

## SCTMG 2020

### International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural Transformations in the Context of Modern Globalism»

## REPRESENTATION OF POWER IN THE CONTEXT OF RELIGIOUS IMAGES

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### *Abstract*

At the turn of the XX–XXI centuries, despite the irreversible integration of the world cultural space, which is an integral part of the globalization process, the process of glocalization of national cultures becomes an obvious phenomenon. The struggle of civilizations is expressed in the desire to actualize the traditional, archetypal, peculiar culture of the early, which is confirmed in all spheres of life, including in the sphere of state power. In the article an attempt is made to start the scientific development of this question. The authors analyze the appeals and statements of officials, the legal framework of the religious sphere, the materials of public actions of the Church and the authorities. Using the comparativistic method, they investigate the phenomena in the context of the historical experience of Russia. The power actively uses religious images for its legitimization and public support. In the context of the culturological approach, the authors conclude that in the cultural field of Russia images are formed, rooted in the archetypal ideas of Holy Russia, based on the traditions of hesychasm, about the special mission of Russia. These imperatives become relevant in new forms, and the Church plays the role of a kind of cultural trigger of modernity, strengthening new / old images, thereby developing the paradigm of "Symphony" of spiritual and secular authorities, which indicates the strengthening of traditional principles of Russian culture and the sacralisation of power at the turn of the XX–XXI centuries.

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**Keywords:** Power, Church, sacralisation, religion, civilization, culture.



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## **1. Introduction**

The problem of the study of the role of religion in the practices of state power affects a large and well-developed in domestic and foreign science aspect associated with the concepts of civilization, civilization specificity, and civilization identity. Works of many famous scientists of the past and present were devoted to this direction: foreign scientists – Brodel (2013), Toynbee (2008), Spengler (2017), Huntington (2004), etc.; domestic scientists – Danilevsky (2013), Kondakov, Sokolov, and Khrenov, (2011), Panarin (2019), Fedotov (2001) etc. However, the achievements of scientists on the specifics of civilization, including in the context of power manifestations, refer to processes not related to modern globalization, which requires, in our opinion, the disclosure of this problem. The material for the study is empirical evidence on the actions of the authorities and the Church, statements of state leaders and the highest clergy, official documents characterizing the state-Church relations which allow defining and studying the discourse of the sacralisation of power as a mechanism of actualization of archetypal principles of culture.

## **2. Problem Statement**

The globalization paradigm of the modern world causes the processes of glocalization of cultures, one of the indicators of which is the tendency to actualize traditional ideas rooted in the archetypal determinants of society. An important component of these determinants are religious images, which become relevant imperatives for the state authorities seeking to legitimize their actions in the conditions of binary opposition "challenge-response". The actualization of traditional paradigms for Russian civilization leads to an increase in the importance of the Church.

## **3. Research Questions**

The subject of study is the representation of power in the context of religious images in the age of globalization at the turn of XX-XXI centuries based on the study of empirical material about promotions, events in the sphere of Church-state relations, reports, applications of authorities and Church leaders, activities of the state and the Church together, governed by religious imperatives and their influence on state power. The authors also reveal the degree of influence of the Church on the formation and strengthening of traditional paradigms of Russian culture, which become the basis for the legitimization of state power.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the work is to study the degree of influence of religious determinants on the representation of power at the turn of XX-XXI centuries in the era of globalization.

## **5. Research Methods**

The authors rely on the works of scientists who studied the features of the development of Russian civilization Toynbee (2008), Spengler (2017), Danilevsky (2013), etc., as well as the approaches of the

theorists of interdisciplinarity in science: Bazhanov, Kiyashchenko, Budanov, Ogurtsov, Scholz, Porus, etc. (as cited in Bazhanov & Scholz, 2015). The study required the integration of the scientific apparatus of several Humanities. We emphasize that modern events are studied in the context of comparative analysis of current events and phenomena of the past, through the categorization of civilizational paradigms, actualized at the turn of XX–XXI centuries.

