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Usage of English Language, Ethnic Identity and Ethnic Culture in American Orthodox Christian Churches.

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Introduction

The question to what extent the various American Orthodox Churches can still be seen as "ethnically based" religious communities remains open. Further, this subject continues to be hotly debated by Orthodox church leadership and by the "rank and file" clergy and laity. That is for good reason. Indeed, the inquiry in this question leads to many issues which have significant implications for church life such as the usage of English versus "ethnic" languages in church, the presence and role of converts, the openness of Orthodox parishes to the ethnically and culturally "others," the preference of younger generation of faithful for either keeping their ethnic heritage and identity or for "blending" with mainstream America – the list of these "big" questions is endless.

The membership of the present-day Orthodox Christian Churches in the United States consists of four very distinct demographic groups:

- US-born descendants (second, third, fourth, fifth generations) of the original Greek, Slavic or Arab immigrants;
- Newly arrived immigrants who emigrated to United States from Eastern Europe or Middle East in recent decades;
- American converts to Orthodox Christianity – the former Protestants or Roman Catholics;
- The children of American converts: the persons who were born and raised in the Orthodox Church, but have no Orthodox "ethnic" heritage themselves.

The presence of these four groups varies significantly from jurisdiction to jurisdiction and – within each jurisdiction - from parish to parish. As a result, there exists great diversity among local Orthodox communities in terms of how strong various ethnic elements in their religious and social lives are expressed.

This report provides several insights into the subject of strength of ethnic identity and ethnic culture in US Orthodox Christian Churches at the beginning of the third millennium. Our goal was to examine this issue both jurisdiction by jurisdiction (i.e. comparing various national Orthodox Church bodies) and state by state (i.e. comparing various geographic areas on US territory).

Data presented on the following pages were obtained in the national survey conducted in 2011 under the auspices of Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America. In this survey, each Orthodox parish which belongs to the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops was asked to respond four questions:

- Please, estimate the percentage of the English language used in your parish on a typical Sunday as the ***language of the Divine Liturgy*** (from 0% - "no English used" to 100% - "exclusively English used");
- Please, estimate the percentage of the English language used in your parish on a typical Sunday as the ***language of sermon(s)*** (from 0% - "no English used" to 100% - "exclusively English used");
- Please, estimate the percentage of the English language used in your parish on a typical Sunday as the ***language in which church choir or chanters sing*** (from 0% - "no English used" to 100% - "exclusively English used");
- Do you ***agree or disagree*** with the statement "Our parish has a strong ethnic culture and identity that we are trying to preserve?" Please, select one answer: "Strongly agree," "Rather agree," "Neutral / Unsure," "Rather disagree," "Strongly disagree."

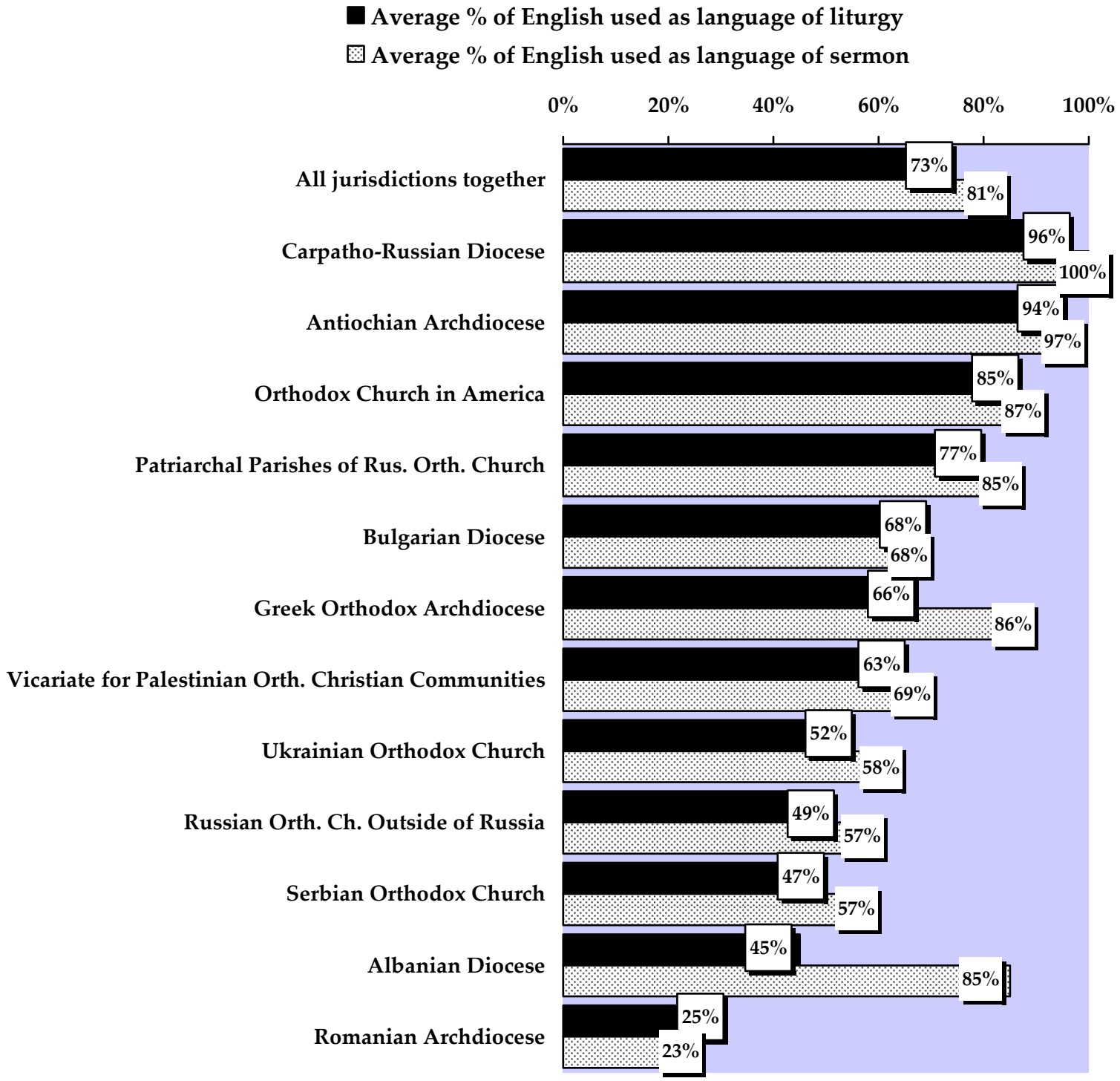
98.6 % of all US Orthodox parishes which are part of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops responded to the survey, thus, making survey results and findings sound and reliable.

Usage of English Language in Church Services

Fig. 1 on the next page and Table A (see Appendix, p.27) furnish information on the usage of the English language in worship services in the parishes of the various Orthodox jurisdictions. One should keep in mind that the data in Fig. 1 reflect US national "average" picture for each jurisdiction. Clearly, within each jurisdiction, there are significant variations in the usage of various languages among individual parishes. Nevertheless, several important observations can be made.

First, for the entire American Orthodox community - for all parishes and for all Orthodox jurisdictions combined - English is much more widely used in the church than the other "ethnic" languages. US nationwide, average proportion of English used as language of liturgy is 73%. In the case of language of sermon, the national average of the usage of English is even higher: 81%.

Fig. 1 Average % of Usage of English Language in the Parishes of Various Orthodox Jurisdictions



Second, in terms of the usage of English versus non-English languages, all Orthodox jurisdictions in America can be divided in three categories. The first group includes three Churches which use almost exclusively English as the language of liturgy and sermon. These churches are: Carpatho-Russian Diocese, Antiochian Archdiocese and Orthodox Church in America (OCA). With regard to the latter, if we exclude from the analysis three "ethnic" OCA dioceses (Romanian Episcopate, Bulgarian Diocese and Albanian Archdiocese),

the rates of the usage of English in the territorial dioceses of OCA are actually higher than Fig.1 shows: 95% as language of liturgy and 96% as language of sermon.

The second group includes jurisdictions where English dominates in worship services, but other languages also have a significant presence. This is the case of the Patriarchal Parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church, Bulgarian Diocese, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese and Vicariate for Palestinian Orthodox Communities.

Finally, the third group consists of four jurisdictions where various non-English languages remain at least as important as English or even dominate as languages of liturgy and sermon. These are Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, Serbian Orthodox Church, Albanian Diocese and Romanian Archdiocese.

Third, Fig. 1 and Tab. A in Appendix indicate a fairly consistent pattern (Romanian Archdiocese being the only exception): English is more widely used as the language of the sermon than as the language of liturgy. This makes sense, because in the formal liturgy parish can still use a language which is not understood or spoken by the some of church members, but delivering homilies on various subjects would make no sense without clear communication between clergy and people present in the church.

Fourth, as noted, in almost all US Orthodox Churches, English is more frequently used as the language of sermon than as the language of liturgy, but in two jurisdiction this gap is especially wide: in Greek Orthodox Archdiocese (66% average usage of English in liturgy versus as much as 87% average usage of English in sermon) and in Albanian Diocese (45% and 85%). What this wide gap suggests is that compared to the other jurisdictions, the Albanian Diocese and Greek Orthodox Archdiocese are more attached to the idea of keeping "traditional ethnic" languages in liturgy as long as possible even if actual language of communication with church members - i.e. the language of the sermon - is English.

To conclude, survey data tell us that in terms of the languages used in worship services, the majority of parishes and in most American Orthodox jurisdictions can be described today as predominantly "English speaking." The exception from this rule are five jurisdictions where various non-English languages remain either as important as English or even dominate in the local church life: Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, Serbian Orthodox Church, Albanian Diocese and Romanian Archdiocese.

