

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: AUTOCEPHALY AS A FUNCTION OF INSTITUTIONAL STABILITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE IN THE EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCH

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The ecclesiastical organization uniquely characteristic of the Christian East is the autocephalous (“self-headed,” or self-governing) church, which in the modern states of Eastern Europe, Russia, and the Balkans are truly national churches, whose boundaries, administrative structures, and identities closely mirror those of the state. Conventional wisdom attributes autocephaly to nationalism: Christianity inevitably becomes closely associated with national identity in those states whose churches are of Byzantine political patrimony, and autocephaly is the organizational manifestation of that association. This study argues that a better explanation for the prevalence of autocephaly lies with the church’s institutional framework. Formal and informal institutions, or “rules of the game,” structure the relationships between groups of local churches and provide incentives to observe constraints upon actions that restructure

those relationships. A restructuring of ecclesiastical relationships implies that an alteration in incentives changed the equilibrium. In the Christian East, enforcement of the equilibrium historically has been carried out by the state.

This study explores the institutional framework of the Orthodox Church, outlining the formal (canon law) and informal (conventions and tradition) rules governing organizational change. These rules are then examined in light of historical evidence of how autocephalous churches have come into being throughout the two millennia of the church's existence. The study concludes that the institutional framework of the Orthodox Church, formed within the political context of the Roman and later East Roman (Byzantine) Empire, became increasingly incongruent both with the changing political geography of Eastern Europe and with the enforcing role afforded to secular political authority as imperial structures gave way to modern nation-states. Since the formal institutional rules have proved resistant to change and unable to keep pace with the changing political geography, the Orthodox Church has relied increasingly upon flexible informal rules which has resulted in a proliferation of autocephalous churches. In addition to locating a more compelling explanation for autocephaly within institutional theory, this study argues that the Orthodox Church provides a compelling area for exploration of some of the more vexing analytical problems in institutional theory, such as why institutions change slowly or even appear not to change at all.

AUTOCEPHALY AS A FUNCTION OF INSTITUTIONAL STABILITY AND  
ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE IN THE EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCH

by

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## Chapter 1: Introduction and Summary

Institutions, per Douglass North, “are the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction” and which “structure incentives in human exchange, whether political, social, or economic.”<sup>1</sup> Federalism, for example, may be understood in this sense as an institution: a set of rules whereby the federal government and the individual states both have incentives to observe certain constraints on their behavior. So long as incentives remain for all parties to play by the rules, a self-enforcing equilibrium persists with none of the players seeing a reason to change how they interact. If the incentives change, the players may no longer be constrained to play by the rules and will tend to restructure their interactions.<sup>2</sup>

In the case of the Eastern Orthodox Church, autocephaly – the unique ecclesiastical arrangement whereby a particular group of churches is recognized collectively as administratively self-governing and independent (*autocephalous*, or self-headed), yet still fully part of the wider communion of churches – could be analyzed in a similar way. Particular to the Orthodox Church are certain institutions or rules, both formal (canon law) and informal (custom or convention),<sup>3</sup> which structure the relationships between groups of local churches and provide incentives for those churches to observe constraints upon actions that restructure those relationships. When we do see a restructuring of ecclesiastical relationships – for

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<sup>1</sup> Douglass North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (New York: Cambridge, 1990) 3.

<sup>2</sup> North 86.

<sup>3</sup> North 4.

example, when one group of churches becomes administratively independent of another – we may look to see if a change in incentives occurred which precipitated the change in the equilibrium. Something must have changed which altered the incentives of the players to comply with the institutional constraints. We could argue that the “thing” in question is enforcement of the equilibrium. In the case of the Orthodox Church, such enforcement historically has been carried out by the state.

Why is this important? Conventional wisdom has largely framed the political significance of the Orthodox Christian churches of Russia, Eastern Europe and the Balkans in terms of their role as agents of religious nationalism, tools of hegemonic state policies, or both. The fact that most of these churches are truly “national” churches (in a way that, for example, the Roman Catholic Church of Poland is not, insofar as it is administratively subordinated to Rome and not to political authorities closer to home) reinforces this view. The conventional wisdom concerning the Orthodox Church overwhelmingly favors the state as the agent behind organizational change in the church, specifically, subdivision of groups of churches into autocephalous units, or (re)incorporation of previously independent churches into a more centrally governed whole. The argument in this case is that institutions particular to the church do not matter, in the sense that they have no effect on organizational change. If we can prove, however, that institutions *do* matter – that specific formal and informal rules do structure the relationships between groups of churches, subject to enforcement by the state, and that these relationships are restructured as incentives change – then we would have to reject this argument and begin the search for a better explanation of organizational change in the Orthodox

Church that captures both significance of institutions and the role of the state. This study attempts to offer the beginnings of such an explanation.

### **1.1 Objectives and Justification**

On the empirical level, we hope to learn something new and interesting about the Orthodox Church and why it tends to organize itself in certain ways over time. We will note that the church consciously organized itself against the political demarcations extant in the Roman Empire, within whose boundaries the church came into existence – a principle enshrined in the church’s formal institutional framework. We also will note that as those political boundaries changed, the ecclesiastical demarcations changed with them. When the empire ceased to exist and deprived the church of a template against which it could organize itself, the church had to adjust to a changing political geography as new states evolved in Russia, Eastern Europe and the Balkans, and in so doing the church relied less upon the formal institutional rules framed during the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) period and more upon the evolving informal rules that enabled flexible organizational responses to rapidly changing political demarcations and regimes. The extraordinarily complex organizational system (multiple overlapping jurisdictions within single sets of political boundaries) observable in the Orthodox Church today is the direct result of the flexibility of these informal rules, and is increasingly at variance with the formal institutional framework assembled during the Byzantine period. The state remained significant throughout this process, enforcing the equilibrium of institutional compliance when congruent

with state interests and incentivizing the recalibration of ecclesiastical relationships when not.

On a theoretical level, we hope to learn something important about how formal and informal institutions govern organizational change. As the church adjusts organizationally to evolving political boundaries, we expect to see those adjustments reflected in the institutions of the church over time. Specifically what we expect to see is a gradual movement away from the formal institutions of the church (canon law) and toward greater reliance on informal institutions. This will force us to probe more deeply the linkages between formal and informal institutions, the pace of organizational change, how incentives and enforcement combine to enable a self-enforcing equilibrium, and why and how self-enforcing equilibriums are disrupted. We also hope to open new avenues for research into institutional change itself, why institutions in some cases appear to change slowly, or even not change at all.

The Orthodox Church provides a uniquely interesting object of analysis for this purpose. Like other organizations (for example the United Nations or the Chinese Communist Party) it is bound corporately by a common set of formal and informal rules that provide its self-identity, govern its behavior, and regulate the relationships among its members. It is not a unitary body insofar as it comprises a number of distinct, administratively self-governing (autocephalous) entities. It is more than simply a “community” of members insofar as it is governed by a universally accepted set of institutional rules. The Orthodox churches share a common identity and set of institutions, and largely maintain ecclesiastical interrelations (manifested through Eucharistic communion and liturgical

commemoration of one another's hierarchs), yet they remain administratively sovereign, and the organizational process by which new autocephalous churches are formed indicates that the pattern of their interrelations is not fixed. The appearance of a new autocephalous church does not, according to the institutional framework of the Orthodox Church, imply a diminution of the whole body of churches. The churches remain ontologically and recognizably the same, and continue to observe the same commonly-held institutions. Autocephaly, in essence, "defines the manner in which one church relates to another and the reality behind the term is of the essence of the Church itself."<sup>4</sup> The complexity of the Orthodox Church, in terms of the variety of organizational forms coexisting under the aegis of a single "organic" body, provides ample possibilities for hypothesis testing. Hence the Orthodox Church is analytically interesting if one wants to observe how a common set of institutional rules affects organizational change among otherwise sovereign members. A key variable, as we will see later in this study, is the enforcement of those rules.

## 1.2 The Object of Study Defined

The object of this study is the Orthodox Church, specifically the Chalcedonian Eastern Christian churches distinct dogmatically from the non-Chalcedonian and other Oriental Orthodox churches of the East, and distinct dogmatically and organizationally also from the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches of the West. Scholarship in politics and history has consistently posited as a definitive characteristic the close parallel relationship – one of *symphony* – between the political

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<sup>4</sup> John L. Boojamra, "Problems Concerning Autocephaly: A Response," Greek Orthodox Theological Review 24.2-3 (1979): 194.

authorities and the dominant Eastern Orthodox churches of Russia, Central and Eastern Europe, and the Balkans. This salient characteristic of the Orthodox churches has manifested itself historically in alternating periods of political ascendancy and suppression of the church by secular authorities. In the modern period, largely coincident with the rise of the state, the Orthodox Church has manifested itself largely as a loose confederation of autocephalous national churches, with the number of autocephalous churches, many with significant émigré populations in other countries, increasing over time.

The two irreducible characteristics of an autocephalous church are the right to administer its affairs independently of all other churches, and the right to govern itself by selecting and installing its own bishops, including the presiding hierarch (a metropolitan bishop or a patriarch).<sup>5</sup> In essence the attainment of autocephalous status, as a specific form of organizational change, means complete administrative independence; an autocephalous church is a self-governing church answerable to no higher ecclesiastical authority. This “content” of autocephaly, however, has not remained static. Early local churches were administratively independent but always understood as part of a larger political entity; the idea of a self-governing church as the ecclesiastical counterpart to the autonomous state obviously was a later development. Nor did independence preclude the right to appeal to a higher authority for resolution of disputes; only later would autocephaly gradually eclipse standard protocols determining how self-governing churches were to defer to one another on matters of dispute. Autocephaly is governed by the institutions generated by the

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<sup>5</sup> This is amply covered in the literature concerning autocephaly. See for example Alexander Bogolepov, “Conditions of Autocephaly,” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 5.3 (1961): 14.

church: laws (canons) approved by the church in approved forums (councils), and the historical experience of the church in applying those laws. Its application has evolved over time, and that evolution has occurred in response to changes in the political geography in which the church has sojourned.

### **1.3 The Prevailing Theory and its Alternative**

Why does autocephaly occur? Contemporary scholarship offers an initial answer by highlighting various characteristics of the Orthodox Church (e.g. as a vehicle of national identity, as a politically weak agent of state co-optation) that both enable these potentially perilous relationships with the state and permit the churches to survive them. Autocephaly, viewed within this framework, becomes in various ways an expression of modern nationalism operationalized through the church. This nationalism theory, however, fails us when we attempt to use it to construct theories about why and how autocephaly occurs and under what circumstances. We know it fails us when we recognize that autocephaly predates modern nationalism; we know it fails us when we see that its monolithic treatment of the church offers little insight into how and why the church organizes itself the way it does; and we know it fails us when we realize that it cannot tell us why subdivision of churches through autocephaly persists even in the wake of the dissolution of strong political control in predominantly Orthodox countries. In short, examining autocephaly as a function of nationalism does not help us explain why or how autocephaly occurs in a way that conforms to the available evidence.

This dissertation will argue that a more satisfying examination of autocephaly begins with an alternative theory: that organizational changes in the Orthodox Church tend to correspond to changes in the political geography, and that the type and scope of these changes is constrained by the institutional framework governing the church. According to this theory, where we observe changes in political boundaries, the dissolution or consolidation of states, or other political reconfigurations, we should expect to see corresponding organizational changes in the church within institutional limits. Formal and informal institutions are key to understanding how and under what circumstances those organizational changes occur. We will argue that the evidence bears this out, compelling us to reject the arguments concerning nationalism noted above and begin to examine the alternative theory posed here.

Although attempting to offer a better explanation of organizational change in the Orthodox Church by focusing on institutions, this study will leave a number of areas unaddressed, most importantly the role of politics both within the church and within the state, and the interactions between the two. For the sake of parsimony this study deliberately leaves these questions aside and treats both church and state largely as monolithic actors. Ideally these issues would be raised in future attempts to test and further refine the theory offered here. If this study is at least able to contribute to the broader knowledge – of both institutions and the Orthodox Church – by examining existing data in a theoretically unique way, it will have fulfilled its intended purpose.

#### **1.4 Structure of Study**

Chapter 2 will lay out the nationalism theory as the standard and predominant explanation for autocephaly. It also will point out the inadequacies of that explanation and point the way toward the alternative theory, which will be developed in chapter 3. Chapter 3 also will introduce the formal definitions of institutions and organizations and outline the rudimentary institutional theory that underpins the alternative theory. Chapter 4 will lay out the institutions of the Orthodox Church, specifically those that govern organizational change generally and autocephaly specifically, and the informal rules surrounding them. Chapter 5 will examine how organizational change has occurred in response to changes in the political geography by presenting, comparing and contrasting historical instances of autocephaly. Based on the conclusions drawn in previous chapters, chapter 6 will provide a case study of a particular instance of autocephaly which will enable a closer examination of the alternative theory. Chapter 7 will close out the study by drawing organizational conclusions about the Orthodox Church and theoretical conclusions about institutions, based upon the analysis of the preceding chapters.

#### **1.5 Sources**

The majority of this study will rely upon information of two types. One is historical information regarding actual instances of organizational change, i.e. the circumstances under which specific churches became autocephalous. The other source is the formal and informal institutional “content” of the Orthodox Church, namely the canons, ecclesiastical legislation, and accepted rules and principles

governing organizational change among churches. Both sources of information are widely available and largely systematized. This study, therefore, is less of an attempt to develop new and heretofore unknown sources of information than an effort to analyze existing information in a new and hopefully innovative way. Ideally new avenues for future research, both with regard to institutional theory in general and the Orthodox Church in particular, will become apparent in the course of this study.

## **Chapter 2: Autocephaly as a Function of Nationalism – The Existing Theory**

This study seeks to understand the predominance of a particular organizational form (autocephaly) amongst the Eastern Orthodox churches. It will argue that a useful way of explaining this phenomenon involves a theory which describes the church as an organization governed and constrained by an institutional framework, comprising formal and informal rules, that is itself durable yet malleable. This alternative theory is necessary because much of the literature dealing with the Orthodox Church in general and autocephaly in particular rests on the state-centric theory that autocephaly ultimately is a function of nationalism. Such studies, though very useful in characterizing the various modalities of the relationship between church and state in the Christian East, particularly in the modern period, tell us comparatively little about *why* and *how* the church organizes and reorganizes itself in certain ways. This chapter will summarize what we will call for want of a better term the nationalism theory, exposing its weaknesses, as a pretext for laying out our alternative theory in chapter 3. Hopefully the alternative theory in turn will enable a more substantive contribution to the literature on church-state relations in the Christian East by widening the discussion beyond nationalism to include institutions and their role in shaping the church as an organization.

## 2.1 Autocephaly as a Function of National Identity

The pattern of intimacy and acquiescence on the part of the Orthodox churches – with the Byzantine Empire, with the Ottoman caliphate, with the Soviet apparatus – has been explained alternatively as cause or effect of what could be summed up as an inherent tendency in predominantly Orthodox countries to identify Christianity with national identity and to amalgamate the church with the state as a function of that identification. An autocephalous church “becomes thus the very basis of national and political independence, the status-symbol of a new ‘Christian nation.’”<sup>6</sup> Studies of church-state relations in confessionally Orthodox countries, operating implicitly or explicitly under this theory, largely confine themselves to explaining how Orthodox churches were (and are) alternatively tools, collaborators, or *de facto* extensions of the state, and how they have seldom functioned as opponents or institutions independent of the state (in contrast to, for example, the Roman Catholic Church of Poland during Solidarity or the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church under Soviet rule).<sup>7</sup>

Ramet, writing near the end of the Soviet period when nationalist resurgence in Eastern Europe was becoming a matter of renewed analytical concern, was explicit in collapsing the issue of autocephaly down to a matter of national identity and national consolidation:

The equation of religious unity with political unity and later with national identity became the *raison d’être* for autocephaly in the Orthodox world.

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<sup>6</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, “A Meaningful Storm,” *Church, World, Mission* (New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1979) 98-99.

<sup>7</sup> Some recent studies of the Orthodox Church and the state in the post-Soviet era are starting to address the issue of nationalism in new and creative ways. See for example Christopher Marsh, ed., *Burden or Blessing? Russian Orthodoxy and the Construction of Civil Society and Democracy* (Brookline: Boston University Institute on Culture, Religion and World Affairs, 2004), 8 Jan. 2005 <[http://www3.baylor.edu/Church\\_State/orthodoxy1.html](http://www3.baylor.edu/Church_State/orthodoxy1.html)>.

Especially with the growth of nationalism in the nineteenth century, to be a nation meant to have a church of one's own, and to be entitled to one's own state. By contrast, subject peoples, such as Macedonians, Belorussians, and Ukrainians, were described as "lacking a true history"; they were said to speak the "dialects" of other "historical" nations and were denied the right to have their own autocephalous churches.<sup>8</sup>

The argument thus becomes that the phenomenon of autocephaly only appears with the dissolution of the Byzantine Empire and the rise of a new Christian nationalism (as distinguished from Byzantine imperial universalism, into which the Orthodox Church was subsumed) is a derivation of this view. According to this interpretation, autocephaly

if not in its origin (it was used in various senses before but always "occasionally") at least in its application, is a product not of ecclesiology, but of a *national* phenomenon. Its fundamental historical connotation is thus neither purely ecclesiological, nor "jurisdictional," but *national*. To a universal empire corresponds an "imperial" church with its center in Constantinople: such is the axiom of the Byzantine "imperial" ideology. There can therefore be no political independence from the empire without its ecclesiastical counterpart or "autocephaly": such becomes the axiom of the new Orthodox "theocracies."...[I]t is very significant that all negotiations concerning the various "autocephalies" were conducted not by churches, but by states: the most typical example here being the process of negotiating the autocephaly of the Russian Church in the sixteenth century, a process in which the Russian Church herself took virtually no part.<sup>9</sup>

The advent of nationalist projects in Europe thus entailed, or more accurately presupposed, a concurrent dissolution of traditional imperially-defined ecclesiastical boundaries in the Christian East, and the construction of new boundaries along "national" lines. Hence, as Roudometof has argued in the case of Southeastern Europe, "[t]he institution of separate national churches (Greece 1832, Serbia 1832,

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<sup>8</sup> Pedro Ramet, "Autocephaly and National Identity in Church-State Relations in Eastern Christianity: An Introduction," *Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twentieth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1988) 4-5.

<sup>9</sup> Schmemmann, "A Meaningful Storm" 98-99, quotation marks and italics in original.

the Bulgarian Exarchate 1870) provided the means through which the traditional ties of Orthodox Balkan peoples could be severed, and new national ties constructed.”<sup>10</sup>

## **2.2 Existing Typologies of Church-State Relations in the Christian East**

Existing studies of autocephaly as a problem of politics and history generally proceed from these assumptions, subdividing largely into two categories. One includes geographically driven studies, in which the parameters of the studies are set according to national, state, or ecclesiastical boundaries (e.g. Eastern Europe before, during, and after communism, or the pre- and post-Soviet Russia and the Russian Orthodox Church). The other categories includes problem-driven studies, in which a transnational issue drives the analysis, such as transitions of post-communist states or problems of ethnic self-determination (e.g. the Balkans), in which religion is identified as a causal or related factor. Ramet, for example, has identified three basic patterns of church-state relations characteristic of the Orthodox churches: nationalism, cooptation, and opposition. While these patterns characterize the Orthodox experience in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, they obviously have deep theological and historical roots. Nor are the patterns static. Ramet notes that

[t]he three variables described here may be combined in different ways, and these different combinations give rise to different patterns in church-state relations. For example, nationalism may be a source of opposition (as in the Serbian case today) or a buttress of co-optation (as in Bulgaria). Or again, opposition of the lower clergy to the hierarchy may figure as an opportunity for alliance between regime and lower clergy (as in the postwar Eastern European states), may arise in reaction to the co-optation of the hierarchy (as has been the case in the Russian Orthodox church in recent years), or may be

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<sup>10</sup> Victor Roudometof, “Nationalism, Globalization, Eastern Orthodoxy: ‘Unthinking’ the ‘Clash of Civilizations’ in Southeastern Europe,” *European Journal of Social Theory* 2:2 (1999): 240.

irrelevant to the course of church-state relations (as in the case of the Coptic church in Egypt).<sup>11</sup>

The church is typically viewed as coterminous with and a defender of the nation, and follows a pattern of alignment with the nation and the state. Hence, to be Serb is to be Orthodox and, in the case of the nation, vice-versa. Nationalism in this context is defined as a “collective affectivity ‘extolling the nation as a supreme value and representing it as a dominant principle of societal organization’”<sup>12</sup>; or alternatively as “a set of beliefs and attitudes according to which certain political and cultural values believed to be essential for the flowering of a nation are considered to have such intrinsic worth that actions and policies that endanger them are held to be impermissible in most circumstances.”<sup>13</sup> Hence “[n]ational-religious messianism, which links religious orthodoxy to a God-given national mission appears to arise at times of confrontation with external foes of rival religious affiliation. The consequences of national-religious messianism are the reinforcement of the link between national identity and a particular religion and the compulsion of state authorities to deal with certain religious organizations as ethnic representatives.”<sup>14</sup> The church invariably fulfills this role in confessionally Orthodox Christian countries.

According to the nationalism theory, national and ethnic self-determination manifests itself via an ecclesiastical re-alignment, typically involving the declaration of an autocephalous church (e.g. Macedonian from Serbian, Ukrainian from Russian). This necessarily makes autocephaly a political, not merely ecclesiological, issue. For

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<sup>11</sup> Ramet 18.

<sup>12</sup> Emerich K. Francis, *Interethnic Relations* (New York: Elsevier, 1976), quoted in Ramet 6.

<sup>13</sup> Kestutis Girnius, cited in Ramet, ed., *Religion and Nationalism in Soviet and Eastern European Politics* (Durham: Duke Press Policy Studies, 1984) 234.

<sup>14</sup> Ramet 7.

example, as Ramet has noted, “[o]ften, as in the case of Finland and Poland in the 1920s, political authorities have favored autocephaly both in the interests of excluding foreign ecclesiastical authority and in order to minimize conflicts of loyalty.”<sup>15</sup>

In other cases a concerted effort is made by the state to co-opt the church to leverage its legitimacy, influence, or contact with the populace, as a way to harness nationalism. The reasons and political ends of such activities by the state are historically varied and do not concern us here. More interesting are the various ways in which co-optation has manifested itself historically. Ramet has identified four such typologies:

(1) Simple co-optive-nationalist, in which the hierarchy is co-opted and espouses a nationalist line endorsed by the regime (examples: contemporary Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, Romania); (2) nonnationalist dependent, in which the church is too weak to offer any resistance to the policy of the state (examples: contemporary Czechoslovakia, postrevolutionary Ethiopia, Poland); (3) nationalist defiant (independent-oppositionist), in which a church’s opposition is organically related to its nationalism; this configuration may involve complex-co-optive features (examples: contemporary Serbia, interwar Bulgaria); (4) simple co-optive antinationalist, in which an otherwise nationalist church is sapped of its nationalist strength by the slow strangulation of being “quarantined” from the public and is penetrated and co-opted by the regime (example: Russia).<sup>16</sup>

Existing studies also identify a dynamic of opposition by the church to hegemonic political authorities. Sometimes this has manifested itself as active opposition to an oppressive government, although this dynamic usually is less apparent in confessionally Orthodox countries. In other cases church-state relations may be affected by opposition among factions within the church itself. Robert Tobias,

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<sup>15</sup> Ramet 10.

<sup>16</sup> Ramet 18-19.

for example, conceptualized a more nuanced set of interactions between church and state, a push-pull relationship in which church and state exerted mutual and often conflicting influences upon one another, as opposed to Ramet's more static conceptualization. The state's attempt to control or subdue the church often occurs either through obliteration, cooperation, or transformation of the latter by the former. Obliteration (the outright extermination of the organizations of Christianity) manifests itself through four typologies: (1) nationalization, in which "[a] national church, therefore, must be one which would not exceed the framework prescribed [by the state] for performing its religious functions, and... would be loyal to the Government in the Government's administration of governmental responsibilities – or at least not oppose the Government. Within that framework there would be freedom, even assistance."<sup>17</sup>; (2) nationalization, meaning the effective domestication of churches; (3) varying degrees of toleration of religious worship and belief; and (4) experimentation with anti-religious propaganda and education.

Cooperation, as yet another alternative dynamic, might imply at face value an autonomous decision by the church to work proactively with the state. However, such cooperation in fact historically occurred under three conditions: (1) "...when Communist governments had sufficient confidence in their own position as to be unafraid of ties to, or influence of non-Communist bodies"; (2) "...when the Church was sufficiently 'nationalized' as to accept, and to be accepted in the role of co-laborer..."; (3) "...when factors external to the Church-State relationship itself

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<sup>17</sup> Robert Tobias, Communist-Christian Encounter in East Europe (Indianapolis: School of Religion Press, 1956) 21.

demanded or permitted cooperation for mutually desirable ends...”<sup>18</sup> In essence, an emphasis on cooperation is predicated on the assumption that the church is not an autonomous actor within hegemonic states, hence cooperation is a rational response to a set of circumstances in which autonomous action is highly limited if not impossible. Tobias identified yet another pattern of church-state interaction which might be captured under the term “transformation,” a concerted attempt by the state to change the nature and substance of the church as an organic reality, rather than just its exterior framework. This might occur either through active indoctrination of values like secular humanism, or through “malnutrition”<sup>19</sup> and neglect, until Christianity is rendered into a secularized or pseudo-religion devoid of any capability of resistance.

### **2.3 Limitations of the Nationalism Theory**

The nationalism theory, to summarize, reduces the phenomenon of autocephaly solely to a function or “symptom” of nationalism, places analytic primacy on the state, and views the church largely as a vehicle for the expression of nationalist sentiments. However, it would be as much a mistake to describe autocephaly solely in terms of nationalism as it would be to describe “the history of the nations of Eastern Europe [as] a function of the triumph of nationalism over imperialism”<sup>20</sup> – in fact, the reality is considerably more complex. This most certainly is not to say that nationalism was not an important phenomenon in the ecclesiastical organization of the Christian East. Undoubtedly from the 1800s

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<sup>18</sup> Tobias 90-91.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Nathaniel Davis, *A Long Walk to Church: A Contemporary History of Russian Orthodoxy* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995).

<sup>20</sup> Stephen Fischer-Galati, “Church and State in Contemporary Romania,” *The Byzantine Legacy in Eastern Europe*, ed. Lowell Clucas (New York: Columbia, 1988) 287.

forward the proliferation of states in the former imperial territories (Ottoman, Hapsburg, etc.) coincided with the concomitant growth of autocephalous churches, and those two phenomena were related. Yet nationalism in Eastern and Southern Europe (in the predominantly Orthodox areas) was highly variegated in the 1800s. The Greek territories, for example, enjoyed cultural and linguistic conduits by which Western European nationalist ideas arrived and catalyzed the movement toward an independent Greek state (characterized in part by the legal recognition of Orthodox Christianity as the dominant religion). Bulgaria, by contrast, lay near the center of the Ottoman territories and received foreign nationalistic ideas much more slowly. Slavs in the Balkans, at least initially, were isolated by the lack of education and a common identity, and only later began to coalesce under the pressure of Hapsburg and Ottoman imperial misrule.<sup>21</sup> “The conventional view that the French Revolution, the communications revolution caused by Napoleon’s campaigns, and German philosophic teachings combined into a force that occasioned national and nationalist reverberations throughout the continent does not hold in the case of the southern Slavs.”<sup>22</sup> Yet in all cases the formation of autocephalous churches accompanied the emergence of these new states. Therefore nationalism alone is an insufficient explanation for the organizational changes that occurred within the churches in these territories.

The nationalism theory also presupposes a somewhat oversimplified view of the political history of the Christian East, one which views the Byzantine imperial legacy as having stunted the development of new permutations of the relationship

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<sup>21</sup> These arguments will be traced out in greater detail in chapter 5.

<sup>22</sup> Ivo J. Lederer, “Nationalism and the Yugoslavs,” *Nationalism In Eastern Europe*, ed. Lederer and Peter F. Sugar (Seattle: University of Washington, 1969) 401.

between church and state conducive to the growth of civil society. According to this argument, nationalism, when projected onto the political landscape of Eastern Europe during this period, accomplished more of a transposition of the Byzantine legacy onto a different political context than a transformation of the legacy itself. Hungarian philosopher Jenő Szűcs, in an analysis of Western Europe, noted that “[t]he West’s separation of the sacred and the secular, the ideological and political spheres, was uniquely fruitful, and without it the future ‘freedoms,’ the theoretical emancipation of ‘society,’ the future nation-states, the Renaissance and the Reformation alike could never have ensued.”<sup>23</sup> Mihály Vajda, another Hungarian, indicated: “The really important feature of West European development from the Middle Ages onwards was the gradual separation of state and society. Out of West European political and social disintegration and fragmentation there arose new urban communities within which the attitudes and behavior of individuals were shaped less and less by tradition ... And – most importantly – relations among various social groups were settled by contract.”<sup>24</sup> The beginnings of a civil society (in the sense of the formation of organizations and activities independent from political authorities and the state), appearing in the West by the 13<sup>th</sup> century, was altogether absent or at best greatly delayed and malformed in the East. Thus

In the West, significantly, it was increasingly assumed that ‘civil society’ should control the ruler and/or the state, whereas the much weaker forms of ‘civil society’ that have emerged (if at all) in eastern Europe...have usually been seen as acting in opposition to the ruler/state. In other words, while the West assumed an increasingly co-operative and consensual relationship between ‘civil society’ and the ruler/state, the East assumed a more combative

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<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Robert Bideleux and Ian Jeffries, *A History of Eastern Europe: Crisis and Change* (New York: Routledge, 1998) 16-17. Full text in John Keane, ed., *Civil Society and the State: New European Perspectives* (London: Verso, 1993).

<sup>24</sup> Quoted in Bideleux and Jeffries 17. Text in Keane (1993).

and antagonistic relationship between its relatively stunted ‘civil society’ and its generally stronger rulers and states.<sup>25</sup>

The result, according to the nationalism theory, is the enduring pattern of church-state relations visible in Eastern Europe through the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This pattern has been characterized more politely in some studies as, for example, the “tactful pliancy” necessary for the Orthodox churches to survive in the face of typically hegemonic states.<sup>26</sup> Less polite have been the descriptive terms generally characteristic of other studies, which have described the Orthodox churches as ceasaropapist, obsequious, compliant, slavish, subservient, and analogous in form and content to the Oriental despotisms of the Far East.<sup>27</sup>

This characteristic subservience has been attributed to the enduring Byzantine political philosophy institutionalized within the church. This philosophy, in its idealized form, could be described as

The existence of a hierarchy of subordinate states revolving in obedient concord round the throne of the supreme autocrat in Constantinople, whose authority, in its rhythm and order, reproduced the harmonious movement given to the universe by its Creator. [The] idea of the Byzantine *oikoumene* [“inhabited realm”]... had strong religious overtones: for, as the emperor was God’s vicegerent on earth, and the empire the pattern and prefiguration of the heavenly kingdom, so was this supranational Christian community the God-appointed custodian of the one true Orthodox faith, destined to fulfill this role until the last days and the coming of the Antichrist. ... So firmly rooted was this concept of the universal empire, centered in Constantinople, that Byzantium’s bitterest enemies in Eastern Europe implicitly accepted it.<sup>28</sup>

The nationalism theory assumes that this political philosophy was in fact so firmly entrenched that it survived the advent of the modern nation-state in the West and

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<sup>25</sup> Bideleux and Jeffries 18.

<sup>26</sup> See for example Steven Runciman, *The Orthodox Churches and the Secular State* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1971) 93, and also preface and chapter V.

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, the study by Bideleux and Jeffries.

<sup>28</sup> Dimitri Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe, 500-1453* (New York: Praeger, 1971) 272-73.

persisted under the guise of nationalism, or alternatively a Pan-Hellenic or Pan-Slavic chauvinism.

The historical evidence suggests a slightly more complex picture, however. In contrast to a model in which Byzantine political philosophy is propagated under the guise of modern nationalism, some studies have demonstrated that there was a fairly complete disjuncture between the Byzantine heritage and, for example, the evolution of the Russian and (later) the Balkan states toward more Western political philosophies. Rather than the continuation of Byzantine political philosophy in the guise of Moscow as “Third Rome” (surviving both old Rome and Constantinople), or the juxtaposition of Western and Eastern political development suggested by Vajda and Szucs, there is instead evidence to suggest that pragmatic political considerations, rather than Byzantine universalism, were becoming important in Russia’s development as the dominant Eastern Christian state. An examination of Russian foreign policy interests in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, for example, reveals that “in place of the medieval conception of a hierarchy of states, presided over by the Byzantine emperor, Ivan III and his successors were guided by the notion of a family of European nations whose sovereigns were equal in status.”<sup>29</sup> *Realpolitik* considerations focusing on irredentist claims in Kievan territories, necessitating peace with the Ottoman Empire, meant that “‘Moscow the Second Kiev,’ not ‘Moscow the Third Rome’ was the hall-mark of [Russian] foreign policy” during that period.<sup>30</sup> The religious messianic content of Byzantine universalism did not necessarily always

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<sup>29</sup> Obolensky 365-66.

