, nationality, and indifference to both. Finally, the de facto monolatry of the monotheism of the axial age period, specifically but not only throughout the history of Christendom—medieval (see Reynolds 1984, pp. 250–331), early modern (see Hirschi 2012), and today—represents an additional, significant complication, if not decisive challenge, to any generalization of historical periodization of the comparative framework.

If we are correct to observe the modern appearance of a kind of monolatry, our understanding of the rationalization of the different spheres of modern life, above all, religious and political, must be qualified. That rationalization certainly cannot be viewed as being unequivocal or homogeneous; for the ideas of either the formal or substantive equality of all human beings, while asserted respectively by the rule of law and monotheism, have been disrupted by that modern monolatry. In light of these many complications to a comparative framework for the relation between nationality and religion, what is called for is a different analytical framework: one that recognizes several perennial orientations of human thought, attachment, and action, for example, religious, kinship, and the legal and economic relations of the market, that, while their historical expressions obviously vary, coalesce in different ways in different times. That there is variation can scarcely be ignored; for otherwise we would not find heuristically useful the distinction between our categories of monolatry and monotheism, or between the different forms of territorial kinship and their political organization—city-state, national state, and empire. And yet, the evidence, for example, the existence of city-states, nations, and empires throughout all historical periods, or the re-emergence of monolatry, provides reasons to be skeptical of unequivocal, historical periodizations. Both religion and various structures of kinship persist, and they come together in ways that significantly complicate any attempt to generalize historically the numerous expressions of their appearance. One must account not only for that persistence, albeit with historical variation, but also the re-emergence or perhaps continuation of monolatry within monotheism, however conceptually paradoxical its appearance may be. Doing so will require clarification of religion as a distinctive category of thought and conduct (see Grosby 2018b).

4. Religion

Durkheim, in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (Durkheim [1912] 1995), made important contributions to how symbols and their relative objectivity, once lifted out of the ebb and flow of life, represent social relations. Nevertheless, two mistakes were made in that work. The first was the incorrect assumption that what he thought was true of Australian totemism, namely, that religion was the worship of society, was characteristic of religion, qua religion. This functionalist assumption was incorrect because, as noted, the central feature of the axial age monotheistic religions is the tension between the reality of this world and the ideal of another world; that is, the axial age religions stand in judgment of mundane relations, including the nation. Thus, while the axial age religions, as bearers of morality, may function as support for the stability of the attachments necessary for a society to exist, they also may be disruptive of those attachments, as is clear with prophecy and the eschatological expectations of all of the monotheistic religions. The second mistake, often ignored or even shared by many scholars, was to view the forms of Australian totemism as being applicable to all of the pre-axial age religions of antiquity. Those historically early religions were not uniform. There were not only differences between them; but, as we shall see, there were also conceptual tensions within them. What both mistakes have in common is an overly simplistic view of religion through an elimination of anything distinctive to it as a category of human thought, attachment, and action.

It is the case that in ancient Egypt and throughout the history of Japan we find divine kinship. The Egyptian pharaoh and the Japanese emperor were considered to be divine. Thus, the existence

and fate of the distinctive territorial kinship of, respectively, the ancient Egyptians and Japanese, was grounded in the order of the universe, as the representatives of that kinship—respectively, the pharaoh and the emperor—were thought to be divine. Here, there is merit to the functionalist analyses of religion, because the worship of these rulers, since they represent their respective societies, function as the worship of those societies.

In the long history of the ancient Near East, we also find divine kinship. During the reign of Naram-Sin (2254–2218 BC), grandson of Sargon of Akkad, Naram-Sin was described as a god. His deification is conveyed in this inscription (Chavalas 2006, pp. 20–21).

> Naram-Sin, the mighty one, king of Akkad: when the four regions of the world revolted against him, because of the love which Ishtar showed him, he was victorious in nine battles in one year . . . Because he fortified the foundations of his city during this time of distress, (the residents of) his city asked of Ishtar in Eanna, of Enlil in Nippur . . . that he be the god of their city, Akkad, and they built his temple within Akkad.

However, there are complications to be found in different accounts of Naram-Sin. These complications should be pondered for the sake of achieving an analytical clarity of pre-axial age religion.

