THE HISTORICAL PROCESS OF THE FORMATION OF THE ORTHODOX
CHURCH OF UKRAINE IN 2019: CHURCH, STATE, AND STATE-BUILDING

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ABSTRACT

THE HISTORICAL PROCESS OF THE FORMATION OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH OF UKRAINE IN 2019: CHURCH, STATE, AND STATE-BUILDING

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This dissertation examines the Ukrainian presidents' endeavors to create an autocephalous Orthodox church in Ukraine and tries to understand how this Church was successfully established in 2019, while previous attempts failed following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. Also, it discusses the significance of the Church in post-Soviet Ukraine state-building process. To this end, semi-structured elite and expert interviews in Kyiv (Ukraine) in 2019 and 2020 and Ankara (Turkey) in 2022 and 2023 are conducted. Based on the interview data, this thesis argues that the reasons for establishing the Orthodox Church of Ukraine are multidimensional and multifaceted. Thus, it would be an oversimplification to explain the formation process with one specific factor. It also suggests Russia's violation of Ukrainian territorial integrity and state sovereignty triggered the need to establish an autocephalous Orthodox Church in Ukraine. Therefore, this study proposes that the chain of events since 2013 created favorable national and international conditions for the creation of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in 2019, and the then president Petro Poroshenko successfully mobilized these conditions toward forming the Church. Addressing the role of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in Ukrainian and Russian

relations from a historical perspective and examining the institutional characteristics of the autocephalous Orthodox Church in Eastern Orthodoxy, this thesis argues that establishing an independent Ukrainian church, freed from Russia's influence, is vital for a sovereign Ukrainian state and institutional consolidation.

ÖZ

2019'DA UKRAYNA ORTODOKS KİLİSESİNİN KURULMASININ TARİHSEL SÜRECİ: KİLİSE, DEVLET VE DEVLET-İNŞASI

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Bu tez, Ukrayna cumhurbaşkanlarının Ukrayna'da otosefal bir Ortodoks kilisesi kurma çabalarını incelemekte; 1991'de Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılmasının ardından, önceki girişimler başarısız olurken bu Kilisenin 2019'da nasıl başarılı bir şekilde kurulduğunu anlamaya çalışmaktadır. Ayrıca Sovyet sonrası Ukrayna'da devlet inşası sürecinde Kilisenin önemini tartışmaktadır. Bu amaçla, 2019 ve 2020 yıllarında Kıyiv'de (Ukrayna) ve 2022 ve 2023 yıllarında Ankara'da (Türkiye) yarı yapılandırılmış elit ve uzman mülakatları gerçekleştirilmiştir. Mülakat verilerine dayanarak bu tez, Ukrayna Ortodoks Kilisesinin kurulma nedenlerinin çok boyutlu ve çok yönlü olduğunu savunmaktadır. Dolayısıyla oluşum sürecini tek bir faktörle açıklamak aşırı basitleştirme olacaktır. Tez ayrıca Rusya'nın, Ukrayna'nın toprak bütünlüğünü ve devlet egemenliğini ihlal etmesinin, Ukrayna'da otosefal bir Ortodoks kilise kurma ihtiyacını tetiklediğini öne sürmektedir. Bu nedenle çalışma, 2013'ten itibaren yaşanan olaylar zincirinin, 2019'da Ukrayna Ortodoks Kilisesinin kurulması için elverişli ulusal ve uluslararası koşulları yarattığını ve dönemin cumhurbaşkanı Petro Poroşenko'nun bu koşulları Kilisenin kurulması yönünde başarılı bir şekilde harekete geçirdiğini ileri sürmektedir. Ukrayna Ortodoks

Kilisesinin, Ukrayna ve Rusya ilişkilerindeki rolünü tarihsel bir perspektiften ele alan ve Doğu Ortodoksluğunda otosefal Ortodoks Kilisesinin kurumsal özelliklerini inceleyen bu tez, Rusya'nın etkisinden kurtulmuş bağımsız bir Ukrayna kilisesinin kurulmasının egemen bir Ukrayna devleti ve kurumsal konsolidasyon için hayati önem taşıdığını savunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sovyet Sonrası Ukrayna, Ukrayna Ortodoks Kilisesi, Otosefal Ortodoks Kilise, Devlet-İnşası, Egemenlik

To my family

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introducing the Study

This dissertation aims to analyze the attempts of Ukrainian presidents in the post-Soviet period to establish a single and unified national Ukrainian Orthodox church which is granted with autocephaly (self-head) by the Istanbul Patriarchate, *primus inter pares*, the *first among the equals* in the international Orthodox community. In particular, this dissertation intends to understand how in 2019 the Orthodox Church of Ukraine was successfully established and was granted with autocephaly by the Istanbul Patriarchate, while previous efforts since the independence of Ukraine had been futile. Moreover, this study seeks to understand the significance of an autocephalous Orthodox church for Ukrainian state-building process.

The word *Ukraine* comes from an ancient East Slavic word, 'ukraina,'[1] mostly translated into English as "on the edge" or "borderland." In fact, one who attempts to understand the current social and political landscapes of contemporary Ukraine cannot help being engaged in the history of Ukraine, which is subjected to a series of political forces, such as the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Kingdom of Poland, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Poland, Austro-Hungarian Empire, Ottoman Empire, Russian Empire, and the Soviet Union. Although Ukrainians struggled to attain their self-governance, except for the short-lived independence periods (1648-1654 and 1917-1920), most of Ukraine's history is characterized by the rule of others, or even worse, by various combinations of them. As a matter of fact, in a substantial part of its history, Ukraine "has served as a sort of middle ground, divided between Russia and Poland (later Austria-Hungary) and occupying far western edge

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[1] Cathal McCall, "European Union conflict transformation as cross-border co-operation: potential and limits," in *Neighbourhood Perceptions of the Ukraine Crisis: From the Soviet Union into Eurasia?*, eds. Gerhard Besier and Katarzyna Stokłosa (New York, London: Routledge, 2017), 18.

of the vast Eurasian steppe, centered between Europe and Asia, West and East."[2] Therefore, Ukraine experienced constant border changes, so its borders had not gained their final form until 1954, when Crimea was transferred from the Russian SFSR to the Ukrainian SSR. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Ukraine took its place on the world map as an independent state. As Subtelny correctly argues, "[s]ince statelessness had been a central theme of Ukrainian history for more than 600 years, the acquisition of a genuinely independent state was clearly a dramatic turning point."[3]

The independence of Ukraine required Ukrainian politicians to make 'herculean' efforts in the nation and state-building process. For example, they have to overcome regional diversities in the country, which accounts for many other problems in post-Soviet Ukraine. Kubicek argues that "one can divide the country into a number of distinct regions based upon historical experience, economic structure, ethnic composition, ties to bordering states and language."[4] That is why contemporary Ukraine consists of various regions, in which political belongings and identities are formed by intersection and interaction of multiple historical experiences and external powers. Thus, as stated by Kuzio, Ukraine became an independent state "without a modern nation or united political community enclosed within its borders."[5] Like former Soviet republics, Ukraine has confronted economic and political problems, as well as corruption, distrust to political authority. Besides, differing political orientations and unequal economic infrastructure of regions became the main obstacle to state-building efforts in Ukraine. All of these problems jeopardized the nation-building process of Ukraine.

Due to its long history with Russia, the challenges of the Ukrainian nation- and state-building became more thorny than in other states that gained independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Ukrainians' close historical, religious, and

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[2]Paul Kubicek, *The History of Ukraine* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2008), xi.

[3]Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), xv.

[4]Paul Kubicek, "Regional Polarisation in Ukraine: Public Opinion, Voting and Legislative Behaviour," *Europe-Asia Studies* 52, no. 2 (2000): 274.

[5]Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine: State and Nation Building* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 1.

cultural ties to Russians left a complex legacy in post-Soviet Ukraine. In short, Ukrainian society is said to be divided into pro-Ukrainian/Western and pro-Russian/Eastern regions in academic circles and this division mostly reflects the opposing views that Ukraine is part of Europe and that it is in the orbit of Russia. Moreover, being exposed to a long-lasting Russian subordination, Ukraine "has not had any recent opportunity to articulate its statehood."[6] After gaining independence, most Ukrainian politicians have made efforts to ensure Ukrainian territorial integrity and protect state independence from Russia, mainly by improving relations with the West. However, this was a difficult task due to the fragmentation in the society and among the political elite, the fear of secessionist movements predominantly related to the Russian-populated eastern Ukraine and Crimea, and substantial economic relations with Russia. On the other side, Russia has tried to keep Ukraine under its influence for several reasons, such as the vital place of Ukrainian land (Kyiv and Crimea) in Russian national myths and the geopolitical importance of Ukraine for Russian security policy. Accordingly, the independence of Ukraine was as an 'anomaly' for Russia. Therefore, propagating the Russian imperial notion that Ukrainians and Russians are 'fraternal peoples' became a major way of keeping Ukraine under Russia's sphere of influence.

Throughout history, in the absence of an independent Ukrainian state, "the church either remained a catalyst of the national consciousness (and its last refuge) or was forced, even manipulated, into being an instrument of assimilation with foreign ruling nations and serving their interests in Ukraine."[7] Orthodox Christianity, common faith between Ukrainians and Russians since the tenth century, rendered a conducive ground for Russia to disseminate the notion of 'fraternal peoples' in Ukraine. Notably, the Orthodox Church in Ukraine was captured by the Russian Empire in 1686 with the questionable decision of the Istanbul Patriarchate. Since then, it has been instrumentalized by Russia to strengthen the so-called long history of brotherhood with Ukrainians and to undermine Ukrainian national consciousness.

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[6]Paul A. Goble, "Establishing Independence in Interdependence World," in *Ukraine: Search for a National Identity*, eds. Sharon L. Wolchik and Vladimir A. Zviglianich (Lanham: Rowman&Littefield Publishers, 2000), 108.

[7]Vasyl Marcus, "Religion and Nationalism in Ukraine," in *Religion and Nationalism in Soviet and East European Politics*, ed. Pedro Ramet (Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, 1984), 60.

Therefore, one of the challenges for post-Soviet Ukraine is related to its fragmented Orthodox community, in which the Ukrainian Orthodox Church- Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP), the 'agent' of Russia, jurisdified the Orthodox parishes in the country.

Ukraine is predominantly populated by Orthodox Christians, yet the Orthodox landscape of the country was far from being unified. Besides, the Catholics were also divided.[8] The division in Orthodox Christianity was exacerbated after independence as the so-called pro-Russian and pro-Ukrainian Orthodox churches fiercely struggled to attract more believers, receive state support, seize the parishes, and obtains historical and symbolic significance. Thus, the fragmentations in Ukrainian Orthodoxy became solid, leading to three ideologically competing Orthodox jurisdictions: the Ukrainian Orthodox Church- Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP), the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kyiv Patriarchate (hereafter the Kyiv Patriarchate), and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC). The UOC-MP claims to have been granted the "rights of broad autonomy" by the Moscow Patriarchate and thus be the only canonical body in Ukraine. Also, it accuses two pro-Ukrainian Orthodox churches-the Kyiv Patriarchate and the UAOC- of being 'uncanonical' and 'schismatic.'

The UOC-MP was the Ukrainian Exarch of the Moscow Patriarchate during the Soviet period. Shortly before the collapse of the Soviet Union, this church had been renamed as 'Ukrainian Orthodox Church,' commonly abbreviated to UOC-MP in the literature to refer to "its communion with the Moscow Patriarchate."[9] It is mostly active in the southern and eastern parts of Ukraine, which are largely settled by Russians and where Russian rule historically lasted longer than in other regions of

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[8]According to the survey implemented by the Razumkov Center in 2014, 76% of the participants identified themselves as "believers." Among them, 70,2% defined themselves as "Orthodox." Of them, 17,4% claimed they belonged to the UOC-MP, 22,4% to the Kyiv Patriarchate, and 0,7% to the UAOC. The remaining 28,1% did not indicate a specific church affiliation, but stated that they are "simply Orthodox." Moreover, 7,8% of "believers" were marked as "Greek Catholic," and 1% as "Roman Catholic." Cited in Natalia Shlikhta, "Eastern Christian Churches Between State and Society: An Overview of the Religious Landscape in Ukraine (1989-2014)," *Kyiv-Mohyla Humanities Journal* 3, (2016): 124.

[9]Thomas Bremer, "Religion in Ukraine: Historical Background and the Present Situation," in *Churches in the Ukrainian Crisis*, eds. Andrii Krawchuk and Thomas Bremer (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 11.

Ukraine. The Kyiv Patriarchate, established in 1992, was the second largest Orthodox Church in Ukraine after the UOC-MP and mostly supported in western and central Ukraine. Lastly, the UAOC was the third with a small number of Orthodox parishes, largely 'regionalized' in western Ukraine, where predominantly ethnic Ukrainians are living. These two pro-Ukrainian Orthodox Churches lacked canonical status in the international Orthodox community, and they differed from each other by their unique ways of struggling. Besides these three Orthodox churches, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church has historically been a defender of Ukrainian nationalism. Still, its influence is highly localized in the western part of Ukraine. It is out of the unification process of Orthodox churches in Ukraine as it recognizes papal authority as the supreme authority, although the church keeps Orthodox rites. Each of these four churches claims to be the national church of Ukraine by asserting their historical ties with the ancient Kyiv Metropolitanate, which was established under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Istanbul after 988 in the Kyivan *Rus'* state.

Thanks to the removal of militant atheism in the final phase of the Soviet regime and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the religious landscape of independent Ukraine became highly poly-confessional and pluralistic. In addition to these four churches, Roman Catholics, Muslims, Jews, and Protestant congregations have also grown in Ukraine. Ukrainian state adopted liberal policies toward religions and promoted religious freedom, but the issue of creating a national Ukrainian Orthodox church has long remained addressed on the political agenda. In fact, all the Ukrainian presidents, except Victor Yanukovych, considered as pro-Russian, supported the idea of a national Orthodox church and attempted to create an autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox Church, freed from the Moscow Patriarchate, yet these efforts failed due to various challenges until 2019.

After the Euromaidan Revolution in 2014 and the subsequent chain of events- annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014 and the war against Russia-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine, the idea of an autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox church gained priority on the Ukrainian political agenda. With the leading efforts of Petro Poroshenko, who was the president between 2014 and 2019, several meetings were attended by Ukrainian state officials and religious hierarchs, as well as the

Ukrainian part and the Istanbul Patriarchate. As a result of prolonged negotiations, the process of creating an autocephalous Orthodox Church in Ukraine was completed in three successive steps. First, on October 11, 2018, the Istanbul Patriarchate declared that it had cancelled the decision of 1686 'transferring' the Kyiv Metropolitanate from the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Istanbul Patriarchate to the Moscow Patriarchate, and that it had lifted the anathema of the heads of two pro-Ukrainian churches, Filaret Denisenko of Kyiv Patriarchate and Makariy Maletych of UAOC. Second, at the *Unifying Council* on December 15, 2018, two pro-Ukrainian Orthodox churches, which were 'unrecognized' in the international Orthodox community, annulled themselves. The bishops of these two churches and two bishops from the UOC-MP established a new church, called the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU), and elected its Primate, Metropolitan Epiphany. Third, the Patriarch of Istanbul Bartholomew gave *Tomos*, the document granting autocephaly to the OCU, to the Metropolitan Epiphany during the ceremony organized in Istanbul on January 6, 2019.

Even though the Moscow Patriarchate tried to obstruct the process of granting autocephaly by claiming that Ukraine is under its ecclesiastical jurisdiction, its attempt failed. On one side, a new process began in the history of Ukrainian Orthodoxy with the decision of the Istanbul Patriarchate: The representation of Ukrainian Orthodoxy by OCU and the UOC-MP. On the other side, the Moscow Patriarchate broke off communion with the Istanbul Patriarchate, which exacerbated the existing controversies in the international Orthodox community.

Based on field research in Ukraine (Kyiv) in 2019 and 2020, and Turkey (Ankara) in 2022 and 2023, this thesis argues that the underlying reasons for creating the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in 2019 are multidimensional and multifaceted, which few researchers address. The 'tectonic' motives behind the need to forge a single autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox Church were triggered by Russia's violation of Ukrainian territorial integrity and state sovereignty. This study argues that the chain of events since 2013 were favorable national and international conditions for the creation of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in 2019, which were completely or partially non-existent in the previous attempts to obtain an autocephalous Ukrainian

Orthodox church since 1991. The then president, Poroshenko, successfully mobilized the domestic and international dynamics toward creating the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in 2019. This thesis also proposes that the establishment of the Church in 2019 emerged as the key factor in Ukrainian state-building. Thus, the establishment of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in 2019 does not arise from the ecclesiastical purposes alone, but it it comes to serve as material and ideological resources for the Ukrainian state-building process.

1.2 A Map of Eastern Orthodoxy and Basics Terms

For a more accurate depiction of the historical developments of the organizational structure of Eastern Orthodoxy and Ukrainian Orthodoxy, it is worth defining the central terms used in this study and presenting a map of current Eastern Orthodoxy. Eastern Orthodoxy is the second largest branch of Christianity after Roman Catholicism. The population of Orthodox Christians is nearly 350 million (estimates vary), and though they are all around the world, the Orthodox Christians primarily concentrate in Central and Eastern Europe. The Orthodox churches are identified by territorial aspects, "with the name of the country or continent that they call home."[10]
As stated by McGuckin, "Orthodoxy lies outside the common experience of the vast majority of Western (Roman Catholic, Episcopal, and Protestant) believers and the Western church history."[11] According to a commonly accepted view, prolonged controversy between Rome and Istanbul regarding the issues of primacy and *filioque* culminated in the mutual excommunications in 1054, which is also known as the Great Schism. As a result, the division between Rome and Istanbul led to the irreconcilable split in Christianity: the Latin (Roman Catholic) Church and Greek (Eastern Orthodox) Church. With regard to the Eastern Orthodoxy, a famous theologian Timothy Ware describes the Orthodox Church as follows:

> a family of self-governing Churches. It is held together, not by a centralized organization, not by a single prelate wielding absolute power over the whole body, but by the double bond of unity in the faith and communion in the sacraments.[12]

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[10]Eizabeth Prodromou, "Christianity and Democracy: The Ambivalent Orthodox," *Journal of Democracy* 15, no.2 (2004): 64.

[11]John Anthony McGuckin, *The Eastern Orthodox Church: A New History*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2020), 297.

[12]Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964), 15.

The self-governing churches, also known as local churches, usually have one of the two statues in the Orthodox community: autocephalous and autonomous. The word of 'autocephaly' literally means "having one's own head." In this regard, the term of 'autocephaly' refers to "the right of a local church to be completely self-governing and electing its own hierarchs without the intervention of any other ecclesiastical supervision other than its own local synod."[13] For Bogolepov:

> There are two distinguishing marks of an autocephalous Church: (1) The right to resolve all internal problems on her own authority, independently of all other churches, and (2) the right to appoint her own bishops, among them the head of the Church. Accordingly, a part of the Orthodox Church claiming to be autocephalous must be sufficiently mature to organize its own ecclesiastical life; it must a sufficient number of parishes and parishioners, the possibility of traning new clergymen, and a hierarchy canonically capable of making subsequent appointments and consecration of new bishop.[14]

For Brusanowski, the autonomous church differs from the autocephalous church by the fact that its primatial bishop needed to be approved by one of the autocephalous churches. Except this, for him, an autonomous church is a completely self-governing body.[15] However, McGuckin argues that autonomy "can represent a degree of self-regulation lower than autocephaly, where the supervisory oversight of an older patriarchate can still be combined with more or less complete local self governance in day-to-day affairs."[16] With regard to primacy, there is no such authority in Orthodoxy as that of the Pope in the Roman Catholic Church. However, the Istanbul Patriarchate holds the first place in the Orthodox community, known as *primus inter pares*. This is some kind of honorary position attributed to the Istanbul Patriarchate. This position of Istanbul does not give the right to intervene in the internal affairs of other autocephalous churches. However, it endows the Istanbul Patriarchate with some 'rights' such as granting autocephaly to the new church.[17]

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[13]John Anthony McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to Its History, Doctrine, and Spiritual Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 84-85.

[14]Alexander Bogolepov, "Conditions of Autocephaly," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 5, no. 3 (1961): 13-14.

[15]Paul Brusanowski, "The Autocephaly in Ukraine: Canonical Dimension," in *Churches in the Ukrainian Crisis*, eds. Andrii Krawchuk and Thomas Bremer (Basingstore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 60.

[16]McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church*, 85.

[17]Jaroslaw Buciora, "The Patriarchate of Constantinople: The Mother Church of the modern Orthodox autocephalous churches," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 62, no.3-4 (2020).

As Brusanowski puts, "there are fourteen local Orthodox Churches, which are recognized by every church as autocephalous:" Istanbul, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, Russia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia, Cyprus, Greece, Poland, Albania, and the Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia.[18] The first four are accepted as ancient patriarchates. The autocephalous statuses of another three, Orthodox Church of America (1970), Orthodox Church of Ukraine (2019), Macedonian Orthodox Church-Archdiocese of Ohrid (2022), are not recognized by all the rest. Besides, there are five autonomous churches: Churches of Sinai Peninsula, Finland, Japan, China, and Estonia. While the first two are recognized by the other autocephalous churches, others- Japan and China- are recognized by the Moscow Patriarchate, but not by the Istanbul Patriarchate. Estonia has two autonomous churches. The Istanbul Patriarchate recognizes one, and the Moscow Patriarchate approves the other. Moreover, Moldova has two Orthodox churches under the Patriarchates of Moscow and Romania. As discussed later, there is an 'autonomous' Ukrainian Orthodox Church affiliated with the Moscow Patriarchate. There are also unrecognized Orthodox churches such as Belarusian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, the Orthodox Church of France, and the Montenegrin Orthodox Church.

Trying to present an overview of Eastern Orthodoxy "is akin to journey into a maze," as correctly stated by Leustean.[19] The number of Orthodox churches is increasing, with their status constantly shifting. Thus, making a chart of the organization of Orthodox churches around the world will not only be difficult, but will also produce a controversial summary in terms of which church is recognized by which one. Notably, after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, "the distinction between autocephaly, autonomy and semi autonomy in Eastern Christianity remains controversial."[20]

The demise of the Soviet Union led to autocephaly demands of the newly independent states. This changed the status quo in Eastern Orthodoxy. Among many

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[18]Brusanowski, "The Autocephaly in Ukraine," 50.

[19]Lucian N. Leustean, "Eastern Christianity and the Cold War: An Overview," in *Eastern Christianity and the Cold War, 1945-91*, ed. Lucian N. Leustean (Oxon: Routledge, 2010), 9.

[20]Lucian N. Leustean, "Eastern Christianity and politics in the twenty-first century: an overview," in *Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Lucian N. Leustean (Oxon: Routledge, 2014), 5.

ambiguities originating from the decentralized organizational structure of Eastern Orthodoxy, the issue of by whom the churches would be granted autocephaly or autonomy mounted the already existing tension between the Patriarchates of Istanbul and Moscow during the Cold War period. This question brings at least two more controversial issues to the agenda: The procedure of granting autocephaly and the specification of the canonical territory. In a nutshell, there is a lack of consensus in Orthodoxy as regards who has the right to grant autocephaly to new church. As of today, the 'mother church' or the Istanbul Patriarchate bestows the autocephaly. Besides, the issue of autocephaly pertains to the notion of canonical territory, so "for a given region only one bishop can be in charge."[21] In relation to Ukraine, both Patriarchates of Istanbul and Moscow regard Ukraine as their own canonical territory, conflicting with each other over who has the right to give autocephaly.

The text has so far only presented an overview of the current landscape of Eastern Orthodoxy's organizational structure, some basic terms related to it, and contemporary dynamics. The organizational structure of Eastern Orthodoxy and its content not being static and changing in the course of history through church laws (canons), forums (councils), and also 'interventions' of political powers. The following sub-section presents a brief look into the historical developments of the organizational structures of Eastern Orthodoxy and the place Ukrainian Orthodoxy within. It is hoped that this provides a historical context for the struggle over autocephaly in post-Sovet Ukraine and the argument of the study.

1.3 A Brief Look into the Historical Developments of the Organizational Structure of Eastern Orthodoxy and Ukrainian Orthodoxy

Over three centuries, the Roman Empire bitterly opposed Christianity. It took a hostile position against Christians, "varying from indifference or scornful toleration to outright violent persecution."[22] The aggressive attitude, however, gradually turned into adoption of Christianity as the official religion of the Empire in the fourth

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[21]Thomas Bremer and Sophie Senyk, "The Current Ecclesiastical Situation in Ukraine: Critical Remarks," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 63, no. 1 (2019): 40.

[22]John Meyendorff, *The Orthodox Church: Its Past and Its Role in the World Today* (Crestwood, N.Y: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996), 15.

century. The church afterward acknowledged the Roman Empire's provincial boundaries as its administrative boundaries. The overlapping of religious and political boundaries paved the way for the development of the metropolitan system for church organizations. In this system, the provinces' bishops were bound to be the bishop of the main city (mother city), whose title was metropolitan. The metropolitan held the chair at the synod, whose participants were the bishops from provinces under the ecclesiastical authority of the metropolitan.[23]

In line with a similar logic, the patriarchial system emerged. Mostly aligned with the political-administrative units of the Roman Empire, the patriarchial system gradually substituted the metropolitan system. The patriarchial structures were given their final form by the decisions taken by the Ecumenic Councils,[24] composed of the primates from significant cities in the Empire. Thereby, the system of five patriarchates, also known as 'pentarchy,' was completed. Ware explains this system as follows:

> [f]ive great sees in the Church were held in particular honour, and a settled order of presedence was established among them: in order of rank, Rome, Costantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem. All five claimed Apostolic foundation. The first four the most important cities in the Roman Empire; the fifth was added because it was the place where Christ suffered on the Cross and risen from the dead. The bishop in each cities received the title of *Patriarch*. The five Patriarchates between them divided into spheres of jurisdiction the whole of the know world, apart from Cyprus, which was granted independence by the Council of Ephesus and remained self-governing ever since.[25]

The system of 'pentarchy' constituted one of the imperial, thus 'ecumenical' ideas in Christianity. The 'ecumenical' church is led by these five patriarchates.[26] Until the

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[23]Philip Zymaris, "Episcopacy," in *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Orthodox Christianity. Volume I: A-M*, ed. John Anthony McGuckin (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing, 2011), 222-223.

[24]As Sullivan explains that: The word 'ecumenical' comes from "the ancient Greek word *oikoumene*, which means 'the inhabited world.'The adjective 'ecumenical,' then, means of 'the whole word'or 'universal.'As applied to councils, it means 'of the whole Church', as distinguished from provincal or regional councils." Francis A. Sullivan, *Magisterium*: *Teaching Authority in the Catholic Church* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2002), 57. The Councils which are regarded as Ecumenical have a crucial place in the development of the Christian doctrine. In addition, they are accepted as "doctrially infallible and therefore binding for all Christians," but "the Roman Catholic Church recognizes all of the first eight councils as ecumenical, while the Orthodox Church recognizes only the first seven, and most Protestant denominations recognize only the first four." Jennifer A. Freeman, "Ecumenical Councils (AD 325-787)," *Great Events in Religion. An Encyclopedia of Pivotal Events in Religious History. Volume 1: Pre-History to AD 600*, eds. Florin Curta and Andrew Holt (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2017), 224.

[25]Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 34.

[26]Meyendorff, *The Orthodox Church*, 89-90.

ninth century, the system of pentarchy "theoretically ensured the equality of five patriarchates."[27] However, this system produced substantial problems whereby the 'primacy' attributed to Rome was not an essential quality of others. In addition, the acceptance of the Istanbul Patriarchate as the 'Second Rome,' not Alexandria, increased the existing tension in the eastern part of the Roman Empire.[28] Moreover, the system of pentarchy led to the emergence of new ecclesiastical jurisdictions under the jurisdiction of each patriarchate, which is often referred to as autocephalous churches.[29]

As previously stated, in 1054, Christianity was divided into two: The Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church. While the former was prevailing in Western Europe, the latter was "in the Balkans, the Middle East, and the Eastern Slavic lands, including much of the contemporary Belarus, Russia, Ukraine."[30] Rome was no longer in communion with eastern patriarchates, but four ancient patriarchates remained in it. From among them, the Istanbul Patriarchate 'raised' as the *primus inter pares*. It already "controlled a vast area in the Balkans, the Aegean and Asia Minor, became the major religious power in the Byzantine Empire."[31] Later, the content of the church-state relation in the Byzantine, often called symphonia- the harmonious unity between church and state- left an enduring legacy to the Orthodox majority countries.

Shortly before the Great Schism in 1054, Christianity was adopted as the state religion in 988 in the Kyivan *Rus'* state. Then the Kyiv Metropolitanate was established under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Istanbul Patriarchate. The Istanbul Patriarchate played a leading role in organizing church structure and

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[27]Hannah Hunt, "Byzantine Christianity," in *The Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity*, ed. Ken Parry (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 76.

[28]In fact, the Patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem were captured by Muslims in the seventh century; thus, their influential position in Eastern Orthodoxy began to fall. McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church*, 33.

[29]Daniela Kalkandjieva, "A Comparative Analysis on Church-State Relations in Eastern Orthodoxy: Concepts, Models, and Principles," *Journal of Church and State* 5, no.4 (2011), 595.

[30]Christopher J. Ward and John M. Thompson, Russia*: A Historical Introduction from Kievan Rus' to the Present* (New York: Routledge, 2021), 11.

[31]Natalie Sherwan, *"Empires Reshaped and Reimagined: Rome and Constantinople, Popes and Patriarchs, 1204-1453"* (PhD diss., University of California, 2016), 35.

disseminating Christian culture in the Kyivan *Rus'* state. During the period of Yaroslav, Christianity institutionally and culturally reached its zenith, and the Kyiv Metropolitanate became an epicenter for Christianity in Eastern Christianity; that is how it became significant for the Istanbul Patriarchate, too.

In 1240, the Mongol invasion destroyed the Kyivan *Rus'* state. While most of the contemporary Ukraine and Belarussian lands were subjected to Lithuanian or Polish rule, the Grand Duke of Muscovy began to rise on its own political organization. The new political reconfigurations in the region had profound ramifications for the future of the Kyiv Metropolitanate at that time. The seat of Kyiv Metropolitanate was temporarily transferred to Vladimir in 1299, then permanently to Moscow in 1326. In the second half of the 14th century, the previous ecclesiastical territory of the Kyiv Metropolitanate was occupied by four states: Muscovy, Lithuania, Poland, and the Golden Horde. In addition, the influence of Catholicism in the western part of the previous Kyivan *Rus'* became a threat to the Istanbul Patriarchate.[32] In this circumstance, the Istanbul Patriarchate allowed the establishment of several metropolitanates under different political authorities.

In 1448, the Moscow Church declared independence from the Istanbul Patriarchate, yet Istanbul did not recognize it. However, the Ottoman Empire conquered Istanbul in 1453; thereby, the Istanbul Patriarchate came under the rule of the Ottomans. With the rise of the Grand Duchy of Moscow, the Moscow Church promoted the idea of 'Third Rome', which "was grounded in the claim that Moscow was the 'Third Rome', and as such, a successor to the political and religious positions [of] both Constantinople, the 'Second Rome' and true Rome."[33] Consequently, with the Moscow's declaration of independence from the Istanbul Patriarchate, two Orthodox metropolitans of Kyiv emerged in Muscovy and in Lithuania, in which most of the Ukrainians resided.

As a result of political and religious developments in Eastern Europe, the Istanbul Patriarchate recognized the Moscow Church in 1589 and elevated its status to

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[32]Paul R. Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine: The Land and Its People* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 159.

[33]Cyril Toumanoff, "Moscow the Third Rome: Genesis and Significance of a Politico-Religious Idea," *The Catholic Historical Review* 40, no. 4 (1955): 411.

patriarchate. This paved the way for the Moscow Patriarchate to expand its influence in the region. At around the same period, due to the collaboration between Rome and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which was formed in 1569, the Uniate Church, later named as the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, was established in 1596. Thus, the Orthodox Church was declared illegitimate in the Commonwealth. Though the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church follows Orthodox rites, it pledged its loyalty to the Pope. With its establishment, the ethnic Ukrainians were somewhat divided into two religious camps: Orthodox Christians and Greek Catholics.[34]

The rise of Ukrainian Cossacks, who were the defenders of Ukrainian social, political, and religious rights against Polish rule, was a direct cause of the reestablishment of the Orthodox Church. In 1648, the Ukrainian Cossacks established an independent state, which is one of the significant symbols of the modern Ukraine state and nation-building. Nonetheless, it lost its independence following the Pereiaslav Agreement signed by Cossacks and the Russians in 1654. The Russian Empire absorbed the eastern part of Ukrainian lands towards the end of the 17th and 18th centuries while most of the western part of Ukraine remained in Poland, to later pass to the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

In 1686, the Istanbul Patriarchate 'transferred' the Kyiv Metropolitanate from its ecclesiastical jurisdiction to the Moscow Patriarchate. The content, causes, and consequences of this decision brought about various debates, which will be reviewed in this study. One consequence for Ukrainian Orthodoxy is obvious: it ruptured Ukrainian Orthodoxy's ties with its nearly seven-hundred-year-old 'mother church.' After 1686, the Kyiv Metropolitanate lost metropolitanate status, and it became an eparchy in the Russian Empire. Indeed, the two successive events -the Pereiaslav Agreement in 1654 and the transfer of the Kyiv Metropolitanate to the Moscow Patriarchate in 1686- are presented differently in contemporary Ukrainian and Russian national narratives. Essentially, the Russians views these events as the 'reunification of Ukraine with Russia,' while the Ukrainians regard them as 'a clear example' of Russian aggressions toward a distinct Ukrainian state and Orthodox identity.

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[34]Heather J. Coleman, "Orthodoxy and autocephaly in Ukraine: editor's introduction," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 62, no.3-4 (2020), 421; Bohdan Harasymiw, *Post-Communist Ukraine* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2002), 210.

In 1721, Peter I adopted the title, Emperor. This meant more than a symbolic change as it resulted from territorial expansions making Russia the leading state in Eastern Europe. This expansion brought expanded bureaucracy and administration for a centralized authority.[35] At the same year, the Moscow Patriarchate was abolished, and the Holy Synod was formed, which was headed by civil authority; thus, the Church became one of the Empire's administrative apparatus. It is also crucial to note that, after the Russian Empire seized the Crimean Peninsula in 1783, Crimea earned the reputation of holy place both in the Empire and Orthodox world, as a result of the propagation of the Empire. Later, the theory of Official Nationality, which proclaims the unity of Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality, was adopted in the Empire. With this formula, the idea of Holy *Rus'* was promoted. This put Russian (Greater Russian) at the center of where identities of Ukrainian (Little Russian) and Belarusan (White Russian) had collapsed. This was followed by the Russification policies in the Russian Empire towards Ukrainians. With several other factors, the Russification policies hindered both the development of Ukrainian national identity and Ukrainian Orthodoxy. What is more, for Russian imperial authorities, the Orthodox Church in the Empire became a tool of eliminating Ukrainian elements in the church organization and strengthening the cultural and political superiority of the Russian identity through the Orthodox Church. Thus, Ukrainian nationalism mostly developed in western Ukraine, which was under the Austro-Hungarian Empire and not subjected to Russification policies. The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in this region became a vehicle for Ukrainian nationalism in the 19th century.[36] However, Ukrainian intellectuals mostly separated religion from the intellectual basis of Ukrainian nationalism because of the dual religious identity of Ukrainians: Orthodox Christianity and Greek Catholic.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the world witnessed the demise of the imperial powers. The collapse of empires was followed by the emergence of the nation-states. Particularly, the struggle for state independence in the realm of the Ottoman Empire opened a new era in the historical course of the organizational structure of Eastern Orthodoxy. The proclamation of state independence was followed by calls for

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[35]Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine,* 277-279.

[36]Harasymiw, *Post-Communist Ukraine*, 210.

autocephaly from the Istanbul Patriarchate. Although the Istanbul Patriarchate initially resisted these demands, it, later, recognized these churches as autocephalous. This paved the way for the creation of national Orthodox churches, whose boundaries were almost identical to their respective state's boundaries.

The collapse of the Russian Empire in 1917 also created a ground for autocephalous Orthodox churches along with the proclamation of state independence. However, this period was extremely chaotic for Ukraine. Due to the complex political atmosphere during the World War I, the struggle of 'Great Powers' in Ukrainian land, the civil war after the Bolshevik Revolution, and the confusion around the idea of a unified Ukrainian state, the independence period of Ukraine lasted short. Particularly, the Bolsheviks began to control the region towards the end of 1919, and they established the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. In 1922, the Ukrainian SSR became a constituent part of Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), and thus most of the Ukrainian land except western Ukraine was incorporated to the Soviet Union. Shortly before this, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church had been established in 1921 as a result of the constant efforts of Ukrainian clergy since the Revolution. However, this Church lacked of the autocephalous status in the international Orthodox community. In addition, when Stalin came to power in 1924, he launched the massive anti-religious policy, which gradually liquated the Church. In short, the demise of the Russian Empire produced neither an independent Ukrainian state nor an autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

As stated above, the western part of Ukraine was not subjected to the rule of the Soviet regime. In 1939, Soviet regime took control of western Ukraine. However, nearly two years of Soviet rule ended by the Nazi occupation during the Second World War. In this region, the second establishment of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church occurred in 1942. Nonetheless, it once again ceased to exist in 1944, when the Soviet forces regained the control of the region. Also, the Greek Catholic Ukrainian Church, which had not been under the rule of the Soviet regime until 1939, was under the suppression of the Soviet rule, and it ultimately dissolved and merged with the Russian Orthodox Church in the 1940s.

The Soviet regime prohibited religion in the public sphere, and instead of religion, the public sphere is filled by the symbols, rites, and doctrines of the quasi-religion of

Communism.[37] The regime, however, loosened the ban on religions during the Second World War to find the moral and material support they needed to change the political contexts related to the war. In reality, this relatively free atmosphere was mostly for the Moscow Patriarchate, established in 1943 by the 'order' of Stalin. Although the Moscow Patriarchate tried to challenge the authority of the Istanbul Patriarchate in the mid-twentieth century and during the Cold War, it was only short-lived, and the Patriarchate was largely instrumentalized by the Soviet regime for its political goals within the Soviet borders.[38]

The rigidity of anti-religious policies and strategies toward eliminating religious organizations varied throughout the Soviet period. The Soviet authorities used the Ukrainian Exarch of the Moscow Patriarchate to fight all Ukrainian elements, including the Ukrainian Greek Catholics, and they used different strategies in Ukraine, such as promoting Ukrainization with Soviet loyal Orthodox clergies. Like other republics in the Soviet Union, the Ukrainian SSR was deprived of the 'actual' sovereignty, and it remained a quasi-state.[39]

Since the mid-1980s, the anti-religious policy of the Soviet regime had transformed into a more liberal policy thanks to the reforms launched by Gorbachev. As the religious policy moderated, the Ukrainian churches were able to articulate their nationalist claims. The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, both of which were once absorbed by the Moscow Patriarchate in the 1940s, were reestablished. These churches were mostly active in the western part of Ukraine, constituting nearly half of the parishes that Russian Orthodox totally possessed. In 1990, the Moscow Patriarchate reacted to the establishment of Ukrainian churches by granting its Ukrainian Exarch during the Soviet period a larger degree of autonomy and asserting that it is the only canonical Orthodox church in Ukraine. Toward the break-up of the Soviet Union, two

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[37]Alexander Agadjanian, "Public Religion and the Quest For National Ideology: Russia's Media Course," *Journal For the Scientific Study of Religion* 40, no. 3 (2001), 351.

[38]Victor Roudemotof, "Orthodox Christianity and globalisation," in *Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Lucian N. Leustean (Oxon: Routledge, 2014), 785.

[39]George G. Liber, "The Ukrainian Revolution of 2013-2014 and the Sources of Russia's Response," in *Revolution and War in Contemporary Ukraine: The Challenge of Change*, ed. Olga Bertelsen (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2017), 48.

Orthodox jurisdictions- the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-MP, and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church were competing for the parishes in Ukraine.

1.4 The Struggle for Autocephaly in post-Soviet Ukraine

Ukraine declared its independence from the Soviet Union on 24 August 1991, and the declaration of independence was ratified in the republican referendum on December 1 of the same year. The state independence was followed by the initiative to receive an autocephalous Orthodox Church, as was in other Orthodox majority countries in the 19th century. The first initiative resulted in the emergence of the Kyiv Patriarchate in 1992, thereby further fragmentation. Consequently, the Ukrainian religious landscape was divided into three Orthodox jurisdictions- the UOC-MP, the Kyiv Patriarchate, the UAOC- and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.

As stated previously, each of these churches claimed to be the national Orthodox church of Ukraine, but lacked nation wide influence. According to the statistics of 1 January 2011, the UOC-MP had 11,952, and the Kyiv Patriarchate 4,371 parishes. Also, the UAOC held only 1,190 parishes. In addition, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church had 3,646 parishes.[40] There were also other Christian denominations and Islam. It would be inconceivable for one single Orthodox church to play a decisive role in state policies in such a pluralistic religious landscape; therefore, along with other reasons, the liberal attitude towards religions has become a state practice in Ukraine since 1991. Casanova argues that "of all European societies, Ukraine is the one mostly likely approximate the American model," which he considers as "the model of a free and highly pluralistic, indeed, almost boundless religious market."[41] Besides, Wanner underlines a combination of religious pluralism with a nominal commitment to Orthodoxy.[42] It is also crucial to note that, even if the percentages

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[40]"Religious Organizations in Ukraine as of 1 January, 2011," Religious Information Service of Ukraine, Last Accessed: January 11, 2022 https://risu.ua/en/religious-organizations-in-ukraine-as-of-1-january-2011_n57317

[41]Jose Casanova, "Ethno-Linguistic and religious pluralism and democratic construction in Ukraine," in *Post-Soviet Political Order: Conflict and State Building*, eds. Barnett R. Rubin and Jack Snyder (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 83.

[42]Catherina Wanner, "Missionaries of Faith and Culture: Evangelical Encounters in Ukraine," *Slavic Review* 63, no. 4 (2004): 736.

vary, almost one-third of those who express that they are Orthodox believers do not affiliate with any church. They are reported in nationwide surveys in Ukraine as 'Simply Orthodox' or 'Just Orthodox.'[43]

In general, the Ukrainian presidents have tried to unify the fragmented Ukrainian Orthodoxy under a single autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox church. Besides attempts from the presidents of Ukraine, the two pro-Ukrainian Orthodox churches-Kyiv Patriarchate and the UAOC- separately called for the autocephaly from the Istanbul Patriarchate. There were also many failed negotiations regarding the unification between the two churches. The UOC-MP is officially distanced from negotiations by asserting itself as the only 'canonical' Orthodox Church in Ukraine. Also, the Moscow Patriarchate regarded Ukraine as its canonical territory and tried to block any attempt to demand autocephaly from the Istanbul Patriarchate. For various reasons, the Istanbul Patriarchate had not engaged in the fragmented Ukrainian Orthodox landscape until 2019.

Throughout the 1990s, under Presidents Leonid Kravchuk (1991-1994) and Kuchma (1994-2005), the idea of the Ukrainian national church, independent from the Moscow Patriarchate, was advocated in varying forms and ways, but it was never realized. What is more, as stated above, the Kyiv Patriarchate in 1992 emerged, which was mostly a result of the initial failed attempts in the beginning of the independence. In addition, the Ukrainian Orthodox landscape from 1991 to 1995 witnessed severe competition and it was anything but close to stability. Meanwhile, the Orthodox churches became highly politicized in regional, parliamentary, and presidential elections in Ukraine. Particularly the presidential election in 2004 polarized pro-Ukrainian Orthodox churches and the UOC-MP. The former supported pro-Ukrainian/pro-Western Victor Yuschenko, and the latter advocated pro-Russian Victor Yanukovych for the Presidential Office. When Yanukovych won, many Ukrainians claimed of fraudulent in the election and organized a series of protests, which is known as the Orange Revolution. After fraud in the election was proved, it was re-run, and Yushchenko came to power. President Yushchenko first addressed

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[43]This situation points to many meaningful interpretations of the religious landscape of Ukraine, such as ambiguous role of religion in national identity, and will be discussed later.

the unification of Ukrainian Orthodoxy and the obtainment of autocephaly from the Istanbul Patriarchate. In 2008, when Barthelomow, the Patriarch of Istanbul, came to Kyiv for the 1020th anniversary of the Baptism of Rus' in 988, the issue of autocephaly for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church was at the top of the Ukrainian political and religious agenda. However, this attempt also failed.

Yanukovych took the presidential election in 2010 with a narrow majority. In his period, the idea of an autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox Church was suspended so that the UOC-MP would receive pro-Russian Yanukovych's support. During his period, the collaboration between the Moscow Patriarchate and Russian politics, which began in 2000, found a ground in Ukraine for disseminating the idea that Ukrainians, Russians, and Belarusians shared indivisible fraternal bonds. This idea was promoted with the ideology of Russkiy Mir (Russian World), which was promoted in 2009 by Kyrill, the Patriarch of Moscow.

Ukraine's religious and political atmosphere changed when Yanukovych withdrew from his promise to make a trade agreement with the European Union and, instead, decided to strengthen economic relations with Russia. In November 2013, many protestors gathered at the Maidan, the central square of Kyiv, to defend the pro-Western orientation of Ukraine. However, peaceful protests were faced with brutal police intervention led by Yanukovich; as a result, over one hundred civilians lost their lives, and hundreds were injured. Later, Yanukovych had to flee Ukraine. Subsequently, Russia invaded Crimea in March 2014. At the same time, the Russian-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine proclaimed their independence, which turned into a bloody war in Ukraine. On May 25, 2014, Poroshenko was elected as the President of Ukraine.

This chain of events opened a new page in the independence period of Ukraine. Ukrainian state sovereignty and territorial integrity became the number one priority in Ukraine's national and international politics. During and after these events, pro-Ukrainian Orthodox churches, the Greek Catholic Orthodox Church, and other religious organizations fought for the territorial integrity of the Ukrainian state. However, the Moscow Patriarchate supported the Russian interventions in Ukraine,

while its affiliated part in Ukraine, UOC-MP mostly adopted a 'neutral' position. Poroshenko prioritized Ukrainian national security and made substantial efforts to unify Ukrainian Orthodoxy and obtain autocephaly from the Istanbul Patriarchate. These efforts resulted in the Istanbul Patriarchate signing the decree in 2019 that marks the autocephalous status of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine.

1.5 Argument of the Study and the Theoretical Framework

As stated earlier, this study claims that the reasons behind establishing the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in 2019 are multidimensional and multifaceted. The Euromaidan Revolution and the subsequent events in Ukraine became a turning point for the durative attempts to establish an independent church. Poroshenko mobilized the emerging favorable national and international conditions to create the Church. Addressing the role of the Orthodox Church in Ukrainian-Russian relations, this thesis argues that establishing an independent Ukrainian church, freed from Russia's influence, is critical to Ukrainian state-building. An independent church, as a national institution, is of great significance for a sovereign Ukrainian state and institutional consolidation.

To address the argument, this study is based on two literature reviews. The first one reviews the literature of modern autocephalous Orthodox churches. It primarily deals with the common characteristics of modern autocephalous churches as a road map to evaluate the function of obtaining an autocephalous Orthodox church in post-Soviet Ukraine. This provides a comprehensive summary of how the Ukrainian case converged on or diverged from the literature. Most scholars take the nation-states emerging after the demise of the Ottoman Empire as a reference point for the emergence of the modern autocephalous churches. In short, the state's independence from the Ottoman Empire was followed by the autocephaly demands from the Istanbul Patriarchate. When the Istanbul Patriarchate recognized their autocephalous status, the territorial boundary of the Churches, also known as canonical territory, corresponded to that of the nation-state. Besides, in Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania, ethnic identity and religious identity merged, representing itself through the state. Notably, the key factor in emergence of the modern autocephalous

churches is considered as the *millet* system in the Ottoman Empire, in which the Orthodox population constituted a single *millet-i Rum*, whose head was millet başı, the Istanbul Patriarchate. This system provided a ground for the subjects of the Ottoman Empire to preserve their religious traditions, and then fused religious identity with ethnic identity in the age of nationalism. Undoubtedly, the emergence of the national autocephalous churches is more complex, encompassing the historical backgrounds of the religious traditions of communities. However, it can be said that autocephalous Orthodox churches emerged as national institutions, whose function was attributed to the respective states' independence and national identity. This departing point has been used by many scholars to understand the autocephaly demands of the newly independent states after the collapse of the Soviet Union, which was subjected to Russian modernization and deprived of both a sovereign state and a church.

The second literature review is related to the theoretical approaches on secularism by giving special attention to the different religions and the modern state. The analysis of the state-building process inherently reveals two interrelated conceptualizations: state and state-building. The definition of the state is heatedly debated in the literature and has become a complex concept. However, any attempt in the literature regarding state building directly or indirectly uses the definition of state by Weber: "a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory."[44] In line with Weber's definition of the state, state-building, as a commonly accepted view among scholars, is a (re)establishing and strengthening of the key institutions for a functioning state. The state-building process entails various institutions such as the constitution, government, parliament, central bank, fiscal authority, tax system, and security system. Therefore, the study examines the state-building process through the prism of institutions and evaluates their role in increasing the state's capacity to exercise its core functions. This is a picture classical state-building theorists paint. It is far more related to the emergence of the modern state in the Western context; thus, institutions they regard as 'crucial' for the modern state mostly refers to modernist assumptions

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[44]Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, edited and translated by H.H. Gert and C. Wrigth Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 78.

such as rationalization, differentiation, bureaucratization, and secularization. Therefore, religious bodies (i.e., churches), as institutions in themselves, are considered problematic by classical state-building theories, which regard secularization process as inheritantly conflictual and "religious institutions [as something to be] treated as some remnants of the past to be gotten rid of."[45] Today, however, this perspective in the secularism literature is subject to criticisms primarily as regards the terms 'secularisms' and 'multiple secularisms,' which have similar grounds to Eisenstadts's term 'multiple modernities.' In a nutshell, state-religion relations take various forms in different contexts, and they do not necessarily refer to conflict-ridden relations. In addition, a state-religion relation may mark different levels of cooperation as long as it does not violate recognition and protection of freedom of conscience and of religion. Thus, religious institutions can be considered important actors in state-building. It is also crucial to note that the religious institution points to not only the indirect contribution to the state- building but also an institution of its own in the institutional consolidation of the state.

In this perspective, also adopted by this study, the role of the Orthodox church in Ukrainian-Russian relations paves the way to the examination of the establishment of the Ukraine Orthodox Church merely because it is mostly different from other autocephalous Orthodox churches. The creation of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine does not alone mark a normative understanding in the Orthodox world- "the independent state has an independent church." After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian domination discursively continued with various ideological formulas such as Russian World and Holy *Rus*'. Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its support to secessionists in eastern Ukraine manifested that Russia's denial of the Ukrainian state and identity exceeded the discourse level. The idea of receiving an autocephalous church in Ukraine shifted from a 'normative understanding' to a material and ideological response to the threats against the state sovereignty of Ukraine.

Most of the studies dealing with the role of religious institutions in post-Soviet state-building processes benefit from terms such as *deprivatization of religion* and

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[45]Birol Baskan, "The State in the Pulpit: State Incorporation of Religious Institutions in the Middle East," *Politics and Religion* 4, (2011): 137.

desecularization to explain how religious institutions have filled the vacuum left by the collapse of the Soviet Union. This understanding is mostly in concordance with specifying religious institutions as a source of legitimacy for political authorities. Besides, the lion's share is often allocated to the usefulness of religious institutions in the nation-building process; thus, the main focus is on 'creating' or 'strengthening' collective identity. Thus, there is hardly ever a study overlooking the role of religious institutions in the nation-building process. Concerning Ukraine, this is even more complex.

In contrary to most of the Orthodox majority countries, in which religio-national symbiosis prevails, the role of an autocephalous Orthodox church in Ukrainian nation-building is mostly limited, mainly due to four reasons. First, Ukraine is not ethnically homogeneous. Second, the Ukrainian religious landscape has more than one church claiming to be Ukraine's national church. Third, Ukrainian Orthodoxy has been dominated by Russian authorities throughout history, so Orthodox Christianity was unable to provide distinct national myths for Ukrainian identity. Fourth, no strong historical link exists between the nation and Orthodox Christianity. Providing a profound perspective on the state-building process, this thesis explains the motives behind the establishment of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine and its significance for post-Soviet Ukraine. It also argues that the Orthodox Church of Ukraine became an institution prioritizing Ukrainian state-building in 2019 and functioning autonomously in Ukrainian-Russian relations. Although its contribution to nation-building seems minor, as mentioned above, it needs further research in light of developments as of February 2022.

1.6 Methods

As stated earlier, this dissertation aims to analyze the Ukrainian presidents' attempts to create an autocephalous Orthodox church in Ukraine and the successful establishment of this church in 2019 after a series of futile attempts following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. Also, it discusses the significance of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in the state-building process of Ukraine. To this end, this study is set to have a qualitative-design, employing semi-structured in-depth

interviews during field research in Kyiv (Ukraine) in 2019 and 2020; and Ankara (Turkey) in 2022 and 2023. Besides, it benefits from documentary research.

In qualitative research, data gathering methods generally "consist of in-depth interviewing, participant observation, and the analysis of textual data and relevant extant information."[46] Among these, an in-depth interview is widely used and preferred by social scientists. The primary motivation for adopting the in-depth interview is to uncover interviewees' worlds, thoughts, and perceptions on the research topic. As rightfully stated by Seidman, "at the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people, and the maeaning they make of that experience."[47]

The researcher can benefit from different types of in-depth interviews, which differ in the degree of being structured: unstructured, semi-structured, and structured. This study employs semi-structured in-depth interview for its advantages before and during the field research. In the preparation period, the documentary research came along with the formulation of the interview questions. Even if some items had been pre-determined, no specific model of theory had been determined before the field research; thus, the study is not "theory-driven" nor was it "theory- building." Indeed, the present research is placed in the middle of the spectrum between theory building and theory testing. Thus, adopting semi-structured interviews as a data collection method was the optimum option for the field research, for it allows maneuvering with freedom to consider possible theoretical frameworks.