<sup>30</sup> Obolensky 365-66.

translate into organizational principles for the Russian church, which found itself existing within a state influenced increasingly by Western political principles.

It is in the *Realpolitik* of Ivan III, Basil III and Ivan IV that we can detect the clearest signs of Russia's 'turning away' from the political heritage of Byzantium. And it is significant that this process, which began in the late fifteenth century, coincided with the growth of the country's diplomatic and cultural relations with the West. Two and a half centuries later, after the westernizing reforms of Peter the Great, Russia became – as she had been in the eleventh and twelfth centuries – an integral part of the European state system.<sup>31</sup>

Another example can be found in Romania, another confessionally Orthodox country with its own autocephalous church and a complex history that defies simple categorization under the nationalism theory. Viewing the present organizational configuration of the Romanian church (autocephalous, with a patriarchate) through the prism of nationalism is reductionistic, presuming as it does a great deal about both the national history of the modern Romanian state and the role (and efficacy) of the church in national consolidation and the attainment of national goals. While it is beyond the scope of this study to examine the Romanian case in any detail, it is worth heeding Stephen Fischer-Galati's warning that

The nationalist interpretation of the history of the Romanians is flawed in several major respects. First, it is absurd to argue that the primary purpose of the Romanians has been, throughout their history, the reestablishment of the unitary, national, state of their Dacian ancestors and making the supreme sacrifice in battle for the attainment of that goal. Second, it is equally absurd to argue that the ultimate socio-political goal of the Romanians was the establishment of a national-socialist order of the right or of the left or, for that matter, of a bourgeois democratic one. Finally, *it is as erroneous to ascribe a decisive role to the Orthodox Church in promoting the attainment of the presumed ultimate goals of the Romanians as it is to exponents of other ideologies, doctrines, or dogmas.*<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Obolensky 367.

<sup>32</sup> Stephen Fischer-Galati, "Relations Between Church and State in Contemporary Romania: Orthodoxy, Nationalism, and Communism," in Clucas 288, italics added.

A final problem with the nationalism theory is a deceptively simple one – the anteriority of autocephaly itself to nationalism. Autocephaly as an organizational form of the Orthodox Church predates modern nationalism by many centuries, appearing fairly early in the church’s history. As will be demonstrated in more detail in chapters 3 and 4, the formal and informal institutions of the church, which govern and constrain the implementation of autocephaly, is itself a unique product of the political environment in which the church was born (the Roman Empire) and lived (the later Byzantine empire, the Ottoman period, imperial and Soviet Russia, etc.). The theory advanced in this study – that autocephaly as a form of organizational change is a response to changes in political boundaries (the “geography”), constrained by the institutional framework of the church, and subject to enforcement – greatly predates the advent of nationalism and nationalist revolutions in Europe. Generally speaking, changes in the church’s organizational structure correspond to changes in the political boundaries in which the church is situated, and this tendency toward what is called territorial accommodation<sup>33</sup> is observable in the first five centuries of Christianity’s existence within the Roman Empire. Certainly it occurs well before the emergence of national identity and nationalist projects in Europe. Hence it is mistaken to characterize autocephaly as a “symptom” of modern nationalism.

To reiterate, this is not to say that nationalism was not a factor, indeed an important one, in the establishment of autocephalous churches during the last three centuries. Certainly the conflict, for example, between the forces of pan-Hellenism and pan-Slavism in Eastern and Southern Europe (which paradoxically witnessed

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<sup>33</sup> A term used by Pierre L’Hullier, Francis Dvornik, Dimitry Pospelovsky, and others. See chapters 3 and 4 of this study.

fragmentation, rather than consolidation, along religious and national lines) point to the importance of national aspirations. One need look no further than a statement by Russian hierarch Porfirii Uspenskii in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century: “Russia from eternity has been ordained to illumine Asia and unite all the Slavs. There will be a union of all Slav races with Armenia, Syria, Arabia, and Ethiopia and they will all praise God in Hagia Sophia.”<sup>34</sup> A curious symmetry with these words can be found in another statement attributed to one Greek advocate of pan-Hellenic irredentism of the same period: “Our country is the vast territory of which Greek is the language, and the faith of the Greek Orthodox Church is the religion. Our capital is Constantinople; our national temple is [Hagia] Sophia, for nine hundred years the glory of Christendom. As long as that temple, that capital, and that territory are profaned and oppressed by Mussulmans, Greece would be disgraced if she were tranquil.”<sup>35</sup> Nationalism and national identity (imagined, constructed, or otherwise) matter in the history of modern Eastern Europe, and this study does not attempt to argue otherwise.<sup>36</sup> It will argue, however, that we need to look beyond nationalism to explain the organizational changes we observe in the Orthodox Church.

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<sup>34</sup> Cited in Theofanis G. Stavrou, “Russian Policy in Constantinople and Mount Athos in the Nineteenth Century,” in Clucas 225.

<sup>35</sup> Nassau W. Senior, “A Journal Kept in Turkey and Greece in the Autumn of 1857 and the Beginning of 1858” (London, 1859) 358, cited in Richard Clogg, “The Byzantine Legacy in the Modern Greek World: The Megali Idea,” in Clucas 253.

<sup>36</sup> The classic example of the close interrelationship between nationalism and autocephaly is the case of post-Soviet Ukraine. There is a large and growing body of research on this particular topic. For background on the growth of Ukrainian national identity and national construction against the backdrop of the legacy of Austrian, Polish, and Russian rule see, for example, Andrei S. Markovits and Frank E. Sysyn, eds., Nationbuilding and the Politics of Nationalism: Essays on Austrian Galicia (Cambridge: Harvard University Ukrainian Research Institute, 1982).

## 2.4 Summary and Assessment

An extensive treatment of nationalism in this context is well beyond the scope of this study, and the objective here is not to claim that nationalism was an unimportant or irrelevant factor either in church-state relations or in the church as a vehicle of national identity or national aspirations.<sup>37</sup> We will grant the tremendous importance of nationalism and not deny that it is germane to the problem – autocephaly – at hand. However, the argument here is that treating autocephaly as a function both of nationalism and of the instinctive subservience of the church to the state characteristic of the Christian East is insufficient. This study remains focused on autocephaly as a form of organizational change, and argues that there are reasons, institutional in nature, why the Orthodox Church assumes the organizational forms it does, which have nothing to do with nationalism.

To find these reasons we need to focus on the church itself as an organization governed by a specific institutional framework and in so doing hopefully problematize new areas for future research. To focus analytically on the church requires an alternative theory that takes the church as its object, which nationalism as an existing theory does not do. The enduring organizational patterns particular to the Orthodox Church are shaped by the church's institutional framework, and this framework reflects the environment of the Roman Empire in which the church evolved. Taking an analytical approach that places analytical primacy on the institutional framework, which predates in its origin the modern period, may in fact

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<sup>37</sup> There is an abundant literature on this topic. In the case of Russia and the Russian church, an insightful and generally respected study can be found in Edward C. Thaden, Conservative Nationalism in Nineteenth Century Russia (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964).

provide a more complete explanation for the organizational patterns we observe in the modern period. As one specialist has noted,

One may suggest that the difficulty which some historians have experienced in explaining how the political independence of the medieval peoples of Eastern Europe could be reconciled with their recognition of the emperor's supremacy will appear less intractable if their links with the empire are viewed not from the standpoint of modern inter-state relations, nor in terms of a conflict between 'nationalism' and 'imperialism,' but in the context of the Byzantine Commonwealth, that supranational community of Christian states of which Constantinople was the center and Eastern Europe the peripheral domain.<sup>38</sup>

Our exploration of the institutional framework of the Orthodox Church and the way in which it enables and constrains organizational change will be the focus of the next three chapters.

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<sup>38</sup> Obolensky 277.

### Chapter 3: Autocephaly as Organizational Change Under Institutional Constraints – The Alternative Theory

This study seeks to understand the predominance of a particular organizational form (autocephaly), and in chapter 2 we found nationalism to be an unsatisfactory and insufficient explanation. Our task then is to develop an alternative theory, and in doing so we will define the church as an *organization* governed by, and simultaneously influencing, specific and enduring *institutions*.<sup>39</sup> Our alternative theory argues that (1) organizational changes in the church (autocephaly being a predominant one) tend to correspond to changes in political boundaries (the “geography”), (2) the church’s institutional framework constrains agents’ efforts to implement those organizational changes, and (3) the effectiveness of those institutional constraints depends upon the credibility of enforcement. According to this theory, where we observe changes in political boundaries, the dissolution or consolidation of states, or other political reconfigurations, we should expect to see efforts to implement corresponding organizational changes in the church, within institutional limits, subject to enforcement by a third party (usually the state). To the extent this theory holds, we must look in two places – the institutional framework and

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<sup>39</sup> There is a large literature on institutions, transactions costs, and organizations. This discussion draws heavily upon analysis and insights drawn from, among others, North, Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance; Oliver Williamson, The Mechanisms of Governance (New York: Oxford, 1990); North, Structure and Change in Economic History (New York: Norton & Co., 1981); North and Barry Weingast, “Constitutions and Commitment: The Evolution of Institutions Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth-Century England,” The Journal of Economic History XLIX.4 (1989): 803-32; Williamson, “Comparative Economic Organization: The Analysis of Discrete Structural Alternatives,” Administrative Science Quarterly 36.2 (1991): 269-97; Stefano Fiori, “Alternative Visions of Change in Douglass North’s New Institutionalism,” Journal of Economic Issues 36.4 (2002) 1025-44; William Dugger, “Douglass C. North’s New Institutionalism,” Journal of Economic Issues 29.2 (1995): 453-59.

the political geography – to understand why the church has certain organizational forms at given points in history, and why those forms endure and change under different circumstances.

### **3.1 Autocephaly as Accommodation to the Political Geography**

We begin with the assertion that the organizational form of the church at any given time is intimately related to the political geography, meaning the political boundaries of the state in which a particular church is embedded. The reconfiguration of that geography – the devolution of an empire into discrete states, for example – prompts corresponding changes to the church’s organizational form. This may happen for many different reasons. Sometimes it is untenable for a single church to maintain relationships of dependency or hierarchy across new political boundaries (e.g. with the governance structures and funds residing in one newly-formed state, and a subordinate diocese residing in the other), forcing what was once a single ecclesiastical unit to subdivide into administratively autonomous units. Often (as noted in chapter 2) it has proven politically advantageous for ecclesiastical boundaries to mimic political ones. Self-government for a church suddenly embedded within a newly autonomous political unit is not automatic, however, and organizational change cannot occur without restriction. Institutional constraints limit the ability of agents to effect organizational change through the redrawing of ecclesiastical boundaries. Autocephaly presupposes the meeting of certain institutionally-mandated criteria, and third-party enforcement must be credible to ensure those institutional rules are adhered to.

What are those institutionally-mandated criteria? Simply put, autocephaly presumes a degree of ecclesiastical development on the part of the nascent autocephalous church in order for it to be validly declared self-governing:

[A] part of the Orthodox Church claiming to be autocephalous must be sufficiently mature to organize its own ecclesiastical life; it must have a sufficient number of parishes and parishioners, the possibility of training new clergymen, and a hierarchy canonically capable of making subsequent appointment of new bishops"... significantly with regard to the latter, the capability to not only ordain (per Apostolic canon 1 requiring only two bishops), but also the ability to appoint (per First Ecumenical Council canon 4, requiring at least three ruling bishops).<sup>40</sup>

This in turn means that autocephalous churches cannot arise *ex nihilo*, necessarily because, given the role of apostolic succession in the church (the idea of unbroken continuity of the church hierarchy back to the apostolic period), the very identity of a particular local church, embodied in the person of its senior-most bishop, must come via ordination by other bishops in another (parent) church. Hence

Since no autocephalous Church has the right to appoint bishops for any but her own dioceses, a bishop of a new Church originally had to be appointed by ruling bishops of one of the established Autocephalous Churches to a diocese of that particular [nascent autocephalous] Church. As a result, the whole church region claiming autocephalous status must be part of an [existing] Autocephalous Church, her diocese, or her mission.<sup>41</sup>

Therefore it is axiomatic that "[n]ew churches always originate from existing autocephalous Churches...Any ecclesiastical region which was not part of an Autocephalous Local Church and whose administration was not organized by that Church, may not claim to be autocephalous."<sup>42</sup> In other words, a parent church begets a subsidiary, and per the institutions of the church, the autocephaly of the

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<sup>40</sup> Bogolepov 14.

<sup>41</sup> Bogolepov 14.

<sup>42</sup> Bogolepov 15.

mature subsidiary comes with the formal consent of the parent. All these criteria for autocephaly form part of the institutional framework governing organizational change. These formal and informal rules will be probed more deeply in chapter 4.

Since particular churches are located within specific political territories (e.g. empires, kingdoms, states), the administrative or ecclesiastical demarcations of the church typically corresponded fairly closely to the political demarcations of that territory (although that correspondence began to collapse in what we will term the post-national period, outlined in chapter 5). Rearrangement of those political demarcations necessarily entails a corresponding rearrangement of ecclesiastical boundaries. To the extent that process of rearrangement of political boundaries yields an independent political entity, the ecclesiastical counterpart often is an autocephalous church. The autocephalous church is administratively independent and is characterized by “the coincidence of [its] jurisdictional boundaries with those of the corresponding state.”<sup>43</sup> The “corresponding state” plays a significant role as a third-party enforcer of institutional rules governing organizational change, and acts as the logical protector of the church located within its political boundaries. As we will see in chapter 4, the institutional framework actually presupposes, and to a large extent depends upon, this unique role for the state.

Our alternative theory therefore suggests that in conditions of relative political quiescence we expect to see a corresponding degree of stability in the church’s internal organization (for example, the ecclesiastical organization of the church in its earlier centuries corresponded largely to the major metropolises and provincial

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<sup>43</sup> J Kamires, *Greek Encyclopedia for Religion and Ethics*, cited in John H. Erickson, “The Autocephalous Church,” *The Challenge of Our Past* 92.

boundaries of the Roman Empire, so long as the empire remained intact). Redrawing of boundaries within principalities or empires, the devolution of empires into discrete states, political upheavals within and among states, or all three of these phenomena, tend to result in corresponding changes in ecclesiastical organizational forms. This tendency by the church toward “territorial accommodation,”<sup>44</sup> manifesting itself during the period of the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire in what some specialists have termed a “Byzantine theocracy,”<sup>45</sup> persisted even after the collapse of the empire itself. The *imprimatur* by the state of ecclesiastical organization continued to be considered by the church as a necessary precondition for organizational decisions and was instrumental in the notion of the coincidence and co-location of state and church persisting through the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>46</sup>

Therefore, to understand why autocephaly occurs we must note those changes in the political geography (the independent variables) that prompt the church to make particular organizational changes (the dependent variable) according to constraints imposed by the institutional framework. As we will see in a brief survey of empirical data in chapter 5, factors favoring organizational change include, but may not necessarily be limited to: (1) a disjuncture, often prolonged, between ecclesiastical and political boundaries; (2) an irregular, disrupted, or dysfunctional ecclesiastical relationship between the parent and subsidiary churches which must be renegotiated; and (3) an alignment of incentives among agents favoring organizational change. The

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<sup>44</sup> Cf. L’Hullier, Pospelovsky and others.

<sup>45</sup> See for example Alexander Schmemmann, “Byzantine Theocracy and the Orthodox Church,” St. Vladimir’s Seminary Quarterly 1.2 (1953).

<sup>46</sup> Schmemmann, “Problems of Orthodoxy in America,” St. Vladimir’s Seminary Quarterly 8.2 (1964): 67-85.

extent to which institutional rules are able to constrain the activities of these agents toward change is contingent upon the credibility of enforcement. Relative quiescence in the political geography – where agents perceive the organizational status quo meets their needs, where incentives for change are low and costs high – tends to create conditions less conducive to organizational change.

### **3.2 The Institutional Framework: Contractual Relationships and Transaction Costs**

We now turn to the institutional framework itself, a topic that will occupy the rest of this chapter and much of the next. Institutions “exert patterned higher-order effects on the actions, indeed the constitution, of individuals and organizations without requiring repeated collective mobilization or authoritative intervention to achieve these regularities.”<sup>47</sup> Organizations in turn “are created with purposive intent in consequence of the opportunity set resulting from the existing set of constraints...*and in the course of attempts to accomplish their objectives are a major agent of institutional change.*”<sup>48</sup> Specific autocephalous churches – organizations – exist in distinct places, times, and political circumstances, but all are derived from and adhere to a set of shared arrangements and constraints – institutions – which govern their configuration and interrelationships.

What do these interrelationships look like? New Institutional Economics has drawn a helpful distinction between the institutional environment (i.e. the “rules of

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<sup>47</sup> Ronald L. Jepperson, “Institutions, Institutional Effects, and Institutionalism,” *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Sociology*, ed. W.W. Powell and P.J. Dimaggio (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991): 143-163, cited in Clemens and Cook, “Politics and Institutionalism: Explaining Durability and Change,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 25 (1999): 444-45.

<sup>48</sup> North, *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance* 5.

the game”) and institutions of governance (e.g. markets, or in the case of the church, hierarchies).<sup>49</sup> If it is true, as Oliver Williamson has noted, that “institutions of governance operate at the level of individual transactions,”<sup>50</sup> then it is useful to focus analytically on the institutions of governance that determine how ecclesiastical agents relate to, or contract among, one another. Doing so will help us understand how organizational change occurs and the role institutions play in constraining the activities of those agents.

Williamson reminds us that “[g]overnance is also an exercise in assessing the efficacy of alternative modes (means) of organization. The object is to effect good order through mechanisms of governance. A governance structure is thus usefully thought of as an institutional framework in which the integrity of a transaction, or related set of transactions, is decided.”<sup>51</sup> The institutional framework of the church thus determines the ordering and shape of churches as organizations, and these organizations – for our purposes considered as analogous to economic agents – contract with one another according to constraints imposed by the institutional framework. Because “[t]aking the institutional environment as given, economic agents purportedly align transactions with governance structures to effect economizing outcomes,”<sup>52</sup> and because these contractual interactions are not cost free (due to the lack of perfect information, the need for enforcement, etc.), particular churches as economic agents will try to contract in such a way as to minimize transaction costs. We know this because transactions, “which differ in their attributes,

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<sup>49</sup> Oliver Williamson, *The Mechanisms of Governance* (New York: Oxford, 1996) 4-5.

<sup>50</sup> Williamson 5.

<sup>51</sup> Williamson 11.

<sup>52</sup> Williamson 5.

are aligned with governance structures, which differ in their cost and competences, so as to effect a discriminating – mainly a transaction cost-economizing – result.”<sup>53</sup>

Particular churches therefore are aligned in contractual relationships governed by an institutional framework, which with credible enforcement makes defection from those institutional rules costly. The interrelations between particular churches, as with any other organization, can be considered contractual because they include the exchange of goods and services which comprise a web of interdependent linkages. These relationships may be either hierarchical – as with parent-subsidiary relationships – or horizontal – as between self-governing autocephalous churches. In all cases and at all levels, however, the relationships are contractual: clergy – needed by the bishop to perform sacramental functions locally in the bishop’s stead – cannot legally perform those functions without the bishop’s authorization, and should the priest fail to discharge his duties in the prescribed manner that authorization can be withdrawn. A subsidiary bishop is dependent upon a patriarch for the chrism used to anoint laity and, historically, consecrate emperors, and this could be withheld should the patriarch see the need to censure a subordinate. A subsidiary church is dependent upon its parent, at least initially, for funds, clergy, and organizational support, while the parent eventually may come to rely upon the subsidiary as a source of revenue, resources, and influence. A nascent autocephalous church requires official recognition from its parent and/or other autocephalous churches to validate its own autocephaly. In all cases and at all levels, an institutional framework binds the contracting “parties” (ecclesiastical organizations) together according to rules that provide incentives for both enforcement and compliance.

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<sup>53</sup> Williamson 12.

However, the institutional framework alone is insufficient to fully enforce contracts and prevent defection, and some sort of third-party enforcer is necessary to ensure compliance.<sup>54</sup> By enforcement we mean specifically the activities of a third party – in this case, the political authority or state – to ensure rules are adhered to and contractual relationships honored. However, the same power that enables the state to enforce contracts also enables the state to break them, and hence political authorities have been able to reconfigure – often unilaterally – ecclesiastical boundaries commensurate with rearrangements of the political geography. For the same reason unrestrained ecclesiastical “recontracting” occurs when the state is not present as an enforcer. This janus-faced depiction of the state as contract enforcer and breaker alike is not surprising in light of North's analysis:

Third-party enforcement means the development of the state as a coercive force able to monitor property rights and enforce contracts effectively, but no one at this stage in our knowledge knows how to create such an entity. Indeed, with a strictly wealth-maximizing behavioral assumption it is hard even to create such a model abstractly. Put simply, if the state has coercive force, then those who run the state will use that force in their own interest at the expense of the rest of society.<sup>55</sup>

Historically in the Christian East the political authority (originally the imperial authority, later the state) played this role, ensuring that the organization of the church was stable and uniform when necessary, and in a shape generally conducive to state interests. Empirically, we note that during those periods when the state was absent as enforcer or redefined its relationship with the church in adversarial rather than cooperative terms, church organization invariably broke down.

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<sup>54</sup> Technically, the state as third party enforcer “enforce[s] agreements such that the offending party always had to compensate the injured party to a degree that made it costly to violate the contract.” See North 58.

<sup>55</sup> North 59.

There have been two long periods when Christianity did not enjoy the support of the state: the three centuries before Constantine and the two centuries since the eighteenth century when some European states and the United States abandoned Christianity as the state religion. Even some European countries, such as England, which kept a state church, relaxed their efforts to compel unity. *The experience of both periods suggests that when it is left to its own resources, Christianity is very prone to split over disputes concerning belief, organization, and discipline.*<sup>56</sup>

Church and state, particularly in the Christian East as noted in chapter 2, existed in a relationship characterized by bargaining and negotiation. The state, occupying the role of enforcer of the church's institutional rules governing organization, was permitted by the church occasionally to exploit this relationship to pursue its own interests. The church ceded some control to the state to secure its own protection and survival. The state in turn accepted the church to help ensure its own legitimacy. We note empirically that periods of political turbulence involving, for example, regime change and the demarcation of new political boundaries would result in renegotiation of this relationship according to the institutional rules established by the church with the consent of the state. Since because of these rules ecclesiastical boundaries tend to follow political ones, these renegotiated relationships often would manifest themselves in organizational changes within the church, e.g. the establishment (or occasionally the abolishment) of autocephalous churches, changes which themselves presuppose the restructuring of relationships among particular churches.

A restructuring of the organizational relationships between churches (i.e. from hierarchical to horizontal, subsidiary to autocephalous) presupposes a fundamental realignment of bargaining power, objectives, and interests (i.e. a *change in relative prices*) between the parent church and its subsidiary. Since autocephaly presupposes

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<sup>56</sup> Joseph H. Lynch, The Medieval Church (London: Longman Group, 1992) 11, italics added.

a recalibration of the relationship between parent and subsidiary from one of dependence to one of independence, a change in the institutional equilibrium governing the relationship between parent and subsidiary is a precondition for autocephaly to occur. Institutional equilibrium may be defined as

a situation where given the bargaining strength of the players and the set of contractual bargains that made up total economic exchange, none of the players would find it advantageous to devote resources into restructuring the agreements. Note that such a situation does not imply that everyone is happy with the existing rules and contracts, but only that the relative costs and benefits of altering the game among the contracting parties does not make it worthwhile to do so. The existing institutional constraints defined and created the equilibrium.<sup>57</sup>

The conditions noted in section 3.1 as “conducive” to organizational change are so designated because they enable a disruption of this equilibrium – an exogenous shock to the system precipitating organizational change. Empirically this means that instances of organizational change (e.g. autocephaly) usually occur “illegally,”<sup>58</sup> which is to say through the breaking of (defection from) the contractual relationship, governed by a common institutional framework and enforced by the state, between two ecclesiastical parties. When the state is either in an adversarial role or absent as an enforcer, the costs of defection are further reduced (particularly when defection is in the state’s interest), and it becomes possible for organizational changes to occur (e.g. autocephaly) that are contentious and disputed by both parties. The parties may appeal to the same institutional framework, but without third-party enforcement

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<sup>57</sup> North 86.

<sup>58</sup> “Illegal” meaning specifically violation of the institutional rules on which the relationship was based, or in other words, defection. This characterization of the way in which autocephaly historically has been declared was used recently by Robert Taft in interview with John J. Allen, published in The National Catholic Reporter 6 Feb. 2004, Religious Information Service of Ukraine, 13 Feb. 2004 <<http://www.RISU.org.ua>>.

resolution of such disputes typically remains elusive, and the contended organizational changes tend to remain in place. As we will see in chapter 5, this tendency – evidenced by an increasing number of organizational splits, subdivisions, and fractures – is what we observe with increasing frequency in the experience of Orthodox churches particularly from the 18<sup>th</sup> through 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

New Institutional Economics thus provides analytical insights – in terms of institutions, organizations, mechanisms of governance, transaction costs and enforcement – that are useful for understanding, albeit in a very rudimentary way, why and how autocephaly occurs. Next we will consider the institutional framework governing organizational change, a discussion that will carry over into chapter 4.

### **3.3 The Institutional Framework: Councils, Ecclesiastical Legislation, and the State**

What comprises the institutions of governance of the Orthodox Church? The church derived its understanding of autocephaly gradually and incrementally, and this process must be located within the broader evolution of the church's understanding of governance. From its very beginning the church recognized that matters of dogma, ecclesiastical discipline, and administration affecting the whole community of Christians were to be discussed by representatives drawn from particular local churches, duly assembled in council. For the canons or laws voted by a council to be considered binding, the council had to acquire a universal or "ecumenical" status, meaning that it represented the interests of, and its decisions were accepted and

acknowledged to be binding upon, all the churches. The first seven such general councils (as distinguished from regional synods convened to resolve purely local problems), jointly recognized as ecumenical by both Western and Eastern (Chalcedonian) churches, voted much of the canonical legislation from which the institutional rules governing organizational change were and are derived.<sup>59</sup>

According to one 11<sup>th</sup> century Byzantine historian, these councils “were named ecumenical, because bishops of the whole Roman Empire were invited *by imperial orders* and in each of them...there was discussion of the faith and a vote, i.e. dogmatic formulae were promulgated.”<sup>60</sup> The councils thus received imperial as well as ecclesiastical sanction and therefore could be considered universal insofar as they were binding on the church throughout the whole of the “inhabited realm” (*oikoumene*) of the empire. Hence the concept of legislation through council is rooted in the political relationship that existed between the Roman Empire and the church, and in Roman law. Byzantine political philosophy specified a role for the political authority (the emperor) that delineated clearly his position as the enforcing agent for the institutions of the church in the Christian East:

The basic principle was laid down in the Code of Justinian: between the emperor and the Church there is *symphonia*, ‘harmony’. In this music, the complementary voices have each their own part. The emperor realizes in the public forum the dogmatic faith determined by the bishops. He summons synods, and actualizes their decisions, but he does not define the Symbol, the faith of the Church. This was the fundamental theory, transgressed on numerous occasions, but never abandoned.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> There has been no council convened since the second council in Nicaea in 787 that the Orthodox churches consider to be ecumenical. Hence there has been no universally-accepted formal canonical legislation governing or clarifying the content of autocephaly since then.

<sup>60</sup> Cedrenus, *Hist I*, 3, ed. (Bonn, 1838) 39, cited in Meyendorff, “What is an Ecumenical Council?” *Living Tradition* 54, italics added.

<sup>61</sup> Aidan Nichols, *Rome and the Eastern Churches: A Study in Schism* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1992) 142. See also Francis Dvornik, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 1960).

The need within the church for universal episcopal consensus was expressed through councils thus convened. Emperors on the eastern side of the empire played the role of political protector (enforcer) of the universal (meaning, at that time, coextensive with the Roman Empire) church, and hence bore the authority to convene councils, so “[t]he word ‘ecumenical’ itself reflects the Byzantine politico-religious view of society.”<sup>62</sup> A given council’s ecumenical status thus presupposed both imperial *imprimatur* and participation (and approval) by all, or the majority of, particular churches. No council truly had all bishops present by any means, however, and just because a council convened did not necessarily mean it automatically would attain “ecumenical” status.<sup>63</sup>

The organizational structure (ecclesiology) of the church in its early centuries conformed to the political boundaries of the Roman Empire. Likewise, the earliest church councils were informed by and conformed to the rules and practices of the Roman senate, with the emperor playing a key role in the convocation of the early councils. However, since in Roman legislation the emperor did not have voting rights in the senate, the emperor likewise in the transposed context of the church council did not have voting rights, which were reserved exclusively for bishops. So a continuity in function was preserved with regard to the emperor in the newly Christian empire,<sup>64</sup> and this continuity evolved into the durable concept of symphony between church and state that would continue to characterize the Christian East up through the 20<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Meyendorff 53-55.

<sup>63</sup> Meyendorff 53-55.

<sup>64</sup> Francis Dvornik, The Ecumenical Councils (New York: Hawthorn, 1961) 9-17.

century. This had important organizational implications, because changes in church organization by definition had political as well as ecclesiological overtones:

According to the principle of harmony (*symphonia*) between *Sacerdotium* and *Imperium*, problems related to the formation, abolishment and adjustment of boundaries of large Church entities necessarily needed imperial involvement. In fact, this is understandable because such actions usually had political implications. Yet, a point should be underlined: *In those matters, imperial government could hardly make an arbitrary decision. It had to take into account the ancient customs of the Church, especially when they had been confirmed by nomocanonical legislation.*<sup>65</sup>

Therefore canonical legislation properly is understood to operate as an institutional constraint on attempts by agents to change church organization, even if one of those agents was the state itself.

The state, therefore, has always occupied a unique role with regard to organizational change in the church. However, unlike the almost unrestricted sphere of influence vis-à-vis the church ascribed to the state in the nationalism theory, the state's role in fact was confined largely to the area of enforcement. During the Roman and Byzantine periods the imperial role vis-à-vis the formation of the church's institutional framework remained significant, particularly given that the Byzantine emperor had a responsibility for both civil and ecclesiastical law.<sup>66</sup> Contrary to the assumptions of the nationalism theory, which ascribes organizational change largely to politics and the state, the church's institutional framework, though envisioning a critical role for the state, subsumed sources of authority unique to the church. Those sources of authority, comprising both formal and informal rules, were

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<sup>65</sup> Pierre L'Hullier, "Accession to Autocephaly," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 37.4 (1993): 275, italics added.

<sup>66</sup> J.M. Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986) 300. See also Nichols 140-41.

well defined by the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries: scripture (the Gospels); apostolic traditions (recorded often in scripture such as the Book of Acts but handed down via church tradition); patristic sources (varied in content but generally referring to the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> century “fathers” of the church whose writings were recognized to be highly influential and often normative); and the decisions of the councils themselves, in terms of dogmatic and disciplinary canons voted at those councils; and finally, imperial legislation (decisions by emperors on ecclesiastical matters, although those touching on dogmatic issues ultimately were validated or rejected in council).<sup>67</sup> These latter two phenomena – ecclesiastical and imperial legislation concerning church affairs – meant there were two sources of canon law, which were brought together as *nomocanons*. The church thus had a broad and often disparate institutional framework to draw upon with regard to disciplinary and organizational issues (such as autocephaly), and many efforts by later canonists to reconcile and systematize these various sources did not necessarily bring about uniformity of opinion and legal precedent.<sup>68</sup> The framework presupposed, however, a specific role for the state as protector and enforcer.

### **3.4 Institutional Change: Evolution of the Framework**

We have noted that the church has an institutional framework that governs organizational change. Our theoretical understanding of institutions, however, also presupposes that the institutional framework itself changes, often in conjunction with the activities of the organizations they govern, as indicated in North’s definition in

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<sup>67</sup> To be discussed in greater detail in chapter 4.

<sup>68</sup> Hussey 304-06.

section 3.2 above. However, we must attempt to understand with somewhat greater clarity the actual mechanisms by which institutions change. Doing so will help us test our alternative theory and refine our understanding of the institutional framework of the church. One theoretical approach to characterizing institutional change starts with two presuppositions. First is the idea that “actors not only have preferences over institutions, but also compete to bring about their preferred versions of them. Institutions are thus contested.”<sup>69</sup> The second presupposition is that changes in the environment – specifically in this case, the political geography in which the institutional framework is embedded and in which the church as organization operates – is relevant to understanding how and under what circumstances institutional change occurs. Shifts in the political geography, as already described in our alternative theory, can precipitate organizational change. However, such shifts, insofar as they affect or modify the foundation (for example, the notion of Byzantine theocracy) on which the institutional framework is built, can change the institutions themselves. “[I]f institutions rest on and reflect a particular foundation (whether efficiency-based, or power-based, or cultural)...then they should change as a result of shifts of these underlying conditions.”<sup>70</sup> Alternatively, “[i]nstitutions rest on a set of ideational and material foundations that, if shaken, open possibilities for change. But different institutions rest on different foundations, and so the processes that are likely to disrupt them will also be different, though predictable.”<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Jeffrey Stacey and Berthold Rittberger, “Dynamics of Formal and Informal Institutional Change in the EU,” *Journal of European Public Policy* 10.6 (2003): 861.