The deification of Naram-Sin was, in fact, unusual for the religion of the ancient Near East, as we generally do not find divine kinship throughout the history of the ancient Near East. It is noteworthy that in the so-called *Cutha Legend* (Chavalas 2006, pp. 36–40) Naram-Sin is described as transgressing the will of the gods in his desire to go to war with the "raven-faced" people of the mountains, presumably the Gutians.

> I summoned the diviners . . . I inquired of the great gods [but] the key of the great gods did not permit me to go [to war], nor did a divine communication in my dream . . . I said to myself let me . . . follow the counsel of my own heart. Let me disregard (the counsel) of the god; let me take responsibility for myself.

We subsequently learn in the *Cutha Legend* that because of Naram-Sin's disobedience to the divine will, as interpreted by the priests, his troops suffer defeat. Only then does he conclude that he must act with the approval of the gods, that is, when that approval is known through priestly divination—through extispicy and interpretation of dreams. Thus, in the accounts of Naram-Sin and his reign, we find not one but two, different pre-axial age religious conceptions: where Naram-Sin is a god; and where he is not only different from the gods but is also subject to their judgment, indeed, punishment for not following their divine will as interpreted by the priests. While certainly those priests do not form an organizational locus for theological generalization as with the religious intellectuals of the axial age, we nonetheless find throughout the history of the ancient Near East an institutional differentiation between king and priest which, as such, provided the basis for this second religious conception even within the pre-axial age religions. What is the significance of that institutional differentiation?

At this point in our analysis, we must proceed with considerable care. The rationalization of religion which took place with the axial age, as described in the previous section, with its institutional corollary of the emergence of the "clerics" as a distinct profession, is not denied. The clerics of the axial age, monotheistic religions do not examine a sheep's entrails or its liver in order to ascertain the communication from the gods. Nonetheless, also not to be denied is the distinction, found in the pre-axial age religions, between this world and the world of the gods, even if that distinction lacks the heightened tension of the axial age's distinction between the two realms. After all, the gods, qua gods, of the pre-axial age religions dwelled in heaven. Thus, one must not overlook the significance of what appears to have been the corollary of the other-worldly existence of the pre-axial age gods: the institutional differentiation between king and priest found throughout the pre-axial age religions. Only those with special qualifications, the priests, could interpret the will, and, hence, speak on behalf of, the gods.

Recognition of the other-worldly existence of the gods of the pre-axial age religions was not merely or primarily a result of their symbolic representation of the social relations constitutive of

their respective societies, as Durkheim and the functionalists seem to have thought. The belief in their other-worldly existence signified much more, as it conveyed an understanding that the fate of the individual and of society was beyond human understanding and control. This was Naram-Sin's lesson, as described in the *Cutha Legend*. He learned the danger of the hubris in defying the divine, the proper understanding of which was beyond his knowledge. True enough, in contrast to the dogma and its theological development of the axial age religions, the divine of the pre-axial age religions was interpreted by priestly diviners. But that difference between, on the one hand, the coherence of theological doctrine and, on the other, mythological ritual, important though it is, does not mean that we do not find similarities in both pre-axial and axial age religions. It does not mean that we do not find, for example, in the pre-axial age conceptions of a degree of ethical generalization. Recall, for example, the conceptions of a future brotherhood and justice, characteristic of the axial age religions, from the quotation previously cited from the pre-axial age "Marduk Prophecy", when there will be a time when "wickedness will be rectified and brother will have consideration for brother as there will always be consideration among the people."

We may justifiably extend the lesson of Naram-Sin beyond the danger of his arrogance in acting as if he were a god to the recognition that the individual will never be certain of his or her place in the world, he or she will never be at ease and at home in this world. This latter recognition is well attested in the pre-axial age literature of the ancient Near East. It is found, for example, in the so-called "Poem of a Righteous Sufferer" (Foster 1995, pp. 300–13) with its statements, "I wish I knew that these things (reverence, worship, sacrifices) were pleasing to a god", and "I have pondered these things (the changes in human fortune); but I have made no sense of them." And it is found in the so-called "Babylon Theodicy" (Foster 1995, pp. 316–24), with its rhetorical observations, "Can a happy life be a certainty? I wish I knew how that might come about!" and "Divine purpose is as remote as innermost heaven, it is difficult to understand, people cannot understand it." The problems recognized here involve the vicissitudes of life in this world. The axial age response to these vicissitudes is the deliverance from them in heaven or in an eschatologically transformed future. However, it is a response, not a solution. It represents a theological rationalization in the face of what would otherwise be the seemingly meaningless course of human events; but one based on an assumption, namely, that sorrow and death may be defeated through the belief in an other-worldly or future existence for the individual.

