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**RELIGEOPOLITICS IN ACTION: ANALYSING
RELIGION-TERRITORIALITY NEXUS ON THE BASIS OF HOLY
RUS', SERBIAN WORLD, ULSTER, AND MEGALI IDEA DISCOURSES**

MA Thesis

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Tartu, 2026

Authorship Declaration

I have prepared this thesis independently. All the views of the authors, as well as data from literary sources and elsewhere, have been cited.

Word count of the thesis: 29 987

Roman Zolotarjov, 15.05.2026

ABSTRACT

In this MA thesis, a comparative analysis of religeopolitical discourses is conducted on the basis of four empirical cases: Holy Rus', Serbian World, Ulster and Megali Idea. The central concept used throughout this thesis is religeopolitics – i.e., particular spatial imaginations based on religious discourse. The major goal of this thesis is twofold: on the one hand, it is the formulation of a new theory of religeopolitics, while on the other hand it is an intellectual contribution to better understanding the role of religion in the process of place-making and the transformation of geographical space into metaphysical notions of religious communities of belonging. This topic is important for two reasons. First of all, four selected empirical cases have been historically related with some form of intra-state conflict and violence, which specifies the societal importance of the topic. Second of all, the contribution of this thesis to the academic debate is a valuable intellectual enterprise.

Methodologically, this thesis is grounded in the post-positivist research paradigm and it uses a qualitative approach to social analysis. In this case, discourse analysis is conducted in the form of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Norman Fairclough. Selected corpora of texts are analysed through the prism of the pre-defined theoretical framework. Particular semantic elements (including the “sacred dimensions of nationalism” of Anthony David Smith and linguistic aspects of proximization of Piotr Cap) are identified and further analysed from a comparative perspective.

The results suggest that religion plays a crucial role in religeopolitics: not only is it a marker of social identity, but also the point of reference of a specific value-system in relation to which the identity of the Self is constructed. Religopolitical discourses represent specific communities of belonging identified through their juxtaposition to the threatening Other that is portrayed as near, imminent and dangerous. The result of this is the call to action, chief among them is the physical extermination of the enemy. Religion also adds an essentialist, messianic dimension to it: religopolitical communities are not only imagined communities of belonging, their function is the restraining of Evil and prevention of the Apocalypse.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CDA → Critical **D**iscourse **A**nalysis

DA → **D**iscourse **A**nalysis

DS → **D**iscourse **S**pace

DST → **D**iscourse **S**pace **T**heory

DUP → **D**emocratic **U**nionist **P**arty

IDC → **I**nside-**D**eictic-**C**enter

IRA → **I**rish **R**epublican **A**rmey

NP → **N**oun **P**hrase

ODC → **O**utside-**D**eictic-**C**enter

ROC → **R**ussian **O**rthodox **C**hurch

SDLP → **S**ocial **D**emocratic and **L**abour **P**arty

SOC → **S**erbian **O**rthodox **C**hurch

STA model → **S**patial, **T**emporal, **A**xiological *model*

VP → **V**erb **P**hrase

UUP → **U**lster **U**nionist **P**arty

WRPC → **W**orld **R**ussian **P**eople's **C**ouncil (rus *Всемирный Русский Народный Собор*)

INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the Cold War, there have been evident attempts at re-conceptualising the general understanding of international politics in relation to geographical space. The most prominent results in this area were achieved in the domain of critical geopolitics, which tries to escape epistemological prison of positivism and excessive state-centrism and highlights discursive character of Earth-writing instead (Ó Tuathail and Agnew, 1992: 192). Still, what is missing from the writings at the moment is a religious component: geopolitics is typically analysed from secular perspective with religious notions being generally neglected (Dijkink, 2006: 193). Paradoxically, there are only two prominent articles published on the topic of a fusion between geopolitics and religion – those are Gertjan Dijkink's article (2006) dedicated to the general analysis of this problematic and Lary Nyroos's article (2001) on the topic of "dissident geopolitics" of fundamentalist movements Hamas and Kach. Nyroos was the first author who used the term "religeopolitics" to designate particular spatial imaginations based on religious discourse.

Thus, the starting point of this Thesis is a theoretical puzzle referred to as a "conceptual omission" in academic literature (Day and Koivu, 2019: 381): namely, there are phenomena *out there* which we lack an adequate theory for. The main objective of this Thesis is to improve our understanding of religeopolitics through laying bases for a new grounded theory of the phenomenon of interest. The general research topic – conceptualised as "some sphere of social life for which it is possible to collect empirical materials" (Lagerspetz, 2023: 78) – is construction of religeopolitical discourses – i.e., discourses where spatial imaginations are based on religious notions. The particular research problem addressed is how geographical space can be transformed into metaphysical notions of religious community of belonging, or in more abstract terms, what is the role of religion in the process of place-making.

The selected topic and research problem are not of merely theoretical interest, although the development of subsequent academic knowledge is an important objective *per se*. All cases discussed in this Thesis – Holy Rus', Serbian World, Ulster and Megali Idea – were at a time utilised by the authorities of their respective states as an instrument of foreign policy that resulted in a number of inter- or intranational conflicts: War in Ukraine (2014-present), Wars in Bosnia (1992-1995) and Kosovo (1999), the Troubles in Northern Ireland (1968-1998),

Balkan Wars (1912-1913) and Greek intervention in Turkey (1922). Thus, understanding of the exact genealogy, nature, ontological bases, as well as impact on the state behavior and foreign policy of these *religeopolitical* concepts constitutes what Mikko Lagerspetz calls “societal importance” of the proposed research (ibid: 79).

In order to address the research problem in a meaningful way, a couple of research questions are formulated, aimed at “unpacking” different aspects of the phenomenon of interest. The research questions (RQs) are as follows:

RQ₁: What role does religion play in the formation of *religeopolitical* discourses?

RQ₂: How are *religeopolitical* discourses constructed, represented and disseminated?

RQ₃: What is the connection between religion and territoriality practices and how religion-territoriality nexus affects the construction of *religeopolitical* discourses?

Research questions help to analyse *religeopolitics* from different perspectives; answers to the research questions in turn lay basis for a new grounded theory of *religeopolitics* – i.e., a theory that “rather than selectively choosing data according to a priori theoretical categories, formulates the theory from the data by developing provisional categorizations via empirical study and abstraction, comparing on the basis of new data whether these categories fit and, if necessary, reformulating the categories so that they are empirically valid” (Milliken, 1999: 234). Accordingly, this Thesis necessarily follows the post-positivist logic of inquiry; in this regard, no hypotheses can be formulated prior to the analysis, but rather the empirics themselves lead the way to a new theory.

This Thesis follows a qualitative methodological approach, it utilises discourse analysis as the basic data analysis technique. To be precise, a particular version of discourse analysis – Critical Discourse Analysis of Norman Fairclough is used. In the first place, a comprehensive literature review is conducted, identifying critical “nodal points” – i.e., the most important or “canonical” texts, upon which respective discourses are based. In the next step, text selection is completed and textual files are put together to be later analysed with the help of QCAmap software. Historical texts (essays, excerpts of political statements and speeches), as well as

modern-day documents (communiqués, reports, official statements) of the leading church and state authorities are selected; exact materials selected for empirical analysis depend on case specifics. Upon the completion of text selection, empirical analysis is conducted, following two major analytical techniques: predicate analysis and proximization analysis of Paul Chilton and Piotr Cap. Religeopolitical discourses are deconstructed, minimal units with separate semantics – *semes* – are selected and analysed separately, following the research logic discussed in detail in the methodology section. Final results are presented in a comprehensive manner, laying basis for a new grounded theory of religeopolitics.

This Thesis is divided into 5 chapters complemented with Annexes. After the introduction, a theoretical framework is presented, providing extensive literature review together with discussion of the most important analytical concepts. The second chapter is devoted to a methodological framework: research design, case selection, as well as data analysis methods are discussed there. Next, empirical section follows, providing a comprehensive overview of empirical results and structuring them in a form of proto-theory. It is followed by a short discussion, where empirical results are put into a broader context of the existing literature. A conclusion follows, with the most important elements being summarised one more time.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, a theoretical framework for analysing religeopolitical discourses is provided. It is divided into five subchapters, each dealing with a particular aspect of religeopolitics. The first part is dedicated to the religion-power nexus, including the functional similarity between religion and nationalism, church-state relations and the Christian theology of war. A discussion of religion-geography nexus follows, devoted to the phenomenon of holy places. The third part is devoted to geopolitics, elaborating on similarities and differences between geopolitical traditions and unpacking the civilizational approach to Earth-writing. The next section deals with the theory of discourse. This chapter ends with a short introduction into four religeopolitical constructs: Holy Rus', Serbian World, Ulster and Megali Idea.

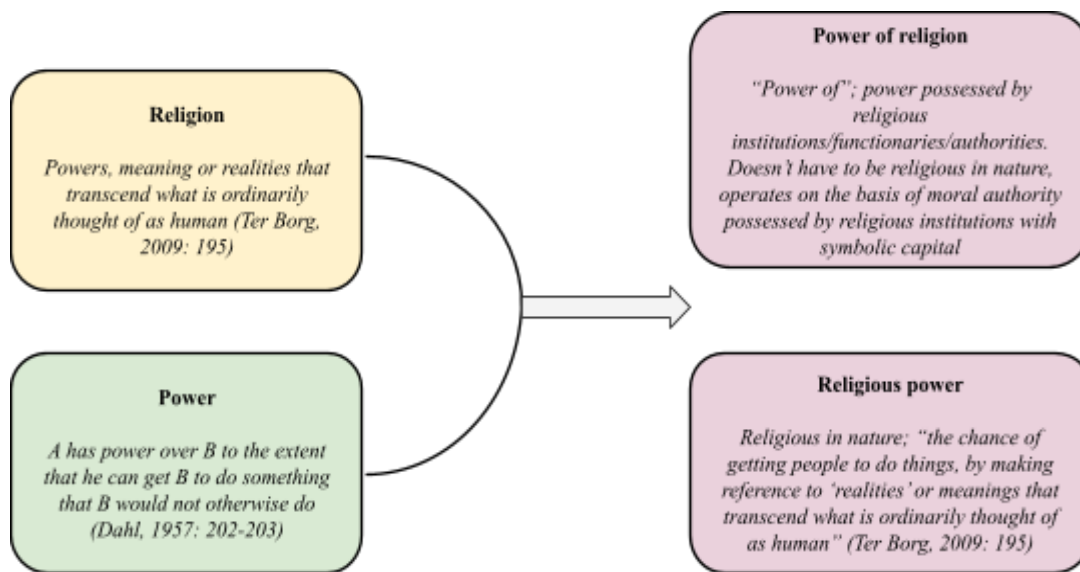
1.1. Political theology and religion-power nexus

1.1.1. Religion, power, and nationalism

Religion and power are usually considered from the standpoint of the sociology of religion as the “basic elements of human co-existence” (Ter Borg, 2009: 195); they are important notions for understanding numerous social processes, including the construction of “symbolic realities” and corresponding discourses (Nyroos, 2001: 138). Although exact definitions of religion and power are less important here¹, some basic understanding of the terms used in this Thesis is still needed for the sake of conceptual clarity. Without going deep into a debate on the faces of power² it will be sufficient for the moment to follow the definition of power presented by Robert Dahl in his *The Concept of Power*, where he famously postulated that “A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do” (Dahl, 1957: 202-203). Likewise, religion can be conceptualised in terms of “powers, meanings or realities that transcend what is ordinarily thought of as human” (Ter Borg, 2009: 195). This is a substantial definition of religion that reflects its essence, although it doesn't consider its social functionality.

When power and religion merge, the result can be either (1) the power of religion or (2) religious power. Ontological differences between these two concepts precipitate a necessity to distinguish them analytically. While “the power of religion is the *power of* religious functionaries, religious organisations and institutions” that doesn't necessarily have to be religious in nature³, the religious power is conceptualised rather as “chance of getting people

to do things, by making reference to “realities” or meanings that transcend what is ordinarily thought of as human” (ibid: 196). These differences are evidently shown in Graph 1:



Graph 1. Power, Religion and their derivatives.
Source: Dahl (1957), Ter Borg (2009).

In popular discourses, religion has frequently appeared in conjunction with the notion of nationalism, which have been treated together as the two major contributors to various social turmoils – “popular insurrections, ethnic persecutions, attempted secessions, and “national”, that is, inter-state conflicts” (Smith, 2000: 791). The relationship between these concepts is complicated⁴, partially because of definitional matters. Although Anthony Smith insists that difficulties “stem from alternative ways of defining the concept of religion” (ibid: 796), finding a working definition of nationalism isn’t any easier. This explains Rogers Brubaker’s observation that because questions of exact relationship between nationalism and religion would be “too blunt to yield interesting answers”, one should be interested instead in “how that relation can fruitfully be studied” (Brubaker, 2012: 2). He proposed four distinct approaches for analysing religion-nationalism nexus, summarized in Table 1, together with similar approaches of Elie Kedourie and Anthony Smith, discussed later in this Thesis:

Rogers Brubaker		Elie Kedourie	Anthony David Smith	
Religion and nationalism are analogous phenomena (functional similarity)	Mode of identity construction	Secular replacement model	Ethnic election	Messianic
	Mode of social organization			(Civilizational struggle → Russia, Serbia)
				Covenant

	Way of framing political claims			(The Chosen People → Northern Ireland)
Religion helps explain nationalism	State identity models (Katechon, Theodul); covenantal culture	Neo-traditionalist model	Ethno-history	
Religion is a substantive part of national identity	Religious and national identities fuse (Orthodox Serbs; Catholic Irish/Croats)	Secular religion	Sacred territory	
Religious nationalism	Jewish nationalism		National sacrifice	

Table 1. Nationalism-religion nexus analysis in writings of R. Brubaker, E. Kedourie and A. D. Smith. Source: Brubaker (2012), Smith (2000).

Brubaker begins with discussing tenets of “treating religion and nationalism as analogous phenomena”: although these are separate notions existing apart from one another, there is still something that makes religion and nationalism similar *in character* (ibid: 3). In Durkheimian terms, religion and nationalism have at least this much in common that their functionality (although not their *substance*) overlaps to the extent that “we may see in nationalism a particular form of “political religion” whose tensions with traditional religions have led to growing politicisation of religion, as well as the messianisation of politics and the elevation of the “people” (Smith, 2000: 792).

Rogers Brubaker distinguishes three particular circumstances where religion and nationalism function similarly. To begin with, both concepts work as a mode of identification, i.e. “ways of identifying oneself and others, of construing sameness and difference, and of situating and placing oneself in relation to others⁵” (Brubaker, 2012: 4). They may also serve as a mode of social organisation, or a “way of framing, channeling and organising social relations”, evident in that the “members of different religious, ethnic or national communities may participate in separate, parallel institutional worlds, which can include school systems, universities, media, political parties, hospitals, nursing homes and institutionalised sporting, cultural and recreational activities as well as churches and ethnic associations” (ibid: 4). Inter-communal relations between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland and the Netherlands, described in the literature as “pillarization” structures, are a good example in this regard⁶. Finally, Brubaker names a political point of view, suggesting that claims made in the name of

religion – or likewise religious groups – can be considered alongside claims made in the name of ethnicity, race or nationhood⁷” (ibid: 5).

Additionally, Brubaker envisions three other modes of analysing the relationship between religion and nationalism. First of all, religion can be seen as lenses which help to better understand the phenomenon of nationalism (ibid). For example, Marlene Laruelle argues that “because it is anchored in Orthodox theology, the Russian reactionary tradition should be read through its religious undertones: those of millenarianism and eschatology⁸” (Laruelle, 2025: 193). Likewise, in the case of Northern Ireland Donald Akenson insists that “one cannot understand Ulster Presbyterian society unless one recognizes that the Old Testament grid is central to the culture”, because otherwise “most of what has gone on in that society makes no sense at all, and seems crazy” (Akenson, 1992: 102).

Further, Brubaker suggests analysing religion “not as something outside nationalism that helps to explain it, but as so deeply imbricated or intertwined with nationalism as to be part of the phenomenon rather than an external explanation of it” (Brubaker, 2012: 8-9). This is evident in cases where boundaries of religious and ethno-national identities fuse together and become analytically inseparable, to an extent one can claim that people are being *called into* their ethno-religious identities⁹. Thus, three communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina are conceptualised through the prism of this double identity: Catholic Croats, Orthodox Serbs and Muslim Bosniaks¹⁰ (ibid: 9). Lastly, Brubaker proposes religious nationalism as a distinct form of nationalism (ibid: 12). In some accounts, religious nationalism is supposed to be a successor of Communism in the post-Cold War era, for it has become “a major force in world politics seeking to wrest the nation from the arms of the secular state” (Smith, 2000: 791).

1.1.2. Nationalism as a new form of religion

We now return to the functional similarity between religion and nationalism described by Anthony Smith (2000) in the following terms: “by distinguishing various levels of analysis – official, popular, and underlying – the nation can be grasped as a “sacred communion of citizens”, a felt and willed communion of all those who assert a particular moral faith and feel an ancestral affinity¹¹” (Smith, 2000: 792). In this regard, ideas of Smith have been developed in close dialogue with those proposed by Elie Kedourie. In his early writings, Kedourie made a clear distinction between religion and nationalism, which he called “a secular doctrine of self-determination” (Smith, 2000: 793). According to him, nationalism “had emerged around 1800 among the Romantic German intellectuals who felt excluded from power in the

regimented bureaucratic absolutist states into which German-speaking lands were then divided” (ibid). Chief among these was Johann Gottfried von Herder, whose ideas on national identity laid the basis for modern understanding of this phenomenon.

Herder would perhaps agree with Rogers Brubaker in that “nationalist ideology demands [...] cultural homogeneity within political units and cultural heterogeneity between them¹²” (Brubaker, 2012: 8). Simultaneously, however, there is one idea of Herder which became so heavily misperceived in the later discourse on nationalism, that a question emerged on the philosopher’s moral stance. Namely, Herder wrote in *Outlines of a Philosophy of a History of Man* (1784) that “the most natural state is *one* nation, with one national character. This it retains for ages, and this is most naturally formed, when it is the object of its native princes [...]. Nothing therefore appears so directly opposite to the end of government as the unnatural enlargement of states, the wild mixture of various races and nations under one sceptre” (Herder, [1784], 1966: 249). This supposed national purity is what made Elie Kedourie to juxtapose a “pre-modern age of traditional interests governed by religion and custom to a modern epoch of secular nationalist “principle” [...], attributing the evils of the modern international order to the revolutionary chiliasm of secular nationalism, which aimed to dethrone God and destroy political order” (Smith, 2000: 792-793). The reality was not so clear-cut, however, because adepts of national secular ideology, in fact, “preached the same pitiless ethic of acosmic brotherly love, reserved the same privileges for the (national) elect, pursued the same quest for purity through terror and derangement, and demanded the same wholesale removal of all barriers between the public and private domains [...]¹³” (ibid: 793).

Anthony Smith worked on the notion of *political religion* when he described elements called “sacred properties of the nation” that are effectively “the sources and properties of the nation conceived as a sacred communion of its members” (ibid: 800-802). The first (and the most important, perhaps) of these properties is the idea of “ethnic election” or otherwise a “sense of constituting a “chosen people” (ibid: 804). This idea is almost omnipresent in various nationalist discourses, for as George Soroka suggested, “arguably, all such entities have at some moment in time exhibited a self-perception of themselves as extraordinary, favored by divine grace and perhaps even imbued with a messianic mission” (Soroka, 2022: 2).

Important is to note that Anthony Smith makes a conceptual distinction between two types of “chosenness”. On the one hand, there is a “messianic” kind, that expresses itself through “the

intense belief that the community has been chosen by the deity for a special religious task or mission, usually to defend the deity's representative or church on earth, or to convert the heathen to the 'one and true' religion, or simply to expand the realm of the religion through territorial acquisitions" (Smith, 2000: 804). This idea is evident for example in the "Moscow the Third Rome" doctrine that emerged in the monastic environment in the 16th century and developed later into an imperial idea of divine predestination, "a kind of belief that Russia is destined to lead and protect universal Orthodoxy and Christian faith" (Klimenko and Yurtaev, 2018: 237). On the other hand, a "covenantal" kind is based in Judeo-Christian tradition and "emphasises the idea of a mutual promise, in which the deity chooses a community and promises it certain benefits if it in turn obeys the laws and statutes of the deity" (Smith, 2000: 804-805). One can see it in the case of Northern Ireland, where the underlying national myth of local Presbyterians is rooted in the Old Testamentic covenantal mentality. Hence, while Presbyterians "did not delude themselves into believing that they were *the* Chosen people", they still "acted under the conviction that they were *a* Chosen people" (Akenson, 1992: 119).

Another important property of a nation is its sacred territory – i.e., a homeland where the most important historical events took place and where the nation's roots are based (Smith, 2000: 806). Yet another "sacred property" is an ethno-history, defined through the national myths which present a story of the "glorious past", highlighting so-called "golden periods" which "are looked on with a special nostalgia and reverence, for they seem to embody the inner or true virtues of the community and fulfil its vision of its own glory"¹⁴ (ibid: 807). Finally, there is a national sacrifice, expressed in the "cult of the glorious dead" that "gives the most tangible expression to the idea of the nation as a sacred communion of the dead, the living and the yet unborn" and serves as the justification for current policy (ibid: 809).

1.1.3. Power modality and the ideal of symphonia

One of the most sophisticated theories of the relationship between religion and a nation-state was formulated by Carl Schmitt, who wrote in *Political Theology* (1922) that "all significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts not only because of their historical development [...], but also because of their systematic structure, the recognition of which is necessary for a sociological consideration of these concepts" (Schmitt, [1922], 2005: 36). Talking about Schmitt and his intellectual legacy one should be particularly careful, because his memory and writings will be forever associated with the fact that he joined Nazi Party in 1933 and sympathised with its ideology. Schmitt's actions of the

Nazi period must not be forgotten, nor forgiven. At the same time, as noted by Willian Rasch, “we do not have to sympathise with Schmitt to benefit from his insights [...]” (Rasch, 2005, cited in Leggs and Vasudevan, 2011: 4). Thus, *fas est ab hoste doceri*.

Schmitt was not the first to theorize on the topic, although his original secularisation thesis was used “to denote the metaphysics of power and launched the modern debate on political theology” (Heith-Stade, 2023: 181). The most prominent historical writings originate from the Byzantine period and derive from patristics¹⁵. Early Church Fathers conceptualised the relation between heavenly and secular power in three possible variations¹⁶. While Eusebius of Caesarea proposed the monistic theory, according to which “imperial power is a reflection of the divine monarchy”, effectively equating “church with empire” (ibid: 179), Gelasius stood by a dualistic theory that “recognizes the divine origin of both spiritual power (*sacerdotium*) and imperial power (*imperium*), but also maintains a strict functional and conceptual distinction between priesthood and emperorship” (ibid). Finally, Augustine envisioned power through the lens of a postlapsarian theory that “views temporal power as a result of original sin and an expression of fallen human nature, which effectively means that temporal power is extraneous to the Church” (ibid). Three are summarized in Table 2:

Author	Eusebius	Gelasius	Augustine
Model/theory	Monist	Dualist	Postlapsarian
Explanation	State power is a reflection of a divine monarchy	Religious power (<i>sacerdotium</i>) and state power (<i>imperium</i>) are two different kinds of power, originating from the same divine source	State power is an engenderment of the fall of Man

Table 2. Modalities of power as envisioned by Eusebius, Gelasius and Augustine.

Source: Heth-Stade (2023)

In a similar way, when the Byzantine Emperor Justinian (482-565) put together his codified system of Roman law called “Corpus Juris Civilis” (CJC)¹⁷, in the preface to the Novel VI he elaborated extensively on the relationship between Church and state, laying the basis to what was later called “symphonia” (gr συμφωνία) or “the system of co-reciprocity” (Leustean, 2008: 422). Justinian wrote:

“[T]he priesthood and the Empire are the two greatest gifts which God, in His infinite clemency, has bestowed upon mortals; the former has reference to Divine matters, the latter presides over and directs human affairs, and both, proceeding from the same principle, adorn the life of mankind; hence nothing should be such a source of care to the emperors as the honor of the priests who constantly pray to God for their salvation” (Novellae Constitutiones, VI, cited in Scott, 1932).

Justinian thus formally acknowledged the fact that spiritual and secular power are two separate phenomena that originate from the same source, which *prima facie* corresponds to the dualist theory of Gelasius. The reality was much more complicated, however, because “in practice the law entrusts the supreme ordinary governance of the Church to imperial power and effectively equates Church and empire” (Heith-Stade, 2023: 180-181) as in the Eusebian monist theory. *Symphonia* has always been aimed at achieving a spiritual completeness of the people through establishing a system where “both church and state use their own laws in order to promote their own purposes and there is no confusion between them”, whereas ideally the state would not “rule itself according to church law nor vice versa. There is no interdependency nor is there a complete separation” (Leustean, 2008: 422-423). The problem has always been, however, that “the demarcation line between church and state remains unclear” (ibid: 423), which has led eventually to abuses of power on both sides.

1.1.4. Church-state relations in modern Russia, Greece, Serbia, and Northern Ireland

Nationalist movements of the 19th century that aimed at achieving popular sovereignty with “the homeland of the nation as a sovereign territory” (Heith-Stade, 2023: 183), changed the nature of church-state relations and turned them away from the ideal of *symphonia*. The fall of Constantinople in 1453 marked the end of the hitherto enacted international system “based on the concept of “Byzantine Oecumene” with its centre in Constantinople” (Klimenko and Yurtaev, 2018: 233). Muscovy began a struggle for the position of Byzantium’s heir and the leader of Orthodox world¹⁸. In order “to support their political aspirations to become the new Christian emperor who would replace the Byzantine emperor” (ibid: 185), its rulers needed a Patriarch. An opportunity occurred at the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1431-1445), which established for a short time a reconciliation of Eastern Churches with Rome under the supreme spiritual authority of the Pope. Muscovite representative – Metropolitan of Kiev and All Rus’ Isidore – was an active supporter of the Union; after returning from Florence and declaring Union with Rome, he was dethroned by Grand Prince Vasily II on accusation of

heresy and the Council of Bishops elected Jonah as the next Metropolitan in 1448, whereas no official recognition from Constantinople was obtained, nor was it asked for¹⁹ (Sergejev and Vsevirov, 2007: 338-340). This is essentially what Carl Schmitt meant when he wrote that “[S]overeign is he who decides on the exception” (Schmitt, [1922], 2005: 5). Although there was a sound theological justification for Isidor’s dethronement (“Greeks’ apostasy”), in fact Muscovy hierarchs acted as sovereigns when deciding on exception: they were acting not in accordance with canon law, but upon their sovereign Will (Shishkov, 2016: 377-379).

The notion of sovereignty became important once again four centuries later when Greece announced the establishment of an autocephalous Greek Orthodox Church, independent of Ecumenical Patriarchate. Greek authorities appealed to ideas proposed by a Swiss jurist Emer de Vattel in *The Law of Nations* (1758), especially to the concept of *ius circa sacra* – a regalist²⁰ idea that “religious communities are bodies of public law” and as such “must be recognized by the sovereign” (Heith-Stade, 2023: 187). Put differently, the sovereign can not recognise any foreign authority on his territory, because that would constitute a violation of his sovereignty in the first place. Thus, Greece needed its *own* sovereign Church independent from Constantinople. The theological justification was more elegant, however: recognising that all bishops are equal in ordination and claiming that ecclesiastic structures such as Metropolitanates and Patriarchates are essentially institutions of *human* law, Greek religious authorities found it natural to adjust Greek ecclesiastic structure to the needs of time, i.e. the context of independent Greek state²¹ (ibid: 189). These arguments are summarized in Table 3:

Logic of autocephaly	Legal reasoning	Case
Sovereign decision	Not the canonical law or church tradition, but the sovereign will	Russia
Ius circa sacra	State sovereignty is absolute and encompasses ecclesiastic matters; regalism	Greece
Concordat	Legalism, contract theory, privilege theory	Serbia

Table 3. Logics of obtaining autocephaly.
Source: Heith-Stade, 2023

Finally, Serbia enacted a third model, that of concordat²². Strictly speaking, Serbian Orthodox Church was established in accordance with the contract theory of concordat model: when the Principality of Serbia was established under the Ottoman patronage (1815), an agreement was reached between Serbian government and Ecumenical Patriarchate on granting *autonomy* to the local Church (ibid: 191). When, following the Congress of Berlin (1878), an independent Serbian state was established, the terms of the agreement were modified and the *autocephaly* was granted (ibid: 192). The Serbian case is important because of a lengthy theological and legal justification provided by Ecumenical Patriarch Joachim III upon granting autocephaly. Essentially, he appealed to the Canon 28 of Chalcedon (451) that granted Constantinople – the New Rome – equal rights with (Old) Rome, because as “the city which is honoured with the Sovereignty and the Senate”, it should bear the same legal status as an old imperial capital (Chalcedonian Canons, [451], 1900, 2023). A precedent was thus made, according to which matters of church-state relations could be decided according to the political need of the day.

In Protestant states, church-state relations developed in a different manner. Here, “Lutheran churches acknowledged the secular authority of the state and accepted the restriction of their own autonomy to purely spiritual matters”, although they “retained a large measure of control of their ecclesiastical affairs” (Aubrey, 1949: 171). Differences are evident between local churches, however. In the United Kingdom, “the Anglican church conceded more power to civil government in ecclesiastical affairs, accepting the king as head of the church and defender of the faith [...]” (ibid: 172). In Northern Ireland, Scottish Presbyterianism was more influential, bypassing the (Anglican) Church of Ireland which “was not in possession of some peculiar ecclesiastical structure which could absorb Scottish Presbyterianism within an episcopal system” (Armstrong, 2006: 1053). It resulted eventually in “a triumph of applied ecclesiology, and particularly of the emergence of the ruling elder, and his principal forum, the congregational session” (ibid: 1069).

1.1.5. Christian teaching on war and peace

One of the intellectual offsprings of Medieval philosophy and theology was a theory of Just War, elaborated in detail in both Western Catholic and Eastern Orthodox traditions. From the very beginning it was “an attempt to condemn the evils of war while accepting that good citizens must sometimes use force to deal with chaos and injustice” (Rowe, 2012: 209). The theory is best known in its Western hypostasis, its roots being laid firstly by Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, and later on developed by Saint Augustine, although roughly speaking “neither of

these two composed a treatise on Just War as such” – rather, “they did write in defence of Christian uses of force to preserve order and justice” (ibid). Augustine derived from a belief in the normalcy of peace: in *De Civitate Dei* he expressed a conviction that “peace is our final good” and that “joy and peace are desired alike of all men” (Augustine, [1610], 1909: 224). From this, he made a further conclusion that “peace is war’s purpose, the scope of all military discipline, and the limit at which all just contentions level. All men seek peace by war, but none seek war by peace” (ibid: 225). What Augustin was really trying to establish is formal criteria for war to be *just*, including “that it be pursued in a just cause, that it be declared by a proper authority, and that the motivation behind it be appropriate” (Rowe, 2012: 209). Thomas Aquinas summed up earlier discussions on the topic, agreeing with Augustine that “those who wage war justly aim at peace, and so they are not opposed to peace except to the evil peace²³” (Summa Theologiae, [1274, 1920], 2017: Secunda Secundae Partis, Q40).

Much less is known about the Orthodox concept of just war and theological tradition behind it, although iconography and patristics suggest that the concept is not absent from Orthodox tradition, contrary to some opinions (Saggau, 2024: 2). In the doctrinal terms, the concept of just war is based primarily on hagiography of Byzantine scholar Constantine-Cyril²⁴ (*Vita Constantini-Cyrilli*), that contains a description of the scholarly dispute between Cyril and a Muslim wiseman in front of the Abbasid court (Stoyanov, 2009: 170). According to the text of *Vita*, a Muslim asked the Philosopher: “[I]f Christ is your God, why do you not do as He commands? For in the Gospels it is written: “Pray for your enemies, do good to them that hate you and persecute you, and unto them that smite you turn your cheek!” (Matthew 5:44), (Luke 6:29). You are not like that but, on the contrary, you sharpen weapons against those who treat you in such a manner” (*Vita Constantini-Cyrilli*, cited in Kantor, 1983: 39). Constantine replied: “God said: “Pray for them which despitefully use you” (Luke 6:28). And He also said: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). We do this for the sake of friends, lest their souls be captured together with their bodies” (ibid). An argument was made for the use of force, based on a conviction that “Christians are obligated to defend their loved ones” (Saggau, 2024: 4; Stoyanov, 2009: 171).

Likewise, “widespread popularity and evolution of a cult of military saints such as St George, St Demetrius of Thessaloniki, St Theodore Therone and St Theodore Stratelates, and their adoption as patrons by the Byzantine military aristocracy” can be indicative of an emerging tradition of righteous warfare in Byzantine canon in the Middle Ages (Stoyanov, 2009: 175;

Appendix 8.2.2). In Orthodox iconography, St Demetrius spearing an enemy has traditionally comprised a popular motif, depicting “a young man on a white horse, who would then lead a host of angels to repel the barbarians [...] from the walls of Thessaloniki²⁵” (Saggau, 2024: 2; see Appendix 8.2.3). In the Russian iconography, “the nearly four-meter-wide Blessed Be the Host of the Heavenly Tsar [rus Благословенно Воинство Небесного Царя], an iconographic masterpiece that commemorates Ivan IV’s 1552 conquest of Kazan” is likewise dedicated to the topic of righteous war (Soroka, 2022: 3; see Appendix 8.2.4).

Teachings of most established Orthodox Churches in this domain typically follow dogmatics laid down during the first Ecumenical Councils. Canon XII of Nicaea (325) talks about men who have initially refused to serve in the military “but afterwards returned, like dogs, to their own vomit”, demanding that “after they have passed the space of three years as hearers, be for ten years prostrators²⁶” (Nicene Canons, [325, 1900], 2023). A more detailed perspective on matters of war and peace is presented in Chapter VIII of the “Bases of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church” (2000), sometimes called “the seminal document dealing with the Church’s view of its place in society, and its relationship to the state” (Soroka, 2022: 5). The document reads explicitly that “war is evil”, because it is a “physical manifestation of the latent illness of humanity” (Bases of the Social Concept, 2000). At the same time, it also says that wars “have accompanied human history since the fall and, according to the Gospel²⁷, will continue to accompany it” (ibid).

Thus wars may sometimes be unavoidable and “while recognising war as evil, the Church does not prohibit her children from participating in hostilities if at stake is the security of their neighbours and the restoration of trampled justice. Then war is considered to be necessary though undesirable but means” (ibid). The Church “calls on believers to protect their native soil if it is threatened, even at the cost of their lives” and treats patriotism as a virtue (ibid). Simultaneously, however, it draws a clear boundary between what is allowed in warfare and what is not, highlighting “activities in which clergy and church bodies cannot cooperate with the state, the most pertinent being the conduct of a civil war or an offensive external conflict” (Soroka, 2022: 5-6).

Church’s reasoning on the matter of war is at least partially explained by Carl Schmitt in *The Concept of the Political* (1932), where he noted that the enemy is not “merely any competitor or just any partner of a conflict in general. He is also not a private adversary whom one hates

[*imicus/ἐχθρός*]” but “enemy exists only when, at least potentially, one fighting collectivity of people confronts a similar collectivity”, thus he is “solely the public enemy [*hostis/πολέμιος*]” (Schmitt, [1932], 1996: 28). Important is to note that in the Biblical verse “Love your enemies” (Matt 5:44)²⁸, the word *imicus/ἐχθρός* is used, thus “no mention is made of the political enemy” (ibid). Schmitt concludes from here that the Church should call for love towards our *personal* enemies and “it certainly doesn't mean that one should love and support the enemies of one's own people” (ibid).

1.2. Religion-geography nexus

1.2.1. Religion, geography, and ontological (in)security

Religion and geography are rarely thought of as fundamentally similar notions²⁹, mainly because of a supposed distinction between their primary objects of interest: while geography encompasses practices of “Earth-writing”, religion – on the contrary – could be perceived as “the ultimate denial of the significance of earthly distinctions” (Dijkink, 2006: 192). Yet both disciplines operate on the same ontological ground: they derive from the human capacity to transcend, i.e. “to go beyond what is given in the here and now” in terms of time and space and serve as an instrument to mediate anxiety caused by this capacity in the first place (Ter Borg, 2008: 231). Because human beings are endowed by Nature with the imagination which “raises them above their biological habitus”, they can “imagine something that is different from what there actually is³⁰” (ibid: 231-233). This ability is not without consequences: while it may be evolutionary useful, increasing our chances – as a species – for survival through stronger identification with other humans (sociality) and the ability to plan the future, transcendence also has its objective limitations. Not being able to stop the process on command, people understand the ultimate finiteness of their lives and inevitability of death (Ter Borg, 2008: 233-234; Ter Borg, 2009: 197).

Constant reflection on the human condition can lead to anxiety and social paralysis, because of the profound feeling of ontological insecurity which it generates. Although in slightly different terms, this phenomenon was observed already by Thomas Hobbes: in *The Leviathan* (1651) he wrote that “it is peculiar to the nature of Man, to be inquisitive into the Causes of the Events they see” (Hobbes, [1651], 1909: 81). Thus, all observable phenomena necessarily have their causes, and when no objective cause is evident, Man has to suppose it. This creates anxiety, because “it is impossible for a man, who continually endeavoureth to secure himself

against the evill he feares, and procure the good he desireth, not to be in a perpetuall solicitude of the time to come³¹” (ibid: 82, *orthography as in original*).

