

Article

Glocal Religion and Feeling at Home: Ethnography of Artistry in Finnish Orthodox Liturgy

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Abstract: This paper adapts a glocalization framework in a transnational, anthropological exploration of liturgy in the Orthodox Church of Finland (OCF). It draws on long-term ethnographic fieldwork and interviews with participants of liturgy from Finnish, Russian, and Greek cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The main argument of the paper is that generic processes of nationalization and transnationalization are not mutually exclusive in practitioners' experiences of liturgy in OCF, but rather generate a glocal space that incorporates Finnish, Russian, Karelian, and Byzantine elements. Individuals artistically engage with glocal liturgy on sensorial, cognitive, social, and semantic levels. What is important for the participants is a therapeutic sense that comes from a feeling of 'being at home', metaphorically, spiritually, and literally. People's ongoing, creative work constitutes Orthodoxy as their national *and* transnational home.

Keywords: glocal religion; Orthodox Christianity; glocalization; transnational anthropology; artistry; liturgy; home; therapeutic

1. Introduction

Most contemporary Orthodox churches across the world are divided into national or diasporic churches; the latter of which is often organized alongside ethno-national and linguistic lines. National churches include, for example, those of Greece and Cyprus, where histories of entanglement between Orthodoxy and nationalization date back to the 19th century. In Russia, Orthodox Christianity emerged as a signifier of individual and collective national identity after the Soviet collapse [1]. On the other hand, Orthodox churches in the USA are mostly diasporic churches, where this religion functions as a 'cultural marker' that implies belonging to a certain national or ethnic group, whether Greek, Serbian, or Russian versions of Orthodoxy ([2], p. 122). This is also the case in Western Europe, for instance, in Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway [3,4]. This situation led to the scholarly categorization of national vs diasporic Orthodox churches in contemporary research [2,4–6].

Such categorizations are analytically useful for examining the social aspects of religion. Yet, they tend to brush aside cross-sectional and cross-cutting processes that cannot be easily captured by the division between national and diasporic. In many ways, 'religious transnationalism' becomes evident in hybrid or minority identities *within* Orthodox diasporas, through the experiences of migration in the modern world of nation-states ([6], p. 213). The Orthodox Church of Finland (OCF), for example, is an interesting case, suggesting that the processes of nationalization and transnationalization are not mutually exclusive, but together constitute a glocal manifestation of Orthodoxy in Finland. This paper unpacks this argument by focusing on individual experiences of liturgy in the OCF, a Eucharistic church service of the Byzantine rite that has been central to Eastern Christian practices since the time of late antiquity, and remains so today amongst Orthodox populations across the globe [7,8].

In general, many approaches to questions of lived religion are bound within a methodological nationalist approach, restricted to exploring phenomena within one national realm or church. However, the author's ethnographic fieldwork in Finland paints a different picture, of the Orthodox

Church as a multi-sited space transcending national borders. The findings are grounded in a glocalization framework [2] and in transnational anthropology [9–11], which challenges methodological nationalism and accentuates multi-sited selves and lives. A transnational anthropological approach helps to yield new interpretations of people's narratives and experiences of liturgy.

Another, key, theoretical axis of the paper is material religion, which emphasizes the holistic character of mind-body experiences [12,13]. The term 'religious aesthetics' is employed to address people's 'embodied and embedded praxis' of religion, in which the process of making meanings and knowing is understood as a holistic experience of the mind, as well as of the bodily emotions and experiences [14]. Religious aesthetics enable us to see that individuals' experiences of, for instance, liturgy, are often sensorially and corporeally felt, in addition to being consciously articulated and apprehended. Following a people's perspective shows the 'work' they do, their 'vernacular' artistry, which is often overlooked in academic accounts of institutionally-based religiosities [15].

The paper draws on the author's long-term ethnographic fieldwork in one of the parishes of the OCF, a dynamic site of multicultural and multilingual interaction. Ethnographic interviews were conducted with 22 practitioners from Finnish, Russian, and Greek backgrounds, who either regularly or occasionally attend liturgical services. The main argument presented here is that Finnish Orthodox glocal liturgy incorporates both nationalization and transnationalization, and thus creates and enables practitioners from different backgrounds to experience a feeling of 'home', both metaphorically and literally. Individuals creatively and artistically engage with glocal liturgy on sensorial, cognitive, and semantic levels.

The paper unfolds as follows. The next section provides a brief background to Finnish Orthodox Christianity from a glocal perspective, focusing on liturgy. This is followed by a section discussing the theory and method. The ensuing three empirical sections discuss individual experiences of liturgy through senses, the language, and shifting lens. The paper concludes with a section that summarizes the findings, as well as opens avenues for future exploration.

