

CANONICAL TERRITORY OF THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE

AN ANALYSIS OF CONTEMPORARY RUSSIAN ORTHODOX THOUGHT

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I. BEHIND THE CURTAIN OF THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE IDEOLOGY

In the Italian Jesuit magazine *Civiltà Cattolica* in its March 16, 2005 edition, Cardinal Walter Kasper, President of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity, accused the Moscow Patriarchate of ecclesiological heresy by defining the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate by using the principle of cultural and ethnic identities.¹ According to Cardinal Kasper, behind this controversial theory of canonical territory, there is another substantially hidden ideological reality. Since those very harsh accusations made by Cardinal Kasper and because of the importance of this theory in the ecclesiological and canonical life of the Orthodox Church, the theme of “the canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church“, also known as “the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate“, becomes one of the most controversial and often discussed subjects in contemporary Orthodox theology. The analysis of this concept concentrates itself not only on its theological significance in the life of the Orthodox Church, but also on a growing concern about the political and ideological implications of this theory on the life of the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union and their local Orthodox Churches. These multiphase implications are especially important in the perspective of our post-modern globalized world and especially in the development of today’s Europe.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, an increased emphasis is seen on the part of the Moscow Patriarchate to continue to develop the theory of “canonical territory” for strategic, political and ideological reasons. One very important element for the development of the theory of the “canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate” is the emergence of the new independent states within the borders of the former Soviet Union, especially independent Ukraine and Estonia with their own aspirations for their independent Local Orthodox Churches. The reactivation of the 1923 autonomy to the Estonian Orthodox Church by the Patriarchate of Constantinople on February 20, 1996 and active presence of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the affairs of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine infuriated the ideological strategists of the Moscow Patriarchate to the

¹ Additional comments of Cardinal Walter Kasper could be found in: John Tavis, *Cardinal says Russian Orthodox have led dialogue into “blind alley”*, Catholic News Service, March 14, 2005.

point of bitter accusations and acrimonies directed towards Constantinople. In addition, the problem of the Orthodox Diaspora in Western Europe and North America makes the situation even more difficult.

The present analysis is not to be considered complete as the theory of the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate embraces the entire spectrum of ecclesiological, theological, historical and political perspectives. As the theory of the canonical territory of Moscow Patriarchate has been just recently elaborated, there is a need to further continue to study this “ecclesiological phenomenon”. In order to analyse this theme in the perspective of the Moscow Patriarchate in the last decade, I am going to analyse it based on the official documents of the Russian Orthodox Church as well as on the writings of contemporary Russian Orthodox theologians. By using the official statements and documents of the Moscow Patriarchate, as well as the crucially important statements of Russian Orthodox theologians and analysts, I can not be accused of bias. It is my hope that this analysis will contribute to the understanding of this contemporary ecclesiological “anomaly” that emerged in its ideological forms after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

As we analyse the time and the circumstances of the creation of the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate, we must not be overwhelmed by the complexity of the issue to be discussed. Since ideological and political elements are part of it, it is almost impossible to analyse the theory of the “canonical territory of Moscow Patriarchate” only from the ecclesiological perspective.

THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH AFTER THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION

The collapse of the Soviet Union, the enormous political changes in Eastern Europe, and the emergence of new independent states on the territory of the former Russian Empire cannot be seen as evidence of the end of the imperialistic ideology of the Kremlin. Even after the disappearance of the Communist Block many ideologists of the post-communist system maintain a strong feeling for the revival of the greatness of Russia.² The nostalgia for the great past of imperial Russia is known among analysts as post-Soviet xenophobia.³ This xenophobic posture is especially applied to Russian Orthodoxy that has locked itself to the defence of isolationism and fundamentalism.⁴ The notion of the “golden age”,

² According to Vladimir Moss, the restoration of Russia, based on the national-religious renaissance, is the greatest possible threat to the civilized world, look in: Vladimir Moss, *The Restoration of Romanity. Essays in Orthodox Political Theology*, Vladimir Moss, 2004.

³ Dmitry A. Golovushkin, *On the Issue of Religious Tolerance in Modern Russia: National Identity and Religion*, <http://hiphi.ubbcluj.ro/JSRI/html>. One of the other very important aspects, emphasized by the political analysts, is the “inferiority complex” that is being created in the Russian society together with the aspects of globalization, consumerism and dictatorship.

⁴ It would be very interesting to analyse the xenophobic characteristic of the Russian society and the Russian Orthodox Church in the context of the document of the Russian Orthodox Church: “The Basic

which is the pre-revolutionary Russian Empire before 1905, is mainly preserved in Russian Orthodox fundamentalism.⁵ There are many organizations in the Russian Federation that take the principle of the revival of the “greatness of Russia” as the foundation of their existence. Among them are: the Orthodox Brotherhoods, the very influential “societies”, “the Union for Christian Revival”, the Union of Orthodox Banner bearers (Khorugvennostsev- UOBB), the Congress of Russian Communities, Black Hundredism, among others.⁶ One of the most known forms of Russian Orthodox fundamentalism is exemplified in the Russian Union of Orthodox Citizens (UOC). This organization maintains one fundamental notion important for our analysis. According to UOC: “*The boundaries of Rus’ extend as far as the boundaries of the Russian Orthodox Church*”.⁷ This statement made by UOC is a very expansionistic and imperialistic notion that introduces the Russian Orthodox Church as the carrier of an imperialistic ideology and national Russian identity. The Russian ideologists need the Russian Orthodox Church to carry and to legitimize its policy.⁸ In the above statement, religion is being used as the catalyst to achieve “other” objectives.⁹ It introduces the interdependency of the boundaries of the Russian Church with the objectives of UOC. The boundaries of the Moscow Patriarchate, which we can understand as the canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church, are intertwined with the ideological concept of a party for the purpose of carrying forth the national Russian interest. This concept is affirmed by Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, according to whom the Orthodox Church was always an instrument of Russian national identity.¹⁰ The statement made by Metropolitan Kirill is not different from the one made by V. Zhirinovskiy (leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia) who looks upon the Russian Orthodox Church as a major source of

Social Concept” that defines xenophobia as contrary to the Orthodox ethics: “*National sentiments can cause such sinful phenomena as aggressive nationalism, xenophobia, national exclusiveness and inter-ethnic enmity. At their extremes, these phenomena often lead to the restriction of the rights of individuals and nations, wars and other manifestations of violence. It is contrary to Orthodox ethics to divide nations into the best and the worst and to belittle any ethnic or civic nation. Even more contrary to Orthodoxy are those teachings which put the nations in the place of God or reduce faith to one of the aspects of national self-awareness*” in: “*Basic Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church*”, in: <http://www.mospat.ru>

⁵ Alexander Verkhovskiy, *The Orthodox in Russian radical Nationalist Movements*, <http://religion.sova-center.ru/publications/194EF5E/194F193>

⁶ Stella Rock, *Fraternal Strife: Nationalist Fundamentalists in the Contemporary Russian Orthodox Brotherhood Movement*, in: Johnathan Sutton and Wil van den Bercken, *Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Europe*, (Leuven-Paris-Dudley, MA, 2003)

⁷ Op. cit. It is very interesting to note a very close ties, according of Alexander Verkhovskiy, between chair of the department of foreign relations of the Moscow Patriarchate Metropolitan Kiril and Union of Orthodox Citizens (UOC).

⁸ Michael Bourdeaux, *The Complex Face of Orthodoxy*, in: The Christian Century, April 4, 2001; Lawrence A. Uzzell, *Russia: Religion on a Leash*, in: Orthodoxy Today. Org.

⁹ According to the analysis of Vladimir Moss, religion was, is, and shall reunite the Russian land, in: Vladimir Moss, *The Restoration of Romanity. Essays in Orthodox Political Theology*, op.cit.

¹⁰ Metropolitan Kirill, *An Interview given on the Russian Radio in New York on Nov. 15, 2003*. According to Dmitry A. Golovushkin, the Russian Orthodox Church is an integral feature of national character, in: *On the Issue of Religious Tolerance in Modern Russia: national Identity and Religion*, op. cit. Similar statement made by Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk we can find in: <http://religion.ng.ru/>

Russian national thinking.¹¹ We can not forget about the prominent social manifestation “Pamyat“, founded in 1986, and led at the present also by Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, that extols Russia’s imperial past, propagates submission to the Russian Orthodox Church and targets ethnic minorities.¹² Only according to this concept we can understand and comprehend the fundamentalism of Metropolitan Ioann who identified Orthodoxy with the ideology of the Russian State.¹³ If the ideology of UOC and the Moscow Patriarchate is strengthened by the concept of pan-Slavism then it has very dangerous connotations for the stability of Orthodoxy in the world.

One characteristic of the Russian Orthodox Church, that is often used in the analysis of the Moscow Patriarchate, is its acquiescence to the return to an authoritarian political system with a controlled economy where the Russian Orthodox Church would occupy a privileged position in state and society.¹⁴ Emblematic of the cooperation between the Kremlin and the Moscow Patriarchate was an agreement signed on November 17, 2004 between Patriarch Alexy II and the Russian Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliyev outlining the cooperation between the State and the Russian Orthodox Church.¹⁵ The agreement declares the intention on both parties to find a joint solution to terrorism. Another very interesting example is Primakov’s foreign policy doctrine of a “multipolar world” that was loyally advocated by nobody else but Metropolitan Kirill himself.¹⁶ According to some political analysts of Russia, because of the very strong ties between religious leaders and the government, it is inconceivable for religious leaders to issue any kind of statement about public policy without prior approval from the Kremlin.¹⁷ This is one of

¹¹ Dmitry A. Golovushkin, *On the issue of religious tolerance in modern Russia: national identity and religion*, in: <http://hiphi.ubbcluj.ro/JSRI>

¹² Peri Pamir, *Nationalism, Ethnicity and Democracy: Contemporary Manifestations*, in: <http://www.gmu.edu/academic>.