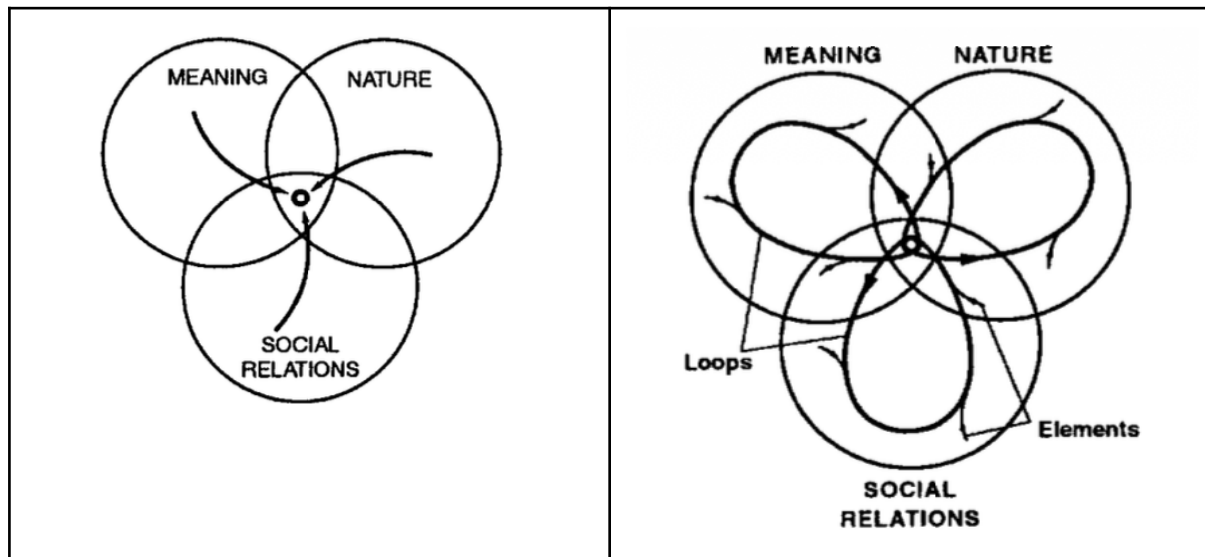
As noted by Jennifer Mitzen, “individuals value their sense of personal continuity, because it underwrites their capacity for agency” (Mitzen, 2006: 344). Thus, the ontological security, conceptualised as “the need to experience oneself as a whole, continuous person in time – as being rather than constantly changing – in order to realize a sense of agency” (Giddens, 1991, cited in Mitzen, 2006: 342), that is achievable only through stable cognitive environment, is a fundamental precondition for person to know exactly “how to get by in the world” and to correlate ends with means and finally to act upon those ends (ibid: 342-345). One achieves ontological security by establishing routines – “internally programmed cognitive and behavioral responses to information or stimuli” – or otherwise “anchors” (ibid: 346). Roughly speaking, it is ontological security (and not religion *per se*) that *animalia transcendentia* are looking for “to feel that their worldview, the meanings they attach to the world around them, will hold” (Ter Borg, 2009: 198; see also Nyroos, 2001: 138).

1.2.2. Space, place, and territorial order

While in the case of religion one deals primarily with the *temporal* form of transcendence, human imagination also gives basis to *spatial* transcendence, leading to what Robert Sack calls “the basic geographic problematic”: “humans are constitutionally incapable of accepting reality as it is and so we create places to change it according to ideas about what we think reality ought to be” (Sack, 2001: 107). Acting upon our imagination we construct new places by delimiting territory and imposing rules³², weaving together elements of nature, meaning and social relations and “attempting to control what takes place” (ibid: 108)³³. Construction of territory is a precondition for the spatial order: because “there is nothing inherent to space that allows it to act as a ground for order: rather, space and order are simultaneously produced through subjective political acts” it necessarily follows that “all rights, all laws are applicable only to specific “territorial situations” and can only be suspended, with respect to such specific “situations”, by a sovereign exception”³⁴ (Minca, 2011: 168-169).

This intimate connection between land and law is evident in “a process of installing a right of ownership upon the productive soil, i.e. Land as a territory belonging to someone who is able to draw resources from it” (Rogers, 2011: 183), which was theorised by John Locke in *Two Treatises on Government* (1689). Locke noted that it was labour which gave great value to

things and was a basis for land ownership: “[...] supposing the world given, as it was, to the children of men in common, we see how labour could make men distinct titles to several parcels of it, for their private uses; wherein there could be no doubt of right, no room for quarrel” (Locke, [1689], 2003: 117). Here, labor lays the basis for a legal order, supposed that the natural environment, meaning and social relations are interwoven together, as in Graph 2:



*Graph 2. Place-making through weaving of elements of meaning, nature and social relations.
A metaphor of loop emphasises the interweaving effect.
Source: Sack, 2001: 108-109.*

It appears eventually that religion and geography are both a means for achieving ontological security; they “create new dimensions of reality through language and symbolism that fulfils human beings’ profound need for order” (Nyroos, 2001: 138). In our attempt to cope with anxiety caused by transcendence humans attach themselves to symbols and practices “that make them feel agentic” (Mitzen, 2006: 347). It is the creation of holy places where religion and geography intertwine most explicitly.

1.2.3. Holy land, geopiety, and territorialisation of memory

By now it is clear that “as geographical beings we are place-makers, and places are essential to our projects” (Sack, 2001: 111). Thus there exists a certain tension between a Nature-given space – understood as “the system of relations that the natural sciences describe and through which our places and the flows they create occur and interact” – and specifically constructed places, whereas a priority is frequently given to the social aspect of this dichotomy, to the detriment of the spatial one (ibid: 111-112). This tense relationship was noted already by Carl

Schmitt, who conceptualised space as “a fundamental measure of the world and something out there; the potential realm of the political”, insisting that Man “has a specific awareness of his own space, since different forms of life correspond to equally different spaces” (Minca, 2011: 167, 175). For Schmitt, the problem was a missing theory of space which no discipline in his opinion was able to produce, although a general idea of space emerged in the European scientific discourse already during the Enlightenment, when “humankind was capable of imagining empty space” (ibid: 176). Humans create places by imposing rules and attributing it a special meaning that can entail religious connotations, thus making some places holy³⁵.

The first scholar to theorize on the intimate connection between geography and religion was John Kirtland Wright, who introduced the term “geopiety” to explain such religious practices as worshiping natural objects as deities (Nyroos, 2001: 138). Wright understood geopiety as “the belief and worship of powers behind nature or the human environment” (Dijkink, 2006: 193). The epistemological difficulty of Wright’s term, however, is the fact that “in terms of geopiety there is no sharp distinction between what has been called the “sacred dimension of nationalism” and the attachment to a place that prides itself on Special Providence” (ibid: 194). Indeed, the same logic that enables humans to create “holy places” also gives basis to various “sacred territories” which can be perceived in terms of a “historic landscape invested with sacred qualities as the “cradle” of the nation” to be utilised in nationalist discourse” (Smith, 2000: 806). In collective imagination some territories become “sacred” mainly through two processes working simultaneously: on the one hand there is “territorialisation of memory”, while on the other hand one can talk about “historisation of natural setting”, that together produce a particular kind of ethnospace, “in which the ethnies or ethnic community becomes part of “its” landscape and habitat” (ibid).

Territorialisation of memory implies the “naturalisation of ethno-history”, when “the site of major battles and gatherings, or the terrain of ancestral resting-places and tombs of founding fathers, saints and sages, as well as of fallen patriot-heroes, or simply land which is sanctified by the long residence of “our kin” or our former (ancient, medieval) state” is attributed a special meaning and is brought to the level of “national cradle³⁶” (ibid). Today one can find plenty of examples when particular territories are framed as “sacred”. In his Crimean speech of 2014, dedicated to the annexation of peninsula, President Putin mentioned that “everything in Crimea speaks of our shared history and pride. This is the location of ancient Khersones, where Prince Vladimir was baptised. The graves of Russian soldiers whose bravery brought

Crimea into the Russian Empire are also in Crimea [...]” (Putin, 2014). Here, “thickening” of place has happened, aimed “to create a sense of rootedness through mythology” that Sack supposes to be “characteristic of modern nationalism and irredentism” (Sack, 2001: 114-115). Likewise, natural setting becomes “historicised”, implying that “nature comes to be seen as intrinsic to the community’s peculiar history and development” (Smith, 2000: 806).

1.3. Geopolitics of the sacred

1.3.1. From traditional to critical geopolitics

Reflecting on the essence of geopolitical knowledge, Geaóid Ó Tuathail and John Agnew reached a conclusion that “in conventional academic understanding geopolitics concerns the geography of international politics, particularly the relationship between the physical environment [...] and the conduct of foreign policy” (Ó Tuathail and Agnew, 1992: 191). The term “geopolitics” itself was coined by a Swedish social scientist Rudolf Kjellen in 1899; its epistemology reflected a profound positivist belief in neutrality and strict impartiality of the discipline: “by its own understandings and terms, geopolitics is taken to be a domain of hard truths, material realities and irrepressible natural facts” (ibid: 192).

Belief in the possibility of achieving objective knowledge based exclusively on natural laws was evident also in that “when the word *Geopolitik* was invented those who used it believed in the hand of nature rather than in the hand of God” (Dijkink, 2006: 197). While treating the natural environment in deterministic terms, as exercising the greatest influence on states’ destiny, geopolitical thinkers of that period equated geography with nature, conceptualising it as a given, thus rejecting the very etymology of the term “geography” which implies rather a different approach: “geography is an inescapably social and political geo-graphing, an “earth writing” (Ó Tuathail, 1999: 109). This note gives basis for substantial critique of the hitherto hegemonic understanding of geopolitics, claiming it instead to be “a highly ideological and deeply politicized form of analysis” that some scholars call a “great irony” (Ó Tuathail and Agnew, 1992: 192). Such critique finds expression mainly in the form of critical geopolitics.

Critical geopolitics distances itself from “orthodox” geopolitics of Friedrich Ratzel, Rudolf Kjellen, Halford Mackinder, Karl Haushofer and others in that it criticises the basic idea underlying their writings – that of “the [neutral] production of knowledge to aid the practice of statecraft and further the power of the state”, and says out loud that “geography is never a natural, non-discursive phenomenon which is separate from ideology and outside politics”

(ibid). Being aware of power relations that emanate from certain representations of territory, critical geopolitics “strives to expose this power politics to scrutiny and public debate in the name of deepening democratic politics” (Ó Tuathail, 1999: 108). For Gertjan Dijkink, “the construction of “self” versus “the other” is the major issue for critical geopolitics; he suggests that it “should be responsive to religious visions of world order” (Dijkink, 2006: 193). In this regard he supports the position of Ó Tuathail, in whose opinion critical geopolitics – while seeking to influence politics in the same manner as “orthodox” geopolitics does – possesses, nevertheless, “a much richer understanding of the problematic of “geopolitics” and “of the problems facing states in conditions of advanced modernity” (Ó Tuathail, 1999: 109)³⁷.

1.3.2. Geopolitics, religion, and a spatial order

As was briefly mentioned above, geopolitics is rarely addressed explicitly through the lens of religion, to the degree that in some accounts “voices from the world of Geopolitics hardly ever devoted a speech or chapter to religion” (Dijkink, 2006: 193). This unfortunate state of affairs is indeed regrettable: not only does it dismiss rich historical evidence of what might be called “fusion” between geopolitics and religion, as for example in the Middle Ages, when “Popes established armies and kings pretended to be the chosen treasurers of God on Earth” (ibid); it also contradicts the ontology of geopolitics. According to Ó Tuathail, geopolitics can indeed be conceptualized as “a form of faith, a belief that there is a secret substratum and/or a permanent set of conflicts and interests that accounts for the course of world politics”³⁸ (Ó Tuathail, 1999: 109). In this regard geopolitics is necessarily mythic, because “it promises uncanny clarity and insight in a complex world. It actively closes down an openness to the geographical diversity of the world and represses questioning and difference” (ibid: 113).

Geopolitics and religion amalgamated in a rather distinctive period of European history, that of *respublica Christiana* – a certain type of spatial order based on “the supposed authority of the church” which we shall call *potestas spiritualis* (Rogers, 2011: 185). Carl Schmitt called the idea of a particular spatial order “nomos”, which he understood “as referring to something both more concrete, and transcendental, than the law”, thus going back to its original Greek etymology, in describing nomos as being “prior to every legal, economic, and social order” (Legg and Vasudevan, 2011: 2). While the *nomos* of the Medieval *respublica Christiana* was based on the distinction between Christian and non-Christian lands³⁹, subsequent historical events (the Reformation and the Thirty-Years’ War) collapsed it, leading to “territorialisation and pluralisation of religion entailed by the process of confessionalisation and codified in

settlements such as the 1555 Peace of Augsburg and the 1648 Peace of Westphalia” that “institutionalised and legitimated this distinctive pattern” (Brubaker, 2012: 8).

Likewise, “the understanding of geography changed together with the definition of religion: from a “medieval” representation of a divine order of vertical and hierarchic organisation of places to a “modern” representation of horizontal organisation of coexistent sovereign places of so-called “nation-states”⁴⁰ (Nyroos, 2001: 138). “Nationalisation” of religion appeared as a reaction of rulers to the “explicit concern with the religious homogeneity of their subjects”: they “were very much interested in the culture of their subjects, though not in their language” (Brubaker, 2012: 8). It also marked a shift towards a new *nomos* – *Jus Publicum Europaeum* – “through the centralisation of administrative authority in the heads of state” which “allowed the nation-state as a personalised entity to lay claim to given territory, impose an order of internal appropriations that suited their needs and forged a new form of state-based authority divorced from spiritual right to the collective rights of a community” (Rogers, 2011: 186).

1.3.3. Nikolay Danilevsky and the civilizational approach to spatial order

For a long time the word “civilization” was juxtaposed to “barbarity” and separated civilised European polities from non-white and non-Christian savages (Hale and Laruelle, 2021: 598). The civilizational discourse was thus based on the infamous “standard of civilization” which justified differences in legal treatment of peoples around the world. It was later used in plural, denoting “loosely coupled, internally differentiated, elite-centered social systems that are integrated into a global context” that comprised the basis for civilizational analysis of world politics interested in “trans-civilizational engagements, inter-civilizational encounters, and civilizational clashes” (Katzenstein, 2010: 1-5). Here, language and religion were “widely acknowledged as a central characteristic of civilizational complexes” (ibid: 4). Together, language and religion were perceived as “two most socially and politically consequential domains of cultural difference in the modern world”, they were “basic sources and forms of social, cultural, and political identification” (Brubaker, 2013: 2-3).

There are two major approaches in civilizational tradition – dispositional and discursive. For the dispositional tradition “civilizations exist objectively in the real world as coherent cultural complexes”, the discursive tradition, on the contrary, insists that “they exist as intersubjective or collective beliefs that are mobilized politically to create, maintain, or shift socially significant boundaries” (ibid: 6). Samuel Huntington’s *The Clash of Civilizations* (1996) is an

example of dispositional analysis⁴¹, but he was not the first to focus academic attention on civilizational distinctiveness. In 1869, Russian philosopher Nikolay Danilevsky presented in his *Russia and Europe* (1869) a theory of distinct “historic-cultural types”⁴².

Danilevsky was convinced that civilizations can be studied in a positivist manner – through discovering the objective “laws of historic development”⁴³. Being evidently inspired by early Slavophiles⁴⁴, he was at the same time “the first to systematically challenge the West-centred, universalist thinking and to advocate a particularistic alternative” (Tsygankov, 2017: 572). Interestingly, the core of Danilevsky’s theory comprised ideas of German intellectuals – Georg Hegel and Johan Gottfried von Herder. From the Hegelian philosophy he borrowed the idea of national *psyche*, a distinctive national character underlying each civilization, “spiritual nature of the people” that pops up “under the influence of different external conditions” to which every civilization is exposed throughout its lifespan (Danilevsky, [1869], 2025: 118)⁴⁵. Simultaneously, Herder proposed an idea that “cultures should remain themselves in their incommensurability, universalism emerges out of concrete diversity of the world rather than from the abstraction of Man as being everywhere the same” (Laruelle, 2025: 152-153).

Danilevsky envisioned the creation of the “All-Slav Union” under political control of Russia, later discussed in the context of both Russian and Serbian Worlds. In this regard his writings resembled Carl Schmitt: not only was Danilevsky’s Union similar to Schmitt’s *Großraum* – i.e., a territory where “dominant powers exercise influence, but do not seek to incorporate the land as with previous colonisation” (Elden, 2011: 99), he also prognosed a great war between Romano-German and Slavic worlds that he considered inevitable and necessary, although not necessarily desirable⁴⁶: “[I]f storms and thunder are necessary in the physical order of Nature, then no less necessary are direct clashes of peoples” (Danilevsky, [1869], 2025: 354).

1.4. Discourse and discourse theory

1.4.1. What is a discourse? Three generations of discourse analysis

In academic literature, the term “discourse” remains contested with many possible definitions being available⁴⁷. In the most general sense, discourse “entails the representational practices through which meanings are generated”; it can also be conceptualised as “a system producing a set of statements and practices that, by entering into institutions and appearing like normal, constructs the reality of its subjects and maintains a certain degree of regularity in a set of social relations” (Dunn and Newmann, 2016: 2-4). Jennifer Milliken (1999) in turn highlights

three ontological premises of discourse theory that she calls “commitments” of discourse scholars: (1) discourses are systems of signification; (2) they are productive in a sense they “make intelligible some ways of being in, and acting towards, the world, and of operationalizing a particular “regime of truth” while excluding other possible modes of identity and action”; and (3) hegemonic discourses are “connected to implementing practices and ways of making these intelligible and legitimate” (Milliken, 1999: 229-230).

What this conceptualisation implies, eventually, is that discourse defines a particular meaning of social world through the medium of language⁴⁸, it “refers to the patterns for how a certain phenomenon tends to be talked and written about at a particular time in a particular context or institution” (Bergström et al, 2017: 209). “Meaning” is no less complicated term: in the most basic terms meaning-making implies existence of three elements: physical objects, general ideas of those objects comprising a kind of “mental map” and signs that express those ideas. Simultaneously, however, “meaning is not in the object or person or thing, nor is it in the word”, rather it emerges through the means of representation⁴⁹ – “the link between concepts and language which enables us to refer to either the “real” world of objects, people or events, or indeed to imaginary worlds of fictional objects, people and events” (Hall, 1997: 17, 21). Thus, representation implies the cooperation between conceptual and linguistic systems which is possible through language⁵⁰, defined as “a series of collective codes and conventions through which things are given meaning and endowed with particular identities” (Hansen 2006, cited in Dunn and Newmann, 2016: 2).

This explains a particular importance of language for discourse theory. Indeed, Ferdinand de Saussure saw discourse simply as “any linguistic sequence more extended than the sentence”, while Michel Foucault believed that the statement (fr. *énoncé*)⁵¹ is a unit of discourse (Laclau, [1993], 2007: 542-544). Both scholars belong to the so-called “first generation” of discourse analysis that took discourse in the narrowest sense, as a “cohesive chunk of written or spoken language” (Bergström et al, 2017: 209). This conceptualisation was broadened by the “second generation” of analysts “to include linguistic aspects of social practice as well”, and stretched yet further by the “third generation”, where “discourses include all social phenomena” (ibid).

1.4.2. ReliGEOpolitics as discourse

As was briefly discussed earlier, religiopolitics implies the construction of places with sacred meaning, an active practice of Earth-writing that can be seen as a form of discourse. Critical

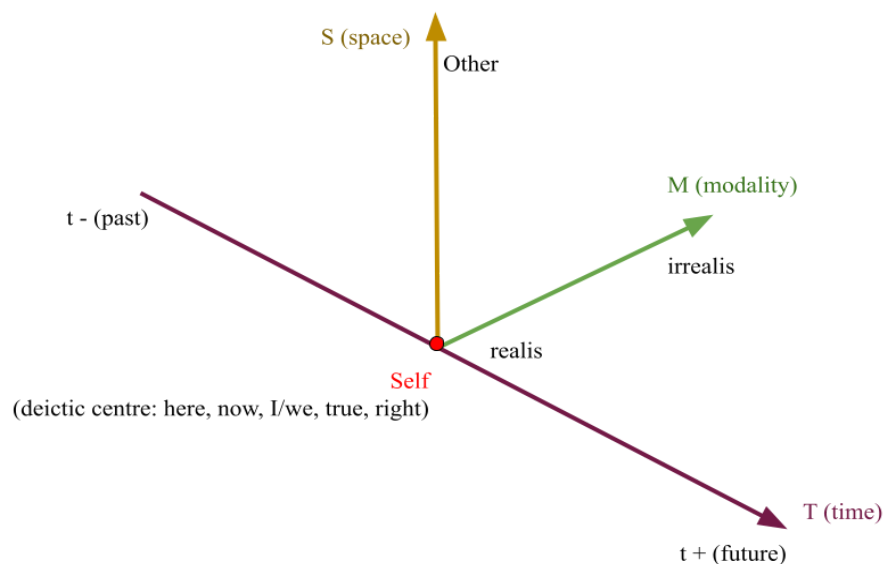
geopolitics thus insists that “geography is a social and historical discourse which is always intimately bound up with questions of politics and ideology” (Ó Tuathail and Agnew, 1992: 192). It understands discourse in a specific way, as “sets of capabilities people have, as sets of socio-cultural resources used by people in the construction of meaning about their world and their activities”, stressing that discourse is not a “simply speech or written statements, but the rules by which verbal speech and written statements are made meaningful” (ibid: 192-193).

This notion has two major implications: on the one hand, it stresses the constitutive function of language, i.e. “the view that language represents a given reality is rejected, the formative and constitutive side of language is emphasized: language as a perspective on the world” (Bergström et al, 2017: 210). On the other hand, it agrees with what Ernesto Laclau called “the basic hypothesis of discursive approach”, namely that “the very possibility of perception, thought and action depends on the structuration of a certain meaningful field which pre-exists any factual immediacy” – hence, “the way in which the speaker put sentences together [is] largely determined by the way in which institutions are structured, by what is “sayable” in some contexts, etc” (Laclau, [1993], 2007: 541-543)⁵². Taken together, these two propositions refute the belief of “orthodox” geopolitics in a strict and law-like quality of the discipline, for “geography is not a fixed substratum as some claim but an historical and social form of knowledge about the earth” (Ó Tuathail, 1999: 109).

The notion of “sayable” is likewise not a neutral description. If “discourses include a number of preconceived notions regarding how we view the world [...]”, there should be something outside the established discourse which remains excluded (Bergström et al, 2017: 212). Thus one can claim that because discourse is “a system of rules that legitimizes certain knowledge but not other knowledge and that indicates who has the right to express themselves with authority” (ibid), the question of knowledge-power nexus is of critical importance. One has to keep in mind that “knowledge is always a situated knowledge, articulating the perspective of certain cultures and subjects while marginalizing that of others” (Ó Tuathail, 1999: 108). This is not mere figure of speech, however, but an epistemological commitment⁵³. Lary Nyroos emphasised the importance of understanding “the functioning of geographical knowledge not as an innocent body of knowledge and learning, but as an ensemble of technologies of power concerned with the production of (sacral) territorial space” (Nyroos, 2001: 140).

1.4.3. Analytical models of discourse. Proximization theory

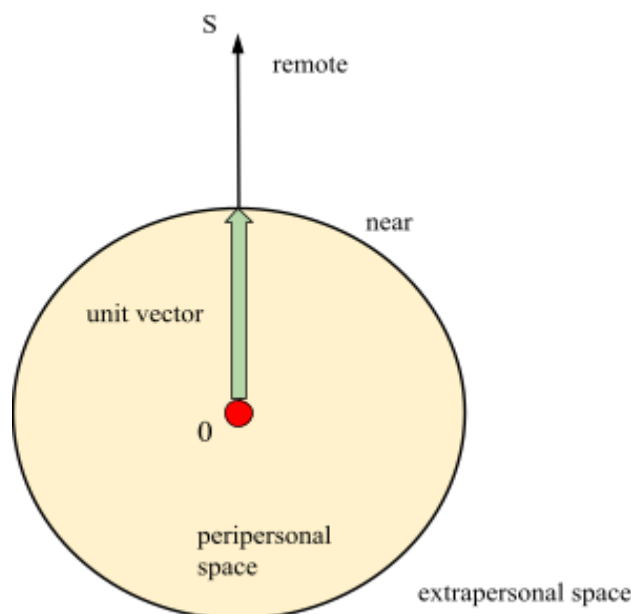
Geography and discourse share in common more than just the notion of meaning-making and constructedness of social reality. Both postulate the “hypothesis that we can represent some important elements of discourse by means of a Cartesian coordinate system” (Chilton, 2005: 86). The hypothesis implies that people exist as rational beings in a three-dimensional space which is the basis for our understanding of the surrounding world. In terms of cognition, processing discourse implies that “people “position” other entities in their “world” by “positioning” these entities in relation to themselves along [...] three axes, space, time and modality” (Chilton, 2004: 57-58). Positioning of objects in space is what Paul Chilton calls “deixis” – i.e., a linguistic practice performed mainly by pronouns (*we*, *our*) and adverbials (*when?* → *now*; *where?* → *here*) (ibid: 56). Logic of deixis is developed further in Discourse Space Theory (DST) that describes “an abstract three-dimensional space in which we use geometric vectors to represent not only spatial locations but also movements, and, what is more important and also more speculative, to represent semantic configurations that can be viewed as derived from spatial concepts” (Chilton, 2005: 79-80). Graph 3 illustrates the case:



Graph 3. Discourse Space Theory (DST).
Source: Chilton, 2004: 58.

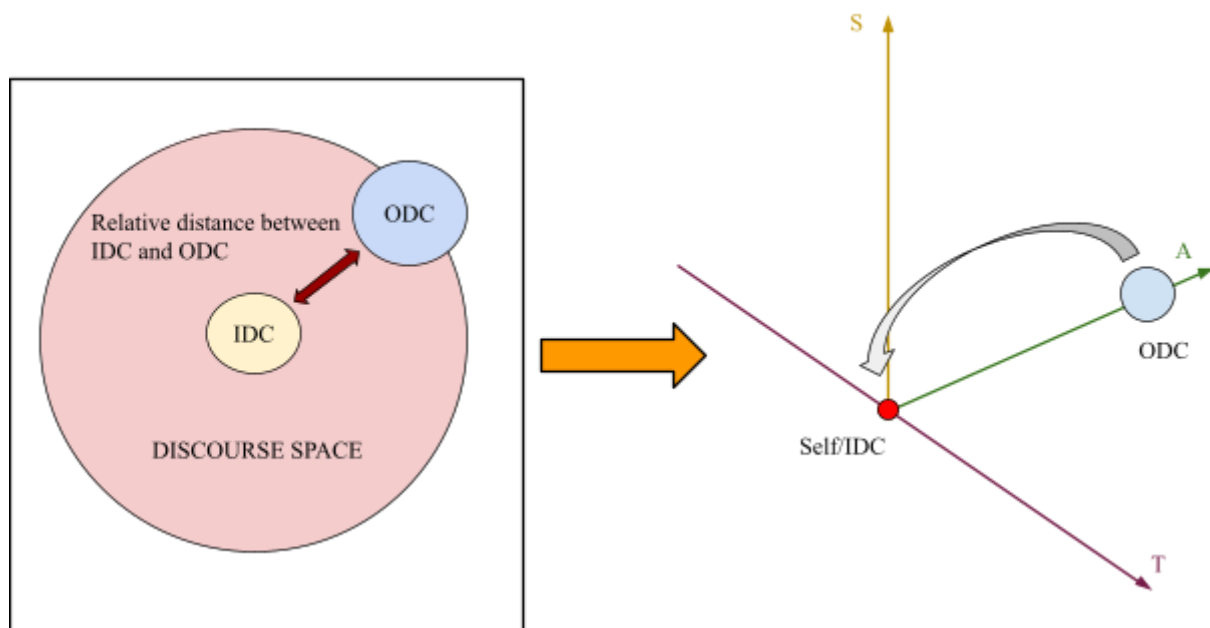
The model consists of three dimensions: temporal axis runs from the past (t-) into the future (t+), spatial axis begins from “here” (according to the Self⁵⁴, i.e. *speaker*) and approaches the “Other”, while modal axis reflects “what seems to be the case for all utterances, namely that speakers entertain meta-representations and give them a valuation in terms of their subjective truth value” (Chilton, 2005: 89)⁵⁵. Modal axis marks the continuum from “what is most real for the speaker” – *realis* – to “maximally distal modal space that corresponds to what is most unreal for the speaker” – *irrealis*⁵⁶ (ibid: 90). At the intersection of axes, a speaker (the Self)⁵⁷ is located. Speaker’s position is defined with such deictic expressions as “I”, “here”, “now”, “true”, “right” (ibid). It is not a coincidence that “sacred dimensions of nationalism” enlisted by Smith can be applied to Chilton’s model: ethno-history corresponds here to the temporal axis, sacred territory – to the spatial one, while the notions of “ethnic election” and “national sacrifice” explain why something is considered “true” and “right” (Smith, 2000: 807-809).

In order to position objects in the discourse space one has to operate with vectors. Those are “mathematical objects that have (a) magnitude (i.e., length) and (b) direction” (Chilton, 2005: 82). Vectors help to note a relative distance and the direction of movement, whereas “the fundamental distance can be defined in terms of peripersonal space, the extent of which we can take as a unit vector in the discourse space” (ibid: 87). This is shown in Graph 4:



Graph 4. Unit vector, peri- and extrapersonal spaces. Note: “0” stands for the Self.
Source: Chilton, 2005: 87

In political discourse⁵⁸ a relative distance from the Speaker is important in ascribing authority by means of proximization – “a discursive strategy of presenting physically and temporally distant events and states of affairs as increasingly and negatively consequential to the speaker and her addressee” (Cap, 2015: 314). In a given discourse space, there is always present the “inside-deictic-center” (IDC) – conceptualised as the Speaker and her addressee and located in the center of discourse space – and the “outside-deictic-center” (ODC), positioned on the periphery of the DS (ibid: 315). This logic is illustrated in Graph 5:

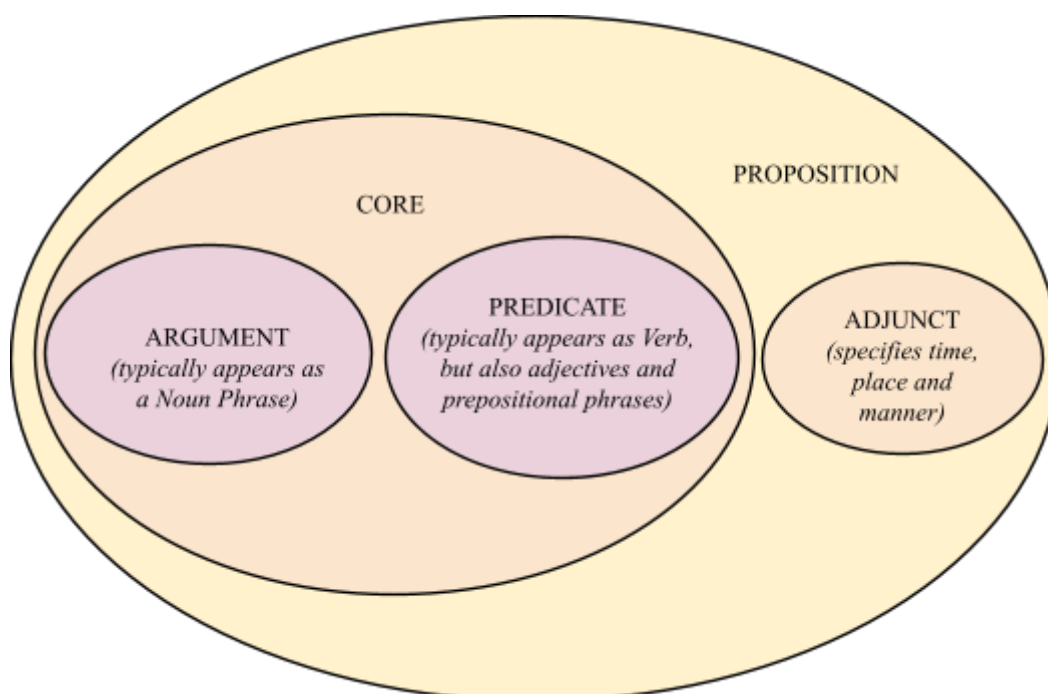


Graph 5. Aspects of proximization in 2D and 3D projections.
Source: Cap, 2005

Because there are three axes in the DST model, there are correspondingly three types of proximization: (1) spatial proximization presents the ODC as physically near, (2) temporal proximization “is a forced construal of the envisaged conflict [between IDC and ODC] as not only imminent, but also momentous, historic and thus needing immediate response and unique preventive measures” and (3) axiological proximization⁵⁹ “is construal of a gathering ideological clash between the “home values” of the DS central entities (IDCs) and the alien and antagonistic (ODC) values” (Cap, 2015: 315).

The goal of proximization is legitimization of certain policies: “addressees tend to approve the speaker’s pre-emptive actions against the ODC threat if they construe such a threat as personally consequential” (Cap, 2010: 393). Although there are differences as to particular

linguistic mechanisms used to perform proximization, Noun Phrases (NPs) and Verb Phrases (VPs) are the most frequently used elements. In linguistics, “the term “noun phrase” has been used to describe any phrase consisting of a noun as its central element (“head”) and capable of functioning as an argument in a sentence” (Payne, 2006: 712). In a verb phrase, the “head” is a verb which can be accompanied by other lexical items, except for the Subject; a VP and a subject-NP together form a sentence (Karlsson, 1998: 166). Arguments and predicates are two functional elements of propositions: “arguments prototypically appear as noun phrases, predicates as verbs [...]” (Chilton, 2004: 53). Together they form a core of any proposition, to which adjuncts can be also added, specifying “such things as location, time and manner” (ibid). This logic is illustrated in Graph 6:



Graph 6. Basic structure of a proposition.
Source: Chilton, 2004: 53.

1.5. Introduction into “worlds”

1.5.1. Russian World and Holy Rus’

Back in 2014 Mikhail Suslov claimed that “in contemporary Russia geographical imagination provides a more powerful source of self-identification than history” due to a “spatial anxiety caused by the loss of empire” (Suslov, 2014: 81). Russian geographical imagination is based on two interrelated concepts: Russian World (rus *Русский Мир*) and Holy Rus’ (rus *Святая*

Ручь). The idea of Russian World emerged as a result of collaboration between prominent Russian intellectuals in the 1990s: methodologists⁶⁰, “new conservatives” and the Foundation for Effective Politics (Suslov, 2018: 333-334). Trying to re-conceptualise relations between Russians inside Russia and numerous co-ethnics across the vast post-Soviet space, they proposed a couple of theoretical models, from the earlier notions of “Russian Archipelago” of Sergei Gradirovsky to the later concept of “solar system” – with the Russian Federation being positioned in the centre – theorised by Iurii Krupnov and Iurii Gromyko (ibid: 335-338).

Another vision was proposed in 1993 by Mikhail Gefter: inspired by the writings of Samuel Huntington, Gefter believed the Russian World to be a part of what he called “World of Worlds” composed of “trans- and post-national formations staying in tight communicative relations with each other, but keeping irreducible differences in culture, politics, economics and morals” (Gefter and Pavlovsky, 2015, cited in Suslov, 2018: 341-342). Gefter insisted that “countries would organize themselves as an international community of friendly and culturally fraternal states” inside those civilizational formations (ibid). His ideas resemble Nikolai Danilevsky, who likewise “attempted to essentialize, ontologize, and define stable civilizational “worlds” (Rohdewald, 2025: 110-111).

The relationship between notions of Russian World and Holy Rus’ is blurred. While on the one hand George Soroka insists that they are essentially synonymous and the choice depends on the audience that one addresses⁶¹ (Soroka, 2022: 8), Mikhail Suslov makes a distinction between the two. In his opinion, Holy Rus’ “emerges on the area, where territorially bounded notion of “canonical territory”⁶² and culturally bounded notion of the “Russian world” overlap” (Suslov, 2014: 86). Yet for Oleksandr Zabirko, “the concept of Holy Rus’ has no clear geographical or ethnic boundaries but rather illustrates a pre-modern, “ecclesiastic” identity of belonging to the community of true Christian believers” (Zabirko, 2022: 2).

The first documented instance of mentioning the Holy Rus’ ostensibly originates from letters of Prince Andrey Kurbsky⁶³ to Tsar Ivan IV, where Kurbsky “counterposes the Tsar to Holy Rus’ because his violent deeds and cruelty bring shame on “the holy Russian land” (ibid: 3). In Suslov’s opinion, historical circumstances of Kurbsky’s epistles imply “entrenched anti-state overtones”, where Holy Rus’ “acquired distinctive dissident connotations as an “opposite to the myth of the ruler” (Suslov, 2014: 84-85). He insists further that it was exactly in this capacity that Slavophiles used the concept: “the transcendental ideal to follow, and a

metaphor associated with relics deposited in Russian monasteries and churches” (ibid). Perception of Holy Rus’ as “rural area, inhabited by traditional peasant communities” results from “sacralization of a geographical space” and etymological similarity between the words “peasant” (крестьянин) and “Christian” (христианин) in Russian (Zabirko, 2022: 9). Holy Rus’ as “a popular idea, detached from any kind of state politics, let alone imperialism” was generously reflected in Russian culture and art (see Appendix 8.2.5).

Holy Rus’ is supposedly “held together by the common system of values and cultural foundations, implanted in “Kievan font” by St Vladimir”, including the belief “that spiritual dominates over material, that there is the good and the evil, and everybody has to choose between the two with no intermediate solution available” (Suslov, 2014: 87). “Kievan font” is perceived as the source of spiritual unity of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus⁶⁴. Symbolically, it resembles the Holy Trinity with “the most prominent reply to this state of affairs ascribed to archimandrite Lavrentii of Chernigov, who is often quoted as saying: “[A]s it is impossible to separate the Holy Trinity of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit – they are the One God, so it is [equally] impossible to separate Russia, Ukraine and Belarus – together they are Holy Rus’⁶⁵” (Zabirko, 2022: 18).

