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One church, one people, one emperor' -  
strategic challenges for the Serbian Orthodox  
Church in post-Milosevic Serbian society

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**NAVAL  
POSTGRADUATE  
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**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

**THESIS**

**‘ONE CHURCH, ONE PEOPLE, ONE EMPEROR’ —  
STRATEGIC CHALLENGES FOR THE SERBIAN  
ORTHODOX CHURCH IN POST-MILOSEVIC SERBIAN  
SOCIETY**

by

Suzanne M. Streeter

June 2006

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<b>REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE</b>			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>
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<b>1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)</b>	<b>2. REPORT DATE</b> June 2006	<b>3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED</b> Master's Thesis	
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE:</b> 'One Church, One People, One Emperor' — Strategic Challenges for the Serbian Orthodox Church in Post-Milosevic Serbian Society			<b>5. FUNDING NUMBERS</b>
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b> Suzanne M. Streeter			
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000			<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b>
<b>9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> N/A			<b>10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER</b>
<b>11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b> The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.			
<b>12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited			<b>12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE</b>
<b>13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)</b> This thesis analyzes the Serbian Orthodox Church's place in post-Milosevic Serbian society. Specifically, the thesis explores the nature of the influence the Church sways within Serbia's on-going transformation into a liberal democracy. Leveraging Robert Putnam's work on civil society and social capital and Ashutosh Varshney's work on associational networks, the thesis addresses two main questions. First, what is the nature of the Church's influence - does it seek to build bridges across societal sectors or does it seek to exclude others by bonding together an autonomous societal group, consisting of the Church and its faithful? Second, what are the implications of this behavior for Serbia's integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions? Using a blend of case studies (Croatia, Russia), historiography (Serbia) and textual analysis, this study argues that the Serbian Orthodox Church has exhibited both bridging and bonding tendencies with other sectors of civil society, though bonding behavior prevails. The European Union and others can mitigate these bonding inclinations through actions like granting funds to increase charity work and acknowledging the fact that the Church will continue its role within Serbian society/identity for a long time. These actions should allow the more moderate and bridging elements within the Church to further develop.			
<b>14. SUBJECT TERMS</b> Serbia, Orthodoxy, Serbian Orthodox Church, Croatia, Catholic Church, Russia, Russian Orthodox Church, European Union, Nationalism, Civil Society, Social Capital, Bridging, Bonding			<b>15. NUMBER OF PAGES</b> 114
			<b>16. PRICE CODE</b>
<b>17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT</b> Unclassified	<b>18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE</b> Unclassified	<b>19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT</b> Unclassified	<b>20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b> UL

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89)  
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**‘ONE CHURCH, ONE PEOPLE, ONE EMPEROR’ — STRATEGIC  
CHALLENGES FOR THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN POST-  
MILOSEVIC SERBIAN SOCIETY**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN  
NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL  
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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis analyzes the Serbian Orthodox Church's place in post-Milošević Serbian society. Specifically, the thesis explores the nature of the influence the Church sways within Serbia's on-going transformation into a liberal democracy. Leveraging Robert Putnam's work on civil society and social capital and Ashutosh Varshney's work on associational networks, the thesis addresses two main questions. First, what is the nature of the Church's influence – does it seek to build bridges across societal sectors or does it seek to exclude others by bonding together an autonomous societal group, consisting of the Church and its faithful? Second, what are the implications of this behavior for Serbia's integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions? Using a blend of case studies (Croatia, Russia), historiography (Serbia) and textual analysis, this study argues that the Serbian Orthodox Church has exhibited both bridging and bonding tendencies with other sectors of civil society, though bonding behavior prevails. The European Union and others can mitigate these bonding inclinations through actions like granting funds to increase charity work and acknowledging the fact that the Church will continue its role within Serbian society/identity for a long time. These actions should allow the more moderate and bridging elements within the Church to further develop.



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Figure 1. Map of Serbia and Montenegro<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Serbia Travel Club Website, n.d. <http://www.serbiatravelers.org/images/serbia%20road%20map.jpg>. (accessed 27 May 2006).

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I must thank God for sending the Holy Spirit to guide me to navigate this very delicate subject. He also sent several fantastic people along my path to encourage me, most importantly my wonderful family: parents (merci bien pour les “allez Suzy” coups de téléphone!) as well as my siblings – je vous aime tous! Many thanks to special K who conducted the most thorough critiques of my work and ensured I could concentrate on finishing my thesis by house hunting and closing on a house in Georgia on my behalf – how cool is that? Thanks sis! My deep gratitude to the local California crew who made sure I hung onto that last bit of sanity (futile effort at times!) and of course the upstairs library dormrats (thanks for the chocolates!). My teachers were terrific – I learned something unique from each of you! And of course, Ms Dora helped keep me straight on my scheduling and everything else! My advisors did not throw me out the window as I bugged them to read my thesis and then changed drafts on them, for which I am most grateful. Thanks for making me stretch my mind! Additionally, I have to say that the Knox Library is by far the best library I have ever patronized – the librarians are always helpful and really have the students’ best interests at heart (go ILL!)? Of course, I could not have even started this thesis without my mentors in the field and those who offered valued advice throughout the months, who are too numerous to name.

## I. INTRODUCTION

...It is our duty before God and all persons to clearly state and warn today: in the language of justice and international law every thought of taking Kosovo and Metohija by force would mean that, under the eyes of the entire world in the twenty-first century, a democratic country in the middle of Europe would have part of its territory taken by force, which is also considered to be its spiritual cradle. And no matter how well this might be covered up, this act of forcible taking away would have the essential character of occupation...Only by agreement can a compromise and a just solution be achieved...The state of Serbia must be prepared in this process to ensure true and substantial autonomy for Kosovo and Metohija, and for all people and nations that live there.

*–Serbian Patriarch Pavle, 4 November 2005*

### A. PURPOSE OF STUDY

In the aftermath of ethnic cleansing in the Balkan region in the 1990s and the subsequent NATO armed interventions, the Serbs have strived to overcome their nationalist legacy and work towards new goals of integration into the greater Euro-Atlantic community institutions, including the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU). Certain issues, however, must be resolved before Serbia can engage in further negotiations with such institutions, including Kosovo's final status and turning over war criminals. Second only to the war criminal issue, Kosovo is the main stumbling block preventing the Serbian government from moving forward in tackling other pressing issues, such as corruption and unemployment.<sup>2</sup> NATO and the EU require its aspirants to institute internal institutional changes to meet pluralistic democratic standards and transparency prior to even being considered candidates. While the Serbian government has met many of the demands imposed upon it, there is a lingering question amongst Western policy makers whether Serbian civil society is robust enough to meet the demands of a pluralistic democracy. Indeed, the Serbian reaction to Kosovo's final status is but one of the many litmus tests for the West

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with Dr Roy Stafford, professor at National Defense University, 13 December 2005.

to assess the Serbian society's readiness to access its institutions.<sup>3</sup> One of the actors which could influence the reaction to tests like Kosovo's final status – positively or not – is the Serbian Orthodox Church, which has grown in its societal and political sway since Milošević left power in 2000 and is currently the most trusted institution in Serbian society.<sup>4</sup>

This thesis analyzes the Serbian Orthodox Church's place in post-Milošević Serbian society. Specifically, the thesis explores the nature of the influence the Church sways within Serbia's on-going transformation into a liberal democracy. The study does this by analyzing the Serbian Orthodox Church's role in Serbian history, politics and society.<sup>5</sup> It examines the nature of the Church's influence and evaluates the implications of this influence (or non-influence). For policy makers seeking a peaceful resolution of Kosovo's status and integration of Serbia into Europe, it is even more important to understand the extent and nature of the Church's current influence in Serbian politics. The common perception in the West is that the Church is a monolithic organization, which promotes rabid nationalism, and that therefore its influence should be marginalized. The West has maintained this image since 1989, when Church officials appeared next to Slobodan Milošević at the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo celebrations; in Western eyes, the two were paired from that point forward. This thesis evaluates whether this perception of the Church is accurate. If the image is accurate, then the possibilities for the Serbian Orthodox Church to exert a positive influence on Serbian society and politics are limited. If the image is inaccurate, however, then pluralism within the Serbian Orthodox Church could allow openings for a pluralist society to

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<sup>3</sup> The Kosovo issue is a volatile one in Serbia right now and needs to be handled with sensitivity, especially as the Radical Party (extreme nationalists) has increased its popularity in the last few elections, currently hovering at about thirty percent favorability in opinion polls (far ahead of the eleven percent sustained by the Serbian president's centrist and pro-European party). Should Kosovo gain independence, the Radical Party could very well come into power. See Igor Jovanovic, "Serbia fights to hold on to Kosovo, Montenegro," *International Relations and Security Network (ISN) Security Watch*, 27 November 2005, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/news/sw/details.cfm?ID=13641> (accessed 23 January 2006).

<sup>4</sup> According to a poll conducted the Centre for Political Research and Public Opinion of the Belgrade Social Sciences Institute for the European Movement in Serbia in January 2005, "a total of 71.2 per cent of citizens [have] a positive opinion of the church. Only 6 per cent of respondents expressed complete distrust of the church." See "Majority of Serbs Still Distrusts Hague Tribunal - Opinion Poll," *BBC Monitoring International Reports* (originally released by Radio B92 text web site, Belgrade), 5 January 2005. Available from LexisNexis.

<sup>5</sup> The Serbian Orthodox Church has been a keeper of Serbian religious heritage, and in essence, of Serbian identity throughout the centuries.



develop. For instance, when Milošević came to power, there were some within the Serbian Orthodox Church who thought the time had come for the Church to take its rightful place within the state. Most in the Church hierarchy were nonetheless quickly disillusioned with Milošević and denounced him fairly early in his reign.<sup>6</sup> Understanding the nature of the Serbian Orthodox Church's actual influence today will help Western policy makers gauge the importance of its potential contributions to the Kosovo discussions, as well as reconciling other facets of Serbia's past so as to move towards the future, which for Serbia means belonging to the European Union and NATO.

## **B. SUMMARY OF CURRENT LITERATURE AND VOCABULARY**

New democratic societies, especially those emerging from the communist experience, have more challenges than those who have been established for several decades or centuries. Central and Southeastern European countries, with the exception of Czechoslovakia, did not have stable, lengthy experiences with democracy prior to the communist era. These countries have thus been expected to develop democratic societies, institutions and traditions practically from scratch in a short amount of time. In contrast, Western European countries and the United States have had many more years to overcome their democratic growing pains. However, the growth experience does not need to be agonizing. There are factors which have emerged from the experiences of more mature democracies which can contribute to the successful establishment and consolidation of new democracies.

One of the more important factors contributing to the consolidation of democratic rule is the development of a robust civil society. Civil society can act as a way to enhance institutional legitimacy among the people of a country; it can serve as a base for developing acceptance of democratic values and can assist the society to deflect such negative forces as extreme nationalism. Of course, civil society is not always positive and can be detrimental to minorities who can be excluded. The theories which address civil society and its associated tools are examined next, followed by a review of the different kinds of nationalism and certain exclusive behavior such as collective rights.

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<sup>6</sup> See Chapter III, which discusses these denunciations in detail. Also, despite this distancing, the West has not disassociated the Serbian Orthodox Church from its alleged endorsement of extreme nationalism.

## 1. Civil Society, Social Capital and Networks

Civil society, a society's state-independent actors, can play a key role in establishing a strong democracy. This is the viewpoint of the associational or the Tocquevillean school of thought.<sup>7</sup> Tocqueville thought that society required "self-governing associations" to strike a balance between the "powerful state...[and the] tyranny of the majority."<sup>8</sup> An adherent of this school, Larry Diamond, argues that civil society advances democracy by: increasing "tolerance and compromise;" reducing conflict; increasing government oversight; and increased communication.<sup>9</sup>

Another advocate for the importance of civil society emerged from a 1996 conference entitled "The Rise of Civil Society in the 21st Century," which established core values to create a strong civil society. One of these values was cultural, in which "all the diverse elements of society are worthy of value and respect," such that a person should not necessarily "merge into some sort of homogenous mass;" rather, this heritage should enrich the society.<sup>10</sup> The conference participants recognized that this type of pluralism was ideal but that the absence of this pluralism produced "ethnic cleansing and its dehumanizing corollaries [which] run totally counter to civilized functioning."<sup>11</sup>

Most political theorists do recognize a strong civil society is not necessarily always a good thing. There are instances where a strong civil society can have negative effects (see Section 2, on extreme nationalism). However, there are some who would go further, claiming that adhesion to ethnic and/or religious identity is not compatible with civic society. For example, Ernest Gellner claims that "modularity ["the ability to rise beyond traditional or ascriptive occupations and associations"]...makes civil society."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Other schools include the post-Marxist or Hegelian School (historical conflict), the Regime or Lockean School (social contract, natural law) and the Neo-liberal School or Paine (anti-statist, pro-market). See Goran Hyden, "Building Civil Society at the Turn of the Millennium," in *Beyond Prince and Merchant: Citizen Participation and the Rise of Civil Society*, ed. John Burbidge (New York and Brussels: Institute of Cultural Affairs International, July 1997), 20-21.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 22-23.

<sup>10</sup> John Epps, "Core Values of Civil Society," in *Beyond Prince and Merchant: Citizen Participation and the Rise of Civil Society*, ed. John Burbidge (New York and Brussels: Institute of Cultural Affairs International, July 1997), 279-280.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 280-281.

<sup>12</sup> Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 41.

Gellner further claims that civil society “is not only modern but also based on strictly voluntary, not ethnic or religious, associations between the family and the state.”<sup>13</sup> Ashutosh Varshney tempers these arguments, stating that “taking pride in one’s ethnic group and working for the group does not, ipso facto, make one ‘uncivil.’”<sup>14</sup>

One way to create a positive civil society is to develop inclusive social capital. Social capital includes the combination of social ties, trust and cooperation between sets of people.<sup>15</sup> Political theorists argue that social capital is created by associations, providing an additional explanation for why civic associations impact the quality of democracy. Robert Putnam and Kristin Goss identify three different aspects of social capital: first, social capital can develop in a formal (labor unions) or informal (lunch buddies) organization; second, social capital can be construed as thin (saying hello to a stranger) or thick (interacting with your family); third, social capital can be inward-looking (men’s only club) or outward-looking (Red Cross).<sup>16</sup>

Just as there can be negative civil societies, social capital can also be negative and not helpful for democratic development and social cohesion. Indeed, the effects of social capital on social cohesion will differ depending on whether the groups link across various social cleavages, or whether they build sub-groups into tighter groups.<sup>17</sup> Social capital can thus exert positive effects if there is some kind of “bridging” with diverse ethnic and religious factions. If civil society creates extreme “bonding” or excessive exclusionary ties, the resulting negative civil society can be detrimental to those considered outside the norm.<sup>18</sup> It is a question of finding the proper balance between the two kinds of behavior since, as Putnam states, “bonding without bridging equals Bosnia.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Varshney, 42.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>15</sup> The term ‘social capital’ first evolved in the early 1900s, when L. Judson Hanifan “concluded that the grave social, economic, and political problems of the communities in which he worked could be solved only by strengthening the networks of solidarity among their citizens.” See Robert D. Putnam and Kristin A. Goss, introduction to *Democracies in Flux: the Evolution of Social Capital in Contemporary Society*, ed. Robert D. Putnam (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 4.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 9-11.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 8, 11.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 8-9, 11.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 11-12.

Pippa Norris outlines two claims of Putnam's social capital theory which are pertinent to this study.<sup>20</sup> First, horizontal networks are important since,

organizations in civic society such as unions, churches, and community groups...[bridge] social cleavages, bringing together people from diverse backgrounds and values, and promoting 'habits of the heart' such as tolerance, cooperation, and reciprocity, thereby contributing to a dense, rich, and vibrant social infrastructure.<sup>21</sup>

These horizontal networks can thus contribute to the building of higher social trust within society, which could translate into positive social capital. Secondly, Putnam claims that social capital leads to "important consequences for democracy" since social capital increases the legitimacy of the democratic institutions.<sup>22</sup>

Norris asserts that Putnam's claims above must be qualified. First, she found that social trust was more important than associations in determining the link of social capital and socioeconomic development, social tolerance or political involvement.<sup>23</sup> Second, she states that this trust "appears to be rooted in...particular cultural histories" (low social trust equals low social capital).<sup>24</sup> This kind of low social trust has been evident in societies like Serbia, which have experienced not only communism but also the after-effects of the wars in the 1990s. Third, Putnam and Goss' claims assume inclusive social capital and a positive civil society. Other theorists have simply rejected Putnam and Goss' claims that social capital and trust are vital ingredients for democracy (see note below).<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, there is mounting evidence that membership in such institutions

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<sup>20</sup> A third claim asserts "Social capital has declined in postwar America." See Pippa Norris, *Democratic Phoenix* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 140.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 138-139.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 139-140.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 155-161.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>25</sup> Kenneth Newton questions the pro-social capital camp's assertion "that social trust and political trust are different sides of the same coin." He claims that they "are not necessarily related." He does not totally discount the role of trust but states that "social and political trust are related to different sets of social, economic, and political variables," in which "political distrust is not caused so much by social or economic factors, but by political ones." He states that social trust (created mostly through education and income level) does not necessarily influence political trust but that political elements can assist "to sustain social capital." He is mostly alluding to older democracies since he goes on to list under political trust in early democracies a "great reliance on social, economic, and ideological ties to underpin trust." See Kenneth Newton, "Social and Political Trust in Established Democracies" in *Critical Citizens*, ed. Pippa Norris (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 172-174, 179-186.

like religions and unions does have an impact on civic engagement in other areas such as electoral turnout and protest activism; this role has been fulfilled by other forces in post-industrial and secularized societies.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to inclusive social capital, strong associational networks can build up a positive civil society. Varshney, in describing Hindu and Muslim strife in India, proposed that there are two kinds of networks, associational and quotidian, which can be helpful in strengthening bonds between communities. Associational networks consist of organized ties between groups, including both professional and non-professional associations, while quotidian networks are informal, the “simple routine interactions of life.”<sup>27</sup> Varshney claims that both can “promote peace” but that their absence “opens up space for communal violence.”<sup>28</sup> Associational engagement, which is considered “a sturdier bulwark of peace,” is developed through such common interests as business.<sup>29</sup> These networks, like bridging and bonding, can be inter- or intra-communal, the latter being potentially detrimental to building up a positive civil society.

These kinds of networks can be extended to religions and ethnic groups. Granted, religious associations may not always reproduce the same positive, bridging effects of other associational networks but they can enrich the building of civic networks. For example, the Catholic Church in Poland is often quoted as a model in that country’s struggle and subsequent transition to democracy – this group acted to increase responsible citizenship.<sup>30</sup> Varshney counters the claim that “...religion is equal to traditionalism and therefore can’t perform the functions of civic organizations” since this claim “has too many exceptions to be considered empirically admissible.”<sup>31</sup> These kinds of associations only work towards peace if they are involved in “intercommunal engagement” (bridging) and not solely in “intracommunal engagement” (bonding).<sup>32</sup> As for quotidian intercommunal networks, they can only be developed if groups are not

<sup>26</sup> Norris, *Democratic Phoenix*, 187.

<sup>27</sup> Varshney, 3.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 9-10.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 42-43.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 46.

totally segregated – people need to have the opportunity to encounter each other if there is to be any engagement.<sup>33</sup> Both the association and quotidian networks can assist society since “organized civic networks, when intercommunal...withstand the exogenous communal shocks – partitions, civil wars, desecration of holy places.”<sup>34</sup> Associational networks are better able to withstand greater shocks than quotidian networks which might fall apart due to smaller shocks. Each type of network is nevertheless better suited for peace than if the “engagement is only *intraethnic*” since in these cases “small tremors” like a football victory “can unleash torrents of violence.”<sup>35</sup>

Varshney lays out the potential outcomes of intra- or inter-communal engagement in the figure below:

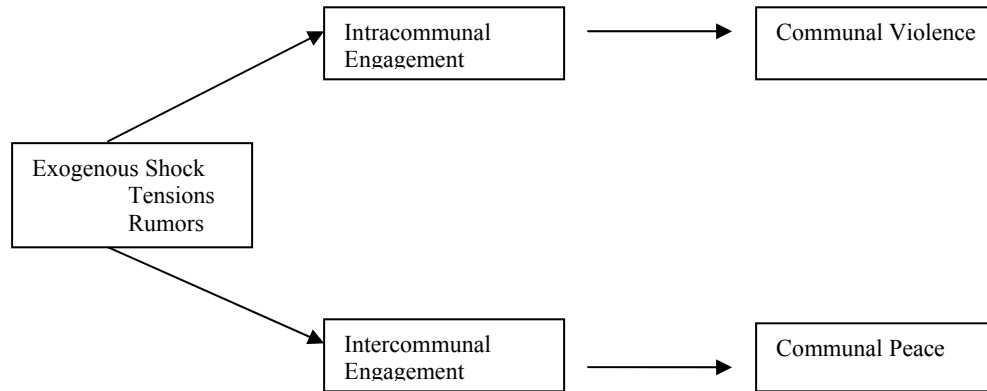


Figure 2. "Communal Violence and Peace" Replicated from Varshney, 12

These theories regarding civil society and some of its tools, social capital and networks suggest that developing an inclusive, intercommunal society will assist developing democracies to withstand shocks such as extreme nationalism or to resist temptations like excessive collective rights.

## 2. Nationalism and Collective Rights

Not all forms of social capital are positive, and some can be challenges to democracies. Foremost is the issue of nationalism, when found in an extreme form. Ernest Gellner defines nationalism as “primarily a political principle, which holds that the

<sup>33</sup> Varshney, 9-10.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 11-12.

political and the national unit should be congruent.”<sup>36</sup> Benedict Anderson expands the definition to be “an imagined political community – and ...it is *imagined* because the members...will never know most of their fellow-members...yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”<sup>37</sup> Within this bonded community there exists a “deep, horizontal comradeship” which will lead to people “willing to die for such limited imaginings.”<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, theorists argue that nationalism has a political agenda because this imagining also locates the nation as sovereign, whose people think they “should rule themselves in a political system that expresses and protects those distinctive [cultural, historical] characteristics.”<sup>39</sup> By nature, then, nationalism seems to be bonding, rather than bridging.

Nationalism need not be necessarily negative bonding, for Jack Snyder provides a distinction between different types of nationalism: counterrevolutionary, revolutionary, ethnic, and civic.<sup>40</sup> Each of these types of nationalism has a different effect on social capital; the last two are of interest to this study. Civic nationalism is based “on loyalty to a set of political ideas and institutions that are perceived as just and effective.”<sup>41</sup> Civic nationalism thus tends to create bridges across ethnic groups – positive social capital. An example would be the United States and the American Dream – no matter what one’s background may be, if one works hard enough, one will have the chance to succeed. In contrast, ethnic nationalism is based

on common culture, language, religion, shared historical experience, and/or the myth of shared kinship, and...use[s] these criteria including or exclude members from the national group.”<sup>42</sup>

Ethnic nationalism thus tends to drive groups further apart, creating social capital within but not across groups – which can lead to negative social capital.

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<sup>36</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1983), 1.

<sup>37</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2d ed. (rev) (London and New York: Verso, 1991), 6.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>39</sup> Jack L. Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2000), 23.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 38-39.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

Societies just starting on their democratization path are most vulnerable to the effects of ethnic nationalism. Democracy opens up the door to those elites who “need to harness popular energies to the tasks of war and economic development” without giving up power.<sup>43</sup> New democracies are vulnerable to ethnic nationalism “when democratization begins in a setting where the basic building blocks of political or administrative institutions have never been laid down.”<sup>44</sup> On the other hand, civic nationalism develops when “elites are not particularly threatened by democratization” since the institutions required to run the democracy “are already well established before the mass of the population gains political power.”<sup>45</sup> The ideal situation for a democratizing state would thus be to first instill the values of civic nationalism and to avoid any collective rights based on ethnicity.<sup>46</sup> These steps might be counterproductive if there are already “entrenched institutions, ideas, and interests based on invidious ethnic distinctions.”<sup>47</sup> Finally, Snyder cautions that “weak democratic institutions often make society uncivil” – that even if democratic elements exist, these might be used for negative and even violent ends.<sup>48</sup>

There is another kind of exclusive behavior akin to extreme nationalism. Sabrina Ramet in *Whose Democracy?* describes the “doctrine of collective rights” which claims that

One’s own group has certain rights that are superior to those of others...and that one’s own group is entitled to set the rules for members of other groups to follow within a certain territory, or to assert territorial autonomy within specified boundaries...it is...the claim to superiority and to an entitlement to rule or...the demand that the group be granted autonomy and provided with state-funded cultural institutions.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Snyder, 32.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 38-39.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 40-41.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>49</sup> Sabrina P. Ramet, *Whose Democracy? Nationalism, Religion, and the Doctrine of Collective Rights in Post-1989 Eastern Europe* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1997), 6.



Various groups adhering to this doctrine seek to transform “cultural *differences* into cultural *divisions*” which can be religious and/or political in nature (e.g., creationism, national language).<sup>50</sup> Ramet proposes instead “societal rights” which include “respect for the interests of the entire body politic.”<sup>51</sup> The idea of “societal rights,” with its concept of universal rights, fits well with civic nationalism, rather than ethnic nationalism.