¹³ Alexander Verkhovsky, *The Orthodox in the Russian Radical Nationalist Movement*, op. cit.

¹⁴ Paul D. Steeves, *Russian Orthodox Fascism After Glasnost*, paper presented to the Conference on Faith and History, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 8 October 1994. Of the same opinion is Paul Goble, who connects the restoration of an imperial state system with Zhirinovskii (Russian ultra nationalist), in: Paul Goble, *Federation. Three Myths about Russian Federalism*, in: RFE/RL Russian Political Weekly, 27 October 2004, vol. 4, No. 42; Vladimir Moss, *The Restoration of Romanity. Essays in Orthodox Political Theology*, op. cit. As an additional comment to the above I want to quote an article published in the Washington Post where we read: “Partly as compensation, the Kremlin allowed the church in the mid-1990s to import between \$75 million and \$100 million worth of cigarettes duty free. About the same time, the church acquired 40 percent of MES, an oil-export firm whose quotas on foreign oil sales, like all such allowances, were set by the government. The company estimated its revenue in 1996 at \$2 billion....Now, the church survives partly on a bottled water business and contribution from wealthy enterprises, including the state-controlled natural gas monopoly, Gazprom, and Lukoil, an oil company that is partly owned by the state. At Lukoil’s behest, Alexy expressed his gratitude to the firm for its patronage in a television commercial that aired in November”, in: Sharon laFraniere, *Russia’s Well-Connected Patriarch. As Church Enjoys Revival of Influence, It’s Past Remains Clouded*, in: Washington Post Foreign service, 23 May 2003.

¹⁵ “*Is the Russian Orthodox Church Trying to Enhance It’s Influence Through Interior Ministry Cooperation*”, in:RIA Novosti, November 18, 2004.

¹⁶ In: Radical Orthodox Anti- Globalism in 199-2002. Electronic tax codes - a typical theme for fundamentalism, in: <http://religion.sova-center.ru/publications>

¹⁷ Lawrence A Uzzell, *Russia: Religion ion a Leash*, op. cit.

the reasons why the Russian Orthodox Church, because of its established position in Russian society and its support from the government, remained silent on issues such as the alleged Russian military atrocities in Chechnya¹⁸ or the brutal treatment of the homeless in Moscow.¹⁹ The Moscow Patriarchate remains silent even though she contradicts her own document - "*Basic Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church*". According to this document, the chapter on "*Church and State*" clearly states that the canonical church structures can not support nor cooperate with governments if the government is "*waging civil war or aggressive external war*".²⁰ A very strong condemnation of the Moscow Patriarchate's policy of silence was issued by the Metropolitan of West Europe Avraam Garmeliia (Georgian Orthodox Church) who in his letter to Patriarch Alexis II accused the Russian Orthodox Church of conspiracy with the leadership and the military of the Kremlin. According to Metropolitan Avraam, behind the silence of the Moscow Patriarchate on the subject of genocide and ethnic cleansing of the Georgian people in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, there lies an aggressive imperial policy of the Kremlin and the Moscow Patriarchate.²¹ In response, the Vice-Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin defended the Moscow Patriarchate's silence and the work of law enforcement agencies as a defence against terrorists and armed bands.²² A history of strong criticism of the cooperation of the Church leadership with the Communist Regime of USSR goes back to 1927 when the imprisoned 17 bishops in Solovki (Russian Orthodox Church before the Revolution) signed a letter, in which they denounced the collaborators of the Russian Orthodox Church with the Russian Communist State.²³ The signatures put under the letter were a distinct reaction to the shameful compromise of the Church

¹⁸ It is noteworthy to mention that on March 11, 1999 Patriarch Alexy II Moscow issued a press release in which he calls both parties for peace in a very politically correct way. He calls the leadership of Chechnya to oppose criminals and the Russian federal authorities to contribute to the struggle with terrorism, in: Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow and All, *Statement on the Situation in Chechnya*, March 11, 1999 in: <http://www.orthodox.org.ru/ne>.

¹⁹ Radio Free Liberty 157. According to Lawrence Uzziel, director of the British-based Keston Institute, which monitors freedom in the post-communist countries, stated that the willingness of the Orthodox Church to be co-opted by the government in return for favours has blunted its moral authority as a Church. Some of the analysts on Russia accuse the Moscow Patriarchate for "parrotting the Kremlin", in: Sharon laFraniere, *Russia's Well-Connected Patriarch. As Church Enjoys Revival of Influence, It's Past Remains Clouded*, op. cit. Similar view was expressed by Michael Bourdeaux in: Michael Bourdeaux, *The Complex Face of Orthodoxy*, op. cit.

²⁰ In: "*Basic Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church*", op. cit. The criteria of the cooperation of the Moscow Patriarchate with the Russian Kremlin is also analyzed by: John O'Mahony, *The New Believers, (Rise of the Russian Orthodox Church)*, in: <http://www.antipas.org/news>

²¹ In: *Metropolitan of Georgian Orthodox Church Issues Open Letter to Patriarch Alexis II*. It is very worthy to add, that Alexis II issued on August 17, 2004 a typical Declaration calling all sides to negotiations. Once again, there is no mention on the atrocities done on Georgian Orthodox people. For the declaration of Alexis II please look: *Patriarch Intervenes in Caucasus Dispute. Declaration of Alexis II in Connection With Escalation of Military Actions in South Ossetia*, in: Stetson University Russia Religion News, August 18, 2004.

²² Romulus Ovidiu, *Patriarchal spokesman takes on critics of current situation in Russia*, in: Christian News (Christians Culture Blog), January 20, 2005.

²³ Michael Bourdeaux, *The Complex Face of Orthodoxy*, op. cit.

leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate with the Kremlin. This compromise also known as “Sergianism”

The “greatness” of Russia’s past locked in the xenophobic fundamentalism of the Russian Orthodox Church, together with the political aspirations of the Kremlin creates within the Russian society an image of an expansionist Russia where “Russian Orthodoxy is the greatest Christian confession”.²⁴ We have to take notice that according to political analysts, the Moscow Patriarchate is the most Soviet institution in Russia today, whose top leadership has not changed since the collapse of Communism.²⁵ This image has tremendous implications on the expansionistic tendencies within the strategists of the Moscow Patriarchate. The strong alliance of the Kremlin with the Russian Orthodox Church is crucial in a pan-Slavic mission that could become a vehicle of influence of the Russian Federation in the former republics of Soviet Russia: mainly Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Estonia etc.²⁶ In the words of the Russian Minister of the Exterior Igor Ivanov, the Russian Orthodox Church is the connecting link among all the Slavic Churches.²⁷ It is exactly pan-Slavism that became the basis for Patriarch Alexy II’s appeal letter to the pastors and the flock of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine just before the election on December 2004: “...*Today any false move made under the influence of emotions and passions can destroy that what has been built for centuries, namely, “unity of spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4,3) of the fraternal Slavonic peoples bound by one faith, one destiny and one history*”.²⁸ The developed theory of the “pan-Slavic” identity, that preserves a strictly Russian national character and tradition, has as its main objective the restoration of the former “natural” borders of the Russian state, that is the borders of

²⁴ Victor Yasmann, *Politics. Can Anyone Oppose the Kremlin*, in: RFE/RL Russian Political Weekly, 18 February 2005, vol. 5, No. 7.

²⁵ Sharon laFraniere, *Russia’s Well-Connected Patriarch. As Church Enjoys Revival of Influence, It’s Past Remains Clouded*, op. cit. Another critical analysis of the top leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate is made by Vladimir Moss, who says: “...*Moreover, the official Russian Orthodox Church, The Moscow Patriarchate, is still led by KGB agents from Brezhnev era whose opportunism and lack of real spirituality is proven beyond reasonable doubt. Just as these hierarchs enthusiastically embraced “Leninist norms” and “Soviet patriotism” in the 1970s and 80s, and then democracy and westernism in the early 1990s, so now they are quite capable of changing again in of Zhirinovsky-type Russian nationalists*”, in: Vladimir Moss, *The Restoration of Romanity. Essays in Orthodox Political Theology*, op.cit; Protopriest V. Potapov, “*Molchaniem predates Bog*” (“*God is Betrayed by Silence*”), Moscow, Isikhiya, 1992, in Russian.

²⁶ Gabriel Andreescu, *International Relations and Orthodoxy in Eastern and Southeastern Europe*, in: *International Studies*, No. 4. The theory of using pan-Slavism through the Russian Orthodox Church is exploited by the Kremlin is analyzed by: Janusz Bugajski, *Cold Peace: Russia’s New Imperialism*. Review of this book is done by: Woodford McClellan, *How Russia is trying to resurrect its lost empire* in: www.washingtontimes.com

²⁷ *Ecumenical patriarch Bartholomew Denounces Moscow’s 3rd Rome Theory*, in: <http://www.kiev-orthodox.org/site/english/915>; According to Lawrence Uzzell, President of International Religious Freedom Watch: “...the Kremlin is getting more skilful” at using the Russian Orthodox Church for political advantage, as well as demonstrating a “growing ability to manipulate all religions”, in: *Manipulating Religion for Politics* in: <http://www.rferl.org/specials/religion/archive>

²⁸ *Address of His Holiness Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow and All Russia and the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church to pastors and flock of the Orthodox Ukraine 24 December 2004*, in: <http://www.mospat.ru>.

the USSR.²⁹ From another perspective, the restoration of the Russian identity is the restoration of the imperial ideology so characteristic for the theory of “canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate”. This is one of the main reasons why the Moscow Patriarchate opposes the independence succession of the local Churches in the new independent states because it would substantially weaken the imperialistic ideology of the Russian Orthodox Church. This would also infringe on the medieval theory of Moscow as the “third Rome”. In effect, the Russian Orthodox Church for reasons of an imperial ideology, defines itself as the defender of a distinctive Slavic Orthodoxy.³⁰

In order to comprehend the theory of the “canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate” after the collapse of the Soviet Union, we have to investigate the usage of the theory of “pan-Slavism”. This concept has fundamental implications for the strategy of the Russian Orthodox Church both abroad and on her own territory. From one perspective, this theory could be applied only to Eastern Europe where the history of the Slavic nations is intrinsically intertwined. But from the other perspective, we have to consider the migration of populations in the globalized world. Because of globalization and the migration of millions of people from Ukraine, Estonia, and Moldavia etc. to Western Europe and North America, the theory of pan-Slavism assumes a global connotation. The term becomes an international slogan under which the Moscow Patriarchate is attempting to create a new concept of transnational political influence in the context of its ecclesiological realm.³¹ One of the most unique concepts of pan-Slavism is proposed by Bishop Hilarion Alfeyev, Bishop of Vienna and Austria and the Representative of the Russian Orthodox Church to the European Institutions in Brussels. In his interpretation, the Moscow Patriarchate is “trans-national”. In other words, the Russian Orthodox Church is the Orthodox Church not only of Russia, but also of Moldova, Belarus, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Estonia.³² In addition to this, Alexy II confirms the above by stating that because the new Baltic countries joined the European Union and because of the new immigrant communities in Western Europe, the territory of the Moscow Patriarchate will increase substantially.³³ The statement made by Bishop Hilarion corresponds to the Statute of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Moscow Patriarchate.