Baptism of Rus’ in 988 by Prince Vladimir⁶⁶ is perceived in terms of a “civilizational choice” explaining a messianic predestination of Russia, based on the notions of Katechon and Third Rome. The idea of Katechon (gr *ὁ κατέχων* – the restrainer, rus *удерживающий*) originates from the Second Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians⁶⁷ and describes the power that prevents Antichrist from taking over God’s creation. In Byzantine tradition, especially the writings of John Chrysostom, Paul’s words were interpreted as referring “to the Emperor and his power that withholds and protects the world⁶⁸” (Engström, 2014: 363). In geopolitical writings, the notion of Katechon was used by Carl Schmitt, in whose opinion “Empire” was “the historical power to restrain the appearance of the Antichrist and the end of the present eon; it was the power that withholds⁶⁹ [...]” (Schmitt, [1950], 2006: 59). In Russia, Aleksandr Dugin’s 1997 article “Katechon and Revolution” laid bases for a new geopolitical discourse where “Russia sees itself not so much as an empire that holds the power of chaos beyond the borders of the world by its inner order, but rather as a military force that resists a metaphysical enemy, sent by the Antichrist” (Engström, 2014: 365-367). In this regard Russian Church has taken the concept of Nuclear Orthodoxy (*атомное православие*)⁷⁰, proposed by Dmitry Adamsky with its central idea being that “for Russia to succeed against the West, it needs to take the best of

tsarism and the Soviet Union, combining Orthodoxy as a spiritual shield and nuclear weapons as a material shield” (Laruelle, 2025: 195).

Such a “transplantation” of the Byzantine katechonic doctrine to the Russian soil was made possible by the means of *translatio imperii* through the notion of the Third Rome, originating from the the Epistle of monk Philotheus of the Yelizarov monastery near Pskov to the Grand Duke Vassily III of Moscow²¹ (Klimenko and Yurtaev, 2018: 233) Historical circumstances of the original Epistle are different from the later interpretations of the concept: not only was Philotheus most probably referring to “Roman tsardom” (*Romeiskoe tsarstvo*), which was later on re-written into “Russian tsardom” (*Rosiiskoe tsarstvo*) by copyists (so that it doesn’t resemble the Holy Roman Empire), he certainly did not formulate “an imperial ideology either for the Muscovite ruler or for the expansion of the Muscovite state” but instead wanted to “remind the ruler to perform his duties in regard to the Novgorodian church” (Ostrowski, 2006: 174). After the fall of the Byzantine Empire, “Moscow was regarded by Philotheus as a successor to Rome and Constantinople and the new centre of the Orthodox world”, although “the fact that Russia was perceived as God’s chosen nation was not a basis for expansion or world domination” (Klimenko and Yurtaev, 2018: 233-235). Philotheus’s ideal was “to care for Church and cherish Orthodoxy” and it was only in the 19th century that the Third Rome doctrine “set forth a number of spiritual and geopolitical tasks for Russia – to ensure inner, primarily spiritual, stability, as well as patronage over all Orthodox nations” (ibid: 239).

The concept of Holy Rus’ thus clearly “underpins “civilizational approach”, which helps the ROC’s intellectuals to reject the universality of the Western notions of secular humanism, human rights and liberal democracy and to establish the principles of autonomy” (Suslov, 2024: 92). Spirituality and special connection with the deity, alongside “traditional values” that ostensibly characterize Rus’, are juxtaposed to Western liberalism, individualism and human rights²² (Laruelle, 2025: 176-181) with special attention being paid to sexual behavior, gender and tolerance towards LGBTQ+ community which is perceived as an instance of “Western decadence” and thus “demonized, portrayed as anti-Christian and supposedly anti-Russian [...], incompatible with a world guided by Orthodoxy” (Rohdewald, 2025: 125).

1.5.2. Serbian World

The concept of the Serbian World emerged in parallel with its Russian counterpart and was likewise inspired by writings of Nikolay Danilevsky and his idea of “pan-Slavic” civilization.

In 1877, an editorial was published in Serbian nationalist newspaper *Zastava* (“The Banner”) entitled “*Russkii Mir’ i Srbski Svet*”⁷³ (“Russian World and Serbian World”), enabling Serbian elites “to promote a specific spatial imagination of their own large-scale national project” (Rohdewald, 2015: 112). Some similarities can be traced, regarding ideas on the pan-Slavic fraternity, advanced in the Russian newspaper *Russki Mir* and the Serbian *Zastava*, although “historically, Pan-Slavic ideas in Serbia and Russia have not had a common focus; while Russian Pan-Slavism was primarily directed against Germany, Serbian Pan-Slavism was always more tied up with anti-Ottoman sentiments” (Vukasović and Stojadinović, 2023: 129).

The Serbian World discourse is centered around the “close relations between the golden age of the Nemanjić dynasty, the Kosovo myth and the Saint Sava cult” that together “dominate Serbian mythology”⁷⁴ (Leustean, 2008: 428). The Kosovo cycle is “the fundamental mythical moment in the [Serbian] national past”, based on the memory of “the battle on June 28, 1389, between the Christian armies under the leadership of the Serbian Knez Lazar Hrebeljanović and the Ottoman armies led by Sultan Murad” on Kosovo Polje (Bieber, 2002: 95-96, see Appendix 8.2.8). Although both rulers were killed in the battle and its overall result was ambiguous from the historical standpoint⁷⁵, “the myth interprets the outcome of the battle as a conclusive victory for the Ottoman forces” (ibid). According to the popular narrative, before the battle Knez Lazar was asked by an angel to choose between two options – whether to win the battle and to establish a mighty (although finite) earthly state, or to establish an everlasting heavenly kingdom at the expense of a martyred defeat. Obviously, “Lazar chose the former, which prevented his victory the following day but ensured the creation of a perpetual heavenly realm for the Serbian people” (ibid). During the subsequent centuries, this myth was complemented by a number of literary details, including a dramatized juxtaposition of figures of Miloš Obilić on the one hand, who – pretending to betray the Serbs – approached Sultan and killed him, with Vuk Branković on the other hand, who ostensibly betrayed his co-ethnics (ibid: 96-97). Likewise, a story of the Last Supper of Knez Lazar evidently weaves together Biblical and nationalist elements, portraying Serbian soldiers “dying as Christ’s warriors unlike any other perishable earthly army” after they took communion (Savić, 2014: 691-692; see Appendix 8.2.9). According to the myth, “the prince believed that only imitating Christ’s sacrifice would save his soul, and his example should be followed by modern political leaders” (Leustean, 2008: 426).

The Kosovo myth thus serves as the basis of Serbian nationalist narrative, supporting the idea of divine predestination and national exclusiveness of the Serbs, interpreting “the existence of the Serbian nation in history” as no less than instance of “a direct act of creation by God who chose them from other people in the same way that previously He had chosen the Jews as His elected people” (ibid: 427). This messianic narrative provides Serbia with both a special religious identity (Theodul – Servant of God) and a geopolitical role – to be the bulwark of Christianity, the defender of the Christian civilization⁷⁶ (Rohdewald, 2025: 117; Savić, 2014: 698). Thus “the date on which the battle took place, Vidovdan⁷⁷, subsequently became a key marker on the Serbian national calendar” (Bieber, 2002: 95). Together with a painful memory of crimes against humanity committed by Ustaše regime in the Independent state of Croatia during World War II⁷⁸, Kosovo myth creates an image “of a Serbia tortured and dismembered by wars, ascetic (like Christ) on earth, and a grand and imperial one in heaven”, implying “an imagination of the country as sacred, as placed in heaven by the virtue of its historical experience” (Savić, 2014: 691).

An image of a mighty heavenly Serbia is thus juxtaposed with earthly sufferings of Serbs, to the extent that “a heroic tradition of struggle is one of the most important elements of the traditional Serbian national identity” (Vukasović and Stojadinović, 2023: 132). According to this line of reasoning, “heavenly state expands by the accumulation of wars and dead bodies, growing into a vicarious “empire” unrealised on earth”, thus “for a heavenly empire to grow into “the largest” one, the earthly state must be perpetually sacrificed” (Savić, 2014: 692). This leads to the necropolitical version of the discourse of Serbian World: “Serbia is where Serbian graves are”. It is juxtaposed to a biopolitical⁷⁹ idea which claims instead that “Serbia is where Serbs are (= where the Serbs live)”; the basis of this discourse is “the intersection of physical prowess, human will, and discursive translation of quality” (ibid: 694).

A biopolitical idea of Serbdom was formulated already in the second half of the 19th century. In 1882, a school teacher Petar Niketić “published a book entitled “Serbian World”, providing “a comprehensive interdisciplinary overview of the “Serbian lands”, meaning the territories of present-day Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Croatia and parts of Slovenia and Bulgaria” (Rohdewald, 2025: 112). Before that, in 1844, a statesman Ilija Garašanin wrote the so-called *Draft* (srp *Načertanije*)⁸⁰, where he envisioned the liberation and unification of the lands of Southern and Ottoman Slavs⁸¹ under Serbian control, claiming that “South Slavs will easily understand this idea and will adopt it with

pleasure” because of the historical memory of the once-mighty Medieval Serbian Empire (Garašanin, [1844], 2007: 243). This claim was based largely on “the linguistic argument already formulated by the eminent national romantic philologist Vuk Stefanovic Karadžic in 1839”, according to which “all Southern Slavs were Serbs anyway” (Rohdewald, 2015: 113).

This idea of Serbdom was grounded on two major concepts: Christoslavism and Svetosavlje. Christoslavism is “the belief that “Slavs are Christian by nature, that conversion to another religion entails or presupposes a transformation or deformation of the Slavic race” (Sells, 1998, cited in Tozer, 2016: 76), while Svetosavlje is a more nuanced concept: it is “the word that the Serbs use to speak of a positive, enlightened side of Serbian nationalism” (Doubt, 2007: 75). Serbdom can thus be claimed to be based on the idea of Durkheimian mechanical solidarity, where “the substance of the collective determines the character of the individual”, so that “when the Serbian Orthodox Church insists on a Greater Serbia, it encourages Serbian people to think no longer of themselves as individuals but as Serbians” (ibid: 75-75). It was exactly this feeling of mechanical solidarity based on the notion of Serbdom that enabled the Serbian Orthodox Church to perform the “scapegoat ritual” during the wars in the former Yugoslavia (1992-1995) “as the dominant cultural, social, and religious paradigm for inciting psychological and physical violence against non-Serbian human beings” (ibid: 72). The result was numerous crimes against humanity committed during the War.

1.5.3. Megali Idea

Greek Megali Idea (gr Μεγάλη Ιδέα, “Great Idea”) had been conceptualized in a couple of different ways: “one envisaged the regeneration of the Byzantine Empire; a second called for the “transfer of Western education to the East”; and a third [...] saw it as an irredentist ideal aspiring to unite the Greek nation under a single state” (Stouraiti and Kazamias, 2010: 12-13). As a political concept, it was announced on January 14, 1844 by Ioannis Kolettis in his speech in front of the Greek Constituent Assembly (Clogg, 1998: 254). The debate arose about supposed discrimination of *autochtones* – “the natives of the lands that constituted the rump Greece that emerged from the protracted struggle for independence” – by *heterochtones* – “the incomers from the lands still under Ottoman rule, whose frequently superior education and greater political experience had enabled them to acquire a disproportionate number of offices of state” (ibid). Because Kolettis himself was a Hellenized Vlach (thus, *heterochtone*), he stood against the privileged treatment of the “natives”, arguing instead that “Greece” was in fact much bigger than territories under control of the Kingdom, which “embraced within

its borders such a small proportion, less than a third, of the Greek population of the Ottoman Empire⁸² (Clogg, [1992], 2002: 46).

In his speech, Ioannis Kolettis “was drawing upon the nationalist language of the day, to lay claim to an ethnic, race-based identity” of Greeks (Beaton, 2019: 128). According to some scholars, the speech “blended millenarian hopes of a restored Christian Empire with secular Greek state-sponsored nationalism; it gave the masses a vision clearly understandable while it transformed millenarianism into modern nationalism” (Roudometof, 1999: 435). He utilized tropes and narratives of one of the founding fathers of the modern Greek nationhood Rigas Velesinlis (Pheraios), who envisioned in the poem “Battle Hymn” the Hellenic state “all the way from Belgrade to Egypt⁸³” (ibid). Although Velesinlis didn’t use the term “Megali Idea” (Clogg, 1998: 255), his works had great influence on its subsequent development, foreseeing “the extension of the borders of the young Greek state to include all the Greek subjects of the Ottoman Empire” (Stouraiti and Kazamias, 2010: 11). To support his political ideas, Rigas ordered a map of what he believed was true Greece. Printed in Vienna in 1797 on 12 separate sheets⁸⁴, it depicted a vast area comprising territories of modern states of Bulgaria, Albania, Macedonia, East coast of Anatolian peninsula and beyond (Annex 8.10; Clogg, 1998: 255).

Such was the secular conception of the Great Idea, but no less important was its religious counterpart. As the fall of Constantinople in 1453 essentially overlapped with the advent of the 7th millennium since Creation (and thus a long-awaited end of the world) “which, in turn, was calculated as the year 1492”, the “spirit of fatalism” and messianic ideas of every kind were popular among the Orthodox population⁸⁵ of the Ottoman Empire (ibid: 257). Chief among those ideas⁸⁶ was a prophecy about the *ξανθὸν γένος* (*xanthon genos*) – “the fair haired race of liberators from the north, widely interpreted to be the Russians” (ibid: 258). During the period of *Tourkokratia*⁸⁷ and especially after the independence of Greece, “Russia was seen as the power most likely to assist Greece in achieving her irredentist ambitions” (Clogg, [1992], 2002: 60). The constant exhortation to the common Byzantine past was not without consequences, however. In 1830 German scholar Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer proposed in his *Geschichte der Halbinsel Morea während des Mittelalters* a pseudo-scientific and overtly racist theory of the “Slavic origin of Greeks” – “that is, the argument that during the Middle Ages the Slavs overrun the Balkan peninsula and, therefore, the contemporary Greeks are descendants of these Slavs and Albanians” (Roudometof, 1999: 436). Fallmerayer claimed that “the Greek state could only be a “Slavo-Greek” state which could be enlightened only by

“Kiev”, modern Greece was a facet of Russian expansionism and therefore Greek nationalism was unwelcomed” (ibid).

In Russia, the Megali Idea was indeed well-known, and the reaction was lukewarm. Nikolay Danilevsky rejected the idea of Slavic origin of modern Greeks, but insisted that “non-Slavic ethnicities” (a broad ethnographic category comprising Greeks, Magyars and Romanians) had to be included into the All-Slavic Union “whether they like it or not”, for their historical fate was “inextricably” related with Slavs and they were essentially “incorporated into the Slavic body” anyways (Danilevsky, [1869], 2025: 429). In his opinion, “a small Greek people, even if its capital was Constantinople, could not restore the Byzantine Empire at any cost” (ibid: 454). The only solution was the Slavic-Greek federation, in line with Fallmayer’s ideas⁸⁸, that went against the Greek aspirations, who saw Constantinople as the only *true* Greek capital⁸⁹ and its liberation as their holy mission⁹⁰ (see Annex 8.11).

Relations with Slavic neighbours deteriorated further during the Bulgarian schism⁹¹. Greeks believed that Russia actively supported its Slavic “brothers” in ecclesiastical issues⁹², as well as in a territorial struggle over Macedonia, where they were “the chief rivals of the Greeks” (Clogg, [1992], 2002: 66). After the Crimean War (1853-1856), hopes for the resurrection of the Byzantine Empire were vanishing, and establishment of the independent Greek Orthodox Church aimed at creating conditions where “people would not be under the influence of an ecclesiastical leader who was a civil servant of the Ottoman state” (Roudometof, 1999: 432). It also influenced the perception of the Byzantine past: according to this narrative, “the new Greece that emerged after 1821 was a continuation of Ancient Greece, and had no spiritual ties with the Byzantine-Orthodox tradition” (ibid: 431).

Greek discourse on state identity and national past changed dramatically under the influence of Constantinos Paparrigopoulos, whose “assumption of an unbroken historical continuity between the Ancient and the Modern Greeks” bridged “the gap between the Ancient world and the Modern Era by reinterpreting Medieval Byzantium as a manifestation of Hellenism during the Middle Ages” (ibid: 439). This new vision of Greek history was divided into three successive periods that correlated “with the Christian doctrine of the triune God: just as one God is in three hypostases, so the same Hellenism historically manifested itself through the “hypostases” of classical antiquity, Byzantium, and the free Greek state liberated from the Turkish yoke” (Hovorun, 2018: 49). New interpretation of the Byzantine identity was sealed

with the term *Ἑλληνοχριστιανικός* (gr “Helleno-Christian”) proposed by a historian Spyridon Zambelios “denoting the identification of Greece with Orthodoxy” (Roudometof, 1999: 440).

The Megali Idea became prominent for the last time during the Greek military campaign in Asia Minor (1921-1922), when the Treaty of Sèvres was debated; it should have become the heyday for the Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos⁹³ (Annex 8.12). When Turkey rejected the Treaty and started an offence in Autumn 1922, the Great Idea effectively came to an end. On September 8, 1922, Turkish troops occupied the city of Smyrna (modern-day Izmir), the last bastion of Greek presence in Asia Minor, followed by a massacre of around 30 000 Greek and Armenian Christians (Clogg, [1992], 2002: 97).

1.5.4. Ulster

As a toponym, “Ulster” can be used in two ways: either to designate a vast area comprising nine counties “that made up the historical province of Ulster as showered in the seventeenth century”, or as a synonym of Northern Ireland – “the jurisdiction created in 1920 when [the island of] Ireland was partitioned” (Akenson, 1992: 103). For the most part of its history from the Norman conquest until the English invasion, Ulster “was the province least permeated by foreign influence and most Celtic in its social organization and culture” (ibid). The situation changed in the beginning of the 17th century. In 1603, Hugh O’Neil – earl of Tyrone and the last sovereign prince on the island – “surrendered to Lord Mountjoy, the English lord deputy of Ireland”, followed by “one of the strangest events in Irish history”, when “humiliated by the continuing decline of their influence, and fearful of further harassment by the English government, the earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnell and nearly one hundred petty chiefs boarded a boat in Lough Swilly and fled to the Continent” in 1607 (ibid: 103-105).

From this time onwards, the demographic composition of Ulster has changed, following the Plantation – i.e., colonization of newly conquered territories, where “the confiscated lands in the six escheated counties were granted to individuals and groups whose duty it was to form British colonies” (ibid: 105). Simultaneously, “in the counties of Antrim and Down [...], an influx of Scottish migrants was taking place” (ibid). As a result, the population of Ulster was divided into three strata: native Irish, who were given the poorest lands and preserved social organization and Catholic faith of their forefathers; Scottish Presbyterians⁹⁴ living in lowlands and English, who now formed the upper classes of Ulster society and who belonged to the

Anglican Church (ibid: 106-108). For the first time in Ulster history, national identity became essentially synonymous with a religious one.

Presbyterians played the leading role in subsequent historical events. Irish Presbyterianism officially “came into existence” on June 10, 1642, when “a presbytery meeting was held, the first on Irish soil, from among the regimental chaplains and officers – elders of the Scottish army sent to Ulster to quell the insurrection which had broken out there the previous year” (Armstrong, 2006: 1048). Dogmatically, Presbyterianism is based on the Calvinist theology, with its most important doctrine of predestination – i.e., the belief “that after the original fall from grace of Adam, there was no such thing as freedom of the human will”⁹⁵ (Akenson, 1992: 112). At the same time, Presbyterianism has historically been more than just a faith, it is a “form of church government, however often bound up with particular doctrines or modes of worship”, that embraced “not merely governance of the local church by a body of elders including the minister, but also a hierarchy of church courts, from session to presbytery, perhaps thence to synode and national assembly” (Armstrong, 2006: 1049).

Another feature characteristic of Ulster Presbyterianism is its rootedness in the Old Testament and its idea of the “Chosen People” selected by God for its exceptional moral qualities as *His* people with whom He enters into the Covenant, establishing a framework of mutual promises and obligations. During the English Civil War (1639-1660), covenantal mentality of the local Presbyterians paved the way to signing a series of treatises aimed against Roman Catholicism and absolutist monarchy: in 1557, “the first of the great Scottish covenants” was signed, followed by “the King’s Confession” of 1581, named so because King James VI also signed it (Akenson, 1992: 114-115). Then, the National Covenant of 1638 followed: it essentially reproduced the previous document, but also contained “an implicit if-then clause: if the monarch follows the ways of God, we will be allegiant to him. Otherwise, no” (ibid: 115). Finally, in 1643, “the Scottish parliament affirmed the “Solemn League and Covenant” which advocated the imposition of Presbyterianism not only in Scotland, but in England and Ireland as well” (ibid: 116). Taken together, these four documents comprised a basis of Presbyterian covenantal mentality, where religious identity affected political behavior: not only were Presbyterians a “Chosen People”, but their position vis-à-vis the Sovereign was essentially that of an equal partner. All in all, “the campaign to win support for the Solemn League and Covenant in Ulster, in the spring of 1644” was ultimately “the symbol of a reordering in the

high politics of three kingdoms, allowing further Scottish intrusion into the English kingdom of Ireland” (Armstrong, 2006: 1060).

Two historic milestones are particularly important for Ulster’s national myth. Years 1641 and 1690 are “dates which have such great resonance that mere mention of them is enough to bond the audience” (Akenson, 1992: 138). In 1641, Ulster Presbyterians were for the first time persecuted for their faith, comprising a sort of “martyrdom”⁹⁶ when “a large-scale civil war broke out in Ulster, initiated by the massacre of thousands of Protestants in a conspiracy brought off by the Irish Catholic natives” (ibid: 140-141). On the contrary, in 1690 in the Battle of Boyne, Protestant army achieved victory over Catholics and liberated native soil.

The situation on the island changed, when the British Government proposed the Home Rule law: first in 1886, then in 1893 and finally in 1914. While fiercely opposing the creation of an independent Ireland, Ulster Protestants eventually “came to realize that the attempt to defeat Home Rule for all of Ireland was not feasible, and that the most that could be hoped for was the creation of a separate Unionist homeland in the northeast” (Loughlin, 2007: 160). Out of nine counties of historic Ulster, six were to be excluded from the Home Rule. Although “the reduction of the claim from nine to six induced deep feelings of shame and betrayal of fellow loyalists” (ibid: 187), it was the only feasible way for Protestants to gain a homeland where Catholics would not “outbreed them” (Akenson, 1992: 160).

Protestant leader, Sir Edward Carson, described new reality in the following way: according to him, Ulster “will be a social and geographical fact” (Loughlin, 2007: 160). This “fact” was made possible due to discourse of Ulster as a distinctive land(scape)⁹⁷, disseminated through popular travelogues, postcards and books, such as Frank Frankfort Moore’s *The Truth about Ulster* with plenty of high-quality photographs of Ulster countryside, towns and monuments that essentially “created” Ulster as a matter of (social and geographical) “fact” (ibid: 180). In his book, Moore juxtaposed Ulster to the rest of Ireland, highlighting its essential features: “[I]t is the difference between a field of lilies and a factory of looms. In three of the provinces they toil not, neither do they spin. But in Ulster they do both” (Moore, 1914, cited in Loughlin, 2007: 180, see Annex 8.2.12). When in “September 1911, 50,000 men representing the Orange Order and the Unionist clubs had marched past the home of the Protestant leader Captain James Craig in a show of solidarity against Home Rule”, it became evident that Protestants were ready to defend their homeland with weapons⁹⁸ (Akenson, 1992: 186).

The milestone was reached on September 28, 1912, when some 500,000 Ulster Protestants signed the Ulster's Solemn League and Covenant which effectively "became the touchstone of loyalty, with considerable scorn rapidly displayed to those who had failed to exhibit their allegiance, whom contemporaries designated as "traitors to their faith" (Morris, 2011: 17). It was a religious document in both form and content: while "the text of the Covenant relied heavily on religious language and imagery, which reinforces the notion of "common Protestantism" as the defining feature of Ulster Loyalism", the document was signed by many prominent clergymen and church-owned properties throughout Ulster served as venues for signing it (ibid: 22). Although there were clear denominational differences in how Protestant communities viewed the essence of the Covenant⁹⁹, it evidently laid the basis for consequent loyalist narrative of "the "Protestant" nature of the protest", as well as "to claim that all the "Protestant communities in Ulster" were united in opposition to Home Rule" (ibid: 27). The trope of "Protestant unity" became an important feature later on, during the Troubles.

2. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, a methodological framework is presented. The chapter consists of three parts: in the first subchapter, the general logic of discourse analysis (DA) is discussed, followed by an introduction into Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which is the primary method of data analysis used in this Thesis. Suitability of the selected method, its strengths and weaknesses are addressed. In the third part, a research design together with the logic of case selection and data collection is discussed. The chapter ends with a short description of research limitations.

2.1. Discourse Analysis as a method of data analysis

Discourse analysis is a complex analytical technique. One has to be aware that “there is no single way to conduct discourse analysis” (Dunn and Newmann, 2016: 103), because “no common understanding has emerged about the best ways to study discourse” (Milliken, 1999: 226) in the social sciences¹⁰⁰. According to some views, discourse analysis “hardly follows any specific methodological approach, and there are rarely any clear templates to rely on” (Bergström et al, 2017: 224). Rather, it “refers to a range of approaches in several disciplines and theoretical traditions” (Taylor, 2013: 1). Still, discourse analysis can be conceptualised as “a research approach in which language material, such as talk or written texts is examined as evidence of phenomena beyond the individual person” or otherwise as “the close study of language and language use as evidence of aspects of society and social life” (ibid: 2-3)¹⁰¹.

DA was selected as an appropriate method, considering its ontological premises, as well as its general agreement with the research questions. First of all, DA is focused on “the analysis of language and language use” through which one can construct “a picture of society and how it functions” (Taylor, 2016: 3), but it goes further than other methods (e.g., qualitative content analysis or narrative analysis) in studying what Michel Foucault called “*épistème*” (= what is knowable). In this sense, “a discourse pre-exists any particular occasion of language use and is available to be drawn on or used selectively, according to the situation and purpose” (ibid: 16). This is especially important for analysing *religēopolitics*, by looking at how a particular meaning was articulated at a certain moment in time through discursivefication¹⁰² (Bergström et al, 2017: 214). Secondly, DA “often focuses on questions of power” (Bergström et al, 2017: 210), which makes it well-suited for analysing political phenomena in the sense Colin Hay uses the term – i.e., essentially as the phenomena of power (Hay, 2013: 324). “Power” is taken here in Foucauldian sense, as a productive social force and “the practice of knowledge

as a socially constructed system” (Dunn and Newmann, 2016: 54). Productive function of power implies that discourses *do things* they “construct objects, subjects, and problems, but also simultaneously articulate policies to address them”¹⁰³ (ibid: 60).

2.2. Critical Discourse Analysis: the essence, suitability, and possible limitations

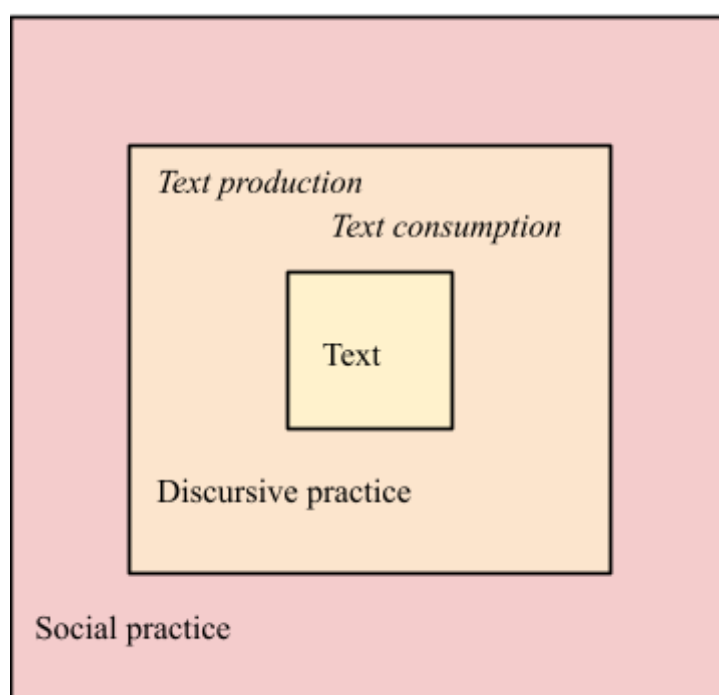
Because DA in itself is not a research method, but rather a general term referring to a number of data analysis methods used broadly in social sciences, a concrete method (i.e., a particular sequence of steps aimed at “unpacking” the phenomenon of interest) is needed. In this Thesis, this concrete method is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Norman Fairclough.

The choice of CDA is likewise a strategic one, based on three major considerations. Firstly, CDA understands the “objects of analysis” as “simultaneously material and semiotic in character” with a dialectical relationship between them (Fairclough, 2012: 9), implying that “some societal phenomena are not of a linguistic-discursive character”¹⁰⁴ (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 61). It differs significantly from the post-structuralist understanding of social reality as an entirely discursive phenomenon¹⁰⁵ (Dunn and Newmann, 2016: 35). Moreover, besides making distinction between discursive and extra-discursive components, CDA also understands the term “discourse” in a narrow sense, as a “linguistic practice only” (Bergström et al, 2017: 222). This makes a researcher’s work less ambiguous: in CDA, analysing discourse essentially means analysing linguistic features of texts, whereas in post-structuralist approach it is less clear how to empirically study social reality. Secondly, in CDA discourses “do not only constitute, but are also constituted” (Bergström et al, 2017: 224), meaning that “communicative events not only reproduce orders of discourse, but can also change them through creative language use” (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 71). This corresponds better to the constructivist approach to discourse analysis taken here. Finally, CDA more than other methods of data analysis stresses the notion of power, trying essentially “to draw attention to the intended, unintended, real, anticipated and/or imagined effects of discourses either directly upon behaviour or indirectly – on the context in which people find themselves and with respect to which they orient their behaviour and thinking” (Hay, 2013: 324).

CDA follows the conceptualisation of discourse formulated by Norman Fairclough, who used the term in three different ways: “(a) meaning-making as an element of the social process¹⁰⁶; (b) the language associated with a particular social field or practice; (c) a way of construing aspects of the world associated with a particular social perspective” (Fairclough, 2012: 11).

Instances (b) and (c) are of particular importance for this research: while *religopolitics* is well conceptualised in terms of the former (as language associated with a particular social field, where notions of power, religion and geography overlap), the later notion explains how particular elements of discourse are constructed¹⁰⁷.

From a methodological perspective, two dimensions of discourse are “important focal points” in CDA: the communicative event (a political speech, a newspaper article, a movie) and the order of discourse (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 71). The former is understood simply as “an instance of language use”, while the later stands for “the configuration of all *discourse types* which are used within a social institution or a social field” (ibid). Essentially, “every instance of language use is a communicative event consisting of three dimensions: it is a text, a discursive practice and a social practice”¹⁰⁸ (ibid), as illustrated in Graph 7:



Graph 7. Analytical model of a communicative event.
Source: Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 68.

This complexity of Fairclough’s model constitutes the first limitation. Another one comes from the nature of CDA itself: it is called “critical” because of its emphasis “upon existing social realities as humanly produced constraints, which in certain respects unnecessarily reduce human flourishing or well-being and increase human suffering” (Fairclough, 2012: 10). CDA is not a neutral approach, but has to be understood as normative and explanatory

critique: it is normative “in that [it] doesn’t simply describe existing realities but also evaluates them, assesses the extent to which they match up to various values, which are taken [...] to be fundamental for just or decent societies”, but also “it is explanatory critique in that it does not simply describe existing realities but seeks to explain them”¹⁰⁹ (ibid: 9).

There is one more limitation of CDA – namely, according to Fairclough, “discourse analysis is not sufficient in itself for analysis of the wider social practice, since the latter encompasses both discursive and non-discursive elements” (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 69). Thus, in order to get a more comprehensive understanding of *social practice* related to religeopolitics (say, a military conflict fuelled by irredentist discourses), one has to use a trans-disciplinary research project¹¹⁰ (Fairclough, 2012: 12). This would go far beyond the initial goal of this Thesis, which is to study discourse construction *per se*. Hence, by claiming the construction of discourse as the only object of research, we escape the necessity to go beyond this limit¹¹¹.

2.3. Description of method and data

The research design for empirical analysis follows the logic of small-N comparative case analysis¹¹². Four empirical cases – Holy Rus’, Serbian World, Ulster and Megali Idea – were selected according to the *Most Different Systems Design* (MDSD) logic, illustrated in Table 4:

Case/feature	Holy Rus’	Serbian World	Megali Idea	Ulster
Denomination	Slavic Orthodoxy	Slavic Orthodoxy	Hellenic Orthodoxy	Presbyterianism
Time frame	19th century, 1990s-present	19th century, 1990s-present	19th century	17th century, 1920s-1990s
Significant (threatening) Other	The West	Islam	Islam, Latinism	Catholicism
Civilizational character	Yes, messianism + ethnic election	Yes, messianism + ethnic election	Yes, messianism	No, covenantal model
National “Homeland”	Russia	Serbia	Greece	UK
Connection with military conflict	Yes, War in Ukraine (2014-present)	Yes, Wars in the former Yugoslavia (BiH 1992-1995; Kosovo 1999)	Yes, Balkan Wars (1912-1913; 1922)	Yes, Troubles in Northern Ireland, (1968-1998)

Table 4. Case selection according to MDSD logic.

As becomes evident from the Table, four empirical cases differ significantly from one another in terms of their religious tradition, historical period, as well as an imagined Significant Other and respective “Homelands”. Yet, they all affected policies of respective states, contributing in one form or another to the emergence of conflicts (wars, civil conflicts, religious schisms).

Next step is selection of empirical data – i.e., texts appropriate for further linguistic analysis (Dunn and Newmann, 2016: 90). When preparing a theoretical framework, relevant scholarly literature was carefully worked through, identifying the so-called “monuments” or otherwise “canonical texts” “in the sense that they have a broad reception and are often cited” (ibid: 93-95). Accordingly, “if one identifies these texts, reads them, and then reads the central texts that these texts in turn refer to, soon one is able to identify the main positions and versions” (ibid)¹¹³. This “snowball” logic, when every new text is attached to previous ones, is applied wherever possible in Thesis. Another criterion is timing: because religeopolitical discourses have been related to conflicts, texts produced during crisis periods are prioritised.

The exact amount of textual materials depends on particular research needs; it should also be feasible, given structural limitations of the Thesis (time restriction and volume of text). While “a single text cannot be claimed to support empirically arguments about discourse as a social background, used regularly by different individuals and groups”, discourse analysis instead “should be based upon a set of texts by different people presumed [...] to be authorized speakers/writers of a dominant discourse or to think and act within alternative discourses” (Milliken, 1999: 232). At the same time, the only logical upper limitation would be the subjective completeness of research, achieved “when upon adding new texts and comparing their object spaces, the researcher finds consistently that the theoretical categories she has generated work for those texts” (ibid: 234). This also solves the issue of reliability of research, i.e., “the interpretation offered has been checked and reworked until it fits with and explains consistently texts that were not originally part of its empirical base” (ibid: 234-235).

Because of the heterogeneity of empirical cases in terms of both their historical periodisation and underlying religious tradition, it is not possible to create identical text corpora. Rather, each case has its own set of “monuments” with different dominating genres and types of documents selected for analysis, achieving the “ideal situation [where researcher] covers a maximum of eventualities, by reading as much as possible from as many genres as possible” (Dunn and Newmann, 2016: 101).

In the case of Holy Rus', the sample consists of materials produced by the World Russian People's Council (rus Всемирный Русский Народный Собор), identified as one of primary "ecosystems" of modern meaning-making in Russia¹¹⁴ (Laruelle, 2025: 27). Created in 1993 under the auspices of ROC and chaired by Patriarch of Moscow, it "unites high-level clergy, the whole constellation of political Orthodoxy figures and institutions and representatives of state institutions and Duma MPs [...]" (ibid). Thus, it represents a snapshot of elite discourses that influence Russian state policies. The timeframe includes years 2022-2025 – i.e., a period of War in Ukraine. The sample consists of several types of documents: addresses by the Patriarch and leading state authorities, final documents adopted by the General Session¹¹⁵ that contain major ideological provisions, as well as excerpts from addresses on foreign policy, international relations and state ideology. In addition, an enthronisation speech of Patriarch Kirill together with his presentation on WRPC in 2015 and final declaration of the same year are added to the list¹¹⁶. A total sample consists of 30 textual pieces (approx 37 000 words). All materials are available in Russian on official websites of WRPC (<https://vrns.ru/>).

In the case of Serbian World, three major types of documents are selected: (1) historical texts comprising the basis of Serbian religious and national narrative (Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, Nikolaj Velimirović), together with texts from the period of Wars in the former Yugoslavia or a shortly before it (Gazimestan speech of President Milošević on the 600th anniversary of the Kosovo Battle on June 28, 1989, and Berne Declaration from 1992). Additionally, a series of modern-day documents is selected: communiques and summaries of the Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church together with statements of Patriarch Porfirije of SOC, from the time of his enthronisation (2021) until the present day. These documents reflect the elite discourse of the Serbian Church, including its views on such questions as foreign policy, relations inside Serbian diaspora and historical memory. The total sample consists of 20 texts (approx 27 000 words). Statements and declarations of SOC hierarchs are available on the website of the Serbian Orthodox Church (<https://spc.rs/en/>), historical essays are translated into English and available in the series *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1770-1945)*, published by the Central European University (CEU).

In the case of Ulster, two kinds of materials are selected: on the one hand, there is a text of Ulster's Solemn League and Covenant (1912), identified as the most important "monument". On the other hand, a number of speeches, statements, addresses to the Party Assembly and

interviews of Rev. Ian Paisley – the head of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster and the Ulster Democratic Party (DUP) – are selected. Ian Paisley is identified as one of the leading figures of Ulster Unionism during the period of Troubles in Northern Ireland (1968-1998), his position as both the head of Church and the leader of a political party influenced greatly the perception of Ulster as a religious, political and geographical entity. Texts are available in the CAIN project database (<https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/>), which is the most extensive collection of historical materials regarding the Troubles created under the auspices of Ulster University. The total sample consists of 18 texts (approx 32 000 words).