2. Orthodox Church of Finland

Orthodoxy in Finland dates back to the eleventh century: it was indigenized in the region of Karelia¹, under the influence of the Novgorodians, who adopted this religion from the Byzantines through Kiev at the end of the tenth century ([16], p. 153). Throughout history, Orthodox Christianity remained a religion of minority, mainly concentrated in the eastern part of Finland. Where religion had been evident in Finland under the centuries-old Swedish rule, culturally or institutionally, that religion had been Lutheranism. There had been some spread of Orthodox Christianity into other parts of the country in the nineteenth century due to the Russian Orthodox Church, when the Grand Duchy of Finland was part of the Russian Empire. After Finland gained independence in 1917, the OCF became an autonomous Finnish Orthodox archdiocese of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in 1923. The histories of Finnish Orthodoxy embraced numerous people's dislocations, resettlements, and enforced and voluntary moves, as well as the alleged tensions between Karelian and Russian Orthodox identities (for a detailed historical accounts of these moves see [16]).

The first half of the twentieth century was marked by the process of nationalization or *Finnicisation*, i.e., deliberate attempts of the OCF to disassociate Orthodoxy from its Russian heritage [16,17]. The national popularity of the OCF started to grow in the 1970s among Finnish intellectuals, due to the 'Romantic movement' that appreciated the Byzantine art of icons and music, which enhanced the oriental and exotic image of Orthodoxy in Finland [16,18,19]. In general, any attentive observer will be overwhelmed by the visibility of Eastern Orthodox materiality—icons of Mary, Jesus, or saints—throughout the country, and the intense activity surrounding them. Many

¹ Occupying an intermediate position on the Russian-Finnish border, Karelia has historically been an area of warlike conflicts or peaceful interactions between Sweden and Novgorod, the Swedish Kingdom and the Russian Empire, Finland and the Soviet Union, and the centuries-old coexistence and interconnectedness of Slavonic and Finno-Ugric cultures.

Finns with wide-ranging beliefs, including Lutherans, keep Orthodox icons in their homes, attend icon-painting courses, or enjoy Orthodox choir singing. This situation is also due to 'good ecumenical relationships' and multiple interactions between the OCF and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (ELCF), 'the two folk churches' that have a legal status as national churches in the country ([20], p. 7). Indeed, there is hardly any sense of resentment between these two branches of Christianity in Finland, and in many cases, there is a continuum for those who convert from Lutheranism to Orthodoxy, or vice versa. Similarly, some Lutherans appreciate and apply elements of Orthodoxy, without feeling any compulsion to join the OCF.

From the 1990s onwards, the OCF started to undergo the process of transnationalization, mainly due to an influx of migrants from Eastern European countries. The share of foreign-born members increased from 3 per cent in 1990, to 11 per cent in 2009 ([16], p. 166). In 2015, the Church's official membership amounted to 60,877, approximately 1.1 per cent of the total population in Finland [21]. However, these official numbers do not include those practitioners who are not officially registered, but share some form of commitment to Orthodoxy. There are most likely many individuals among Russian-speakers (presently the largest migrant minority in Finland, roughly estimated at 78,000), who consider themselves Orthodox, but may not have officially joined the OCF. Practitioners from this and other linguistic minorities (Greek, Romanian, Ukrainian, Serbian, Tigrinya, etc) also attend church services in the parish where the fieldwork research was conducted, but not all of them are registered members of the OCF.

A central component of the regular Orthodox Church service is the Divine Liturgy or, simply, liturgy. Liturgy stands for the recreation and celebration of the Kingdom of Heaven, as well as the symbolic and actual reliving of the mystery of the Last Supper. The term derives from the Ancient Greek 'leitourgia', translated as 'public works' to emphasize the communal character of this rite ([22], p. 190). As a 'synthesis of arts' [23], liturgy has been a 'unique source of aesthetic, intellectual, music, poetic and visual enjoyment' [24]. According to Orthodox theology, its 'sorrowful joy' manifests in the re-enactment of the sacrifice of Jesus's body and blood, but also in the glorious resurrection and glad thanking (*Eucharistia*), as well as the glorifying of the life-giving Trinitarian God [7,22]. Although theological research into liturgy has been substantial, there is little scholarly understanding of the ethnographic reality surrounding this service in the lives of Orthodox practitioners ([25], p. 12).