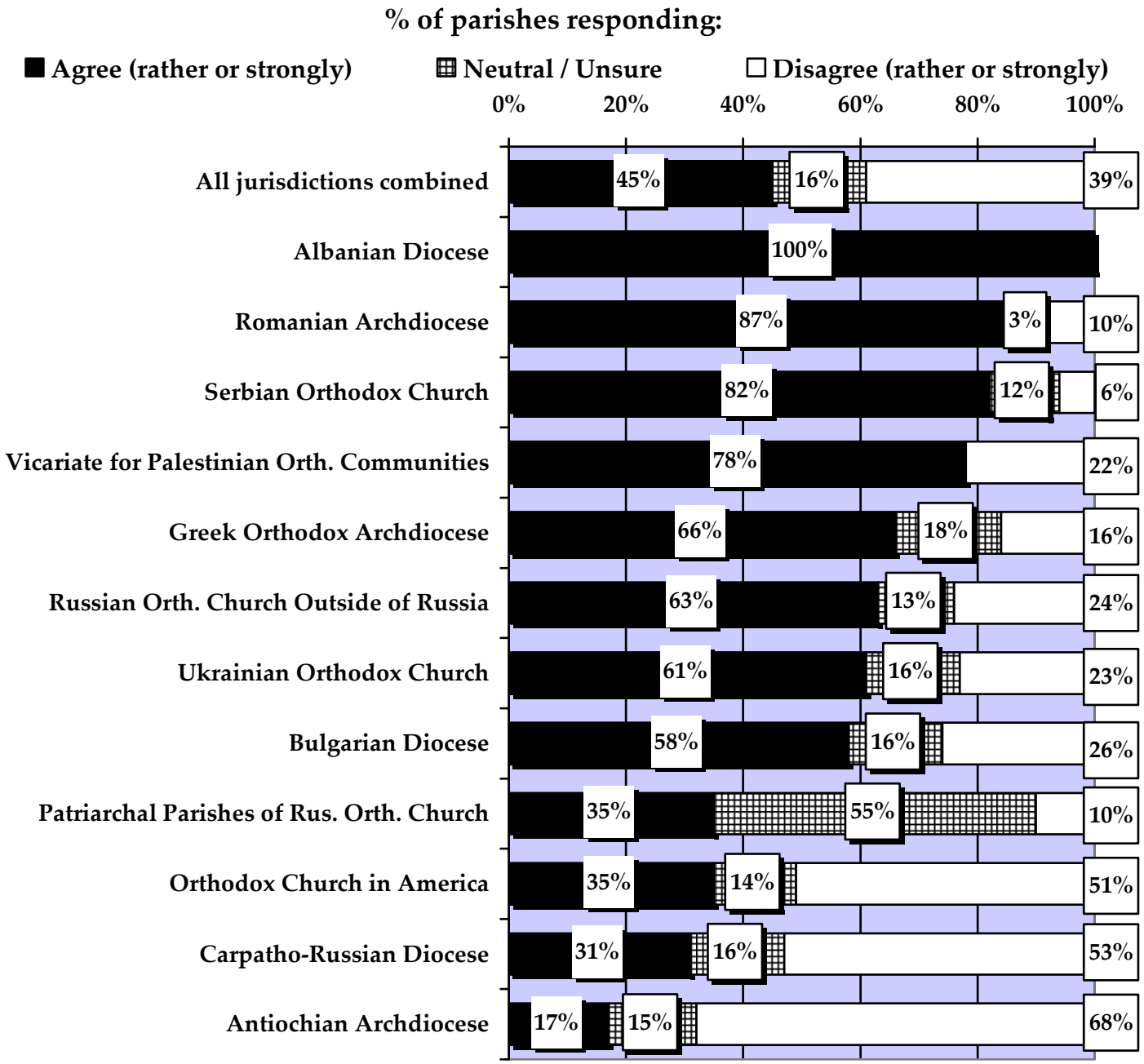
Strength of Ethnic Identity in US Orthodox Parishes

The fact that English language dominates in American Orthodox church life - both as the language of liturgy and sermon – may prompt a premature conclusion that today solid majority of American Orthodox parishes can be described as "all American" congregations. However, survey data show that this is not quite the case. The last question in the 2011 US national Orthodox parish survey asked: "Do you agree or disagree with the statement 'Our parish has a strong ethnic heritage and identity that we are trying to preserve?'" In essence, this question asked parishes about how they view themselves in terms of being or being not "ethnically based" and about how important are their "ethnic roots" to them. The answers to this question were given on a five point scale: "Strongly agree," "Rather agree," "Neutral / Unsure," "Rather disagree," "Strongly disagree."

Fig. 3 on the next page and Table B (in Appendix, p.28) show that relative majority (45%) of all US Orthodox parishes agreed with the statement "Our parish has strong ethnic heritage that we are trying to preserve." Only 39% of parishes rejected this statement and 16% responded "neutral or unsure."

Further, in eight out of twelve jurisdictions, a strong absolute majority of parishes agreed with the statement about "having strong ethnic heritage and identity." These jurisdictions are: Albanian Diocese (100% agreement with the statement), Romanian Archdiocese (87%), Serbian Orthodox Church (82%), Vicariate for Palestinian Orthodox Communities (78%), Greek Orthodox Archdiocese (63%), Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (63%), Ukrainian Orthodox Church (61%) and Bulgarian Diocese (58%). By contrast, in only three jurisdictions (Orthodox Church in America, Antiochian Archdiocese and Carpatho-Russian Diocese), absolute majority of parishes rejected statement about "having strong ethnic heritage and identity." Finally, one jurisdiction – Patriarchal Parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church – presents an interesting case, when dominant majority of parishes responded that they are "neutral or unsure."

Fig. 3 Strength of Ethnic Identity in the Parishes of Various Orthodox Jurisdictions: Do you agree or disagree with the statement "Our parish has a strong ethnic culture and identity that we are trying to preserve"



To further examine the strength of ethnic identity in US Orthodox Churches we constructed the so-called "index of strength of ethnic identity." To do so, we assigned numbers to each of five possible responses as follows: "Strongly agree" – 5; "Rather agree" – 4; "Neutral, unsure" – 3; "Rather disagree" – 2; "Strongly disagree" – 1. The average index of strength of ethnic identity for each jurisdiction was calculated by adding up numbers reported by the parishes (i.e. 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5) and dividing the obtained sum by the number of parishes in each jurisdiction.

In theory, for each jurisdiction, the index of strength of ethnic identity can vary anywhere between "1" (assuming that all parishes in the jurisdiction "strongly disagreed" with the statement about having "strong ethnic identity and heritage") and "5" (assuming that all parishes in the jurisdiction "strongly agreed" with the statement about having "strong ethnic identity and heritage"). The value of "3" should be used as a benchmark to separate jurisdictions which are more likely to agree with the statement about having "strong heritage and identity" from the jurisdictions which are more likely to reject this statement. Indeed, value "3" means that parish or jurisdiction is "neutral or unsure" about "having strong ethnic identity and heritage."

Tab. 1 shows four jurisdictions that clearly stand out in the strength of their ethnic identity (value of index is 4 or higher): Albanian Diocese, Romanian Archdiocese, Serbian Orthodox Church and Vicariate for Palestinian Orthodox Christian Communities. In addition, the Romanian Episcopate within "Orthodox Church in America" also has very high index: 4.2.

Tab. 1 Index of Strength of Ethnic Identity:
on the scale from 1 (no ethnic identity) to 5 (very strong ethnic identity)

Jurisdiction	
US nationwide for all jurisdictions together	**3.1**
Albanian Diocese	4.5
Antiochian Archdiocese	2.1
Bulgarian Diocese	3.5
Carpatho-Russian Diocese	2.8
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese	3.7
Patriarchal Parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church	3.4
Orthodox Church in America, including: - Territorial dioceses - Romanian Episcopate - Bulgarian Diocese - Albanian Archdiocese	2.5 2.1 4.2 3.4 3.9
Vicariate for Palestinian Orthodox Christian Communities	4
Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia	3.7
Romanian Archdiocese	4.4
Serbian Orthodox Church	4.3
Ukrainian Orthodox Church	3.6

Five further jurisdictions have indexes which are not as high but still above benchmark value of 3: Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Bulgarian Diocese and Patriarchal Parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church.

In only three jurisdictions, the indexes of the strength of ethnic identity are below median value of three (i.e. their parishes are more likely to disagree with the statement about having strong ethnic identity and heritage): Antiochian Archdiocese, Orthodox Church in America and Carpatho-Russian Diocese.

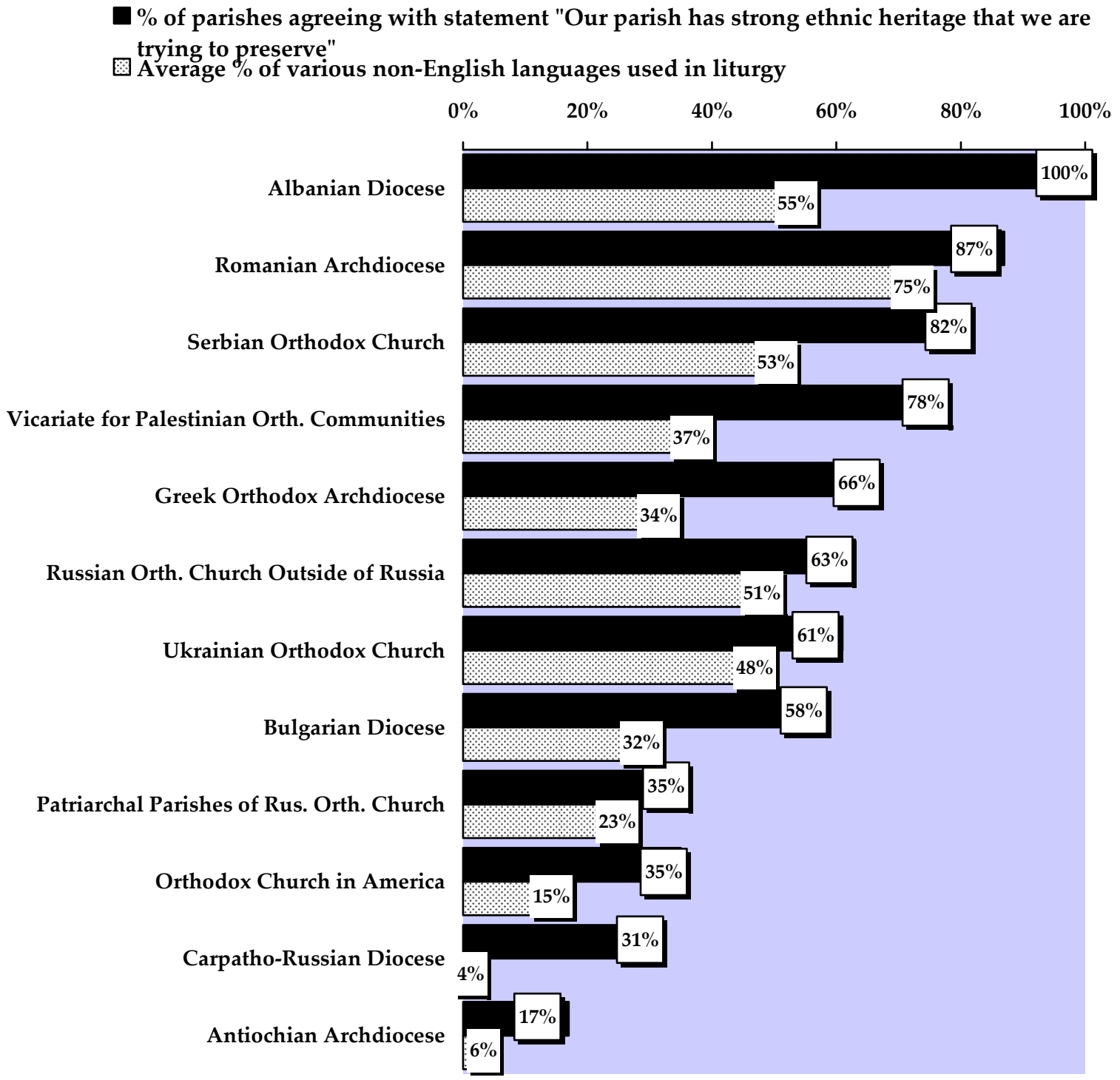
In summary, the index of strength of ethnic identity shows that dominance of English language in most of US Orthodox jurisdictions does not mean that local Orthodox parishes abandon their ethnic identity and heritage. In fact, if anything, at the beginning of the third millennium, the American Orthodox Churches can still be described rather as being "ethnically-centered" than as being "All American" denominations.

