

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale and Purpose

Thailand and Russia have become close friends since the Empire era until now. Many Russians have come to visit and doing business in Thailand. They have taken the Russian Orthodox Church as a part of the way of Russian life to Thailand and an increasing number of Thai people have turned to Orthodox Christianity. This leads to study the expansion of Orthodox Church proselytizing¹ role which has influenced the steadily increasing stream recognition to the role of Buddhism and other religions in politic of Thailand. The Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) is the largest centralized religious organization in post-Soviet Russia. It is collectively recognized as administrative independent and self-governing (autocephalous churches²). 74 percent call themselves Orthodox believers (has dropped by 6 percent, from 80 percent in 2009). The number of atheists is 5 percent (affected from communist regime).³ The State used the church as an institutional political actor to achieve unity for national security. Even many non-believers support the church as a symbol of Russian culture and national pride. Throughout Russian history, from the time of the forced adoption of Christianity, religion had permeated society.

¹ “Proselytizing” is the act of attempting to convert people to another opinion and, particularly, another religion.

² An autocephalous church becomes the very basis of national and political independence, the status-symbol of a new ‘Christian nation’ by Alexander Schmemmann, “A Meaningful Storm,” Church, World, Mission, New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1979, p. 98-99.

³ “Number of Orthodox Church Members Shrinking in Russia, Islam on the Rise – Poll,” Interfax-religion, December 2012. [Online] From: <http://www.interfax-religion.com/?act=news&div=10160>

This thesis focuses on the role of the Orthodoxy. This is *de facto* a religious and is an essential part of the Russian Empire. The Orthodoxy was introduced to Kievan Rus⁴ in the ninth century by Greek missionaries from Byzantium. After Constantinople fell to the Turks, Russia continued to develop potential country as legitimate heirs to the Byzantine Empire. The hegemony in the world of Orthodox Christianity shifted to Muscovite Russia and Moscow and became the new city of Constantine (the Third Rome). The ROC played a leading role in unifying the lands of Moscow and expanded to control a political power of Empire (that is most potent centralized over all of Eastern Europe states). The Czar served as the leader of secular life; therefore, the patriarch as leader of ecclesiastical life, and the monarchy and the church were inextricably linked. Although the church held a major influence of Russian life in the nineteenth century, the October Revolution of 1917 was the major turning point for the history of the ROC.

Later, the thesis presents the role of ROC. The latter has been lobbying an increasingly responsive unitary government to ecclesiastical interests of various actors concerned with the Russian church–state relationship, including state actors, the patriarch and Christian Orthodox from within society. After revolution by the Bolsheviks Party under Lenin seized control of Russia, Communism is hostile to religion. Lenin spoke clearly alluded to Marx's earlier comments of religion in *Novaya Zhizn* (the first legal newspaper of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party) in 1905:

...Religion is opium for the people. Religion is a sort of spiritual booze, in which the slaves of capital drown their human image, their demand for a life more or less worthy of man.⁵

As the Bolsheviks consolidated their power, they placed more and more restrictions on the church. The Bolsheviks wanted to achieve in seizing churches and monasteries but lacked a clear plan to deal with religion and unprepared for the incendiary reaction of parishioners that resulted they were arrested and prosecution. From this reason, the church had been evacuated from Russia and the expansion of its proselytizing role in abroad by established the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR) to represent of the

⁴ “Kievan Rus” was a powerful East Slavic state that later became the state of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia.

⁵ Vladimir Lenin, “Socialism and Religion,” *Novaya Zhizn*, No. 28, December 3, 1905.

free part of the Russian Church that for Orthodox restore in homeland. The Orthodox Church was restored in Stalin era, because of WWII. Stalin tried to use the Church for control the Russian nationalism power to defense USSR from German. The relations between church and state improved much better. Especially Mikhail Gorbachev era, with new political and social freedoms of “Glasnost and Perestroika”^{6, 7}, the Orthodox Church returned to Russia and to be restored by local parishioners. After years of awful suffering in Russia, Communism collapsed. Russia had a tremendous change in the political and religious situation but the church showed an amazing power to survive and modernist tendencies grew stronger in political orientation, both in the religious aspects of ideology and practice.

The repercussions of the early Bolshevik religious legislation had a paradoxical effect. The Russia's transformation in the post-Soviet period, one of the most interesting for me is the emergence of a religious orientation after was formerly an officially atheistic society with the reform-oriented policies on the opportunities for religious freedom of glasnost' and perestroika that were initiated in the late 1980s. Today, more twenty years after the fall of the Soviet Union and Communism, the ROC is once again thriving, and registering an increasingly visible presence in civil society, and ongoing dedication and support help to keep the memories of old Russia alive. Especially, during Dmitry Medvedev's presidency the position of the ROC in the public sphere got stronger. Christians know that the survival of the church is owing to the power of considerable trust at work in common people. This study analyses the nature of the prominent public role of the Orthodox Church and the development of relation with the Russian State. The study concludes that the institutional framework of the Orthodox Church, formed within the political context of Russian Empire and with the enforcing role afford to secular political

⁶ Lewis Siegelbaum, “Perestroika and Glasnost,” Seventeen Moments in Soviet History, 14 May 2010.