In particular, scant attention has been paid to how liturgy in the OCF embeds *both* the processes of nationalization *and* transnationalization. In the course of the twentieth century, Finnish has become the main liturgical language, as well as the medium of social interaction in the OCF. The translation of liturgical texts from Church Slavonic into Finnish—liturgies by John Chrysostom and St. Basil the Great, the two most frequently used in the church service—signifies a process of nationalization through vernacularization. Although the first translation was made in 1862 in Saint Petersburg, that carried out by Sergei Okulov became the most commonly used translation from 1910 ([26], p. 9). Composing music specifically for the Finnish text of the liturgy also depicts the process of nationalization, and was first completed by Peter Akimov (published under P. Attinen, 1936) ([26], p. 10). Yet these attempts at nationalization had in fact relied on a strong transnational component. First, there had been a great deal of effort placed on reviving the Byzantine art of icon-painting and the eight-mode system of chanting [27] and, thus, on establishing a direct connection to the Greek heritage. Second, in its religious aesthetics, Finnish Orthodoxy has also retained Russian Orthodox elements (albeit it has been less articulated in Church public rhetoric [16]). In particular, the Finnish liturgical practice has continued to follow the Russian Orthodox tradition of multi-vocal choir singing. Many hymns and chants composed by Russian composers (such as the famous 'Cherubim hymn' by G. Lvovski), have been adopted for choir singing in the Finnish language, and continue to be sung during liturgies (Figure 1). Compositions of the Finnish composers Aleksei Krasnostovski, Leonid Bashmakov, Pasi Torhamo, and Timo Ruottinen, incorporate both Byzantine and Slavic influences [26,28]. Likewise, the church architecture, church interior, and icons—indispensable parts of the religious aesthetics of the liturgy—variably integrate Byzantine, Russian, and Karelian features [19,29].



Figure 1. The Liturgy used by the choir during services. Photo by the author.

The church in which the fieldwork research was conducted is located in a major urban centre of the country. In its architecture and interior, including icons, this church incorporates 19th-century Russian ‘academic classicism’ ([29], p. 289). The ‘western’ style of iconography within the church is not always appreciated by scholars of art, as it diverges from the Byzantine and Old Russian art of icons [19]. Yet, the fieldwork research illustrates that both old and new iconographic styles ‘speak’ to individuals, and practitioners venerate icons, irrespective of their artistic and theological ‘correctness’. Most clubs and groups in the church are run in both Finnish and Russian languages, and as one of the Finnish interlocutors puts it: ‘it is great that one can hear many languages spoken’. Although Finnish is the main language of liturgy, church services are also occasionally conducted in Church Slavonic, Greek, Romanian, Serbian, and English languages. There is a multi-vocal choir and a one-vocal choir: both sing a diversity of choral music during liturgies, ranging from traditional (Neo) Byzantine chant and Russian ‘znamenny chant’, to various Finnish compositions, which may also integrate traditional and modern Nordic music influences.

3. Theory and Methods

Growing research has attempted to address the global and transnational character of Orthodox Christianity [4,6,25]. The argument here draws on Roudometof’s account of Orthodox Christianity, as historical glocalization that comprises processes of indigenization, vernacularization, nationalization, and transnationalization [2]. These glocalizations of Orthodoxy emerge as concrete historical processes involving a fusion between religious universalism and local particularism. The expression ‘transformations of a religious tradition’ in the book’s title points to the diversity of manifestations of Orthodoxy in local contexts, in particular its different responses to nationalization and transnationalization. Roudometof’s theorizing on glocalization is an excellent framework for understanding the historical and contemporary dynamic in the OCF.

The contribution of this paper is that it incorporates an anthropological perspective into the sociological glocalization framework [30]. First, this paper applies transnational anthropology, which challenges methodological nationalism and accentuates multi-sited histories, lives, and senses of belonging [9–11]. An ethnic group or a nation can no longer be viewed as being self-evidently fixed with a certain locality and state, as ‘the structures of feeling that constitute nationalism need to be set in the context of other forms of imagining communities, other means of endowing significance to space in the production of location and “home”’ ([31], p. 331). In the increasingly interconnected global realm, many individuals share *transnational subjectivities* that refer to a ‘trajectory that combines living in different places, and makes mobility a historical trajectory of one’s own, always connecting to where one is located but simultaneously keeping oneself solidly anchored in one’s own story and oneself’ ([11], p. 170). This anthropological perspective helps to illustrate people’s agency in renegotiating their transnational subjectivities, where nationalization and transnationalization may in fact be simultaneously at work.