<sup>70</sup> Kathleen Thelen, “How Institutions Evolve: Insights from Comparative-Historical Analysis” (manuscript), cited in Stacey and Rittberger 864.

<sup>71</sup> Kathleen Thelen, “Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 2 (1999): 397, cited in Lindner 916.

Institutional change therefore can be defined as “the introduction of new rules or rule interpretations that supplement or replace existing rules and interpretations.”<sup>72</sup> Johannes Lindner has described a useful typology involving two forms of institutional change: those that cause formal changes (actual alterations) to the institutional rules, and those that do not. According to this typology, agents recontracting among one another gravitate toward options for interpreting the institutional framework in ways most conducive to their own organizational interests and that involve least risk and cost. Three such options do not formally change the institutional rules. One of these is unilateral reinterpretation of the rules to the advantage of a particular agent, usually when the threat of sanction by a third-party enforcer is low, which is an option involving least risk and cost to the agent. A second option involves joint interpretation by two or more agents, which is “often preferred to formal rules changes because the less binding nature of joint interpretation inflicts lower sovereignty costs, and allows agents to change the agreements more easily.”<sup>73</sup> Another option is third-party interpretation, in which agents, particularly when facing the undesirable possibility of unilateral interpretation by one agent or another, resort to adjudication by a third party. This option risks, however, an interpretation of the institutional rules unfavorable to some or all the agents, and therefore is the costliest of the three mentioned so far. A fourth option, unlike the previous three, involves formal change to the institutional rules and therefore is the highest-risk option, necessarily because “[c]ontracting costs and uncertainty over outcomes are high. A formal change entails the risk that the whole package of formal rules is renegotiated,

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<sup>72</sup> Johannes Lindner, “Institutional Stability and Change: Two Sides of the Same Coin,” *Journal of European Public Policy* 10.6 (2003): 913.

<sup>73</sup> Lindner 914.

including previously accepted rules.”<sup>74</sup> Per Thelen,<sup>75</sup> institutions rest on and are stabilized by specific foundations or “mechanisms of reproduction” of enduring institutions, the disruption of which is conducive to institutional change. The stability of a coalition of agents with a vested interest in the existing institutional framework, prohibitively high costs associated with switching to a new institutional framework, and a durable preference for small-scale informal changes in lieu of formal institutional changes, are all reproduction mechanisms which, when disrupted, open the door to institutional change.<sup>76</sup>

Using this analysis we can envision scenarios of formal and informal institutional change within the Orthodox Church. As we will see in the next two chapters, the conditions or environment in which the church’s institutional framework is embedded change over time. Furthermore, organizational agents prefer certain interpretations of formal and informal institutional rules (for example, those justifying a unilateral move toward autocephaly) over others, according to their own interests, and vie with one another to operationalize those interpretations. Those agents may pursue a variety of options, at varying levels of cost, to achieve their objectives without risking formal changes to the institutions of the church. One church might interpret the rules in such a way as to justify its own unilateral declaration of autocephaly, risking censure from other churches but facing little risk legal or political sanction (option one above). A small coalition of two or more churches might agree upon a mutually-acceptable interpretation of the institutional framework that legitimizes organizational decisions in their mutual interest, an option preferable

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<sup>74</sup> Lindner 915.

<sup>75</sup> Thelen, Historical Institutionalism 397, cited in Lindner 916.

<sup>76</sup> Lindner 916-19.

to unilateral action by one church but less risky than any attempt at formal rule change (option two above). If unable to find a common interpretation of the rules acceptable to all, the churches might submit to arbitration by a third-party enforcer (usually the state) (option three above). The most radical option (number four above), involving the highest cost and risk to all agents, would entail formal change to the institutional rules, which in the case of rules governing autocephaly is accomplished only through general council. If the balance of power shifts in favor of a pro-change coalition of churches, if the costs of change decrease substantially relative to the costs of maintaining the institutional status quo, and/or if informal changes are no longer able to stave off the need for formal modification of the institutional framework, a general council presumably would convene and all churches would face the shared risk of embarking on a contentious process of formal institutional change, the outcome of which would be uncertain.

What we have, then, is a roadmap of rudimentary but useful indicators that will help us detect conditions under which changes to the church's institutional framework might occur. We will revisit these conditions in chapter 7 in an attempt to see if institutional change has occurred and, if it has, to characterize the type of change we have observed.

### **3.5 Summary**

Our alternative theory holds that the organizational shape of the Orthodox Church at any given time – manifested in the set of contractual relationships between its various local churches – is determined by its institutional framework and the

political geography in which it is embedded. This alternative theory, by focusing on the institutional framework, goes much further than the nationalism theory in explaining how and why organizational change occurs. Changes in the political geography are accommodated organizationally by the church according to constraints imposed by the institutional framework. Autocephalous churches are the result of recalibrated contractual relationships between formerly united parent and subsidiary churches, with the state as a third party agent usually exercising a decisive role in the fate of the contractual relationship. While the content of the institutional framework governing autocephaly is diverse and subject to multiple interpretations, autocephaly invariably is justified in specifically institutional terms. So long as enforcement remains credible, defection from the organizational norms imposed by the institutional framework will remain costly; when enforcement decreases, those costs decrease and defection becomes increasingly likely. Changes to the institutional framework, characterized in a variety of ways, can accompany organizational changes, depending upon the risk tolerance of the agents, the costs involved, and (again) credibility of enforcement. With this theory in mind, we now turn to a more detailed exploration of the sources and content of the institutional framework itself.

## **Chapter 4: The Institutional Framework**

The previous chapter laid out our alternative theory and sketched, largely in theoretical terms, the conditions conducive to organizational change, how the institutional framework governs and constrains organizational change, the role of enforcement, and the way in which institutions themselves are modified by the organizations they govern. This chapter will attempt to flesh out the alternative theory by describing in specific terms the content of the institutional framework of the Orthodox Church governing organizational change. It will demonstrate how the institutional framework of the church evolved in the political geography of the Roman Empire and incorporated the organizational adaptations the church made to that geography. The variety of rules in that framework – concerning territorial accommodation, the prioritization of sees, the rights of bishops and historically independent churches, and the role of established customs of administration – provide the institutional parameters governing autocephaly as a form of organizational change. How those parameters actually guided organizational change, and the role of state enforcement, will be the subject of our historical survey in chapter 5.

### **4.1 Territorial Accommodation and the Institutions of the Church**

The institutional rules governing the organization of the church evolved in the political context of the Roman Empire, and the church's organizational patterns were profoundly and irrevocably shaped by Roman political and legal practices. This

situation was accelerated by the legalization of the church under Constantine I (306-337) and the subsequent adoption of Christianity as the official religion of the empire. The division of the empire into eastern and western halves under Diocletian (284-305), and the survival through the 15<sup>th</sup> century of the eastern half as the Byzantine Empire with its capital in Constantinople, framed the various forms of ecclesiastical organization in the Christian East in terms that far outlived the political circumstances in which they arose.<sup>77</sup> These organizational forms were validated and codified in ecclesiastical legislation voted at early church councils, and it is this legislation (formal rules), along with ancient custom and interpretations and applications of ecclesiastical legislation (informal rules), which comprise the bulk of the institutional framework governing church organization.

It is important to reiterate that autocephaly, as a particular form of church organization, was not an invention of the church promulgated through ecclesiastical legislation. Rather, the ecclesiastical legislation recognized and codified a form of organization already in existence. Ecclesiastical boundaries by design largely corresponded to the political boundaries in which the church existed, and some churches were, by virtue of their unique situations or ancient prerogatives, self-governing, while others were integrated into broader ecclesiastical structures. As one specialist has noted:

Even before the establishment of Christianity as the favored religion of the state, before structures of coordination were defined in written form by conciliar canons, ecclesiastical organization in the Roman Empire already was modeled along the lines of civil administration. Roughly speaking and with several important exceptions, the churches of each province, headed by the metropolitan (i.e., the bishop of the capital city) and the other bishops,

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<sup>77</sup> See overview in "Byzantine Christianity and Greek Orthodoxy," Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001) 97-102.

constituted what was in effect an autocephalous unit. They *were* autocephalous; they did not *become* autocephalous nor were they *granted autocephaly* by some higher authority.<sup>78</sup>

This extant system of ecclesiastical organization, which presumed an organic linkage with political geography, enabled the church in the eastern part of the empire to organize itself in a coherent and consistent way. The geography did not remain static, however, and as we will see in chapter 5, the church had to continually adjust its system of self-organization in tandem with corresponding changes in the political geography. These adjustments were governed by the institutional framework as it evolved largely during the first five to seven centuries of the church's existence.

This deliberate correspondence of ecclesiastical to political boundaries, which has been termed by later scholars as territorial accommodation,<sup>79</sup> had three implications, per L'Hullier. First, the primordial and irreducible ecclesiastical unit, the local church gathered around its bishop, could be unified into higher-level units that corresponded to civil boundaries such as provinces. Second, territorial accommodation enabled a purely political prioritization of churches (as opposed to prioritization justified exclusively by divine right, as with Rome) in which bishops located in provincial capitals (metropolitan bishops) assumed a senior status among all local bishops; this later allowed certain important metropolises to emerge as ecclesial centers of gravity whose spheres of influence expanded over time. Third, it permitted the church to acquire a political philosophy, reflected in its institutional framework, in which the emperor possessed a divinely instituted responsibility for the

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<sup>78</sup> Erickson, *The Challenge of Our Past* 94, italics in original.

<sup>79</sup> As noted in chapter 3, this term is used by, among others, L'Hullier and Dvornik as an analytical category. It was not a term used by the church at the time.

entirety of the Christian realm, even though his prerogatives did not extend to the sacerdotal. The cumulative result was the integral role played by emperors (and subsequent political authorities) in the life of the church and the very close identification of church ecclesiology with political organization.<sup>80</sup> The institutional rules governing autocephaly evolved directly from ecclesiastical legislation enacted in this context.

Territorial accommodation also provides the context for understanding autocephaly itself as an organizational form. The institutions of the church, in the political context of the Roman Empire, mandated that all bishops in a given civil province were charged with coming together to elect and consecrate a new bishop among them (a minimum of three bishops were required), and the bishop of the metropolis of that province was recognized as the senior-most bishop (the primate) among the college of bishops. To the extent no higher or external authority was required for the election and consecration of bishops, that territory, unified under its metropolitan bishop, constituted what could be described as a functionally independent or autocephalous unit.

Although nowhere in the primary sources informing the institutional framework is the term “autocephaly” per se defined, some secondary sources (such as commentaries on disciplinary canons) have derived and applied the term in the context of primary sources.<sup>81</sup> Three interpretations of how churches legitimately are to become autocephalous have coalesced over time, predicated upon the institutional

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<sup>80</sup> Pierre L’Hullier, “Problems Concerning Autocephaly,” Greek Orthodox Theological Review XXIV.2-3 (1979): 166.

<sup>81</sup> Lewis J. Patsavos, “Canon Law of the Orthodox Church,” course manual, Holy Cross School of Theology, 1975, 21.

rules governing church organization as they evolved over the first five to seven centuries of the church's history. Generally, autocephaly legitimately may be granted (1) by the nascent subsidiary's parent church, (2) by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople as the preeminent see, or (3) by an ecumenical council. A fourth possibility, in which the validity of a new autocephalous church is predicated upon its recognition by the community of existing autocephalous churches, implies an even more contentious process than the other three and has almost never been observed in practice.<sup>82</sup> In recent cases where churches are declared autocephalous, that act of organizational change consistently is justified on the basis of one of these three interpretations – which is to say, in specifically *institutional* terms. This is not to say that the process is not contentious, however, and when the state is in either an adversarial role or absent as an enforcer, and the costs of defection from contractual relationships are reduced, organizational change occurs with little practical restriction by the institutional framework. Historical cases of autocephaly will be examined in chapter 5 in the hope of demonstrating this phenomenon.

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<sup>82</sup> These four scenarios are examined in, among others, Bogolepov, "Conditions" 11-37. A council recognized by the Orthodox Church as ecumenical has not convened in over 1,000 years. Other councils that have convened since the 9<sup>th</sup> century in both the Eastern (Orthodox) and Western (Roman Catholic) churches have been recognized in the East as purely local synods with no universal applicability. Preparations for a general council among all the Eastern Orthodox churches were occurring through the mid-1990s but work on that project all but ceased due to a variety of political complications. For more on the role of local councils see Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Penguin Putnam, 1997) 202-03. For an insightful analysis of which councils are considered ecumenical and binding by both sides see Francis Dvornik, "Which Councils are Ecumenical?" *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 3.2 (1966): 314-28. For a further discussion on the role of ecumenical councils vis-à-vis the granting of autocephaly see L'Hullier, "Accession to Autocephaly" 281-85.

## 4.2 Sources of Institutional Content

As noted in chapter 3, ecclesiastical legislation in the Eastern (Orthodox) Church was never standardized into a singular internally consistent corpus to the same extent as in the Western (Roman Catholic) Church. Five basic sources, however, underpin the Orthodox Church's formal institutional framework. These are, per Meyendorff and others: (1) Conciliar and patristic sources (comprising the canons of the ecumenical (universal) and local councils along with writings by individual authors widely accepted as authoritative); (2) Imperial legislation (such as the Code of Justinian, although in cases of conflict between canons and imperial laws canons were understood as taking precedence, and imperial legislation that contradicted Christian dogma could not be accepted); (3) Codifications of ecclesiastical legislation (compilations such as the influential *Nomocanons in Fourteen Titles* assembled under Patriarch Photios, which systematized a large body of ecclesiastical legislation and became highly influential in the Slavic churches beyond the Byzantine Empire); (4) Commentaries (such as those by Theodore Balsamon, John Zonaras, and Alexios Aristenos, all 12<sup>th</sup> century canonists who issued authoritative commentaries and interpretations of ecclesiastical legislation); and (5) Official decrees by church hierarchs (patriarchs and synods of bishops, with the Patriarch of Constantinople preeminent particularly following the mutual estrangement between the Eastern and Western churches).<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> John Meyendorff, "Ecclesiology: Canonical Sources," *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (New York: Fordham, 1976) 79-88. See also Ware, 199-207; and Patrick Viscuso, "A Late Byzantine Theology of Canon Law," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 34.3 (1989): 203-19.

The church also developed and accepted informal rules as well. These came often in the form of longstanding customs and convention (“ancient tradition”) that predated formal legislation, as well as later interpretations and applications of the formal legislation that, even if not codified, became normative. Pastorally the church applied informal rules through the use of *economia* (“economy”), properly understood as the flexible interpretation of formal rules. According to Joseph Allen,

*Economia* is *the* means by which the hierarchs of the Eastern Church can face – and bypass – certain rigid and narrow restrictions imposed by the letter of canon law. It allows them to accommodate ecclesial regulations to each particular context as it arises. *Economia* is never *considered* for use in cases touching upon the basic doctrines – the dogmas – of the faith. Its function is to respond to those regulations inherited from the past whose time and relevance are past.<sup>84</sup>

*Economia* is best understood as operative in individual cases of episcopal discretion involving issues surrounding application of canon law (as in rules regulating marriage, divorce, ordination, church discipline, etc.). It is less germane to “corporate” issues such as church organization and autocephaly. However, it reveals the Orthodox Church’s ability and tendency to rely on informal institutional rules that provide elasticity where the formal rules do not. As L’Hullier has noted,

In many cases, the canons merely endorsed customs which were seen to be legitimate. To the extent that written law (canons and imperial laws) gained ground, custom was more or less limited to the domain of precedents. We could, it is true, quote the statement of Metropolitan Zachary of Chalcedon at the time of the Council of St. Sophia (879-880): “custom has a tendency to outweigh canons,” but we must not overestimate the significance of a statement formulated during a discussion or take it as a fundamental principle of Byzantine church law. Appealing to custom remains limited, as we can

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<sup>84</sup> Joseph J. Allen, “*Economia* as the Critical Principle in Making Decisions of Priesthood and Marriage,” *Vested in Grace: Priesthood and Marriage in the Christian East*, ed. Joseph J. Allen (Brookline: Holy Cross, 2001) 3-4, italics in original. See also Meyendorff, “Ecclesiology: Canonical Sources” 89-90.

clearly see in reading the *Nomocanon in XIV Titles* and the commentaries of Balsamon on this work.<sup>85</sup>

We will see this “endorsement” of ancient custom encoded in the formal institutional rules themselves. The five sources of formal institutional rules, though enumerated here as discrete categories, in practice usually found their way into the institutional framework in a cumulative fashion, reinforced by informal rules. For example, the elevation of the status of the Patriarchate of Constantinople to a preeminent position within the Eastern church – a significant and durable feature of church organization in the Christian East – was the combined result of conciliar legislation (canon 28 of the council of Chalcedon, to be discussed below), patriarchal decrees (encyclicals by patriarchs from the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries asserting “universal” leadership), and authoritative commentaries (e.g. by Balsamon, also discussed below).<sup>86</sup> However, it is the disciplinary canons voted during the major general councils of the first seven centuries of the church’s history that form the foundation of the institutional framework governing church organization, and analysis of these particular canons will occupy much of the rest of this chapter. The texts of the canons themselves, though seemingly obtuse at times, are of great importance given the weight they carry, and must be examined in their entirety to ensure that their context remains as clear as possible.

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<sup>85</sup> L’Hullier, *The Church of the Ancient Councils: The Disciplinary Work of the First Four Ecumenical Councils* (New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1996) 2.

<sup>86</sup> Meyendorff, “Ecclesiology: Canonical Sources” 86-87.

### 4.3 Conciliar Sources: The Institutionalization of Territorial Accommodation

Evidence of the essential or primordial organizational principle of territorial accommodation can be found in ecclesiastical legislation adopted during the first general council, convened at Nicaea in 325, particularly in canon 4 voted by the council:

It is by all means desirable that a bishop should be appointed by all the bishops of the province. But if this is difficult because of some pressing necessity or the length of the journey involved, let at least three come together and perform the ordination, but only after the absent bishops have taken part in the vote and given their written consent. But in each province the right of confirming the proceedings belongs to the metropolitan bishop.<sup>87</sup>

This canon formalizes the role of the bishops of the province, headed by the bishop of the metropolitan center of that province, in appointing new bishops for that province, and hence “[t]his decision implied that the civil provinces...constituted the geographical boundaries on which the territorial organization of the Church was henceforth to be modeled.”<sup>88</sup> As the term territorial accommodation (a later academic appellation, not to be found in conciliar legislation) implies, this system of organization was intended to provide institutional rather than dogmatic content by which the church could regularize its organizational life.<sup>89</sup> This can be seen in exceptions to the rule recognizing long-standing administrative customs particular to certain areas and the recognition that “exceptional rights” or unique prerogatives applied to the major metropolitan centers of Alexandria, Rome and Antioch.<sup>90</sup> These exceptions were summed up in canon 6 of Nicaea:

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<sup>87</sup> Translation taken from Norman P. Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, Volume I: Nicaea I to Lateran V* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown, 1990) 7.

<sup>88</sup> L’Hullier, *The Church of the Ancient Councils* 38.

<sup>89</sup> L’Hullier, “Problems Concerning Autocephaly” 170.

<sup>90</sup> Bogolepov 15.

The ancient customs of Egypt, Libya and Pentapolis shall be maintained, according to which the bishop of Alexandria has authority over all these places, since a similar custom exists with reference to the bishop of Rome. Similarly in Antioch and the other provinces the prerogatives of the churches are to be preserved. In general the following principle is evident: if anyone is made bishop without the consent of the metropolitan, this great synod determines that such a one shall not be a bishop. If however two or three by reason of personal rivalry dissent from the common vote of all, provided it is reasonable and in accordance with the church's canon, the vote of the majority shall prevail.<sup>91</sup>

Diocletian's reforms, which multiplied and reordered the provinces in the empire, threatened to limit the existing special prerogatives (extending beyond a single province) of the metropolitan bishops of Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria, and canon 6 sought to preserve these rights while limiting other metropolitan bishops to what was traditionally customary, i.e. with the bishop of Jerusalem as referenced in canon 7,<sup>92</sup> which states:

Since there prevails a custom and ancient tradition to the effect that the bishop of Aelia [Jerusalem] is to be honoured, let him be granted everything consequent upon this honour, saving the dignity proper to the metropolitan.<sup>93</sup>

This early legislation suggests that the church was recognizing as legitimate systems of organization already in place which in fact were reflections of the political geography of that time.<sup>94</sup> What is important from the perspective of church organization is that the Nicaean council established general rights for metropolitan bishops; significantly, however, it envisaged no jurisdictional power greater than that of the metropolitan bishop, nor did it presume the complete autonomy of each local church – both of which were concepts that were incorporated into the institutional

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<sup>91</sup> Tanner 8-9; per Tanner footnote 2, see also Apostolic canons 34 and 35.

<sup>92</sup> L'Hullier, "Problems Concerning Autocephaly" 172; and L'Hullier, The Church of the Ancient Councils 45-53.

<sup>93</sup> Tanner 9.

<sup>94</sup> L'Huller, The Church of the Ancient Councils 53-56.

content of the church later on.<sup>95</sup> We can find proof of this in the fact, for example, that the key word “metropolitan” was subsequently deleted, evidently during the 5<sup>th</sup> century, from the text of canon 6 to bolster the justification for the increasing consolidation of jurisdictional power into major sees (e.g. pentarchy) (in other words, the key sentence of canon 6 reportedly originally read: “...In...the other provinces the prerogatives of the *metropolitan* churches are to be preserved”).<sup>96</sup>

#### **4.4 Conciliar Sources: Pentarchy and the Prerogatives of the Major Sees**

Conciliar legislation of this period reflected the tension between the consolidation of jurisdictional power into major sees and efforts to uphold and protect the rights of metropolitan and local bishops. The general council convened at Constantinople in 381 clarified and extended territorial accommodation and established special prerogatives for the bishop of Constantinople analogous to those afforded to the major metropolises of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch.<sup>97</sup> This legislation would become important later on both in the evolution of the pentarchic organization of the church and in the legitimization of autocephalous churches after the collapse of the empire. At the same time, canon 2 recognized the independence and administrative sovereignty of the metropolitan bishops, and specifically the sovereignty of the bishops of Alexandria, Antioch, Asia Minor, Pontus, and Thrace:<sup>98</sup>

Diocesan bishops are not to intrude in churches beyond their own boundaries, nor are they to confuse the churches: but in accordance with the canons, the bishop of Alexandria is to administer affairs in Egypt only; the bishops of the

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<sup>95</sup> L’Hullier, “Ecclesiology in the Canons of the First Nicene Council,” St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly 27.2 (1983): 126.

<sup>96</sup> L’Hullier, “Ecclesiology in the Canons of the First Nicene Council” 128.

<sup>97</sup> L’Hullier, The Church of the Ancient Councils 115-19.

<sup>98</sup> Bogolepov 13, and also L’Hullier, The Church of the Ancient Councils 118-19.

East are to manage the East alone (whilst safeguarding the privileges granted to the church of the Antiochenes in the Nicene canons); and the bishops of the Asian diocese are to manage only Asian affairs; and those in Pontus only the affairs of Pontus; and those in Thrace only Thracian affairs. Unless invited, bishops are not to go outside their diocese to perform an ordination or any other ecclesiastical business. If the letter of the canon about dioceses is kept, it is clear that the provincial synod will manage affairs in each province, as was decreed at Nicaea. But the churches of God among barbarian peoples must be administered in accordance with the custom in force at the time of the fathers.<sup>99</sup>

Importantly, there were churches outside the political geography of the Roman Empire that did not fit into this system of territorial accommodation, which created anomalous organizational arrangements. An example of this is the Church of Armenia. De facto independent of Caesaria by the late 300s or so, it lay beyond Pontus outside the eastern boundary of the empire (“among the barbarian peoples”), and canon 2 reflects the accommodation – the formalization of a previously informal rule, as it were – by the church to this political reality.<sup>100</sup> This interpretation was affirmed much later in the writings of Theodore Balsamon, the 12<sup>th</sup> century Byzantine hierarch and canonist, who noted in a commentary on canon 2 that by the time of the council at Constantinople “every ecclesiastical province was autocephalous.”<sup>101</sup> Commentaries such as Balsamon’s both reflected the contemporary understanding by the church of its own history in granting autocephaly, and provided a foundation for future justifications of autocephaly. It therefore comprises, along with canon 2 itself, part of the content of the institutional rules governing autocephaly.

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<sup>99</sup> Tanner 31-32. Tanner notes that “[n]o copy of the council’s doctrinal decisions...has survived. So what is presented here is the synodical letter of the synod of Constantinople held in 382, which expounded these doctrinal decisions, as the fathers witness, in summary form...” Tanner 21.

<sup>100</sup> L’Hullier, “Accession to Autocephaly” 271.

<sup>101</sup> Cited in L’Hullier “Accession to Autocephaly” 269.

The second article adopted by the council that forms part of the institutional framework is canon 3:

*Because it is new Rome, the bishop of Constantinople is to enjoy the privileges of honour after the bishop of Rome.*<sup>102</sup>

This canon enabled a reprioritization of the five major sees within the church (the other three being Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch), elevating the status of Constantinople commensurate with its status as the imperial capital and center of political power, which would become important in later definitions of its prerogative to grant and recognize autocephalous churches.<sup>103</sup> Significantly, this canon (and the other six adopted at the council) were not accepted by the see of Rome. While eventually acknowledging the reprioritization of sees (of which it legitimately remained the first), Rome never accepted an abrogation of its unique authority and prerogatives which it saw as derived not from political arrangements but by divine institution.<sup>104</sup> This would be a significant factor in the growing estrangement and eventually permanent schism between the Eastern and Western Churches.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Translation taken from Tanner.

<sup>103</sup> L'Hullier, The Church of the Ancient Councils 119-22.

<sup>104</sup> In reference to this particular event Aidan Nichols has noted: "Whilst this move was mainly anti-Alexandrian [against the rising pretensions of that see], it also imperiled Roman primacy, since the ground for promotion was that Constantinople is the new Rome. The following year, 382, pope Damasus held a synod which, inter alia, protested against the passing of this canon, stoutly maintaining that the Roman church owed her primacy to the decrees of no episcopal assembly, but directly to Christ himself. For Damasus, indeed, Rome was the *sedes prima Petri apostoli*, the 'first see of the apostle Peter'. More, the see of Rome is now spoken of as *sedes apostolica*, the apostolic see *simpliciter* – as though no others worth mentioning existed. ... The claims of Constantinople compelled Rome to move further along the road to a fully efficacious primacy, gathering together her earlier titles into the compendious counter-claim to be the exclusive inheritor of all the New Testament tells us of the prerogatives of Peter." Rome and the Eastern Churches: A Study in Schism 163.

<sup>105</sup> Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity 414. Cf. also the Catholic Encyclopedia entry on the "First Council of Constantinople"; and Tanner 23. For additional background on information on the historical, cultural, and theological causes of the growing East-West estrangement, see among others Deno John Geanakoplos, Byzantine East and Latin West: Two Worlds of Christendom in Middle Ages and Renaissance (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966); J.M. Hussey, The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986); Steven Runciman, The Great Church in Captivity (New York:

A local synodal council convened in Constantinople in 394, dealing with issues particular to the eastern part of the empire, also affirmed the territorial accommodation principles outlined at Nicaea and validated the status of Constantinople as “New Rome,” the bishop of which would be second in rank after the Roman pontiff. The rationale for this decision was that Constantinople “lay outside the standard system of the administrative division of the Roman Empire into prefectures, dioceses and provinces,”<sup>106</sup> and was entitled to conciliar recognition of its preeminent position.

#### **4.5 Conciliar Sources: Prerogatives of Local and Metropolitan Bishops**

Ecclesiastical legislation continued to uphold the rights of bishops and stress the relationship between a bishop’s territory and civil boundaries, particularly in the case of metropolitan bishops. A local council, convened in Antioch in 341, recognized that in addition to the right to validate and confirm election of bishops within his province, the metropolitan bishop also had the right to oversee and provide pastoral care over the whole of the province. Furthermore, the metropolitan bishop was to enjoy primacy of honor over other bishops of the province but not direct administrative authority over them, preside over provincial synod of bishops, and control the right of appeal to the emperor.<sup>107</sup> Canon 9 noted that “It behooves the bishops in every province to acknowledge the bishop who presides in the metropolis” – and therefore, Bogolepov has concluded that “in the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> century the

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Cambridge, 1968); and John Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions* (New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1989).

<sup>106</sup> L’Hullier, “Accession to Autocephaly” 282.

<sup>107</sup> Canons 9, 19, 20, and 11, respectively. L’Hullier, “Accession to Autocephaly” 268-69.

territorial principle was recognized as paramount for the establishment and government of ecclesiastical districts, regardless of whether or not it conformed to the national principle. The national principle was significant only so far as it coincided with the territorial principle, but it could never override it.”<sup>108</sup>

The following general council, convened at Ephesus in 431, had the primary purpose of resolving dogmatic disputes with the church and formalizing distinctions between heterodox and orthodox Christian beliefs. One resolution, however, later was recognized by the Orthodox churches as normative in terms of justification for autocephaly. This resolution centered on an affirmation of the independence of the particularly ancient Church of Cyprus, again on the basis of longstanding custom (again, formalizing a previously informal institution) rather than political geography, against claims of hegemony by the See of Antioch. The full text of the particular resolution from the council governing the regulation of the Church of Cyprus is important and reads as follows:

*The most reverent bishop Rheginus and with him Zenon and Evagrius, revered bishops of the province of Cyprus, have brought forward what is both an innovation against the ecclesiastical customs and the canons of the holy fathers and concerns the freedom of all. Therefore, since common diseases need more healing as they bring greater harm with them, if it has not been a continuous ancient custom for the bishop of Antioch to hold ordinations in Cyprus—as it is asserted in memorials and orally by the religious men who have come before the synod — the prelates of the holy churches of Cyprus shall, free from molestation and violence, use their right to perform by themselves the ordination of reverent bishops for their island, according to the canons of the holy fathers and the ancient custom.*

*The same principle will be observed for other dioceses and provinces everywhere. None of the reverent bishops is to take possession of another province which has not been under his authority from the first or under that of his predecessors. Any one who has thus seized upon and subjected a province*

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<sup>108</sup> Bogolepov 16.

is to restore it, *lest the canons of the fathers be transgressed and the arrogance of secular power effect an entry through the cover of priestly office.* We must avoid bit by bit destroying the freedom which our lord Jesus Christ, the liberator of all people, gave us through his own blood. *It is therefore the pleasure of the holy and ecumenical synod to secure intact and inviolate the rights belonging to each province from the first, according to the custom which has been in force from of old.* Each metropolitan has the right to take a copy of the proceedings for his own security. If any one produces a version which is at variance with what is here decided, the holy and ecumenical synod unanimously decrees it to be of no avail.<sup>109</sup>

Significantly, one of the three Cypriot bishops present at the council (the above-mentioned Rheginus) was the elected head of the Church of Cyprus, and the formal conciliar recognition of that church's independence was also a recognition by the churches represented of the validity of his election, which occurred at the hands of the bishops of Cyprus (and not those of Antioch).<sup>110</sup> The Orthodox churches subsequently have derived from this particular resolution, among others, the two defining characteristics or "inalienable rights" of the autocephalous church (of which Cyprus was considered a prototype): the right to control its internal affairs (administrative independence) and the right to appoint its own bishops (ecclesiastical independence).<sup>111</sup> This particular resolution is significant insofar as it recurs often in subsequent ecclesiastical disputes regarding the legality of a particular church's move toward autocephaly. The case of Cyprus invariably is referenced as a clear and unambiguous affirmation of the sovereignty of bishops and legitimacy of independent, autocephalous churches.

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<sup>109</sup> Tanner 68-69, italics added. Tanner also cross-references Nicaea I canons 6-7; Constantinople I canon 2; Apostolic canons 34-35; Antioch 341 canons 9, 13, and 22; and Sardica 342-43 canons 3, 11 and 12. Tanner 68, footnote 1.

<sup>110</sup> Bogolepov 13.

<sup>111</sup> Bogolepov 13.