⁷ “Perestroika” refers to the reconstruction of the political and economic system established by the Communist Party. The goal was to create a semi-free market system, reflecting capitalist practices. The term “Glasnost” means “openness” and was the name for the social and political reforms to bestow more rights and freedoms upon the Soviet people. Its goals were to include more people in the political process through freedom of expression.

authority by focusing on the development of political, social institutions in the country, as well its contributed to positive development of intercultural relations in a global world and surely in Thailand, where there are at least 5 churches nowadays!

1.2 Objectives

1. To study the role of Orthodox Church engaging in Russian politics, including the foreign policies that affect to the expansion of Russian Orthodox Church proselytizing role to abroad during the Soviet period.
2. To analyze factors of State policy supporting to resurgence the Orthodox Church by cooperate between Orthodox Church institutional of Russia and abroad in post-Soviet era.
3. To study the role from the expanding of Russian Immigrants to State policy supporting Russian Orthodox Church that affect to the expansion of its proselytizing role to Thailand.

1.3 Hypothesis

After Russia was transformed into a liberal democracy with religious freedom policy, the Russian Orthodox Church came back as a popular and influential faith in the liberal political structure of various Russian society to preserve their cultural and spiritual identities, including international relation of Russian politic by proselytizing role to other countries including Thailand.

1.4 Scope of study

This study focuses on the role of the Orthodox Church in the Russian Federation where its social and political influence has lasted from the Russian Empire's period, through the Soviet period to the transition to post-Soviet era. The study also covers its growing influence to the expanding of ROC proselytizing role to other countries including Thailand.

1.5 Conceptual framework

In order to understand in the role of religion in political and social life in Russia since Empire period up to the present time, I have decided to cover the main concepts and terms and their implications through documentary research, using descriptive analysis. Relevant theories will also be invoked to guide the analysis in order to capture the whole picture with understanding. The concepts include Nationalism and patriotism, State Mandate, Liberalism and Globalization.

The Orthodox Church was first brought to Russia by Greek missionaries across to Byzantine into Kievan Rus. It was one of the first terms used to define **Nationalism** and **patriotism**. Czars offered to use ROC to create national unity and form the basic premise of the doctrine of original sin because people were scared and did not dare to challenge the state. Russia used nationalism to control social life. At the end of the Russian empire, it was replaced by Marxism-Leninism, which has led to the exodus of human resources in Soviet era. But Russian nationalism has been a prominent feature of Russian polity and society again since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991. The first book, I would like to use, is “The Russian Orthodox Church and Nationalism After 1988” by John B. Dunlop. This paper focuses upon one pivotal aspect of that crisis: the relationship of the Russian Orthodox Church to the burgeoning nationalism of the Ukraine, Belorussia, Moldavia, and the Russian Republic. And one more book is “The Orthodox Nationalist” is a weekly program hosted by historian and writer Fr. Matthew Raphael Johnson. He discussed political theory and religious ideas, with a focus on the central role of Russian nationalism, and the Eastern Orthodox faith, in challenging the New World Order. Thus, I would like to use this theory to analyze the relationship between the Russian government and the Orthodox Church in post-Soviet period.

State Mandate refers to Russian empire’s or government’s power and influence that affect to change religious priorities in all aspects of public and political life, including the involvement of religion in the everyday life of the citizen. The Orthodoxy in Russia was strengthened by the infusion of ideas from the Byzantine, Greek and Romanian rulers to the foundation of the Kievan Rus dynasty. Thus was born the unified ROC that was recognized and provided legitimacy to the State and the State provided patronage to the ROC, although effectively autonomous, nominal autonomy in fact. Until the institution of bolshevism, religion was strictly limited before Russian Parliament passed a law

restricting the activities of religious organizations in 1997. Complete freedom is given to any religious organization officially recognized. But citizens do not yet feel to the real of religious liberty more enough and even existing religious liberties could disappear. This act has been sharply criticized as antithetical to the concept of freedom of religion and also engages in practices that have been accused of being discriminatory against other than Orthodox Christianity. The Constitution of the Russian Federation adopted on December 12, 1993, declares equality of all religious associations in Article 14 that all religious organizations shall be separate from the state. No other legal acts may contradict this fundamental principle. But many Russians know that religious liberty is still a problem in this country. They are still finding stability in the country's dominant Orthodox religion.