Second, this paper approaches Orthodoxy as a vernacular, lived religion that necessarily entails an experiential component, an individual's creativity and artistry in interpretation, and a unique engagement with liturgy [15]. In this respect, it expands on Roudometof's concept of 'vernacularization' to go beyond linguistics and into the artful and creative way in which people relate to religiosity. Most approaches to the important questions of lived religion build on a cognitive approach to religious materiality (icons, music), which stresses how believers relate to the theological meaning of an image or appreciate its aesthetics, in more or less theoretical terms. However, ethnographic fieldwork offers a different view, namely significant evidence of sensorial and corporeal experiences of religious art [13,32].

The argument presented here draws on the long-term ethnographic fieldwork research [33–35]. The fieldwork research was conducted amongst Orthodox Christians in Finland (2014–2016), which included participant and non-participant observation in a church setting,² as well as 22 ethnographic interviews. The church serves as the spiritual and social environment of a vibrant multicultural community within the parish in western Finland. Following the premises of transnational anthropology the purpose of approaching interlocutors was to interact and interview individuals from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds, in order to address the multicultural dynamic of the OCF. Thus, the ethnographic interviews were conducted with individuals of Russian, Finnish, and Greek origins. The interviewees were mostly women aged between 26 and 69, all but two had a university degree, and most were teachers, university lecturers, accountants, researchers, and doctors. The findings presented here should be seen as the result of the long-term immersion in the studied phenomenon and engagement with the interlocutors.

4. Transnational and National Experiences of Liturgy: 'Being at Home'

4.1. Liturgy and Senses

What unites the interlocutors of this research is that none of them (except two women from a Greek background), for various reasons, could be seen as 'cradle' Orthodox. Despite all of the differences between the cultural and political situations of the Orthodox Churches in Finland and Russia, there are some obvious parallels in their interrelated histories. Due to the decades of Soviet suppression of religion, Orthodoxy was rather passively present in people's lives, and was mainly transferred through elderly women or babushkas (grandmothers in Russian) [35,36]. In Finland, Orthodoxy was the religion of a 'stigmatized minority' up to the 1970s [18] and, therefore, many Finnish interlocutors also only had passive experiences of Orthodoxy. This tangible experience of Orthodoxy formed a 'latent religious affiliation' [37] that many individuals built on in their rediscovery of Orthodox spirituality in their adult lives. Corporeal and emotional experiences of liturgy have been important in their pursuit of the Orthodox path.

This is how Maija, who was raised as a member of the (Protestant) Free Church of Finland, recalls her first experience of liturgy in the New Valaam Monastery in Finland, in her early twenties:

I found Orthodoxy after I finished high school. I went to the Valaam Monastery, and it was more about how I felt [tunneasia in Finnish] there during the liturgy, and the monks singing. When I came home and went to the service [at the Free Church of Finland], it was not the same. Yes, it was a liturgy in a parish, and all the elements were there, but I was thinking that it was not the same as in Valaam. The service [in Valaam] was very intense, and it was alive, and this affected me. Many people say that there is a powerful energy in the Valaam Monastery... And there was something very moving in that icon [the Valaam icon of the Mother of God]. I felt it that very first time I went there. When I was close to the icon, I felt peace inside, and it stayed deeply in my memories [38].

² The name and the location of the church are omitted to enhance anonymity of the interlocutors. Naturally, their real names are not mentioned in the paper, and certain other details have also been anonymized.

Johanna, too, recalls that she felt like ‘being at home’ when she visited the Valaam Monastery, also in her early twenties. Marja compares ‘joining the church’ with ‘coming home’, while Minna says that she found her ‘spiritual home’ in Orthodoxy. The word ‘home’ frequently appears in people’s narratives, irrespective of their linguistic backgrounds. There are multiple meanings of ‘home’, ranging from a place that one physically inhabits, to various subjective experiences of home [39], and the use of the term in the interviews captures these different levels. Shifting experiences of home may signify ‘movement within the constitution of home’ ([40], p. 341). Various situated and changing experiences of home(s) reveal that being at home is always a matter of ‘how one feels or how one might fail to feel’, rather than a marker of one specific abode [40]. Upon her return to what used to be her home church, Maija failed to feel that way after she faced another kind of church service. Liturgy with flickering candles, icons, incense, and choir singing, was experienced as welcoming, and home-like. In other women’s narratives, the first encounters of Orthodox materiality are also often recollected as experienced on a sensory and intuitional level, connecting to something familiar and seemingly known, that one had been longing for.

