

The Role of Institutions in the Civilization Schism (the Case of Christianity)

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Abstract. The geopolitical transformations of recent decades have added to the topicality of the study of civilizational differences between the East and the West relevant. Religion is often cited as a contributing factor to these differences. This can be confirmed by the example of the split of the Christian Church into the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches and, as a consequence, the emergence of the Western and the Eastern Christian civilizations. As a rule, the authors “isolate” religion from the social system, considering it independently of all other spheres, as the primary factor that triggers the emergence of civilization. In this work, the emergence of a new Western and Eastern Christian, is considered within the framework of the institutional approach, as a process of formation of a certain complex institutional structure that regulates the life of society and consists of a whole complex of interconnected and interdependent economic, political, and socio-cultural institutions, including religion. This process can begin in the bowels of the “mother” civilization, causing its crisis. The stages of development and resolution of such a crisis are analyzed using the example of a split in the united Christian world using a matrix approach. This approach assumes that civilization is characterized by a civilizational matrix formed by an institutional core that simultaneously contains market and redistributive institutions on the basis of dominance/complementarity, and a shell that includes cultural-religious and national-demographic characteristics, the natural-climatic and material-technological environment. The necessity of both strengthening dominant institutions in the institutional core and creating balancers (complementary institutions) for the sustainable development of civilization is shown.

Keywords: civilizational matrix, institutional core, market institutions, redistributive institutions, institutional matrix, religion

For citation: Barakhvostov P.A. The Role of Institutions in the Civilization Schism (the Case of Christianity). *Russia & World: Scientific Dialogue*. 2024, 1(11): 142-157, [doi.org/10.53658/RW2024-4-1\(11\)-142-157](https://doi.org/10.53658/RW2024-4-1(11)-142-157)

Introduction

Research on the East-West dichotomy has become relevant due to the geopolitical and geo-economic transformations of recent decades, which have changed the modern world beyond recognition. The peculiarities of the geographical location make this problem extremely important for Russia, which is located both in Europe and Asia. The issue of the confrontation between East and West and the role of Russia occupied many Russian thinkers, in particular N. Ya. Danilevsky [9], L. N. Gumilyov [8], K. N. Leontyev [16], who identified civilizational contradictions as its basis. It is important to establish the factors that determined them.

Among these factors, religion is often mentioned, considering the formed differences (contradictions) between Western and Eastern Christian civilizations as a consequence of the split of the Christian Church into Roman Catholic and Orthodox. The role of the religious factor in the formation of two Christian worlds is studied by historians [13, 15, 20, 21, 22, 26, 27], philosophers [5, 14, 25, 28, 29, 32], political scientists and lawyers [19, 23, 30], theologians [11, 18, 24]. As a rule, the authors isolate religion from the social system and consider it independently of other spheres, as the primary factor that triggers the process of distinguishing civilization. However, is this so, since religion is only one of the institutions of the social system? To answer this question, in this work, the emergence of a new civilization is considered as a process of formation of a certain complex institutional structure that regulates the life of society and consists of a whole complex of interconnected and interdependent economic, political, socio-cultural institutions, including religion. This process can begin in the depths of the mother civilization, causing its crisis. Its stages of development and resolution are analyzed using the example of a split in the united Christian world.

Materials and methods

The work uses an integral institutional approach [1; 4; 10; 35]. It is based on the idea that the evolution of civilization is determined by its civilizational matrix, formed by interconnected elements: a shell that includes cultural-religious and national-demographic characteristics, the natural-climatic and material-technological environment, and the institutional core – a complex system of institutions (“rules of the game”, which determine the direction of social actions [36]), ensuring the functioning of the entire system. In the institutional core, we can distinguish an institutional matrix formed by basic institutions – “deep, historically stable and constantly reproducing social relations that ensure the integration of different types of societies, historical invariants that allow society to survive, maintain its integrity and develop in its given material environment” [12].

There are two types of basic institutions: redistributive and market. In accordance with the works of S. G. Kirdina [12], the basic redistributive institutions include: in the economic sphere – public property, redistribution (accumulation – coordination – distribution with the mandatory participation of the Center); in the political sphere – a unitary-centralized political structure, a hierarchical vertical of power; in the sociocultural sphere – a communitarian worldview, which expresses an awareness of the priority of “We” over “I”, egalitarianism.

Basic market institutions: in the economic sphere – private property, purchase and sale as an institution of exchange, wage labor, competition; in the political sphere – federal political structure, self-government and subsidiarity; in the sociocultural sphere – an individualistic worldview, expressing the dominance of “I” over “We”.