### C. THE SERBIAN EXPERIENCE

The preceding theories about issues like civil society and nationalism can be related to the Serbian experience. Both Serbian nationalism and the Serbian Orthodox Church have been historically bonding in nature. Indeed, Milošević’s decade-long nationalist reign still casts a shadow over the neophyte Serbian democracy. Snyder maintains that Serbian ethnic nationalism was “an intensely exclusionary nationalism,” developed in the early 19th century “institutional vacuum” created by the departure of the Ottoman Empire. The new government imported ideas of nationalism from the West and appropriated “cultural themes to lend legitimacy to the task of building a wholly new state.”<sup>52</sup> These themes included teaching school children the myths of the past and the definition of Serb nationhood. Intellectuals initiated the spreading of nationalistic ideas, borrowing elements of religion at times to create their national myths (i.e., Heavenly Serbia), with the government using populism and the myths to subsequently gain momentum for their own interests.<sup>53</sup> The Serb leadership seemed to follow a similar pattern in the post-Communist 1990s.<sup>54</sup> Another possible barrier to democratic development includes Donald Horowitz’s claim that ethnic cleavages found in countries like Serbia have retarded democratic efforts, as opposed to Poland, which has a more or

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<sup>50</sup> Sabrina P. Ramet, *Whose Democracy?*, 9. Emphasis original.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>52</sup> Snyder, 38, 170, 182.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 172, 179.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

less homogenous society.<sup>55</sup> The challenge for Serbia today is to break free of these ethnic nationalist molds of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and acquire the civic mold of nationalism.

Civic networks in the Balkans have been extremely vulnerable to shocks. Varshney argues that communism virtually wiped out intercommunal civic networks in Serbia and “robbed [Serbs] of their civic role.”<sup>56</sup> Since the networks were so weakened, they could not overcome the dire economic and politic situation of the late 1980s, leaving the people susceptible to Milošević’s agenda. Another vulnerability to exogenous shocks also came from the Serbian Orthodox Church’s religious bonding tendencies and the resulting influence on society. Historically, the Serbian Orthodox Church has seemed exclusive of others, viewing itself as a social, political and cultural force, entitled to a proper place in society, akin to the collective rights doctrine.<sup>57</sup> The Serbian Orthodox Church has indeed made strides in reasserting itself in the public sphere, particularly since 2000.<sup>58</sup> It has also envisioned itself as a representative of all Serbs, even for those outside of Serbia proper.

There are some academics who have claimed that Orthodoxy and democracy are thus not compatible because of Orthodoxy’s alleged inflexibility. One detractor is Samuel Huntington, who argued societies with a Catholic or Protestant background “are, or historically have been, more conducive to successful democratic political change than others (Orthodoxy, Islam).”<sup>59</sup> However, this claim of incompatibility with democracy was also claimed of Catholics in the United States even as late as the 1960s when John F. Kennedy was running for president. Another pessimist regarding Orthodoxy is Max

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<sup>55</sup> Donald L. Horowitz, “Democracy in Divided Societies” in *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy*, ed. Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1994), 36.

<sup>56</sup> Varshney, 298.

<sup>57</sup> This view has partially stemmed from the “one church, one people, one emperor” doctrine.

<sup>58</sup> The Church has been successful in convincing the Serbian government to pass favorable legislation and taking action on the Church’s behalf. For example, the Serbian military used a helicopter to transport a Serbian Orthodox chapel onto Montenegrin property in 2005. For more see “Churches and Helicopters in Montenegro: Politics by Other Means,” *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty Reports* 9, no 23 (12 August 2005), <http://www.rferl.org/reports/balkan-report/2005/08/23-120805.asp> (accessed 23 January 2006).

<sup>59</sup> John Anderson, *Religions Liberty in Transitional Societies: The Politics of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 15. Original Source: Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 72-85.

Weber, who claimed that it suffers from its “caesaropapist” structure.<sup>60</sup> However, many contest these kinds of claims. Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan assert that “Orthodox Christianity is [not] an inherently antidemocratic force.”<sup>61</sup> Linz and Stepan claim that if the government is democratic, Orthodox Christianity will support it but if the government is “antidemocratic, the democratic opposition in civil society will not normally receive substantial or effective support from a national Orthodox church.”<sup>62</sup> Elizabeth Prodromou has also contested Huntington and Weber, stating that “there is ample empirical evidence to suggest that Orthodox Christianity and democracy are generally compatible.”<sup>63</sup> However, Prodromou acknowledges that when it comes to “key elements of the pluralism that characterizes democratic regimes,” Orthodoxy is rather ambivalent.<sup>64</sup> This ambivalence stems from different sources, such as “little experience with life amid democratic pluralism,” experiences of vulnerability as a minority in different empires, and elements within the religion (such as emphasis on unity).<sup>65</sup> The experience of living in pluralist societies has actually increased the amount of internal pluralism within the various Orthodox churches, which has further contributed to the Orthodox ambivalence towards societal pluralism.<sup>66</sup> Political analyst Christos Mylonas further states that

orthodoxy and democracy share common notional references in the prescriptive emphasis on co-operation, responsibility, participation and the potential for human progress and fulfilment.<sup>67</sup>

One cannot superimpose the Western model of democracy onto Serbia since factors like the Serbian Orthodox Church, which has formed an identity based on the “fusion and

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<sup>60</sup> Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 453.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Elizabeth Prodromou, “The Ambivalent Orthodox,” *Journal of Democracy* 15, no. 2 (April 2004): 62. Available from Project Muse.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> “Orthodoxy’s emphasis on love and harmony leads to skepticism about pluralism as the protection of difference and the primacy of unfettered competition.” See Ibid., 66-67.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 67, 70.

<sup>67</sup> Christos Mylonas, *Serbian Orthodox Fundamentals: The Quest for an Eternal Identity* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2003), 130.

sacralisation of Serbianhood.”<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, Mylonas asserts that the Serbian government, through its use of Serbian Orthodox symbols of a “sacred and transcendent cause” could “circumscribe the consolidation of democracy...[based on the] claim that it alone is capable of maintaining the peace among its population.”<sup>69</sup> Of note, the Church being involved in politics for the sake of politics “would be doctrinally unsustainable and socially dismissed.”<sup>70</sup> While Orthodoxy may be compatible with democracy, its role within Orthodox countries is not necessarily compatible with the Western liberal democratic model (e.g., separation of church and state).<sup>71</sup>

#### **D. QUESTIONS FOR STUDY**

Given the previous theories regarding Serbia, Orthodoxy, civil society and nationalism, how do these apply to the Serbian Orthodox Church, after the fall of Milošević in 2000? What is the nature of the Church's influence - does it seek to build bridges across societal sectors or does it seek to exclude others by bonding together an autonomous societal group, consisting of the Church and its faithful? Is it united in its approach to define and subsequently implement its goals? Does the Serbian Orthodox Church depend on the state for its political mandate, or is it the one shaping the political picture? Finally, what are the implications of this behavior for Serbia's integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions?

This study will demonstrate the multifaceted nature of the Serbian Orthodox Church in its behavior toward other communities and the internal pluralism it has experienced in various issues. Additionally, though it has increased its influence over the political and civil society fronts, this influence has been mitigated by its internal pluralism, and to a certain extent, Serbia's democratic institutions. The Serbian Orthodox Church has thus not been monolithic in its approach towards other communities, though bonding behavior prevails. This bonding behavior partially arises from the fact that all

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<sup>68</sup> Mylonas, 132.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>71</sup> One might point to the Greeks as the cradle of democracy and model for Western democracies but these proto-democracies died out long before the Greeks were absorbed into the Roman Empire and subsequently adopted Christianity.

religions exhibit some form of exclusiveness or they would not be a separate religion. The issue to monitor is if these bonding tendencies become an obstacle to building a positive civil society. At this point, it is unclear if the bridging foundations laid in the last few years will effectively counterbalance some of the more negative bonding tendencies within the Serbian Orthodox Church. It is nevertheless imperative that the Church not be excluded from future developments within civil society due to the great respect held for the Church by the Serbian people within Serbian society.<sup>72</sup>

## **E. METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES**

This study uses a blend of case studies, historiography, and textual analysis to evaluate the nature of the Serbian Orthodox Church's bonding and bridging influences as an actor within civil society. First, each chapter will be divided into bonding and bridging sections, followed by an analysis of the subject church's influence. This is an artificial division, since one member of the clergy can exhibit both bonding and bridging behavior, but this is done for the sake of clarity. Second, this study has limited access to measures of influence, due primarily to the author's inability to access native language documentation. As such, several proxies will be used to measure the influence of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Chapters III and IV and the other churches examined in Chapter II. These proxies include level of trust in the church as an institution, as well as rise of membership within the church. Some direct measurements will include the level and kind of state funding the church has received and what kind of legislation has been passed to benefit the majority church and/or to exclude other churches.<sup>73</sup> Third, this study relies on several different kinds of sources, though primarily on secondary. These secondary sources include those found in academia and media (especially for the more current issues). The media does include extensive translated media sources from the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS, now the Open Source Center) and

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<sup>72</sup> The Serbian Orthodox Church (listed as SPC) had 22 percent vote of confidence as opposed to the Republic president (11 percent) and the EU (5 percent). It should be noted that about 20 percent of those polled did not trust any institution. See "Institucija od Najvećeg Poverenja u Srbiji Decembra 2004," *Center for Political Studies and Public Opinion Research: Institute of Social Sciences* (Belgrade, December 2004), <http://www.cpijm.org.yu/srpska/scpijmdn.htm> (accessed 28 August 2005).

<sup>73</sup> A majority church is the church which has the most members within a given nation – in Serbia's case, the Serbian Orthodox Church.

LexisNexis. Primary sources include translated church documents as well as e-mail correspondence and face-to-face interviews with numerous academic and military experts, religious figures and even a Serbian politician. These sources are not necessarily quoted in the study but did provide much appreciated vectors, insights, information and feedback.

Chapter II commences the study with two case studies, that of Croatia and Russia. This analysis will examine the nature of the influence of the majority churches in the subject countries. Each case will examine if the majority churches were monolithic or pluralistic in their influence (was it simply bonding/bridging or a mixture of both?). In Croatia, Serbia's neighbor and adversary in the twentieth century, Roman Catholicism has traditionally played a major role in national identity, though this has been problematic due to a large minority population (mostly Serbs). Additionally, the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia has played a more ambivalent role in shaping society than in countries like Poland. Russia, Serbia's co-religionist and historical partner, is too religiously diverse as a country for the Russian Orthodox Church to totally dominate society, but it has attempted to position itself as the shaper of Russian society. After these comparative case studies, Chapter III will address the questions at hand by examining unresolved issues stemming from historical events, including the issues of Kosovo's final status and the handing over of war criminals to The Hague. The snapshots will reveal what kind of influence the Serbian Orthodox Church exhibited during these periods of trial and tribulation. Chapter IV will then explore the Serbian Orthodox Church and its role in civil society in the post-Milošević era, as Serbia attempts to transition into a liberal democracy. This chapter will demonstrate that despite the Serbian Orthodox Church's increased role within society, it still engages in a mix of bonding and bridging behavior. Finally, the conclusion will offer an assessment of the impact of the nature of the Serbian Orthodox Church's influence and implications for the Euro-Atlantic institutions, which are considering Serbia's applications for membership.

## II. RELIGION AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE: CASE STUDIES OF CROATIA AND RUSSIA

### A. INTRODUCTION

*Nihil obstat* – nothing stands in the way...the words are employed to suggest that, with the collapse of the communist power monopoly throughout what used to be called the Soviet East European region, literally *nothing stands in the way* of new religious movements, groups, and associations, including many previously illegal.<sup>74</sup>

Religions in post-communist societies have had varied experiences as their countries emerge from decades of repression. Still, they have one thing in common – they have desired to become (or in some cases remain) prominent actors within the public sphere. The case studies will argue that both throughout history and in the modern era, the main churches in Croatia (Roman Catholic) and Russia (Orthodox) have not been monolithic in their bonding or bridging behavior, though each have exhibited bonding tendencies towards ethnic groups affiliated with other denominations. To understand the context of each church's influence, this analysis will begin with an overview of Catholicism's and Orthodoxy's respective roles *writ large* throughout history. Next, each case will examine the nature of the influence of the country's primary religion in the public sphere, in history and today.

### B. THE ROLES OF CATHOLICISM AND ORTHODOXY

#### 1. Catholicism

Due to their unique historical heritage, Western European religions have very different internal structures and roles in the public sphere than their counterparts in the East. First, when the western half of the Roman Empire disintegrated towards the end of the fifth century, the Catholic Church was the only institution left intact. The Church quickly went from being the spiritual leader of the newly Christianized empire to also being its secular administrator. As a result, “churchmen provided the lawyers and clerks on whom the lay rulers depended...[which] tended to give the Roman Church a legal

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<sup>74</sup> Sabrina P. Ramet, *Nihil Obstat: Religion, Politics, and Social Change in East-Central Europe and Russia* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1998), 3. Emphasis original.

outlook.”<sup>75</sup> As the barbarian invasions mounted, the power in the Catholic Church became increasingly asymmetrical in favor of the Bishop of Rome, who was “the guardian not only of the Faith but of the traditions of Roman civilization.”<sup>76</sup> Eventually, under this bishop, the Church became a political force in its own right. By the time secular forces organized enough to create empires, the rulers had to accommodate the Catholic pope.<sup>77</sup>

The Catholic Church was also financially independent, which helped its autonomy. While the secular powers gained more of an upper hand with the Catholic Church as time passed, there were still instances in which the pope was able to make emperors literally beg for forgiveness.<sup>78</sup> Even after the Protestant Reformation, the Catholic Church was able to insert itself in the domestic affairs of states. It intervened between local Catholics and their rulers (Catholic or not) in negotiating the local Catholics’ status in the state, which bore “all the characteristics of a treaty between one power and another.”<sup>79</sup> The pope did not necessarily take sides with the local Catholics since he “was more inclined to look for an amicable solution.”<sup>80</sup> The universal authority also extended to the public sphere, as the Catholic Church was often the shaper of civil society and moral authority.<sup>81</sup> Though it had a universal outlook and was able to bridge across many different ethnic groups to bring them under one faith, the Catholic Church

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<sup>75</sup> Steve Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity: A Study of the Patriarchate of Constantinople from the Eve of the Turkish Conquest to the Greek War of Independence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 6.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>77</sup> This was evident in the crowning of Charlemagne in 800, when the Holy Roman Emperor was ordained by the Catholic pope – thereby drawing at least part of his secular legitimacy from the Catholic Church. See Hendrik Spruyt, *The Sovereign State and its Competitors* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), 43-44.

<sup>78</sup> The Catholic Church was able to successfully raise money throughout Western Europe – “no area of Christian Europe escaped the extractive capability of the church.” See *Ibid.*, 45-51.

<sup>79</sup> Some would claim that the Reformation actually launched the centralization of papal power. See René Rémond, *Religion and Society in Modern Europe* (Oxford and Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, Inc., 1999), 28-29.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>81</sup> This is not to imply that the Catholic Church has always been monolithic. Even today there are over twenty different rites and churches which identify with the Catholic faith, each with various degrees of autonomy vis-à-vis the pope; however, all recognize the pope’s authority and the basic tenets of the Catholic Church. See Colin B. Donovan, “Catholic Rites and Churches,” *Eternal Word Television Network Global Catholic Network*, (n.d.), [http://www.ewtn.com/expert/answers/catholic\\_rites\\_and\\_churches.htm](http://www.ewtn.com/expert/answers/catholic_rites_and_churches.htm) (accessed 12 April 2006).



has nevertheless exhibited bonding behavior toward those of other faiths. The actions conducted in the name of a singular faith have had dark implications for many non-Catholics, from the victims of the Spanish Inquisition to the victims of multiple pogroms.

This exclusionary behavior has been moderated in recent decades. There nevertheless remain growing pains in developing this new approach, as seen in the Croatian case. The advent of Vatican II in the mid-twentieth century fundamentally changed the doctrine of the Catholic Church regarding other faiths. No longer were other faiths to be automatically condemned, but rather they were to be respected. This change of heart widened the Catholic Church's universal religious outlook (all are called to be saved) to giving priority to building bridges with non-Catholics, without direct proselytizing aims.

## **2. Orthodoxy**

The Orthodox Church followed a very different path than its sister church (the Catholic Church), even before the Great Schism of 1054. First, the eastern half of the Roman Empire stayed strong for many years after the implosion of the western half. Unlike in the West where the Catholic Church came to dominate the secular realm, in the East, secular authority remained firmly in place – leaving no room for the Orthodox Church to assert itself independently. In the East, therefore, the Orthodox Church became a quasi-state actor and in some later cases, a full-fledged state actor. The Emperor in the East was the Orthodox Church's head; the political efforts of the Catholic Church to subjugate all rulers to the pope were frowned upon by the Orthodox Church since it believed that secular power only belonged to the emperor and not to the Empire's church.<sup>82</sup>

The theological outlook also shaped the Orthodox Church position within society and its internal structure. Whereas the Catholic Church became increasingly legalistic in its outlook, the Orthodox Church remained apophatic, embracing a tradition that avoids any exact pronouncements on doctrine. By not pronouncing definite doctrine, the Orthodox Church hesitated to advocate “religion [as] a complete guide for the conduct of life” which reduced much of its potential moral authority over the masses, and as a result,

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<sup>82</sup> Runciman, 7.

it “could never exercise the same moral influence as the hierarchy in the West.”<sup>83</sup> The apophatic outlook also extended to the internal Orthodox Church structure: the Ecumenical Patriarch did not have as nearly much sway over other Orthodox churches in Eastern cities as the pope did in the West. This was due to the fact that hierarchy in the Orthodox Church is much more horizontal than in the Catholic Church. All Orthodox patriarchs are technically equal: Orthodox Church hierarchies and spheres of influence have traditionally been circumscribed within specific countries.<sup>84</sup> This meant there has been little overarching structure that governs the Churches across national boundaries. Furthermore, the emphasis on mysticism has led to the filling of higher positions within the Church with monks, including that of the patriarch, which has further disassociated the Orthodox Church hierarchy from shaping secular life.<sup>85</sup>

The structure of church-state interdependence and horizontal hierarchy led to the establishment of autocephalous (independent) churches, tied to individual countries. Though the basic theological dogmas remained similar, these churches have tended to bond religiously as well as ethnically, each maintaining the old “one church, one people, one emperor” norm from Byzantine times. The Catholic Church, because of its independence from individual state structures and vertical hierarchy, not only had the potential to unite a community of Catholics across national boundaries, but also avoided the exclusive association of the Church with a particular nationality or ethnic group – all can become Catholic, regardless of their ethnic background. Within each national Orthodox Church, in contrast, there has been no incentive to bring in other ethnic or national groups under their national church. The Ecumenical Patriarch does, nevertheless, lend an element of universality to Orthodoxy and has acted to unify Orthodox Churches within the last few decades.<sup>86</sup> Due to the decentralized nature of Orthodoxy, however, these actions are conducted via moral influence rather than ecclesiastical authority as the pope has in Rome. In any case, the tendency to tie national identity to a national Orthodox Church exists to this day, as seen in the case of Russia.

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<sup>83</sup> Runciman, 6-7.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 8-9.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>86</sup> “Brief Historical Note Regarding the Ecumenical Patriarchate,” Ecumenical Patriarchate website (n.d.), <http://www.ec-patr.gr/patrdisplay.php?lang=en&id=5> (accessed 12 April 2006).

## C. CROATIA

The universal Catholic Church has long influenced Croatian society.<sup>87</sup> It was not until the nineteenth century when nationalist influences clamored for a specific Croatian Catholic identity that the Vatican allowed more native Croatians to occupy positions within the Croatian Catholic hierarchy.<sup>88</sup> Previous attempts to create a unique Croatian Catholic identity had been discouraged and many times denied by the Vatican.<sup>89</sup> Since the establishment of a more distinct Croatian identity, the Catholic Church in Croatia has exerted mixed influences over civil society, as captured by the events in World War II, the communist era, the 1990s and today. Each historical juncture will be examined for evidence of bonding and bridging influences.

### 1. Bonding

World War II continues to be a sore subject within the Balkan region. Many claim the Catholic Church in Croatia was a full collaborator with the *Ustaša* (Nazi-affiliated regime).<sup>90</sup> These fascists adopted some Catholic symbols as part of their paraphernalia, thereby linking the movement to the Catholic Church. They also mandated forced conversions to Catholicism, sometimes to the point of death.<sup>91</sup> The *Ustaša* regime also went out of its way to kill Jews, Roma and Serbian Orthodox. Serbs suffered the most, with the US Holocaust Museum estimating between “330,000 and 390,000 [Serbs were killed], with 45,000 to 52,000 Serbs murdered in Jasenovac” (the

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<sup>87</sup> Croatians first started converting to Catholicism in the seventh century but the faith became mainstream after the Croatian ruler converted in 800. See Marcus Tanner, *Croatia: A Nation Forged in War* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), 6-7.

<sup>88</sup> Vjekoslav Perica, *Balkan Idols: Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslav States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 10.

<sup>89</sup> One major sticking point was the use of the Glagolitic script, which is akin to Cyrillic. After several centuries of restricting use of the script, Pope Innocent IV finally eased the limitations in 1248, allowing use of the vernacular, a privilege not accorded to other Catholic churches until Vatican II. Nevertheless, this division within the Catholic Church in Croatia, coupled with outside interventions by the Vatican, has been claimed as a key factor in weakening the early Croatian state. Later, when the Croatian state was split between the great powers of the day, including the Hapsburgs, Venitians and the Ottomans, some Catholic clergy in Croatia actually sought a pan-Slavic solution to re-establish Croatia, even reaching out to the ‘enemy’ – the Orthodox. See Tanner, 10-12, 44-45.

<sup>90</sup> This history came back to haunt the Croatians during the 1991-1995 conflict as their Serb minority joined forces with the Yugoslav army to commit atrocities in the name of avenging past wrongs, including the shelling of Vukovar and Dubrovnik.

<sup>91</sup> Tanner, 151.

infamous *Ustaša* concentration camp).<sup>92</sup> While only a minority of priests and bishops embraced the *Ustaša* cause from start to finish, it was enough to cause a split within the Catholic Church in Croatia.

The communist experience also divided the Catholic Church. A few clergy within the Catholic Church remained a thorn in the Yugoslav government's side, even after relations with the state improved after the 1960s. These clergy promoted bonding of their religious compatriots, championing the rights of their believers (to be treated equally as non-believers) and rejecting Marxism.<sup>93</sup> When Pope John XXIII initiated Vatican II, several Croatian clergy were wary of the sweeping reforms, afraid that these reforms would be exploited by the communists and would weaken the Catholic Church in Croatia.<sup>94</sup> Certain Croatian clergy also suspected the Vatican would force the Catholic Church in Croatia to accept rulings to suit the Vatican's agenda.<sup>95</sup> The moderating trends in Croatia dictated by Vatican II were reversed after the events of the Croatian Spring (nationalist revival) in 1971, when the traditionalist clergy re-emerged and successfully pushed the Church back to the traditional (non-ecumenical) ways.<sup>96</sup> These actions included influencing the society through such actions as Marian devotions and canonization of Croatian saints; religiosity (those professing to be religious) among Croatian Catholics also soared during this time of nationalist fervor.<sup>97</sup> The Yugoslav government tried to squash this spirit of defiance by cracking down on the Catholic

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<sup>92</sup> US Holocaust Museum, "Holocaust Era in Croatia: Jasenovac 1941-1945," (Washington, D.C.: n.d.), <http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/jasenovac/history/print.html> (accessed 25 February 2006).

<sup>93</sup> Pedro Ramet, "The Catholic Church in Yugoslavia, 1945-1989," in *Catholicism and Politics in Communist Societies Christianity under Stress*, vol. 2, ed. Pedro Ramet (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1990), 192-196.

<sup>94</sup> The Croatian clergy were even more suspicious of their fellow Yugoslavs, the Serbian Orthodox clergy, who also attended the Vatican II discussions based on Yugoslav government's hope this participation would encourage ecumenism between the two churches (and an easing of societal tensions between ethnic groups). This plan failed due to each side's suspicions. See Klaus Buchenau, "What Went Wrong? Church-State Relations in Socialist Yugoslavia," *Nationalities Papers* 33, no 4 (December 2005): 553, 557.

<sup>95</sup> "The Holy See made compromises that the church inside the country swallowed unwillingly." See *ibid.*, 553.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 558.

<sup>97</sup> Perica, 58-59.

Church.<sup>98</sup> The Catholic Church in Croatia nevertheless remained strong, with 62 percent of its members proclaiming themselves as religious, as opposed to the Serbian Orthodox Church, which only had 26 percent of its faithful identifying themselves as religious (as polled in 1985).<sup>99</sup>

The Croatian break from the Yugoslav federation is a third example which reflected divisions within the Catholic Church in Croatia. When General Tudjman came to power in 1990, there were those in the Catholic Church hierarchy who were undoubtedly pleased. After all, Tudjman was a bona fide nationalist as a survivor of the communist purges that followed the Croatian Spring and was friendlier to the Catholic Church than the communists. Plus, the Vatican endorsed the recognition of an independent Croatia, which bolstered Tudjman's claims. The majority of Croats held bonding outlooks since their attitudes towards Serbs and Muslims in Croatia were extremely negative (as late as 1997).<sup>100</sup> This newly independent society placed great confidence in the Catholic Church, with the top cleric, Cardinal Kuharić, receiving 95 percent confidence from Croats (higher than Croatian President Tudjman's 87 percent).<sup>101</sup> If using this last measurement as a proxy for influence, one could infer that the Catholic Church in Croatia did not use its influence to bridge but rather to bond. Indeed, though the Vatican had pushed the Catholic Church in Croatia and the Croatian people to forgive the atrocities committed against them in the 1990s, there was still pushback as late as 2003 from both lower level clergy and lay people. In the words of one lay person, who had lost her two young boys to the war in the 1990s: "The priest and

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<sup>98</sup> Pedro Ramet, "Factionalism in Church-State Interaction: the Croatian Catholic Church in the 1980s," *Slavic Review* 44, no. 2 (Summer, 1985): 303. Available from JSTOR.

<sup>99</sup> Pedro Ramet, "The Catholic Church in Yugoslavia, 1945-1989," 200.