Strength of Ethnic *Culture* in US Orthodox Parishes

The statistical analysis of survey data indicated a sound correlation between degree of usage of English in the local parishes and their self-definition as having or not having a "strong ethnic heritage and identity." Predictably, the parishes with higher percentage of English used in sermon and liturgy are more likely to deny that they have "strong ethnic identity." To the contrary, parishes with the wider usage of various non-English languages are more likely to agree with the statement about having "strong ethnic heritage and identity.

Fig. 4 on the next page graphically demonstrates that in jurisdictions with greater usage of various *non-English* languages as language of liturgy, more parishes agree that "Our parish has strong ethnic heritage and identity that we are trying to preserve." This relationship seems to be intuitive and even trivial. What is interesting, however, is that in the case of three Orthodox jurisdictions the correlation between usage of English in worship services and agreement with the statement about having strong ethnic heritage and identity is relatively weak. These Orthodox jurisdictions are Carpatho-Russian Diocese, Serbian Orthodox Church and Greek Orthodox Archdiocese.

Fig. 4 Strength of Ethnic Identity and Usage of non-English Languages in the Parishes of Various Orthodox Jurisdictions



In simple terms, in these three jurisdictions, parishes regard themselves as having "strong ethnic heritage and identity" to a much greater extent than their actual usage of English would statistically predict. What this finding suggests is that these three jurisdictions are more strongly - than the other jurisdictions - attached to the idea of keeping their ethnic culture "intact," even if changing demography of membership "push" them towards greater usage of English.

In previous section, we also observed that in the overall picture, the American Orthodox Churches maintain their ethnic identity in a stronger manner than it may appear from the dominance of English in the local parish life. Therefore, both the language of church services and parish's ethnic identity are useful indicators to describe degree of presence of ethnic elements in the local church life, but neither of these indicators is sufficient on its own: both should be equally taken into account.

Tab. 2 contains data on what we called "Index of Strength of Ethnic Culture." Statistically, it was constructed out of two elements: 1. % of English used in each parish as language of liturgy, sermon and church choir; 2. Parish's degree of agreement or disagreement with the statement "Our parish has a strong ethnic culture and identity that we are trying to preserve?" In essence, the index of strength of ethnic culture shows to what extent various ethnic elements are present in the church life by looking both at "linguistic" component (i.e. % of English used in the parishes) and "ethnic identity" component (i.e. parish's agreement/disagreement with the statement about having "ethnic heritage and identity").

Tab. 2 Index of Strength of Ethnic Culture:
from 0 (no ethnic culture) to 10 (very strong ethnic culture)

Jurisdiction	
US nationwide: for parishes of all jurisdictions together	**4.0**
Albanian Diocese	6.6
Antiochian Archdiocese	1.6
Bulgarian Diocese	4.8
Carpatho-Russian Diocese	2.4
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese	4.9
Patriarchal Parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church	4.0
Orthodox Church in America, including: - Territorial dioceses - Romanian Episcopate - Bulgarian Diocese - Albanian Archdiocese	2.6 1.5 7.5 4.5 4.1
Vicariate for Palestinian Orthodox Christian Communities	5.5
Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia	5.8
Romanian Archdiocese	8.1
Serbian Orthodox Church	6.7
Ukrainian Orthodox Church	5.6

Tab. 2 shows that if we would judge ***both*** usage of English in church life ***and*** strength of ethnic identity in the local parishes, three jurisdictions with the greatest presence of ethnic culture in their parishes are: Romanian Archdiocese (8.1 index value), Albanian Archdiocese (6.6) and Serbian Orthodox Church (6.1). On the opposite end are Antiochian Archdiocese (index value 1.6), Carpatho-Russian Diocese (2.4) and Orthodox Church in America (2.6) - the jurisdictions where various "ethnic elements" in church life are relatively insignificant.

In the case of Orthodox Church in America, Tab. 2 also indicates great internal differences in presence of ethnic elements in the church life between territorial dioceses of OCA (index as low as 1.5) and its "ethnic dioceses:" Albanian (4.1), Bulgarian (4.5) and Romanian (7.5).

Is there any relationship between the size (membership) of US Orthodox parishes and the strength of their ethnic culture? The answer to this question is "yes." In summary, survey data tell us that Orthodox parishes with stronger ethnic culture tend to be larger than the more "Americanized" churches. And this is true for both usage of English in worship services and probability of agreement with the statement "Our parish has strong ethnic heritage and identity that we are trying to preserve." Fig. 5.1 indicates that the parishes which use less English are more likely to be large parishes, while Fig. 5.2 on the next page shows that the parishes which have higher index of ethnic identity (i.e. higher degree of agreement with the statement about "having strong ethnic heritage and identity) are also more likely to be large parishes.

Fig. 5.1 Usage of English in Worship Services in the Parishes of Various Size Categories

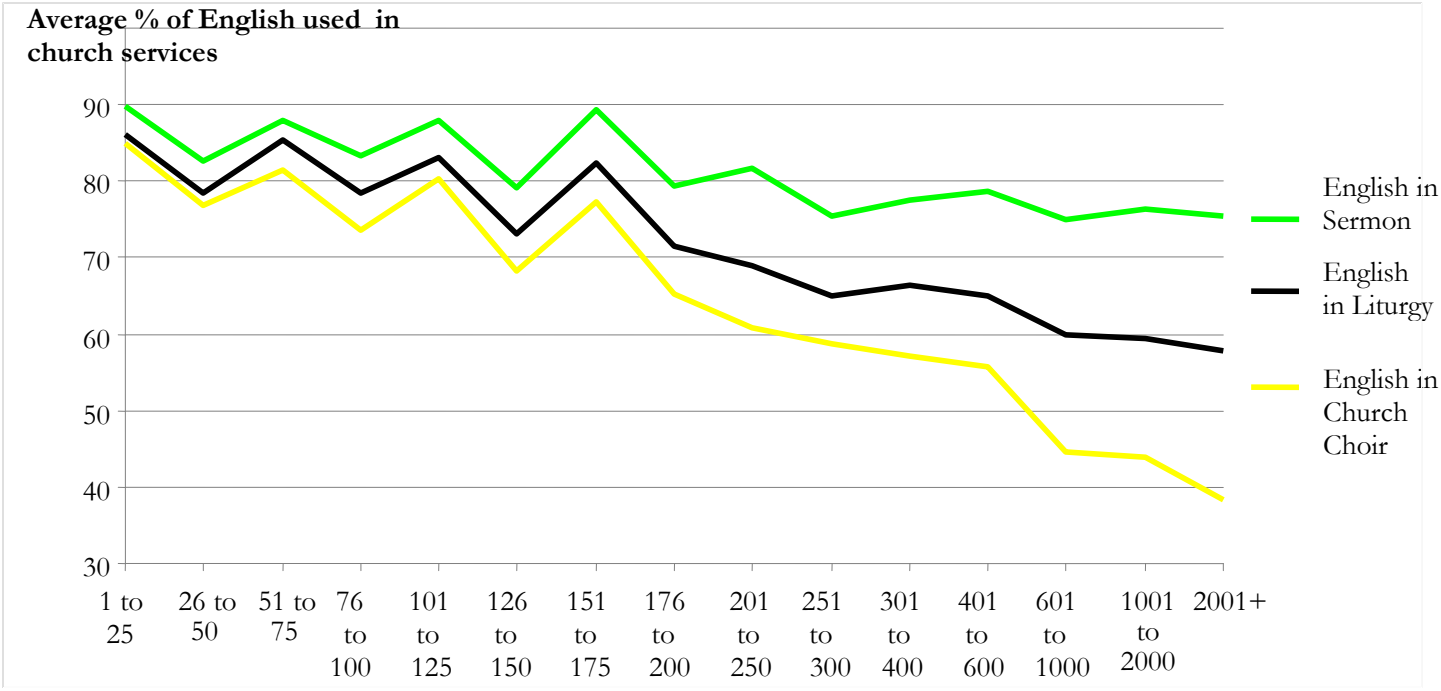
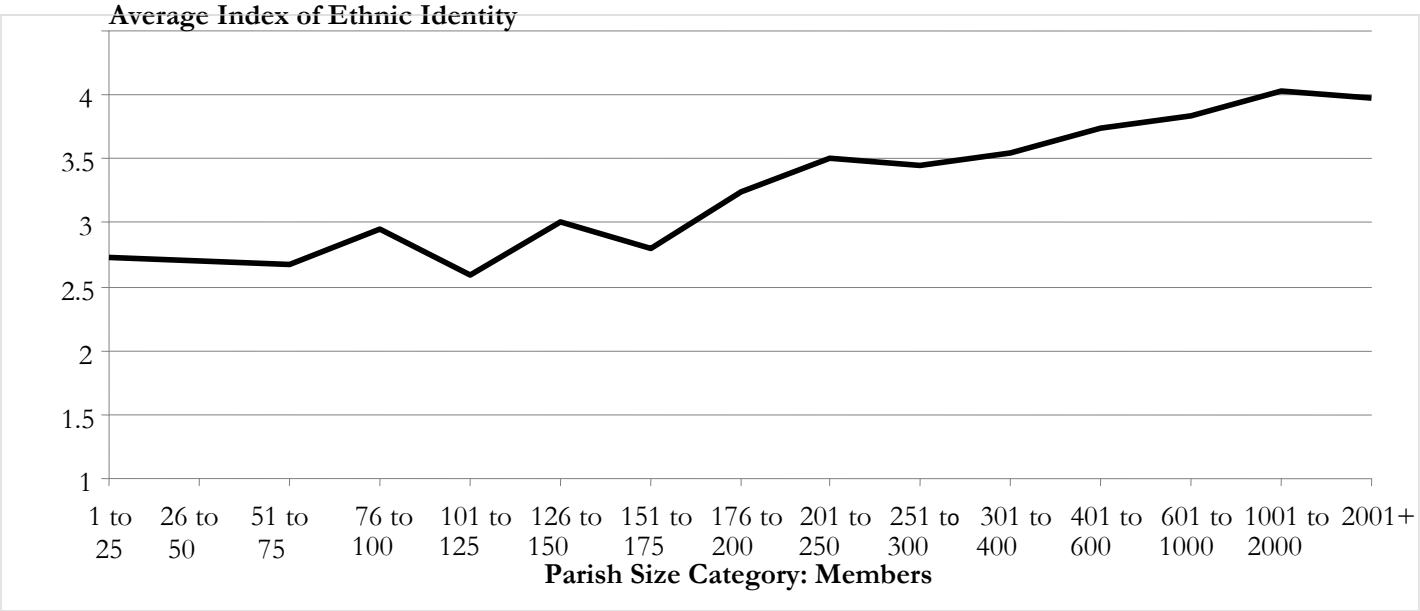


Fig. 5.2 Strength of Ethnic Identity in the Parishes of Various Size Categories



Impact of Ethno-Linguistic Situation in the Parishes on Church Attendance

We found a statistically sound and strong correlation between strength of ethnic identity of a parish (i.e. parish's agreement or disagreement with the statement about having "strong ethnic heritage and identity") and the rates of church attendance (i.e. percentage of parishioners who attend church services on a regular weekly basis). In short, the rates of church attendance are much higher in the parishes which ***disagree*** with the statement "Our parish has strong ethnic heritage that we are trying to preserve," and they are significantly lower in the "ethnically based" parishes which agree with this statement. Fig. 6.1 on the next page demonstrate this finding.