²⁹ Dmitry A. Golovushkin, *On the issue of religious tolerance in modern Russia: national identity and religion*, op. cit.

³⁰ Alexander F.C. Webster, *Split decision: the Orthodox clash over Estonia - Cover Story*, in: <http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi>

³¹ Very expressive at this point are words of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew who said: “*the gathering of Orthodox faithful into one flock under the leadership of a single powerful leader, who would be carrying out the agenda of a particular government, will unavoidably lead the Church into becoming nothing more than an organ of that government, and not the means by which mankind achieves salvation*”, in : *Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew Denounces Moscow's “3rd Rome” theory*, op. cit

³² Bishop Hilarion Alfeyev, *Is the Conflict of Civilizations Unavoidable?*, in: Orthodoxy Today.org; Bishop Hilarion Alfeyev, *Christian Witness to Uniting Europe: A View from the Russian Orthodox Church. Paper delivered at the International Symposium “Wisdom as a Source of European Unity”, Rome, Chamber of Deputies, Italian Parliament, 15 November 2002*, in: OrthodoxyToday.org; *Council of Bishops of Russian Orthodox Church Winding up in Moscow*, in: Moscow - RIA Novosti, Oct. 5, 2004.

³³ Bishop Hilarion Alfeyev, *Christian Witness to Uniting Europe*, op. cit.

The Statute says: “*The Russian Orthodox Church is a multinational Local Autocephalous Church in doctrinal unity and in prayerful and canonical communion with other Local Churches*”.³⁴ It is very interesting to note that the official document of the Moscow Patriarchate defines the Russian Orthodox Church as a local Church but of a multinational character. Therefore, the locality of the Moscow Patriarchate is being defined by the multiplicity of ethnic local Churches of other independent States. In effect, according to Bishop Hilarion, the local Church of the Moscow Patriarchate assumes the boundaries of former republics of the former USSR.³⁵ The boundaries of the local Russian Orthodox Church are defined not by the territorial principle of the Russian state, as it is traditionally defined by ecclesiological principle, but by the multinational boundaries of other independent states. Remarkable is also the fact that the Moscow Patriarchate defines its own local Church as Russian that embraces in its boundaries the other national local Churches. If the local Church of the Moscow Patriarchate is defined as Russian, then the other Orthodox Churches of other independent countries are still Russian Churches even though the local Churches find themselves in sovereign and independent countries. Obviously, the term “Russian” has the “other” ideological connotation and reason mentioned earlier in our analysis that supersedes the basic principles of Orthodox ecclesiology. It is puzzling to observe that the government of the Russian Federation indisputably recognizes the independence of Ukraine and Estonia, while the Moscow Patriarchate refuses even to consider the possibility of giving complete independence-autocephaly to the local Churches of those countries.³⁶ What is more remarkable about the Moscow Patriarchate, is the fact that it even does not follow and even contradicts its own statements and beliefs. On the occasion of the visit of Mr. Igor S. Ivanov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation to the Cathedral of the Dormition of the Mother of God in Budapest, Bishop Hilarion stated: “...*The Russian Church, on the contrary, believes that each country and people have the right to have their own Orthodox Church in which the faithful can hear the services in their native tongue. Moreover, we believe that local Churches have the right to become independent and to administer themselves. This is why the Russian metropolia in North America was recognized as the autocephalous Orthodox Church in America, and the Russian metropolia in Japan- as the autonomous Japanese Orthodox Church.*”³⁷ Definitely, the statement made by bishop Hilarion in Budapest is a politically correct version of what the EU wants to hear. In reality, the words of Bishop Hilarion are in contradiction to the policy of the Moscow Patriarchate, that can be seen on the basis of the situation in Ukraine. As sad as it is, only because of the fallacy of the Moscow Patriarchate’s ideological doctrine, this Church loses its reputation and dignity among the local

³⁴ In: *The Statute of the Russian Orthodox Church*, in: <http://orthodoxeurope.org>; Hilarion Alfeyev, *Christian witness to uniting Europe: a view from a representative of the Russian Orthodox Church*, in: *Ecumenical Review*, Jan. 2003.

³⁵ Bishop Hilarion of Podolsk, *Welcome address by the Representative of the Russian Orthodox Church to the European Institutions Bishop Hilarion of Podolsk to Her Majesty Queen Paola of the Belgians*, in: <http://orthodoxeurope.org>

³⁶ In: *Anomalies in the Ecclesiology of Contemporary Orthodox and Catholic Churches*.

³⁷ In: *Russian Foreign Minister Visited Hungarian Orthodox Cathedral*, in: <http://orthodoxeurope.org>.

Orthodox Churches in the world. Because of this opposition of the Moscow Patriarchate to the idea of Autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine there is a strong criticism of the Russian Orthodox Church by the Ecumenical Patriarchate regarding this issue. According to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, an independence race-nation, according to the 34th canon of the Holy Apostles, has the right to constitute its own Church: *“In no way are You justified, Beatitude, in condemning the Orthodox Estonians of helotism. They, as a race themselves, have the right, in accordance with the 34th canon of the Holy Apostles, to constitute their own Church, having the bishops in their Church and the first among them from among their own race, especially since they constitute a sovereign and independent nation”*.³⁸ Indisputably, the Ukrainian nation is a separate national entity and as an independent and autonomous country, according to the establish ecclesiological norms, deserves its own independent local Church. The other question would be the fact, that according to the document “Basic Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church: III Church and State”, *“God blesses the state as an essential element of life in the world distorted by sin...”*. If the official document of the Russian Orthodox Church recognizes the state of Ukraine as an essential element of life of the Ukrainian people and if the boundaries of the local Churches are defined by the geographical criteria that follow the political administration of the particular state, we cannot but strongly criticize the Moscow Patriarchate for continuing to control the local Church of the Ukrainian nation. We have to recall the fact that the Council held in Constantinople in 1872 condemned philetism as a negation of the catholicity of the Church.³⁹ Obvious disregard to the principles of Orthodox ecclesiology as well as the imperialistic notion of the Moscow Patriarchate create an image of the Russian Orthodox Church as the most powerful ecclesiological entity within the Orthodox Church.⁴⁰ It is not surprising then that based on such a expansionistic notion, Metropolitan of Smolensk Kirill stated: *“The Russian Orthodox Church holds de facto first place among all of the other Orthodox Churches because of her great spirituality, her ethics and virtue, her tradition, and her political influence; as such she speaks for over 350 million Russians throughout the world. Moreover, she exercises influence in all of the other Orthodox Churches of the Balkans, as well as in those countries where Orthodox faithful represent a minority. We are rightful heirs of Byzantium”*.⁴¹ The statement made by Metropolitan Kirill is a continuation of the outdated “3rd Rome theory” that is very dangerous for society, the Russian Orthodox Church, and the Orthodox World in general.⁴² The self-expressed

³⁸ In: *Letter of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to Patriarch Alexy of Moscow Concerning the Orthodox in Estonia*, February 24, 1996, Prot. No. 206

³⁹ Jaroslaw Buciora, *Ecclesiology and National Identity in Orthodox Christianity*, in: Jonathan Sutton and Wil van den Bercken (eds.), *Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Europe*, Eastern Christian Studies 3, (Leuven-Paris-Dudley, MA, 2003), p. 39. Another paper that discusses this subject is: *Territorial Jurisdiction According to Orthodox Canon Law. The Phenomenon of Ethnophiletism in Recent Years*. A paper read at the International Congress of Canon Law, Budapest, 2-7 September 2001.

⁴⁰ It is only for our information that in year 2000 the Moscow Patriarchate opened her first parish in the Antarctic that is seen by analysts as a sign of strengthening of Russia's presence on the continent. In: *Radio Free Liberty* 183.

⁴¹ In: *Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew Denounces Moscow's "3rd Rome" theory*, op. cit.