<sup>100</sup> The Croatian attitudes towards other ethnic groups depended on where these ethnic groups lived. Ninety-four percent of Croats held negative attitudes of Serbs living in Krajina (part of Croatia). It was much better for Serbs who lived in Croatian cities, where the negative numbers dropped to 52 percent. See Lenard J. Cohen, "Embattled Democracy: Postcommunist Croatia in Transition" in *Politics, Power, and the Struggle for Democracy in South-East Europe*, Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott, ed. (Glasgow: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 102.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

the pope say you must forgive, but they don't understand."<sup>102</sup> Additionally, there are lingering issues with the Catholic Church clergy, which is reactionary at times.<sup>103</sup>

The final example in which the Catholic Church in Croatia has had mixed reactions is the handing over of war criminals to The Hague and its linkage to EU accession. The Catholic Church in Croatia has typically not been in favor of handing any native sons over to The Hague. When the Croatian government decided in 2001 to extradite two Croatian generals accused of war crimes to The Hague, both the nationalist right and Catholic Church opposed the government's decision.<sup>104</sup> More recently the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) prosecutor, Carla Del Ponte, accused the Catholic Church in Croatia of hiding General Gotovina, Croatia's most wanted war criminal.<sup>105</sup> In September 2005, Del Ponte further shifted the blame from the Croatian government to the universal Catholic Church, claiming that the Vatican could rapidly find Gotovina.<sup>106</sup> Though these allegations were not corroborated by any specific evidence and vehemently denied by the Catholic Church both in Croatia and the Vatican, there was sympathy for Gotovina among certain clergy of the Catholic Church in Croatia. This attitude was exemplified by Bishop Bogovic, a self-proclaimed "Euroskeptic," who claimed that the EU was "forcing entire Croatia to establish battle formations to run after Gotovina, who has exposed and sacrificed himself for this state."<sup>107</sup> When Gotovina was captured, there was no direct reaction from the Church; in January 2006, though, several Church clergy joined political personalities and Gotovina's family in a "concert of support" for Gotovina.<sup>108</sup> As for the EU accession linked to the

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<sup>102</sup> Peter S. Green, "Forgive, Pope Says, But Croats Find it Hard," *New York Times*; 8 June 2003; Late Edition (East Coast), 1.10. Available from ProQuest.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> "Croatia Risk: Security Risk," *Economist Intelligence Unit*, 13 April 2004. Available from LexisNexis.

<sup>105</sup> Gotovina was wanted for his actions in Operation Storm, which occurred in August-November 1995 and consisted of a campaign against the breakaway Krajina Serbs; atrocities are alleged to have occurred.

<sup>106</sup> Molly Moore, "U.N. Prosecutor Faults Vatican in Fugitive Hunt," *Washington Post*, 21 September 2005, A.14. Available from ProQuest.

<sup>107</sup> Marijan Majstorovic, "Croatia Should not be Rushing Anywhere," *Zagreb Focus*, 25 March 2005, 8-10. Translated from Croatian by FBIS. Available from FBIS.

<sup>108</sup> "Croatian Officials Attend Concert of Support for Gen Gotovina," *BBC News*, 21 January 2006 (original source: Croatian *HINA news agency*). Available from LexisNexis.

ICTY turnover, many clergy are fearful that Croatia will lose its sovereignty in another supranational institution, which in turn would diminish the amount of influence the Catholic Church has enjoyed since Croatia's independence.<sup>109</sup>

Today, the Catholic Church remains an influential voice within Croatian civil society. Though it has officially eschewed a political role, it is nevertheless very engaged in promoting the Catholic Church's societal agenda within the government. Since the Catholic Church is the most trusted institution in Croatia, by proxy one can infer that it also has significant influence over society.<sup>110</sup> The most prominent manifestation of the church's influence can be seen in the Catholic Church's efforts to change society's laws to comply with its teachings. For example, while it has not been successful in legally limiting abortion, the pro-life movement led by the Church has convinced 33 percent of the licensed clinics in the public health system to stop providing the procedure.<sup>111</sup> Furthermore, the Church has voiced its disapproval in such issues as artificial insemination and secular sexual education, which has led to legislative blocks within parliament and the Catholic Church being placed in charge of sexual education, keeping it within Catholic teaching.<sup>112</sup> These actions are in keeping with the bonding tendency of the Catholic Church in Croatia, which has sought to establish its values upon society.

## **2. Bridging**

Though the Catholic Church in Croatia seems to have had a tendency to be bonding in nature, there have been numerous instances in which it has displayed bridging capacities. For instance, during World War II, certain Catholic clergy spoke up against the *Ustaša* and also tried to promote a certain level of tolerance among the different religious groups. The most prominent critic was Bishop Stepinac (the top Catholic Church cleric), who quickly changed from his position of endorsing the *Ustaša* for their

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<sup>109</sup> "Roman Catholic Primate Opposes Growing Euroskepticism in Croatia," *Associated Press Worldstream*, 23 March 2005. Available from LexisNexis.

<sup>110</sup> Other communities include: "Orthodox Christian, 6 percent; Muslim, 1 percent; Jewish, less than 1 percent; other, 4 percent; and atheist, 2 percent." The May 2005 survey determining most trusted institutions was published by the international research agency GFK Marketing Research Center. See U.S. Department of State, "Croatia" in *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom 2005* (Washington, D.C., 8 November 2005), <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2005/51546.htm> (accessed 16 February 2006).

<sup>111</sup> "Croatia Report on Women's Human Rights in 2005," Women's United Nations Report Program & Network: Women's Network Croatia, March 2006, [http://www.wunrn.com/news/03\\_12\\_06/031706\\_croatia\\_report.htm](http://www.wunrn.com/news/03_12_06/031706_croatia_report.htm) (accessed 19 April 2006).

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

anti-communist position to decrying their actions in his sermons in 1941.<sup>113</sup> Stepinac appealed for tolerance, stating in one of his sermons that

All men and all races are the children of God...all without distinction...For this reason, the Catholic Church has always condemned and does condemn, all injustice and violence committed in the name of theories of class race or nationality.<sup>114</sup>

These bridging actions were not recognized by the Yugoslav government, which instead punished Stepinac's resistance to the communist regime.<sup>115</sup>

During the communist regime, there were Catholic clergy who advocated ecumenism. Some of the more vocal clergy, in forming bridges with other ethnic groups, were ironically those who joined the communist priests' associations. The Croatian communist priest organization's secretary, Vinko Weber, stated in 1978 that his society was ostracized by the mainstream Church since it included statutes which mandated its members to "promote the brotherhood and unity of our peoples, defend the achievements of the national liberation struggle, promote ecumenism."<sup>116</sup> The associations eventually petered out, especially due to the pressures from the Catholic hierarchy and the Vatican, which were dead set against the communist system.<sup>117</sup> During Vatican II, there were also other progressive voices, which called for resolving differences with the Serbian Orthodox Church by building a joint-use cathedral, which was immediately rejected by the more traditionalist clergy.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Stepinac also assisted Serbs and Jews, quite possibly saving hundreds of people. See Marija Bistrice, "Pope Beatifies Croat Prelate, Fanning Ire Among Serbs," *New York Times*, 4 October 1998, 1.13. Available from ProQuest.

See also Pedro Ramet, "The Catholic Church in Yugoslavia, 1945-1989," 181-183.

<sup>114</sup> Tanner, 181. Originally quoted in T. Dragun, *Le Dossier du Stepinac*, Paris (1958), 134.

<sup>115</sup> Archbishop Stepinac was ironically later put on trial as a Nazi collaborator by the communists, which can be linked to his refusal to cooperate with Tito's request to break relations with the Vatican. These details were confirmed in later admissions by top Yugoslav officials and even Stepinac's prosecutor. He was later beatified by Pope John Paul II. See Ramet, "The Catholic Church in Yugoslavia, 1945-1989," 184-189. See also Bistrice, "Pope Beatifies Croat Prelate."

<sup>116</sup> Pedro Ramet, "The Catholic Church in Yugoslavia, 1945-1989," 190-191. Originally quoted in *Vjesnik*, 15 July 1978, trans. Joint Publications Research Service (JPRS), *East Europe Report* no 72058, 17 October 1978.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 183, 189-190.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 197-198.



Bridging actions have also surfaced in more recent times. Even during the 1990s, members of the Catholic clergy spoke up against the war in Croatia. The most prominent critic was the pontiff himself, who rebuked Tudjman's anti-Serb and anti-Muslim actions during his visits to the country in 1994, 1998 and in 2003. Pope John Paul II continuously called for the "need for forgiveness, reconciliation, spiritual renewal, the protection of life, and promotion of peace."<sup>119</sup> Pope John Paul II also waded into the politics of the conflict when he successfully led the charge to remove the leader of the Croat Republic of Herzeg-Bosnia and demanded that Tudjman's party stop the war.<sup>120</sup> The installment of Cardinal Bozanic in 1997 as the head Catholic leader in Croatia has accelerated the Catholic Church in Croatia's reconciliation efforts to heal the wounds of war and increase understanding with other religious groups, which have in turn resulted in improved overall intercommunal relations.<sup>121</sup> Cardinal Bozanic's efforts have included broadcasting ecumenical shows on the Catholic radio and meeting in inter-faith fora to develop legislation for the law on religion.<sup>122</sup> Bozanic pled for more trust in his 1998 Easter message, stating that the growing distrust within the Croatian society could "lead the nation into a state of illness."<sup>123</sup> The reconciliation efforts by Bozanic have also extended to the still-open wounds of World War II, claiming the healing will take time, on both sides but that the Church "can play a role in that process;" he has also taken such actions as investigating allegations of Masses celebrating Ustaša leaders.<sup>124</sup> In addition to its leadership's efforts, the Catholic Church in Croatia has had support from the universal Catholic Church, which has sent its Non-Government Organizations (NGO)

<sup>119</sup> Patrick Moore, "Balkans: the Former Yugoslavia and the Pope," *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, 4 April 2005, <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2005/04/937f0729-4782-4656-8a04-83c985bc0041.html> (accessed 17 February 2006).

<sup>120</sup> Robert Bajrusi, "Bozanic Provokes a Rebellion of the Clergy," *Zagreb Nacional*, 29 March 2005, 16-18. Translated from Croatian by FBIS. Available from FBIS.

<sup>121</sup> "Croatia" in *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom 2005*.

<sup>122</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom 2001* (Washington, D.C., December 2001), 258, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/9001.pdf> (accessed 12 May 2006).

<sup>123</sup> Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, "Report of the OSCE Mission to the Republic of Croatia on Croatia's Progress in Meeting International Commitments since January 1998" (20 May 1998), 5, [http://www.osce.org/documents/mc/1998/05/1047\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/mc/1998/05/1047_en.pdf) (accessed 12 May 2006).

<sup>124</sup> "HDZ Condemns Masses for Ustasha Leader as 'Reckless,'" *Belgrade BETA*, 6 January 1999. Translated from Serbo-Croatian by FBIS. Available from FBIS.

See also "Zagreb Archbishop Calls for Reconciliation in Reaction to Bleiburg Incident," *Zagreb HINA*, 13 May 2002. Available from FBIS.

to assist Croatia in the building of civil society as well as the reconciliation process. One such NGO, Pax Christi, has been in Croatia since the early 1990s. In December 1992, this organization organized an interfaith prayer service, which drew about two hundred Zagreb citizens, a Serbian Orthodox priest, a Jewish rabbi and an American Muslim imam.<sup>125</sup> Catholic Relief Services, another worldwide NGO, has focused on such issues as post-trauma care – providing training to various professionals, including “medical personnel, social workers, doctors, teachers, and attorneys.”<sup>126</sup> Finally, the worldwide Catholic NGO, Caritas, has garnered a high level of trust from the public, much higher than any media, government or other NGOs.<sup>127</sup> As already mentioned, the Catholic Church in Croatia has also participated in ecumenical efforts, which was listed by Croatians as a key promoter of “peaceful conflict resolution.”<sup>128</sup> Building these networks with other religions has produced a side benefit for the Catholic Church in Croatia – with its new allies it can mobilize more forces for its social agenda. For example, in 2004 the Catholic Church in Croatia, the Serbian Orthodox Church and Muslim community joined forces to vocally oppose legalized abortion. On the surface this declaration might seem banal, but in a country like Croatia which has experienced so much warfare, this kind of joint communication is actually a step forward in intercommunal relations. On another positive note, the Catholic Church in Croatia has not used its high level of confidence among Croatians to influence the government to exclude other religions. Croatia

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<sup>125</sup> “Visit to Zagreb, Croatia,” *Pax Christi International Newsletter*, no. 19 (March 1993), 6, <http://storage.paxchristi.net/NL19E93.pdf> (accessed 12 May 2006).

<sup>126</sup> David Smock, “Catholic Contributions to International Peace,” *United States Institutes for Peace*, Special Report no. 69 (9 April 2001), available at <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr69.html> (accessed 12 May 2006).

<sup>127</sup> In a poll on public trust in institutions, under the category “a great deal of trust” the Catholic Church in Croatia received 24.9 percent of the Croatians’ trust, Caritas 17.6 percent, Croatian Helsinki Committee 3.3 percent and NGOs 5 percent. Media, unions and the Croatian government hovered at around the 1 percent mark. See Gojko Bežovan, Siniša Zrinščak, Marina Vugec, “Civil Society in Croatia: Gaining Trust and Establishing Partnerships with the State and Other Stakeholders, *CIVICUS Civil Society Index Report for Croatia* (Zagreb, 2005): 65.

<sup>128</sup> The other two entities were peace studies institutes and UNICEF. See *Ibid.*, 55.

garnered satisfactory marks from the Croatian Helsinki Committee since well over forty religions now enjoy various tax breaks and other considerations.<sup>129</sup>

Catholic clerics have recently called for support of the ICTY, including the head ecclesiastical authority of the Catholic Church in Croatia, Cardinal Bozanic, and Bishop Mrzljak (auxiliary bishop of Zagreb). Shortly after the EU denied Croatia its anticipated accession talks in March 2005, Bozanic challenged to Croatians to “respect and utilize international institutions and the legal system to further the country's cause, rather than to denigrate them.”<sup>130</sup> Considering Bozanic had been one of clergy opposing the handing over of war criminals (the key reason for the EU’s denial), this volte-face is even more remarkable. Bishop Mrzljak emphasized that “The Hague was the place at which the truth about the Homeland War was told.”<sup>131</sup> Furthermore, when a priest caused controversy in March 2005 by encouraging Gotovina not to surrender, the bishops of the Catholic Church quickly proclaimed this view was not the Church’s position.<sup>132</sup> Though most of those within the Church hierarchy are not in favor of EU membership, Cardinal Bozanic has recently come out in favor of the accession process, by stating that resisting EU accession is “an escape into isolation without perspective.”<sup>133</sup> This has been the furthest any Catholic Church official within Croatia has gone to endorse the EU. This kind of attitude could help the Croatian society complete the necessary steps to meet the requirements of the EU accession process.

### **3. Analysis**

As with most issues, the Catholic Church in Croatia has been more complicated than being one extreme or another in its influence and behavior towards other religious and ethnic groups. The Church has exhibited both bonding and bridging influences, though it has tended to bond within its religious group and even at times the Croatian

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<sup>129</sup> Any religion in Croatia can practice, though new ones existing after 2003 need to have a minimum number of believers (500) in order to register. Also the Catholic Church does receive preferential treatment from the government in practice such as the return of confiscated properties due to a concordat with the Vatican – other churches have not had such avenues. See “Croatia” in *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom 2005*.

<sup>130</sup> “Croatia” in *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom 2005*.

<sup>131</sup> Bajrusi, “Bozanic Provokes a Rebellion of the Clergy.”

<sup>132</sup> “Croatia” in *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom 2005*.

<sup>133</sup> “Roman Catholic Primate Opposes Growing Euroskepticism in Croatia.”

ethnic group. These nationalist leanings have nevertheless been moderated due to the Catholic Church in Croatia's submission to papal authority, albeit sometimes grudgingly. It also seems that there have been differences of opinion between the leadership within the Catholic Church in Croatia and its lower clergy, where the leadership seems more willing to create bridges across divides within society, whereas other religions or political institutions and the lower clergy seems to be more defensive. In any case, it will take time for the ecumenical and reconciliatory efforts initiated by the Catholic Church to filter down to the masses within civil society.<sup>134</sup>

The pluralism within the Catholic Church in Croatia means that it does not have a complete monopoly over society. Nevertheless, it has been accused of trying "to impose its particularistic ethical position as universal," which can be detrimental to forging a pluralist civil society.<sup>135</sup> Additionally, since the religiosity factor (those professing to be religious) has risen through the years, the Catholic Church has still had quite a bit of influence over society's actions, especially among the young Croatians.<sup>136</sup> For example, sexual activity among college freshmen went down significantly in a five-year period, between 1998 and 2003; this was attributed to an increase in religiously affiliated households and those young Catholic adults who took their religious education (in public

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<sup>134</sup> Though Croatian violence against other communities has declined over the years, Orthodox Serbs are still targets for sporadic acts of violence, vandalism and other harassment (the numbers are negligible against Muslims and Jews). See "Croatia" in *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom 2005*.

<sup>135</sup> Tomislav Domes, "Round-Table Discussion: Catholic Church Influence on Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Health Policies," *OneWorld*, 6 March 2006, <http://see.oneworld.net/article/view/128838/1/> (accessed 24 March 2006).

<sup>136</sup> Aleksandar Štulhofer, Gordan Anterić and Saša Šlosar, "Seksualna Permisivnost, Egalitarnost I Odgovornost: Longitudinalno Istraživanje Seksualnosti u Kasnoj Adolescenciji, 1998-2003" ["Sexual Permissiveness, Sexual Egalitarianism, and Sexual Responsibility Among College Students in Croatia, 1998 - 2003"], *Sociological Review*, no. 1-2, Croatian Sociological Association (21 October 2004), <http://www.hsd.hr/revija/en/pdf/1-2-2004/03-Stulhofer.pdf> (accessed 3 May 2006).

schools) seriously.<sup>137</sup> Furthermore, according to the U.S. State Department, there have been measurable impacts, including the following:

- Participation in government-sponsored yoga classes declined by 50 percent when the Catholic Church stated this was “an attempt to introduce Buddhist practices in primary schools under the guise of exercise;”<sup>138</sup>
- Participation in a government-sponsored international HIV/AIDS awareness program dropped from 100 to 60 percent when the Catholic Church objected to the mention of condoms;<sup>139</sup>
- Stores closed on Sunday after a Catholic-based NGO successfully lobbied for stores to be closed (the law was later overturned).<sup>140</sup>

Many Croatians viewed this last initiative to be inappropriate behavior on the Catholic NGO’s behalf. It is difficult to find any measurable signs of the bridging side of religiosity and influence of the Catholic Church, but if looking at the overall estimate of the Croatian civil society by the CIVICUS index on civil society, civil society is developing, albeit slowly. According to the CIVICUS index, Croatian civil society is low on certain key issues like transparency and poverty but is doing much better on non-violence, tolerance, democratic values and gender equality; overall the society is in the negative but trending up category.<sup>141</sup> Besides the civil society, the Catholic Church in

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<sup>137</sup> Štulhofer, “Seksualna Permisivnost, Egalitarnost I Odgovornost.”

Of note, per Article 13 of the 2002 Law on the Legal Status of Religious Communities, a religious community can sign an agreement with the Croatian government to provide religious education for their specific church in public schools (as an optional subject). As of 2004, the Croatian government had signed religion agreements with the following communities found in Croatia: Serbian Orthodox Church, Islamic Community, Evangelical Church, Reformed Christian Church, Pentecostal Church, Christian Adventists, Baptists, Bulgarian Orthodox Church, Ancient-Catholic Church (does not recognize papal authority), and the Macedonian Orthodox Church. It also signed concordats with the Holy See formalizing certain privileges for the Croatian Church in Croatia. Not all of these communities necessarily have official religious education in public schools but do receive certain amenities from the state. See Silvo Devetak, Liana Kalčina and Miroslav F. Polzer, ed., “Legal Position of Churches and Religious Communities in South - Eastern Europe,” *Institute for Ethnic and Regional Studies* (Ljubljana-Maribor-Vienna, 2004): 244, 249, <http://www.aso.zsi.at/attach/LegposreleginSEE.pdf> (accessed 11 May 2006).

<sup>138</sup> U.S. Department of State, “Croatia” in *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom 2004* (Washington, D.C., 15 September 2004), <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2004/35447.htm>, (accessed 2 May 2006).

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> This law was overturned a few months later due to vehement protests from businesses. See Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Gojko Bežovan, “Utjecaj Organizacija Civilnog Društva u Hrvatskoj” [“Impact of Civil Society Organizations in Croatia”], *Sociological Review* XXXIV, no 3-4, Croatian Sociological Association (23 November 2003): 131, <http://www.hsd.hr/revija/en/pdf/3-4-2003/01-organizacije-civilnog-drustva.pdf> (accessed 3 May 2006).

See also Bežovan, Zrinščak and Vugec, “Civil Society in Croatia,” 50-57.

Croatia and the universal Catholic Church have influenced the government's policies on reconciliation and toleration, as claimed by Croatian Prime Minister Sanader in 2005: "This [tolerance and reconciliation] is a policy of the Holy Father."<sup>142</sup> The Catholic Church in Croatia has contributed to this civil society's progression, even though it has shown itself to be a more bonding influence on society's behavior and attitudes.<sup>143</sup> Time will tell if the foundations of the bridges being built today will bear out in the future development of Croatian civil society.

#### **D. RUSSIA**

The Russian Orthodox Church has devoted most of its energy to its role as a state actor throughout much of its existence, instead of being an autonomous actor, shaping Russian civil society. The Russian Orthodox Church inherited many aspects of the Byzantine Church, including Caesaropapism (church subservient to the head of state).<sup>144</sup> The Church actually became completely part of the government under Peter the Great, when he dissolved the Russian Orthodox Church Patriarchate and set a course for eliminating sects, such as the Old Believers who did not serve the interests of the state.<sup>145</sup> During the Russian Empire, the Russian Tsar was considered the head of the Orthodox Church; it legitimized his rule and reinforced a Russian identity.<sup>146</sup> For example, in the nineteenth century, the Church's bonding tendencies complemented Tsar Alexander III's nationalist or Russification agenda; all those who were non-Orthodox were persecuted.<sup>147</sup> Converting other ethnic groups to Russian Orthodoxy as the Empire grew "forged a sense

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<sup>142</sup> "Sanader Says Mesic's Attempts to Delude Croatian Public Unacceptable," *Zagreb HINA*, 8 January 2005. Available from FBIS.

<sup>143</sup> Though the Church undoubtedly contributed to such efforts as promoting toleration, it was most likely reactions to specific events versus an overall advocacy for tolerance. Overall tolerance has been largely advocated by others such as "women's organizations and homosexual and lesbian groups." See Bežovan, Zrinščak and Vugec, "Civil Society in Croatia," 53-54.

<sup>144</sup> Runciman, 73.

<sup>145</sup> The Old Believers were Russian Orthodox fundamentalists and quite xenophobic. Though Tsar Peter tried to eliminate this sect, he was not successful as the number of adherents actually grew as more Russians rejected Peter's modernizing reforms. Many believers went underground or fled to Siberia. See James H. Billington, *The Icon and the Axe* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 192-197. See also Runciman, 337.

<sup>146</sup> Runciman, 324-325.

<sup>147</sup> Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, 5th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 394.

of unity.”<sup>148</sup> Even after the communists took over Russia, the Russian Orthodox Church continued this tradition of subservience to the reigning government.<sup>149</sup> An element within the Russian Orthodox Church, known as the Renovationist Church, embraced the new regime and at one time controlled the Russian Orthodox Church within Russia.<sup>150</sup> One of these Renovationists, Metropolitan Sergii, was appointed the head of the Russian Orthodox Church by Stalin, and was so totally compliant with the Soviet Regime he denied Soviet persecution of the Church.<sup>151</sup> This compliancy was rejected by quite a few Russian Orthodox believers, who went underground as the “True Orthodox Church.”<sup>152</sup> Throughout the communist era, the Russian Orthodox Church seemed primarily concerned about its survival and not about “the defense and protection of believers or advocacy of individual rights.”<sup>153</sup> The Russian Orthodox Church in Russia was still at the complete mercy of the regime’s whim – often still persecuted (though members were no longer killed), sometimes ignored, but the official church leadership remained co-opted.<sup>154</sup> It was also regularly manipulated, whether as an instrument to help mobilize forces in World War II or to emit “positive propaganda” on the Soviet Union’s behalf in such ecumenical fora as the World Council of Churches (WCC).<sup>155</sup> The only time any

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<sup>148</sup> Christopher Marsh and Nikolas Gvosdev, ed., *Civil Society and the Search for Justice in Russia* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, July 2002), 141.

<sup>149</sup> At first, the patriarch denounced the communist regime but as a result the Church was severely persecuted and much of the Church property was either confiscated or destroyed, dwindling from 50,000 to 200-300 churches in 1939. See Sabrina Ramet, *Nihil Obstat*, 229-231.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 230.

<sup>152</sup> These “True Orthodox” were not numerous, maybe about 2 million versus the 55-60 million Russian Orthodox faithful. Due to persecution, the movement died out relatively early, by the 1950s. See Jane Ellis, *The Russian Orthodox Church: A Contemporary History* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986), 4, 177, 476.

See also Sabrina Ramet, *Nihil Obstat*, 231-232.

Of note, there was also another sect, the diaspora-based Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia, which broke off ties with the Russian Orthodox Church in 1927 after Patriarch Sergii’s embrace of the USSR. It has taken almost 80 years for this rift to heal -- in May 2006 this sect voted to rejoin the Russian Orthodox Church in Russia. See Louise Chu, “Russian Orthodox Sect Rejoins Parent,” *Monterey Herald*, 13 May 2006, A4.

<sup>153</sup> Adamantia Pollis, “Eastern Orthodoxy and Human Rights,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (May 1993): 353. Available from JSTOR.

<sup>154</sup> Sabrina Ramet, *Nihil Obstat*, 233-234.

<sup>155</sup> Stalin re-established the Russian Orthodox Patriarchy in 1943 – the Patriarch was no longer part of the Renovationists but still complied with the Soviet regime’s wishes. See Riasanovksy, 588.