During the field research, the semi-structured in-depth interview provided three inherent advantages. First, the interviewee's feelings, perceptions, or thoughts on the research topic "are more likely to be expressed in an openly designed interview situation than in a standardized interview or a questionnaire," as Flick suggests.[48]

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[46]Jill A. Chouinard and J. Bartley Cousins, "Conceptual and Practical Intersection Between Participatory Evaluation and Qualitative Inquiry," in *Qualitative Inquiry in Evaluation: From Theory to Practice*, eds. Leslia Goodyear, Jennifer Jewiss, Janet Usinger, and Eric Barela (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2014), 118.

[47]Irvin Seidman, *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and Social Sciences* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2006), 9.

[48]Uwe Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2009), 150.

Second, during the interview, the researcher can ask for more clarification from the interviewee, direct follow-up questions, or elucidate his or her question if the question is unclear for the interviewee. This kind of interaction provides freedom for both the researcher and the interviewee to talk about emerging issues during the interview. Besides, the researcher can modify or alter his questions to pursue emerging issues in the subsequent interviews. Third, in the semi-structured in-depth interview, it is possible to ask sensitive questions due to the established rapport between the researcher and the interviewees. In short, the reasons behind the use of semi-structure in-depth interview in this study are mostly related to its flexibility in formulating the questions during the interview and its adaptability to emerging topics.

As semi-structured interviews were conducted with elites and experts in this study, this group will be defined based on the related literature before explaining the advantages of conducting interviews with this group. In the scope of this research, the term 'elite' refers to the people in a position of power in establishing the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in 2019. That is, the Ukrainian political and religious elites were purposively chosen for interviews. Also, the term 'expert' in this study refers to academians or the representatives of civil society organizations in Ukraine who are competent in one of the following fields: the characteristics of the religious landscape of Ukraine, the process of obtaining autocephaly since 1991, and the history of Orthodoxy in Ukraine. Semi-structured elite and expert interviews enabled me to gain first hand insight in a short period. Besides, interviews with experts conducting related field research offered a strong ground for gaining a deeper understanding. Lastly, elite interviewees revealed the main perceptions of the Ukrainians regarding the autocephalous Church in Ukraine and responded to a variety of questions, most of which would not be addressed in formal speeches.

Three field researches in Kyiv, involving semi-structured elite and expert interviews, were conducted. The first and second field research was carried out in Kyiv between January 28 and April 24, 2019, and between May 13 and May 25, 2019, with academicians, Ukrainian state officials, a high-ranked Ukrainian Orthodox clergy, and representatives of non-governmental organizations. In this span, total 17 semi-

structured interviews were conducted. This field research paid particular attention to the interviewees' perceptions and thoughts about the revival of Orthodox Christianity in post-Soviet Ukraine, the evolution of the relation between Orthodox churches and the Ukrainian state, Orthodox churches in the 'critical process' of Ukraine such as in two revolutions in Ukraine: Orange and Euromaidan, previous attempts to create a national Orthodox church in Ukraine, the reasons behind the creation of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine 2019, the problems faced after the establishment of the Church in 2019, different aspects of these problems, and the importance of an autocephalous Orthodox Church in Ukraine. The third field research was conducted in Kyiv between February 11 and March 22, 2020. Indeed, this field research had been planned for four months, but it was interrupted by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. During this field research, three semi-structured interviews were conducted. Questions similar to those in the first field research were directed in these interviews, as well as the ones suitable to the new agenda of the Church one year after its establishment. Furthermore, three semi-structured interviews were conducted in Ankara in 2022 and 2023. In total, 23 semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with highly representative Ukrainian political and religious elites and experts.

The semi-structured elite and expert interviews is the primary data source of this study. The semi-structured interviews were 1-1.5 hour long. They were conducted in English, Ukrainian, and Turkish. The interviews in Ukrainian were conducted with the help of a translator, who is familiar to the field and was the gatekeeper. In the phase of getting the appointments, all interviewees were informed about the research project and its possible outputs. If it was not possible, they were briefly told before the interview. Due to ethical concerns, the total anonymity of the interviewee was preserved. Initially, at least the institutional affiliations of the interviewees would be revealed; however, the names of the institutions of the interviewees, except for those of state officials, were also ultimately assured due to potential security concerns after the full-wedged war in Ukraine, which Russia launched in February 2022. Therefore, the interviewees are presented by their field of expertise.

The timing of the first two field researches in 2019 was significant as it was shortly after the establishment of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, thus a promising start

while the debates were still intense. Also, the fieldwork in 2019 was a great opportunity for making informal observations and having conversations regarding the Presidential Election in 2019, and for debates on the role of the autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox Church during election campaign. Even though the second field research in 2020 was limited to three interviews, conducting interviews in different periods over two years helped trace experts' perceptions of the establishment of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in 2019.

The data obtained from semi-structured elite and expert interviews was analyzed by thematic analysis, which "is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data."[49] Thematic analysis is one of the powerful and flexible methods of processing qualitative data; thus, researchers conducting qualitative research widely prefer it. Researchers engage in different forms of thematic analysis and elaborate on how to use thematic analysis. This study follows the guidelines presented by Braun and Clarke,[50] which is widely adopted in the literature. Braun and Clarke outline five phases for thematic analysis: familiarizing oneself with your data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, defining and naming themes, and producing report. These phases are not necessarily linear, for they encompass a more recursive process back and forth throughout the analysis phases.[51]

Besides the thematic analysis of the interview data, this thesis benefits from the official statements and media interviews of some of the high-ranking political and religious elites in Ukraine and Russia, as well as the Istanbul Patriarchate. Although these sources mostly belong to the 2014-2020 period, the ongoing war in Ukraine from February 2022 necessitated public statements and speeches related to the Orthodox church. In addition, extant literature, the reports of the national and international civil society organizations, and relevant official documents of the Ukrainian state were employed. All these materials are used as a subsidiary to the main data of this study obtained from the field research.

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[49]Moira Maguire and Brid Delahunt, "Doing a Thematic Analysis: A practical, step- by-step guide for learning and teaching scholars," *Reflections, Journey, and Case Studies* 9, no.3 (2017): 3352.

[50]Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology," *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no.2 (2006).

[51]Braun and Clarke, "Using Thematic Analysis," 86-87.

A major criticism against collecting and analyzing qualitative data is its being subjective. This critique is "an irrelevant concern when subjectivity is often the focus and the vehicle for research using qualitative interviewing."[52] The study resting on the interview data accepted that people experience reality subjectively. In this regard, as correctly claimed by Schwandt and Cash:

> Subjective does not mean biased or unreliable (a common use of the word). Rather, subjective is used to indicate that these perception come from the subject-they represent the personal view of an individual or the subject's point of view based on his or her (or their) historical, political, cultural, social, material lived experience.[53]

For some, the evaluation criteria for the results of qualitative research are also questionable. Some scholars argue that more appropriate standards are needed for qualitative research because the traditional ones, such as validity and reliability, are ill-suited for qualitative research. Therefore, communicative validation, procedural validity, and such ethical criteria as trustworthiness, credibility, and dependability criteria became more important for data analysis in qualitative research. Other scholars insist on using reliability and validity by revising their definitions.[54] Indeed, qualitative researchers recognize the subjective role of the researcher during the data analysis process. They admit that the main challenge to the researcher is being aware of the subjectivity risk in self-reflection and how it may influence the research process. Nevertheless, if the researcher overcomes this challenge, the subjective lenses of the researcher may contribute to the research.[55]

1.7 Organization of Chapters

This dissertation is composed of six chapters. The first chapter presents an introduction to the study and the historical developments of the organizational

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[52]Rosalind Edwards and Janet Holland, *What is Qualitative Interviewing?* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 92.

[53]Thomas A. Shwandt and Timothy J. Cash, "The Origins, Meaning, and Significance of Qualitative Inquiry in Evaluation," *Qualitative Inquiry in Evaluation: From Theory to Practice*, eds. Leslia Goodyear, Jennifer Jewiss, Janet Usinger, and Eric Barela (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2014), 14.

[54]Hubert Knoblauch, "The Future Prospect of Qualitative Research," in A Companion Qualitative Research, eds. Uwe Flick, Ernst von Kardorff, and Ines Steinke (London: Sage Publications, 2004), 355-356).

[55]Alan Peshkin, "In Search of Subjectivity-One's Own," *Educational Researcher* 17, no.7 (1988).

structure of Eastern Orthodoxy and Ukrainian Orthodoxy, the main arguments of the study, the theoretical framework, and methods. The second chapter presents detailed information on the theoretical frameworks used in the study. The third chapter examines the most debated conflicting narratives between Ukraine and Russia on the historical course of Orthodoxy in Ukraine. Also, this chapter structures and contextualizes the post-Soviet debates regarding the creation of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in 2019. The fourth chapter demonstrates the Ukrainian presidents' efforts to establish an autocephalous Orthodox church in Ukraine from 1991 to 2014. In this section, along with the relevant literature, data from field research is employed to understand the president's approach to the unification of Orthodox churches in Ukraine and Ukrainian autocephaly and the main reasons for the failure of pro-Ukrainian autocephaly initiatives. The fifth chapter consists of two main parts. In the process that started with Yanukovych's ouster, brief information is given about Poroshenko's becoming president and his attempts at establishing an autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox Church free from the Moscow Patriarchate. Based on the field research data, the second part of this chapter focuses on the motives behind establishing an autocephalous church in Ukraine and the problems encountered in the early period of its foundation. The concluding chapter presents an overall analysis of the study and the findings based on the theoretical frameworks introduced in the second chapter.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

2.1 Introduction

The principal objectives of this study are to examine the reasons behind the establishment of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in 2019 and the significance of the Church for the state-building process in post-Soviet Ukraine. The introduction chapter signals that the theoretical chapter will focus on state-building to analyze the significance of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. Hence, this chapter further elaborates on theoretical orientation.

To this end, the chapter is divided into four parts. After the introductory part, the second section overviews the literature on the emergence of national autocephalous Orthodox churches. The related literature review shows that the studies trying to conceptualize the emergence of national autocephalous Orthodox churches have highlighted Eastern Orthodoxy's institutional characteristics and the Byzantine Empire's legacy on church-state relations as significant factors. Therefore, as this part identifies the gap in conceptualizing the Church as an institution in modern state-building, it would be helpful to briefly compare Eastern Orthodoxy and Catholicism. Also, this attempt aims to establish bedrock for the subsequent part, in which church-state relations in the modern state are discussed. Additionally, the literature review reveals that studies on the emergence of national autocephalous Orthodox churches have focused on 19th-century developments. In this period, the Ottoman Empire gradually declined for various reasons, eventually leading to the emergence of nation-states within its borders. The independence struggles in the Balkans against the Ottoman Empire ran parallel to the quest for respective national Orthodox churches, independent of the Istanbul Patriarchate operating as the head of all Orthodox Christians in the Empire. As a result of the complex religious and

political dynamics, national autocephalous Orthodox churches, such as those in Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania, came into existence. The ecclesiastical jurisdiction of every church was restricted with the boundaries of the nation-state to which it corresponded. Moreover, establishing an independent state became the main rationale behind the autocephaly calls in subsequent periods. Thus, the development of autocephalous Orthodox churches did not apply to other Orthodox Christians, who were subjected to the rule of the Russian Empire and then its predecessor, the Soviet Union. However, the insights into the 19th century guided many scholars to understand the autocephaly demands in the independent states after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. At this point, an exhaustive review of literature encompassing the detailed historical, social, and political backgrounds of the individual trajectory of each autocephalous Orthodox church is not within the scope of this study. Instead, it focuses on identifying the primary themes of discussions and situating the Ukrainian autocephaly achieved in 2019.

The third section is literature review related to Church's role in the modern state. The primary focus is how the institution of Church is conceptualized in the modern state. Overall, the related research, influenced by the modernist framework, considers religious institutions through the secularization theory and covers Western historical developments. It refers to the view that modernization will necessarily be followed by secularization and religion will lose its significance in the modern state. While characterizing the modern state as secular, secularism is used for the institutional separation between church and state. According to this conceptualization, religion is removed from the public sphere and confined to the private sphere. The recent literature provides different conceptualizations without deviating from the modernist, highlighting multiple forms of secularism rather than a single one. This understanding essentially refuses the state-church relation, in which the latter is solely in the private sphere; instead, it emphasizes practices of secularism mostly shaped by historical, political, and social contexts. It also allows for analysis of the neutrality of the state toward religion as regards whether the state provides equality and freedom of conscience. Despite these theoretical orientations, most studies based on Western experiences for the role of the church tend to ignore the Orthodox majority states, in which an autocephalous Orthodox church is historically viewed as a necessary institution in the modern state-building process.

As a conclusion, the next section focuses on the formation of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in 2019 as the institutional consolidation of post-Soviet Ukraine's state-building. It is hoped that this will contribute to the recently growing literature on the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, formed in 2019, and to the theoretical understanding of how the Orthodox church is an essential institution for the state-building, sovereignty, and independence process.

2.2 An Overview of Literature on the National Autocephalous Orthodox Church

Numerous scholars from diverse fields, such as history, theology, and social sciences, have studied various issues related to Eastern Orthodoxy. However, despite extensive efforts, many contend that there is a lack of substantial research on it, and to a large extent, the existing analyses on Eastern Orthodoxy use Western theoretical conceptualizations and deals with Orthodox Christianity isolating it from its own cultural, political, and historical context. Furthermore, unsurprisingly, that leads to some misconceptions,[56] on which Roudometof states:

> Conventional views assume a systematic intertwining between the Orthodox Church and the state, which makes Orthodox countries culturally hostile to modernity. These views have been shaped by a long history of antagonistic relationships between Western and Eastern European states and fail to grasp important long-term trends within the Orthodox religious landscape.[57]

Upon careful analysis of the literature, it has become clear that understanding the fundamental principles of Eastern Orthodoxy is essential for comprehending the subject matter. Over the centuries, the formal and informal institutional rules and procedures of the Orthodox Church have undergone significant changes.[58] This

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[56]See, for example, Victor Roudometof, "Church, State, and Political Culture in Orthodox Christianity," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019); Victor Roudometof, *Globalization and Orthodox Church: The Transformation a Religious Tradition* (New York: Routledge, 2014); Chris Hann, "The Heart of the Matter: Christianity, Materiality, and Modernity," *Current Anthropology* 55, S10 (2014); Chris Hann, *Eastern Christianity and Western Social Theory* (Erfurt: University of Erfut, 2011); Vasilios N. Makrides, "Why are Orthodox Churches Particularly Prone to Nationalization and even to Nationalism?" *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 57, no.3-4 (2013); Daniela Kalkandjieva, "A Comparative Analysis on Church-State Relations in Eastern Orthodoxy: Concepts, Models, and Principles," *Journal of Church and State* 53, no.4 (2011).

[57]Roudometof, "Church, State, and Political Culture in Orthodox Christianity," 1.

[58]Cyril Hovorun, *Scaffold of the Church. Towards Poststructural Ecclesiology* (Cambridge: James Clarke& Co, 2017)*;* Charles Wegener Sanderson, "Autocephaly as a Function of Institutional Stability

means that the interpretations of the institutional aspects of Eastern Orthodoxy have gone through a continual process of reconfiguration. Although it is acknowledged that there may be some variations depending on social, political, and religious contexts, certain aspects have left a legacy. That is, these principles also contributed to the emergence of national autocephalous churches in the 19th century. Hence, it is necessary to consider their long-term effects in relation to the developments of the 19th century; otherwise, it can only be partially evaluated. This chapter evaluates the emergence of national autocephalous Orthodox churches under the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century, highlighting the decentralized organizational structure of Eastern Orthodoxy, the development of local traditions in Eastern Orthodoxy, and Byzantine's legacy on church-state relations.

As stated above, a distinctive characteristic of Eastern Orthodoxy is its decentralized administration. Unlike Catholicism having the central papal authority and supporting universality, the churches of Eastern Orthodoxy "developed most of its structures based on particularity, including the patriarchates, canonical territory, and autocephaly."[59] For the Catholic Church, Ferguson and Bruun point out:

> Christianity was the one vital force and the church the one living organism in the Roman world during the last two centuries of the Western Empire. When that empire disappeared, the church, so far as was possible, took its place; the popes took over the universal authority of the emperors: and the episcopal hierarchy filled the void left by the withdrawal of the imperial administration. Throughout the Middle Ages the unity of the Roman Catholic Church was the bond that held together the various peoples of western Europe.[60]

Here, the pope represents the hierarchical center in Catholicism in a vertical organization, and the Istanbul Patriarchate holds the honorary position in Eastern Orthodoxy, where self-governing churches are aligned in a horizontal structure[61] but

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and Organizational Change in the Eastern Orthodox Church" (PhD. dis., University of Maryland, 2005).

[59]Hovorun, *Scaffold of the Church*, 189.

[60]Wallace K. Ferguson and Geoffrey Bruun, A *Survey of European Civilization* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1969), 84.

[61]Irena Borowik, "The religious Landscape of Central and Eastern Europe after Communism," in *The Sage Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, eds. James A. Beckford and N.J. Demerath III (London: Sage Publications, 2007), 658.

remain united in faith and sacraments. In other words, the rationale behind the difference between Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy in terms of organizational structure is somewhat in line with, respectively, the primacy of authority and the primacy of honor, or *primus sine paribus* (first without equals) and *primus inter pares* (first among equals). In a broader sense, this distinct feature of Eastern Orthodoxy was a cause for the Great Schism in 1054 and determined its subsequent organizational set up.

The variation in the organizational characteristics is not the only factor to consider; how autocephaly has changed throughout history is of importance. Even though the idea of autocephaly is accepted to date back to the first Christian communities, Christianity was actually adopted by the Roman Empire in the institutional structure of the Church.[62] The Church's activities and jurisdiction had to be in accordance with political regulations and administration, and that was codified in the canons for an enhanced position of Istanbul in the East. However, it later established a lasting tradition.[63] In fact, the autocephaly of local churches was initially perceived as a mere administrative convenience with little political and cultural significance, yet as Christianity spread beyond the Byzantine Empire to neighboring regions, the newly established churches in different states were increasingly seen as a means of ensuring political self-sufficiency.[64] An analysis of the emergence of national autocephalous churches during the 19th century[65] revealed that this understanding remained prominent and somewhat set the stage for their assessment within the broader, enduring patterns of Eastern Orthodoxy. Approaching the issue critically, Makrides states:

> [T]he principle of autocephaly came to be conceptualized in modern times in purely national terms. Yet there were some antecedents to this modern process, especially when the socio-political circumstances did change. When the newly Christianized

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[62]Cyril Hovorun, "Autocephaly as Diachronic Phenomenon and its Ukrainian Case," in *A Jubilee Collection: Essays in Honor of Professor Paul Robet Magocsi*," eds. Valerii Padiak and Patricia A. Krafcik (Uzhhorod: Valerii Padiak Publishers, 2015), 273.

[63]Makrides , "Why are Orthodox Churches," 336.

[64]Hovorun, *Scaffold of the Church*, 94.

[65]See Lucian N. Leustean (Ed.), *Orthodox Christianity and Nationalism in Nineteenth Century Southeastern Europe* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014).

Slavic peoples thus accepted Byzantine Christianity, the need also to acquire an independent Church was in many cases quite prominent. Political change and independence often went hand in hand with aspirations for church independence. With the advent of the modern nation-state, this process took a most radical turn, for it completely identified state and church independence. There was then an intrinsic connection between political formation, state-building, territoriality, and church independence. This was perhaps the unforeseen consequence of the historical administrative plurality of the Orthodox East in a fully new context.[66]

The decentralized organization of Eastern Orthodoxy was conducive to the development of local traditions while churches still kept the core tenets of Orthodox Christianity. As Meyendorff points out:

[O]f all the confessional families of medieval Christendom, Byzantine Orthodoxy was the only one which *de facto* combined a rather strict practice of liturgical uniformity with the principle of unlimited translations of the same liturgical texts into the vernacular languages of various nations. The Latin West, less insistent upon ritual uniformity, remained linguistically monolithic until our own generation [...][67]

In this respect, the language issue holds crucial importance as it signifies the differences between Eastern Orthodoxy and Catholicism and has a role in the emergence of national autocephalous Orthodox churches. During the medieval period, churches in the West followed the strict rule that only Latin must be used in liturgy. On the other hand, Byzantine missionaries took a different approach, making Christianity accessible to people. An example often referred to is the translation of religious texts into the vernacular language, Old Slavonic. This opened the door for Slavic people to adopt Christianity. As Ware explains:

The Greeks communicated this faith and civilization not in an alien but in a Slavonic garb (here the translations of Cyril and Methodius were of capital importance); what the Slavs borrowed from Byzantium they were able to make their own. Byzantine culture and the Orthodox faith, if at first limited mainly to the ruling classes, became in time an integral part of the daily life of the Slavonic peoples as a whole. The link between Church and people was made even firmer by the system of creating independent national Churches.[68]

When the Old Slavonic, with its variants, served as the basis for a literary tradition, it also helped develop a sense of ethnic difference. As regards to the Orthodox Church,

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[66]Makrides, "Why are Orthodox Churches," 335-336.

[67]John Meyendorff, *The Byzantine Legacy in the Orthodox Church* (Crestwood, New York: St. Viladimir's Seminary Press, 1982), 127.

[68]Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964), 86.

the autocephalous status historically guaranteed that the clergy in the Church would be comprised of native ones and the language used in religious services would be the local language.[69] Religious services conducted in the local language reinforced the connection between religion and ethnic identity. Also, the Orthodox Church assumed historical importance in the respective ethnic community as it was the only institution, under foreign rule that managed to recall memories of former statehood, keep traditions alive, promote local culture, preserve native language through religious services, and build a narrative about ethnic unity.[70] That is, the Orthodox church was able to establish itself as the national church and symbol of national identity during the age of nationalism. Ramet maintains:

> Whether through their nurturing of indigenous literary and artistic developments or through their defense of national culture and independence against foreign penetration or domination, Orthodox churches have frequently assumed importance as nationalist institutions.[71]

Alongside the advancements that influenced the formation of national movements in Western Europe, Makrides offers a valuable perspective on the perception of nationalism in East and Southern Europe. He posits that, in these regions, nationalism was frequently perceived as the optimal means of achieving modernization, but with an emphasis on religion. For him, the religious aspect of nationalism can be attributed to the historical politicization of the Orthodox Church, which created a favorable environment for the emergence of national movements and the development of nationalism. Therefore, he suggests: "The encounter, mixture, and fusion between exogenous and endogenous reasons have chiefly led to the formation of the 'national' Orthodox Churches of today."[72]

It is also worth noting that the West, until the Reformation in the 16th century, did not experience linguistic diversity as it did in Eastern Orthodoxy. In addition, following

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[69]Pedro Ramet, "Autocephaly and the National Identity in Church-State Relations in Eastern Christianity: An Introduction," in *Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Pedro Ramet (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1988), 5.

[70]Tornike Metreveli, *Orthodox Christianity and the Politics of Transition: Ukraine, Serbia, and Georgia* (Oxon: Routledge, 2021), 145-146.

[71]Ramet, "Autocephaly and the National Identity," 6.

[72]Makrides, "Why are Orthodox Churches," 329.

the Reformation, the Catholic Church's ecclesiastical unity was dissolved, and in the meantime, its power began to decline with the emergence of national Protestant churches. These churches encouraged the translation of the Bible into vernacular languages, whereas the Catholic Church continued to prohibit any language other than Latin.[73] Additionally, the political entities under the supreme authority of the Holy Roman Empire became divided into Catholic or Protestant churches, which paved the way for religious wars in Europe. The Peace of Westphalia in 1648 ended religious wars and left two key principles:

> The first was *rex est imperator in regno suo*. Literally, it means that the king is sovereign within his own domain and not subject to the political will of anyone else. The settlement recognised the absolute power of rulers and linked this personal or dynastic rule to a specific territory. The second principle was *cuius regio, eius religio*. This principle confers upon the king the power to determine which religion would be practised in his realm. It was a principle that prohibited interference into the internal affairs of other states on religious grounds, and it remains important today in providing the basis for international law.[74]

In this respect, the Peace of Westphalia is considered to create a modern system of states, in which state sovereignty, equality of the states, and the principle of non-intervention in internal affairs are established. Besides, as understood from the quotation, the Holy Roman Empire recognized the territorial sovereignty of the princes. This indicated the continuing decline of the Empire, which barely existed on it greatly decreasing power. It was not only the Empire's losing its supra-state power. The Catholic Church, who was interfering on behalf of universalism, also seemed as a challenge to the sovereign. Indeed, that is why Pope of that time stated: "[The Peace of Westphalia] is null, void, invalid, unjust, damnable, reprobate, inane, empty of meaning and effect for all time."[75] As briefly summarized by Holsti:

> The Peace of Westphalia organized Europe on the principle of particularism. It represented a new diplomatic arrangement- an order created by states, for states- and

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[73]John Myhill, *Language, Religion, and National Identity in Europe and the Middle East: A Historical Study* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2006), 39.

[74]Martin Griffiths and Terry O' Callaghan, *International Relations: The Key Concepts* (London and Newyork: Routledge, 2002), 239.

[75]Quoted in Kalevi J. Holsti, *Peace and War: Armed Conflicts and International Order 1648-1989* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 25.

replaced most of the legal vestiges of hierarchy, at the pinnacle of which were the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor.[76]

Due to later developments, the Peace of Westphalia is remembered for establishing religious toleration, yet it refers at that time to the religious toleration between states but not in the individual states. In this context, the direct result of the principle of *cuius regio eius religio* was the subordination of the church to the territorial control of the sovereign. Hence, it enabled the "confessionalization of the state" and "the territorialization of religions and peoples."[77] In other words, a combination of "migration, forced conversion, and legal sanctions against religious minorities" led to "the confessional states with established churches" in Europe.[78] It paved the way for a religiously homogeneous state and bound together the state, religion, and people. What is important here is that the link between the three was already an issue for Eastern Orthodoxy.

The tradition of church-state relations in Eastern Orthodoxy is another important aspect that separates it from other branches of Christianity. The literature reviews show that the concept of symphonia is commonly used to identify church-state relations in Eastern Orthodoxy. Although many note that this tradition dates back earlier, the sixth Novella of Byzantine Emperor Justinian (527-565) is frequently cited:

> There are two greatest gifts which God, in his love for man, has granted from on high: the priesthood and the imperial dignity. The first serve divine things, the second directs and administers human affairs; both however, proceed from the same origin and adorn the life of mankind. Hence, nothing should be such a source of care to the emperors as the dignity of the priests, since it is for the [imperial] welfare that they constantly implore God. For if the priesthood is in every way free from blame and possesses access to God, and if the emperors administer equitably and judiciously the state entrusted to their care, general harmony will result, and whatever is beneficial will be bestowed upon the human race.[79]

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[76]Holsti, "Peace and War," 25.

[77]Jose Casanova, *Global Religious and Secular Dynamics: The Modern System of Classifications* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 20.

[78]Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Jonathan Vanantwerpen, "Introduction," in *Rethinking Secularism*, eds. Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Jonathan Vanantwerpen (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 15.

[79]Quoted in John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1979), 213.

Despite diverse viewpoints and interpretations of the above-mentioned famous text, it is widely believed that symphonia marks the harmonious and complementary essence of the relationship between the church and the state.[80] As Harakas says, in symphonic relations, "Church and State cooperate as parts of an organic whole in the fulfillment of their purposes, each supporting and strengthening the other without this causing subordination of one to the other."[81] Simply put, symphonia aims to benefit society; however, the line between the church and state is ambiguous with no clear interdependency or separation.[82] The interplay between the two has made it possible for religious leaders to assume political roles in society and for political leaders to hold influence on the church. That is, "the ruler and the priest are the major political and, at the same time, religious figures on earth."[83]

In light of the discussion above, Eastern Orthodoxy is apart from Catholicism, in which a sharp dichotomy exists between religious and political spheres. Besides, the pope in the West by the 13th century exercised considerable influence over political power and managed to keep the Emperor out of the religious sphere.[84] As stated earlier, emergence of the sovereign states after the Peace of Westphalia challenged the supra-state authority of the Catholic Church. In fact, this is mainly characterized by the conflict-ridden relations between church and state. The Pope endeavored to assert over the states continuously and struggled with the political rulers in the defined territory. On the other hand, the Catholic rulers sought to increase their

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[80]See, for example, Kalkandjieva, "A Comparative Analysis;" Aristeides Papadakis, "The Historical Tradition of Church-State Relations under Orthodoxy," in *Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Pedro Ramet (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1988); Daniel Jianu, "Symphonia and the historical relationship between State and Church: Legacies from Byzantine times until today," in *Orthodox Religion and Politics in Contemporary Eastern Europe: On Multiple Secularisms and Entanglements*, ed. Tobias Köllner (London and New York: Routledge, 2019); Nathaniel Wood, "Church and State in Orthodox Christianity: Two Versions of Symphonia," in *Orthodoxy in Two Manifestations? The Conflict in Ukraine as Expression of a Fault Line in World Orthodoxy*, ed. Thomas Bremer, Alfons Brüning and Nadieszda Kizenko (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2022).

[81]Stanly S. Harakas, "Orthodox Church-State Theory and American Democracy," in Greek Orthodox Theological Review XXI, no.4 (1976): 399.

[82]Lucian L. Leustean, *Orthodoxy and the Cold War: Religion and Political Power in Romania*, 1947-65 (Hampshire: PalgraveMacmillan, 2009), 11.

[83]Leustean, *Orthodoxy and the Cold War*, 11.

[84]Walter Scheidel, *Escape From Rome: The Failure of Empire and the Road to Prosperity* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2019), 346.

authority over the Churches in their countries and understood that, for this, they had to curb the Pope's interference in their political affairs or control his influence. Like in the late 18th century, "[t]he nationalization of the churches by the states meant the loss of the papacy's power to appoint high clerical officials."[85] Undoubtedly, the Enlightenment and French Revolution was a sharp blow to the already diminishing authority of the Pope. With the encouragement of rational thinking, triumph of reason over religious dogma, and the replacement of the sovereignty of monarchs with the sovereignty of the nation, the Catholic Church holding supra-national claims became a target, and consequently, the church was formally separated from the state. The conflictual 'nature' of the church-state relations within Catholicism was mostly absent in Eastern Orthodoxy, where collaboration was given precedence.

In addition to the model of symphonia, some argue that the church-state relations in the Byzantine can be defined as caesaropapism, which refers to the full control of the political ruler on the church, or, as in the words of Weber, "the complete subordination of priests to secular power."[86] The relevant literature has shown that it is probably because the Byzantine emperors hold some formal and informal rights in church affairs.[87] However, Kalkandijeva criticizes the usage of the caesaropapism concept to specify church-state relations in Eastern Orthodoxy:

> Neither the Byzantine basileus nor the rulers of the medieval states of Bulgaria, Serbia, or Russia had achieved full control over all spheres of the life of their local churches as had happened in the German or Scandinavian states after the Reformation. Eastern Orthodoxy did not allow sacramental or doctrinal matters to go to secular hands. In this respect, the Eastern European rulers did not become heads of their domestic Orthodox churches as had happened in the Protestant world.[88]

It is worth noting that the concepts of symphonia and caesaropapism, despite their various interpretations, mostly attempt to describe ideal types of relationships between political and religious spheres. These were not necessarily fully realized

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[85]Jackson J. Spielvogel, *Western Civilization: Volume II: Since 1500* (Boston: Cengage, 2022), 538.

[86]Max Weber, Economy and Society, eds. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 1161-1162.

[87]See J. M. Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in Byzantine Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[88]Kalkandjieva, "A Comparative Analysis," 591.

during or after the Byzantine period. Nevertheless, Eastern Orthodoxy has mostly endorsed the understanding of a symphonic relationship between church and state, which has left a lasting impact on Orthodox-majority countries, even if the content and extent of their collaborations may differ.[89] As Leustean maintains about the developments in the Balkans in 19th century:

> [T]he legacy of symphonia was evident in the work of religious and political leaders in their joint struggle to obtain national independence, identifying their common enemy not only in the political structure of the Ottoman Empire but also in the religious authority of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Close relations between the religious and political spheres were evident across the region, with political elites playing the prime role in acquiring national independence while ensuring that churches supported the processes of achieving statehood. In both Greece and Romania, political leaders were influential in organizing church synods that fostered nationalist views and ultimately led to national autocephaly.[90]

The existing studies have shown that, in forming national autocephalous Orthodox churches, the Ottoman Empire played a decisive role as well as the decentralized organizational structure of Eastern Orthodoxy and the Byzantine legacy of church-state relations. This view is largely related to how the Ottoman Empire managed its diverse population, especially the *millet* system, in which non-Muslim subjects were divided into units based on religion. Jews, Catholics, and Orthodox Christians were integrated into the empire through their respective religious organizations.[91] Although non-Muslims did not enjoy equal rights with Muslims, each *millet* was politically semi-autonomous and had its own judicial and fiscal administrations.

The Ottoman Empire ended the Byzantine Empire in 1453 and the Istanbul Patriarchate came under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. According to Papadakis, the dissolution of the administration of Balkan states and the Byzantine imperial did not affect the ecclesiastical administration, whose "independence and corporate identity,

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[89]Pantelis Kalaitzidis, "Church and State in the Orthodox World: From Byzantine Symphonia and Nationalized Orthodoxy, to Need of Witnessing the Word of God in a Pluralistic Society," in *Religioni, Libertà, Potere: Atti del Convegno Internazionale Filosofco-Teologico sulla Libertà Religiosa*, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore e Università degli Studi, ed. di Emanuela Fogliadini (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 16–18 Ottobre 2013), 40.

[90]Lucian N. Leustean, "Orthodox Christianity and Nationalism: An Introduction," in *Orthodox Christianity and Nationalism in Nineteenth Century Southeastern Europe*, ed. Lucian N. Leustean (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), 7.

[91]Roudometof, *Globalization and Orthodox Church*, 68-69.

as a rule, were left undisturbed."[92] However, with the gradual incorporation of Bulgaria, Romania, and Serbia by the Ottoman Empire, they lost independence and their Orthodox churches, so they were placed under the jurisdiction of the Istanbul Patriarchate.[93] All Orthodox Christians in Empire, such as Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians, Arabs, and Albanians, were a part of the *millet-i rum*, and the Istanbul Patriarchate was the *millet başı* or *ethnaarch,* serving as the legitimate leader. The Istanbul Patriarchate's dominance was not limited to religious matters; it also acted in judicial and administrative spheres. In return for its granted power, the Patriarchate was responsible for ensuring all Orthodox Christians' loyalty to the Empire. The related literature commonly manifest that the administrative authority of the Istanbul Patriarchate was more powerful during the Ottoman Empire than it was under the Byzantine Empire.

Furthermore, the *millet* system enabled Orthodox Christian subjects in the Ottoman Empire to exercise their religion and maintain their communal connections, thereby preserving their religious identity against the Muslim authority. Walters points out:

> The millet system meant that no local church in the Ottoman Empire kept its autonomy. Nevertheless, the Christian subjects of the empire were allowed to maintain their churches and monasteries, and their religious leaders had a defined role to play. It was the local churches which did most to preserve the cultural heritage and separate identities of the various Balkan peoples.[94]

Hovorun also asserts:

> [T]he circumstances of Ottoman rule forced the eastern churches to realign more closely with their communities. Communities became important in the church again. As a result, the Ottoman period turned out to be no less effective- if not indeed more effective- than the Byzantine period in the formation of modern eastern church structures.[95]

Similarly, Jianu draws attention to the religious and political power of the Istanbul Patriarchate:

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[92]Papadakis, "The Historical Tradition of Church-State Relations," 47.

[93]Ware, *The Orthodox Church,* 100.

[94]Philip Walters, "Notes on Autocephaly and Phyletism," Religion, State, & Society 30, no.4 (2002): 359.

[95]Hovorun, Scaffold *of the Church*, 4.

> The relationship between faith and state during the Ottoman times' millet system of administration granted the Patriarch both ecclesiastical and temporal authority over the Christian subjects of the empire. This peculiarity of the millet system also allowed the Orthodox Church to help instil and preserve a sense of belonging and common identity among Orthodox populations that even after the collapse of the empire continues to entangle the spiritual and temporal authorities between the State and Church [...][96]

Besides, the Ottoman modernization process in the 19th century involved the implementation of Western reforms that brought about the principle of national-self identification and the equality of all within the Empire, irrespective of religious affiliations. Hence, the religious-based *millet* system underwent a transformation, towards national grounds. As a result of revolts and wars against the Ottoman rule and supports from international political actors, nation-states such as Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania formed in the realm of the Empire. Their emancipation struggle was focused on being free from not only the Ottoman rule but also the Istanbul Patriarchate. Moreover, it is worth noting that the Greek clergy, culture, and language heavily influenced the Istanbul Patriarchate. As a result, Orthodox Christians from different socio-cultural backgrounds were compelled to follow the Greek lead. This led to growing resentment among the Slavic origin people in the Empire, not because of the imposed Ottoman rule but because of the enforced domination of Greek over them.[97] In short, establishing the national Orthodox Church was considered a pathway to statehood; as Hovorun claims, "Without having their own autocephalous churches, the national Orthodox states in the Balkans could not consider themselves sufficiently independent."[98] The Istanbul Patriarchate initially opposed the recognition of the unilateral autocephaly declarations, but later it had to recognize them. As Ware explains:

> The Patriarch resisted as long as he could, but in each case he bowed eventually to the inevitable. A series of national Churches were carved out of the Patriarchate: the Church of Greece (organized in 1833, recognized by the Patriarch of Constantinople in 1850); the Church of Romania (organized in 1859, recognized in 1885); the Church of Bulgaria (reestablished in 1870, not recognized by Constantinople until 1945); the Church of Serbia (restored and recognized in 1879).[99]

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[96]Jianu, "Symphonia," 29.

[97]Walters, "Notes on Autocephaly," 359.

[98]Hovorun, *Scaffold of the Church,* 110.

In the cases above, except for Bulgaria, the autocephaly declarations were followed by the state independence; therefore, the institutionalization of the national Orthodox church became a part of modern state-building in the Balkans. Kitromilides suggests:

> The paradox in the Bulgarian case is that the claims of ecclesiastical emancipation preceded the emergence of an independent state and ecclesiastical conflict became a substitute for fighting a national liberation struggle. What emerges from the historical record, therefore, is illuminating not so much for an understanding of the institutionalization of the Church as part of modern state formation but of its uses as an instrument for the promotion of the aspirations of Bulgarian nationalism with the objective of attaining state independence. In this case we have national church formation as the major stage of nation-building preceding of the state. In other words, the historical sequence observable in the other Balkan cases of the modern state taking over the Church and transforming it to meet its own requirements of modernization, institutionalization and integration was reversed in the Bulgarian case.[100]

Papadakis also considers the formation of the autocephalous churches as a part of modern state-building process, highlighting the influence of developments in Europe regarding church-state relations in the Balkans and the multifaceted dynamics therein:

> [T]he early protagonists in the struggle for [political] independence were in general anticlerical. Their ideals were those of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, currents that, as is well known, had little sympathy for religion. Hence the indifference, hostility, and even bitter opposition of many of these patriots toward the patriarchate and the whole Phanariot establishment in Constantinople. Equally, these nationalists were familiar with the way in which the triumphant secular state in the West had handled its relationship with the church. As a result, they too saw the relationship in almost exclusively subservient terms. Separation of church and state, therefore, was neither a plausible nor a desirable alternative. Nor did they want any suggestion of a "symphony of powers" in the tradition of Justinian's sixth Novella. On the contrary, their aim was the subordination of religion to the secular power. Significantly, one of the first steps taken by these independent states was to separate the church within their frontiers from the authority of Constantinople. By declaring it autocephalous, by "nationalizing" it, they hoped to control it.[101]

After a series of complex processes explained so far, the autocephalous Orthodox church eventually rose in its modern form, in which the territorial boundary of the church, known as canonical territory, overlapped that of the state. The state's

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[99] Ware, *The Orthodox Church,* 100.

[100] Paschalis M. Kitromilides, *Religion and the Politics in the Orthodox World: The Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Challenges of Modernity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2019), 37-38.

[101] Papadakis, "The Historical Tradition of Church-State Relations," 49-50.

territorial border continually changed from the 19th century to the end of the Second World War, and in this process, the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Church mostly followed the state's territorial boundaries. In addition, state independence influenced the decision of the Istanbul Patriarchate to recognize autocephaly demands. Also, the Orthodox churches justified their unilateral autocephaly demands within the boundaries of the respective states by the need for an independent state.

In addition, as stated earlier, the territorial boundaries of the Orthodox churches mainly formed in line with that of the political administration, which was also the case in the 19th century. Moreover, the notion of autocephaly in the modern period began to refer to the church, which is sovereign in its canonical territory. This is very similar to the term of the territorial sovereignty of the modern state. As Shishkov explains:

> The question of autocephaly is one of supreme power, and therefore sovereignty. If it is declared that an autocephalous church has the source of power in itself and is independent of other churches, then there can be no power above it and it is sovereign. Therefore, what is called autocephaly in the Church corresponds to what is understood as sovereignty in the political, inter-state relations sphere.[102]

Denysenko makes a similar emphasis:

> The national dimension of autocephaly discloses synergy between two types of sovereignty- state and Church. A nation-state exercises its sovereignty by governing its own affairs without dependence on a foreign entity- the same principle holds true for the local, national autocephalous Churches. Their independence is of a similar quality and nature to state sovereignty.[103]

In this respect, historically speaking, the papal authority in the West claimed control over the individual state. That means the church challenged the king holding sovereignty in the defined territory. Then, the intervention of the Catholic Church turned into a violation of national sovereignty in the modern age. Along with the conflict-ridden historical process between the church and state, the church was institutionally separated from the state in the Western state-building process.

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[102]Andrey Shishkov, "Church Autocephaly as Sovereignty: A Schmittian Aproach," *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 60, no.3 (2016): 373.

[103]Nicholas Denysenko, The *Church's Unholy War: Russian Invasion of Ukraine and Orthodoxy* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2023), n.a

Regarding Eastern Orthodoxy, the centuries-long notion of autocephaly has turned into its national form, which, as Roudemotof conceptualized, is a modern synthesis of Church and nation.[104] In addition, institutionalization of the autocephalous Church in the newly formed nation-states in the 19th century marks its importance in the modern state-building process. Given that the Orthodox Church and the respective nation-state are based on the same territorial boundaries and they have favorable relations in state-building, their sovereignties do not compete, at least initially. On the contrary, they reinforce each other as they did in the Balkans in the 19th century.

2.3 A Critical Look into the Conceptualization of the Church-State Relation in the Modern State

The church-state relation in the modern state has been examined through the classical secularization theory for a long time. Its origin can be found in Western Europe's social and intellectual history of the 18th and 19th centuries. The modernization process in Western Europe also marked this period; thus, it brought up a seemingly simple question: What is the place of religion in the modern world? The pioneers of sociology, such as Max Weber, Karl Marx, and Emile Durkheim, who were the firsthand witnesses of the changes in the West, most importantly marginalization of the church, proposed that the significance of religion and religious belief would decrease in the transition from the traditional to modern society. This idea renders the foundation of the secularization theory embraced by many, who believe that modernization declines the importance of religion in the modern world.[105]

Some scholars emphasize that secularization theory should not be considered uniform because many academicians, called the theory's defenders, highlight

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[104]Roudometof, *Globalization and Orthodox Church,* 79-101.

[105]See Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York, Doubleday, 1967); Talcott Parsons, "1965 Harlan Paul Douglass Lectures: Religion in a Modern Pluralistic Society," *Review of Religious Research* 7, no.3 (1966):125-146; Robert N. Bellah, Beyond Belief: Essays on Religion in a Post-Traditionalist World (Berkeley:University of California Press, 1970); Richard K. Fenn, "The Process of Secularization: A Post-Parsonian View," *Journal for Scientific Study of Religion* 9, no.2 (1970): 117-136; David Martin, *The Religious and Secular: Studies in Secularization* (New York: Schocken, 1969); David Martin, *A General Theory of Secularization* (New York: Harper&Row, 1978); Bryan R. Wilson, *Religion in Secular Society: A Sociological Comment* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969).

different kinds of processes related to the place of religion in the modern world.[106] They seem to agree that the differentiation process between religious and non-religious spheres lies at the center among various interpretations and approaches. In the words of Casanova:

> Although it is often viewed as a single unified theory, the paradigm of secularization is actually made up of three different and disparate propositions: secularization as differentiation of the secular spheres from religious institutions and norms, secularization as general decline of religious beliefs and practices, and secularization as privatization or marginalization of religion to a privatized sphere. Strictly speaking, the core and central thesis of the theory of secularization is the conceptualization of the historical process of societal modernization as a process of functional differentiation and emancipation of the secular spheres- primarily the state, the economy, and science -from religion and the concomitant specialized and functional differentiation of religion within its own newly found religious sphere.[107]

In addition to this analytical distinction, one can argue that the classical secularization theory encompasses a straightforward relationship between religion and modernization, in which the two are mutually exclusive, leading the eventual disappearance of religion as modernization progresses. In this conceptualization, secularism refers to the institutional separation of church from the state and its confinement to the private sphere. This is also regarded as the single and universal model all modern states will inevitably follow. As eloquently stated by Quack:

> In its most often absorbed form, the secularization thesis resulted not only in the claim that functional spheres get differentiated in the modern age, that religion has been confined to only one of them, and that this sphere as well as its influence on other spheres are constantly shrinking. At its core was also the universalistic and evolutionistic assumption that processes of modernity necessarily led to the respective decline of religion according to the European model all over the world. This idea was so powerful that some scholars assumed that the study of contemporary religious expressions was obsolete and that the topic of religion was to be left to historians.[108]

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[106] See Warrem S. Golstein, "Secularization Patterns in the Old Paradigm," *Sociology of Religion* 70, no.2 (2009): 157-178; Philip S. Gorski, "Historicizing the Secularization Debate: Church, State, and Society in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe, CA. 1300 to 1700," *American Sociological Review* 65, no.1 (2000): 138-167, Jose Casanova, "Secularization," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences (Second Edition Volume 21)*, ed. James D. Wrigth (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2015): 383-387.

[107] Casanova, "Secularization," 384.

[108] Johannes Quack, "Identifying (with) the Secular: Description and Genealogy," in The Oxford Handbook of Secularism, eds. Phil Zuckerman and John R. Shook (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 22.

Since the late 1960s, many scholars have criticized the secularization theory, aiming to either systematize or revise it. In other words, it was commonly believed that the classical secularization theory had its limitations and was often deceptive when it came to interpreting the role of religion in the modern world; however, completely discarding the theory was also deemed a mistake. Since the late 1980s, the secularization theory has been severely attacked and, later, lost dominance, even if some have continued to hold the theory. Greatly varied as they are, the critics of the theory can be separated into two general categories, though with minor overlaps. Firstly, scholars have highlighted that religious belief has not faded out in the world but that new forms of religiosity have emerged. For example, Thomas Luckmann and Grace Davie develop the concepts of 'the invisible religion' and 'believing without belonging,' respectively, both of which refer to the development of new social forms of religiosity rather than the traditional affiliation to the institutional church. While these conceptualizations emphasize subjective religiosity and its new modalities, they at the same time suggest that the significance of religion never has dwindled.[109] Actually, doing what most supporters of the secularization theory did, i.e. assuming that religion has lost its importance based on falling church attendance, is empirically problematic for them.

Secondly, various scholars stress that the global religious upsurges and religious fundamentalism refutes the secularization theory's empirical accuracy about the decline of religion. The core differences of this category from the first one is that the importance of religion declined, but later it was regained. For example, the concept of *deprivatization of religion*, coined by Jose Casanova, influenced the studies about the return of religion to the public sphere. By *deprivatization*, Casanova means "religious traditions throughout the world are refusing to accept the marginal and privatized role which theories of modernity as well as theories of secularization had reserved them."[110] Upon examining Catholic and Protestant churches in four countries- Spain, Poland, Brazil, and the United States, he concludes that the

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[109] Thomas Luckmann, The Invisible Religion: *The Problem of Religion in Modern Society* (New York: Macmillan, 1967); Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing without Belonging* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).

[110] Jose Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1994), 5.

churches become a part of the public sphere through legitimate grounds in accordance with modern values and Catholic churches played a crucial role in democratization process. Casanova, who also accepted the differentiation between religious and secular spheres, argues that the differentiation between the two does not necessarily lead to religious decline and privatization. He explains as follows:

> The assumption that religion will tend to disappear with progressive modernization, a notion which has proven patently false as a general empirical proposition, is traced to genealogically backed to the Enlightenment critique of religion. The analysis affirms that the thesis of the differentiation of the religious and secular spheres is the still defensible core of the theory of secularization. But it hold the related proposition that modern differentiation necessarily entails the marginalization and the privatization of religion or, its logical counterpart that the public religions necessarily endanger the differentiated structure of modernity, to be no longer defensible.[111]

In fact, Casanova's analysis has a productive theoretical perspective within the secularization theory. While the Western-based conflictual historical process imposes separation between church and state, Casanova focuses on the histories of the individual churches and their relations with respective states and societies. This attempt challenged de-politicization of religion in the modern world by maintaining the differentiation of religious and public spheres, which is one of the premises of the modernization process.

Peter Berger, a renowned scholar in the related field, who was previously a staunch supporter of the secularization theory, also suggests that the importance of religion initially declined to eventually return as a counter-movement to the secularization process in a global scale. He argues:

> My point is that the assumption that we live in a secularized world is false. The world today, with some exceptions [...] is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever. This means that a whole body of literature by historians and social scientists loosely labeled "secularization theory" essentially mistaken [...] Although the term 'secularization theory' refers to works from the 1950s and 1960s, the key idea of the theory can indeed be traced to the Enlightenment. The idea is simple: Modernization is necessarily leads to a decline of religion, both in society and in the minds of individuals. And it is precisely this idea that has turned out to be wrong. To be sure, modernization has had some secularizing effects, more in some places than in others. But it has also provoked

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[111]Casanova, *Public Religions*, 7.

powerful movement of counter-secularization. AIso, secularization on the societal level is not necessarily linked to secularization on the level of individual consciousness. Certain religious institutions have lost power and influence in many societies, but both old and new religious and practices have nevertheless continued in the lives of individuals, sometimes taking new institutional forms and sometimes leading to great explosions of religious fervor. Conversely, religiously identified institutions can play social or political roles even when very few people believe or practice the religion that the institutions represent. To say the least, the relation between religion and modernity is rather complicated.[112]

While Berger described the world as massively religious, he gave examples of Western Europe and Western-educated international sub-cultures as the two exceptions for his *desecularization* thesis. In this respect, as Davie, states:

> The idea of European exceptionalism is increasingly, if not universally, accepted by scholars interested in the sociology of religion in the modern world. European patterns of religion are no longer seen as a global prototype, but constitute an unusual case in a world in which vibrant religiosity becomes the norm.[113]

However, the turning of Western Europe, which was previously the model for secularization, into an exceptional case for a desecularized world seems to produce a new kind of universalistic model, even if the linear relation between modernity and religion is challenged. Trying to understand the differences in the rest of the world, some scholars mostly analyzed how the other cases diverged from the secularized Western Europe. In other words, these studies have continued the Eurocentric in essence. In this context, the critics of the Eurocentric and universalistic nature of secularization theory continued to claim that it cannot examine the differences in the world effectively.

While the view that modernization does not necessarily lead to secularization became dominant, the universal model of Western experience in the secularization process was abandoned by Shmuel N. Eisenstadt. He developed the term 'multiple modernities,' through which he suggests: "[M]odernity and Westernization are not

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[112]Peter L. Berger, "The Desecularization of the World: A Global Review," in *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, ed. Peter L. Berger (Washington, D.C: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 2009), 2-3.

[113]Grace Davie, "The persistence of institutional religion in modern Europe,' in *Peter Berger and Study of Religion*, eds. Linda Woodhead, Paul Heelas, and David Martin (London: Routledge, 2001), 101.

identical; Western patterns of modernity are not the only 'authentic' modernities, though they enjoy historical precedence and continue to be basic reference point for others."[114] Briefly, his term challenged the idea that all modernizing and modern societies would inevitably adopt the European-originated cultural program of modernity and its fundamental institutional structures. He maintains:

> The actual developments in modernizing societies have refuted to homogenizing and hegemonic assumptions of this Western program of modernity. While a general trend toward structural differentiation developed across a wide range of institutions in most of these societies- in family life, economic and political structures, modern education, mass communication, and individualistic orientations- the ways in which these arenas were defined and organized varied greatly, in different periods of their development, giving rise to multiple institutional and ideological patterns. Significantly, these patterns did not constitute simple continuations in modern era of traditions of their respective societies. Such patterns of distinctively modern, though greatly influenced by specific cultural premises, traditions, and historical experiences. All develop distinctly modern dynamics and modes interpretations, for which the original Western project constituted the crucial (and usually ambivalent) reference point.[115]

His term multiple modernities also refused the idea that Western experiences are uniform; therefore, he covers "internal and external dynamics of both Western and non-Western countries and embraces diverse paths towards modernity."[116] His conceptualization was reflected in the understanding of church-state relations, mostly a strict institutional separation between religious and political spheres. Many researchers began to emphasize the diversity of secularism, highlighting the social, political, and historical contexts of particular cases.[117] One of the results of this development is the proliferation of categories, types, or classifications of church-

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[114]Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, "Multiple Modernities," *Daedalus* 129, no.1 (2000): 2-3.

[115]Eisenstadt, "Multiple Modernities," 1-2.

[116]Ayşegül Aydıngün, Serhat Keskin, and Hazar Ege Gürsoy, "Georgian Path to Secularism: A Case of 'Cultural Defense,' *Politics, Religion&Ideology* 22, nos 3-4 (2021): 394.