⁴² Dmitry A. Golovushkin, *On the issue of religious tolerance in modern Russia: national identity and*

influence of the Moscow Patriarchate on the other Orthodox Churches mentioned by Metropolitan Kirill, creates a direct interference into the affairs of the Local Churches of independent countries. One of the best examples in the history of the direct interference of the Moscow Patriarchate in the life of a particular Local Church is the second autocephaly for the Orthodox Church in Poland and the direct interference of the Russian Orthodox Church in the life of the local Orthodox Church of Czechoslovakia.⁴³ After the Second World War in 1948, after the takeover of Poland by the Soviet Army and the deposition of the Orthodox Metropolitan of Warsaw because of his opposition to communism, the Moscow Patriarchate, disregarding the first autocephaly given to this local Church in 1924 by the Patriarchate of Constantinople and neglecting all the ecclesiological principles of the Orthodox Church, granted a second autocephaly to the Orthodox Church of Poland. This act happened not because of the geographical changes in borders of the Orthodox Church of Poland, but because of the politics of that time and the communists aggression on Poland. The most tragic and intriguing event in this situation was the naming by the Moscow Patriarchate of a new Metropolitan of Warsaw and all Poland - Archbishop Makary Oksaniuk of Lviv, who was a member of the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church. It is not surprising, that this act was strongly criticized by the leaders of the Orthodox Church to the point of condemnation.⁴⁴ At the present time, this example of the ideology of power of the Moscow Patriarchate is already seen on the international scene, when the same Metropolitan Kirill, articulates and expresses the view of the Russian Orthodox Church towards a document that will determine the life of many countries in Europe.⁴⁵ The statement made by Metropolitan Kirill corresponds to the policy of one of the most xenophobic and chauvinist Russian organization mentioned before - "Pamyat", which advocates submission to the authority of the Russian Orthodox Church.⁴⁶ In response, the expansionistic notion of the Moscow Patriarchate represented by Metropolitan Kirill and analyzed in our presentation, was strongly criticized by the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew who described it as: "*foolish, hubristic, and blasphemous*", ... *because it resounds with the spirit of caesarism and vaticanism; something totally unacceptable to the Orthodox Church*".⁴⁷ We shall be analyzing the response of the See of Constantinople in the second half of our presentation. The ideology of the Moscow Patriarchate follows its own path which contradicts the ecclesiological nature of the Orthodox Church that is being analyzed in this presentation.

religion, op. cit.

⁴³ A very strong condemnation of those acts, that are considered by the Ecumenical Patriarchate as "bold interference of the Russian Orthodox Church beyond her jurisdiction", is found in: In: *Letter of Patriarch Athenagoras to Metropolitan Pimen*, Protocol Number 583, June 24, 1970.

⁴⁴ In: *Letter of Archbishop Ieronymos to Metropolitan of Krutitsa and Kolomna*, Registry Number 1997, March 23, 1971".

⁴⁵ Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk, *Letter from Russian Orthodox Church to Convention on the Future of Europe*, in: *OrthodoxyToday.org*.

⁴⁶ Peri Pamir, *Nationalism, Ethnicity and democracy: Contemporary Manifestations* in: <http://www.gmu.edu/academic/ijps/vol2>

⁴⁷ In: *Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew Denounces Moscow's "3rd Rome" theory*, op. cit.

Before going into further analysis, we have to mention one other very important reason why the Moscow Patriarchate is not allowing for the peaceful succession of the Local Churches in the new and independent countries. According to the research project “Religion and values after the Fall of Communism“, which was carried out in 1991-1999, post-Soviet Russia remains a profoundly secularized country where despite the fact that 82% of Russians considered themselves Orthodox, only two to three percent of Russians are serious, practicing Orthodox.⁴⁸ This shocking statistic has an immediate effect for the Moscow Patriarchate’s ideology of power, which is being preserved mainly in the imperialistic Moscow ideology and in popular slogans and claims. The Russian Orthodox Church has at the present time over 26,000 parishes in its so called “canonical territory“. Out of those 26,000 parishes over 50% (14,700) belong to the Orthodox Church in Ukraine. On the territory of the Russian Federation there are only 12,600 parishes that belong to the Moscow Patriarchate.⁴⁹ As a consequence, the Moscow Patriarchate, in losing the parishes in Ukraine, would be numerically smaller than the Orthodox Church in Rumania. In the perspective of this evidence, it seems logical to say, that it is evident why the Moscow Patriarchate can’t allow for the independent state of Ukraine to have its own autocephalous Church.⁵⁰ It is not an ecclesiological reason, but a strictly imperialistic motive to control the oppressed. As shocking as it is, there is an offensive propaganda directed by the Moscow Patriarchate to divert the attention from this reality to the canonical status of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. Because of this imperialistic ideology, the presumed primacy among the world’s Orthodox faithful and its presumed leadership in the ecumenical movement, Ukraine, as a consequence, then becomes a battle ground for the Moscow Patriarchate’s hegemonistic survival.

The above analysis was fundamental for a proper investigation of the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate. Without this introduction it would be almost impossible to comprehend the entire spectrum of the theory of the canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church that was developed for reasons mentioned above. We have to recognize the limitations of this analysis due to the limitations of sources. But even based on the presented and analyzed material it is evident, that the imperialism of the pre-revolutionary Russian Empire before 1905 emerges once again with unprecedented power and sophistication. The political aspirations of the Moscow Patriarchate are only the medium to achieve its final expansionistic goal. The issue of the cooperation of the Russian Orthodox Church with the Kremlin, mentioned in our presentation begs for vigilance and a further analysis of the subject.

⁴⁸ In: *Old Church, New Believers: Religion in Public Perceptions in Post-Soviet Russia*, St. Petersburg, Moscow, 2000, pp.7-15; Lawrence A. Uzzell, *Russia: Religion on a Leash*, op. cit; Dmitry A. Golovushkin, *On the issue of religious tolerance in modern Russia: national identity and religion*, op.cit.

⁴⁹ Yuriy Chornomoretz, *Pochemu Mockovskij patriarhat neizberzno poteriaet Ukrainu*, in: RISU.

⁵⁰ Very similar conclusion is made by Klara Gudzyk, in: <http://www.bbc.uk/ukrainian>

II. THE CANONICAL TERRITORY OF THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE

As we have just analyzed the subject of the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate from the ideological point of view, it is important for us to make certain distinctions of the discussed subject matter. It is correct to state that we have to make a differentiation between the recently developed theory of the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate and the canonical territory of the local Church according to Orthodox ecclesiology. Ideologically, these two concepts are dissimilar as they represent two different points of departure. The lack of separation of those two ideologies creates an ecclesiological anomaly as it is presented by the ideological statements of the Moscow Patriarchate.

It is recognized that the theory of the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate was formulated by the anti-liberal ideologist Metropolitan Ioann of St. Petersburg and Ladoga (Snytchev).⁵¹ It was Metropolitan Ioann, a very controversial Russian ultra-nationalist, who with this created theory of canonical territory, became the chief strategist of the Russian Orthodox Church.⁵² In certain circles of political analysts of contemporary Russia, the theory of the “canonical territory of Moscow Patriarchate” is also known as the “Doctrine of Metropolitan Ioann”.⁵³ Based on our previous analysis of the Russian Orthodox Church, after the collapse of Communism, it would not be a mistake to assume that this theory was formed right after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the disintegration of the border of USSR. As a result of political changes in Eastern Europe and the emergence of an ideologically political vacuum in the post-Soviet Eastern Block, the created theory of the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate would become a mechanism by which the imperialistic ideology of imperial Russia would be maintained and rebuild.

From the very beginning of our analysis, we are facing a very peculiar problem. Although in the official documents of the Moscow Patriarchate we meet the phrase “canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate” quite often, the Russian Orthodox Church failed to provide an adequate elaboration this concept. There is a certain puzzling silence on the part of the Moscow Patriarchate on the elaboration of this concept or even on an introduction of it in any written official document. A very helpful, although not an official document of the Russian Orthodox Church, is a circulated text

⁵¹ Dmitry A. Golovushkin, *On the issue of religious tolerance in modern Russia: national identity and religion*, op. cit. An example of his controversial writings if found in: Metropolitan Ioann, *The Battle for Russia*, in: http://oag.ru/battle_for_russia.html

⁵² Pual D. Steeve, *Russian Orthodox fascism After Glasnost*, op. cit. It is not our position to characterize the controversial personality and ideology of bishop Ioann. We will refer only to the mentioned article and various publications presented by the author; Michael Bourdeaux, *The Complex Face of Orthodoxy*, op. cit.

⁵³ Alexander Verkhovsky, *The Orthodox in the Russian Radical Nationalist Movements*, op. cit.

over the Internet under the title: “The Russian Canonical Territory”.⁵⁴ It appears to be an attempt to circulate a text among Orthodox Christians in order to justify and project this recent unecclesiological theory of the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate. Based on our initial analysis, this text has some commonalities with statements of Russian Orthodox representatives and the ideology of Moscow Patriarchate. Some of the points of the text are identical with the official statements of the Moscow Patriarchate officials that will be presented and analyzed in our presentation. Because there is no authorship attached to the document we can't base our further analysis on its essential ecclesiological elements.

BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CANONICAL TERRITORY OF THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE

In the internet-conference held by the Lutheran Church in Russia, Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, articulated in a very abbreviated form the Moscow Patriarchate's position on the theory of the canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church.⁵⁵ In his interview Metropolitan Kirill defines the theory of the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate based on three major principles/peculiarities: territorial, ethnic/national, and pastoral. In a very short way he refers unsuccessfully to the concept of canonical territory at St. Paul's letters, but immediately after this he bases the theory of the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate on external “peculiarities” of canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate. It is dubious if the peculiarities presented by Metropolitan Kirill are original to St. Paul's letters and do constitute the original parameters of the eucharistic ecclesiology of the early Church. The way in which they are presented by Metropolitan Kirill, they represent later developments of Russian theological thought that compromised the essential ecclesiological elements of the Orthodox Church with the ideologically different peculiarities of the Russian Empire. Based on those external “peculiarities” mentioned by Metropolitan Kirill we shall with our analysis.