See also Sabrina Ramet, *Nihil Obstat*, 229.

Russian Orthodox leadership contradicted the Soviet leadership was in 1980, when three of its bishops joined the WCC in declaring “serious concern” about the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (the declaration also condemned NATO’s tactical nuclear weapon deployment decision).<sup>156</sup> When Gorbachev came to power, the Russian Orthodox Church’s situation improved since he overturned many restrictions on religion, and by 1988, the Russian Orthodox Church and the state joined forces to celebrate 1000 years of Christianity in Russia.<sup>157</sup>

It seemed that the Russian Orthodox Church under tsarist rule formed mostly bonds within society. As for during the Soviet regime, the Russian Orthodox Church’s lack of resistance and subservience to the government left it in a “hemmed-in state” and too isolated to shape society.<sup>158</sup> The lay Russian Orthodox blasted their leadership “for failing to care for the flock committed to their charge by the church.”<sup>159</sup> This situation changed after the fall of communism, when the Russian Orthodox Church was able to assert itself as an independent public actor for the first time.

### **1. Bonding**

The fall of communism brought many opportunities for the Russian Orthodox Church, but also several challenges.<sup>160</sup> In the 1990s, the Russian Orthodox Church gained an independence it had never experienced before, either under the tsar or the communists. With this new freedom, the Church wanted to establish its own agenda within the political realm and be the shaper of Russia’s future.<sup>161</sup> This agenda has been assisted by an increasing identification of the Russian population with Russian Orthodoxy. During the 1980s, about seventy percent of Russians declared themselves to be atheist.<sup>162</sup> By 2002, about fifty-eight percent of Russians considered themselves

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<sup>156</sup> Ellis, 213.

<sup>157</sup> Sabrina Ramet, *Nihil Obstat*, 235.

<sup>158</sup> Another factor was that religiosity was severely low – in the 1970s, Russian religiosity hovered at around 20 percent. See Ellis, 174, 304.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

<sup>160</sup> For instance, Patriarch Aleksii II was implicated of having worked for the KGB; this came to light during the *glasnost* (openness) era, when the books on the Russian Orthodox Church’s activities were opened. See Sabrina Ramet, *Nihil Obstat*, 241.

<sup>161</sup> This political activity included priests serving in parliament! See *Ibid.*, 238, 240-242.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 242.



Orthodox (of which forty-two percent were strictly cultural Orthodox), about thirty-one percent of Russians considered themselves atheist, five percent as Muslim, one-half percent as Jewish and negligible numbers of Buddhists.<sup>163</sup> By 2006, the number of Russians who identified themselves as Orthodox jumped to about seventy percent, though the religiosity numbers stayed about the same, about ten percent.<sup>164</sup> The Russian Orthodox Church's trust levels range between thirty-eight to fifty-four percent, depending on the polls.<sup>165</sup> It must be noted that unlike the Catholic Church in Croatia (or the Serbian Orthodox Church), the Russian Orthodox Church is not the number one institution trusted by Russians – President Putin takes those honors.<sup>166</sup> By restricting the pool strictly to non-government institutions, however, the Russian Orthodox Church is considered the most trusted by far; this trust is not due to the Russians' religiosity but rather to “the institution itself, which is seen as less corrupt and more competent than other institutions.”<sup>167</sup> Also, despite the explosion of religious diversity in Russia, Russians have a certain “expectation that Orthodox values set the norm for Russian society...other religions [in Russia]...are expected to conform, to some extent, to the Orthodox norm.”<sup>168</sup> Though its influence on Russian citizens' individual decisions on morality is much weaker than in the Croatian case, the Russian Orthodox Church's influence has increased significantly over the past few years. The trust and expectations

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<sup>163</sup> Cultural Orthodoxy is when a person may identify themselves as an Orthodox person but does not adhere to any of the religious tenants of the faith; in this case, the 42 percent listed had “had never been in an Orthodox church.” See “Russia: Census and Religious Statistics,” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* 3, no. 36 (4 September 2002), [http://www.religioscope.com/notes/2002/071\\_russia\\_census.htm](http://www.religioscope.com/notes/2002/071_russia_census.htm) (accessed 9 October 2005).

Of note, in 2001, there were four different kinds of Russian Orthodox sects besides the official Russian Orthodox Church. Protestants formed the third largest minority. See also U.S. Department of State, “Russia” in *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom 2002* (Washington, D.C., 7 October 2002), <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2002/13958.htm> (accessed 13 May 2006).

<sup>164</sup> “54% of Russians Trust Russian Orthodox Church – Poll,” *Moscow Interfax*, 2 February 2006. Available from FBIS.

<sup>165</sup> “Poll Shows Russians Trust President, Church, State Security Agencies,” *Moscow Interfax*, 28 March 2006. Available from FBIS. See also “54% of Russians Trust Russian Orthodox Church.”

<sup>166</sup> Vladimir Shlapentokh, “Trust in Public Institutions in Russia: The Lowest in the World,” *Johnson's Russia List*, 27 June 2005, <http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/9186-29.cfm> (accessed 14 May 2006). See also “Poll Shows Russians Trust President, Church, State Security Agencies.”

<sup>167</sup> Shlapentokh, “Trust in Public Institutions in Russia.”

<sup>168</sup> Marsh and Gvosdev, 80.

Over 40 different religions are registered in Russia. See Embassy of the Russian Federation website (Washington, D.C., n.d.), <http://www.russianembassy.org/RUSSIA/religion.htm> (accessed 14 May 2006).

of Russians vis-à-vis the Church can, on the surface, be used as a proxy of measurement of the Russian Orthodox Church's influence in society at large.

As it has pursued its agenda since the downfall of communism, the Russian Orthodox Church has increasingly exhibited bonding-type behavior. Based on the Orthodox membership growth in both numbers and level of trust, it seems the Russian Orthodox Church has acted as if it is the official religion, even though the Russian Orthodox Church denies such motives.<sup>169</sup> The Russian Federation is legally a secular state and lay Russians reportedly do not want the Church to interfere with politics, but these facts have not stopped the Russian Orthodox Church from claiming it is the champion of the "Russian national idea."<sup>170</sup> It has done so through a series of bilateral agreements with individual state institutions, including the police, military and interior security forces, education and hospitals, and even metro stations. These agreements seek to establish the Russian Orthodox Church as the primary religion in each of these allegedly secular institutions (other religions are excluded or marginalized), which leads one to conclude that Orthodoxy is trying to become the legitimate ideology of Russian state tradition."<sup>171</sup> All of these actions might be more or less benign were it not for the fact that through these relationships the Russian Orthodox Church has encouraged the state to exclude other religions in public institutions in exchange for allowing the state institutions to leverage the Church for the state's own needs. A remarkable illustration of the religious-political moves by the Russian Orthodox Church is the push to establish Orthodox chapels in Moscow. When asked why there were no plans for inter-faith chapels, the Orthodox priest in charge of coordinating the project responded:

Orthodoxy is the state-forming religion and it is inappropriate to talk about some kind of democracy and equality of confessions in this context.<sup>172</sup>

Another stark example is the Moscow Patriarchate-Ministry of Defense agreement in 1997. This agreement states that in exchange for a re-establishment of Orthodoxy within

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<sup>169</sup> Sabrina Ramet, *Nihil Obstat*, 242.

<sup>170</sup> "54% of Russians Trust Russian Orthodox Church – Poll."  
See also Sabrina Ramet, *Nihil Obstat*, 242.

<sup>171</sup> Geraldine Fagan, "Russia: Orthodox becoming First among Equals," *Forum 18*, 27 May 2003, [http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article\\_id=64](http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=64) (accessed 9 October 2005).

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*

the military, the Orthodox Church would encourage conscripts to serve their time. More disconcerting, however, is the agreement that the Church would “expose scoundrels who refuse military service by hiding behind faith.”<sup>173</sup> The Russian Orthodox Church has also entered into foreign policy and local politics. The Russian Orthodox Church is co-chair, with the Russian government, of the World Council of Russian People.<sup>174</sup> At the most recent council in April 2006, there were two items on the agenda – the role of Russia in the world and the question of the universality of human rights. First, both the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian government sought to emphasize Russia’s uniqueness, clamoring for Russia to “once again [become] one of the most powerful states;” the Russian Orthodox Church proclaimed it should exert more influence in European issues as more Orthodox countries enter into the EU.<sup>175</sup> Of note, this vision is not shared by the Russian people – only thirty-four percent of those polled wanted Russia to become a superpower.<sup>176</sup> Second, the council also passed a “Russian Declarations of Human Rights,” which proclaimed that “faith, morality, sacred objects, the Motherland” are just as important as human rights and that

one should not allow a situation under which the concept of human rights suppresses faith and moral traditions...According to the document...‘it is the religious tradition [that is designed] to distinguish between the good and the evil’...President Putin endorsed that role [of the Russian Orthodox Church being the ‘ultimate guide’ for Russian society].<sup>177</sup>

This role of ultimate guide seems to have extended to local politics as well. For instance, the Russian Orthodox Church has worked with local governors to keep “alien religions” out with public money or mandating that regional government food facilities follow

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<sup>173</sup> Fagan, “Russia: Orthodox becoming first among equals.”

<sup>174</sup> This council was established in 1993; its mission is to “[bring] together Russians from home and abroad and is under the aegis of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Kremlin.” See Victor Yasmann, “Russia: the Orthodox Church and the Kremlin’s New Mission,” *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, 10 April 2006, <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/04/9768f306-a076-429f-802c-07f591fc6417.html> (accessed 17 May 2006).

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> The rest of the poll numbers: “38 percent want Russia to be among the 10 most influential countries in the world; only 14 percent agree Russia should be a regional power; and 7 percent say Russia should back away from any global ambitions at all.” See Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

Orthodox Lenten guidelines (no meat).<sup>178</sup> The abovementioned examples point to the Russian Orthodox Church's increased influence and involvement in politics.<sup>179</sup>

Bonding behavior has extended to civil society, where the Russian Orthodox Church has viewed outside Christian-based sects, such as Roman Catholicism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Church of Latter Day Saints and any form of Protestantism, as dangerous to its agenda. These religious minorities already were encountering discrimination by 1993.<sup>180</sup> Furthermore, elements of the Russian Orthodox Church have acted within the political realm to legally limit these sects' activities.<sup>181</sup> The 1997 Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations has been tweaked several times, each time making it more restrictive for non-traditional religions to participate in the Russian public sphere.<sup>182</sup> It seems as if the Russian Orthodox Church "feels happiest to live with [denominations which] are all non-Christian."<sup>183</sup> Furthermore, the U.S. State

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<sup>178</sup> Fagan, "Russia: Orthodox becoming first among equals."

<sup>179</sup> Adding to the Russian Orthodox Church's intertwining with the government, as well as its increased power, are its sources of revenue. First, one of the more lucrative sources would have to be the "huge quota from oil exports" first offered in 1994 by the Russian government, which was estimated to cover about five years worth of the Church's deficit. Other sources of income have included the selling of candles and rental properties, as well as donations from abroad, including some from other Christian churches (Catholic, Episcopal Lutheran). See Sergei Chapnin, "Frankly Speaking: The Income of the Russian Orthodox Church," *East-West Church & Ministry Report* 9 (Winter 2001): 15-16.

Also, from 1996-1998, the Russian Orthodox Church had "a special license to import, free of customs fees, alcohol and tobacco products to fill its coffers." See Vladimir Shlapentokh, "The Reaction of the Russians to the Country's Demographic Decline," (Michigan State University, n.d.), <http://www.msu.edu/%7Eshlapent/demography.htm> (accessed 17 May 2006).

Finally, Diamond mining is another activity in which the Russian Orthodox Church has been involved (at least up until the early 2000s); all these activities have led to allegations of corruption. See "Russian Church Linked to Crime, Corruption," *Vancouver Sun*, 30 June 2000, <http://www.globalpolicy.org/nations/corrupt/russia2.htm> (accessed 14 May 2006).

<sup>180</sup> Pollis, "Eastern Orthodoxy and Human Rights," 350.

<sup>181</sup> As with the Catholic Church in Croatia, the Russian Orthodox Church is not monolithic and has experienced both bonding and bridging tendencies, as will be shown in the bridging section.

<sup>182</sup> Traditional Russian religions include Islam, Judaism and Buddhism, though these too have been subject to harassment. Furthermore, Metropolitan Kirill, Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations chair, claimed that "the fact that Catholics and Protestants have each had parishes on Russian soil for between 200 and 300 years does not...qualify them as 'traditional religions.'" See "Dissident Gundyayev. Why did Rice not Consult with Kirill?" *Moscow Moskovskiy Komsomolets*, 2 December 2005. Translated from Russian by FBIS. Available from FBIS. See also U.S. Department of State, "Russia" in *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom 2005* (Washington, D.C., 8 November 2005), <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2005/51576.htm> (accessed 23 March 2006).

<sup>183</sup> Philip Walters, "The Orthodox Church Seeks to Place Itself in Russian Society" in *Burden or Blessing? Russian Orthodoxy and the Construction of Civil Society and Democracy*, ed. Christopher Marsh (Brookline, Massachusetts: Institute on Culture, Religion and World Affairs Boston University, 2004), 86.

Department reported in its 2005 *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom* that since the religion law is subject to interpretation, disturbing events occur, such as

Local officials, reportedly often influenced either by close relations with local Russian Orthodox Church authorities or the FSB, sometimes refused outright to register groups or created prohibitive obstacles to registration.<sup>184</sup>

The main concern the Russian Orthodox Church harbors towards non-traditional religions is of course that they are proselytizing on their turf and to their people. This attitude is not necessarily a bad type of bonding, since most religions do this. The universal Catholic Church, for example, has continuously protested to Protestant churches that they are treading on Catholic turf in Latin America. Nevertheless, what is worrisome concerning the Russian Orthodox Church is that in addition to the already mentioned political forays, it has actively sought to bar other religions from public and private life.

The Russian Orthodox Church has also had some effects on quotidian life in Russia, though not nearly to the same extent as the Catholic Church in Croatia. That is, on issues like abortion, the Russian Orthodox Church has had almost zero influence – the high rate of abortions has continued (two-thirds of all Russian pregnancies are terminated), despite the impending demographic crisis.<sup>185</sup> It seems that the Russian Orthodox Church nevertheless views itself as being influential. In April 2006, Metropolitan Kirill rebuffed social scientists' allegations that the Russian Orthodox Church had little influence over society, stating

do not let some false sociologists scare us today with their 'pigmy' percentages of the presence of Orthodoxy in society. We, by God's mercy, are an Orthodox country and Orthodox people.<sup>186</sup>

There are signs that the Church's influence is growing, albeit sporadically and only on select issues. In 2003, a group of six vandalized an art exhibit considered blasphemous by Russian Orthodox; their arrests on the charges of "hooliganism" were nullified due to

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<sup>184</sup> "Russia" in *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom 2005*.

<sup>185</sup> Shlapentokh, "The Reaction of the Russians to the Country's Demographic Decline."

<sup>186</sup> "Metropolitan Kirill: Sociological Conclusions about the Minor Role of Orthodoxy in Russia are Pseudo-Scientific," *Interfax*, 26 April 2006, <http://www.interfax-religion.com/?act=news&div=1357> (accessed 17 May 2006).

efforts of a Russian Orthodox priest.<sup>187</sup> In January 2006, the Russian Orthodox Church convinced a pharmacy in Yekaterinburg to ban condoms and only sell Orthodox-approved products.<sup>188</sup> In May 2006, the Union of Orthodox Citizens claimed that “only religious motivation...is effective to increase birth rate.”<sup>189</sup> It also warned that it would mobilize Russian Orthodox parishioners to peacefully block a planned gay-rights parade.<sup>190</sup> The gay parade organizers pressed ahead with their plans on 27 May 2006, without permission from the Moscow mayor and faced several violent clashes with protestors. It is unclear if the Russian Orthodox protestors were involved in this violence since there were several nationalist and other groups among the protestors.<sup>191</sup> This case and the other previously mentioned examples are more evidence of the Russian Orthodox Church’s bonding behavior within civil society.

## 2. Bridging

With the focus on asserting itself within government, the Russian Orthodox Church has not had as much focus devoted to building bridges within civil society. An initial step towards forming a platform from which it can build bridges has been the Sacred Bishop’s Council release of the “Bases of the Social Concept” document. This document, released in 2000, formally outlined the Russian Orthodox Church’s position on several social issues for the first time, ranging from warfare, labor issues and cloning.<sup>192</sup> The document does have elements of bonding (e.g., patriotism, Orthodox

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<sup>187</sup> Willis Sparks, “The Faith of a President: Exploring the Religious Profile of Vladimir Putin,” *Harriman Institute* (February 2004): 1, <http://www.sipa.columbia.edu/REGIONAL/HI/Putin-faith.pdf> (accessed 17 May 2006).

<sup>188</sup> “Russian Pharmacy Stops Selling Contraceptives with Orthodox Church Blessing,” *Moscow NTV*, 18 January 2006. Translated from Russian by FBIS. Available from FBIS.

<sup>189</sup> “Orthodox Muscovites will Resist Gay Parade if it Ever Takes Place,” *Interfax*, 16 May 2006, <http://www.interfax-religion.com/?act=news&div=1425> (accessed 17 May 2006).

<sup>190</sup> This group also linked its anti-homosexual protests to the 10 May 2006 state-of-the-nation address by President Putin. Putin offered monetary incentives and other benefits for Russians to have more children to help resolve the demographic crisis. It stated that “the latest address of the President to the Federal Assembly poses the demographic issue as essential for Russia’s sovereignty and national survival. Any apology of sexual perversion, including the so-called gay parade runs contrary to the presidential address.” See *Ibid*.

<sup>191</sup> “Russia: Gay Activists Tout Success of Rally,” *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, 29 May 2006, <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/5/63F18D02-3626-4787-B3F4-D9439765C477.html> (accessed 31 May 2006).

<sup>192</sup> Unfortunately, this initial attempt at a social justice philosophy received lukewarm response from inner circles of the Russian Orthodox Church, as well as other elements of Russian society. See Sergei Chapnin, “The Orthodox Church’s Social Concept,” *Russia Profile* II, no. 8 (October 2005): 23.

values in society) but this was a tremendous initial effort at trying to build a systematic approach to social justice issues; the document also condemned as sinful the replacing of the “nation in the place of God or reduce[ing] faith to one of the aspects of national self-awareness.”<sup>193</sup> Implementing this document would assist the Church to be fully engaged in civil society.

Besides the “Bases of the Social Concept,” the Russian Orthodox Church has also engaged in preliminary bridging steps within the Russian society. On the domestic level, the Russian Orthodox Church established the Interfaith Council of Russia, which has included the four traditional religions (though it excluded the Protestants and Catholics). This council is meant to increase intercommunal communication, tackle societal issues and embrace common values.<sup>194</sup> There have also been expressions of sympathy for the traditional faiths that have undergone attacks. For example, in January 2006, Patriarch Alexii II, in deploring an attack on a Moscow synagogue, stated that all Russians should “prevent such expressions of ethnic and religious intolerance.”<sup>195</sup> Furthermore, the Russian Orthodox Church proclaimed their support of the Muslims’ outrage over the Danish cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad in 2006.<sup>196</sup>

There have also been some tentative forays into ecumenism with other Christian faiths, most notably with Catholicism. These have been accomplished between the Vatican and the Russian Orthodox hierarchy, not necessarily with the local Catholic Church. Russian Orthodox Church Metropolitan Kirill remarked that this cooperation is needed to “protect Christian values.”<sup>197</sup> He recently went to see Pope Benedict XVI and both sides agreed that they needed to strengthen the relationship to combat the “climate

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<sup>193</sup> Russian Orthodox Church Representation to the European Institutions, “Bases of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church” (Brussels, Belgium, n.d.), <http://orthodoxeurope.org/page/3/14.aspx> (accessed 1 June 2006).

<sup>194</sup> Marlin VanElderen, “1999: The Year in Review,” *World Council of Churches* (n.d.), <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/who/review-99.html> (accessed 24 March 2006).

<sup>195</sup> “Patriarch Offers Support to Synagogue Attack Victims,” *Moscow Interfax*, 12 January 2006. Available from FBIS.

<sup>196</sup> Grigoriy Svirin, “Russian Muslims Demand that Journalists be Punished,” *Moscow Utro.ru*, 2 February 2006. Translated from Russian by FBIS. Available from FBIS.

<sup>197</sup> “Russian Church Favors Further Dialogue with Vatican,” *Moscow Interfax*, 15 November 2005. Available from FBIS.



of runaway secularism in much of Europe.”<sup>198</sup> Several experts assert this cooperation is only a marriage of convenience since many tensions still exist; nevertheless, the more interaction occurs between the two churches, the better the chances for intercommunal associational networking. The Russian government has recognized that the dialog might also assist Russian counter-terrorism efforts. Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Mikhail Kamynin stated

World religions may contribute greatly to the inter-civilizational dialog and to the development of a model of international interaction that will not use religious slogans to uncoil extremism and violence.<sup>199</sup>

At the international level the Russian Orthodox Church is a member of the World Council of Churches, which is probably the largest worldwide ecumenical movement. In November 1999, the Russian Orthodox Church also participated in a seminar which included representatives from thirty-three different Christian faiths.<sup>200</sup> Finally, at the local level the Russian Orthodox Church has collaborated with some other churches on various charity projects and further intercommunal communication.<sup>201</sup> Though done incrementally and accusations of “hegemonic ecumenism” have been leveled against the Russian Orthodox Church, the Russian Orthodox Church has attempted to build intercommunal dialogue and solidarity with other religions found within its borders.<sup>202</sup>

On the societal level, the Russian Orthodox Church has not taken as much bridging action as in the religious ecumenical realm. Its leadership, however, has “taken care in its public statements to stress the need for tolerance of all religious groups in Russia.”<sup>203</sup> It should be noted that with “the obvious and important exception of Chechnya, Russia has largely avoided inter-communal (ethnic or religious) violence,

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<sup>198</sup> Brian Whitmore, “Russia: Catholic, Orthodox Churches Unite Against European Secularism,” *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, 29 May 2006, <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/5/934B89D3-DCAB-43E2-AE77-A42C2C14D8A7.html> (accessed 1 June 2006).

<sup>199</sup> “Inter-Church Dialog Helps Fight Terrorism – Kamynin,” *Moscow Interfax*, 25 October 2005. Available from FBIS.

<sup>200</sup> VanElderen, “1999: The Year in Review.”

<sup>201</sup> “Russia” in *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom 2005*.

<sup>202</sup> James Warhola, “Religiosity, Politics, and the Formation of Civil Society in Multinational Russia” in *Burden or Blessing? Russian Orthodoxy and the Construction of Civil Society and Democracy*, ed. Christopher Marsh (Brookline, Massachusetts: Institute on Culture, Religion and World Affairs Boston University, 2004), 94.

<sup>203</sup> Sparks, “The Faith of a President,” 1-2.



fragmentation, and religious warfare” such as that experienced by the former Yugoslavia.<sup>204</sup> Finally, the Church has also taken tentative steps into charity work, though its efforts are still at the infancy stage. It has nevertheless cooperated on a sporadic basis with mainstream Protestant groups, as well as the Catholic charity “Renovadis” to minister to flood victims, orphans and the poor.<sup>205</sup> The framework has thus been set, through the “Bases of the Social Concept” but it will take more work and has yet to have an operational plan to deal with the many societal needs of the Russian society.

### 3. Analysis

The Russian Orthodox Church has only been an actor within civil society for a few years and yet has seemed determined to quickly ensure its dominance in Russian society.<sup>206</sup> It is nevertheless internally pluralistic, a position that has been accepted by the Russian Orthodox leadership since the early 1990s, when it decided “to abandon any effort to create a unified ‘Orthodox’ social and political movement” and instead allowed for diversity within a certain set of parameters; this action has mitigated internal divisions.<sup>207</sup> Though tolerant to a certain extent of Russian traditional faiths (Judaism, Islam, Buddhism), the tolerance has not necessarily extended to fellow Christians, as demonstrated by the tactics used to block minority groups from registering. When there have been ecumenical actions with other Christian faiths, it has tended to be at the international level and at the Patriarchate level, not at the local level, as has been the case within Croatia. Though the Church by and large has tended to be more bonding in nature, there are signs that the Russian Orthodox Church has engaged in some bridging activity. The Church is still many years and perhaps several generations away from fostering any true bridging behavior within civil society – the “Bases of the Social

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<sup>204</sup> Warhola, “Religiosity, Politics, and the Formation of Civil Society in Multinational Russia,” 93.

<sup>205</sup> Alexander Polunov, “Social Programs of the Russian Orthodox Church: Prospects and Contradictions,” *School of Public Administration* (Russia), 10 August 2005, [http://www.spa.msu.ru/e-journal/8/81\\_1.php](http://www.spa.msu.ru/e-journal/8/81_1.php) (accessed 17 May 2006).

<sup>206</sup> Though bounded nationally, the Russian Orthodox Church is much more ethnically diverse than other Orthodox nations, mostly due to Russia’s empirical past.

<sup>207</sup> Nikolas K. Gvosdev, “Unity in Diversity: Civil Society, Democracy, and Orthodoxy in Contemporary Russia” in *Burden or Blessing? Russian Orthodoxy and the Construction of Civil Society and Democracy*, ed. Christopher Marsh (Brookline, Massachusetts: Institute on Culture, Religion and World Affairs Boston University, 2004), 27.