#### 4.6 Conciliar Sources: Prerogatives of the Major Metropolitan Sees

As noted earlier, local sovereignty and structural pluralism coexisted, often uneasily, with a steady drive toward consolidation of the churches around a hierarchical taxonomy of major sees. The general council convened at Chalcedon in 451 voted an important piece of ecclesiastical legislation, canon 28, which has been interpreted subsequently by Orthodox churches as deconflicting and resolving in a definitive way the jurisdictional and supra-metropolitan rights of the sees of Jerusalem, Antioch, and Constantinople; recognizing the jurisdictional claims of Constantinople over the civil dioceses of Pontus, Asia, and Thrace; and raising Constantinople's status to equal that of Rome. Such a resolution was necessary because of the tension developing between the roles of metropolitan bishops (the bishops of the capital cities of each province) versus the rights of the bishops of the major sees. As L'Hullier has noted

There was a conflict between two conceptions of church organization: according to the more ancient law, each province was normally to enjoy autocephaly; strictly limited exceptions were allowed in the cases of Rome, Alexandria and Antioch. According to the new law which had not yet received official approval, there was a tendency for a generalized control by the major sees to develop over vast areas. This was to result in the constitution of the patriarchates.<sup>112</sup>

This canon, while institutionalizing the organizational arrangement emerging in the Christian East, was rejected in the West by the See of Rome on the argument that it

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<sup>112</sup> L'Hullier, *The Church of the Ancient Councils* 277.

ran counter to the disciplinary canons of Nicaea and abrogated the rights of particular local churches.<sup>113</sup> Canon 28 reads as follows:

Following in every way the decrees of the holy fathers and recognising the canon which has recently been read out – the canon of the 150 most devout bishops who assembled in the time of the great Theodosius of pious memory, then emperor, in imperial Constantinople, new Rome – we issue the same decree and resolution concerning the prerogatives of the most holy church of the same Constantinople, new Rome. *The fathers rightly accorded prerogatives to the see of older Rome, since that is an imperial city; and moved by the same purpose the 150 most devout bishops apportioned equal prerogatives to the most holy see of new Rome, reasonably judging that the city which is honoured by the imperial power and senate and enjoying privileges equaling older imperial Rome, should also be elevated to her level in ecclesiastical affairs and take second place after her.* The metropolitans of the dioceses of Pontus, Asia and Thrace, but only these, as well as the bishops of these dioceses who work among non-Greeks, are to be ordained by the aforesaid most holy see of the most holy church in Constantinople. That is, *each metropolitan of the aforesaid dioceses along with the bishops of the province ordain the bishops of the province, as has been declared in the divine canons; but the metropolitans of the aforesaid dioceses, as has been said, are to be ordained by the archbishop of Constantinople, once agreement has been reached by vote in the usual way and has been reported to him.*<sup>114</sup>

Another important piece of legislation voted by the council pertaining to autocephaly is canon 17, which the Orthodox churches have viewed as yet another affirmation of the validity of territorial accommodation as an institutional rule:

Rural or country parishes belonging to a church are to stay firmly tied to the bishops who have possession of them, and especially if they have continually and peacefully administered them over a thirty-year period. If, however, within the thirty years any dispute about them has arisen, or should arise, those who are claiming to be wronged are permitted to bring the case before the provincial synod. If there are any who are wronged by their own metropolitan, let their case be judged either by the exarch of the diocese or by the see of Constantinople, as has already been said. If any city has been newly

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<sup>113</sup> Tanner 76. Tanner also cross-references Constantinople I canon 3; and Apostolic canon 34. Tanner 99, footnote 3. Tanner notes that this particular canon, unlike the others, does not appear in the standard Latin translation provided by Dionysius Exiguus. Tanner 76. See also the discussion in *Blackwell's Dictionary of Eastern Christianity* 414. For a detailed exegesis of this particular canon see L'Hullier, *The Church of the Ancient Councils* 267-96.

<sup>114</sup> Tanner 76, italics added.

erected, or is erected hereafter, by imperial decree, *let the arrangement of ecclesiastical parishes conform to the civil and public regulations.*<sup>115</sup>

The last phrase confirming the conformity of ecclesiastical parishes to municipal patterns further justifies organization of ecclesiastical boundaries along political lines.<sup>116</sup> Although this canon, like the ones before it in previous councils, was the result of a resolution passed against the political backdrop of the Roman Empire (and in fact was limited in scope to the political geography as it existed at that time), it has been taken to mean more generally that whatever the political context, ecclesiastical boundaries validly may conform (and in fact should conform) to political ones. This interpretation was likewise reflected in the decisions of the local African council convened at Carthage between 419 and 424. In reference to the independence of the Church of Carthage, the council affirmed that “all matters should be determined in the places where they arise.”<sup>117</sup>

Another issue relevant to autocephaly can be found in canon 12, which governed the treatment of bishops who had been raised to status of metropolitan when the civil province in which he operated was divided in two, creating two metropolitan seats where there used to be only one:

It has come to our notice that, contrary to the ecclesiastical regulations, some have made approaches to the civil authorities and have divided one province into two by official mandate, with the result that there are two metropolitans in the same province. The sacred synod therefore decrees that in future no bishop should dare do such a thing, since he who attempts it stands to lose his proper station. Such places as have already been honoured by imperial writ with the title of metropolis must treat it simply as honorary, and that goes also

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<sup>115</sup> Tanner 95, italics added. Tanner also cross-references Nicaea canon 6; Apostolic canons 74; Antioch (341) canons 14-15; and a long list of canons from Carthage (419). Tanner 95, footnote 1.

<sup>116</sup> See for example the discussion in Bogolepov 15.

<sup>117</sup> Bogolepov 13.

for the bishop who is in charge of the church there, without prejudice of course to the proper rights of the real metropolis.<sup>118</sup>

In this case, obviously the original metropolitan had an incentive to oppose the creation of a second metropolitan seat, entailing as it would the loss of prestige and income, and the church's solution was to make the newly-created metropolitan an "autocephalous" archbishop (an honorary title only, as canon 12 stipulates) directly answerable to the Patriarch of Constantinople. This administrative arrangement, which was applied until it fell out of use in the Middle Ages, was qualitatively different than those archbishops (such as the archbishop of Cyprus, as referenced in the Council of Ephesus, above) who were functionally independent of the patriarch.<sup>119</sup> This usage of term "autocephalous" is distinct from the usage under examination here, implying as it does external dependency (in sense of a direct linkage to the patriarch) rather than the absence of that dependency, and this different usage can be confusing. Given that this usage really is a distinct entity altogether, it will not be considered further in this examination, but we mention it given its historical significance: there were at least 24 of these autocephalous archbishoprics in existence in the Byzantine Empire by the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, presumably due to repeated provincial reorganizations.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Tanner 93. Tanner also cross-references Nicaea canons 6-8; Constantinople I canons 2-3; Ephesus canon 8; and Apostolic canon 34. Tanner 93, footnote 1.

<sup>119</sup> Hussey 325. See also L'Hullier, "Problems Concerning Autocephaly" 167.

<sup>120</sup> See map 3 in Hussey.

#### 4.7 Other Conciliar Sources Governing Church Organization

In terms of institutional rules governing organizational change, the remaining general councils largely reiterated and codified the essential principles laid out during the previous three centuries. The next general council whose legislation was to inform the institutional rules governing autocephaly convened at Constantinople “in Trullo” in 692. This council planned to vote a series of disciplinary canons since the two previous (fifth and sixth) general councils (of 553 and 680-81, both convened at Constantinople) had not done so. It therefore was intended as a completion of or addendum to both councils, hence its title *Quinisextum* or *Penthekte* (“Fifth-Sixth”).<sup>121</sup> Many of the disciplinary canons recapitulated those promulgated in previous general councils. Once again, however, the canons particular to church organization were not accepted by Rome and consequently were not normative in the Western Church.<sup>122</sup> Canon 36, recalling canon 28 of Chalcedon (381) and canons 2 and 3 of Constantinople I (451), recognized the pentarchic arrangement of sees according to rank:

Renewing the enactments by the 150 Fathers assembled at the God-protected and imperial city, and those of the 630 who met at Chalcedon; we decree that the see of Constantinople shall have equal privileges with the see of Old Rome, and shall be highly regarded in ecclesiastical matters as that is, and shall be second after it. After Constantinople shall be ranked the See of Alexandria, then that of Antioch, and afterwards the See of Jerusalem.

Canon 38 reiterates the critical content of canon 17 of Chalcedon:

The canon which was made by the Fathers we also observe, which thus decreed: If any city be renewed by imperial authority, or shall have been

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<sup>121</sup> See entry in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. IV (1908).

<sup>122</sup> *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. IV (1908).

renewed, let the order of things ecclesiastical follow the civil and public models.

Both of these canons formed part of the institutional framework that later governed the establishment or recognition of autocephalous churches following the collapse of the Byzantine Empire.

The next general council at Nicaea, convened in 787, did not vote disciplinary canons pertinent to autocephaly or other issues of church organization. The subsequent council which convened in Constantinople in 869-70, although designated as ecumenical in the Western Church after the 11<sup>th</sup> century, never attained that status in the Eastern Church. Its disciplinary canons were not observed in (Chalcedonian) Eastern Christendom and do not form part of its institutional framework, being absent from its collections of canon law and commentaries on the same.<sup>123</sup>

#### **4.8 Later Application of Institutional Rules: Four Examples**

The application of the canons and resolutions cited can be observed in the changing contractual relationships between various local churches in the centuries following the collapse of the Byzantine Empire (resulting in the loss of the church's traditional third-party enforcer). Institutional rules that had justified or codified the existence of autocephalous churches within the empire were cited as precedents to justify autocephaly of new churches under a radically reconfigured political

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<sup>123</sup> See Tanner 157. For a more in-depth discussion of the differences in understanding between the Eastern and Western Churches over which councils properly are to be considered universal in scope, see Francis Dvornik, "Which Councils are Ecumenical?" 314-28.

geography. One example of this dynamic can be seen in the edition of the “Rudder” (*Kormchaia Kniga*), a compendium of ecclesiastical regulations published by Russian Patriarch Nikon in 1653, which among other things justified the autocephaly of the Russian Church and the severing of its over six-century ecclesiastical dependence upon the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The justification for the Russian Church’s autocephaly was based on three premises: First, drawing upon canonical precedents noted above, the development of a nation into a self-governing state means that an equivalent change can and should occur in the local church. Second, administrative dependencies of one church upon another (in this case the Patriarch of Constantinople’s exclusive right to ordain Russian metropolitan bishops) imposed unnecessary hardships on the Russian church. Third, Moscow considered itself “worthy of the Patriarchal dignity, since Moscow [in a status analogous to Constantinople] was a royal city of the Russian Kingdom.”<sup>124</sup> Antecedents to all three premises can be found in the canons cited above, and in fact the canons, combined with their previous application in other churches, provided the institutional basis for the autocephaly of the Russian church. But the impetus behind the declaration of independence also had political (and dogmatic) overtones: as will be noted in chapter 5, the declaration of union by Constantinople with Rome, although accepted in the ancient see of Kiev, was never accepted in the whole of the Russian church and prompted the establishment of a new see, of patriarchal dignity, at Moscow.

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<sup>124</sup> Bogolepov 17.

In a second example, Patriarch Alexis of Moscow in 1948 reiterated the principles laid out in the 1653 *Kormchaia Kniga* necessitating the autocephaly of the Russian Church, again affirming the ecclesiastical self-sufficiency (via adequate number of ruling bishops) of the Russian Church, the location of the Russian Church within a separate state, Russia's national distinctness, and necessity of local self rule through appointment of its own bishops.<sup>125</sup> All of these rationales were justified as canonical, congruent not only with the decisions of councils (formal rules) but also validated historically by church practice (informal rules).

A third example can be found in the letter from Patriarch Joachim III of Constantinople in 1879 recognizing the autocephaly of the Church of Serbia, which affirmed establishment of autocephalous churches “not only in conformity with the historical importance of the cities and countries in Christianity, but also according to political conditions of the life of their people and nation.” The letter, specifically citing canon 28 of Chalcedon and other precedents, noted that “[t]he ecclesiastical rights, especially those of parishes, usually follow the political subdivision of the country and the government concerned.” The letter then proclaimed the independence of the Church of Serbia on the basis of (1) the new *political* independence of Serbia itself, and (2) the formal written requests of Serbian Prince Miloš Obrenović and Archbishop Michael of Belgrade to Constantinople for autocephaly “conforming with the political independence of the state [of Serbia].”<sup>126</sup>

In a fourth example, Ecumenical Patriarch Gregory VII of Constantinople, in a *tomos* of November 1924, affirmed the validity of territorial accommodation as

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<sup>125</sup> Bogolepov 18-19.

<sup>126</sup> Cited in Bogolepov 17-18.

justification for recognizing the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in Poland.<sup>127</sup>

Gregory cited in this decision canon 17 of the Council of Chalcedon and canon 36 of the Council in Trullo. Interestingly, the *tomos* Gregory published also echoed many of the same arguments made just four years earlier in the unsuccessful attempt by the Ukrainian Church to declare autocephaly from the Church of Russia.<sup>128</sup> Justification of autocephaly in institutional terms is not in and of itself a guarantee that the contractual relationship between parent and subsidiary will be successfully renegotiated and autocephaly granted, particularly if, as in the Ukrainian case, the state is in an adversarial position relative to the church and autocephaly is not in the state's interests. However, it is useful to note that even the unsuccessful attempts at securing autocephaly rely on the same institutional rules as the successful events of autocephaly. The institutional framework, even when transposed onto a vastly different political geography, continues to provide the rules by which organizational change in the church is to occur. Enforcement by the state remains, however, a critical factor in the efficacy of those rules in actually governing and constraining change.

#### 4.7 Summary

The institutional framework of the church evolved in the political geography of the Roman Empire and incorporated the organizational adaptations the church made to that geography. That framework comprised a variety of formal and informal

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<sup>127</sup> Bogolepov 18.

<sup>128</sup> Andre Partykevich, Between Kyiv and Constantinople: Oleksander Lototsky and the Quest for Ukrainian Autocephaly (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta, 1998) 58-59.

rules concerning territorial accommodation, the prioritization of sees, the rights of bishops and historically independent churches, and the place of established customs of administration, particularly for those churches outside the political boundaries of the Roman Empire. This framework, when transposed onto different (post-Roman or post-Byzantine) political geography, continued to have a normative effect upon organizational change in the church. Chapter 5 will attempt to demonstrate, through a chronological survey of organizational changes, how the institutional framework governed and constrained organizational change as the political geography shifted and the role of the state as enforcer waxed and waned. Hopefully this survey, and the specific case study to follow in chapter 6, will enable us to assess the validity of our alternative theory, and also to draw meaningful conclusions both specifically about organizational change and more generally about institutions and their durability.

## **Chapter 5: Organizational Change, Institutional Enforcement, and the State: Evidence and Trends**

Our alternative theory states that the church organizes itself in consistent ways against the political geography governed and constrained by the church's institutional framework. This chapter will lay out historical evidence demonstrating that the organizational shape of the church changed significantly over time in conjunction with changes in regimes and shifts in political boundaries, as the theory would suggest. We will observe the state's role in the enforcement, recalibration, and breaking of ecclesiastical relationships. Additionally, we will note the extent to which the institutional framework has been efficacious in governing and constraining organizational change in the context of third-party enforcement. We have argued that formal and informal rules structure the relationships between groups of local churches and provide incentives to observe constraints upon actions that restructure those relationships, subject to enforcement by the state, and in chapters 3 and 4 we laid out much of the content of those rules. This chapter will sketch historical instances of organizational change (e.g. restructuring of ecclesiastical relationships) and the circumstances behind them.

Why is this examination of historical data necessary? To reject the notion that institutions are not relevant to the discussion of organizational change in general and autocephaly in particular, we must demonstrate how the organizational structure of the church has changed over time in response to changes in the political geography, a process governed by the institutional framework and subject to state enforcement. A

survey of the evidence suggests that the church's historical experience has been characterized by *organizational elasticity* and what Meyendorff has called *structural pluralism*.<sup>129</sup> Where we see state advocacy of organizational change we also see recourse to institutional rules governing how those changes are to occur and what their eventual shape should be. The organizational shape of the church bends (elasticity) and assume diverse forms, sometimes even within a single set of political boundaries (structural pluralism), but always within the confines set by the institutional framework – provided the state plays a credible role as enforcer. Where the state is absent in this role or assumes a hostile posture vis-à-vis the church, the constraints of the institutional framework break down and elasticity and pluralism increase to a level inconsistent with the institutional framework.

While a detailed organizational history of the church is well beyond the scope of this limited project, a brief survey of evidence supporting the above-mentioned conclusions is in order. For this purpose it is useful to categorize the organizational history of the church into four (arguably arbitrary) periods:<sup>130</sup> The first is the imperial period, in which a legalized church organized itself first within the Roman empire (including the consolidation of churches into the five major patriarchates of Rome, Constantinople, Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria, plus traditionally independent churches such as Cyprus and Georgia) and later within Eastern Roman (Byzantine) empire. The second is the post-imperial, which saw the subordination of the church in the East to the non-Christian Ottoman Empire and the emergence of autocephalous

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<sup>129</sup> John Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1989) 58.

<sup>130</sup> This is a derivation of a typology introduced by Alexander Schmemmann in "A Meaningful Storm," *Church, World, Mission* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1979) 85-116.

churches in Russia and the Balkans. The third is the national period, in which the independent church became the definitive symbol of the independent nation-state, a trend which became pronounced with the rising tide of nationalism in Europe as the Ottoman Empire collapsed. The fourth is the post-national period, characterized by the disintegration of nation-states and the failure of nationalism, émigré Christian populations no longer located within their respective Orthodox countries, and the collapse of traditional ecclesiastical organizational models. These divisions are not meaningful in an historical sense and are intended only as an analytical aid for the purposes of this study. The phenomena these periods are intended to capture in fact overlap in some cases (e.g. the beginnings of the national period with the end of the post-imperial period). Throughout all four periods autocephaly functions as an “index” issue telling us much about how organizational changes in the church – through the recalibration and breaking of contractual agreements and the role of the state as enforcer – are governed and constrained by the institutional framework.

### **5.1 The Imperial Period**

This period can be located between the legalization of the church in the Roman Empire under Constantine in the 4<sup>th</sup> century through the final collapse of the Byzantine (Eastern Roman) Empire in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. We present such a long span of time as a single period only because of the ongoing presence of some sort of imperial, Christian authority which provided both an organizational reference point and an enforcing agent for the church. This would cease under Ottoman rule and would assume a very different form in the national period, when the state became the

organizational reference point but there was no supranational enforcing authority, which would have direct organizational consequences for the church.

We observe during the imperial period two significant and durable trends in ecclesiastical organization – territorial accommodation and the pentarchic arrangement of sees – both of which were determinative, albeit in different ways, of the evolution and application of the institutional rules governing autocephaly. Whether these two trends opposed, overlapped, or co-existed with one another was largely determined by the shape of the political geography at any given time. But both persisted throughout the span of this lengthy period.

#### *5.1.1 Territorial Accommodation*

We first must recall that initially during this period, as noted in chapter 4, particular churches that had always existed independently *de facto* (either through “ancient custom” or prestige) were recognized in ecumenical councils as being independent *de jure* (Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch at the first council, Thrace, Asia Minor, and Pontus at the second, Cyprus at the third, Constantinople and Jerusalem at the fourth).<sup>131</sup> A conscious effort seems to have been made by the church to ensure that ecclesiastical administration corresponded closely to imperial administrative boundaries, irrespective of the national composition of the particular church. This effort seems to reflect both Roman political philosophy and the pragmatic recognition of the organizational principles required within a multinational empire.

The institutional rules governing autocephaly as a form of organizational change evolved within this context. “In the Byzantine canonical texts the adjective

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<sup>131</sup> Bogolepov 22.

‘autocephalous’ most frequently designated individual ‘archdioceses’ which were not dependent upon a regional metropolitan and his synod, but were appointed either by a patriarch or by the emperor directly.”<sup>132</sup> Eventually, a consensus of sorts emerged that “a new autocephalous church could only be established for a nation lying within the borders of a state independent of that of the Mother Church,” so that from the 9<sup>th</sup> century forward, as the Balkan nations gained independence as discrete states, they established churches within the boundaries of those states.<sup>133</sup> Later, the Church of Russia extended and developed this into a principle of “an autocephalous church in an independent state.”<sup>134</sup> With the rise of the importance of the Church of Russia, an ongoing rivalry began between Moscow and Constantinople over which patriarchate had authority to grant autocephaly to a nascent subsidiary. By the 20<sup>th</sup> century the issue of validation of any autocephaly by the growing community of autocephalous churches came to the fore with the (re)independence of many formerly independent churches.<sup>135</sup> Hence autocephaly as such has roots in the early tendency toward territorial accommodation and the institutional rules that evolved from that tendency.

### *5.1.2 The Pentarchic Arrangement of Sees*

A second trend is the emergence of a pentarchic arrangement of sees, in which five ecclesiastical centers acquired dominant roles in church governance according to a fixed hierarchical order. What we see reflected in the ecclesiastical legislation outlined in chapter 4 is the gradual process of consolidation of ecclesiastical units

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<sup>132</sup> John Meyendorff, “The Catholicity of the Church,” footnote 1, originally published in *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 17.1-2 (1973): 5-18.

<sup>133</sup> Bogolepov 16.

<sup>134</sup> Bogolepov 17.

<sup>135</sup> Bogolepov 30-34.

first into provinces that conformed largely to civil administrative divisions, with major sees either acquiring for themselves or receiving conciliar validation or sanction of special “rights” surpassing those of, for example, a given provincial metropolitan bishop. Metropolises with their major bishoprics spawned churches in outlying townships and territories and maintained pastoral responsibility for them, leading to a pyramidization<sup>136</sup> of bishoprics with the major metropolitan bishoprics at the top. Provinces were consolidated into dioceses – another imperial governmental unit – with various major sees emerging to exercise varying degrees of authority over those dioceses. By the 6<sup>th</sup> century the system had largely crystallized into the following jurisdictional arrangement of major sees: Rome exercised authority increasingly over the western provinces; Constantinople over the dioceses of Pontus, Asia, and Thrace; Alexandria over Egypt; Antioch over the dioceses of the East (sans Cyprus and Palestine); and Jerusalem over the Palestinian provinces. This was the “pentarchic” arrangement that would prove so durable and increasingly normative in later centuries. In addition to these major sees were those that exercised practical jurisdiction but whose status was never institutionalized, such as Thessalonica’s jurisdiction over Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Greece (i.e. the prefecture of Illyricum, sans the diocese of Dacia); and Justiniana Prima over the diocese of Dacia; and Cyprus, which remained a functionally autocephalous province (as recognized by the council of Ephesus).<sup>137</sup>

What is important about the pentarchic arrangement is not the territories themselves (now long lost to history) within the spheres of influence of these five

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<sup>136</sup> Thanks to George Majeska for suggesting this term. See also L’Hullier, The Church of the Ancient Councils 117.

<sup>137</sup> Meyendorff, Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions 278-80.

sees, but rather that there remained a durable recognition, long after their political significance waned, that these sees *continued to possess* unique authority and influence in matters of church organization. Pentarchy thus existed in a very tense relationship with territorial accommodation, which generated other organizational models in response to changes in the political geography (eventually resulting in the coterminous relationship between state and ecclesiastical borders during the national period, and the breakdown of that relationship in the post-national period, as we will see below).

### 5.1.3 Structural Pluralism

It was the reign of the Emperor Justinian (527-580) that saw the emergence of the five major sees of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, an arrangement that became part of the Church's institutional framework as the proper system of ecclesiastical order, coextensive with the *oikoumene* or "inhabited realm" of the empire. However, the pentarchic arrangement, unlike the system of universal papal jurisdiction evolving slowly in the Latin west, did not actually correspond to the reality of the "de facto structural pluralism" of the church in which several overlapping organizational systems *already* coexisted within one political context (e.g. autocephalous Cyprus, major sees-cum-patriarchates, the unique structures of the very ancient Armenian and Georgian churches).<sup>138</sup> We observe a tension between

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<sup>138</sup> Meyendorff, "Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions" 58-59. The emphasis on apostolic foundation, rather than pragmatic political considerations, as a way of ordering and giving precedence and priorities to the major sees illustrates the growing difference of opinion between East and West. Francis Dvornik has argued that this probably was influenced by the ancient conceptualization of the Roman primacy according to its apostolic origin, which was increasingly emphasized when the capital was moved to Constantinople due to papal fears of increased encroachment by Constantinople on Rome's preeminence. There were reciprocal fears in the East of papal administrative encroachment on

the normative “ideal” of pentarchy and the organizational reality of structural pluralism in response to various political realities within the empire and beyond its (shifting) borders. This tension would grow after the Byzantine and particularly the Ottoman periods, when the disjuncture between institutional rules framed in an imperial environment and the new political landscape of nation-states became acute.

This process of jurisdictional expansion of the five major sees led to a relative decline in the number and size and autocephalous provinces and churches, reducing them to autonomous (limited self-governance) status in the cases of Pontus, Asia, and Thrace vis-à-vis Constantinople, from the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century to the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>139</sup> This was followed by a trend which continued through the Middle Ages whereby the degree of strength of the civil provincial structure became inversely proportional to the degree of ecclesiastical centralization of patriarchal authority, a trend which was a product of administrative reforms under Emperor Heraclius in the 7<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>140</sup>

Another area of disconnect between the normative value assigned to pentarchy and the reality of structural pluralism was the growth in the jurisdictional importance of the see of Constantinople vis-à-vis the other eastern patriarchates during this period. Hussey points out that Constantinople’s increasing preeminence was due in part to the decreasing political influence of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, which by the 7<sup>th</sup> century found themselves outside Byzantine imperial boundaries after the Muslim

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the ancient privileges of the Eastern sees. Pentarchy is an example, per Dvornik, of this shift in thinking with regard to apostolicity and ecclesiastical organization from the perspective of the Eastern Church.

<sup>139</sup> L’Hullier, “Accession to Autocephaly” 272-75.

<sup>140</sup> George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 1969) 132-33, cited in L’Hullier, “Accession to Autocephaly” 277.

conquests of Eastern and North African territories, and competing with the monophysite and Nestorian churches separated since the council of Chalcedon over dogmatic disputes. Constantinople as the center of the eastern half of the empire increased in importance and rose to a position of undisputed functional preeminence among the eastern sees.<sup>141</sup> We see this reflected in the institutional framework of the church discussed in chapter 4 – both pentarchy and the special privileges of Constantinople are incorporated into the institutional rules of the church, yet both reflect unique and distinct realities of the political geography.

Both pentarchy and the preeminence of Constantinople were examples of the church's organizational response to the political landscape. The church used the mechanisms at its disposal – ordering sees by both imperial and ecclesiastical legal acts – to conform itself in a useful way in relation to political realities such as re-drawn borders and shifts in political prominence of different metropolitan centers. Pragmatic legal and political reasoning lay behind these changes, and it is this pragmatism that is reflected in the institutional framework of the church, as attested, for example, by the canonist and hierarch Theodore Balsamon (referred to in the previous chapter), whose commentaries on the canons informed the institutional framework governing autocephaly (and many other issues as well). As Erickson has noted,

Balsamon has little use for the more metaphysical aspects of pentarchic theory or for any other purely theological approach to church order. While he devotes an entire treatise to describing and defining the powers and prerogatives of the five patriarchates, he is relatively uninterested in their mystical or symbolical significance. Rather, for Balsamon, *patriarchates, primacies, special prerogatives and other aspects of supra-episcopal organization are established by means of legal acts, which in turn have been*

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<sup>141</sup> Hussey, The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire 297-99.

*framed in response to various special circumstances – above all, political circumstances. Time and again Balsamon points out that Constantinople, like Rome before it, was honored because it is the imperial city.*<sup>142</sup>

This political pragmatism underpinning church organization enabled the state to play its third-party role in the enforcement, recalibration, and breaking of ecclesiastical relationships between local churches. It was, for example, a political leader, Tsar Boris of Bulgaria, rather than a hierarch who first assigned the title of patriarch to the Archbishop of Bulgaria, thus changing qualitatively the status of the Bulgarian church.<sup>143</sup> However, we also observe in the history of the church evidence of the constraining effect the institutional framework had upon this pragmatism. On one hand, we note that during this period the imperial role increased in the setting of ecclesiastical borders, the establishment of patriarchates, the elevation of the status of bishoprics, and other ecclesiastical recalibrations. On the other hand, “from the time of Justinian onward, the Byzantine East considered the pentarchical system as *an immutable order independent of the factual reality*” – suggesting pentarchy over time became fully part of the institutional framework with quasi-dogmatic status – and this entailed the disestablishment of previously autocephalous churches in favor of greater consolidation into the five major sees.<sup>144</sup> Thus, starting in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, “a discrepancy arose between the claims of universality of the Byzantine State and the fact of the dramatic reduction of its territory,”<sup>145</sup> meaning that the now institutionally-enshrined hierarchical ordering of sees was confronting changed political geography,

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<sup>142</sup> Erickson 102, italics added.

<sup>143</sup> L’Hullier, “Accession to Autocephaly” 288-89.

<sup>144</sup> L’Hullier, “Accession to Autocephaly” 285.

<sup>145</sup> L’Hullier, “Accession to Autocephaly” 285, italics in original.

necessitating new organizational responses that did not fit into the pentarchical arrangement.

#### *5.1.4 Example: The Church of Bulgaria*

There were already at this time several particular churches outside the Byzantine imperial boundaries which because of their location fit neither the pattern of territorial accommodation nor that of pentarchy, and our examination of them will overlap somewhat with the post-imperial period. One of these, as noted above, was the Church of Bulgaria.<sup>146</sup> The emergence of the nascent Bulgarian state, predicated upon a growing political, religious and linguistic identity distinct from the Byzantine Empire, was mirrored by the emergence of an autocephalous Bulgarian church. The cyclical waxing and waning of Bulgarian political independence until the Ottoman period is mirrored by the granting and withdrawing by civil authorities of the autocephaly of the Bulgarian church. The first tsar, Boris, sought independence for the church in Bulgaria precisely because he feared Greek ecclesiastical (and hence Byzantine imperial) control over the emerging Bulgarian state, and exploited the schism between Rome and Constantinople during the mid-800s (over the irregular election of Photios as Patriarch of Constantinople) to seek ecclesiastical independence, along with a concomitant recognition of Boris' political sovereignty as king, first unsuccessfully from Rome and then later successfully from Constantinople.<sup>147</sup> By the 10<sup>th</sup> century Bulgaria had effectively decoupled itself from the Byzantine Empire and

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<sup>146</sup> On this discussion of the Bulgarian church during the imperial period see L'Hullier, "Accession to Autocephaly" 288-90; Dennis P. Hupchick, The Balkans: From Constantinople to Communism (New York: Palgrave, 2002) chs. 2 and 3; and Dennis P. Hupchick and Harold E. Cox, The Palgrave Historical Atlas of Eastern Europe (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).

<sup>147</sup> Hupchick, The Balkans 43.

acquired the status of an independent state: a peace treaty in 927 with the Byzantine emperor secured political recognition of the Bulgarian throne and acknowledgement by the Ecumenical Patriarch of a Bulgarian patriarchate, and hence autocephaly.<sup>148</sup> Under Tsar Simeon Greek clergy were replaced with native Bulgarian clergy and the archbishopric (eventually located at Ohrid) was elevated to the status of patriarchate, successfully replicating the Byzantine political model by which an autocephalous church, together with a sovereign king, were viewed as the *sine qua non* of the independent Christian state.<sup>149</sup>

Protracted fighting between Bulgarian and Byzantine forces between the late 10<sup>th</sup> and early 11<sup>th</sup> centuries caused fluctuations in the political geography as the Bulgarian kingdom gained and lost territory, and the patriarchate was moved repeatedly in line with those changes. Its status was reduced from an autocephalous patriarchate to a metropolitanate dependant upon Constantinople after Byzantine forces drove Russian troops from Bulgarian territory in 972 and occupied the country. After more fighting, Bulgaria finally succumbed definitively to Byzantine control in 1014 during the reign of the Byzantine emperor Basil II. The autocephaly of the Bulgarian church was abolished by 1018, leaving the episcopal seat at Ohrid as an archbishopric subordinate to Constantinople.<sup>150</sup> Though initially permitted to continue in a largely autonomous fashion with perhaps half of its previous territory,

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<sup>148</sup> Matthew Spinka, A History of Christianity in the Balkans: A Study in the Spread of Byzantine Culture Among the Slavs (Archon, 1933) 57-58.

<sup>149</sup> Hupchick 43-49. See also Obolensky ch. 3.

<sup>150</sup> Spinka 57-72.

the Bulgarian church, centered around the see of Ohrid, steadily succumbed to Greek imperial influence in the ensuing decades.<sup>151</sup>

Numerous revolts and periods of political instability culminated in Bulgarian independence from the empire in 1186. The rulers of the newly-consolidated Bulgarian state, viewing the Greek dominance of the see of Ohrid as untenable given the independence of the state, restored the autocephaly of the Bulgarian church by installing a Bulgarian archbishop at Trnovo.<sup>152</sup> This unilateral break with the patriarchate of Constantinople was only repaired a century later following a treaty signed between the political, not ecclesiastical, authorities (Byzantine Emperor Theodore II Lascaris and Bulgarian Tsar Asen II). Interestingly, during the Latin occupation of Byzantine territories following the Crusades, Tsar Kaloyan sought recognition from Rome of both his political sovereignty and the autocephaly of the Trnovo Patriarchate. The expansion of Bulgarian territories to include Macedonia brought within one set of political boundaries two autocephalous archbishoprics – Ohrid and Trnovo – one under Rome and the other not.<sup>153</sup> Later, when allying with a rival Byzantine “state in exile” at Nicaea (discussed below) to expel the crusaders from Byzantine territories, Tsar Ivan, Kaloyan’s successor, sought and received recognition from the Nicean authorities of the independence of the Trnovo Patriarchate, again (re)validating the autocephaly of the Bulgarian Church.<sup>154</sup> The three major Balkan sees – Peć, Ohrid, and Trnovo – witnessed a very complicated subsequent history as each gained and lost autocephaly as political boundaries and

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<sup>151</sup> Spinka 91-92.