Territorial - geographical “peculiarity”

According to Metropolitan Kirill, the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate embraces the whole of Russia, “...where the word of God was preached by the Orthodox and where she existed from the very beginning as a Local Church, that is the Church of this place, is considered to be the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate”.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ The Russian Canonical Territory: comment from an Orthodox historico-canonical perspective, in: <http://www.orthodoxia.org/GB/orthodoxy/canonlaw/Russianterritory.htm>

⁵⁵ *Orthodoxy and Non-Orthodoxy. Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations, answers questions from participants in the internet-conference held by the Lutheranism in Russia website*, in: <http://www.mospat.ru>. It is worthy to mention, that Metropolitan Kirill elaborates the concept of the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate in an internet conference hold by the Lutheran Church although the ecumenical relations of the Moscow Patriarchate under his leadership have suffered a severe blow

⁵⁶ *Orthodoxy and Non-Orthodoxy. Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, Chairman of the Department for External Church Relation, answers questions from participants in the internet-conference*

Although the statement made by Metropolitan Kirill sounds quite credible and theologically articulated, it contains a controversial ecclesiological ambiguity. For Metropolitan Kirill all the historical facts of Rus', obviously, do not have any substantial ecclesiological or historical value. The historical local Church, as it was initially founded in Kievan Rus' - Ukraine by the Patriarchate of Constantinople and rightly recognized by Metropolitan Kirill as Local- "mysteriously transformed itself", in words, the of Metropolitan Kirill, into the local Church of the Moscow Patriarchate. In the centuries from 988 to 1686- the beginning of the occupation of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine by the Russian Orthodox Church, the Metropolis of Kiev prospered as a local Church under the Ecumenical Patriarchate. We have to remember, that it was the Metropolis of Kiev, not Moscow, that was placed by Emperor Leo the Wise, in the constitutional record of metropolis, archbishoprics and bishoprics "to the Patriarch of Constantinople", on the 61th position.⁵⁷ This document, dating from the 11th century, categorically defines the Metropolis of Kiev as a separate ecclesial entity, that in no possible way can it be identified with the Moscow Patriarchate, which at this time was not even on the map of Europe. This fact that the local Church of the Metropolis of Kiev was independent was so strong in the mind of the ecclesial life of the fifteenth century that even the autocephaly of the Metropolis of Moscow was defined in terms of separation from the Metropolis of Kiev.⁵⁸ Even the "Golden Seal Certificate" of the Ecumenical Patriarch Jeremiah II in the year 1591, validating the establishment of the Moscow Patriarchate, defined the canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church as the Church of Russia and the far northern parts within the Russian dominion, excluding the metropolis of Kiev and Lesser Rus':⁵⁹ "...the throne of the most venerable and Orthodox city of Moscow is and shall be called Patriarchate' .. and all Russia and the Far-Northern Territories shall be subject to the Patriarchal Throne of Moscow and all Russia... It has its place after His Beatitude of Jerusalem in the sacred diptychs... it is the head of this region of Moscow and all Russia and the Far-Northern territories...".⁶⁰ We have to emphasize, that the definition of the boundaries of the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate, according to this document, follows a territorial, and more accurately, administrative description of the boundaries of the Russian Empire. It is the same principle that is redefined once again by modern Orthodox theologians.⁶¹ We have to recall that the Czar

held by the Lutheranism in Russia website, op. cit.

⁵⁷ In: *Territorial Jurisdiction According to Orthodox Canon Law. The Phenomenon of Ethnophyletism in Recent Years*. A paper read at the International Congress of Canon Law, Budapest, 2-7 September, 2001, in: <http://www.ecpat.gr/docdisplay>

⁵⁸ In: *Territorial Jurisdiction According to Orthodox Canon Law*, op. cit.

⁵⁹ Athenagoras of Constantinople Ecumenical Patriarch, *Letter of Patriarch Athenagoras to Metropolitan Pimen*, Protocol Number 583, June 24, 1970,

⁶⁰ In: *Territorial Jurisdiction According to Orthodox Canon Law. Op. cit.* We have to mention once again the letter of Athenagoras to Metropolitan Pimen where once again the Moscow Patriarchate is remained about the ecclesial boundaries defined in the Golden Seal Certificate in 1591 and latter confirmed in 1593, in: *Letter of Patriarch Athenagoras to Metropolitan Pimen*, op. cit.

⁶¹ Op. cit. We have to recall one paragraph of this presentation, that has very important implications for our further analysis: "...The boundaries of the patriarchies are geographical and nothing more. They are not ethnophyletic, cultural, liturgical, or anything else of the sort, and were defined by Ecumenical Synods through sacred canons and ecclesiastical regulations in accordance with Christian teaching against racial

of the Russian Empire at that time, Theodore, had the title "King of Moscow and all Russia and of the extremely Northern territories". The definition of the canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church presented in this document is clear and unambiguous. The exclusion of the Metropolis of Kiev and Lesser Rus' from the edict was based on the territorial principle that Ukraine was not part of the Russian Empire and the local Church in Kievan Rus' was not an integral part of the canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church. The obvious omission of these very essential historical facts by Metropolitan Kirill creates an impression of non-existence of the local Church of Ukraine. It is a convenient and misleading way of avoiding and misrepresenting the historical and ecclesiological facts, that are fundamental to the analysis of the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate. It is essential to mention that the "Golden Seal Certificate" of 1591 is the primary source of definition of the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate. The document articulates the establishment of a Patriarchate in the Orthodox World and coordinates the life of this ecclesiological entity according to the existing practice. In no way does this document limit the missiological character of the local Church of Russia. It essentially coordinates the life of this Orthodox entity among the other local Churches in this part of the world. Without this document and its ecclesiological clarification an ecclesiological chaos would reign in the region.

We have to clarify an important ecclesiological principle that is strictly defended by Orthodox canonical and patristic teaching. One ecclesial body can't be identified or manifested in another ecclesial body: one local Church can't be in the territory of another local Church, because there is only one Body of Christ and not many.⁶³ It is according to Orthodox ecclesiology, in the One Body of Christ, the Church emphasizes the unity of all faithful in the same place under one Bishop in one ecclesial Body: "there is neither Greek nor Jew... but Christ is all and in all" (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11).⁶⁴ According to St. Paul, the followers of Jesus Christ create one body of Christ and as one body it can't be divided as Jesus Christ is not divided.⁶⁵ It is exactly this principle that is safeguarded in this document. We have to see this document as a magnificent presentation of the Orthodox ecclesiology that follows the doctrine of Orthodoxy. This document has to be seen as the

ethnophyletic, cultural, liturgical, or anything else of the sort, and were defined by Ecumenical Synods through sacred canons and ecclesiastical regulations in accordance with Christian teaching against racial discrimination, with Orthodox ecclesiology and with canon law and pastoral requirements".

⁶³ Emmanuel Clapsis, *The Boundaries of the Church* in: <http://www.goarch.org/en/ourfaith/articles/article>; His Beatitude, Chrysostom, Archbishop of Athens and of all Greece, *The Nature of the Church*, in: *faith and Order: Proceeding of the World Conference Lausanne, August 3-21, 1927*, ed. By H.N. Bate, Garden City, Doubleday, Doran and Company NC, 1928. It is interesting to mention that Metropolitan John (Zizioulas), in the context of one body of Christ, discusses the enculturation of the Gospel in the context of pneumatological incarnation, look in: Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon, *The Orthodox Church and the Third Millenium*, in: <http://www.balamand.edu.lb/theology/art> ; John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, Crestwood, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985, p.151.

⁶⁴ In: *Letter of Patriarch Athenagoras to Metropolitan Pimen*, op. cit.

⁶⁵ Emmanuel Clapsis, *The Boundaries of the Church: An Orthodox Response*, in: <http://www.goarch.org>; John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, op. cit, p. 247; Prof. J.D. Zizioulas, *1st Comment*, in: *Proces-Verbaux Du Deuxieme Congres De Theologie Orthodoxe a Athenes 19-29 Aout 1976*, Athenes 1978, p. 144.

local Churches. Unfortunately, this fundamental ecclesiological principle in the history of the Moscow Patriarchate was never truly validated and understood. The most recent and most characteristic example is the autocephaly given to the Orthodox Church of America by the Russian Orthodox Church. Based on the tomos of autocephaly of 1971, the Orthodox Church of America received full independence while in the same ecclesial entity over 43 parishes continued to be under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate. This action of the Moscow Patriarchate was strongly condemned by the majority of the Orthodox World as contrary to the ecclesiastical order in Orthodoxy.⁶⁵ If a Eucharist doesn't transcend divisions in the Local Church it is not a true Eucharist.⁶⁶ As harsh as these words are, they can't be taken lightly without any implications on ecclesiology. The rupture in the unity of the Church is a rupture in the essential eucharistic elements of ecclesiology. Further analysis of this unecclesiological venture on the part of the Moscow Patriarchate should be studied separately in a different context of the ecclesiology of the Orthodox Church.

Another very important ecclesiological principle that we have to analyze is the existence of the Metropolis of Kiev and Lesser Rus' under the canonical jurisdiction of the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate until 1686 under the 28th canon of the 4th Ecumenical Council. Until this date, the local Orthodox Church of Ukraine functioned as a local Church of Kiev Rus' and independent from the Russian Orthodox Church. The presently disputed 28th canon of the 4th Ecumenical Council was maintained until then by all the local Churches in all its legality. This is the canon that strengthened the ruling system of the Church in the Orthodox world and the canonical rights of all the local Churches of this area were secure. The contemporary debate about the 28th canon of the Fourth Ecumenical Council is in fact a debate about the existence of the local Orthodox Church in Ukraine until 1686. Although the debate consists mainly on the issue of the Orthodox Diaspora in the Western Europe and North America, historically this was the case with the local Church of Kiev's Rus'. Therefore, it would be advisable to analyse this canon in the context of the contemporary situation in Eastern Europe and particularly in the context of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine. It is surprising and ironic to see a statement

⁶⁵ It would be useful and desirable to cite a letter of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem to the Ecumenical See, where the contradiction to the ecclesiastical order of the Moscow Patriarchate is eloquently shown: *"Furthermore, the Tomos decrees this paradox and unheard of in the Orthodox chronicles, that the recently appointed Vicar General of the Patriarchate of Moscow, formerly bishop of Umanski Makarios, continues to have under his jurisdiction all the parishes of the former Exarchate of the Patriarchate of Moscow in America. Consequently, 43 of the parishes of the Exarchate of the United States, among them the cathedral of St. Nicholas in New York City with its entire estate, as also all the parishes in Canada remain under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Moscow. This way, the Tomos becomes more of a commercial agreement, contrary to any kind of ecclesiastical order, and the Holy Synod of Moscow badly contradict themselves by it. Thus, by granting with the one hand the Autocephalous to the Russian Metropolia in jurisdiction on parishes within the very same ecclesiastical area - this contrary to fundamental canonical regulations - they disclaim and invalidate the very Autocephaly the previous granted"*, in: *Patriarchate of Jerusalem to the Holy Archbishop of Constantinople, new Rome, Prot. No. 215, March 16, 1971*".