Fig 6.1 shows: in almost half (49%) of the parishes that agree with the statement about having a strong ethnic heritage, the rates of church attendance are below 30% (i.e. less than 30% of their members attend weekly). In only one out of ten (11%) "ethnically-based" parishes the rates of church attendance are 60% or higher. The situation is very different in the churches which disagree with the statement "Our parish has strong ethnic heritage and identity that we are trying to preserve." In 35% of these parishes, more than 60% of parishioners come to church every Sunday. And in only one out of ten (11%) "non-ethnic" churches less than 30% of their members attend on a regular weekly basis.

Fig. 6.1 Strength of Ethnic Identity and Church Attendance in US Orthodox Parishes

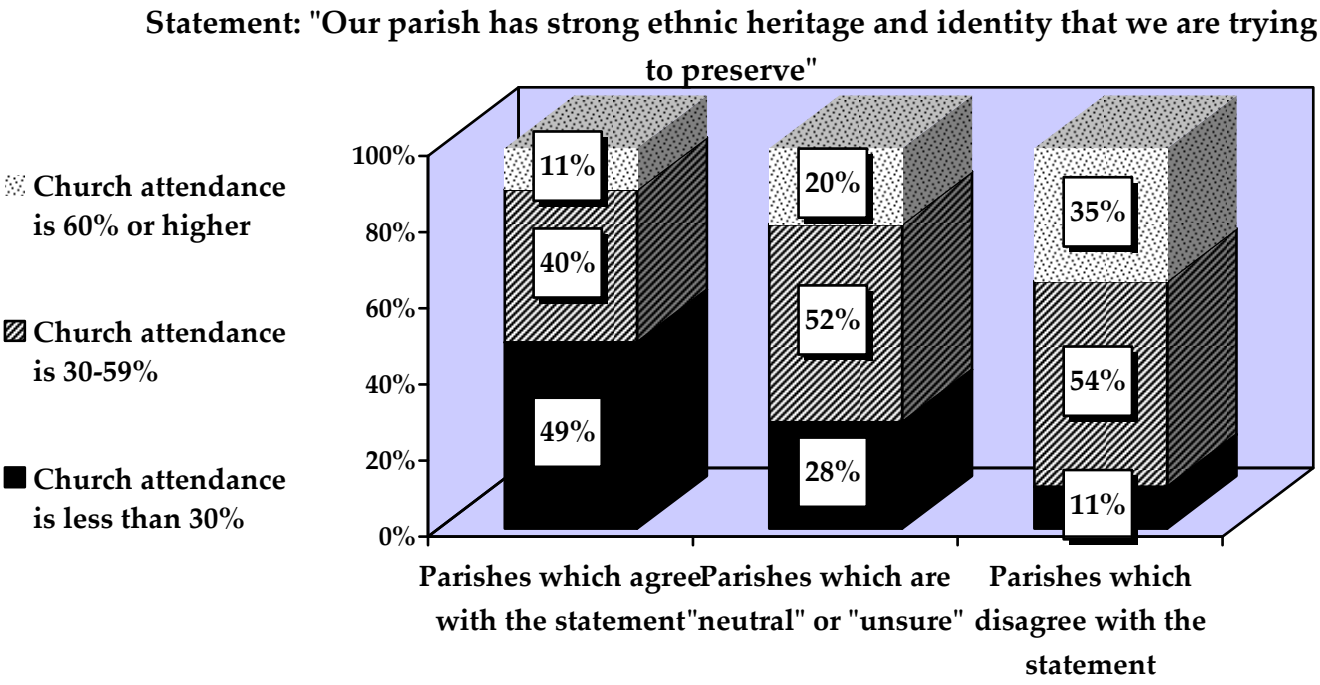


Fig. 6.2 demonstrates that the rates of church attendance decline consistently from 55% on average in parishes with index of strength of ethnic identity equal 1 (i.e. parishes which strongly disagree with the statement about having "strong heritage and identity") to 34% on average in parishes with index of strength of ethnic identity equal 5 (i.e. parishes which strongly agree with the statement about having "strong heritage and identity").

Fig. 6.2 Index of Strength of Ethnic Identity and Church Attendance in US Orthodox Parishes

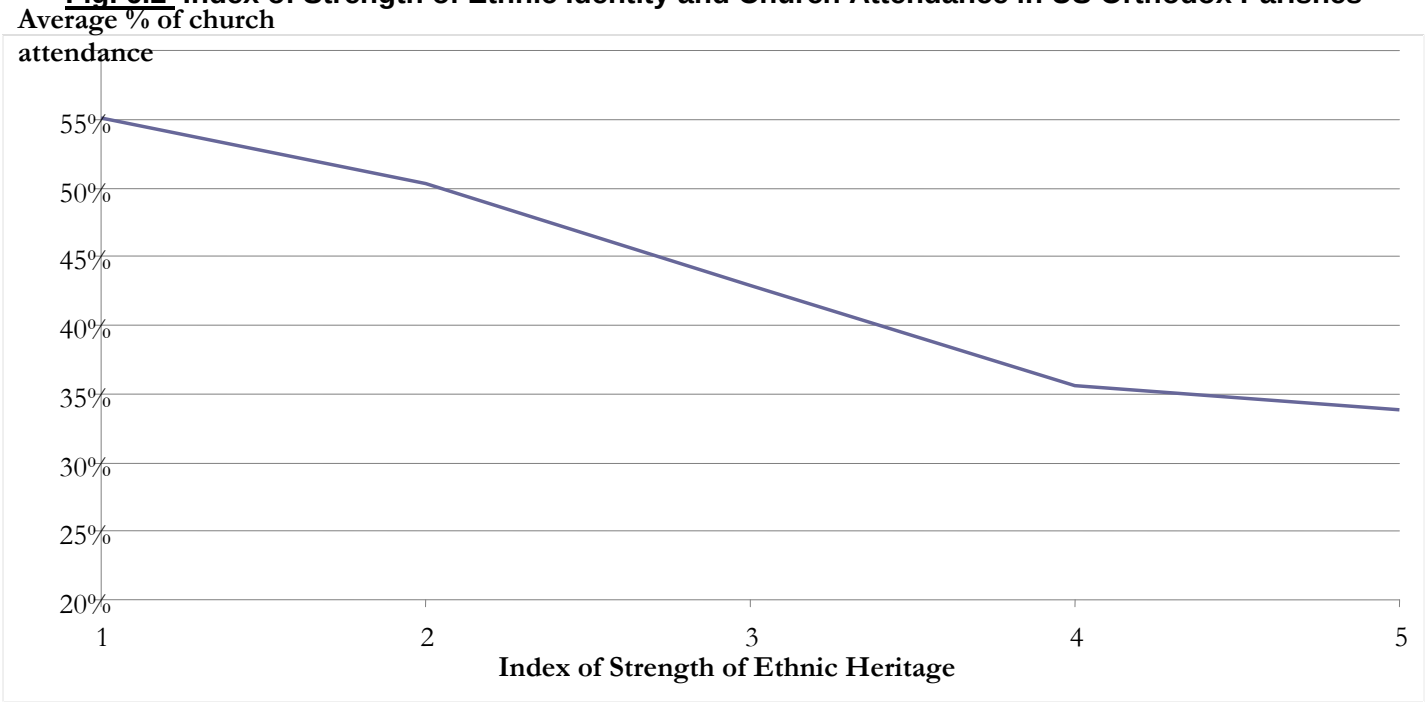
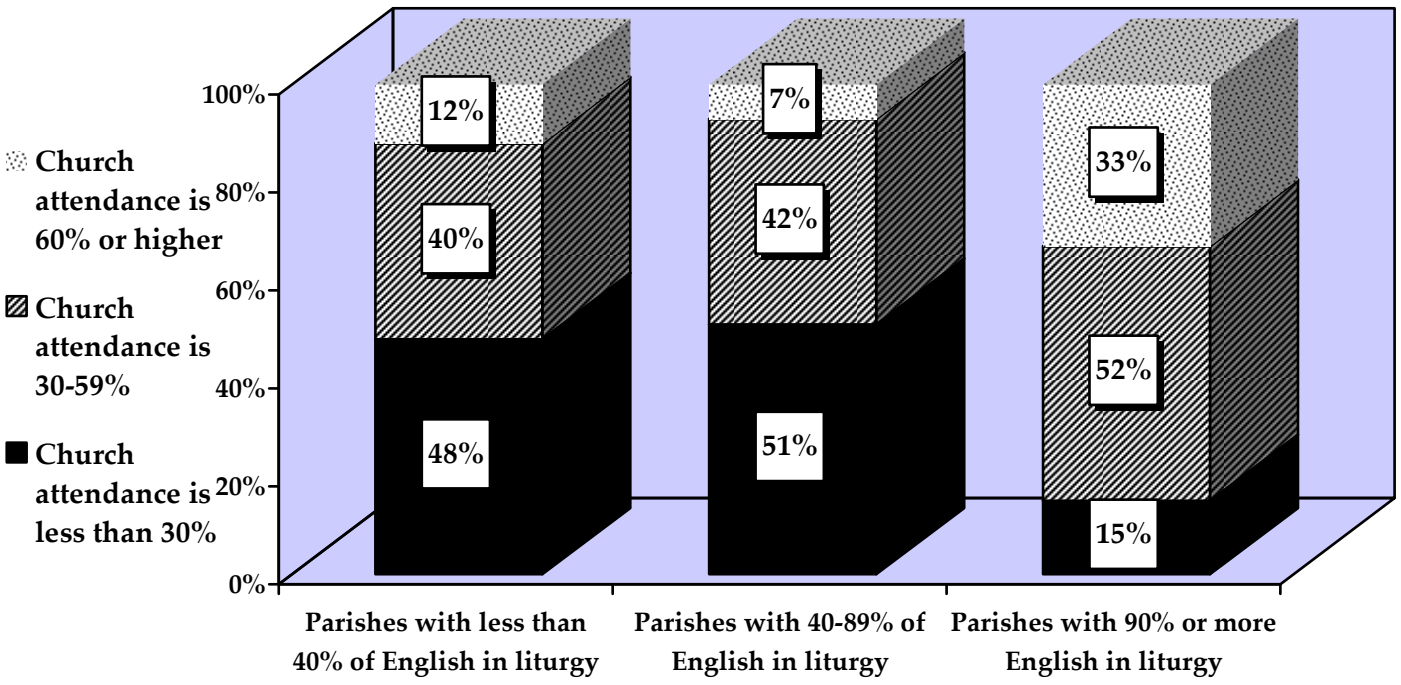


Fig. 6.2 also shows that the most dramatic drop occurs between values of 2 to 4 of the index of strength of ethnic identity, while this decline is relatively steady between values 1 and 2 or between 4 and 5. In other words, the real "dividing line" in terms of church attendance is between parishes which either agree ("strongly" or "rather" doesn't matter) or disagree ("strongly" or "rather" doesn't matter) with the statement "Our parish has strong heritage and identity that we are trying to preserve." There is much less difference in the rates of church attendance between churches which "strongly" and "rather" agree (value 4 or 5) or the parishes which "strongly" and "rather" disagree with this statement (value 1 or 2).