## 6. Findings

The conscious use of archetypal imperatives is particularly characteristic of sociocultural systems based on distinctive religious beliefs that are part of their collective identity. In this regard, Russia, as a country-civilization (Toynbee, 2008), in the historical and cultural development of which religion played a major role in the development of statehood, is a local culture in which traditional foundations rooted in religious determinants are used by the authorities for the purpose of a certain legitimization of their activities. In the conditions of aggravation of relations with the West, there is an actualization of the mechanism of "challenge-response" (Toynbee, 2008), which leads to the desire to consolidate society on the basis of traditional ideas rooted in religion. The attempt to pressure Russia is perceived as a "challenge", as response evidence – the policy of isolationism, based on traditional ideas about the role of power, religion, Russia's mission, national identity.

At the turn of the XXI century in Russia we can observe the strengthening of ritualization in power manifestations, which is recorded in numerous actions with the participation of representatives of the Church and the state. First of all, the participation of representatives of the federal and regional authorities in divine services, processions, prayers becomes a peculiar trend. At the turn of the XX–XXI centuries, the President of Russia and the Prime Minister attended all Christmas and Easter services. Vladimir Putin often chose churches in the regions to visit.

Among large-scale actions we will allocate the memorial service organized and widely covered by mass media in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior on the first President B. N. Yeltsin (24.04.2007). The first President of Russia was buried according to Orthodox canons publicly for the first time in post-Soviet Russia, which symbolized the connection of the first head of the new Russian state with the Orthodox tradition.

In our opinion, the fact that the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church has blessed the presidents of the Russian Federation at all inauguration ceremonies without exception is important. Moreover, after the inauguration in the XXI century there was a tradition of visiting Vladimir Putin's prayers in the Annunciation Cathedral.

In the XXI century, prayers before important events of national importance are becoming a frequent phenomenon. Prayers were made on the occasion of the start of Olympics in 2014, on the occasion of events in Ukraine and etc. The participation of government representatives in the Church's actions indicates a desire to use religious imperatives, which strengthens the determinants of sacralization of power through legitimization by the Church of the government's actions. This peculiarity can be traced in the Church's ideas about the Symphony of two powers, which was substantiated in the Social concept of the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate, 2000). In this document, which was the first official published document, which formulates the position of the Church on the main issues of our time,

secular power and spiritual power are equal partners (as "body and soul"). Moreover, the actions of the authorities in the opinion of the Church should be in line with the spiritual and moral foundations and Christian values, otherwise, the Church can call the people to disobedience (Moscow Patriarchate, 2000, p. 57). In this model of interaction with the state, the ROC sees its mission in the formation of collective images of life, which are strengthened, including through the actions of the state authorities.

In the historical and cultural experience of Russia, such a mechanism was traditional in the interaction of Church and state. Religious worldview was also the basis of ideology, which was reflected, for example, in the idea of "Moscow – the Third Rome", which eventually became a socio-cultural paradigm. The idea of the special mission of Russia as a stronghold of the Christian faith is reflected in the tradition of hesychasm, the methodological basis of which is the concept of Holy Russia, which performs the historical mission – to bring the light of faith, transforming the world. In this context, the task of the authorities was clear – the protection of the Orthodox worldview. The ruler who fulfilled this historical mission secured the necessary legitimacy through the support of the Church. In some rituals, for example, krestoslovitsa record, "walking on donkey", etc. it is possible to trace the close relationship of religious beliefs and ideological bases of power.

In the post-Soviet period, despite the rapid assertion of Western ideals of democratic society, for a long Soviet period of struggle with the Church, almost destroyed by the end of the 1980-ies Church institution, the sacral imperatives of power are being actualized with renewed vigor, the Church is being revived. We are witnessing a kind of religious Renaissance; the Church is becoming an important institution, to which the authorities again appeal, seeking support (Eremin, 2010). The very first inauguration demonstrates the closeness of Patriarch Alexy II to President Boris Yeltsin, whose personal relations were friendly. The discourse of "Boris Tsar" was developed in the widely replicated and shown on all channels film "Tsar Boris".

In the XXI century, the sacralisation of power intensified. The Orthodox orientation of the President, the development and use of such concepts as the Russian world, civilization, historical roots, traditions, faith, emphasizing his churchwardness as the leader of Russia launched mechanisms of actualization of the sacred principles of power. Calls for unity based on the historical past and civilizational code contributed to the popularity of the President.