[117] See, for example, Jose Casanova, "The Secular and Secularims," Social Research 76, no.4 (2009); Alfred Stepan, "The Multiple Secularisms of Modern Democratic and Non-Democratic Regimes," *Rethinking Secularism*, eds. Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Jonathan Vanantwerpen (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Peter J. Katzenstein, "Civilizational States, Secularisms, and Religions, *Rethinking Secularism*, eds. Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Jonathan Vanantwerpen (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Edited by Janet R. Jakobsen and Ann Pellegrini, *Secularisms* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008); Edited by Linell E. Candy and Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, *Comparative Secularisms in a Global Age* (New York:Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

state relation to describe the boundaries between religion and politics. What is important here is that a secular state is not necessarily marked by strict institutional separation of the church and the state. Many European states have already developed institutional ties with their respective churches because of historical, political, and social reasons.[118] As such, Perez and Fox claim that "no country worldwide can be classified as adopting the pure, theorized 'separation' model."'[119]

In addition, as discussed in the previous section, the legacy of church-state relations in Eastern Orthodoxy was observed in their cooperation. As can be seen in the literature, the symphonia is still used for describing the church and state relations in the Orthodox majority of countries. For example, Jianu argues:

> The legacy of the symphonia survives in the countries despite the fact that they have also undergone a process of secularisation to a large extent. The symphonic harmony between the religious and the secular in Orthodox countries is reflected in many privileged and hegemonic partnerships between the Church and State, and in the ways public administration had developed and established itself.[120]

Nevertheless, it will be misleading to claim that the above quotation applies to all Orthodox majority countries and there is a single symphonia model.[121] The literature on church-state relations in the Orthodox majorities reveals that there are multiple symphonia(s), like multiple secularisms. In a very similar line, although Kalaitzidis highlighted the common heritage of symphonia for the Orthodox majority countries, he suggests:

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[118]See, edited by John T.S. Madeley and Zsolt Enyedi, Church and State in Contemporary Europe: The Chimera of Neutrality (London: Frank Cass, 2003).

[119]Nahshon Perez and Jonathan Fox, "Normative Theorizing and political data: toward a data-sensitive understanding of the separation between religion and state in political theory," *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 24, no.4 (2021): 2.

[120]Daniel Jianu, "Symphonia and the historical relationship between State and Church: Legacies from Byzantine times until today," in *Orthodox Religion and Politics in Contemporary Eastern Europe: On Multiple Secularisms and Entanglements*, ed. Tobias Köllner (London and New York: Routledge, 2019), 18.

[121]See, for example, Edited by Tobias Köllner, *Orthodox Religion and Politics in Contemporary Eastern Europe: On Multiple Secularisms and Entanglements* (London and New York: Routledge, 2019); John Anderson, Putin and The Russian Orthodox Church: Asymmetric Symphonia?, *Journal of International Affairs* 61, no.1 (2007); Kristen Ghodsee, "Symphonic Secularism: Eastern Orthodoxy, Ethnic Identity and Religious Freedoms in Contemporary Bulgaria," *Anthoropology of East Europe Review* 27, no.2 (2009). Cyrill Hovorun, "Is the 'Byzantine Symphony' Possible in Our Days?," Journal of Church and State 59, no.2 (2016).

> [W]hen we have to deal with church-state relations in the Orthodox world, it is useful always to bear in mind that it is not about monolithic or unified world, but of a variety of types or models of church-state relationship, ranging from 'established church' to 'strict separationism.' A further difficulty, and even a paradox of our topic is that, as Western standards are not always applicable to these countries, it happens that legally speaking, the most secular country, with a strict separationism model of church-state relationship like Russia, is more authoritarian and much less democratic and liberal than for example Greece, which reflects an incomplete secular model, and has an establishment type of church-state relationship.[122]

In light of the theoretical analysis of this section, it can be concluded that the church-state relation varied and the strict separation is neither a single model nor necessary for defining the state as secular. The clash between the catholic churches and the states starting with the Reformation ended up with the adoption of Protestantism, through which the religious authority was controlled by the political power, or with a strict separation between the church and the state, wherein religion is confined to the private sphere. When it comes to the Orthodox world, the dynamics are quite different because Orthodox communities mostly have been ruled by different imperial powers like the Russian and the Ottoman Empires and communist and socialist regimes.

Thus, another significant point is the close link between the Orthodox Church and the state-formation of Orthodox majority countries, which have long been ruled by imperial powers or totalitarian communist and socialist regimes, which officially banned religion in public and private sphere. In such cases, the church collaborated with political actors against the "invader," aimed at forming an independent and sovereign state, which was followed by the establishment of an autocephalous church in the state's territory. The case of Ukraine should be analyzed from this perspective because the collapse of the Soviet Union and the establishment of the independent Ukrainian state was never complete as the political influence of the Russian Federation continued. The Russian State's influence is effective through both political and religious institutions (Russian churches) on Ukrainian land and by defining Ukraine as part of its own canonical territory. This shows that an autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox Church is vital for a sovereign, independent modern state.

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[122]Kalaitzidis, "Church and State in the Orthodox World," 40.

CHAPTER 3

THE HISTORY OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY IN UKRAINE UP TO 1991: THE CONFLICTING NARRATIVES OF UKRAINE AND RUSSIA

3.1 Introduction

The idea of 'the national church of Ukraine' has been a controversial issue between Ukraine and Russia for a very long time. It turned into a highly problematic subject with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, followed by Ukraine becoming an independent and sovereign state. The four Eastern churches (re)emerged in post-Soviet Ukraine: the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP), the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kyiv Patriarchate (hereafter the Kyiv Patriarchate), the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. These churches claimed to be the national church of Ukraine, and their claims were rooted in the history of Ukraine. The political-religious developments provided a ground for Ukrainian and Russian national historiographies to claim the legitimacy of their respective Orthodox churches in post-Soviet Ukraine.[123] In this regard, through narratives, Ukrainian and Russian historians underlined their own

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[123]The terms 'Ukrainian' and 'Russian' are mainly used to identify the scholars' viewpoints on the respective 'national' historiographies. Furthermore, the usage of 'national' does not necessarily mean that all Ukrainian and Russian historians follow their respective historiographies. It is already accepted that Ukrainian and Russian historians can have contradictory views within 'national' categories. In addition, the terms 'Ukrainian' and 'Russian' might not only signify national categories but also a widely accepted common ground of international scholars. Thus, unless otherwise stated, instead of *scholars* following the Ukrainian or Russian national historiography, the terms *Ukrainian* and *Russian* will be used to indicate for the ideas and approaches of respective national historiographies. Complex as it may seem, this usage prevents repetitions in the text.

Four main 'schools' have governed the narration of the history of Ukraine: Russophile (known as Russian imperial), Sovietophile, Eastern Slavic, and Ukrainophile (Ukrainian National). For detailed information regarding how they differ, see Paul R. Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine: The Land and Its People* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 12-25; Taras Kuzio, "National Identity and History Writing in Ukraine," *Nationalities Papers* 34, no. 4 (2006): 407-427.

unbroken Christian tradition in general and their claims over the legacy of Christianity in the Kyivan *Rus'*[124] state in particular.[125]

This chapter presents the historical course of Orthodox Christianity from its beginning to 1991, within the related political backgrounds, by drawing on conflicting Ukrainian and Russian perspectives. To this end, the chapter focuses on Kyiv Metropolitanate as an institution. It also briefly explains some issues related to the Kyiv Metropolitanate, such as its role in the identity and the state formations of Ukraine.[126] As it is difficult to consider all directly or indirectly relevant issues within the scope of this chapter, it examines the narratives that are the most debatable and significant for the comprehension of the post-Soviet debates over the creation of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in 2019.

3.2 The Origin and Early Spread of Christianity in the Region

Christianity is widely accepted to have spread from *Rus'* land, following the baptism of Volodymyr in 988 in Chersonesos in the Crimean Peninsula and his declaration of Christianity as the official religion for the Kyvian *Rus'* state. Nevertheless, studies pay little attention to the debates on the appearance of Christianity and its early expansion. The discussions on the pre-988 presence of Christianity in the region indicate that Ukrainian and Russian historians have developed national claims over the origin of Christianity in the region and presented their respective churches as historical carriers of the Christian tradition. This potentially explains how Ukrainians

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[124]While most Ukrainians call it 'Kyivan *Rus'*', Russians prefer to use the term 'Kyivan Russia.' The Russian usage of 'Kyivan Russia' directly links the Kyiv state to the Russian Empire, which later developed around the city of Moscow. Steven Otfinoski, *Ukraine* (New York: Facts on File, 2005), 4. The term *Rus'* should not be confused with 'Russian' as an ethnic identity. It signifies the inhabitants of the Kyivan *Rus'* state, which survived as a significant political entity from the late ninth century to the mid-13th century.

[125]This chapter mainly presents different views of historians/academicians on the historical developments of the Kyiv Metropolitanate. The following chapter gives room to the narratives of Ukrainian and Russian church leaders and politicians on the Ukrainian autocephaly in the post-Soviet period.

[126]In this chapter, national historiographies of Ukrainians and Russians will be utilized to the extent to which they are useful to understand the Kyiv Metropolitanate's historical course. In other words, the detailed analysis of how Ukrainian and Russian national historiographies regard their respective identity and state formations is beyond the scope of this chapter.

and Russians have asserted their churches' apostolic origin. That is, the debate on the pre-988 presence of Christianity presents one of the narratives regarding how Ukraine and Russia boost the idea that they have unbroken Christian tradition since the early spread of Christianity.

It is commonly believed that the region in which Christianity started to spread and formed a Christian community has particular importance among Christian communities. Indeed, if one of the Apostles directly brings Christianity to the region and creates a church therein, this church can assert apostolic origin.[127] That is why several versions of the legend of St. Andrew missionary visits were promoted by Orthodox communities, including the Istanbul Patriarchate, to prove their apostolic roots and long-term historical existence. Thus, the legend of St. Andrew became a tradition and a source of prestige among churches. In this regard, the Ukrainian and Russian (church) historians frequently refer to the missionary journey of St. Andrew in 55 A.D. to explain how and when Christianity reached ancient Ukrainian land. One version of the missionary journey of St. Andrew in ancient Ukrainian land is described as follows in the *Tale of Bygone Years*:[128]

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[127]The terms describing the apostolic origin of the assumed Church is not limited to the early period of Christianity in the first century and the Twelve Apostles. For different interpretations of the apostolic origin, its historical implementations, and also related terms such as 'Equal to Apostles' and 'Apostolic Succession of Bishops,' see; Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964); Francis Dvornik, *The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium and the Legend of the Apostle Andrew* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958).

[128]This Chronicle is also known as *Chronicle of Nestor*, *Kyivan Chronicle*, *Russian Primary Chronicle*. Its Russian title was often translated into English as the *Tale of Bygone Years*. It is widely accepted as an essential information source about the history of Kyivan *Rus'* state between the 850s and the 1110s, when supposedly a monk named Nestor completed it. Indeed, varied information on, such as Slavic identity, state structures and rulers of that period, and social relations in the Kyivan *Rus'* realm was primarily obtained from this Chronicle. Most historians benefit from it in their studies and try to combine its contexts with other medieval chronicles, annals, or oral traditions to provide consistent information. However, it is also presumed that the *Tale of Bygone Years* may not be the product of one author. Many must have contributed to at different periods, leading to more than one surviving edition. Thus, it is not surprising that it contains contradictory myths, legends, stories, and narratives, leaving on the minds of readers many unanswered questions. Though it is accepted that all additions to the text or omissions from it must have reflected the political, social, and religious atmospheres at the date of revisions, tracing the changes in its context has been a daunting task for the historians who study the *Tale of Bygone Years* and other Chronicles. In fact, historians still have not reached a consensus over the reliability of the *Tale of Bygone Years* and other medieval chronicles as an information source about that period. Historians' perception of the related issues in the medieval texts and their contextual presentations are more important for a sociologist than yhe correctness of the information in the chronicles as regards the aim of this chapter (specifically, the first five sections of this chapter). Thus, throughout this chapter, the limitations mentioned above are considered, yet studies are referred to more for the presentation of holistic perspectives.

When Andrew was teaching in Sinope came to [...] Kherson [...], he observed that the mouth of the Dnieper was near by. Conceiving a desire to go to Rome, he thus journeyed to the mouth of the Dnieper. Thence he ascended the river, and by chance he halted beneath the hills upon the shore. Upon arising in the morning, he observed to the disciples who were with him, 'See ye these hills? So shall the favor of God shine upon them that on this spot a great city shall arise, and God shall erect many churches therein.' He drew near the hills, and having blessed them, he set up a cross. After offering his prayer to God, he descended from the hill on which Kiev was subsequently built, and continued his journey up the Dnieper. He then reached the Slavs at the point where Novgorod is now situated. He saw these people existing according to their custom, and observing how they bathed and scrubbed themselves, he wondered at them.[129]

As can be seen in this text, Ukrainian and Russian historians largely agreed that (1) St. Andrew brought Christianity to the *Rus'* land, and (2) the traces of Christianity in the coastal sides of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov date back to the first century.[130] A noted Russian Orthodox metropolitan, theologian and church historian Makari Bulgakov compared legends with the texts from the Middle Ages, and he concluded that St. Andrew came to the southern part of the Crimean peninsula as

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[129]Samuel H. Cross and Olgerd P. Sherbowitzs-Wetzor, *The Russian Primary Chronicle, Laurentian Text* (Cambridge: Crimson Printing Company,1953), 53-54.

[130]Therefore, the legends in which the coastal cities of the Black Sea are mentioned became more relevant for studies on the spread of Christianity in ancient Ukrainian lands. According to hagiographic works, the Kingdom of Bosphorus, located on both sides of the Kerch Strait, where the Ancient Greek colonies had settled, became a refuge for dissident Christians, who were subjected to the religious persecution of the Roman Empire. It is also believed that St. Clement, the fourth pope, who was deported to Chersonesos in the Crimean peninsula in 92 by the Roman Emperor Trajan, saw Christians inspired by St. Andrew before the Christians came from the Roman Empire. He was killed in 101, upon the order of the Roman Emperor, but he managed to convert more people to Christianity, so he played a prominent role in the Christianization of the region. Following the death of St. Clement, Christianity continued to spread in both coastal sides and the steppe hinterland. The Germanic tribes of Goths defeated Sarmatians in around the third century, and they settled in the Ukrainian land. However, their control in the steppe hinterland brought to halt by the Hun invasion in 375, and the movement of Ostrogoths, a branch of Goths, who largely adopted Byzantine Christianity, to the Crimean peninsula. The Eparchy of Gothia was established in their capital Doros under the ecclesiastical authority of the Istanbul Patriarchate around the fourth century. At the beginning of the sixth century, the northern part of the Black Sea came under the direct control of the Byzantine Empire. However, in the late seventh century, Khazars took control of the entire Crimean peninsula with the exception of Chersonesos. The relatively peaceful diplomatic relations between the Byzantine Empire and Khazar and their collaboration against nomads from step hinterland gave momentum to the spreading of Christianity in the Crimean peninsula. Besides, as in the first century, many dissident Christians arrived at the Crimean Peninsula. Thanks to Pope Martin I, who was exiled in the mid-seventh century, Chersonesos acquired a considerable place as a Christian center. Many others came to Chersonesos following the iconoclastic controversy in the Byzantine Empire in the eighth and nineth centuries. Parallel to the expansion of Christianity, a bishopric was formed under the Archbishop of Gothia at the beginning of the eighth century. In addition, Cyril and Methodius, who created the early form Church Slavonic language, arrived in Crimea in the 860s for missionary activities. They also conducted missions to Slavic people in Greater Moravia. The influence of this mission reached the farthest western regions of present-day Ukraine. For more information on the spread of Christianity in the ancient Ukrainian land to the 860s, see Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine*, 75-76.

well as reaching the coasts of the northern side of the Black Sea and the other regions in the Russian Empire.[131] However, Ukrainian scholars refused that St. Andrew visited the North, nor did they admit that St. Andrew made a missionary journey to any region that became a part of Russia.[132]

The assumed missionary journey of St. Andrew to Kyiv lacks archeological evidence, and even the portrayal of the *Tale of Bygone Years* does not point to any church establishment or a Christianized community. In fact, this text is only one of the versions for the legend of St. Andrew, as mentioned before. The quoted text is believed to have been written in Kyiv around the 12th century. This means that the assumed journey of St. Andrew was transcribed, roughly eleven centuries after St. Andrew and a hundred years after the official baptism of Kyivan *Rus'* state and the creation of the Kyiv Metropolitanate under the jurisdiction of Istanbul. Undoubtedly, a variety of reasons must have prompted Kyivan *Rus'* clergies and rulers to develop the legend of St. Andrew.[133] One thing is clear: The legend of St. Andrew led some

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[131]Cited in Mara Kozelsky, "The Challenges of Church Archaeology in Post-Soviet Crimea," in *Selective Remembrances: Archaeology in the Construction, Commemoration, and Consecration of National Pasts*, eds. Philip L. Kohl, Mara Kozelsky, and Nachman Ben-Yehuda (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 76.

[132]Cited in Andrew Wilson, *The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nations* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015), 33.

[133]One of the ideas on the apostolic foundation developed during the period of Metropolitan Ilarion (1051-1054). The metropolitans of Kyiv are accepted to be Greeks coming from the Istanbul Patriarchate since the assumed establishment of the Kyiv Metropolitanate in 988 after the baptism of Volodymyr. Only two non-Greek metropolitans went to the office during the Kyivan *Rus'* period. Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 49. The first attempt to ensure a native metropolitan in Kyiv instead of the Greek ones was made during the Yaroslav's period (1036-1054). The Metropolitan Ilarion became the metropolitan of Kyiv in 1051. He was the writer of the *Sermon on Law and Grace*. This work also highlights the idea of the apostolic foundation of Kyiv Church over Prince Volodymyr in the Kyivan *Rus'* state. For detailed information, see Enrique S. Marinas, "Christian Myths of Origin among the East Slavs: The Alleged Apostolic Roots of Christianity in the Kievan Rus'," in *Europe of Nations. Myths of Origins: Modern and Postmodern Discources* (Aveiro University, 2011). On the other hand, describing the assumed missionary journey of St. Andrew, the *Tale of Bygone Years* sacredizes the region of Kyiv through the blessing of St. Andrew, and presents the inhabitants of Novgorod with their 'bizarre' traditions. In fact, the 'invention' of St. Andrew's missionary journey in the 11-12th century might have reflected onto the political competition between the Kyiv region, the center of Orthodox Christianity at that time, and the northern parts of the region-Vladimir-Suzdal and Novgorod. With political competition between the region of Kyiv and the North, religious tension was mounting. Clement Smolyatch, a native metropolitan of Kyiv, was elected in 1147 for the Kyiv Metropolitanate without the approval of the Istanbul Patriarchate. The northern princes rejected the native metropolitan. This tension between Kyiv and the North might have also raised the need to promote Kyiv through the St. Andrew missionary journey. See, Danylo Leshchyshyn, "Legacies of the First-Called: Saint Andrew and Claims to Apostolic Succession in the Rus'-Byzantine World," *The Macksey Journal* 2, Article 125

authors, such as Chubaty and Bilaniuk to argue that the Ukrainian Church is an apostolic church whose origin dates back to the very beginning of Christianity. In addition, these authors claim the presence of Christianity in Ukraine if the subsequent religious developments in the Ukrainian land are considered.[134] However, Kost Panas asserts that "the legend of Andrew may have been a later invention designed to boost the Ukrainian Church's claim to autocephaly as an original 'apostolic' foundation."[135]

Russians' invention of St. Andrew's missionary journey to the region dates back to around the 16th century. Before that time, Russians make few, if any, reference to the missionary journey of St. Andrew. This period almost coincided with when Moscow declared unilateral independence from the Istanbul Patriarchate and argued that Istanbul was no longer the 'protector' of Orthodox Christianity due to the conquest of Istanbul in 1453 by the Ottoman Empire. The interest in the assumed journey of St. Andrew among Russian Orthodox hierarchs and political rulers increased in the 17th century, when the authority of the Istanbul Patriarchate weakened and the Pope increased its activities in the region. For example, the Chronicles in the Muscovites referred to St. Andrew's visit to the region as evidence to the equality of Moscow Church to the Istanbul Patriarchate principally. In addition, the promotion of St. Andrew's journey became an instrument to break the religious domination of Istanbul on Moscow and strengthen their claim to being an independent and unique sacred mission in Orthodoxy.[136]

Crimean peninsula holds a crucial place for Russians for their claims over the origin of Christianity in the region. The archeological findings, such as Christian symbols

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(2021): 1-26. Besides the reasons arising from the regional contexts, the Great Schism in 1054 led to the division between Istanbul and Rome, and then between Eastern and Latin. That is, the promotion of the missionary journey of St. Andrew might be indicative of that the Kyiv Metropolitanate is as old as that of Istanbul, which also accepted St. Andrew as the founder of own church. As stated before, all these interpretations open ground to counter-interpretations. What is important here is that the Kyiv Metropolitanate was seen as the source of prestige and legitimacy by the political entities, as further discussed in this chapter. In addition, possessing the Kyiv Metropolitanate became a means of defining the 'other' in the region.

[134]Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine*, 76.

[135]Cited in Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 369.

[136]Daniel H. Shubin, *A History of Russian Christianity. Volume I: From the Earliest Years through Tsar Ivan IV* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2004), 9-14.

and inscriptions in the Chersonesos in Crimea, go back to the late third and early fourth centuries. Besides tangible evidence of the spreading of Christianity in the Crimean peninsula, Kozelsky draws attention to the 'church archaeology' and underlines the active participation of the Moscow Patriarchate in the archaeological excavations in the Crimean peninsula after the Russian Empire took control of the region in 1783. By showing the ruins in the Crimean peninsula as evidence to the existence of Holy figures of Orthodoxy in Crimea, the Russian side described Crimea as 'the cradle of Russian Christianity.'[137] In this respect, Kozelsky presents the complex interplay between Orthodox Christianity and archeology, and she explains how Christianity/Orthodoxy in Crimea became the forefront of the Russian identity discourse toward other ancient inhabitants of the Crimean peninsula, such as Muslim Crimean Tatars.[138] She also stated:

> Ruins in Crimea are perceived as having not only a special Orthodox significance, but a special Russian significance as well. Archaeology in this case, and undoubtedly elsewhere in the Orthodox world, has become an instrument of faith and a link between Church and state. And ironically, the state in question is not Ukrainian, but Russian.[139]

In short, Ukraine and Russia contested Christianity's first appearance and its early spread in the region. They often disputed over where St. Andrew reached. As stated earlier, the authenticity of St. Andrew's missionary journey to the region is questionable, and the historical documents based on the context of the Chronicle are open to 'infinitely different' interpretations. On the other hand, archaeological findings about the expansion of Christianity in the Crimean peninsula demonstrate archaeological presentation of the past promotes the 'Russian Orthodoxy.' What is important here is that the presumed apostolic origin between Ukraine and Russia is seen as one of the narratives stressing the historical transmission of Christianity in

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[137]During the period of Catherina II (1762-1796), Chersonesos renamed Korsun, the ancient Russian name. Many historians, archeologists, and priests came to the Crimean peninsula to find the ruins of the ancient church, in which Volodymyr was supposedly baptized in 988. For detailed information on the 'archaeology of Korsun legend' within its political and religious contexts in the 19th century and how it promoted Russian 'unique' role in Eastern Christianity by propagating the 'holy past' of Crimea. See Mara Kozelsky, "Ruins into Relics: The Monument to Saint Vladimir on the Excavations of Chersonesos, 1827-57," *The Russian Review* 63, no.4 (2004): 655-672.

[138]Kozelsky, "The Challenges of Church Archaeology in Post-Soviet Crimea."

[139]Kozelsky, 91.

the region. In addition, the narratives regarding the early touch of Christianity and its rooted Christian past make the Crimean peninsula the 'symbolic capital,' which Russia has continued to rise after the annexation of the peninsula in 2014.

3.3 The Christianity in the Kyivan *Rus'* State

Christianity in the region spread gradually among pagans during the ninth century, and it gained momentum after the baptism of Grand Prince Volodymyr in 988. The spreading of Christianity in the late ninth century is mainly associated with the Varangian rule. Two Varangian leaders, Askold and Dir established control over Kyiv, and they launched a military campaign to Istanbul in 860. Allegedly, this attack on Istanbul provided a ground for their baptism.[140] In 882, Oleh, the Varangian ruler of Novgorod, defeated Askold and Dir, and he made Kyiv the capital of the Kyivan *Rus'* state. He declared Kyiv "should be the mother of Russian cities."[141] Thus, he is widely accepted as the first leader of the Kyivan *Rus'* state. The information on the presence of Christianity in his period is mainly obtained from sources referring to the treaty in 911 with the Byzantine Emperor and the *Tale of Bygone Years.* It is believed that Oleh took an oath in compliance with the pagan, rather than Christian, traditions.[142] Following Oleh, Ihor ascended the throne in the Kyvian *Rus'* state.[143] He also signed a treaty in 944 with the Byzantine Empire. This treaty is also a crucial source for the studies regarding the Christianization of the Kyivan *Rus'* state. Supposedly, the two ceremonies were organized in Istanbul and Kyiv. The depictions of the oath-taking ceremonies, however, could not present clear evidence to what extent Christianity was predominant among Kyivan rulers and inhabitants.[144]

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[140]The information about whether they were baptized, and if they were, how and where they were baptized is not clear. In addition, the historical evidence lacks reliable answers to the question of whether Istanbul nominated a bishop to Kyiv.

[141]Cross and Sherbowitzs-Wetzor, *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 61.

[142]Aleksandr A. Vasiliev, "The Second Russian Attack on Constantinople," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 6, (1951): 166-169.

[143]Ihor spent many years establishing control in the state against rebellious tribes. After gaining political dominance, he launched a massive military campaign against the Byzantine Empire.

[144]For more information, see M. N. Tikhomirov, "The Origins of Christianity in Russia," *History* 44, no.152 (1959): 199-211; John Fennell, *A History of the Russian Church to 1448* (New York: Longman Publishing, 1995), 24-25.

After the death of Ihor, his wife, Olga came to power in 945 as she was the regent for his young son, Sviatoslav.[145] Unlike her predecessors, she aimed to develop peaceful diplomatic relations with the Byzantine Empire. In one of her missions to Istanbul, she converted to Christianity.[146] This fostered political and commercial ties with the Byzantine Empire. Although Olga's conversion strengthened the presence of Christianity in the Kyvian *Rus'* state, it did not lead to mass conversion. Sviatoslav, Olga's son, came to power in 962. He did not accept Christianity and died as a pagan.[147] The death of Sviatoslav in 972 led to fierce competition among his three sons: Yaropolk, Oleh, and Volodymyr. Yaropolk ruled the Kyivan *Rus'* state for eight years, but Volodymyr defeated him in 980, and ascended the throne. The Volodymyr period would be groundbreaking for the spreading of Christianity.

These political and religious developments demonstrate that, although the presence of Christianity can be traced among rulers and, to some extent, among inhabitants, Christianity could not attract the masses. Indeed, paganism and Christianity coexisted in Kyiv. The study of Tolochko on the location of religious sites (the pagan temples and the Christian Churches) in Kyiv, mainly before the Volodmyr period, confirms the coexistence of these two belief systems, but it draws attention to the complex ideological situation at the time before the official introduction of Christianity in the state.[148] In addition, the ecclesiastical matter of whether the Istanbul Patriarchate nominated a bishop for the Kyivan *Rus'* state before 988 or not is debatable.

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[145]Olga successfully gained control on the various tribes in the state and forced them to pay tributes. This improved the financial and political stands of the state.

[146]According to some sources, Olga was already Christian when she went to Istanbul. In addition, she also attempted to establish religious relations with Germans during the Christianization of Poland. For detailed information for Olga's conversion and the supposed ecclesiastical structure in Olga's period, see Francis Butler, "Ol'ga Conversion and the Construction of Chronicle Narrative," The Russian Review 67, no.2 (2008): 230-242; John L. Fennell, *A History of the Russian Church to 1448*, 26-31; Andrzej Poppe, "Once Again Concerning the Baptism of Olga, Archontissa of Rus,'" *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 46, no. 46 (1992): 271-277.

[147]In his ten years on the throne, he gained prominence as a warrior due to his constant military attacks to enlarge the state's realm and seize trade routes from the Baltic to the Black Sea.

[148]Petro P. Tolochko, "Religious Sites in Kiev During the Reign of Volodimer Sviatoslavich," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 11, no.3/4 (1987): 317-322. Tolochko also makes some interpretations regarding the first decades after the official introduction of Christianity in 988.

When Volodymyr came to power in 980, he succeeded in expanding the territory of the Kyivan *Rus'* state.[149] The expansion of the state increased the social fragmentations within boundaries, which were already problematic due to the continuous uprisings of the Slavic tribes. Therefore, he tried to find a way to promote social cohesion in the state. For him, separate pagan cultures of Slavic tribes threatened the state's social unity, thus political unity. Therefore, he established the state pantheon headed by Perun, a pagan deity. He enforced this single form of paganism across the state. Although this effort had some positive effects, it failed to solve the problem of division in the state.[150]

With such motivation, Volodymyr was baptized and converted to Christianity in Chersonesos in 988.[151] When Vladimir returned to Kyiv, he declared Christianity as the state religion. To Christianize the inhabitants of Kyiv, he ordered people to get en masse baptism in the waters of Pochaino River, a tributary of the Dnieper. The pagan

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[149]Volodymyr initially engaged in regaining state control by launching military campaigns against rebellious tribes. In addition, he wished to expand state borders toward the West to capture trade routes and improve alternative roads to Istanbul. His conquest of contemporary Western Ukraine led to a long-lasting competition with Poland. As a result of his territorial expansion, the Kyivan *Rus'* state became the largest one in Europe. In addition to military campaigns, he paid attention to securing state borders, so he constructed a fortification system against Pechenegs. To strengthen his dynastic power in domestic affairs, he dismissed native princes from the seat of local principalities; instead, he assigned his sons. Subtelny*, Ukraine: A History*, 32-33. In addition, the term *Rus'* was for the ruling elite of Varangian origin; it began to refer to "the territories and their inhabitants living under the rule of Volodymyr I and his filial representatives." Paul R. Magocsi, *Ukraine: An Illustrated History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), 36.

[150]Boris Rauschenbach, "The Development of Kievan Rus' in the wake of Christianization," in *The Christianization of Ancient Russia. A Millennium: 988-1988*, ed. Yves Hamant (Paris: UNESCO Press, 1992), 44.

[151]For the widely accepted narrative, the political turbulence in the Byzantine Empire became the turning point of Christianity in the Kyivan *Rus'* state. The legitimate Byzantine Emperor Basil II faced upsurging in 987, led by Bardas Phocas. Supposedly, Basil II asked Volodymyr for military aid to suppress the growing revolt. Volodymyr agreed to send the military assistance on the condition that he would marry Basil II's sister, Anna. Although Volodmyr helped quell the rebellion, Basil II did not send Anna for the promised marriage. In response, Volodymyr seized control of Crimea and Chersonesos. Basil II, who refrained from a new political chaos, allowed this marriage, but on the condition that Volodymyr would get baptized. Volodymyr accepted this condition and was baptized in 988 in Chersonesos. This is one of the narratives presenting how and when Volodymyr was baptized. Ostrowski claimed that *the Tale of Bygone Years* is "a compilation of four distinct conversion stories, involving [...] five traditions, tide loosely together." Donald Ostrowski, "The Account of Volodimer's Conversion in the Povest' vremennykh let: A Chiasmus of Stories," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 28, no.1-4 (2006): 567. Besides, the chronology of events of in the text, the motives behind Volodymyr's baptism, and other details of the process are also matters of controversy among (church) historians. For different perspectives on these issues, see Ostrowski, "The Account of Volodimer's Conversion" 567-580; Andrzej Poppe, "The Political Background to the Baptism of Rus': Byzantine-Russian Relations between 986-89," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 30 (1976):195-244.

idols and temples were replaced by churches. The religious hierarchs coming from Istanbul took crucial positions in the institutional structure of the newly established churches. Besides, Volodymyr gave substantial concessions and autonomy to these churches. For example, 10% of the state income was allocated to the churches.[152] It is also believed that the Kyiv Metropolitanate, under the jurisdiction of the Istanbul Patriarchate, was established shortly after 988. However, there is scanty evidence that a metropolitanate existed under the Istanbul Patriarchate until 1037.

After adopting Christianity, the Kyivan *Rus'* state went through significant cultural, political, and commercial changes. The Church Slavonic, a literary language which is formed based on the south-Slavic dialect and the shapes of St. Cyrill and Methodius alphabet, began to be used and disseminate Christian culture and tradition in the state. Furthermore, the adoption of Christianity via the Byzantine Empire enabled the Kyivan *Rus'* state to distinguish itself from the Catholic Slavic communities in the region, thus create a common identity. Politically, the Kyivan *Rus'* state won the recognition of other Christian states in Europe; this enabled dynastic marriages with European counterparts, which facilitated diplomatic relations with Europe. Stronger political ties with Europe increased the commercial capacity of the state. In short, the period of Volodymyr was a watershed in the spread of Christianity in the Kyivan *Rus'* state. Adapting Christianity gave the state significant advantages, so Kyiv became a hub of political, cultural, and commercial activities in the 11th century.[153]

Yaroslav came to power after Volodymyr,[154] and he took the spread of Christianity and the institutional formation of the church structure much further. His reign is considered the zenith of the Kyivan *Rus'* state. He expanded the state territory, as well as ensuring political and social stability. To this end, he developed the rotation system to prevent the state from the throne fights.[155] Furthermore, the basis of a law

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[152]Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 33.

[153]See, Subtelny, 33-34; Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine*, 78; Magocsi, *Ukraine: An Illustrated History*, 36; Serhii Plokhy, *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), 35.

[154]The death of Volodymyr in 1015 led to a stiff fight for the throne among his sons. With the help of Poles, Sviatopolk, the eldest son of Volodymyr, killed his three brothers, Sviatoslav, Borys, and Hlib to ascend the throne. However, Yaroslav defeated Sviatoslav in 1019 with the help of Varangians. He shared political authority with his brother, Mstyslav. Upon the death of Mstyslav in 1036, Yaroslav took his land and became the only ruler of the state. Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 34.

[155]Although this system worked for a short time after the death of Yaroslav, it would later become more complex, putting uncles and nephews in a fight for the throne.

code, known as *Ruskaia Pravda/Pravda Russkaia,* or *Rus' Law,* was formed in his era. This law code was used throughout the state and made inhabitants feel like living in a single polity. Besides domestic affairs, the Kyivan *Rus'* state was integrated into the rest of medieval Europe through marriage alliances.[156] In addition to his activities in the political sphere, he endeavored to spread Christianity in the state and consolidate it institutionally. Many churches and monasteries were constructed in his period. Notably, the construction of St. Sophia Church modeled from Hagi Sophia in Istanbul started soon after he came to power. It was in this period that the Kyiv Pechersk Lavra, also known as Kyiv Monastery of the Caves, was constructed. These religious centers became an important place for religious and educational activities. Many Greek religious texts were translated into the Church Slavonic language.[157] He also called for the preparation of historical chronicles, the most prominent ones being the *Tale of Bygone Years* and the *Sermon on Law and Grace*. For Magocsi, historical chronicles in his period "provided common 'foundation myths' and eventually a common historical consciousness" for all lands of the state.[158] As stated previously, one of the most remarkable achievements regarding the religious sphere was related to the establishment of the Kyiv Metropolitanate. In 1037, a metropolitanate diocese was established under the Istanbul Patriarchate. Although the Byzantine culture was dominant in the church hierarchy, Yaroslav nominated the first native metropolitan, Ilarion. In general, Plokhy describes his period as follows:

> Volodymyr brought Christianity to Rus', but it fell to his successors to define what that would mean for the politics, culture, and international relations of the realm and to secure a place for Rus' in the Christian community of nations led by the Byzantine emperor. None of Volodymyr's successor was more important in making those definitions than his son Yaroslav. While Yaroslav's grandfather, Sviatoslav, became known as 'the Brave,' and his father, Volodymyr 'the Great,' Yaroslav gained renown as 'the Wise.' He could also have been named 'Lawgiver' or 'Builder,' indicating that the main accomplishments of his rule, which lasted well over a quarter century, from 1019 to 1054, were not won on the battlefield but attained in the realm peace and culture, state and nation building.[159]

As stated at the beginning of this section, Christianity began to spread in the Kyivan *Rus'* realm in the mid-ninth century, and it gained momentum in the state after 988.

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[156]Magocsi, *Ukraine: An Illustrated History*, 38.

[157]Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine*, 102-105.

[158]Magocsi, *Ukraine: An Illustrated History*, 38.

[159]Plokhy, *The Gates of Europe,* 35.

Undoubtedly, the periods of Volodymyr and Yaroslav were groundbreaking for the dissemination of Christian traditions. However, their periods do not mark the definite triumph of Christianity over paganism for all the lands of the state. The entrenchment of Christianity took more than two centuries in the region. Most of the Ukrainian and Russian historians confide in the idea Christianity and paganism coexisted in the region. Besides, the existing evidence suggests that Christianity arrived in the northern part of the Kyivan *Rus'* state later than in the southern part. Categorically, the pagans or pagan priests in the southern part of the region had little influence, so the resistance to Christianity was low. In contrast, Christianity in the northern towns, where present-day Russia is situated, faced strong opposition.[160] According to the Ukrainian view, the late arrival of Christianity to the North is related to 'ethnic' differences between the South and the North, or between Ukrainians and Russians, respectively. However, Wilson attributes the different paces in the spread of Christianity to a "simple geographical remoteness or a more likely distinction between elites and masses."[161]

Besides the pace of the spreading of Christianity, it is no doubt that Volodymyr and Yaroslav were two significant rulers in the Kyivan *Rus'* state, who brought revolutionary changes in political and religious spheres. Both contemporary Ukraine and Russia are proud of these two figures' glories and commemorated them in their respective national histories. This is not surprising for scholars who emphasize how historical figures and the 'Golden Ages' are instrumentalized in all nation-states. However, the different perspectives of Ukrainian and Russian national historiographies are also evident in the debate over these two historical figures' ethnic affiliations and which one owns the legacy of the Kyivan *Rus'* state. In general, the Russian historiography views the Kyvian *Rus'* state as a common cradle of all Eastern Slavs-Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus. Its modern founders, the famous Russian historians Nikolai Karamzin, S.M. Solov'ev, and V.O Kliuchevskii, regard the Kyivan *Rus'* state, which "emerged in the tenth century in central Ukraine, as the

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[160]Ivan Katchanovski, Zenon E. Kohut, Bohdan Y. Nebesio, and Myroslav Yurkevich, *Historical Dictionary of Ukraine* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2013), 75.

[161]Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 34.

first Russian state and its East Slavic inhabitants as Russians."[162] That is, classical Russian history offers the history of Kyivan *Rus'* state as the first phase of Russian history, thereby for the history of church and Christianity as Russian.[163] In contrast, Ukrainian historiography developed by Mykhailo Hrushevskyi rejected the premises of the Russian historiography by claiming that the Kyivan *Rus'* state is a part of Ukrainian history.[164] As for Ukrainian identity formations in the Kyvian *Rus'* period, Wilson presents two Ukrainian views: "either Rus was only ever a loose agglomeration of peoples; or the opposite-Rus was relatively united early Ukrainian state, dubbed Ukraine-Rus, from which the Russian nation emerged as a later offshoot."[165] In short, this section shows that the heritage of Christianity in the Kyivan *Rus'* state in general, and that of Volodymyr and Yaroslav in particular, are contested between Ukraine and Russia, which constitutes a major bone of contemporary contentions between the two.

3.4 The Kyiv Metropolitanate in the Disintegration Period of the Kyivan *Rus'* State (1132-1240)

As stated in the previous section, the period of Yaroslav was the pinnacle of the political and cultural developments in the Kyivan *Rus'* state. Nonetheless, his death was followed by fierce fights among nephews and uncles for the throne, which also led to severe civil strife in the state. In addition to the internal power struggle, Polovtsians who gained control of some parts of the southern region posed a severe threat to the Kyivan *Rus'* state.[166] Although Volodymyr Monomakh (1113-1125) and

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[162]Zenon E. Kohut, "History as a Battleground: Russian-Ukrainian Relations and Historical Consciousness in Contemporary Ukraine," in *The Legacy of History in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, ed. S. Frederick Starr (New York: M.E Sharpe, 1994), 124.

[163]Alfons Brüning, "Orthodox Autocephaly in Ukraine: The Historical Dimension," in Churches *in the Ukrainian Crisis*, eds. Andrii Krawchuk and Thomas Bremer (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 81.

[164]Kohut, "History as a Battleground," 125-126.

[165]Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 2.

[166]Some of the princes met in Liubech in 1097 to solve the succession problem. They agreed on the principle of patrimony instead of seniority. This decision brought the Kyivan *Rus'* state into a federation of self-governing principalities. Each of the principalities pursued their own dynastic lines. In this regard, the political realm of the Kyivan *Rus'* state became a competition area that multiple principalities took part in. See, Magocsi, *Ukraine: An Illustrated History*, 39.

his son Mstyslav I (1125-1132) partially managed to gain control in the state, the political turbulence became a marker of the post-Yaroslav era. After the death of Mstyslav I, the state entered the disintegration period, which lasted until the Mongol invasion in 1240, causing the collapse of the Kyivan *Rus'* state. During this period, the Kyivan *Rus'* state was divided into several hereditary principalities, which later became *de facto* independent political entities. Among them, Galicia-Volhynia in the southwest, Vladimir-Suzdal in the northeast, and Novgorod in the far north were the most influential ones.[167]

During this period, Kyiv lacked political stability. It was subjected to military campaigns by the principalities that aimed to enjoy ruling of the 'the mother of *Rus'* cities' and take the title 'Grand Prince' to be the senior member of the Riurikid dynasty.[168] In this political sphere, eighteen rulers between 1132 and 1169 came to power in Kyiv, whereas it was fourteen between 878 to 1132.[169] Among the sieges of Kyiv in this period, the most debatable one between Ukrainian and Russian was that of Andrei Bogoliubsky, the prince of Vladimir-Suzdal (which later became the Grand Duchy of Moscow). The doyen of Ukrainian national history, Hrushevsky, describes Bogoliubsky's siege as follows:

> [F]or many days the victors pillaged the churches and monasteries; the soldiers carried away icons, rare books, vestments, and church bells, which they carried into the northern regions; they killed many of the inhabitants or led them away into captivity. Following his conquest of Kiev, Andrew [Bogoliubsky] saw to it that only mediocre princes ruled over it, thereby lowering still further its power and prestige.[170]

By referring to Bogoliubsky's attempt to establish a metropolitanate in the Vladimir-Suzdal principality in 1162, which the Istanbul Patriarchate rejected, Plokhy argues that "the removal of a religious relic from Kyiv to Vladimir is a perfect metaphor for Bogoliubsky's transfer of the symbolic power of the Rus' capital from south to north."[171] Furthermore, Plokhy argues that, whereas Yaroslav was loyal to Kyiv and

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[167]Magocsi, 50.

[168]Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 38.

[169]Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine*, 85.

[170]Michael Hrushevsky, *A History of Ukraine*, ed. O. J. Frederiksen (USA: Archon Books, 1970), 94.

[171]Plokhy, *The Gates of Europe*, 45.

Rus' land, Bogoliubsky was attached to his patrimony, and he never regarded his realm as a part of *Rus'* land. For this reason, Plokhy viewed the varying loyalty of Bogoliubsky in line with the development of diverse *Rus'* identities in the region.[172]

In general, the Russian national historiography harshly criticized the differentiation of ethnic identity in the region during this period. As to the case of Bogoliubsky's attack on Kyiv, in his book, *The Ukraine Question: The Historic Truth Versus The Separatist Propaganda*, Wolkonsky emphasizes the ethnic unity in the region and regards Bogoliubsky's siege to Kyiv as one of "fratricidal struggles among Rurik for the succession to the throne of Kiev."[173] By emphasizing Bogoliubsky's strong attachment to the Christian faith, Wolkonsky stated that "the destruction may have been accidental, a consequence of the heat and violence of the battle."[174]

As discussed above, the Russian and Ukrainian sides have different opinions on why Bogoliubsky attacked Kyiv and to what extent it can be attributed to the assumed ethnic differences between Ukrainians and Russians in the region. As Bogoliubsky's military attack on Kyiv gained significant attention in the Ukrainian national historiography, the religious dimension of his siege resulted in the reproduction of the narratives regarding the ethnic difference of Ukrainian from Russian. This at the same time reflects the debates on the successor state of the Kyivan *Rus'* state. The Russian side asserts the transfer of the dynastic ties from the Kyivan *Rus'* to Vladimir Suzdal. In contrast, the Ukrainian side regards the Galicia-Volynia principality as the only direct successor of the Kyivan *Rus'*.[175] In short, considering the mutual narratives of Ukrainians and Russians on Bogoliubsky's siege of Kyiv, his attack on Kyiv and bringing religious treasure to Vladimir was an anticipatory sign of the broken integrity of the Kyiv Metropolitanate in the following centuries.[176]

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[172]Plokhy, 46.

[173]Prince Alexandre Wolkonsky, *The Ukrainian Question: The Historic Truth versus the Separatist Propaganda* (Rome: Ditta E. Armani, 1920), 45.

[174]Wolkonsky, *The Ukrainian Question*, 47.

[175]Kuzio, "National Identity and History Writing in Ukraine," 421.

[176]The struggle to obtain a separate metropolitanate in the region is much more complicated than stated in this section. For further details about the period from 1132 to 1240, see Osyp Zinkewych and

3.5 The Kyivan Metropolitanate after the Collapse of the Kyivan *Rus'* State in 1240

As stated in the previous section, after the death of Mstyslav I in 1132, the Kyivan *Rus'* state entered the disintegration process. As a part of their full-scale attacks on the *Rus'* land from 1237, the Mongols invaded Kyiv in 1240. Mongols destroyed Kyiv, which led to the collapse of the Kyivan *Rus'* state. In this period, the Galicia-Volhynia principality flourished in the southwest, and the Vladimir-Suzdal principality emerged in the north. The debate over which principality owns the legacy of Orthodoxy, more specifically, the Kyiv Metropolitanate, continued.

The narrative concerning which principality was the defender of the Orthodox faith originates in the early period followed by the Mongol invasion of Kyiv in 1240. After the Mongol invasion, the metropolitans of Kyiv started to live in the northern part of the previous Kyivan *Rus'* realm. Consequently, Danylo, the prince of the Galicia-Volhynia principality (1205-1264), and Bogoliubsky's grandson, Alexandr Nevsky, the prince of the Vladimir-Suzdal (1253-64) came into prominence, respectively in the Ukrainian and Russian national historiographies. Danylo was accepted by the Ukrainians as an outstanding ruler in Ukrainian history for such accomplishments as improving the relations with Pope Innocent IV to get military help against the Mongols. The Pope crowned Danylo as the 'King of *Rus''* in 1253. The Ukrainian point of view intended to view his relations with Western countries and the Pope as the practical 'foreign diplomacy' to defeat the Mongols.[177] However, Russians alleged that Danylo accepted the supremacy of the Pope and converted to Catholicism. On the other hand, Russians present Alexandr Nevsky as a defender of Orthodox faith in the *Rus'* land though he accepted the Mongol rule. He was also taken as the 'national hero' for the Russian history for his efforts to protect the *Rus'* land from Swedes and Teutonic Knights, and he was recognized as a Saint in 1547.[178] As will be discussed in the following section, the 'invention' of this

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Andrew Sorokowski, *A Thousand Year of Christianity in Ukraine: A Encyclopedic Chronology* (Ellicott City: Smoloskyp Publishers, 1988), 54-64.

[177]See, Magocsi, *Ukraine: An Illustrated History*, 55.

[178]Thomas Bremer, *Cross and Kremlin: A Brief History of the Orthodox Church in Russia* (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2013), 72.

narrative by Russian authorities was to promote Moscow as the 'protector' of the Orthodox Christianity from the Mongols at that period.

As stated, the metropolitans of Kyiv temporarily resided in the northern side of the region. In 1299, the metropolitanate of Kyiv moved to Vladimir-in-Suzdal. At that time, the rulers of the Galicia-Volhynia principality made efforts to establish a metropolitanate in their political realm. Four years later, in 1303, the Halych Metropolitanate was established in the Galicia-Volhynia principality with the decision of the Istanbul Patriarchate. The Halych Metropolitanate consisted of the six eparchies that previously belonged to the Kyiv Metropolitanate, called 'Little Rus''.[179] In 1317, the Istanbul Patriarchate also allowed the establishment of a metropolitanate in Navahrudak for Orthodox Christians in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. On the other hand, the Kyiv Metropolitanate moved from Vladimir-in Suzdal to Moscow, and Moscow became the permanent residence of the Kyiv Metropolitanate in 1326. The hierarchs in Moscow continued to use the title of 'Metropolitan of Kiev and All Rus'' although their religious authority was confined with territories under the Muscovy and some northern principalities. In this religious atmosphere, Moscow constantly rejected the establishment of the Metropolitanates of Halych and Navahrudak by arguing that they led to divisions over the ecclesiastical territory of the Kyiv Metropolitanate. As a result, both were closed in 1328 and 1330, respectively.[180] The Navahrudak Metropolitanate existed till 1419, even after interruptions.[181]

The reason why the seat of Kyiv Metropolitanate moved to Vladamir in 1299, then to Moscow in 1326, is a subject of controversy between Ukrainian and Russian scholars. The widely accepted reason among Russian scholars can be found in the descriptions of the chronicles at that time. Accordingly, Russian scholars follow this logic for the move of metropolitan: the Mongols destroyed Kyiv, all inhabitants of

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[179]Andrzej Poppe, "The Christianization and Ecclesiastical Structure of Kyivan Rus' to 1300," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 21, no.3/4 (1997): 365-366.

[180]The Halych Metropolitanate was opened and closed, twice more. For detailed information on the historical developments for the Halych Metropolitanate. See Katchanovski et al., *Historical Dictionary of Ukraine*, 206-207.

[181]Magocsi, *Ukraine: An Illustrated History*, 44-45.

Kyiv moved to the northern parts of the region, so the Metropolitan of Kyiv had to move to a relatively safe place to continue his religious duties in the *Rus'* land. However, most Ukrainian historians are skeptical about this alleged mass migration to the north. For example, Plokhy argues as follows:

> Kyiv suffered a deadly blow from the Mongol assault and would not recover its former importance and prosperity for centuries. But the population of the Kyiv and Pereiaslav land did not abandon the region altogether and did not move to the Volga and Oka basins, as some Russian scholars suggested in the nineteenth century.If the dwellers of the Kyiv Land had to flee the steppe borderlands, they had plenty of opportunity to find safe haven closer to home, in the forests of northern Ukraine [...].[182]

Examining the explanations related to why the Kyiv Metropolitan moved to Vladimir in 1299, Ostrowski focuses on who can decide on the location of the new seat of the Kyiv Metropolitanate. From the Istanbul Patriarchate's perspective, the location of the Kyiv Metropolitanate does not really matter since the metropolitan was anyway responsible for all of *Rus'* land. From the metropolitan view of that period, if the political center were no longer Kyiv but Vladimir, he most likely would be in Vladimir, where the current political authority is supposedly located. Therefore, Ostrowski concluded that moving to the relatively safe North was the logical choice for the metropolitan.[183] On top of the security issues, the northern princes are believed to have taken advantage of the Mongol attacks and encouraged the metropolitan to move the North.[184] In the following centuries, especially after 1991, Ukrainian clergy views this move as 'uncanonical, thereby negating the Moscow Patriarchate that based its initial history on this move.

Clearly, the political reconfigurations in the region after the collapse of the Kyivan *Rus'* state began to destroy the unity of the Kyiv Metropolitanate and prepared the conditions of various narratives for the historical course of the Kyiv Metropolitanate between Ukrainian and Russian scholars.

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[182]Plokhy, *The Gates of Europe*, 51-52.

[183]Donald Ostrowski, "Why Did the Metropolitan Move From Kiev to Vladimir in the Thirteenth Century," in *Christianity and Eastern Slavs. Volume I: Slavic Cultures in the Middle Ages*, eds. Boris Gasparov and Olga Raevsky-Hughes (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 83-101.

[184]Zinkewych and Sorokowski, *A Thousand Year of Christianity in Ukraine*, 76.

3.6 The Union of Florence in 1439, the Conquest of Istanbul in 1453, and the Moscow Metropolitanate

The territory of the Galicia-Volhynia principality became a part of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In 1386, these two states united under one ruler as a dynastic union at the Union of Krevo, and then Lithuanians became Catholic. In the north, Moscow appeared as the center of the Grand Duke of Moscovy, which defeated the Golden Horde in 1380 and established control over the northern principalities. Although the supremacy of the Golden Horde continued in the North, Russians put an end to Golden Horde's authority in 1480,[185] so the political division of the previous realm of the Kyivan *Rus'* state became apparent. While Poland-Lithuania took control of the south and east, the Grand Duke of Moscovy became dominant in the north. In these political circumstances, both rulers of Lithuania and Moscovy tried to influence the Istanbul Patriarchate's appointments to the Kyiv Metropolitanate. These interventions actually could not destroy the unity of it. The metropolitan still held the "Metropolitan of Kyiv and All Rus'."[186]

During the mid-15th century, the Kyiv Metropolitanate became a subject of growing competition between Lithuanian and Russian rulers. Besides sole political motivations, the developments in the Christian world intensified this competition. Pope Eugenius IV organized a council in Florence in 1439 and invited the eastern churches to restore Christian unity, which the Great Schism of 1054 broke. Allegedly, the Istanbul Patriarchate welcomed the agreement with the Latins, which was considered as an option to receive military backing for defending of Istanbul against the increasing threat of Ottomans. However, Moscow disfavored this possible unification by proposing that Istanbul was a 'betrayal' to Orthodoxy at the Council of Florence, and it accepted the Pope's supremacy.[187] Thus, when Isıdore, metropolitan of Kyiv, returned to Moscow to declare the decisions of the Council, he was expelled from Moscow. Instead, the Muscovites elected their own metropolitan, Bishop of

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[185]Paul Bushkovitch, *A Concise History of Russia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 19-36.

[186]Brüning, "Orthodox Autocephaly in Ukraine," 84-85.

[187]Davor Džalto, *Anarchy and Kingdom of God: From Eschatology to Orthodox Political Theology and Back* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2021), 72.

Ryazan, Jonas, in 1448 without the approval of the Istanbul Patriarchate. This election was a self-proclaimed independence of Moscow from Istanbul. The Istanbul Patriarchate did not recognize this election, and the relations between Istanbul and Moscow were broken.[188]

In 1453, Istanbul was conquered by the Ottoman Empire, which led to the collapse of the Byzantine Empire and the Istanbul Patriarchate coming under Muslim control. In these political and religious circumstances, a council held in 1459 in Moscow announced the successors of Jonas to be the legitimate metropolitans. This decision justified that dependence on the Istanbul Patriarchate, which was under the rule of Turks, was impossible.[189] Actually, from the Council in Florence and specifically after 1453, Moscow claimed that the Istanbul Patriarchate lost its legitimacy after falling in the hands of Muslims, and Moscow became the last standing fortress of 'true' Orthodoxy after the Byzantine Empire. Indeed, Moscow had developed the idea that it had a distinct religious and political role as the successor to Rome and Istanbul. This idea was formulated surrounding the 'Third Rome' doctrine. Its earliest foundation is probably found in a letter written by the monk Filofei (Philotheus) in 1511 to Basil III. In his letter, he wrote the following words: "For two Romes have fallen, and the Third stands, and a fourth shall never be, for Thy Christian Empire shall never devolve upon others [...]"[190] In other words, this doctrine offers that following the fall of Rome and Istanbul, "Moscow was destined to be third- and permanent- holy and universal."[191]

Russians narratives promoting their resistance against the Mongol rule made them the 'protector' of Orthodoxy and propagated the 'Third Rome' doctrine. The rule of the Mongols from the mid-13th century to mid-15th century is referred to as 'Tatar

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[188]See, Vera Shevzov, "The Russian Tradition," in *The Orthodox Christian World*, ed. Augustine Casiday (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 19.

