



# (Review A) Pandemic, *homo somatis*, and Transformations of the Russian Orthodox Ethos

ANONYMOUS

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**ABSTRACT** This is the first review of the preprinted article “Pandemic, *homo somatis*, and Transformations of the Russian Orthodox Ethos.” The review will be taken offline once the final article has appeared.

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**KEYWORDS** review, preprint

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## Summary Evaluation

Accepted with suggested minor/major revisions (B/C).

[1]

## Original Article

The original article can be found under the following link: <https://er.ceres.rub.de/index.php/ER/article/view/8897>

[2]

## 1. Give a presentation of the article. What is its contribution to research?

The article presents the arguments of the representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church expressed for and against compliance with pandemic sanitary rules. It focuses on the first wave of pandemic and discuss the idea of closure or opening of the churches during the Easter 2020, the way the Holy Communion is enjoyed and other orthodox rituals perpetuated. According to the author two epistemes of the late modern society, which he/she calls the scientific and exclusive-expressive subjectivity had impact on the Church’s arguments for compliance with pandemic sanitary rules.

[3]

## 2. Assess the source materials and research literature.

The article lacks the methodological part. The author only mentioned that s/he analyzed the articles from the press and Internet portals, however, s/he does not recall the names of the journals and portals and does not explain their choice. There is also no information on time frame of the analysis and the number of journals/ articles analyzed. What concerns the research literature, the article mostly focuses on the empirical materials, there are little references to ongoing scientific discussions on the place of the ROC in the Russian society and especially its modernization concept. [4]

## 3. Assess the problem formulations; are they clearly stated?

The problem is clearly stated, however the argumentation is sometimes blurr. It especially concerns the theoretical part, in which the author introduces two epistemes of the late modernity, which s/he claims are the most important/ had the biggest impact on the ROC representatives opting for the respectation of the pandemic rules. However, the author does not refer here to exiting literure on the late modernity, s/he rather bases on his/her ordinary knowledge: „In my opinion, bio-determinism rests on a combination of two cultural foundations, or epistemes: scientism and exclusive-expressive subjectivity.“ (p. 22) It would strenghten the argument if in the theoretical part the author refers to the exising literure. [5]

Some references to the state of art are also unclear as in case of the Catholic tradition on “love of one’s neighbor” [37]. Why does the author refer to the catholicism while analysing the Russian orthodoxy and not to other orthodox Churches? [6]

## 4. Assess the analysis and conclusion.

If the methodological part is added and explained the analytical part will be sufficient. However, the conclusion does not follow the main arguments developed in the article. The goal of the article expressed in the introduction: „how basic religious attitudes and habitus collided and correlated with the prevalent epistemes of the late-modern society“ (p. 4) is not presented in the article. [7]

The conclusion introduces some new statements that are not developed in the analytical part as: [8]

- “Definitely, in these fears we can still see the echoes of the postmemory of Soviet anti-religious violence”. Neither the concept of postmemory nor empirical materials showing the fears of the Soviet anti-religious campaign, are showed in the article. [9]
- “As we have seen, the pandemic has made certain tendencies in religious life more apparant: a movement towards a greater internalization of practices and faith.” [52] However, the article does not show it, it rather shows the discussion, but not the tendency in the Russian orthodox religion. [10]
- The conclusions also mentions that the religious practices moved towards virtual media, however, the article does not examine any virtual rituals that were developed during the pandemic. [11]

It will also enrich the analysis if the author better explains the way the chalice is used in the orthodox religious rituals and the Holy Communion as some readers of the article may not be familiar with orthodox religion. [12]

Even if the focus is put on the first wave of the pandemic, and the Eastern time of 2020, the author should mention and somehow refer to the changes of the orthodox rituals during the following waves. Was the first wave the exception? Or some changes in the rituals and some arguments were later followed and they constantly change the Russian orthodoxy? [13]

## **5. Summary, final verdict, and rationale for your decision:**

It is for sure a very interesting and worth publishing article, however the revisions are necessary to make the argument and conclusions more persuasive and better embedded in the existing literature. [14]