Similarly to strength of ethnic identity, we also found strong relationship between the usage of the English language in church services (% of English used by a parish as the language of liturgy) and proportion of parishioners attending church services regularly. ***In summary, in the parishes that conduct worship services in English (or almost exclusively in English), the rates of church attendance are much higher than in the parishes with significant presence of various non-English "ethnic" languages***. See Fig. 7.1.

Fig. 7.1 Usage of English as the Language of Liturgy and Church Attendance in US Orthodox Parishes

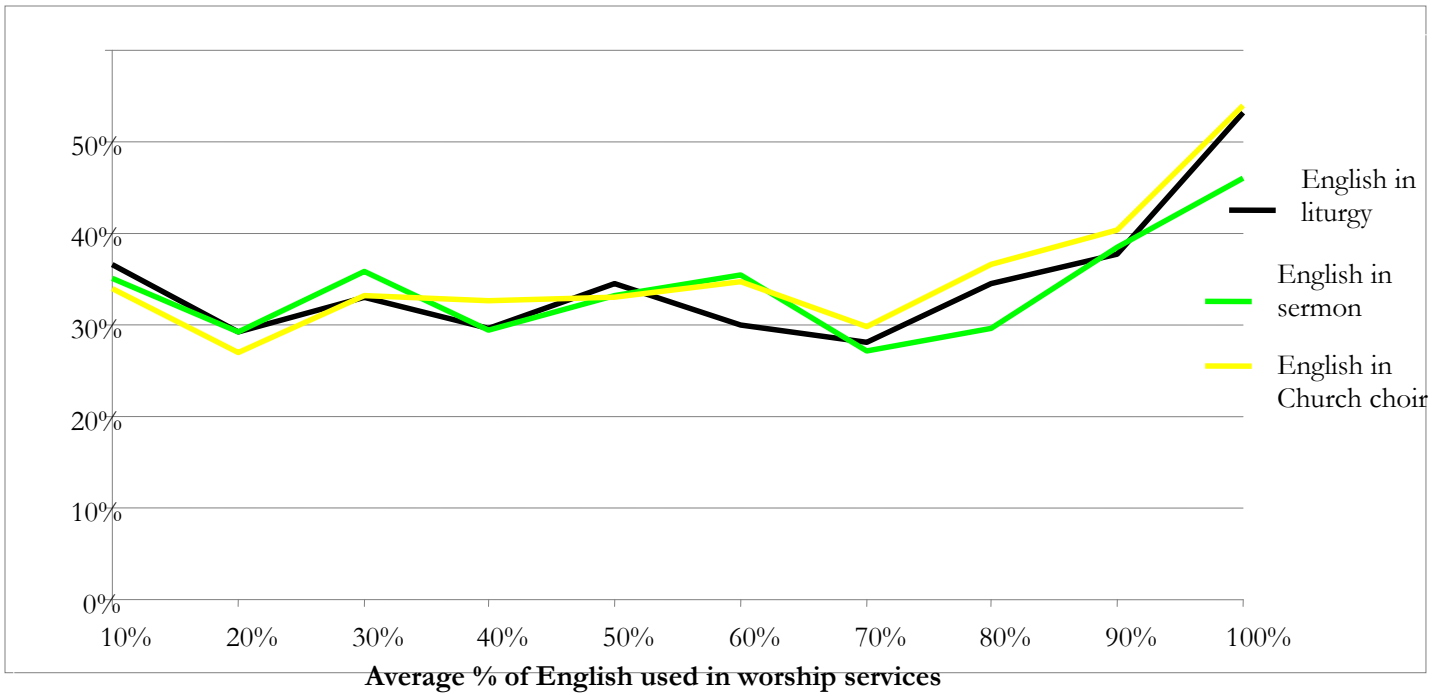


In one–third (33%) of the parishes with more than 90% of English used in liturgy, the rates of church attendance are 60% or higher. In only 15% of these English-speaking churches, the rates of church attendance are below 30%. Quite differently, in half of the parishes with less than 90% of English used in liturgy, no more than 30% of members attend services regularly.

Fig. 7.1 also reveals an interesting phenomenon: the relation between proportion of English used in worship and rates of church attendance is ***not*** "linear." One can see, there is little difference in rates of church attendance between parishes with less than 40% of English in liturgy and parishes with 40-89% of English in liturgy. Rather, church attendance jumps sharply in the parishes where English is used exclusively or almost exclusively as the language of liturgy (90% or more English in liturgy). In simple words, having somewhat less or somewhat more of English in worship has little impact on church attendance. But having almost only English as the language of liturgy correlates strongly with high rates of church attendance.

Fig. 7.2 confirms this observation. After several "ups" and "downs," the black line (the % of English used in liturgy) raises sharply, when level of usage of English reaches 90%. For the language of sermon (green line), the same phenomena occurs at 80%: that is, church attendance jumps in the parishes with more than 80% of English used as a language of sermon.

Fig. 7.2 Average % of Usage of English in Worship Services And Rates of Church Attendance in US Orthodox Parishes



One more important remark should be made. Clearly, the influence of the strength of ethnic identity on church attendance (less "ethnic" parishes – better church attendance) and the impact of the English language used in worship (better attendance in English speaking parishes) are two mutually related patterns. Indeed, as noted previously, the parishes with higher percentage of English in worship are more likely disagree with the statement about "having strong ethnic heritage and identity."

What is interesting, however, is that when we looked *only* on the parishes which agree with the statement "Our parishes has strong ethnic heritage and identity" the correlation between higher usage of English in liturgy and higher rates of attendance continued to exist. That is, even in the case of "ethnically-based" parishes, a higher proportion of English used in worship is associated with better rates of church attendance. This finding is actually relatively easy to explain. One can imagine a parish which – for whatever reason – is deeply rooted in and maintains its Greek or Slavic or Arabic culture. Yet, even in such an imaginary parish there can be certain categories of parishioners who do not speak anything but English: young people, spouses who do not have ethnic ancestry, etc. Consequently, even in the "ethnically based" parishes, having more English in church life is helpful to bringing these categories of parishioners to the church.

To conclude, the high rates of attendance in American Orthodox parishes are typically associated with high usage of English in worship services and with churches which do not emphasize their ethnic identity and heritage.

"Geography" of Ethnic Culture in American Orthodox Parishes: State by State Differences

The particular combination of various Orthodox parishes is unique for each state. In the earlier report on "Ten Facts about Geographic Patterns of Orthodox Church Life in the United States," we saw that US states differ hugely from one another in number of Orthodox parishes and Orthodox church members, in prevalence of parishes of certain jurisdictions, in geographic density of Orthodox parishes and in number of parishes per capita of general population.

In the last section of this report, we will examine how different are various states in terms of the presence of the parishes which use either more or less English in their services and which have either stronger or weaker "ethnic identity." Our ultimate goal is to identify two very different types of areas on US territory:

- the states where various ethnic elements still have strong presence in local Orthodox church life;
- the states where most of the Orthodox parishes can be described as "All-American" churches with very little (or none) ethnic identity and with exclusive (or almost exclusive) usage of English in worship services.

Four maps accompanying this section will help to "visualize" main findings and conclusions.

We noted earlier that in the US nationwide and for all Orthodox jurisdictions combined, the average proportion of usage of English language in Orthodox parishes as a language ***of liturgy*** is 73%. In the case of the usage of English as a language ***of sermon*** this proportion is even higher - 81%.

Tab. C in Appendix (p.29) demonstrates how different are these two figures (average proportion of English used by the local parishes as language of liturgy and sermon) for each state.[1] The states with the lowest usage of English in the liturgy are New York and Nevada: in both states, the local parishes reported only 52% of the English used in liturgy on average. On the opposite end are eight states where English is almost exclusively used (more than 90% on average) by the parishes as the language of Divine Liturgy: Kentucky, Mississippi, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Wyoming, Montana, South Dakota and Delaware.

Map. 1 on p.23 shows that there are two solid regions on US territory (the states colored in yellow and orange) where the rates of the usage of English as the language of Liturgy are ***significantly lower*** than the national average of 73%. One region consists of four Southwestern states: California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona. The second region encompasses the Northeastern states of New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine and the national capital - Washington DC. In addition to these macro-regions, two individual states – Florida and Illinois – form two "enclaves" on US territory with relatively little usage of English and relatively strong presence of various non-English languages in liturgy in the local parishes.

[1] In 2011 National Orthodox Parish Survey, each Orthodox parish was asked: "Please estimate the percentage of the English language used in your parish on a typical Sunday as the language of Divine Liturgy and as the language of sermon (from 0% - "no English used" to 100% - "exclusively English used"). The average % of English in Liturgy and sermon for each state was calculated by adding up the figures reported by the parishes and dividing the obtained sum by the number of parishes in each state.

Map 2 on p.24 and Tab. D in Appendix (p.30) show the average percentage of the English used as the language of sermon in the Orthodox parishes in each state. Essentially, Map 2 resembles Map 1 with only difference that in many states the colors are "shifted" one level up reflecting typically greater usage of English by parishes as a language of sermon than as a language of liturgy. Hence, the states that feature either a significantly lower or a significantly higher presence of English in sermon (compared to the national average of 81%) are the same as on the Map 1. Two states on the "lowest end" are New York (59% of English used on average by the local parishes in sermon) and Nevada (54%). On the very "upper end" of usage of English are the states of Kentucky, Mississippi, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Wyoming, Montana, South Dakota, Alabama and Vermont. In these 9 states, all local parishes use 100% of English as a language of sermon.

In the section on "Strength of Ethnic Identity in US Orthodox Parishes," we arrived to the conclusion that the wide usage and even dominance of English language in most of US Orthodox Churches does not mean necessarily that local Orthodox parishes abandon their ethnic identity and heritage. That is, many Orthodox parishes with predominantly English language used in worship services continue to view themselves as "ethnically based" and responded affirmatively to the statement "Our parish has strong ethnic heritage and identity that we are trying to preserve." To better measure the strength of the ethnic identity in US Orthodox Churches we also constructed and discussed the "index of strength of ethnic identity."

Tab. E in Appendix (p.31) shows state-by-state index of strength of ethnic identity[2] in the local Orthodox parishes while Map 3 on p.25 helps to visualize information provided in Tab. E. The areas colored in light and dark blue colors are the states where index of strength of ethnic identity is equal or above national average. In simple, these are the states where majority of Orthodox parishes agree with the statement "Our parish has strong ethnic identity and heritage that we are trying to preserve." Differently, the areas colored in light and dark yellow colors are the states where index of strength of ethnic identity is well below national average: these are the states where most Orthodox parishes reject statement about "having strong ethnic identity and heritage."