<sup>152</sup> Spinka 101-02, and Hupchick 67-68.

<sup>153</sup> Spinka 101-07

<sup>154</sup> Hupchick 71-73.

fortunes shifted, a process which continued until the fall of the Bulgarian state to Ottoman forces in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>155</sup> By the early 15<sup>th</sup> century the Bulgarian church had been subsumed under the patriarchate of Constantinople as part of the Orthodox *millet* within the Ottoman Empire. It would not reemerge as an autocephalous church until the reappearance of an independent Bulgarian state in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>156</sup>

#### *5.1.5 Example: The Church of Serbia*

Serbia was the other major emergent Orthodox state at the periphery of the Byzantine Empire during this period. Originally vassal territory of the Byzantine Empire, ruler Stefan I Nemanja achieved political and ecclesiastical consolidation of the nascent Serbian territories, sought independence for Serbia and finally achieved independence from the Byzantine Empire by 1190 during a period of Byzantine preoccupation with Bulgarian rebellion.<sup>157</sup> Serbia managed to declare itself a state independent from Byzantine control by the late 12<sup>th</sup> century and began to consolidate itself territorially in the ensuing decades. Serbia eventually was able to consolidate and expand its holdings at the expense of a declining Byzantine Empire during the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. Serbian rulers, culminating in Stefan Dusan, tried to assert control over much of the Balkans and even attempted to capture Constantinople itself, but remained unsuccessful on the eve of Byzantium's final fall to Ottoman forces.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Spinka 108-20.

<sup>156</sup> Spinka 127-28.

<sup>157</sup> Spinka 73-81, and Hupchick 82-83.

<sup>158</sup> Hupchick 82-94.

It should be noted at this juncture that after the Fourth Crusade in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, which resulted in a temporary period of Latin control over both the Byzantine throne and patriarchate, contending Byzantine “states in exile” appeared in Nicaea, Trebizond, and Epirus, the Nicean ruler installing an Orthodox patriarch as a rival to the Latin patriarch occupying the see in Constantinople through the early decades of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>159</sup> It was in this reconfigured political context that newly-independent Serbia’s first ruler, Stefan II Nemanja, accepted a crown in 1217 from the pope, who reportedly viewed it as a way to achieve Roman Catholic inroads into the predominantly Orthodox Balkans at a time when the emergent Serbian state required ecclesiastical recognition. However, facing local popular and ecclesiastical opposition to Latin dominance, Stefan subsequently secured a concurrent recognition of autocephaly for the Serbian church from the newly-constituted (erstwhile Ecumenical) patriarch at Nicaea in 1219 and was crowned king by his brother, the archbishop Sava, thus effecting full political and ecclesiastical recognition of the new Serbian state, in exchange for Serbia’s recognition of the nascent state of Nicaea.<sup>160</sup> (Serbian autocephaly thus granted obviously also precluded ecclesiastical subordination to Rome.)<sup>161</sup> The grant of autocephaly from the patriarch of Nicaea detached the Serbian bishopric from the control of the autocephalous archbishopric of Ohrid, to which the Serbian sees were subordinate, and set the stage for governance of the Serbian church commensurate with Serbia’s status as an independent state.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> See John V.A. Fine, Jr., *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1987) ch. 2; and Spinka 82-83.

<sup>160</sup> Fine 114-19, and Spinka 83-90.

<sup>161</sup> Hupchick 83.

<sup>162</sup> Fine 114-19.

The occupant of the see of Ohrid at that time, Demetrius Chromatianus, objected that the Ecumenical Patriarch's detachment of territories from his autocephalous archbishopric was an uncanonical act; the Serbian political and ecclesiastical authorities, however, had calculated that a request for autocephaly for the Serbian church was best directed to the Ecumenical Patriarch, given that Demetrius' see of Ohrid "lay within the despotate of Epirus and [Demetrius] was therefore under political restraint to oppose the expansionist policy of Serbia."<sup>163</sup> Later, again at the behest of the Serbian king, a council of the Serbian church in 1346 elevated the autocephalous archbishopric of Peć to patriarchal status, with the consent of the autocephalous see of Ohrid and the Bulgarian church, but not with the consent of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, which resulted in a suspension of communion between Constantinople and the Serbian church that was only resolved on the eve of the initial wave of Turkish conquests in 1389.<sup>164</sup> Changing political geography necessitated reorganization of the ecclesiastical boundaries, and the state played a major role in the recalibration of ecclesiastical relationships as those reorganizations occurred. Serbia's history in many ways mirrored the experience of Bulgaria, with the independence of the Serbian church governed largely by the political fortunes of the Serbian rulers in establishing a viable state independent of the Byzantine Empire.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Spinka 87.

<sup>164</sup> Spinka 141-54

<sup>165</sup> Repeated shifts in the ecclesiastical boundaries in conformity with changing political demarcations – with resulting effects on the Serbian church's autocephalous status – are detailed in Spinka 129-55.

### *5.1.6 Example: The Church in the Wallachian and Moldovian Principalities*

Romania as a discrete entity did not exist during this period other than in the form of the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia. Each was able to acquire ecclesiastical recognition for a more or less independent local church commensurate with the political consolidation each had achieved by the 13<sup>th</sup> century. In both cases ecclesiastical independence was won from Constantinople by political authorities as part of a broader effort toward political consolidation in response to Hungarian pressure against their emerging states. Wallachian leader Nicolae Alexandru secured approval in 1359 for autonomy (in the form of the elevation of the bishop of the capital Curtea de Argeş to the level of metropolitan) from the patriarch of Constantinople. Moldovian leader Alexandru the Good obtained an equivalent recognition of autonomy from the patriarch of Constantinople for the Moldovian church in 1401.<sup>166</sup>

### *5.1.6 Example: The Church of Georgia*

The Georgian kingdom, Christian since the 4<sup>th</sup> century, has a very obscure history in terms of ecclesiastical structure.<sup>167</sup> Subordinate at least formally to the Patriarchate of Antioch, the Georgian church was caught between the influences (and during some periods, dogmatic disputes) of the neighboring Armenian and Syrian churches, and by the last decades of the 5<sup>th</sup> century had established its own catholicate (the functional equivalent of a patriarchate) under King Vachtang. The Patriarchate

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<sup>166</sup> Hupchick 78-80.

<sup>167</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the information on the autocephaly of the Church of Georgia is drawn from one of the very few sources on the subject available in English: Michael Tarchnisvili, "The Origin and Development of the Ecclesiastical Autocephaly of Georgia," trans. Patrick Viscuso, *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 46.1-2 (2001): 89-111.

of Antioch evidently granted limited autocephaly to the Georgian church sometime in the 8<sup>th</sup> century specifically due to the problems posed by the Georgian church's external dependency on Antioch (there was a significant period, for example, when dangers of travel through hostile Arab territories prevented the consecration and installation of a new Georgian catholicos); the Georgian church's autocephaly eventually was finalized following periods of prolonged disruption between Antioch and Georgia.<sup>168</sup> Its autocephaly was validated in local council held in Antioch, apparently in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The Church of Georgia remained autocephalous even initially following the treaty signed with Russia in 1783, which respected the autocephaly of the Georgian church, but which subsequently was abrogated by Emperor Alexander I of Russia who abolished that autocephaly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (an act which L'Hullier argues is analogous to the Byzantine imperial suppression of the Bulgarian autocephaly in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, referenced above), pulling the Georgian church definitively into the Russian imperial orbit.<sup>169</sup> An autocephalous Georgian church would not re-emerge until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century with the collapse of the Soviet Union.

#### *5.1.7 Example: The Church of Russia*

The emergence of the autocephalous Church of Russia occurred according to a similar pattern. As noted in chapter 4, the Russian Church's justification for autocephaly was based upon its need for administrative independence from a debilitating set of external linkages and dependencies upon Constantinople. These

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<sup>168</sup> Tarchnisvili 98-101.

<sup>169</sup> L'Hullier, "Accession to Autocephaly" 291, and Tarchnisvili 105-06.

dependencies were defined in terms of three key circumstances: (1) the political compromise of the patriarchate of Constantinople to Rome at the council of Ferrara-Florence (1438-1449); (2) the threat posed to Constantinople by Ottoman Turkish forces, necessitating that compromise to win military support; and (3) the civil war within Russia necessitating ecclesiastical unity precisely at a period when the Byzantine ecclesiarchs in Constantinople were least able to provide hierarchical leadership.<sup>170</sup> The Russian church dated back to the embrace of Christianity by the Kievan Rus' in the 10<sup>th</sup> century at the hands of a suffragan bishop of the patriarch of Constantinople. There is some dispute, however, as to whether occupants of the metropolitan bishop's seat in Kiev, which oversaw the Russian church, were exclusively Byzantines appointed by the Patriarch at Constantinople, or whether alternation occurred between Byzantine and Russian candidates according to agreement or compromise between the emperor and the Russian political and ecclesiastical authorities. Therefore it is difficult to establish precisely when the Russian church became autocephalous, *de facto* if not *de jure*.<sup>171</sup>

When the attempt to heal the persistent breach between the Eastern and Western churches at the council of Ferrara-Florence collapsed and the pro-union (with Rome) metropolitan of the Russian church was deposed as a result, the Russian church was left with a vacant see during a period when the patriarch of

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<sup>170</sup> Gustav Alef, "Muscovy and the Council of Florence," *Slavic Review* 20.3 (1961): 389-401. Alef also cites alternative interpretations for the Muscovite rejection of the union decision at Florence, contained in I. Sevcenko, "Intellectual Repercussions of the Council of Florence," *Church History* XXIV (1955): 291-323; Deno Geanakoplos, "The Council of Florence (1438-1439) and the Problem of the Union between the Greek and Latin Churches," *Church History* XXIV (1955): 324-46; and M. Cherniavsky, "The Reception of the Council of Florence in Moscow," *Church History* XXIV (1955): 347-59. Alef also cites the contrasting views of Joseph Gill, *The Council of Florence* (Cambridge, 1959); and Oscar Halecki, *From Florence to Brest (1439-1596)* (Rome, 1958).

<sup>171</sup> Dimitri Obolensky, "Byzantium, Kiev and Moscow: A Study in Ecclesiastical Relations," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 11 (1957): 22-78.

Constantinople, charged with appointing a replacement, was also pro-union and therefore politically compromised in the view of Russian authorities. Those authorities, facing the necessity of national consolidation in the face of civil war and external (Tatar) threats, responded by convening a synodal meeting in Moscow in 1448 and appointing a Russian (rather than Greek) hierarch, Iona, as metropolitan, evidently as a stop-gap measure, under the assumption that a replacement would be forthcoming from Constantinople once the difficulties posed by the Ferrara-Florence compromise had been overcome. The impetus for this decision to install unilaterally a Russian hierarch as metropolitan had less to do with dogmatic disputes with Constantinople over Ferrara-Florence than it did with political exigencies “requiring a united church behind the throne,” and therefore in the opinion of at least one specialist “the ‘necessity’ which dictated the decision to elevate Iona in 1448 was *secular*.”<sup>172</sup> With no metropolitan coming from Constantinople and local political conditions in Russia and Byzantium alike not conducive to a regularized ecclesiastical relationship, Russian political authorities made the decision to break the relationship. The fall of Constantinople in 1453 made this *de facto* autocephaly a permanent fixture of the organization of the Russian church, permanently severing its ties with the patriarchate of Constantinople (a process replicated in large part, as we shall see in chapter 6, by the Russian church’s own Metropolia in North America in the 20<sup>th</sup> century following the Bolshevik revolution). The situation was regularized from the Byzantine side only in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century when (1) the patriarch of

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<sup>172</sup> Alef 399-401, italics added. As evidence Alef cites a letter from Vasilii II to Emperor Constantine XI explaining the rationale for Moscow’s unilateral selection and installation of a metropolitan. This letter evidently never reached Constantinople, but it does reflect an attempt at initial consultation before breaking the relationship. See Alef 400-01.

Constantinople finally approved the unilateral change in status of the Russian metropolitan to patriarch (in 1589), and (2) this patriarchal status was officially confirmed by the patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem (in 1593). Thereafter the Russian church remained autocephalous until the collapse of the Russian imperial state, the victory of Bolshevik forces, and the suppression of the Russian church by the newly consolidated Soviet state.<sup>173</sup>

Thus, by the close of the imperial period, what L'Hullier has described as a "double standard" had emerged among the autocephalous Eastern churches. The traditional patriarchates (plus ancient outliers like Cyprus and Georgia) enjoyed autocephalous status as an institutionally-enshrined permanent fixture of the "Byzantine Commonwealth," whereas the recently-emerged churches from outside that commonwealth (e.g. Russia, Bulgaria, Serbia, the Romanian principalities) enjoyed autocephaly of a more transitory nature. For the former, "imperial involvement involved the granting, confirmation or cancellation of autocephalous status for the Churches regarded by the Byzantines as parts of the 'Commonwealth,'" whereas for the latter, "the heads of the newly-formed States had a tendency to appropriate for themselves the Imperial privileges, including those concerning autocephaly and the title of the primates of their State Churches."<sup>174</sup> This split reflects a changing role of the state from enforcing agent to a more interventionist driver of organizational change, as the political geography began to shift away from the imperial model toward the consolidation of discrete nation-states.

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<sup>173</sup> L'Hullier, "Accession to Autocephaly" 290-93.

<sup>174</sup> L'Hullier, "Accession to Autocephaly" 287.

### 5.1.8 *The Imperial Period: Preliminary Conclusions*

We may at this point note a few conclusions about autocephaly during the imperial period.<sup>175</sup> First, “being autocephalous did not necessarily preclude belonging to a larger regional entity,” insofar as independent churches could operate with no external administrative interference, even while being confederated within the political boundaries of the Roman Empire. Second, autocephaly was not a static and unchangeable legal classification. Territorial accommodation meant that autocephalous status could change, i.e. be revoked, when provincial reorganizations meant that ecclesiastical boundaries had to be redrawn. Third, the increasing consolidation into a system of major sees brought with it the concurrent decrease in the authority of local metropolitan bishops as certain territories were drawn into the administrative sphere of major sees like Constantinople.<sup>176</sup>

We also may note that many of these developments arose concurrently. Even during the initial stages of organizational development when territorial accommodation was the norm, special prerogatives particular to the see of Rome did not eclipse the general local administrative independence afforded to other particular local churches. Later, with consolidation in the East into the pentarchic configuration of major sees, some churches such as Cyprus remained largely independent of administrative dependencies on the major sees. As noted earlier, the Church of Georgia was de facto independent as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> century and, upon reconciling itself in the 7<sup>th</sup> century to orthodox dogma as laid out in the general council of

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<sup>175</sup> These points are discussed in L’Hullier, “Accession to Autocephaly” 280-81.

<sup>176</sup> L’Hullier, “Accession to Autocephaly” 281. See also Erickson, “The Autocephalous Church” 95-96.

Chalcedon, retained its de facto autocephalous status.<sup>177</sup> Structural pluralism coexisted, at times uneasily, with pentarchy, but the institutional framework was sufficiently elastic to accommodate both.

Finally, we should reiterate the fact that autocephaly of the newer states outside the boundaries of the Byzantine empire, such as Bulgaria, Serbia, and Russia, was often a function of the diplomatic efforts coming from the emperor. Conceding varying degrees of ecclesiastical autonomy was one way for the emperor to ensure states of the “Byzantine commonwealth” would remain in the orbit of the imperial center. Obolensky has noted:

[A]s the history of the Empire’s relations with its northern neighbors, and particularly with the Balkan Slavs, so clearly illustrates, these concessions were apt to include the granting to the satellite states a measure of ecclesiastical self-government; the recognition by the Emperor Basil II about 1020 of the autonomy of the Bulgarian Church, whose primate, the archbishop of Ohrid, was to be consecrated by his own suffragan bishops, the Emperor reserving for himself the right of appointing or nominating him, is an outstanding and contemporary example of this ecclesiastical diplomacy.<sup>178</sup>

## 5.2 The Post-Imperial Period

The fall of Constantinople in 1453 to Ottoman forces led to both administrative changes and continuities for the church. The church retained its institutional framework governing the means for self-regulation and organizational change. However, its external environment was radically different. The political authority of the Eastern Christian realm was no longer Christian, which forced new applications of existing institutional rules in the absence of the transitional alignment

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<sup>177</sup> Erickson, “The Autocephalous Church” 99.

<sup>178</sup> Obolensky, “Byzantium, Kiev, and Moscow” 76-77.

between church and state. Despite this, the persistence of some aspects of Byzantine political philosophy, even into the post-Byzantine era, with regard to autocephaly remains an important factor for our consideration.

### *5.2.1 Transition to Ottoman Rule and the Changing Role of Constantinople*

Orthodox Christians within the Ottoman Empire, irrespective of nationality, were administered as a separate nation (*millet*) within the empire, of which the Patriarch of Constantinople<sup>179</sup> was the appointed head. The responsibilities of the Patriarch of Constantinople thereafter extended beyond the ecclesiastical to include increased political and jurisdictional duties as well. The sultan consolidated the administration of the Orthodox millet, and while the eastern patriarchates of Alexandria, Jerusalem, and Antioch theoretically retained their administrative authority, in fact they became answerable to the Sublime Porte via the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The historically autocephalous church of Cyprus had already become functionally dependent upon the Patriarchate of Constantinople during its Venetian occupation and that external dependency remained in place. In general, and at least initially, the structure of the ecclesiastical territories already under the patriarchate of Constantinople remained as before, with local bishops answering to their metropolitans and the metropolitans answering to the patriarch (although, as mentioned above, there were also the “autocephalous” bishops answerable directly to

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<sup>179</sup> We will continue to use this term interchangeably with “Ecumenical Patriarchate” as a matter of convenience. Constantinople ceased to exist in name after this period but the patriarchate’s retention of the (arguably) anachronistic title signifies a concurrent retention of much Byzantine political philosophy – the patriarch as responsible for the entirety of the *oikoumene* or “inhabited realm” of the empire.

the patriarch). Additionally, episcopal elections had to receive civil ratification from the Ottoman civil authority.<sup>180</sup>

This new arrangement (1) increased the administrative authority exercised via the Patriarchate of Constantinople over other patriarchs and the leaders of the other (formerly) autocephalous churches, and (2) allocated to the patriarch of Constantinople some of the powers that formerly belonged to the Byzantine emperors in the area of the recognition and suppression of autocephalous churches.<sup>181</sup> By the late 15<sup>th</sup> century the Ottoman Empire had spread to encompass the emergent states (Serbia, Bulgaria, the Romanian principalities) with the newly-established autocephalous churches.<sup>182</sup> With these states under Ottoman control the autocephaly of their churches was abolished by default, and were only restored selectively by Ottoman governmental action: it was Grand Vizier Sokollu, for example, who ordered the reinstatement of the Serbian patriarchate in Peć in 1557, but circumscribed the activities of the patriarch himself to prevent Serbian separatism from Ottoman control.<sup>183</sup>

It might be noted parenthetically that after the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the emergence of the secular Turkish state, the Ecumenical Patriarch became (following the 1923 population exchange with Greece) the head of only a very small number of Christians, which caused Constantinople to become “more inclined than ever before to emphasize its primatial authority [as *primus inter pares*] in the entire

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<sup>180</sup> Steven Runciman, The Great Church in Captivity (New York: Cambridge, 1968) 165-179.

<sup>181</sup> L'Hullier, “Accession to Autocephaly” 293.

<sup>182</sup> See Hupchick, map 5, “Ottoman Expansion in the Balkans, 1354-1566,” The Balkans: From Constantinople to Communism.

<sup>183</sup> Runciman, Great Church in Captivity 203-04.

Orthodox Church”<sup>184</sup> – presumably as a way of maintaining a semblance of its hierarchical role following the collapse of its traditional sphere of influence.

Recalling the discussion above of the imperial period, we may conclude that before the fall of Constantinople in 1204 during the Fourth Crusade – arguably the beginning of the final process of Byzantine political disintegration that would culminate two centuries later in the Ottoman victory – the “non-pentarchic” class of autocephalous churches (e.g. Cyprus, Georgia, arguably the patriarchate of Ohrid) all came into existence through conciliar decision or imperial rescript that was accepted or validated by the other churches. After the reestablishment of the patriarchate at Constantinople in 1261, as was noted above, two new autocephalous churches had emerged, one of Serbia and one of Bulgaria, but these came into existence exclusively through agreements between *civil* authorities – i.e. essentially through an extra-ecclesiastical process.<sup>185</sup> Erickson has argued that this represents a major demarcation point at which the identification of church and state as coterminous entities took hold.

### 5.2.2 *The Significance of the “New” Autocephalous Churches*

According to Erickson, these “new” autocephalous churches in Bulgaria and Serbia – like the Church of Russia to follow – had certain characteristics that distinguished them from the earlier “class” of autocephalous churches: (1) they “came into existence as one aspect of bilateral treaties between civil governments, reflecting

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<sup>184</sup> L’Hullier, “Accession to Autocephaly” 294. See also Harry J. Psomiades, “The Ecumenical Patriarchate Under the Turkish Republic: The First Ten Years,” *Balkan Studies* (Thessaloniki) 2 (1961): 47-70.

<sup>185</sup> Erickson, “The Autocephalous Church” 106-07.

a tendency to regard autocephaly chiefly as the sign of an independent national state”;

(2) the concept of autocephaly had expanded to include not only ecclesiastical but political independence;<sup>186</sup> (3) the autocephaly of this new class of churches “increasingly became...conditional and partial, limited by treaty and juridically revocable”; and (4) conciliar ecclesiastical validation of new autocephalous churches through the pentarchic arrangement of sees gave way to a more exclusive prerogative enjoyed by Constantinople.<sup>187</sup> As Erickson has noted,

In the course of these thirteenth-century disputes, autocephaly assumes an ad hoc quality less affected by the Church’s earlier canonical tradition than by the political exigencies of the moment. In part this is because the parties involved were not above juggling the canons to suit their own private ends; but it is also because *the canons themselves, for the most part products of and predicated upon the existence of one Christian empire, failed to provide consistent and unequivocal answers to the problems of the day*. The eventual political and military triumph of Nicea, by restoring the empire, provided a respite from the jurisdictional chaos and assured continuation – and indeed expansion – of the authority of the patriarch of Constantinople, New Rome. But the canonical problems raised by the collapse of the empire remained, and still remain, unsolved.<sup>188</sup>

In this sense the emergence of the “new” autocephalous churches embodied both the vocabulary of Byzantine universalism and increasingly national preoccupations. This can be seen, for example, in the rise of Muscovite Russia and the circumscribed *tsardom* it entailed: “The Muscovite grand-prince...never pretended to be ‘emperor of the Romans’, as the Byzantine emperors did, but only ‘*tsar*’ of all Russia. His real political ambition was to build an empire on national –

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<sup>186</sup> Interestingly, Erickson has noted that this “was expressed above all in the right to consecrate the *myron* [holy chrism] needed for anointing an emperor.” Erickson, “The Autocephalous Church” 109-110.

<sup>187</sup> Erickson, “The Autocephalous Church” 106-07.

<sup>188</sup> Erickson, “The Autocephalous Church” 109-110, italics added.

and largely secular – grounds.”<sup>189</sup> Certainly the political maxim, embodied for example in a statement ascribed to Patriarch Antony of Constantinople in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century – “It is impossible for Christians to have the Church but not to have an emperor” – continued to hold in the East.<sup>190</sup> But a natural corollary developed as well following the collapse of the Byzantine Empire, namely that it was impossible to have an emperor (and by extension a kingdom, or state) without the church, which logistically meant a patriarch to crown and anoint that emperor, and the establishment of a new kingdom necessarily entailed the establishment of a church whose boundaries were coterminous with that state. Likewise, the idea of the “national church” took hold in earnest. Spinka has argued that “during the period of the Turkish supremacy, the churches in Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece became the chief conservers of the spirit of nationality. In course of time, the terms Orthodox and Serbian, or Bulgarian, or Greek, became almost synonymous.”<sup>191</sup> This became acute as the withdrawal of autocephaly and the loss of statehood sowed the seeds of the identification of religion with nationhood – spelling the beginning of the national period. Spinka has noted that in case of Serbia,

...the church became the heart of Serbian nationalism – a function which it performed till the recovery of autonomy at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The patriarch in a way assumed the headship of the nation. Orthodoxy became synonymous with the Serbian nationality so that those Serbs who had accepted Islam were regarded as lost to the nation, and as having become Turks.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> John Meyendorff, “Byzantium, the Orthodox Church and the Rise of Moscow,” *The Byzantine Legacy in Eastern Europe*, ed. Lowell Clucas (New York: Columbia, 1988) 15.

<sup>190</sup> Cited in George P. Majeska, “Russia’s Perception of Byzantium after the Fall,” Clucas 23.

<sup>191</sup> Spinka 88.

<sup>192</sup> Spinka 154-55.

Finally, and in general with regard to the “new” class of autocephalous churches, the state emerged less as an enforcer of existing ecclesiastical relationships sanctioned by the institutional framework and more as a proactive agent in forming, recalibrating, and breaking those relationships often independent of the formal institutional framework and, often, church hierarchs themselves. While the organizational principles set forth in the institutional framework continued to exist “on the books,” the degree to which they actually were able to constrain acts of organizational change levied by the state began to decrease. This decrease would continue through the national period, reaching a nadir in the post-national period.

### **5.3 The National Period**

The *millet* system was the key organizing principle for all Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire, and the episcopal hierarchies were controlled by Greeks under the patriarchate at Constantinople. “After the autocephalous Slavic-rite Peć and Ohrid patriarchates were eliminated again in the 1760s, Orthodox Christians were under the administration of the Greek-controlled Ecumenical Patriarchate, and Greek cultural hegemony within the Orthodox *millet* went unchallenged until the middle of the nineteenth century.”<sup>193</sup> The dual constraints of Ottoman administrative and Greek ecclesiastical control were important external dependencies that nascent Eastern European states sought to throw off in part through the establishment of

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<sup>193</sup> Hupchick, The Balkans 206.

autocephalous churches with borders coterminous with their newly-independent states.<sup>194</sup>

### 5.3.1 Example: *The Church of Serbia, Continued*

The patriarchate of Peć, its autocephaly restored in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, continued to operate with a wide degree of independence until it was abolished and brought under Greek ecclesiastical control in 1766.<sup>195</sup> To that point the provinces and territories (which included, for example, Montenegro) jurisdictionally subject to the patriarchate of Peć fell within a fluid set of political boundaries between the Ottoman and Austrian empires (all were within the Ottoman domain prior to the war with Austria, and after the Treaty of Karlowicz in 1699 they fell on either side of the new border); altogether under the patriarchate of Peć there were some eight metropolitan sees, four archbishoprics, and one bishopric on the Ottoman side and two metropolitan sees, one archbishopric, and three bishoprics on the Austrian side.<sup>196</sup> An account by Patriarch Chrysanthos of Jerusalem from 1778 reveals that these ecclesiastical territories were malleable and changed often according to the configuration of the political geography: “It ought to be further noted that the Thrones there are often altered, elevated or demoted, while two Provinces are often united as one, in the sense of both being under an Hierarch [sic], as times and needs require, so that not even their designation is agreed by all to be one and the same... .”<sup>197</sup> The

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<sup>194</sup> See Marin V. Pundeff’s chapter, “Bulgarian Nationalism,” *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*, ed. Peter F. Sugar and Ivo J. Lederer (Seattle: University of Washington, 1969).

<sup>195</sup> Hupchick 208.

<sup>196</sup> Panteleimon Rodopoulos, “Autocephaly and the Manner in Which It Is Declared: The Orthodox Church in Montenegro,” *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 42.3-4 (1997): 215-17.

<sup>197</sup> Chrysanthos of Jerusalem, *Syntagmaton* (Venice, 1778): 55, cited in Rodopoulos 215.

church's organizational shape continued to be driven by changes in the political geography. The role of the state as an arbiter and driver of organizational change is evident during this period as well. In 1857, under pressure from the Western powers to implement reforms of the *millet* system (the number of *millets* had been expanded to include Western European Christians located within the boundaries of the Ottoman empire), the sultan ordered the church to convene a council to deal with problems associated with Greek domination of the Orthodox *millet*. The patriarch of Constantinople felt compelled to do this and a council did in fact convene for this purpose in Constantinople in 1860.<sup>198</sup>

The church in the newly independent Serbian state felt that it could no longer exist under the administrative control of Constantinople, and in 1830 the sultan agreed to reinstate the autonomy of the Serbian Church. There is much evidence reflecting the expanded role of the state as an agent of organizational change – Miloš Obrenović in fact viewed the church as an institution of the state (similar to the situation in Greece and Russia).<sup>199</sup> Hapsburg Emperor Leopold I granted autonomy to part of the Serbian Orthodox Church that existed within the Hapsburg imperial territories (primarily in its border regions, most of the Serbian occupants of which were émigrés from Ottoman territories), and established its center at Sremski Karlovci (Karlovec) in 1713.<sup>200</sup> As Hupchick has noted:

The border Serbs' religious autonomy harmonized well with their former Ottoman *millet* traditions and reinforced their old *millet* sense of group identity. Direct exposure to emerging Western European national and ethnic concepts linked their autonomous Orthodox church organization to a growing

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<sup>198</sup> Hupchick 242.

<sup>199</sup> Charles Jelavich and Barbara Jelavich, The Establishment of the Balkan National States, 1804-1920 (Seattle: University of Washington, 1977) 59.

<sup>200</sup> Hupchick 200.

sense of ethnic awareness. By the opening of the nineteenth century the Orthodox border Serbs viewed the Sremski Karlovci church as their quasipolitical collective voice.<sup>201</sup>

The Ecumenical Patriarchate acknowledged the autonomy of the Serbian church in 1831, but did not recognize its autocephaly until 1879. Serbia gained territory in the Balkan Wars and after World War I was incorporated along with Bosnia, Hercegovina, Croatia and Slovenia (all former territories of the Austro-Hungarian Empire) and Montenegro into Yugoslavia, and in 1920 the archbishop was elevated to the status of patriarch.<sup>202</sup>

### 5.3.2 Example: *The Church of Greece, Continued*

In Greece, the establishment of a national state resulted in a similar demand for a state church, which is to say a church independent from Constantinople. Following the Ottoman military defeat at the hands of Russia, Britain, and France and the subsequent London Protocol (1830), Greece was recognized as an independent state and the Western powers installed Otto, a Bavarian prince, as king. The new government under Otto essentially nationalized the Church of Greece. In the post-revolutionary state, the church was made a department of the state under the guidance of Ludwig von Maurer, consciously modeled on the state churches of Russia and Bavaria. This declaration of autocephaly by secular authorities caused an ecclesiastical split between Greece and the Patriarchate of Constantinople which was only resolved after 1850 when Russian authorities pressured the patriarchate of Constantinople to accept the *fait accompli* and recognize the autocephaly of the

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<sup>201</sup> Hupchick 200.

<sup>202</sup> Steven Runciman, The Orthodox Church and the Secular State (Auckland: University Press, 1971) 71-72.

Church of Greece. This church, which included approximately 33 bishops, was headed by a synod over which the Archbishop of Athens presided, with all synodal decisions subject to approval by a state procurator.<sup>203</sup> Not all territories that were incorporated into the new Greek state fell under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Athens; the northern Greek territories, to include Macedonia (incorporated after the Balkan Wars), and later the Dodecanese islands (incorporated after World War II) remained under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate,<sup>204</sup> leading to a very complicated ecclesiastical situation and sowing the seeds of organizational conflict later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as will be discussed below.

### *5.3.3 Example: The Church of Bulgaria, Continued*

In Bulgaria, the rising tide of European national revolutions, along with increasing educational levels and exposure to nationalistic ideologies, among other factors, eventually did cause an increase in a uniquely Bulgarian national consciousness by the 1800s. Roudometof has argued that “[t]he establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate was the most visible and dramatic manifestation of the fragmentation of Eastern Orthodox universalism.”<sup>205</sup> As Jelavich has noted, Bulgarians observed the equivalent actions taken in Greece and Serbia and recognized the increasingly negative impact upon their national project of Bulgaria’s ecclesiastical dependence upon the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Unlike in Greece, the establishment of a Bulgarian national church independent from Constantinople

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<sup>203</sup> Preceding discussion from Jelavich 71-72, and Hupchick 222-24.

<sup>204</sup> Runciman, *The Orthodox Churches and the Secular State* 69.