Concept” is a good first step. Finally, the Church’s influence on society has been mixed. About forty-seven percent of Russians in April 2006 stated that they “would like the Church to more actively influence spiritual life of the society” and fifty-three percent recognized “unique role of the Orthodoxy.”<sup>208</sup> All the same, most Russians do not agree with the Russian Orthodox Church’s collective identity vision – sixty percent of those polled preferred the “concept of rights and freedoms of a person, which the West considers as universal” and fifty percent stated their “main goal is individual prosperity” (as opposed to the forty-two percent who claimed “moral traditions and faith are more important than individual prosperity”).<sup>209</sup> It will be interesting to track if these numbers will change as Putin’s Russia becomes increasingly nationalist and employs questionable democratic practices.<sup>210</sup>

## **E. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

Both the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia and the Russian Orthodox Church have displayed bonding tendencies in their past and even to this day. Both churches have experienced internal divisions throughout their history and have not been monolithic in their approaches to various issues. Their pasts have shaped their outlooks, which have tended to be conservative and anti-ecumenical. Their influence over their societies has also varied. Both have also pushed legislation which would be beneficial to their specific agendas, but sometimes they are oblivious to others’ sensitivities. Both countries are also candidates for membership for international institutions – Croatia in the EU and Russia in the World Trade Organization. Both of these organizations link membership to certain societal standard criteria. At this juncture, however, their main religions do not have the wherewithal to make enough of a difference to accomplish these standards; instead they could, at times, impede the government from reaching these standards. Though the

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<sup>208</sup> “Russians for Church to Play More Active Role in Society – Poll,” *Interfax*, 5 May 2006, <http://www.interfax-religion.com/?act=news&div=1388> (accessed 17 May 2006).

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>210</sup> Though the Russian Orthodox Church has accepted the idea of democracy and of a civil society, it has nevertheless bristled at some Western concepts and demands, insisting that Russian interests should come first. See Gvosdev, “Unity in Diversity,”<sup>26</sup>

See also “Russian Church Official Asserts Russian Authorities Face a Choice Between Bows and Scrapes to the West and the Interests of People,” *Interfax*, 30 August 2005, <http://www.interfax-religion.com/?act=news&div=263> (accessed 17 May 2006).

churches have shown some progress towards bridging behavior they have not gone far enough – it will take years and a change of heart amongst a majority of the clergy. The same seems to be true for the Serbian Orthodox Church, which has faced similar situations as Croatia and Russia.

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### **III. REVERBERATIONS OF HISTORY IN SERBIA TODAY**

#### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Orthodox time has its own dynamic. Its motion is spiral, not linear, which means that Orthodox history moves in divinely ordained circles, as pleasingly repetitive as the patterns on church vestments. Empires and lands are lost and regained, lost and regained again, lost and regained, until the end of the world. The past is never forgotten because it comes around again, and the future is never new.<sup>211</sup>

History plays a central role in the Balkan population's daily disposition – the ghosts of the past are there, ready to surface in any conversation. This factor came to light in a November 2005 policy forum commemorating the ten years since the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords.<sup>212</sup> Though focused on Bosnia–Herzegovina, the forum could very easily be applied to Serbia and other former republics of Yugoslavia. During the panel on truth, justice and reconciliation, unresolved problems quickly emerged, such as the number of people actually killed in World War II and the number of people killed in the 1990s wars. There was also disagreement as to which historical point to start these kind of “who did what to whom” accountability exercises – the Yugoslav kingdom of the 1920s? World War II? The 1990s? This kind of historical baggage still reverberates today within the region's civil societies and political entities. Additionally, the area's long subjugation (fourteenth through the nineteenth centuries) under the Ottoman Empire and in Serbia's case, the allegoric effects of the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, are included in practically any discussion regarding the Balkans. The Serbian Orthodox Church was the only Serbian institution that experienced all of these events firsthand.

#### **B. CRYSTALLIZATION OF A NATION**

##### **1. Historical Context**

The early history and identity of Serbia and the Serbian Orthodox Church tended to be intracommunal and bonding in nature. The Serbian kingdom's founding father,

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<sup>211</sup> Victoria Clark, *Why Angels Fall: a Journey through Orthodox Europe from Byzantium to Kosovo* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2000), 75.

<sup>212</sup> “A Policy Forum on the Tenth Anniversary of the Dayton Peace Agreement: Looking Back and Where are We Now?” sponsored by *Dayton – A Peace Process*, Dayton, Ohio, 17-18 November 2005.

Stefan Nemanja's son, Sava, is still considered to be the greatest saint within Serbian Orthodoxy. Sava maneuvered not only to consolidate his family's power but also to secure independence (autocephaly) from the Patriarch in Constantinople in 1219. Some would go as far as to say that Sava "founded Serbian statehood and national identity."<sup>213</sup> The nation's identity did not, however, crystallize until the Battle of Kosovo in 1389.<sup>214</sup> After 1389 and the subsequent subjugation by the Ottoman Empire, the Serbs portrayed themselves as a suffering people, who had chosen spirituality over material wealth.<sup>215</sup> Kosovo also emerged as a critical part of the Serbian identity because it hosted the See of the Serbian Orthodox Patriarchy in Peć (akin to the Vatican See). The Serbian Orthodox Church kept this Serbian identity alive during the time of the Ottoman Empire by holding services in the vernacular and serving as the "repository of limited education and administrative experience for Serbs."<sup>216</sup> The Serbian Orthodox Church was able to engage in these practices since it did not really challenge Ottoman rule and was thus granted autonomy for many years.

A few centuries after regaining its Patriarchy in 1557, Serbian Orthodox autonomy was finally curtailed. First, the Serbian Orthodox Church came under pressure from its sister church, the Greek Orthodox Church. The Greeks had traditionally filled the role of Ecumenical Patriarch (first among equals), but this ecumenical attitude was squelched by the newly rich Greek traders (Phanariots) who wanted the Church to be

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<sup>213</sup> Tim Judah, *The Serbs: History, Myth & the Destruction of Yugoslavia*, 2d ed. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 18-20.

<sup>214</sup> The battle of 1389 in Kosovo is imprinted into the psyche of many Serbians. According to the story, the night before the battle against the Ottomans, Serb King Lazar was given a choice between winning the battle and preserving his earthly kingdom or losing the battle but gaining the kingdom in heaven. Lazar chose the latter and the following day, the Serbs lost the battle with Lazar paying the ultimate price by being killed; there were also allegations of betrayal of one of Lazar's closest aides to the Ottomans. This story is analogous to the Passion of Christ who was betrayed and died so all could one day be resurrected. Of course, the one exception in the Serbian version is that it is the Serbian kingdom which will be resurrected. Until this kingdom is resurrected, the Serbs (in this myth) consider themselves part of the 'heavenly Serbia.'

<sup>215</sup> The chronicles were later aggrandized during the height of nineteenth century nationalism by several poets, including the Montenegrin Serbian Orthodox prince-bishop Petrović-Njegoš in the 1847 poem *The Mountain Wreath* and Vul Karadžić, his contemporary, in his poem "The Downfall of the Serbian Empire." Karadžić extolled King Lazar as the sacrificial Christ figure and proclaimed that "the state would one day be resurrected." Petrović-Njegoš focuses on the issue of treachery as the source of loss at Kosovo. See Judah, 34, 36-37, 64.

<sup>216</sup> Steven W. Sowards, "Lecture No 5: The Serbian Revolution and the Serbian State," *Twenty-Five Lectures on Modern Balkan History (The Balkans in the Age of Nationalism)*, page created May 1996, last modified 23 April 2004, <http://www.lib.msu.edu/sowards/balkan/> (accessed 1 March 2006).

more Greek. This was important since the Ottomans categorized all people of the same religion into a *millet* or nation.<sup>217</sup> Since the Greeks were technically in charge of all Orthodox people, they were able to eliminate the Serbian patriarchate of Peć in 1766. The Greeks then installed their own countrymen in positions of authority within Serbia.<sup>218</sup> Second, in 1690, a small number of Serbs joined the Austrians in fighting the Ottomans. To escape Ottoman vengeance, about 30,000 Serbs fled to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. They were led by the Serbian Orthodox Church Patriarch Arsenije. The Serb refugees settled in what is now the Vojvodina region in Serbia, enjoying certain privileges not accorded to other religious groups within the Catholic Hapsburg Empire. The Serbian Orthodox Church moved its See from Peć to Sremski Karlovci (current day Vojvodina region), which became the center of Serbian religious and cultural life until the Serbian homeland broke away from the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century.<sup>219</sup> The Church was thus divided, first within its ranks due to the Greeks then due to a physical separation from its spiritual cradle in Kosovo.

No matter what the privileges the Austro-Hungarians had granted, Kosovo had been lost. This further fuelled the Serbian Orthodox Church's vision of the restoration of the glories of the Serbian Empire and a return to their New Jerusalem, Kosovo. The Church safeguarded this vision even when many of its people would have forgotten.<sup>220</sup> The Church's themes were appropriated by nationalists in the nineteenth century, then again throughout the twentieth century (e.g., Balkan Wars of 1912, 1913 and 1990s). The initial wave of nationalists wove the many different Kosovo stories into one effective rallying cry. Many Serbs in the nineteenth century took the "Kosovo pledge" to create a

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<sup>217</sup> A millet was "treated as a unit and governed itself according to its own laws...the religious head of the group was responsible for good behaviour." Steve Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity: A Study of the Patriarchate of Constantinople from the Eve of the Turkish Conquest to the Greek War of Independence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 78, 378-380.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, 181-182, 379-380.

<sup>219</sup> Marcus Tanner, *Croatia: A Nation Forged in War* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), 54-55.

<sup>220</sup> Granted, stories were also preserved through epic poems and songs but as Judah noted, "It is impossible to underestimate the historical role of the church in keeping alive the idea of Serbia and its notion that one day the old state would, Christ-like, be resurrected...it was the church...which gave people a glorious past to look back on and hence a hope for the future." See Judah, 40- 43, 46-47.

“Heavenly Serbia” or acted in the “spirit of Kosovo.”<sup>221</sup> Kosovo thus became sacrosanct to not only the Serbian Orthodox Church but to the majority of Serbs as well. The dream of returning Kosovo to Serbia fits into the doctrine of collective rights by asserting a right over a certain property – a dream that has continued to exist in defiance of the fact that Albanians have greatly outnumbered the Serbs for many years in the area. The Kosovo dream exists even today for Serbia since Kosovo is a deep, almost subconscious symbol of Serbian identity, regardless of people’s religiosity.<sup>222</sup> Moreover, this steadfast vision is still especially true for the Serbian Orthodox Church, as seen in the wrangling over Kosovo’s current status.

## **2. Implications for Today: The Possible Shock of Losing Kosovo**

Kosovo came back under Serbian jurisdiction in the early twentieth century but was lost again when it became a United Nations (UN) protectorate in 1999. The Kosovo Albanians, who constitute an overwhelming majority of the population (now 2 million versus 100,000 Serbs), have long clamored for independence from Serbia.<sup>223</sup> Fortunately for the Kosovo Albanians (and not so for the Kosovo Serbs), the international community has decided not to wait any longer to commence the status discussions, despite several UN-mandated requirements not being even remotely fulfilled by the Kosovo Albanians,

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<sup>221</sup> David A. Steele, “Christianity in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo: From Ethnic Captive to Reconciling Agent” in *Faith-based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik*, ed. Douglas Johnston (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 148-149.

<sup>222</sup> Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart claim in their theory on secularization that “the distinctive world-views that were originally linked with religious traditions have shaped the cultures of each nation in an enduring fashion...even if they never set foot in a church, temple, or mosque.” So, even in former communist countries, the experience could be as follows: “we are all atheists; but I am a Lutheran atheist, and they are Orthodox atheists.” See Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 17.

<sup>223</sup> Daniel Williams, “In Kosovo, Two Peoples Look Across Bitter Divide,” *Washington Post*, 22 November 2005, A22, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/11/21/AR2005112101717.html> (accessed 22 November 2005).



including critical issues about the protection of minorities and a market economy.<sup>224</sup> By October 2005, United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, probably reflecting the international community's "Kosovo fatigue," called for status talks to begin.<sup>225</sup>

The Serbian Orthodox Church is in the middle of all this turmoil. Immediately before and after the 1999 NATO bombing campaign, it became the sole political, social and cultural institution for the remaining Kosovo Serbs. Clergy like Bishop Artemije stayed behind as the secular leadership left Kosovo. As a result, he became a Serb spokesman on the domestic and international scenes. The remaining Kosovo Serbs also started living in or near the churches and monasteries, as they have been under UN protection. Despite this protection, Serbs have been consistently harassed. These experiences have elicited both bonding and bridging behavior within the Serbian Orthodox Church.

**a. Bonding**

The Serbian Orthodox Church interpreted the attacks on Serbs by Kosovo Albanians as additional layers of Serbian martyrdom, the like of which had hearkened back to the Battle of Kosovo in 1389. The Serbian Orthodox Church published a book entitled *Kosovo Crucified* in 2001 which detailed over 100 churches and shrines destroyed since June 1999. The book, authored by Father Sava of the Decani Monastery, posed the following question:

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<sup>224</sup> Any final status discussions had been contingent on the UN's policy of "standards before status" – Kosovo's social, political and economic institutions needed to first be functional. These standards include: "(1) the existence of effective, representative and functioning democratic institutions; (2) enforcement of the rule of law; (3) freedom of movement; (4) sustainable returns of refugees and displaced persons, and respect for the rights of communities; (5) creation of a sound basis for a market economy; (6) fair enforcement of property rights; (7) normalized dialogue with Belgrade; and (8) transformation of the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) in line with its mandate." See Steven Woehrel, "CRS Report for Congress: Kosovo's Future Status and U.S. Policy," *Congressional Research Service* (Washington, D.C., Updated 9 January 2006): CRS-2.

Discussions for accelerating the final status talks popped up as early as 2004, from the UN's special representative and a special commission on Kosovo. See Robert McMahon, "Kosovo: UN Group Discusses Revival Of Political Process, Status Issue," *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, 21 September 2004, <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2004/09/1c4c8ba4-94dd-4b39-8d1c-6b5bbac7b8a3.html> (accessed 5 May 2006).

<sup>225</sup> Woehrel, CRS-2, CRS-3.

Why was the world so resolute in trying to stop the mass exodus of Kosovo Albanians only two years ago but now watches passively and helplessly a Serbian people and their culture exposed to uncontrolled violence?<sup>226</sup>

These words are reflective of the frustration felt by the Serbian Orthodox Church. It seemed to the Church and the Serbian people that the world was against the Serbs due to the inadequate response from the Kosovo authorities and the NATO forces when Serbs and their institutions were clearly being attacked. Kosovo Crucified's author, Father Sava, is credible in his complaint since he was not a nationalist during the 1990s; he and his fellow monks at the Decani Monastery had provided refuge to all, regardless of ethnic or religious background in Kosovo before, during, and after the NATO air campaign of 1999.<sup>227</sup> The attacks against Kosovo Serbs continued well after 2001, the high point being the 17-18 March 2004 attacks by Kosovo Albanians on Serbian property and people (over 900 reported injuries).<sup>228</sup>

The situation potentially became more serious for the Church when UN Secretary General Annan declared the status talks would begin. Patriarch Pavle decried any move for independence, claiming that any such move "would have the essential character of occupation."<sup>229</sup> The Patriarch's proclamation has been taken up as a rallying cry by not only other church officials but also politicians like the ultra-nationalists. Indeed, Radical Party (extreme nationalist) leader Nikolic repeated the Patriarch's words when the discussions started in February 2006:

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<sup>226</sup> Sava Janjić, Rev., Preface to *Kosovo Crucified*, ed. Sava Janjić (Prizen: Diocese of Raska and Prizen, 2001), 6. <http://www.kosovo.com/ckos/ckos06.jpg> (accessed 11 March 2006).

<sup>227</sup> Father Sava has been a renowned advocate of moderation and intercommunal dialog and action for many years, including during the Balkan wars. See Steele, 150-153.

<sup>228</sup> Woehrel, CRS-2.

<sup>229</sup> "Address of his Holiness Serbian Patriarch Pavle on Behalf of the Holy Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church Regarding Upcoming Negotiations on the Status of Kosovo and Metohija," Serbian Orthodox Church website, 4 November 2005, <http://www.spc.org.yu/Vesti-2005/11/04-11-05-e.html#add> (accessed 8 November 2005).

What was wrong about what I said? I had the nerve to repeat the Serbian Orthodox Church's position. Well, others too could learn something from His Holiness about how to live their lives. I believe that anyone who would not defend Kosovo-Metohija would also not defend Belgrade.<sup>230</sup>

Considering that the Radicals are in position to win the next elections, Kosovo's independence would make winning the elections that much easier.<sup>231</sup> Kosovo is so important that a certain minority within the Serbian Orthodox Church would gladly support the Radicals if they thought the Radicals would bring Kosovo back to them. These include Serbian Orthodox Church youth groups who purport such slogans as "I believe in God and Serbdom."<sup>232</sup> These groups are typically xenophobic and generally intolerant of any social mores inconsistent with Orthodox teachings. Granted, they are small in numbers, but they do receive funding from the Serbian Orthodox Church.<sup>233</sup>

Even those elements of the Serbian Orthodox Church that are willing to work out a resolution within the democratic process have displayed bonding tendencies to safeguard their church property. The Serbian Orthodox Church has added its own agenda to the Kosovo final status process, which is not necessarily the same as Belgrade's. In February 2006, the Church released a document entitled "Basic Principles" which called for the establishment of protection zones at church sites.<sup>234</sup> The Church requested a separate discussion on the international community's responsibilities in protecting its religious sites, claiming that military protection would be required for several years to

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<sup>230</sup>Radmila Ognjanovic, "I am Not Inciting War," *Belgrade Vecernje Novosti*, 13 February 2006. Translated from Serbian by FBIS. Available from FBIS.

<sup>231</sup> The Radicals have jumped up in popularity in the last few elections and currently hover at about thirty percent in opinion polls (as opposed to the eleven percent sustained by the Serbian president's party). See Igor Jovanovic, "Serbia Fights to Hold on to Kosovo, Montenegro," *International Relations and Security Network (ISN) Security Watch*, 27 November 2005, <http://www.Isn.Ethz.Ch/News/Sw/Details.Cfm?Id=13641> (accessed 23 January 2006).

<sup>232</sup> Ivana Petrovic, "Religious Right Makes a Pitch for Serbia's Youth," *Sarajevo Balkan Investigative Reporting Network*, 16 December 2005. Available from FBIS.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

<sup>234</sup> International Crisis Group, "Europe Report no. 170: Kosovo: the Challenge of Transition," (17 February 2006): 29, [http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/europe/balkans/170\\_kosovo\\_the\\_challenge\\_of\\_transition.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/europe/balkans/170_kosovo_the_challenge_of_transition.pdf) (accessed 24 February 2006).

avoid any potential “de-Serbanisation” by the Kosovo Albanians.<sup>235</sup> The Serbian Orthodox Church thus seems to be maneuvering to protect its property, should Kosovo gain independence.

**b. Bridging**

Despite this bonding behavior, there have been signs of bridging activity concerning the delicate subject of Kosovo from the Serbian Orthodox Church. The Serbian Orthodox Church hierarchy agreed to sign a document allowing repair on its destroyed churches (from the 2004 riots) in August 2005, which it had previously refused to do.<sup>236</sup> The UN envoy to Kosovo, Soren Jessen-Petersen, lauded this step, stating that with the patriarch’s agreement, reconstruction of the churches would help to guarantee “a stable Kosovo, multi-ethnic and tolerant of religious sites.”<sup>237</sup> The Serbian Orthodox Church hierarchy is also trying to work within the system to prevent Kosovo from being completely lost to Serbia. The Serbian Orthodox Church hierarchy has even sent bishops to participate in the discussions with the six-nation Contact Group for Kosovo.<sup>238</sup> Patriarch Pavle’s and the Holy Synod’s pleas in November 2005 reflect the final condition acceptable to the Serbian government regarding Kosovo: “more than autonomy, but less than independence.”<sup>239</sup> More recently, on 23 April 2006, the Serbian Orthodox Bishop Teodosije of the Decani Monastery welcomed Kosovo President Fatmir

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<sup>235</sup> There is precedence of this kind of protection – since April 2005, the Decani monastery has been protected by the UN, which has helped calm the situation in the immediate area. See *Ibid.*, 29-30.

<sup>236</sup> After encouraging Kosovo Serbs to boycott the elections in November 2004, the Serbian government decided it would be better for the Kosovo Serbs to have a voice from within Kosovo provisional institutions since Kosovo Albanians would make decisions which would affect the Kosovo Serbs. See “Draskovic Urges Kosovo Serbs to Join Province’s Institutions,” *Southeast European Times*, 29 June 2005, [http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en\\_GB/features/setimes/features/2005/06/29/feature-01](http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2005/06/29/feature-01) (accessed 28 August 2005).

<sup>237</sup> “Kosovo: l’Envoyé de l’ONU Salue l’Accord de l’Eglise Orthodoxe Serbe à la Reconstruction des Sites Religieux.” *Centre de Nouvelles ONU*. 28 March 2005. Available at <http://www.un.org/apps/newsFr/storyF.asp?NewsID=10134&Cr=Kosovo&Cr1=MINUK>. Accessed 22 August 2005.

<sup>238</sup> Contact Group for Kosovo: Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, United States

<sup>239</sup> The US is not advocating one outcome over another but avows that the international community should ensure that “First, it should promote stability not only in Kosovo, but throughout the entire region. Secondly, it should ‘provide full democratic rights for all people, especially minorities’ and lastly, it should further the region’s Euro-Atlantic integration.” See “US Official Outlines Criteria Kosovo Solution Must Meet,” *Southeast European Times*, 9 November 2005, [http://setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en\\_GB/features/setimes/features/2005/11/09/feature-01](http://setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2005/11/09/feature-01) (accessed 9 November 2005).

Sejdiu, a Muslim, stating “the doors to the Decani monastery are always open to people of goodwill and who bring the message of peace.”<sup>240</sup> At the inter-religious level, the Serbian Orthodox Church hosted a conference 2-3 May 2006 which included religious leaders from the Islamic and Catholic religious groups in Kosovo, as well representatives from the Lutheran Church and Jewish community in Belgrade. This inter-faith dialogue began before the NATO air campaign in 1999, and then continued under a more formalized medium, the Inter-religious Council of Kosovo, in 2001. The May 2006 conference was actually the first to be held by the council since talks had stopped due to attacks on Serbian Orthodox sites and Kosovo Serbs in 2004. The forum was well attended by secular and foreign entities, to include the EU, the UN, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and Italian forces from Kosovo Force (KFOR, which provided logistics support). At this conference, Bishop Amfilohije of Montenegro stated that he hoped the dialogue would “help the healing of common wounds in the region of Kosovo [and would lead to] the overcoming of hatred among brothers and division.”<sup>241</sup>

Bridging efforts by the Serbian Orthodox Church have yet to truly develop systematically within Kosovo civil society; the efforts are mostly kept at a higher leadership level. One reason for this lack of bridging is that the Kosovo Serbs are concerned foremost about their survival since there are still attacks on the Kosovo Serbs, though much less than in 2004. The next reason, tied to the first, is due to restrictions of movement of the Kosovo Serbs.<sup>242</sup> The efforts of the Serbian Orthodox Church in

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<sup>240</sup> Of note, Kosovo’s Prime Minister Agim Ceku was denied access to services at another other Serbian Orthodox monastery in Kosovo as he is considered a war criminal by the Kosovo Serbs. The official Church reasoning was stated more delicately, stating that since the Kosovo Serbs “have been living with the status of refugees for nearly a full seven years, outside our residence in Prizren, which was burned in the March 17, 2004 riots...we are not able to welcome Mr. Ceku before we have returned to our restored residence, and our people have return to their homes.” See “Ceku’s Request Denied,” *B92 News*, 20 April 2006, [http://www.b92.net/english/news/index.php?start=10&style=texts&news\\_per\\_page\\_limit=0&order=hrono&dd=20&mm=4&yyyy=2006](http://www.b92.net/english/news/index.php?start=10&style=texts&news_per_page_limit=0&order=hrono&dd=20&mm=4&yyyy=2006) (accessed 18 May 2006).

See also “Kosovar President Attends Easter Services,” *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty* 24 April 2006, <http://www.rferl.org/newsline/2006/04/4-see/see-240406.asp> (accessed 18 May 2006).

<sup>241</sup> “Interfaith Conference Opens in Pec Patriarchate Monastery,” *KIM Info Service*, 4 May 2006, [http://www.kosovo.net/news/archive/2006/May\\_04/2.html](http://www.kosovo.net/news/archive/2006/May_04/2.html) (accessed 18 May 2006).

<sup>242</sup> For more information, see U.S. Department of State, “Kosovo” in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – 2005* (Washington, D.C., 8 March 2006), <http://pristina.usmission.gov/hrkos5.htm> (accessed 18 May 2006).

Kosovo's have thus been focused on aiding Kosovo Serbs but many projects have been conducted in cooperation with other religious NGOs, especially the Catholic Church, the Serbian Orthodox Church's fellow members of the World Council of Churches, and the International Orthodox Christian Charities, as well as foreign governments (e.g., US, Greece). These entities have provided money and expertise to the efforts aiding Kosovo Serbs still in Kosovo, as well as those who still have yet to return. For example, a Catholic charity, Caritas-Austria, funded a Serbian Orthodox charity project in spring 2000 to distribute seeds to nearly all Kosovo Serbs so they could plant vegetable gardens.<sup>243</sup> There have also been some sporadic inter-ethnic initiatives in the few locations where the Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs are living in the same city (though separated). These initiatives have not been sponsored by the Serbian Orthodox Church for the reasons already mentioned but do involve Serbian Orthodox laity. Once such initiative is currently conducted in the town of Mitrovica – the epicenter of the March 2004 violence, symbolically still divided by a bridge.<sup>244</sup> The Mitrovica City Wide Youth Council, bringing youth together from the Kosovo Serb and Kosovo Albanian sides, has been mentored by Catholic charity Catholic Relief Services (CRS) even before the 2004 violence. Recently, the CRS received funding from United States Institutes for Peace to help the Mitrovica City Wide Youth Council members learn about each religious group's funeral rites, in the hope that there would eventually be free movement to visit their cemeteries.<sup>245</sup> CRS has also hosted the "Peacebuilding Training for Social Change" effort which has brought two NGOs (one Serbian, one Albanian) together to provide "youth leaders in Mitrovica with the peacebuilding tools and skills necessary to create positive change."<sup>246</sup> Another charity, Catholic charity Caritas Kosovo, opened up a joint Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serbian youth center in Mitrovica in 2003. It has

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<sup>243</sup> For more information, see Serbian Orthodox Philanthropy website, [http://www.covekoljublje.org/proj\\_completed.htm](http://www.covekoljublje.org/proj_completed.htm) (accessed 18 May 2006).