[189]Paul Brusanowski, "The Autocephaly in Ukraine: Canonical Dimension," in *Churches in the Ukrainian Crisis*, eds. Andrii Krawchuk and Thomas Bremer (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 60.

[190]Cited in Cyrill Toumanoff, "Moscow the Third Rome: Genesis and Significance of a Politico-Religious Idea," *The Catholic Historical Review* 40, no. 4 (1955): 438.

[191]Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 77.

Yoke' or 'Mongol-Tatar Yoke' in the Ukrainian and Russian historiographies and has a highly negative connotation, implying the alleged persecution during their rule. However, Plokhy claims that the term "Tatar Yoke" was invented in the 17th century in Muscovy to create an image emphasizing the heroic struggle of Muscovites to preserve the Kyivan heritage from the Mongols. Here, the Orthodox faith was a part of the Kyivan heritage, which Muscovites allegedly defended from Mongols and its 'collaborator' Istanbul Patriarchate.[192] Plokhy also claimed:

> Ironically, there was probably no other institution that benefitted as much from the 'Tatar yoke' as the Orthodox Church. It was not only tolerated by the steppe rulers but also privileged with regard to taxation. One can even speak of a quasi-alliance between the Golden Horde and the Rus' metropolitanate for most of the period Tatar rule over Northern Rus'.[193]

The creation of a separate metropolitanate in Moscow independent from the Istanbul Patriarchate seemed also to be concurrent with the formation of the Grand Duke of Moscow, that is, with the creation of a new political center. Adopting the title of 'Tsar'- the Slavic version of Latin *Caesar*-, Moscow's princes gave legitimate ground to prove the *translatio imperii* from the Byzantine Empire. In this sense, the patriotic part of the Ukrainian Church historiographers analyzed the Moscow rejection of the Council of Florence to create a church under its political rule.[194] Parallel with this perspective, Hovorun claims that even the Istanbul Patriarchate denounced the union with Rome, Moscow found another excuse (the conquest of Istanbul in 1453) to justify its self-proclaimed autocephaly in 1448.[195]

3.7 The Rise of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Creation of the Uniate Church

As stated earlier, the unity of the Kyiv Metropolitanate was undermined, and it was divided into two: one with his seat in Muscovy and the other in Lithuania. The

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[192]Serhii Plokhy, *The Origins of the Slavic Nations: Premodern Identities in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 135.

[193]Plokhy, *The Origins of the Slavic Nations*, 134.

[194]Brüning, "Orthodox Autocephaly in Ukraine," 86-87.

[195]Cyril Hovorun, "The Cause of Ukrainian Autocephaly," in *Religion During the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict*, eds. Elizabeth A. Clark and Dmytro Vovk (London and New York: Routledge, 2020), 182.

religious developments at the end of the 16th century in the region further complicated the institutional situation of the Kyivan Metropolitanate, triggering different narratives between Ukrainian and Russians on the course of Orthodox Christianity in the region.

The first significant development in Orthodoxy is that the Istanbul Patriarchate recognized the independence of the Moscow Church in 1586 after nearly 150 years of its unilateral proclamation of autocephaly. The Istanbul Patriarchate also elevated the status of Moscow from Metropolitanate to Patriarchate. Its patriarchal status was officially recognized by the Patriarches Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, in 1593.[196] Indeed, the canonical situation of Moscow from 1448 to 1586 was unclear, and its metropolitans during this period remained unrecognized in the Orthodox world. The crucial change in the policy of the Istanbul Patriarchate towards Moscow seemed to maintain relations with Moscow, which was the only remaining Orthodox sovereign in the region.[197] Undoubtedly, this act of Istanbul attached more importance to Moscow. However, the patriarchal status of Moscow only partially affected the previous Kyiv Metropolitanate; the part which largely embraced the Orthodox Christians in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth remained under the jurisdiction of the Istanbul Patriarchate.[198]

The second significant development in Orthodoxy took part in where Kyiv Metropolitanate was under the jurisdiction of Istanbul. At the Union of Brest in 1596, most Orthodox bishops in the Commonwealth acted in union with Rome, bringing about the Uniate Church. This Church preserved the Byzantine rites but accepted the Pope as the supreme authority. The Polish political administration favored the Uniate Church to stand against the Orthodox Church. Although most Orthodox bishops took the Uniate Church, this Church could not receive massive support from the Orthodox Christians.[199] Subtelny depicts this process as follows:

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[196]Charles W. Sanderson, "Autocephaly as a Function of Institutional Stability and Organizational Change in the Eastern Orthodox Church," PhD diss. (University of Maryland, 2005), 95.

[197]Brusanowski, "The Autocephaly in Ukraine: Canonical Dimension," 60.

[198]Hovorun, "The Cause of Ukrainian Autocephaly," 182.

[199]Serhy Yekelchyk, *Ukraine: Birth of a Modern Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 26.

> Ukrainian society split in two: on the one hand were the Orthodox magnates, the majority of the clergy, and the masses, while on the other, backed by the king, was the former hierarchy and a handful of followers. Consequently, a situation existed in which there was a hierarchy without faithful, and faithful without a hierarchy. What had begun as an attempt to unite the Christian churches ended in their further fragmentation, for now instead of two there were three churches: the Catholic, Orthodox, and Uniate (or Greek Catholic as it was later called).[200]

The Uniate Church succeeded in receiving support from the believers in western Ukraine. It became critical to loyalty to the Ukrainian identity in the following centuries. On the other hand, the Uniate Church in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth would profoundly change Istanbul's loyal part of the Kyiv Metropolitanate. The Orthodox Church was regarded as the 'illegal' in the Commonwealth. Since its establishment, the Uniate Church has been much debated between Orthodox and Catholics in terms of theological foundations. Also, this Church has become a debated subject between Ukraine and Russia, and in Ukraine in itself. Indeed, the motives of the various sides in establishing the Uniate Church must be considered in their specific contexts to understand how Ukrainian and Russian historians develop different narratives.

Following the Union of Lublin in 1569, the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania merged, and they created the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Concerning the new configuration of the borders between them, most of the Ukrainian territory was transferred to Polish control. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania primarily took the present-day Belarusia.[201] In other words, the Union of Lublin separated south from the north, and Kyiv and Lviv came under the rule of Poland in the Commonwealth.[202]

During the 200-year Lithuanian rule, the Orthodox Church was free to practice its traditions from the Kyivan *Rus'* state.[203] However, Orthodox Christians were subjected to the policies of Catholicization and Polonisation under the rule of Poland.

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[200]Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 101.

[201]Plokhy, *The Gates of Europe*, 63.

[202]Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 47.

[203]Peter J. Baker, "The Politics of Taxation and State Building in Ukraine, 882-2004," PhD diss., (University of Notre Dame, 2008), 69.

For example, the Uniate Church was used as a tool by Poland to increase the loyalty of the Ukrainians to the Catholic rulers, and this Church was identified with the Ukrainian lands under Polish rule.[204] From the point of most Orthodox bishops, the Orthodox Church under the authority of Lithuania lacked institutional discipline even to the extent that it was relatively free to practice Orthodox faith. Therefore, the Orthodox Church lagged behind new theological polemics and religious education, and it encountered corrupt and ignorant clerics. Furthermore, the emergence of Protestantism, Reforms, and the Counterreformation after 1570 in Poland required internal reforms in the Orthodox Church in Poland. At that time, the Istanbul Patriarchate was under the control of the Turks, and it was not in a position to lead the reforms. Therefore, the Patriarch of Rome offered to support the Orthodox Church in the implementation of reforms.[205] Upon this, the Orthodox bishops considered the Uniate Church as an optimum deal as they could present this Church as the manifestation of the earlier efforts towards the unification of Orthodoxy and Catholicism. However, the historians were polarized into two camps; the first camp considered the Uniate Church as a means of resisting the growing significance of Catholicism and maintaining a stable identity for Orthodox Christians, while the second camp which this Church as a tool for Catholicization and Polonization.[206]

These reasons for the creation of the Uniate Church, along with whether the Uniate Church is a continuation of Kyivan Christianity have long been debated. As the Greek Catholic historians were mainly interested in the manifestation of the previous unification attempts in Kyivan Christianity through the Uniate Church, the acceptance of the Pope's authority was of secondary importance for them. In fact, Greek Catholic historians have highlighted the function of the Uniate Church in linking the Latin West and the Orthodox East. However, the claim of this church on the continuity of Kyivan Christianity was also rejected by the brotherhoods and the

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[204]Tolga Bilener, "Ulus Devlet Olma Sürecinde Ukrayna," in *Değişen Dünyada Rusya ve Ukrayna*," ed. Erhan Büyükakıncı (Ankara: Phoenix Yayınevi, 2004), 332.

[205]Brüning, "Orthodox Autocephaly in Ukraine," 90.

[206]Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 50.

many clergymen of various ranks in the region, resulting in the formation of the anti-Uniate Church camp.[207] Sysyn comments on this period as follows:

> Both groups not only developed out of the church of St.Volodymyr, but they were also formed from similar influences and conditions in the century before and after the Union of Brest. Locked in heated combat, they were always aware that they were essentially one church and one tradition, distinct not only from Western churches but also from other Eastern churches.[208]

In fact, the perspective emphasizing the shared origin of the Uniate and Orthodox Churches in the region implies the political manipulation pervasive in the region in that period. In present-day Ukraine, the Greek Catholic Church and Orthodox Church of Ukraine represent the Ukrainian nationalist camp, and they have been relatively open to maintaining cordial relations after 2014, as will be discussed later in this study. However, it is clear that various Orthodox theologians, including Moscow and Istanbul, reject the idea of continuity in the Uniate Church, and they:

> seek to present the Uniates as traitors of authentic Orthodox theology and spirituality, and as non-Orthodox or even anti-Orthodox people, who deceive the Christian world by simulating the appearance of the "true" Orthodox. The derogatory term 'Uniatism' serves as a tool to discredit any theological and spiritual sincerity of Eastern-rite Catholics.[209]

As discussed in this section, the rise of the Moscow Patriarchate and the establishment of the Uniate Church were two important developments in the historical course of Orthodox Christianity. As the Moscow Patriarchate expanded its sphere of influence, the Uniate Church became an important center for defending the Ukrainian identity in the following centuries; even the Orthodox hierarchs and defenders of Orthodox Christianity viewed this Church as detrimental to Orthodoxy.

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[207]Brüning, "Orthodox Autocephaly in Ukraine," 90.

[208]Frank E. Sysyn, "The Formation of Modern Ukrainian Religious Culture: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in *Church, Nation, and State in Russia and Ukraine*, ed. Geoffrey A. Hosking (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 17.

[209]Yury P. Avvakumov, "Ukrainian Greek Catholics, Past and Present," in *Churches in the Ukrainian Crisis*, eds. Andrii Krawchuk and Thomas Bremer (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 23.

3.8 The Subordination of Kyiv Metropolitanate to Moscow Patriarchate in 1686

As stated, the Orthodox Church in the Commonwealth was somewhat regarded as 'illegal.' That is why this church had no metropolitan from the Union of Brest in 1596.[210] With the rise of the Cossacks, the fate of Orthodoxy began to change, for a short time as it was. Cossacks, who were regarded by the Ukrainians as national heroes and used as the fundamental national myth of post-Soviet Ukrainian state- and nation-building, revolted many times against Poles to defend Orthodox Christianity and get self-rule authority. Consequently, the Orthodox Church was established in 1620 and was recognized in 1632 by the Polish authority due to the pressure of Orthodox nobility and Cossacks.[211]

Commanded by Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky, one of the national heroes in Ukrainian national history, Cossacks launched a massive revolt against the Polish authority in 1648.[212] Then, they succeeded in establishing an independent state, which Ukrainian historiography accepted as the foundation of modern Ukraine. However, the war between the Cossacks and Poles continued, and the Cossacks sought military aid against the Poles. In the hope of obtaining military support, the Cossacks signed the Pereiaslav Agreement in 1654 with the Russians. This agreement brought Cossacks under the protection of the Russian Tsar.[213] This agreement had ramifications for the fate of the Orthodox Church in the following years.

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[210]Sysyn, "The Formation of Modern Ukrainian Religious Culture," 6-7.

[211]See Katchanovski et al., *Historical Dictionary of Ukraine*, 655; Andrew Wilson, Ukrainian Nationalism in the 1990s: A Minority Faith," (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 5.

[212]However, Soviet historians intended to attribute this revolt to the peasants who were displeased with the then socioeconomic conditions. Paul Kubicek, *The History of Ukraine* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2008), 40-41.

[213]This agreement and its consequences caused a heated debate among Ukrainian and Russian scholars and politicians in the following centuries. In honor of its 300th anniversary in 1954 in the Soviet regime, the Pereiaslav Agreement was celebrated by the numerous publications that present this agreement as the 'reunion' of two brotherly peoples thanks to Russians, who saved Ukrainians from the Polish subjugation. However, Ukrainian scholars rejected this Soviet invention by claiming that the Pereiaslav Agreement signified alliance against external enemy, rather than act of loyalty to the Russian Empire. Cited in Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 64. Magocsi draws attention to the interest of Soviet scholarship in the Pereiaslav Agreement after 300 years and states that "as an act of 'reunification' rather than union reveals how Soviet scholarship had returned to a variant of the pre-revolutionary Russian framework for understanding the history of eastern Europe." Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine*, 23.

The fierce competition among Poles, Russians, Cossacks, and Tatars for control of the Ukrainian land continued after 1654. With the Treaty of Andrusova in 1667, Russians took the Left Bank (the east of Dnieper), while Poland retained control over the Right Bank (the west of Dnieper). With the so-called 'Eternal Peace' in 1685 between Poland and Russia, these two states accepted the principle of the Treaty of Andrusova, and the Russian Empire gained the right to protect Orthodox Christians who resided in the Commonwealth. In fact, Khmelnytsky's rebellion for self-ruling divided Ukrainian land into two and delivered part of it to Russia.[214]

The Moscow Patriarchate attempted to absorb the Kyiv Metropolitanate in these political and religious circumstances. In fact, since the 1650s, the Moscow Patriarchate put pressure on the Kyiv Metropolitanate, under the jurisdiction of the Istanbul Patriarchate to limit the title of its metropolitan from 'Kyiv, Halych and all Rus'' to 'Kyiv Halych and Little Rus".[215] However, the Kyivan Orthodox clergies largely disfavored the Kyiv Metropolinate's subordination to the Moscow Patriarchate. Most of them desired to maintain traditional ties with the Istanbul Patriarchate. Moreover, the Kyivan clergy that experienced Western theological thinking disdained Moscow's religious practices. On the other hand, the Moscow clergy considered Ukrainian traditions semi-heretical or Catholic.[216] These attitudes of the two church hierarchies towards each other stem from the differing attitudes to the Orthodox revival in the Kyiv Metropolitanate in the 16th and 17th centuries.

The year 1686 became the milestone for the ecclesiastical course of the Kyiv Metropolitanate. Istanbul Patriarch Dionysius IV and his Synod issued two letters in 1686, which transferred the right of ordaining the metropolitans of Kyiv to the Moscow Patriarchate. The historic decision of the Istanbul Patriarchate was the subject of contemporary debates among the Istanbul Patriarchate, the Moscow Patriarchate, and the supporters of the Ukrainian autocephaly.

The perspectives regarding the historic decision of the Istanbul Patriarchate will be discussed in detail later. In brief, Istanbul Patriarchate regarded this decision in 2019

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[214]Kubicek, *A History of Ukraine*, 42.

[215]Sysyn, "The Formation of Modern Ukrainian Religious Culture," 7.

[216]Zenon E. Kohut, "The Problem of Ukrainian Orthodox Church Autonomy in the Hetmanate (1654-1780s)," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 14, no. 3/4 (1990): 366.

as a necessity to adjust to the then-current political situation and to provide temporal care of the Kyiv Metropolitanate. Thus, the Istanbul Patriarchate stresses that Istanbul is the 'mother' church of the Kyiv Metropolitanate. However, the Moscow Patriarchate treats the 1686 decision as a complete transfer of the Kyiv Metropolitanate to Moscow's ecclesiastical jurisdiction, so to its canonical territory. Furthermore, from Moscow's point of view, the Orthodox Church was divided artificially in the middle of the 15th century due to the politically driven interests of Lithuanian rulers and the Istanbul Patriarchate's insistence on unification with Rome. Therefore, to the Moscow Patriarchate, this decision was reunifying the Orthodox Church of *Rus'*, which had been artificially broken.[217] In contrast, most of the Ukrainian scholars tended to regard the decision of the Istanbul Patriarchate as a result of Moscow's pressure on Istanbul. Furthermore, the Ukrainian side considered the act of the Moscow Patriarchate as a kind of hostile takeover, or, the annexation of the Kyiv Metropolitanate. The supporter of the Ukrainian autocephaly drew attention to the changing jurisdiction that manifested itself in the changing title of metropolitan of Kyiv in 1685 from 'Kyiv, Halych and All of *Rus*'' to 'Kyiv, Halych and Little Russia'. For them, the act of the Moscow Patriarchate was 'uncanonical.'[218]

Whatever the narratives and counter-narratives on this issue suggest, one thing is certainly clear: The 1686 decision is a major foundation of the contemporary debates on the Ukrainian autocephaly, and this decision led to nearly 350 years of Russian domination on Ukrainian Orthodoxy.

3.9 Ukrainian Orthodox Christianity under the Russian Hegemony (1686-1991)

The decision of the Istanbul Patriarchate in 1686 was relatively clear for Ukrainian historians than several other interpretations, and in line with the perspective of the Istanbul Patriarchate, it basically made the patriarch of Moscow responsible for providing the temporal care of the Kyiv Metropolitanate in the political turmoil of

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[217]Denys Shestopalets, "Religious Freedom, Conspiracies, and Faith: The Geopolitics of Ukrainian Autocephaly," *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 18, no.3 (2020): 36.

[218]Cited in Brüning, "Orthodox Autocephaly in Ukraine," 93.

that period. Accordingly, the Kyiv Metropolitanate was to remain a separate Church with its own eparchies, as it had been before 1686. However, this did not occur in reality. The Kyiv Metropolitanate gradually lost all its eparchies from 1686. Kyiv became just an eparchy under Moscow. Archbishops, rather than metropolitans, were appointed to Kyiv from 1722 to 1742 in the Russian Empire.[219]

In 1721, Peter I abolished the Moscow Patriarchate and replaced it with the Holy Synod to manage the Russian Orthodox Church. However, the subordination of Ukrainian Orthodoxy continued.[220] While the influence of Kyiv decreased, the Ukrainian clergies, paradoxically, became influential figures in Moscow. However, the decisions of the Holy Synod demonstrated that "most of the Ukrainian clergymen who went to Russia [were] identified with a universal, imperial Orthodox Church, and would not tolerate any signs of Ukrainian church particularism."[221]

The Orthodox eparchies in the Ukrainian land under the Russian Empire were territorially reconfigured during the 19th century. Nine eparchies were formed, whose religious boundaries largely fit into the boundaries of secular provinces. These eparchies had educational and publicational programs in the Russian and Church Slavonic languages, which are pronounced as Russian. A clerical social class was formed through these institutions that remained committed to Orthodox Christianity and the Russian Empire. The Russian imperial authorities initially allowed 'Little Russian patriotism' to rise, but later it considered this patriotism as 'Ukrainian separatism.' In this regard, the Russian Orthodox clergy in the imperial order was against any attempts to promote the Ukrainian language to the status of a literary language.[222] Thus, it was not surprising that the Orthodox clergy in the Russian Empire refused that Ukrainian nationality is different from the Russian one.[223]

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[219]Kohut, "The Problem of Ukrainian Orthodox Church Autonomy," 368.

[220]Jerry G. Pankhurst, "History, ecclesiology, canonicty, and power: Ukrainian and Russian Orthodoxy after the Euromaidan," in *Religion During the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict*, eds. Elizabeth A. Clark and Dmytro Vovk (London and New York: Routledge, 2020), 163.

[221] Kohut, "The Problem of Ukrainian Orthodox Church Autonomy," 376.

[222]The policies towards Ukrainian Orthodoxy were in line with the language policies of the Russian Empire. Peter I issued a decree against Ukrainian books. Moreover, Catherina II abolished the Ukrainian language at the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. During the 19th century, the restrictions increased. Especially in 1876, a decree was issued limiting the use of Ukrainian language and even prohibiting

Amidst this atmosphere, the Orthodox Church in the Russian Empire served the Russification policies of imperial Russia on Ukrainians. That is, it was not a 'tool' or 'protector' of the Ukrainian national identity. On the other hand, The Greek Catholic Church, which survived in the Austrian rule after the first partition of Poland in 1772, became an important institution supporting the Ukrainian national movement. However, as stated in the previous section, the Cossacks, who were the defender of the Orthodox Christianity and opponent of the Catholic expansion, placed the Ukrainian nationalists into a paradoxical situation by advocating the Greek Catholic Church. Commenting on this, Yelensky states as follows:

> Ukraine's actual religious composition and the concrete historical circumstances of its nation-formation demanded the Ukrainian nationalists maintain a degree of deliberate distance from the religious factor. The foundation fathers of Ukrainian nationalism considered religion a stumbling block rather than a reliable resource for nation-building.[224]

The Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 led to the collapse of the Russian Empire, resulting in political turmoil in the region. The period from 1917 to 1920 was described in Ukraine as the 'Ukrainian Revolution.' Ukrainians, in this period, had a short-lived independent state. When Bolsheviks seized control of the region, Ukraine became a part of the Soviet Union in 1922.[225] Political independence in this period prepared the conditions for the Ukrainian national Orthodox church. In 1921, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church was established thanks to Ukrainian nationalist clergy. Without any support from bishops, priests elected the married

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the import of Ukrainian publications from Galicia, where the Austro-Hungarian Empire ruled. These policies aimed to hinder the cultural and scientific developments of the Ukrainian nation. The linguists of the Russian Empire regarded the Russian language as a common language across the Empire to ensure unity and loyalty to the Empire. For them, the Russian language was a leading one among Indo-European languages. However, Ukrainian and Belarusian were "component dialects of a singular 'great Russian languages.'" While these language policies were used in massive education for promoting Russian nationalism, they constituted a severe barrier to developing Ukrainian nationalism in the territory ruled by the Russian Empire. Margrethe B. Søvik and Olga Filippova, "Images of Languages and the Politics of Language and Identity in Ukraine: The Burden of the Past and Contestation in the Present," *Ab Imperio*, no. 2 (2005): 372-373. Thus, the Ukrainian language was not crucial for most Ukrainians, at least until the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, except for patriotic intelligentsia. Magocsi, *Ukraine: An Illustrated History*.

[223] Magocsi, 141, 158.

[224]Victor Yelensky, "Religion and Nation-Building in the Epoch of Desecularization: The Case of Ukraine," *Annales Universitasis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis. Studia Sociologia*, no. 1 (2014): 128.

[225]Kubicek, *The History of Ukraine*, 91.

priest Vasyl Lypkivsky, who was ordained by "a collective laying on of hand, arguing that this was the practice of apostles themselves."[226] Nonetheless, this kind of ordination was not legitimate for the Orthodox canons, so the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church was deprived of canonical recognition from the Orthodox world, nor was it recognised by the Istanbul Patriarchate, which remained irresponsive to the church's previous pursuit of canonical recognition.[227]

The Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church managed to control many churches, most notably St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv. The Ukrainian language was preferred to the Church Slavonic language in religious activities. It also began to gain popularity. However, the Soviet government imposed heavy taxes on it due to its strong emphasis on Ukrainization in the late 1920s. Finally, the Soviet regime outset Metropolitan Vasyl Lypkivsky from his office.[228] Denysenko underlines the significance of the Church for its innovative approach to Orthodox canons and leading role in the Ukranization movement. He also presents the paradoxical consequences of this church as follows:

> The establishment of a married episcopate through a renovated rite of episcopal consecration caused the stigma of ecclesial illegitimacy to become a permanent scar on the 1921 UAOC and its sympathizers, as traditional Orthodox who were sympathetic to autocephaly could not accept the UAOC because of its disregard for apostolic succession. All other components of modernization hailed by the UAOC, including Ukrainization and a conciliar-oriented ecclesiology, became attached to the stigma of illegitimacy and established a pattern of suspicion of Ukrainian autocephaly in the following decades.[229]

As Denysenko stated, the stigma of illegitimacy constituted a crucial barrier for the subsequent Ukrainian autocephalist movements. The supporters of the Moscow Patriarchate, almost without exception, have exploited the discourse of the 'illegitimacy', 'uncanonical' or 'separatist' to undermine the Ukrainian autocephalist

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[226]Thomas Bremer, "Religion in Ukraine: Historical Background and the Present Situation," in *Churches in the Ukrainian Crisis*, eds. Andrii Krawchuk and Thomas Bremer (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 5.

[227]Hovorun, "The Cause of Ukrainian Autocephaly," 183-184.

[228]Yekelchyk, Ukraine*: Birth of a Modern Nation*, 99. Actually, when Ukraine became a part of the Soviet Union, and thereby the regime's anti-religious policies, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church gradually lost its institutional capacity, and the Soviet government abolished it in 1930.

[229]Nicholas E. Denysenko, *The Orthodox Church in Ukraine: A Century of Separation* (DeKalb Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 2018), 8.

movements. The Ukrainian territories were occupied by Nazis during the Second World War between 1941 and 1944. The Orthodox clergy regarded the invasion of Germany as an opportunity for freeing themselves from the Soviet regime and the Moscow Patriarchate.[230] Consequently, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church was established for the second time. This second establishment had a legitimate hierarchy with the help of Polish bishops in the Church of Poland, which had been granted with autocephaly in 1924 by the Istanbul Patriarchate.[231] After the Soviet Army took control of western Ukraine and expelled Germans from the region, the church was abolished in 1946. Its clergies had to flee mainly to Canada and the United States to continue their religious activities. However, they had remained 'unrecognized' until Istanbul Patriarchate recognized their church in Canada and the United States in 1990 and 1995, respectively.[232] Moscow alleged the Church collaborated with Nazis. In other words, the collaborator of 'fascists' stigma was added to the 'illegitimacy' stigma on the Ukrainian Orthodoxy.

It is crucial to state that the Soviet anti-religious policies became slightly softer during World War II due to the need for moral support at war. However, the Nazi invasion of Ukrainian territory and the alleged collaboration of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church with Nazis in the German-occupied parts led to severe sanctions against these institutions following the Soviet regime's invasion of the regions. As stated in the paragraph above, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church ceased functioning. The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was also subjected to severe persecution in the Soviet Union. It was outlawed and forced to dissolve and merge with the Russian Orthodox Church after the church council (a "pseudo-council") in L'viv in 1946. Greek Catholics perceived this as the annexation of the church, its parishes, buildings, and properties, but the Council was propagated by Moscow "as the return of a prodigal daughter to the mother-church."[233]

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[230]Denysenko, *The Orthodox Church in Ukraine*, 70.

[231]The adherents of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church tried to prove their right to demand the autocephalous status by referring to the same points cited by the Istanbul Patriarchate for Polish autocephaly.

[232]Hovorun, "The Cause of Ukrainian Autocephaly," 185.

[233]Cited in Avvakumov, "Ukrainian Greek Catholics, Past and Present," 27.

The control of religions in the Soviet Union increased after the death of Stalin in 1953. His successor in power, Khrushchev, who acted from 1953 to 1964, tried to strengthen communism by implementing anti-religious policies. This view prevailed in Brezhnev's period (1964-1982). In 1961, out of 11,000 registered Orthodox parishes in the Soviet Union, 8,500 were located in western Ukraine. Most of these churches were regarded by the Soviet regime as 'Catacomb Church.' In other words, the Soviet government perceived these churches as underground churches that carried out Greek Catholics' religious activities. To increase the legitimacy of the Russian Orthodox Church as Ukrainian Church and eliminate the impact of Greek Catholics in the western population of Ukraine, the Soviet regime designed a more 'Ukrainian' church. To this end, in 1966, for the first time since the 18th century, a Ukrainian religious official, Metropolitan Filaret, was appointed to the Kyiv Metropolitanate. Parallel to this, Kyiv became where all Ukrainian bishops were appointed. In addition, to emphasize the increasing autonomy of the Ukrainian Church, Moscow established a branch of the Department of External Affairs in Kyiv in 1969; this was headed by the Ukrainian Exarch of the Moscow Patriarch. Besides these administrative regulations, the first prayer book in the Ukrainian language was published in 1968. All these strategies developed by the Soviet regime aimed to fight against the Greek Catholics and legitimize the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine as the Ukrainian institution. Nevertheless, these strategies largely failed to undermine the influence of Greek Catholics in western Ukraine. However, on the one side, the prestige of the Ukrainian Exarchate of the Moscow Patriarchate, in which Ukrainian clergy took part, increased among Ukrainians. On the other side, most of the Ukrainian clergy in the 1960s were loyal to the Soviet authority; thus, the 'Ukrainian' church continued to be the tool for the Russification policies of the Soviet regime in Ukraine.[234] In this period, while Ukrainians brought the term 'Catacomb Church' to the forefront and promoted the 'suffering' discourse referring to Russian domination, Moscow mostly labeled any attempt to form Ukrainian religious formations as 'separatist.'

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[234]Ilya Prizel, *National Identity and Foreign Policy: Nationalism and Leadership in Poland, Russia, and Ukraine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 356-357.

The Soviet regime began to face social, political, and economic problems in the 1980s. Gorbachev, who came to power in the Soviet Union in 1985, introduced policies of perestroika and glasnost to solve these problems. The reforms handled religious issues that allowed the Soviet anti-religious policies to be liberalized. As a result of this, restrictions and pressures on religions were removed. Formerly closed religious centers began to reopen. Especially in Soviet Ukraine, the celebrations of the 1000th anniversary of Volodymyr's baptism in 988 led to the Orthodox revival. In addition, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was allowed to register its parishes officially. The massive turn to "church of their fathers" took place, and being a member of the Russian Orthodox Church became a 'shame' in western Ukraine, where Ukrainian nationalism prevails.[235] Thereby, churches within the Ukrainian nationalist movement-Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church began to increase their influence. As of 1988, more than half of all parishes that legally belonged to the Russian Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union were in Soviet Ukraine.[236] Thus, the revival of Ukrainian nationalist churches posed severe challenge to the Russian monopoly in Soviet Ukraine.

In 1990, 1,650 parishes, mainly in Western Ukraine, separated from the Russian Orthodox Church and pledged loyalty to the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church.[237] After this, the UAOC declared its independence in 1990. The UAOC was officially established for the third time, but it was again denied canonical recognition from the international Orthodox communion. Mstyslav Skrypnyk, the only survivor from the church's second establishment during World War II, was elected as Patriarch. In 1990, the Moscow Patriarchate declared the autonomy of renamed Ukrainian Orthodox Church under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate as a response to the revival of these two nationalist churches. Metropolitan Filaret, one of the significant officials in the Russian Orthodox Church, became the metropolitan of this church with the title 'Metropolitan of Kyiv and all Ukraine.'

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[235]F. Iwan Dacko and F. Oleh Turii, "'Traditional' Churches In Independent Ukraine. In Search of Common Identity," in *Ukraine Twenty Years After Independence: Assessments, Perspectives, Challenges*, eds. Giovanna Elisabeth Brogi, Marta Dyczok, Oxana Pachlovska, and Giovanna Siedina (Rome: ARACNE editrice S.r.l, 2015), 66.

[236]Zenon V. Wasyliw, "Orthodox Churches in Ukraine," in *Eastern Christianity and the Politics in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Lucian N. Leustean (Oxon: Routledge, 2014), 312.

[237]Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 579.

Towards the dissolution of the Soviet Union, there were two Orthodox churches in the Ukrainian SSR: the canonically unrecognized Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church and the supposedly canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate. Besides the two, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church also seemed to be an influential actor in the religious landscape of Soviet Ukraine. Consequently, these three churches, in general, and various churches at the parish levels, struggled to attract followers and to utilize the church buildings. This struggle intensified following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991.

3.10 Conclusion

The history of Ukraine covers multifaceted series of political and religious developments. The various parts of Ukrainian land were subjected to the rules of different political entities throughout history. In addition, Ukrainian land witnessed the constant competition between Orthodoxy and Catholicism (between Istanbul and Rome, respectively), and between two important Orthodox centers (Istanbul and Moscow). These political and religious circumstances led to different religious grounds in the neighboring parts of the region at the same period. Besides, because of the frequently changing political authorities, Orthodoxy and Catholicism interchangeably penetrated into the same parts of Ukraine at alternating times. Although various changes occurred in the political and religious spheres in the Ukrainian land, the Kyiv Metropolitanate largely kept its position for the political authorities as a source of prestige and legitimacy.

Ukrainian Orthodoxy was subordinated by the Moscow Patriarchate in 1686, even though it was attempted to be revived in the 1920s and 1940s. These revivals were impermanent due to the repressive policies of the Soviet regime, which labeled them 'illegitimate' and 'uncanonical.' These stigmas attached by Russians were not necessarily based on theological principles but political motivations. Moreover, Ukrainian Orthodoxy was subjected to Russification policies until the last phase of the Soviet Union. Amidst this atmosphere, Ukraine's Orthodox church was far from being a figurehead of Ukrainian national organization throughout history.

The debate on the Kyivan *Rus'* state and the following political entities on the Ukrainian land constitute a significant part of the historical course of the Kyiv

Metropolitanate. The Ukrainian and Russian national historiographies have primarily differed, allowing Kyiv and Moscow to claim the Kyiv Metropolitanate simultaneously. The development of a Ukrainian narrative on the Kyiv Metropolitanate inevitably prevents or interferes with the Russian narrative, and vice versa. What seems to stand out in the narrative building is the concept of the state, which is grounded in historical continuity. Whereas Ukrainians lacked a stable, independent state, Russians formed stable and influential political authorities that played a crucial role in the religious developments of Orthodox Christianity. In short, it can be concluded that the narratives on Ukrainian autocephaly were to a considerable extent shaped by the political authorities and, for Russians, powerful means of claiming over Orthodoxy on the Ukrainian land.

CHAPTER 4

THE ATTEMPTS TO ESTABLISH AN AUTOCEPHALOUS UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH UNDER DIFFERENT PRESIDENTS IN POST-SOVIET UKRAINE (1991-2014)

4.1 Introduction

Gorbachev took power in 1985, when the Soviet system was undergoing a crisis. The social and political problems in the Union, especially the economic ones and the diminished Soviet prestige on the world stage had become impossible to ignore. To deal with them, Gorbachev set the course of 'reform from above': perestroika (restructuring) and glasnost (openness). Due to a variety of reasons, his package of economic measures failed to stimulate the deteriorating economy. By encouraging freedom of expression through glasnost for the regime's legitimacy, Gorbachev unintentionally fueled the nationalist movements within the Soviet borders. All of these ultimately ended the existence of Soviet Union. Ukraine declared independence on August 24, 1991, and the popular referendum on December 1 sealed it. With these developments, Ukraine obtained independence bloodlessly and peacefully, and political elites began to engage in nation- and state-building. However, these processes in Ukraine have not been without challenges.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the lack of a stable and full-fledged state was one of the major obstacles to Ukraine's having its own autocephalous Orthodox Church. Moreover, Ukrainian Orthodoxy had been subjected to Russian domination since the 17th century, which created a favorable ideological ground for Russian authorities to discredit a genuine Ukrainian state and a distinct Ukrainian identity embracing Orthodox Christianity. On that account, the political independence of Ukraine in 1991 represents an event of historical significance, which marked the liberation of Ukraine from Soviet rule and even from Russian imperial vision, and

paved the way for the pursuit of ecclesiastical independence from the Moscow Patriarchate.

This chapter aims to examine autocephaly demands under the different presidents from independence to the beginning of 2014. It also discusses the main motives behind the presidential policies toward unity among Orthodox churches in Ukraine and Ukrainian autocephaly.[238] The data collected from the field research is used along with that provided by existing studies to analyze the failure of autocephaly initiatives during that period. Thus, this chapter starts with an analysis of the pre-demise of the Soviet Union,[239] and it ends with the final days of Yanukovych in the presidential office.[240]

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[238]As it is practically unfeasible for a chapter of this size to thoroughly explain the factors behind the presidents' approach to the unification of Orthodox churches in Ukraine and pro-autocephaly initiatives, it aims to present the most salient background information such as presidents' foreign policy, identity and religious policies, Istanbul and Moscow Patriarchates' stance on Ukrainian autocephaly, and the changes taking place within Orthodox churches. Although substantial literature about each of these issues exists, only certain aspects of discussions within the scope of this chapter are highlighted.

[239]During this period, the Ukrainian SSR had no official presidential office; however, "Gorbachev's reforms made parliament by far the most important branch of government." Serhii Plokhy, *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), 316. On this political backdrop, Kravchuk, the head of Parliament from the mid-1990, "began to act like the head of the state." Paul Kubicek, *The History of Ukraine* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2008), 134. Given that Kravchuk was elected as Ukraine's first president, his attempts to create an autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox church through the shifting political and religious contexts before the independence need particular attention. This focus marks the first subsection of this chapter, in which the developments in the Ukrainian religious sphere on the eve of independence are briefly explained. Accordingly, the political and religious developments in Ukraine preceding the fall of the Soviet Union are within the scope of this chapter, with their direct and indirect repercussions for the autocephaly demands in independent Ukraine.

The term of office of the presidents frames the analysis of this chapter basically for two interrelated reasons. First, the Ukrainian political system is generally characterized by a presidential-parliamentary system. Although Ukrainian politics has often witnessed power struggles among the parliament, the prime minister, and the president, it is the presidents that play a central role in shaping the political realm by holding formal and informal power. Besides, the establishment of an autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox church is a process involving many actors, such as the Patriarchs of Istanbul and Moscow, political circles in Ukraine and Russia, and the leading figures of Ukrainian Orthodox churches. Considering that the actors' attitudes have transformed over time, shifts in presidents in Ukraine have often been a driving force. Therefore, the following text covers the presidents' terms in periods for a cohesive and easy read.

[240]As stated in the first chapter, in November 2013, Ukrainians held mass protests against Yanukovych, known as the Euromaidan Revolution, ending his presidency in February 2014. Shortly after, Russia annexed Crimea, and Russian-backed armed separatist movements began in eastern Ukraine. The divergent approaches of the Kyiv Patriarchate, the UOC-MP, and the Moscow Patriarchate toward all these fast-moving dramatic events in Ukraine have become the subject of

4.2 Toward the Collapse of the Soviet Union: The Road to the Political and Ecclesiastical Independence in Ukraine

In the last phase of the Soviet regime, Gorbachev's reforms sparked a wave of changes in the Union, which helped national movements find a footing in their path. In 1989, Rukh ('movement' in Ukrainian) was established as the Ukrainian Popular Movement for Perestroika, endorsing Gorbachev's reforms. Rukh became a main platform for disparate groups and organizations such as Ukrainian cultural and writers' unions, ecological associations, and university students. Therefore, its foundation somewhat ended the Ukrainian amorphous national movement. Fundamental changes in economic, political, and cultural domains were on Rukh's agenda. Despite not posing a direct challenge to the authority of the Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU), Rukh underlined the necessity of having a republican level of control over Ukraine's national resources and facilities. This was attributed to the people of Ukraine deciding their own destiny. Rukh aimed at gradually dismantling the Soviet administrative and bureaucratic systems and transforming Ukraine into a genuinely sovereign state.[241]

In March 1990, the Ukrainian SSR held republican-level parliamentary elections, in which candidates outside the Communist Party ran. The Democratic Block, including Rukh, held a quarter of the seats in the parliament, while the Communists took the majority. Subsequently, Kravchuk, a communist leader, became the chairman of the parliament. In a nutshell, the election results signaled the outset of falling off the hegemonic position of the CPU. Nonetheless, it was apparent that Rukh's influence as the leading organization in the national-democrat camp was limited to the western electoral districts of Ukraine. That is, without the support of the communist elites, Rukh was not strong enough in the parliament to impose its agenda.[242]

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boiling debates in the field research of this study and the relevant literature. Consequently, detailed analyses of these issues are left to the following chapter.

[241]Bohdan Nahaylo, *The Ukrainian Resurgence* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 156-175.

[242]Kataryna Wolczuk, *The Moulding of Ukraine: The Constitutional Politics of State Formation* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2001), 66.

Meanwhile, Kyiv's relations with Moscow had begun to change, but complete independence was still a long way off. Historically less exposed to Russian rule and the hotbed of Ukrainian national self-awareness, civic movements in western Ukraine articulated Rukh's calls for Ukrainian political independence and the revival of the Ukrainian language and culture. However, this was not the case in the densely populated southern and eastern Ukraine, which was heavily Russified and industrialized. Miners launched economic strikes in the Donbass due to the worsening economic and working conditions, which eventually evolved into political ones.[243] As Motyl and Krawchenko put:

> Except in the western parts of Ukraine, the motor force for independence was socio-economic in nature. It could hardly be otherwise given that decades of Russification had weakened the traditional determinants of a Ukrainian national identity.[244]

Still, Rukh, primarily focusing on Ukraine's national awakening and independence, failed to capture most of the population composed of ethnic Ukrainians. This was one of the reasons why Rukh failed to initiate a movement in Ukraine to eradicate the legitimacy of the Soviet regime. This once again showed that Rukh lacked societal and political facilitative mechanisms that would attain Ukraine's independence. Still, after a while, Gorbachev's failed economic reforms began to undermine the incumbent administration's political authority, which evolved into one of the factors uniting the opposing sides in the Ukrainian political landscape for embracing the idea of sovereignty.[245] Thereupon, following similar declarations in Russia and other republics, the Ukrainian Parliament passed the 'Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine' on July 16 and acknowledged the supremacy of Ukrainian laws over the Soviet ones. The Declaration also asserts the sovereignty of the Ukrainian SSR, but not its independence from the Soviet Union.[246] Even if the Declaration was non-

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[243]Ilya Prizel, "Ukraine Between Proto-Democracy and 'Soft' Authoritarianism," in *Democratic Changes and Authoritarian Reactions in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova*, eds. Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 338.

[244]Alexandr Motyl and Bohdan Krawchenko, "Ukraine from Empire to Statehood," in *New States, New Politics: Building Post-Soviet Nations*, eds. Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 244.

[245]Plokhy, *The Gates of Europe*, 316.

[246]For the full text of the Declaration see, the translation by Roma Hadzewycz, "Declaration on State Sovereignty of Ukraine," The Ukrainian Weekly, July 22, 1990, p.1,7.

binding and symbolic, it marked the rising alliance between the Communist majority and the democratic opposition, for the votes of Communists enabled the Declaration.[247] Both Rukh and the Communists considered the declaration a success. For the former, the Declaration was a step toward independence, and for the latter, it was a stage toward renewed Soviet Union.[248] As D'Anieri states, the proclamation of Ukraine's sovereignty, but not its independence is

> a contradiction that was confusing but also pragmatic. There was a strong impetus to establishing as much self-control as possible, but Ukraine was not ready to secede or to force a showdown with central authorities. Ukrainian nationalists made a tactical decision to ally with 'national communists,' such as Kravchuk, rather than to oppose the Communist Party entirely, which would have left the nationalists in a minority. Therefore, Ukraine moved toward independence not by ejecting the communist establishment but by allowing the establishment to co-opt the cause of independence.[249]

Meanwhile, Gorbachev, to prevent the Soviet Union from collapsing, drafted many versions of a new Union treaty that offered a degree of autonomy to its constituent parts. In March 1991, he succeeded in holding the all-Union referendum asking, "Do you consider it necessary to preserve the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as a renewed federation of equal sovereign republics, in which the rights and freedom of an individual of any nationality will be fully guaranteed?"[250] Through Kravchuk's endeavors, the second question was added to the referendum ballot in Ukraine: "Do you agree that Ukraine should be part of a Union of Sovereign States on the basis of the Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine?"[251] As a result, 71 and 81 percent of the responses favored the questions by Gorbachev and Kravchuk, respectively. The leaders interpreted the results differently. Gorbachev continued the negotiations on a new Union treaty, allowing for "considerable autonomy to the republics, but

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[247]Serhy Yekelchyk, *Ukraine: Birth of a Modern Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 185.

[248]Kubicek, *The History of Ukraine*, 133-134.

[249]Paul D'Anieri, *Ukraine and Russia: From Civilized Divorce to War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 29.

[250]Valery Tishkov, *Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Conflict in and After the Soviet Union: The Mind Aflame* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 50.

[251]Sarah Birch, *Election and Democratization in Ukraine* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 72. A third question in Ukrainian SSR was asked only in Galicia in western Ukraine. As a result, 88% of voters supported Ukrainian independence.

maintain a united military, a common foreign policy, and a single currency."[252] On the other hand, Kravchuk considered the referendum result as "proof of mass support for Ukrainian sovereignty and a popular mandate for his policies."[253] The results of the referendum likely "suggest[ed] that most Ukrainians wanted to have their cake and eat it, too."[254] In fact, the referendum questions were unclear, as many scholars have pointed out. Wilson eloquently explains it as follows:

> What was the difference between the two main questions? To many Ukrainians, none or very little. The language of 'sovereignty' and its cognates was much debased in Soviet discourse; Ukraine had after all been described as a 'state' since 1921. There seems to have been considerable confusion, with many people voting 'yes' to both questions.[255]

As seen above, a cloud of uncertainty hung over the issue of Ukrainian independence before and after the March referendum. Admittedly, the Ukrainian religious sphere was influenced by the political atmosphere of that period, and the rapid changes in the religious realm further complicated the religious scene. As stated in the previous chapter, the millennial anniversary of the Baptism of the Kyivan *Rus'* was one of the turning points for the relaxation of the Soviet anti-religious policies. The celebrations, were centered on Moscow notwithstanding, not on Kyiv, which is the original place of the baptism. In addition, Gorbachev stressed the significance of Orthodox Christianity for Russian history, culture, and state, which reflected the Russian claim over the legacy of the Kyivan *Rus'* state. His stance also implied that the isolation of Ukrainian nationalists would endure, and this would boil the opposition of the Ukrainian nationalist political and religious circles towards those in Moscow.[256] As previously stated, rapid changes in religious policy led to religious revivals throughout the Union. As Shlikhta explains:

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[252]D'Anieri, *Ukraine and Russia*, 30.

[253]Roman Solchanyk, *Ukraine: From Chernobyl' to Sovereignty. A Collection Interviews* (Alberta: RFE/RL, 1992), xxiii.

[254]Alexandr J. Motyl, *Dilemmas of Independence: Ukraine after Totalitarianism* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1993), 47.

[255]Andrew Wilson, *The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 165.

[256]Peter H. Quimby, "Constructing States, Constructing Interests: Religion and Politics in Post-Soviet Russia and Ukraine," PhD diss. (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1999), 83-85.

These pompous celebrations marked the last 'honeymoon' in relations between the declining Soviet regime and the Russian Orthodox Church, considered by many to be the 'state' Church in the USSR. Simultaneously, the event marked the end of the Russian Orthodox Church's hegemony on the Soviet landscape.[257]

The resurgences of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC) in western Ukraine in this atmosphere were notable. The UGCC survived as a 'catacomb' church under the communist rule and served as a haven for Ukrainian identity. Wawrzonek states that the UGCC "became a symbol of a fight for freedom and was one of the few elements of Ukrainian identity which were not Sovietized."[258] Some of its clergy in 1987 declared the Church's return, and they began to demand church properties that had been seized and then passed to the Russian Orthodox Church by the Soviet regime. The rebirth of the UGCC led to serious concerns among Moscow's political and religious elites, and their stakes in Ukraine contradicted with the UGCC as such, which is "an avid supporter of Ukrainian language use in its liturgies, sermons, publications, and educational institutions."[259] Due to these reasons, the Soviet political authorities and the Moscow Patriarchate attacked the UGCC by calling some of the labels such as 'unchurchly,' 'extremists,' and 'Nazi collaborators.'[260] As the Metropolitan Filaret, the head of the Ukrainian Exarches of the Russian Orthodox Church was responsible for preventing the UGCC from growing; he fervently supported any move discrediting the UGCC. Despite various countermeasures, the UGCC succeeded in officially registering in 1989 after Gorbachev's meeting with Pope John-Paul II at Vatican.

The UAOC, pro-Ukrainian Orthodox Church, also flourished in this period. As many clergies in western Ukraine began emphasizing Ukrainian patriotism, they left the

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[257]Natalia Shlikhta, "Eastern Christian Churches Between State and Society: An Overview of the Religious Landscape in Ukraine (1989-2014)," *Kyiv-Mohyla Humanities Journal* 3, (2016): 124-125.

[258]Michał Wawrzonek, *Religion and Politics in Ukraine: The Orthodox and Greek Catholic Churches as Elements of Ukraine's Political System* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 136.

[259]Paul R. Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine: The Land and Its People* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 742.

[260]Bohdan Bociurkiw, "Politics and Religion in Ukraine," in *The Politics of Religion in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, ed. Michael Bourdeaux (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), 137.

Moscow Patriarchate, pledged their loyalty to the UAOC, and tried to appeal to Ukrainians residing in western regions. They promoted the UAOC as a Church independent from both Moscow and Rome and stressed the standing of UAOC within the glorious Cossack heritage. In 1990, Metropolitan Mstyslav, the leader of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the United States (UOC-USA), was elected as 'Patriarch of Kyiv and All Ukraine.' Despite his advanced age, he conducted visits throughout the Ukrainian SSR to gather support for the Church. This Church expected canonical status from the Istanbul Patriarchate, which recognized the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada (the UOCC) in 1990.[261] As Sysyn asserts, with the growing interest of Ukrainians in the 1980s towards delegitimizing Russian historiography,"[t]he Ukrainian cultural revival and growth of historical consciousness inevitably led even those distant from church affairs to view the UAOC positively and the ROC negatively."[262] From this point of view, it is understandable why Patriarch Mstyslav and Metropolitan Filaret opposed each other. While Patriarch Mstyslav was the only surviving hierarch from the second re-establishment of the UAOC under German occupation and one of the most prominent figures of the Ukrainian religious movement in diaspora, Metropolitan Filaret was one of the most influential religious figures in the Moscow Patriarchate and known by his long-time loyalty to Moscow's interests in Ukraine. During their confrontation, Moscow tried to weaken the UAOC by claiming it was schismatic, and Metropolitan Filaret described Patriarch Mstyslav as a "Hitlerite" and a "false patriarch."[263]

In 1990, Patriarch Pimen of Moscow died, and Metropolitan Filaret was elected as *locum tenens*. However, Filaret lost the election to Alexy. When Filaret returned to Kyiv, he urged Ukrainian bishops to demand more independence from the Moscow Patriarchate. Patriarch Alexy refused the demand, arguing that it was politically

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[261]Zenon V. Wasyliw, "The Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church," in *Eastern Christianity and the Cold War, 1945-91*, ed. Lucian N. Leustean (London: Routledge, 2010), 163-164.

[262]Frank E. Sysyn, "The Third Rebirth of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church and Religious Situation in Ukraine," in *Religion and Nation in Modern Ukraine*, eds. Serhii Plokhy and Frank E. Sysyn (Edmonton and Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2003), 96.

[263]John Anderson, *Religion, State, and Politics in the Soviet Union and Successor States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 190.

driven, not particularly serving Ukrainian religious needs.[264] Nevertheless, facing the rising autocephaly demands within its Ukrainian branch and the rapid development of two pro-Ukrainian churches, the Moscow Patriarchate had to make the decision to form a new church administration in Ukraine. As mentioned in the previous chapter, in October 1990, the Moscow Patriarchate simply renamed its Ukrainian body, known as the UOC-MP, and granted it 'internal autonomy,' meaning it still reports to Moscow. Metropolitan Filaret became the head of this Church titled 'Metropolitan of Kyiv and All Ukraine.' With this change, Filaret stressed the canonical status of this Church and argued that the Church regained its pre-1686 status. Accordingly, he sustained labeling the UAOC as 'uncanonical.'[265] For Bremer, the forming of the UOC-MP was an effort of the Moscow Patriarchate to "compromise between the aspirations of believers who wanted a more Ukrainian Church and those who wanted to remain in communion with Moscow."[266] Gerus says that the establishment of UOC-MP and Moscow's attempt to maintain its authority by just renaming was "a shrewd and calculated move designed to stifle the growth of the autocephalous movement which seriously threatened economic and power base of the Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine."[267]

These aforementioned developments changed the status quo of the Ukrainian religious landscape. The revival of pro-Ukrainian churches, also backed by Rukh, threatened the monopoly of the UOC-MP in Ukraine, but the relationship between the UAOC and the UGCC had been strained mainly due to competition for control of parishes and church properties in western Ukraine. Furthermore, these two churches were experiencing administrative problems, which caused a lack of unity in their respective church organizations. By receiving support from the Soviet regime and taking over structures and parishes from the Russian Church in Soviet Ukraine, the

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[264]Sysyn, "The Third Rebirth of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church," 92.

[265]Nicholas E. Denysenko, *The Orthodox Church in Ukraine: A Century of Separation* (DeKalb Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 2018), 165.

[266]Thomas Bremer, "Religion in Ukraine: Historical Background and the Present Situation," in *Churches in the Ukrainian Crisis*, eds. Andrii Krawchuk and Thomas Bremer (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 5.

[267]Oleh W. Gerus, "Church Politics of Contemporary Ukraine," *Ukrainian Quarterly* 52, (1996): 35-36.

UOC-MP, which mainly served in eastern and southern Ukraine, had a relatively stable organization. Although the number of parishes of the Russian church in Ukraine decreased from 6,505 to 5,301 within a year as of 1990, primarily due to the loss in western Ukraine, the UOC-MP held its leading position.[268] The UGCC and the UAOC had 1,912 and 811 parishes, respectively, almost exclusively in western Ukraine.[269] The number of parishes of these three churches was clearly in favor of Moscow; however, participation in church services and membership in parishes indicated that religiosity in western regions was higher than it was in eastern regions.[270] Furthermore, one matter was evident regarding this period: The religious sphere became a ground for Ukrainians to claim national and cultural rights against centuries of Russian dominance.