<sup>205</sup> Victor Roudometof, “Nationalism, Globalization, Eastern Orthodoxy: ‘Unthinking’ the ‘Clash of Civilizations’ in Southeastern Europe,” *European Journal of Social Theory* 2.2 (1999): 240.

preceded the establishment of a Bulgarian nation-state. The political situation regarding the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the Balkans was such that Constantinople resisted calls by Bulgarian hierarchs for Bulgarian bishops to be appointed in Bulgarian dioceses – a key requirement for autocephaly. The patriarchate enlisted the support of the patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem in rejecting Bulgarian efforts toward ecclesiastical independence. Metropolitan Filaret of Moscow, however, found political advantage in a peaceful resolution of the conflict in favor of the establishment of a Bulgarian church, given the increasing foreign missionary pressure in Bulgarian lands.<sup>206</sup>

The mediation effort, once again spearheaded by the Russian ambassador to Constantinople, was unsuccessful however, and Bulgarian hierarchs eventually presented a *fait accompli* by replacing Greek bishops with Bulgarians. Ottoman authorities, concerned about rising Christian tensions throughout its territories, eventually intervened to mediate the situation, essentially acknowledging the existence, *de facto* if not *de jure*, of an independent Bulgarian church.<sup>207</sup> Ecclesiastical and political claims by the Greek government and Ecumenical Patriarchate to Bulgarian territory, plus equivalent Serbian claims to the ancient territories of Peć and Ohrid, further complicated the situation. The Ottoman government attempted to resolve the situation by creating a Bulgarian exarchate and in March 1872 an exarch was named. The patriarchate of Constantinople rejected this action and declared the new Bulgarian ecclesiastical entity schismatic, a decision rejected by the Russian, Serbian, and Romanian churches but endorsed by the Church

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<sup>206</sup> Preceding discussion from Jelavich 129-35.

<sup>207</sup> See also E. Garrison Walters, The Other Europe: Eastern Europe to 1945 (New York: Syracuse, 1988) 100.

of Greece. In the end it was a process of negotiation, with political authorities (namely the Ottoman and Russian authorities) playing the decisive role and the patriarchate of Constantinople eventually accepting the *fait accompli*. Revolutionary activities leading to the establishment of a Bulgarian state occurred later.<sup>208</sup>

Like the Serbian Church, the Bulgarian patriarchate of Ohrid became autocephalous in the course of the establishment of the Ottoman Empire and survived in its independent form until its abolition in 1767. The patriarchate was occupied by mostly by ethnic Greeks as well.<sup>209</sup> Despite its isolation, the influence of Western European nationalism was evidenced by the fact that by the mid-1800s a nationalist agenda was gaining strength, “aimed at both religious independence from the Greeks and political independence from the Ottomans.”<sup>210</sup> In 1860, at the *millet* reform council, the Bulgarians were underrepresented and therefore unable to obtain the right to elect their own (Bulgarian, rather than Greek) bishops – again, an important requirement for autocephaly. So the Bulgarians (evidently not the clergy, but rather influential ethnic Bulgarian merchants in Constantinople) unilaterally declared the Bulgarian church independent of Greek patriarchal authority. This amounted to a declaration of national independence in the sense of the creation of a new Bulgarian *millet*, which the Greek hierarchs rejected.<sup>211</sup> “The Bulgarians demanded a church of their own that would define, in *millet* terms, the geographic extent of a Bulgarian ethnonational territory, while the Greeks viewed that demand as a threat to Hellenism and the future of an enlarged Greece based on the ‘Great Idea’ [*Megali Idea*, calling

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<sup>208</sup> Preceding discussion from Jelavich 129-35.

<sup>209</sup> Hupchick 209-10.

<sup>210</sup> Hupchick 210.

<sup>211</sup> Hupchick 242-44.

for the reconsolidation of the Greek nation-state along old Byzantine boundaries] and centered on a re-Christianized Constantinople.”<sup>212</sup> The “Great Idea” has been characterized as Greek nationalist irredentism, the “Greek equivalent of ‘Manifest Destiny,’ of *la mission civilisatrice*, of ‘the white man’s burden,’ of the ‘Third Rome,’ or of Pan-Slavism or Pan-Germanism.”<sup>213</sup> Russia yet again played a mediating role with the Patriarchate of Constantinople, but when that failed, the sultan recognized the independence of the Bulgarian church via an imperial decree, establishing in 1870 the church headed by a Bulgarian exarch headquartered in Istanbul.

The establishment of this new exarchate was a significant event, since it decoupled Bulgarian Christians from dependence upon the patriarchate and granted them *de facto* autocephaly, insofar as the Ottoman imperial decree mandated non-interference by the patriarchate in the election of bishops or in administrative matters.<sup>214</sup> This set in motion a process whereby the *millet* system, which subdivided the state along religious lines, was formalized with the establishment of an independent Bulgarian ecclesiastical authority, which, although initially located in Istanbul, was viewed as exercising authority over all parts (and, by extension, people) of the “Bulgarian ecclesiastical territory... wherever this authority may be located.”<sup>215</sup> “The new Bulgarian Exarchate was granted jurisdiction over large tracts of three regions within the empire (Bulgaria, Thrace, and Macedonia) and the sanctioned

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<sup>212</sup> Hupchick 244.

<sup>213</sup> Stephen G. Xydis, “Modern Greek Nationalism,” Sugar and Lederer 238.

<sup>214</sup> See the Article III of the imperial firman of 1870 establishing the Bulgarian Exarchate. Balkanicus, *The Aspirations of Bulgaria* (London: Simpkin Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., 1915) 245-49, reprinted in Stephen Fisher-Galati, ed., *Man, State, and Society in Eastern European History* (London: Pall Mall, 1970) 200-03.

<sup>215</sup> Article 39 of the Trnovo Constitution. See Marin V. Pundeff, “Bulgarian Nationalism,” Sugar and Lederer 123 (footnote 50).

ability to acquire other territories should two-thirds of their inhabitants wish to join.”<sup>216</sup> The patriarchate in Constantinople condemned the act as schismatic on the grounds of phyletism, defined as “the establishment of particular churches, accepting members of the same nationality and refusing members of other nationalities, being administered by pastors of the same nationality” and the “coexistence of nationally defined churches of the same faith, but independent from each other, in the same city and village.”<sup>217</sup> In the end, however, the Ecumenical Patriarchate was faced with another *fait accompli*, because the Bulgarian church continued to operate independently.<sup>218</sup> The Greeks and to a lesser extent the Serbs were concerned that Macedonians would vote to be included in the Bulgarian exarchate, and when this occurred the patriarchate of Constantinople labeled the exarchate a schismatic entity, but this did not stop the outflow. To some extent this began to prefigure a nationalist movement among Macedonians, calling for the creation of an independent Macedonian state, free of control by the Ottoman state.<sup>219</sup>

### 5.3.4 Example: The Church in Ukraine

Ukraine presents a useful case in which the growth of national identity predated the creation of both an autocephalous church (yet to be realized) and a state. Up to World War I, with the movement toward national churches throughout Eastern

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<sup>216</sup> Hupchick 245.

<sup>217</sup> Precisely the situation that evolved with the Orthodox émigré populations in North America, and to a lesser extent in Western Europe and Australia. Citation of Greek version of the decrees quoted in text by Maximos of Sardis, cited in John Meyendorff, “Orthodox Unity in America: New Beginnings?” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 35.1 (1991) 12-13.

<sup>218</sup> Hupchick 244-45.

<sup>219</sup> Hupchick 297-99.

Europe, there was no concurrent achievement of separate ecclesiastical status for Orthodox Ukrainians within the Russian Empire – the Russian Orthodox Church considered Kiev as the epicenter of Russian Christianity, dating back to the 10<sup>th</sup> century and the baptism of the Kievan Rus'. The metropolitan of Kiev was subordinated to the Patriarchate of Moscow a century or so after the establishment of the latter as an autocephalous church free of external dependencies on the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Two attempts to (re)establish autocephaly for the Ukrainian Church paralleled the search for Ukrainian political autonomy after 1917. The Russian Orthodox Church was unwilling to grant the church in Ukraine any status beyond autonomy. From the 1920s forward the Ukrainian church's two abortive attempts at establishing autocephaly included "self-consecrating" its own bishops against Moscow's objections in 1921 followed by a second attempt during the German invasion in World War II, but both attempts, lacking any external support (most notably from the Patriarchate of Constantinople), ending with reincorporation of the Ukrainian church under the Moscow Patriarchate.<sup>220</sup>

Suppressed during the Soviet period, the Ukrainian church attempted again to establish ecclesiastical boundaries coterminous with the Ukrainian state after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The political environment in which the other Orthodox churches found themselves (in addition to the substantial Ukrainian émigré population particularly in North America) exerted considerable influence on the outcome of the Ukrainian ecclesiastical project. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the independence of the Ukrainian state, the search for an independent

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<sup>220</sup> See among a number of sources John S. Reshetar, "Ukrainian Nationalism and the Orthodox Church," *American Slavic and East European Review* 10.1 (1951): 38-49.

Ukrainian church led to a situation in which three Orthodox entities – the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Kiev Patriarchate, of disputed canonical status), and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Church (non-canonical and largely unrecognized outside of Ukraine) – competed for ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the Ukrainian Orthodox population. Further complicating the situation was the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, suppressed and forcibly subordinated to the Moscow Patriarchate during the Soviet period but resurgent after its legalization following the Soviet collapse. The interests of many of these entities converge on the idea of the establishment of an independent Ukrainian church, manifesting itself as an autocephalous church according to the Orthodox model, and even as a patriarchate centered in Kiev (an idea with support among the Greek Catholic population and Ukrainian Parliament but rejected by the Vatican given the delicate state of ecumenical relations between Rome and Moscow).

This situation created the conditions, by the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, for Ukraine to emerge as the epicenter of ecclesiastical competition between Moscow, Constantinople, and Rome. The Moscow Patriarchate viewed Ukrainian autocephaly as a threat (more so, arguably, than Greek Catholic encroachment), and probably as part of its larger competition with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, proposed autonomy for the Ukrainian church provided it did not secede from Moscow. The Ecumenical Patriarchate, in a position inconsistent with its erstwhile opposition to autocephalies in the diaspora populations (discussed below), reportedly preferred the creation of a united autocephalous Orthodox Church in Ukraine.<sup>221</sup> The Vatican for its part has attempted to balance opposing interests between the Ukrainian Greek Catholics,

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<sup>221</sup> Phillip Walters, Editorial, *Religion, State, and Society* 29.3 (2001): 151.

Roman Catholic hierarchs favoring ecumenical relations with Moscow (for whom the existence of the Greek Catholic Church is unacceptable), and Catholic centralists for whom the existence of “local” or national (autocephalous) churches is inconsistent with Roman Catholic ecclesiology.<sup>222</sup>

#### 5.4 Post-National Period

The national period was characterized by the tendency to define ecclesiastical boundaries on the grounds of national and ethnic identity. The post-national period, centered primarily on the experiences of state churches during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, is characterized by several competing trends: (1) The tendency for (mostly autocephalous) state churches to expand their jurisdiction to include members of their own ethnic and national groups who found themselves within the borders of other discrete states; (2) A contest for authority between the two dominant Eastern sees, the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople and the Patriarchate of Moscow (the patriarchates of Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century enjoyed little more than historical prestige with the large exodus of Christians from

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<sup>222</sup> Serhii Plokyh, “Between Moscow and Rome: The Struggle for the Greek Catholic Patriarchate in Ukraine,” *Journal of Church and State* 37.4 (1995): 849-68. There has been a large amount of material published since 1991 particularly on the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church; many monographs provide excellent overviews. For some additional information and analysis from a variety of disciplinary perspectives on the relationship between religion, history, and national identity in the search for an independent Ukrainian church, see also Marian Rubchak, “Ethnohistorical Construction of Identity: The Lviv Paradigm,” *National Identities* 2.1 (2000): 21-34; Hugo Lane, Review Article: “Rusyns and Ukrainians Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow: The Limitations of National History,” *Nationalities Papers* 29.4 (2001): 689-96; Geraldine Fagan and Aleksandr Shchipkov, “The Ukrainian Greek Catholics in an Ambiguous Position” and “‘Rome is Not Our Father, But Neither is Moscow Our Mother’: Will There be a Local Ukrainian Orthodox Church?” *Religion, State, and Society* 29.3 (2001): 197-213; Myroslaw Tataryn, “Russia and Ukraine: Two Models of Religious Liberty and Two Models for Orthodoxy,” *Religion, State, and Society* 29.3 (2001): 155-72; Konrad Sadkowski, “From Ethnic Borderland to Catholic Fatherland: The Church, Christian Orthodox, and State Administration in the Chelm Region, 1918-1939,” *Slavic Review* 57:4 (1998): 813-39.

the Middle East);<sup>223</sup> (3) The increasingly complex and decreasingly efficacious role of the state as an enforcer of the church's institutional rules under unprecedented circumstances of globalization, fragmentation, and secularization.<sup>224</sup> The geopolitics and the unique political experiences of the Eastern European states in particular have been described elsewhere<sup>225</sup> in considerable detail and it is beyond the scope of this chapter to encapsulate them all. However, a few brief case studies will be sufficient to illustrate these broader trends.

#### *5.4.1 Trends: Émigré Populations, Jurisdictional Competition, and the Role of the State*

The political geography of the post-national period is characterized by the decreasing importance of state borders and the increased movement of émigré populations out of predominantly Orthodox Christian countries into primarily Western Europe and North America. It should be noted, however, that some of the cases cited, for example Ukraine and Estonia, do not themselves fit into the *émigré* category; rather, their own populations were caught in the broader jurisdictional competition between the major sees of Constantinople and Moscow.

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<sup>223</sup> In the case of the dispute between Moscow and Constantinople over the church in Estonia, for example, the holy synod of the Patriarchate of Antioch, obviously not consulted by either see despite its ancient prestige, declared: "We deplore that our contribution in that very important matter has been reduced to simply being informed." Peter L'Hullier, "A Challenge to Orthodox Unity," *Jacob's Well*, Spring-Summer 1996: 3, reprinted in *Sourozh* 65 (1996): 38-39.

<sup>224</sup> Certainly the relationships between and among states in the 20<sup>th</sup> century have been characterized by these two countervailing forces. There is abundant literature on this topic. See for example Ian Clark, *Globalization and Fragmentation: International Relations in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford, 1997).

<sup>225</sup> See for example the studies by Hupchick and Jelavich, cited earlier, as well as the very useful Hupchick and Cox, eds., *Palgrave Historical Atlas of Eastern Europe* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

In the case of Western Europe the initial wave of immigrants from Russia, Greece, and Asia Minor occurred in the 1920s, followed by a second wave from the Balkans, Soviet Russia, and Romania after World War II, followed by a third wave from the Middle East during the 1960s and 70s.<sup>226</sup> In the case of North America, as will be discussed in chapter 6, the émigré populations arrived earlier, starting in the 1800s, joining the indigenous Orthodox populations already in the Alaskan territories Christianized through Russian missionary activities in the 1700s. However, the 20<sup>th</sup> century also saw repeated waves of new émigrés from Eastern Europe arriving in North America through the interwar and cold war periods, and again through the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In sum, the movement of Eastern Christian populations out of their home countries occurred at unprecedented rates throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and this phenomenon caused considerable difficulties for the church, which attempted to transpose institutional rules framed in a specific state-centric context into an entirely different political geography devoid of many of the traditional state-based enforcement mechanisms. The implications of this radically different political context and lack of effective enforcement was, in many cases, a widening and accelerating disjuncture between the institutional framework of the church and the organizational forms the church began to manifest during this period.

The émigré populations came to be organized, in both Western Europe and North America, as separate parallel ecclesiastical communities, defined in national and ethnic terms, under the jurisdiction of either their respective “mother churches”

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<sup>226</sup> Michel Sollogoub, “Orthodox Christians in Western Europe Move Towards a Local Church,” talk given at a plenary session of the triennial Congress of the Fraternité Orthodoxe en Europe Occidentale, 31 October to 3 November 2002 at St Laurent-sur-Sevres (Vendee), published in French as a supplement to *Service Orthodoxe de Presse*, No. 273, December 2002, document 273.B; and published in English (in an amended version) in *Sourozh* 92 (2003): 8-32.

(primarily Russia, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, and the Patriarchate of Antioch) or the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The ecclesiastical boundaries and identities of these émigré communities reflected in large part the political conditions of their countries of origin and mother churches. For example, after the 1930s the Russian churches in Western Europe split into three jurisdictions – one under Constantinople, a diocese under the Moscow Patriarchate, and a jurisdiction under exiled hierarchy of the Russian Church – the same lines of demarcation generally seen in North America during the same period due to political events in Soviet Russia. The boundaries of these émigré jurisdictions were “superimposed” onto the political geography of Western Europe, insofar as they generally did not correspond in any meaningful way to local civil and political boundaries, and often overlapped with or ran parallel to one another, both organizational features inconsistent with the institutional rules governing the church described in chapters 4 and 5.<sup>227</sup> As such they represented a highly confused ecclesiastical situation unprecedented even during the challenges and difficulties of the national period.

The broader competition between Moscow and Constantinople can be observed in the contested status of many of these émigré or minority communities. Constantinople argued that during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries it alone had been responsible for granting, according to its unique prerogative, autocephalous status to the churches of Romania, Greece, Bulgaria, Poland, Albania, and Georgia, and autonomous status to the churches of Lithuania, Estonia, Finland, and Czechoslovakia.<sup>228</sup> The Moscow Patriarchate, on the other hand, claimed

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<sup>227</sup> Sollogoub 14-17.

<sup>228</sup> Rodopoulos 215.

jurisdictional rights over the churches in many of those same countries, particularly those falling within the old Russian imperial and later Soviet spheres of influence. To an extent this struggle was a reflection of the broader East-West conflict during the cold war, with the Moscow Patriarchate representing Soviet interests and the Ecumenical Patriarchate receiving support from the western powers. As the cold war wound down and the churches in the former Soviet bloc began to reemerge from decades of repression, this conflict moved to the fore as both sees struggled for jurisdiction over émigré populations of Eastern Christians in Western Europe and the United States. The complete collapse of communism and the Soviet apparatus, and the loss of those territories typically considered to be within the Russian sphere of political (and hence ecclesiastical) influence, created great tension within the Russian church as it competed for influence with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, whose own territories had dwindled almost exclusively to the Greek Orthodox émigré populations plus some of the territories in the Middle East.

#### *5.4.2 Example: The Church in the Czech Lands and Slovakia*

The case of the former state of Czechoslovakia provides one illustration of this competition over influence and the difficulties the church had in transposing its institutional rules onto a fluid political geography. By the late 1800s the push for national independence for Czechs and Slovaks, opposed by the Roman Catholic Hapsburg leadership, became associated among some Orthodox populations with the idea of an independent national church.<sup>229</sup> Prior to Czechoslovakia's independence in

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<sup>229</sup> The following discussion from *The Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001) 153-54. See also Hupchick and Cox, *Historical Atlas of Eastern Europe*, map 40.

1918 Orthodox Christians were under the jurisdiction of Serbian diocese of Dalmatia; after independence the creation of a national church became a possibility. By the early 1920s there were two rival candidates for the position of archbishop of Czechoslovakia, one consecrated by the Serbian patriarch in 1921 and another backed by Constantinople, forcing the state to intervene and select the Serbian candidate. Under the Soviet regime in Eastern Europe and as an extension of the Soviet state, the Russian Church consolidated the Orthodox jurisdiction as an exarchate of the Moscow Patriarchate in 1946 (which also involved either the suppression or forcible resubordination under Orthodox bishops of the local Greek Catholic communities), and declared the Czechoslovakian church autocephalous in 1951.<sup>230</sup> However, the Patriarchate of Constantinople recognized the same church as only autonomous and under its own jurisdiction, and only recognized the church's autocephaly in 1998. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the split of Czechoslovakia into separate Czech and Slovak states, the Orthodox Church in those states reconfigured itself commensurate with the changed political geography in an innovative way as the Church in the Czech Lands and Slovakia. This new structure incorporated four dioceses – the eparchies of Prazska and Olomoucko-Brnenska on the Czech Republic side and the eparchies of Presovska and Michalovska on the Slovakian side, all four administered jointly under a single metropolitan bishop in Prague.<sup>231</sup> Thus

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Contrast the Ecumenical Patriarchate's views of spiritual and administrative primacy over the Orthodox of the Czech and Slovak lands with the Moscow Patriarchate's own very different reading of that history, encapsulated for example in Josef Fejsak, "The Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia: The Path to Autocephaly," *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* 12 (1981): 46-49; and Jaroslav Suvarsky, "The 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia," *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* 7 (1982): 56-61.

<sup>230</sup> Suvarsky 58-59.

<sup>231</sup> *Church in the Czech and Slovak Lands*, 14 Nov. 2004 <<http://www.pravoslavnacirkev.cz/>>. Path: Pravoslavna Cirkev; Schematismus. See also *Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity* 154.

reconsolidated and with its autocephaly recognized, the church was able to largely escape continued jurisdictional competition between Moscow and Constantinople after the 1990s.

#### *5.4.3 Example: The Church in Estonia*

The Baltic Republic of Estonia was not as fortunate. A confrontation erupted in 1996 between the patriarchates of Moscow and Constantinople over the status of Orthodox communities in Estonia (by the national period a majority Protestant state). The Orthodox Church in Estonia, whose roots go back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century, by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was administratively under the Russian diocese of Pskov (Estonia by 1721 was part of the Russian Empire). When Estonia proclaimed independence in 1920, the Moscow Patriarchate recognized the Estonian church as an autonomous entity, a situation similar to the Orthodox churches of Poland, Finland, and Latvia during that period.<sup>232</sup> These other churches were subsequently brought under the administration of the Patriarchate of Constantinople during the Soviet era because, like the Russian Metropolia in North America, their external dependencies on Moscow were untenable during the worst periods of persecution in Soviet Russia. In 1923, due to similar concerns in Estonia, the Patriarch of Constantinople formed an autonomous Estonian church as a diocese of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and by

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<sup>232</sup> Information in this section drawn from Sergei Chapnin, "Estonia: No Love Lost Between Sister Churches," *Sourozh* 84 (2001): 43-44; Alexander F.C. Webster, "Split Decision: The Orthodox Clash Over Estonia," *Christian Century* 113.19 (1996): 614-21; "Rift Threatens Orthodoxy," *Christian Century* 113.10 (1996): 319-21; "Estonian Orthodox Church," *Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity* 183-83; and articles in *Paris Service Orthodoxe de Presse et d'Information* 200, July-August 1995: 9; 201, September-October 1995: 3; and 202, November 1995: 9; all reprinted in *Sourozh* 62 (1995): 43-47.

1947 a synod of pre-Soviet Estonian bishops in exile in Stockholm had been brought under the administrative authority of Constantinople.

In 1945, a year after the Soviet Union annexed Estonia, the Moscow Patriarchate reabsorbed the Russian and Estonian-speaking parishes as a diocese of the Russian church. Following the fall of the Soviet Union and Estonia's political independence in 1991, Moscow restored the autonomous status of the Estonian church; meanwhile, Constantinople never renounced the ecclesiastical jurisdiction it had exercised during the Soviet period. The Estonian government intervened in 1993 by legally registering the exiled Stockholm synod church as the official Estonian Orthodox Church (and refused this registration to the autonomous Estonian church under Moscow), effectively creating two rival churches within the same state. In 1996, after two years of failed negotiations with Moscow, Constantinople asserted full jurisdictional control over the autonomous Estonian church. This announcement prompted Patriarch Aleksy II of Moscow to formally break communion with the Ecumenical Patriarchate. This dispute threatened for a few months to snowball into a wider and much more serious ecclesiastical conflict.<sup>233</sup> The breach was healed, at least temporarily, four months later when Moscow and Constantinople agreed to a temporary interim agreement. Relations improved only in 2002 when both sides attempted to resolve questions over property rights, and Patriarch Alexy (a native of Estonia) made his first visit to the country after the dispute in September 2003.<sup>234</sup> The underlying issue of jurisdictional control, however, remained unresolved.

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<sup>233</sup> "Orthodox Dispute Spurs Protest in Estonia," *Christian Century* 113.12 (1996): 394-95.

<sup>234</sup> Michael Tarm, "Russian Patriarch Alexy II Visits Estonia," *Associated Press* 25 Sept. 2003, *Orthodox Christian News Service* 5:42 (2003), 19 Nov. 2003  
<<http://www.orthodoxnews.netfirms.com>>.

#### *5.4.4 Example: The Church in Finland*

An analogous situation occurred with the Orthodox Church in Finland. Ecclesiastically under the patrimony of Russia since between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, external dependencies upon Moscow became untenable after 1917. The church in Finland was brought under Constantinople in an autonomous status, but thereafter its search for autocephaly was caught in the same dynamic of competition between Moscow and Constantinople that characterized much of Eastern Europe during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Finnish church sought autocephaly on the same grounds as the other European churches – national independence, the need to order its own affairs, and the difficulties posed by external dependencies (applicable, from Finland’s point of view, to both Moscow and Constantinople). The church in Finland remained in its autonomous status under Constantinople through the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (even despite an offer from Moscow in 1948 to grant autocephaly, which viewed Helsinki’s turn to Constantinople, like that of the minority Orthodox populations in Estonia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and elsewhere during the early Soviet period, as a temporary stop-gap measure) and never received a grant of autocephaly from the Ecumenical Patriarchate.<sup>235</sup>

#### *5.4.5: Example: The Church of Greece*

The Ecumenical Patriarchate itself became involved in a jurisdictional dispute with the Church of Greece in 2003 over rights of final approval of bishops of the

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<sup>235</sup> Soili Oorni, “Autocephaly and its Meaning for the Finnish Orthodox Church,” thesis, St. Vladimir’s Theological Seminary, 1986, chapter 3.

“New Lands” territories acquired by Greece after the Balkan Wars in 1912.

Constantinople had ceded administrative authority over the New Lands territories to the Church of Greece in 1928 in what it considered as a temporary measure because of its own external dependencies and constraints imposed by the Turkish government. In 2003, following a series of episcopal vacancies (two bishops died and a third resigned) in those territories, the Church of Greece attempted to select replacements without securing Constantinople’s final approval as called for in previous agreements, prompting a dispute that continued into 2004. The Church of Greece defended its right to select and appoint bishops (including the 36 bishops administering the New Lands) as part of its right as an autocephalous church, arguing (if not explicitly) that Constantinople’s privileges in the territories were not justifiable given the challenges of maintaining external dependencies on the Patriarchate of Constantinople located in Turkey, a hostile neighbor. It also cited administrative and pastoral difficulties those dependencies had already posed for the patriarchate’s other jurisdictions in North America and Australia (an argument reminiscent of those used by the Russian church centuries earlier to justify its own autocephaly from Constantinople). Constantinople defended its exclusive right of approval as part of its institutionally and historically validated privileges in the territories, and argued that the 1928 agreement remained in force and enjoyed legal enforcement under the Greek constitution. Constantinople’s concern appeared to be that appropriation of full administrative control by the Church of Greece over the New Lands territories would be part of an effort to establish an autocephalous patriarchate for the Church of Greece and sever all external

dependencies on the Patriarchate of Constantinople, further reducing its administrative sphere of influence.<sup>236</sup>

It is useful to reiterate the degree to which the characteristic structural pluralism of the church was a factor in these disputes. In the case of the New Lands dispute, as mentioned above, the very complex division of ecclesiastical power which evolved between Greece and the Ecumenical Patriarchate within the political territory of the Greek state lay at the heart of the problem. As noted in chapter 4, the disputed island of Cyprus has its own autocephalous church of very ancient origin. In addition to the New Lands territories, four other distinct administrative systems coexist within Greek political boundaries: (1) The Church of Greece (autocephalous); (2) the Church of Crete (semi-autonomous, under the Ecumenical Patriarchate); (3) the Metropolis of the Dodecanese (under the Ecumenical Patriarchate); and (4) Mount Athos (a multinational monastic center under the Ecumenical Patriarchate).<sup>237</sup> This division of administrative responsibility between the Greek church and Constantinople was enforced through provisions in the Greek constitution and in charters of the Church of Greece. In the case of the “New Lands” dispute, the mediating role came from the Greek state in the person of Minister of Education Marietta Giannakou, who

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<sup>236</sup> Theodore Kalmoukos, “Patriarchate and Church of Greece Dispute Escalates,” The National Herald 8-9 Nov. 2003, Orthodox Christian News Service 5:48 (2003), 19 Nov. 2003 <<http://www.orthodoxnews.netfirms.com>>; George Gilson, “Bridging the Church Rift,” Athens News 31 Oct. 2003, Orthodox Christian News Service 5:48 (2003), 19 Nov. 2003 <<http://www.orthodoxnews.netfirms.com>>; “Vote Brings Churches to the Brink,” Kathimerini.com 7 Nov. 2003, Orthodox Christian News Service 5:48 (2003), 19 Nov. 2003 <<http://www.orthodoxnews.netfirms.com>>; Gilson, “Holy War Rages On,” Athens News 7 Nov. 2003, Orthodox Christian News Service 5:48 (2003), 19 Nov. 2003 <<http://www.orthodoxnews.netfirms.com>>; Kalmoukos, “Archbishop Demetios Embroiled in ‘New Lands’ Dispute,” The National Herald 22-23 Nov. 2003, Orthodox Christian News Service 5:50 (2003), 9 Jan. 2004 <<http://www.orthodoxnews.netfirms.com>>; “Patriarch Says 1928 Act Valid,” Kathimerini.com 24 Nov. 2003, Orthodox Christian News Service 5:50 (2003), 9 Jan. 2004 <<http://www.orthodoxnews.netfirms.com>>.

<sup>237</sup> Kalmoukos, “New Lands Dispute,” “Dispute Escalates.”

reportedly secured a verbal agreement in May 2004 in which the Church of Greece would affirm its respect for the traditional prerogatives of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.<sup>238</sup>

#### *5.4.6 Other Examples*

It is important to note that similar structural pluralism can be observed everywhere Orthodox Christian émigré populations exist, and that the jurisdictional disputes that arise over those populations reflect the ongoing attempt of the church to negotiate the new political geography imposed by the end of the cold war, increasing globalization, and the (arguable) waning importance of state boundaries. While these disputes predominantly occur between the patriarchates of Moscow and Constantinople, other sees are involved as well. The Patriarchate of Romania, for example, was involved since 1992 in a jurisdictional dispute with the Moscow Patriarchate over the Orthodox Church in Moldova.<sup>239</sup> Also in 1992 the Patriarchate of Jerusalem involved itself in a dispute involving jurisdiction over specific parishes of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of North America, evidently leveraging ties of ethnicity and nationality in conflict with the canonical rights of the Antiochian Archdiocese. The latter reportedly received no support from its mother church, the Patriarchate of Antioch, nor was it able to appeal successfully to other major patriarchates, including Constantinople, for help in defending what it viewed as an

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<sup>238</sup> George Gilson, "Church Turf War Two Centuries Old," *Athens News* 14 May 2004, *Orthodox Christian News Service* 6.21 (2004), 27 May 2004 <<http://www.orthodoxnews.netfirms.com>>; "Minister Says Peace Deal Will Hold," *Kathimerini.com* 21 May 2004, *Orthodox Christian News Service* 6.21 (2004), 27 May 2004 <<http://www.orthodoxnews.netfirms.com>>; and "Archbishop Blinks in Church Crisis," *Kathimerini.com* 20 May 2004, *Orthodox Christian News Service* 6.21 (2004), 27 May 2004 <<http://www.orthodoxnews.netfirms.com>>.

<sup>239</sup> Webster, "Split Decision."

intrusion into its internal affairs. The archdiocese subsequently was able to secure from the Patriarchate of Antioch the status of autonomy in 2003, enabling it to govern more directly its own administrative affairs.<sup>240</sup> This precise nature of the rights and privileges granted to the Antiochian Archdiocese, versus those retained by the Patriarchate of Antioch, however, evidently continue to be an issue of some dispute.<sup>241</sup>

## 5.5 Conclusions

Our brief examination of the historical evidence suggests that the organizational shape of the church changed significantly over time in conjunction with changes in regimes and shifts in political boundaries. We have noted many examples of organizational elasticity, particularly in the national period and after, and structural pluralism. We have observed that the state has played an increasingly significant role in the enforcement, recalibration, and breaking of ecclesiastical relationships, again particularly after the imperial period. Finally, we have observed the constraining effect of the institutional framework on efforts toward organizational change, usually initiated by political authorities.

This constraining effect, however, appears to have decreased over time to the point of becoming effectively nonbinding on instances of organizational change, particularly during the post-national period. The reason for this seems to lie with the

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<sup>240</sup> Metropolitan Philip (Saliba), "Right Faith...Wrong System," *The Word* April 1996: 3, reprinted in *Sourozh* 65 (1996): 40-41.

<sup>241</sup> See for example the open letter by Fr. George Dimas, Secretary of the Holy Synod of Antioch in Beirut, regarding the Antiochian self-rule resolution, published by the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East, 26 April 2004, *Orthodox Christian News Service* 6.17 (2004), 27 April 2004 <<http://www.orthodoxnews.netfirms.com>>.

changing role of the state as enforcer. On one hand, where the state is active as an enforcer it has become, during the national and post-national periods, largely a unilateral agent of organizational change without reference (or with cursory, *post-facto* reference) to the institutional framework, as evidenced by the many declarations of autocephaly by political authorities with little or no participation by church officials. On the other hand, when the state is absent as an enforcer or exists in a hostile relationship vis-à-vis the church, organizational change appears to occur without effective constraint by the institutional framework, as evidenced by the proliferation of organizational arrangements (e.g. parallel or overlapping jurisdictions within one political territory, characteristic of the post-national period) incongruent with institutional rules. In both cases, the efficacy of the institutional framework with regard to organizational change is diminished.