[2] In 2011 National Orthodox Parish Survey, each Orthodox parish was asked: "Do you agree or disagree with the statement "Our parish has a strong ethnic culture and identity that we are trying to preserve?" The answers were coded on a five point scale: "1" - Strongly disagree; "2" – Rather disagree; "3" – Neutral / Unsure; "4" – Rather agree; "5" – Strongly agree.
The average index of ethnic identity for each state was calculated by adding up the coded responses from the parishes (i.e. 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5) and dividing the obtained sum by the number of parishes in each state.

Two important observations can be made from Map 3. First, the two regions with low level of usage of English in worship identified on Map 1 (Southwestern and Northeastern "pockets") also form the nucleuses of two solid areas on US territory with high index of strength of ethnic identity in the local Orthodox parishes. Second, compared to two relatively compact regions with the low usage of English in liturgy, the areas with high index of strength of ethnic identity have significantly wider geographic expansion and encompass more states. This pattern is consistent with our earlier conclusion that in overall picture American Orthodox parishes maintain their ethnic identity in a stronger manner than it may appear from the dominance of English in the local church life.

Put simply, there are more US states where parishes continue to view themselves as "having strong identity and heritage" than the states where parishes continue to use widely various non-English languages in their worship services.

It was noted previously that both the language of church services and parish's ethnic identity are useful indicators to describe degree of presence of various ethnic elements in the local church life. Yet, neither of these indicators is sufficient on its own: both should be equally taken into account. To do so, we constructed the so-called "Index of Strength of Ethnic Culture" – a statistical measure which looks both at "linguistic" component (i.e. % of English used in the parishes) and "ethnic identity" component (i.e. parish's agreement / disagreement with the statement about having "ethnic heritage and identity").

Tab. E in Appendix (p.31) contains state-by-state data on index of strength of ethnic culture while Map 4 on p.26 pictures data presented in Tab. E. They will help us to summarize our earlier findings on state-to-state differences in usage of English and strength of ethnic identity in the local Orthodox parishes.

Looking on Map 4, one can see three solid macro-regions and two individual states colored in light and dark blue colors which highlight the areas with the index of strength of the ethnic culture above US national average:

- Southwest: the states of California, Arizona, Nevada and Utah;
- Northeast: the states of New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rod Island, Maine along with the national capital – Washington DC;
- Midwest: the states of Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan (with Indiana having lower scores of index and somewhat breaking this area in two);

- The states of Alaska and Florida.

In summary, these blue-colored states are the areas where many Orthodox parishes continue to view themselves as having "strong ethnic identity and heritage" ***and*** use relatively high proportion of various non-English languages in their worship services.[3] On the opposite side of the spectrum, two large regions and two single states are colored in light and dark yellow colors highlighting the areas with index of strength of ethnic culture ***significantly*** below national average:

- One region bisects US territory in the middle in the North-South direction. This region includes the states of Montana, North and South Dakota, Wyoming, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Texas;
- Second region forms pocket in the Southeast of United States and includes the states of West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi and South Carolina;
- The states of Vermont and Hawaii.

In summary, these yellow-colored states are the areas where most Orthodox parishes use high proportion of English language in their worship services and reject the statement "Our parish has strong ethnic heritage and identity that we are trying to preserve."

We conclude this chapter with three important observations. First. There are three clearly-identifiable regions in the US, where "ethnic elements" (non-English languages used in worship along with sense of the strong ethnic identity) have relatively strong presence in the local Orthodox church life and where many parishes can still be described as "ethnically-based." One is Southwestern "corner" consisting of California, Nevada, Arizona and Utah. The second is Northeastern "corner" including states of New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rode Island and Washington DC. The third Midwestern area encompasses the states of Illinois, Wisconsin and Michigan (although in the two latter states the usage of English is close to the national average). In addition to these sprawled multi-state regions, the state of Florida also stands out by low level of usage of English in worship services and strong sense of ethnic identity typical for the local parishes.

[3] It should be noted that both percentage of usage of English in worship services in the parishes and their responses to the statement about having strong identity and heritage have statistically equal impact on the aggregate index of strength of ethnic culture. Therefore there are several "blue colored" states where the usage of English in church life is close to the national average (or even slightly higher), but, at the same time, significant proportion of parishes "strongly agree" with the statement about having strong heritage and identity, thus, "pushing" the value of index of strength of ethnic culture above national average.

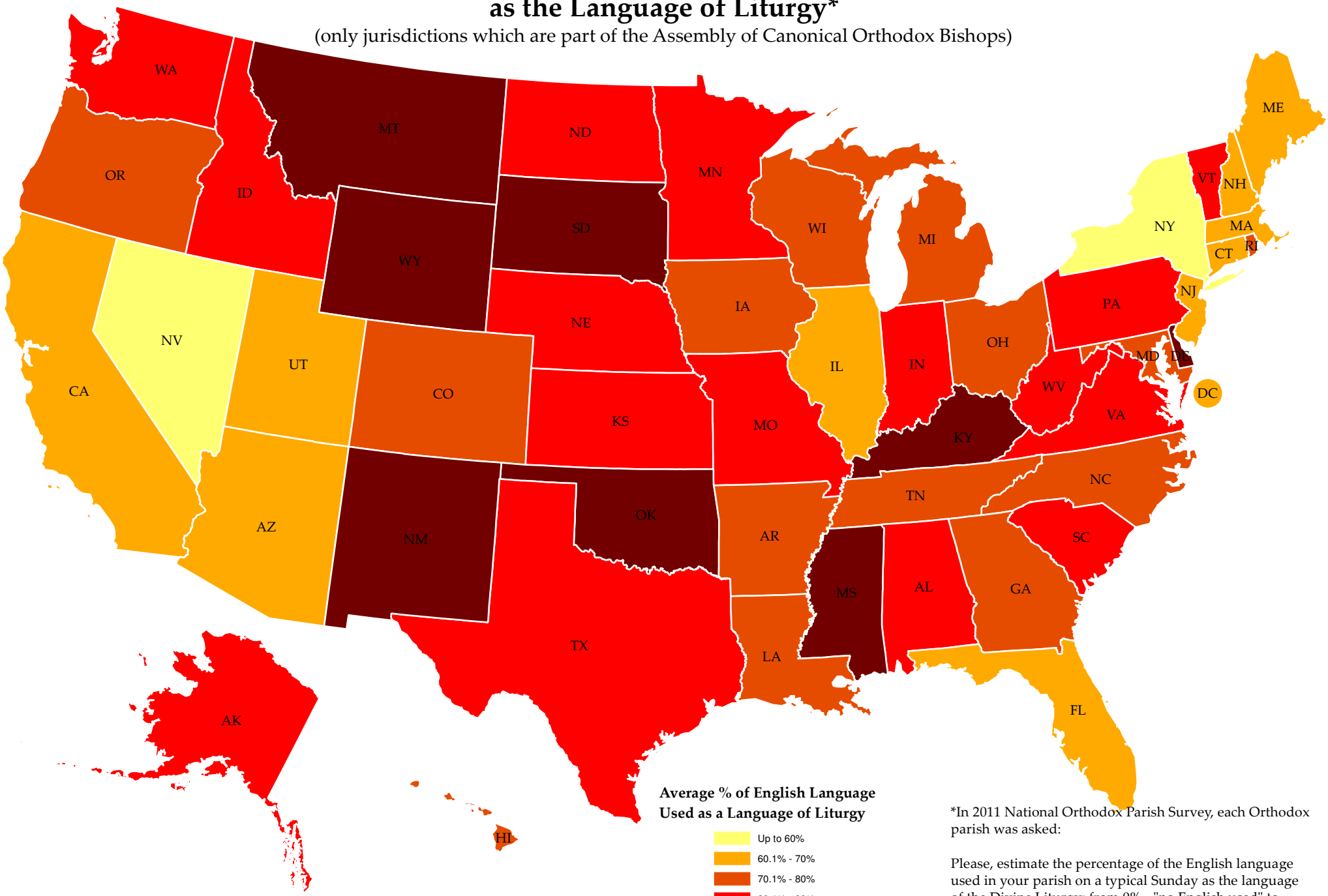
Second. The actual "geography" of the ethnic culture in US Orthodox parishes which was discussed in this section debunks one of the commonly shared stereotypes – the notion that the Orthodox parishes in the West tend to be more "Americanized," while the churches in East tend to remain more ethnic. As we saw, the reality is more complex. On the one hand, the Western part of United States has a huge enclave with strong ethnic culture in the local parishes: the Southwestern "pocket" of California, Nevada, Arizona and Utah. On the other hand, in the Eastern part of the country, the area with significant presence of the "ethnically-based" parishes is limited to the Northeast corner including New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rode Island and Washington DC.

Third. Out of 50 US states, only 16 along with Washington DC have indexes of the strength of the ethnic culture above the national average. Map 4 shows that geographically these 16 blue-colored states cover relatively small portion of US territory. At the same time, 53% of all US Orthodox parishes are located in these states and 66% (almost two thirds) of all Orthodox Church members live there. In other words, strong majority of all US Orthodox Church members live in the areas where various ethnic elements still have significant impact on the local church life.

Map 1

Average Percentage (%) of the English Language Used in the Orthodox Parishes as the Language of Liturgy*

(only jurisdictions which are part of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops)



US nationwide and for all Orthodox Churches combined the average % of usage of English as language of liturgy is 73%.

*In 2011 National Orthodox Parish Survey, each Orthodox parish was asked:

Please, estimate the percentage of the English language used in your parish on a typical Sunday as the language of the Divine Liturgy: from 0% - "no English used" to 100% - "exclusively English used."

The average % of English in Liturgy for each state was calculated by adding up the figures reported by the parishes and dividing the obtained sum by the number of parishes in each state.