Finally, because Megali Idea is a historical case, here the sample is the most heterogeneous, comprising excerpts from different genres and types of documents. Speeches of the leading political figures (Ioannis Kolettis, Eleftherios Venizelos, Ioannis Metaxas) were selected, together with the writings of the most prominent leaders of national movement (Adamantios Korais, Rigas Velestinlis, Alexandros Ypsilantis), as well as pieces of historic (Constantinos Paparrigopoulos), geographic (Daniil Philippidis, Grigorios Constantas), literary narratives (Giorgos Theotokas, Kalliroi Parren). The timeframe thus unites a long period from the end of the 18th century until the middle of the 20th century with the primary principle of selection being the importance of a particular text for the development of Megali Idea discourse. Translations of excerpts into English are taken from a five-volume series entitled *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1770-1945)* published by the Central European University. The total sample consists of 20 textual excerpts (approx 25 000 words).

After text corpora completion, four textfiles were created, each containing case specific texts. The final sample consists of 88 textual pieces (121 000 words). Then, textfiles are converted into TXT format and are uploaded into QCMap software. QCMap is an online programme designed for qualitative content analysis, it enables scholars to easily code textual materials and study linguistic features of interest. QCMap is easy to use and free-of-charge – an optimal solution for students. Coding begins with “close reading” of textual files. The goal is to “delineate the discursive elements at play” – i.e., “to identify and contextualize specific discourses” and get an initial impression about what discourses can be found in texts (Dunn and Newman, 2016: 103). After the first round, the second phase begins – predicate analysis, which “examines the verbs, adverbs, and adjectives that are attached to nouns within specific texts”, trying to “expose how certain meanings or capabilities are established, thus enabling actors to understand and act in certain ways” (ibid: 111). The last step is the proximization

analysis. It begins with finding the smallest textual units which bear a separate semantics and categorizing them according to the template provided by Piotr Cap (see Annex 8.3.1). Exact number of coding/reading rounds depends on material at hand (coding lasts until there are no new codes appearing), but at least three rounds are necessary for results to be verifiable.

Textual analysis (coding) follows both deductive and inductive logics: on the one hand, the goal is to identify elements of proximization (Cap) and “sacred dimensions of nationalism” (Smith) discussed earlier (thus, the deductive part), while at the same time inductive approach is evident in that “empirics lead the way” – i.e., conclusions are drawn from the empirical material itself. A discourse is categorised as “relig geopolitical” according to its content, as related to spatial imagination based on religious notions. In this regard, the exact author is of less relevance: what determines the type of discourse is its content, not necessarily its author.

3. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

In this chapter, results of empirical analysis are presented, according to the research schemas outlined above in the methodology section. First of all, general results are highlighted. Then, a more nuanced discussion of religiopolitical discourses is presented on a case-by-case basis. Finally, empirical results are summarised and the bases of a new grounded theory are laid.

Generalised results of empirical analysis are presented in comparative manner in Table 5:

Case/feature	Holy Rus'	Serbian World	Ulster	Megali Idea
Master discourse	Civilizational, messianic, geographical	Geographical, national suffering	Covenantal, fundamentalist, betrayal	National suffering, identity crisis
Dominant reliGEOpolitical identity	Katechon (<i>the Restrainer</i>)	Theodul (<i>Servant of God</i>)	<i>a</i> Chosen people	Orthodox oecumene
Sacred territory	Russian lands; canonical lands; territories of historical Rus'	Serbian lands; God-given and blood-soaked lands	Territory of the British Crown (HM King/Queen)	Hellenic lands, Byzantine territories
Geographic location	Russia, Belarus, Ukraine; Russian World as a metaphysical community of values/common historical fate	Serbia; Kosovo and Metohija, Republika Srpska, Montenegro; Serbdom as an ethno-national community	Northern Ireland, six counties of out of nine of historical Ulster	Greece, Ionian Islands, Asia Minor, Thrace, Constantinople, Macedonia, Epirus
National election	Messianic, withholding the "Satanic West"	Messianic + "promised land"	Covenantal	Messianic, against (1) the Turks and (2) the heresy of Latinism
Ethno-history (Golden age)	Medieval Rus'	Medieval Serbian Kingdom	Plantation of Ulster	Ancient Greece, Byzantine Empire
National sacrifice	Great Patriotic War (1941-1945), Communist persecutions	Kosovo Battle, WWII, the Bosnian War (1992-1995); the Kosovo War (1999)	Irish Rebellion (1641); Battle of Boyne (1690); Battle of Somme (1916); the Troubles (1968-1998)	Fall of Constantinople (1453); Defeat in the battle of Smyrna (1922)

Dominant narratives	Apocalypticism, fundamentalism, irredentism, messianism, anti-modernism	Apocalypticism, fundamentalism, nationalist exceptionalism, messianism, irredentism	Fundamentalism, national exceptionalism	Messianism, irredentism
Central religious concepts	Katechon	Theodul	Covenant	-

Table 5. General results of the empirical analysis.

Upon the completion of empirical analysis it became evident that religeopolitical discourses are not monolithic in themselves. Rather, these are complex discursive structures built around a couple of “master discourses” or “building blocks” out of which religeopolitical discourses are composed. Following Norman Fairclough, we shall call these complex structures “orders of discourse” (Fairclough, 1995b, cited in Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 67).

In selected cases, there are eight master discourses or “discursive building blocks”:

1. Civilizational discourse;
2. Messianic discourse;
3. Geographical discourse;
4. National suffering;
5. Covenantal discourse;
6. Fundamentalist discourse;
7. National betrayal;
8. Identity crisis

These master discourses are not universally applicable, nor should a particular religeopolitical discourse use all of them. Rather, every particular religeopolitical uses two-to-three “blocks” according to the semantic or political necessity. Likewise, in selected empirical cases, there are evident “sacred dimensions of nationalism” of Anthony Smith discussed earlier. These enable semantic cohesion and conceptual clarity, as every religeopolitical discourse features particular elements that attribute otherwise secular nationalist discourses with religious undertones. Finally, every religeopolitical discourse “promotes” a particular state identity

which is supposed to translate discourse into active policies (e.g., *Katechon* restraining the West in the case of Holy Rus'). This aspect is elaborated further in chapter 4.

3.1. Holy Rus'

In selected materials, civilizational discourse is a dominant one, related also to messianic¹¹⁷ and geographic discourses. As described by Deputy Head of WRPC Mikhail Ivanov, “Russia is an independent civilization with its own cultural code (“russian world”) and mission” (Ivanov, 2025). The basis of Russian civilizational identity is Orthodoxy – “a backbone of Russian culture [стержень русской культуры] that fostered in the Russian people all these moral qualities that today comprise our distinctive character [самобытность] and give grounds for talking about Russian identity and Russian World” (Kirill, 2023). According to this line of reasoning, Orthodoxy lays the basis for “[...] ideals and values characteristic of Russian civilization, without which the history of Russia and its people is unimaginable” (Nakaz, 2022). While the list of these exceptional moral qualities contains “faith in God, love of Fatherland, self-sacrifice [жертвенность], centuries-old notions of loyalty, duty, honor, etc” (ibid), it is a traditional family that is “the basis of Russian national life [основа русской национальной жизни] and the internal bulwark of tradition of Russian World” (Kirill, 2023).

Thus, the “values characteristic of IDC” – in this case, the IDC stands for Russia/Russian World/Holy Rus' – are of a spiritual character: “our nation, irrespective of political ideology, has always been preserving its spiritual code [духовный код], consciously, or sometimes even unconsciously, orienting itself towards Christian values of kindness and love” (Kirill, 2025a). In a similar vein, the Russian World is called “a spiritual-civilizational phenomenon” (Nakaz, 2023) superior to the West (the ODC), which is understood in terms of ideology: “the West is ideology. Liberalism, globalism, secularism [are] ideology. Post-humanism belongs to the sphere of ideas [...]” (Dugin, 2022). Between the IDC and the ODC there is antagonism, with the ODC being a constant threat to the very existence of Rus': “why is it that Russia, Belarus and Ukraine are like a bone in the throat of the Western World? The answer is easy: it is because of values that we embrace, that comprise a basis of our spiritual-cultural identity [духовно-культурная идентичность]” (Kirill, 2024).

Conceptualizations of the Russian World follow two major “tracks”. On the one hand, it appears essentially as a metaphysical community of values: “Russian World is first of all not an administrative, but spiritual unity [духовная общность], bound together by historical and

moral bonds of the Russian Orthodox Church” (Sobornoye Slovo, 2022). The ROC itself is presented as an everlasting entity: “Russian Orthodox Church is the oldest Russian civil organisation, whose activity has not been interrupted from the baptism of Rus’ onwards” (Shchipkov, 2025). This formulation stresses common religious identity: “Russian World is a historical Rus’ which contains territories of modern Russia, Ukraine and Belarus whose people are rooted in the Orthodox culture and ethics” (Sobornoye Slovo, 2022). In this particular hypostasis, the concept has a clear messianic undertone: “[...] the Russian World was ascribed a high vocation – to defend centuries-long notions of the good, truth, family and faith at the decisive historic moment” (Sobornoye Slovo, 2024).

Another option is the Russian World as a supra-ethnic community comprising representatives of different ethnicities under the common guidance of the Russian people, referred to as “the state-forming people” [государствообразующий народ]: “it would be wrong to understand the Russian World [...] in narrowly national, ethnic sense, and to restrict it to current political borders, perceiving Russian World solely as the Russian Federation” (Kirill, 2023). This conceptualisation has an evident disadvantage, for it poses a question about the Russian national identity and its relations with other ethnicities in the general framework of this “supra-ethnic community”, leading essentially to conceptual ambiguity. On the one hand, it is claimed that “Russian World unites different peoples and representatives of different religious traditions, who live on the vast territory of Russia”, while on the other hand any “revisionist ideas that question the state-forming role of Russian people and the Slavic identity of Russia are unacceptable in every possible way” (Sobornoye Slovo, 2024). In a similar vein President Putin claimed that “without Russians as an ethnos [этнос], without the Russian people [русского народа], there can be no Russian World, nor Russia as such (Putin, 2023).

In 2023, Patriarch Kirill addressed this complexity in the following way: while recognising the widespread practice of equating nation with the linguistic community¹¹⁸, he nevertheless rejected its applicability to the Russian nation for two major reasons: while (1) “the second and the third generation of Russian emigrants can barely speak Russian, but still think of themselves as true Russians [...]”, (2) “not everybody speaking and writing in Russian as the native language claims his/her belonging to the Russian people” (Kirill, 2023). According to Vladimir Putin, “[Russian] means much more than nationality [национальность]. It is also a cultural, spiritual, historical identity. To be Russian means first and foremost responsibility” (Putin, 2023). Both conceptualisations thus highlight the similarity of value-orientations:

“decisive is the cultural unity, which comprises cognition by nations of the unity of their historic fate [осознание народами общности исторической судьбы], as well as the unity of spiritual-moral values, from which the unity of worldviews emanates” (Kirill, 2023). This leads back to the perception of a nation as the metaphysical community of values, where geographic merges with culture:

“borders of the Russian World as spiritual and cultural-civilizational phenomenon are much broader than the state borders of both the current Russian Federation, as well as big historical Russia. Together with representatives of Russian oekumene scattered around the world, it unites all people for whom the Russian tradition, sacred places of Russian civilization [святыни русской цивилизации] and great Russian culture are the highest value and the ultimate meaning of [their] lives” (Nakaz, 2023).

It remains unclear, however, where the borders of this entity run eventually. One possible “point of reference” is the border of the ROC itself, its “canonical territory”: “the territory of the Russian Orthodox Church essentially marks the border of the Russian civilization” (Shchipkov, 2025). These borders can be conceptualized in two different ways. On the one hand, “borders of the Russian Church are not political, nor geographical in nature, but determined by supra-temporal [надвременный] and supra-spatial [надпространственный] catholicity [кафоличность] or Christian universality”¹¹⁹ (ibid). This is a classical reflection of Orthodox identity as a universal body: “[Moscow] Patriarchate is a single spiritual organism. Its parishes in Ukraine, Belarus, Baltic States [Прибалтике], Middle and Central Asia, Europe, Africa, South-East Asia and the US live a single spiritual life” (ibid). On the other hand, the ROC claims particular geographical areas as its “canonical lands”. For example, in 2022, the final text of *Nakaz* constituted that “forces, which stand behind Russian-Ukrainian internal fighting [междоусобица], aim at spreading it on all states that comprise the Russian World, on the whole of canonical territory of our Church: Russia, Belarus, Baltic States [страны Балтии], Moldova, states of Transcaucasia and Central Asia” (Nakaz, 2022).

Important is to note a conceptual development that the term “Russian World” has undergone during the years of tenure of Patriarch Kirill. In his enthronization speech, Kirill noted that

“Patriarch is the defender of canonical borders [канонических рубежей] of the Church. This tenure is acquiring special meaning in the situation which appeared after the emergence of independent states on the territory of historical Rus’. While respecting their sovereignty and taking care of the benefit of every single state, Patriarch has at the same time to take care of [...] the spiritual bonds that exist between peoples who live there, in order to preserve this system of values that a single Orthodox civilization of Holy Rus’ shows the world” (Kirill, 2009).

While containing major tropes of the Holy Rus’ discourse (spiritual unity, civilizational distinctiveness, etc), it was nevertheless rooted in the notion of respect towards sovereignty and territorial integrity of the newly independent states. And in 2015, when reflecting on the historical importance of baptism of Rus’, Kirill noted that “baptism doesn’t mean that our ancestors have joined some elite-like community of peoples [элитарное сообщество народов]”, because “Christ doesn’t have chosen peoples, He loves and awaits everybody” (Kirill, 2015). This can be understood as a rejection of national exclusivity. And yet, after the beginning of War in Ukraine, WRPC insisted that “Russia needs to go back to the tradition of triune Russian nation [доктрина триединства русского народа] that has existed for more than three centuries and according to which the Russian people consist of the Great Russians, Little Russians and Belorussians, who are branches (sub-ethnicities) [субэтносами] of a single people, and the term “Russian” comprises all Eastern Slavs, descendants of historical Rus” (Nakaz, 2023). Not only does this formulation deprive Ukrainians and Belarusians of their indigenous national identity, but it also paves the way to irredentist narratives: “after the end of SVO the whole territory of modern Ukraine should be incorporated into the sphere of exclusive influence of Russia” (ibid).

Besides a geographical dimension, the concept of “Russian World” has also a trans-historical one, uniting successive historical periods into a single continuum or timeline: “Russian World is all generations of our predecessors and our descendants, who will live after us. Russian World is the Ancient Rus’, Muscovy, the Russian Empire, Soviet Union, it is modern Russia that takes back, makes stronger and multiplies its sovereignty as the Great Power [мировая держава]” (Putin, 2023). The stability of state identity is achieved through the Church, whose “uniqueness lies in its transhistoricity [трансисторичность]: it serves as the link between different periods of Russian history, preserving the collective experience of the people” (Shchipkov, 2025). Here it remains unclear though, who “the people” essentially are. On the

one hand, Russia is “big, multifaceted [многоликая] country. In this multiplicity of cultures, traditions, and customs lies our strength” (Putin, 2023). At the same time, however, “creation of thousand-years-old Russian statehood is the highest form of political creativity of Russians as a nation [русских как нации]” (Nakaz, 2023)¹²⁰.

Russian civilization is one of many World civilization; notions of unipolarity, hegemony, and globalisation are rejected on essentially religious grounds: “from the viewpoint of Christian eschatology we do know what global universalism means, and we also know that without this global universalism there will be no one, who will aim at global power and with whose name the end of the world will be related” (Kirill, 2022a). Put differently, global universalism which aims at “the end of history” is related with Antichrist, whose appearance will precede it. In a similar vein, it was claimed that the ultimate historical mission of the Russian World is to “once and again break down attempts to establish a universal hegemony in the world – attempts at subjugating humanity to the single evil End” (Nakaz, 2023).

Thus, War in Ukraine gains a messianic dimension and the highest religious goal: “this is a war of the Heaven against the Hell, a war of angelic armies, a war of the army of Archangel Michael [рати Архангела Михаила] against the Devil [...]. On the one side there are we, Holy Rus’ [...] and against us there are powers of the absolute world Evil” (Dugin, 2022). And again, existential character of war is highlighted in Nakaz: “from a spiritual-moral point of view, the special military operation is the Holy War in which Russia and its people, while defending the single spiritual space of Holy Rus’, play a role of the Restrainer, who defends the world from a triumph of globalism and victory of the Satanic West [натиска глобализма и впавшего в сатанизм Запада]” (Nakaz, 2023). In this line, all elements of proximization are well presented with both IDC and ODC clearly defined, as well as detailed antagonism between them and potential consequences of the triumph of the Other.

3.2. Serbian World

In the selected materials, two discourses are particularly important: national suffering and territorial discourse centered on Kosovo and Metohija. Discourse of national suffering, humiliation and sacrifice is by far the most prominent, it is organically merged with notions of national identity and messianism. It is presented in historical terms, beginning from the humiliating defeat in Kosovo Battle (1389) due to “betrayal and disunity” which according to

President Slobodan Milošević “will continue to follow the Serbian people like an evil fate through the whole of its history” (Milošević, 1989).

Then, during World War II, genocide of the Serbian people was committed in the Independent State of Croatia by Ustaše regime with numerous concentration camps and places of mass executions enlisted separately in the final document of the All-Serbian Council. Special attention was paid to crimes committed against Serbian children during the War, with the aim being “to present the world [evidences of] immense suffering and genocide committed against Serbian people” (All-Serbian Council, 2024). The list of national sacrifices continues with Wars in the former Yugoslavia (1992-1995), and especially the operation “Storm” during which Serbia lost the self-proclaimed Republic of Serbian Krajina (in modern-day Croatia), triggering an outflow of ethnically Serbian population away from the region. Here, a religious narrative of purification through suffering is an important discursive element: according to Patriarch Porfirije, “our people have countless times, through suffering, sacrifice, and death, attained the inalienable experience of freedom and life”, so that “this exodus is not a trigger for despair but, on the contrary, an incentive for hope and optimism, for a free and creative life, for the welcoming of our future generations” (Porfirije, 2024).

Another instance of national humiliation was the Kosovo War (1999), referred to in popular discourse as “NATO aggression against Serbia”, but also in messianic terms, as an “inhuman and illegal aggression of the largest military power in history, the most disproportionate war conflict, the most disproportionate balance of power on the battlefield since the beginning of time” (Porfirije, 2023b). Here the discourse of national suffering merges with the discourse of Christs’ passions and Serbian people are equated with crucified Lord Jesus Christ: “thousands of men, women and children from our kin, were crucified [during NATO aerial bombings]” (ibid). In this passage, the nation acquires a new, religious-messianic identity, it evidently becomes theologised. The epistemic roots of this tradition are present already in the writings of Nikolaj Velimirović (1942), in whose opinion Serbs have historically lived in accordance with a special religious path – *theodulia* – “the service of God as the sense of life and the path towards the Celestial Empire” (Velimirović, 1942: 222). While not being able to travel to holy places abroad, Serbs had allegedly transformed their homeland itself into the Holy Land: “[Serb] has turned his home into a place of worship and a church; he has turned it into a monastery and the Holy Mountain; he has turned it into Jerusalem. He has placed the cross of

Christ on his house, dedicated everything to the cross and hallowed the divine and unknowable Holy Trinity” (ibid: 223).

A couple of important conclusions may be drawn from this quote. First of all, it gives basis to a particular form of national identity, based on the idea of “ethnic election” – i.e., Serbs are a chosen people, a *Theodul*, because of exceptional spirituality and moral qualities, evident in that “the Serbian people has always been on the right side of history [српски народ увек био на правој страни историје]” (All-Serbian Council, 2024). As a chosen people, Serbs bear a special responsibility for the preservation of God’s creation. Thus, the All-Serbian Council highlighted “the historical role of the Serbian nation, which liberated all other Balkan nations at the price of its own life” (ibid). Likewise, Slobodan Milošević insisted that “the Serbs have never in the whole of their history conquered and exploited others”, but rather saved Europe and the whole of Christian civilization instead: “Serbia was at that time [during the Battle of Kosovo] the bastion that defended the European culture, religion, and European society in general” (Milošević, 1989).

Second of all, it also lays the basis for merging of religious and ethnic identities, resulting in construction of the “Orthodox Serbian nation”, as in Patriarch Porfirije’s words: “Our people are the people of the Church of Christ, and therefore it should not surprise anyone that the way of life that is characteristic of us Orthodox Serbs is a life structured according to the order of the Gospel and the words of Christ” and later “we want to be what we are, Christ’s and Orthodox” (Porfirije, 2023a).

Exceptional spiritual qualities of the Serbian people rest upon three major narratives. On the one hand, Svetosavlje is considered a “special religious path” of Serbia: “Saint Sava revealed to us and explained that this unity is reflected in a man’s sense of responsibility for another man; that it is founded upon our communion with God, for He, God, is the common Father of all people” (Porfirije, 2025c). From this quote, another quality of the Serbian people arises, that of (spiritual, religious, civil) unity, preserved by the Church, who “gathers, she does not divide, she does not identify with any fragment; she is the entirety of the faithful people, she bridges differences and reconciles” (Assembly of Bishops, 2025). From doctrinal perspective, spiritual unity emanates directly from a commandment of Paul the Apostle: “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind

and in the same judgment (1 Cor 1:10)¹²¹ (cited in Porfirije, 2025c). In a similar vein, in the context of Socialist Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milošević also highlighted the virtue of unity that was absent from the Medieval feudal Serbian Kingdom and is needed at present: “Yugoslavia is a multinational community and it can survive only under the conditions of full equality for all nations that live in it”, although Serbian domination is still evident in his narrative: “unity in Serbia will bring prosperity to the Serbian people in Serbia and each one of its citizens, irrespective of his national or religious affiliation” (Milošević, 1989).

Kosovo can be conceptualised as the center of Serbian religeopolitical discourse: it serves as link between historical, religious and geographical discourses: “it is in Kosovo and Metohija that we joined the ranks of mature, historical peoples, and that it is through Kosovo and by Kosovo that we [i.e., Serbs] have built ourselves into the foundations of a respectable Europe and the entire respectable world of God and all its peoples” (Amfilohije, 2019). The use of the term “Kosovo” in relation to a geographic territory is considered inappropriate; in this regard the Council insists on “using the complete name of the Southern Serbian province – Kosovo and Metohija”, which is juxtaposed to a simple “Kosovo”, allegedly used only by “Albanian separatists” (All-Serbian Council, 2024). Not only are Kosovo and Metohija called “inalienable” parts of Serbia (in the legalist terms, according to its Constitution), but they are referred to as simply “*our* Kosovo and *our* holy Metohija” in the popular discourse (Porfitije, 2023c). What makes Kosovo and Metohija special for the Serbian World is its messianic character, conceived in the terms of the “Kosovo Covenant”, that “is by its nature a New Testament sealed not with ink but with the blood of our people” (Amfilohije, 2019).

Besides a historical narrative of the Kosovo Battle, Kosovo and Metohija are perceived as holy or otherwise sacred places because of religious sites located there (Orthodox churches, monasteries, cemeteries), which have historically belonged to SOC and comprise the core of its ecclesiastical structure – “the holy places, the villages and the cities, everything that makes Kosovo a pearl” – that the Church is entailed to protect and preserve in the present, because it “has always been on Kosovo. The Church has never deviated from Kosovo and Metohija, nor abandoned Kosovo and Metohija. [...] Never, not even now! The Church is on Kosovo and Metohija now and always will be!” (Porfirije, 2023c). Thus, Kosovo and Metohija should be considered the core of the Serbian World, “the very heart of our Motherland” that needs to be protected “as the apple of our eye”, an integral part of Serbian national identity: “Kosovo is our being, our breathing, our sight. Kosovo – that is us!” (ibid). Likewise, in Metropolitan

Amfilohije's words, "Kosovo and Metohija is the apple of our eye, the heart of our hearts, our holy city of Jerusalem" (Amfilohije, 2019). Here, an evident allusion is made to the concept of Promised Land, shared by many peoples of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Here, the pathos of Kosovo and Metohija is related to the messianic character of the Serbian value-core itself (i.e., values of the IDC): "if we are to live, let us live in freedom, and if we are to die, let us die for freedom, not just our own freedom and the freedom of our Kosovo and Metohija but for the freedom of every honorable person and people on the face of this earth" (ibid).

While evidently being the most important part of the Serbian World, Kosovo and Metohija are not the only territories that comprise what Patriarch Porfirije calls a "land given by God" (Porfirije, 2025c). Other territories include the former Republic of Serbian Krajina, Republika Srpska, as well as Montenegro. In selected materials, there are different lines of reasoning explaining why different territories are called "Serbian" or otherwise belonging to the single space of the Serbian World. On the one hand, there is ethno-national belonging, merged with religious identity: all territories where Orthodox Serbs live or have been historically present are considered "Serbian": "today, here with us in prayer, are our brothers and sisters from Šabac, Mačva, and Pocerina, from Valjevo, from other regions, from our Republic of Srpska, from our much-suffering but also proud Bosnia" (Porfirije, 2023a). The case of Republika Srpska is particularly interesting. While officially accepting the general framework of Dayton Peace Accords and committing itself to the preservation of Republika Srpska as a constituent part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is insisted that "institutions of the Republic of Serbia and Republika Srpska act unanimously and prevent the assimilation of Serbs in the countries of region [...]" (All-Serbian Council, 2024). In this context "preventing assimilation" essentially means preventing the unification of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the basis of common civil identity. Instead, Republika Srpska and Serbia – being part of a single spiritual-territorial space of the Serbian World – are supposed to preserve their exceptional unity, based on common identity. Likewise, Montenegro is referred to as a territory with a "centuries-old Serbian presence" which implies special relations with Serbia proper (ibid).

And according to another logic, it is national sacrifice and historical suffering of the Serbian people that gives bases for claiming some territories "Serbian lands", as evident in Patriarch Porfirije's formula: "this blood-soaked, blessed soil of Serbian land" (Porfirije, 2024). Here the historical suffering of the Serbian people serves as a justification for claiming territories sprinkled with Serbian blood as "Serbian lands".

3.3. *Ulster*

In the selected materials, there are three most prominent discourses: (1) covenantal discourse, (2) national betrayal and (3) fundamentalist¹²² discourse, all organically interrelated. To begin with, covenantal mentality is evidently underlying religeopolitics of Ulster, based on the text of Ulster's Solemn League and Covenant, where "men of Ulster"¹²³ and "loyal subjects of His Gracious Majesty King George V" swore not only to use "all means which may be found necessary to defeat the present conspiracy" of Home Rule, but also "to stand by one another in defending, for ourselves and our children, our cherished position of equal citizenship in the United Kingdom" and "to refuse to recognise" the authority of Home Rule Parliament, should it materialize one day (Ulster's Solemn League and Covenant, 1912). In the text of Covenant, there is a religious dimension, evident in that Ulstermen described themselves as "humbly relying on the God whom [our] fathers in days of stress and trial confidently trusted" (ibid).

The mentioning of God makes any possible surrender on the terms of the Covenant an act of religious treachery and thus necessarily also blasphemy, highlighting the existential character of this document. It also sets a transhistorical link: generations of Ulstermen succeeding each other are held together by a common Protestant faith of their forefathers. The need to return to God of Ulster's forefathers is a constant trope used by Ian Paisley on different occasions, typically in fundamentalist¹²⁴ context, as in his speech from 2004: "[L]et us renew our faith in the God of our fathers, and let us face our foes with a courage which will die rather than surrender" (Paisley, 2004).

This covenantal mentality gained further momentum in 1916, during the Battle of Somme, when "our gallant boys and men went over the top for King and Country" (Paisley, 2006). Their sacrifice sealed the Covenant with blood spilled during the battle, where "mercy was not pleaded for and mercy was not given" and "Britain's gallant soldiers [...] became Britain's gallant dead forever" (ibid). Ultimate sacrifice was made not only for the reason of Ulster's patriotism and loyalty, although these are very important tropes in the subsequent discourse, evident in many political speeches of Paisley, for example his 1995 address to the Democratic Unionist Party's (DUP) Annual Conference: "the spirit which inspired our forefathers to refuse to bow the knee to the enemies of liberty still burns in the breast of their sons and daughters" (Paisley, 1995). According to him, during the Battle of Somme, "the last enemy of mankind fell on its prey" (Paisley, 2006) which evidently added a metaphysical dimension to

this historical milestone. Patriotism is likewise an important trope, symbolising commitment of Ulstermen to Covenant: “that patriotism, which catching its inspiration from the immortal God and leaving an immeasurable distance below all lesser grovelling, personal interests and feelings, animates and prompts deeds of self sacrifice, of valour, of devotion and of death itself” (Paisley, 1991b).

In the most general sense, Ulster’s Solemn League and Covenant, sanctified with blood of Ulstermen, established the basic narrative in which religio-political discourse is rooted. Its messianic character and bloody sacrifices made in the name of Unionism is what makes any concessions impossible, because “no country suffered more than this whole island of Ireland, and no locality of any country in the world suffered like loyal Ulster” (Paisley, 2007). This is where fundamentalist discourse begins, marking a set of “irrefutable truths” upon which no compromises are possible, illustrated with Paisley’s words: “there is only one way we can walk, and it is the safe path of No Surrender to the enemy” (Paisley, 2006). The “enemy” that he was referring to is a multifaceted one. On the one hand, it is the Republic of Ireland, which effectively epitomises the “Gaelic civilisation, a civilisation viewed by Ulster and the rest of the United Kingdom as backward and negative” (Paisley, 1997). The legal claim made in the Constitution of Ireland (which in Paisley’s word is clearly “based on the moral theology of the Church of Rome”) for the entire territory of the island of Ireland is called the “irredentist claim” which ultimately “brought anger and contempt from Ulster” (ibid). Here, the Northern Ireland is called simply a “part of Her Majesty’s territory” (Paisley, 1991b) and the supposed equation of the British monarch with the Irish President in the context of Northern Ireland’s internal policy is taken not only as an indirect claim for the abolition of Ulster’s special status in the UK, but also as offense against the Sovereign (Paisley, 1998a). It is not a coincidence that in 1995, Paisley quoted at length the Book of Esther from the Old Testament, which tells a story of a Jewish woman Esther, whom Persian King Ahasuerus made his wife (thus, the Queen) and who was predestined to save her people (the Jews) from genocide. The British monarch is juxtaposed in this discourse with the figures of heads of Government, who are accused of betrayal of the interests of loyal Unionists and of “selling out” Ulstermen.

Another “enemy” of Protestant Ulster is the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the nationalist pro-united Ireland party Sinn Fein. These are used in the selected materials predominantly as one and the same (“IRA/Sinn Fein”), meaning that from a Unionist perspective, Sinn Fein is nothing more than just a political wing of the IRA, whereas both are described as “terrorist”

organisations. In this as well, the values possessed by Ulstermen (thus, the values of the IDC) are uncompromised: “we expect and demand [...] to defeat the I.R.A. terrorists so we must defeat Sinn Fein at the polls” (Paisley, 1984). These exceptional moral values were taken by Paisley together in a speech dedicated to the anniversary of the Battle of Boyne (1690), where he proclaimed that “for Protestants and unionists, the Boyne carries with it a powerful significance for our culture, our history and our pride. It represents liberty, triumph and determination” (Paisley, 2007). Thus liberty, triumph and determination are taken as the core values, which significantly overlaps with the narrative of the Book of Esther cited above, where the Jews triumphed over their enemies, liberated by Queen: “[O]n this day the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them, but now the tables were turned and the Jews got the upper hand over those who hated them” (Esther 9:1).

The juxtaposition of Unionists to the “IRA/Sinn Fein terrorists” is what enables Ian Paisley to draw a picture of the besieged fortress under the constant attack of “blood-soaked murderers” (Paisley, 1995). On the one hand, this is a continuation of the national sacrifice narrative, while on the other hand it paves the way to a new trope – that of injustice made by the British Government to Ulster, that constitutes a grave violation of the terms of the Covenant and thus a national betrayal or treachery: “today those who should be in the front line defending the Union are in cahoots with the enemy and surrendering in an unholy partnership the very principles that they swore to uphold” (Paisley, 1998a). Once again, a specifically religious discourse is used here to conceptualise the very act of betrayal in terms of a sin: “the worst and most loathsome person in society is the traitor - the Judas, the Iscariot. Who dares to excuse and whitewash treachery but he who is a party to that treachery?” (ibid).

Succeeding Governments in London were accused of treachery because of “surrenders” made to “ancient enemies” of Protestant Unionists. Three most important accusations were made against Margaret Thatcher after she signed the Anglo-Irish Agreement (1985), John Major for negotiating peace agreements with the Republicans, as well as for signing the Maastricht Treaty on the EU, and Tony Blair for signing the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement (1998). Although the Maastricht Treaty had less relevance for the religeopolitics of Ulster *per se* (Paisley was criticising it mainly as the head of DUP), rhetorically it was in the same line of Unionist narratives: “as Ulster’s sovereignty was sold at Hillsborough by Margaret Thatcher, so the United Kingdom’s sovereignty could be sold at Maastricht by John Major” (Paisley, 1991b). Signed on November 15, 1985 in Hillsborough Castle, the Anglo-Irish Agreement is

referred to as the “supreme act of treachery”, posing a constant threat to Ulster Unionism and undermining the Covenant: “The Union, our Province, our people and our future can never be safe while that parchment of treachery continues to be implemented. The diktat and our Province cannot co-exist” (ibid).

The use of the term “diktat” is supposed to highlight the fact that the Agreement was negotiated and signed by London and Dublin authorities and was put on Northern Ireland, whose opinion was not asked in the first place. Second of all, any supposed concession to the Republicans (Sinn Féin and IRA) was seen as betrayal of the fundamental principles of Ulster Unionism – no surrender – evident in Paisley’s own words regarding the Democratic Unionist Party’s principles: “I must say that this party which I lead will never go soft against any form of Republicanism. Republicanism is anathema to us and we will fight it at the polls continually and use the democratic process for its defeat and overthrow” (Paisley, 1984). In a similar vein, John Major was accused of “surrendering to terrorists” and “selling out” the Province: “Mr. Major is in the surrendering business to the IRA and its bedfellows John Hume, Dublin and the White House. Mr. Major is in the capitulating business to the IRA. Mr. Major is in the concession business to the IRA. Mr. Major is in the deceiving business with the IRA. Mr. Major is in the sell-out business to the IRA” (1996b).

The treachery discourse does not end with the London authorities, however. One of its major features is a fundamentalist undertone which leaves no room for “neutral” actors – there are only loyal adherents to the Covenant and traitors. Not only *prima facie* non-allied political parties in Northern Ireland (SDLP of John Hume and Alliance), but also fellow Unionists from the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) of David Trimble got eventually accused of treachery, for negotiating peace with the Republicans: “time and time again David Trimble has reneged on his promises and capitulated to the sell-out of our province” (1998a). In a sense, this discourse reached its apogee with Paisley’s personal political appetites. While running for the office he declared himself to be the only person capable of preserving Ulster from disaster: “anyone who studies the previous election figures for Europe will know that I am the only Unionist candidate in the field that can achieve this” (Paisley, 1984). This is also the apogee of Paisley’s religious discourse with him playing essentially the role of Messiah.

3.4. *Megali Idea*

In selected excerpts, two discourses are the most prominent: national suffering and national identity crisis, whereas the latter can be analytically divided into two: *who are we?* and *where is our national homeland?* When it comes to the national suffering, a sense of humiliation experienced by Greeks during the period of Tourkokratia is crucial, as described by Georgios Boussios: “there could be heard, everyday and without cease, the complaints of the nation, persecutions, violations, injuries and so many other illegalities which sullied the new regime and filled with desperation the souls of those who pinned so many hopes on the golden promises of its prime movers” (Boussios, [1912], 2010: 342). The major source of complaints was a despotic nature of Ottoman regime, evident in arbitrary and violent treatment perceived by subjects of the Empire – “the Turks, the Greeks, and all its inhabitants” (Philippidis and Constantas, [1791], 2006: 78). This “Oriental despotism” is evident in that the ruler, while “slaying, drowning, hanging, with his will as the only law, sets an example to his chief minister, and he to the next man, and so on down to the least thing”, which leads eventually to a situation where all men “fear for their life and their property, and most of all the rich, and many get up and go and settle in neighboring lands, there where the laws are sovereign” (ibid: 78). Arbitrariness and ethnic persecutions make up a prominent narrative of national suffering of Greeks: “our houses stripped bare, our fields plundered and ourselves wretched slaves!” (Ypsilantis, [1822], 2007: 400).

The slavery trope is another important aspect of the national humiliation discourse, expressed plainly in poetic lines of Rigas Velestinlis ([1797], 2006: 301), where it is contrasted with the freedom-loving character of the Greek people:

Better a single hour of a life that is free,
Than forty years of slavery and prison!
What is the good of living, if one is a slave?

The national character of Greeks is discussed further by George Seferis, who dedicated his text to Yannis Makriyannis – a national hero, who “even though he was illiterate, was by no means a mountain-dwelling, uncultivated barbarian”, but “exactly the opposite: he was one of the most cultivated spirits of Hellenism” (Seferis, [1943], 2010: 327). In Makriyannis’s figure, characteristic features of “the Greek spirit” (the value-orientations of the IDC) – patriotism, national election and self-sacrifice – fuse together, evident in Makriyannis’s own

words: “the positions [that Greek forces defend] are weak, and so are we. But the God that protects us is strong, and we will prove our good fortune at these weak positions” (ibid: 328). These are also “spiritual qualities of the nation” mentioned by Alexandros Ypsilantis: “unite, then, O brave and magnanimous Hellenes! Let national phalanxes be formed, let patriotic legions appear, and you will see those old giants of despotism falling by themselves before our triumphant banners” (Ypsilantis, [1822], 2007: 400).