The failed coup attempt in Moscow became a game changer in Ukrainian religious and political spheres. The Ukrainian parliament declared independence on August 24, 1991, based on the "1,000-year tradition of state development."[271] Besides, the Independence referendum on December 1 was scheduled with the presidential election. As expressed by D'Anieri, "The question now was not whether the Soviet Union would be maintained, but whether something new could be forged from its fragments."[272] In the period from August 24 to December 1, Moscow resorted to many strategies to prevent Ukrainian independence, ranging from territorial threats to manipulation of ethnic Russians in the country.[273] The religious authorities of Moscow also got involved by discouraging Ukrainians from supporting political independence. They voiced the belief that Russians and Ukrainians had shared history and fate being Eastern Slavs and 'brotherly nations,' and the Ukrainian independence from the Union would divide the unity.[274]

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[268]Frank E. Sysyn, "Politics and Orthodoxy in Independent Ukraine," *The Harriman Review* 15, no.2-3 (2005): 11.

[269]Andrew Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 237.

[270]Nikolay Mitrokhin, "Orthodoxy in Ukrainian Political Life 2004-2009," *Religion, State, and Society* 38, no.3 (2010): 232.

[271]Taras Kuzio, *Russian Nationalism and the Russian-Ukrainian War: Autocracy-Orthodoxy-Nationality* (London: Routledge, 2022), 161.

[272]D'Anieri, *Ukraine and Russia*, 31.

[273]Peter J. Potichnyj, "The Referendum and Presidential Elections in Ukraine," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 33, no. 2 (1991): 124-129.

[274]Bociurkiw, "Politics and Religion in Ukraine," 142.

To take action against the religious domain's anti-independence attacks, Kravchuk began to promote the principles of the Law of Ukraine, "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations," which had already been adopted in April 1991. Besides, Kravchuk became the initiator of the "All-Ukrainian Religious Forum" to promote unity and prevent divisions in the religious sphere on the eve of the Independence Referendum. The Parliamentary Commission on Culture and National Revival urged all religious organizations in Ukraine to refrain from conflict and form a joint coordinating committee to prevent religious conflicts. While highlighting the need for unity in the country, the Commission urged religious leaders and believers to foster a peaceful transition of Ukraine to independence.[275] Due to the vital role of religious organizations in the referendum, Ukrainian authorities held another interreligious forum designed "to persuade members of all faiths that they had nothing to fear from life in an independent Ukraine."[276]

Promoting equality among religions and religious pluralism in Ukraine, Kravchuk often voiced "For an independent state- an independent church."[277] After the declaration of Ukrainian independence on August 24, the head of the UOC-MP, Metropolitan Filaret, loudly voiced the same idea, and thereby, these two Soviet officials assumed the Ukrainian autocephaly cause. Relevant studies suggest their 'sudden convert' was due to pragmatic considerations,[278] which is also confirmed by field research data of this study. On the one side, Kravchuk, previously the head of the ideological department of the CPU, appeared to have already realized the significance of a church in Ukraine independent of Moscow. On the other side, Filaret, who was never supportive of an autocephalous Ukrainian church during the Soviet era, seemed to advocate that the authority of the Russian church in Ukraine would be further shaken by the political independence of Ukraine. An interviewee, an academician studying Ukrainian church history, stated that, when Filaret failed to

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[275]Taras Kuzio, "In Search of Unity and Autocephaly: Ukraine's Orthodox Churches," *Religion, State and Society* 25, no.4 (1997): 394-395.

[276]Andrew Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 234.

[277]Cited in Nathaniel Davis, *A Long Walk to Church: A Contemporary History of Russian Orthodoxy* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 95.

[278]See Pål Kolstø, *Political Construction Sites: Nation-Building in Russia and the Post-Soviet States* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2000); Gerus, "Church Politics of Contemporary Ukraine," 37.

become Patriarch of Moscow, he understood that they had missed a great historical chance because a patriarch is chosen for a lifetime. Accordingly, Filaret desired to grasp an opportunity to form a Ukrainian church, where he could serve as the patriarch.[279]

Backed by Kravchuk and nationalist circles and under the leadership of Filaret, the UOC-MP filed a formal petition with the Moscow Patriarchate, asking for autocephaly in November 1991. At the end of December, the Holy Synod of Moscow agreed to consider the petition. However, it did not specify a date, which was why Ukrainian nationalist deputies blamed Patriarch Alexy of Moscow for upholding Russian imperialism.[280] Meanwhile, the UOC-MP decided to launch a new request to Moscow, but three bishops of the Church refused to submit to the new demand, which caused Metropolitan Filaret to remove them from their office.[281] Consequently, within the UOC-MP, as well as between the UOC-MP and the Moscow Patriarchate, tensions began to rise, and the process went on without any significant development. It was hardly surprising that the Moscow Patriarchate opposed autocephaly in Ukraine because, as it approached the demise of the Soviet Union, the Moscow Patriarchate already endorsed the idea of "several states; one patriarchy," meaning that the political disintegration of the Union does not justify violating the unity of the Moscow Patriarchate.[282] Accordingly, the Moscow Patriarchate prioritized the task of preserving its 'canonical territory' from "the activity of nationalist and pro-Western groups in the former Soviet republics, the policy of the Vatican and the proselytism of Protestant churches."[283]

Amid epoch-making political and religious developments, Ukrainians headed to the polls to vote for Ukrainian independence and choose the first President of Ukraine on December 1, 1991. More than 90% of them voted for Ukrainian independence, and

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[279]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 29, 2019.

[280]Cited in Gerus, "Church Politics of Contemporary Ukraine," 37.

[281]Davis, *A Long Walk to Church*, 97.

[282]Alicja Curanović, *The Religious Factor in Russia's Foreign Policy* (London: Routledge, 2012), 133.

[283]Curanović, *The Religious Factor in Russia's Foreign Policy*, 133.

Kravchuk, among the six candidates, was elected as the first President of Ukraine with almost 62% of the vote. On December 8, the leaders of Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus reached a consensus to revoke the 1922 Union Treaty, legally forming the Soviet Union, and they also created the Commonwealth of Independent States (hereafter CIS). On December 25, 1991, Gorbachev declared the formal dissolution of the Soviet Union. All these developments heralded a new era in the history of Ukraine.

4.3 The Presidency of Kravchuk and the Search for Autocephaly

At this point, a brief summary of the critical backgrounds of Kravchuk's term may help contextualize his efforts to establish an autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox church. As often stated previously, Ukraine's independence in 1991 was a historical moment for Ukrainians, for they had long been deprived of their full-fledged sovereign state. However, the task of securing Ukrainian independence was profoundly difficult for political elites, mainly due to economic, political, and social problems. Like all former Soviet socialist republics, Ukraine faced serious nation- and state-building challenges.

Many scholars have characterized post-Soviet Ukraine in its early period as a weak national identity mainly due to the diversity of characteristics across regions. Though one cannot generalize, researchers often drew attention to the division between predominantly ethnic Ukrainian-populated western regions and ethnic Russian-populated southeastern and eastern Ukraine because of the multilayered identities of regions and the cross-cutting and dynamic regional cleavages. The regional divisions are assumed to be reflected in economic, linguistic, ethnic, political, religious, ideational, and historical memory cleavages. Given the competing visions of Ukrainian identity, it seems crucial for Ukrainian political elites to create a 'national idea' and build strong institutions to win people's loyalty.

In addition, Ukraine had most of the institutional components of an independent state, yet their structures inherited from the Soviet regime can merely be described as "a hollow institutional caricature of a sovereign state."[284] That is, independent

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[284]Wolczuk, *The Moulding of Ukraine*, 29.

Ukraine encountered weak or dysfunctional state institutions, which needed strengthening. Nevertheless, this demanding task required many essentials Ukraine mostly lacked, such as considerable financial resources and expert knowledge.[285] A coherent Ukraine state ideology was the major prerequisite to far-reaching reforms. Therefore, it was necessary to reach a consensus between the national-democrat camp, which was predominantly supported in western regions, and the old communist *nomenclature,* which was backed in the southern and eastern regions. While the former wished to be freed from Soviet cultural and institutional legacies and be integrated into the West, the latter adopted the Ukrainian national cause shortly before the demise of the Soviet Union, therefore remaining an important force in Ukrainian politics and primarily defending Ukraine's Russia direction. [286] Their relationship has often been far from being harmonious, and disagreements on state ideology also manifest themselves in the debate about Ukraine's geopolitical and civilizational direction between the West and Russia regarding institution building, hence, in defining the national idea. Given the obstacles mentioned in Ukraine's nation- and state-building, securing Ukrainian independence would not be a trouble-free task. Furthermore, this process became more challenging with Russia's resistance to accepting Ukraine as an equal state and its identity as distinct from that of Russian.[287] As Solchanyk puts:

> [T]raditionally Russian public opinion, regardless of its political orientation, has found it inordinately difficult to imagine Ukraine existing outside of the Russian context. Historically, mainstream Russian political though has considered Ukraine to be 'Little Russia' and Ukrainian as an offshoot of a larger all-Russian *(obshcheruskki)* nation that also incorporates the Belorussians. In this context, to 'lose' Ukraine is tantamount to losing an important part of Russian history, and consequently, identity.[288]

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[285]See Taras Kuzio, Robert S. Kravchuk, and Paul D'Anieri, eds., *State and Institution Building in Ukraine* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).

[286]Before independence, Ukraine's politics had taken on a landscape that continued throughout the 1990s. National democrats (mainly Rukh with its 20-25 percent electorate), a hard left dominated by the communists (40 percent of the votes through alliances) and an amorphous center. The impasse between the right and the left caused a fluid center dominating the government. Anders Åslund, *How Ukraine Became A Market Economy and Democracy* (Washington DC: Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2009), 41.

[287]Andreas Kappeler, "Ukraine and Russia: Legacies of the Imperial Past and Competing Memories," *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 5, no.2 (2014): 108.
[288]Roman Solchanyk, "Ukraine, The (Former) Center, Russia, and 'Russia'," *Studies in Comparative Communism* 25, no.1 (1992): 32.

After all, the Ukrainian state became a reality in 1991, which Moscow had to 'recognize'. However, this time, the relations between Ukraine and Russia was strained by problems, such as the status of Crimea, in which predominantly ethnic Russian resided, the fate of the Black Sea Fleet, the delivery of nuclear weapons inherited from the Soviet Union, and the recognition of the Russian-Ukrainian borders. These issues became more complicated, particularly when power politics began to be tied to emotionally charged politics of symbolism.[289]

In addition, most of the Western political and intellectual circles, adopting the Russian historiography, regarded Ukrainian independence as temporary and predicted that Ukraine would reunite with Russia.[290] This view was prevalent at the state level also: "On a visit to Western Europe in Spring 1992, then President Kravchuk was asked by the leader of a country: 'Which part of Russia is Ukraine in?'"[291] Furthermore, early analyses from the West regarding Ukraine pointed to the risk of ethnic and regional conflicts in Ukraine, leading to its collapse. Such potential conflicts might bring about a global nuclear disaster, considering the fact that Ukraine housed the third-largest nuclear arsenal in the world.[292]

As can be seen in this background, Ukrainian politicians needed to render "Ukrainian statehood a reality both in the international arena and for the population, which suddenly found themselves citizens of a new state."[293] Kravchuk, therefore, is concerned with nation- and state-building to make the Ukrainian state strong and viable. As a part of his arduous task, Kravchuk placed emphasis on building up Ukraine as an independent European state.[294] Thus, Kravchuk invested significant

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[289] Kolstø, *Political Construction Sites.*

[290] In European history books, Ukraine was rarely discussed, and it was quite common "for university students to complete degrees in Russian/Soviet and East European history without gaining awareness that Ukrainians had a separate political identity." Marta Dyczok*, Ukraine: Movement Without Change, Change Without Movement* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 2000), 9.

[291] Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine: State and Nation Building* (London: Routledge, 1998), 200.

[292] Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 598.

[293] Kubicek, *The History of Ukraine*, 142.

[294] Karina V. Korestelina, *Constructing the Narrative of Identity and Power: Self-imagination in a Young Ukrainian Nation* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013), 71.

efforts in preserving Ukrainian territorial integrity and sovereignty by improving relations with the West and promoting Ukraine's participation in Western security organizations.[295] Furthermore, Kravchuk's goal of assuring Ukrainian independence turned him away from Russian-led supranational associations. For him, the sustainability of the Ukrainian state would be assured by keeping Ukraine from Russia. In this respect, "the adversarial transformation was complete: Europe became the security partner, and Russia became the potential threat."[296]

Kravchuk stressed the importance of the revival of Ukrainian identity. On that ground, he declared that "Ukrainian culture, language, national self-consciousness and historical memory have been subject to so much damage for so long, that we must apply enormous force in order to revive them."[297] Accordingly, many scholars tend to characterize the Kravchuk era as a period of 'nationalizing policies', which includes the adoption of state symbols of the pre-Soviet period, the promotion of the ethnic component of Ukrainian identity, and the Ukrainian language. However, according to D'Anieri et al.:

> Kravchuk himself was never a nationalist and sought to use nationalism to build the state rather than the other way […] He always supported centrist policies that recognized Ukraine as a multinational country composed of different regions through policies that aimed to prevent interethnic and inter regional strife.[298]

This vision of Kravchuk signaled that the ongoing presence of the Moscow-affiliated Orthodox Church in Ukraine was an issue for him to settle. As noted in the previous section, Kravchuk-supported Metropolitan Filaret had demanded autocephaly from the Moscow Patriarchate before Ukraine's independence, but this fell on deaf ears. Once Ukrainians overwhelmingly voted in favor of independence and the collapse of the Soviet Union in the following month, the Moscow Patriarchate became deeply

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[295]Karina Shyrokykh, "The Evolution of the Foreign Policy of Ukraine: External Actors and Domestic Factors," *Europe-Asia Studies* 70, no.5 (2018): 832.

[296]Natalie Mychajlyszyn, "From Soviet Ukraine to the Orange Revolution: European Security Relations and the Ukrainian Identity," in *Europe's Last Frontier? Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine between Russia and the European Union*, eds. Oliver Schmidtke and Serhy Yekelchyk (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 45-46.

[297]Cited in Andrew Wilson, *Ukrainian Nationalism in the 1990s: A Minority Faith*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 112.

[298]Paul D'Anieri, Robert Kravchuk, and Taras Kuzio, *Politics and Society in Ukraine* (New York: Westview Press, 1999), 60.

worried that the UOC-MP would break away from its ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Besides, a further concern for Moscow was that Metropolitan Filaret, President Kravchuk, and Ukrainian nationalists strongly backed the pro-autocephaly initiative.[299] In connection with this, the Moscow Patriarchate organized a series of councils, in which canonical debates regarding Filaret's autocephaly demand and the issue of 'conflicts' within the UOC-MP were on the agenda.[300] Furthermore, the prominent periodicals began releasing documents from the newly opened Soviet archive and made public that the Metropolitan Filaret was the informer of the KGB under the code name 'Antanov'. As a final resort, Filaret was removed from the head of the UOC-MP due to his so-called 'canonical violations,' causing a schism. Later, Filaret was demoted to the rank of a simple monk,[301] and that was also confirmed by the Istanbul Patriarchate.[302] At the Council in May 1992 in Kharkiv, Metropolitan Volodymyr Sabodan was elected as the new head of the UOC-MP with the title of 'Metropolitan of Kyiv and All Ukraine.' He is ethnic Ukrainian, but he was not from the Ukrainian Exarchate; thus, the Council of Religious Affairs in Ukraine rejected his election, stating that it violated the law of Ukraine concerning religious organizations, which required the head of the Church in Ukraine to serve on Ukrainian territory. Moreover, the Council once again expressed its support for Metropolitan Filaret.[303]

Against all the odds, Metropolitan Volodymyr Sabodan arrived in Kyiv to assume control of the UOC-MP. While supporters of the UOC-MP were pressing Filaret, he managed to control the St Volodymyr's Cathedral. However, Kyiv was plagued by an interdenominational struggle to regain the church properties.[304]These

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[299]John B. Dunlop, "The Russian Orthodox Church as an 'Empire-Saving' Institution," in *The Politics of Religion in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, ed. Michael Bourdeaux (New York: M.E Sharpe, 1995), 23.

[300]A likely explanation for these councils' purpose was for Moscow to seek a way to counter increasing autocephalous fervor in Ukraine.

[301]Sabrina P. Ramet, *Nihil Obstat: Religion, Politics, and Social Change in East-Central Europe and Russia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 255-256.

[302]Bremer, "Religion in Ukraine," 12.

[303]Davis, *A Long Walk to Church*, 99.

[304]Zenon V. Wasyliw, "Orthodox Churches in Ukraine," in *Eastern Christianity and the Politics in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Lucian N. Leustean (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 314.

developments weakened the authority and prestige of Filaret, whereas they provided a ground for Metropolitan Volodymyr Sabodan to reinforce his leadership. Nevertheless, he had a challenging task; as the head of the autonomous church with a permanent seat in the Moscow Holy Synod, he had to persuade Ukrainians that he genuinely defended their interests.[305]

Each development in this process was extremely intricate, encompassing controversial theological and political debates and personal power struggles, yet the overall result was evident: The autocephaly process led by Filaret (then the head of the UOC-MP) and President Kravchuk failed. In his analysis of this failure, Plokhy draws attention to the following aspects:

> Official Kyiv had acted on the issue according to the old, Soviet method of administering matters involving church-state relations. In keeping with principles hitherto developed, the bishops were supposed to support government policy, for which Filaret was the spokesman, unconditionally. This time, however, the old ideas and old policies did not work. Perestroika had loosened the state's control over the church, and the widespread fear created by Stalin vanished. On the other hand, the bishops, who were dissatisfied with Filaret, and prospects of his gaining more power were incited by Moscow and given full support by Patriarch Aleksii II. On the other hand, their policy was also full supported by their old ally, the Communist elites of southern and eastern Ukraine, who not only remained in power despite Ukrainian independence, but had even strengthened their influence in local affairs.[306]

After the failure of the autocephaly initiative designed over the UOC-MP, political circles in Ukraine considered the possibility of the unification of the UAOC with Filaret's camp. For them, this was a shortcut to the nationalization of the existing Orthodox Church.[307] Metropolitan Filaret, his followers, and some members of the UAOC established the Kyiv Patriarchate on June 25, 1992. In absentia, Patriarch Mstyslav was elected as the head of the Kyiv Patriarchate, and Filaret became the deputy patriarch. However, Patriarch Mstyslav, who was in the US, announced that the election had not been to his knowledge, and he declared his strong opposition to

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[305]Dunlop, "The Russian Orthodox Church," 24.

[306]Serhii Plokhy, "Kyiv vs. Moscow: The Autocephalous Movement in Independent Ukraine," in *Religion and Nation in Modern Ukraine*, eds. Serhii Plokhy and Frank E. Sysyn (Edmonton and Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2003), 139-140.

[307]Andrew Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 235.

this unification, specifically to Filaret.[308] In fact, most of the UAOC's clergy refused to join to the Kyiv Patriarchate, remaining loyal to Patriarch Mstyslav. Nonetheless, the Council of Religious Affairs in Ukraine moved to register the Kyiv Patriarchate and deregister the UAOC; therefore, the UAOC lost its 'legal' status and 'was wiped' from the official statistics presenting the number of parishes in Ukraine.[309] Consequently, the former religious hierarch of the Moscow Patriarchate, Metropolitan Filaret, "became the effective head of a national church, created in an ecclesiastical *coup d'état*."[310] As Dawisha and Parrot assert, "Despite Filaret's long history of attacks on nationalist trends within Ukrainian religious confessions, Kravchuk and the leadership of Rukh quickly hailed the merged church as the only legitimate representative of Orthodoxy in Ukraine."[311] By enjoying the support of the state and Ukrainian nationalist groups, such as the Ukrainian National Self-Defense Guard (UNSO), the Kyiv Patriarchate began to strengthen its standing. Even though Kravchuk asserted church-state separation and non-preferential treatment among Ukrainian churches, the Kyiv Patriarchate "was single out as the embryo 'state church' during his presidency."[312] In short, Ukraine then officially had two Orthodox churches: the Kyiv Patriarchate and the UOC-MP, though the former was not recognized by the international Orthodox community.

As stated above, an overwhelming majority of the bishops of the UAOC were disinclined to join the unification. Also, those who became part of the Kyiv Patriarchate were uncomfortable with Filaret because of his Soviet past and ambitions. Following the death of Patriarch Mstyslav in 1993, discontent in the church flared up, and the pro-Mstyslav wing returned to the pre-Unification structure, which meant the re-forming of the UAOC. These two churches held elections for their new heads. While the former dissident Volodymyr (Romaniuk)

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[308]Marta Kolomayets, "Orthodox Churches announce union," *The Ukrainian Weekly*, June, 28, 1992, p.10

[309]Bociurkiw, "Politics and Religion in Ukraine," 147.

[310]Myroslaw Tataryn, "Russia and Ukraine: Two Models of Religious Liberty and Two Models for Orthodoxy," *Religion, State, and Society* 29, no. 3 (2001): 162.

[311]Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott, *Russia and the New States of Eurasia: The Politics of Upheaval* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 107-108.

[312]Kuzio, "In Search of Unity and Autocephaly," 396.

became the leader of the Kyiv Patriarchate, Dymytriy Yarema took over the UAOC. Both asserted being heirs of Patriarch Mstyslav, yet neither church lacked canonical recognition.[313]

Consequently, the unification attempts in 1992 led by President Kravchuk and Metropolitan Filaret failed, causing further divisions represented by three churches: the UOC-MP, the Kyiv Patriarchate, and the UAOC. As Wilson ironically states, "Ukraine had, amazingly, three of the world's 17 Orthodox Churches."[314] With the strong support of Kravchuk and nationalist circles, the Kyiv Patriarchate continued to request the Istanbul Patriarchate for autocephalous status. Notably, the representative of Kravchuk visited Patriarch Bartholomew of Istanbul in 1993 to ask autocephalous status. Nevertheless, Bartholomew refused, reiterating the necessity of unifying Ukrainian Orthodox churches into one as a precondition of the autocephalous status.[315] Bartholomew previously recognized the UOC-MP as the only canonical body in Ukraine. Furthermore, he regarded collaboration between Ukrainian clergy, who wished to gain autocephaly, and the Moscow Patriarchate as the only solution to the 'Ukrainian problem.'[316]

Because of the above-mentioned standpoint of the Istanbul Patriarchate, it was impossible to realize the Ukrainian autocephaly because the Moscow Patriarchate, proposed by the Istanbul Patriarchate for cooperation, had already adopted the formula- "several states; one patriarchate-" to preserve its unity. Furthermore, the Moscow Patriarchate's headquarters approved significant church-related political formulations the first all-Russian Assembly in May 1993 at the Danilov Monastery. For example, they accepted "the term of Russian is a generic, collective concept that includes Great Russians, Little Russians, and Belarusians"[317] Dunlop argues that the

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[313]Wasyliw, "Orthodox Churches in Ukraine," 315.

[314]Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 236.

[315]Kuzio, "In Search of Unity and Autocephaly," 403.

[316]Cited in Sergei A. Mudrov, "The Confrontation, Intimidation and New Divisions? A Controversial Path to the Creation of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church in Ukraine," *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 18, no. 54 (2019): 65.

[317]Cited in Dunlop, "The Russian Orthodox Church," 16.

Assembly also accepted "all Ukrainians and Belarusians were in fact ethnic Russians"[318] and "the existence of Ukraine and Belarus as sovereign states was due to some kind of a misunderstanding."[319] Furthermore, the Assembly agreed that Russians are a divided nation that remained under foreign countries after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, thus proclaiming the need to protect their rights.[320] Stressing the critical role of Ukraine in the 'restoration' of the Soviet Union, Dunlop maintains that Russia's losing Ukraine "would be to acquiesce to the loss of a part of itself," therefore, the ecclesiastical independence of Ukrainian church from the Moscow Patriarchate was "a debacle to be averted at all cost."[321]

To sum up Kravchuk's tenure, he followed an anti-Russian and pro-Western policy, but failed to introduce essential economic reforms at home.[322] Besides, even though his anti-Russian rhetoric in forming boundaries of Ukrainian identity was welcomed in western Ukraine, it made him unpopular in the eastern and southern parts of the country.[323] The regional polarization in the country was aggravated by separatism seething in Crimea, and with that, the broad consensus on Ukrainian independence in 1991 lost its luster,[324] and Ukrainians headed for polling for the election of the new president in 1994. The main rival of Kravchuk in the election was Leonid Kuchma from eastern Ukraine. Kuchma served as prime minister of Kravchuk (1992-1993), and prior to his career in politics, he was the head of the world's biggest missile

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[318]Dunlop, 16.

[319]Dunlop, 16.

[320]Dunlop, 22. This undoubtedly attributed special importance to Ukraine. Approximately 25 million Russians remained outside the borders of Russia after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, of which 11 million, approximately 22 percent of the Ukrainian population, were Russians. As Kolstoe states, "four out of every five non-Ukrainians in Ukraine are Russians." Paul Kolstoe, *Russians in the Former Soviet Republics* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 1995), 170.

[321]Dunlop, "The Russian Orthodox Church," 20.

[322]Peter J. S. Duncan, "Westernism, Eurasianism and Pragmatism: The Foreign Policies of the Post-Soviet States, 1991-2001," in *The Legacy of the Soviet Union*, eds. Wendy Slater and Andrew Wilson (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 231. His years in office were beset by the economic crisis, including inflation rates skyrocketing. Ukraine recorded "hyperinflation of 10,155 percent in 1993, suffering the greatest official decline in output of any country not ravaged by war," which led to questioning the Ukrainian state's sustainability. Åslund, *How Ukraine Became A Market Economy and Democracy*, 3-4.

[323]Kolstø, *Political Construction Sites.*

[324]Birch, *Election and Democratization in Ukraine*, 81.

factory. During the election campaign, Ukraine's economy and relations with Russia was the focal subject.[325] On the one side, Kravchuk portrayed himself as pro-Ukrainian/Western and positioned himself as a guarantor of Ukrainian independence and sovereignty against Russia. On the other side, Kuchma emphasized the Eurasian dimension of Ukrainian identity and state, and he promised to make Russian the official language. Also, Kuchma emphasized the necessity of improving cooperation with Russia to handle the economic crisis in the country. On the religious front, the Kyiv Patriarchate supported Kravchuk, hoping to preserve its privileged position, while the UOC-MP displayed its adherence to Kuchma.

In the election, Kuchma defeated incumbent president Kravchuk and became the new president of Ukraine. The regional distribution of votes showed varying political orientations between Ukraine's east and west, thus the political significance of regional differences in the country. Indeed, various factors might have influenced the shifts in votes in the Russified population. Still, UOC-MP's contribution to his victory may have motivated the undecided voters in eastern Ukraine, especially encouraging the passive voters in rural areas to vote for Kuchma.[326] More importantly, Orthodox churches served to deepen the rifts that already existed in the country, and elections emerged as a decisive factor in determining the future of the churches.[327]

4.4 The Presidency of Kuchma (1994-2005): The Matter of Ukrainian Autocephaly

Considering Kuchma's electoral promises, many Western and Russian scholars expected that Kuchma would make a radical shift from the policies already in effect regarding the Ukrainian nation and state building and the country's Western orientation to those which would bring Ukraine's reunification with Russia.[328] It

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[325]Vicki L. Hesli, Governments and Politics in Russia and the Post-Soviet Region (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2007), 314.

[326]Sysyn, "Politics and Orthodoxy in Independent Ukraine," 13.

[327]Sysyn, 13.

[328]Taras Kuzio, "Stateness and Institutions in Ukraine: A Theoretical and Comparative Introduction," in *State and Institution Building in Ukraine*, eds. Taras Kuzio, Robert S. Kravchuk, and Paul D'Anieri (New York: St. Martin's Press,1999), 15.

became clear that Kuchma had no intention of cultural, political, or economic initiatives with Russia, which would dilute Ukrainian state independence. Kuchma seemed to maintain his predecessor's policies basically to ensure the continuation of Ukraine as an independent state, as well as his own legitimacy as president.[329] In short, he kept Kravchuk's policy regarding NATO and EU and tried to improve economic relations with Russia, as general agreements with the West "did little to actually open up trade opportunities, leaving Ukraine heavily dependent on Russian energy and on the Russian market."[330] Indeed, Kuchma's vision of foreign relations is commonly described as a multi-vector policy. This approach refers to maintaining a balance between the West and Russia to gain "the most from both and to gently play on their differences, while gradually drifting away from Moscow and using the West as a counterbalance to Russia's harsh tactics."[331]

As regards Kuchma's identity politics, he declared his opposition to national identity based on western Ukrainian nationalism. This enabled him to garner votes of Russophone regions. However, the regional distribution of votes clearly indicated that Kuchma had to adopt a policy that embraces diversity in Ukraine and removes the east and west division.[332] That is why Kuchma is said to have avoided bold identity politics moves, which would cause alienation of the inhabitants of either the western or eastern region of Ukraine, and tried to build a middle ground to establish civic identity in Ukraine. He also refrained from controversial memory politics regarding the pre-Soviet and Soviet past, and he instrumentally tailored official discourse on these issues for different regions and circumstances.[333] While his maneuverings were considered by many as his expertise in balanced politics and ability to ensure political and social stability, for Riabchuk, "[s]uch a purely instrumental approach to historic events emerged naturally from the post-Communist

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[329]Yitzhak M. Brudny and Evgeny Finkel, "Why Ukraine is not Russia: Hegemonic National Identity and Democracy in Russia and Ukraine," *East European Politics and Societies* 25, no.4 (2011): 826.

[330]D'Anieri, *Ukraine and Russia*, 74-75.

[331]Vladimir Fesenko, "Ukraine: between Europe and Eurasia," in *Eurasian Integration- The View From Within*, eds. Piotr Dutkiewicz and Richard Sakwa (London: Routledge, 2015), 135.

[332]Wolczuk, *The Moulding of Ukraine,* 139.

[333]Volodymyr Kulyk, "The Politics of Ethnicity in Post-Soviet Ukraine: Beyond Brubaker," *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 26, no. 1-2 (2001): 215.

strategy of holding the 'centrist' niche and marginalizing their rivals as dangerous radicals, stupid fanatics or infantile romantics out of touch with reality."[334] Additionally, Kuchma embraced Ukrainian identity in terms of both European and Eastern Slavic frames; however, his relationship with Russia was criticized for "the processes of building a national identity and defining social boundaries."[335] In a nutshell, it is safe to argue that this duality manifested itself in Kuchma's religious policy and led to some contradictions and ambiguities.

Kuchma, unlike Kravchuk, who supported the Kyiv Patriarchate, publicly announced his intention to remain hands-off.[336] Accordingly, he abolished the Council for Religious Affairs, which was disrupted by its interference in the religious sphere. Its functions were transferred to the newly established Ministry for Nationalities, Migration and Cults. For some, by removing the Council that functioned to support the creation of the 'state church' in Ukraine based on the Kyiv Patriarchate, he displayed his gratitude to the UOC-MP, which supported him in the election.[337] In fact, Kuchma's position on the religious sphere became more evident when he appointed a new head of Department of Religious Affairs, who had opposed state support for the Kyiv Patriarchate during Kravchuk's presidency. Thanks to this appointment, Kuchma limited the state budget for the Kyiv Patriarchate and provided tacit support for the UOC-MP. Such a shift in church-state relations under Kuchma removed the Kyiv Patriarchate's 'privileged' position at the state level, which resulted in growing tension between the Kyiv Patriarchate and the state.[338] Thus, it can be concluded that Kuchma's backing of the UOC-MP reflected his policy on the

[334]Mykola Riabchuk, "Holodomor: The Politics of Memory and Political Infighting in Contemporary Ukraine," *Harriman Review* 16, no. 2 (2008): 6.

[335]Karina V. Korostelina, *Constructing the Narrative of Identity and Power: Self-Imagination in a Young Ukrainian Nation* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014).

[336]He expressed his views on church-state relations in Ukraine by reiterating the principle of church-state separation and state neutrality towards religions. Kuchma also urged the warring churches to construct peaceful relations. Additionally, he took the initiative to establish a government commission to help local authorities resolve inter-confessional conflicts causing social instability in Ukraine. Gerus, "Church Politics of Contemporary Ukraine," 43-44.

[337]Kuzio, "In Search of Unity and Autocephaly," 405.

[338]Serhii Plokhy, "Church, State, and Nation in Ukraine," in *Religion and Nation in Modern Ukraine*, eds. Serhii Plokhy and Frank E. Sysyn (Edmonton and Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2003), 178.

issue of nationality, language, and culture,[339] but it does not necessarily mean that he embraced the pro-Russian vision. Concerning his religious policy, Elenskii states the following:

> Kuchma [...] contemptuously called the Kyiv Patriarchate 'an apparatus Church' and obviously favored the UOC MP, which had supported his election campaign. The 'early' Kuchma loved to emphasize his pragmatism and his neglect for 'ideological lyricism.'[340]

Additionally, Wawrzonek questioned Kuchma's promise to keep state neutrality in the religious realm:

> It may be true that in reality, Kuchma sought the 'complete impartiality' of the state in confessional matters and was about to withdraw from 'participating in the resolution of any religious problems.' But soon it turned out that when the Ukrainian state and the Orthodox community are so tightly entangled in a net of dependencies concerning property and ideology, escape from these problems can bring disastrous consequences.[341]

Many scholars focusing on Kuchma's religious policy have devoted considerable attention to the funeral ceremony of Patriarch Volodymyr, who 'suspiciously' passed away on July 14, 1995. Reportedly, Metropolitan Filaret insisted on burying the Patriarch inside St. Sophia Cathedral, technically a state museum, as opposed to the Kuchma administration's proposal to bury him in the central cemetery of Kyiv. Doing so, Filaret was in pursuit of "staking a claim to the greatest shrine of East Slavic Christendom."[342] On July 18, the funeral procession[343] led by Filaret attempted to enter the Cathedral to bury the Patriarch. As a response, the police forcibly dispersed the funeral procession, and it ended in bloodshed. This day, known as 'Black Tuesday' or 'Sophia Battle'[344] was a source of severe criticism at the

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[339]Plokhy, "Church, State, and Nation in Ukraine," 177.

[340]Viktor Elenskii, "Ukrainian Orthodoxy and the Ukrainian Project: The Churches and "Unforeseen Statehood in an Age of Religious Revival," *Russian Social Science Review* 56, no. 3 (2015): 80.

[341]Wawrzonek, *Religion and Politics in Ukraine*, 166.

[342]Plokhy, "Church, State, and Nation in Ukraine," 179.

[343]It was mainly composed of extreme nationalist groups, Kravchuk, national-democrat deputies, and the followers of the Kyiv Patriarchate.

[344]"Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kyivan Patriarchate," Religious Information Service of Ukraine, Last Accessed September 10, 2022, https://risu.ua/en/ukrainian-orthodox-church-kyivan-patriarchate_n52321

government.[345] It is also commonly believed that this incident reflected opposition towards the emerging alliance between Ukrainian identity and the pro-Russian church- the UOC-MP.[346] Plokhy presents some repercussions of this tragic day for Ukraine and Filaret as follows:

> The conflict on St. Sophia Square ended in tragedy and a resounding scandal that undermined the prestige of the government and the presidential administration. For the first time in Ukraine, which had attained independence bloodlessly and was justly proud of its tolerant practices, blood had been shed and brute force applied. Metropolitan Filaret and the UOC-KP could congratulate themselves. In a single day, Filaret had been transformed from a figure suspected of arranging the patriarch's murder into a symbol of the national-democratic camp, the sole individual who could unite the assorted national-democratic forces that were at odds with one another of the national-democratic political forces, which was particularly important for winning the election as patriarch at the future sobor of the UOC-KP.[347]

Following the 'Black Tuesday,' Filaret became the head of the Kyiv Patriarchate in October 1995. Also, he promoted the Church to the forefront as a supporter of Ukrainian independence and national identity. Although, shortly before and after his election, some bishops transferred to the UAOC, the Kyiv Patriarchate continued to consolidate its standing, particularly with the support of the nationalist groups in Ukraine. Besides, Kuchma, who sided with the UOC-MP, realized that his intention to undermine the Kyiv Patriarchate could lead to severe political consequences for him; therefore, state authorities withdrew their open favoritism towards the UOC-MP.[348] Furthermore, Kuchma announced the re-establishment of the Council for Religious Affairs. According to one view, Kuchma understood that, if he wished to maintain state neutrality, his administration had to be more active in alleviating the interfaith tensions and communicating with religious representatives.[349] According to the other view, the driving force of his re-establishing of the Council was Kuchma's conviction that the state had a role to play regarding the three Orthodox jurisdictions.

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[345]Khristina Lew, "Ukraine Feels Repercussions of Violence at Patriarch's Funeral," *The Ukrainian Weekly*, July 30, 1995, p. 1, 4, 6.

[346]Bohdan Harasymiw, *Post-Communist Ukraine* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2002), 210.

[347]Plokhy, "Church, State, and Nation in Ukraine," 180.

[348]Wawrzonek, *Religion and Politics in Ukraine*, 167.

[349]Tataryn, "Russia and Ukraine," 164.

However, he was still doubtful about the unifying role of religion in Ukrainian society.[350] In fact, the statistical data for that period, i.e. numerical division between Orthodox jurisdictions, partially confirmed this concern. While UOC-MP had 5,993 parishes, the Kyiv Patriarchate and the UAOC held 1,753 and 608, respectively.[351]

Referring to Kuchma's then support for the unity of Orthodox churches might be misleading, but the idea of unification continued to be a significant issue among the three Orthodox churches and manifested itself in their bilateral initiatives. There were no concrete results, however. Specifically, Patriarch Filaret and Metropolitan Volodymyr Sabodan made accusations against each other, causing barren ground for reconciliation. On one side, Filaret blamed the Moscow Patriarchate for being an institution siding with contemporary Russian politics employing the Russian imperialist vision. Accordingly, he claimed that the UOC-MP lacked 'genuine' autonomy and depended on the Moscow Patriarchate. On the other side, Metropolitan Volodymyr refused Filaret's allegations regarding the status of the UOC-MP and underlined that the Church is the only canonical body in Ukraine. For him, those who are 'uncanonical' and 'schismatics' had to repently return. Besides, it was voiced by the UOC-MP that Filaret himself was a hindrance to the unification process.[352] The above-mentioned allegations were made many times by the two churches. Thus, these accusations seem to be a kind of 'norm,' based on complex theological roots, historical interpretations, and political atmospheres of different periods.

At this point, it is worth reviewing the negotiations initiated by the pro-Ukrainian UAOC and the UOC-MP in 1995. The initial question is how these two ideologically opposite churches were able to sit together. The major reason was their shared opposition to Filaret, who refused to admit the negative repercussions of his

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[350]D'Anieri, Kravchuk, and Kuzio, *Politics and Society in Ukraine*, 83.

[351]Nathaniel Davis, "Hard Data on Russian and Ukrainian Orthodox Churches," *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe* 20, no. 6 (2000): 24.

[352]Some pejoratively called the Kyiv Patriarchate "Church of Filaret" and its followers "Filaretovites." Jeffrey Mankoff and Alexei Miller, "Ukraine's Church Politics in War and Revolution," in *Religion and Violence in Russia: Context, Manifestations, and Policy*, ed. Olga Oliker (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), 239.

personality on the unification process. In addition, the rapprochement between the UAOC and the UOC-MP might also point to a rising pro-Ukrainian fraction within the UOC-MP.[353] Undoubtedly, the Moscow Patriarchate was constantly worried about a unified church in Ukraine; therefore, it was determined to hinder the unification attempts to preserve the *status quo* in its ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Despite the Moscow Patriarchate, Ramet, one of the influential scholars focusing on Orthodox Christianity and politics, was convinced that unity was possible at that time and commented on the logic behind the unity attempt:

> The fact that such a union would necessarily entail the effective loss by the patriarch of Moscow of any say over any part of Ukrainian Orthodoxy may, at first, seem to pose a not insignificant obstacle to that union. But, as all parties to the dispute realize, Moscow's jurisdiction within Ukrainian Orthodoxy is itself a relic of the tsarist and communist past, unlikely to endure long in independent Ukraine.[354]

Regarding the prospects of the unity talks between the UOC-MP and the UAOC, Wilson contends that these two ideologically opposite churches most likely clash, and especially diaspora clerics tend not to cooperate with 'KGB' clerics.[355] Wilson also highlights UAOC's organizational instability as an obstacle in the negotiations.[356] One can therefore assume that, even without the Moscow barrier on the unification talks, the core issues between the two churches might hinder the negotiations. Not having come to an agreement yet, negotiations continued. What is more, the Council of the UOC-MP later discussed the issue of autocephaly and declared that it was not the right time for the Church to become autocephalous.[357] These developments in the UOC-MP may indicate that the pro-Ukrainian wing in the UOC-MP wanted their voice to be heard. Meanwhile, however, there was a 'strange' turn of events. For instance, in 1996, the UOC-MP withdrew its 1991 autocephaly demand 1991. As eloquently expressed by Sysyn, "This decision placed the

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[353]Gerus, "Church Politics of Contemporary Ukraine," 45-46.

[354]Ramet, *Nihil Obstat*, 262.

[355]Wilson, *Ukrainians*, 245-246.

[356]Wilson, 246.

[357]Alexei D. Krindatch, "Religion in Postsoviet Ukraine as a Factor in Regional, Ethno-Cultural and Political Diversity," *Religion, State &Society* 31, no. 1 (2003): 55.

Ukrainian government in the awkward position of seeing no end to the division and turmoil among Orthodox believers."[358]

Adopting the Constitution of Ukraine in 1996 was certainly one of the most significant achievements of Kuchma. The constitution was long awaited, with Ukraine becoming the last state to adopt a new constitution among the Soviet successor states. With regard to religious matters, Article 35 of the Constitution confirms the freedom of religion, church-state separation, and it does not give a special status to any religion.[359] In addition to the constitutional guarantees, Kuchma initiated the foundation of the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations, which is an inter-denominational consultative body embracing more than 90% of all religious organizations in Ukraine.[360] These were some of the promising progresses in Ukraine's religious condition. However, the fact that the Moscow Patriarchate anathematized Filaret in 1997 dissipated this positive atmosphere. Through this act,

> [n]ot only do hierarchs in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church [UOC-MP], Moscow Patriarchate therefore not recognize his standing as head of another Orthodox church, they view him neither as an Orthodox clergyman nor as an Orthodox believer. The pronunciation of anathema declares one's separation from God and exclusion from ultimate salvation. For members of the Moscow Patriarchate, Patriarch Filaret is a heretic and an enemy of the church.[361]

Additionally, anathema on Patriarch Filaret triggered an increase in nationalist support to him, yet it also 'inflamed' the already existing religious fanaticism and intolerance of the UOC-MP and Kyiv Patriarchate followers.[362] Furthermore, other Orthodox churches endorsed the anathema on Filaret. As Moscow pressured them,

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[358]Sysyn, "Politics and Orthodoxy in Independent Ukraine," 14.

[359]Constitution of Ukraine," Council of Europe, Last Accessed January 27, 2020, http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/cooperation/ccpe/profiles/ukraineConstitution_en.asp.

[360]"Information About UCCRO," Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations, Last Accessed September 10, 2022, https://vrciro.org.ua/en/council/info. See also, "All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations," Religious Information Service of Ukraine, Last Accessed September 10, 2022 https://risu.ua/en/all-ukrainian-council-of-churches-and-religious-organizations_n33568.

[361]Quimby, "Constructing States, Constructing Interests," 124.

[362]Plokhy, "Church, State, and Nation in Ukraine," 192.

"even non-Orthodox churches and ecumenical organizations refused to have any formal contact with the Kyiv Patriarchate," and the Kyiv Patriarchate became "completely isolated."[363] Patriarch Filaret's isolation from global Orthodoxy fueled the perception regarding the Ukrainian autocephaly movement as "a dubious, anti-Orthodox, and anti-canonical rationale."[364] In short, the anathema added another theological barrier to the potential problems associated with unity.

Ukrainians went to polls to elect a new president in 1999. In his presidential term, Kuchma made significant achievements such as introducing the new currency- the *hryvnia*, dismantling the separatism in Crimea, adopting the Constitution in 1996, developing ties with NATO and EU, signing the Budapest Memorandum in 1994,[365] and signing the Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Partnership in 1997 with Russia.[366] These maneuvers quite effectively strengthened the Ukrainian state and protected its territorial integrity. However, the related literature commonly points out that, as he exponentially became more powerful in the country and moved away from democratic practices, authoritarianism and corruption significantly increased. Although his popularity declined on the eve of the 1999 presidential election, he won.[367]

During his first term, despite keeping balance to some extent, it is contended that Kuchma favored UOC-MP. Although some scholars emphasizing his balance politics

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[363]Cyril Hovorun, "The Cause of Ukrainian Autocephaly," in *Religion During the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict*, eds. Elizabeth A. Clark and Dmytro Vovk (London and New York: Routledge, 2020), 187.

[364]Denysenko, *The Orthodox Church in Ukraine*, 183.

[365]Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States agreed upon respecting Ukraine's sovereignty in its existing borders in return for Ukraine's giving up nuclear arms inherited from the Soviet Union. They would also refrain from the threat or use of military force against Ukraine. For other details, see the full text of the Agreement, "Ukraine: The Budapest Memorandum of 1994" Last Accessed April 1, 2023, https://policymemos.hks.harvard.edu/links/ukraine-budapest-memorandum-1994.

[366]By the Treaty, Ukraine and Russia "respect[ed] each other's territorial integrity and confirm[ed] the inviolability of their common borders." For the details of strategic partnership and cooperation see, https://treaties.un.org/Pages/showDetails.aspx?objid=0800000280401fbb, Last Accessed April 1, 2023. The issue of the Black Sea Fleet was also 'solved' by partitioning it between Ukraine and Russia. For the conditions of the partition and status of its headquarters, Sevastopol in the Crimea see, Åslund, *How Ukraine Became A Market Economy and Democracy*, 101.

[367]Birch attributed Kuchma's re-election to fragmentation in the left camp and state interference in the election. Sarah Birch, "The presidential election in Ukraine, October 1999," *Electoral Studies* 21, (2002): 339.

do not agree with this, they seem to acknowledge that Kuchma was against a national Orthodox church under the leadership of Filaret. In addition, Kuchma occasionally voiced the necessity of healing the fragmentation in the Orthodox jurisdictions, yet he hardly undertook an active role in that. However, his support for the autocephaly initiative was evident in his second term. According to Elenskii:

> Gradually, the missile designer turned president began to realize how important it was for state building that the Orthodox Church should be independent of external centers of influence. At the pan-Orthodox summit in Jerusalem on the occasion of the bimillennium of Christ's birth, it was quite graphically explained to Leonid Kuchma in the language of state protocol and Church ritual what autocephaly means for a country in which the majority of believers profess Orthodox Christianity. In the company of the Russian, Georgian, Cypriot, Greek, Romanian, and other heads of state walking in festive procession alongside 'their' primates, the Ukrainian president felt almost like a pariah. For the primate of the UOC MP, Metropolitan Vladimir, had come to Jerusalem as a member of the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church, while the primates of the independent Ukrainian Orthodox Churches- the UOC KP and the UAOC- were not recognized by the local Orthodox Churches and had not therefore been invited to Jerusalem. Upon his return to Kyiv, Kuchma delivered a passionate speech about the urgent need for a single national Orthodox Church and harshly criticized the forces impeding its establishment.[368]

The above-mentioned view behind Kuchma's changing position points to his emotive aspect stemming from the event he participated in, but other factors may have also contributed to his change, such as planning an active intervention into the religious sphere to alleviate tensions and increase interest of the Istanbul Patriarchate in the Ukrainian Orthodoxy. In fact, after the death of Patriarch Dymytriy in 2000, the UAOC intentionally did not elect a new patriarch, which would be an advantage for the future unification negotiations,[369] so Metropolitan Mefodiy was elected as the primate of the Church.[370] Although the UAOC strived to enhance its ties with the Istanbul Patriarchate by bringing itself under the jurisdiction of the UOC-USA,[371] disagreements and conflicts within the Church arose, leading to fragmentations.[372] In

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[368]Elenskii, "Ukrainian Orthodoxy," 80-81.

[369]Bremer, "Religion in Ukraine," 12.

[370]"Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church," Religious Information Service of Ukraine, Last Accessed December 5, 2022, https://risu.ua/en/ukrainian-autocephalous-orthodox-church_n33543

[371]Denysenko, *The Orthodox Church in Ukraine,* 169.
[372]Religious Information Service of Ukraine, "Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church."

fact, Metropolitan Mefodiy encouraged return to the Kyiv Patriarchate, and this was supported by Kuchma, who finally realized the advantages of a single unified Ukrainian Orthodox Church.[373] To this end, several negotiations were held between the UAOC, the Kyiv Patriarchate, and the Istanbul Patriarchate; however, these attempts failed to produce tangible results due to conflicting views of the church leaders on the essentials of the unification schema. Besides, in 2000, Kuchma demanded autocephaly from the Moscow Patriarchate, only to be disappointed by the response he received.[374]

Kuchma's autocephaly initiatives might seem suggestive of his opposition to the Russian propaganda of the so-called Ukrainian-Russian unity; however, this was not the case for Kuchma. One striking example was when Putin and Kuchma met in the ancient city of Chersonesus in June 2001 to celebrate the reopening of St. Volodymyr Cathedral. During their speeches, both leaders highlighted the importance of Orthodox Christianity. Furthermore, Putin referred to Orthodox Christianity as the foundation of fraternity and brotherhood between Ukrainians and Russians. For Putin, many use clichés associated with 'unity' without comprehending its meaning, so such a place representing fraternity and brotherhood is significant for both countries.[375] Especially in the second term of Kuchma, he sided with Putin in many organizations, which directly or indirectly promoted the narrative of common history shared with Russia.[376]

One must look at politics to understand Kuchma's paradoxical pro-autocephaly initiatives. The widespread corruption and authoritarianism began to mark Kuchma's second term. What is more, after the tape scandal,[377] the domestic opposition and

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[373]Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 246.

[374]"Moscow Refuses autonomy to Ukrainian Orthodox Church," Kyiv Post, Last Accessed December 5, 2022, https://archive.kyivpost.com/article/content/ukraine-politics/moscow-refuses-autonomy-to-ukrainian-orthodox-chur-4025.html

[375]"Russia, Ukraine leaders sing church praises," BBC News, Last Accessed December 6, 2022, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/monitoring/media_reports/1462322.stm

[376]See Tatiana Zhurzhenko, "A Divided Nation? Reconsidering Role of Identity Politics in the Ukraine Crisis," *Die Friedens-Warte* 89, no.1/2 (2014).

[377]In November 2000, the tapes recorded in the Kuchma office from 1998 to 2000 were released. These tapes seemed to reveal many illegal acts of Kuchma, such as undeclared arm trade, abuse of the

international critics towards Kuchma intensified, resulting in the cut of Western support. He became persona non grata in the West.[378] As a result, he grew closer to Russia and began to lose interest in the autocephaly initiative.[379] Besides, at that time, the symbiotic relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian state expanded under Putin, and the Church often served as the only organization supporting collective identity or action in Eastern Slavs.[380] It is also well-known that this cooperation played an extremely significant role in strengthening Russian national identity and determining Russian domestic and foreign policy. Public visibility of the 'brotherly nations' propaganda not incidentally increased while Kuchma leaned closer to Russia. Besides, Gvosdev suggests that Kuchma utilized the issue of autocephaly as a tool to consolidate his position and gain a maneuvering ground against Russia.[381] As regards to Kuchma's autocephaly initiatives in his second term, one academician, who previously was a high-ranking state official on religious affairs, stated that Kuchma tried to 'artificially' grow the UOC-MP by granting it more parishes to increase the chances of receiving autocephaly. The same interviewee considered Kuchma's stance on Ukrainian autocephaly as pragmatic, leading to the consolidation of the influence of the UOC-MP at the state and regional levels.[382] Therefore, for the interviewee, Kuchma unintentionally paved the way for the intensification of Moscow's political and religious influence in Ukraine.

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presidential office, high-level corruption, pressure on journalists and politicians, and manipulations in elections. Taras Kuzio, "Oligarchs, Tapes, and Oranges: 'Kuchmagate' to the Orange Revolution," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 23, no.1 (2007): 42. Allegedly, Kuchma was implicated in the murder of journalist Gongadze, who was an explicit critic of him. All scandals led to three months of protests in Kyiv. Following the confrontation between the hard-nationalist right and police on March 9, 2001, the protests ended. Åslund, How *Ukraine Became A Market Economy and Democracy*, 144.

[378] Åslund, 145.

[379] Gennadiy Druzenko, "Religion and Secular State in Ukraine," in *Religion and Secular State: National Reports*, eds. W. Cole Durham Jr. and Javier Martínez-Torrón (Washington, DC: International Center for Law and Religion Study, 2010), 769.

[380] Andrew Wilson, "Rival Versions of the East Slavic Idea in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus," in The *Legacy of the Soviet Union*, eds. Wendy Slater and Andrew Wilson (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 46.

[381] Nicholas K. Gvosdev, "The new Emperors? Post-Soviet Presidents and Church-State Relations in Ukraine and Russia," *Sophia Institute Studies in Orthodox Theology* (2010), 187.

[382] Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 19, 2019.

Ukrainians voted for the country's third president in 2004, but the meanings attributed to the election implied that it was more than an election. There was a collision between authoritarian pro-Eurasian and democratic pro-European sides over Ukraine's political orientation, leading to an election known as the "dirtiest and most bitterly contested."[383] Ukraine's presidential election featured two front-runners, Yanukovych, the incumbent prime minister of Kuchma, and Yushchenko, an opposition leader who served as prime minister from 1999 to 2001. Yushchenko envisioned developing close ties with the West and positioned himself as a pro-Western leader, countering Kuchma's authoritarianism. Russia-backed Yanukovych, Kuchma's handpicked successor, promised close relations with Russia. Much has been written about Russia's strong support for Yanukovych. The studies addressing the church's involvement in election campaigns highlight the unprecedented level of the UOC-MP's active role in the previous elections in Ukraine.[384] In other words, most religious organizations, especially the Kyiv Patriarchate, supported Yushchenko, while the UOC-MP supported Yanukovych. An attempt was made to undermine Yushchenko's image by an orchestrated campaign full of religion oriented discrediting tactics. Some derogatory labels UOC-MP used for Yushchenko were extremely offensive such as "the defeat of Orthodoxy in Ukraine" and "agent of Uniates and Protestants."[385] On the other hand, Yanukovych was portrayed as the defender of the 'canonical' Orthodox church in Ukraine and Metropolitan Volodymyr Sabodan blessed him. As the UOC-MP already had well-established national and regional communication networks, the propagation against Yushchenko was very high-end.[386]

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[383]Taras Kuzio, "Ukraine: Muddling Along," in *Central and East European Politics: From Communism to Democracy*, eds. Sharon L. Wolchik and Jane L. Curry (Lanham, MD: Rowman &Littlefield, 2008), 351.