The analysis of empirical material relating to the actions of the first person of the state, allows stating that the religious discourse of the perception of power intensified in the XXI century (Letina, Eremin, & Shaposhnikov, 2010). Note the visit of Vladimir Putin to Jerusalem 27.04.2005. Visiting the Church of the Resurrection of the Lord, expressing intentions to support "the guardians of the Orthodox faith and the interests of the Russian state in the Holy Land", the President actualized the idea of Russia as a New Jerusalem, which in the historical tradition we see in the rite of "walking on a donkey".

The special importance of power in the religious context was manifested in the process of unification of the ROC and the ROCOR. Since 2003, the President has been the coordinator of the dialogue between the two churches and its main initiator, organizing meetings with the primates. The unification of the churches in 2007 was largely due to the participation of the secular authorities, which certainly strengthened the mechanism of its sacralisation (Patriarchate, 2019). Numerous facts of support of the President by the Patriarch, mutual rewarding of the power and clergy, frequent meetings of the

leader of the state power with primates of the ROC, V.V. Putin's assistance to activity of Church in the social and cultural sphere formed representation of the President as about the Orthodox leader of the country. The course chosen by the authorities for the revival of civilizational foundations and traditions, emphasizing the Orthodox orientation is a kind of signal for the preferences of the Church in the socio-cultural field. The increase in the activity of the Church in society, which are recorded in numerous socio-cultural projects initiated by the Russian Orthodox Church and the government in the appeals of the head of the Church from the stands of political power (Federal Assembly) with specific proposals to change the social situation (the abolition of public funding of abortion, the development of social patronage, religious education, support of the family institution, etc.) indicate the development of the so-called cooperative system of interaction of Church and state, which began to form after the adoption of the Law "On freedom of conscience and religious associations" in 1997, which assumes priority in cooperation with one of the most significant and large-scale denominations, which in turn is perceived by the Church as a model close to the "Symphony", when two institutions act inextricably as body and soul (Moscow Patriarchate, 2000).

The actualization of sacralisation also contributes to the development of the messianic universe. This is especially beginning to manifest itself with the development of the discourse of the protection of the Russian world in the official field of the media. In 2013, Vladimir Putin (2019) noted that the basis of the identity of the people is Orthodoxy (Valdai club meeting). On the day of the 1025th anniversary of the Christianization of Rus', the President noted: "Spiritual unity is so strong that it is not subject to any actions of the authorities – neither state, nor, let me even say, Church, because, whatever power over people may be, but stronger than the power of the Lord, nothing can be" (Duma RF, 2019).

Patriarch Kirill develops this discourse in numerous speeches about the special mission of Russia in the era of globalization, using the phrase "the island of Russia". According to the Patriarch Kirill (2019), the moral crisis of the individual requires fulfilling the main mission – to create a culture that will be based on Christian foundations. "To rescue the human person from the embrace of anti – culture, anti-Christianity, to return it to God – this is the urgent task that stands before us today" (Patriarch Kirill, 2019, para. 09). The definition of the cultural mission of the government and the Church in modern Russia coincide, which proves the common vector of their interaction.

## **7. Conclusion**

Thus, in modern Russia we can observe the revitalization of religious determinants in the politics of power, which strengthens the civilizational discourse. This tendency is explained by the desire to use the mechanisms of legitimization, which are based on archetypal imperatives inherent in the Russian cultural experience and rooted in the mental foundations of society. This process is accompanied by the strengthening of the traditional institution – the Russian Orthodox Church, which supports and develops the images actualized by the authorities. It should be noted that the development of traditional images becomes possible in the conditions of globalization paradigm, which triggers the processes of glocalization of local cultures. Russia as a country with a rich imperial past, with a centuries-old tradition of ideas about a special mission, has in its cultural experience and the mechanism of "call-response",

which is often updated, including, thanks to the power to unite before external and internal threats. We can observe something similar at the beginning of the XXI century.

## Acknowledgments

The article was prepared as part of the implementation of the project of the Russian Science Foundation No. 20-68-46013 "Philosophical and anthropological analysis of Soviet being. Prerequisites, dynamics, influence on modernity".

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