Such a sensorial component remains significant throughout years of participation in the liturgy. Many emphasize that they ‘like the smell’ in the church, that choir singing ‘touched my very soul’, or that they were ‘moved to tears’; they talk of the feeling of ‘trembling’ or ‘gooses’ in the body. This is how the sensorial effects of liturgy are described in the words of Vera, a Russian-speaking practising psychiatrist, in her early thirties:

Solemnity. Sometimes there is such moment in life, some kind of breakdown. Not like some kind of quarrel, but some serious stress. Somebody got sick or some problems, for instance, at a work place. And there is a feeling [oshchushchenie] of tearfulness, a feeling that it is bad. And then it is gone. And there is a peak of bliss. And tears stream down, I don’t know...I don’t know how to explain it as it is well difficult to do it. Well you know, when you say that you are extremely deeply moved. There is this very feeling [oshchushchenie]...well you know, it is actually overwhelming you, and there is a lump in the throat...I don’t know, it is difficult to explain [41].

Vera applies the Russian word *oshchushchenie*, which does not have any direct translation into English. Yet, its use is important, as this term implies a ‘subjective image’ of the world and encompasses the whole range of senses and sensations, tangible and emotional experiences, and perceptions [42]. Vera and her family have stayed in different places in Finland and attended church services in local churches. She mentions that, although ‘she has been always attracted by the Orthodox church’, she did not really attend church in Russia, where one’s behaviour and clothes could be easily misjudged. Instead, she says that the OCF is more ‘democratic’, explaining that she ‘found her church in Finland, not in Russia’. This is also important to sensorial experiences of liturgy, as it stands for the comforting feeling of being at home.

However, most of the Russian-speaking interlocutors appreciate the multi-locality of Orthodoxy. They do not draw a particular difference between Russian and Finnish Orthodox churches, but rather their Orthodox journey takes place within the constitution of their transnational home. Anfisa, for instance, points out that she has never been disconnected from the church, and always liked the music, the smell, and the entire ‘atmosphere’ during the liturgy. She used to attend church services, but later apprehended Orthodoxy with ‘awareness’ when she was in Finland, through her brother who stayed in Russia and acted as her spiritual mentor. Yet, she notes: ‘It all started in Russia, and the first Eucharist I also received in Russia.’ Only somewhat later, she came to the Eastern service in Finland, started regularly attending liturgies, and joined the choir.

The feeling of being at home is not necessarily rationally apprehended. It is often a non-cognitive, sensorial, and embodied connection that evokes a comforting feeling of being at home. When Russian-speakers or Greek-speakers participate in the liturgy in the OCF, they also connect to the religious aesthetics of glocal liturgy in Finland; the art of icons and music that incorporate Russian and Byzantine features (and often are not fully familiar within the complex, ambiguous histories of Finnish Orthodoxy). They encounter the same images and familiar melodies that connect them with

their homes, where they were born. This is why many Russian-speakers, when entering an Orthodox church in Finland, may have a feeling of ‘very home’, as Elena puts it (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Church interior (iconostasis) in the Uspenski Cathedral in Helsinki. Photo by the author.

During liturgies, they also face and contemplate icons of Mary, Jesus, and other saints. In their eyes, these figures do not belong to one single national realm, but rather transcend national borders. Victoria notes that, upon her first visit to a Finnish Orthodox church, she was pleasantly surprised to view what seemed to be an exact image of the Virgin that she had seen at the Valaam Monastery in Russian Karelia³, a copy of which she had also brought with her to Finland.

A similar effect of Orthodox religious aesthetics can be observed among so-called transnationals, who have moved and stayed in different places due to their work. For instance, Marta, a woman of Greek origins, is a researcher who came to Finland 10 years ago. She notes that, with age, she has realized the spiritual depth of the Orthodox tradition, but participation in liturgy has also meant that she has joined with something that she has been ‘missing, maybe part of the identity I had in Greece’. Individual artistry manifests in the various sensorial ways individuals from different backgrounds engage with the Orthodox materiality of liturgy. These engagements often generate a therapeutic feeling of being at home, in both metaphorical and literal senses. The glocal character of Finnish liturgy—its national and transnational religious aesthetics—enables this artistry, and this feeling amongst people from both Finnish and non-Finnish backgrounds.