⁶⁶ John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 257; Metropolitan John (Zizioulas), *Communion and otherness*, in: *Sobornost*, 16(1994)1.

context of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine. It is surprising and ironic to see a statement made by Patriarch Alexy of Moscow and All Russia in his letter to the Ecumenical Patriarch where he, using the phrase of Archbishop Paul of Finland, defines the “barbarian lands” of the 28th canon as an “anachronism”.⁶⁸ Definitely, the interpretation of the 28th canon of the Fourth Ecumenical Council by Patriarch Alexy II is substantially different from the one that regulated the internal life of the Orthodox Church for so many centuries. If this principle was maintained until then and if it was supported by the “Golden Seal Certificate” in 1589, there is no legal or ecclesiological principle that would justify the annexation of the local Church of Kiev Rus’ by the Russian Orthodox Church. It is remarkable to note that the 28th canon of the Fourth Ecumenical Council coordinates the ecclesiological principle of the life of the Church and can’t be analysed in a historical perspective. Because of the validity and importance of the 28th canon of the Fourth Ecumenical Council in the Orthodox Church, the characterization of this canon as an “anachronism” is equal to ecclesiological absurdity. Ecclesiological norms are characterized not by historical evaluation and change, but by the eschatological principles of Eucharist that are incarnated in the structure of the local Church.⁶⁹ The Church can’t be assimilated nor modeled on fading political powers and modern systems of democracy.⁷⁰ The Church has only one model to follow: the pattern of the Kingdom of God.⁷¹ If this eschatological reality changes its nature and becomes an “anachronism” than the nature of the local Church loses its original reality. A local Church, in this case, becomes a historical entity that is being submerged under the political, sociological, historical and other changes. The local Church then becomes an obscured entity that, by its character is identified by the change, and by nature it becomes a shadow of an eschatological reality. The annexation of the local Orthodox Church in Ukraine by the Moscow Patriarchate in 1686 was a blatant violation of basic ecclesiological principles and the canons of the Orthodox Church. The second canon of the Second Ecumenical Council in Constantinople categorically forbids this kind of action: “*Bishops should not*

⁶⁸ Patriarch Alexis of Moscow and All Russia, *A Letter to the Ecumenical Patriarch Concerning the Situation of the Diaspora*, in: <http://www.orthodoxytoday.org>

⁶⁹ It is very important to mention that the eschatological concept of the Church is totally revealed in the Sacrament of Eucharist, where the anamnesis of Christ is the anamnesis of the past and the future, look in: John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 255; Prof. J.D. Zizioulas, *Conciliarity and the Way to Unity, in: Churches in Conciliar Fellowship? - A discussion amongst Europeans on unity and cooperation, Conference of European Churches*. Occasional papers, No 10, 1978. Another very interesting analysis is offered by Olivier Clement, that emphasizes the integral link between communion and Church structure, look in: Olivier Clement, *Orthodox Ecclesiology as an Ecclesiology of Communion*, in: *One in Christ*, VI(1970)2.

⁷⁰ Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia, “*Not So Among You*”: *How Christian is Our Understanding of Church Authority*, in: <http://www.olconference.com>; John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 260; John Meyendorff, *The Catholicity of the Church: An Introduction*, *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly*, 17(1973)1-2.

⁷¹ Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon, *The Church as Communion*, in: *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly*, 38(1994)1, John Zizioulas, *The Early Christian Community*, in: *Christian Spirituality. Origins to the Twelfth Century*, eds: Bernard McGinn and John Meyendorff, Crossroad, New York, 1985, pp. 27-28; Stanley Harakas, *The Local Church*, in: *The Ecumenical Review* 29(1977); Georges Florovsky, *The Doctrine of the Church and the Ecumenical Problem*, in: *The Ecumenical Review*, II(1950)2.

invade Churches beyond their boundaries for the purpose of governing them, nor should they mingle the Churches... “. Historically, this canon is based on the earlier Apostolic Canons 14 and 34 which states that: “... *no Bishop be permitted to pass over into the Province of another”*. Because of the illegality of the annexation of the local Church in Ukraine in 1686 by the Russian Orthodox Church, the Patriarchate of Ecumenical See of the Constantinople never accepted this action and never acknowledged the local Orthodox Church of Ukraine as a part of Moscow Patriarchate. What is more important, following the 28th canon of the Forth Ecumenical Council, the Patriarchate of Constantinople still recognizes the local Church of Ukraine as an integral part of it’s canonical jurisdiction. The Ecumenical Patriarchate is continuously identifying herself as a “tender Mother” of all Orthodox Christians of Eastern and central Europe.⁷² In addition to the above, in a letter of Patriarch Athenagoras to Patriarch Pimen, all areas of Ukraine, which previously belonged to the local Church in Poland, and were detached from this Church are under the jurisdiction of Ecumenical Patriarchate: “...*And this act of the Russian Orthodox Church was done by exceeding her jurisdictional rights, since after the end of World War II, the territories of Ukraine and Byelorussia, which previously belonged to the Church of Poland, were detached from this Church; and the areas included in these detached Churches reaching westward as far the Baltic Sea, and being from times past outside the boundaries of the Patriarchate of Moscow, are under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchal Throne”*.⁷³ Because the local Church of Ukraine until 1686 was under the canonical jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and there is no ecclesiological nor canonical justification for the action done by the Moscow Patriarchate in 1686, the matters of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine are the matters of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The claim of Patriarch Athenagoras was once again reinforced just recently by Archbishop Vsevolod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA. In his statement Archbishop Vsevolod once again reinforced the position of the Patriarchate of Constantinople saying: “*The position of the Mother Church, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, is that her daughter - the Moscow Patriarchate - consists of that territory, which it encompassed to the year 1686. The subjection of the Kyivan Metropolia to the Moscow Patriarchate was concluded by the patriarch Dionysius without the agreement or ratification of the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Great Church of Christ*”.⁷⁴

Before our further analysis of the subject, we have to mention a very interesting argument used by the Moscow Patriarchate against the 28th canon of the Forth Ecumenical Council. In the earlier mentioned letter of Patriarch Alexy II to the Patriarchal See of Constantinople, Patriarch Alexy II emphasizes the fact, that the autocephaly received by the Russian Orthodox Church from Constantinople in 1459

⁷² In: *Patriarchal and Synodal Act Concerning the Reactivation of the Patriarchal and Synodal Tomos of 1923 Regarding the Orthodox Metropolitanate of Estonia*, in: <http://www.anemos.com/Diaspora/finari>

⁷³ In: *Letter of Patriarch Athenagoras to Metropolitan Pimen*, op. cit.

⁷⁴ In: *Hierarchs of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of USA Meet with President of Ukraine Victor Yuschenko Urging Continued Efforts to Establish a United and Independent Ukrainian Orthodox Church*, Office of the Public Relations of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA

followed a general principle that acquired the condition necessary for autocephaly and it could not be applied to the 28th canon of the Forth Ecumenical Council.⁷⁵ If we follow this line of thought, even though it is strongly disputable, we can be just astonished, that the same principle is not applied to the contemporary situation of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine and that autocephaly is not granted to this Church. The lack of consistency on the part of the Moscow Patriarchate regarding certain ecclesiological principles of the Orthodox Church could no doubt amaze and infuriate even the most patient and humble Christians.

In the establishment and validation of the Moscow Patriarchate by the Patriarchate of Constantinople, there is one very important element, that is fundamental for our discussion. In the quoted document “Golden Seal Certificate” from 1591, the Moscow Patriarchate operates in a certain and defined ecclesiastical territory. One of the fundamental Orthodox ecclesiological principles of a local Church is its territorial-canonical limitation. According to the canons and the Holy Tradition of the Orthodox Church, the boundaries of every local Church, including the Patriarchates, are strictly defined. The belief in the “limitlessness” of the jurisdiction of one of the Patriarchate can not stand scrutiny.⁷⁶ It is because of this reason that the Moscow Patriarchate operates as an ecclesiological territorial entity defined by the patriarchal document. The validity of the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate is based on the defined ecclesial reality that prohibits the territorial expansion to the territory of other local Orthodox Churches based either on political interference or military measures: “...*The same rule shall hold good also with regard to other diocese and churches everywhere, so that none of the Bishops most beloved by God shall take hold of any other province that was not formerly and from the beginning in his jurisdiction, or was not, that is to say, held by his predecessors. But if anyone has taken possession of any and has forcibly subjected it to his authority, he shall regive it back to its rightful possessors, in order that the Canons of the Fathers be not transgressed, nor the secular fastus be introduced, under the pretext of divine services; ...*’ (Canon Eight of the Third Ecumenical Council). In the definition of the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate, from one side there is a definite limitation of the territory, but from the other side, the patriarchal document opens the door for mission in the northern territories of the Russian Empire, where there was no local Church. Therefore, from one side, there is a defined canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church that does not allow for the expansion of its border towards the existing local Orthodox Churches, but from the other side the document allows for mission towards the Northern territories of the Russian Empire where the existence of the Church was required.