Another discourse quintessential for religeopolitics of Megali Idea is a national identity crisis, described most bluntly by Giorgos Theotokas, in whose words “we [i.e., Greeks] represent nothing, no one takes us seriously, we cannot justify the place we hold in Europe and, in the eyes of foreigners, we are only money-brokers, boatmen, small-time grocers and nothing more” (Theotokas, [1929], 2010: 142). The first question that appeared after independence of Greece was “*who we are?*” with two possible answers given by authors belonging to different ideological lines: whether we are the descendants of Ancient Greeks – and through the classical culture of Antiquity that inspired the European Renaissance, also an integral part of the Enlightened West – or we are the descendants of the Orthodox Empire of Byzantium.

Adamantios Korais paved the way for a Western-oriented construction of the Greek national identity. In his opinion, despite the fact that Greeks were necessarily descendants of glorious Ancient Greece, “in the middle of the last century, the Greeks constituted a miserable nation who suffered the most horrible oppression and experienced the nefarious effects of a long period of slavery” (Korais, [1803], 2006: 144). Korais believed that education would elevate Greeks to the level of *civilization*: “we must either try to become again worthy of this name [i.e., Greeks] or we must not bear it” (ibid: 144). This line of reasoning was further supported by Markos Renieris, who praised return of Greece back to a European family of nation-states, insisting that “Greece, this homeland of Reason, could only return to the society of Western nations through Reason and not through violence and conquest” (Renieris, [1842], 2007: 311). A historic continuity trope between Antiquity and modern Greece is evident likewise in the letter of Ypsilantis, full of historical parallels with Ancient Greek history: “let us then once again, O brave and magnanimous Hellenes, invite liberty to the classical land of Greece! Let us hold a battle between Marathon and Thermopylae!” (Ypsilantis, [1822], 2007: 401).

This approach contrasted rather drastically with that preferred by the adherents of Christian Byzantine legacy, evident in a debate over the appropriateness of the very term “Hellenes” to

name modern Greeks. Dimitrios Katartzis, one the prominent opponents of “Westernizers” in Greek literary tradition, insisted that “this exaggerated tendency in Greek education and language, observed in certain personages of ours, who consider it an honor to be also referred to as Hellenes, is a thing unworthy of a Roman Christian” (Katartzis, [1783], 2006: 215). Here the distinction is made between pagan Hellenes of Ancient times on the one hand and Roman Christians of the Byzantine Empire on the other: “when Constantine the Great moved the kingdom to Constantinople, we were named Romans, and that is how all the nations of the world referred to us, and so we became accustomed to always refer to pagans by the name Hellenes” (ibid: 215).

According to this line of reasoning, Orthodoxy is the only authentic basis of Greek national identity and a foundation upon which Greece should be based. It is evidently juxtaposed to the Western heresy of Latinism: “the devil raised from the West another newer heresy for the ruin of the pious, I mean the Latin heresy, different in name but similar to the foregoing heresies and leading to destruction” (Anthimos, [1798], 2006: 308). Patriarch Anthimos warned against liberal attitudes, as well as a general pathos of “national awakening”, because “this new system of liberty is none other than a confusion and overturning of good government, a path leading to destruction or, simply speaking, a new ambush of the evil devil to lead astray the abandoned Orthodox Christians” (ibid: 310-311). In the text, messianic line is evident: according to Anthimos, Byzantium collapsed because it started “to deviate from the beliefs of the Orthodox faith” and was punished by God for its apostasy: “He raised up the empire of the Ottomans higher than any other kingdom so as to show without doubt that it came about by divine will, and not by the power of man, and to assure all the faithful that in this way He deigned to bring about a great mystery, namely, salvation to his chosen people” (ibid: 308-309). Thus, the Ottoman yoke could be seen as the way of national salvation, and so Anthimos encouraged Greeks to humbly subjugate themselves to the will of God.

Another vision of historic continuity was proposed by Constantinos Paparrigopoulos. While admitting the fact that “the inhabitants of the Hellenic lands were generally renamed Romans, or sometimes Greeks and Helladics, while the ancient meaning of Hellenism remained unknown”, he still insisted that the authentic essence of “Hellenism” is not the Orthodox faith, nor the Greek way of life, because “its religion is common to that of most of the Eastern peoples, while its institutions are common to most of those of the West. And such a way of life is more fitting today to the most civilized part of the human race” (Paparrigopoulos,

[1886], 2007: 78). Instead, Paparrigopoulos believed the Greek language to be this medium of national character. This didn't solve the crisis of national identity, however, because it was not clear what does "Greek language" mean – whether an artificially created *katharevousa* proposed by Korais on the basis of Ancient Greek, or a national vernacular (*demotiki*) – let alone Greeks in Asia Minor who didn't speak any form of Greek (so-called "karamanlides").

One possible solution was proposed by Ioannis Psicharis, who described his experience in the following way: "I write in the common language of the people; when our demotic language hasn't a word we need, I take the word from the ancient language and try, as much as possible, to match it to the grammar of the people" (Psicharis, [1888], 2010: 254). Another approach was proposed by Ion Dragoumis, in whose words the "Neo-Hellenic civilization will be even more perfect than the Hellenistic one of the Macedonians and the Byzantine one, if the nation succeeds in freeing itself from the learned tradition which weighed down both these earlier civilizations and prevented absolute free will, originality, and unbridled flourishing" (Dragoumis, [1914], 2014: 179). Thus, a radical break from the past was needed.

The last important discourse of the Megali Idea is a geographic one, dealing with the question of national homeland. According to Ioannis Kolettis, "due to its geographical location, Greece is the center of Europe; positioned thus, and having to its right the East, and to its left the West, it has been destined, on the one hand, by falling, to enlighten the West and, on the other, by being reborn, to enlighten the East" (Kolettis, [1844], 2007: 247). Kolettis was evidently dissatisfied with the current condition of Greece, which he found deeply at odds with its "natural boundaries", leading inevitably to the feeling of ontological insecurity:

"The Kingdom of Greece is not Greece. It constitutes only one part, the smallest and feeblest. The name Hellenes describes not only those who live in this kingdom, but also those who live in Jannina, in Thessaloniki, in Serres, in Adrianople, in Constantinople, in Trebizond, in Crete, in Samos and in any territory associated with Hellenic history and the Hellenic race. [...] There are two prime cores of Hellenism: Athens, the capital of the Hellenic Kingdom, and the City (Constantinople), the vision and hope of all Hellenes" (ibid: 248).

Here Kolettis evidently appropriated earlier discourses on national territory, described already by Daniil Philippidis and Grigorios Constantas, in whose opinion "the name of Greece could

certainly have been given to the whole of Asia Minor, the peninsula of the Taurus Mountains, [and] lower Egypt; because in all those places the inhabitants were almost [all] Greeks” (Philippidis and Constantas, [1791], 2006: 77). This particular vision of national territory laid basis for the whole of Megali Idea discourse, whose ideal “was the possible re-establishment of the former Hellenic Byzantine state, which went on to be crystallized in the fairly utopian “Great Idea,” a mixture of confused past aristocratic and present bourgeois ideas and instincts” (Skliros, [1907], 2010: 112). Here the notions of “Hellenic” and “Byzantine” compliment each other, leading “to the creation of a great and powerful Greece, which will not constitute an expansion of the state by conquest, but a natural return to the borders within which Hellenism was active from prehistoric times” (Venizelos, [1915], 2010: 266).

3.5. Towards a new theory of reliGEOpolitics

Results of the empirical analysis of four different cases have shown evident similarities that can be used for laying grounds of a new theory of religepolitics. These findings are not isolated, however, but have to be analysed in a broader perspective of the existing academic literature. To begin with, empirical results suggest that religepolitics gains momentum in the context of political crises and turmoils – dissolutions of former empires and the creation of new political bodies – when people face two kinds of questions: *who we are* and *where is our home?* This is evident in all four cases analysed in this Thesis: after the dissolution of Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, as well as creation of independent Hellenic Kingdom, newly-emerged states faced a new reality, where it was not clear what their new identity is and how to build relations with people of “their own kin” who remained outside new borders. Likewise in Ulster, independence of Ireland under the Home Rule posed a question about a supposed new role of Protestant minority in a new Catholic state.

These questions cause ontological insecurity – i.e., anxiety provoked by a disruption in the continuity of the Self – when people organised into polities lose a coherent understanding of who they are and where they belong¹²⁵. An attempt to overcome this feeling results in “the drive to minimize hard uncertainty by imposing cognitive order on the environment” (Mitzen, 2006: 346). This comes in the form of religepolitics – i.e., the creation of single continuous spaces of ethno-religious belonging, united by common values and shared nationalist myths, based on respective religious and cultural (linguistic, literary) traditions. In a sense, religious communities have an advantage in establishing a particular cognitive order, because of their relative stability based on a trans-historical character of the Church, its *catholicity*. Political

regimes, historical epochs and state borders change, but the Church as the personification of a religious community remains the same, it is based on unchanging foundations – the Holy Bible and ecclesiastical tradition. In this regard, religeopolitics is necessarily conservative and anti-modernist in nature, but they also can be conceptualised as fundamentalist doctrines.

Fundamentalist character of religeopolitics is evident in many instances. On the one hand, it is reflected in the idea of ethnic election, observable in all four cases. Here, besides what we have already known from Rogers Brubaker (the conflation of ethnic and religious identities), a new phenomenon arises – namely, the theologisation of national identity. Holy Rus' and the Serbian World are two most evident examples. In the first case, Holy Rus' is equated with the power restraining the advent of Antichrist (*Katechon*), while in the case of Serbian World, the Serbian nation itself is equated with the figure of Lord Jesus Christ: its historical suffering is presented as Christ's passions, while the predestined rise of Serbian state ("Greater Serbia") would be a reflection of His resurrection. Likewise in Ulster, the notion of Covenant implies the sacred status of the "Chosen people", and the provisions of Covenant should be strictly followed, because otherwise it would be a betrayal of God.

The ultimate result in case of a supposed failure of the chosen people to fulfill its mission and divine predestination, otherwise – to act in accordance with its religeopolitical role/identity – would be the advent of Apocalypse – i.e., the destruction of God's creation and the end of the World¹²⁶. This is where religeopolitics unites elements of Christian eschatology, messianism, metaphysics and apocalyptic tradition. In this regard, religeopolitical doctrines should not be seen simply as attempts at establishing political hegemony in the sense of *Realpolitik*, but rather as a messianic attempt at preventing the triumph of the Evil. In popular discourse, these concepts are frequently presented as "special communities of values" with an exceptional spiritual and moral character, distinct from others. These values comprise what Teun van Dijk (2006) called a "feeling of group belonging that is typically expressed by the pronoun we" (van Dijk, 2006: 119). Likewise, these are values that typically indicate a special moral character of the community, being in conformity with the will of God and thus worthy of being *chosen*. These can be analytically defined as values of the *realis*. This special character doesn't only show close relations with the deity, it also indicates a mission that the chosen people are called to achieve: to prevent the Apocalypse.

Discourse space lying between the IDC and the ODC is layered, with the role of IDC being fulfilled by the Church (with the possible exception of Megali Idea case, where the Church – be it Hellenic Orthodox Church or Constantinople Patriarchate – is less prominent than state authorities). The church is the body of Christ, “the fullness of Him Who fills everything in every way” (Ephesians 1:23), surrounded by her flock of believers. The more distant from the IDC, the more antagonistic, adversarial and hostile are the values of particular entities: in the peripersonal space of the Church, there are allies and neutral actors, while in the extrapersonal space there are physical enemies (independent states, social collectivities, supra-national entities and religious communities), followed by metaphysical entities (the Devil, the absolute Evil, Antichrist). This is the space of *irrealis*, as presented in Table 6:

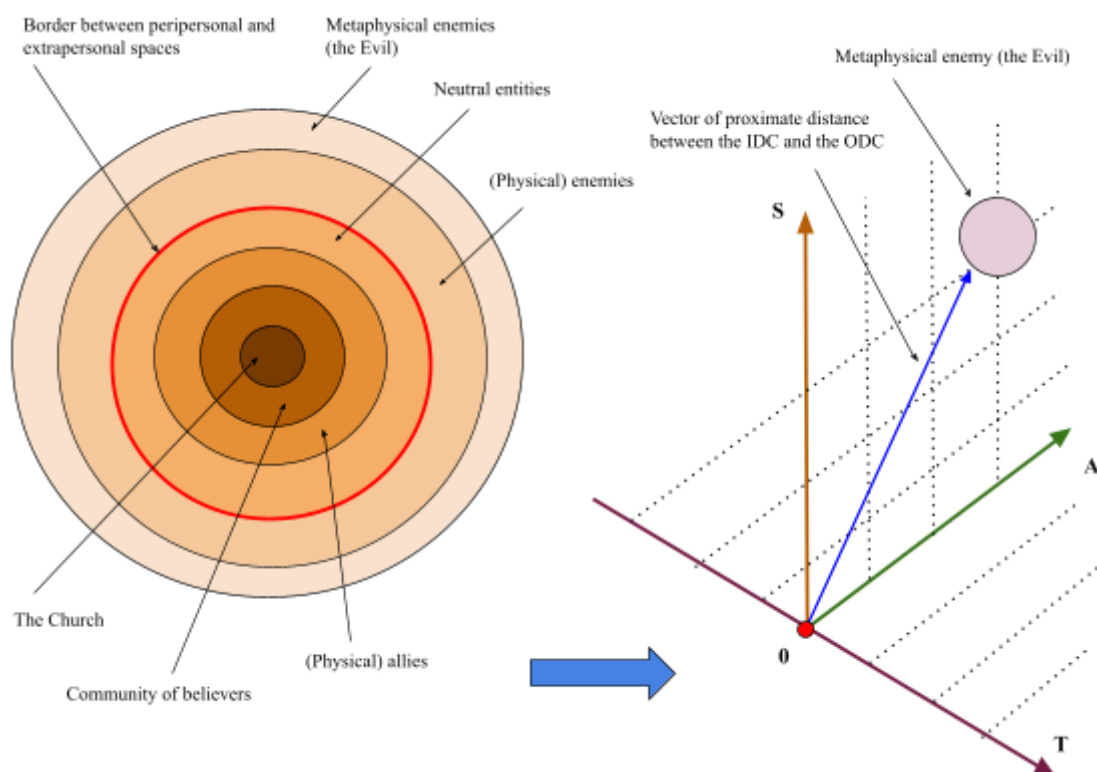
Case/ feature	Parameter 1: enemies according to the relative distance between the IDC and the ODC				
	Peripersonal space			Extrapersonal space	
	IDC	Near/close	In between	Distant	Metaphysical
Holy Rus'	ROC, “our people/army/ President”, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine	Moldova, Kazakhstan, Transcaucasia	Baltic States, Orthodox parishes in Western Europe and the USA	The West, NATO, the US, LGBTQ+	Antichrist, the Absolute historical Evil, Devil
Serbian World	SOC, Serbian people, Kosovo and Metohija, Republika Srpska	Montenegro	Other Christians of the Balkans, the Slavs	NATO, Islam, Albanian separatists	The Devil, the death, the Evil, Antichrist,
Ulster	Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster, loyalist people of Ulster, DUP	Orange Order, Ulster Defence Forces, UUP	SDLP, Alliance, mainland UK	Sinn Fein, I.R.A., Dublin, Republic of Ireland, Roman Catholic Church	“the last enemy of humankind”
Megali Idea	Greek Church, Greece, Greeks, “our nation”, Constantinople	Karamanlides	Macedonia, Epirus, Thrace	Latinism, the Turks, Islam	The Devil, a wild Beast
Case/ feature	Parameter 2: value-orientations of the entities according to the relative distance from the IDC				
	<i>realis</i> → <i>irrealis</i>				
	IDC + Close entities	Entities in between	Distant entities	Metaphysical enemies	

Holy Rus'	Orthodox faith; traditional family values, canonicity, patriotism, self-sacrifice, love, kindness	Orthodox faith, brotherhood	Secularism, liberalism, moral relativism, colonialism,	Trans-humanism, paganism, satanism, occultism
Serbian World	Orthodox faith; traditional family values, patriotism, self-sacrifice	Orthodox faith, ethno-national proximity	Separatism, ethnic and religious persecutions	Tyranny
Ulster	Protestant faith, loyalty, patriotism, self-sacrifice, valor, resistance	Protestant faith, lack of unity	Terrorism, violence, betrayal, homosexuality	Perversions, treachery
Megali Idea	Orthodox faith, canonicity, democratic spirit	Orthodox faith, ethno-national proximity	Lawlessness, despotism, barbarity,	Anarchy

Table 6. Layered Discourse Space with different entities and their value-orientations.

Three conclusions can be drawn from this Table. First of all, as in the writings of Schmitt, “enemy” is always a public enemy [hostis/πολέμος], not *personal adversary* [imicus/ἑχθρός] (Schmitt, [1932], 1996: 28) – this is a distinctive feature of political theology evident also in empirical cases. Second of all, the peripersonal space is held together by common values and a single identity, where religious and ethno-national features merge together, as discussed by Rogers Brubaker (2012: 9). Finally, the distinction between *realis* and *irrealis* evidently has a “life vs death” dimension: values of the IDC are portrayed as pro-life/pro-birth with discourse of “traditional (family) values” clearly dominating over death-related discourses of the ODC.

The above discussion can also be portrayed as a concentric circles model as in Graph 8:



Graph 8. Proximate distance between the IDC and the ODC in reliGEOpolitica discourses.
Note: 0 stands for the Church.

A similar logic is evident regarding the sacralisation of geographical space. What Anthony Smith wrote about the territorialisation of historical memory holds true, but besides holy places (churches, monasteries, cemeteries) and sites of historical events (baptism, battles), there is also a religious tradition of worshipping some places as blessed territories which can be identified in the empirical cases. In this regard, the more venerated the place is, the more it resembles the metaphysical Holy Land. What is likewise evident is that the general logic of place-making, according to Robert Sack, holds true: “sacred” territories are “carved out” of space and elements of nature, meaning and social relations are interwoven. In religeopolitical discourses, the element of meaning clearly dominates, and the very act of sacralization of territory can be described simply as attributing sacred meaning to a particular geographical area (geopiety)¹²⁷. In different cases the sacralisation takes different forms: in the Serbian World discourse, sacredness comes from religious sites and the monastic tradition of veneration, while in the Russian World it comes primarily from the metaphysical juxtaposition of *Holy Rus’* to the *Satanic* West. Likewise, in the Megali Idea discourse the purity and universality of Orthodoxy is juxtaposed to the heresy of Latinism, as well as liberal nationalism. Yet in the case of Ulster, sacredness comes from the strict adherence to the terms of the Covenant.

4. DISCUSSION

In this subchapter, a connection between linguistic and social practices is summarized once again, to be further discussed in the light of existing literature. Likewise, possible avenues of future analysis are identified.

In Norman Fairclough's theory, discourse consists of two elements: the communicative event and the order of discourse, whereas the former comprises in itself the text, discursive practice (i.e., how texts are produced and consumed) and social practice (Fairclough, 1995b, cited in Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 67-68). Earlier we have defined *religeopolitics* as the particular *order of discourse* consisting of "master discourses". These are, essentially, communicative events. In the centre, there are particular texts: a portion of them was used as an empirical material during the analysis. These texts are interrelated semantically, in a sense they belong to the same semantic sphere (that can also be institutionalised, as in the case of WRPC, for example). Here, earlier texts influenced the creation of later ones (direct citations are a good indicator in this regard), while at the same time the later texts influence the way the former ones are re-interpreted. This is a cyclical process of interpretations and re-interpretations.

What remains less evident, however, is the relation between discursive and social practices. This is where one can claim that the discourse *does things* and where questions of ideology and power become important. Sacralization of territory – the attribution of sacred meaning to particular geographical areas – necessarily includes the construction of identity of the Self. As a result, there is a clear understanding (a kind of "mental map") of *who we are* and *where we belong*. This understanding is important for overcoming the feeling of anxiety and ontological insecurity, engendered by a rupture in the otherwise stable identity. Particular reasons why this rupture has taken place in the first place are less important, but they are typically of endogenous character and do not depend on actors themselves. Construction of identity of the Self requires existence of the threatening Other, in relation to whom the Self constitutes itself. Linguistically, this process goes through proximization which portrays the Other as a close, imminent threat that requires active measures. This need is expressed in messianic and apocalyptic terms: if the Other is not exterminated, the Apocalypse will follow.

This is where discursive practice transforms into social practice: threatening Others, chief among which are metaphysical entities (the Evil, Devil or Antichrist), are conceptualised as

“public enemies” which need to be fought back. These public enemies can be portrayed as political entities (states), social organizations (political parties) and groups (queer people) or religious communities. These are dangerous, because their value-orientations threaten the very existence of the Self – thus, they tend to be portrayed in the “life vs death” dichotomy.

The transformation itself takes place through the mechanism which is conceptualised in the literature as “sharp” or “evil” power projection. The term “sharp power” was coined by Peter Mandavile “as distinct from either the positive allure of soft power [*of Joseph Nye*]¹²⁸ or the use of military force often associated with hard power”; it “refers to the use of information, communication, and technology tools to disseminate ideas and messages likely to sow discord and tension in target societies” (Mandavile, 2022, cited in Kilp and Pankhurst, 2022: 4). In this regard, epistles of Patriarch Anthimos against the Latins, together with political speeches of Rev. Ian Paisley against the Roman Catholic Church (as well as political bodies such as Irish Republic and successive British Governments), which exalt the idea of opposing the “enemy” and exhorting the audience to take some active measures in this regard, can be conceptualised through the prism of “sharp power” projection. Important is to note that “active measures” do not necessarily imply the destruction of the enemy *per se*. Rather, the audience is asked to refrain from having anything in common with the supposed “Other”. However, when the Church is advocating for physical extermination of the enemy, another concept is needed – that of “evil power”. According to Kilp and Pankhurst (2022), this term denotes “power exercised in service to immoral or unethical state actions” which makes it suitable to denote instances when the Church is actively promoting the elimination of the “enemy”, typically through the frame of “Holy” war (Kilp and Pankhurst, 2022: 6). This is evident most clearly in the case of ROC, although some narratives of Serbian clerics (e.g., Metropolitan Amfilohije) can be also conceptualized as evidence of “evil power”.

The last notion which remained – for the most part – outside the scope of the ongoing Thesis is the relation between ideology, narratives and discourse. If one agrees with Amaglobeli’s (2017) assessment that discourse is a “manipulative linguistic strategy which serves concrete (ideological) goals” – which seems to hold true, according to results of empirical analysis – there should be an intrinsic connection between ideological predispositions expressed through particular *narratives* (i.e., “what is being told”) and contained in corresponding *discourses* (i.e., “how it is being told”) (Amaglobeli, 2017: 19-20, van Dijk, 2006: 117). Although there is an open philosophical debate up to what is ideology in the first place and what is its

relationship with religion,¹²⁹ empirical results suggest that religeopolitics as a particular order of discourse is grounded predominantly in conservative, nationalist and fundamentalist ideology. From these ideological systems, major narratives and discourses identified above emanate. What remains unclear, however, is the exact mechanism of translation of ideological beliefs and statements into narratives and discourses which are confined in religeopolitics as a special *order of discourse*. This is a possible avenue for future research.

5. CONCLUSION

This MA Thesis began with a recognition of the fact that there is evident conceptual omission present in academic literature: despite voluminous literature on place-making (discussed mainly in the school of critical geopolitics), there has been paid much less attention to the role of religion in this process and geopolitics were seen predominantly in the secular paradigm. The research problem underlying this Thesis was thus formulated in the following way: transformation of the geographical space into metaphysical notions of religious communities of belonging. The term “religeopolitics” was borrowed from the writings of Larry Nyroos to designate particular spatial imaginations based on religious discourse. The ultimate goal of this Thesis was to improve the general understanding of religeopolitics in the way that would enable us to fill the existing conceptual omission – i.e., to better understand the role of religion in the process of place-making and to formulate a new grounded theory of religeopolitics that would devote attention to the religious component.

The theoretical framework is based on three major provisions. First of all, in the domain of nationalism and religion, ideas of Anthony David Smith were discussed, according to which nationalism features “sacred dimensions” that enable it to function in a similar way with religion (although they do not equate religion with nationalism on the ontological level). These “sacred dimensions of nationalism” were ethnic election (whether of messianic or covenantal type), sacred territory, ethno-history (i.e., “golden ages” in the history of a nation), as well as national sacrifice. To this theory, a proposition of Rogers Brubaker was added, which views the relationship between nationalism and religion not as exogenous one, but ascribes nationalism the special role: it becomes a feature essential to religious identity, evident in the attempt to equate religious and national identities. The second theoretical provision concerned the sacralization of territory, evident in the phenomenon of geopiety: here, particular geographical areas are ascribed religious character and become sacralized. The sacral meaning can be attributed whether because of the presence of religious objects of worship (churches, cemeteries, monasteries) on the territory, or because some important historical events (battles, baptisms) have taken place there. In the case of battles, the blood spilled on the land is seen as one of the reasons why a particular nation has the right to this territory. Otherwise, the fact of ancestors living there (and their graves remaining there) can be another argument. Finally, the third theoretical provision was about critical geopolitics – i.e., the art of statecraft which views the geographic territory as the basis for policy

formulation and highlights the importance of discourse in it: Earth-writing is not a neutral entrepreneurship, but a power projection with long-lasting consequences.

The methodological framework is based on the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach of Norman Fairclough. This method was selected strategically, considering its ontological and epistemological bases, including the understanding of discourse as comprising both linguistic and non-linguistic elements (thus, discourse analysis means essentially the analysis of linguistic features identified in the selected textual materials), special attention paid to the concept of power and critical character that asks the question *why* something is the case. First of all, four empirical cases – Holy Rus', Serbian World, Ulster and Megali Idea – were selected, according to the MDSD (*Most Different Systems Design*) logic: despite differences in religious denominations to which particular cases belong, as well as timeframes and the character of threatening “Other” in relation to which particular identities are constructed, all four cases are similar in a sense they have been historically related with some form of violent conflict which at the same time explains their societal importance and academic interest. For every empirical case, a separate corpus of texts was selected, according to the “snowball” logic – i.e., at first, “monuments” or nodal texts of particular importance were selected, followed by texts for which they served as the basis and/or point of reference. Because of differences in cases, textual corpora are not identical and in every case, a specific genre dominates (whether historical texts/essays, political documents, interviews, statements or the like). The total sample consists of 88 textual fragments, approximately 121 000 words.

After the completion of text selection, empirical analysis was conducted. In the first place, textual fragments were analysed using the QCMap software. The textual analysis followed both deductive and inductive logics: for the deductive parts, elements identified earlier (in the theoretical part) – i.e., “sacred dimensions of nationalism” of Anthony Smith and linguistic aspects of proximization of Piotr Cap – were identified in the text, while inductive logic was evident in that “empirics led the way”. Separate elements with particular semantics (called “semes”) were identified, to be later analysed in a comparative perspective.

In the introductory part, three research questions (RQs) were posed:

RQ1: What role does religion play in the formation of religeopolitical discourses?

RQ₂: How are religeopolitical discourses constructed, represented and disseminated?

RQ₃: What is the connection between religion and territoriality practices and how religion-territoriality nexus affects the construction of religeopolitical discourses?

Religion plays a central role in the construction of religeopolitical which is evident in both identity construction (*who we are?*) and conceptualising particular geographical areas as holy lands (*where do we belong?*). Religeopolitical constructs are essentially communities of values that elevate inhabitants to the level of “chosen people”. Their construction is typically related with the period of identity crisis, when a sudden rupture breaks the continuum of stable perception of oneself as a coherent Self which causes the feeling of anxiety and ontological insecurity. The response is establishment of new routines, performed through identity construction and place-making that take place in relation to some threatening Other who – by utilizing the linguistic features of proximization – is portrayed as near, imminent and dangerous – i.e., its values are incompatible with those of the Self, thus they threaten the very existence of the Self. Religion adds a metaphysical dimension of transcendence to it: the ultimate Other is perceived in religious terms as Antichrist or the abstract notion of historical Evil, while the religious community of belonging – by adhering to the values it possesses – is called to perform the function of the Restrainer, who keeps away the advent of Apocalypse.

In this regard, the religious dimension serves as the force multiplier, it elevates the discourse to the level of the existential, requiring the immediate response to the danger posed by the Other, whereas the ultimate response would be the physical extermination of the enemy. In this sense, religeopolitics enables states to perform military actions otherwise prohibited by the provisions of law.

All in all, this MA Thesis laid the basis for a new theory of religeopolitics: it answered the research questions in a meaningful and comprehensive way and diverted scholarly attention to the otherwise neglected notion of religion in the process of place-making. Further research of the topic which would elucidate remaining aspects of it (e.g., the relation between identity, narratives and discourse) is appreciated.

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8. APPENDIX

8.1. Endnotes

1. Dutch sociologist of religion Merteen ter Borg (2009) once made a joke that “as terms, power and religion have at least this much in common, that to reach conceptual agreement about their precise meaning seems next to impossible” (Ter Borg, 2009: 195).
2. A debate on four faces of power derives from the underlying definition of power presented by Robert Dahl in 1957 with different authors trying to critically rethink and re-assess its coherence and validity. The debate was opened by Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz who published an article in 1962, where they claimed effectively that one can not decide for sure on the presence or absence of power by merely analysing the actions of agents. They wrote: “[O]f course power is exercised when A participates in the making of decisions that affect B. But power is also exercised when A devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to A” (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962: 948). Thus, what Bachrach and Baratz were actually claiming is that power can be evident also when the result is non-decision. Indeed, what is important is an ability to influence the agenda-setting (Selg, 2021: 192). The third face of power was added to the debate by Steven Lukes, whose influential book “*Power: A Radical View*” (1974) contained an idea that power can express itself not only through active influencing of someone with the aim being to get him/her do something which s/he would not otherwise do, but also through tacit (undercover) influencing of someone’s preferences so that agent B does indeed do something that A wants, but s/he is at the same time convinced that it is his/her natural desire, not the will of another agent (ibid: 193). Finally, Michel Foucault added yet another face to this debate. Foucault went beyond the classical idea of power as a relationship between agents, conceptualising it as a constructive force which establishes agents in the first place, as well as the relationship between them.
3. Power of religion emanates from economic, political, as well as cultural resources of the actor and/or particular organisation or state that has accumulated so-called “sacred” capital, be that of symbolic, cultural, or network type (Bettiza, 2020: 3). The “sacred capital” is based primarily on religious resources which – although it would be difficult to express numerically – “may include holy sites, sacred artifacts, spiritual leaders, places of religious learning and knowledge production, official institutions, and significant lay organizations” (ibid: 2).
4. Historically, religion and nationalism were closely related: *pathos* of the Reformation, which postulated that salvation is achievable only through faith and that the true faith in turn can be based only on the Holy Scripture (*sola scriptura*), demanded that everyone be able to read the Holy Bible, which led in turn to the standardisation of vernacular languages and increased literacy rates. Thus, according to one scholar, “the Reformation laid the groundwork for imagining nationhood through the medium of language” (Brubaker, 2012: 7).
5. For example, the Medieval Byzantine Empire was an Orthodox state in a sense Orthodoxy was the underlying identity category and its purpose was “to secure divine favor (especially on the battlefield – *in hoc signo vinces*)” (Heith-Stade, 2023: 186).
6. In the Netherlands, in the nineteenth century, the basic principle of social organisation was so-called “pillarization”. As described by Ter Borg, “the dominant structure was not a class structure, but a structure of “pillars”. A “pillar” was a conglomerate of organizations, defined in terms of a particular worldview or religion” (Ter Borg, 2009: 207). Thus Catholics workers joined the Catholic *bourgeoisie*, but not Protestant workers. The same situation was evident in Northern Ireland, where sectarian division partitioned the whole of society.

7. The famous outcry of James Craig (Prime Minister of Northern Ireland in the period 1921-1940) who declared Stormont to be “a Protestant parliament for a Protestant people” is paradigmatic in this case.
8. Thus, one could not comprehend meaningfully the concept of *Holy Rus*’ without understanding such fundamental theological ideas as Holy Trinity or the concept of Katechon, which is an important identity category for modern Russia which sees itself as the “shield, restoring order in the face of an Antichrist embodied by a West that is destroying itself and others” (Laurelle, 2025: 195).
9. In the case of Northern Ireland, the separation line has traditionally run between (Irish Nationalist) Catholic and (British Loyalist) Protestant communities, although this division is in fact too simplistic. Not only were there Protestant Nationalists, as in the case of Stephen Gwynn, who “belonged to a small, but vitally important, constituency in the Nationalist party whose chief function was to demonstrate to British public opinion that Irish Protestants would not be persecuted by Ireland's Catholic majority under Home Rule” (Loughlin, 2007: 164), but the Protestant community itself consisted of different religious denominations (Presbyterians, Anglicans, Methodists, etc), whose political objectives were at times very different (on this matter, see Morris, 2011).
10. In the scholarly literature, a separate term “ethno-religiosity” – i.e., “a specific symbiotic merger of one’s ethnic and religious heritage as a means of providing a sense of personal and collective identity” (Mojzes, 2011, cited in Tozer, 2016: 77) – was coined to describe such instances, when ethnic and religious categories of personal identity intertwine.
11. A conceptual similarity is evident here with the ideas proposed by Benedict Anderson in his famous book “Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism” ([1983], 2006). Similarly, George Soroka has noted that “ethnic nations, wherein belonging is assumed to stem from consanguineous descent and typically involves sharing common cultural, linguistic, historical, and religious repertoires, have long conflated the sacred with the profane” (Soroka, 2022: 2).
12. Anthony Smith also noted that nationalism brought a new dimension of cultural pluralism to 19th century politics, where before that only political pluralism existed, thus “supplementing traditional and territorial legitimations with the new criterion of popular culture” (Smith, 2000: 795).
13. Elie Kedourie himself recognised this aspect in his later works, presenting an analytical framework for studying the relationship between religion and nationalism, distinguishing (1) a “secular replacement” model (nationalism replaces traditional religions); (2) a “neo-traditionalists” model (nationalism is utilised in the non-Western societies in connection with traditional belief systems in order to combat colonialism), as well as (3) “secular religion” thesis, where nationalism effectively becomes “theologised” (Smith, 2000: 794).
14. Those are particular points of reference in national history, such as Ancient Greece and the Byzantine Empire for modern Greeks.
15. Patristics - “[T]he study of the lives, doctrines, and writings of the Fathers of the Church, esp. as a branch of theology” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2026).
16. Early patristics were written primarily in the context of diarchy – i.e., “the parallel existence of spiritual and temporal authority within a Christian society where both the emperor and church hierarchs formally belonged to the same religion” (Heith-Stade, 2023 177).
17. *Corpus Juris Civilis* officially consisted of three parts (*Codex Justinianus* - *Digesta* - *Institutiones*) and one annex which was added later on to the major corpus of text. It was entitled “New Constitutions” (*Novellae Constitutiones*) or simply the “Novels”.
18. In their pursuit of the leadership in the Eastern Christendom, Muscovite rulers went back to the letter of Ecumenical Patriarch Anthony IV to Grand Prince Vasily I of Moscow

(1371-1425), “in which the patriarch states that all Christians must be obedient to the one emperor” because the Holy Scripture “does not recognize many kings but only a single emperor” (1 Peter 2:17) (Heith-Stade, 2023: 182).

19. Formally, Moscow Patriarchate was established in 1589, when Patriarch of Constantinople Jeremias II consecrated Metropolitan Job as the first Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus'. Historical circumstances of Jeremias's decision have been fiercely debated in academic literature. On the one hand, there was a clear desire on behalf of Muscovite ruler Boris Godunov (*de facto* regent 1585-1598, Tsar from 1598 until 1605) to cement his position in power through ecclesiastic matters, acknowledged by many Russian historians (Sergejev and Vsevirov, 2017: 74). On the other hand, faced with financial difficulties and in a desperate need of material support, Patriarch of Jeremias II himself went to Moscow, where he was (somewhat lukewarmly) welcomed by Tsar Feodor I Ivanovich and placed under the *de facto* home detention, until he gave his support to consecrate Job as Patriarch (ibid: 80-88). Upon his return to Constantinople, Jeremias II convinced other Eastern Patriarchs (all under the control of the Ottoman Empire) to support this decision. Moscow Patriarchate was granted the fifth position in the diptychon to a great disappointment of Muscovite elites, who demanded the third place, which would support their aspirations to become the leading force of Eastern Christendom, the “Third Rome” (ibid: 90).

20. Regalism - “[T]he doctrine of the supremacy of the monarch in ecclesiastical matters; the exercise of this supremacy” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2026).

21. In the subsequent nationalist tradition, the Greek Orthodox Church becomes intimately intertwined with the Greek state, which is evident in the foundational myths of the Greek Revolution (1821). According to this myth, “[...] the Metropolitan of Old Patres Germanos (1771–1826) blessed the flag of the Greek revolution on the feast of the Annunciation, March 25” (Hovorun, 2018: 49; see also Appendix 8.2.1).

22. Concordat is essentially an agreement between two parties and can be seen from three different perspectives: (1) a legalist reading supposes that the State dictates terms of the agreement and Church accepts them; (2) contract theory views Parties as equal actors, while (3) a privilege theory believes in supremacy of the Church over the State in ecclesiastic matters (Heith-Stade, 2023: 191).

23. Basically, Thomas Aquinas confirmed principles elaborated earlier by Saint Augustine and added two more principles of his own: “the degree of force used in war should be proportionate to the ends sought, and war fought in the defence of life was justifiable” (Rowe, 2012: 209).