4.2. Liturgy and Languages

Individual artistry also shapes the various ways in which participants experience liturgy on a semantic level, and how these experiences change over a period of years. As mentioned above, although the main language of the liturgy is Finnish, liturgies are also held in Church Slavonic, Ancient Greek, Romanian, Serbian, and English. Some parts may be sung in Finnish, Swedish (the second official language of Finland alongside Finnish), and Church Slavonic during a single liturgy. When services are conducted in Church Slavonic, there are many Russian-speakers, including those who come from out of town, who attend the liturgy. Some don’t understand Finnish well enough to follow the service in Finnish, and as physiotherapist Slava expresses: ‘Of course, it is easier to follow in Church Slavonic, and the liturgy unfolds better’. Although many understand liturgy in Finnish, some also note that liturgy in Church Slavonic is particularly moving and, in the words of Ivan, ‘sounds smoothly’, ‘probably because this tradition is hundreds of years old’. Others simply say that it is so ‘touching’ because it is in Russian. Similarly, Marta and Evgenija, women of Greek origins,

³ The existence of the two Valaam Monasteries, one in Russia and one in Finland, is another example of transnational Orthodox entanglements [43].

make efforts to attend liturgies in Greek, which is usually followed by a gathering, and by talking over coffee with a Greek priest and other Greeks living in Finland. This points to the therapeutic effect of feeling at home amongst non-Finnish Orthodox through the language of the liturgy, but also through the broader social interaction with people from similar cultural backgrounds.

The language of liturgy is not simply a medium for transmitting the meaning of the words, but is irrevocably inscribed in the holistic experience of liturgy, and evolves over years. For instance, Johanna, a Finnish-speaking woman, has been singing in a church choir for more than twenty years, and she points out that not a single liturgy has ever been the same: it has also varied across different life stages, and even the season and weather affects the ways in which liturgy has been experienced. She describes that, in her earlier years of engagements, perfecting the singing technique, enjoying the physical and emotional sensations, and hearing oneself in the harmony with others, were what she enjoyed most. She notes that, when the singing technique was improved, she started paying more attention to the texts of the hymns and verses. Some texts have been familiar to Johanna since her childhood, during which time she was studying the Bible in her Lutheran school classes. Yet, those texts come alive with music in her liturgical experience:

I have known some [texts] as I was attending religious classes, and heard what the Bible says. But when you sing those texts yourself, almost the same texts or related to the same matter, then in these verses the matter starts to come alive. Some texts have been translated from Russian in such a way that Old Finnish was preserved. So when some unusual word comes, then you start thinking of its deeper...Of course, a person lives through different life phases, and at some point I stopped being stressed during liturgy. I did not think only of singing, but I started to listen to what a priest had to say, very excitingly [44].

Other interlocutors, too, point out that, during liturgy, hymns and verses 'open' texts in different ways. Some also underline the special power of archaic prayers, especially in Ancient Greek and Church Slavonic. For instance, Victoria, a Russian-speaking Orthodox, mentions that as she immersed in the Orthodox tradition and prayers, she learnt to appreciate Church Slavonic more as a 'deeply poetic' and 'metaphorical' language, with weighty words and subtle meanings. Similarly, Marta mentions that one ancient prayer in Ancient Greek is especially powerful and beautiful to her, although when translated into English, 'it does not make sense at all'. The prayer that Marta refers to is a prayer that is addressed to the Holy Ghost 'O Heavenly King', which begins all prayers, and Liturgy in particular:

Yes, it is beautiful to read and makes sense in old Greek. But as I was going to translate it, there is no sense. It is like that 'You, that you have all the power in the world, and let Your Kingdom become true also not in heaven, but here, and empower us to do the good and show us, if possible, to which way to follow, and make us wise and come and live inside us as the good of the eternal good to help us do these things. You are the treasure of the poor and the Giver of life to everyone. Come and relieve us from many sins and save our souls. The source of Good. Amen.' Something like that, but it makes no sense, you know [45].⁴

Thus, cognitive engagement with aspects of the language of the liturgy is linked to sensorial and embodied experiences. Some attend liturgy in archaic languages that they don't understand, but nevertheless feel connected to the church service through the 'beauty' of the language. Multiple engagements with the ancient Trisagion prayer, which includes triple recitation 'Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us', and is sung during liturgy, is a good example. The fieldwork and interviews show that this prayer 'reaches' individuals through the medium of different languages and varying music arrangements. For Minna, the Trisagion 'reaches' when

⁴ One of most common translations of this prayer, used in Liturgy in English is: O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, You are everywhere and fill all things, Treasury of blessings and Giver of Life, Come and abide in us, cleanse us from every impurity. And save our souls, O Good One.

performed in Finnish as a 'Slavic melody'; for Marta, when it is in Ancient Greek or Church Slavonic as a Byzantine chant; and for Polina, it is in Finnish as a Byzantine chant, adopted for Finnish choral singing. In some cases, it is not one single configuration of the language and the music, but its multiple variations and engagement over time, that makes it work. As Victoria notices: 'Sometimes I get the deep meaning of a certain word when I hear and sing it in both Finnish and Church Slavonic languages and during many services'. Many interlocutors find that archaic words generate different experiences and meanings. It seems that archaic words tend to be more poetic and deep, thus offering an alternative to the instrumental language of modernity. These various experiences and dynamic work on the languages illustrate people's creativity and artistry in participation during liturgy. Words seem to carry and interplay with the "authentic" inner life experiences of individuals' ([30], p. 50). These engagements disclose that the semantic diversity of glocal Finnish liturgy enables this artistry, and allows a connection to Orthodoxy as a metaphorical, spiritual, and actual home.