<sup>244</sup> "More Ethnic Fighting in Kosovo Leaves Thousands Homeless," *Catholic Relief Services* (n.d.), [http://www.crs.org/our\\_work/where\\_we\\_work/overseas/eastern\\_europe\\_&\\_the\\_caucasus/kosovo/emergency\\_response.cfm](http://www.crs.org/our_work/where_we_work/overseas/eastern_europe_&_the_caucasus/kosovo/emergency_response.cfm) (accessed 18 May 2006).

<sup>245</sup> United States Institutes for Peace Balkans Initiative, "USIP Grants Related to the Balkans" (Washington, D.C, n.d.), <http://www.usip.org/balkans/grants.html> (accessed 18 May 2006).

<sup>246</sup> "Social Change through Peacebuilding," *Catholic Relief Services* (n.d.), [http://www.crs.org/our\\_work/where\\_we\\_work/overseas/eastern\\_europe\\_&\\_the\\_caucasus/kosovo/peacebuilding.cfm](http://www.crs.org/our_work/where_we_work/overseas/eastern_europe_&_the_caucasus/kosovo/peacebuilding.cfm) (accessed 18 May 2006).

focused its efforts on inter-ethnic training workshops, such as teaching journalism. This center now publishes a magazine which “attempts to change local prejudice.”<sup>247</sup> At this point, these inter-ethnic activities are sowing the seeds for future peace since the adults on both sides are not ready for reconciliation – the wounds are still too fresh.<sup>248</sup> Indeed, inter-ethnic bridging in Kosovo has a long way to go but will become even more imperative, especially should Kosovo obtain its independence. The Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo, though it has a very limited bridging role at the moment, has already proven itself capable of these actions in the past and there is no reason why it would not do the same in the future, provided its clergy feel safe enough to move around the countryside.

## C. NATIONALISM

### 1. Historical Context

In the beginning of his rule, Slobodan Milošević seemed to be an answer to certain Serbian Orthodox Church prayers. He took up the nationalist cause and recognized the importance of Kosovo, even attending the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo in 1989.<sup>249</sup> Milošević soon leveraged Serbian historical sensitivities regarding WWII by spreading propaganda that the Ustaša regime was being reinstated by Croatian nationalist Franco Tudjman.<sup>250</sup> Propaganda also surfaced asserting that Serbian genocide was just around the corner – a story that was reinforced by the Serbian Orthodox Church in its official media.<sup>251</sup> For example, the Serbian Orthodox Church *Pravoslavlje*

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<sup>247</sup> Darren Shore, “Building the Media Bridge: Uniting Youth in Divided Yugoslavia,” *Centre des Medias Alternatifs du Québec*, 4 November 2004, <http://www.cmaq.net/fr/node.php?id=18756>, (accessed 27 April 2006).

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> Milošević appeared a strong man, ready to take up the cause of Serbia when in 1987 he uttered his now infamous phrase “no one should dare to beat you” when claiming to protect the allegedly beleaguered Kosovo Serbs from the Kosovo Albanians; this statement “enthroned him as a Tsar.” See Judah, 160, 162, 163.

<sup>250</sup> As mentioned in Chapter II, this Nazi-affiliated regime went out of its way to kill all those who were not Croat. The Serbian Orthodox Church also suffered tremendously as *all* 577 priests in Croatia disappeared, including 217 killed; 700 total clergy were killed in Yugoslavia. See Pedro Ramet, “The Serbian Orthodox Church,” in *Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twentieth Century* ed. Pedro Ramet (Durham and London: Duke University Press 1988), 237-238.

<sup>251</sup> The accusation of genocide is not a new concept for the Serbs. The Serbian Orthodox Church alleged Kosovo Albanians were harboring genocidal tendencies against the Serbs in 1969 and 1982, including formal allegations of rape and other kinds of abuse. See Steele, 147.



newspaper reported that “Ustasha ideology was being resurrected in Bosnia and that the Serbs would have to remain united in their support for those who protect [them].”<sup>252</sup> Furthermore, in the 1980s, certain elements of the Serbian Orthodox Church pursued a collective rights approach in line with the nationalist cause, as evidenced by the mid-1980s tour of Tsar (now Saint) Lazar’s bones.<sup>253</sup> Lazar’s bones were carried throughout Serbia and other places which were historically Serbian, including areas of Bosnia and Croatia.<sup>254</sup> This tour occurred at about the same time the Academy of Arts and Sciences issued an extreme nationalist proclamation, commonly referred to as the *Memorandum*. The *Memorandum* alleged atrocities (genocide) in Kosovo against Serbs and advocating the right of gathering all Serbs to live under a Serb state.<sup>255</sup> Certain elements within the Serbian Orthodox Church thus approved of Milošević’s political maneuvers and of his wars of “self-determination.”<sup>256</sup> Some within the media and academia allege that the Church turned on Milošević only when things did not go well.<sup>257</sup>

Like all things, the relationship between the Serbian Orthodox Church and Milošević was much more complicated than the media seemed to portray. There were several Serbian Orthodox Church elements that were quickly disillusioned by Milošević, some as early as his Kosovo appearance in 1989. As Father Sava (one of Milošević’s most vocal critics) stated:

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<sup>252</sup> Christos Mylonas, *Serbian Orthodox Fundamentals: The Quest for an Eternal Identity* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2003), 142. Originally quoted in *Pravoslavljje*, no. 558, 15 June 1990 and no. 559, 1 July 1990.

<sup>253</sup> As a reminder, Lazar was the hero of 1389, having chosen the heavenly kingdom over the earthly kingdom per the Kosovo myth.

<sup>254</sup> Jeremy Bransten, “Unholy Alliance? Nationalism and the Orthodox Church,” *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, 26 October 2004, <http://www.rferl.org/specials/religion/archiv/orthodox-1.asp> (accessed 13 August 2005).

<sup>255</sup> Judah, 4-5, 158-159.

<sup>256</sup> Andrew Higgins and Robert Block, “Holy War: From Ruins of Kosovo, Serbian Church's Role Raises Hard Questions --- Clerics Now Want Milosevic to Step Down, but Many Embraced his Policies,” *Wall Street Journal* (New York, N.Y.: 24 June 1999): A.1. Available from ProQuest.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid. For the counterpoint, see Bob Djurdjevic, “The Journal's Anti-Christian Propaganda Founder,” *Truth in Media*, 24 June 1999, <http://www.truthinmedia.org/truthinmedia/Activism/ws6-24-99.html> (accessed 9 November 2005).



In the late eighties we felt the national change and thought it would be a good thing...we thought [Milošević] would come to [the church of] Gračanica to bow down to the ideals of the past, the good, spiritual, moral traditions, but he did not. He appeared like an antique god by helicopter. I saw at that moment that the change was going in the wrong direction.<sup>258</sup>

Father Sava also later cautioned fellow clergy to refrain from practicing *ethnophyletism*, or giving primacy to “national interests [over] spiritual ones.”<sup>259</sup> Some within the Serbian Orthodox Church hierarchy also voiced its displeasure with Milošević. The Holy Synod called for his resignation in May 1992, and Patriarch Pavle led a couple of religious ceremonies and demonstrations during the same time frame.<sup>260</sup> Pavle also stood in unity with other religious leaders, signing the Berne Declaration with Catholic and Muslim leaders in November 1992, demanding for an end of the war, as well as “the re-establishment of peace and the renewal of dialogue.”<sup>261</sup> It appeared as if the ecumenical movement which had been petered out by the 1980s was slowly starting up again.<sup>262</sup> The Serbian Orthodox Church hosted several ecumenical conferences, such as the “Ecumenical Dialogue on Reconciliation” in 1996, sponsored by the Conference of European Churches.<sup>263</sup> During this conference, it was acknowledged that there were many open wounds and differing opinions but that there were several common points upon which the participants could expand and eventually reconcile.<sup>264</sup> Another example of ecumenical actions was the agreement to write a joint history as early as mid-1990s,

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<sup>258</sup> Judah, 164.

<sup>259</sup> Steele, 149.

<sup>260</sup> Sabrina Ramet, “A Theory about the Causes of the Yugoslav Meltdown: The Serbian National Awakening as a ‘Revitalization Movement,’” *Nationalities Papers* 32, no. 4 (December 2004): 772, <http://taylorandfrancis.metapress.com/media/78519up2yj3uqh4drlr/contributions/r/4/2/8/r428816047156188.pdf>, (accessed 3 March 2006).

<sup>261</sup> Berne Declaration: “Appeal for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.” Wolfsberg/Zurich, Switzerland, November 26, 1992, <http://www.appealofconscience.org/declarations/Berne.htm> (accessed 7 August 2005).

<sup>262</sup> This is not to imply that these actions would build a pluralist society and indeed there have been and continue to be many more fits and starts in the process.

<sup>263</sup> The Croatian Catholic bishops did not attend this conference, though there was an universal Catholic presence. See “Ecumenical Dialogue on Reconciliation,” *Conference of European Churches* (Belgrade, 19-22 February 1996): ii.

<sup>264</sup> Some of the common points included: the economy, the youth and the need for multi-cultural education. See *Ibid.*, 78-79.

approved by both the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church in Croatia.<sup>265</sup> These types of activities were steps in the right direction of preliminary bridge building between the different communities.<sup>266</sup>

## **2. Implications for Today: Turning Over War Criminals**

Patriarch Pavle and the Holy Synod again demanded Milošević's resignation in 1999 for the good of the Serb people.<sup>267</sup> While Milošević fell rather quickly out of favor with the Serbian Orthodox Church, other Serbian leaders like Dr Radovan Karadžić of Republika Srpska did not, by and large. Since Karadžić and others like him have been indicted as war criminals by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), admiration for the war criminals has continuously complicated matters for the post-Milošević Serbian government and for the Serbian Orthodox Church, as Serbia has balked at complying with ICTY demands.<sup>268</sup> This contrarian attitude from the Serbian government has eventually changed, even though the society is still against a foreign entity trying its people. There are several reasons for this change of behavior, the most important being that the Serbian government has been under enormous pressure to hand over its war criminals as a first step towards a coveted ticket to EU accession. The EU mandate has been clear – turn over the war criminals or be refused any chance for accession.<sup>269</sup> NATO has the same mandates. Both of these institutions are vital to Serbia's future prosperity and security.

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<sup>265</sup> Tatjana Peric, "On Being Agents of God's Peace: Relationship and Roles of the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia and the Serbian Orthodox Church in Ethnic Conflicts in Former Yugoslavia," Master's Thesis, *Bossey Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches* (Geneva, Switzerland, 1996). [http://www.georgefox.edu/academics/undergrad/departments/soc-swk/ree/PERIC2\\_YUG.html](http://www.georgefox.edu/academics/undergrad/departments/soc-swk/ree/PERIC2_YUG.html), (accessed 1 June 2006).

<sup>266</sup> Nevertheless, there was still contradictory behavior from Serbian Orthodox leadership. One year after Patriarch Pavle had demanded that Milošević resign in 1999, Bishop Artemije critiqued Patriarch Pavle and other church leaders for attending a formal event with Milošević in 2000. See Steele, 153.

<sup>267</sup> This demand embarrassed the government, which wasted no time denouncing the Church. The spokesman for the reigning party warned "the old wise men of the Holy Synod that they 'maintain the spirit of the 5<sup>th</sup> ecclesiastic rule – pray for those in power'" and others warned "what if the government shaped the Synod?" See I. Samardzija, "Serbie: L'Eglise, l'opposition et le pouvoir," *Courrier des Balkans*. Originally published in *Reporter*, 28 June 2000, <http://www.balkans.eu.org/article1922.html> (accessed 26 July 2005).

<sup>268</sup> Since the early 1990s, the UN has indicted alleged war criminals from the Balkan wars and has pushed other international organizations to link member accession to cooperation with the ICTY.

<sup>269</sup> There is already evidence of this occurring as the scheduled early May 2006 talks with the EU were postponed indefinitely since Serbia did not turn over the indicted war criminal General Mladic by 30 April 2006, as mandated by the EU.

**a. Bonding**

Until recently, the Serbian Orthodox Church did not encourage war criminals to turn themselves in to the ICTY, with very few exceptions. Bishop Amfilohije Radovic, recognized as one of the more nationalist Serbian Orthodox Church leaders, described Karadžić's mother at her funeral in May 2005 as "the mother of an immortal."<sup>270</sup> Furthermore, the ICTY has gone so far as to accuse the Serbian Orthodox Church of harboring Karadžić, and Bosnian media has claimed that he has adopted a monk's disguise – all of which the Serbian Orthodox Church denies.<sup>271</sup> Amfilohije changed his tune in August 2005, calling for Karadžić to surrender, though emphasizing that it was Karadžić's "personal decision...but I expect him to make that decision."<sup>272</sup> This change of heart is not convincing to some experts since they view this type of behavior as a means to preserve nationalist-leaning and devout Orthodox Serbian Prime Minister Kostunica's position in power. This new behavior is also allegedly a way that "the Serbian Orthodox Church can be seen as modern, on one hand, while on the other hand it is de facto supporting war criminals."<sup>273</sup> These allegations imply that the Serbian Orthodox Church is still bonding, still seeking to protect its own kind.

**b. Bridging**

Father Sava once again served as a voice in the wilderness early in the process of bridge building. As early as 1998, he called for all Balkan leaders, including Milošević and Karadzic, to be indicted.<sup>274</sup> He has been joined over the past year or so by other elements of the Serbian Orthodox Church, as more clergy have encouraged war criminals to turn themselves in to the ICTY. In February 2005, Patriarch Pavle encouraged General Vladimir Lazarevic to turn himself to the ICTY, praising his courage

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<sup>270</sup> Nicholas Wood, "Serbian Nationalists Turn a Funeral into a Tribute to a Fugitive," *New York Times*, 9 May 2005, A.4. Available from ProQuest.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

<sup>272</sup> Bishop Amfilohije is related to Prime Minister Kostunica by marriage so perhaps since the latter was feeling EU pressure, the former called for Karadžić to surrender. See "Leading Serbian Orthodox Cleric Urges Karadzic to Surrender," *Southeast European Times*, 26 August 2005, [http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en\\_GB/features/setimes/feature-01](http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/feature-01) (accessed 29 August 2005).

<sup>273</sup> "Serbian Orthodox Church Helps Premier by Supporting Surrenders to Hague Analyst," *Belgrade Radio B92*, 2 February 2005. Available from FBIS.

<sup>274</sup> Steele, 151.

to “take the hard road in the interests of the fatherland.”<sup>275</sup> Other clergy have also come forward, like Bishop Grigorije, when in spring 2005 he requested that all indictees turn themselves in to the ICTY; his call has since been echoed by other clergy.<sup>276</sup> Some of these changes of heart can be tenuously linked to the corresponding changes in government policy. Another event which might have helped the Serbian Orthodox Church change its mind about war criminals was the shock over the released tape of the events in Srebrenica in June 2005. This was not a proud moment for the Serbian Orthodox Church, since the tape depicts an Orthodox priest blessing militia members before they committed their gruesome deeds.<sup>277</sup> Subsequent to the tape’s release, the Holy Synod decried “the cold-blooded killing of unarmed, defenseless civilians.”<sup>278</sup> This can be considered a further bridging step, since the Church has acknowledged this wrongdoing against religiously different people.

#### **D. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

Serbia is still dealing with historical reverberations even as it orients itself to join the West. The Serbian Orthodox Church, also laden with this historical baggage, has had to reevaluate where it belongs in a post-modern society. It has been a painful dividing process at times. The Serbian Orthodox Church’s actions today are not necessarily directly linked to specific historical events but they are heavily influenced by them. The Serbian Orthodox Church continues to cling to the land of Kosovo; in 2005, Patriarch Pavle proclaimed, “[O]ur Kosovo today is a symbol of the Cross.”<sup>279</sup> Moreover, the Serbian Orthodox Church has had a hard time seeing Serb brethren as war criminals for their actions in the 1990s because they are seen as defenders of the Serbian nation from the Islamic and Catholic ‘hordes.’ Moreover, Milošević manipulated the Serbian

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<sup>275</sup> “Serbian Orthodox Church Helps Premier by Supporting Surrenders to Hague.”

<sup>276</sup> Elizabeth Pond, “Kosovo and Serbia after the French Non,” *Washington Quarterly* 28, no. 4 (Autumn 2005): 26. Available from Project Muse.

<sup>277</sup> Marko Albinovic, “Execution under Code Name ‘Simultaneous Match’,” *Belgrade Politika*, 3 June 2005, 2. Translated from Serbian by FBIS. Available from FBIS.

<sup>278</sup> Pond, 27.

<sup>279</sup> “The Serbian Orthodox Church to Her Spiritual Children at Pascha, 2005,” Serbian Orthodox Church Official Website, 1 May 2005, [http://www.spc.org.yu/Saopstenja/vaskrs2005\\_e.html](http://www.spc.org.yu/Saopstenja/vaskrs2005_e.html) (accessed 4 August 2005).

Orthodox Church as part of his deliberate political agenda.<sup>280</sup> Yet, despite these factors, the Serbian Orthodox Church is not monolithic. There has been an ongoing tug-of-war between the moderate and nationalist factions within the Serbian Orthodox Church over the issues of Kosovo and war criminals. These factions can be found at play in many other issues, such as the status of minority religions, teaching religion in school, the Macedonian Orthodox Church, among others. Elizabeth Pond asserted in late 2005 that “the outcome of this battle will have a strong influence on public opinion about Serb pride, European identity.”<sup>281</sup> Most importantly, the Church should resolve these outstanding issues since it may be the only way it can finally break with cyclic Orthodox time, where “the future is never new.”<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>280</sup> “Orthodoxy confers the political domain with a measure of moral legitimacy. Serbian Orthodoxy has historically coalesced with authoritarian and oligarchic advocates...Upon these cultural-historical referents, Slobodan Milosevic forged the perimeter – political and economic – of his autocratic construct...[He] approximated the Serbian cause through a predetermined fusion of historical and mythical time...” See Mylonas, 125.

<sup>281</sup> Pond, 27.

<sup>282</sup> Clark, 75.

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## IV. THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH AFTER MILOSEVIC

### A. INTRODUCTION

The state identity is completely lost. We have confidence only in church now. All democratic institutions are extremely low, judiciary system, government and parliament. But the church is the only institution which presents some kind of identity.

— Srdjan Bogosavljevic, Serbian pollster, *National Public Radio: All Things Considered*, 17 March 2006

Opinions vary greatly in assessing the Serbian Orthodox Church's influence since the fall of Milošević in 2000. Some claim the Serbian Orthodox Church is the worst enemy imaginable to a pluralist Serbian society, and it will impede Serbia's chances to access the EU and NATO. In their view, the Serbian Orthodox Church is narrow-minded, only concerned about leveraging its newfound strength to become a state religion, to protect its property and to shape Serbian politics to fit its agenda, including keeping other religions from practicing in Serbia. Others counterclaim that while the Serbian Orthodox Church does have certain bonding tendencies (like all religions), it is actually a moderating voice and its endorsement can legitimize the Serbian government's quest for integration into the Euro-Atlantic institutions. The Serbian Orthodox Church can also help mitigate societal tensions through its reconciliation and ecumenical efforts. A third group claims that the Serbian Orthodox Church exhibits both bonding and bridging tendencies. These differing opinions might seem banal on the surface, but there are some indisputable considerations: Serbians are searching for an identity since the demise of Yugoslavia; the Serbian Orthodox Church is often cited as the most trusted institution in Serbia; and the secular government is not so trusted. The combination of these factors has opened up an unprecedented opportunity for the Serbian Orthodox Church to influence civil society. Even with increased leverage and power, this church still seems as pluralistic in its approach as when it retained little power.<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>283</sup> Numerous examples exist but, in the interest of brevity, only a few will be examined.

## B. BONDS

The Serbian Orthodox Church is reputed to exhibit exclusionary behavior to those who are neither Serb nor Orthodox, the two identities being symbiotic. Sabrina Ramet, a noted expert on the Serbian Orthodox Church, warned in 2005 that if the Church continues along an exclusionary path, “its culture will be one of hatred, not of reconciliation.”<sup>284</sup> Furthermore, in 2003 the International Crisis Group categorized the Serbian Orthodox Church as “one of the most conservative and isolationist in the Orthodox world.”<sup>285</sup> Two basic kinds of agendas appear evident in the Serbian Orthodox Church’s bonding tendencies: a societal agenda to protect and sometimes expand religious turf and a political agenda that can in turn be used by the secular government to achieve its own ends.

### 1. Societal Agendas

Two instances come to mind when examining the bonding nature of the Serbian Orthodox Church towards society and its alleged mission of de-secularizing the Serbian society. This mission is such since secularization has, according to the Serbian Orthodox Church, “reduced Serbia and its people to poverty.”<sup>286</sup> First, the Serbian Orthodox Church has sought to contain proselytizing activity from newer faiths by initiating legislative changes. Several attempts to regulate religion have taken place since the abolishment of the communist-era law in 1993. Each of the six draft laws has attempted to narrow the activities of various religions, with primary benefits allocated to the Serbian Orthodox Church and six other traditional religions.<sup>287</sup> Previous attempts to pass a law had proven futile until the Serbian National Assembly overwhelming passed the Law on

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<sup>284</sup> Sabrina P. Ramet, “The Politics of the Serbian Orthodox Church” in *Serbia Since 1989: Politics and Society under Milošević and After*, ed. Sabrina P. Ramet and Vjieran Pavlaković (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2005), 277.

<sup>285</sup> International Crisis Group, “Balkans Report no. 141: Serbia after Djindjic” (Belgrade/Brussels, 18 March 2003): 16, [http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/report\\_archive/A400921\\_18032003.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/report_archive/A400921_18032003.pdf) (accessed 20 April 2006).

<sup>286</sup> Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, “What the Church Can(not) be Asked About: The Serbian Orthodox Church, State and Society in Serbia” (Belgrade, 2005): 20.

<sup>287</sup> Other six religions: “Roman Catholic Church, Slovak Lutheran Church, Reformed Church, Evangelical Christian Church. . .the Islamic and Jewish communities.” See Drasko Djenovic, “Serbia: Almost No one Satisfied as Religion Bill Reaches Parliament,” *Forum 18 News Service*, 17 April 2006, [http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article\\_id=760](http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=760) (accessed 23 April 2006).



Churches and Religious Communities on 20 April 2006.<sup>288</sup> There were several critiques regarding the process, including a lack of transparency to both the non-traditional religious communities and many within the international community. Primarily, the non-traditional religious communities rejected the Serbian government's claim that the law had been accepted by all religious groups within Serbia.<sup>289</sup> Other critics have proclaimed that the law is in violation of the Serbian constitution guaranteeing religious equality of all citizens before the law and in violation of the federal Charter on Human and Minority Rights and Civil Liberties of Serbia and Montenegro; the law practically sets up five different religious castes, each with less privileges.<sup>290</sup> Finally, one Serbian lawmaker explained that she had voted against the law since "it is not in harmony with European standards, and it is not good for Serbia as a multiethnic civil society."<sup>291</sup> Also disconcerting is the remark made by the Serbian minister for religious affairs, Milan Radulovic, regarding his goal for the religious law in April 2006:

[It] is not so much to address religious liberties, since freedom of belief is a constitutional right...[as it is to] guarantee collective rights for religious communities.<sup>292</sup>

These collective rights include further regulations on the return of confiscated church property (which would exclude non-recognized religions) and the trade-marking of every component of a registered religion's name (so technically other orthodox religions like the Romanian Orthodox Church would not be able to register under their own name).<sup>293</sup> In a related issue, the Serbian government instituted an amendment in 2004 to the property tax law which changed from universal tax exemption for churches to exemptions

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<sup>288</sup> On 27 April 2006, Serbian President Tadic's signature enacted the law. Tadic acknowledged the law was "not exactly in accordance with all European conventions regarding human rights that Serbia-Montenegro's parliament ratified in 2004, but that all of its shortcomings can be remedied with various changes and additions." See "Serbian President Signs Controversial Religion Law," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 28 April 2006, <http://www.rferl.org/newsline/4-see.asp> (accessed 29 April 2006).

<sup>289</sup> Drasko Djenovic, "Serbia: Religion Law Rushed through Parliament," *Forum 18 News*, 21 April 2006, [http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article\\_id=766](http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=766) (accessed 23 April 2006).

<sup>290</sup> Djenovic, "Serbia: Almost No one Satisfied as Religion Bill Reaches Parliament."

<sup>291</sup> Djenovic, "Serbia: Religion Law Rushed through Parliament."

<sup>292</sup> Djenovic, "Serbia: Almost No one Satisfied as Religion Bill Reaches Parliament."

<sup>293</sup> Djenovic, "Serbia: Religion Law Rushed through Parliament." See also Djenovic, "Serbia: Almost No one Satisfied as Religion Bill Reaches Parliament."

extended only to the seven traditional faiths.<sup>294</sup> These types of legislative activity, while not directly involving the Serbian Orthodox Church, have its fingerprints all over them. For example, in May 2005, the draft Law on Churches and Religious Communities was delayed since the government was awaiting the Serbian Orthodox Church's edits on the legislation.<sup>295</sup> This now signed law also provides the Serbian Orthodox Church with an "unofficial superior place among the traditional religious communities" (Article 12).<sup>296</sup> This does not mean that the Serbian Orthodox Church has become the official religion by any means, but it does mean that other religions, even those accorded similar privileges as the Serbian Orthodox Church, play second fiddle. The increased legal standing for the Serbian Orthodox Church would work to the Church's agenda of insuring its primacy within society.