Liberalism and Globalization focus on relationship between the ROC and the international community since Soviet period to the present. The Liberal was once a forbidden word, and people would be very hesitant to use related notions like "open society" and "civil society" before they were introduced into the Soviet Union when Mikhail Gorbachev became the head of state after 1988. He launched programs glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring) that contributed to the restoration of the Russian Orthodox Church as a signal of a political schisms with communism and a reflection of Old Russian nationalism. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the new governments passed law that significantly restored religious freedom to allow for the Orthodox Church and others to come back to Russia. The ROC plays as intermediate institutions between increasingly powerful local, regional and global mechanisms of governance. Such a view of generally privileges an economic logic and, in its neoliberal variant, the emergence of a single global market and the principle of global competition as the harbingers of human progress that through the establishment of transnational networks of religions. This term will be used to analyze religious freedom during the late Soviet period which resulted in the transition to democracy.

The book that I used for understanding on relationship of the ROC to global is "Eastern Orthodoxy in a Global Age: Tradition Faces the Twenty-First Century" by Agadjanian and Rousselet. This essay is an excellent introduction to understanding the Russian Church's view of globalization and modernity, which sets the stage for the rest of the Orthodox world. This looks at the Orthodox Church's response to globalization and

modernity that focuses on some of the various ethnic groups that make up the church, especially when dealing with contemporary issues. It has outstanding credentials in both the study of the Eastern Orthodox Church and the nation/state in Orthodox countries.⁸ I would like to use globalization to analyze action on the part of the ecumenical movement: culture, physicality and solidarity of the ROC in the global arena.

1.6 Literature Reviews

In order to clarify role of the Orthodox Church in Russia, I have divided the research into three sections. I would like to classify the important sources to be used for the analysis in the following categories.

A History of the Russian Orthodox Church

First step of my research focuses on history of the Russian Orthodox Church from the beginning when the church came to Kievan Rus to the collapse of the Soviet Union period. The sources that I want to introduce are “Russia: A Country Study,” an article produced by Glenn E. Curtis. He wrote about all of Russia. But I just use some information on history of Russia that is relevant to the Orthodox Church since early history, Muscovy, Empire, revolutions, Soviet and post-Soviet era from this article. And “A History of the Russian Church,” written by Ángel F. Sánchez Escobar, I have used the part on their conversion to analyze the beginning of Orthodox Christianity in Russia in the ninth century, when Constantinople's greatest mission was sent to Kievan Rus by Greek missionaries from Byzantium; years of Tatar oppression in the fifteenth century; the time when the Russian Church was pivotal in the survival and life of the Russian state and its economic and spiritual expansion; the beginning of the seventeenth century that proved to be a hard time because Russia experienced the great schism and Peter the Great had to reform the church; and finally the period from the Russian revolution to the early 1960's till the mid-1980's.

⁸ Ellen Gvosdev, “Eastern Orthodoxy in a Global Age: Tradition Faces the Twenty-First Century,” *Journal of Church and State*, 48, 2 (2005): p. 290.

Then, my research focuses on the ROC in the Soviet period, when Russia was under communist rule. The majority of them were monographs focused on the Soviet case. The sources of my research are: “Survival: The Russian Orthodox Church,” written by John G Keegan. He discusses about Soviet State decreed the separation of the Church from the State and freed the educational system from all Church influence and laid down new rules for church administration at all levels after the Orthodox Church survived its near extinction from 1917 to 1945, and how the Church was assisted in its struggle for survival under the Bolsheviks. “Cooperation and Conflict between Church and State: The Russian Famine of 1921-1923,” an article produced by Richard Gribble. It describes the unprecedented and unrepeated international and interdenominational efforts made to relieve the severe and widespread famine in Russia. The Russian famine did however demonstrate that international cooperation between church and state was possible. Even when the political was so adverse, millions of people were saved from certain starvation. “History of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad,” written by St. John (Maximovich) of Shanghai and San Francisco would be used next to give information about a history of the ROCA when the Soviet state was anti-religious. This is especially helpful for tracing the historical development of the Ecumenical movement. And “Communist Russia and the Russian Orthodox Church 1943-1962” is a book wrote by William B. Stroyen. This book is about the history of the Russian Orthodox Church during the Soviet regime that analyze of relations between Soviet State and Moscow patriarchate under the concept of “peace,” but with more subtlety than under Stalin. Here again the Church could be of use to Christian movement for peace of the State and the Russian Church fully supported it. The information I got from these articles and books is very useful for my chapter II that focuses on history of Orthodox Church in Russia.