[384]There was no open mass campaigning of the UOC-MP in the 1994 and 1999 presidential elections. Yuriy Chornomorets, " The Destiny of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church at the Beginning of the 21st Century", Religious Information Service of Ukraine, Last Accessed January 8, 2023, https://risu.ua/en/the-destiny-of-the-ukrainian-orthodox-church-at-the-beginning-of-the-21st century_n9815

[385]Cited in Andrij Yurash, "Orthodoxy and the 2004 Ukrainian presidential electoral campaign," *Religion, State & Society* 33, no.4 (2005): 370.

[386]Yurash, "Orthodoxy." For more information regarding the role of churches in the presidential election, see Yurash, "Orthodoxy;" Chornomorets, "The Destiny of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church;" Andrian Karatnycky, "What They Believe," Religious Information Service of Ukraine, Last Accessed

On October 31, the first round of elections was held. Having ranked the first and the second, Yanukovych and Yushchenko moved to the second round of voting, which took place on November 21. Many international observers reported massive electoral fraud related to this round in eastern and southern Ukraine in favor of Yanukovych. Due to electoral fraud allegations, protestors wearing orange-the color of Yushchenko's campaign- to support Yushchenko and his camp, gathered at Kyiv's Independence Square, giving birth to the Orange Revolution. This demonstration was peaceful, and the police did not use force. On November 24, the Central Electoral Commission declared Yanukovych victory. In the face of protests, the Supreme Court of Ukraine nullified the second-round results and decided to rerun on December 26. During the protests, the Kyiv Patriarchate and the UGCC leaders became the most vocal religious figures supporting the Revolution. While Patriarch Filaret referred to protest as "the process of rebirth of the Ukrainian nation,"[387] Cardinal Lubomyr Husar declared that "at the root of the crisis is an immoral regime which has deprived Ukrainian people of their legitimate rights and dignity."[388]

Yushchenko defeated Yanukovych in the December 26 election, under a significant number of international observers, and became the president of Ukraine. However, the regional distribution of the votes showed a stark divide between western and eastern Ukraine and the absence of a middle ground, thus signaling the uncertainty of developments ahead.[389] The constitutional change during the Orange Revolution increased the power of the parliament and the prime minister while decreasing that of the president. Admittedly, this regulation limited Yushchenko's power and would boost the internal political crisis.

January 8, 2023, https://risu.ua/en/religion-and-the-orange-revolution_n4112 (Original link, https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB110324184266202822).

[387]Brian Whitmore, "Analysis: 'Orange Revolution' Highlights Ukraine's Religious Divide," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Last Accessed January 18, 2023, https://www.rferl.org/a/1056528.html

[388]Karatnycky, "What They Believe."

[389]David R. Marples, *Ukraine in Conflict: An Analytical Chronicle* (Bristol: E-International Relations, 2017), 126.

4.5 The Presidency of Yushchenko: The Pursuit of Autocephaly

Following the Orange Revolution, Yushchenko displayed his strong commitment to Ukraine's pro-Western orientation by putting the country's accession to NATO and the EU on the top of the national agenda. This is considered to be a breaking point in Kuchma's ambiguous multivector foreign policy. Yushchenko also depicted Ukraine "as a 'post-totalitarian,' 'post-colonial' and 'post-genocide' country, which implied its fundamental distinction from Russia as its historical oppressor."[390] He aimed to "rehabilitate Ukrainian nationalism, which had long been seen through the hostile Russian and Soviet."[391] While his identity and memory politics sought to delegitimize the Russian imperial and Soviet past, it aimed to legitimize the place of the Ukrainian state and identity within the European civilization. His bold policies of De-Sovietization and de-Russification of Ukraine led to the deterioration of the relations with Russia, which had already been strained after the Orange Revolution. In short, establishing a Ukrainian autocephalous Orthodox Church would prove of great importance, considering the centuries-long domination of Russian Orthodoxy in Ukraine and the affiliation of the UOC-MP to the Moscow Patriarchate.

In his inaugural address on January 23, 2005, Yushchenko highlighted his adherence to the principle of freedom of conscience in Ukraine by stating, "Everyone will be able to pray in his or her own temple. Everyone will be guaranteed the right to hold his or her own views."[392] On January 24, he addressed the leaders of religious organizations at the St. Sophia Cathedral and said, "We are Europeans. We respect every faith and the spiritual choice of every individual. No one from the secular authorities will point a finger and say which church one should attend."[393] On the same day, he paid his first foreign visit to Russia as the President of Ukraine, meeting with Putin and Patriarch Alexy of Moscow. In the meeting with Patriarch

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[390]Stephen White and Valentina Felkyunina, Identities *and Foreign Policies in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 145.

[391]Zhurzhenko, "A Divided Nation?" 254.

[392]Yurii Reshetnikov, "Religious Freedom in Ukraine: The Current Context," Religious Information Service of Ukraine, Last Accessed January 20, 2023, https://risu.ua/en/religious-freedom-in-ukraine-the-current-context_n7291

[393]Reshetnikov, "Religious Freedom in Ukraine."

Alexy, Yushchenko brought up the issue of the canonical Orthodox Church in Ukraine, as the Patriarch underlined the importance of strengthening ties between East Slavic nations that share the Orthodox faith as a common heritage. Additionally, Yushchenko noted that tolerance would be the core of his religious policy.[394]

In addition, for Yushchenko, it was critical to establish a unified Ukrainian Orthodox church to strengthen Ukraine's national and spiritual unity. Accordingly, Yushchenko and his team began to improve relations with the Istanbul Patriarchate by partaking in a series of meetings on the issue of autocephaly. In this context, Archbishop Vsevolod, a representative of the Istanbul Patriarchate, visited Ukraine and met with Yushchenko on March 24, 2005. During this meeting, Yushchenko spoke about three main topics such as Ukrainians' desire for a single Orthodox church in the country, the importance of interdenominational dialogue, and the equality of religions on the road to unity among Orthodox churches in Ukraine.[395] Archbishop Vsevolod made the following statement in the meeting, which allegedly reflects the Istanbul Patriarchate's stance on Ukrainian autocephaly:

> The position of the Mother Church, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, is that her daughter- the Moscow Patriarchate- consists of that territory, which it encompassed to the year 1686. The subjugation of the Kyivan Metropolia to the Moscow Patriarchate was concluded by Patriarch Dionysius without the agreement or ratification of the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Great Church of Christ (the Patriarchate of Constantinople).[396]

According to the Moscow Patriarchate, this statement did not reflect the official view of the Istanbul Patriarchate considering the previous negotiations with Istanbul. For Moscow, it belonged to Archbishop Vsevolod, rather than Bartholomew[397] and the 'Ukrainian schismatic' previously attempted to create a rift between the Patriarchates

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[394] *"His Holiness Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow and All Russia meets with Ukrainian President V.A.Yushchenko,"* Last Accessed February 3, 2023 http://orthodoxeurope.org/newsarchive/february_2005.aspx

[395] Ukrainian Orthodox Church of U.S.A, "Ukrainian Orthodox hierarchs from U.S Seek Church unity in Ukraine," The Ukrainian Weekly, April 17, p.3

[396] Ukrainian Orthodox Church of U.S.A, "Ukrainian Orthodox hierarchs."

[397] Russian Orthodox Church-Official Website of the Department for External Church Relations, "Perplexity in Moscow over Constantinople's Canonical Claims to Ukraine," Last Accessed December 13, 2022, https://old.mospat.ru/archive/en/2005/03/8954-1/

of Moscow and Istanbul claiming that Istanbul Patriarchate regards Ukraine as its own canonical territory. In fact, the Moscow Patriarchate based its claim over Ukraine on historical documents and stated that this 'historical fact' has never been challenged by other autocephalous churches for three centuries.[398] However, according to UOC-KP officials and some analysts, Bartholomew might have intended to declare the 1686 decision to establish the Moscow Patriarchate's ecclesiastical jurisdiction over Ukraine as an 'uncanonical.'[399] This discord hinted at the tensions between the Istanbul and Moscow Patriarchates over the spiritual leadership of Ukraine, which frequently sparked off debates during Yushchenko's period.

As explained above, Yushchenko advocated religious freedom and the necessity of an autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox church. He took actual initial steps to ensure them, as well as making verbal reassurances. Nevertheless, his vision raised several questions, such as whether he would protect the constitutionally endowed rights of religious organizations while promoting a unified Ukrainian Orthodox Church. That's why Sysyn draws attention to the changing political and religious dynamics in Ukraine after 2004:

> Orthodoxy was politicized and the churches, above all the Moscow Patriarchate, took part in electoral politics during the elections in late 2004 to a much greater degree than they had ever done before. Unquestionably Yanukovych gained considerable advantage from the support of the UOC-MP, and he and the new opposition in Ukraine will turn to the church again for support […] Although Yushchenko consistently declared after the elections that the state should not determine religious issues, the new Ukrainian government has to face the reality that a major Orthodox church tied to a center in Russia had campaigned against it.[400]

Many interviewees confirmed a finding revealed by the related literature: Patriarch Filaret started to gain power during Yushchenko's period by positioning the Kyiv Patriarchate as the symbol of a pro-European, democratic, and independent Ukraine

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[398]Russian Orthodox Church-Official Website of the Department for External Church Relations, "Perplexity."

[399]United States Department of the State, "U.S. Department of State Annual Report on International Religious Freedom for 2005-Ukraine," Last Accessed December 13, 2022 https://www.refworld.org/country,,USDOS,ANNUALREPORT,UKR,,437c9cea2b,0.html

[400]Sysyn, "Politics and Orthodoxy in Independent Ukraine," 17-18.

free from Russia, and he supported Yushchenko's policies. Furthermore, Filaret began to promote the Kyiv Patriarchate as the platform for the unification process and himself as the leader of a possible unified Church. This indicated a setback for the UOC-MP, which was favored in the Kuchma period and which strengthened its hold on state affairs. However, Yushchenko tried to protect the constitutional rights of religious organizations and faithful individuals when forming a unified Ukrainian Orthodox church. Also, Yushchenko's desire to integrate into Europe required the securing of religious freedom not only on paper but also in practice. Therefore, Yushchenko tried to meet European standards in religious policy, or avoided at least religious discrimination.[401]

Also, backed by Yushchenko, Patriarch Filaret sought out a union with UAOC and peaceful relations with the UOC-MP. In May 2005, unification negotiations between the Kyiv Patriarchate and UAOC increased expectations of a unified church. Midway through November, however, officials of both churches declared that the process did not culminate in unification. Neither church acknowledged responsibility for this failure. The spokesman of the UAOC noted that the purpose of the Kyiv Patriarchate in the negotiations was not unification but "annexation." Patriarch Filaret criticized the "inconsistent and unconstructive attitudes" of the UAOC.[402]

In March 2006, Yushchenko issued a call for the establishment of a unified Orthodox Church in Ukraine. However, this call was criticized by the UOC-MP, which accused Yushchenko of "politicizing" and "artificially" accelerating the process.[403] In June 2006, President Yushchenko, parliamentary leaders, and representatives of civil society organizations assembled to discuss solutions to the country's current political crisis which culminated with a tentative document, "Universal of National Unity." Although the item on state's non-interference in religious matters was strongly opposed, Yushchenko insisted on having an article in the document regarding the

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[401]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 15, 2019.

[402]"Ukrainian Church Reunification Talks Collapse," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Last Accessed February 4, 2023, https://www.rferl.org/a/1063037.html

[403]U.S Department of State, "2006 Report on International Religious Freedom," Last Accessed December 13, 2022, https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2006/71415.htm

unification of the Ukrainian Orthodox jurisdictions in the document by emphasizing its contribution to the spiritual unity in Ukraine.[404] A month later, Yushchenko once again underlined the political importance of an autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox Church by stating, "I hardly perceive how it is possible to discuss spiritual independence of a nation lacking the local church."[405] Yushchenko persistently addressed this issue in many occasions, yet no progress was achieved.

Yushchenko placed the idea of autocephaly at the top of his agenda in 2008, and obtaining autocephaly seemed closer than ever. The celebration of the 1020th anniversary of the Baptism of the Kyivan *Rus'* in Kyiv became an opportunity for Yushchenko, whose plan was to request Patriarch Bartholomew of Istanbul to grant autocephaly during the celebrations.[406] Before the event, many meetings had been held between the Yushchenko team under the presidential office and Ukrainian religious hierarchs led by Filaret, as well as Ukrainian sides with the Istanbul Patriarchate's representatives.[407]

Upon the invitation of Yushchenko, Bartholomew arrived in Kyiv on July 25, 2008. Yushchenko honored the Patriarch in all possible ways, personally and officially. At the airport, Patriarch Bartholomew spoke as follows:

> We have come to pray together with you for *the unification of all Orthodox citizens of Ukraine to one church*, the Church of your people, the Church of your country [...] We bless you from our heart, personally and on behalf of the Church of Constantinople, *the Church that became your Mother ten centuries ago and remains today and always your Mother*.[408]

The speech of Patriarch Bartholomew could be considered affirmative somewhat testing the Moscow Patriarchate, proposing to be the mother church of the Ukrainian

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[404]"Roundtable calls for declaration of Unity," The Ukrainian Weekly, August 6, 2006, p.2

[405]Cited in Druzenko, "Religion and Secular State in Ukraine," 769.

[406]Nicholas E. Denysenko, "Chaos in Ukraine: the churches and the search for leadership," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 14, no. 3 (2014): 243-244.

[407]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 19, 2019.

[408]Bartholomew, Ecumenical Patriarchate, "Speech of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew on His Arrival at the Kyiv Airport," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 53, no.1-4 (2008): 263 (emphasis added).

Church. On July 26, Yushchenko asked an autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox church for Patriarch Bartholomew at the public ceremony in front of the St. Sophia Cathedral. Implying the symbolic significance of Yushchenko's rhetoric involving the themes of Christianity, European civilization, and Ukrainians' 1000-year-old nationness, Griffin stated the following:

> On a holiday honoring Saint Vladimir and the baptism of Rus, he linked the prince's desire to be baptized with a desire to become a part of Europe. He explicitly invoked the medieval East Slavic myth of origins and suggested that it belonged to Ukraine, not Russia, and that it reflected the country's desire to become a part of the European political community.[409]

The speech of Patriarch Bartholomew,[410] in which he responded to Yushchenko's request, was like "a masterclass in ecclesiastical politics".[411] Bartholomew addressed important topics such as historical periods of Ukrainian Orthodoxy, relations of Kyiv's Church with the Istanbul Patriarchate, and division among Orthodox churches in Ukraine. Furthermore, he reiterated the primacy of the Istanbul Patriarchate in the international Orthodox community. All these issues cast doubt on the ecclesiastical claim of the Moscow Patriarchate over Ukraine. At the end of his speech, however, Bartholomew made this comment:

> The various political and ecclesiastical difficulties that are the outcome of the existing confusion are obvious and known from the long historic past, but it is also known to all that the care for the protection and restoration of the Church's unity is our common obligation that exceeds whatever political or ecclesiastical purposes [...][412]

In the meantime, Patriarch Alexy of Moscow came to Kyiv. Allegedly, there was the risk that the Patriarchates of Moscow and Istanbul would split, yet the two Patriarchs managed to "peacefully concelebrated in Kyiv and sent irenic messages to their

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[409]Sean Griffin, "Putin's Medieval Weapons in the War against Ukraine," in Studies in Medievalism XXIX, ed. Karl Fugelso (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2020), 16.

[410]Bartholomew, Ecumenical Patriarchate, "Speech of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to the Ukrainian Nation," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 53, no.1-4 (2008): 264-271.

[411]Sean Griffin, "Revolution, *Raskol*, and Rock 'n' Roll: The 1020th Anniversary of the Day of the Baptism of Rus," *The Russian Review* 80, no. 2 (2021): 198.

[412]Ecumenical Patriarchate, "Speech of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to the Ukrainian Nation," 271.

flocks."[413] In fact, Yushchenko's aim was in total contrast to the Russian celebration of Volodymyr's Baptism, which considers "Saint Equal-of-the-Apostles Prince Vladimir" and ancient Kyiv as unifying symbols for Eastern Slavs. Indeed, Metropolitan Kyrill, who was then in charge of the Moscow Patriarchate's external relations and supported by Yanukovych at the rival celebrations in Kyiv, propagated the idea of Holy *Rus,'* stressing the common religious bond between Ukrainians and Russians. Thus, the timing of the alternative celebrations led by Kyrill were most probably not incidental, especially considering that, if Bartholomew granted autocephalous status to the Ukrainian churches, the Moscow Patriarchate would lose nearly 40 percent of its all parishes.[414] The risk of loss would have also posed a threat to Russian political interests in Ukraine. Therefore, Russian secular authorities viewed the prevention of pro-autocephaly initiatives in Ukraine at that time as a vital mission.[415]

When Bartholomew returned to Istanbul, clearly Yushchenko still needed to fight to achieve autocephaly. In other words, the Istanbul Patriarchate did not endow the pro-Ukrainian Orthodox churches with the autocephalous status at the celebrations in Kyiv, where great hopes were attached. The related literature attributes the futility of Yushchenko's acts to various factors, ranging from the Russian attempts to block the process to the internal problems of Ukrainian religious and political spheres.[416] The main obstacle, however, appears to be Patriarch Filaret. In an expert interview in Kyiv, an advisor in the state committee at that period presented a comprehensive analysis of the failure, giving the lion's share to Filaret. For the expert, the problems attributed to Yushchenko, such as his passivity in the practice and inability to inform Ukrainians on the issue, paved the way for Russian influence on the process. The main impediment was not the Russian power to impact the process but Filaret's ambitions. Accordingly, Filaret insisted on a patriarchate-level church, of which he would be the leader; however, his desire was at odds with Bartholomew's offer to

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[413]Hovorun, "The Cause of Ukrainian Autocephaly," 188.

[414]Griffin, "Revolution, *Raskol*,"196.

[415]Elenskii, "Ukrainian Orthodoxy," 81.

[416]See, Denysenko, *The Orthodox Church in Ukraine*; Denysenko, "Chaos in Ukraine;" Griffin, "Revolution, *Raskol*;" Hovorun, "The Cause of Ukrainian Autocephaly."

create a metropolitanate under the Istanbul Patriarchate and to elect a new head. In addition, emphasizing Filaret's old Soviet authoritarian approach, the expert suggested Yushchenko could not convince Filaret of Bartholomew's schema for the Ukrainian church.[417]

Despite the failure, Yushchenko persistently advocated the establishment of a unified Orthodox Church in Ukraine, claiming that it is essential to build a national identity and a sense of belonging to Ukraine.[418] Furthermore, the UOC-MP began to change its attitude towards other Orthodox Churches, gradually developing more constructive communication with them. However, their relations were far from smooth. The hopes about this development potentially promising for the unification of Ukrainian Orthodox churches were 'destroyed' when Metropolitan Kyrill became the Patriarch of Moscow in 2009, following the death of Patriarch Alexy at the end of 2008. When Kyrill took office, "Moscow had exhausted all possible ideological platforms for the latest 'gathering of Russian lands' and needed an alternative, clear, ideologically and spiritually sound plan of action."[419] Patriarch Kyrill, who is one of the 'masterminds' for shaping tenets of close relations between the Russian church and the state, began to promote the idea of the 'Russian World' in conjunction with President Putin's substantial political support. As Galeotti states, "It has been under Vladimir Putin and, especially, Metropolitan Kirill, who was elected in 2009, that the Kremlin-Church alliance has been most striking."[420]

Patriarch Kyrill's visit to Ukraine in July 2009 is indeed significant since it acknowledged Ukraine as the center of the 'Russian World.' That is why his visit was subject to fierce opposition led by a mainly Ukrainian nationalist camp. Russian President Dimitry Medvedev sent an open letter to Yushchenko in August 2009,

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[417]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 19, 2019.

[418]"Yushchenko Convinced of the Creation of a National Church for Ukraine," Religious Information Service of Ukraine, Last Accessed December 11, 2022, https://risu.ua/en/yushchenko-convinced-of-the-creation-of-a-national-church-for-ukraine_n34047

[419]Cited in Tetiana Oleksiivna Panina, "Russian Orthodox Geopolitics: The 'Russian World' and the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine" (Major Thesis, The Florida State University,2021), 14.

[420]Mark Galeotti, "How the Russian Orthodox Church became the State God Corporation," *Ram op Rusland,* Last Accessed December 12, 2022, https://www.raamoprusland.nl/dossiers/religie/1304-how-the-russian-orthodox-church-became-the-state-god-corporation

noting that the Ukrainian state interfered with the UOC-MP's internal affairs and created "artificial conditions" for Kyrill's pastoral visit to Ukraine.[421] However, it was debatable that Kyrill's visit merely had pastoral goals. Tonoyan and Payne argue that Kyrill intended to solidify political and religious ties between Ukraine and Russia, prevent a possible independent Orthodox Church "in the motherland of the Russian Orthodoxy," and keep the fragmentation in Ukraine alive.[422]

By the end of his presidency, Yushchenko had lost popularity, mainly due to his incapacity to implement effective domestic reforms and secure political stability. Furthermore, his emphasis on pro-Ukrainian identity politics increased discomfort in the Russian-populated eastern and southern regions of the country. His dismal performance in the presidential office caused him to take just around five percent of the vote in the first round of presidential office in January 2010. The once-discredited Yanukovych won over Tymoshenko in the second round of the election by a narrow margin. While the voting distribution in central parts of the country was almost head to head, the electoral choice indicated ongoing political polarization between the vote-rich southeast and the west, advocating Yanukovych and Tymoshenko, respectively.[423]

4.6 The Issue of Ukrainian Autocephaly under the Term of Yanukovych

Yanukovych took presidential office with promises to end corruption, implement democratic reforms, and introduce economic recovery policies. Whether Yanukovych could bring political stability and progress to Ukraine after years of internal political conflicts and ineffective reforms was a common object of interest.

As regards his foreign policy, most researchers predicted that Yanukovych would develop relations with Russia and pursue a multivector foreign policy like Kuchma. While this view highlighted Yanukovych's deviation from Yushchenko's anti-

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[421]For the letter, see Taras *Kuzio, Ukraine: Democratization, Corruption, and the New Russian Imperialism* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2015): 438-439.

[422]Lydia S. Tonoyan and Daniel P. Payne, "The Visit of Patriarch Kirill to Ukraine in 2009 and Its Significance in Ukraine's Political and Religious Life," Religion*, State & Society* 38, no. 3 (2010): 253.

[423]Serhy Yekelchyk, *The Conflict in Ukraine: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford: Oxford Press, 2015), 99.

Russian foreign policy, it envisaged that Ukraine's 'productive' relations with Russia did not necessarily mean Ukraine's political turn toward Russia or Yanukovych's sacrifice of Ukrainian sovereignty. This view seemed to be embraced by many who considered Yanukovych's early period, in which he tried to develop ties with the West and to normalize Ukraine's relations with Russia, which had been tense during the Yushchenko period. On the other side, the presidency of Yanukovych was regarded as a new phase wherein Kremlin may start again to pursue its interest in Ukraine and compensate for "what was lost over years."[424] For instance, in April 2010, Ukraine and Russia signed the Kharkiv agreement, extending Russian lease on Sevastopol naval base in Crimea until 2042 in exchange for lower gas prices.[425] For many, this Agreement surrendered sovereignty to Russia. Furthermore, Yanukovych declared Ukraine's 'non-block' status and removed the goal of Ukraine's NATO membership from the political agenda. Most researchers who have studied Yanukovych's foreign claim that Yanukovych followed a pro-Russian policy, even if they confirmed Ukraine and Russian relation was not smooth and questioned the motives behind Yanukovych's coming closer to Russia.[426] In short, Ukraine under Yanukovych seemed to leave the anticipated multivector policy and "drifted far into a single-vector policy toward Russia."[427] For D'Anieri:

> Yanukovych's policy was more pro-Russian than that of any Ukrainian leader since independence. Perhaps for the first time since the 1997 'big treaty,' [Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership] one could question whether Ukraine would be completely independent of Russia or whether it would once again become a 'little brother.'[428]

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[424]"Speech at Meeting of the Russian-Ukrainian Interstate Commission," *President of Russia*, Last Accessed December 12, 2022, http://www.en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/9615.

[425]Russia continued to bill Ukraine with the highest gas prices in Europe during the term of Yanukovych. Taras Kuzio and Paul D'Anieri, *The Sources of Russia's Great Power Politics: Ukraine and Challenge to the European Order* (Bristol: E-International Relations Publishing, 2018), 72.

[426]For Sakwa, Yanukovych did not care about being either pro-Russian or pro-Western, yet, he was "a rather degenerate representative of the bureaucratic-oligarchic order, largely concerned with his personal aggrandisement." Richard Sakwa, *Frontline Ukraine: Crisis in the Borderlands* (London, I. B. Tauris, 2016), 210.

[427]Vladimir Socor, "Non-block status-Ukraine's shift to Russian vector orientation," Moldova.org, Last Accessed January 23, 2023, https://www.moldova.org/en/non-bloc-status-ukraines-shift-to-russian-vector-orientation-209156-eng/

[428]Paul D'Anieri, "Ukraine Foreign Policy from Independence to Inertia," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 45, no.3-4 (2012): 450.

With Yanukovych's leaning toward Russia, the sensitive issue of Ukraine's civilization choice between the West and Russia, hence identity politics became a current topic again. Yanukovych abandoned Yushchenko's pro-Ukrainian/European cultural initiatives.[429]Whereas Yanukovych tried to undermine and marginalize the Ukrainian language, culture, and identity,[430] he explicitly supported the Russian language by introducing a law titled "On Principles of the State Language Policy." He also adopted the Kremlin-friendly memory politics stressing the East Slavic commonality of Ukraine with Russia and elements of Soviet nostalgia.[431]

The religious organizations in Ukraine immediately felt the repercussions of Yanukovych's coming to power. One of the very early examples was Yanukovych's inauguration ceremony. He only invited Patriarch Kyrill of Moscow to preside at his blessing service, but not other religious representatives in Ukraine.[432] Furthermore, Patriarch Kyrill was also allowed to operate an exclusive service in 2010 at the St. Sophia Cathedral.[433] During his first year, he regularly met with the UOC-MP, ignoring the dialogue demands of other religious organizations to such an extent that he had just one meeting with the representatives of the Council over an entire year.[434]The increasing public visibility of Kyrill in Ukraine can be considered proof of Yanukovych commitment to the Moscow Patriarchate and Kremlin.[435]

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[429]Alexander J. Motyl, "Ukrainian Blues: Yanukovych's Rise, Democracy's Fall," *Foreign Affairs* 89, no. 4 (2010): 129.

[430]Mykola Riabchuk, "Ukraine's 'muddling through': National Identity and postcommunist transition," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 45, (2012): 445.

[431]For some examples see, "Stepan Bandera is no longer a Hero of Ukraine," Religious Information Service of Ukraine, Last Accessed March 25, 2023, https://risu.ua/en/stepan-bandera-is-no-longer-a-hero-of-ukraine_n44074; "Deleting the Holodomor: Ukraine Unmakes Itself," Religious Information Service of Ukraine, Last Accessed March 25, 2023, https://risu.ua/en/deleting-the-holodomor-ukraine-unmakes-itself_n41279

[432]For a critic from the Kyiv Patriarchate, see "Kyiv Church Opposes Russian Patriarchate's Inauguration Prayer in Ukraine," Religious Information Service of Ukraine, Last Accessed January 24, 2023, https://risu.ua/en/kyiv-church-opposes-russian-patriarch-s-inauguration-prayer-in-ukraine_n35237

[433]Gvosdev, "The new Emperors?" 191.

[434]Myroslav Marynovych, "Religious Aspects of the Three Ukrainian Revolutions," in *Three Revolutions: Mobilization and Change in Contemporary Ukraine I. Theoretical Aspects and Analyses on Religion, Memory, and Identity*, eds. Pawel Kowal, Georges Mink, and Iwona Reichardt (Stuttgart: Ibidem 2019), n.a.

[435] Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 29, 2019.

The radical shift in religious policy during the Yanukovych era was somewhat a consequence of the declining democracy in Ukraine. According to Riabchuk, soon after he assumed power:

> Victor Yanukovych usurped virtually sultanistic power in the country, emasculated parliament and the courts, crushed the opposition, and severely restrained civic freedoms, specifically mass media, right to assembly, and elections. All this was undertaken by the familiar instruments of 'blackmail state' perfected by President Leonid Kuchma for whom Yanukovych served as a trustful prime minister in 2002-2004.[436]

Besides, as commonly argued, Yanukovych tried to apply the Putin model of vertical power.[437] That is, he attempted to make the UOC-MP an official church in Ukraine by modeling Russia.[438] The Kyiv Patriarchate and the UGCC denounced Yanukovych's systematic interferences into church affairs. Towards the end of 2010, Patriarch Filaret claimed that Yanukovych tried to destroy Kyiv Patriarchate.[439] With its pro-Ukrainian orientation, the UGCC also conflicted with Yanukovych. It is believed that the Yanukovych regime put pressure on the Church and the government intended to disband the UGCC.[440] These allegations were not really unfounded. The international organizations publishing reports on religious freedom and equality among religions in Ukraine also reported the discriminative policies under his presidency.[441]

A significant characteristic of Yanukovych's period was the relatively strong manifestation of a pro-Ukrainian wing within the UOC-MP in various means under the leadership of Metropolitan Volodymyr. In one view, due to the UOC-MP's

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[436] Riabchuk, "Ukraine's 'muddling through,'" 445.

[437] An example from economic sphere is that Yanukovych, who came with the promise of ending corruption, concentrated Ukraine's economy in the hands of a small group, called 'the family.'

[438] Mankoff and Alexei Miller, "Ukraine's Church Politics in War," 244-245.

[439] Paul Goble, "Ukrainian Officials are helping Moscow destroy Kyiv Patriarchate, Filaret warns," The Ukrainian Weekly, January 9, 2011, p.1,12.

[440] Mankoff and Alexei Miller, "Ukraine's Church Politics in War," 238.

[441] See Marynovych, "Religious Aspects of the Three Ukrainian Revolutions;" United States Department of State, 2011 Report on International Religious Freedom- Ukraine, Last Accessed March 26, 2023, https://www.refworld.org/docid/50210577c.html.

cooperation with Yanukovych during the 2004 election, its influence in society declined, and Volodymyr and his tight circles "started to recognize and appreciate the increasing significance of society as a factor on which the existence of the UOC MP indeed depends."[442] Undoubtedly, this development laid the groundwork for strengthening dialogue between the UOC-MP and the pro-Ukrainian Orthodox churches. However, the presence of pro-Moscow wing was obvious within the UOC-MP, and Metropolitan Volodymyr had severe health problems. It was also publicly known that Yanukovych wanted to remove Metropolitan Volodymyr from his post[443] because of his critics towards 'political Orthodoxy', the interference of the Moscow Patriarchate into the Ukrainian religious realm, and his rejection to endorse Yanukovych's reelection campaign. Notably, Yanukovych appointed his business partner as the "supervisor" of the UOC-MP. For Hovorun:

> This was part of a larger pattern of installing unofficial observers to monitor all areas of Ukrainian society. It was a 'mafia model' that allowed a businessman loyal to Yanukovych to meddle freely in church affairs.[444]

All these developments interrupted the dialogue among Orthodox churches at that time.[445] The presidency of Yanukovych provided Patriarch Kyrill of Moscow the

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[442]Michał Wawrzonek, "Eastern Christian Religious Communities and Development of Civil Society in the Post-Soviet: The Ukrainian Case," in *Religious Communities and Civil Society in Europe: Analyses and Perspectives on a Complex, Volume II*, ed. Rupert Strachwitz (Berlin/Boston:De Gruyter, 2020), n.a. In one view, the hierarchs of the UOC-MP already regarded their church as a leading one in Ukraine; therefore, they were reluctant to share responsibility with the government for marginalizing other confessions to maintain their privilege.

[443]"General Prosecutor's Office of Ukraine started investigation into unlawful pressure on UOC-MP Metropolitan Volodymyr by Yanukovych and Zacharchenko," Religious Information Service of Ukraine, Last Accessed March 5, 2023, https://risu.ua/en/general-prosecutor-s-office-of-ukraine-started-investigation-into-unlawful-pressure-on-uoc-mp-metropolitan-volodymyr-by-yanukovych-and-zacharchenko_n68903

[444]Cyril Hovorun, "The Church in the Bloodlands: Ukrainian Churches Must Encourage and Engage Civil Society," First Things, Last Accessed February 11, 2023, https://www.firstthings.com/article/2014/10/the-church-in-the-bloodlands

[445]The tension in the relations between the Patriarchates of Istanbul and Moscow decreased, and attempts were made to improve mutual relations. In such a case, Istanbul Patriarchate would probably not engage in establishing an autocephalous church in Ukraine free from the Moscow Patriarchate because it was likely that it would break the relations. See "Meeting with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and all Russia," President of Russia, Last Accessed March 26, 2023, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/7851.
According to some sources, Yanukovych had partially left discriminative politics toward the Kyiv Patriarchate since mid-2011. However, this does not mean that Yanukovych turned to the idea of autocephaly, but it may have been a factor in his seeking electoral support.

optimum condition to cement the idea of the Russian World, which Yushchenko's autocephaly initiatives aimed to challenge. Especially, the 1025th anniversary of the baptism of *Rus'* celebrated in Kyiv in late July 2013 became an occasion, in which the so-called indivisible fraternal bond shared by Ukrainians and Russians was loudly voiced. In the "Orthodox-Slavic Values: The Foundation's Ukraine's Civilisational Choice Conference," Putin stated:

> [A]t the baptismal site on Dnieper River, a choice was made for the whole of Holy Rus, for all of us. Our ancestors who lived in these lands made this choice for our entire people. When I say 'for our entire people', we know today's reality of course, know that there are the Ukrainian people and Belarusian people, and other peoples too, and we respect all the parts of this heritage, but at the same time, at the foundations of this heritage are the common spiritual values that make us a single people. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church leaders spoke about this today. It would be hard to deny this. We can only agree with it. The Baptism of Rus was a great event that defined Russia's and Ukraine's spiritual and cultural development for the centuries to come. We must remember this brotherhood and preserve our ancestors' traditions. Together, they built a unique system of Orthodox values and strengthened themselves in their faith. [446]

Plokhy claims that this was the first time Putin publicly endorsed the idea that Ukrainians and Russians are one people, which the Moscow Patriarchate had previously expressed.[447] In another speech in Kyiv, Putin also stated:

> We have common roots, a common culture and religion. We can feel this shared legacy especially strongly over these days as our countries celebrate the 1025th anniversary of the Baptism of Holy Rus. Our blood and spiritual ties are unbreakable.[448]

November of 2013 would be the beginning of dramatic changes for Ukraine. In late November, Yanukovych was keen to sign a trade agreement with the EU at the summit that would be held in Vilnius; however, after his trip to Moscow, he postponed the signing of the agreement. Yanukovych's decision signaled that

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[446]"Orthodox-Slavic Values: The Foundation's Ukraine's Civilisational Choice Conference," President of Russia, Last Accessed, February 15, 2023, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/18961

[447] Serhii Plokhy, *Lost Kingdom. A History of Russian Nationalism from Ivan the Great to Vladimir Putin* (London: Penguin Books, 2017), 331.

[448] "Celebrations of Russian Navy Day and Ukrainian Navy Day," President of Russia, Last Accessed, February 15, 2023, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/18963.

Ukraine would remain in the Russia's orbit and likely join the Eurasian Economic Union, which began in 2015.[449] The suspension of the deal with EU caused discontent, so demonstrators, mainly university students, began to take Maidan on November 24. When riot police, *Berkut*, attacked peaceful protestors on November 30, the demonstrations grew, and protestors loudly demanded the resignation of Yanukovych. The incrementally increased tension reached its apogee on February 20, 2014, when the *Berkut* opened fire on the protesters, resulting in many deaths. Nevertheless, protests continued, growing into a revolutionary movement, known as the Euromaidan Revolution. Although, on February 22, the opposition party leaders declared that the government and Yanukovych would schedule reforms, the protestors insisted on Yanukovych's resignation. The following day, Yanukovych left Ukraine and moved to Russia. The *Verkhovna Rada* of Ukraine announced Yanukovych's leaving was unconstitutional; therefore, it decided he was not entitled to carry out his presidential duties. Accordingly, the election for the new president would be set on May 25, 2014, and the Parliament would be in charge during the interim.[450]

Protests reportedly resulted in over 100 deaths, and nearly two thousand were injured, leaving many of them in critical condition. Yanukovych was overthrown before his term was officially ended. Then, as explained in the next chapter, Russia annexed Crimea in March 2014, and the Russian-backed separatists started an armed conflict in eastern Ukraine. During the Euromaidan Revolution and subsequent developments, pro-Ukrainian churches' open support to Ukraine's pro-Western direction and territorial integrity of Ukraine increased their political and social prestige, which will be further discussed in the next chapter.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter presents the attempts at unifying Orthodox churches in Ukraine and pro-autocephaly initiatives under the different presidents in post-Soviet Ukraine until

[449]David R. Marples, "Introduction," in *Ukraine's Euromaidan: Analyses of a Civil Revolution*, eds. David R. Marples and Frederick V. Mills (Stuttgart: Ibidem Press, 2015), 9.

[450]"A timeline of the Euromaidan revolution," Euromaidan Press, Last Accessed March 23, 2023, https://euromaidanpress.com/2016/02/19/a-timeline-of-the-euromaidan-revolution/

2014. Furthermore, having covered the primary motives behind the presidents' stance on the subjects, it analyzes the failure of the attempts at establishing an autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox church, which is free from the Moscow Patriarchate.

The two presidents-Kravchuk and Yushchenko- gave importance to creating an autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox church. One of their common points was the desire to drive Ukraine away from Russia. Like their identity politics, this was one of the reasons that ended their presidency. Kravchuk spent much of his tenure dealing with property conflicts of churches, the reconciliation of which looked impossible due to power struggles within the churches. The ongoing disagreements within the churches were also prevalent in the Yushchenko period, but allegedly the reluctance of Patriarch Filaret to accept Bartholomew's offer of a metropolitanate under the Istanbul Patriarchate came to the forefront. Indeed, it was not the only reason for the failure. The relations of the Istanbul Patriarchate with the Moscow Patriarchate also played a role in it. Bartholomew may have avoided confrontation with the Moscow Patriarchate claiming ecclesiastical authority in Ukraine with the numerical outweigh of the UOC-MP over the pro-Ukrainian churches.

In contrast to his first term, Kuchma took steps towards autocephaly in his second term. As discussed earlier, his initiatives were criticized for being inconsistent and ideologically ill-founded, leading to the growth of the UOC-MP. Furthermore, his attempts coincided with the rising collaboration between the Russian state and the Church under Putin. When close relations with Russia were developed during the Yanukovych period, the establishment of an autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox church was delayed. Yanukovych, who embraced the idea of common history and identity with Russians, promoted the Moscow-affiliated Orthodox Church, while he regarded pro-Ukrainian churches as problematic.

In a nutshell, neither internal nor external factors sufficed to establish an autocephalous Orthodox church, free from the Moscow Patriarchate. Certainly, internal factors- such as disagreements among churches, presidents' firm pro-autocephaly stance- and external factors- such as the engagement of Patriarchates of

Istanbul and Moscow- were interrelated. These factors were further complicated by the church leaders' and politicians' views that tend to change over time in accordance with shifting political and religious dynamics.

CHAPTER 5

HOW THE ORTHODOX CHURCH OF UKRAINE CAME TO BEING: UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS, REASONS, AND CHALLENGES

5.1 Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, Ukrainian presidents, except Yanukovych, endeavored to establish an autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox church, independent of the Moscow Patriarchate. However, their efforts have not yet been successful for various reasons. The Euromaidan Revolution overthrew Yanukovych in February 2014, and when the pro-Western interim government came to power in Ukraine, Russia annexed Crimea and supported pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine, which turned into a war. Upon assuming the presidency in May 2014, Poroshenko faced severe challenges, mainly arising from the war conditions, which greatly affected Ukraine and required urgent action. Apart from implementing policies designed to strengthen the Ukrainian national identity and reclaim state sovereignty over the territory of Ukraine, Poroshenko laid great emphasis on the establishment of an autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox church. He saw an independent Orthodox church, recognized by the Istanbul Patriarchate, as an essential step towards removing Russia's political and spiritual influence. For him, the Russian side had exploited the UOC-MP to support Russia's aggression in Ukraine. In 2019, his objective was successfully attained when Patriarch Bartholomew of Istanbul granted autocephaly to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, which was formed by the merger of the Kyiv Patriarchate, the UAOC with limited participation of bishops from the UOC-MP.

This chapter mainly intends to explain how and why the Orthodox Church of Ukraine came to being. It also presents the prominent debates regarding the impetus behind the establishment of the Church and the obstacles confronted during its early

period to increase clarity. To this end, this chapter is structured into seven parts. The subsequent section delivers an overview of Russia's annexation of Crimea and the Russia-sponsored separatist movement in eastern Ukraine, as both have profoundly impacted Ukraine's political, social, economic, and religious spheres. To better comprehend the formation of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, Poroshenko's autocephalous policies related to nation- and state-building must be considered. Therefore, the third part presents a selection of these efforts. The fourth section is devoted to the unification attempts among Ukrainian Orthodox churches and Poroshenko's efforts to receive autocephaly. The fifth section presents the themes that the interview data yielded pointing to the reasons behind establishing the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in 2019. The sixth part, which also draws on the interview data, offers discussions revolving around the formation of the Church and the challenges met in its initial phase. Finally, the Church issue during Volodymyr Zelensky's presidency is briefly discussed.

5.2 The Turbulent Times for Ukraine: Russia's Annexation of Crimea and the War in Eastern Ukraine

In November 2013, Yanukovych suddenly decided to suspend the treaty, which would potentially improve the economic and political relations with the EU. His unexpected turn ushered protests in Kyiv. Following the violent police intervention in peaceful protests, Yanukovych left Ukraine and was removed from power. The power vacuum in Kyiv was filled by the interim government formed by the oppositional and pro-Western block in the parliament. The new administration comprised politicians who supported the Revolution, and there were no representatives of the political parties, which enjoyed support from Russian-speaking population in the eastern regions.[451] Indeed, most members of the Party of Regions had broken their association with Yanukovych's regime,[452] and the ruling elites had fled to Russia.[453] Oleksandr Turchynov was appointed as Ukraine's acting president

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[451]David R. Marples, "Introduction," in *Ukraine's Euromaidan: Analyses of a Civil Revolution*, eds. David R. Marples and Frederick V. Mills (Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2015), 20.

[452]Marples, "Introduction," 14.

[453]Michael Kofman, Katya Migacheva, Brian Nichiporuk, Andrew Radin, Olesya Thacheva, Jenny Oberholtzer, *Lessons's from Russia's Operations in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine* (Santa Monica, Calif: RAND Corporation, 2017), 1.

and Arseniy Yatsenyuk as the interim prime minister until the presidential election, which would be held on May 25. After the pro-Western governmental change, the supporters of the Euromaidan Revolution were hopeful that Ukraine would lean toward the West. Just as expected, the newly formed administration aimed at a political break from the Yanukovych regime and a reinforced Western direction to improve ties with the EU.[454] One day after the Yanukovych regime fell, the Parliament controversially voted to cancel the 2012 Language Law signed by Yanukovych, with which the Russian language became a 'regional language.' Removing the Language law without considering its symbolic significance was a hasty action, which was to be vetoed by Turchynov a week later.[455] The attempt to repeal the Law is said to trigger the protests against the government in Kyiv in eastern and southern Ukraine.

Yanukovych asserted that "fascists and ultra-nationalist" took power in Kyiv in such a heated atmosphere and alleged that he was forced to leave Ukraine. For him, the US supported the illegal coup against him, and he claimed to be the legitimate president by denouncing the interim government as illegitimate. He expressed that the Russian-speaking population in the southern and eastern regions demands their legitimate rights.[456] According to Putin, Yanukovych had been unlawfully removed from his position so he was the legitimate president of Ukraine,[457] and:

[454]See David M. Herszenhorn, "In Ukraine, Naming of Interim Government Gets Mixed Response," *The New York Times*, February 26, 2014, https://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/27/world/europe/ukraine.html; Ian Traynor and Shaun Walker, "Western nations scramble to contain fallout from Ukraine crisis," *The Guardian*, February 24, 2014, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/23/ukraine-crisis-western-nations-eu-russia.

The interim government signed the political part of the Association Agreement with the EU on March 21. This agreement somewhat supported the Ukrainian government and aimed to enhance the political relations between Ukraine and the EU. "EU signs treaty with Ukraine," *Deutsche Welle*, March 21, 2014, https://www.dw.com/en/ukraines-interim-prime-minister-yatsenyuk-signs-eu-association-agreement/a-17512145.

[455]Dominique Arel, "Language, Status, and State Loyalty in Ukraine," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 35, no.1/4 (2017-18): 251.

[456]See, "Yanukovych reasserts authority, slams US for supporting opposition," *Anadolu Ajansı*, March 11, 2014, https://www.aa.com.tr/en/archive/yanukovych-reasserts-authority-slams-us-for-supporting-opposition/175715; " Yanukovych: I was Forced to Leave Ukraine," *Voanews*, February 28, 2014, https://www.voanews.com/a/yanukovych-i-was-forced-to-leave-ukraine/1861218.html.

[457]"Vladimir Putin answered journalists' questions on the situation in Ukraine," *President of Russia*, March 4, 2014, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20366.

> [T]hose who stood behind the latest events in Ukraine had a different agenda: they were preparing yet another government takeover; they wanted to seize power and would stop short of nothing. They resorted to terror, murder and riots. Nationalists, neo-Nazis, Russophobes and anti-Semites executed this coup.[458]

Considering these allegations put by Yanukovych and Putin, Wilson argues:

> Yanukovych and Russia may well have hoped events in Kiev would look more like a coup d'état after he fled, but the Maidan forces were too restrained. There was no 'revolutionary justice', in fact the opposite. The snipers and their political bosses escaped; though Russia carried on claiming there was mass disorder and discrimination against ethnic Russians anyway.[459]

After Yanukovych, dramatic events in Ukraine unfolded. Russian military forces in unmarked uniforms, known as the "little green men," seized key facilities and checkpoints on the Crimean peninsula. Putin initially denied the presence of Russian forces on the peninsula; however, he later acknowledged it.[460] While numerous Western states and international organizations denounced Russia's infringement on Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, Russia's annexation of Crimea was already underway. The government in Crimea was dismantled, and the newly installed pro-Russian administration acknowledged the declaration of independence on March 11, 2014 and set a date for a referendum on March 16. On that day, under the control of the Russian forces, a hastily organized referendum was held on whether voters supported 'reunification' with Russia. As Pifer rightfully states, "The referendum unsurprisingly produced a Soviet-oriented result: 97 percent allegedly voted to join Russia with a turnout of 83 percent."[461] Kyiv announced the referendum as illegal and unconstitutional, and refused to recognize the result. Putin claimed that the referendum was carried out in accordance with democratic procedures and international standards.[462] For him, the referendum was an inevitable consequence of

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[458]"Address by President of the Russian Federation," *President of Russia*, March, 18, 2014, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603.

[459]Andrew Wilson, *The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nations* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015), 349.

[460]Steven Pifer, "Five years after Crimea's illegal annexation, the issue is no closer to resolution," Brookings, March 18, 2019, https://www.brookings.edu/articles/five-years-after-crimeas-illegal-annexation-the-issue-is-no-closer-to-resolution/

[461]Pifer, "Five years after."

[462]President of Russia, "Address by President of the Russian Federation."

a "fascist coup" in Kyiv and Russia "had to help create conditions for the residents of Crimea to, for the first time in history, peacefully express their free will regarding their own future."[463] On March 17, the pro-Kremlin administration in Crimea submitted a request to join the Russian Federation.[464] On the same day, Putin signed the Executive Order, which recognized "the Republic of Crimea as a sovereign and independent state, whose city of Sevastopol has a special status."[465] On the next day, a treaty of accession was signed, bringing Crimea and Sevastopol into the Russian Federation. Three days later, Putin approved the law finalizing the process.[466] Considering all these developments regarding the annexation of Crimea, Sasse expresses Russia followed "a carefully staged process which quickly produced results."[467] After all, the entire process was concluded within a month after Yanukovych departed from Kyiv. In fact, the arrival of the Russian military in Crimea in March 2014 rendered the interim administration in Kyiv unprepared and ordered the Ukrainian forces not to oppose them. Through a bloodless process, the Russian military annexed Crimea, which demonstrated the ineffectiveness of the Ukrainian army. The moving of many officers to the Russian side further damaged its reputation.[468]

In the meantime, the international community was shocked by Russia's moves and seeking proper sanctions to Russia's violation of international laws. Amid this, Russia took another step into eastern Ukraine, resulting in the emergence of two *de facto* states on Ukraine's border - 'Donetsk People's Republic' and the 'Luhansk People's Republic.' It is a widely held view that the process of uprising in eastern

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[463]President of Russia, "Address by President of the Russian Federation."

[464]"Crimea Applies To Join Russia; EU, U.S. Announce Sanctions," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, March 17, 2014, https://www.rferl.org/a/crimea-independence-declaration-russia-annexation-referendum/25299518.html.

[465]"Executive Order on recognising Republic of Crimea," *President of Russia*, March 17, 2014, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20596#sel=2:1:k3m,2:42:22j.

[466]"Laws on admitting Crimea and Sevastopol to the Russian Federation," *President of Russia*, March 21, 2014, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20625.

[467]Gwendolyn Sasse, "The Annexation of Crimea in 2014," *Centre for East European and International Studies*, March 15, 2014, https://www.zois-berlin.de/en/publications/zois-spotlight/archiv-2017/the-annexation-of-crimea-in-2014.

[468]Kofman et al., *Lessons's from Russia's Operations*, 11-12.

and southern regions started with anti-Maidan protests backed by pro-Russian political circles in Kyiv and local elites in the regions. The Russian media also sparked public discontent in these regions by pressing claims that the Russian language, culture, and Orthodoxy would be suppressed.[469] The tension in the region was escalated with the attempts of pro-Russian separatists, who consider the new government in Kyiv illegitimate, to capture governmental buildings. As a result, the uprisings rapidly increased and evolved into a separatist movement and a direct challenge to the territorial integrity of Ukraine. To regain the control in the region, Kyiv launched an 'anti-terrorist operation.' Although this enabled them to regain some regions, it failed to quell separatists. Consequently, Russian-backed armed separatists declared they established the so-called 'Donetsk People's Republic' on April 7 and the 'Luhansk People's Republic on April 27, 2014. They also announced their separation from Kyiv, followed by the two referendums on May 11. After the proclamation of independence, the conflict in the region became more militarized when the separatists tried to expand their control. As the conflict intensified and the Kyiv government strengthened its position, the operations grew, and Russian support for separatists became more obvious.[470] In the later periods, peace agreements in September 2014 (Minsk I) and February 2015 (Minsk II) proved as unproductive solutions.[471] Indeed, the conflict continued as "an intermittent, low-intensity fire exchange that could escalate at any moment"[472] after February 2015. As a result, Ukraine found itself amid a war in eastern Ukraine, which Russia propagated as a civil war emphasizing internal factors and denying the presence of Russian forces.

Although scholars could not predict all the events in 2013 and afterward, many analyses were presented following Russian actions in Ukraine. Clearly, shifting from

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[469]See Center For Civil Liberties and International Partnership for Human Rights, *When God Becomes the Weapon: Persecution based on religious beliefs in the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine* (April 2015).

[470]Paul D'Anieri, *Ukraine and Russia: From Civilized Divorce to Uncivil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 233.

The available evidence demonstrates that Moscow escalated the armed conflict between Kyiv and pro-Russian separatists by providing intelligence information, weapons and ammunition, and mercenary soldiers. See Mark Galeotti, *Armies of Russia's War in Ukraine* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2019).

[471]Galeotti, *Armies of Russia's War*, 18.

[472] Serhy Yekelchyk, *Ukraine: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford: Oxford Press, 2020), 135.

a pro-Russian leadership to a pro-Western administration in Ukraine would have geopolitical repercussions for Russia. Putin perceived the likelihood of Ukraine's shift towards the West after Yanukovych's removal, so he was convinced that taking over the territory Russia had long claimed would be a low-risk, high-reward move.[473] He tried to legitimize Russian interventions in Ukraine in many speeches by emphasizing Russia's responsibility to protect Russian citizens and Russian speakers. Marples states:

> Ukraine's residents may or may not be disturbed by the events of November-February in Kyiv; but there is no evidence whatsoever that more than a handful of residents sought or welcomed a Russian invasion. Perhaps more to the point, there has been no indication that the interim Ukrainian government had targeted Russian-speakers for persecution. Even the controversial language law, which was repealed after the Kyiv events, was quickly reinstalled giving Russians language rights in areas where they constitute more than 10% of the population.[474]

Mankoff's analysis of Russian interventions in post-Soviet states suggests that Russia does so when it perceives a threat to its influence. Additionally, he maintains Russia's actions of protecting the Russian minorities are "opportunistic, driven more by a concern for strategic advantage than by humanitarian or ethnonational considerations."[475] In this regard, as Mankoff argues:

> Russia's willingness to go further in Crimea than in the earlier cases appears driven both by Ukraine's strategic importance to Russia and by Russian President Vladimir Putin's newfound willingness to ratchet up his confrontation with a West that Russian elites increasingly see as hypocritical and antagonistic to their interests.[476]

In fact, most of Putin's speeches reveal the main political motivations behind Russia's annexation of Crimea as he often emphasizes confrontation with the West and blends Russia's political interests with Crimea's significance in Russian military history. For example, he said:

> [T]hey have lied to us many times, made decisions behind our backs, placed us before an accomplished fact. This happened with NATO's expansion to the East, as

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[473]D'Anieri, *Ukraine and Russia*, 241.