In the institutional matrix, basic institutions of two types (redistributive and market) coexist on the principles of dominance – complementarity [12]. Similarly, in the institutional core one can also find institutions of alternative types, and the dominant type coincides with that in the institutional matrix.

The civilizational matrix is not a once and for all given structure. In the process of sociocultural dynamics, determined by the influence of both endogenous and exogenous factors, it reconstructs its elements. The question arises: under what conditions does a civilizational crisis arise and to what state of the civilizational matrix does it correspond? How does the crisis develop and what are the ways to resolve it? These problems will be analyzed using the example of the collapse of Roman civilization and the birth of Western and Eastern Christian civilizations.

Discussion

In the process of the birth of Western and Eastern Christian civilizations, several stages can be distinguished, each of which is associated with a certain phase of the crisis of the “mother” Roman civilization. Their features are analyzed in the article.

Western Roman Empire and Eastern Roman Empire: the origin and development of a civilizational crisis

In 330, the center of the Roman Empire, which was experiencing colossal pressure from warlike barbarian tribes, moved to the calm and rich eastern provinces, where the ancient Greek city-colony of Byzantium was located on the shores of the Bosphorus. However, due to the enormous size and, as a result, poor governance of the Roman Empire, an internal economic and political crisis broke out, and in 395 it was divided into two parts – the Western (Latin) and Eastern (Greek) Roman Empires. The linguistic and cultural differences between them (differences in socio-cultural institutions) caused centrifugal tendencies, which served as the beginning of the first stage of the civilizational crisis. The western part of the empire found itself adjacent and, therefore, subject to the diffusion

(penetration) of the institutions of the Germanic, and the eastern – of the Asian tribes and empires. The main integrating factor was the single Christian religion, but due to printing in different languages in the western and eastern parts of the Roman Empire, differences were found even in liturgical texts.

As a result of the fall of Rome under the onslaught of the barbarians, Italy found itself under Gothic rule. “The Gothic rulers were not persecutors of the Catholic Church, but the awareness of living without protection forced the bishops to unite into a more solidary union” [2, p. 457]. A force arose that could resist the weak state power in the barbarian kingdoms of the early Middle Ages – the church. The functions of governance in the cities were taken over by bishops [7]. Thus, “the Italian episcopate was educated in the awareness of its complete ecclesiastical independence” [2, p. 457].

After colossal destruction, the restoration of the lands of the former Western Roman Empire began. This was favored by the geographical advantages of Western Europe: a mild climate, a warm Gulf Stream, the presence of rivers leading to the sea, which contributed to the development of agriculture and trade; the diversity of natural landscapes that determined the development of various forms of management; remoteness from the most aggressive tribes and empires of that time, therefore there was no need to organize a strong centralized state to provide protection. Western Europe inherited from the Romans and Greeks a number of advanced technologies (for example, technologies of urban planning, water supply, road construction, in agriculture – viticulture and winemaking) and institutional developments (institutions of polis democracy, rational legal consciousness, ideas of the “common good”, protected by the right of private property, the dignity of a free person). From the Eastern Roman Empire, as a result of the diffusion of institutions, a monetary system, legislative codes, experience in government, and a number of cultural achievements of Eastern civilizations came to these lands.

The institutional developments of the ancient Germanic peoples had a significant influence: an emphasis on the personal and group rights of free people, the accountability of authorities to the community. The Latin language, the liturgical language of the Western Christian Church, played a huge integrating role. The absence of barriers to communication stimulated the spread of ideas and technological innovation.

As a result of the influence of many factors, the formation and strengthening of market-type institutions began in Western Europe: in the economy – private/personal property, commodity-money exchange; in the political sphere – bodies of class representation, self-government; in the sociocultural sphere – elements of an individualistic worldview. At the same time, there was a strengthening of the branch of spiritual power (the Western Christian Church), which is characterized by a high degree of centralization, which is inherent in institutions of a redistributive type. Taken together, this was a balance that prevented the emergence of eastern-type despotism while overcoming fragmentation and establishing a strong central government in Western Europe.

In the eastern part of the Roman Empire, development took a different path. For Byzantium, surrounded by enemies, one of the primary tasks was protection from

external aggression. This function could only be performed by a strong state, and victory could only be achieved with the dominance of “We” over “I.” A necessary condition for the survival of society in this case was the dominance of redistributive institutions in the institutional matrix. Byzantium is a social system welded together by the spirit of militant collectivism.