What is important here for our analysis of religion is that the realistic recognitions of both the limitation of human knowledge and the inability of the individual to feel at ease are to be found in the pre-axial age, even if not formulated in scriptures; they are central to all religions, qua religion. The category of religion—for both the pre-axial and axial ages—represents the configuration of thought, variously developed, and conduct in response to the problem of the ordeal of human consciousness about the mystery of the universe, specifically, whether or not there is meaning to its order, and the place of both the individual and his or her society within it. It is the categorial distinctiveness of that response, although variable, for example, monolatry and monotheism, that accounts for why religion is an independent factor in a comparative analysis of its relation to another, different orientation: the significance human consciousness accords to the generation and transmission of life, as represented by different forms of kinship, including the territorial kinship of the nation.

Here, now, is the pressing theoretical problem, namely, the distinctiveness of the orientation of the human mind that we designate by the term "religion." As noted, that distinctiveness is suggested by: one, the historically perennial and ubiquitous institutional differentiation between priest and king; and two, that the deities of the pre-axial age religions, while some may be associated with natural phenomena, dwell in heaven, that is, beyond human existence, understanding, and control, even though attempts, through both ritual and ethical behavior, are made to propitiate them. The character of religion—the positing of an other-worldly realm with an evidently attendant institutional differentiation—indicates that it is a distinctive orientation of human consciousness, that is, it is not derivative of another orientation. It is a response to the distinctive problems of the lack of human knowledge about one's place and the place of one's society in the universe.

We are with good reason accustomed to concentrate our attention on the differences between pre-axial age and axial age religions, between polytheism, on the one hand, and monotheism, on the other. Irrespective of the obvious merit of recognizing those differences, we ought to pay more attention to what those historically different religions have in common so that we are better able to ascertain both the distinctiveness of the religious orientation in contrast to the other orientations of the human mind, and the variable contours of the relation of one orientation to another, specifically, religion and nationality.

Recall that we face the conundrum of the re-appearance or perhaps continuation of monolatry within monotheism, hence, a de facto or implicit monolatry. Is the answer to this conundrum that the significance accorded to the relations arising from the generation and transmission of life, that is, different forms of kinship, has been frustrated by a rigorously consistent monotheism? Is it because of the persistence of that significance that monotheism has had to accommodate itself to kinship, whether manifested through the family or the nation? And is monolatry an example of that accommodation, as these different orientations cohere into a never uniform unity?

5. Conclusions

Central to all religious belief is the recognition of a realm which, although beyond human experience and comprehension, has bearing on human existence. Although there exist significant differences about how that realm is understood, for example, the Christian assertion of a divine *agape* (so, 1 John 4:8, 16) in contrast to the seemingly incomprehensible fate of the pre-axial age religions, and about how one accesses that realm, for example, through the ethical or righteous conduct of the axial age religions in contrast to the sacrifice and divination of the pre-axial age, all religions posit this realm. What does recognition of this other-worldly realm indicate about the religious orientation of the human mind?

Whatever may be the nature of a primary psychic consciousness, whether developmentally or as a sub-stratum, the human mind, qua human, is open to the world; thus, being for oneself is never only that; for it is always being in the world. This openness to the world, this potential both to create and to be shaped by cultural achievements, finds expression not in a uniform direction or single purpose but in a number of distinct orientations, of which religion is one among several. It appears that these distinct orientations, the existence of which is expressed by historically persistent institutional differentiation of priest, king, judge, and merchant, arise from, and relations are formed in response to, correspondingly distinct problems encountered by and in life. One problem is the determination of the place of the life of the individual and his or her society within the world and universe—a determination that unavoidably involves an evaluation of life itself. This latter determination and evaluation are the concerns of religion. That there is variability in that determination and evaluation is obvious, for example, the grounding of one's society in the order of the universe as conveyed by the quasi-monolatrous Deuteronomy 32:8 in contrast to the universal equality and possible salvation of all individuals as proclaimed in Galatians 3:28 and Romans 10:12. A different problem is not the evaluation of life in the universe but the importance of the propagation and transmission of life itself, the response to which is kinship in all its varying forms, ranging from the family to the territorial kinship of the nation. The etymology of the term nation from the Latin noun *natio* and the verb *nasci*, "to be born from", reveals this preoccupation with traceable lines of descent, albeit, for the nation, not within the family but within a territory. A third problem is the order of life, the response to which is law and the state.