24. Constantine-Cyril and his brother Methodius were Byzantine scholars from the Greek city of Thessaloniki, whom the Emperor Michael III sent as Christian missionaries to Slavic tribes – Bulgarians, Moravians, later on also Kievans – in order to baptize them. In order to spread Gospel in local vernacular languages, Cyril and Methodius invented a new alphabet – Glagolic script – which was designed specifically for Slavic dialects; later on it was transformed into Cyrillic script. Cyril and Methodius are worshiped as saints in the Eastern Orthodox tradition. It is possible that the text of *Vita* was put together by Clement of Ohrid, one of the disciples of Cyril and Methodius. At the end of his life Cyril became a monk and took a new name – Constantine, thus his double name Constantine-Cyril (Ivanov, 2003: 149-152, 157-172).

25. In hagiographic texts Demetrius is said to spear Bulgarian Tsar Kalojan, whereas it is important that he is presented “as the defender of the city and its flock, killing the foreign, aggressive ruler but refraining from further bloodshed” (Saggau, 2024: 4).

26. Exact meaning of the canon XII, as well as its theological justification, can be analysed from two different perspectives. On the one hand, it was related to the “condemnation of Christian participation in (Roman) military service” (Stoyanov, 2009: 167), but not

necessarily because of warfare as such. Rather, what frustrated Christians was the necessity to venerate and worship Roman gods, as well as the Roman emperor (the personification of the Roman state), that went hand-in-hand with the military service and was evidently at odds with Christian teaching (as a clear form of paganism condemned in Christianity). A more detailed theological elaboration on warfare can be found in the “Eastern Orthodox Christian canon law, as in the 13th Canon of St Basil the Great, from his first Canonical Epistle to Amphilochus, Bishop of Iconium (378), according to which the act of killing during war needs to be distinguished from voluntary murder, although it is advisable that the perpetrators should be refused communion for three years” (ibid: 169). St Basil wrote: “homicide in war is not reckoned by our Fathers as homicide; I presume from their wish to make concession to men fighting on behalf of chastity and true religion. Perhaps, however, it is well to counsel that those whose hands are not clean only abstain from communion for three years” (St Basil of Caesarea, [1895], 2026).

27. “When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come” (Mk 13:7).

28. Throughout the text of this MA thesis, the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible is used for biblical quotes, accessible online: <https://www.biblegateway.com/>.

29. It is remarkable, how small a role has geography of religion played in the academic discussion to this day, which can be partially explained through “religious studies with clear theological and phenomenological aspiration that connect holiness with the God’s epiphany instead of social and communicative processes behind ascribing it in the first place (Kippenberg and Stuckard, [2003], 2021: 106).

30. It was Thomas Luckmann (1967) who introduced the concept of transcendence in relation with religion for the first time. Luckmann – being deeply influenced by such thinkers as Helmuth Plessner and Friedrich Nietzsche – believed that humans come into this world incomplete, thus they need to transcend their biological habitus in order to achieve wholeness which they initially lacked. Merteen Ter Borg writes that “it is because of this transcendence that Luckmann calls man a religious animal” (Ter Borg, 2008: 230). While Luckmann believed humans to be *religious animals* exactly because of this necessity to transcend and referred “to what people end up in, after this transcendence (their worldviews), as an elementary form of religion, a term coined by Durkheim,” Ter Borg sees it only as a *precondition* for religion (ibid). In his view, a human being is an *animal transcendens*, but religion demands much more than just going beyond what is given now and here, it also needs *belief* in powers that transcendence provides us with (ibid: 232).

31. From this Thomas Hobbes concluded that the natural cause of religion is “an anxiety for the time to come” (Hobbes, [1651], 1909: 82). Thus he found it to be self-evident that “the seed of religion is onely in man” (ibid: 81). It should be noted, however, that Hobbes made a clear distinction between pagan religions and Christianity: while he was ready to agree with ancient philosophers “that the Gods were at first created by humane Feare” he was nevertheless convicted that “the acknowledging of one God Eternall, Infinite, and Omnipotent, may more easily be derived from the desire men have to know the causes of natural bodies, and their severall vertues, and operations; than from the feare of what was to befall them in time to come” (ibid: 83). Put differently, when talking about Christianity, Hobbes supported the Aristotelian idea of the First Mover, “an Eternall cause of all things” (ibid: 83). If everything in the universe has its own cause, there should be the First cause from which all consequences derive.

32. This logic is evident already in Schmitt, who understood territory as “a bounded space under a control of a group; a quasi-Weberian definition that may provide the terms to be analysed, but is hardly a theory in itself” because it was “far too static, and seemingly ahistorical” (Elden, 2011: 98).

33. Seen from the epistemological perspective, a notion of “weaving” necessarily implies a sense of situatedness and agency, i.e., “weaving” implies a “weaver” who has a sense of coherence” (Kress, 2011: 36). Thus, it is never a “neutral” or otherwise “abstract” notion, but one which is centred around a particular actor, his interests and thus also power relations. It is also worth mentioning that although in different places different elements might prevail (e.g., meaning in the church and social relations in the prison), all three elements are always present in places (Sack, 2001: 108). Overall, one has to bear in mind that according to Sack, it is because of the “loom-like quality” of places that we can weave together elements of the natural environment, meaning and social relations (ibid: 111).
34. From this it also follows that “the occupation and denomination of land can thus be seen as a spatial ontological gesture” (Minca, 2011: 168)
35. Construction of places through the attribution of meaning raises a question, whether “place” should be analytically perceived as merely a discourse, a “discursive site”. Some postmodernists – especially those working in the Derridain tradition – would support this proposition, claiming that “we can never escape language, and so virtually everything, and everything geographic, is a form of language” (Sack, 2001: 115). But this would erect immediately a counterargument, namely that there should be the Self, an author to interpret the canvas of the discourse. This Self, however, would be trapped into the same prison of discourse (ibid). Another argument could be raised by scholars raised in the tradition of Foucault, who “allows that there is more to the world than language, but that we are still prisoners, and this time of contexts and forces that surround us and make us irretrievably situated and pawns of power” (ibid: 115). This position is open to the same kind of criticism, however, namely that “if we and our knowledge are prisoners of contexts and become their instruments, then how would he – Foucault – know this unless he has escaped the prison to become less situated” (ibid).
36. The contested genealogy of a concept of homeland can be traced back to Herder, who criticised the Ancient concept of Fatherland (literally, *land of the fathers*, i.e. soil where ancestors were buried) for its excessive belligerence and wrote instead that “not the earth beneath our feet but the air we breathe, the father’s hands that hold us, the mother’s breast that feeds us, the sun we see, the siblings we play with, and the friendly natures that are good for us” is what underlines the national cradle: “the father’s house, a father’s field, family” (Herder, [1795], 2004: 110).
37. To be precise, “critical geopolitics divides geopolitics into formal, practical, popular and structural geopolitics” (Ó Tuathail, 1999: 109). According to Ó Tuathail, “[F]ormal geopolitics refers to what is usually considered “geopolitical thought” or “the geopolitical tradition”. It is a problematic of intellectuals, institutions and the forces shaping geopolitical thought in particular places and contexts. Practical geopolitics is concerned with the geographical politics involved in the everyday practice of foreign policy. It addresses how common geographical understandings and perceptions enframe foreign policy conceptualization and decision making. [...] Popular geopolitics refers to the geographical politics created and debated by the various media-shaping popular culture. It addresses the social construction and perpetuation of certain collective national and transnational understandings of places and peoples beyond one's own borders [...]. Finally, structural geopolitics involves the study of the structural processes and tendencies that condition how all states practice foreign policy” (ibid: 109-110).
38. Structural similarity between geopolitics and religion is even further cemented by the observation that the former is “fetishistically concerned with “insight”, and “prophecy” (Ó Tuathail, 1999: 109).
39. Schmitt noted that while “the soil of European Christian princes and peoples was distributed, according to the land law of the time, among princely houses and crowns,

churches, cloisters and sponsors, lords of the land, castles, marches, cities, communities and universities of various types”, the soil of non-Christians was considered “Christian missionary territory” and thus open for conquest (Schmitt, [1950], 2006: 58). The same was true for warfare: “wars among Christian princes were bracketed wars”, i.e. “they were distinguished from wars against non-Christian princes and peoples”, because they “did not negate the unity of the *respublica Christiana*”, whereas wars against non-Christians were “holy wars” if declared by the pope (ibid).

40. This is evident in the underlying principle of geo-theo-spatial thinking of that era: “cuius regio, eius religio” (“whose realm, his religion”) which “privatised or nationalised religion in international public life” (Nyroos, 2001: 137).

41. According to this particular work of Huntington, civilizations objectively exist “out there”, they are “broadest cultural entities” defined “both by objective elements, such as language, history, religion, customs, institutions, and by the subjective self-identification of people” (Huntington, 1996: 43). It needs to be highlighted, however, that in his later works, Huntington himself questioned the applicability of the dispositional approach to civilizational analysis, rejecting the notion of rigid and “objectively given” civilizational identities, arguing rather for constantly changing identities “in flux”.

42. Ideas of Danilevsky and Huntington, exemplifying a dispositional approach to civilizational analysis, are quite different from a modern understanding of civilizations as “configurations, constellations, or complexes” that “are not fixed in space or time” but rather “are both internally highly differentiated and culturally loosely integrated” (Katzenstein, 2010: 5). In a discursive approach, the idea of civilizations existing “out there” is rejected and they are treated rather as “social constructs that are changeable, heterogeneous, interactive, and flexible” (Hale and Laruelle, 2021: 597).

43. The most important laws established by Danilevsky postulated that civilizations are based on linguistic distinctiveness, they can develop fully only under conditions of political independence and their development is non-linear: a relatively long period of collecting vital forces is followed by a short period of cultural flourishing (Danilevsky, [1869], 2025: 107-108).

44. There were features that directed Danilevsky away from the main stream of Slavophiles, however. Danilevsky sincerely believed that “each civilization should be judged by its own cultural and developmental laws, not by an external yardstick, because they are all “unique and incommensurable” (ibid: 153). He thus rejected the idea of “catching up” or “joining” Europe (which he called a “Romano-German world”) and envisioned rather “the idea of culturally breaking away from Europe” which effectively meant development of a new civilization “of its own, Slavic type, that would progress on the basis of its own laws” (Tsygankov, 2017: 579).

45. Here and later on all translations of Danilevsky are made by the author himself, based on the text: Danilevsky, N. ([1869], 2025). *Russia and Europe. A Look at the Cultural and Political Relations of the Slavic World to the Romano-German World* [Россия и Европа. Взгляд на Культурные и Политические Отношения Славянского Мира к Германо-Романскому]. Saint Petersburg: Azbuka

46. This was similar to Schmitt’s distinction between friend and enemy underlying his understanding of the concept of the political, where “to the enemy concept belongs the ever present possibility of combat” (Schmitt, [1932], 1996: 32).

47. In this regard scholar Gunther Kress (2011) notes somewhat ironically that “the term [discourse] names a large territory, located somewhere between two ‘markers’, which might, generally speaking, be something like ‘providing accounts of connected stretches of language in use’ and ‘uncovering salient social, political, psychological features in text-like entities” (Kress, 2011: 35).

48. This is because “discourses operate as background capacities for persons to differentiate and identify things, giving them taken-for-granted qualities and attributes, and relating them to other objects”, thus defining what is sayable (Milliken, 1999: 231).
49. From the viewpoint of discourse theory it is important that “representations that are put forward time and again become a set of statements and practices through which certain language becomes institutionalized and “normalized” over time” (Dunn and Newmann, 2016: 5).
50. Important is to note that “meaning of words, of sentences and of discourses are in mind, not objectively given” (Chilton, 2004: 48).
51. The concept of a “statement” is in fact a rather complicated one: according to Ernesto Laclau, “a statement cannot be considered as a proposition because the same proposition can involve two different statements. [...] It cannot be considered as an utterance either, because different utterances can involve the same statement. Finally, statements cannot be identified with speech-acts, given that the former are restricted by Foucault to what he calls “serious speech-acts” – those that are not ordinary, everyday speech-acts, but are constituted through an authoritative or autonomous activity” (Laclau, [1993], 2007: 544).
52. Note the conceptual similarity with Milliken (1999: 231).
53. This commitment has also a methodological implication, namely “the study of geopolitical reasoning necessitates studying the production of geographical knowledge within a particular state and throughout the modern world-system” (Ó Tuathail and Agnew, 1992: 194).
54. Paul Chilton is talking about two possible coordinate systems – egocentric and allocentric systems. The difference between them consists in particular “points of reference” (which can be also called the “anchoring point” if one so wishes), i.e. in the allocentric system, the basic point of reference is Ego (the Self, i.e., speaker - *see an additional commentary No 16*), so that the position of any kind of objects in space is seen relatively to the Self. On the other hand, in allocentric systems the point of reference is not the Self (the speaker), but some other object. Chilton takes the phrase “*John is in front of the church*” as an example: in the egocentric coordinate system, there “ego is the Speaker, S, who is oriented toward (i.e., facing) the church and *John’s* position is between the oriented speaker and the church” (Chilton, 2005: 84). If one switches the type of a coordinate system from the egocentric to the allocentric one, the basic point of reference would be the church itself and it is relative to the church’s “front” that John is located (*ibid*).
55. Despite the fact that “spatial, temporal, and social deixis are usually distinguished from one another”, on the linguistic level “space is in some way more fundamental” (Chilton, 2004: 57). This implies that temporal and axiological positioning is frequently done in spatial terms: e.g., in the English language it is common to describe temporal constructs in terms of distance and/or motion – “time flies”, “near future”, “we are approaching the end” etc. In a similar vein, social relations (value orientations) can also be understood in spatial terms, as in “close allies” or “distant relations” (*ibid*). According to Ó Tuathail, in the classical geopolitical writings of the second half of the 19th - beginning of the 20th century, “geographical difference was translated into a temporal schemata of backward and modern. To travel beyond Europe, therefore, was to travel back in time; to earlier backward stages in the evolution of human civilization” (Ó Tuathail, 1998: 20).
56. On the level of functional linguistics, modality implies three distinct notions: (1) epistemic modality stands for the degree of certainty, (2) deontic modality deals with permission and obligation, while (3) negation is marking the opposite (Chilton, 2004: 59).
57. In order to understand why the Self (described through the special pronoun I) is necessarily the speaker, one has to return to the writings of the French linguist Émile Benveniste (1902-1976). The fundamental proposition of Benveniste was the fact that

subjectivity – “the capacity of the speaker to posit himself as “subject” – is “only the emergence in the being of a fundamental property of language”, thus “ego” is he who says “ego” (Benveniste, [1966], 1971: 224). He proceeds further by implying that “language is possible only because each speaker sets himself up as a *subject* by referring to himself as *I* in his discourse” (ibid: 225). A personal pronoun *I* is peculiar in a sense “there is no concept “I” that incorporates all the *I*’s that are uttered at every moment in the mouths of all speakers, in the sense that there is a concept “tree” to which all the individual uses of *tree* refer” (ibid: 226). Instead, “*I* refers to the act of individual discourse in which it is pronounced, and by this, it designates the speaker” (ibid). All in all the Self referred to by the means of personal pronoun “I” should necessarily be the speaker himself.

58. Designating a particular instance of discourse as “political” tacitly implies the acceptance of an ontological conviction that “political discourse is different in kind from other forms of discourse in that it is political” which leads, in turn, to a methodological position which requires that political discourse “should be analysed primarily as such” (Hay, 2003: 321).

Colin Hay believes this proposition to be erroneous, leading to what he calls a “methodological absolutism”. For him, a better alternative would be “to conceive of the political as a more or less developed and significant dimension of all social interaction” so that “all discourse, as social, contains a political element or dimension – whether or not we choose to draw attention to it analytically” (ibid: 324).

59. Piotr Cap uses the term “axiological axis” instead of “modal axis”, it “involves different ideological beliefs and values which the addressee in the deictic center interprets relative to their own predispositions [...]” (Cap, 2008: 36). Thus, his theory is called the “STA” model.

60. A philosophical movement of methodologists (rus *методологи*) emerged from the Moscow Methodological Circle established by a Soviet linguist and philosopher of language Georgii Shchedrovitskii (1929-1994) in 1958. While Georgii Shchedrovitskii “developed a not very original philosophy of language and worked fruitfully on the methods of pedagogics with the focus on active learning through games”, his followers – son Petr Shchedrovitskii, Iurii Krupnov, Efim Ostrowskii and Sergei Fradievskii – were fascinated with how language influences politics, as well as “scientific methods” of studying cognitive processes and meaning-action nexus (Suslov, 2018: 334).

61. George Soroka prefers a concentric circles model when talking about “spatial arenas of interest for the [Russian] Church”: (1) Holy Rus’ in the center, uniting modern Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus, (2) “Orthodox neighbourhood” consisting of countries “with which Russia shares much in common culturally, historically, and linguistically” (Serbia, Bulgaria), lands with big Russian-speaking diasporas (Latvia, Estonia), as well as other Orthodox-majority states” (Greece), and finally (3) “far abroad” with sporadic Slavic communities (Soroka, 2022: 8).

62. According to the Statute of the Russian Orthodox Church, its jurisdiction (referred to as “canonical territory” in the ecclesiastic tradition) comprises territories of all former Soviet republics – except for Georgia and Armenia – as well as China, Mongolia, Japan and those Orthodox people living in other countries who “voluntarily belong” to the ROC (Statute of the Russian Orthodox Church, 2024: Chapter 1, §3).

63. Oleksandr Zabirko calls Prince Andrey Kurbsky (1528-1583) “Russia’s first political refugee”, because he defected to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania amidst Livonian War in 1564. Kurbsky and Tsar Ivan IV (1530-1584, Grand Prince from 1533, in 1547 Ivan IV was crowned as Tsar for the first time in Russian history) continued their correspondence for roughly 15 years after Kurbsky’s “political emigration” (1564-1579). “Violent deeds and cruelty” that Kurbsky was referring to, were first and foremost oprichnina (1565-1572) – mass repressions, killings and confiscation of property organized as part of Ivan IV’s official policy at that time.

64. President Vladimir Putin referred to this alleged “unity” of three republics in his article “On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians” published in July 2021 (Putin, 2021), just half a year before the full-scale invasion of Ukraine which took place in February 2022.
65. According to Oleksandr Zabirko, archimandrite Lavrentii’s formula “obviously has its origins in the idea of a ‘triune nation’ of the Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians, which was coined by Russian imperial authorities in the nineteenth century already to oppose the menace of Polish nationalism in the western borderlands of the empire” (Zabirko, 2022: 20).
66. The year 988 is generally accepted as the year of the baptism of Rus’, it originates from the “Primary Chronicle” (rus *Повесть временных лет*) written by a monk Nestor the Chronicle from the Kyiv Pechersk Lavra in the form of Byzantine annals – “year-event” – in the second half of the 11th century, although no precise dates are established (Sergejev and Vseviiov, 2007: 27). It is an official chronology accepted by the scholarly communion, although there are interpretations of how the Christian religion achieved the lands of Rus’. One of those interpretations postulates that it was Saint Andrew, one of Jesus Christ’s Apostles, who went to the lands of Rus’ and established a cross on one of the hills that the city of Kyiv was established upon later. The story goes as follows: after the cross was built, St. Andrew blessed the land and prophesied that here a powerful city will be built (see Appendix 8.2.4). In the Russian Empire (and later in the Russian Federation as well), the most honorable order was the Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle the First-Called with a distinct inscription “SAPR” on it, standing for *Sanctus Andreas Patronus Russiae* – Saint Andrew, the Patron of Russia (Sergejev and Vseviiov, 2007: 76-77).
67. II Thessalonians 2: 3-10.
68. Likewise, the Roman Empire was envisioned as “an antithesis of Anomia [that] will exist until the Second Advent, restraining the chaos. This empire has no constant temporal or spatial characteristics and can manifest itself on the territory of different states (*translatio imperii romani*)” (Ergström, 2014: 263). Eschatological perception of the universal monarchy as the ultimate power preventing the advent of Apocalypse is largely based on Hebrew prophecies, especially those of Daniel. According to this line of reasoning, “universal history up to the advent of the Messianic kingdom is shown by Daniel as a succession of four empires, represented either by the parts of the idol that appeared in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream or by four animals, which tradition interprets as the Babylonian, Persian, Macedonian and Roman empires” (Stremoukhoff, 1953: 84). Interesting to note that “at times, this fourth empire of Daniel was regarded [...] as the kingdom of Antichrist (Apocalypse); at others, as the power by which the advent of Antichrist was being held back” (ibid).
69. Likewise, Schmitt insisted that “the Empire of the Christian Middle Ages lasted only as long as the idea of the *katechon* was alive” (Schmitt, [1950], 2006: 60).
70. The term “Nuclear Orthodoxy” as a description of the Russian messianic ideology was proposed and popularised by Egor Kholmogorov, inspired by the painting of Russian conceptualist artists Alexey Belyaev-Gintovt and Andrei Molodkin “Nuclear Orthodoxy” (2001), a part of their series “Novonovorossiysk” (Новоновооросийск). It depicts “a deeply frozen Russia” with the nuclear submarine on the forefront, “where the rubber of the missile submarine resembles a cross” (Ergström, 2014: 369, see Appendix 8.2.6).
71. There is an open scholarly debate in the academic literature going on, as to which literary source is the “authentic” one. Besides Epistles of monk Philotheus there are also such literary sources as the paschal canon of Metropolitan Zosima (1492) and the Tale of White Cowl (Ostrowski, 2006: 171-173). As literary sources, however, neither one of them is reliable. It is true that Zosima’s canon names Moscow “the Third Rome”, but it does so only in one preserved text, while other copies of the document refer to Jerusalem, so that it is possible that in one of the copies the word “Ierusalim” (Jerusalem) was erroneously written as “Rim” (Rome) (ibid: 172). The *Tale* claims that “Rus’ lands” as a whole is the Third Rome, it is

pro-Novgorodian in character and can barely support the claim of Moscow to be the successor of the Byzantine Empire (ibid: 173).

72. Russia's official position on the question of values and general ideological orientation of the state is well-documented and can be distilled from major strategic documents adopted in the later years. Adopted in 2022, Federal Law № 809 on the "Bases of the state policy regarding preservation and strengthening of traditional Russian spiritual-moral values" enlists 21 "values" which it calls "moral benchmarks that form the worldview of Russian citizens" (Federal Law № 809, 2022: §4). Those values include, but are not restricted to, notion of "rights and liberties of citizens", "patriotism", "high moral ideals", "strong family bonds", "priority of the spiritual over material", "humanism", "justice" and "collectivism" (ibid, §5). In a similar vein, the Concept of the Foreign Policy refreshed in 2023 stipulates that one of major foreign policy objectives of Russia in the international arena is "to promote traditional Russian moral and spiritual values, preserve cultural and historical heritage of the multi-ethnic people of the Russian Federation" (The Concept, 2023: ch III §15.8).

73. Serbian written language operates in two scripts: while the traditional variant would be to use the cyrillic script, it is also possible to write words down in the latin script. Throughout this Thesis, the latin script is predominantly used, except for instances, where direct quotations from Serbian sources are taken, although in these cases translations into English are always provided.

74. The word "myth" does not mean a mere historical fable. Rather, "myths that combine religion and politics have been milestones in the creation of national identity", they are "powerful elements that connect the past with the present" (Leustean, 2008: 421). In studying myths historical accuracy is not so important, because they are "historical and anti-historical at the same time": on the one hand "they are historical in content, being based on real past events, and in reception, since they evoke the past for their various audiences", while on the other hand the ahistorical element of a myth implies "the historical separation between past and present by contemporizing the past or historicizing the present" (Bieber, 2008: 97-98). As such, "the strength of a political myth is that it is rooted in 'common sense', as something that has always been because it is so normal" (Vukasović and Stojadinović, 2023: 131).

75. According to historical examinations, "it took nearly another century for the Ottomans to subdue the remnants of the declining medieval Serbian state and consolidate their control of the Balkans" (Rejep, 1980, cited in Bieber, 2008: 96).

76. According to Bojan Savić, "to support this imagined intrinsic and quasi-physical bond between the "Christian civilization" and Prince Lazar's army, historiographers and *politicos* would cite the bells of the Notre Dame cathedral in Paris and King Charles VI of France who allegedly ordered that they ring and that masses of thanks to be sung to celebrate Serbian heroism and another Christian victory" (Savić, 2014: 698). Although it is yet one more instance of mythologisation of history and does not have any real historical evidence to support this claim, the trope of Notre Dame as the quintessence of Christianity is a powerful symbol which provides the Kosovo myth with external validation.

77. St Vitus Day.

78. After the end of War, two prominent bishops of Serbian Orthodox Church – Nikolaj Velimirović (himself a prisoner of the Dachau concentration camp, later on canonised by the Holy Synod of SOC) and Irinej Djordjević "claimed that the Ustaše regime in Croatia killed large sections of the Serbian population in concentration camps similar to those set up by the Nazis", deepening the ostensible similarity with Christ's passions (Leustean, 2008: 428).

79. The epistemological roots of the term "biopolitics" lie in the works of Michel Foucault, especially his *The History of Sexuality. Volume 1: An Introduction*, where Foucault claims that power can be also exercised in relation to physical bodies, as in instances of birth control, public health and demographic policies (Foucault, [1976] 1978). Characteristically for the

works of Foucault, the concept of power is taken here in the form of discourse: the way we talk about human bodies affect the way we treat them and the kind of policies we utilize. From this biopolitical paradigm, a special discourse emerged, concerning not only treatment of the human bodies and aspects of biological life, but also decisions on the matter of life and death, i.e., who is supposed to live and who is supposed to die. This discourse is referred to as “necropolitics”; its major theorist is a Cameroonian scholar Achille Mbembe, who dedicated his scholarly research to the topic of colonialism and colonial policies in Africa, summarized in his work *On the Postcolony* (2001). Mbembe’s writings are conceptually related to similar works of critical scholars who theorised the phenomenon of power from the life/death perspective. Chief among them is Giorgio Agamben, who proposed the term “homo sacer” to describe life exposed to inhuman treatment on behalf of those in power (Agamben, [1995] 1998).

80. *The Draft* had for a long time been kept in secrecy, it was published for the first time only in 1906.

81. Ottoman Slavs - northern Bulgarians.

82. Political reality in the middle of the 19th century was such that “whereas the other Balkan peoples were relatively compactly settled, the Greeks were widely scattered throughout the Near East” (Clogg, [1992], 2002: 47). While in Athens there were approximately 26 000 inhabitants, “the Greek population of Constantinople at that time was almost five times larger at 120 000” (Clogg, 1998: 255).

83. Rigas Velestinlis was not the only national leader who believed that “Greece” was in fact much bigger than the territory of the modern Hellenic Kingdom. In a similar vein, Neophytos Doukas (another prominent leader of the national awakening in Greece) was writing in 1811 that “when I pronounce the sweet name of the Hellenes I do not mean only those few inhabiting the lands of ancient Greece, but simply the whole area in which the modern tongue of the Greeks is spoken [...]”, referring essentially to “all those living between the Pruth and Nile Rivers” (cited in Clogg, 1998: 255). Historian Roderick Beaton mentions that “Battle Hymn” was “the only part of Rigas’s doomed political programme that had been widely disseminated” (Beaton, 2019: 128).

84. A separate map of Constantinople (referred to as simply “The City”) was added to the main map later.

85. Because the legal system of the Ottoman Empire was based essentially on the Islamic law, which “presupposed the existence of only one head, the *millet-bashi*, in a religious community”, a new system of governance was created (Shishkov, 2016: 384). Under this peculiar system of millets, “the Patriarch of Constantinople was the head of the Orthodox community [*the so-called “Rūm-millet”, literary – the “Roman nation”*], the largest among the non-Muslim communities of the empire” (ibid).

86. There were other prophecies as well, predicting the resurrection of the Byzantine Empire, for example the popular legend of *Marmorenos Vasilias*. “[A]ccording to this, Constantine XI Palaiologos bravely fought alongside his troops in the defence of ‘The City’ until at last his horse was killed under him and he fell to the ground. A Turkish soldier, with sword in hand, was poised to cut him down when suddenly an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, seized the Emperor and took him to a cave deep beneath the earth near the Khrysoporta, one of the gates of Constantinople. There he lay, turned into marble, awaiting the day when the angel would return to rouse him” (Clogg, 1998: 257).

87. The Ottoman period.

88. In a similar vein, Konstantin Leontiev – another prominent thinker of Byzantine legacy – claimed in 1873 that “Hellenization of the Balkan peninsula – the “Great Idea” – becomes impossible” (Leontiev, 1873, 2005: 177). Here and later on all translations of Leontiev are made by the author himself, based on the text: *K. N. Leontiev. The Full collection of literary*

texts in 12 volumes. Volume 7, Part I. Articles from the period 1862-1879. [К. Н. Леонтьев. Полное собрание сочинений в двенадцати томах. Том 7, часть I. Публицистика 1862-1879 годов]. Saint Petersburg: Publishing House "Vladimir Dal".

89. Indicative in this regard is the quote from the travelogue of the economist Nassau Senior, put together shortly after the end of the Crimean War (1853-1856). According to the text of the travelogue, a local Greek man (referred to simply as "Zeta") told the author "Do not think that we consider this corner of Greece as our country, or Athens as our capital, or the Parthenon as our national temple. The Parthenon belongs to an age and to a religion with which we have no sympathy. Our country is the vast territory of which Greek is the language, and the faith of the Orthodox Greek church is the religion. Our capital is Constantinople; our national temple is Santa Sophia, for nine hundred years the glory of Christendom. As long as that temple, that capital, and that territory are profaned and oppressed by Mussulmans, Greece would be disgraced if she were tranquil" (cited in Clogg, 1998: 253).

90. According to Günal and Balci (2026), "[Hellenic Orthodox Church] formally embraced the irredentist aspirations of the Megali Idea, which called for the restoration of the Byzantine Empire as proof of an uninterrupted historical lineage from antiquity", mainly because its "idealization of the Byzantine past [...]" facilitated a reinterpretation of Greek history and the birth of an irredentist ideology. This vision aimed to reclaim former Greek Orthodox territories stretching from the Aegean to the eastern Mediterranean, including parts of Asia Minor" (Günal and Balci, 2026: 131).

91. Bulgarian schism - the creation of an independent Bulgarian Exarchate separate from the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

92. This opinion was mainly rejected in Russia. Konstantin Leontiev, for example, claimed that it was a nationalist policy of Greek churchmen in Bulgaria that alienated local population from the Hellenic Orthodoxy; although he didn't support particular *means* by which Bulgarian Exarchate was established, claiming them for the most part "uncanonical", he nevertheless insisted that "the schism has brought the Bulgarians more benefits, than to the Greeks" (Leontiev, [1873], 2005: 206). He insisted further that "*relative to the previous situation, the Bulgarians will keep getting stronger, while the Greeks, despite all their efforts, will keep getting weaker relative to their earlier demands*" (ibid, *the italics as in original*).

93. In the beginning of the 20th century, Greece entered a protracted period of political turmoil, in the center of which was the conflict between Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos and King Constantine. During the First World War, this conflict was fuelled by rivaling sympathies of two politicians: while Venizelos supported the *Entente*, King Constantinos sympathised with Germany, not least because he was married to the sister of Kaiser Wilhelm II (Clogg, [1992], 2002: 84). Controversy was further accelerated with different foreign policy orientations: while Venizelos was "wholly identified with an aggressive policy in the prosecution of the "Great Idea [...]", the king and his supporters were advocates of "a small but honorable Greece", which should first consolidate its hold over the new territories before engaging in hazardous irredentist adventures" (ibid: 87). The conflict led to several resignations of Venizelos from the position of Prime Minister and has been traditionally referred to as the "National Schism" in Greek historiography.

94. Despite organisational differences characteristic of the Presbyterian Church, there were also dogmatical matters that influenced local Scots in relation to other communities in Ireland, for "being Scottish in origin meant that the people were Presbyterian in religion and seriously so" (Akenson, 1992: 124).

95. During the Plantation of Ulster, the Calvinist dogma of predestination effectively advanced the Scottish aims, for they "could easily define the natives as immutably profane, and damned, and oneself as predestined to virtue" (Akenson, 1992: 112).

96. The history of Ireland is full of “national sacrifices” made by different ethno-religious communities. In the Protestant myth, the massacre of 1641 and the Battle of Somme (1916) are two most prominent historical milestones, when Protestant blood was spilled for the ideal of Covenant. Likewise, among Irish Catholics, the Easter Uprising of 1916 designates the “sacrifice” of nationalists made in the name of freedom and liberty.

97. The notion of landscape as a distinctive category comprising the “national territory” or otherwise a “homeland” was perceived differently by different communities in the UK. According to James Loughlin, “while the English, Scots and Welsh, like Irish Nationalists, had a clearly conceived and immutable idea of their national territories, this was not the case for Ulster Unionists, for whom political control was the crucial determinant in decisions affecting the boundaries of “Ulster” (Loughlin, 2007: 186). Here, the “landscape per se was not their prime focus of attachment, something that, despite the attempt to invest north-east Ulster with a primordialist identity, was all too clear to the Westminster authorities” (ibid: 186). Differences in attitudes towards the phenomenon of landscape can be traced in how the catastrophe of the First World War was perceived by the “mainland Brits” in comparison to Ulster Unionist: while “the eulogization of “village England” and pastoral in general quickly emerged as idealizations of the homeland and as a means of coping with wartime trauma for English soldiers”, it was not the case for Ulstermen, who rather “sustained Bible-reading and a sense of divine mission were the norm” (ibid: 186).

98. As a part of general preparations for the possible civil war in Ireland, “throughout the Protestant area of Ulster, groups were formed to hold regular military drills, using firearms whenever available. Early in 1913 these disparate paramilitary bodies were welded into a single organization as the Ulster Volunteer Force” (Akenson, 1992: 186-188).

99. See the research of Nicola Morris (2011) on how different Protestant denominations in Ulster – Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptist and adherents of the Church of Ireland – conceptualised the Ulster’s Solemn League and Covenant, as well as the role of religious institutions and clergy in political agitation and the process of signing the document that accompanied it.

100. As the result of heterogeneity in conceptualisations and approaches towards DA, “discourse scholarship is regularly criticized as bad science, because of its lack of testable theories or empirical analyses” (Milliken, 1999: 227).

101. What these conceptualizations thus highlight, is the fact that “the text itself is not the object of study, rather discourse analysis uses text as a vehicle for understanding social, political, and cultural phenomena” (Dunn and Newmann, 2016: 3).

102. Articulation means essentially “the construction of discursive objects and relationships out of a particular society’s “cultural raw materials”. Unfortunately enough, the discourse theory remains silent as to what exactly is considered as “raw material” in every particular case (Dunn and Newmann, 2016: 50).

103. According to Marianne Jørgensen and Louise J. Phillips (2002), “discourse contributes to the construction of social identities, social relations, and systems of knowledge and meaning” (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 67). At the same time, the notion of power is not a neutral one, however, rather “discourses (re)-produce the common sense(s) of societies, limiting possible resistance among a broader public to a given course of action, legitimating the state as a political unit, and creating reasonable and warranted relations of domination” (Milliken, 1999: 237). This inevitably makes such notions as “ideology” and “hegemony” important for discourse analysis (Bergström et al, 2017: 224).

104. Thus, when Ó Tuathail and Agnew claim that “it is only through discourse that the building up of a navy or the decision to invade a foreign country is made meaningful and justified. It is through discourse that leaders act, through the mobilization of certain simple geographical understandings that foreign-policy actions are explained and through

ready-made geographically-infused reasoning that wars are rendered meaningful” (Ó Tuathail and Agnew, 1992: 191) they tacitly imply that there are linguistic-discursive, as well as non-discursive components present: while building of a navy is meaningful only through the discourse, navy operation (e.g., launching ballistic missiles and destroying adversary’s infrastructure) is physical in nature and ontologically doesn’t depend on discourse: ballistic explosion happens irrespective of the constructed nature of social reality.

105. It needs to be stressed, however, that “poststructuralists are not rejecting a “real world” in which objects exist independent of our knowledge, rather it is only through discursive meaning-making that these objects become known and knowable to us” (Dunn and Newmann, 2016: 40).

106. For the sake of parsimony and analytical clarity Norman Fairclough uses the term “semiosis” “for the first, most abstract and general sense [...] which has the further advantage of suggesting that discourse analysis is concerned with various ‘semiotic modalities’, of which language is only one (others are visual images and “body language”)” (Fairclough, 2012: 11). He continues by claiming that “semiosis is viewed here as an element of the social process, which is dialectically related to others” (ibid).

107. For example how the Serbian Orthodox Church constructs the idea of national suffering of Serbs in terms of the antithesis between Heavenly Serbia and the earthly state.

108. For example, when Ioannis Kolettis presented his speech on the Megali Idea on 14 January 1844, this was an instance of a communicative event consisting of three dimensions: (1) there was a *text* of his speech, that was based on previous discursive elements and later on itself became a point of reference for successive generations, thus constituting a (2) discursive practice which at the same time should be analysed in the broader context of (3) social practice – that of unequal treatment of *heterochtones* and *autochtones* in Greece in the reign of the Bavarian King Otto

109. Thus, one has to be aware that when utilising CDA for analysing religeopolitical discourse, we inevitably take the position of those who are discriminated against or otherwise oppressed as a result of policies and decisions taken upon such discourses.

110. Norman Fairclough proposed a genuine methodology for CDA. According to him, scholars utilizing this method should follow a general research path consisting of four major steps or “stages”: “Stage 1: Focus upon a social wrong, in its semiotic aspects; Stage 2: Identify obstacles to addressing the social wrong; Stage 3: Consider whether the social order ‘needs’ the social wrong; Stage 4: Identify possible ways past the obstacles” (Fairclough, 2012: 13).

111. A part of this elegant solution comes directly from the writings of Norman Fairclough. According to his understanding, “particular methods are selected according to how the object of research is constructed” (Fairclough, 2012: 12).

112. According to some accounts, “there is, ultimately, almost always an arbitrary element in case selection” because “many cases may actually work just as well as the ones you end up choosing” (Dunn and Newmann, 2016: 88).