The second example of religious bonding is the Serbian Orthodox Church's push including religious education in public schools. This has been part of the Church's effort to ensure traditional Orthodox mores are instilled in young Serbian Orthodox. This request was submitted when the ink was barely dry following the 2000 elections which removed Milošević from power. By the fall of 2001, the public school system introduced electives in religious education based in one of the seven traditional religions as well as classes in civic education.<sup>297</sup> The Serbian Orthodox Church insisted on specific religious education over a multi-confessional approach, claiming "there is no such thing as a general concept, let alone a universal religion;" it also insisted the classes be mandatory (the choice being between religion and civics).<sup>298</sup> This regulation caused immediate issues in multi-confessional regions like Vojvodina with thirty-nine registered religions; children could potentially be segregated by their religion (or non-religion), which could

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<sup>294</sup> According to the US State Department, however, taxes have not been collected from the non-traditional faiths (as of November 2005). See U.S. Department of State "Serbia and Montenegro (includes Kosovo)" in *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom 2005*, (Washington, D.C., 8 November 2005), <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2005/51546.htm> (accessed 23 April 2006).

<sup>295</sup> Branko Bjelajac, "Serbia: Orthodox Veto on New Religion Law?" *Forum 18 News*, 16 May 2005, [http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article\\_id=562](http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=562) (accessed 9 October 2005).

<sup>296</sup> Djenovic, "Serbia: Almost No one Satisfied as Religion Bill Reaches Parliament."

<sup>297</sup> Branko Bjelajac, "Serbia: Religious Freedom Survey, August 2004," *Forum 18 News*, 5 August 2004, [http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article\\_id=387](http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=387) (accessed 23 April 2006).

<sup>298</sup> Bojan Aleksov, "Religious Education in Serbia," *Religion, State & Society* 32, no. 4 (December 2004): 341-342.

result in “psychological distance between children of different faiths.”<sup>299</sup> Other critics challenged the constitutionality of the decree, since it elevated certain religious sects above others (not to mention the fact that the state funds these programs).<sup>300</sup> Another concern regarding this action was that by equating civic education (“the basics of democracy”) with religious education, it could be insinuated that knowledge about either subject is interchangeable.<sup>301</sup> An alternative view offered by the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights was that the choice between a civics and religion class implied religious education “did not promote democracy, human rights and tolerance.”<sup>302</sup> The religious education and civic education classes did not attract many enrollees at first, but this changed within a couple of years, with a majority of the parents opting for civic education classes for their children.<sup>303</sup> Despite initial complaints from the Serbian Orthodox Church (and the Catholic Church) that the Ministry of Education did not take the religious classes seriously enough, religious education in public schools has provided the Serbian Orthodox Church unprecedented access to Serbian youth to strengthen them against proselytization from other religions, as well as instill the basics of the faith.<sup>304</sup> It has also provided an opening to teach its doctrines to non-Serbian Orthodox children since some children do not want to be separated from their classmates and thus attend the Serbian Orthodox classes.<sup>305</sup> Religious education has raised eyebrows among human rights advocates, secularists and those of minority religions, confirming for them that the Serbian Orthodox Church is using its newfound influence to ensure collective rights for its faithful, whether its members agree or not with its actions.<sup>306</sup> These bonding trends

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<sup>299</sup> Sabrina Ramet, “The Politics of the Serbian Orthodox Church,” 271-272.

<sup>300</sup> Aleksov, “Religious Education in Serbia,” 342-343.

<sup>301</sup> Sabrina Ramet, “The Politics of the Serbian Orthodox Church,” 272.

<sup>302</sup> Aleksov, “Religious Education in Serbia,” 344.

<sup>303</sup> In October 2001, only about 36 percent chose religious education and about 22 percent chose civics. By 2003, the numbers had risen to 43 percent attending religious education classes and 57 percent attending civics. See Bjelajac, “Serbia: Religious Freedom Survey, August 2004.”

<sup>304</sup> Ibid.

<sup>305</sup> Aleksov, “Religious Education in Serbia,” 352-353.

<sup>306</sup> When the decree was introduced in 2001, only about 33 percent of Serbians endorsed the idea of religious education in public schools, despite the government claim that it was acting on behalf of 87 percent of Serbians who identified themselves as religious. Also, one of the minority churches, the Adventists, claimed that the communist era was more religiously tolerant than the post-2000 era. See Ibid., 344, 347.

are disturbing but not as much as the exclusionary tendencies displayed by the Serbian Orthodox Church within the political realm, especially since 2000.

## 2. Political Agendas?

At times it appears as if the Serbian Orthodox Church has gone beyond the normal bonding behavior religions exhibit and has become politicized to the detriment of other religious groups and secular entities. These actions appear to also benefit the Serbian government's political agenda (though it would be imprudent to state there is a direct link between the two agendas). There are two instances that stand out regarding this ambivalent relationship. First, it seems that the Serbian Orthodox Church has acted most vocally against schismatic Orthodox branches, namely the Montenegrin Orthodox Church and the Macedonian Orthodox Church. Since having a separate national church lends legitimacy to an Orthodox nation, the fight between the Serbian Orthodox Church and the breakaway branches can take on a political tinge. For example, the Macedonian Orthodox Church was established in 1967, with the blessing of the Yugoslav communist regime.<sup>307</sup> Through the years this issue has been more of an internal religious question, but there recently have been allegations that the Serbian Ministry for Religious Affairs provides funds for the minority Serbian Orthodox Church in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FRYOM).<sup>308</sup> The Serbian government did not deny this allegation, stating it was legal to allocate funds "for the protection of ecclesiastical cultural heritage outside the borders of the Serbia-Montenegro State Union."<sup>309</sup> This revelation by the Serbian government has provoked several reactions from the Macedonian government and the Macedonian Orthodox Church, including going to the EU and the US with the evidence. Also, the Macedonian president, Branko Crvenkovski, stated the issue could "cast a shadow over ties between the two countries."<sup>310</sup> The

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<sup>307</sup> This self-proclaimed autocephaly has never been recognized by either the Serbian Orthodox Church or the other Orthodox churches. However, the Macedonian Orthodox Church claims it was independent for almost eight centuries, from 1019 to 1767 so it was natural that it would once again be independent. See Sabrina Ramet, "The Politics of the Serbian Orthodox Church," 268.

<sup>308</sup> Archbishop Jovan, the head of the Autonomous Orthodox Archdiocese of Ohrid, FRYOM, switched allegiance from the Macedonian Orthodox Church to the Serbian Orthodox Church in 2002. See Ibid., 269.

<sup>309</sup> Ivan Blazevski and Zelimir Bojovic, "Serbia 'Financing' Rival Macedonian Church," *Balkan Investigative Reporting Network: Balkan Insight*, no. 27 (24 March 2006), [http://www.birn.eu.com/insight\\_27\\_1\\_eng.php](http://www.birn.eu.com/insight_27_1_eng.php) (accessed 24 April 2006).

<sup>310</sup> Ibid.

Macedonian government is extremely sensitive about any kind of interference in its internal affairs from its neighbors due to obstruction from countries like Greece in the 1990s.<sup>311</sup> This does not mean that the Macedonian government has been innocent in respecting other religions within its borders, as seen in the imprisonment of the top Serbian Orthodox Church cleric in the FRYOM.<sup>312</sup> Regardless of this issue, it still appears that the Serbian Orthodox Church and Serbian government are directly interfering with a sovereign government's domestic matters. A manifestation of the Serbian Orthodox Church's influence on the Serbian government in this matter is evident in Serbian minister's following comments after he grounded Macedonian flights in Serbia: "After the patriarch, one should not speak and his decisions should not be commented on."<sup>313</sup> This is not to imply the patriarch ordered him to ground the planes, but the minister could have interpreted the patriarch's condemnation of the Macedonians as a green light to act.

There have been issues with other Orthodox churches in which the Serbian Orthodox Church has involved the Serbian government, such as the issue of the schismatic Montenegrin Orthodox Church. This church broke off the Serbian Orthodox Church to form its own church in 1993.<sup>314</sup> This schism also took on a political taint as Montenegrins neared their referendum on independence on 21 May 2006.<sup>315</sup> This politicization was exemplified by the Serbian army's use of one of its helicopters in

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<sup>311</sup> Greece was adamantly against Macedonia becoming its own country and cooperated with Serbia to ensure this did not occur. It even imposed an embargo against the Macedonians to stir up trouble. Macedonia was recognized internationally as its own country but under a compromise to accommodate Greek sensitivities, is now known in international circles as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

<sup>312</sup> Bishop Jovan was recently released from a Macedonian jail, having been imprisoned for almost a year for allegedly "spreading national and religious hatred, divisions and intolerance." This issue had gained attention at the international level, first with OSCE, and was supposed to have gone before the International Court of Justice in Strasbourg. See "Archbishop Jovan Released," *Danas Daily* (Belgrade, 4 March, 2006), [http://www.kosovo.com/news/archive/2006/March\\_05/2.html](http://www.kosovo.com/news/archive/2006/March_05/2.html) (accessed 11 March 2006).

<sup>313</sup> "Serbia and Montenegro: Ethnic Fundamentalism in Serbia," Women Living under Muslim Laws website, 17 March 2006, <http://www.wluml.org/english/newsfulltxt.shtml?cmd%5B157%5D=x-157-530529> (accessed 26 April 2006).

<sup>314</sup> Like the Macedonian Orthodox Church, the Montenegrin Orthodox Church claims a longer history of independence than just the twentieth century. It claims that Montenegrins had their autocephalous church for centuries before being annexed by the Serbian Orthodox Church in 1920. See "The Continuity of Being Autocephalous," Montenegrin Orthodox Church website (n.d), [http://www.moc-cpc.org/index\\_e.htm](http://www.moc-cpc.org/index_e.htm) (accessed 24 April 2006).

<sup>315</sup> The Montenegrins voted to secede from the Union of Serbia and Montenegro, just barely making the 55 percent "yes" bar imposed by the EU.

August 2005 to install a Serbian Orthodox Church chapel on land considered holy by Montenegrins.<sup>316</sup> It seemed to send a message to the Montenegrins that the Serbian Orthodox Church and the government were unified in acting against Montenegrin independence. One Serbian politician who vehemently denounced this action, Nenad Canak, was targeted by the Serbian Orthodox Church. Canak has been a secular advocate for Vojvodina autonomy and has empathized with the Montenegrins, who provided him shelter during the 1990s (when he was part of the opposition to Milošević).<sup>317</sup> He has spoken consistently against Serbian Orthodox Church involvement in political affairs. In reference to the helicopter incident, he had the following to say about Bishop Amfilohije, head Serbian Orthodox clergy in Montenegro, who has known Serb nationalist tendencies:

[This] is preparation for a civil war. It is quite clear...that the next image will be Amfilohije on a tank that is running over everyone. He is not doing it alone and in an unorganized fashion but has the support of Kostunica and the Army.<sup>318</sup>

By January 2006, the Serbian Orthodox Church launched its denunciation of Canak in a letter released from Patriarch Pavle's office, claiming Canak was one of the perpetrators of hate speech against the Serbian Orthodox Church in Vojvodina.<sup>319</sup> These Serbian Orthodox allegations of being victimized within Serbia were countered by critics, who noted the Church "is not exposed to hate speech, unless this term encompasses occasional statements critical of the Church."<sup>320</sup> Another critic discounted other allegations of discrimination against the Serbian Orthodox Church claimed by the Serbian government. The Serbian minister of religion claimed the Serbian Orthodox Church "is the most frequently attacked religious organisation, verbally and physically;" this allegation seems

<sup>316</sup> Patrick Moore, "Serbia and Montenegro: the Politics of Churches and Helicopters," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 5 August 2005, <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2005/08/962276d0-0bfc-4d6d-a2bc-4cbfb5268260.html> (accessed 9 October 2005).

<sup>317</sup> Canak is the leader of the League of Social-Democrats of Vojvodina.

<sup>318</sup> N. Calukovic, "Serbia Will Go to War Against Montenegro," *Belgrade Blic*, 15 August 2005. Translated from Serbian by FBIS. Available from FBIS.

<sup>319</sup> Miroslav Zadrepko, "Serbian Church Claims Victim Status," *Balkan Investigative Reporting Network: Balkan Insight*, no. 17, 20 January 2006. Available at [http://www.birn.eu.com/insight\\_17\\_5\\_eng.php](http://www.birn.eu.com/insight_17_5_eng.php). Accessed 24 April 2006.

<sup>320</sup> The Serbian Orthodox Church also pointed out acts of vandalism against its churches, which had already been resolved at the time of the letter. See "Vojvodina Analysts Deny Serbian Orthodox Church is Under Attack in Province," *Belgrade Radio B92*, 23 January 2006. Available from FBIS.

ludicrous considering the more frequent attacks on other religions.<sup>321</sup> It appears the allegations of attacks against the Serbian Orthodox Church in Vojvodina were a way to discredit the efforts of those politicians seeking more regional autonomy from the central government.<sup>322</sup>

The bonding actions by the Serbian Orthodox Church seem to obstruct the chances for it to positively affect society. The examples cited above seem to fall into what Sabrina Ramet calls the “social creed” of Orthodox churches, which include the following: the state has a duty “to protect its Church and to advance its agenda;” harming “those who have sinned against the Church” is legitimate; and the idea that “there can be no equal rights for rival religious organizations.”<sup>323</sup> This prognosis is bleak, but as many have already acknowledged, including Sabrina Ramet, the Serbian Orthodox Church is internally pluralistic so there is room for other kinds of activity, including bridging to occur.<sup>324</sup>

### C. BRIDGES

Ongoing bridging activities between the Serbian Orthodox Church and other groups have occurred since 2000, just as they did during communism and during the wars in the 1990s. The majority of the inter-communal reconciliation process has taken place at the inter-religious cleric level. This is an important first step to creating cross-cutting networks within society. The second step has been to put the words of reconciliation into action, through multi-confessional charity work as well as with secular entities.

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<sup>321</sup> “Vojvodina Analysts Deny Serbian Orthodox Church is Under Attack in Province.”

<sup>322</sup> The Church is opposed to more Vojvodinian autonomy since not only does this go against Serbian “integration” but allegedly some Vojvodinians want their own church. See Sonja Biserko, “Human Rights and Accountability, Serbia 2003,” Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia (Belgrade, 2004): 364, <http://www.helsinki.org.yu/doc/reports/eng/AnnualReport2003.pdf>, (accessed 4 April 2006).

<sup>323</sup> Sabrina Ramet, “The Politics of the Serbian Orthodox Church,” 275.

<sup>324</sup> For example, ideal forms of government advocated by Serbian Orthodox clergy range from monarchy to Christian democracy. The Church has not adopted a specific platform. See Nonka Bogomilova, “The Religious Situation in Contemporary Bulgaria, and in Serbia and Montenegro: Differences and Similarities,” *Religion in Eastern Europe* XXV, no. 4 (November 2005): 14, <http://www.georgefox.edu/academics/undergrad/departments/soc-swk/ree/2005/bogomilova.pdf>, (accessed 1 June 2006).

See also Sabrina Ramet, “The Politics of the Serbian Orthodox Church,” 272.



## 1. Religious Reconciliation Trends

Religious ecumenism (inter-Christian dialogue) has had a spotty record throughout Serbian history and was often accomplished through individual efforts on both sides.<sup>325</sup> Even today, there are quite a few influential Serbian Orthodox Church clergy who still advocate the teachings of prominent Serbian Orthodox Church theologian Justin Popovich (now saint), who claimed ecumenism as “a collective name for pseudo-Christianities [which] are nothing other than a collection of heresies.”<sup>326</sup> The main concern these clergy hold against ecumenism is that the Orthodox faith would be corrupted through compromise on issues of their one true faith. Nevertheless, even those who have been adamantly anti-ecumenical have still managed to build bridges with other groups outside the Orthodox faith. For example, Bishop Artemije, who spoke vehemently against ecumenism at a conference in 2004, was a key factor in saving many Kosovo Albanian lives during the 1999 crisis. His erstwhile right-hand man, Father Sava Janjic, a voice for peace and probably the favorite cleric among Western players, has also taken a hard line on ecumenism in his 1995 book *Ecumenism and the Time of Apostasy*.<sup>327</sup> His views on ecumenism did not stop him from publicly apologizing to Kosovo Albanians in November 1999, stating

[I] express my greatest regret for everything which was done by members of the Serbian people and special forces against the Albanian civilians, which is a very serious crime.<sup>328</sup>

In June 2005, Fr Sava repeated a similar apology for Serb behavior in the 1990s – even after Kosovo Albanians destroyed much Serbian Orthodox property in 2004 – regretting that the “Church had been unable to prevent the tragic events” of the 1990s.<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>325</sup> Vjekoslav Perica, *Balkan Idols: Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslav States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 15.

<sup>326</sup> Bishop Artemije of Raska and Prizren, “The Serbian Orthodox Church vis-à-vis Ecumenism,” Conference on *Ecumenism: Origins, Expectations, Disenchantment*, September 2004, [http://www.orthodoxinfo.com/ecumenism/artemije\\_thess.aspx](http://www.orthodoxinfo.com/ecumenism/artemije_thess.aspx) (accessed 2 April 2006).

<sup>327</sup> “What the Church Can(not) be Asked About,” 16.

Of interest, there has been a rift between Fr Sava and Bishop Artemije on approaching the Kosovo final status talks. See Maja Radojevic and Tanja Matic, “Church Split Over Question of Dialogue,” *Balkan Insight*, no. 37, 1 June 2006, [http://www.birn.eu.com/insight\\_37\\_3\\_eng.php](http://www.birn.eu.com/insight_37_3_eng.php) (accessed 1 June 2006).

<sup>328</sup> Sabrina Ramet, “The Politics of the Serbian Orthodox Church,” 262.



Despite an anti-ecumenical tendency within the Serbian Orthodox Church, there have recently been enormous steps taken to reconcile tensions with the Catholic Church, whose faithful constitute the largest Christian minority in Serbia or about four percent of the population.<sup>330</sup> This is not to imply that the two religions will necessarily resolve their theological and doctrinal differences, but just getting beyond past animosity would be a revolutionary step in facing the past and progressing towards a more charitable relationship.<sup>331</sup> This rapprochement has been occurring over the past few years. In 2000, Catholic bishops from the EU and Serbian Orthodox bishops gathered in Belgrade to call for an end of the trade embargo against Yugoslavia, as well as discuss common points of interest, such as increasing cooperation on charity work and exchanges.<sup>332</sup> By 2003, relations had warmed up enough for a delegation of high level Serbian Orthodox Church bishops, including nationalist-leaning Metropolitan Amfilohije, to meet with Pope John Paul II at the Vatican. This was further confirmation of warming relations between the two churches as each espoused a common interest – the defense of Christian values within an increasingly secular Europe. John Paul addressed the Serbian delegation in its own language:

The Christian identity of Europe...sometimes seems to be under dispute. This can only force us to seek and promote every form of collaboration that enables Orthodox and Catholics to join in giving a vivid and convincing testimony of their common tradition.<sup>333</sup>

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<sup>329</sup> “Serbian Orthodox Church Official Offers Apology to Kosovo Albanians,” *Southeast European Times*, 19 June 2005, [http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en\\_GB/document/setimes/newsbriefs/2005/06/19/nb-03](http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/document/setimes/newsbriefs/2005/06/19/nb-03) (accessed 6 April 2006).

<sup>330</sup> The Muslims are the largest religious minority constituting about 19 percent of the population. See U.S. State Department, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, “Background Note: Serbia and Montenegro,” (Washington, D.C., December 2005), <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5388.htm> (accessed 25 April 2006).

<sup>331</sup> This movement comes from those Serbian Orthodox who think that there is some room for ecumenical relations with Catholics (and maybe other traditional Christian faiths), though extending this to other religions, especially small Protestant sects is unthinkable. See “What the Church Can(not) be Asked About,” 17.

<sup>332</sup> “Catholic and Orthodox Bishops Call for End to Yugoslavian Embargo,” *ZENIT News Agency*, 20 July 2000, <http://www.zenit.org/english/archive/0007/ZE000720.html> (accessed 25 April 2006).

<sup>333</sup> Pope John Paul II, “The Spirit is Guiding the Church toward Full Unity,” *L'Osservatore Romano*, 12 February 2003, [http://www.catholicculture.org/docs/doc\\_view.cfm?recnum=4690](http://www.catholicculture.org/docs/doc_view.cfm?recnum=4690) (accessed 25 April 2006).

The Serbs reacted warmly to the pope's outreach and Metropolitan Amfilohije stated this visit showed the "real improvement in relations with the Catholic Church."<sup>334</sup> This was evidenced by Patriarch Pavle's discussions with European Roman Catholic bishops in June 2004. Their joint statement proclaimed that Catholic-Orthodox interaction would further "the real spiritual unification of Europe."<sup>335</sup> Pope Benedict XVI has carried on the dialogue with the Serbian Orthodox Church, prioritizing Serbia as his first visit to an Orthodox country, followed by Russia.<sup>336</sup> The Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church would need to agree to this kind of visit (due to the horizontal structure of the Church). Whereas this kind of visit would have been unthinkable a year ago, more bishops are now for the pope's visit; the majority of Serbian people would also welcome such a visit.<sup>337</sup>

The Serbian Orthodox Church has not limited itself to building bridges with fellow Christians. On several occasions, the Serbian Orthodox Church has supported the Muslims and Jewish communities after they have been attacked. The most poignant intervention occurred right after the March 2004 Kosovo Albanian violence against Kosovo Serbs and numerous Serbian Orthodox sites of worship (see Chapter III). Several young Serbians rioted in Belgrade as a reaction, setting fire to the seventeenth century Bajrakli mosque.<sup>338</sup> The Serb police and firefighters were too afraid to intervene, but nationalist-leaning Metropolitan Amfilohije broke through the mob and pled with firefighters to save what they could. The firefighters heeded his words and the mosque, though severely damaged, was not completely destroyed. Amfilohije was later thanked

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<sup>334</sup> Jonathan Luxmoore, "Serbian Orthodox Church Takes Further Step in Contacts with Vatican," *The Orthodox World* (April 2003): 31. Initially printed in *ENI Bulletin*, no. 3, 19 February 2003, [http://www.antiochian.org/wordhtml/200304\\_31.html](http://www.antiochian.org/wordhtml/200304_31.html) (accessed 25 April 2006).

<sup>335</sup> "Serbian Orthodox Church Pledges Closer Ties with Roman Catholics" *Ecumenical News International* ENI-04-0383, 22 June 2004. Available at <http://www.eni.ch/highlights/news.shtml?2004/06>. Accessed 25 April 2006.

<sup>336</sup> Thomas Patrick Melady, "Viewpoint: A Papal Visit to Serbia is Historic Opportunity," *National Catholic Reporter*, 24 February 2006, [http://ncronline.org/NCR\\_Online/archives2/2006a/022406/022406v.htm](http://ncronline.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2006a/022406/022406v.htm) (accessed 6 April 2006).

<sup>337</sup> The main sticking points for Serbian Orthodox include the unresolved issues of the WWII Ustaša regime and its Jasenovac concentration camp. See "Commentary: Number of Bishops of SPC Against Pope's Visit Constantly Decreasing," *Forum for South-Eastern Europe*, 30 September 2005, <http://balkansecurity.com/news/index.php?l=en&id=127380&q=search.txt> (accessed 8 April 2006).

<sup>338</sup> Felix Corley and Branko Bjelajac, "Kosovo & Serbia: Churches & Mosques Destroyed Amid Inter-Ethnic Violence," *Forum 18 News Service*, 18 March 2004, [http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article\\_id=280](http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=280) (accessed 26 April 2006).

by Muslim leaders for his actions.<sup>339</sup> Furthermore, members of the Serbian Orthodox Church including Patriarch Pavle, joined Serbian government sponsored marches to call for a return to calm in the streets; the peaceful demonstrations seemed to diffuse the volatile situation.<sup>340</sup> A more recent example of expressing solidarity with the Muslims was in the February 2006 controversy over the re-publishing of the Danish Muhammad cartoons. Serbian Orthodox Bishop Irinej, rumored to be on the short list to succeed Patriarch Pavle (along with Metropolitan Amfilohije), strongly condemned those European dailies which had republished the cartoons, stating “the feelings of every believing person have been hurt, as well as those of every civilized person...ready to respect another person's religious feelings and convictions.”<sup>341</sup> As for the Jewish community, the Serbian Orthodox Church has denounced the increasing anti-Semitic trend in Serbia.<sup>342</sup> An official statement by the Serbian Orthodox Church’s Holy Synod in March 2005 made it clear the rising anti-Semitism was unacceptable from every aspect.<sup>343</sup> These kinds of supportive statements for Jews and Muslims are only the first steps to easing tensions between religious groups, but they are hopeful indicators.

Besides the numerous formal declarations by various church leaders, there have been multiple efforts to formalize the process of reconciliation between the different religious groups. One example is the establishment of the Inter-Religious Center in Belgrade in Spring 2000, just prior to Milošević’s departure from power. This center

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<sup>339</sup> Corley and Bjelajac, “Kosovo & Serbia: Churches & Mosques Destroyed.”

<sup>340</sup> The demonstrations primarily protested the Kosovo violence but also quelled the violence in Belgrade. See International Crisis Group, “Europe Report no. 154: Serbia’s U-Turn,” (26 March 2004): 3.

<sup>341</sup> “Serbian Orthodox Church Condemns Muhammad Cartoons,” *Belgrade FoNet*, 14 February 2006. Translated from Serbian by FBIS. Available from FBIS.

<sup>342</sup> As with all matters, this issue is complicated since some of the anti-Semitic activity has been linked to groups with alleged ties to the Serbian Orthodox Church. See Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, “The Serbian Orthodox Church and the New Serbian Identity” (Belgrade, 2006): 10.

See also “Serbia and Montenegro (includes Kosovo)” in *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom 2005*.