4.3. *Shifting Experiences of Liturgy*

As evident, the nature of individual experiences of liturgy is intrinsically dynamic and shifting. Experiences may change across one's life span and under various life circumstances. Many Russian-speakers who sing in the choir, for instance, point out that joining the choir helped them better understand and immerse in liturgy in the Finnish language. Minna, a Finnish-speaking singer, on the contrary, points out that temporary withdrawal from the choir due to her motherly duties, positively affected her prayer concentration, and eventually helped when she started singing during liturgies again:

There are of course many church songs, which open texts in a completely different ways. It was also good for me that I had not been singing in a church choir for a long time as I had to be with the children and other stuff. And during this time, my concentration on prayers gradually somehow improved, when I didn't sing in the choir. Especially when there are new melodies and other things, then one has to concentrate more on that you sing correctly, rather than what you sing. But when the melody is well-known, then singing becomes a prayer [46].

This narrative illustrates that liturgical experiences are tightly intertwined with people's home practices, and are subject to change. Natalia's case is also an interesting example of that. Natalia recollects one episode from her life, that took place when she had recently moved to Finland, and as an art teacher, had difficulties in finding a job. She had applied for a highly competitive course, organized for teachers who had earned degrees in other countries, to allow them to teach in the Finnish schooling system. By that time, Natalia had received an answer that she would be able to attend, only if two other participants cancelled their participation. It was at that moment in her life that she happened to be in Helsinki and came to the liturgy in the Uspenski Cathedral:

I came to the big icon of Jesus Christ. The icon depicted Jesus—that icon is near the altar—and the children surrounding Jesus. I approached that icon and said: 'Lord, I don't know which path I am to take in Finland, which profession, what to do? You', I am saying 'help me and guide me. I don't know what to do'...'Lord, if it is meant to be, and you want me to become [find myself] in Finland...If the society needs that I would be a teacher, help me please find my path'. And the miracle happened. That autumn, during the first days of September, a secretary from the institute called me and said: 'You are accepted, come and study' [47].

Natalia successfully completed the course and has been working as an art teacher since, 'surrounded by children'. Natalia's story shows that experiences of liturgy are necessarily embedded in an individual's everyday life, and evolve accordingly. It also discloses both a national and transnational dynamic: she turns to Jesus, the transcendental figure depicted in the icon, in her attempts to find her place in the new national realm. Her narrative highlights the general observation that each individual may have a unique experience of icons during liturgy, and in different life situations.

Similarly, Ivan, a Ukrainian Russian-speaking transnational, who has worked and lived in Canada, England, and now in Finland, talks about the personal significance of the figures and icons of St Nicolas and Mary. For him, Mary (or Mother of God as the Virgin is referred to in Orthodoxy) is associated with ‘cosmic wisdom’ and ‘all-acceptance’, and St Nicolas with indulgence and kindness. In the midst of transnational moves, the figure of St Nicolas, known as the protector of travellers, has become especially close to Ivan. Again, Ivan says that a realization of, and closeness to, these figures have come with age. Ivan attends church services whenever possible, which often produces the feeling of ‘being in Russia or Ukraine’ for him. It can also be assumed that, given the importance of Mary and St Nicolas, a unique space opens up through Ivan’s personal engagement with their icons during liturgy. Notably, the figure of St Nicolas is much venerated in Finnish Orthodoxy, and many churches are devoted to this saint. Below, a photograph (Figure 3) shows the icon of St Nicolas, framed by elaborate floral arrangements carefully made by two regular participants of liturgy, as yet another example of individuals’ artistry and creativity.



Figure 3. The icon of St Nicolas decorated with flowers. Photo by the author.