[474]Marples, "Introduction," 25.

[475]Jeffrey Mankoff, "Russia's Latest Land Grab: How Putin Won Crimea and Lost Ukraine," *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 3 (May/June 2014): 60-68.

[476]Mankoff, "Russia's Latest Land Grab," 60.

well as the deployment of military infrastructure at our borders. They kept telling us the same thing: "Well, this does not concern you." That's easy to say.[477]

[W]e could not allow our access to the Black Sea to be significantly limited; we could not allow NATO forces to eventually come to the land of Crimea and Sevastopol, the land of Russian military glory, and cardinally change the balance of forces in the Black Sea area. This would mean giving up practically everything that Russia had fought for since the times of Peter the Great, or maybe even earlier - historians should know.[478]

To justify Russia's annexation of Crimea, Putin also argues that Crimea is an integral part of Russia, and he questions the transfer of Crimea to Soviet Ukraine in 1954 because of which Crimea remained in Ukraine after the collapse of the Soviet Union.[479] Besides, he addresses Crimea from Holy *Rus'* and Russian World perspectives. For him, the baptism of Volodymyr in Crimea "became the source of Russia's development as a unique country and civilization"[480] and "predetermined the overall basis of the culture, civilisation and human values that unite the peoples of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus."[481] Of particular significance to this chapter is the fact that Russia not only disregarded Ukraine's sovereignty overtly but also continued to exploit religious rhetoric to undermine Ukraine's tendency to Western civilization.

5.3 An Overview of Poroshenko's Nation and State- Building Policies

The chain of events after the Euromaidan Revolution threw Ukraine into turmoil, in which the state suffered a significant loss of sovereignty. The ongoing war in eastern Ukraine also caused thousands of deaths and millions of internally displaced persons. As a result of the war, the Ukrainian economy, which was already shrinking, was

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[477]President of Russia, "Address by President of the Russian Federation." Putin also accused the West of applying double standards in international law. He pointed out that the West had previously created a similar situation with Kosovo separating from Serbia, but refused to allow Crimea to exercise the same right.

[478] "Conference of Russian ambassadors and permanent representatives," *President of Russia*, July 1, 2014, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/46131.

[479]President of Russia, "Address by President of the Russian Federation."

[480]"Reception to Mark 1000 years since the death of St. Vladimir, Equal-to-the-Apostles," *President of Russia*, July 28, 2015, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50068.

[481]President of Russia, "Address by President of the Russian Federation."

severely damaged.[482] During such a difficult period, the presidential election was held on May 25, 2014. As D'Anieri puts:

> The presidential vote was decisive: Petro Poroshenko, a chocolate magnate who had supported Yushchenko in 2004, then been a minister under Yanukovych, then became an early supporter of anti-Yanukovych protests, was elected decisively, winning 54.7 percent of the vote in the first round, the first time since 1991 a presidential election had been decided without a runoff.[483]

Being elected as president of Ukraine, Poroshenko had the daunting task of restoring the country's sovereignty, economy, and international reputation. Moreover, these tasks were even more challenging because of the Russian propaganda that depicted Ukraine as a failed state and dissemination of fake news about the ongoing war. Marples states:

> The country was almost bankrupt, its army barely mobile, and its new leaders initially could do little but respond with angry rhetoric to each new move by the Russians. The survival of Ukraine as a viable independent nation seemed very much in question.[484]

In such a context, Poroshenko's inauguration speech[485] was highly significant as it showed what Ukraine needed, how he would meet them, and what Poroshenko expected from Ukrainians. For him, the Euromaidan Revolution resulted from the Ukrainian desire to 'return' to a European state, which was hindered by Yanukovych's dictatorship. He also said:

> The victorious Revolution of Dignity did not only change the government. The country became different. The people became different. The time for irreversible positive changes has come. In order to make them, we need, first and foremost, peace, security and unity.[486]

Besides, he stressed the necessity of developing close economic and political ties with the EU to overcome Ukraine's challenges due to Russian aggression.

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[482]Ulrich Schmid, *Ukraine: Contested Nationhood in a European Context*, translated by Roy Sellars (London and New York: Routledge, 2020), 84.

[483]D'Anieri, Ukraine and Russia, 239.

[484]Marples, "Introduction," 25.

[485]"Petro Poroshenko's speech at the inauguration: full text," *Euromaidan Press*, June 7, 2014, https://euromaidanpress.com/2014/06/07/petro-poroshenkos-speech-at-the-inauguration-full-text/

[486]Euromaidan Press, "Petro Poroshenko's speech."

Poroshenko also paid tribute to and commemorated the Ukrainians who sacrificed their lives for the independence of Ukraine during the Euromaidan and the ongoing war. Also, referring to Ukrainians' long struggle for independence and freedom, he criticized the notion that Ukraine gained independence without effort.[487] One could argue that he viewed the war with Russia as a battle for independence from Moscow.

Poroshenko also stated that his election disproved Russian allegations that the government in Kyiv was illegitimate. Giving conciliatory messages, he stressed Russian language usage and respect for local communities' historical memories, heroes, and religious traditions. Undoubtedly, war conditions in the country made the issue of territorial integrity a priority; thus, possible strategies to protect the sovereignty of Ukraine, such as diplomatic relations and international security agreements, were voiced. Notably, he gave more emphasis on the reality of war and the need for the development of Ukrainian armed forces by saying the following:

> The peace that we are hoping to reach in the nearest future will not last long if we don't strengthen our security accordingly. For peace to last, we need to get accustomed to living in conditions of constant preparation for war. We have to keep our gunpowder dry...Those who save on feeding their own armed forces is feeding the enemy army. And our army has to become a real elite of Ukraine. The word 'General' has to be associated not with the word 'corruption,' but with the word 'hero' [...] We have to make our own effort to achieve everything that the provision of stable peace and security of Ukraine depend on. Our best allies and best guarantees of peace are the army, the fleet, the National Guard and professional special services! Nobody will protect us until we learn to defend ourselves.[488]

His speech attracted attention to essential elements that are necessary for building a strong state and fostering a cohesive society. These had been overlooked, especially during Yanukovych's period, when Ukraine was more vulnerable to Russian influence. Although Poroshenko's speech was promising, the question of whether he could comply with his commitments and take tangible steps toward fulfilling them remains. Notably, implementing the intended pro-Western reforms seemed difficult at the high cost of the ongoing war in eastern Ukraine, even though the support of the West and various international organizations was negotiable. Besides, afterward, negotiations with Russia to end the war had proved ineffective; thus, the war was

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[487]Euromaidan Press, "Petro Poroshenko's speech."

[488]Euromaidan Press, "Petro Poroshenko's speech."

unlikely to come to a close anytime soon. Despite the obstacles faced by Poroshenko, the changing political and social dynamics in Ukraine during 2014 presented specific opportunities.

Related studies argue that the Euromaidan Revolution, Russia's annexation of Crimea, and the war in eastern Ukraine mark consequential turning points in Ukraine and that these have drastically weakened pro-Russian sentiment in Ukraine, including the southern and eastern regions historically associated with strong Russian influence.[489] Many studies that focus on the consequences of these events on Ukrainian society have stated that Ukrainians' loyalty to the state has increased and civic national identification,[490] mingled with substantial support to Ukraine's pro-Western orientation, has begun to be stronger. Bertelsen argues, "[t]he Euromaidan and the Russian-Ukrainian war awakened Ukraine, producing a cultural change and creating a new civic identity which seems to be more stable and overarching than at the dawning of independent Ukraine in 1991."[491] As Kulyk argues, national identity has become more evident than "other territorial and non-territorial identities than it was before the Maidan and the war," and being a part of the Ukrainian nation began to point to "the increased alienation from Russia and the greater embrace of Ukrainian nationalism as a worldview and, accordingly, as a historical narrative."[492] Given these, one could argue that this is a pivotal period for Ukraine, a country that had been described by many scholars as one with a weak national identity since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. In addition, many emphasize the new political landscape in Ukraine. More than 4.5 million voters,[493] who predominantly support

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[489]Oxana Shevel, "The Battle for Historical Memory in Postrevolutionary Ukraine," *Current History* 115, no. 783 (2016): 258.

[490]Volodymyr Kulyk, "Shedding Russianness, Recasting Ukrainianness: The Post- Euromaidan Dynamics of Ethnonational Identifications in Ukraine," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 34, no. 2–3 (2018): 127. See also the essays in Olexiy Haran and Maksym Yakovlev, eds., *Constructing a Political Nation: Changes in the Attitudes of Ukrainians during the War in the Donbas* (Kyiv: Stylos Publishing, 2017).

[491]Olga Bertelsen, "Epilogue," in *Revolution and War in Contemporary Ukraine: The Challenge of Change*, ed. Olga Bertelsen (Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2017), 385.

[492]Volodymyr Kulyk, "National Identity in Ukraine: Impact of Euromaidan and the War," *Europe-Asia Studies* 68, no.4 (2016): 606-607.

[493]Shevel, "The Battle for Historical Memory," 260. See also, Paul D'Anieri, "Gerrymandering Ukraine? Electoral Consequences of Occupation," *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures* 33, no.1 (2019).

pro-Russian politicians or parties, have not participated in the elections due to the annexation of Crimea and separatist-controlled regions in eastern Ukraine. As D'Anieri summarizes:

> Russia's occupation of Ukrainian territory had sizable unintended consequences for Ukrainian politics. It increased the portion of Ukrainians who identified as 'Ukrainian' (rather than 'Russian') and it removed from the Ukrainian electorate many of the most pro-Russian voters (who were concentrated in Crimea and Donbas).[494]

This has altered the electoral balance, leading to the rise of pro-Western camps in Ukrainian politics.[495] Pointing to the 2014 parliamentary election in Ukraine, Shevel states, "For the first time in Ukraine's post-Soviet history, elections produced a pro-Western and pro-market majority rather than a parliament more or less evenly divided between broadly pro-Russian and pro-Western forces."[496] In this respect, one of the decisive consequences of Russian aggression in Ukraine is that Ukraine's political zigzags between Russia and the West came to an end. Additionally, it has contributed to the bottom-up consolidation of Ukrainian national identification, and all these provided Poroshenko with an opportunity to introduce bold moves to move Ukraine's orientation toward the West and to detach the country from Russian influence.

Therefore, as mentioned earlier, Poroshenko decisively embraced a pro-Western stance and pursued a policy of integrating with the EU and NATO. Many strategic documents were adopted or revised during his period regarding Ukraine's foreign policy and security. These documents indicated that Russia was recognized as an "aggressor" state and the Russian threat was a long-term concern. It was also emphasized that Ukraine's membership in NATO and the EU was necessary to ensure security of Ukraine.[497] Poroshenko also emphasized consolidating

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[494]D'Anieri, *Ukraine and Russia*, 225.

[495]Paul D'Anieri, "Gerrymandering Ukraine?"

[496]Shevel, "The Battle for Historical Memory," 260.

[497]See Hennadiy Maksak, *Ukrainian Prism: Foreign Policy 2015* (Kyiv: Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2016); Hennadiy Maksak, Hanna Shelest, Nadiia Koval, and Maria Koval, *Ukrainian Prism: Foreign Policy 2016* (Kyiv: Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2017); Hennadiy Maksak, Hanna Shelest, Nadiia Bureiko, Nadiia Koval, and Maria Koval, *Ukrainian Prism: Foreign Policy 2017* (Kyiv: Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2018).

international support in dealing with Russian aggressions and intensifying the sanctions targeting Russia. In line with those aims, numerous bilateral relations and cooperations with many countries and international organizations were developed. With this regard, three developments seem to be crucial. The first one is the Association Agreement, which was signed with the EU on June 27, 2014. Pifer argues:

> Implementation of the agreement will not only bring Ukraine's trade and customs rule conformity with EU standards, it will help to country draw closer to EU democratic norms and 'Europonize' other Ukrainian regulatory regimes.[498]

The second is a long-awaited visa-liberalization agreement signed with the EU in May 2017. Emphasizing its importance for Ukraine, Poroshenko said, "Ukraine returns to the European family. Ukraine says a final farewell to the Soviet and Russian Empire."[499] It is important to note that the agreement gave credit to Poroshenko because it was "an important sign for Ukrainian citizens that their most recent revolution had not been in vain."[500] Lastly, in addition to existing agreements that bolster integration with the EU and military cooperation with NATO, Ukraine's commitment to joining NATO and the EU was strengthened with the signing of a constitutional amendment by Poroshenko in February 2019.[501]

Poroshenko also initiated reform packages for the Ukrainian armed forces, which were left in ruins during Yanukovych's period. Increasing the state budget on

Many Western governments, including the USA, condemned Russia's actions as violation of international law, mainly citing Russia's security commitments towards Ukraine in the 1994 Budapest Memorandum. Russia's aggressions sparked debates in Ukraine regarding the 1994 decision to renounce nuclear weapons, which provided ambiguous security guarantees. Poroshenko expressed that Ukraine has no intention to return to nuclear state status. Yekelchyk, *Ukraine*, 60-61.

[498]Steven Pifer, "Poroshenko Signs EU-Ukraine Association Agrement," Brookings, June 27, 2014, https://www.brookings.edu/articles/poroshenko-signs-eu-ukraine-association-agreement/

[499]"President in the ceremony of signing the document on visa liberation with the EU: It is a historical day for Ukraine,"*Mission of the President of Ukraine in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea*, May 17, 2017, https://ppu.gov.ua/en/press-center/president-in-the-ceremony-of-signing-the-document-on-visa-liberalisation-with-the-eu-it-is-a-historical-day-for-ukraine/

[500]Yekelchyk, *Ukraine*, 155.

[501]"Ukraine President Signs Constitutional Amendment On NATO, EU Membership," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, February 19, 2019, https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-president-signs-constitutional-amendment-on-nato-eu-membership/29779430.html.

security, domestic arms production, and salaries of soldiers, modernizing the existing equipment and military administration, providing training programs under the joint programs of some of the Western states, regulating the integration of volunteer units into the army, and launching the 'de-Sovietization' process for army's symbols were just a few examples of how Poroshenko tried to materially and ideologically strengthened the Ukrainian army.[502] All these efforts provided significant improvements in the capacity of military; Yekelchyk argues:

> Because of the Ukrainian army's transformation, already by 2016–2017 no international security expert could talk about the Russian army taking the Ukrainian capital in a week, as some had prognosticated in 2014. The war in the Donbas became a conflict of equals; it also became a standoff that could only be solved through international mediation and coordinated measures discouraging the aggressive behavior of Putin's Russia.[503]

One of the critical reforms of Poroshenko was the introduction of decentralization. It aimed at achieving "economic development in Ukraine's regions and addressing imbalances and inadequacies in the level of infrastructure, public services and overall standard of living across the territory."[504] It is also crucial to note that decentralization was not realized by federalization, but it combined "smaller municipalities and a reallocation of political, administrative and financial competencies to these merged and enlarged local communities (hromady)."[505] This system suffered many problems in its initial phase. However, as Romanova and Umland states, "Insofar as decentralization helps Ukraine state-building and nation building, it indirectly promotes a non-authoritarian path of post-communist development that implies an open society, political pluralism, public participation and Western integration."[506] Additionally, local administrations were empowered by

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[502]See Anna Kyslytska, "How to Ukrainian Army rose from ashes:10 facts to know," Euromaidan Press, December 7, 2017, https://euromaidanpress.com/2017/12/07/how-the-ukrainian-army-rose-from-ashes-10-facts-to-know; Yuliya Biletska, "Sovyet Sonrası Ukrayna'da Devlet ve Siyaset,"in *Sovyet Sonrası Ukrayna'da Devlet, Toplum ve Siyaset: Değişen Dinamikler Dönüşen Kimlikler*, eds. Ayşegül Aydıngün and İsmail Aydıngün (Ankara: Terazi Yayıncılık, 2020), 67-68.

[503]Yekelchyk, *Ukraine*, 137.

[504]William Dudley, *Ukraine's Decentralization Reform* (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik: Working Paper, Research DivisionEastern Europe and Eurasia, 2019): 5.

[505]Valentyna Romanova and Andreas Umland, *Ukraine's Decentralization Reforms Since 2014: Initial Achievements and Future Challenges* (London: Chatham House, 2019), 2.

[506]Romanova and Umland, *Ukraine's Decentralization Reforms Since 2014*, 22.

this reform, which in turn, prevented Russia from fuelling separatism or acting out of annexation of regions.[507]

Poroshenko also played a crucial role in shaping Ukraine's official policy on collective memory and national identity politics. On April 9, 2015, the Ukrainian Parliament adopted four memory laws entitled: "On the Legal Status and Honoring the Memory of Fighters for Ukraine's Independence in the Twentieth Century," "On Perpetuation of the Victory over Nazism in World War II of 1939-1945," "On access to Archives of Repressive Agencies of Totalitarian Communist Regime of 1917-1991", and "About Condemnation of Communist and National-Socialist (Nazi) totalitarian regimes in Ukraine and a ban on propaganda of their symbols." When Poroshenko signed these laws soon afterwards, on May 15, Ukraine embarked on a phase of de-communization. This marked a complete rejection of the Soviet legacy, including "the removal of monument and place names related to communism, spurring the renaming of thousands of cities, towns, villages, and streets."[508] It also paved the way for a 'de-communization' era in the history of Ukraine.[509] Overall, the de-communization process in Ukraine aimed at removing the lingering Russian narrative of the Soviet past and promoting, instead, a Ukrainian version to foster a distinct Ukrainian identity. In addition to de-communization laws, significant policies in 2016, 2017, and 2019 were introduced to promote the usage of the Ukrainian language.

Indeed, the policies for bolstering Ukrainian identity has no longer targeted the distant past only. The "Heavenly Hundred," which is used for people losing their lives during the Euromaidan protests, has become the most prominent symbol of the Euromaidan commemoration.[510] Besides, soldiers who died or were wounded in the war in eastern Ukraine have been honored at the state level. Military service has

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[507]Cited in Romanova and Umland, *Ukraine's Decentralization Reforms Since 2014*, 22.

[508]D'Anieri, *Ukraine and Russia*, 250.

[509]Turgut Kerem Tuncel, "Ukrayna'nın Ulusal Tarih Anlatısının Oluşumu," in *Sovyet Sonrası Ukrayna'da Devlet, Toplum ve Siyaset: Değişen Dinamikler Dönüşen Kimlikler*, eds. Ayşegül Aydıngün and İsmail Aydıngün (Ankara: Terazi Yayıncılık, 2020), 23-30.

[510]Andriy Liubarets, "The Politics of Memory in Ukraine in 2014: Removal of the Soviet Cultural Legacy and Euromaidan Commemorations," *Kyiv-Mohyla Humanities Journal* 3, (2016): 197-214.

evolved into a significant source of pride, with soldiers being regarded as national heroes. Additionally, the military has provided an opportunity for individuals from diverse linguistic, religious, and ethnic backgrounds to serve, thereby promoting civic integration.[511]

As can be seen in these developments, Poroshenko's policies for nation- and state-building are centered on strengthening the sovereignty of Ukraine amidst the ongoing conflict in the eastern region and are clearly aimed at distancing the country from Russia and aligning with the West. Additionally, Poroshenko has adopted an identity politics similar to Yushchenko's, albeit with notable differences. These differences arise from the changing societal and political dynamics due to Russia's blatant violations of Ukraine's territorial integrity. In other words, as mentioned earlier, the balance in Ukraine shifting since 2013 has not only launched pro-Western policies but also consolidated the increasing bottom-up patriotism.

5.4. Pro-Autocephaly Initiatives in the Presidency of Poroshenko

Poroshenko made it a priority to establish an autocephalous Orthodox church to protect Ukraine's state sovereignty and security. He believed Russia was endeavouring to expand its influence and garner spiritual and political support for its involvement in Ukraine through the Moscow Patriarchate and the UOC-MP. Mirovalev asserts that, for Poroshenko, "Ukraine's ecclesiastic independence is not just a matter of squabbles of elderly, long-bearded men with archaic names."[512] His strong emphasis on Ukraine's spiritual emancipation from Russia and desire to deviate from Russia's geopolitical orbit can be considered a state level of support to the autocephaly initiative, which the previous president Yanukovych had abolished. In addition to Poroshenko's backing, a series of events since late 2013 have drastically changed the dynamics in the religious landscape of Ukraine, which had been feeding the UOC-MP's privileged position in Kuchma and Yanukovych terms.

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[511]Biletska, "Sovyet Sonrası Ukrayna'da Devlet ve Siyaset," 68.

[512]Mansur Mirovalev, "In battele between Russia and Ukraine, even God is in dispute," Los Angeles Times, May 29, 2018, https://www.latimes.com/world/europe/la-fg-ukraine-russia-church-20180529-story.html.

During the protests in Kyiv against the corrupt Yanukovych administration, numerous religious communities united to support the Revolution for a democratic Ukraine and inclusive Ukrainian nation. Casanova notes that this experience at the Maidan highlighted the importance of religious pluralism in forming a democratic Ukraine.[513] On the other hand, Ukrainian religious organizations faced the decision of whether to align themselves with the protesters' demands for democratic governance. During the protests, many religious organizations were present, displaying varying degrees of action and engagement in the movement, and their positions changed mainly after the police violence. The Kyiv Patriarchate and the UGCC, both of which had already played a significant role in supporting the Orange Revolution in 2004, actively supported the Euromaidan Revolution and the pro-Western orientation of Ukraine.[514] Yanukovych administration threatened the UGCC to terminate its registration on the grounds that it held religious activities in the Maidan.[515] During the protests, the Kyiv Patriarchate opened St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral for use as a haven and immediate medical care unit for the protestors injured due to police intervention.[516] These two churches also voiced their support for the territorial integrity of Ukraine and Ukraine's fight against Russian-sponsored separatists in eastern Ukraine. As regards the Orthodox churches, the Kyiv Patriarchate generally managed to cultivate social acceptance as a patriotic Ukrainian religious organization. On the other side, Patriarch Kyrill of Moscow supported Putin and Russian interventions in Ukraine, and this put the UOC-MP in a difficult situation in Ukraine, where patriotic feelings have been mounting. Hence, the UOC-MP took an ambiguous stance towards the Euromaidan Revolution, failed to present its clear opposition to the Russian interventions, and mainly remained 'silent.'

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[513]José Casanova, "The Three Kyivan Churches of Ukraine and the Three Romes," *East/West Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 9, no. 1 (2022): 215.

[514]See Catherine Wanner ed., Religion and Political Crisis in Ukraine (St. Gallen: University of St. Gallen, 2015).

[515]"Ministry of Culture threatened to terminate the registration of the UGCC because of the priests' presence on Euromaidan," *Religious Information Service of Ukraine*, January 13, 2014, https://risu.ua/en/ministry-of-culture-threatened-to-terminate-the-registration-of-the-ugcc-because-of-the-priests-presence-on-euromaidan_n66648.

[516]With a similar aim, the UGCC also opened its Patriarchial Cathedral to the protestors. Yury P. Avvakumov, "Ukrainian Greek Catholics, Past and Present," in *Churches in the Ukrainian Crisis*, eds. Andrii Krawchuk and Thomas Bremer (Palgrave Macmillan), 35.

Indeed, as discussed in the previous chapter, the UOC-MP camps are roughly divided into two: pro-Ukrainian and pro-Russian. The internal division is also manifested in the UOC-MP's reactions to the Euromaidan Revolution and Russian aggression in Ukraine. As Krawchuk points out:

> Russia's armed intervention in 2014 only intensified that difference of opinion about the church's civic identity and loyalty. Before the conflict, with virtually no sense of an imminent threat from Russia, the UOC-MP was able to contain the tensions between those who favored closer ties with Russia and those who felt a primary loyalty to Ukraine. But once the conflict began, it was increasingly difficult to keep those countervailing loyalties in check. Previously reconcilable, the two positions quickly became mutually exclusive and eroded the solidarity of the UOC-MP. The pro-Ukrainian faction, which supported Ukraine's sovereignty and condemned Russian military aggression, found itself increasingly at odds with the pronouncements of its ultimate authority, Moscow Patriarch Kirill, whose loyalty to Putin's Russia never wavered. Meanwhile, the pro Russian wing took its perspective on the conflict from Putin and Kirill, who attributed it to the work of fascists and schismatics.[517]

It is also worth noting that the faction, led by the head of the UOC-MP, Metropolitan Volodymyr Sabodan, made the pro-Ukrainian voice within the UOC-MP louder. However, upon his passing and the election of pro-Russian Metropolitan Onufriy as the head of the UOC-MP, the internal dynamics of the Church underwent a shift, strengthening the pro-Russian camp within the UOC-MP. To put it simply, the dynamics within the UOC-MP were unsettled yet again. Therefore, criticisms against the Church mounted as the war in eastern Ukraine continued.[518] As Babinsky argues:

> Upon the passing of Vladimir (Sabodan), the pro-Ukrainian movement within the UOC (MP) became orphaned. The new head of the UOC (MP), a loyal pupil of the Moscow religious school and monastery tradition, is strongly committed to the leadership of the Russian Church [...] [T]he leaders of the UOC (MP) have been silent about the annexation of Crimea by Russia, as well as Russia's extensive support of the pro-Russian separatists in the east of Ukraine.[519]

With the late 2013 changing dynamics of Orthodox churches in Ukraine, the initiatives to unify the fragmented Ukrainian Orthodoxy gained new momentum. In

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[517]Andrii Krawchuk, "Redefining Orthodox Identity in Ukraine after the Euromaidan," in *Churches in the Ukrainian Crisis*, eds. Andrii Krawchuk and Thomas Bremer (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 176.

[518]Oleksandr Sagan, "Orthodoxy in Ukraine: Current State and Problems," in *Traditional religion and political power: Examining the role of the church in Georgia, Armenia, Ukraine, and Moldova*, ed. Adam Hug (London: Foreign Policy Center, 2015), 19.

[519]Anatoliy Babinsky, "The Ties That Bind," *New Eastern Ukraine* XVII, no.3-4 (2015): 48.

February 2014, the UOC-MP responded positively to the Kyiv Patriarchate's request by establishing a commission to engage in dialogue with the UOC-KP. Nevertheless, there was minimal progress in this period. While members of both churches, i.e. bishops, priests, and laypeople, unofficially discussed the unification, the commission was inactive because of the high-ranking officials of the UOC-MP. At times, the official dialogue broke due to worsening relations between the two churches.[520] For Krawchuk, the changing dynamics after 2014 opened led to a constructive dialogue among Orthodox churches, later obstructed by the move of numerous UOC-MP parishes in 2014 to the Kyiv Patriarchate.[521] An interviwee was doubtful about the high-ranking clergy of the UOC-MP's willingness to heal division among Orthodox churches in Ukraine. According to the interviwee, the UOC-MP first launched a dialogue with the Kyiv Patriarchate to meet the growing public demand for unification; then, they deliberately suspended negotiations at stake. For him, this was a typical delaying tactic to prolong the process and to create the impression that the UOC-MP had been engaged in the issue of unification of the Orthodox churches in Ukraine.[522]

Towards the end of April 2015, Patriarch Filaret urged for the unification of Orthodox churches in Ukraine to block the influence of Russia, which uses the Church for its interests in Ukraine. In June 2015, the UAOC and the Kyiv Patriarchate came to a mutual understanding to convene in July to discuss the prospect of unification. Later, September 14 was designated as the date for the church merger, and the issue of how each church was to be represented in the Council was settled.[523] Despite these constructive advancements in unification, numerous disagreements between these churches soon occurred. One of them centered around the prospective name of the unified church. Metropolitan Makariy,

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[520]Krawchuk, "Redefining Orthodox Identity in Ukraine," 190.

[521]Krawchuk, 190.

[522]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 11, 2020.

[523]Metropolitan Makariy(Malatych): unification council may fail to occur," *Religious Information Service of Ukraine*, June 16, 2015, https://risu.ua/en/metropolitan-makariy-maletych-unification-council-may-fail-to-occur_n74772; "Synod of the Kyiv Patriarchate announced the Local Unification Council to be held on September 14," *Religious Information Service of Ukraine*, June 19, 2015, https://risu.ua/en/synod-of-the-uoc-kp-announces-the-local-unification-councilto-be-held-on september-14_n74814.

the head of the UAOC, stated that bishops did not opt for utilizing the name of the Kyiv Patriarchate for a unified church:[524] He said:

> The UAOC demands are quite moderate: making a combined name of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church-Kyiv Patriarchate and leaving all bishops in their place, and then we'll see. It would be a real step towards the establishment of a local church, a step to unification. But that is not going to happen [...] He [Patriarch Filaret] wants to retain their name –the Ukrainian Orthodox Church - Kyiv Patriarchate, while we are just to join.[525]

Patriarch Filaret claimed that a joint name for a unified church would mean a myriad of legislative procedures for more than 6,000 registered parishes of the Kyiv Patriarchate and the UAOC.[526] Approaching the name issue just technically, he proposed using the name Kyiv Patriarchate and left the door open for the UAOC parishes, which wish to keep the UAOC as their name. Filaret claimed that, if they wanted to change their name, one single amendment would simply complete the procedure.[527]

Another disagreement arose from how many delegates from these two churches would participate in the Unification Council. Metropolitan Makariy advocated a 50/50 principle, arguing that a proportional allocation would result in an imbalanced representation of parishes with four hundred delegates from the Kyiv Patriarchate and only two hundred from the UAOC. However, this proposal was objected by the Kyiv Patriarchate for the same reason. They argued that a 50/50 ratio would be unfair given their significantly higher number of communities (4,887 to 1,225).[528] In a nutshell, Kyiv Patriarchate declared that "Kyiv Patriarchate is disappointed and saddened by the outcome of yet another attempt- the fifth in 20 years- to negotiate with the UAOC."[529]

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[524]Religious Information Service of Ukraine, "Metropolitan Makariy(Malatych)."

[525]Religious Information Service of Ukraine, "Metropolitan Makariy(Malatych)."

[526]"Patriarch Filaret to UAOC hierarchs: setting forth new knowingly unacceptable conditions is an attempt to disrupt unification," *Religious Information Service of Ukraine*, June 30, 2016, https://risu.ua/en/patriarch-filaret-to-uaoc-hierarchs-setting-forth-new-knowingly-unacceptable-conditions-is-an-attempt-to-disrupt-unification_n74926.

[527]Religious Information Service of Ukraine, "Patriarch Filaret to UAOC hierarchs."

[528]"Kyiv Patriarchate disappointed with yet another breakdown of negotiations with the UAOC," *Religious Information Service of Ukraine*, July 10, 2015, https://risu.ua/en/kyiv-patriarchate-disappointed-with-yet-another-breakdown-of-negotiations-with-the-uaoc_n75103.

[529] Religious Information Service of Ukraine, "Kyiv Patriarchate disappointed."

That is, the opposing forces from the churches hindered an effective merge. The two churces united only to become a ground where a power struggle ensued, as had occurred in the past.[530] The representatives of the Istanbul Patriarchate participated in the negotiations and played a constructive role in the unification process. Despite the failure, the Istanbul Patriarchate remained invested in the issue, and the dialogue between Poroshenko's team and the Istanbul Patriarchate was maintained. That is why Metropolitan Yuri Kalishcuk, the representative of the Istanbul Patriarchate, visited Ukraine in 2015 to take part in the baptism celebrations in Kyiv and reiterated the Istanbul Patriarchate's readiness to contribute to the unification process. For him, the Ukrainian State and Church had struggled for independence and unity since Volodymyr's baptism and this struggle's success was imminent. Also, he expressed that the unification would revive the traditions the Ukrainian Church had had prior to the Treaty of Pereiaslav, which resulted in the annexation of the Ukrainian State and the Church.[531] At the same celebrations, Poroshenko for the first time asserted that, as an independent state, Ukraine had the right to have its own independent church.[532]

Towards the end of 2015, Patriarch Filaret addressed significant issues regarding the problems, motives, and future of the unification, as well as loyalty to the UOC-MP:

> There is one and most important obstacle [for the unification]- Moscow's influence on the Ukrainian Church, as there is dependence that prevents clergy fully supporting their people in the fight against the aggressor. The war really shows who is who, because unfortunately there are priests and bishops of the Orthodox Church, calling Putin to come and save Ukraine. Ordinary believers see this 'fifth column' and do not want to belong to it, so the parishes transfer from the UOC to the UOC-KP. This is the process of unification, but it is a bottom-up process. In large cities, these transitions proceed smoothly, but in small villages, where there is only parish, a real struggle evolves. Of course, this process can be accelerated provided that the Kyiv Patriarchate is recognized by the Ecumenical Patriarch as an autocephalous Church. This in turn will enable not only the faithful but the clergy to make transitions.[533]

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[530]Maksym Kamenev, "How President Poroshenko Secured Church Independence for Ukraine," *Hromadske*, December 21, 2018, https://hromadske.ua/en/posts/how-president-poroshenko-secured-church-independence-for-ukraine.

[531]"Constantinople to help revive traditions existing long before the Treaty of Pereiaslav and annexation of Ukraine," *Censor.Net*, July 28, 2015, https://censor.net/en/news/345619/constantinople_to_help_revive_traditions_existing_long_before_the_treaty_of_pereiaslav_and_annexation.

[532]Kamenev, "How President Poroshenko Secured Church Independence for Ukraine."

[533]"Unification of Ukrainian Orthodoxy proceeds from bottom to up- Patriarch Filaret comments on transitions from UOC(MP) to UOC-KP," *Religious Information Service of Ukraine*, December 25,

The year 2016 is marked by President Poroshenko's strenuous efforts to secure autocephaly for Ukraine. In January 2016, he encouraged the UOC-MP to promote interchurch dialogue, endorse unity among Orthodox churches in Ukraine, strengthen state-church collaboration in assisting soldiers and rehabilitating those who returned from the frontline, and serve victims of Russian aggression in Ukraine. Furthermore, referring to the Pan-Orthodox Council that the Istanbul Patriarchate would organize in 2016, wherein autocephalous churches worldwide would participate, he expressed his hope for the Council's contribution to the unification process of the Orthodox churches in Ukraine. On March 10, 2016, Poroshenko, for the first time, met with Patriarch Bartholomew of Istanbul during his official visit to Turkey. Among other issues, they tackled the issue of a single unified Ukrainian Orthodox church. Although a definitive conclusion was not reached on the matter, the statements after the meeting implied that the Istanbul Patriarchate was the mother church of Ukraine.[534]

Ukrainian autocephaly became a prominent issue on the eve of the Pan-Orthodox Council held on June 19 of that year. Three days before the Council, on June 16, the Ukrainian Parliament had voted for Decree No. 4793, which requested autocephaly for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church from Patriarch Bartholomew of Istanbul. The vote received an overwhelming majority, with 245 lawmakers in favor and only 20 in opposition.[535] The request was as follows:

> [T]o recognized invalid the act in 1686 as the one adopted in violation of the sacred canons of the Orthodox Church;
> [T]o take an active part in overcoming the church schism by convening Ukrainian unification council under the auspices of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which would solve all controversial issues and unite the Ukrainian Orthodox Church;
> [F]or the benefit of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine and the integrity of the Ukrainian nation, to issue the *Tomos* granting autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in

2015, https://risu.ua/en/unification-of-ukrainian-orthodoxy-proceeds-from-bottom-to-top-patriarch-filaret-comments-on-transitions-from-uoc-mp-to-uoc-kp_n77451.

[534]"Poroshenko discussed with Bartholomew the establishment of one united Ukrainian Orthodox Church," *Religious Information Service of Ukraine*, March 10, 2016, https://risu.ua/en/poroshenko-discussed-with-bartholomew-the-establishment-of-one-united-ukrainian-orthodox-church_n78661.

[535]"Parliament adopted a draft appeal to Ecumenical Patriarch on granting autocephaly to Ukrainian Church," *Religious Information Service of Ukraine*, June 16, 2016, https://risu.ua/en/parliament-adopted-a-draft-appeal-to-ecumenical-patriarch-on-granting-autocephaly-to-ukrainian-church_n80045.

Ukraine, under which it can take its rightful place in the family of Local Orthodox Churches.[536]

The adoption of the Decree by the Parliament was important since it could be seen as a step towards making the pro-autocephaly initiative official. Although the Istanbul Patriarchate did not instantly respond positively, it did not reject the request either. It commissioned a special synod to examine the issue.[537] During the Parliament Speaker of Ukraine Andriy Paruby's visit to the Istanbul Patriarchate in November 2016, Patriarch Bartholomew expressed the significance of the appeal of June 16 by underscoring that it is a historical event.[538] For this meeting, Paruby stated:

> We have a unique historical opportunity. Millions of Ukrainian ask God and hope that the unified Ukrainian Orthodox Church will rise in Ukraine and the Ecumenical Patriarch will give it the *Tomos* of ecclesiastical independence- autocephaly. Patriarch Bartholomew is very well aware of the religious situation in Ukraine, so we managed to discuss religious issues very closely.[539]

On April 9, 2018, Poroshenko and his team visited Istanbul to meet with Patriarch Bartholomew and the Synod members.[540] They requested canonical recognition of the Ukrainian Church, to which the Istanbul Patriarchate responded positively. [541] Upon return to Ukraine, on April 17, Poroshenko declared they had reached an agreement for launching the process for the unification of Ukrainian Orthodox churches. Even if he did not provide details of the procedure, he voiced his hope for receiving the autocephalous status before the 1030th anniversary of the baptism of Volodymyr.[542] He also urged the Parliament to support his initiative. The following

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[536]Religious Information Service of Ukraine, "Parliament adopted a draft appeal to Ecumenical Patriarch."

[537]Cyril Hovorun, "War and Autocephaly in Ukraine," *Kyiv-Mohyla Humanities Journal* 7, (2020): 15.

[538]"Patriarch Bartholomew hopes to visit Ukraine soon," Religious *Information Service of Ukraine*, November 19, 2016, https://risu.ua/en/patriarch-bartholomew-hopes-to-visit-ukraine-soon_n82162.

[539]Religious Information Service of Ukraine, "Patriarch Bartholomew Hopes."

[540]"President of Ukraine Visited the Ecumenical Patriarchate," *Ecumenical Patriarchate Permanent Delegation to the World Council of Churches*, April 12, 2018, https://www.ecupatria.org/2018/04/12/president-of-ukraine-visited-the-ecumenical-patriarchate/

[541]Hovorun, "War and Autocephaly in Ukraine," 15.

[542]"UPDATE: Ukraine asks Constantinople to allow creation of independent Ukrainian Orthodox Church," *Unian News*, April 17, 2018, https://www.unian.info/politics/10084109-update-ukraine-asks-constantinople-to-allow-creation-of-independent-ukrainian-orthodox-church.html.

day, the UOC-KP and the UAOC submitted a joint petition forwarded to Poroshenko, through which they expressed their will to join under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Istanbul Patriarchate.[543] The head of the UOC-MP Metropolitan Onufriy declined to take part in the process. However, some bishops from the UOC-MP, whose names were kept confidential, consented to participate in the process of autocephaly. Following these developments, Poroshenko presented his official request to the Istanbul Patriarchate to proceed with the process. On April 19, the Ukrainian Parliament supported Poroshenko's initiative by adopting a resolution.[544] The Opposition Block in the Parliament did not endorse with the resolution, and it criticized Poroshenko's acts with the claims that the state should not interfere in religious affairs and regarded this act as a move of Poroshenko for presidential and parliamentary elections in 2019.[545]

The chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR), Metropolitan Hilarion, also criticized Poroshenko's initiative on the ground of the church-state separation principle in the modern day, i.e. the need for seperating religious affairs from political affairs. Furthermore, Metropolitan Hilarion stated:

> We have recently heard of negotiations of the Ukrainian President Poroshenko with Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople. We have heard of the schismatics' various initiatives, of trips to Phanar. We have heard of rich gifts brought there […] We know all this, as well as many other things which I would not like to make public. At the same time, for many years we have heard a very firm position expressed by the Patriarch of Constantinople who has always said that he recognizes His Beatitude Metropolitan Onufry as the only head of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church. And the Ukrainian Orthodox Church has no intention of severing relations with the Russian Orthodox Church. We are one Church born in the Kiev, Dnieper baptismal font, and, of course, neither Patriarchate of Constantinople, nor any other Church can unilaterally proclaim autocephaly of this or that Church. Therefore we believe that despite all the media fuss, this initiative will have the same fate, as the initiatives of the

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[543]See Hovorun, "War and Autocephaly in Ukraine;" Lucian N. Leustean and Vsevlod Samokhvalov, "The Ukrainian National Church, Religious Diplomacy, and the Conflict in Donbas," *Journal of Orthodox Christian Studies* 2, no.2 (2019).

[544]"Ukrainian Lawmakers Back President's Move to Obtain Autocephalous Status For Orthodox Church," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, April 19, 2018, https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-lawmakers-back-president-move-to-obtain-autocephalous-status-for-orthodox-church/29176970.html.

[545]Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, "Ukrainian Lawmakers Back President's Move."

previous years, and we say again that the Ukrainian church problem can only be solved through canonical means.[546]

Nonetheless, the assertions put by Metropolitan Hilarion were challenged by the statement issued by the Istanbul Patriarchate on April 22:

> In accordance with the Divine and Sacred Canons, as well as centuries-old ecclesiastical order and Holy Tradition, the Ecumenical Patriarchate concerns itself with the preservation of Pan-Orthodox unity and the care for the Orthodox Churches throughout the world-especially of the Ukrainian Orthodox Nation that has received the salvific Christian faith and holy baptism from Constantinople. Thus, as its true Mother Church, it examined matters pertaining to the ecclesiastical situation in Ukraine, as done in previous synodal sessions, and having received from ecclesiastical and civil authorities-representing millions of Ukrainian Orthodox Christians- a petition that requests the bestowal of autocephaly, decided to closely communicate and coordinate with its sister Orthodox Churches concerning this matter.[547]

These developments provoked a heated debate between Ukrainian Orthodox churches and the patriarchates of Istanbul and Moscow. Besides, the attention turned to the 1030th celebration held on July 28, 2018, in which Poroshenko announced a possible date for achieving autocephaly. About two weeks before the celebration, a challenging path to Ukrainian autocephaly was underlined by Poroshenko: "We do not have to believe that *Tomos* is in our pocket. We should pray and fight for it."[548] At the celebration on June 28, Poroshenko made a speech highlighting the significance of autocephaly for Ukraine's national security, state independence, and resistance against Russia's intervention in Ukraine.[549] A representative of the Istanbul Patriarchate also attended the celebrations, and he voiced that the Istanbul Patriarch can no longer ignore the autocephaly demands repeated over more than a

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[546]"Metropolitan Hilarion: creation of Local Church cannot be initiated by secular authorities," *The Russian Orthodox Church Department For External Church Relations*, April 19, 2018, https://mospat.ru/en/news/47523

[547]Ecumenical Patriarchate Permanent Delegation to the World Council of Churches, "President of Ukraine Visited the Ecumenical Patriarchate."

[548]"Autocephaly a matter of Ukraine's Independence, national security-Poroshenko," *Ukrinform*, https://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-polytics/2503697-autocephaly-a-matter-of-ukraines-independence-national-security-poroshenko.html.

[549] Natalie Zinets and Matthias Williams, "Ukraine marks church anniversary, aims to tackle Kremlin influence," *Reuters*, July 28, 2018, https://www.reuters.com/article/ukraine-religion-baptism-idINKBN1KI0DI

quarter of a century. However, hopes to achieve autocephaly did not materialize that summer, and this caused concern that the process was stalled.[550]

September 2018 was a month of significant developments in the autocephaly process. A special commission in the Istanbul Patriarchate handled canonical and historical aspects of Ukrainian autocephaly. Then, the Patriarchate announced on September 7 that it appointed its two Exarchs to Ukraine "within the framework of the preparations for the granting of autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in Ukraine."[551] The act of the Istanbul Patriarchate raised questions regarding the intended aim of the Exarches. For Hovorun:

> The mission of exarchs in the Ecumenical Patriarchate is similar to the mission of legates in the Catholic church. They represent the Patriarch and give account to him. They cannot act by their own authority and do not exercise the power of a diocesan bishop in the places to where they have been sent. A particular mission of the exarchs in Ukraine was to prepare the unifying council of the church.[552]

However, Metropolitan Hilarion highlighted the meaning of the word "Exarch," and stated that:

> The Greek word "exarch" means "superior." The heads of large church areas were called "exarchs." Besides, the word "exarch" is used in the meaning of "special envoy." I suppose that what is meant here is that the two special representatives of the Patriarchate of Constantinople are to go to Kiev to prepare the granting of autocephaly to the Ukrainian Church.[553]

In fact, Metropolitan Hilarion was concerned that, by sending two bishops, the Istanbul Patriarchate aimed to restore the Ukrainian clergy canonically. This is because not one but two bishops can ordain a third bishop. Besides, Metropolitan Hilarion stated that the only canonical Orthodox Church in Ukraine is the UOC-MP,

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[550]Zinets and Williams, "Ukraine marks church anniversary."

[551]"Ecumenical Patriarchate Sends Legates to Ukraine," *Ecumenical Patriarchate Permanent Delegation to the World Council of Churches*, September 7, 2018, https://www.ecupatria.org/2018/09/07/ecumenical-patriarchate-sends-legates-to-ukraine/

[552] Hovorun, "War and Autocephaly,"15-16.

[553] "Metropolitan Hilarion: Current situation creates a threat of schism for Universal Orthodoxy," *The Russian Orthodox Church Department For External Church Relations*, https://mospat.ru/en/news/47220/

and it did demand autocephaly from the Istanbul Patriarchate; however, schismatics did. Referring to Moscow's diplomacy with the Istanbul Patriarchate on the issue of Ukrainian autocephaly, he stated that the Istanbul Patriarchate acted falsely and "treacherously."[554] Another statement released by the Moscow Patriarchate noted that the Istanbul Patriarchate violated church canons, which prohibit the interference of one Local church in another. The Moscow Patriarchate accused Bartholomew of distorting historical facts, asserting his so-called supreme authority in the Orthodox world. For Moscow, this was to legitimize his involvement in another Local Church's internal affairs. These developments would presumably deteriorate Moscow's relations with Istanbul and pose a threat to the unity of world Orthodoxy.[555] On September 14, the Moscow Patriarchate decided to discontinue its commemoration of the Istanbul Patriarchate. Also, it suspended its participation in any religious services or activities led by representatives of the Istanbul Patriarchate.[556] These indicated that tension between the two Patriarchates escalated.

The Exarchs who visited Ukraine submitted their report on Ukrainian autocephaly when they were back in İstanbul. The issue was addressed in a Holy Synod session held on October 9-11. The Ukrainian side was hopeful that a decision would be made to grant autocephaly to Ukrainian churches,[557] but this did not come to fruition. Nonetheless, the Istanbul Patriarchate announced groundbreaking decisions that paved the way for the eventual granting of autocephaly. It reiterated its decision to proceed with autocephaly in Ukraine. Also, it declared that the hierarchical rank of Filaret and Makariy, both of whom anathematize by the Moscow Patriarchate, was canonically reinstated. Undoubtedly, the most critical decision is the annulation of the 1686 decision. The Istanbul Patriarchate announced:

> [t]o revoke the legal binding of the Synodal Letter of the year 1686, issued for the circumstances of that time, which granted the right through oikonomia to the

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[554]The Russian Orthodox Church Department For External Church Relations, "Metropolitant Hilarion: Current situation creates."

[555]"Russian Orthodox Church Holy Synod Statement as of September 8, 2018," *The Russian Orthodox Church Department For External Church Relations*, https://mospat.ru/en/news/47221/

[556]"Minutes of the Holy Synod held on 14 September 2018, *The Russian Orthodox Church Department For External Church Relations*, September 14, 2018, http://www.patriarchia.ru/en/db/text/5268268.html.

[557] Hovorun, "War and Autocephaly."

Patriarch of Moscow to ordain the Metropolitan of Kyiv, elected by the Clergy-Laity Assembly of his eparchy, who would commemorate the Ecumenical Patriarch as the First hierarch at any celebration, proclaiming and affirming his canonical dependence to the Mother Church of Constantinople.[558]

In a lengthy statement released on October 15, the Moscow Patriarchate frequently referring to history and canonical rules, pointed out that all decision of the Istanbul Patriarchate is uncanonical:

From now on until the Patriarchate of Constantinople's rejection of its anti-canonical decisions, it is impossible for all the clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church to concelebrate with the clergy of the Church of Constantinople and for the laity to participate in sacraments administered in its churches […] In a situation of the deep undermining of inter-Orthodox relations and full disregard for ages-long norms of church canonical law, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church believes it her duty to come out in defense of the fundamental traditions of Orthodoxy, in defense of the Holy Tradition of the Church substituted by new and strange teachings on the universal power of the first among the Primates […] We call upon the Primates and Holy Synods of Local Orthodox Churches to a proper evaluation of the [...] anti-canonical actions of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and to a joint search for a way out of the grave crisis tearing apart the body of the One Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.[559]

Metropolitan Hilarion also stated on October 17:

On the Patriarchate of Constantinople's side, the process has moved on quicker than it could be surmised. I think Constantinople has some reason to hurry. Perhaps, the main reason is that they wish to have time to carry out their designs till President Poroshenko is still in power because they realize that if another president comes there will be no conditions so excellent as those created for them by the present head of the Ukrainian state […] [T]he fact that the Patriarchate of Constantinople has recognized a schismatic structure means for us that Constantinople itself is now in schism. It has identified itself with a schism. Accordingly, we cannot have the full Eucharistic communion with it.[560]

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[558]"Announcement of the Holy and Sacred Synod of 11 October 2018," *Ecumenical Patriarchate Permanent Delegation to the World Council of Churches*, October 12, 2018, https://www.ecupatria.org/2018/10/12/announcement-of-the-holy-and-sacred-synod-of-11-october-2018/#more-994.

[559]"Statement by the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church concerning the encroachment of the Patriarchate of Constantinople on the canonical territory of the Russian Church," *The Russian Orthodox Church Department For External Church Relations*, October 15, 2018, http://www.patriarchia.ru/en/db/text/5283716.html.

[560]"Metropolitan Hilarion: The fact that the Patriarchate of Constantinople has recognized a schismatic structure means for us that itself in now in schism," *The Russian Orthodox Church Department For External Church Relations*, October 17, 2018, https://mospat.ru/en/news/47047/

Despite Moscow Patriarchate' opposition and financial threats[561], the Istanbul Patriarchate made progress toward Ukrainian autocephaly. Poroshenko and Patriarch Bartholomew signed a cooperation agreement on November 3 in Istanbul.[562] This agreement would facilitate the establishment of a united Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Bartholomew also expressed his conviction that the decision to grant autocephaly would promote unity among Orthodox believers in Ukraine.[563]

On December 15, 2018, all bishops of the Kyiv Patriarchate and the UAOC and two bishops from the UOC-MP were summoned to the Unification Council at St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv. Prior to this, both the UAOC and the UOC-KP dissolved their existence, paving the way for the participating bishops to serve as bishops of the Kyiv Metropolitanate under the Istanbul Patriarchate. During the council, the Orthodox Church of Ukraine was established. It had been agreed beforehand that Patriarch Filaret would not be chosen as the leader of the newly-formed church. Instead, his right man, 39 year-old man Epifanii was elected by the council to lead the Orthodox Church of Ukraine with the title of Metropolitan of Kyiv and All Ukraine. Filaret received the status of honorary Patriarch.[564] An academician, who had a high-level position in the Ministry of Culture, expressed that although the Council faced several issues, it was efficiently managed with Poroshenko's expertise in crisis management. The same academician also acknowledged Poroshenko's success in persuading Patriarch Filaret, while noting that Filaret's advanced age might have been to his advantage.[565]

The Moscow Patriarchate stated that the 'Unification Council' was illegitimate and that the Istanbul Patriarchate did not have the ecclesiastical authority to give the autocephalous status. These objections were useless as they could not prevent the

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[561]See The Russian Orthodox Church Department For External Church Relations, "Metropolitan Hilarion: The fact that the Patriarchate of Constantinople."

[562]Kamenev, "How President Poroshenko Secured Church Independence for Ukraine."

[563]"Ukrainian President, Patriarch Bartholomew Sign Cooperation Agreement," *Radio FreeEurope/Radio Liberty*, November 3, 2018, https://www.rferl.org/a/poroshenko-patriarch-bartholomew-sign-cooperation-agreement/29580756.html.

[564]See Casanova,"The Three Kyivan Churches of Ukraine," 210.

[565]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 19, 2019.

process of granting autocephaly to the newly created unified Church. On January 6, 2019, at a ceremony held in Istanbul, Patriarch Bartholomew of Istanbul signed the decree called *Tomos*, which granted the autocephalous status to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. The attempts to establish an autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox Church free from the Moscow Patriarchate, which had been underway since the collapse of the Soviet Union, eventually succeeded at Poroshenko's term.

5.5 The Main Reasons Behind the Creation of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine

This section offers the reasons for and factors contributing to the establishment of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in 2019. The discussions are based on the data obtained from field research. Additionally, relevant academic sources, national and international reports in English, and public statements made by the religious and political figures involved in the autocephaly process are utilized to enhance comprehension of the entire process.

5.5.1 Ukrainian Autocephaly as the Restoration of the Historical Justice

A major factor enabling the Ukrainian Orthodox Church to obtain autocephaly in 2019 was the long-lasting fight against historical injustices Ukrainian Orthodoxy faced. Therefore, the Istanbul Patriarchate finally granting autocephaly was a significant act of historical justice. The interview data also demonstrates that the perceptions of historical injustices are fed by the view that Ukrainians should historically and canonically have their own autocephalous Orthodox Church. During the interviews, it was stated that, throughout history, the Russian secular and religious establishments have consistently opposed Ukraine's political and religious emancipation from Russia. As a result, the interview data showed Russia had been viewed as the root cause of the historical injustice that deprived Ukraine of its own autocephalous Orthodox church.[566]

Christianity has also been a key factor in the history of these two nations. As stated in the third chapter, the development of Orthodox Christianity in present-day

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[566]Also see Serhat Keskin, "Sovyet Sonrası Ukrayna'da Dini Canlanma ve Ortodoks Kiliseler: Ukrayna Ortodoks Kiliselerinin Birleşmesi," in *Sovyet Sonrası Ukrayna'da Devlet, Toplum ve Siyaset: Değişen Dinamikler Dönüşen Kimlikler*, eds. Ayşegül Aydıngün and İsmail Aydıngün (Ankara Terazi Yayıncılık, 2020).