Here, both new institutions and the institutional developments of the Roman Empire, which played the role of a balance, were combined in a bizarre way. Byzantium was headed by an emperor, but in the early Middle Ages there was still no order of succession to the throne. Formally, it was believed that the emperor was elected by the senate, the army and the people represented by unique parties. Under the emperor, there was a permanent advisory body – the Senate (synclit), which discussed issues of foreign and domestic policy, considered bills sent for approval by the emperor, appointed senior officials, and carried out judicial functions in the most important criminal cases. At the head of the central government administration was the State Council (Consistory), an advisory body that discussed all current issues of government administration and carried out judicial functions. But these bodies did not play a decisive role in the life of society. Subsequently, the right to consider bills and appoint senior officials of the empire was withdrawn from the Senate in favor of the imperial power, which indicates the strengthening of redistributive institutions.

Local government was initially built on the principles of separation of military and civil government. Local communities were governed by elected officials under the control of government (appointed) officials. But under the influence of the military threat, new administrative units – themes – were formed in many regions, where military and civil power was concentrated in the hands of an appointed commander of military units stationed in this territory.

A strong army is the core of the Byzantine social system. In pre-industrial society, one of the main sources of income was land. In Byzantium, the most common way to receive it was through reward for military service. In the 7th century a special military class of stratiots was created from among the free communal peasants. The land of the stratiots could not be alienated and was inherited by one of the sons, who were supposed to serve.

The needs of maintaining the army led to the creation of a system of centralized redistribution of income – state taxes and distributions, which, as a consequence, led to the emergence of a huge bureaucratic apparatus. The service of officials and military personnel was paid in gold coins, the issue of which was monopolized by the state. They, in turn, bought everything they needed for life with them. The coins “spreading” throughout Byzantium were returned to the state in the form of taxes. State regulation of the volume of issued coins made it possible to manage economic life: if more coins were produced, manufacturers were forced to sell their products at reduced prices.

Peasants gave coins as a tax to the state. This was much higher than peasant payments in Western Europe and was often prohibitive, which led to the emergence of a special form of enslavement – centralized, which hindered the development of private estates, the

strengthening of the power of landowners, and, consequently, the formation of a strong class that could balance the excessive strengthening of the branch of state power. It is noteworthy that there are no such castles here as in the West. The nobility preferred to live in cities, but not in all of them, since during the 3rd–5th centuries. A policy of “rationalization” of the distribution of cities was practiced: many of them in densely populated regions were deprived of their status and privileges, which was again associated with the need to increase tax revenues to the treasury. The central authorities began to directly control urban fiscal affairs and use local authorities primarily as assessors and tax collectors. By the middle of the 6th century, only the state could afford to invest in the construction of buildings in cities – usually defensive or administrative structures. By the end of the 6th century, the cities actually lost their independence and no longer served as cultural centers. The decline of cities, and consequently the weak development of handicraft and industrial activity, did not allow the development (as in Western Europe) of the “third estate”, with its inherent values of individualism.

With such a decline in provincial cities, the capital of the Byzantine (Eastern Roman) Empire, Constantinople, flourished. The main goal for everyone was to occupy a certain place in the imperial system. The well-being of representatives of the ruling class depended much more strongly on their place in the hierarchy of state power than on inherited and acquired property. Byzantium is characterized by an undifferentiated unity of power and property functions – that is, the institution of power-property [6].

Thus, in the Byzantine Empire an institutional matrix was formed with the dominance of redistributive institutions, which is usually characteristic of eastern hydraulic societies (the term was introduced by K. Wittfogel [37]). As I. Brodsky noted, “Byzantium was a bridge to Asia, but movement along it went in the opposite direction” [3:373]. The main reason was the militarization of Byzantium due to external factors.

In conditions of strict domination and subordination in the state (dominance of political institutions of a redistributive type), the Eastern Christian Church sought to maintain democracy within itself, thereby performing a compensatory function, balancing institutional imbalances in the institutional core. The Eastern Christian Church was the representative body for all Christians living both within the territory of the empire and beyond its borders. Decisions concerning church life were made by a majority vote and were binding on everyone. In early medieval Byzantium, along with the clergy, the laity also participated in the work of cathedrals. The life of the church between councils was directed and regulated on the basis of consensus reached by the Ecumenical Patriarchs in the absence of a strict hierarchy between them. If in Western Europe there were two strong branches of government – secular and spiritual, represented by the Western Christian Church, then in Byzantium the relationship between church and state was built on the principle of union (“symphony”).