Based on the above analysis of the territorial-geographical “peculiarity” of Metropolitan Kirill, we have to emphasize that the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate has

⁷⁵Patriarch Alexis of Moscow and All Russia, *A Letter to the Ecumenical Patriarch Concerning the Situation of the Diaspora*, op. cit.

⁷⁶In: *Letter of Archbishop Ieronymos to Metropolitan of Krutitsa and Kolomna, Registry Number 1997, March 23, 1971*”, op. cit.

canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church was defined and limited to the territorial borders to the Moscow Empire before 1686. Because of this fundamental ecclesiological reason, based on the canon of the Holy Fathers, the local Churches of Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Estonia, Baltic countries... are not the integral parts of the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate. The military annexation of those countries by the Russian Empire and later by the Communists and the Soviet army can't be the basis for the occupation of the local Churches by the Moscow Patriarchate. Therefore, the canonical territory defined by the By-law of the Russian Orthodox Church contradicts the ecclesiological principles of the Orthodox Church and goes against the territorial norm defined by the "Golden Seal Certificate". The imperialism of the Russian Empire with the expansionistic ideology of the Moscow Patriarchate, as it was presented in the first part of our analysis, creates an ecclesiological anomaly that weakens the position of the Russian Orthodox Church in the world and paralyses the spiritual development of the local Orthodox Church in Ukraine and elsewhere.

Ethnic-national "peculiarity"

The second essential element for the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate, according to Metropolitan Kirill, is the ethnic-national peculiarity: "*Since the Baptism of Russia, Russian Orthodox missionaries became enlightening pioneers who played a key role in the Christianisation of the country and the development of the national identity of the people to whom they brought the word of God*".⁷⁶ According to Metropolitan Kirill, the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate is defined by the national identity even of those, to whom the missionaries brought the word of God. Therefore, the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate is expandable, according to Metropolitan Kirill, to the limits of the boundaries of missionizing nations. The use of the national principal as a basis for the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate by Metropolitan Kirill is in accordance with the Statute of the Russian Orthodox Church which in the general provisions states: "*The Russian Orthodox Church is a multinational Local Autocephalous Church in doctrinal unity and a prayerful and canonical communion with other Local Orthodox Churches*".⁷⁷ In the other websites of the Moscow Patriarchate the Russian Orthodox Church is presented as a multi-ethnic local Autocephalous Church.

It is very interesting to note, that the term applied to the local Orthodox Church in Russia as "Russian" is nowhere seen in the "Golden Seal Certificate" of 1591. The language of the certificate is precise and strictly ecclesiological. The certificate avoids any ambiguity defining the Orthodox Church in the Russian Empire according to the geographical-territorial principle. We may assume that the contemporary definition of the local Orthodox Church in Russia as Russian is a consequence of a process which took place after the French Revolution. The nation, up to the French Revolution, was defined not by the ethno-phyletic concept, but by the religion itself. This is a main reason why the

⁷⁶*Orthodoxy and Non-Orthodoxy. Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations, answers questions from participants in the internet-conference held by the Lutheranism in Russia website, op. cit.*

⁷⁷ In: Statute of the Russian Orthodox Church, in: <http://orthodoxeurope.org>

the ethno-phyletic concept, but by the religion itself. This is a main reason why the document “Golden Seal Certificate” operates in this framework. The contemporary address of the local Orthodox Church as Russian by Metropolitan Kirill is contrary to the original document of 1591 and finally it is a deviation from the principle of the Orthodox ecclesiology. If the Moscow Patriarchate wants to emphasize the multi-national or multi-ethnic character of its nature, this Church cannot define itself in the first place as Russian and then include in the definition a multinational component. In effect, the second part of the definition is ecclesiologicaly mutilated and subjected by the first part with the emphasis on “Russian”. The way in which the Moscow Patriarchate portrays its national identity, it supersedes all the others national cultures and identities damaging, in effect, it’s own ecclesiology. In effect, Russian exclusiveness, as it is presented by the Statute, contradicts the basic notion of the Kingdom of God, where all the segregations are transcended.⁷⁹ We have to categorically state that Orthodox ecclesiology forbids to absolutize the local Church of a specific territory to an exclusive nation or national ideology. It has to be remembered that the Church and it’s ecclesiology must apply theological criteria which are not identical with political, economic, nationalistic, or cultural dimensions. In fact, the definition used by Metropolitan Kirill and the Statute of the Russian Orthodox Church to characterize the local Church of Russia as Russian contradicts the principle of locality of this ecclesial entity as a self-governing, hierarchical unity, that embraces all Orthodox Christians living there. According to the statement made by Metropolitan Kirill, the local Church is not only exclusive, but it is also discriminatory to the existing reality of the multinational dimension of the local Church of Russia. The absolute denomination of the Russian nationalistic element in the Statute creates a Russian cultural monopoly that imposes its superiority over other cultures and ethnic identities.⁸⁰ It is also wrong, according to Orthodox ecclesiology, to use missionaries in order to subordinate the missionized territories under its own control. The ethnic Russian emphasis on the nationalistic element replaced the territorial or the geographical principle. This can be seen then as the secularization or politization of the Church.⁸¹ The only logical conclusion for such an ideology is the preservation of an imperialistic ideology of a great Russia and the preservation of a lost Empire. There is no ecclesiological justification for the Moscow Patriarchate to emphasize Russian nationalism in the by-law of the Russian Orthodox Church and in the theory of it’s canonical territory. The ethnic or national element is not and can not be an ecclesiological principle upon which we can built the entire theory of the canonical territory.⁸²

⁷⁹ John Zizioulas, *The Early Christian Community*, in: *Christian Spirituality*, op. cit., p. 30/

⁸⁰ We can’t forget to mention, that the imposition of one particular culture over the others and its glorification, according to John Zizioulas, has a demonic character, look in: John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 258.

⁸¹ A very interesting analysis of the process of secularization is presented by: John Meyendorff, *The Catholicity of the Church: An Introduction*, op. cit.

⁸² In: “*The time has come for ecumenism of life*”. *An Interview with Anatoiné Arjakovsky, an Orthodox Frenchman, professor at the Ukrainian catholic University*, in: <http://www.risu.org.ua>

What is even more remarkable in the statement of Metropolitan Kirill is the use of Russian nationalism for the purpose of defining the ecclesiological principle of a local Church. According to Metropolitan Kirill's statement, the local Church is defined not only by the national criteria but is dependent on it. It is just remarkable to hear those remarks from a church statesman who can compromise the basic ecclesiological principle of the Orthodox Church with the ideological imperialistic tendency of the Moscow Patriarchate. It is just incomprehensible for any Orthodox theologian to compromise the eschatological vision of the Church with the nationalistic and xenophobic element of the Russian hierarchy. As a consequence, the Church, as is represented by the Moscow Patriarchate, loses its salvific direction and Divine character. As a consequence, the Patriarchate of Constantinople can not stand on the side and be uncritical of the ideology of the Russian Orthodox Church. Because the Ecumenical Patriarchate refuses to accept the events caused by uncanonical force and tyranny, it is commendable to see the Ecumenical See taking action to defend the weak.⁸³ The comments made by Patriarch Bartholomew and mentioned in the first part of our presentation are courageous and consequential to the historical duty of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.⁸⁴ When it comes to the point of betrayal of its ecclesiological direction by the Moscow Patriarchate, the words used by Patriarch Bartholomew are harsh but necessary in order to defend the nature of the Church. From the other perspective, as we analyzed the ideology of the Moscow Patriarchate and the other official statements of Metropolitan Kirill, we should only conclude the inevitable. The ecclesiological nature of the Church is subordinated to the "higher" imperial ideology. We should only add, that the territory of the local Church is defined not by the national, racial, or ethnic criteria, but by the geographical - administrative parameters that identified the local Orthodox Church from the very beginning.⁸⁵

There is also another reason for defining the local Orthodox Church of Russia as Russian with a multinational character. By defining the local Church of Russia as Russian, the Statute of the Russian Orthodox Church and consequently Metropolitan Kirill defend the universal national jurisdiction. If by definition, the local Church is defined as national, this particular national local Church enjoys universal national jurisdiction founded upon the political ideology that includes within jurisdiction all members of the same political conviction.⁸⁶ In a sense, a local Church becomes a source or a vehicle of universal ideology discussed in our previous analysis. As a consequence, the ethnic-national particularity used by Metropolitan Kirill carries an ethno-phyletic ideology that corresponds with a heresy. The accusations made by Cardinal Kasper in our introduction are, after our analysis, ecclesiologicaly warranted and justified. The local Church of

⁸³ In: *Patriarchal and Synodal Act Concerning the Reactivation of the Patriarchal and Synodical Tomos of 1923 Regarding the Orthodox Metropolitanate of Estonia*, op. cit.

⁸⁴ In: *Letter of Patriarch Athenagoras to Metropolitan Pimen*, op. cit.

⁸⁵ In: *Territorial Jurisdiction According to Orthodox Canon Law. The Phenomenon of Ethnophyletism in Recent Years*. A paper read at the International Congress of Canon Law, Budapest, 2-5 September 2001.

⁸⁶ Archbishop Basil of Brussels, *Catholicity and the Structures of the Church*, in: St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly 17(1973)1-2, p. 50.

Russia is not a nationalistic entity that can be subjected to the external imperialistic ideology of Russian nationalists. From the other side, the ethno-nationalistic peculiarity used by Metropolitan Kirill is a consequence of an established agenda of the Russian imperialism. The infiltration of ethnophyletism into the ecclesiology of the Church creates out of her a subservient entity that carries the ideology of nationalism.⁸⁷

Phyletism, that can be seen in the Statute of the Russian Orthodox Church and in the statement made by Metropolitan Kirill, causes ecclesiological chaos not only in internal affairs of the local Orthodox Church of Russia, Ukraine, and Estonia, but also in the life of the Orthodox Church in North America.