A logical conclusion is that the state no longer plays the enforcement role ascribed to it in the institutional framework developed in the Byzantine period. We have observed in chapters 3 and 4 that the institutional framework developed in a specific political context which presupposed a role for civil (imperial) authorities co-extensive and complementary with that of the church. When the political context changed, the institutional framework's ability to govern organizational change became increasingly stressed as the state assumed a more dominant and often oppositional, rather than co-extensive, role in promoting and regulating organizational change. Regularized and reasonably consistent organizational change in the church, necessary to adjust to a continually changing political landscape, presumes reliance by the church on the state as an enforcer. However, the state,

alternatively hostile, indifferent, or interventionist in the national and particularly post-national periods, has not been the reliable partner as envisioned in the institutional framework of the church.

Therefore we may view the “modern” jurisdictional conflicts within the church as a function of the church’s attempt to negotiate new and radically different political terrain using the institutional vocabulary (e.g. autocephaly) at hand, albeit with less and less effective enforcement and a less and less efficacious institutional framework. Hence the philosophical differences epitomized, for example, in the struggle between the sees of Moscow and Constantinople, “with Moscow’s affirmation, on one side, of absolute autocephaly, and the temptation experienced by Constantinople, on the other, to claim universal jurisdiction,”<sup>242</sup> could in fact be viewed as the natural result of this process of negotiation of new political geography with neither common agreement on rules nor common recourse to enforcement. A major question, then, is whether the institutional framework can function adequately in the post-national environment to regulate and constrain organizational change without the state’s reliable involvement as an enforcer. The autocephaly of the Russian Metropolia in North America in 1970 provides some useful insight into this question, and it is to this event we now turn.

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<sup>242</sup> Sollogoub 23.

## Chapter 6: Organizational Change and Institutional Enforcement: A Case Study

In chapter 5 we concluded that the state no longer plays the enforcement role ascribed to it during the institutional framework's formative period, which presupposed a role for the church coextensive and complementary with that of the state. We also concluded that changes in the political context evidently diminished the institutional framework's ability to govern organizational change in a coherent way. Regularized and reasonably consistent organizational change in the church, necessary to adjust to a continually changing political landscape, presumes reliance by the church on the state as an enforcer. However, the modern states of the Christian East, though occasionally adopting aspects of Byzantine political philosophy for pragmatic political reasons (e.g. enhanced legitimacy), have not upheld and enforced the *symphonia* on which much of the institutional framework of the Orthodox churches rests. Furthermore, the presence of large émigré populations in secularized or confessionally non-Orthodox countries entailed the transposition of the institutional framework onto a political geography radically different, in terms of the role of the state vis-à-vis the church, from that envisaged in the institutional framework itself.

To return to our question from chapter 5, is the institutional framework sufficiently effective in the post-national environment to regulate and constrain organizational change without the reliable involvement of an enforcer? The conclusions consistent with our alternative theory suggest a negative answer. As

noted in chapters 3 and 4, the Orthodox churches were able to formulate and amend the institutional framework largely through the unifying efforts of a central political authority, operationalized in large part through ecumenical councils and secondarily through regional synods and other local meetings. For the framework to govern effectively organizational changes in the modern context, it must be modified to reflect the reality of a multiplicity of modern states, a multipolar and increasingly secular landscape completely different from that of the Byzantine era. Yet the very fact of multiple states exerting conflicting pressures on their respective churches, and the absence of a centralized enforcing authority, makes this modification difficult to achieve.

### **6.1 Case Study: The Autocephaly of the Russian Metropolia in North America**

An examination of the autocephaly of the Russian Orthodox Metropolia in North America<sup>243</sup> in 1970 may shed some light on the question posed at the conclusion of chapter 5. The case is useful because it demonstrates, first, a measure of the ability of the institutional framework effectively to constrain organizational change under modern circumstances. It also illustrates the role of consensus among Orthodox churches regarding the content and application of institutional rules, and the importance of the state's role in adjudicating conflicts in a manner consistent with the institutional rules of the church. The Metropolia's autocephaly was a contentious event that threw into relief the issue of organizational change and how it is

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<sup>243</sup> Known variously, depending upon the point in history, as the Russian Orthodox Missionary Diocese in America, the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in North America, the Russian Orthodox Metropolia in North America (or simply, the "Metropolia"), and, after 1970, the Orthodox Church in America.

legitimately to be achieved. This issue remains contentious and unresolved in the present day.

### *6.1.1 The Role of Nationalism in Explaining the Autocephaly of the Metropolia*

We must begin by returning to the point originally raised in chapter 2 that nationalism, although not the *mechanism* for autocephaly, certainly is a factor contributing to the unrestricted organizational change, unconstrained by institutional rules, observed during the national and particularly post-national periods. It has been widely argued that nationalism has had a divisive rather than unitive effect on Eastern Christian populations, particularly those dispersed outside of predominantly Orthodox countries. Nationalism loomed large in the disintegration of the Orthodox émigré population in North America from the 1920s forward as political events in Europe were mirrored ecclesiastically in the United States and Canada. As one archbishop, a witness to those events, noted in 1927:

The [First] World War and the triumph of the slogan of 'democracy' [and] 'self-determination' fanned into destructive flame that smoldering but ever superabundant nationalism in the Eastern Orthodox people [in America]...Each little group or tribe now aspired to become a distinct nation, and each nationalistic party determined to have a separate and distinct national Orthodox Church or, indeed, a Patriarchate. This brought confusion and disorder enough in the Church in Europe where new or revived states sprang into existence; but its reaction on the Orthodox population in America *where there was no corresponding political development to justify or excuse new ecclesiastical organizations*, was chaotic and disastrous.<sup>244</sup>

The fact that organizational changes, in the sense of fragmentation along national lines, were occurring without “corresponding political development” suggests that the

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<sup>244</sup> Aftimios, Archbishop of Brooklyn, “Present and Future of Orthodoxy in America in Relation to Other Bodies and to Orthodoxy Abroad,” *The Orthodox Catholic Review* 1:4-5 (1927), cited in *Orthodox America* 196, italics added.

institutional framework was not effective in constraining those changes in the sense envisaged in the framework itself. However, the origins of the autocephaly cannot be attributed exclusively to nationalism. The Russian Metropolia in North America, a de facto autonomous entity in the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution, could not be considered simply an extension of the Soviet state apparatus and an apologist for the Soviet government (evidenced by the fact that there was a Russian patriarchal exarchate in place in North America at the time), nor could its autocephaly be viewed exclusively as an extension of Russian nationalism (in fact a large number of parishes within the Metropolia originally were Greek Catholic parishes of Carpatho-Rusyn origin). Instead, the facts suggest that a variety of factors favoring autocephaly came into alignment in the North American case. Nationalism was only part of the story, albeit a very important part.

## **6.2 The Salience of the Alternative Theory**

How well does our alternative theory hold up against the available evidence regarding the Metropolia's autocephaly? In the course of laying out the alternative theory in chapter 3 we identified three factors favoring autocephaly: disjuncture between political and ecclesiastical boundaries, disruption in the ecclesiastical relationship between parent and subsidiary, and alignment of political incentives. We will assess each factor in turn according to the available historical evidence concerning the Metropolia and how its autocephaly was achieved.

### *6.2.1 Factor One: Disjuncture Between Political and Ecclesiastical Boundaries*

Looking at the first factor – disjuncture between political and ecclesiastical boundaries – there is ample evidence that this was a major component in the process of the Metropolia toward autocephaly. A Russian presence in North America, starting with trading and missionary activities, began in the Alaskan territories in the 18<sup>th</sup> century with the native inhabitants of that area. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century a Russian Orthodox presence had spread down to the west coast of the United States even as immigration from Russia and Eastern Europe increased on the east coast. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the Orthodox “diaspora” – in fact a truly multi-ethnic patchwork of communities of Russian, Greek, Syrian, Romanian, former Greek Catholic, and other origins – were more or less aligned ecclesiastically into a single missionary diocese under the administrative control of the Russian Orthodox Church. The organizational complexity of the situation in North America on the eve of the Bolshevik Revolution, however, cannot be over-emphasized. Beyond the native Alaskan communities and the increasingly large numbers of Russians immigrating to North America, there were also (more or less under the control of the Russian missionary diocese) 24 Arab parishes by 1915, 19 Serbian parishes by 1916, 6 Albanian parishes by the early 1900s, 20 Romanian parishes by 1920, coupled with repeated waves of various Slavic groups emigrating to North America from the 1890s through the early 1900s.<sup>245</sup> Not counted here are the large numbers of Greek immigrants who began arriving roughly during the same period. In summary,

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<sup>245</sup> Mark Stokoe and Leonid Kishkovsky, *Orthodox Christians in North America: 1794-1994* (Wayne, New Jersey: Orthodox Christian Publications Center, 1995) ch. 2, 24 Nov. 2004 <[http://www.oca.org/pages/orth\\_chri/Orthodox-Church-Introduction/North-America-1794-1994/index.htm](http://www.oca.org/pages/orth_chri/Orthodox-Church-Introduction/North-America-1794-1994/index.htm)>.

By 1916, the majority of the roughly 300,000 Orthodox Christians in America were no longer Alaskan native peoples, nor Slavs in the missionary diocese: they were Greeks in independent "trustee" parishes. According to the 1916 US Census of Religious Bodies, "Eastern Orthodoxy" had been the fastest growing denominational family in America in the preceding decade, showing an incredible 25,000 percent increase in number of adherents. The rapid proliferation of independent Greek parishes (more than 140 were established between 1906-1916 alone), and to a lesser extent those "independent" Romanian, Bulgarian, and Ukrainian parishes which imitated them, overwhelmed the understaffed missionary diocese's ability or desire to deal with the canonical, legal, and administrative problems they engendered.<sup>246</sup>

The diversity and rapid increase in numbers, with the concomitant increase in administrative difficulties, combined with the unlikelihood of return given political circumstances in Eastern Europe, guaranteed a situation organizationally irresolvable according to the institutional norms outlined in chapters 4 and 5. The patchwork of ethnic parishes in North America reflected a transposition of European ecclesiastical boundaries in miniature onto an entirely different political landscape. There was no direct correlation between ecclesiastical affiliation and state borders and no political authority available or able to adjudicate effectively or definitively the inevitable resulting jurisdictional disagreements, and to enforce rules to guarantee institutionally consistent organizational decisions.

### *6.2.2 Factor Two: Disruption in the Relationship Between Parent and Subsidiary*

In terms of the second factor – disruption in the ecclesiastical relationship between parent and subsidiary – it was clear that the Bolshevik Revolution was a major turning point not only for the Metropolia itself but for the adjacent jurisdictions outlined above. Monies for the Metropolia (\$1,000,000 requested by 1916) had

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<sup>246</sup> Stokoe and Kishkovsky ch. 2.

ceased flowing from the Russian synod by March 1917.<sup>247</sup> Furthermore, in the years following the revolution the nascent organizational unity of Orthodox communities in America was split by tensions between politically opposed forces: representatives of the communist co-opted Living Church in Russia, socialist agitators in America, Russian nationalists, and a growing sense of ethnic separatism on the part of other non-Russian and non-Slav groups to that point more or less unified within the diocese.<sup>248</sup> Different groups competed with one another, each claiming to be the authentic and canonical representatives of the Russian Church on American soil. It is difficult to overstate the extent of the administrative collapse on the North American continent that came in the wake of the Russian Revolution and the political turbulence in other confessionally Orthodox countries. John Meyendorff, for example, has noted that “[t]he territorial principle was universally applied in the Orthodox Church until it was formally broken for the first time in America in 1921”<sup>249</sup> – broken by the complete collapse of canonically regular relationships between émigré groups in the West and their national churches of origin. One Lebanese hierarch, who governed a portion of the once-unified Metropolia in North America (his very presence in the hierarchy spoke to the level of multinational Orthodox integration that had existed up to 1917), described in 1927 the state of administrative disarray:

Each little group of Orthodox people produced some new party or leader who wished to set up in America a Church based solely on the national or racial derivation of its adherents. The inclusive unity and coordination of Orthodoxy as such in America regardless of nationality or language was forgotten in this

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<sup>247</sup> *Orthodox America* 177.

<sup>248</sup> Stokoe and Kishkovsky ch. 5.

<sup>249</sup> Meyendorff, “The Ethnic Principle of Church Administration” 105-06.

sudden over-emphasis upon political or tribal distinctions based upon the reorganization of the map of Europe. The true ideal of one Orthodox Catholic Church in America for the growing thousands of Americans born and reared in Orthodoxy was lost in the over-zealous patriotic desire of the immigrant generation to parallel in America the national resurrections taking place in Europe. The situation was most favorable for ambitious and self-seeking ecclesiastical adventurers and politicians; and these appeared in every group.<sup>250</sup>

By the end of the 1920s the Metropolia had more or less collapsed as an organization, and the ecclesiastical situation became, in institutional terms, highly irregular. A synod of Russian bishops in exile in Serbia (the Karlovci Synod), claiming to represent the canonical Russian church, attempted to assert control over the Russian Orthodox diaspora populations in North America, Western Europe, and Asia.<sup>251</sup> Later this was followed by the establishment in North America by Moscow of an exarchate of the Russian church itself, now firmly under Soviet control, leading to multiple authorities each claiming to represent the canonical church in America.

All evidence points to a nearly total loss of communication between the Metropolia and the Moscow Patriarchate in the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution.<sup>252</sup> This was to an extent anticipated by the All-Russia *Sobor* (conciliar ecclesiastical assembly) of 1917, a watershed event itself disrupted by the Revolution, which granted broader rights of self-government for the Metropolia, since regular relations with Moscow would be increasingly problematic.<sup>253</sup> In a 29 September 1923

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<sup>250</sup> Aftimios, Archbishop of Brooklyn, "Present and Future of Orthodoxy in America," Orthodox America 196-97.

<sup>251</sup> Stokoe and Kishkovsky ch. 6.

<sup>252</sup> Details regarding the history of the Russian Church up to the Bolshevik Revolution, through World War II, and into the cold war can be found in, among others, John Curtiss, Church and State in Russia: The Last Years of the Empire, 1900-1917 (New York: Columbia, 1940); Curtiss, The Russian Church and the Soviet State: 1917-1950 (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1953); and Dimitry Pospelovsky, The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime: 1917-1982, 2 vols. (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1982).

<sup>253</sup> Orthodox America 173.

statement, Russian Patriarch Tikhon confirmed the election of Metropolitan Platon to head the Metropolia in North America. However, in 1924 a statement attributed to Tikhon abruptly deposed Platon for engaging “in public acts of counter-revolution directed against the Soviet Power” (which were not specified) and summoned him immediately to Moscow, leaving the status of his successor ambiguous (a situation mirroring that of the Russian church itself vis-à-vis the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, as noted in chapter 5).<sup>254</sup> The Metropolia also refused to sign an oath of loyalty to the Soviet government.<sup>255</sup> Given the contradictory directives coming from the Moscow Patriarchate and the rapidly deteriorating political and ecclesiastical relationship between the patriarchate and its North American subsidiary, the Metropolia in its own 1924 council, which convened in April in Detroit, decided to (1) declare the diocese temporarily self-governing (e.g. de facto autonomous), (2) provide for continuing administration under Metropolitan Platon (implicitly recognizing his deposition to be a canonically irregular act by a politically co-opted hierarchy in Moscow), and (3) develop a constitution that would enable the church in America to operate in a normal fashion until the relationship with the Church of Russia could be regularized.<sup>256</sup>

An 18 October 1946 memorandum regarding the “Status of the Russian Orthodox Church in America” (in preparation for the 1946 Cleveland *Sobor*) provides

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<sup>254</sup> Account of the Fourth All-American Sobor, convened in Detroit, MI from 2-4 April 1924, according to a summary of the results provided by Alexis Liberovsky, archivist for the Orthodox Church in America. The full text of the 1923 and 1924 statements of Patriarch Tikhon to Metropolitan Platon, no. 41 dated 29 September 1923, and no. 28 dated 16 January 1924, are published in Serafim Surrency, *The Quest for Orthodox Church Unity in America* (New York: Ss. Boris and Gleb Press, 1973) A124-25.

<sup>255</sup> Metropolitan Theodosius, Archbishop of Washington, “The Path to Autocephaly and Beyond,” originally published in *The Orthodox Church* 31:6-7 (1995): 7, reprinted in *Sourozh* 62 (1995): 1-12.

<sup>256</sup> Excerpt from documents of 1924 Detroit Sobor (Council), published in Surrency, pp. A126.

additional evidence. The memorandum noted that there was a close relationship between the existing Orthodox hierarchy in Russia and the Soviet government, and that the majority of the faithful in the United States were American citizens living under very different political conditions than those in Soviet Russia, and “[t]hese two facts do not preclude any canonical subordination of our Church to the Moscow Patriarchy, but force us to insist on receiving for our Church a wide autonomy which would remove all influence of the Soviet government, direct or indirect, on our Church.”<sup>257</sup> Subsequently at the 7<sup>th</sup> All-American *Sobor* in Cleveland in November 1946, a resolution was passed advocating (1) severing administrative ties with the hierarchy of the exile Russian Church Abroad (the Karlovci Synod), (2) regularizing the relationship of the church in America with the Moscow Patriarchate provided the church in America would retain its autonomy, and (3) should the Moscow Patriarchate refuse those conditions, the church in America should continue in its condition of *de facto* autonomy.<sup>258</sup> Other evidence points to ongoing pressure against the Metropolia by the Soviet government and the Karlovci Synod, and internal schisms by dissident hierarchs (e.g. the Carpatho-Rusyn bishops Stefan Dzubai and Adam Filippovsky), which the Metropolia, lacking a canonically regular relationship with the Moscow Patriarchate, had great difficulty resolving.<sup>259</sup>

The Moscow Patriarchate responded to these moves toward independence by calling the breach with Moscow a schism and placing the Metropolia under

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<sup>257</sup> “Memorandum on the Status of the Russian Orthodox Church in America,” 18 October 1946, signed in New York by M. Karpovitch, N. Timashev, G. Fedotov, Peter Zubov, and George Novitzky, cited in Surrency A136-40.

<sup>258</sup> Resolution of the 7<sup>th</sup> All-American Sobor Held in Cleveland, Ohio, 26-28 November 1946, cited in Surrency A141.

<sup>259</sup> Pospelovsky 283-93.

interdiction (although remaining in sacramental communion with it).<sup>260</sup> The Metropolia in North America continued in its de facto autonomous status through the 1960s, consolidating itself administratively and financially along the way, until rapprochement with the Russian Orthodox Church, and subsequently autocephaly, was achieved. Until that time, as with the Russian Church vis-à-vis Constantinople in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Metropolia viewed its external dependencies upon Moscow as unsustainable and therefore no longer binding. Despite the interests of the Soviet government to the contrary and (no doubt government sponsored) ecclesiastical pressures brought to bear by rival bodies in North America, these organizational changes occurred evidently without obstruction.

### *6.3.3 Factor Three: Alignment of Political Incentives*

The salience of the third factor – alignment of political incentives – can only be understood within the geopolitical context in which the autocephaly of the Metropolia occurred.<sup>261</sup> In the late 1940s the political posture of the Russian church mirrored that of the Soviet state, evidenced by its overt hostility to the Vatican, to the World Council of Churches (WCC), to “schismatic” groups such as the Metropolia, to anything that could be viewed as a threatening agent of Western (anti-Soviet) influence. The fact that the Russian church set up an exarchate on North American soil is testament to its denial, in line with Soviet interests, of the legitimacy of the

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<sup>260</sup> Thomas Hopko, *Questions and Answers on Autocephaly* ([New York]: [St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press], 1971).

<sup>261</sup> I am indebted to Prof. John H. Erickson for his guidance in locating events surrounding the autocephaly of the Metropolia in the geopolitical context of the cold war. This section is derived in large part from that guidance, cross-referenced against other materials. Errors in this section are the sole responsibility of this author.

Metropolia. In fact the cold war played itself out, as in other spheres, though ecclesiastical proxy wars in which the activities of churches were viewed as extensions of state power. The activities of the Soviet state in this area are well documented.<sup>262</sup> Obviously the West played its role by proxy as well (for example, the election of Athenagoras as Ecumenical Patriarch evidently was the result at least in part of American involvement – Athenagoras was a U.S. citizen and arrived in Istanbul on board a U.S. Presidential aircraft). However, as the cold war moved from “peaceful coexistence” toward détente, there was a corresponding change in the attitudes of the Russian Church and the Metropolia towards one another. This shift was evident in the participation by the Russian church in the World Council of Churches as a representative of the socialist bloc and its response to the ecumenical overtures of Pope John XXIII in the 1960s,<sup>263</sup> and the warming of the Moscow Patriarchate’s relations with the Metropolia.

The various reasons the Metropolia sought autocephaly from the Russian Church are well-documented and need not be recapitulated in their entirety here.<sup>264</sup> Its primary stated goal was the regularization of its ecclesiastical life, not only to legitimize itself in the view of other autocephalous churches (given that the

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<sup>262</sup> See, for example, Curtiss, The Russian Church and the Soviet State, and Pospelovsky, The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime (particularly the chapters in vol. 2). Cf. also William Fletcher, Religion and Soviet Foreign Policy: 1945-1970 (London: Oxford, 1973).

<sup>263</sup> Relevant documents and background can be found in, among others, John Borelli and John Erickson, eds., The Quest for Unity: Orthodox and Catholics in Dialogue: Documents of the Joint International Commission and Official Dialogues in the United States, 1965-1995 (New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press; Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1996); and also in Edward Kilmartin, Toward Reunion: The Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches (New York: Paulist Press, 1979) chs. 1 through 3, and appendix.

<sup>264</sup> For details see Surrency chs. 2 through 6, plus appendix; Constance Tarasar and John Erickson, eds., Orthodox America: 1794-1976: Development of the Orthodox Church in America (New York: OCA Department of History and Archives, 1975) chs. 5 through 8; “Documents of the Autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in America,” St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly 15:1-2 (1971): 42-80; and also documentation (with a different interpretation) in Russian Autocephaly and Orthodoxy in America: An Appraisal (New York: Orthodox Observer Press, 1972) 45-72.

Metropolia had been in an undefined state of de facto autonomy for decades), but it also would promise to improve cooperation among the still-divided parallel Orthodox jurisdictions in North America. An autocephalous Orthodox Church in America, recognized as such through a canonical process (although exactly what that meant remained ambiguous), also hopefully would stem the tide of disgruntled congregations leaving the Metropolia to put themselves under competing jurisdictions perceived as more canonical.

The precise reasons behind the Moscow Patriarchate's decision to grant autocephaly to the Metropolia are less clear, but it is apparent that there was an alignment of incentives favoring autocephaly in the political context of détente. In addition to the change in political climate, it was becoming clear to the Moscow Patriarchate by the 1960s that its exarchate in North America no longer was fulfilling a useful function. Acceptance of autocephaly from the Metropolia offered a face-saving way to effectively extricate the Russian church from its relationship with the exarchate, the parishes of which were proving neither financially nor politically advantageous to Moscow. Certainly any improvements in foreign (Western) perceptions of Russian religious life would have been in line with Soviet foreign policy priorities during the period from the late 1960s through the 1970s, and the Russian church remained an instrument of the Soviet government in achieving these goals (e.g. through the WCC and other international forums).<sup>265</sup> By granting autocephaly to its Metropolia, the Russian church itself presumably also hoped to gain allies in the West, which could prove useful as a hedge against the future policies of the Soviet government. It would place the Russian church in a more attractive

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<sup>265</sup> Pospelovsky 469-71.

light vis-à-vis the West and help counterbalance the image of the Russian church as primarily a tool of the Soviet regime. Expected improvements in ecumenical contacts and the priorities of the WCC also were priorities for the Russian Orthodox Church at the time.

We do know that the Russian church remained an instrument of Soviet foreign policy even when that policy took on a less anti-Western posture. The head of the Russian church's department of external relations during this period, Nikodim Rotov, implemented policies that were directly congruent with Soviet foreign policy priorities. Pospelovsky has argued that

Nikodim's policies...responded to Khrushchev's policies of peaceful coexistence, of enlarging and strengthening the contacts of the Soviet Union with the foreign world – in short, of attempting to come out of isolation. It was Nikodim who lead the Moscow Patriarchate into the World Council of Churches (although the decision to do so had been made under his predecessors). It was Nikodim who cofounded and joined the Prague Peace Conference, as well as a number of interconfessional dialogue undertakings in the West. It was he who discontinued the attacks against the Vatican and established very close links with it. It was eventually under him and on his initiative that the Orthodox Church in America was granted autocephaly.<sup>266</sup>

The issue of whether the autocephaly itself occurred as a result of initiatives from Moscow (the Patriarchate) versus the United States (the Metropolia) is open to debate.<sup>267</sup> Still, viewed in this context, the rapprochement between the Russian church and the Metropolia in the late 1960s makes more sense. The Metropolia had a reason to seek autocephaly and the Moscow Patriarchate, in line with adjusted Soviet foreign policy priorities, had a variety of incentives to grant it. In 1966 and again in

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<sup>266</sup> Pospelovsky 361.

<sup>267</sup> It has been argued anecdotally that the influential priest and theologian Alexander Schmemmann was instrumental from the Metropolia's side in engineering the grant of autocephaly. Schmemmann passed away prematurely in 1983 and his memoirs, published posthumously (and post-dating the events surrounding the autocephaly), do not provide details of his specific role with regard to the negotiations leading to the autocephaly. See *The Journals of Father Alexander Schmemmann: 1973-1983*, trans. Juliana Schmemmann (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2000).

1967, the Metropolia approached the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople to seek a grant of autocephaly, having been rebuffed by the Moscow Patriarchate in previous years. The Ecumenical Patriarch, however, also rebuffed the Metropolia, reminding them that it was the responsibility of the Russian church to resolve the problem (a position from which the Ecumenical Patriarchate would reverse itself, evidently for political reasons, immediately after the autocephaly was granted). The official reason was that the Ecumenical Patriarchate then viewed the situation of the Russian church as having returned to a semblance of normalcy following the difficulties of the Stalinist period. Unofficially, however, it appears that the Russian church exerted pressure against the Ecumenical Patriarchate possibly via the Russian Exarchate in Paris, evidence that the rivalry between these two dominant patriarchates, in the context of larger geopolitical rivalries, continued to play itself against the background of détente. It also is possible that Constantinople did not expect anything substantive to come out of negotiations between the Metropolia and the Russian Orthodox Church. The shock expressed by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, made clear in its response to the Moscow Patriarchate's *tomos* granting autocephaly, was viewed by the American architects of the autocephaly as disingenuous in light of the fact that Constantinople had been aware of the status of the negotiations with Moscow throughout. To emphasize, the autocephaly of the Metropolia must be viewed in the broader context of the rivalry between the two patriarchates.<sup>268</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> See Metropolitan Theodosius, "Path to Autocephaly and Beyond."

#### 6.3.4 Assessment

These three factors – changed ecclesiastical boundaries, the need for ecclesiastical regularization, and the congruence of political interests – help explain the Russian church’s decision to grant autocephaly to the Metropolia in 1970, autocephaly being the institutionally-sanctioned organizational option of greatest benefit to both sides. The Russian church justified its decision to grant autocephaly on several premises.<sup>269</sup> First, it viewed itself canonically as the parent church to the Metropolia, the latter having originated first as a mission and subsequently as a diocese of the former, and therefore the patriarchate had, according to Moscow’s interpretation of the institutional framework, the exclusive canonical right to grant autocephaly. Second, the Orthodox émigré populations in North America, originally under Russian administrative control, had subdivided into jurisdictions largely controlled or overseen by their respective churches of origin. Hence the Moscow Patriarchate had a legitimate pastoral responsibility for its own North American subsidiary in particular, if not the whole North American Orthodox émigré population in general. Third, the Metropolia was considered to be at a sufficiently mature stage of organizational development as to be capable of self-government, having as it did sufficient bishops and clergy, theological schools, and resources at hand to operate without Moscow’s oversight. Far from being merely a function of nationalism,<sup>270</sup> the

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<sup>269</sup> These premises are laid out in, among others, Hopko, “Questions and Answers.”

<sup>270</sup> Interestingly, John Meyendorff, another priest and theologian of the Metropolia intimately involved in the autocephaly, argued in an open letter that, in fact, it was the Ecumenical Patriarchate’s opposition to autocephaly for the church in America, rather than the autocephaly itself, that was rooted in nationalism. Arguing that (1) the road to autocephaly did include pan-Orthodox consultations and (2) affirming the right of the Moscow Patriarchate to grant autocephaly to its daughter church, he noted: “Personally, I have wasted a great deal of ink and energy defending the prerogatives of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. I do not disown a word of what I have written. But I declare that in America the Ecumenical Patriarchate has erred in its responsibility to act as a unifier and has made itself only the

North American autocephaly reflected instead the Metropolia's organizational response to a changed political landscape and to a changed relationship with the Russian church.

#### **6.4 Implications: Organizational Change and Institutional Enforcement**

The interpretation of the institutional rules cited by both the Metropolia and the Moscow Patriarchate to justify the autocephaly was not shared by other Orthodox churches. The reactions and public disagreements over the legitimacy of the autocephaly of the Metropolia – specifically in terms of the Moscow Patriarchate's right to declare it in principle and the manner in which it was declared in the North American case in particular – all illustrate the lack of consensus regarding how the institutional rules were to enable or constrain organizational change. In this sense the autocephaly of the Metropolia provides a good index for the efficacy of institutional rules and the impact of weak or non-existent enforcement of those rules.

##### *6.4.1 The Importance of Consensus in the Application of Institutional Rules*

In the case of the Metropolia, the responses and reactions of the other Orthodox churches with populations or jurisdictions in America, to include the other four ancient patriarchates, all point toward concern over the “canonicity” of the autocephaly but also displayed a marked lack of consensus over what “canonical” meant. A few months after autocephaly was granted, Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras appointed Archbishop Iakovos of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of

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agent of Greek nationalism.” John Meyendorff, “The Problem of the Autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in America,” original published in French in *Contacts* 72 4e Trimestre (1970): 309-10, reprinted in English in *Surrency* A169-70.

North and South America as Patriarchal Exarch Plenipotentiary with “the right to preside over consultations and meetings of the Orthodox Canonical Bishops in America...provided that the existing Canonical ties of each hierarch with his own mother Church are fully and unilaterally preserved and further continued until the time the entire question of the Orthodox Churches in the diaspora is undoubtedly and finally regulated...by the [forthcoming] Holy and Great Synod...”<sup>271</sup> This decision can be interpreted as an attempt by the Ecumenical Patriarchate to assert a measure of control over the North American situation and to prevent further organizational fragmentation through autocephaly, while guaranteeing protection of the patriarchate’s interests on North American soil against Russian encroachment.

Patriarch Nikolaos of Alexandria, in a 16 December 1970 response to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, condemned the autocephaly of the Metropolia as null and void “without historical and canonical basis,” and argued that in order that the autocephaly “not become the cause of disastrous consequences, the Patriarchate of Moscow should have waited for the question of the future of the Russians in diaspora to be investigated, discussed, and decided with finality by all Orthodox in the Great Synod of the Orthodox Church now in preparation.” Perhaps significantly the letter refers to the problem of a specific diaspora population, rather than the question of autocephaly more generally.<sup>272</sup> Above all, the content of the letter reflects a concern about the inadequacy of formal rules (canons) governing organizational change in light of unprecedented shifts in ecclesiastical boundaries in the post-national period.

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<sup>271</sup> “Decree Issued in December 1970 Patriarch Athenagoras to Archbishop Iakovos,” protocol no. 1160, published in *The Orthodox Observer* Feb. 1971: 4, reprinted in Surrency, pp. A174-75.

<sup>272</sup> Letter of Patriarch Nikolaos of Alexandria to Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, 16 December 1970, published in English translation in *Russian Orthodoxy and Orthodoxy in America: An Appraisal* 45-67.

The unique difficulties of this environment posed challenges the institutional framework as configured was ill-equipped to resolve.

Patriarch Elias IV of Antioch noted in official correspondence that “an autocephalous Church in America [can] exist only as a result of an agreement between the Autocephalous Churches, principally between those retaining jurisdiction[s in] America....We in the Church of Antioch take this stand: that only...autocephalous Churches in consultation and agreement can claim an ‘Autocephalous Church in America.’”<sup>273</sup> This statement reflects an interpretation that the institutional rules call for ecumenical sanction of autocephaly, a view at variance both with Moscow’s interpretation that it is the parent’s right to confer autocephaly on its mature subsidiary, and Constantinople’s view of its own unique prerogatives vis-à-vis the Orthodox diaspora.

Patriarch Benedictos of Jerusalem, echoing the response of Antioch, argued in 17 March 1971 correspondence that granting autocephaly is “the prerogative of the whole Church.” However, he also made an unprecedented argument regarding the need for popular consent of the faithful to be governed by new ecclesiastical arrangements as a prerequisite for autocephaly. Finally, the patriarch referred “the entire question of the Orthodox Diaspora, and specifically that of America” to “the Holy and Great Synod of our Eastern Orthodox Church now in preparation.”<sup>274</sup> The statement taken as a whole is similar to that of Alexandria, insofar as it essentially recognizes the inadequacy of the institutional framework and the need for

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<sup>273</sup> Letter of Patriarch Elias IV of Antioch (presumably to Metropolitan Ireney), 22 July 1971, published in English translation in Russian Orthodoxy and Orthodoxy in America: An Appraisal 45-67.