113. Megali Idea is an illustrative case in this regard: an article of Eleftherios Venizelos “The program of his foreign policy” published in the newspaper Πατρίς (gr “Fatherland”) that stated explicitly “We will create a Greater Greece!” is leaning on earlier texts – essentially those of Constantinos Paparrigopoulos and Ioannis Kolettis.

114. Laruelle identified three more ecosystems - the Presidential Administration, the block of *siloviki* – i.e., law-enforcement agencies (Ministry of Interior, Federal Security Service FSB, broader military-industrial complex), as well as “systemic liberals” – i.e., technocratic elite of financial branch of the Russian Government (Laruelle, 2015: 26-29).

115. Final documents of WRPC can be called differently, depending on the year. Two most frequent designations are *Sobornoye Slovo* (rus Соборное Слово) and *Nakaz* (rus Наказ).

These two words have no exact equivalents in English and can be roughly translated as “announcement”, “creed”, “declaration”, “proclamation”, “resolution” or “testament” if one so wishes.

116. In 2015, the first World Russian People’s Council after the annexation of Crimea was held. It was also the first Council after a short break 2010-2014, when no Council meetings were called together.

117. Alicja Curanović (2019) makes a conceptual distinction between *messianism* and *missionism*. While messianism is centered around the conviction that “Providence has a plan along which History unfolds, and in this plan the chosen one (individual or collective) has a special role to play (mission)”, “missionism” is called a “secular offspring” of messianism, with the distinction between the two being that “in messianism, mission is entrusted to the “chosen one” by God, and in missionism, by History” (Curanović, 2019: 254). This analytical distinction may be useful for some particular research needs, but it is not at all easy to draw a clear boundary between two phenomena: while Curanović herself acknowledges the fact that they “can exist in parallel” and are often “mixed up or fused and evolve into hybrid forms”, she uses the adjective “messianic” (and not “missionist”) to designate both messianism and missionism-related aspects (ibid), which makes the whole enterprise even more ambiguous and murky. Throughout the text of this MA thesis I uses the term “messianism” and a corresponding adjective “messianic” to designate a discourse which features three prominent aspects of the mission (for as long as “mission” is the central aspect of both messianism and missionism anyways): (1) “the conviction of having a special destiny”; (2) “a sense of moral superiority”; (3) “the conviction that the state’s activity is motivated not only by its own national interest but also by a higher cause that is important for a broader (regional, global, etc.) community” (ibid).

118. “[W]hen the term “nation” is used it is generally understood as referring to a collectivity of people speaking the same language” (Kirill, 2023).

119. According to Kilp and Pankhurst (2023), Church-endorsed universalism (epitomized in the term *sobornost*’ (rus. соборность) and the secular concept of Empire are epistemologically related with the boundaries of the two phenomena being essentially open-ended, vague and not clearly defined. This line of reasoning is evident in Patriarch Kirill’s attitude towards the “civilizational choice of St. Vladimir” which paved the way towards the universal empire, not the nation-state of the European kind (see further, Kilp and Pankhurst, 2023: 6).

120. On the detailed research of the phenomenon of nationalism in WRPC’s documents see Kilp and Pankhurst, (2023). Analysing the use of the “nation” trope in Metropolitan (until 2009)/Patriarch (from 2009 onwards) Kirill’s speeches throughout the period 1993-2022, Kilp and Pankhurst identified five different semantic fields/contexts where different discourses of nationalism are used: (1) “Russia and Orthodoxy “are national”; (2) “Russia and Orthodoxy are universal and imperial, not national”; (3) “Russia and Orthodoxy are multinational, wherefore the true Orthodox person is not a nationalist”; (4) “there is a kind of nationalism not characteristic of Russia and Orthodoxy (the exemplary case of such a negative relationship is Ukrainian nationalism)” and finally (5) “the fault of Ukrainian nationalism lies in the violation of the unity of Russia” (Kilp and Pankhurst, 2023: 9).

121. Biblical citation is provided by the press-department of the Serbian Orthodox Church and it does not follow the New International Version (NIV) translation of the Bible used in the remaining part of this MA thesis.

122. The term “fundamentalism” originates from the Protestant context. During the five-year period from 1910 until 1915, two “devout Christian brothers” from the Southern California – Milton and Lyman Stewart – whose fortune came from an oil industry in the US, sponsored the publication and wide dissemination “of a series of pamphlets which were distributed free

of charge to English-speaking Protestant pastors, evangelists, missionaries, theological professors, theological students, YMCA secretaries, Sunday School superintendents, religious lay workers, and editors of religious publications throughout the world” (Ruthven, [2004], 2007: 7). This series of essays and other literary texts “written by a number of leading conservative American and British theologians” was entitled *The Fundamentals: A Testimony of Truths* and contained “what the brothers [Stewart] and their editors considered to be the fundamental beliefs of Protestant Christianity” including the direct creation of the world *ex nihilo*, “the inerrancy of the Bible”, as well as the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, his divine nature, his death and resurrection, as well as a forthcoming Judgement Day (ibid). In the subsequent academic tradition, the word “fundamentalism” describes a number of beliefs which are supposed to be not only true, but ultimately *the only truth* and thus in need to be followed strictly, without any possible deviation. Despite its epistemological roots grounded in the Protestant Christian tradition, the phenomenon of fundamentalism doesn’t necessarily have to be always religious in character: following the categorisation of Ernest Gellner, American scholar and sociologist of fundamentalism Martin Marty (one of the leading figures of the Fundamentalism Project conducted in the period 1988-1993 under the auspices of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences) makes a distinction between religious and rationalist forms of fundamentalism (the latter can be also defined as “Enlightenment rationalism”) (Marty, 1998: 367). It should be noted that Martin Marty perceived specifically religious form of fundamentalism as the major challenge of the modern era, for when it merges ethnonationalism, it becomes “the most perplexing, confusing, puzzling and bemusing force” which is “hard to anticipate, locate, or define” (ibid: 373). In his opinion (following Gellner), religious fundamentalism typically appears as a defensive reaction to the challenges posed by modernity towards the “traditional” (i.e., patriarchal, rural, Church/faith-based) way of life; differently from *secular* totalitarian ideologies, religious fundamentalism has the advantage called “eschatological verification”: “whatever happened in an economy or a polity or elsewhere in the empirical world, one has to wait and see – beyond one’s own death or the world’s end – whether it was “true” or not (ibid: 368).

123. The word “men” used in the text of Ulster’s Solemn League and Covenant is gendered and should be understood in the strict sense of the word as referring to *males* of Ulster. The historical document was signed only by *men*, while women signed a separate Declaration.

124. The word “fundamentalism” is used here as referring to a particular type of discourse which is centered around certain provisions (i.e., beliefs, value-orientations, opinions, claims, etc) expressed as the ultimate truth that can not be compromised. It doesn’t necessarily imply the overtly religious form of fundamentalism, quite the opposite: interestingly enough, Rev. Ian Paisley’s rhetoric frequently lacks specifically religious content. Put differently, he doesn’t talk much about the nature of the Protestant teaching (Christian dogmatics, catechism, etc), at least the selected materials do not register this kind of discourse (Rev. Ian Paisley’s sermons were not included in the text sample). Rather, his “fundamentalism” is evident in the firm belief in the absolute rightness of his words and nearly a total lack of wish and/or readiness to make any compromises, let alone to “surrender”. Such a conceptualisation of fundamentalism roughly follows the way Gladys Ganiel and Paul Dixon (2008) define the term in their article on the religious dimension of the conflict in Northern Ireland. In the paper, they note that fundamentalism “applies both to religious and political actors who make strong claims for simple, irrefutable beliefs and *proclaim* their refusal to compromise on them” (Gladys and Dixon, 2008: 420, *italics in original*).

125. This feeling of anxiety and a corresponding perception of ontological insecurity can be mutual, in a sense it can be perceived by people living both inside newly-created political entities and outside the state border, in diasporas.

126. The eschatological (i.e., related to end times) term “Apocalypse” comes from the Greek word “Ἀποκάλυψις” (*apocalypsis*), which means “revelation”. It is the first word of the Book of Revelation, sometimes also called “Apocalypse of John” or “Book of the Apocalypse” – the last canonical text of the Bible, ascribed by church tradition to John the Apostle, although the question of authorship is heavily debated in Biblical scholarship. Essentially, it is a blueprint from Greek that originally meant nothing more but simply “message” or “prophecy”. However, because the Book of Revelation contains prophecies regarding the supposed end of this World and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, portrayed in dark, negative and terrifying terms, the later tradition ascribed the word “apocalypse” with faithful, prophetic meaning, as something related to the end of the World, understood as Armageddon or a worldwide catastrophe. Besides the Book of Daniel from the Old Testament, the Book of Revelation is the only apocalyptic text in the Bible (and the only one in the New Testament). In this MA thesis, the term is used to denote eschatological perception of the end of this World and destruction of God’s creation, according to the late church tradition.

127. However, it also affects the social relations taking place inside these newly created “holy places” with some entities considered as allies, while other entities are portrayed as enemies who threaten the very existence of this holy place.

128. Joseph Nye Jr. coined the term “soft power” in his eponymous article published in the *Foreign Policy* in 1990. He derived from a general proposition that while “traditionally, the test of a great power was its strength in war”, nowadays “[...] the definition of power is losing its emphasis on military force and conquest that marked earlier eras. The factors of technology, education and economic growth are becoming more significant in international power, while geography, populations and raw materials are becoming somewhat less important” (Nye, 1990: 154). Because of the changed social environment of the post-Cold War era and qualitatively new challenges that states are facing today, Nye envisioned the decline of importance of traditional coercive measures (conceptualised as “hard power” with military being its paradigmatic example) and the increase in importance of new, non-coercive instruments (e.g., trade and technological interdependence) through which states can achieve their political goals. Likewise, soft power has a cultural/psychological dimension – i.e., states have to be attractive for the global audiences in order to be able to exercise “power” over them; in this regard the soft power of Joseph Nye shares common epistemological grounds with Steven Luke’s conceptualisation of power (the so-called “third face of power” in the grand debate discussed earlier in this Thesis, *see further Selg et al, 2021: 193*).

129. Ideology is a complex social phenomenon and its epistemological grounds are lively debated in academic literature. For Louis Althusser (1971) ideology is a mechanism that “interpellates individuals as subjects” – i.e., it creates a certain framework of relations in which subjects simultaneously (1) recognise themselves as subjects, (2) recognise other subjects as subjects, (3) recognize the Subject as an ultimate point of reference in relation to which they understand themselves *as subjects* in the first place; the subjection of subjects to the Subject is taking place and this overall framework is recognised as a true one, which is confirmed through special formula (e.g., “Amen!” in case of Christian ideology) (Althusser, 1971: 180-182). Thus, for Althusser religion is essentially an ideology. This view is not generally accepted, however. For Cyril Hovorun, for example, ideology is a “theology that has been secularized”: although theology and ideology feature a couple of similar characteristics (e.g., both “put ideas above visible world” and are eager to “sacrifice this visible world to ideas”, mobilizing masses in the name of this overall goal, they nevertheless have one fundamental difference, namely, while “theological ideas led a person to the divine [...], ideological ideas confine masses to the immanent frame of *saeculum*” (Hovorun, 2018: 16-17). In this regard, religion can not be considered an ideology, because of the distinction

between the sacred and the profane. Likewise, Norman Fairclough rejects Althusser's conceptualisation of religion on two major grounds: on the one hand, he "adheres to the consensus within critical cultural studies in rejecting parts of Althusser's theory on the grounds that Althusser regards people as passive ideological subjects and thus underestimates their possibilities for action", while also rejecting "Althusser's understanding of ideology as a totalising entity" (Jørgenssen and Phillips, 2002: 75-76). For him, ideology is a "meaning in the service of power" (Fairclough, 1995, cited in Jørgenssen and Phillips, 2002: 75). Teun van Dijk (2006) insists that ideologies are a "fundamental and axiomatic" kind of socially shared beliefs that perform a couple of social functions: "first of all, [...] they organize and ground the social representations shared by the members of (ideological) groups. Secondly, they are the ultimate basis of the discourses and other social practices of the members of social groups as group members. Thirdly, they allow members to organize and coordinate their (joint) actions and interactions in view of the goals and interests of the group as a whole. Finally, they function as the part of the sociocognitive interface between social structures (conditions, etc.) of groups on the one hand, and their discourses and other social practices on the other hand" (van Dijk, 2006: 117).

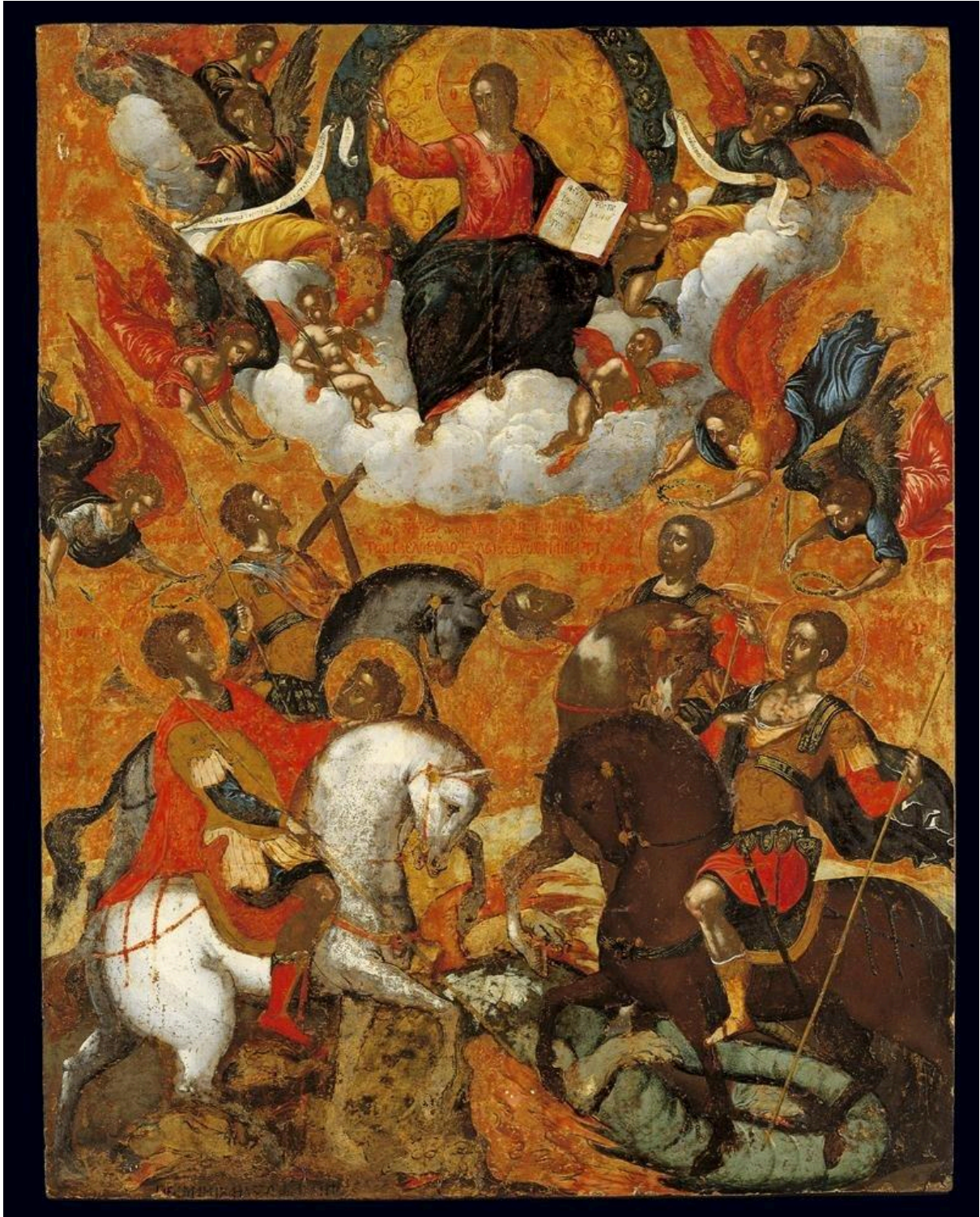
8.2. Graphs, images, geographical maps, tables etc

8.2.1. Theodoros Vryzakis. (1851). *The Oath-taking in the Church of Aghia Lavra*. Collection of the Benaki Museum in Athens. [online]. Available at:

https://www.benaki.org/index.php?option=com_collectionitems&view=collectionitem&id=108748&Itemid=0&lang=en (Accessed: 08.04.2026).



8.2.2. Michael Damaskinos. *Icon depicting military saints on horseback: George and Dimitrios, Theodoros Tyron (The Recruit) and Theodoros Stratilates (The General)*. Collection of the Benaki Museum in Athens. [online]. Available at: https://www.benaki.org/index.php?option=com_collectionitems&view=collectionitem&id=108331&Itemid=&lang=en (Accessed: 08.04.2026).



8.2.3. [Unknown author, 17th century]. Icon depicting St. Demetrios on the horseback. Trustees of the British Museum. [online]. Available at: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H_1994-0102-4 (Accessed: 08.04.2026).



8.2.4. Icon from the Moscow Cathedral of the Dormition “Blessed be the Host of the Heavenly Tsar”. Collection of the State Tretyakov Gallery. [online]. Available at: <https://my.tretyakov.ru/app/masterpiece/8820> (Accessed: 08.04.2026).



8.2.5. Mikhail Nesterov. (1905). *Holy Rus'*. Collection of The State Russian Museum. [online]. Available at: https://rusmuseumvrn.ru/data/collections/painting/19_20/zh_1850/index.php?lang=en (Accessed: 11.04.1026).



8.2.6. Alexey Belyaev-Gintovt and Andrei Molodkin. (2001). *Atomic Orthodoxy* (part of the series “Novo-novorossiysk”). [online]. Available at: <https://doctrine.ru/novonovosibirsk/> (Accessed: 11.04.2026).



8.2.7. Nikolay Lomtev. (1848). *St Apostle Andrew the First-Called establishing the cross on the Kyivan hills*. The State Tretyakov Gallery. [online]. Available at: <https://my.tretyakov.ru/app/masterpiece/22002> (Accessed: 11.04.2026).



8.2.8. Adam Stefanović. (1875). *Boj na Kosovu*. Collection of the Serbian National Museum. [online]. Available at: https://www.narodnimuzej.rs/?attachment_id=31936&lang=en (Accessed: 11.04.2026).



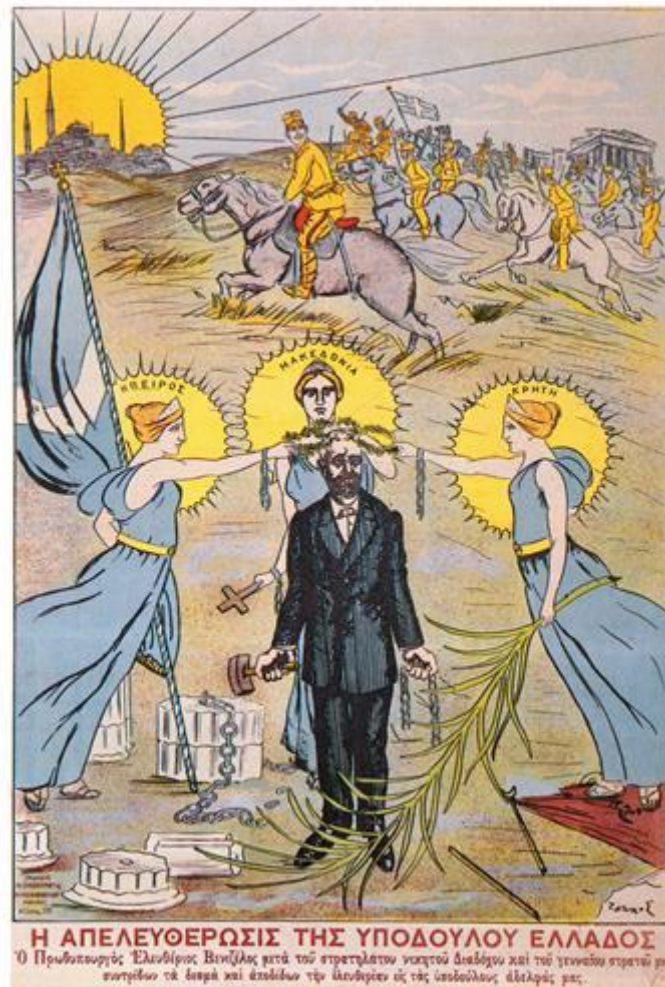
8.2.9. Adam Stefanovic. (N/A). *Knezeva Vecera*. Collection of the Serbian National Museum. [online]. Available at: http://www.narodnimuzej.rs/?attachment_id=35984&lang=en (Accessed: 11.04.2026).



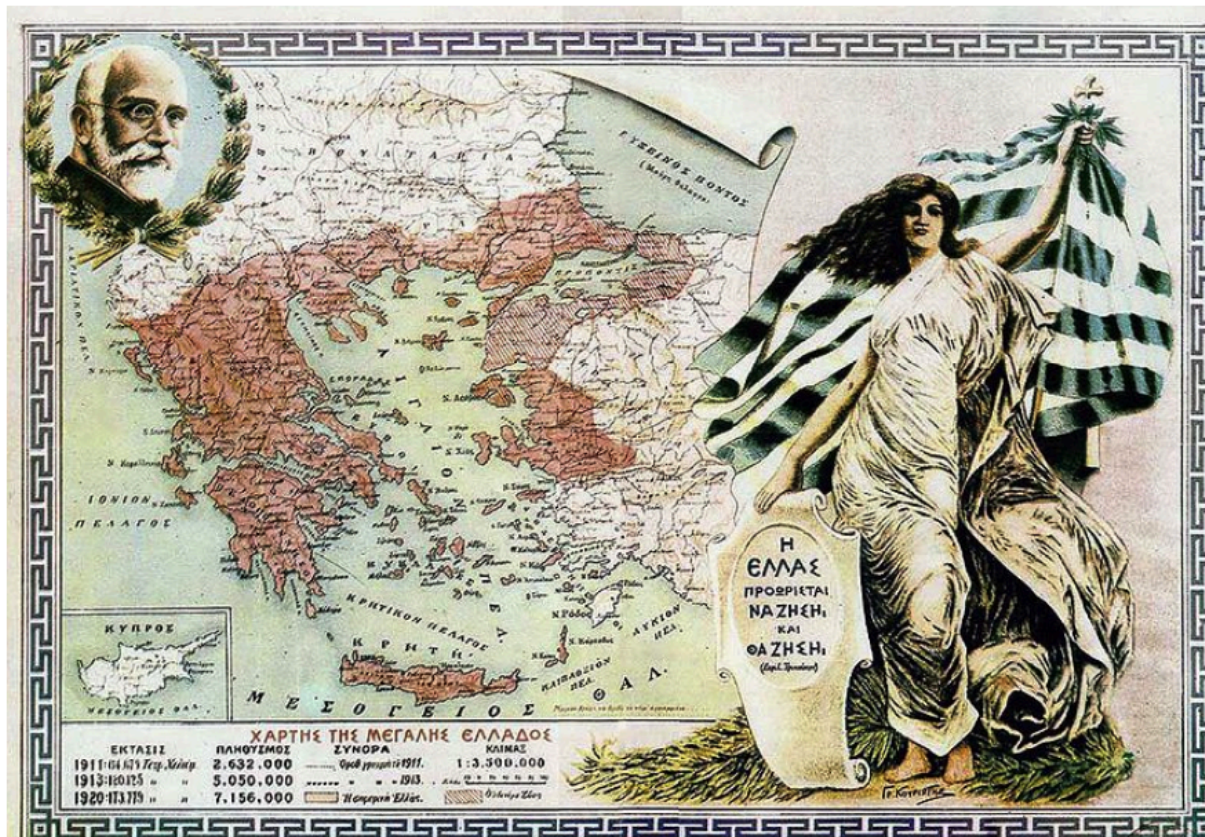
8.2.10. Rigas Velestinlis. (1797). *Charta (Map) of Greece*. Copper engraving by Franz Müller, Vienna. Collection of the Greek National Historical Museum. [online]. Available at: <https://nhmuseum.gr/en/departments/into-the-museum-s-collection/item/5005-chartamapofgreecebyrigasferaioscopperengravingbyfranzm%C3%BCllervienna1797> (Accessed: 11.04.2026).



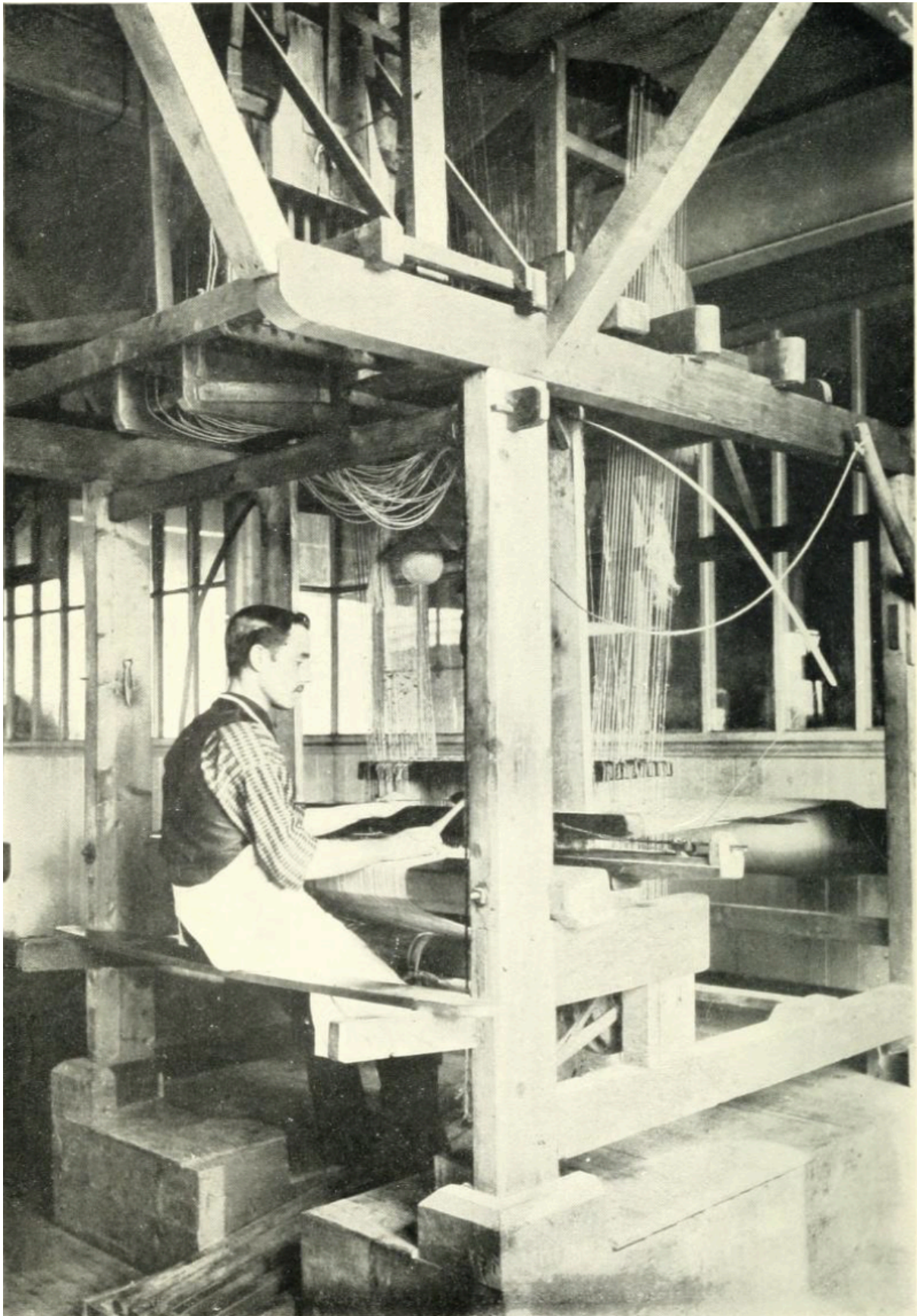
8.2.11. “*Liberation of the Enslaved Greece*” Representation of El. Venizelos, King Konstantinos and the Church of Hagia Sophia. Chromolithograph. Collection of the Greek National Historical Museum in Athens. [online]. Available at: <https://nhmuseum.gr/en/departments/into-the-museum-s-collection/item/6026-liberationoftheenslavedgreecerepresentantionofelvenizeloskingkonstantinosandthechurchofhagiasophiachromolithograph> (Accessed: 09.04.2026).



8.2.12. *Megali Hellas*. Retrieved from: Zervas, G. (2012). *The Making of a Modern Greek Identity: Education, Nationalism, and the Teaching of a Greek National Past*. (p 43). New York: Columbia University Press.



8.2.13. *Hand-Loom Weaving*. Photograph by Robert Welch (1859-1936). Retrieved from: Moore, F. F. (1914). *The Truth About Ulster* (frontispiece). London: Eveleigh Nash.



8.2.14. *Sir Edward Carson signing the Ulster's Solemn League and Covenant (September 28, 1912).* Photograph by Robert Welch (1859-1936). Collection of the National Museums NI. [online]. Available at: <https://collections.nationalmuseumsni.org/object-belum-y19672> (Accessed: 22.04.2026).



8.2.15. *Ulster Day. Belfast, Sept. 28th, 1912. The Procession entering City Hall to sign the Covenant against Home Rule.* Photograph by Robert Welch (1859-1936). Collection of the National Museums NI. [online]. Available at: <https://collections.nationalmuseumsni.org/object-belum-w2011-1295-14> (Accessed: 22.04.2026).



8.3. Lexical aspects of proximization (template + empirical analysis).

8.3.1 Template of Piotr Cap for proximization analysis

Linguistic elements of Spatial-Temporal and Axiological Proximization			
Spatial/ temporal proximization (I)	NPs conceptualized as elements of the deictic center (IDCs)	NPs conceptualized as elements outside the deictic center (ODCs)	VPs of motion and directionality conceptualized together as indicators of movement of ODCs towards the deictic center and vice versa
Empirical case			
Spatial/ temporal proximization (II)	VPs of action conceptualized as indicators of contact between ODCs and IDCs	NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as anticipations of potential contact between ODCs and IDC	NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as effects of actual contact between ODCs and IDC
Empirical case			
Axiological proximization	NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as values and/or value sets/ideologies of IDCs	NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as values and/or value sets/ideologies of ODCs	NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as effects of IDC–ODC physical contact (conflict)
Empirical case			

Source: Cap (2010): 394; visualization by the author

8.3.2 Holy Rus

Linguistic elements of Spatial-Temporal and Axiological Proximization			
Spatial/ temporal proximization (I)	NPs conceptualized as elements of the deictic center (IDCs)	NPs conceptualized as elements outside the deictic center (ODCs)	VPs of motion and directionality conceptualized together as indicators of movement of ODCs towards the deictic center and vice versa
Empirical case	We; Holy Rus'; Russian World; Russia; our army; our President; Heaven; Archangel Michael; angels; our Motherland; our people; Russian Orthodox Church	Adherents of Nazism; NATO; Hell; Devil; evil; Western civilization; our enemies; LGBT; external forces; Washington and its European satellites; russophobic regime of Zelensky; enemies of Russia; Ukrainian neonazis; Western “political engineers”;	Moving beyond the horizon, into the pitfalls of Hell; struggling [= moving in a particular direction] of the collective West for global hegemony
Spatial/ temporal proximization (II)	VPs of action conceptualized as indicators of contact between ODCs and IDCs	NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as anticipations of potential contact between ODCs and IDC	NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as effects of actual contact between ODCs and IDC
Empirical case	Two ideas and two armies are clashing; our struggle is going on; Devil is fighting with God; military actions are continuing; war against Russia is going; our soldiers are defending the security of our people, are fighting the Neonazis, are liberating historical Russian lands	Escalation, threat, possible direct clash; intensifying fears about different apocalyptic scenarios; threat of total extermination; a new threat of losing [Russian] sovereignty; increasing imminent pressure; geopolitical technologies of separation and persecution can be transplanted into the Russian soil; spiritual crisis that threatens humanity with apocalypse	Global apocalyptic end; end of Church; nuclear war; destruction of the whole peoples; destruction of sovereignty, destruction of identity; dismemberment of Russia; destruction of Russian economy, military defeat; cancelling of Russian culture, Russian people and Russian state; victory of the satanic West; establishment of the universal hegemony; deprivation of national tradition and identity

Axiological proximization	NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as values and/or value sets/ideologies of IDCs	NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as values and/or value sets/ideologies of ODCs	NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as effects of IDC–ODC physical contact (conflict)
Empirical case	Traditional moral and spiritual values; truth; holiness; traditional culture; patriotism; solidarity; Orthodoxy; religious and civil tolerance; traditional family; harmonious cooperation between church and state; freedom; independence; love, kindness and compassion; canonicity	Secularism; moral relativism; globalism; transhumanism; satanism; occultism; paganism; violence; immorality; universalism; colonialism; extremism;	Destruction; genocide; tragedy; catastrophe; suffering; apocalypse; killing, shooting, bombing; persecution for the faith; subjugation of humanity to the single evil cause

8.3.3. Serbian World

Linguistic elements of Spatial-Temporal and Axiological Proximization			
Spatial/temporal proximization (I)	NPs conceptualized as elements of the deictic center (IDCs)	NPs conceptualized as elements outside the deictic center (ODCs)	VPs of motion and directionality conceptualized together as indicators of movement of ODCs towards the deictic center and vice versa
Empirical case	Republic of Serbia; Kosovo and Metohija; Serbs; our people; Republika Srpska; Serbian Orthodox Church; St Sava; Prince Lazar; Kosovo martyrs; the Orthodox Serbian people; Christians; the entire civilized world;	Albanian separatists; organs of the provisional government in Priština; authorities in Priština; the Devil; the evil; the death; somebody, who is not Christ, who opposes us; the Ottoman Empire; Islam	The reality that comes to us from the future; cruise missiles are delivering the deadly cargo

	the Slavs		
Spatial/ temporal proximization (II)	VPs of action conceptualized as indicators of contact between ODCs and IDCs	NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as anticipations of potential contact between ODCs and IDC	NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as effects of actual contact between ODCs and IDC
Empirical case	The bombs fall on people; destruction of nature, property and lives takes place; people are being killed	If the spiral of evil starts, we will all be losers; the threat is that the question of one nation being endangered by others can be posed one day;	Destructions; inhuman aggression; war conflict; occupation; tyranny
Axiological proximization	NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as values and/or value sets/ideologies of IDCs	NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as values and/or value sets/ideologies of ODCs	NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as effects of IDC–ODC physical contact (conflict)
Empirical case	Respect of rights of all peoples; preservation of traditions; “traditional values”; anti-Fascist and anti-Nazi values; peace; stability; preservation of national culture; Orthodoxy; cyrillic script; religions and spiritual unity; life structured according to the Gospel	Separatism; ethnic and religious persecutions; complete lawlessness; classical abuse of rights”; insults, humiliations, hatreds; tyranny	Suffering; pain;

8.3.4. Ulster

Linguistic elements of Spatial-Temporal and Axiological Proximity			
Spatial/ temporal proximization (I)	NPs conceptualized as elements of the deictic center (IDCs)	NPs conceptualized as elements outside the deictic center (ODCs)	VPs of motion and directionality conceptualized together as indicators of movement of ODCs towards the deictic center and vice versa
Empirical case	True loyalist people of Ulster; Protestants; unionists; Ulstermen; DUP; UUP (<i>at times</i>); Ulster defence forces (police/volunteers, Constabulary); Protestant organisations; Orange Order/Orangemen	I.R.A.; Sinn Fein; SDLP; Alliance Party; Republican terrorists; traitors; revolutionaries; filthy nest of Irish nationalists; Roman Catholic Church; papacy; Romanists; Dublin Government; Irish Republic; nationalist; Éamon de Valera; Margaret Thatcher's/ Tony Blair's Government; British Government; "our traditional enemies"; "ancient enemies/foes"; a pan-nationalist front; blood-soaked murderers	It has been one way traffic in the direction of terrorists; we were passing through sad, dark, and terrible days; our gallant boys and men went over the top for King and Country
Spatial/ temporal proximization (II)	VPs of action conceptualized as indicators of contact between ODCs and IDCs	NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as anticipations of potential contact between ODCs and IDC	NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as effects of actual contact between ODCs and IDC
Empirical case	Guerilla forces and advanced guard of the foes are bombing, maiming, killing, and destroying us; the king of terrors and the terror of kings cuts its devastating sword;	"this is just the start and the end is too terrible to contemplate"; "their design is the destruction of Protestant Ulster"; "the Union is in danger and in a greater danger at this time than at any other time"; danger of being murdered at any time because of Government's security policy's failure; the Union can never be safe while treachery continues to be	Destruction of the Union; complete destruction of the British identity in Northern Ireland; crush of the Protestant faith; destruction of the Ulster's foundation; war, anarchy, rebellion

		implemented	
Axiological proximization	NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as values and/or value sets/ideologies of IDCs	NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as values and/or value sets/ideologies of ODCs	NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as effects of IDC–ODC physical contact (conflict)
Empirical case	Loyalty; valor; self-sacrifice; Protestant ethics; gratitude, determination, dedication, resistance;	Perversions, provocations, perjures; homosexuality and partnerships outside marriage; terrorism; violence; betrayals and treachery; “selling out”; political immorality; dishonesty;	Terrifying cries; the pain, injury, mischief, damage; battle cry; tragedy; suffering; tears

8.3.5. Megali Idea

Linguistic elements of Spatial-Temporal and Axiological Proximization			
Spatial/temporal proximization (I)	NPs conceptualized as elements of the deictic center (IDCs)	NPs conceptualized as elements outside the deictic center (ODCs)	VPs of motion and directionality conceptualized together as indicators of movement of ODCs towards the deictic center and vice versa
Empirical case	We; our nation; Greece; Greeks; Greek inhabitants; enlightened nations of Europe; a hospitable and philanthropic nation (= French); brothers;	The Turks; Islam; Albanians; tyrant called Sultan; a wild beast; the powerful empire of the Ottomans; the arch-apostle, the Devil; the evil devil; Turkey; barbarous conquerors; foreigners;	[Peace and prosperity] have been endangered by a greater expansion of the Turks in Thrace; having extended Greece’s borders, I’m the cause of these difficulties; Greece [...] extended its borders and occupied a position [...] which was not only extremely imposing [but also] extremely dangerous

Spatial/ temporal proximization (II)	VPs of action conceptualized as indicators of contact between ODCs and IDCs	NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as anticipations of potential contact between ODCs and IDC	NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as effects of actual contact between ODCs and IDC
Empirical case	Albanians [...] move about under military banners and destroy villages, burn homes, enslave; slaying, drowning, hanging [...];	National disasters have been accumulating; despite all the accumulating disasters; it is probable [...] that we shall encounter more difficulties; one must be blind not to see what will take place from then on; large and colossal problems have been emerging from the time [...]; you will make the country to go to war out of the necessity;	Enslavement; spiritual destruction; uprooting of Hellenism; war out of the necessity; suffering the fate suffered a few decades ago by the flourishing Hellenic communities;
Axiological proximization	NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as values and/or value sets/ideologies of IDCs	NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as values and/or value sets/ideologies of ODCs	NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as effects of IDC–ODC physical contact (conflict)
Empirical case	Quarrelsome character; Orthodoxy; religious and civil tolerance; mercy and reason shown for those who have been deceived; principles that are healthy and salvational; vigor; security and happiness; progressive, liberal, and democratic spirit;	Islam; lawlessness; despotism; absence of order and rules; enslavement; arrogance; anarchy; unbearable tyranny of the Ottoman despotism; filthy, woman obsessed appetites; blood-thirsty and illiterate court; corruption and confusion; ungodliness; those who only take power into account; shameless hedonism;	Disaster; catastrophe; death;

8.4. Coding trees

8.4.1. Coding tree of Holy Rus' textual analysis

Main category	Sub-category	Code	Example
Sacred dimensions of nationalism	Ethno-history	Baptism of Rus'	"It is evident that the basic and the most important meaning of the legacy of Equal-to-Saints Prince [Vladimir] is the religious meaning, it the Chritian faith adopted by the people of Rus" (Kirill, 2015).
		Byzantium	"Eastern Roman Empire, by far the biggest state of the Medieval Christendom, that became a source of Orthodoxy for Russians, can not be considered only a European state" (Kirill, 2015).
		Negative attitude towards Communist past	"Godless power tried to exterminate our spiritual bases, to desecrate [подвергнуть поруганию] our holy places" (Sobornoye Slovo, 2025).
	National election	Messianism	"As long as our Fatherland remains this "island of freedom", the remaining world will still have some sign of a hope to change the course of history and to prevent the global apocalyptic end [...]" (Kirill, 2022a).
		National election/exclusivity	"[...] those who even try to question the state-forming role of the Russian people" (Kirill, 2024).
		Katechon	"The highest meaning of the existence of Russian and the Russian World that it created – its spiritual mission – is to be a global "Withholder", who defends the world from evil" (Nakaz, 2023).
	National sacrifice	National sacrifice (general)	"Our wellbeing is based on the victims of previous generations, who died during the [Second World] War, while defending the Homeland [...]" (Kirill, 2022b).
		Victory Day/May 9/ Victory in WWII	"May 9 is the nationwide [всенародный] holiday which symbolizes the strengths of spirit and unwavering love to homeland [...]" (Belousov, 2025).
		"Special Military Operation"/SVO	"Special Military Operation is the new phase of the struggle for national liberation of the Russian people against the criminal Kyiv regime and the collective West standing behind it, which has been taking place on the lands of South-Western Rus' from 2014

			onwards” (Nakaz, 2023).
		Similarity between SVO and WWII	“Today the heroes of the Special Military Operation – like the fighters of the Great Patriotic War, are selflessly fighting adherents of nazism and defending the sovereignty of [our] state” (Belousov, 2025).
	Territorial discourse	Canonical territory of ROC	“Its [i.e., those belonging to Moscow Patriarchate] parishes in Ukraine, Belarus, Baltic states, Middle and Central Asia, Europe, Africa, South-East Asian and the US are living the same spiritual life” (Shchipkov, 2025).
		Ukraine	“The battlefield of struggle between angels and devils is Ukraine” (Dugin, 2022).
		Sacred land/territorial order/spatial order	“We will have to find solutions to huge challenges [колоссальные задачи] on how to organize these vast spaces from the Pacific Ocean to the Baltic Sea and Black Sea” (Putin, 2023).
Linguistic elements of proximization	Ambiguous categories	Ideology	“Trans-humanism is an ideology propagating the radical change of human nature [...]” (Kirill, 2022a).
		Against national exclusivity	“[...] we all have to admit that there are no “highest races” on Earth, because we are all children of God [...]” (Kirill, 2025a).
	NPs characterizing IDCs	Holy Rus’/Russian World	“There is fighting going on for our Homeland, for our Russian World” (Kiriienko, 2022).
		Soldiers/Military/ Armed Forces	“Our soldiers [воины] defend the Fatherland with arms” (Ivanov, 2025).
		Russian Orthodox Church	“It is time for the Church to take huge responsibility for our people and our country” (Kirill, 2023).
		Fraternal (or otherwise “united”, “single” or “triune” people	“[...] for the policy of artificial, violent separation of the big Russian nation, the triune people – Russians, Belorussians and Ukrainians” (Putin, 2023).
		NPs characterizing IDCs (general)	“[...] our army [...], we against NATO” (Dugin, 2022).
	Values of IDC	Values and value-orientations characteristic of IDCs (general)	Russia has always been, is now and will continue to be in the future as well the bastion of traditional values, truth and justice” (Ivanov, 2025).