Anfisa’s story (above) provides another illustration of shifting experiences of liturgy. According to her, she was raised in an ordinary Soviet family, where most family members were atheists. She started attending church services as an adult, enjoying the smell of incense and the music. It took her several years to receive her first Eucharist in Russia, with the help of her brother, who guided and supported her. Soon, she started attending liturgies in Finland as well. The major shift in her experience of liturgy is evident in an extract from the interview with Anfisa that took place half a year after she had joined the choir in the Finnish Orthodox parish:

This is such a great blessing to be there, breath that air, be able to sing to the glory of God. It is not possible to describe it. One has to really merely stand there and feel it. And there is always some trembling [in the body]. And when you leave the temple, and everything went well. And then you understand that it is not because of us, it is not our merits, that everything went well. But everything went fine, and there were less mistakes, and the sound was beautiful, and you feel it, and other people feel it...and then people come and thank you. But how can you explain people: ‘It is not me, understand me. It is not me. I am the instrument’ [48].

5. Discussion

This paper has adapted Roudometof’s glocalization framework for a transnational anthropological exploration of liturgy in the Orthodox Church of Finland. The paper has shown that the OCF is a specific example of the entanglement of nationalization and transnationalization. It does not readily fit in the mainstream categorization of national vs. diasporic churches; rather, its glocal

manifestation occupies an in-between position. On the one hand, OCF went through intense nationalization in the 20th century, and has become a national church of a religious minority. On the other hand, since the 1990s, it has gone through a dynamic process of transnationalization, incorporating migrants from the Eastern European heartlands of Orthodoxy, especially Russian-speakers. In contrast to diasporic churches, where both hybrid and minority identities are constructed through orientation to the past and an external national homeland ([4], p. 219), OCF enables a space for transnational subjectivities. The space is activated in many church practices, including that of liturgy. The complex nature of such subjectivities is best captured through the metaphor of 'home'; the term that most interlocutors frequently activate to channel its various modalities. Individuals from migrant backgrounds (Russian, Ukrainian, or Greek) may develop their home-relatedness to Finland, while at the same time retaining their cultural sense of identity and belonging with their origins. Individuals with Finnish backgrounds also contribute to the making of transnational subjectivities, as participants of glocal liturgy and a multicultural parish.

The processes of nationalization and transnationalization are not mutually exclusive in the Finnish liturgy, but rather generate a glocal space that incorporates Finnish, Russian, Byzantine, and Karelian elements. Liturgy emerges as a 'synthesis of the arts' that encompasses the 'art of fire' or burning candles, the 'art of smoke' or the incense dissolved in the air, the art of icons, singing, church poetry, and priestly conduct ([23], p. 109). People's own artistry is essential in making the national and transnational nature of the church, and these experiences evolve across one's life span, and in response to different life situations. Individuals creatively and artistically engage with the glocal Finnish church artistry of liturgy on a sensorial, cognitive, social, and semantic level, and create a connection with 'home', metaphorically, spiritually, and literally. More importantly, this therapeutic feeling is in the nature of the artistry by the people. All of these individual efforts constitute movement within the constitution of Orthodoxy as their national and transnational home. This home-feeling is another aspect of therapy (curing, health) of the soul and the body, to which references are numerous made in the prayers and texts sung during liturgies. As many pointed out, the ultimate joy and effect of liturgy is going beyond the self, and such a therapeutic feeling of home may also transcend the very idea of national belonging and a modern nation-state.

Of course, the liturgy is only one aspect of the OCF that enables glocality. More research is needed into other practices, such as the Church's ecumenical and outreach work, for instance through organising icon-painting courses or summer camps, or employing multilingual clergy. All of these may contribute to the glocality of the Church. Yet, the prime movers in generating this hybrid nature are the participants themselves. They engage in all manners of artistry, to find a 'spiritual home' in the liturgy in the OCF. This feature complicates simple divisions of nationalization vs. transnationalization, or national vs. diasporic, in the OCF. However, further research is needed to determine whether such cross-overs also exist elsewhere, for instance in traditionally diasporic churches, where Orthodoxy is not afforded state encouragement.

It must also be noted that discovery of this spiritual home also signified the beginning of yet another journey of 'spiritual transformation' ([49], p. 190). 'To be on a journey', according to Bishop Kallistos Ware, is metaphorically applicable to each Orthodox Christian, as it emphasizes the practical character and spiritual depth of the living tradition, through the 'inward space of the heart' ([50], p. 7). Likewise, Durre Ahmed points to the archetypal significance of the journey as 'a symbolic trope signifying discovery or knowledge, not only of the physical world but more so of the psychological and spiritual' ([51], p. 3). The scope of this paper did not allow an illustration of the intrinsic dynamism which is pertinent to experiences of liturgy. The complex and productive nature of the tension between the modalities of home and journey, in experiences of liturgy, remains to be addressed in forthcoming research.

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