Each of the different responses to the respectively different problems of life—the propagation and transmission of life, the evaluation of life within the universe, and the ordering of life—achieves over time a distinctive tradition sustained in various ways, above all, through corresponding institutions, respectively, the family, clan, or nation; the cult, church, and priesthood; and legal codes, courts, market exchanges, and the state. The coming together of the traditions of these different orientations into a unity is what is meant when we use the term "culture." However, that unity is never uniform. There

are always tensions, sometimes muted and sometimes acute, among these different traditions: for example, between nationality and religion; or between nationality or religion, on the one hand, and the efficient exchange of goods and services in a competitive market-place, on the other; or between the equality before the rule of law and the preferences accorded to different forms of kinship, and so forth. Moreover, there are tensions within each of the distinctive traditions of the respectively distinctive responses to the different problems of life, for example, the tension between formal and substantive justice in the legal ordering of life.

While I have once again formulated a framework for the relation between nationality and religion, this framework is confronted by, indeed, sometimes overwhelmed by, numerous complications arising from the tensions both between the different responses to the problems of life and within each of them. An example of the latter tension within the tradition of the religious orientation was the above recourse to a modification of the earlier characterization to describe Deuteronomy 32:8, from the previous "monolatrous" to now "quasi-monolatrous".

When the Most High (*Elyon*) gave the nations their homes, when he divided humankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of gods.

While, according to this verse, each nation has its own god, the problem of, or the tension within, this otherwise monolatrous formulation is how are we to understand the place of the "Most High", *Elyon*, in this religious conception of the world? Does Elyon's existence qualify the authority and jurisdiction of the other national gods? Are the latter subordinated to him? And, if so, what is the extent of that subordination? Finally, what is the relation between Elyon and Yahweh? Are they the same god or different gods? The following verse, Deuteronomy 32:9, only increases the pressing relevance of these questions, "for Yahweh's portion is His people, Jacob His own allotment."

Whether or not Yahweh is Elyon here, throughout the historically earlier pre-axial age religions of the ancient Near East, there were, in fact, other, usually older gods who co-existed with, and sometimes exercised authority over, younger gods, for example, in ancient Ugarit, the older El and the younger Baal, or in ancient Babylon, the older Anu and the younger Marduk, and in ancient Israel, perhaps the older El/Elyon and the younger Yahweh. This co-existence, however interpreted, for example, the earlier generation of the gods representing natural phenomena while the younger, political, and however conceptually undeveloped, represents tensions within the pre-axial age religions.

One conclusion to which these questions lead us is that our analytical categories, for example, monolatry, monotheism, nation, empire, are abstractions that, as such, often obscure the conceptual tensions within each of them. This conclusion is, of course, a commonplace. The closer we examine each category and its application to a particular historical moment, we encounter complications to those categories, for example, the apparent need to characterize Deuteronomy 32:8 as "quasi-monolatrous", or the existence of national saints within otherwise monotheistic Christendom, or the national monotheism of Iranian Islam and Sinhalese Buddhism. The important point here is not the conclusion that our analytical categories often obscure numerous complications, but whether or not there are recurring patterns, however variable, to these complications, above all, in the relation between these categories, specifically, nationality and religion.

It seems that one reason for these many complications to our categories is the conceptual tensions existing not merely within each of them but also between them, when the different responses to the problems posed by life come together into a never uniform unity, into a national or civilizational culture. One orientation exerts an influence on another, for example, the territorial kinship of the nation on monotheism. This, too, may be a commonplace. But it is a commonplace that assumes the logically autonomous orientations of the human mind, of which religion is one, and the territorial kinship of the nation is another, in response to different problems of life.

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