<sup>343</sup> The Holy Synod’s statement: “Once again, as we have done in previous years, we most strongly condemn every form and every manifestation of anti-Semitism...This phenomenon is unacceptable theologically, morally, on the grounds of civilisation and in every other respect.” See “Serbian Orthodox Church Condemns Anti-Semitism,” *Ecumenical News International* ENI-05-0212, 31 March 2005, <http://www.eni.ch/highlights/news.shtml?2005/03> (accessed 27 April 2006).

aims to train religious personnel to mitigate social tensions within Serbian society.<sup>344</sup> The Serbian Orthodox Church has also been a participant in this center, whose stated mission is “to replace hostility with cooperation and respect.”<sup>345</sup>

## 2. Charitable Work

In addition to the religious reconciliation efforts, the Serbian Orthodox Church has joined forces with religious and secular NGOs, as well as foreign government-sponsored organizations to develop civil society. The principal method has been to work through joint charitable actions. Philanthropy, the Serbian Orthodox Church’s official charity, has been the foremost Serbian Orthodox actor, interacting with many different NGOs and government organizations, including some from the US.<sup>346</sup> Philanthropy started in 1992, amidst the Balkan wars and professes to be non-discriminatory in regards to background in providing aid (religion included). Its stated interests vary but include the development of civil society.<sup>347</sup> Efforts have included such projects as providing medical/food assistance to the poor in Serbian cities, assistance to internally displaced persons and refugees in Serbia and agriculturally-based projects in Kosovo. Nearly each project has been accomplished in conjunction with either a foreign government (like the US or Greece) or with a NGO (like Catholic Caritas or German Lutheran Diakonisches

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<sup>344</sup> The center aims to train people “in conflict resolution, reconciliation and peace-building.” See Tsjeard Bouta, S. Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana and Mohammed Abu-Nimer, “Faith-Based Peace Building: Mapping and Analysis of Christian, Muslim and Multi-Faith Actors,” *Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael and Salam Institute for Peace and Justice* (Washington, D.C. and The Hague, November 2005): 88, [http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2005/20051100\\_cru\\_paper\\_faith-based%20peace-building.pdf](http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2005/20051100_cru_paper_faith-based%20peace-building.pdf), (accessed 1 June 2006).

<sup>345</sup> “Representatives of Interreligious Centre Visit Patriarch Pavle,” *Hoboeth News* (Information Service of the Serbian Orthodox Church), 16 December 2000, [http://www.spc.org.yu/News/12/16-12-00\\_e.html](http://www.spc.org.yu/News/12/16-12-00_e.html) (accessed 28 April 2006).

See also United States Institute of Peace: The Balkans Initiative, “Rule of Law and Interreligious Cooperation” (Washington D.C., n.d.), <http://www.usip.org/balkans/programs/> (accessed 28 April 2006).

<sup>346</sup> According to the Philanthropy website, these include the following partnerships: ACT (Action by Churches Together); ACT Netherlands; BPRM (Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration - US Government); Caritas Vienna; Caritas Austria, CRS (Catholic Relief Service - USA); CEC (Conference of European Churches); Diakonisches Werk (Germany); Intersos (Italy); IOCC (International Orthodox Christian Charities - USA); UMCOR (United Methodist committee on relief - USA); WCC (World Council of Churches). For more information, see Philanthropy website, <http://www.covekoljublje.org/about.htm> (accessed 27 April 2006).

<sup>347</sup> Goals include: “distribution of food and non-food items, distribution of medicine, medical supplies and medical equipment, providing medical examinations and psycho-social counseling, food production, income generation and civil society development.” See *Ibid*.

Werk).<sup>348</sup> Two examples illustrate the inter-religious cooperation. First, in 2000, Philanthropy worked with other faith-based NGOs to provide over a 1000 meals per day at a soup kitchen in Kragujevac (south of Belgrade) and Kursumlija (just north of Kosovo).<sup>349</sup> At that time, most of the efforts were geared toward taking care of Serb refugees from Kosovo. Second, in 2006, the NGO Action by Churches Together provided funds to Philanthropy to assist villages in northeast Serbia affected by the flooding with such items as potable water. This area, the Banat region in Vojvodina, is ethnically diverse and has a significant Hungarian minority.<sup>350</sup>

Not all of the Serbian Orthodox Church's charitable work has been done with fellow Christians or for other religious groups. In 2001-2002 timeframe, the Serbian Orthodox Church worked with the US government (Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration) and another faith-based NGO to help mitigate the persistent issue of Kosovo Serb refugees. Philanthropy trained these refugees to gain basic work skills and to build greenhouses so they could grow their own food. In exchange, the refugees agreed to provide 25 percent of their harvest to local soup kitchens (with the food going to an estimated 1500 needy people).<sup>351</sup> Some charitable action has been geared explicitly towards Serbian Orthodox laity but has nevertheless funded by NGOs of different religious backgrounds. This is like what has happened in Kosovo with the Kosovo Serbs, where the taken action is bonding, but the coordinating action is bridging. One such example is the Pastoral Counseling Center, started in 2000 and primarily sponsored by three different Christian-based NGOs (Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox).<sup>352</sup> This center is a fusion of psychological assistance with a spiritual emphasis for Serbian

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<sup>348</sup> For more details on the projects, see Philanthropy website, [http://www.covekoljublje.org/proj\\_completed.htm](http://www.covekoljublje.org/proj_completed.htm) and [http://www.covekoljublje.org/proj\\_current.htm](http://www.covekoljublje.org/proj_current.htm), (accessed 27 April 2006).

<sup>349</sup> "ACT Sitrep Balkans Appeal EUBK01," no. 4/00, Action by Churches Together website, 13 March 2000, <http://www.reliefwebint/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/ACOS-64C9ZW?OpenDocument> (accessed 27 April 2006).

<sup>350</sup> "ACT News Update: East Europe-ACT Members Respond to Floods," Action by Churches Together website, 24 April 2006, <http://www.reliefwebint/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/ABES-6P6MF3?OpenDocument> (accessed 27 April 2006).

<sup>351</sup> Philanthropy website.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid.

Orthodox laity. It trains psychology and theology students to work out in the field. The center also provides psychological treatment (4370 patients were treated in 2004).<sup>353</sup>

Though sporadic, the Serbian Orthodox Church has joined forces with other groups to build inter-ethnic bridges within society. For example, Catholic Pax Christi Nederland (a foreign NGO), the Serbian government, and the Serbian Orthodox Church have worked together on tackling some ethnic/religious issues. In November 2004, all three entities met to deal with rising ethnic tension in Vojvodina, where young thugs had stirred up trouble.<sup>354</sup>

The examples mentioned above are but a sampling of charitable activity in which the Serbian Orthodox Church is a joint partner. Considering the Serbian Orthodox Church did not have any systematic way of conducting charitable work before 1992, its efforts have grown tremendously, especially in coordination with other religious NGOs, the Serbian government and foreign government based institutions. Though more could be done to bridge at the grass-roots level to other ethnic groups within Serbia, it has bridged effectively at the administrative level with other religious groups. Additionally, every morsel of bread handed out at a soup kitchen, every seed planted, and every trained worker will lead to a more stable and confident Serbian society.

#### **D. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

When it comes to the Serbian Orthodox Church and the kind of influence it maintains over the Serbian society, the opinions are often completely polarized. Some actors seem dead set against the Serbian Orthodox Church and seem to go out of their way to portray the Church as only a reactionary and negative force within Serbian society. For instance, the oft quoted allegations that the Church never protested against the Milošević regime or that it only waited until 1999 to do so are simply not true but are almost accepted as gospel truth by the West. On the other side, the actors associated with

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<sup>353</sup> For more details, see the Orthodox Pastoral Counseling Center of the Belgrade-Karlovci Archdiocese website, <http://www.ppsc.spc.yu/Misija/aktuelnosti.php?j=e> (accessed 27 April 2006). See also Philanthropy website.

<sup>354</sup> Pax Christi Nederland - Balkans, "Conference about the Role of Churches in Religious, Cultural and Multiethnic Cooperation on the Path of European Integrations" (November 2004), [http://www.paxchristinl-balkans.org/documents/spc\\_conference\\_eng.pdf](http://www.paxchristinl-balkans.org/documents/spc_conference_eng.pdf) (accessed 25 April 2006).

the Serbian Orthodox Church do not address the uncomfortable reality that certain clergy and church leaders supported the activities of the Serbian government and its partners, the leaders of the Bosnian Serb and Croatian Serb factions. These actors either ignore proof of Serbian aggression (and their clerics' approval of it), or when pressed, will quickly point out that the West has cast Serbia as the pariah, ignoring the Serbs' ongoing suffering in Kosovo at the hands of aggressive Kosovo Albanians. There is truth in each side's allegations, but one conclusion is clear from the evidence – the Serbian Orthodox Church is not the omnipotent and evil organization portrayed in certain circles. The Church does not have an iron grip on controlling the entire Serbian political scene or society, nor does it necessarily desire that kind of power. This lesser power is also due partially to the pluralism found within the Serbian Orthodox Church as well as pluralism within the Serbian government and society.

What does pluralism within the Serbian Orthodox Church mean to Serbian civil society? First, it should be recognized that the Church is not as powerful politically as some would portray it. The Serbian Orthodox Church cannot lobby the Serbian parliament to pass its sponsored legislation without incurring changes. The Church must accept the fact that compromises will be made, just as in any democracy. For example, the recently passed law on religion was over five years in the making. The earlier drafts called for a minimum of 700 signatures to register a religious organization (which would make it more difficult for smaller religions to become legalized), but the latest public draft required only 75 petitioners.<sup>355</sup> Also, though the law regulating religion is far from perfect, it will provide some legal order in what has become a chaotic situation for religions. Even when laws are passed which should benefit the Serbian Orthodox Church, unintended consequences have popped up. This is evident in the assessment of religious education in public school, which has produced mixed results. It has provided a venue for the Serbian Orthodox Church to teach its faith to a captive audience but the religious education program was so rushed in 2001 that it was poorly organized, with

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<sup>355</sup> Djenovic, "Serbia: Almost No one Satisfied as Religion Bill Reaches Parliament."  
See also Bjelajac, "Serbia: Orthodox Veto on New Religion Law?"



unqualified teachers and uninterested students.<sup>356</sup> Ironically, the highest student enrollment percentages in religious education classes have actually occurred in Muslim-heavy districts (reaching 80-100 percent); overall, enrollment of all Serbian students in religious education hovers around 50 percent.<sup>357</sup> Since the preponderance of religious education teachers are Serbian Orthodox (1200 out of 1500), one can draw the conclusion that many Serbian Orthodox children have opted to take the civics education class over religious education.<sup>358</sup> Finally, critics should take comfort in the fact that religious groups examine the other religions' textbooks for signs of religious intolerance.<sup>359</sup> Of course, only time will demonstrate the extent of Serbian Orthodox Church's influence (or non-influence) over today's children as they reach adulthood, but to date, it does not appear that this program "has led to any recorded serious problems or inter-confessional disputes."<sup>360</sup>

The Serbian Orthodox Church is also not omnipotent in influencing the quotidian decisions of society, especially when it comes to enforcing Church regulations. Part of this reason might be because even though about ninety-five percent of Serbs affiliate themselves with Serbian Orthodoxy, religiosity hovers around twenty-two percent and only about seven percent are regular church attendees (in 2004).<sup>361</sup> An example of the on-going struggle against the society's secularization is the so-called sausage incident of 2004. Certain Serbian Orthodox Church leaders threatened local villagers with religious consequences when they held their sausage festival during the Lent fast. These threats included denying religious services (e.g., baptism, marriages) to those participants in the

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<sup>356</sup> The Serbian Orthodox diocese in Belgrade is probably the exception, with a training program as well as education standards for its instructors. In the rural areas, the Orthodox priests provide the religious education but do not necessarily have the training. See Aleksov, "Religious Education in Serbia," 345-347.

<sup>357</sup> Truancy runs high in these classes – sometimes as high as 80 percent! See Ibid., 352-353.

<sup>358</sup> Aleksov, "Religious Education in Serbia," 345.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid., 348.

<sup>360</sup> Ibid., 355.

<sup>361</sup> Vesna Peric Zimonjic, "Religion-Serbia: Church Takes on a Sausage," *Inter Press Service Asia Pacific*, no. 41, 19 March 2004, cached text at <http://www.ipsnews.co.th/anmviewer.asp?a=1396> (accessed 27 April 2006).



sausage festival.<sup>362</sup> In any case, the festival was well attended, with one event organizer quipping it did not seem that those who “ate the sausage cared much about excommunication.”<sup>363</sup> These kinds of issues have critics asking first, why there has not been excommunication of war criminals (from the 1990s wars) and second, why the Church has not considered social issues like poverty, human trafficking or any number of issues as more important than society’s de-secularization.<sup>364</sup>

While there is no reason to be alarmist about the Serbian Orthodox Church’s current influence in society, certain bonding trends are increasing. First, it appears the Serbian Orthodox Church is making more inroads with young people as more of them accept Serbian Orthodox teachings in such issues as abortion; a rising number of young women think abortion is wrong, as opposed to the middle-aged and older women.<sup>365</sup> Also, more young people (and other Serbs) think atheism is undesirable.<sup>366</sup> Second, the Serbian Orthodox Church appears to be extremely sensitive to critiques of the Church, including any calls for reform. Lay Serbian Orthodox theologian Mirko Djordjevic, a critic of the Serbian Orthodox Church’s current direction, has stated that the old Orthodox paradigm advocating “a narrow collaboration between secular and spiritual power” is sorely outdated and that the Church should rather focus on evangelization.<sup>367</sup> As a result, Djordjevic has been branded a closet communist by nationalist leaning Serbian Orthodox Bishop Atanasije; Atanasije claimed “those who are not nationalist

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<sup>362</sup> Bishop Irinej of Backa wrote a letter stating that the villagers should defend “the sanctity of the fasting and protect the faith and tradition of our honorable ancestors.” See Sonja Biserko, “Human Rights and Collective Identity, Serbia 2004,” Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia (Belgrade, 2005): 70, <http://www.helsinki.org.yu/doc/reports/eng/AnnualReport2004.pdf>, (accessed 4 April 2006).

<sup>363</sup> Zimonjic, “Religion-Serbia: Church Takes on a Sausage.”

<sup>364</sup> “What the Church Can(not) be Asked About,” 12.  
See also Zimonjic, “Religion-Serbia: Church Takes on a Sausage.”

<sup>365</sup> “Serbia and Montenegro: Ethnic Fundamentalism in Serbia.”

<sup>366</sup> Of Serbs polled, “25% does [sic] not want atheists to educate their children.” See “What the Church Can(not) be Asked About,” 19.

<sup>367</sup> Jean-Arnault Dérens, “Eglise Orthodoxe Serbe: "Je Suis un Dissident!" - Entretien avec Mirko Djordjevic,” *Religioscope*, 13 October 2004, [http://religion.info/french/entretiens/article\\_105.shtml](http://religion.info/french/entretiens/article_105.shtml) (accessed 26 July 2005).

See also Bjelajac, “Serbia: Religious Freedom Survey, August 2004.”

have betrayed their people.”<sup>368</sup> Third, related to the second observation, the Serbian Orthodox Church seems to be trying to close the pluralist trends within its ranks, including restructuring the Orthodox churches in the Vojvodina region to reflect a more traditional Byzantine architecture.<sup>369</sup> Finally, the candidates rumored to replace Patriarch Pavle are reputedly nationalist and traditionalist in their outlook. These trends will not necessarily translate directly into negative impacts on the overall Serbian society but Euro-Atlantic institutions should encourage more of the bridging activity previously discussed. A more inclusive attitude will take longer to develop but, in the end, will be the best for Serbian society.

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<sup>368</sup> Stasa Zajovic, “Serbia and Montenegro: Religious Fundamentalism - the Birth Rate and Reproductive Rights,” Women Living under Muslim Laws website, 17 July 2004, <http://www.wluml.org/english/newsfulltxt.shtml?cmd%5B157%5D=x-157-60785> (accessed 30 April 2006).

<sup>369</sup> Biserko, “Human Rights and Accountability, Serbia 2003,” 364.

## **V. CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH AND THE EUROPEAN UNION**

### **A. SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH: BONDING OR BRIDGING?**

The Serbian Orthodox Church has survived institutionally as it transcends governments, politics and mere geography, and is identified with the social and spiritual conditions of its people. The Church is not only the repository and guardian of Orthodox Christianity; it is also uniquely situated as the patron and protector of the Serbian people and their rich, world-class cultural and spiritual heritage.

— Fr. Irinej Dobrijevic, U.S. House Committee on International Relations, Kosovo: Current and Future Status, 18 May 2005

The words of Father Dobrijevic encapsulate the attitude of many within the Serbian Orthodox Church – that the Church is the crucial component of Serbian society. As shown in this study, while this goal has definitely been pursued through various actions in the political realm as well as within civil society, the Church does not have nearly the influence over society it wishes it had. It nevertheless is an important part of Serbian society and can act as the tipping point on certain issues – Kosovo certainly comes to mind. The question this study has examined is if the behavior of the Serbian Orthodox Church has been bonding or bridging within society. Before responding in the affirmative on either choice, one should consider the trap of reductionism.

It is impossible to have an accurate or holistic understanding of an issue if one reduces people down to a certain set of perceived collective traits. The Serbian Orthodox Church, which might seem to be a unitary bloc, is bound to be as multi-faceted and complex as any organization run by humans. Sometimes a cleric who will exhibit bridging tendencies in one instance might be quoted as a bonding nationalist in the next. The same seemed to be true for the Catholic Church in Croatia, the Russian Orthodox Church and the Serbian Orthodox Church. Given these complexities, one should avoid the temptation to conflate the entire Serbian Orthodox Church into one camp or another. This consideration is directed especially to the West but also to certain strands of the Serbian Orthodox Church. These entities tend to dump all Serbs into one category of identification – for the West, Serbs as rabid nationalists and for certain Church hierarchy,

Serbs as Serbian Orthodox. This kind of reductionism, known as “singular affiliation” ignores the fact that individuals can have several kinds of identity; for instance, Serb/Orthodox/Democrat/Europealist or Serb/atheist/nationalist/anti-EU or Serb/Catholic/apolitical.<sup>370</sup> Each citizen of Serbia is a slightly different combination of any number of issues. One cannot claim that its members and leadership are completely bonding or completely bridging with respect to other religious and ethnic groups. Each tendency exists, though within the Serbian Orthodox Church, most strands are bonding. This bonding tendency is not a reason to give up hope on the Church’s potential to form bridges and create stabilizing networks within Serbian civil society. Certain elements of the Church, like Philanthropy, are already positively affecting certain aspects of society (like taking care of the poor) and collaborating with other religious groups in so doing. The Church’s charity work has come a long way from the early 1990s, before it had a systemic approach. Finally, as Serbia becomes further integrated into the Euro-Atlantic institutions, the experiences of Serbian Orthodox faithful in more pluralist societies could very well lead to more bridging activities and attitudes within the Church itself. The final verdict has thus not been cast for the Serbian Orthodox Church. Though trending heavily towards bonding behavior, the bridging framework currently being developed by elements within the Church and its partners should offer a ray of hope for those monitoring Serbia’s development into a secure and stable democracy.<sup>371</sup> Finally, in the spirit of avoiding reductionism, this study will conclude with some thoughts for all sides to consider.

## **B. CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**

The Serbian Orthodox Church is a self-governing actor – it is not the West’s place to tell it what to do – but there are some items it could take into consideration. First, for those bonding elements within the Serbian Orthodox Church which are afraid of losing Serbian identity, should Serbia ascend to the EU, Serbia’s accession might actually open some doors for the Church. Features of the EU such as the Schengen Accords (which

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<sup>370</sup> “Singular affiliation” is “assuming that any person preeminently belongs...to one collectivity only.” See Amartya Sen, *Identity and Violence: the Illusion of Destiny* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006), 20, 23-28.

<sup>371</sup> Thanks to Tara Leweling for this idea.

provides for the free movement of EU citizens) would allow the Serbian Orthodox Church to minister to its people more efficiently. Of course the Church will have to also consider that the EU will expect it to “obey” EU laws, which does not sit well with many clergy (the tone of the EU is perceived as condescending).<sup>372</sup> Second, as the Serbian Orthodox Church finds its place within this new reality, expanding partnerships with organizations like the International Orthodox Christian Charities can help the Serbian Orthodox Church develop more ties with the rest of the world, within the safety of being among Orthodox.<sup>373</sup> Third, bonding elements within the Serbian Orthodox Church should recognize the reality that Serbia is and will remain a pluralist society. This reality does not take away from any of the historical and cultural roles the Church has had throughout the years. This reality also does not diminish the role the spiritual message the Church may have for its adherents or the role it can play in advocating social justice on the behalf of all Serbians, Orthodox or not.

### **C. CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE EU**

The largely secular EU is suspicious of countries in which religious forces appear to impose themselves on the public sphere, as in the Serbian case. These activities are nonetheless bound to be a factor within social and political issues, no matter how secular the society. Ignoring the reality of a church’s or religious group’s influence will not make the issues go away. For example, pro-life movements within countries with Catholic majorities (Austria, Portugal, Spain, Ireland, and Luxemburg) or large Catholic minorities (Germany) have blocked an EU-wide law regulating embryonic stem cell research.<sup>374</sup> In June 2005, the Vatican and the Catholic Church in Italy succeeded in convincing citizens to abstain from voting, thereby defeating a referendum on artificial

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<sup>372</sup> Sonja Biserko, “Human Rights and Collective Identity, Serbia 2004,” Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia (Belgrade, 2005): 58.

<sup>373</sup> The IOCC, established in 1992 professes its mission does not include direct proselytization or aiding the Orthodox internal activities but is geared solely towards the poor. See “Mission and Focus,” International Orthodox Christian Charities website, [http://www.iocc.org/aboutiocc\\_mission.shtml](http://www.iocc.org/aboutiocc_mission.shtml) (accessed 30 January 2006).

<sup>374</sup> “EU Policy on Embryonic Stem Cells,” *International Right to Life Federation, Inc.* 17, no. 2 (March/April 2006), <http://www.lifeissues.org/international/2006/v17no2.htm> (accessed 1 May 2006).

fertilization.<sup>375</sup> It has been reported that Pope Benedict XVI's goal is to save Europe from itself, with its growing demographic issues and increased secularization.<sup>376</sup> Until 2002, the Greeks mandated religious affiliation on national identification cards; when it was deemed unconstitutional, the Greek Orthodox Church vehemently protested.<sup>377</sup> Finally, quite a few of the EU member states have either official churches or financially subsidize them.<sup>378</sup> Even France, the only EU country completely secularized, has increased its dialogue with the Catholic Church, with top French officials meeting with Church leaders on a regular basis since 2002.<sup>379</sup> While at times the EU seems to be on a social engineering mission to shape the civil societies of its aspiring members by setting strict entry conditions, its own church-state-society issues are still unresolved.

As such, the EU should be sensitive to the fact that its aspirants will not be completely secularized when they join the union. This is especially true as more Orthodox states enter the EU fold. The church-state-society relationships are more complicated in these countries than in non-Orthodox countries, due to the Orthodox tradition of Caesaropapism. As has been stated, this does not mean that Orthodoxy is automatically counter to democracy but each Orthodox nation has its historical legacy to consider. This continued interaction between church and state is reflected by a Russian Orthodox bishop, advising his fellow Orthodox in other countries to

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<sup>375</sup> Ian Fisher, "Italian Vote to Ease Fertility Law Fails for Want of Voters," *New York Times*, 14 June 2005, A.11. Available from ProQuest.

<sup>376</sup> "Pope's Goal Nothing Less than Saving Europe" *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 5 March 2006, D01. Available from LexisNexis.

<sup>377</sup> David W. Hendon and Donald E. Greco, "Notes on Church-State Affairs," *Journal of Church and State* 44, no. 1 (Winter 2002), [http://www3.baylor.edu/Church\\_State/journ2002Winter.html](http://www3.baylor.edu/Church_State/journ2002Winter.html) (accessed 1 May 2006).

<sup>378</sup> As examples, Malta, Greece, Denmark and the UK all have official state religions; Finland has two. The Austrian, German and Spanish governments currently do support or have financially supported their registered churches. Lithuania and Poland have religious education in their schools. See U.S. Library of Congress: Federal Research Division, "Country Studies" (Washington, D.C., n.d.), <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/> (accessed 1 May 2006).

See also Robert J. Barro and Rachel M. McCleary, "Which Countries Have State Religions?" *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* CXX, no. 4 (November 2005): 1336-1339.

<sup>379</sup> "Instance de Dialogue entre le Gouvernement et l'Eglise Catholique," Government of France website, 21 December 2006, [http://www.premier-ministre.gouv.fr/acteurs/communiques\\_4/instance-dialogue-gouvernement-eglise\\_54768.html](http://www.premier-ministre.gouv.fr/acteurs/communiques_4/instance-dialogue-gouvernement-eglise_54768.html) (accessed 1 May 2006).

actively participate now in the dialogue with European political structures...to prevent the monopoly of one world-view [e.g., secularization] which might dictate its conditions to all residents of the EU.<sup>380</sup>

The EU will try to balance respecting future members' cultures and needs, but it needs to recognize that developing a viable pluralist civil society will be a long, hard journey for both sides. It should also recognize that if it acts condescendingly to such institutions like the Serbian Orthodox Church, it could tip the balance even more strongly toward the bonding, anti-EU sections of the Church. If, however, if it encourages the Church to continue its bridging work, through actions such as granting funds for charity work to all needy Serbian citizens and if the EU acknowledges the fact that the Church will play a role within Serbian identity for a long time to come, the extreme bonding elements' claims could be mitigated. This would increase the space for the more moderate and bridging elements within the Church to further develop. These kinds of actions can ease the transition process of integrating countries like Serbia into the European Union and will be the best for Europe's future security and well-being.

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<sup>380</sup> Alfayev Hilarion, Russian Orthodox Church Bishop, "Orthodoxy in a New Europe: Problems and Perspectives," *Religion in Eastern Europe* XXIV, no. 3 (June 2004): 24.

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