		Religious, civic, civilizational tolerance	“In this equality of heterogeneous peoples, in this respect towards the multiplicity of cultures, in this rejection of superiority is our understanding of Christianity [...]” (Kirill, 2015).
		Church-state relations	“Yes, the Church is separated from the State, and Patriarch has told me this a couple of times already, but despite this, there have formed unique relations between the Church and the State” (Putin, 2023).
		Exceptional spiritual qualities of Russia/ Russians/ Spiritual Rus’	“Russia, by the grace of God [...] has defended in battles and wars not only its right for existence, but its ability to preserve the exceptional spiritual life of its people and unique culture” (Sobornoye Slovo, 2025).
		Collectivism (as juxtaposed to individualism)	“The tithe became the means of voluntary subjugation of the individual interests to the collective goals, became of the forms solidarity [...]” (Kirill, 2015).
		Tradition(s), traditional values	“As has been already told before, tradition is the spiritual denominator of the Russian World” (Kirill, 2023).
		Against secular universalism	“Do we really put hegemony upon the remaining world, representing it as the general good for the overall world without alternatives?” (Kirill, 2022b).
		Nation, national, nationalism	“[...] without the Russians as ethnos, without the Russian people there is no and can not be the Russian World, nor Russia” (Putin, 2023).
		(“Traditional”) family, marriage	“For the Russian world one of the bulwarks of tradition is family” (Kirill, 2024).
		Negative attitude towards migration and migrants	“Uncontrollable surplus of the foreign workforce leads to lower wages for the native population and their replacement with migrants in the whole sectors of the national economy” (Nakaz, 2023).
		Patriotism	“[Sobor] believes that education and art have to nurture patriotism, paying attention to heroic figures of homeland history – from Saint Prince Vladimir till today defenders of our Fatherland” (Resolution, 2025).
		Pastoral discourse	“Living on your own soil, in the ecologically beneficial and comfortable conditions, in your own well-organised house, where you can raise a family, to give birth to three and

			more children – this should become a visible implementation of ideas of the Russian World” (Nakaz, 2023).
	Values of the ODC	Values and value orientations characteristic of ODC (general)	“[...] worldviews [мировоззренческие постулаты] that are alien to our civilization, that are based this time on liberal theories and are directly opposite to the spiritual-moral sources characteristic of Russia” (Sobornoye Slovo, 2025).
		Separation of religious and profane, secularism	“In the public consciousness that is full of secular ideology, there was even more evident the desire to eradicate borders between the most important worldview categories: the truth and the lies, the good and the evil” (Kirill, 2022a).
		Colonialism and neo-colonialism	“Pax Britannica became the signifier of the historical period of worldwide hegemony of the British colonial order” (Kirill, 2023).
		Globalism	“Globalism is not a religious doctrine, there is no place for God” (Kirill, 2022a).
		The West: malign, bad influence, threat	“The genocide [conducted by] Hitler was not an accidental phenomenon at the separate short period of time in a separate European country – rather, it blossomed against the background of centuries-long colonial policy of Western states, against the background of the evil pride and prejudice towards other people of the Earth” (Kirill, 2025a).
		Neopaganism	“A threat of dissemination of neopaganism with the cult of brutality and raw force does really exist [...]” (Kirill, 2024).
		Nazism and neo-nazism	“We see how Washington and its NATO allies are increasing the supply of lethal weapons to Ukrainian neonazis” (Lavrov, 2022).
		Genocide/religious persecution	“[Sobor] supports the attempts at lawfully recognizing the genocide of the Soviet peoples by Nazi Germany and its allies” (Resolution, 2025).
	Other aspects of spatial/temporal and axiological proximization	NPs characterizing ODC	“[the conflict] is supported by external forces that are well-known to everybody” (Kirill, 2024).
		VPs of action indicating contact between IDC and	“[...] the struggle of the good with the evil is going on [in the hearts of people], Devil is fighting with God” (Kirill, 2023).

		ODC	
		VPs indicating motion of the ODC towards the IDC and vice versa	“We were moving beyond the horizon. We were going down into the pitfalls of Hell” (Dugin, 2022).
		NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as anticipations of potential contact between ODCs and IDC	“This path of [constant] complying will not save the spiritual life from the downfall, rather, it simply accelerates the process [of decline]” (Kirill, 2022a).
		NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as effects of actual contact between ODCs and IDC	“If there is no free Russia, there will be no Russian Church – there will be those who will betray it from the inside, as well as those exterminating it from the outside” (Kirill, 2023).
Civilizational discourse	Holy Rus’/ Russian World as a civilization	Supra-ethnic character of the Russian World /Holy Rus’	“[...] This very Russian World that has united people of a hundred different nationalities” (Kiriienko, 2022).
		Holy Rus’/Russian World as a metaphysical community	“What are, then, key ideas of the Russian Idea, which are, after all, the value base of the Russian World as a special spiritual and cultural space?” (Kirill, 2023)
		Civilizational identity	“We need to evidently show it that Russia is an independent civilization with its own cultural code (russian world) and mission” (Ivanov, 2025).
		Orthodoxy as the basis of Russian civilizational identity	“The Orthodox tradition that has for centuries been defining the very being of the Russian people, that has raised in it the best moral qualities [...]” (Kirill, 2023).
	Remaining codes under the broader category “civilizational discourse”	Existential/Holy/ Just War	“From the spiritual-moral point of view, the Special Military Operation is the Holy War [...]” (Nakaz, 2023).
		Eschatology	“We do not know [the final] times, no one knows [them], even Son of Man does not

			know the final times, but we can see it according to the signs how near they are” (Dugin, 2022).
		Nikolay Danilevsky	“As was plainly written by a talented Russian philosopher Nikolay Yakovlevich Danilevsky [...]” (Kirill, 2024).
		Multipolarity	“Today’s world is not West-oriented, quite the opposite, it is a multipolar one” (Lavrov, 2022).
		Biopolitics	“The unproportional substitution of the native population with migrants – who bear another cultural code and historic experience – will lead to the critical cultural disbalance in Russia and will destroy the value-bases of the Russian World” (Sobornoye Slovo, 2024).

8.4.2. Coding tree of the Serbian World textual analysis

Main category	Sub-category	Code	Example
Construction of national identity		Svetosavlje	“Saint Sava revealed to us and explained that this unity is reflected in a man’s sense of responsibility for another man; that it is founded upon our communion with God, for He, God, is the common Father of all people” (Porfirije, 2025c).
		Church-state relations	“The Serbian Orthodox Church has never been, nor is she now, and certainly will not be in the future a political institution, but rather she is and remains the spiritual Mother of Orthodox Serbians, carrying out her spiritual mission without impediment in countries throughout the world” (Assembly of Bishops, 2024b).
		Serbian language	“The All-Serbian Council highlights the uniting meaning of the Serbian language and the cyrillic script, as the basis of Serbian culture and science, as well as national identity” (All-Serbian Council, 2024).
		Serbian official insignia (flag/coat of arms, etc)	“Both unity in the Holy Spirit and freedom in Christ are inseparably bound in our Serbian flag, which boldly waves wherever we are [...]” (Porfirije, 2025c).

		Conflation of religious and ethnic identities	“Our people are the people of the Church of Christ, and therefore it should not surprise anyone that the way of life that is characteristic of us Orthodox Serbs is a life structured according to the order of the Gospel and the words of Christ” (Porfirije, 2023a).
		Construction of national identity (ambiguous)	“We know well that our name and our essence cannot be recognizable without the seal of Christ, without the seal of the Gospel, without the seal of Saint Sava, Saint Prince Lazar, the martyrs of Kosovo, and the numerous saints of God who have emerged from our people” (Porfirije, 2023a).
		Multi-ethnic character of Serbia and/or Yugoslavia	“Serbia has never had only Serbs living in it. Today, more than in the past, members of other peoples and nationalities also live in it. This is not a disadvantage for Serbia. I am truly convinced that it is its advantage” (Milošević, 1989).
Linguistic elements of proximization	IDC-related elements, except for values	Serbdom/Serbian people/Serbian nation	“Being aware of the responsibility of the Republic of Serbia and Republika Srpska as territories where the Serbian people live [...]” (All-Serbian Council, 2024).
		Nation/national/nationalism	“Deriving from the common national interests of the Serbian people [...]” (All-Serbian Council, 2024).
		Serbian Orthodox Church	“Our Holy Orthodox Church, brothers and sisters, has always and tirelessly not only spoken out about Kosovo and Metohija but has relentlessly and continuously testified and proclaimed the truth about Kosovo” (Porfirije, 2023c).
		IDC (general)	“[...] the Holy Assembly of Bishops gives witness before the entire civilized world, and especially before Christians [...]” (Assembly of Bishops, 2024b).
	Values of the IDC	Values of the IDC (general)	“[...] faithfulness to the Gospel and keeping it is the only safe, salvific and correct path that we should follow” (Porfirije, 2023c).
		Tradition(s), “traditional values”	“[...] it is important to cherish the family, and that is one of the principles taught to us by the Lord Himself and His Gospel” (Porfirije, 2023a).

		Religious and civil tolerance	“That is why every person, regardless of race, nationality, class, or any other difference, is my brother or sister” (Porfirije, 2025c).
		(“Traditional) family, marriage	“[...] it is important to cherish the family, and that is one of the principles taught to us by the Lord Himself and His Gospel” (Porfirije, 2023a).
		Religious and spiritual unity	“Now more than ever, we must bear witness that the Church is an Assembly. She gathers, she does not divide, she does not identify with any fragment; she is the entirety of the faithful people, she bridges differences and reconciles” (Assembly of Bishops, 2025)
		Fraternal relations between the Serbs and the Russians	“Our small Serbian boat, while sailing in the storming sea, must be linked to the big Russian ship” (Porfirije, 2025b).
		Fundamentalism	“In the Gospel, there is no dilemma about what is black and what is white, what is falsehood and what is truth, what is good and what is evil, what sin is and what virtue is. Everything is straightforwardly expressed, and whoever directs the gaze of their heart to the Word of Christ, to His Gospel, will know at all times what is right to do” (Porfirije, 2023a).
		Against LGBTQ+	“[...] and then we will teach you what a family should be, how many genders there are, and how genders multiply every day. No, brothers and sisters!” (Porfirije, 2023a).
		Peace	“[...] peace should be an everyday reality in which we treat each other with consideration, not out of fear of divine punishment, but out of love and trust in God, for the sake of a better tomorrow, for the sake of descendants who, alongside nature, should adorn these skies that the Lord selflessly bestowed upon us!” (Porfirije, 2023d).
		Socialism	“Socialism in particular, being a progressive and just democratic society, should not allow people to be divided in the national and religious respect” (Milošević, 1989).

	IDC-ODC interaction	NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as anticipations of potential contact between ODCs and IDC	“The threat is that the question of one nation being endangered by the others can be posed one day -- and this can then start a wave of suspicions, accusations, and intolerance, a wave that invariably grows and is difficult to stop” (Milošević, 1989).
		NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as effects of actual contact between ODCs and IDC	“[...] not only military facilities were destroyed by bombs in this city, but also factories, craft workshops, homes, schools, kindergartens, even the water springs from which the city of Sombor is supplied [...]” (Porfirije, 2024).
	ODC-related elements	ODC (general)	“[...] those internationals who advocate extreme nationalism and populism either in Europe or in United States” (Diocese of Eastern America, 2008).
		Values of the ODC	“They would like there to be as much misunderstanding, discord, and quarrels among us as possible, they would like us to provoke each other, and no one to show even the elementary measure of humility, even in the days of the holy Great Forty Days” (Porfirije, 2023c).
Sacred dimension of nationalism	Ethnic election	Messianism	“Freedom to be devoted to Christ, to His irresistible love, and through Him – that is, through Christ – to be partakers in the final victory over the devil, over evil, and over death, our greatest threefold enemy” (Porfirije, 2025c).
		National election/exclusivity	“[...] the Serbian people have always been on the right side of history” (All-Serbian Council, 2024).
		Kosovo covenant	“[...] the Kosovo covenant that is by its nature a New Testament sealed not with ink but with the blood of our people [...]” (Amfilohije, 2019).
		Theodul	“The example of theodoulia, the service of God as the sense of life and the path towards the Celestial Empire” (Velimirović, [1942], 2014: 222).

	Ethno-history	Prince Lazar	“[...] under the vaults of the chapel dedicated to the Kosovo martyr Prince Lazar [...]” (Assembly of Bishops, 2024a).
		Serbian statehood	“[...] highlighting the [fact of] existence of the Serbian people on the territories of the Republic of Serbia, Republika Srpska and other geographic areas for many thousands of years [...]” (All-Serbian Council, 2024).
		Wars in the former Yugoslavia (1992-1995)	“[...] gave meaning to every suffering and every endurance, including that which befell our people on the dreadful August days of 1995” (Porfirije, 2023d).
		World War II	“[...] and grieve the wounds from the Second World War [...]” (Porfirije, 2023a).
		Kosovo War (1999)	“[...] today we pray for all those who suffered death in the spring of 1999, innocent victims, for our compatriots, our brothers and sisters. May God forgive their souls and grant them eternal rest, and to all the people who suffered innocently during the NATO aggression against the Serbian people” (Porfirije, 2023b).
		Kosovo Battle: historical vs symbolic narrative	“Therefore it is difficult to say today whether the Battle of Kosovo was a defeat or a victory for the Serbian people, whether thanks to it we fell into slavery or we survived in this slavery” (Milošević, 1989).
	National sacrifice	National suffering/humiliation/sacrifice	“Today, thirty-one years after the suffering, we have gathered to pray together for the souls of our brothers, sisters, children, and elderly who suffered in the past war” (Porfirije, 2023a).
	Sacred territory	Sacred territory/territorial discourse	“People who have been living in their centuries-old homeland, on Kosovo and Metohija, for at least a millennium and a half, to which ancient monasteries and churches, graves, frescoes, and priceless icons bear living witness” (Assembly of Bishops, 2024b).
		Kosovo and Metohija	“[...] we can tell them that Kosovo and Metohija is the apple of our eye, the heart of our hearts, our holy city of Jerusalem and that we can renounce it neither in this worldly life nor in God’s eternal one any more than we can renounce our soul and

			our destiny” (Amfilohije, 2019).
		Motherland/ Fatherland	“[...] when the first destructions of our wonderful and beloved Motherland, our nature, our property and our lives began [...]” (Porfirije, 2023b).
		Greater Serbia	“The Serbian state, which has already taken off favorably, but which needs to expand and become stronger, has its strong base and foundation in the Serbian kingdom of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and in the rich and glorious Serbian history” (Garašanin, [1844], 2007: 242).
Other discursive elements		International relations	“The Assembly also paid attention to the spiritual and geopolitical consequences of the armed conflicts in Ukraine and Palestine” (Assembly of Bishops, 2024a).
		Biopolitics	“The All-Serbian Council highlights the necessity of producing a unified complex of legal solutions and [other] measures for stimulating the growth of the birth rate, with the aim at achieving the demographic growth” (All-Serbian Council, 2024).
		Rise of Serbia	“[...] is taking place in a year in which Serbia, after many years, after many decades, has regained its state, national, and spiritual integrity” (Milošević, 1989).

8.4.3. Coding tree of Ulster textual analysis

Category	Sub-category	Code	Example
Sacred dimensions of nationalism	National election	National exclusivity	“It is the Unionist people only who have faced up to the reality of the situation” (Paisley, 1984).
		Fundamentalism	“Let us renew our faith in the god of our fathers, and let us face our foes with a courage which will die rather than surrender” (Paisley, 2004).
		Messianism	“This challenge however is our opportunity, the opportunity to give determined, resolute, imaginative and courageous leadership to our people and by so doing save not only ourselves but

			our beloved province for further generations” (Paisley, 1984).
		Conflation of religious and political narratives	“We should make it a repenting time, our sins and our national sins need to be repented of. We need to return to the God of our fathers” (Paisley, 1997).
	National sacrifice	The Troubles (1968-1998)	“Features that have too often been forgotten because of more recent troubles” (Paisley, 2007).
		National humiliation/sacrifice	“No country suffered more than this whole island of Ireland, and no locality of any country in the world suffered like loyal Ulster” (Paisley, 2007).
		Injustice towards Ulster	“Crimes committed against people here in Ulster are not to be regarded in the same way by the British government as crimes committed on the mainland” (Paisley, 1996a).
		Lack of unity among the Unionists	“Evidently, and regrettably, the Ulster Unionists do not share that view. That is to the detriment of unionism” (Paisley, 1996a).
		National betrayal	“Mr Major has gone back on his undertakings over and over again. His word is not his determined bond, it is rather his disposable baggage” (Paisley, 1996b).
	Sacred territory	Ulster/Northern Ireland	“Ulster shall remain free” (Paisley, 2006).
		Sacred territory/territorial discourse (general)	“The cemeteries of the Somme Valley are uncanny and mystical” (Paisley, 2007).
	Ethno-history	Ethno-history	“For Protestants and unionists the Boyne carries with it a powerful significance for our culture, our history and our pride” (Paisley, 2007).
		Unification of Ireland	“What is the Framework Document? It is a document with only one option - the united Ireland option and on their agenda the British Government has made it clear that that is the best bet” (Paisley, 1997).
		Unionist insignia	“We will fly the flag, the union flag, the flag of liberty” (Paisley, 1991b).

Linguistic elements of proximization	IDC	Ian Paisley	"I will let the people of Ulster detect for themselves the traitor and then pass their own verdict" (Paisley, 1998a).
		Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)	"The Democratic Unionist Party was born in the throes of the agonies of Ulster" (Paisley, 1984).
		IDC (general)	"Our security forces are not fighting a sham enemy [...]" (Paisley, 1984).
	Values of the IDC	NPs conceptualizing value-orientations of the IDC	"A person who is a constitutionalist will give their support to the security forces of the legitimate state under which they live" (Paisley, 1984).
		Against the Home Rule	"[...] Home Rule would be disastrous to the material well-being of Ulster as well as of the whole of Ireland, subversive of our civil and religious freedom, destructive of our citizenship, and perilous to the unity of the Empire [...]" (Solemn League and Covenant, 1912).
		Unionism	"It was our endeavour to help forward the establishment of a united Unionist front" (Paisley, 1984).
		Values of the IDC: No compromise/No surrender	"Ulster is not capitulating to the IRA. Ulster is not conceding to the IRA. Ulster is not selling out to the IRA. Ulster is not going down the Dublin road, not an inch" (Paisley, 1996b).
		Condemnation of terrorism	"Terrorism must be sunk once and for all" (Paisley, 2004).
		Civil and religious tolerance	"Here young boys and able-bodied men, here mingled all classes, from the aristocracy to the lowest in the social measurement of man. All colours, all classes, all creeds, all beliefs and none, thronged together in that valley of slaughter" (Paisley, 2007).
		Patriotism	"So with our faith firm in the God of our fathers and with hearts motivated by the patriotism of which I have spoken, let us put our best foot to the hill and our face toward the wind in the direction of what please God will be for us all a glorious sun rise" (Paisley, 1991b).
		Covenant/covenantal mentality	"The spirit which inspired our forefathers to refuse to bow the knee to the enemies of

			liberty still burns in the breast of their sons and daughters” (Paisley, 1995).
		Against the Republic of Ireland	“The Constitution itself aimed to restore Ireland, its Gaelic civilisation, a civilisation viewed by Ulster and the rest of the United Kingdom as backward and negative” (Paisley, 1997).
		Against the Roman Catholic Church	“It is back to Reformation days as far as Rome is concerned. Rome dictates to the Protestants what church they should march to” (Paisley, 2004).
		Democracy	“The supremacy of the ballot box is the key to progress and so it must continue to be if we are to have any chance of success” (Paisley, 1991b).
	ODC-related elements	ODC (general)	“Anyone who collaborates with them can expect to be expelled from the Parties immediately” (Paisley, 1985).
		IRA	“[...] it had been announced that the IRA could not use the word "permanent" to define any ceasefire, because that would breach the constitution of the Provisional IRA” (Paisley, 1996b).
		Sinn Fein	“It is up to Sinn Fein to address their lack of credibility before anything they say or do will have any credibility in the eyes of unionists [...]” (Paisley, 2004).
		Value-orientations of the ODC	“[...] is an example of the despicable political immorality to which this Government has sunk” (Paisley, 1997).
	IDC-ODC contact	NPs conceptualizing the anticipated contact between the IDC and the ODC	“Remember this that if there is not this humiliation of Sinn Fein at the polls then a weak-kneed spineless British administration surrounded in Parliament by many who hate and detest Ulster (and let us spell it out plainly) will seek to bolster up what they call constitutional nationalism at the expense of a Unionist majority in Northern Ireland” (Paisley, 1984).
		NPs conceptualizing the result of the actual contact between the IDC and the ODC	“Instead it has produced war, the very opposite to peace, anarchy, the very opposite of stability, and rebellion, the very opposite of reconciliation” (Paisley, 1991b).

		VPs of action indicating movement of the IDC towards the ODC and vice versa	“[...] just as they were on the morning when our gallant boys and men went over the top for King and Country” (Paisley, 2006).
		VPs indicating the contact between the IDC and the ODC	“Simply because the guerrilla forces and advance guard of those foes are bombing, maiming, killing and destroying us [...]” (Paisley, 1991b).

8.4.4. Coding tree of Megali Idea textual analysis

Category	Subcategory	Code	Example
Linguistic elements of (spatial/temporal, axiological) proximization	IDC and its values	IDC	“[...] with other ethnicities which found themselves in the same position as us [...]” (Boussios, [1912] 2010: 343).
		Value-orientations of the IDC (general)	“[...] we should feel hatred for those who harm civil society, show mercy and reason to those who have been deceived, and the love which we owe to each one for the sake of humanity” (Philippidis and Constantas, [1791] 2006: 78).
		Religious/Civil Tolerance	“[...] all of you, I say, Christians and Turks, without any distinction of religion (as you are all creatures of God and children of the first man), who think that the tyrant called the Sultan [...]” (Rigas Velestinlis, [1797] 2006: 302).
		Positive attitude towards the West	“Some rays of this [Western] enlightenment escape and penetrate into Greece” (Korais, [1803] 2006: 144)
		Greece as the Western state	“Greece, then, was named by herself, as soon as she was reborn, a child of the West, and did not even remember that between herself and the West there had once existed unrelenting enmity” (Renieris, [1842] 2007: 314).
		Church-State relations	“[...] let the holy shepherds encourage the people with their own example [...]” (Ypsilantis, [1822] 2007: 401).
		Fatalism	“Take at random some of Greece’s present-day publications, verses, narrations, discourses of ideas. What will

			you encounter almost without fail? Boredom, disillusionment, nostalgia for things gone by, fatalism, a defeatist attitude” (Theotokas, [1929], 2010: 144).
		Constantinople	“Constantinopolitans live, as much as they can, fraternally with the Turks and try to govern them— or, in other words, to have a hold on them” (Psicharis, [1888], 2010: 255).
	Everything related to the ODC	ODC	“But Albanians, as much in time of peace as in time of war, move about under military banners and destroy villages, burn homes, enslave” (Philippidis and Constantas, [1791] 2006: 79)
		Value-orientations of the ODC (general)	“[...] was wiped off the book of life by the blood-thirsty sword of Mohammed” (Renieris, [1842] 2007: 312).
		Against external (malign) influence	“Let us have steadfastness and prudence, let us not lose the unfading crowns of eternal blessedness for a false and non-existent liberty in this present life” (Anthimos, [1798] 2006: 311).
		Against the (Latin) West	“Thirdly, the devil raised from the West another newer heresy for the ruin of the pious, I mean the Latin heresy, different in name but similar to the foregoing heresies and leading to destruction. And with this he led astray all the West” (Anthimos, [1798] 2006: 308).
		Against Byzantium	“[...] they gradually divested themselves of their Byzantine petty arrogance and their aversion to the West” (Renieris, [1842] 2007: 312).
		Against the Turks	“The Turks proved themselves incapable of creating their own superior civilization or to accept the civilization of the nations which they conquered” (Alexandros Papanastasiou, [1922], 2010: 173).
		Against Communism	“Those of you who, during your time of repose, follow in the newspapers [the events] taking place outside Greece’s boundaries today, and during all this time, see a terrible scheme being revealed by the Third International against European civilization” (Metaxas, [1937], 2014: 351).

	Contact between the IDC and the ODC	NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as anticipations of potential contact between ODCs and IDC	“Since then, national disasters have been accumulating” (Alexandros Papanastasiou, [1922], 2010: 171).
		NPs expressing abstract notions conceptualized as effects of actual contact between ODCs and IDC	“[...] it is obvious that in the event that they come to power, our fellow nationals will suffer the fate suffered a few decades ago by the flourishing Hellenic communities of Hungary, Wallachia and Moldavia” (Paparrigopoulos, [1886] 2007: 79).
		VPs of action indicating moving of the ODC towards the IDC and vice versa	“[...] Greece, having ceased to be small, extended its borders and occupied a position in the Mediterranean which was not only extremely imposing but also extremely enviable, and as such, extremely dangerous” Eleftherios Venizelos, [1915] 2010: 265).
Sacred dimensions of nationalism	Ethno-history	Ancient Greece/Greeks	“The blood of the tyrants is acceptable to the shades of Epameinondas the Theban and Thrasybulus the Athenian, who routed the thirty tyrants; to the shades of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, who crushed the yoke of Peisistratus; to that of Timoleon, who restored liberty in Corinth and Syracuse; and all the more so to those of Miltiades and Themistocles, of Leonidas and his three hundred men, who cut down innumerable times the countless armies of the barbarian Persians [...]” (Ypsilantis, [1822] 2007: 401-402).
		Byzantium (positive)	“The Byzantines were wise” (Psicharis, [1888], 2010: 257).
		Hellens/Hellenic as designating the pagans (juxtaposed to the Roman Christians)	“[...] we were named Christians, and it was the pagans we called Hellenes” (Katartzis, [1783] 2006: 215).
		Continuity from Ancient to modern Greece	“But one of the strongest arguments against the claims of the German historiographer is the similarity between

			our life and that of the ancient Greeks” (Politis, [1871], 2010: 7).
		Greek Revolution as a bourgeois/ aristocratic revolution	“[...] the Greek revolution, born mainly on the basis of bourgeois material prosperity and development, was waged in the name of fairly aristocratic ideals and traditions” (Skliros, [1907], 2010: 112).
		Disruption of the historic narrative/freeing from the past	“Neo-Hellenic civilization will be even more perfect than the Hellenistic one of the Macedonians and the Byzantine one, if the nation succeeds in freeing itself from the learned tradition which weighed down both these earlier civilizations and prevented absolute free will, originality, and unbridled flourishing” (Dragoumis, [1914], 2014: 179).
		Continuity from Byzantium to modern Greece	“According to this [path], passing over its true powers, its bourgeois foundation and the ensuing great historical changes, the new state should consider itself as the sole legal representative and heir of the former aristocratic Byzantine state” (Skliros, [1907], 2010: 112).
	National election	Greek/Hellenic as a national category	“He was exactly the opposite: he was one of the most cultivated spirits of Hellenism” (Seferis, [1943], 2010: 327).
		Messianism/ Existential character of events	“[...] it has been destined, on the one hand, by falling, to enlighten the West and, on the other, by being reborn, to enlighten the East” (Kolettis, [1844] 2007: 247).
		National election/ chosen people	“[...] to enjoy those good things which God has prepared from times immemorial for those who love him” (Anthimos, [1798] 2007: 311).
		Nation/national/ nationalism	“[...] the development of the state in order for its borders to coincide with the borders of the national domination [...]” (Venizelos, [1915] 2010: 263).
	National sacrifice	National suffering/ humiliation/ sacrifice	“[...] the clamor can still be heard of the persecution, the slaughter, the torture and the plundering which have been systematically committed since 1913 against our fellow nationals in Asia Minor and Thrace at the command of this State, as always, as well as of the tragic fate of the Armenians” (Papanastasiou, [1922], 2010: 173).

		Jakob Fallmerayer	“Approximately forty years ago, an educated German by the name of Fallmerayer, extremely well-versed in our Medieval history, attempted to prove that the Hellenic race had become completely extinct and that a medley of all sorts of ethnicities and races, especially Slavic ones, today inhabits the land of Greece” (Politis, [1871], 2010: 7).
		Lawlessness	“[...] there could be heard, everyday and without cease, the complaints of the nation, persecutions, violations, injuries and so many other illegalities which sullied the new regime and filled with desperation the souls of those who pinned so many hopes on the golden promises of its prime movers” (Boussios, [1912], 2010: 342).
	Territorial discourse	Geographic location of Greece	“The name of Greece, then, could certainly have been given to the whole of Asia Minor, the peninsula of the Taurus Mountains, [and] lower Egypt; because in all those places the inhabitants were almost [all] Greeks” (Philippidis and Constantas, [1791] 2006: 77).
		Sacred territory/spatial order	“There are two prime cores of Hellenism: Athens, the capital of the Hellenic Kingdom, and the City (Constantinople), the vision and hope of all Hellenes” (Kolettis, [1844] 2007: 248).
		Motherland/Fatherland	“[...] and the Motherland will embrace them!” (Ypsilantis, [1822] 2007: 400).
		Megali Idea/Great Idea	“Their ideal was the possible re-establishment of the former Hellenic Byzantine state, which went on to be crystallized in the fairly utopian “Great Idea,” a mixture of confused past aristocratic and present bourgeois ideas and instincts” (Skliros, [1907], 2010: 112).
	Construction of national identity	Greek Orthodoxy	“See how clearly our Lord, boundless in mercy and all-wise, has undertaken to guard once more the unsullied Holy and Orthodox faith of us, the pious, and to save all mankind” (Anthimos, [1798] 2006: 308).
Greek language		“[...] a very small number of Greeks acquired only the most superficial knowledge of the Greek language”	

		(Korais, [1803] 2006: 144).
	National awakening	“ [...] to bravely raise its burdened shoulders and, furiously arming itself with the weapons of revenge and desperation, to shout out loudly before the whole of the world, with a thunderous cry, the holy and immaculate rights, which are God-given, to live quietly upon the earth” (Rigas Velestinlis, [1797] 2006: 303).
	Conflation of religious, civil and ethnic identities	“When I say Roman Christian, I mean the citizen of a nation who by both these names is declared to be a member of this political society from which he receives this unofficial name” (Katartzis, [1783] 2006: 213).
	Citizenship/ Statehood	“We will create a Greece which will be greater and strong and rich, capable of developing within its borders a vital industry [...] and capable of protecting the Greek citizen, wherever he may be in the world [...]” (Venizelos, [1915] 2010: 266).
	National leader	“Government under a Leader who does not belong to any of the parties, which, in any case, no longer exist, but a Leader who belongs to the whole of the Nation and who deals with its needs as a unified whole, a Leader who is supported by the undivided and absolute trust of the people, which is expressed through every means and through all means, through which a people knows how to express its true trust, as you do today, and who holds concentrated in his hands all the power, in order to proceed in his work” (Metaxas, [1937], 2014: 353).
	Identity crisis	“[...] our nation begins to be filled with that which it shouldn't, [i.e.] foreign ideas, young people do not have the ones [ideas] that are fitting to us, they eliminate from the [ancient] Greek texts even the Christian ideas included in them, they love other nations, hating our own, they are indifferent to our religion; and if a reasonable course of action is not adopted, the natural consequence will be that the youth of the next generation will not even study their primary courses in Greek, and the absurdity in this is obvious” (Katartzis, [1783] 2006: 216).

	Hellens/Hellenic (as designating Ancient Greeks)	“The name Hellenes first became prevalent after the great change in things brought about by the Dorians. With the passage of time, the sum of the Hellenes was named the Hellenic nation, or simply the Hellenic, according to Herodotus and Thucydides, or the race of the Hellenes according to Aristotle” (Paparrigopoulos, [1886] 2007: 77).
	Hellens/Hellenic (as designating modern Greeks)	“The name Hellenes describes not only those who live in this kingdom, but also those who live in Jannina, in Thessaloniki, in Serres, in Adrianople, in Constantinople, in Trebizond, in Crete, in Samos and in any territory associated with Hellenic history and the Hellenic race” (Kolettis, [1844] 2007: 248).

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10. FUNDING

Publication of this MA Thesis was supported with a grant provided by the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The major goal of the grant is to assist young scholars and professionals in conducting research on International Relations and Estonian foreign policy.