So by the middle of the 7th century, the institutional core of the once united Roman Empire was divided into two parts: Western and Eastern with alternative institutional matrices (market institutions dominated in the West, and redistributive institutions in the East). Religion as an institution in the west and east of the Roman Empire was embodied

in institutional forms of an alternative type, corresponding to the complementary institutions of parts of the divided institutional core. These various institutional forms had a corresponding impact on cultural and religious characteristics – the shell of the civilizational matrix, which led to its significant spatial deformation. The civilizational crisis in the Roman Empire moved into the next, stage II.

Development of the civilizational crisis (VII–IX centuries)

By the middle of the 7th century due to the expansion of Arab tribes, Byzantium lost a large number of its lands: Egypt, Jerusalem, Syria and Antioch. Only Greek territories remained within the empire; Latin began to be forgotten, which negatively affected trade with Western Europe and the development of crafts. The state became de-urbanized, relying on the peasant community with its collective responsibility (redistributive institution). The Roman service aristocracy gradually turned into a church and government service elite that sought to settle in Constantinople and its environs, closer to the emperor. The economic and political independence of the upper strata of society decreased with a corresponding strengthening of imperial power.

The Byzantine power model finally took shape, which formed the basis of the first Christian ideology in history: the emperor (leader of the people and army) and the church operating under his tutelage (guardian of the moral foundations of the state and society). By actively introducing this model, the emperors endowed the church and its important structural element, the monasteries, with enormous possessions and privileges, which, on the other hand, limited the possibilities of distributing lands for service.

The need to live in a state of constant military threat (especially on the Asian outskirts of the empire) and the difficult economic situation led to an increase in discontent, a decline in culture and a surge in superstitions. Constantinople of those times was “an ark full of relics and other religious relics” [31], the attitude towards which on the part of the illiterate population bordered on pagan idolatry. This was the basis of iconoclasm, launched by Emperor Leo III the Isaurian. To justify their actions, the iconoclasts used the thesis that it was impossible to adequately depict Christ, since he was not a man in the usual sense. In addition to the fight against icon veneration, iconoclasm implied strengthening the power of the state in church affairs that is, strengthening the elements of redistribution in religious institutional forms, in particular, the secularization of monastic land property. The implementation of such a policy led to the elimination of the balancers of the institutional matrix, the role of which is played by religion, and to the excessive strengthening of the dominant redistributive institutions.

The Roman popes saw the victory of Caesaropapism¹ in iconoclasm, declaring for the first time the contradictions in the principles of state-church relations that had developed in the East and West. This marked the beginning of the confrontation

¹ Caesaropapism is a term denoting a form of government in which the head of secular power, the emperor (Caesar), was actually at the same time the head of the church (the pope). Available from: <http://ponjatija.ru/taxonomy/term/4619>.

between the Eastern and Western Christian churches, which culminated in a schism that lasted about a hundred years and formed a “crack” in the shell (cultural and religious characteristics) of the Roman civilizational matrix. By its end, the former Roman Empire found itself divided both administratively and religiously. Thus, de facto, as a result of the development of the civilizational crisis, two Christian worlds emerged (Western and Eastern).

By the beginning of the second millennium, the Roman civilizational matrix had not only two different institutional cores, but also a split shell. The Great Schism of 1054, as a result of which the Western Christian and Eastern Christian churches de jure separated, forming respectively the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches, resolved the civilizational crisis and recorded the final collapse of the Roman civilizational matrix.

Overcoming the consequences of the division of civilizations

The favorable location of Western Europe contributed to the strengthening of market institutions in the institutional core. The population explosion at the beginning of the second millennium caused active colonization of empty European lands. New settlements arose, cities flourished, under the patronage of feudal lords and kings interested in the development of trade, which ensured an influx of duties. The growth of trade required the development of infrastructure (good and safe roads, bridges). New crafts appeared (for example, cloth production), which began to generate great income.

As a rule, the artisans who made up the main population of the city united into social corporations (guilds); this is a hybrid type of institution, which is not uncommon in transitional societies [34]. On the one hand, the workshops were created to withstand yesterday's peasants in new conditions; they are based on the idea that only a collective can be a force. The workshops were distinguished by strict organization and isolation from the outside world, which implied preferential communication and even marriages within such an association. Workshops are an institution that has the features of a redistributive type. However, the leadership of the workshop was elective. In addition, there was no equalizing principle for the distribution of workshop income, as a result of which this institution also had market-type characteristics.

Wealthy members of the guilds, traders, and landowners were members of the elected bodies of city government. The autonomy of the city from the power of the feudal lord was often achieved through ransom. Independent cities established connections with each other, created agglomerations or even unions, for example, the Hanseatic League. Thus, economic market institutions led to the emergence and strengthening of political and sociocultural institutions (individualist worldview).