<sup>274</sup> Letter of Patriarch Benedictos of Jerusalem to Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, 17 March 1971, published in English translation in Russian Orthodoxy and Orthodoxy in America: An Appraisal 45-67.

modification. It is at variance with the other churches, however, in its introduction of the concept of popular mandate, which is found nowhere in the canonical content of the institutional framework governing organizational change.

The response provided by the Church of Greece, in the person of Archbishop Ieronymos, president of the Greek Holy Synod, was the most extensive and closely argued. The archbishop argued that “it is the undoubted jurisdictional rights over a territory that constitute the indispensable condition for the right to appoint a bishop, not the claiming of jurisdictional rights as a result of having appointed a bishop there. The appointment and establishment of a bishop in a particular place cannot be used as a means of jurisdictionally annexing that place.” Quoting a statement by Ecumenical Patriarch Joachim III (presumably circa 1908), the archbishop affirmed: “It is obvious that neither the holy Church of Greece, which has been granted by our Patriarchate the status of being autocephalous but with strictly defined jurisdictional boundaries, nor any other Church or Patriarchate could canonically extend their authority beyond the boundaries of their jurisdictions, apart from our Apostolic [sic] and Patriarchal Throne; this, both by virtue of the privilege accorded to it to ordain bishops within the barbaric nations which are even beyond defined ecclesiastical jurisdictions, and by virtue of having the right deriving from its seniority to extend supreme protection to the said Churches in foreign territories.” In sum, the archbishop continued, “[o]nly the Ecumenical Throne can justifiably extend its authority beyond its own territorial jurisdiction,” and the Patriarch of Moscow, like any other patriarch save the Patriarch of Constantinople, had jurisdiction only over his own realm, defined largely by the political boundaries of the state within which his church was located. Connecting the

particular rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate with the requirement for conciliar validation, the archbishop affirmed “that whether as a result of decisions of Ecumenical or local Synods or as a result of other procedures, the promotion of a church to the status of being autocephalous and independent has been all along a question for the whole Church to decide.” Therefore, everything the Patriarchate of Moscow did vis-à-vis the diaspora populations “without the consent of the Senior Throne – such as the naming by the Patriarchate of Moscow of the Churches of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and now of America, as autocephalous – is dangerously inordinate and anti-canonical, and decisions of this kind are void and condemnable.”<sup>275</sup> This latter statement, indicative of the jurisdictional competition between Constantinople and Moscow as the two dominant Orthodox sees, illustrates clearly that the objections to the autocephaly clearly involved not simply canonical (institutional) objections but political ones as well.

#### *6.4.2 The Importance of Third-Party Enforcement of Institutional Rules*

These letters more or less represent the breadth of the argumentation surrounding the issue of autocephaly in the post-national period. There was (as hinted at in the letter by the Greek Synod) much effort put forth in explicating “the canonically established and universally accepted procedures” for establishing autocephaly.<sup>276</sup> The wide variety of opinions offered by all the major Orthodox sees,

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<sup>275</sup> Letter of Archbishop Iernymos, President of the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, to Metropolitan Pimen, Locum Tenens of the Patriarchate of Moscow, 23 March 1971, published in English translation in *Russian Orthodoxy and Orthodoxy in America: An Appraisal* 45-67.

<sup>276</sup> This phrase was used in another such corrective letter concerning “The Irregularity of the Russian Autocephaly in America,” attributed to Metropolitan Emilianos, Permanent Representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate at the World Council of Churches, published in *Russian Autocephaly and Orthodoxy in America: An Appraisal* 68.

however, demonstrates a complete lack of consensus as to what those “universally accepted procedures” – institutional rules – for autocephaly were to be, i.e. whether autocephaly properly is to be declared by the parent church, by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, by a general council, or by some combination of all three methods. With no adjudicating third party to enforce a particular outcome, the *fait accompli* process characteristic of the national and post-national periods was exemplified by the case of the Metropolia. Autocephaly was declared unilaterally (or perhaps more accurately bilaterally, solely between the Metropolia and Moscow with no input from Constantinople or elsewhere), with selective reference to the institutional framework to justify *post facto* a decision made exclusively between parent and subsidiary, which was followed by widespread disagreement and eventual acceptance (*de facto* if not *de jure*) among the community of Orthodox churches. The institutional framework remained useful insofar as it could be cited as justification for the organizational change implemented. However, the formal rules themselves did not appear to constrain the organizational change in any substantial way.

If our theory is valid, we may attribute the inability of institutions to constrain this instance of organizational change to the lack of effective third-party enforcement. And that enforcement itself would have been difficult to achieve in the post-national context of multiple states exerting conflicting pressures on their respective churches, combined with the absence of a universally-accepted authority. Therefore one state could not enforce a particular organizational outcome affecting parallel jurisdictions in North America to the satisfaction of all other parent churches, many of which were in competition with one another. Hence the autocephaly of the Metropolia illustrated

the limits of third-party enforcement in a post-national environment. One of the chief architects of the autocephaly of the Metropolia, Alexander Schmemmann, summarized the situation this way:

The canonical chaos in America is not a specifically "American" phenomenon. Rather, Orthodoxy here is the victim of a long, indeed a multi-secular disease. It was a latent disease as long as the Church was living in the old traditional situation characterized primarily by an organic unity of the State, the ethnic factor and the ecclesiastical organization. Up to quite recently, in fact up to the appearance of the massive Orthodox *diaspora*, ecclesiastical stability and order were preserved not so much by the canonical "consciousness," but by State regulations and control. Ironically enough it made not much difference whether the State was Orthodox (The Russian Empire, the Kingdom of Greece), Roman Catholic (Austro-Hungary) or Muslim (the Ottoman Empire). Members of the Church could be persecuted in non-Orthodox States, but Church organization—and this is the crux of the matter—was *sanctioned* by the State and could not be altered without this sanction. This situation was, of course, the result of the initial Byzantine "symphony" between Church and State, but after the fall of Byzantium it was progressively deprived of that mutual interdependence of Church and State which was at the very heart of the Byzantine theocratic ideology.<sup>277</sup>

## 6.5 Conclusions

Given what we know based on the information presented above, in response to our question from chapter 5 – is the institutional framework sufficiently effective in the post-national environment to regulate and constrain organizational change without the reliable involvement of an enforcer? – we might venture an answer in the negative. Our case study, which is congruent with the broad trends outlined in chapter 5, seems to support this answer. What, then, is the significance of this answer? First, it suggests we may be able to make some reliable predictions

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<sup>277</sup> Schmemmann, "Problems of Orthodoxy in America: The Canonical Problem," *St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly* 8.2 (1964): 67-85. Cf. Schmemmann "Byzantine Theocracy and the Orthodox Church," *St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly* 1.2 (1953): 5-22.

regarding future organizational change in the Orthodox churches, specifically that trends point toward continued organizational change (in the direction of fragmentation, rather than reconsolidation) largely unconstrained by formal institutional rules. Second, it tells us something significant about the institutional framework itself, namely that for some reason the framework does not seem to be evolving, or evolving fast enough, commensurate with rapid changes in the political geography. To understand why we will have to return to the rudimentary models of institutional change outlined in chapters 3 and 4. These two rather provocative conclusions will be traced out in greater detail in chapter 7.

## **Chapter 7: Conclusions**

We have attempted in the preceding chapters to explain the process of organizational change more generally, and the phenomenon of autocephaly more specifically, via the theory that the Orthodox Church organizes itself against the political landscape in consistent ways governed and constrained by the church's institutional framework. We have attempted to validate this theory by citing evidence that the organizational shape of the church has changed significantly over time in conjunction with changes in regimes and shifts in political boundaries. We have observed the extent of the institutional framework's ability to constrain organizational changes in the Orthodox churches. And we have attempted to make the case for the importance of the state in the enforcement, recalibration, and breaking of ecclesiastical relationships. What conclusions can we draw from the preceding discussion specifically about the Orthodox Church as an organization, and more theoretically about institutions in general?

### **7.1 The Church: Organizational Considerations**

As mentioned at the conclusion of chapter 6, we may be able, based upon our alternative theory combined with what we now know about efficacy of the institutional framework, to make a few broad characterizations regarding organizational change in the church. First, it appears likely that continued organizational changes will result in further subdivision and fragmentation, in the

form of autocephaly and through corporate toleration of existing and future “irregular” ecclesiastical situations (such as the problem of parallel and competing jurisdictions in North America and Western Europe). Autocephaly continues to be a form of organizational change with some form of institutional sanction or validity that enables ecclesiastical entities to justify organizational decisions toward independent self-government. Although there have been some recent attempts to resolve irregular forms of ecclesiastical organization, these rarely result in reincorporation of previously divided groups.<sup>278</sup> The church seems unable to avail itself of any mechanism to resolve the status quo into some institutionally consistent alignment of ecclesiastical and political borders.

A second generalization, related to the first, is that the institutional framework will have a decreasingly effective ability to constrain this general tendency toward organizational subdivision, absent resurgent enforcement by a political power. We already have demonstrated how lack of consensus regarding institutional content, combined with lack of effective enforcement, have contributed to the situation of acute fragmentation among Orthodox churches. Given that there are few countervailing trends toward consolidation,<sup>279</sup> and little expectation that the formal

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<sup>278</sup> The Moscow Patriarchate, for example, negotiated during late 2003 and into 2004 with the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR) in an attempt to heal the long-standing breach with that body and restore ecclesiastical relations. Agreement along those lines is unlikely to result, however, either in the subsuming of ROCOR under the Moscow Patriarchate or the amalgamation of ROCOR into its erstwhile rival jurisdiction, the autocephalous Orthodox Church in America (former Russian Metropolia, described in chapter 6). “His Holiness Patriarch Alexy Met With His Eminence Metropolitan Laurus and the delegation of the Russian Church Outside of Russia,” Moscow Patriarchate 1 June 2004, Orthodox Christian News Service 6.23 (2004), 15 Jan 2005 <<http://www.orthodoxnews.net/firms.com>>.

<sup>279</sup> This is a generalization and admittedly there are exceptions. There have been some instances of reconsolidation of previously divided jurisdictions, even in the post-national period. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church, for example, was divided into two jurisdictions in the United States until 1996, when they were united under the auspices of the Ecumenical Patriarchate under a single metropolitan bishop. “A Brief History of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA,” The Ukrainian Orthodox

institutional rules can be modified to the agreement of all, there are few prospects for any constraint on organizational change, save for the occasional intervention of the state, provided the state in question is politically strong enough and constitutionally able to intervene. Historically these interventions usually have been in the direction of conforming ecclesiastical boundaries to specifically national, rather than territorial, boundaries (as was the norm at the time of the development of the institutional framework), and therefore will trend toward continued subdivision rather than reconsolidation.<sup>280</sup>

Third, the dominant trends of resurgent nationalism and statism are likely to continue to play themselves out through ecclesiological “proxy wars,”<sup>281</sup> foremost and perhaps exclusively between the patriarchates of Moscow and Constantinople (and often also with Rome). The battleground for these proxy wars is the disputed émigré populations in Western Europe and North America, as well as ecclesiastically contested areas such as Ukraine. Recalling chapter 5, as Nichols has noted, after about the 15<sup>th</sup> century the Orthodox world collapsed largely into two imperial camps, one Byzantine-cum-Ottoman and the other Russian. Each possessed its own sphere of influence, and each provided the political center of gravity to ensure at least nominal enforcement and adjudication of organizational change. Jurisdictional competition between Moscow and Constantinople continued through the national period, with Moscow pulling nascent national churches out of Constantinople’s orbit during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and Constantinople reciprocating against a weakened post-

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Church of the United States of America, 15 Jan. 2005 <<http://www.uocofusa.org>>. Path: Index; History.

<sup>280</sup> See for example Nichols 108.

<sup>281</sup> Thanks to Prof. John Erickson for highlighting this concept and its terminology.

imperial Russian church in the 20<sup>th</sup>.<sup>282</sup> The evidence cited regarding the post-national period suggests that there is no sign of this competition abating, as Constantinople tightens its control over its diminished but still significant area of influence and Moscow witnesses a resurgence of the Russian national church in the wake of the Soviet collapse.

It is significant that the experience of the Russian Metropolia in North America effectively forced autocephaly onto the agenda of the forthcoming general council of the Orthodox Church (a meeting intended to be ecumenical and potentially binding and so is to include representatives from all the Orthodox churches). It is likewise significant that preparatory committees for that council effectively ceased their work during the mid-1990s, precisely as the ecclesiastical proxy wars heated up over issues such as autocephaly and jurisdictional rights and prerogatives following geopolitical changes in the wake of the cold war. It is unlikely that, given these conditions and the lack of a universally acknowledged (and empowered) enforcing agent, such a council will meet in the near future. Until it does, no formal and universally agreed-upon changes to the institutional framework will be forthcoming.

The diversity of interpretation outlined in the case study in chapter 6, both in terms of the formal institutional rules themselves and how they might be changed, continues to apply on the issue of autocephaly. The argument that the existence of parallel ecclesiastical jurisdictions within a single set of political borders is uncanonical (i.e. inconsistent with the formal rules of the church) is itself not universally held. Even for those who argue that it is, there is a definite lack of consensus as to what change, particularly outside of confessionally Orthodox states,

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<sup>282</sup> Nichols 108-11.

is to occur to restore an institutionally acceptable form of organization. As one bishop remarked in 1999 with reference to émigré Orthodox populations, “[t]he presence of several Orthodox bishops in this city [Paris] does not undermine the [canonical] order of the Orthodox Church or the idea that there should be one bishop in a city, since each of the canonical bishops takes care of the members of his Local Church.”<sup>283</sup> This interpretation implies an understanding of “local church” ultimately in national or ethnic terms decidedly at odds with the Orthodox Church’s institutional framework (e.g. the canonical condemnation of phyletism), and represents the wide latitude church officials enjoy in interpreting the institutional framework – demonstrating the elasticity available through informal rules when the formal ones are not perceived as efficacious.

Another bishop argued in 2003 that local autonomy (though not autocephaly) was not mutually exclusive with loyalty to a patriarchate located within another set of political borders. Rather, such an arrangement would provide a means toward canonical unity, insofar as local independence became a prerequisite for eventual administrative regularity and unification of parallel ecclesiastical structures:

It seems absolutely clear to me that the only way forward is to...combine loyalty to the Patriarchate [of Moscow] with internal autonomy...showing the other jurisdictions [in Western Europe] what can be done within the Moscow Patriarchate, how it is possible to live with the local autonomy that enables a *diaspora* community to react appropriately to the very real challenges it faces. By doing so we will be giving a lead to the other Orthodox Churches in the *diaspora*, since only by *their* achieving local autonomy will it be possible to bring them all together to form a truly all-embracing local Orthodox Church in Britain and in Western Europe.<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>283</sup> Bishop Konstantin, representative of the holy synod of the Patriarchate of Serbia, in a statement at the enthronement of Bishop Luka in Paris in 1999, cited in Sollogoub 25 (see footnote 2).

<sup>284</sup> Basil, Bishop of Sergievo, “The Diocese of Sourozh in the Historical Context of the Russian *Diaspora* in Western Europe, the USA and Elsewhere in the World,” Statement at All Saints Cathedral, London, 16 Feb. 2003, <<http://www.sourozh.org/news/basil160203.htm>>. Italics in original.

Like individual hierarchs, the two major patriarchal competitors for jurisdictional primacy, Constantinople and Moscow, have interpreted corporately the institutional framework differently at different times. This difference is less usefully viewed as competition between governing philosophies, e.g. Constantinople resurrecting Byzantine political philosophy through a recapitulation of the *Megali Idea* and Moscow representing a renewed attempt to further imperial aspirations through an ideology of “Moscow as the Third Rome.” Rather, the more useful explanation, in light of our theory, may be that these two ecclesiastical centers, lacking of effective and authoritative institutional interpretation and enforcement, are locked in a competition for primacy in an arena ungoverned by a single dominant political authority who could definitively adjudicate the dispute. The Moscow Patriarchate, according to Sollogoub, has

reaffirmed that the Russian Orthodox Church will continue to “manifest its pastoral care for all its children who live outside the frontiers of the Russian State.” It launched an appeal in the direction of the faithful of the ‘diaspora’ who “for well-known historical and political reasons [have] temporarily left their Mother Church and placed themselves under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople,” assuring them that the Russian Church intends to “protect [them]” and to “encourage [their] voluntary return to [their] spiritual roots under the authority of the Patriarch of Moscow.”<sup>285</sup>

The Patriarchate proposed, in anticipation of the forthcoming general council, an interpretation of the institutional rules that effectively reasserted the principle of territorial accommodation, whereby political territories (e.g. North America, Western Europe, Australia) with multinational parallel émigré populations could be

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<sup>285</sup> Sollogoub 26.

consolidated into a single, territorially-based autocephalous church.<sup>286</sup> The Moscow Patriarchate has been working to reunite all parts of the Russian diaspora under its jurisdiction, possibly even allowing for sufficient internal autonomy to make reunion attractive to the Russian hierarchy in exile since the Revolution.<sup>287</sup> Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow made this concrete when he announced in 2003 the intention to consolidate all Russian churches in Western Europe into a single metropolitan district (i.e. a metropolia) that would be autonomous (one step short of autocephaly), in the sense that it would have the right to administer itself and choose its own metropolitan bishop, with Moscow retaining the right to confirm that metropolitan. This theoretically autonomous metropolia would serve “as the foundation for the future canonical establishment of a multinational Local Orthodox Church of Western Europe, to be built in the spirit of conciliarity by all the Orthodox faithful living on those countries.”<sup>288</sup> This approach implies a view of church organization that presupposes Moscow as the predominant see and effectively precludes the jurisdictional authority of the ecumenical patriarchate – an evolving informal institutional rule that, although contested, is gaining wider acceptance in ecclesiastical circles.<sup>289</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> Pospelovsky 453-54.

<sup>287</sup> Bishop Basil, “The Diocese of Sourozh in the Historical Context of the Russian *Diaspora* in Western Europe, the USA and Elsewhere in the World.”

<sup>288</sup> Letter of Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow and All Russia, *Sourozh* 92 (2003): 1-5. See also “Patriarch Alexy II Urges Russian-Trend Orthodox Parishes in Western Europe to Unite,” *Russian Information Agency Novosti* 8 April 2003, *Orthodox Christian News Service*, 15 Jan. 2005 <<http://www.orthodoxnews.net/firms.com/Patriarch%20Alexis%20II%20Urges.htm>>.

<sup>289</sup> Evidence for this may be seen, just in the context of relations between Rome and the Eastern Churches, in the weight Moscow has carried regarding opposition to papal visits to Orthodox states (Russia and Serbia) and Rome’s reluctance (despite Ukrainian support) to recognize a Greek Catholic patriarchate in Kiev based largely on united Orthodox opposition led by Moscow.

Constantinople, for its part, continues to interpret the institutional framework in such a way as to assert its unique and unqualified jurisdictional primacy particularly over the Orthodox émigré communities. However, this has not yielded a consistent institutional interpretation regarding the advisability of autocephaly in the context of that primacy. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in 1992 argued that ecclesiastical subdivision through autocephaly leads inexorably to organizational disunity. While not arguing against autocephaly *per se*, he categorically condemned unrestricted ecclesiastical subdivision and fragmentation through autocephaly.

The path of autocephaly for all these Local Churches is not a path of unity of Orthodoxy. I think that today Christianity's presence must be strong and unanimous. But separatism produces nothing. Take Yugoslavia which consists of several states: if just as many autocephalous churches are established, unity will definitely weaken. ... As to these Churches, decisions will be made in accordance with real needs. This is not only for communities and states, in which they exist, to decide: at times we meet with subjective criteria and nationalistic motives demanding church independence and running counter to the genuine interests and needs of a Local Church.<sup>290</sup>

Yet Constantinople continues to recognize that autocephaly reflects something specific and durable in the Orthodox Church's institutional framework of formal and informal rules, even if its operationalization remains a topic of dispute. In 1993 a preconciliar document produced under the auspices of the Ecumenical Patriarchate affirmed the institutional legitimacy of autocephaly:

The institution of autocephaly expresses in an authentic way one of the fundamental aspects of the Orthodox ecclesiological tradition concerning relations between the local Church and the universal Church of God. The profound connection between the canonical institution of ecclesiastical autocephaly and Orthodox ecclesiastical teaching concerning the local Church justifies the concern of the autocephalous local Churches to solve existing

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<sup>290</sup> Interview to Crois-Evenements (in French), following the meeting at the Patriarchate with the heads of the thirteen other autocephalous churches on 13-15 March 1992, reprinted (in English) in Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate 6 (1992): 49-51.

problems with regard to the correct functioning of the institution, as much as it does their willingness to participate, through their detailed contributions, in the enhancement of this institution for the advancement of the unity of the Orthodox Church.<sup>291</sup>

Ultimately, barring effective intervention by an acknowledged and accepted third party enforcer, the jurisdictional competition between Moscow and Constantinople, with the already autocephalous churches playing largely a sideline role, is likely to continue. This is not to say that the state does not continue to play a role in arbitrating ecclesiastical organizational disputes. Russian President Vladimir Putin, for example, attempted to engage the Vatican with an eye toward Russian Orthodox-Roman Catholic reconciliation during a period when the Moscow Patriarchate was (and still is) unwilling or unable to do so. Likewise, Russian Patriarch Alexy II in 2003 praised Bulgarian President Georgi Parvanov for the latter's attempts to heal the persistent schism within the Bulgarian Orthodox Church between the canonical patriarch, Maxim, and his rival, Innokentii, who accused Maxim of collaboration with communists during the Soviet era.<sup>292</sup> Senior Greek government officials eventually were able to compel a resolution to the New Lands dispute between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Greek Holy Synod as noted in chapter 5, healing a temporary rupture in relations between the Church of Greece and Constantinople in April 2004.

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<sup>291</sup> "Autocephaly and the Way in Which it is to be Proclaimed," adopted text of the Interorthodox Preparatory Commission for the Great and Holy Council, Orthodox Center of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Chambesy, Switzerland, 7-13 November 1993, reprinted in George Beorin and Philip Tamoush, eds., *A New Era Begins: Proceedings of the 1994 Conference of Orthodox Bishops in Ligonier, Pennsylvania* (Torrance, CA: OPT, 1994) 115.

<sup>292</sup> "Head of Russian Orthodox Church Praises Bulgarian President for His Efforts to End Religious Schism," *Associated Press* 21 Jan. 2003, reprinted in *Orthodox Christian News Service* 5.48 (2003), 20 Nov. 2003 <<http://www.orthodoxnews.netfirms.com>>.

The record of attempts at state enforcement has been and likely will continue to be mixed. As always, it is usually (and logically) political advantage motivating these interventions by state authorities in church organizational disputes. Given that these interventions occur by definition only at the state level, however, institutional problems that involve the whole constellation of Orthodox churches transcend state boundaries and therefore may remain resistant to state-sponsored solutions. It is evident, however, that autocephaly remains an organizational option with durable institutional sanction and utility, and both church and state continue to avail themselves of that option when it is advantageous for both to do so. The case of the Russian Metropolia in North America is the latest evidence of this tendency. Since the formal institutional rules provide no clear roadmap for organizational change in the post-national era, and since the state no longer reliably plays the sympathetic enforcement role ascribed to it in the formal rules, both church and state tend to resort to a fluid combination of flexible interpretations of the formal rules, emerging customs, and informally accepted practices to readjust ecclesiastical boundaries to fit political ones when such adjustments are advantageous for both. We might conclude preliminarily, then, that this highly unstructured set of informal rules is what actually governs organizational change in the Orthodox Church in the modern era, and that the formal rules – though remaining “on the books” – play a decreasingly important role. This claim would be controversial to those who argue that the formal rules are normative in the Orthodox Church, however, and certainly more in-depth research would be necessary to properly evaluate this claim.

## 7.2 The Church: Institutional Considerations

The foregoing discussion raises more complicated theoretical questions about the church's institutional framework itself, and what institutional theory tells us should happen to that framework. It is useful in considering these questions to return to our definitions from chapter 3. Institutions, we noted, "exert patterned higher-order effects on the actions, indeed the constitution, of individuals and organizations without requiring repeated collective mobilization or authoritative intervention to achieve these regularities."<sup>293</sup> Organizations in turn "are created with purposive intent in consequence of the opportunity set resulting from the existing set of constraints...*and in the course of attempts to accomplish their objectives are a major agent of institutional change.*"<sup>294</sup> We noted that this implies a sort of reciprocity between organizations and institutions, in which organizations actually have an incremental modifying effect upon their own institutional framework. It is logical to assume, based upon this definition, that we should expect to see changes in the institutional framework of the Orthodox Church evolving out of the church's attempts as an organization to negotiate new political terrain for which its existing set of formal institutional rules are ill-equipped to handle.

Yet we do not observe evidence of such institutional changes, at least among the formal rules of the church. Local synods and meetings have been held, usually to deal with problems of local concern such as disciplinary issues, but such meetings

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<sup>293</sup> Ronald Jepperson, "Institutions, Institutional Effects, and Institutionalism," W.W. Powell and P.J. DiMaggio, eds., *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Sociology* (Chicago: University Press, 1991): 143-63, cited in Elisabeth Clemens and James Cook, "Politics and Institutionalism: Explaining Durability and Change," *Annual Review of Sociology* 25 (1999): 444-45.

<sup>294</sup> North, *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance* 5.

have been limited in scope and no changes have been made to the formal institutional rules (primarily the disciplinary canons), particularly those governing organizational change. Such changes would be unlikely until another general (ecumenical) council convenes – changes to a disciplinary canon voted at a general council would not be accepted corporately by the constellation of Orthodox churches unless those changes were voted at another general council. In this context, which has endured for a very long period (on the order of centuries), the only visible change has been in the arena of informal rules, for example conventions that have emerged to govern organizational behavior in the absence of clear formal rules, as noted above. Since there seems to be little general agreement on the means by which autocephaly formally may be granted, it is unclear how any consensus opinion could migrate over time into the general usage of the church, and become accepted as part of the institutional framework.

Why has formal institutional change not occurred in the Orthodox Church?

We could argue, in line with institutional theory as outlined by North, that the change in relative prices (fundamentally, the disconnect between political and ecclesiastical boundaries) has remained “simply a source of recontracting within the framework of existing rules,” with no incentive for any of the ecclesiastical players to fundamentally restructure the framework itself.<sup>295</sup> Even if, as North notes, institutional change is “overwhelmingly incremental,”<sup>296</sup> there has been very little detectable change in the church’s formal institutional rules for several centuries (acknowledging that the major corpus of Eastern canon law is well over 1,000 years

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<sup>295</sup> North 86.

<sup>296</sup> North 89.

old, as noted in chapters 3 and 4), despite various local attempts at systemization. A plausible reason might be found, again, in the lack of effective enforcement, itself due in part to the changing political landscape (evolution of the modern state) and the changing relationship between church and state (increasing secularization). Still, since changing enforcement itself is a factor in the evolution of institutional frameworks,<sup>297</sup> the relative stability of the Orthodox Church's institutions suggests that perhaps the lack of enforcement has created some sort of disincentive to change (at least to formal change through general council).

The ultimate significance, then, of the Orthodox Church as an object of study for institutional theory may be that more attention must be paid to the internal links between changes in relative prices, enforcement, and actual, demonstrable changes in the institutional framework. If the institutions in question were embodied in the United Nations charter or the European Union constitution, evidence of institutional change would be detectable through changes to the relevant legal documents, production of new ones, and the legal processes through which those changes occurred. In the case of the church this function is accomplished exclusively through councils. Institutional change would be evidenced by the voting of new disciplinary canons and the modification of old ones in council. Alternatively, we might consider evidence that compliance with the formal rules is merely *pro forma* and that increasing reliance on informal rules is itself evidence of institutional change – formal rules, though “on the books,” fall into disuse and irrelevancy, as suggested above. Yet this does not seem to be entirely the case with the Orthodox churches, insofar as they (1) continually affirm the framework of formal rules as part of their institutional

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<sup>297</sup> North 83ff.

identity, and (2) continue to look in earnest toward the future opportunity when modification of those rules might be possible. The Orthodox churches have affirmed explicitly, in the preparatory documents for the forthcoming general council, that issues of organizational change (namely, autocephaly and how it is declared) must be addressed. This implies the recognition that existing formal rules are inadequate and that modification of those institutions is necessary. If no council convenes then the formal rules cannot be modified.

Another possibility is that institutional change in the Orthodox Church occurs not gradually but perhaps more suddenly and dramatically. If, as Fiori argues, “we suppose that modern history is connoted by the increasing pace (or acceleration) of change, a consequence is that the past (including traditions and customs) is progressively less able to create stable institutions.”<sup>298</sup> This implies what Fiori has termed an “anti-gradualist” approach to institutional change, one in which “radical change is a possibility which is realized when a set of contingencies occur (otherwise it may long remain potential).”<sup>299</sup> Such a concept is complementary to North’s idea of gradual change, rather than in competition with it: either type might be used to explain institutional change in a given instance. However, much work remains to be done with regard to this avenue of institutional theory, which “stresses the role of contingencies in the process of institutional change: the more [formal and informal] rules conflict, the more contingencies can determine the result of process, and the less the past (embodied in informal rules) is able to condition the direction of change.”<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>298</sup> Stefano Fiori, “Alternative Visions of Change in Douglass North’s New Institutionalism,” *Journal of Economic Issues* 36.4 (2002): 1025-44.

<sup>299</sup> Fiori 1044.

<sup>300</sup> Fiori 1043-44.

To the extent an analytical approach to anti-gradualistic types of institutional change is articulated, it may prove helpful to understanding why formal institutional change has not occurred within the Orthodox Church.

Yet another possibility regarding institutions, particularly intriguing in light of our study here, is that the analytical focus should be not so much on why institutions are not changing, but rather on *what makes them so remarkably stable*. Pierson, for example, has highlighted the paucity of research addressing the issue of “institutional resilience” and has identified, largely in the rational choice literature, a number of important factors inhibiting change of any kind: that institutions resolve coordination problems among actors, that multiple options for veto of change at various levels inhibit change, and that commitments or investment by actors in the framework itself makes change both “difficult” and “unattractive.”<sup>301</sup> Pierson’s hypothesis – that “all other things being equal, an institution will be more resilient, and any revisions more incremental in nature, the longer the institution has been in place”<sup>302</sup> – appears quite applicable given what we know of the formal institutions of the Orthodox Church as outlined in the preceding chapters. The formal rules of the church, by codifying both existing informal institutions as well as new ones, have provided a means for actors (both ecclesiastical and secular) to coordinate their interaction without continual renegotiation – significant for an organization like the Orthodox Church which has such a wide expanse both geographically and chronologically. At the same time, drawing upon Goodin’s analysis, the multiple

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<sup>301</sup> Paul Pierson, “Explaining Institutional Origins and Change,” chapter draft from manuscript of “Politics in Time: History, Institutions and Social Analysis,” 2002, 34-41, 21 Oct. 2004 <<http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~pierson/>>. See also Stacey and Rittberger, “Dynamics of Formal and Informal Institutional Change” 867.

<sup>302</sup> Pierson 41.

levels of hierarchy at which modification of rules must occur promote institutional stability and increase the costs of change.<sup>303</sup> The hierarchical nature of the church, combined with its reliance on conciliar (as opposed to “top-down,” as with the see of Rome<sup>304</sup>) decision making, multiplies the opportunities for individual actors or coalitions of actors to derail attempts to modify institutions, and likewise increases the costs and risks of (and hence decreases the incentives toward) change.

Ecclesiastical and secular actors alike are heavily “invested” in the particular configuration of costs and benefits associated with the system of institutional rules, and modifications to those rules may simply be too costly for the actors to initiate.<sup>305</sup>

We could argue, then, that profitable areas of further exploration regarding institutional change in the Orthodox Church could include path dependence<sup>306</sup> and the reasons why formal institutions remain highly durable and change-resistant, particularly when they have been in place for a very long time. As Pierson has noted, “Actors do not inherit a blank slate that they can remake at will when their preferences shift or unintended consequences become visible. Instead, actors find that the dead weight of previous institutional choices seriously limits their room to maneuver.”<sup>307</sup> It may be that the Orthodox Church finds itself sufficiently encumbered with the accumulated weight of its very long institutional past that any extensive change to its formal rules would be very difficult to achieve. Increasing

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<sup>303</sup> Robert E. Goodin, “Institutions and Their Design,” in Robert E. Goodin, ed., The Theory of Institutional Design (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 1-53, cited in Pierson 37.

<sup>304</sup> The argument here is not that councils are not operative or important in the Roman Catholic Church but rather that dogmatically, Rome has “institutionalized” the realization that it is the papacy that convenes a council, validates its ecumenical status, and ratifies its binding resolutions. The modern papacy is in a sense the “referee” ensuring a council’s legal convocation and outcome, at least in theory.

<sup>305</sup> Pierson 42-46.

<sup>306</sup> See North ch. 11.

<sup>307</sup> Pierson 46.

reliance on more flexible informal conventions enables it to accommodate more immediate organizational requirements, against the day when formal institutional change becomes possible. In any event, the body of evidence provided by the Orthodox Church could be very fruitful for future examinations of the durability of institutions.

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