SOURCE OF DATA: 2011 US National Orthodox Parish Survey conducted by the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops

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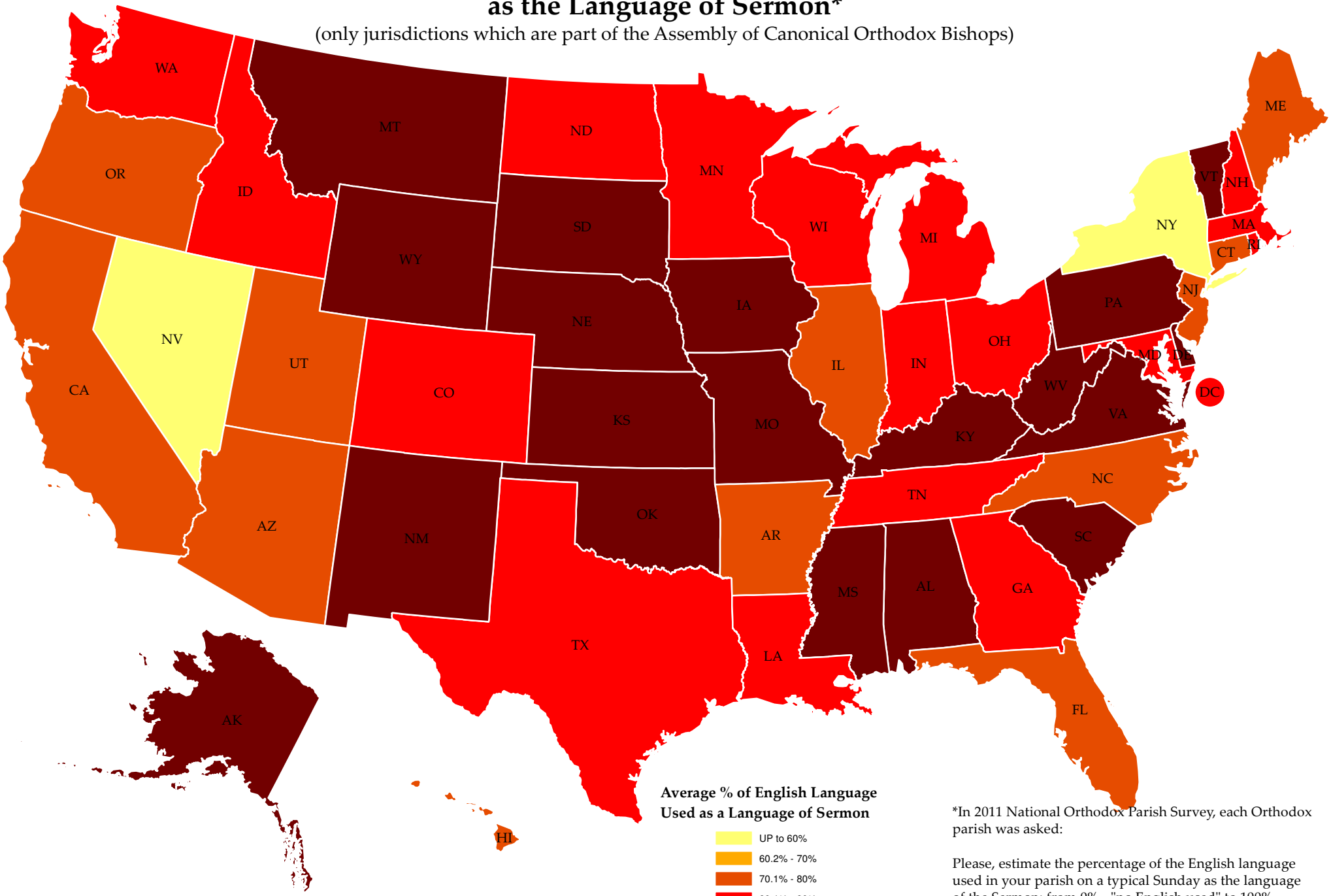
Map 2

Average Percentage (%) of the English Language Used in the Orthodox Parishes as the Language of Sermon*

(only jurisdictions which are part of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops)



Average % of English Language Used as a Language of Sermon

- UP to 60%
- 60.2% - 70%
- 70.1% - 80%
- 80.1% - 90%
- More than 90%

US nationwide and for all Orthodox Churches combined the average % of usage of English as language of sermon is 81%.

*In 2011 National Orthodox Parish Survey, each Orthodox parish was asked:

Please, estimate the percentage of the English language used in your parish on a typical Sunday as the language of the Sermon: from 0% - "no English used" to 100% - "exclusively English used."

The average % of English in Sermon for each state was calculated by adding up the figures reported by the parishes and dividing the obtained sum by the number of parishes in each state.

SOURCE OF DATA: 2011 US National Orthodox Parish Survey conducted by the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops

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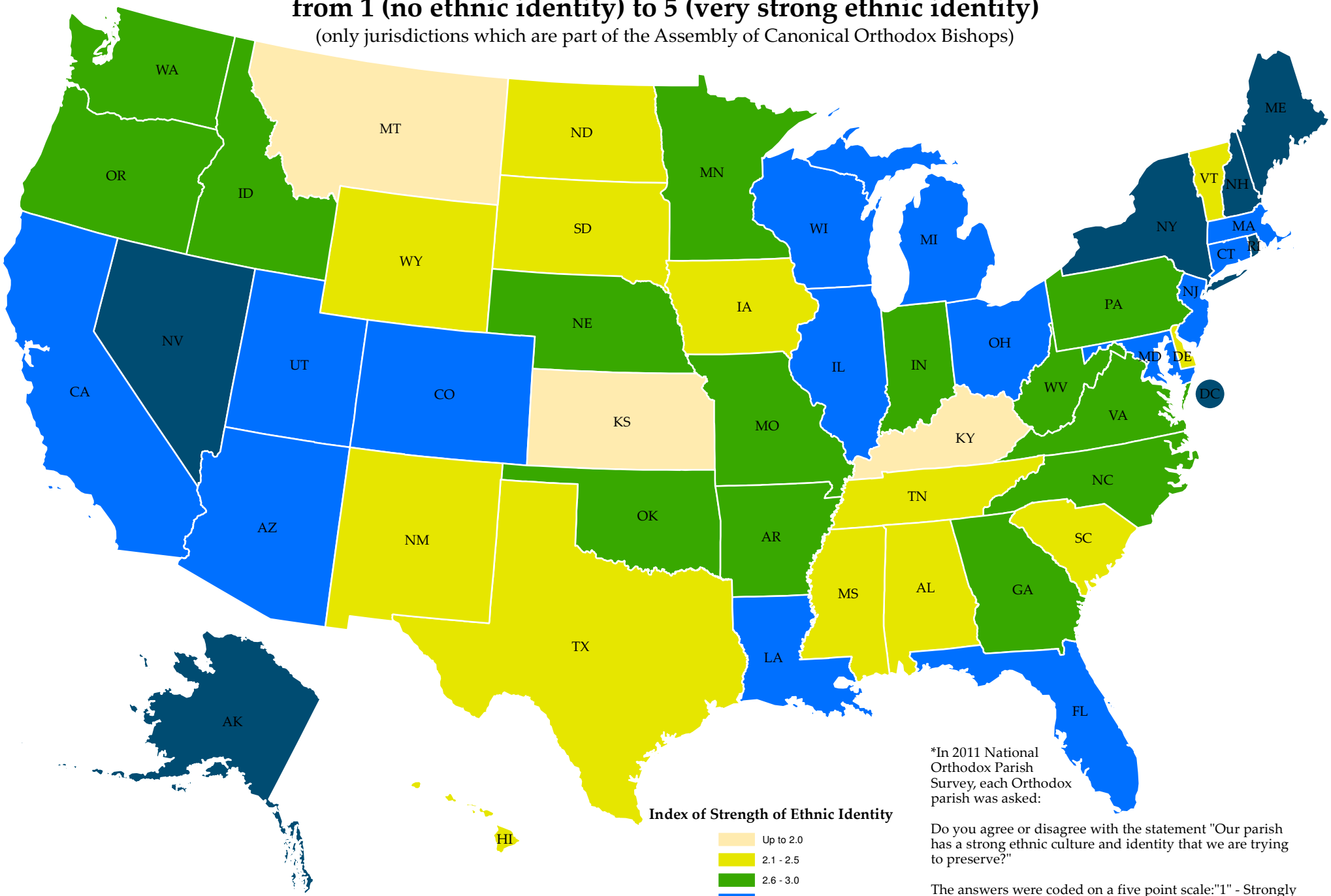
Map 3

State-by-State Index of Strength of Ethnic Identity in Orthodox Parishes:* from 1 (no ethnic identity) to 5 (very strong ethnic identity)

(only jurisdictions which are part of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops)



*In 2011 National Orthodox Parish Survey, each Orthodox parish was asked:

Do you agree or disagree with the statement "Our parish has a strong ethnic culture and identity that we are trying to preserve?"

The answers were coded on a five point scale:"1" - Strongly disagree; "2" - Rather disagree; "3" - Neutral/Unsure; "4" - Rather agree; "5" - Strongly agree.

The average index of ethnic identiry for each state was calculated by adding up the coded responses reported by the parishes (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) and dividing the obtained sum by the number of parishes in each state.

US nationwide and for all Orthodox parishes combined the average index of strength of ethnic identity is 3.1.

SOURCE OF DATA: 2011 US National Orthodox Parish Survey conducted by the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops

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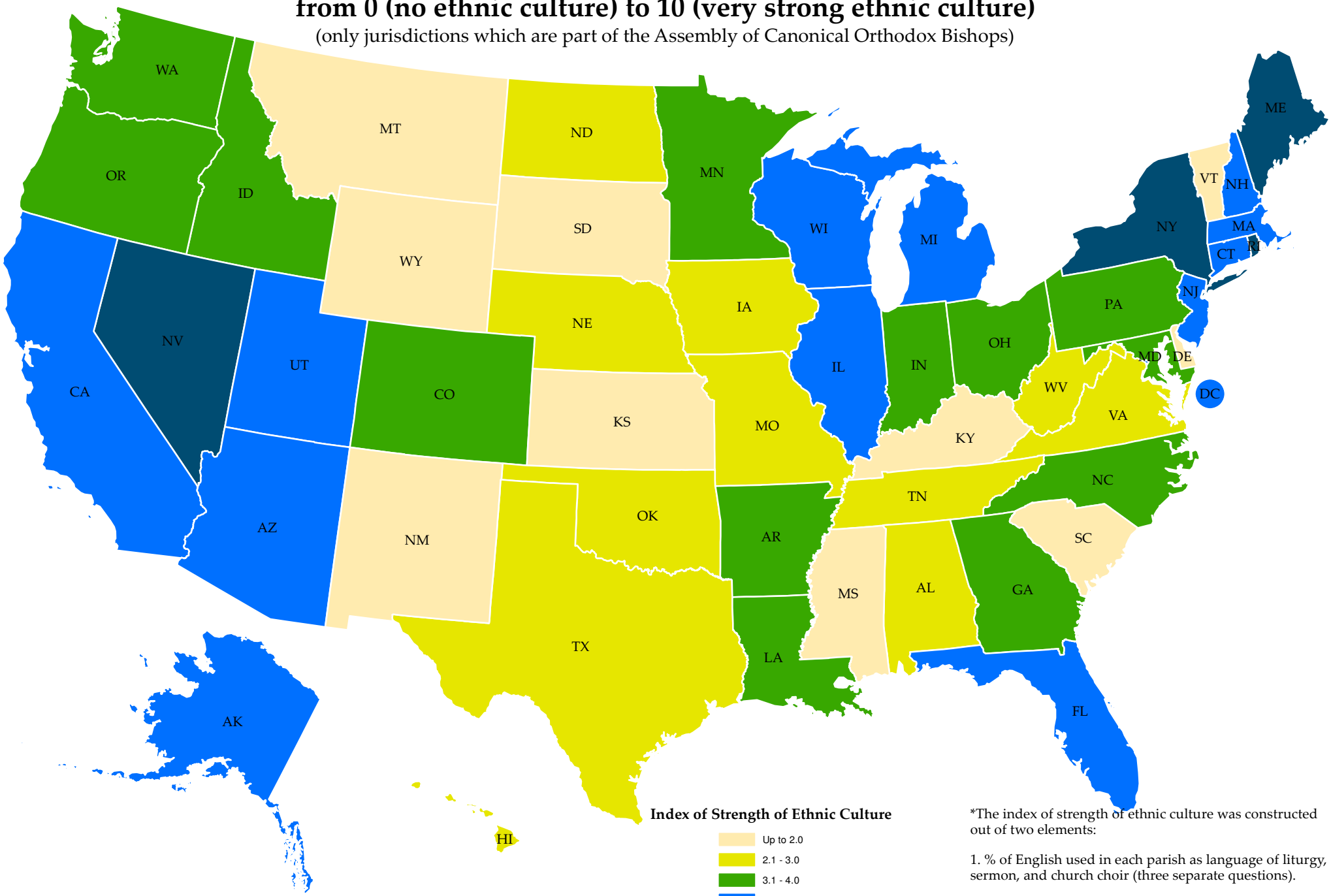
Map 4

State-by-State Index of Strength of Ethnic Culture in Orthodox Parishes:* from 0 (no ethnic culture) to 10 (very strong ethnic culture)

(only jurisdictions which are part of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops)



US nationwide and for all Orthodox parishes combined the average index of strength of ethnic culture is 4.0.