The Orthodox Church in post-Soviet Russia

The most sources are articles, news and books. My research discusses the relationship between church and state, including to international (ROCA) in the Soviet and post-Soviet periods when the government relaxed restrictions on religious practice. The article “Russian Church and Stalin,” edited by Lev Regelson that explained how the government reduced anti-religious stringency after the outbreak of the Second World War in Stalin era. Because he needed more support for the war effort from Russian people, he had to use the church. I have information from “Russian Orthodox Christians and Their

Orientation toward Church and State,” written by Christopher Marsh about the orientations of members of Russian Orthodox Christians toward issues of church and state and about the new religious environment that was codified in the 1990 ‘Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Belief.’ This legislation introduced religious equality and the separation of church and state for the first time in Russian history.

My research continues about the relationship between church and state in Russian Federation and the activities of the ROC the effect on international relations of Orthodox countries from the post-Soviet period to the future prospect. Each of their volumes is dedicated to a specific legal issue discussed country by country, e.g. post-communist laws on religion, nationalism, and religious minorities. I rely on the essay, “Forced Miracles: The Russian Orthodox Church and Post-soviet International Relations,” written by Andrew Evans, which discusses international relations in age of globalization, when nation-states must deal with other actors in the arena of international politics and religion. The next article is “Religious Reestablishment in Post-Communist Polities,” produced by Ani Sarkissian. The essay first discusses current trends in the literature on religion–state relations to identify a theoretical model that can be used to examine the countries under consideration. It focuses on a set of arguments referred to as religious economy theory, and examines the motivations of religious and political actors as they negotiate the post-communist religious marketplace. In addition, “Putin and the Russian Orthodox Church,” written by John Anderson, properly analyzes nation and community tied in very closely to the rhetoric of the Putin administration, as did the skepticism about liberalism and democracy as ends in and of themselves. Further, there was an affinity between the president’s attitudes towards non-governmental organizations and the church’s view of its critics.

The thesis is also based on “The Orthodox Church and Russian Politics,” relies upon Irina Papkova. Her study case examines the ROC's influence on federal-level policy in the Russian Federation in-depth since the fall of communism to 2008. The analysis balances the church as an institutional political actor with the government's response to church demands based on interviews, close readings of documents including official state and ecclesiastical publications and survey work conducted by the author. This book is the source of most important information that has helped me get ideas on fundamental

relationship between the church and state and covers such important factors in Russian politics as the Communist and the Liberal Democratic parties.

The expansion of Russian Orthodox Church proselytizing role to Thailand

Thesis in this chapter, I have information from the website of “Orthodox Christian Church in Thailand (Moscow Patriarchate),” originally designed by Andreas Viklund, and the web-hosting is provided by “Orthodox Russia.” From this site I knew brief history about non-officially bilateral relations between Russia and Siam, which is unique in many aspects. Personal friendship of outstanding monarchs Rama V (Chulalongkorn) and His Majesty Nicholas II (Romanov) grew into the friendship and collaboration of two great nations. I can also monitor the important situation and activities of the Orthodox Christians in Thailand from the website. “Russo-Siamese Relations: The Reign of Kings Rama Fifth and Sixth” written by Chalong Soontarawanit and “The Russo-Siamese Relations: The Reign of King Chulalongkorn” of Natanaree Posrithong are good history books that analyzes Russian-Thai relation from beginning during Colonial time.

Besides, I also got information about officially bilateral relations history between Russian-Thai during Soviet period and after collapse until present from website “Royal Thai Embassy in Moscow.” Although I did not get directly information about Russian Orthodox Church in Thailand, I got reduction causes of Russian-Thai relations, it is Russian Revolution and Cold War which occurred before the establishment of an officially Orthodox Church, these are probably major causes to the Orthodox Church is not widespread as much as other sects Christian in Thailand.

1.7 Research Methodology

My research focuses on the role of Orthodox Church in the Russian Federation and the expansion of its proselytizing role in Thailand. I use documentary research as a method to collect information concerning the Russian Orthodox Church since the Russian Empire, how it was driven exile abroad in the Soviet period, and then its restoration with the transition to the post-Soviet era to the present. My descriptive analysis focuses on the role of the church in relation to the government and society in Russia and the expansion of the church abroad.

I firstly began to review literature on the history of the Russian Orthodox and the Russian Orthodox abroad which I have found both in Russian and international resources, archival documents including books, reports, journals, news, and internet articles to supplement my study. My research is composed of primary and secondary sources.

1.8 Significance

1. Knowledge gained from the study the history of the Russian Orthodox Church and its role on Russian's society and politic both since the Russian Empire period to Soviet period and the transition to post-Soviet.
2. Knowledge gained from studying both the internal and external factors that affect the missionary of the Russian Orthodox on abroad including Thailand.
3. No officially research or document about the missionary of the Russian Orthodox Church which mentioned on the effect of its proselytizing role to Thailand.