The strong spiritual power in the West was the Roman Catholic Church. A clash developed between the popes and European kings for political dominance. Its stages were: the struggle for the joint participation of representatives of spiritual and secular authorities in acts of investiture of vassal bishops, recognition of the infallibility of popes, the right to carry out military actions in various regions of the world in the name of God (crusades). The

Church created special paramilitary structures, which were the vanguard of the crusades and the colonization of new Christianized lands – spiritual knightly orders. Their members, as a rule, were the younger sons in feudal houses (due to the right of inheritance, or primacy, that existed in Western Europe, they could not count on their father's possessions). Smoothing out the social consequences of primogeniture, the Catholic Church was an active participant in the formation of Western civilization [33].

From the beginning of the 14th century, the Roman Church began to lose influence in Western Europe, which was largely due to the modification of this institution – the penetration of market elements into its structure in the form of trade in indulgences. The Western European path of development for the following centuries was finally determined: the dominance of secular power with a strong spiritual power, playing the role of an institutional balancer, and strengthening market institutions. At the same time, the civilizational matrix of Byzantium was taking shape: an institutional core of the redistributive type and a shell, the specificity of which was determined by the Orthodox faith, ethnic diversity, and proximity to the Mediterranean Sea, a strong influence of Roman and Greek cultures and technologies, and a constant threat to the existence of the empire. The empire's being in a state of permanent war led to material costs that annually ate up to 70% of the budget, and, as a consequence, the conservation of the existing order [17]. It was not the economic sphere that determined the political one, but vice versa. G. G. Litavrin noted that the Byzantine Empire was the only country in the European Middle Ages whose monarchical system preserved the features of ancient Asian despotisms, where subjects owned property as long as it pleased the despot. At the same time, the subjects themselves were a kind of property [17].

In this situation, the emperor's expenses were difficult to calculate in advance, so he was granted the right to collect not only ordinary, but also emergency taxes. At the same time, the state was the guarantor of the rural community in case of crop failure. This led to the formation of state paternalism and a "moral economy", which cultivated the predominance of "We" over "I", the idea of tradition as the highest value in comparison with innovation, and egalitarian values.

However, the institutional core of the Byzantine civilizational matrix contained not only dominant redistributive institutions, but also complementary market ones in the form of emerging private land ownership and commodity-money relations in developing provincial cities. But these institutions were weak, and the aggressive external environment did not allow them to develop and fulfill its function as an institutional balancer.

The imbalance of the institutional core of Byzantium (excessive strengthening of redistributive institutions with extremely weak development of market ones) did not allow it to overcome the consequences of the civilizational crisis.

Thus, the institutional differences between the Western and Eastern Roman Empires were the primary factor that caused the civilizational crisis and the split between the Western Christian and Eastern Christian civilizations. The stages of this process are identified: the first stage is characterized by the emergence of heterogeneity of the institutional core of the civilizational matrix; this stage manifested itself in the division

of the Roman Empire into Western and Eastern parts; the second stage is characterized by the division of the institutional core into parts with alternative institutional matrices and the deformation of the "shell" (cultural and religious features), which was observed by the middle of the 7th century; the third stage of the civilizational crisis is characterized by the emergence of a crack in the shell, covering all its components, this stage ends with a civilizational schism (which occurred in 1054 during the division of the Western Christian and Eastern Christian churches *de jure*). For the development of civilization, it is necessary to strengthen the dominant institutions in the institutional core and create balancers (complementary institutions) that contribute to the sustainable development of society.

Conclusion

The conducted research shows that the cause of a civilizational split is the emergence of two spatially separated institutional systems (civilization cores), institutional matrices of alternative types, in the depths of the "parent" civilization. A civilizational crisis is characterized by a prolonged stage-by-stage development and can end, as in the case of the Roman civilization, with a split, manifested, in particular, in the cultural and religious features of the resulting "fragments". The condition for the formation of new civilizations from them is the strengthening of dominant institutions in the new institutional core and the creation of balancers (complementary institutions).

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Contribution of the author

The author declares no conflicts of interests.

Article info

Received: November 10, 2023. Approved after peer review: December 25, 2023.

Accepted for publication: January 14, 2024. Published: March 20, 2024.

The author has read and approved the final manuscript.

Peer review info

«Russia & World: Scientific Dialogue» thanks the anonymous reviewer(s) for their contribution to the peer review of this work.