*The index of strength of ethnic culture was constructed out of two elements:

1. % of English used in each parish as language of liturgy, sermon, and church choir (three separate questions).

2. Parish's degree of agreement with the statement "Our parish has a strong ethnic culture and identity that we are trying to preserve."

Statistically, both "linguistic" component and "ethnic identity" component were equally taken into account by constructing index of strength of ethnic culture.

SOURCE OF DATA: 2011 US National Orthodox Parish Survey conducted by the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops

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Appendix

Tab. A Average % of Usage of English in the Parishes of Various Orthodox Jurisdictions

Jurisdiction	Average % of English used as language of *liturgy*	Average % of English used as language of *sermon*	Average % of English used by the *church choir*
US nationwide for all jurisdictions together	**73**	**81**	**67**
Albanian Diocese	45	85	15
Antiochian Archdiocese	94	97	93
Bulgarian Diocese	68	68	63
Carpatho-Russian Diocese	96	100	94
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese	66	87	49
Patriarchal Parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church	77	85	74
Orthodox Church in America including:	85	87	83
- Territorial dioceses	95	96	94
- Romanian Episcopate	32	32	27
- Bulgarian Diocese	71	78	57
- Albanian Archdiocese	89	97	81
Vicariate for Palestinian Orthodox Christian Communities	63	69	57
Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia	49	57	47
Romanian Archdiocese	25	23	24
Serbian Orthodox Church	47	57	39
Ukrainian Orthodox Church	52	58	49

Tab. B Strength of Ethnic Identity in the Parishes of Various Orthodox Jurisdictions (% of parishes in each category of answers)

Jurisdiction	Do you agree or disagree with the statement "Our parish has a strong ethnic culture and identity that we are trying to preserve"				
	Strongly agree %	Rather agree %	Neutral, Unsure %	Rather disagree %	Strongly disagree %
US nationwide, for parishes of all jurisdictions	**24**	**21**	**16**	**19**	**20**
Albanian Diocese	50	50	0	0	0
Antiochian Archdiocese	8	9	15	22	46
Bulgarian Diocese	47	11	16	0	26
Carpatho-Russian Diocese	11	20	16	40	13
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese	27	40	17	12	4
Patriarchal Parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church	16	19	55	7	3
Orthodox Church in America including:	14	21	14	24	27
- Territorial dioceses	5	7	15	33	40
- Romanian Episcopate	60	21	6	9	4
- Bulgarian Diocese	25	12	44	19	0
- Albanian Archdiocese	17	58	25	0	0
Vicariate for Palestinian Orthodox Christian Communities	67	11	0	0	22
Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia	35	28	13	20	4
Romanian Archdiocese	64	23	3	10	0
Serbian Orthodox Church	57	25	12	3	3
Ukrainian Orthodox Church	40	21	16	8	15

Tab. C State-by-State Average Percentage (%) of Usage of English in Worship Services in Orthodox Parishes (parishes of all Orthodox jurisdictions combined)

State	% English used in Liturgy	% English used in Sermon	% English used by Church Choir	State	% English used in Liturgy	% English used in Sermon	% English used by Church Choir
Alabama	90%	100%	75%	**Nebraska**	89%	98%	82%
Alaska	86%	91%	81%	**Nevada**	52%	54%	50%
Arkansas	75%	78%	73%	**New Hampshire**	67%	84%	51%
Arizona	68%	72%	64%	**New Jersey**	64%	70%	54%
California	63%	73%	55%	**New Mexico**	92%	100%	92%
Colorado	79%	84%	73%	**New York**	52%	59%	43%
Connecticut	68%	80%	60%	**North Carolina**	70%	74%	63%
Delaware	95%	98%	95%	**North Dakota**	81%	88%	74%
Florida	63%	73%	57%	**Ohio**	74%	84%	66%
Georgia	75%	83%	66%	**Oklahoma**	92%	100%	83%
Hawaii	76%	76%	76%	**Oregon**	74%	79%	69%
Idaho	81%	81%	73%	**Pennsylvania**	85%	93%	81%
Illinois	64%	71%	55%	**Rhode Island**	77%	88%	55%
Indiana	82%	90%	74%	**South Carolina**	83%	99%	79%
Iowa	76%	91%	70%	**South Dakota**	95%	100%	95%
Kansas	89%	95%	86%	**Tennessee**	79%	82%	76%
Kentucky	97%	100%	87%	**Texas**	84%	89%	80%
Louisiana	79%	88%	67%	**Utah**	64%	77%	53%
Maine	61%	77%	46%	**Vermont**	90%	100%	88%
Maryland	74%	86%	62%	**Virginia**	83%	92%	75%
Massachusetts	66%	81%	56%	**Washington**	81%	87%	77%
Michigan	71%	82%	66%	**West Virginia**	87%	100%	72%
Minnesota	81%	85%	76%	**Wisconsin**	74%	83%	67%
Mississippi	95%	100%	87%	**Wyoming**	94%	100%	90%
Missouri	84%	97%	71%	**Wash., DC**	65%	83%	53%
Montana	96%	100%	93%	**US nationwide**	73%	81%	66%

<u>Tab. D</u> State-by-State Index of Strength of Ethnic Identity (*) in Orthodox Parishes: on the scale from 1 (no ethnic identity) to 5 (very strong ethnic identity) (parishes of all Orthodox jurisdictions combined):

State	Index of strength of ethnic identity	State	Index of strength of ethnic identity
Alabama	2.5	**Nebraska**	2.6
Alaska	3.9	**Nevada**	3.8
Arkansas	2.7	**New Hampshire**	3.6
Arizona	3.1	**New Jersey**	3.4
California	3.3	**New Mexico**	2.3
Colorado	3.1	**New York**	3.8
Connecticut	3.4	**North Carolina**	3.0
Delaware	2.3	**North Dakota**	2.5
Florida	3.5	**Ohio**	3.3
Georgia	3.0	**Oklahoma**	2.7
Hawaii	2.4	**Oregon**	2.7
Idaho	2.6	**Pennsylvania**	3.0
Illinois	3.5	**Rhode Island**	4.5
Indiana	3.0	**South Carolina**	2.2
Iowa	2.5	**South Dakota**	2.5
Kansas	1.9	**Tennessee**	2.4
Kentucky	1.8	**Texas**	2.4
Louisiana	3.1	**Utah**	3.4
Maine	3.7	**Vermont**	2.3
Maryland	3.1	**Virginia**	2.6
Massachusetts	3.5	**Washington**	2.8
Michigan	3.3	**West Virginia**	2.7
Minnesota	2.8	**Wisconsin**	3.4
Mississippi	2.3	**Wyoming**	2.2
Missouri	2.9	**Washington, DC**	3.7
Montana	1.5	**US nationwide**	3.2

Note: (*) **-** "Index of Strength of Ethnic Identity" was calculated in following way. In 2011 National Survey of US Orthodox parishes, each Orthodox parish was asked: "Do you agree or disagree with the statement "Our parish has a strong ethnic culture and identity that we are trying to preserve?" The answers were provided on a five point scale: "Strongly disagree;" "Rather disagree;" "Neutral / Unsure;" "Rather agree;" "Strongly agree." Each of five possible responses was coded as follows: "Strongly agree" – 5; "Rather agree" – 4; "Neutral, unsure" – 3; "Rather disagree" – 2; "Strongly disagree" – 1.

The average index of ethnic identity for each state was calculated by adding up coded responses from the parishes (i.e. 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5) and dividing the obtained sum by the number of parishes in each state.

Tab. E State-by-State Index of Strength of Ethnic Culture (*) in Orthodox Parishes: on the scale from 0 (no ethnic culture) to 10 (very strong ethnic culture) (parishes of all Orthodox jurisdictions combined):

State	Index of strength of ethnic culture	State	Index of strength of ethnic culture
Alabama	2.3	**Nebraska**	2.4
Alaska	4.3	**Nevada**	5.8
Arkansas	3.3	**New Hampshire**	4.7
Arizona	4.1	**New Jersey**	4.7
California	4.6	**New Mexico**	1.9
Colorado	3.7	**New York**	5.8
Connecticut	4.5	**North Carolina**	4
Delaware	1.9	**North Dakota**	2.8
Florida	4.8	**Ohio**	4
Georgia	3.7	**Oklahoma**	2.5
Hawaii	2.9	**Oregon**	3.4
Idaho	3.1	**Pennsylvania**	3.1
Illinois	4.8	**Rhode Island**	5.5
Indiana	3.4	**South Carolina**	2
Iowa	2.8	**South Dakota**	2
Kansas	1.6	**Tennessee**	2.7
Kentucky	1.2	**Texas**	2.6
Louisiana	3.6	**Utah**	4.8
Maine	5.2	**Vermont**	2
Maryland	3.8	**Virginia**	2.7
Massachusetts	4.7	**Washington**	3.1
Michigan	4.2	**West Virginia**	2.7
Minnesota	3.2	**Wisconsin**	4.1
Mississippi	1.9	**Wyoming**	1.8
Missouri	3	**Washington, DC**	4.8
Montana	0.7	**US nationwide**	4.0

Note: (*) **-** "Index of Strength of Ethnic Culture" was constructed out of two elements: 1. % of English used in each parish as language of liturgy, sermon and church choir; 2. Parish's degree of agreement or disagreement with the statement "Our parish has a strong ethnic culture and identity that we are trying to preserve?" The average index of ethnic culture for each state was calculated by adding up the indexes of individual parishes and dividing the obtained sum by the number of parishes in each state.

In essence, the "index of strength of ethnic culture" shows to what extent various ethnic elements are present in the church life by taking into account both "linguistic" component (i.e. % of English used in the parishes) and "ethnic identity" component (i.e. parish's agreement / disagreement with the statement about having "ethnic heritage and identity").