Pastoral “peculiarity”

Another very important element of the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate, briefly elaborated by Metropolitan Kirill, is the pastoral “peculiarity” that embraces in its definition some external pseudo-ecclesiological elements. According to Metropolitan Kirill: “... *Our Church feels that great responsibility for her members that is, for those who received from us the sacrament of Baptism, which we believe makes a person a member of the Church*”. In our first evaluation of this statement, we have to emphasize the very-wide concept that can be interpreted in various ways. One striking characteristic of this comment is the fact that this comment is not limited to any ecclesial body or to any particular territory. It is an open concept that transcends all the known ecclesiological norms. In other words, the Russian Orthodox Church feels responsible for all her members in wherever territory they are. Because of the Sacrament of Baptism, all her members are in the pastoral care and at the same time in the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate. According to this comment, any member of the Russian Orthodox Church, regardless of where in the world he/she lives, even if that be within the territorial borders of any local Orthodox Church, is still a member of the Russian Orthodox Church. In other words, the Sacrament of Baptism of every member of the Russian Orthodox Church, supersedes all the established ecclesiological principles of the Orthodox Church, including the quoted canons of the Ecumenical Councils. In its foundation, this kind of interpretation even supersedes the condemned phyletism in 1872. This kind of interpretation is supported by other representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate. In affirmation of our interpretation, Patriarch Alexy II without hesitation confirmed the presence of the Moscow Patriarchate in Western Europe because of the thousands of faithful who emigrated to Western Europe or because of the enlargement of the European Union towards Eastern of Europe.⁸⁸ The presence of the Moscow Patriarchate in Western Europe is possible, according to Patriarch Alexy II, thanks to the application of the pastoral “particularity” mentioned by Metropolitan Kirill. The new wave of emigrants from the former Soviet Union is considered by the Moscow Patriarchate as a carrier of the Moscow Patriarchate’s canonical territory. The statement made by Patriarch Alexy II regarding the presence of the Moscow Patriarchate in Western Europe was

⁸⁷ Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon, *The Orthodox Church and the Third Millenium*, op. cit. The heresy of philetism is also strongly criticized by Vladimir Lossky in: *Vladimir Lossky, The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, Crestwood, St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1976, p. 15.

⁸⁸ Patriarch Alexy of Moscow, in: Hilarion Alfeyev, *Christian Witness to Uniting Europe*, op. cit.

that definitely counteracts the established norms and parameters of Orthodox ecclesiology. Once again, the same statement is reiterated by Alexy II in his letter to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, in which the Moscow Patriarchate considers the parishes in the Western Europe as part of its canonical territory: "... *The desire for the restoration of the spiritual unity of our people is reflected in the declaration you have mentioned, which was made by the Holy Synod on 8 November 2000, where it is question of those children "who live beyond the limits of the Russian State" (not "outside the limits of the Russian Church", as is incorrectly stated in Your letter)*".⁸⁸ As we see this in the document, the statement follows again the same strategy of the Moscow Patriarchate ideology of universal power without any concern of the ecclesiological principles of the Orthodox Church. This kind of strategy presents classical Russian chauvinism, that will trample any established norms in order to achieve its final goal. There is no other principle that would lead us to a different conclusion. It is only because of this reason that there are some parishes in Western Europe composed of the Russian emigrants, that the Russian Orthodox Church feels obliged to embrace in its canonical territory.⁸⁹ At this moment, this is simple application of the analysed phyletic principle and "pastoral" particularity, that allow in an non-ecclesiological way, the enlargement of the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate.

This kind of interpretation of the "canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate" has even global implications. According to Metropolitan Anthony of Sourouzh, Moscow Patriarchate's own Exarch in London, England, even the normalization of the Eucharistic unity of the Ukrainian Orthodox Communities in the United States and Canada was interpreted by the Moscow Patriarchate as offensive.⁹⁰ A very strong condemnation of this kind of interpretation of the basic principles of Orthodox ecclesiology comes from the participants of the International Congress of Canon Law in Budapest, that precisely clarified this situation. According to participants of this Congress, any member of the Local Church who emigrated to another country and resides there, becomes a member of the Local Church, that is established in that particular country.⁹¹ In fact, the pretension of the Moscow Patriarchate has even a larger context than we can imagine. The members of the Russian Orthodox Church who emigrated to Western Europe and parishes in Western Europe with contingents of the Russian emigration, are opportunities for the Russian Orthodox Church to contest the 28th Canon of the Forth Ecumenical Council. The aspiration of the Moscow Patriarchate to dominate the Orthodox world is a constant "work in progress".

⁸⁸ Patriarch Alexis of Moscow and All Russia, *A Letter to the Ecumenical Patriarch Concerning the Situation of the Diaspora*, op. cit.

⁸⁹ The same intention we can find in a letter of Patriarch Alexis II to the Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, in: *The Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Alexis the Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad*, 1st April 2003, 119034, in: <http://www.sourozkh.org/news/patriarch010403>.

⁹⁰ Alexander F.C. Webster, *Split decision: the Orthodox clash over Estonia- Cover Story*, in: <http://www.findarticles.com>

⁹¹ In: *Territorial Jurisdiction According to Orthodox Canon Law. The Phenomenon of Ethnophyletism in Recent Years*, op. cit.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is essential for us to emphasize the need to discuss the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate in a variety of perspectives that are constitutive to our analysis. A proper examination of the analysed subject asks all those who will continue to analyse this theme to extend the parameters of their analysis to other fields: history politics, sociology.... As it is a complex subject, it is almost impossible to discuss the canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church only from the ecclesiological perspective without discussing the historical and political/ideological data. For this reason, in the first part of our analysis we had discussed the contemporary ideological background of the Moscow Patriarchate that infiltrated the ecclesial life of the Russian Orthodox Church. Without this introductory analysis of this ideological trend in the Russian Orthodox Church it would be almost impossible to comprehend the genesis of the theory of the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate. As we concluded, the manner in which the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate is presented by Russian Orthodox ideologists, is only a theory without ecclesiological and historical support. This is one of the reason why, in the second part of our analysis, we had the responsibility to address this question in the historical perspective that is constitutive for the ecclesiological understanding of the boundaries of the Moscow Patriarchate. Based on the analysis, we have to state, that the present universal imperial ideology of the Moscow Patriarchate is a historical continuation of the processes of the sixteen, seventeen and, eighteen centuries that saw the Russian Church nationalized and secularized.⁹² The process of secularization of the Russian Orthodox Church continues even today, as it absorbs the old nationalistic ideas in a revised edition.

As we have discussed in our presentation, the ecclesiology of the Church can't be subjected to any ideology of any time or in any place. The Church patterns itself on the image of the Kingdom of God, that provides the Church with the eschatological vision. Because of the eschatological vision, the local Church functions within the ecclesiastical norms that regulate it's life among the rest of the local Churches. As the essential ecclesiological elements that regulate the life of the local Churches are contained in the historical life of the Church, we had to analyse the origin of the establishment Moscow Patriarchate in order to present the fundamental ecclesiological parameters of canonical boundaries on which this Patriarchate was established. This is our main reason why we took so much time to analyse the document of 1591-"Golden Seal Certificate", where we find the validation of the establishment of the Moscow Patriarchate and it's territorial coordinates. According to this document, in the ecclesiological perspective, we concluded that the ideological aspiration of the Moscow Patriarchate presented in the period of the last four centuries is nothing else than political machinations on the part of the state to justify and to maintain its original aspiration. The infiltration of state ideology into the ecclesial life of the Russian Church was so immense, that the present ideological life of the Moscow Patriarchate is a consequence of that infiltration. At the

⁹² John Meyendorff, *Ecclesiological Regionalism: Structures of Communion or Cover for Separatism? Issues of dialogue with Roman catholicism*, in: St. Vladimir's Theological seminary, 24(1980)3, p. 165.

present time, this ideology is even more sophisticated and academically saturated as it involves a new methodology and a form of ecclesiological creationism. In order to strengthen its own case the Moscow Patriarchate is not afraid to challenge the fundamental ecclesiological principles of the Orthodox Church that regulated the life of the local Churches till the present. The examples of the Orthodox Church in Poland and the USA are it's best expressions. As we analyse the ecclesial situation in Ukraine and Estonia, we might be just as astonished at the behaviour and attitude of the Moscow Patriarchate. The local Church in Ukraine and Estonia are treated by the Moscow Patriarchate as political institutions and properties to be given away or subordinated at the right time. This typical imperialistic approach to the Church destroys the genuine life of Orthodox Christians. In effect, the Moscow Patriarchate developed an ecclesiological theory that in itself betrays not only the eucharistic life of a local Church but also its own identity. We may assume, that being aware of this betrayal of the essential Orthodox ecclesiology, the Moscow Patriarchate fails to introduce it's official teaching on its interpretation of the canonical territory. The only evidence of this theory is found in the statements of the Russian Orthodox Church leaders who, together with the Statute of the Russian Orthodox Church, give us evidence of the real ideology of the Moscow Patriarchate. Only in this perspective can we approach and comprehend the recently developed uncanonical theory of the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate. We can only hope that at this time, when the Orthodox Church in Russia can speak freely, it is time to direct the attention of Russian theologians to pay more attention to the eschatological reality of the Church that is never to old or anachronistic. The Orthodox Church is a living Divine Body that incarnates itself in the local Church presided by a bishop. Only in this parameter it is possible to find a genuine Orthodox ecclesiology that overcomes all ideological trends and political agendas. This should be the direction of the Moscow Patriarchate in the future. An honest discussion of the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate could resolve so many burning issues in this part of the world and in the Diaspora. So long as this discussion is not addressed by the leaders of the Moscow Patriarchate in a constructive way, ecclesiological chaos in the Orthodox world will continue.