Ukraine is a contested issue between Ukrainian and Russian historiographies. The origins of Christianity in Ukraine can be traced back to the initial period of spreading Christianity, notably St. Andrew's visit to the region in which the city of Kyiv was founded. In 988, when Volodymyr accepted Christianity through the Istanbul Patriarchate and declared Christianity as the state religion of Kyivan *Rus'*, Christianity gradually became the dominant faith in the region. According to an academician, the proximity of Kyiv to the Black Sea coast suggests early connections with Christianity in the area. For him, adopting Christianity in the late 10th century strengthened the religious bonds between Kyiv and the Istanbul Patriarchate. Also, it reinforced the political relations between the Kyivan *Rus'* state and European states, so European civilization. This academician highlighted that Christian traditions blended with native customs and traditions in Kyiv and an embryonic religious identity had started to take root in Kyiv and its near surroundings. While the inhabitants of Kyiv were more receptive to adopting and advancing Christian traditions, the northern regions, where Muscovites were raised, resisted to Christianity and were disinclined to discard their pagan practices.[567] This view is confirmed by the Ukrainian historian Kyrylo Halushko:

> [A]lthough officially Prince Volodymyr brought Christianity to the 'entire Rus', a huge state, he actually Christianized only Kyiv and Novgorod. Novgorod was baptized with 'iron and blood' and in contemporary central Russia uprisings against baptism ("uprisings of the magi") took place as late as at the end of the 11th century. Pagan symbolism can be seen on the coins of Russian principalities until the 15th century. In other words, only Kyiv was Christianized on "mutual assent". It, therefore, became the sacred city of Kyivan Rus'; today, this city is the capital of Ukraine. In Kyiv, Christian communities had existed several decades prior to Volodymyr officially bringing Christianity here, as a result of close relations with Constantinople. It is believed that Prince Askold (mid-9th century) was Christian, but there is very little information about him. There is no doubt that Princess Olga (945–960) was a Christian. In other words, Kyiv Christianity possesses history that is several hundred years longer. Back then, Volodymyr could believe that he Christianized the Rus' land (official name of the state), but the "Rus' land" was, at that time, limited to the territory around Kyiv, Chernihiv, and Pereiaslav. This is central Ukraine today. Christianity needed more time and had more problems reaching the territory of what is contemporary Russia.[568]

In an interview with a high-ranking state official from the Department for Religious Affairs and Nationalities of the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine (hereafter the

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[567]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 11, 2020.

[568]Edited by Volodymyr Yermolenko, *Re-vision of History: Russian Historical Propaganda and Ukraine* (Kyiv: K.I.S, 2019), 37.

Ministry of Culture), it was stated that the Kyiv Metropolitanate had had an established administrative structure since the 10th century. The participant also emphasized the self-governing structure of the church administration of the Kyiv Metropolitanate and stressed that it enjoys a *de facto* autocephalous status.[569] Another high-ranking state official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine who served in the autocephaly process in 2018 confirmed the *de facto* autocephalous status of the Kyiv Metropolitanate and pointed out that, while Western influences continued to affect Ukrainian Orthodoxy after the demise of the Kyivan *Rus'*, the Moscow Church started losing its links with the West during Mongol rule.[570]

As stated earlier, in 1448, the Moscow Church unilaterally declared independence from the Istanbul Patriarchate, and many interviewees attributed it to Russia's political rise during that period. They also commonly believed that the declaration of the Moscow Church signalled its rupture from the Istanbul Patriarchate and the Kyiv Metropolitanate, both administratively and spiritually. Similarly, the academician mentioned above asserted that its formal title, from which the word Kyiv was omitted, was evidence to the Moscow Church's administrative rupture from Kyiv. For him, it was not an administrative divergence only, but it also symbolized that Russian Orthodoxy took up a course different from that of Ukrainian.[571]

As elucidated in Chapter Three, the Moscow Church had remained uncanonical before the recognition of the Istanbul Patriarchate in 1589. The interview data revealed that the recognition of the Moscow Church was widely perceived as a consequence of political pressure wielded by the secular authorities in Moscow on the Istanbul Patriarchate. Andriy Fert focuses on this viewpoint and posits that various actors involved in the 2018 autocephaly campaign employed this narrative to undermine Moscow's opposition to Ukrainian autocephaly:[572]

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[569] Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 25, 2019.

[570] Interview, Ankara (Turkey), November 21, 2022.

[571] Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 11, 2020.

[572] Andriy Fert, "Church Independence as Historical Justice: Politics of history explaining the meaning of the Tomos in Ukraine 2018-2019," *Baltic Worlds* XIII, no.2-3 (2020).

> The story about how Moscow illegally split from Kyiv Metropolis in the 15th century and then, with help from the Grand Prince of Moscow, forced the patriarch of Constantinople to recognize its independence could have not has been better designed to back up present-day Ukrainian state interference in the same business.[573]

The interview data yielded that the decision taken by the Istanbul Patriarchate in 1686, which allegedly transferred the Kyiv Metropolitanate to the Moscow Patriarchate, was the primary source of historical injustice related to Ukrainian Orthodoxy. Several parts of this study elaborated on the motivations of the Istanbul Patriarchate in the 1686 decision and how the Moscow Patriarchate interpreted this decision. The common view in the interviews is that the Moscow Patriarchate uncanonically took Kyiv Metropolitanate. Indeed, the interview data revealed two sub-themes related to why the Istanbul Patriarchate's 1686 decision were considered uncanonical. The less pronounced one was that the Moscow Patriarchate resorted to bribery to Patriarch Dionysios of Istanbul and forced him to transfer the Kyiv Metropolitanate to its ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Interestingly, the Moscow Patriarchate was depicted as a corrupted entity that violated the canonical rules, while the then-Patriarch of Istanbul as a victim of the Moscow Patriarchate. Interview data suggested that the shifting political dynamics might have made the Patriarch of Istanbul more vulnerable to illegal moves of the Moscow Patriarchate.[574] Despite all, relevant academic studies refrain from discussing the role of Patriarch Istanbul in this 'corrupted' relation between Istanbul and Moscow, and instead, they give considerable attention to how the Russian side forced the Patriarch of Istanbul to transfer Kyiv Metropolitanate to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate.

A more salient sub-theme regarding the historical injustice for Ukrainian Orthodoxy caused by the Istanbul Patriarchate's 1686 decision was a deliberate misinterpretation of Istanbul's decision by the Moscow Patriarchate, whose aim was to seize the Kyiv Metropolitanate.[575] The narratives of the Ukrainian side and the Istanbul Patriarchate during the pursuit of autocephaly in 2018, and the interview

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[573] Fert, "Church Independence as Historical Justice," 80.

[574] Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 22, 2019; Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 25, 2019; Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 11, 2019.

[575] Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 29, 2019; Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 22, 2019.

data revealed a predominant belief: the Istanbul Patriarchate charged the Moscow Patriarchate with the temporary care for Kyiv Metropolitanate due to the socio-political circumstances and permitted the Moscow Patriarchate to ordain the Kyiv Metropolitans. This points out that the Kyiv Metropolitanate remained under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Istanbul Patriarchate. Also, it is stated in some interviews that the metropolitans of Kyiv, during liturgies, are obliged to commemorate the Patriarch of Istanbul first before the Patriarch of Moscow.[576] This symbolic act is also presented as clear evidence to the Istanbul Patriarchate's canonical authority over Ukraine, rather than Moscow Patriarchate's. However, many interviewees stated that the Moscow Patriarchate intentionally disregarded the 1686 decision and claimed ecclesiastical authority on the Kyiv Metropolitanate. As an academician stated, "An examination of Moscow [Patriarchate]'s moves against the Kyiv Metropolitanate before and after 1686 will make it clear that Moscow had no concern to obey the canonical rules."[577] The issue of commemoration and the previous attempts of the Moscow Patriarchate to take over the Kyiv Metropolitanate shortly before 1686 are also addressed by Patriarch Bartholomew of Istanbul as follows:

> It is a fact that there is no regular canon, that is, a Patriarchal *Tomos* or a Patriarchal and Synodical Act of Concession of the Metropolis of Kiev to the Patriarchate of Moscow. The documents are clear, and the letters of Patriarch Dionysios, sent in 1686, are very clear. Not only do they not grant the Metropolis of Kiev to Moscow, they also set as a basic prerequisite that Kiev will continue to commemorate Constantinople as its canonical authority. Those who have elementary ecclesiological and canonical knowledge understand that it would not be possible to grant the Metropolis of Kiev to Moscow but the Metropolitan of Kiev would continue to commemorate Constantinople. Unfortunately, the Patriarchate of Moscow unilaterally abolished this agreement. It ended the commemoration of Constantinople because it knew that this was the visible sign of the normal jurisdictional reference of the Metropolitan of Kiev to Constantinople. It is also known that before the letters of Patriarch Dionysios were sent, our Russian brothers attempted to ordain Metropolitans of Kiev, but they always encountered reactions from the clergy and the people of Little Russia, who in no way wanted Moscow. Indeed, the Patriarch Nikon of Moscow (1652-1658) improperly appropriated the title of the Patriarch 'of Great, Little and White Russia,' which demonstrated the expansionist spirit that had overtaken him.[578]

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[576]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 11, 2020.

[577]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 11, 2020.

[578] "Interview of His-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew by Journalist Zivojin Rakocevic for the Serbian newspaper 'Politika,'" *Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate*, https://www.archons.org/-/politika-interview.

Besides, almost all the interviewees stated that the transfer of the Kyiv Metropolitanate to the Moscow Patriarchate was a forcible takeover. Some interviewees described the process as the annexation of the Kyiv Metropolitanate by the Moscow Patriarchate. During an interview conducted in Kyiv with a high-ranking official from the Presidential Administration, a strong emphasis was placed on the historical context surrounding the annexation of Ukrainian land by the Russian Empire during the 17th century. Specifically, the official pointed out that the Moscow Patriarchate also annexed the Kyiv Metropolitanate during this period.[579] It can be concluded that a parallelism exists between the loss of independence risk faced by the Ukrainian political entity and the Kyiv Metropolitanate. This can be attributed to the fact that Russian secular and religious authorities had shared interests and co-operated against Ukrainians. Therefore, these two events are similar in that both help keep Ukrainians in the Russian imperial orbit. Also noteworthy is that the word 'annexation' has been frequently used by proponents of autocephaly, including Poroshenko, to describe the incorporation of Kyiv Metropolitanate into the Moscow Patriarchate. Its usage became even more prevalent after the Istanbul Patriarchate canceled the 1686 decision in 2018.[580]

Another historical injustice brought up in the interviews was related to the period after the Moscow Patriarchate seized the Kyiv Metropolitanate after 1686. During most interviews, the Ukrainian clergy was generally depicted as more progressive and enlightened thanks to uninterrupted Western influence under various political entities, yet the Russian clergy was portrayed as backward and corrupt.[581] Besides, Ukrainian Orthodoxy was associated with flexible religiosity and priority given to religious ceremonies, but Russian Orthodoxy was ascribed an authoritarian structure, manifesting itself in rituals, where the essence is to control the believers and make them obey.[582] Indeed, the religious revival of Ukrainian Orthodoxy in the 16th and

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[579]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 22, 2019.

[580]Andriy Fert, "Church Independence as Historical Justice: Politics of history explaining the meaning of the Tomos in Ukraine 2018-2019," *Baltic Worlds* XIII, no.2-3 (2020): 78.

[581] Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 25, 2019; Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 11, 2020; Interview, Ankara (Turkey), November 21, 2022.

[582]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 29, 2019.

17th centuries was underlined in certain interviews.[583] The most commonly stated opinion was that the Ukrainian clergy was a vital force behind modernizing Russian Orthodoxy. It was also stated that, despite the resistance of the Ukrainian clergy, they were subjected to the Russification policies of the Russian Empire. As a result, Ukrainian Orthodoxy began to lose its Western influence, and the longstanding ties of the Kyiv Metropolitanate with the Istanbul Patriarchate, which spanned almost 700 years, were hampered.[584]

The Ukrainian autocephaly movement, which can be considered an injustice committed by Russians against Ukrainians followed by the collapse of the Russian Empire, was frequently brought up during the interviews. It was expressed that the attempt to establish a Ukrainian Orthodox church began to take shape with the formation of the Ukrainian state following the collapse of the Russian Empire. The high-ranking state official from the Ministry of Culture stated that the Russian authorities opposed the pro-autocephaly initiative because Ukrainian clergy had patriotic feelings and national consciousness. He stated that nearly all Ukrainian clergy, who 'only' demanded autocephaly, were killed by the Russian authorities during that period.[585] Besides, an academician stated that, while the Ukrainian clergy sought to create a genuinely Ukrainian Orthodox church, they developed a new path for consecrating bishops, which was incompatible with traditional practices of Eastern Orthodoxy; therefore, it was seen as canonically illegitimate.[586] This academian also claimed:

> Ukrainian clergy nurtured the Ukrainian identity. They supported a national and religious identity distinct from Russia. The unrecognized way of consecrating bishops offered a favorable pretext for Russians. In every way, Russians were ready to call and propagate that this church is uncanonical […] It is unthinkable for Russians that 'Little Russian' leave 'Great Russians.'[587]

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[583] Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 22, 2019; Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 25, 2019; Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 11, 2020; Interview, Ankara (Turkey), November 21, 2022.

[584] Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 26, 2019.

[585] Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 25, 2019.

[586] Interview, Ankara (Turkey), November 19, 2022.

[587] Interview, Ankara (Turkey), November 19, 2022.

It may be concluded from the interview data that the Soviet Union was seen by many interviewees as the continuation of the Russian Empire in terms of the destructive and oppressive nature of policies against Ukrainians. Thus, some interviewees noted that the autocephaly movement of the 1940s, which occurred under the Nazi rule, was a means of achieving ecclesiastical liberation for Ukraine.[588] However, as explained in Chapter Three, the autocephaly movement did not come to fruition. Moreover, Ukrainian religious organizations were the target of the Soviet regime's persecution, the aim of which was to eradicate any Ukrainian element. Some respondents emphasized that the rebirth of the UAOC in 1990 is an example of the continuous struggle for an autocephalous Ukrainian church. Gorbachev's reforms removed the anti-religious policy of the Soviet Union.[589] As understood from the interviews, the regime's move toward a more liberal religious policy was nevertheless of a limited and pragmatic nature in Soviet Ukraine. Despite all the difficulties posed by Soviet authorities, UAOC was re-born in 1990 as it was in the 1920s and 1940s.

Many interviewees underlined that the political independence of Ukraine in 1991 was a canonically adequate reason for having an autocephalous Orthodox church independent of the Moscow Patriarchate. Indeed, they frequently referred to the notion of canonical territory, "only one bishop can be in charge for a given region." A state official, for example, expressed that "the independent state should have an independent [Orthodox] church and it is a usual process in Orthodoxy."[590] Many interviewees underlined that Russia's opposition is the biggest obstacle to Ukraine's having an independent church. One academician reproachfully questioned: "The independent state has a canonical right to have an independent church. Church border corresponds to the state border. Why did Ukraine get *Tomos* [autocephaly] in 2019 but not in 1991?"[591] He added:

[588] Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 22, 2019; Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 26, 2019; Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 18, 2019.

[589] Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 26, 2019.

[590] Interview, Ankara (Turkey), June 1, 2023.

[591] Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 11, 2020.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, the Moscow Patriarchate continued as if nothing had changed. It claimed all territory of the Soviet Union as its canonical territory. Russians accepted neither a Ukrainian church nor a Ukrainian state separate from Russia. Whenever Ukrainians voiced that they should have their church, Moscow blocked the attempts. This is why Ukraine did not receive autocephaly until 2019. Poroshenko said this was unfair and tried harder than other [presidents] to get *Tomos*.[592]

According this participant, the Russian side distorted complex religious developments to justify the Moscow Church's grand narrative on church history and only a thorough analysis of the Ukrainian church history can illustrate the form of Christianity which had developed in the Kyiv region . He stated that such an analysis had not been possible as the Russians hideously exploited historical facts and consistently used them for their propaganda.[593]

5.5.2 Ukrainian Autocephaly as Outcome of the Rivalry between Patriarchates of Istanbul and Moscow

The ongoing dispute between the Patriarchates of Istanbul and Moscow and its ramifications for Eastern Orthodoxy has been an important scholarly subject. As expounded in this study, this conflict encompasses various theological and historical roots and multiple implications for the international Orthodox community, such as the alignment of autocephalous churches with either the Istanbul Patriarchate or the Moscow Patriarchate. The main contention is over which one holds the ultimate spiritual authority. In other words, the Moscow Patriarchate questions the authority of the Istanbul Patriarchate, whose canonical right to decide on ecclesiastical matters is recognized. In short, with its moves on giving autocephaly in the 20th century, Moscow Patriarchate considered itself on par with the Istanbul Patriarchate and in a position to challenge the authority of the Istanbul Patriarchate, which is commonly accepted as the first in global Orthodoxy.

A controversial ecclesiastical jurisdiction, among others, is which one has the exclusive right to bestow autocephaly on a Ukrainian Orthodox church as both claim

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[592]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 11, 2020.

[593]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 11, 2020.

to be the mother church of the Ukrainian Church. This issue has been boiling since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. The interview data showed that a critical factor in the realization of Ukrainian autocephaly in 2019 is the enduring rivalry between the Patriarchs of Istanbul and Moscow, further intensified after the Pan-Orthodox Council in 2016.

As above mentioned, the ongoing conflict between the two patriarchates has a deep-rooted historical background and can be clearly observed in certain events. The unilateral proclamation of independence by the Moscow Church in 1448, for example, emerged in certain interviews as one of the earliest examples of its unwillingness to accept the spiritual authority of the Istanbul Patriarchate. One academician cited how the Moscow Church utilized the political and religious developments during the 15th century, such as the Council of Florence and the Ottoman conquest of Istanbul, to establish its dominance as the center for the Orthodox communities then.[594]

During many interviews, it was conveyed, albeit with little detail, that Moscow being the Third Rome was invented to overshadow the supremacy of the Istanbul Patriarchate. It emerged that the primary impetus behind the 'Third Rome' ideology in the 16th is embedded in the Moscow Church's ambition to undermine the Istanbul Patriarchate's spiritual influence and authority. An academician, who had high-level position in the Ministry of Culture, also emphasized that the imperial vision of the Third Rome ideology was a means of legitimizing Russia's expansionist policies and displaying its so-called 'Russian greatness.'[595]

Drawing from the interview data, it can be argued that Russian political entities have firmly retained different aspects of the Third Rome ideology, and its core principles have been incorporated into various political and religious 'myths,' such as the Holy *Rus'* and the Russian World. It was pointed out that the Moscow Patriarchate uses myths and doctrines to establish its superiority over Slavic people and engages its population in the competition against the Istanbul Patriarchate to present itself as the

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[594]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 11, 2020.

[595]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 19, 2020.

center of Orthodox Christianity.[596] In this respect, many interviewees emphasized the importance of Ukraine for the claims of the Moscow Patriarchate, citing Ukraine's rich history in Orthodoxy and its considerable number of churches and believers. The prevailing perception is that the Moscow Patriarchate's claim on the leadership of world-wide Orthodox Christianity actually relies on what Ukraine possessed. That is why Poroshenko, by referring to Ukrainian autocephaly, stated that "The Third Rome concept, Moscow's longest-standing claim of global hegemony, is collapsing like a house of cards."[597]

Besides, considerable studies have focused on how the Patriarchates of Istanbul and Moscow competed with each other for the leading position in Orthodoxy in the Cold-War period, in which the interests of the geopolitical actors, namely the US and the Soviet Union, were also involved. However, it can be claimed that the Patriarchates of Istanbul and Moscow experienced institutional difficulties, respectively, under the Republic of Turkey and the Soviet Union in that period. The Istanbul Patriarchate lost its position in the Ottoman Empire, and its power declined due to the 1920s' political and social changes in Turkey. The Moscow Church, on the other hand, was subjected to the anti-religious policies of the Soviet Union. During the Second World War, it had to serve under the control of the regime and cooperate with the Soviet authorities to survive. As stated earlier, the anti-religious policies of the Soviet Union were removed by the reforms launched by Gorbachev. The end of the Cold War and the Soviet Union heralded a new era of competition between Istanbul and Moscow Patriarchates. Fajfer and Rimestad explain this as follows:

> By the end of the Cold War, the two patriarchates were thus in very different, though equally unfavorable situations. The Patriarchate of Constantinople had lost most of its direct jurisdiction and was concerned to assert its honorary primacy over the Orthodox Christians outside traditionally Orthodox countries. Moreover, it worked hard to justify this approach theologically and canonically. The Patriarchate of Moscow was, on the one hand, a puppet of the Soviet government, but, on the other hand, the powerful head of millions of faithful [...] Both Patriarch Demetrios I of Constantinople and Patriarch Pimen of Moscow died in the midst of the changes and

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[596]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 11, 2020.

[597]Roman Olearchyk and Max Seddon, "Ukraine's Orthodox church emerges from Russia's shadow," *Financial Times*, September 29, 2018, https://www.ft.com/content/1bdfb854-c26e-11e8-95b1-d36dfef1b89a.

were replaced by Bartholomew I and Alexei II respectively. The beginning of the post-Soviet period was thus triply a restart for the Orthodox Church, two new Patriarchs and a completely new political situation for the Moscow Patriarchate.[598]

In this backdrop, the Moscow Patriarchate aligned itself with the post-Soviet Russian political administration, which sought to maintain its influence over the newly independent post-Soviet states. It considered the post-Soviet space its canonical territory and thus viewed any form of intervention in the post-Soviet space as a violation of its ecclesiastical authority. Consequently, as the newly independent states began to demand autocephaly, they turned to the Istanbul Patriarchate for support, and the Istanbul Patriarchate saw this as an opportunity to restore its honorary position in Orthodoxy worldwide. All these developments have added a new layer to their ongoing competition.

The interview data suggests that the clash between Patriarchates of Istanbul and Moscow over Ukraine was not an explicit one in the 1990s. Istanbul Patriarchate refrained from proactively interfering with the fragmented Ukrainian Orthodoxy, in which the Moscow-affiliated Church was dominant. In other words, Patriarch Bartholomew of Istanbul avoided an open confrontation with the Moscow Patriarchate church in Ukraine and was aware of the likely negative impact of such a move on his prestige in case he gave autocephaly to the Ukrainian church. In the perception of the interviewees, Patriarch Bartholomew took a balanced stance and consistently emphasized the need for unity among Ukrainian Orthodox churches. However, an academician underlined that Istanbul Patriarchate recognized the Ukrainian diaspora churches in Canada and the USA in 1990 and 1995, respectively, and these acts were regarded as signs of support for the Ukrainian autocephalous movement, which concerned the Moscow Patriarchate.[599] This view is also expressed by Kelleher. Although the conflict between Moscow and Istanbul at that time seemed to be the issue of which one has the authority in diaspora churches, Kelleher explains the problem in Ukraine otherwise:

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[598]Lukasz Fajfer and Sebastian Rimestad, "The Patriarchates of Constantinople and Moscow in a Global age: A Comparison," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 10, no.2 (2010): 213.

[599] Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), November 19, 2022.

> The real issue underlying the quarrel is the church in Ukraine itself. Constantinople has not touched Ukraine directly, but the Ukrainian Orthodox churches in Canada and the USA which are now part of the Ecumenical Patriarchate are in quite open contact with the two Ukrainian autocephalous bodies in Ukraine. In deference to the policy of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, actual eucharistic concelebration with the autocephalous bodies in Ukraine is avoided, but other forms of support are maintained publicly. This of course infuriates the Moscow Patriarchate.[600]

Some interviewees emphasized the disagreement between two patriarchates in Estonia in 1996, which led to the coexistence of two Orthodox churches-one recognized by the Moscow Patriarchate (1993) and the other by the Istanbul Patriarchate (1996)- and the short schism between the two patriarchates. It was stated in these interviews that no confrontation between them for the leadership of Orthodoxy has been more decisive than assuming control over Ukraine's ecclesiastical jurisdiction, given the number of churches and believers of Ukraine.[601] Besides, an academician argued that the Estonian model encouraged the two pro-Ukrainian Orthodox churches of the time to unify under one church with the hope that the Istanbul Patriarchate might follow a similar pattern in Ukraine, in return of which the Moscow Patriarchate got an alarm position to prevent any further moves by the Istanbul Patriarchate.[602]

As stated earlier in Chapter Four, since the 2000s, the Patriarchate of Istanbul has occasionally encouraged the unification of Ukrainian Orthodox churches, and by emphasizing the close historical and religious ties with the Ukrainian Church, it claimed to be the mother church of the Ukrainian Church. However, it abstained from bold moves on the issue of granting autocephaly. A typical incident occurred during the Yuschenko era, in which Patriarch Bartholomew avoided taking decisive actions for Ukrainian autocephaly; it was cautious to maintain positive relations with the Moscow Patriarchate. Patriarch Kyrill, who became the head of the Moscow Patriarchate in 2009 after the death of Patriarch Alexy, is one of the creators and supporters of the Russian World ideology, which, among its other principles,

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[600]Serge Kelleher, "Orthodox rivalry in the twentieth century: Moscow versus Constantinople," *Religion, State, and Society: The Keston Journal* 25, no.2 (1997): 135.

[601] Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 11, 2020; Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 26, 2019; Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 29, 2019.

[602] Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 11, 2020.

essentially opposes the Ukrainian political and church independence from Moscow. In this sense, Patriarch Kyrill denied the idea of Ukrainian autocephaly, and his firm stance on the issue made Patriarch Bartholomew, who was already cautious not to harm the relations with the Moscow Patriarchate, produced a setback in the process of autocephaly to the Ukrainian Orthodox church. After Yanukovych came to power in Ukraine and the Ukrainian autocephaly issue was shelved, the tension between Istanbul and Moscow over Ukraine lost its public visibility. Although Poroshenko's increasing emphasis on autocephaly and his conduct with Barthelemos brought the issue back onto the agenda, Barthelemous did not go beyond the balanced policy he had adopted in the previous years. As stated by Kulyk:

> Although Bartholomew's rhetoric refuted the claim by the Moscow Patriarchy of having Ukraine kept within its sphere of influence, he did not, in fact, want to antagonize the Russian Church, which he preferred to have as a partner in ecumenical matters.[603]

In this respect, interviewees were asked some questions centered on underlying reasons that sparked Bartholomew's shift in attitude about the issue of Ukrainian autocephaly. Based on interview data, the main factor that drove the Istanbul Patriarchate to give autocephaly status to the Ukrainian Orthodox was the Pan-Orthodox Council in 2016, organized by the Istanbul Patriarchate, in which Moscow Patriarchate did not attend.[604]

The announcement that the Council would meet in 2016 to convene all autocephalous churches was initially made in 2014. The idea of the Pan-Orthodox Council can be traced to the 1920s, but preliminary conferences and meetings were held since 1961 with the participation of the representatives of other autocephalous churches to promote the Council and determine the agenda. The Council's agenda was finalized in January 2016. The items were as follows:

> 1) The Mission of the Orthodox Church in the contemporary world; 2) The Orthodox Diaspora; 3) Autonomy and its manner of proclamation; 4) The sacrament of

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[603]Volodymyr Kulyk, "Church and Geopolitics: The Battle over Ukrainian Autocephaly," *Ponars Eurasia*, January 31, 2019, https://www.ponarseurasia.org/church-and-geopolitics-the-battle-over-ukrainian-autocephaly/

[604]Also see, Keskin, "Sovyet Sonrası Ukrayna'da Dini Canlanma."

Marriage and its impediments; 5) The importance of Fasting and its application today; and 6) Relations of the Orthodox Church to the rest of the Christian world.[605]

The press office of the Istanbul Patriarchate placed a strong emphasis on the historical importance of the Council, stating that it marks the first gathering in 1200 years, where fourteen autocephalous Orthodox churches would convene. Besides, it was underlined that the event is expected to draw nearly 500 participants who share "a desire to reinforce their relations and address contemporary spiritual and social challenges in the world."[606] The significance of the Council was also confirmed by some scholars, who argued that "the 2016 Synod could be regarded as a successor to the Second Council of Nicaea, the last major pandenominational summit of Christian churches, which took place in 787 CE."[607]

Clearly, the Pan-Orthodox Council was regarded by the Istanbul Patriarchate as important for Orthodoxy. Thus, the Council was also deemed highly significant by Patriarch Bartholomew, which was evident in his prior endeavors as well as his effective handling of challenges in the final phase of the Council's planning. Indeed, the relationship between Turkey and Russia was strained when Turkey shot down a Russian warplane on its Syrian border in 2015 on the grounds that it violated the Turkish air space, and amidst the mounting tensions between Turkey and Russia, Patriarch Bartholomew led the decision to move the location of the Council to Crete to ensure the participation of the Russian delegates.[608]

Although the Istanbul Patriarchate diligently worked to include all autocephalous churches in the Council, the Bulgarian, Antioch, and Georgian churches decided not to attend, despite having participated in the previous meetings. The Moscow Patriarchate referred to their refusal to attend the Council, and it also announced the

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[605]"History of the Holy and Great Council," Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church Ecumenical Patriarchate Press Office, https://www.orthodoxcouncil.org/preparation-of-a-council-a-history.html.

[606]Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church Ecumenical Patriarchate Press Office, "History of the Holy and Great Council."

[607]Lucian N. Leustean, "Eastern Orthodoxy, Geopolitics and the 2016 'Holy and Great Synod of the Orthodox Church'," *Geopolitics* 23, no.1 (2018): 203.

[608]Leustean, "Eastern Orthodoxy, Geopolitics," 207-208.

decision not to attend the Council. The Moscow Patriarchate criticized Istanbul Patriarchate for proceeding with the Council despite the four absences. As Leustean argues, the actual reason behind the Moscow Patriarchate not attending the Council later revealed: "a number of clergy in the Russian orthodox Church declared that a 'true' pan-Orthodox Synod could only be held in Moscow, a narrative reminiscent of the Cold War period."[609] Although the Orthodox churches of Serbia and Romania had indecision about attending the Council, they decided to send their delegations to Crete at the last minute. While these important developments were taking place regarding the Council, shortly before the start of the Council and under the leadership of Poroshenko, the Ukrainian Parliament officially applied to the Istanbul Patriarchate with the demand for autocephaly to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

Despite challenges, the Pan-Orthodox Council was held on June 16-27. Although the issue of Ukrainian autocephaly was not addressed, the items on the Council's agenda were discussed, and the official documents concerning the decisions were released. The representatives of the Istanbul Patriarchate asserted during and following the Council that the decisions made would be binding to all Orthodox churches, despite the objection of non-participating churches and certain opinion differences among the attending churches.

According to the interview data, Patriarch Bartholomew displayed greater interest in Ukrainian Orthodoxy in the absence of the Moscow Patriarchate and the other three churches in the Council. According to a state official from the Ministry of Culture, Patriarch Bartholomew perceived those who did not attend the meeting as a direct challenge to his authority; thus, he stepped up the process of granting Ukraine autocephaly. A metropolitan interviewed in Kyiv also stated:

> The religious and state leaders had requested that Patriarch Bartholomew grant autocephalous status. Patriarch Bartholomew did not want to harm relations with the Moscow Patriarchate and waited for Moscow to take action to resolve the fragmentation in Ukraine. The Moscow Patriarchate had repeatedly promised to address the division among Orthodox churches in Ukraine, but it demanded more time. Patriarch Bartholomew dedicated much of his life to organizing the Ecumenical Council. He made concessions to the Moscow Patriarchate on the issue

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[609]Leustean, 203.

of autocephaly to ensure their participation in the Council. Just two weeks before the Council, the Moscow Patriarchate announced that it would not attend the council and attempted to convince others not to do so. This offended Bartholomew. He then decided to personally take on the task of resolving the division in Ukraine.[610]

An academician argued that the Istanbul Patriarchate has the right to organize the Ecumenical council, which remarks its exclusive authority in Orthodoxy. He stressed that organization of this Council was significant as it had not been held for more than a millennium, making it crucial for Patriarch Bartholomew to take on responsibility. As he worded, the Moscow Patriarchate "sabotaged" the Council by non-attendance and challenged the legitimacy of the decisions taken there. Hence, Patriarch Bartholomew decided not to delay granting autocephaly to the Ukrainian Church any longer.[611]

According to another academician, the Council drew attention to the division among Orthodox churches and the intensifying rivalry between the Patriarchates of Istanbul and Moscow on the leadership in global Orthodoxy. He acknowledged that the absence of the Moscow Patriarchate in the Council was the impetus for the growing interest of the Istanbul Patriarchate in Ukraine but the Istanbul Patriarchate had been closely monitoring the shifting political and religious dynamics in Ukraine since 2014. That is, he implied that Patriarch Bartholomew carefully evaluated the costs and benefits of granting autocephaly to the Ukrainian Church before progressing through autocephaly. Many interviewees drew attention to the consequences of the recognition of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine by the Istanbul Patriarchate; the Ukrainian autocephaly not only enhanced Istanbul's prestige among other Orthodox churches given the number of Ukrainian churches and faithful, but it also dealt a blow to the Moscow Patriarchate's claim to leadership.[612]

Some have attributed the achievement in the autocephaly process to Poroshenko's strategic decision-making both prior to and subsequent to the Council.[613] His effort in

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[610]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 18, 2019.

[611]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 11, 2020.

[612]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 26, 2019.

[613]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 12, 2019; Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 18, 2019.

this regard was viewed as a strategic maneuver, especially as the competition between the two Patriarchates was intensifying.

5.5.3 Ukrainian Autocephaly against Russia's Security Threats

The interview data indicated that the effort to obtain autocephaly is related to the struggle of Ukraine to protect its sovereignty against Russia. Undoubtedly, Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the ongoing war in eastern Ukraine against Russian-backed separatists pulled Ukraine into a profound political crisis in its independence period after the Soviet Union's collapse. Since 2014, Ukraine has been unable to exercise complete authority over its internationally recognized borders, which means Ukraine's loss of territorial sovereignty. While the security concerns followed by Russia's violation of Ukraine's sovereignty in 2014 and the war in eastern Ukraine were still on the state agenda, Russia's tools of interventions in Ukraine compounded security concerns at the Ukrainian state level. In fact, the interview data revealed that the UOC-MP were perceived as a pro-Russian institution because it coupled with Russian interest and was instrumentalized by Russia to justify its violations and undermine Ukraine's fight against Russia. Therefore, most interviews showed that the UOC-MP, which claimed to be the only canonical Orthodox church in Ukraine, advocated Russia's aggression in Ukraine and it necessitated the creation of a pro-Ukrainian autocephalous church to strengthen the national security of Ukraine after 2014.

Most interviewees argued that the idea that the pro-Ukrainian Orthodox churches not having canonical recognition poses a threat to Ukrainian statehood has been around since the early days of Ukraine's independence. However, this view was not directly referred to as an imminent security threat to the Ukrainian state but attributed to a normative understanding in Eastern Orthodoxy that the independent state has its own independent church. Thus, it can be claimed that the absence of an autocephalous Orthodox church in Ukraine is auotomatically seen as a sign of doubt on the legitimacy of Ukrainian statehood. Yelensky agrees with this view:

> The system of local autocephalous churches, which in modern times were aligned with political boundaries, made the subordination of the Orthodox flock in   the

newly created Ukrainian state to the Russian Orthodox Church ambiguous in the eyes of much of the Ukrainian elite. The non-recognition of the right to independence of the Orthodox Church within the borders of the sovereign state was seen by this part of the elite as an indirect, but still expressive rejection of Ukrainian statehood.[614]

According to an academician, the UOC-MP is inherently opposed to Ukraine's independence and constitutes a severe barrier to Ukraine's emancipation from the Russian spiritual and political sphere. According to his statement, the priests of the Russian Church in Ukraine during the Soviet era were captured by the Russian imperial mentality, which dismissed the idea of a separate Ukrainian identity and state. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, many of these priests maintained this mentality and continued to serve in the UOC-MP in post-Soviet Ukraine. Therefore, he was not surprised to see that these Russian imperial-minded priests have remained aligned with Russia and have worked to advance Russia's political interests in post-Soviet Ukraine. He also pointed out that the Moscow Patriarchate was under the control of Soviet secular authorities, and the archives of the Soviet Union, which were made available after its dissolution, indicated that the KGB played a role in selecting the Patriarch of Moscow. He emphasized that post-Soviet Russian political elites continued to exert their influence over religious affairs for domestic and international political interests and the political elites of post-Soviet Russia tried to use the same level of control over the UOC-MP. Therefore, it was beyond question that the chair of the UOC-MP would be someone who does not care for the interests of Russia.[615]

Besides, most interviewees were doubtful about the autonomous status of the UOC-MP and criticized it for taking directions from the Moscow Patriarchate. One participant expressed that, even if the Moscow Patriarchate has no authority to bestowal autocephaly, it gave "fake" *Tomos* to its loyal body, which was Ukrainian Exarch in the Soviet period. Thus, he questioned the canonical legitimacy of the

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[614]Viktor Yelensky, ""Then What are We Fighting For": Securitizing Religion in the Ukrainian-Russian Conflict," *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe* 41, no.6 (2021):14.

[615]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 29, 2019. About the relationship between Metropolitan Sabodan, who served as the head of UOC-MP from 1992 to 2014, and Russia, the interviewee stated that Metropolitan Sabodan had transformed and held a pro-Ukrainian stance. When Metropolitan Sabodan's pro-Ukrainian stance became obvious, he was forced to quit his position at the office.

UOC-MP.[616] In another interview, it was stated that most priests of the UOC-MP were involved in the presidential elections and the parliamentary elections in Ukraine by taking a side with pro-Russian candidates or camps. Moreover, he contended that the UOC-MP prioritized its institutional interests over the national interests of Ukraine and overlooked the detrimental effects of its religious and political affiliations with Russia on Ukraine's independence. As he stated, despite all this, the UOC-MP had presented itself as a Ukrainian patriotic church and tried to discredit pro-Ukrainian Orthodox churches in the eyes of Ukrainian people by claiming that it is the only canonical Orthodox Church in Ukraine. The priests attracted more believers to the UOC-MP by using the card of "canonical" and disseminated Russia's propaganda, which disregards the existence of the Ukrainian state and nation.[617]

The interview data demonstrated a close relationship between the perception that UOC-MP would be a threat to the Ukrainian state and the level of cooperation between the Russian Church and the state. Here, the UOC-MP was seen as a tool for soft power, used by post-Soviet Russian political circles, to increase pro-Russian sentiments in Ukraine. A state official attributed this to the weak cooperation between the Russian state and the Moscow Patriarchate, which could result in a weak influence on the UOC-MP.[618] However, the collaboration between Russian secular and religious authorities improved during the 2000s and further strengthened with Putin's rise and Patriarch Krill's leadership in 2009. The interviews also revealed that this collaboration and sway posed a threat to Ukraine's independence and alignment with the West.[619]

As stated several times in this study, Russian political and religious elites regard Ukrainians to be inseparable from Russians, and Ukrainian state independence after 1991 temporary. Most interviewees shared this view; however, it was inferred from

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[616]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 29, 2019.

[617]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 11, 2020.

[618]Interview, Ankara (Turkey), June 1, 2023.

[619]Interview, Ankara (Turkey), November 21, 2022; Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 11, 2020.
It can be also argued that the solid state-church cooperation in Russia gave them greater control over the UOC-MP, especially after Yanukovych openly supported the Russian World concept and dismissed the notion of an autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox church separate from Moscow.

the interviews that most Ukrainians had not considered Russia as a direct threat to their independence until 2014.[620] It can also be concluded that the Euromaidan revolution, the annexation of Crimea in 2014, and the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine have led to the perception of Russia as an urgent threat to the Ukrainian state. Moreover, Ukrainian society felt more vulnerable because of Russia's blatant violation of Ukrainian territorial sovereignty,[621] and the pro-Russian stance of the UOC-MP escalated the threat Russia poses to the Ukrainian state. For example, an academician highlighted that the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine has brought to light the close ties between the UOC-MP and Russian authorities. To address this concern, the interviewee suggested establishment of an independent Orthodox Church of Ukraine, separate from the Moscow Patriarchate. This Church would not only promote Ukrainian sovereignty but also restrict Russia's influence on Ukraine.[622] According to a state official from the Presidential Administration, the Moscow Patriarchate and the UOC-MP tried to impede the Euromaidan Revolution onlyto ultimately serve Russia's interests in Ukraine. According to him, the gap between those who support Russia and those who support Ukraine became wider, given the reactions of different churches to the annexation of Crimea and the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine. The official also noted that, while the UOC-MP backed Russian intervention in Ukraine, other churches, such as the Kyiv Patriarchate, the UGCC, and the Protestants, advocated the sovereignty of Ukraine and the Ukrainian autocephaly.[623] Indeed, as Babynskyi argues for the Greek Catholics:

> As Ukrainian citizens, they treated the independence of Ukrainian Orthodoxy as primarily a state security issue. Since Russian state authorities have been weaponizing religion as an active component of Russia's hybrid warfare against Ukraine, the Ukrainian president's attempt to construct adequate defense in this sector was evaluated positively.[624]

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[620]In fact, it is important to acknowledge that various factors influenced how Ukrainians from different regions of the country and the political elites perceived the UOC-MP as a potential danger before 2014.

[621]Interview, Ankara (Turkey), November 21, 2022.

[622]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 29, 2019.

[623]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 22, 2019.

[624]Anatolii Babynskyi, "The Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU) and the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church (UGCC): a meeting after the tomos," Canadian Slavonic Papers 62, no.3-4 (2020): 490-491.

Furthermore, the state official above highlighted that many priests affiliated with the UOC-MP disseminated Russian propaganda to prevent Ukrainians from participating in the war in eastern Ukraine and added:

> The Moscow Patriarchate was speaking about the brother-killing war. In this case, when we have an aggressor and the victim of aggression, it was kind of strange to hear such things. Some of them [priests from the UOC-MP] refused to commit prayers for the killed soldiers […] Many clergy and priest in the UOC-MP were either disseminating hate speech messages or propaganda that would separate people from one another. In a way inflicting hostility between different groups of Ukrainian.[625]

Similarly, Kuzio argues:

> The Russian Orthodox Church chose to support Putin by refusing to bury Ukrainian *siloviki* who had been killed in the Russian-Ukrainian war, not standing in their honour in the Ukrainian parliament, never condemning Russia's annexation and military aggression, and using Kremlin 'civil war' discourse when calling it 'internecine' and 'fratricide.' All three terms purposefully deny Russian military involvement in Ukraine.[626]

The state official from the Presidential Administration also said:

> One of the bishops refused to do a funeral not only for a soldier but also for a child. In Zaporizhna the child died in an accident. He was baptized in the Kyiv Patriarchate, so the priest of the UOC-MP refused to commit prayer. So parents had to wait until a priest from the Kyiv Patriarchate came. Such incidents had far-reaching impact.[627]

An academician has pointed out that the negative incidents during the funeral services were due to the particular attitude of the overseeing priest. He, however, noted that the impact of such acts on society is profound, which makes them all the more significant.[628] During an interview in Kyiv, another academician also stated that funerals became a sensitive issue for Ukrainians and sparked a reaction amongst many. He also pointed out that most priests within the UOC-MP still align

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[625]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 22, 2019.

[626]Taras Kuzio, Russian Nationalism and the Russian-Ukrainian War: Autocracy-Orthodoxy-Nationality (London and New York: Routledge, 2022), 221.

[627]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 22, 2019.

[628]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 26, 2019.

themselves with the Russian World ideology and support Russian interests in Ukraine; however, they now abstain from expressing their pro-Russian stance due to growing criticism of the UOC-MP.[629]

Besides, the state official mentioned above also detailed how the UOC-MP became a serious security challenge to Ukraine:

> On the frontline, you can see the priest with a machine gun on the side of pro-Russian terrorists. You find church hurrahing terrorists. They allow terrorists to fire from churches, so the backfire hits the church and makes headlines for Russian propaganda.[630]

The discourse that the UOC-MP works with Russia in the war was frequently used by Poroshenko, state officials, pro-Ukrainian camps, and church leaders. Poroshenko, in his various speeches, highlighted the national security dimension of autocephaly and its significance for consolidating the sovereignty and independence of Ukraine. For example, at the Unification Council, resulting in the establishment of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, he made the following statement:

> This day ... [is] [t]he day of the final gaining of Ukrainian independence from Russia. And Ukraine will no longer drink, as Taras Shevchenko said, 'Moscow's poison from the Moscow's bowl' [...] What is this Church? This is a Church without Putin. What is this Church? This is a Church without Kirill. What is this Church? This is a Church without prayer for the Russian authorities and the Russian army. Because the Russian authorities and the Russian Army kill Ukrainians [...] [W]hat kind of citizen will be raised by the Church center, if it is located in a foreign state, moreover, in the aggressor country? Exactly not a citizen of Ukraine. The Kremlin does not hide the fact that it considers the Russian Orthodox Church as one of the main instruments of influence on Ukraine. The situation in Ukrainian Orthodoxy is discussed at the Russian Security Council under the chairmanship of its president [...] [W]hen Moscow speaks about Ukraine as allegedly its canonical territory, isn't this an encroachment on our territorial integrity? And aren't we obliged to protect Ukrainian soil and the Ukrainian spirit in such conditions? And we know well: in the areas where the Russian censer is being waved today, Russian missiles will strike tomorrow. At first, Patriarch Kirill toured Ukraine with the propaganda of the "Russian peace" and a single font, and then their tanks came. Obviously, the issue of autocephaly goes far beyond the Church's fence. This is an issue of our national security. This is an issue of our statehood [...] No patriot doubts the importance of having an independent Orthodox Church in an independent Ukrainian state. Such a Church is a spiritual guarantor of our sovereignty. In December 1991, at the

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[629]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 29, 2019.

[630]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 22, 2019.

referendum, we approved the Declaration of Independence. In December 2018, an independent Orthodox Ukrainian Church was founded, to which the Ecumenical Patriarch will hand over the *Tomos*.[631]

On January 6, 2019, when the Istanbul Patriarchate granted the Orthodox Church of Ukraine autocephaly, Poroshenko stated, "the *Tomos* for us is actually another act of proclaiming Ukraine's independence. It will complete the assertion that the Ukrainian state will be independent [...]."[632]As discussed earlier, the concern that the UOC-MP is a potential threat could be reinforced on a state level after 2013, particularly during the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine. In addition, the so-called state in Donetsk has openly espoused the ideology of the Russian World and has professed loyalty to the Moscow Patriarchate. Furthermore, various reports and studies have underscored the UOC-MP's support for the separatists in the war. Given all these, why Poroshenko emphasized the security aspect of establishing the Orthodox Church of Ukraine was obvious.

5.6 The Debates over the Formation of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine and Initial Challenges

The interview data demonstrated that the initial obstacles and the future of Orthodox Church of Ukraine was a source of concern in the country.[633] It also provided valuable insight into the factors contributing to the creation of the Church and whole process.

One of the notable discussions was related to the following questions: Was the creation of the Church actualized thanks to the demand of Ukrainians, or was it deliberately prioritized by Poroshenko, whose popularity decreased before the 2019 presidential election, to ensure his second term? Almost all interviewees stated that

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[631]"Speech by President Poroshenko on the results of the Unification Synod," *The Ukrainian Weekly*, December 21, 2018, https://www.ukrweekly.com/uwwp/speech-by-president-poroshenko-on-the-results-of-the-unification-synod/.

[632]"Poroshenko on the Tomos of autocephaly," The Ukrainian Weekly, January 11, 2019, https://www.ukrweekly.com/uwwp/poroshenko-on-the-tomos-of-autocephaly/

In his various speeches, he also referred to the autocephaly and Ukraine's desire to be a member of NATO and the EU in the context of European integration.

[633] See Keskin, "Sovyet Sonrası Ukrayna'da Dini Canlanma."

due to the pro-Russian position of the UOC-MP during the Russian aggression, Ukrainians became disillusioned with the UOC-MP. While the pro-Russian activities of the UOC-MP have been seen as a betrayal of Ukraine's national interests by many, it has caused more support for the Kyiv Patriarchate, viewed as the patriotic church. Various national reports on church belonging have indicated that belonging to the Kyiv Patriarchate has somewhat increased, though with varying percentages.[634] Moreover, many interviewees perceived the increase in the percentage of Ukrainians expressing loyalty towards the Kyiv Patriarchate as a growing desire to create an autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox church.

A state official from the Presidential Administration reported that 25 percent of Orthodox believers had belonged to the Kyiv Patriarchate before the Russian aggression and this almost doubled during the aggression. On the other hand, while the percentage of those affiliated with the UOC-MP varied between 35 and 45, this has decreased to half. Therefore, for the official, changing church affiliations was the critical impetus for the state to resume its attempts to achieve autocephaly.[635] Besides, a high-ranking state official from the Ministry of Culture disagreed with the claim that Poroshenko had raised the issue of autocephaly for his own benefit and expressed that the issue of autocephaly had held significant importance a hundred years back, during the Soviet Union, as well as after its downfall. He clearly stated that the autocephaly matter had always been on the agenda and, though not conventional wisdom yet in Ukraine, the independence of the Ukrainian church was of great importance to the society.[636] In addition, an academician claimed that, before the autocephaly process was accelerated, the state authorities conducted extensive research to see the increasing autocephaly demand of Ukrainians. Ukrainians were ready to embrace an autocephalous church, and Poroshenko pioneered creation of a national church. He believed there was a consensus between the Ukrainians and the state on this issue.[637]

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[634]See Razumkov Center, *Specifics of Religious and Church Self-Determination of Citizens of Ukraine: Trends 2000-2021 (Information Materials)* (Kyiv, 2021).

[635]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 22, 2019.

[636]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 25, 2019.

[637]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 26, 2019.

During some interviews, it was stated that the independent Ukrainian Orthodox Church was not highly significant to the general public. For example, during an interview in Kyiv, an academician stated:

> I cannot say that *Tomos* is important to Ukrainians. It would not be correct to say that Ukrainians are religious. Most Ukrainians go to church two or three times a year. There is no high church attendance. They usually go to church for special occasions such as Christmas or Easter […] Especially for Ukrainians living in underdeveloped regions, there are more severe problems like unemployment. People's priorities are different there. That is why I cannot say that *Tomos* is significant for Ukrainians.[638]

An expert from one of the research centers in Kyiv also claimed that Ukrainians are not effective believers and are inclined to exaggerate their church attendance. He also stated that most people, especially in rural areas, say they are just Orthodox believers, and they do not specify a particular church belonging. Thus, the expert argued that people in rural areas do not care about which Orthodox church they should attend. Actually, they are not concerned with attending a church, let alone its being canonical or not. He stated that people's priorities are salary, health, and education. However, he also expressed how church affiliation turned a highly political marker in these words: "even people who do not attend any particular church say 'I am an atheist of Kyiv Patriarchate.'"[639] When the same expert was asked about the perception of Ukrainians related to what Poroshenko did for the unification of the Ukrainian churches, he stated:

> There are a lot of companies that asked this question to people, but the problem is in the wording of the questions. When we mentioned Poroshenko in the wording of the questions about the Church, lower support was expressed. When we do not mention his name, 40-45% support or 50% supports the creation of the Church or, at least, have a favorable view, and 30% have negative views, and others say they have not decided […] This is also related to internal clashes between political elites. Those against Poroshenko are against the process of autocephaly [...] Most people think that Poroshenko did it [creating the Orthodox Church of Ukraine] for religious purposes, but the top purpose was his success [in the presidential election].[640]

An academician stated above claimed that Poroshenko utilized the slogan "Army, Language, Faith" during the 2019 presidential campaign to appeal to anti-Russian

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[638]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 29, 2019.

[639]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 22, 2019.

[640]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 22, 2019.

and patriotic groups and bolster his image as a national leader. As regards to the faith, he said, Poroshenko organized "*Tomos* tour" in Ukraine by emphasizing the importance of the independent Ukrainian Orthodox Church.[641] Initially, the statement of the academician could be understood as if the autocephaly issue was rooted in the self-interest of Poroshenko. However, the academician also noted that having an independent Orthodox church free from Moscow is crucial for the security of Ukraine. He pointed out that the autocephaly demands had been made numerous times in the past under other presidents, but Poroshenko managed to obtain it. Therefore, he regarded Poroshenko as successful in leading the way to autocephaly.[642] For another expert in Kyiv from a research center's sociological service, the Russian media intensely disseminated the view that the move of Poroshenko was for his success in the presidential election.[643]

The interview data demonstrated that the matter concerning the autocephaly demand in 2018 is closely tied to how a potential change in presidency in 2019 could impact the Church. During all the interviews, the 2019 presidential election was mentioned as a crucial turning point for the Church's future. The prevailing perception is that many parishes of the UOC-MP waited for the presidential election to make the final decision on whether to move to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine or not. Furthermore, a significant number of interviewees held the belief that, if Poroshenko were to be defeated in the election, it would lead to a decrease in political support for the Church, and this, in turn, could potentially impede the efforts at securing recognition from other autocephalous churches. As regards the negotiations with other autocephalous churches, Poroshenko's election was critical. Indeed, the interruption of these efforts would be inevitable if Poroshenko was not elected and this alone shows the significance of his efforts toward the recognition of the Church by other churches in global Orthodoxy.

During the interviews, the enactment of legal regulations in the changing Orthodox landscape in Ukraine and their implementation were also discussed. Overall, the

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[641]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 29, 2019.

[642]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 29, 2019.

[643]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 21, 2019.

initial disagreement was centered on the naming of Orthodox churches in Ukraine. Politicians in favor of the Ukrainian autocephaly movement were against the use of 'Ukrainian' in the UOC-MP's name and demanded that the title 'Russian Orthodox Church' be officially used instead. During a parliamentary session addressing this matter, tensions rose as a group of deputies, known for their pro-Russian stance, opposed using this title. Still, the regulation was unanimously approved. An academician underlined the significance of the naming issue and claimed that the branch of the Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine, the UOC-MP, hides the name of Moscow or Russia and pretends as if they serve the interest of Ukrainians. In his opinion, when people do not see any sign marking this church's affiliation with Moscow, they go, and the priests of the UOC-MP make Russian propaganda.[644] During an interview in Kyiv, a metropolitan from the Orthodox Church of Ukraine said:

> Currently, there is opposition to naming the Moscow Patriarchate as the Russian church in Ukraine. Why are you afraid? Why do you [the UOC-MP] oppose this naming if you [the UOC-MP] support *Russki Mir*? They contend this naming, but the law requires it. Within nine months, they have to change their name by September. If you are a Ukrainian church, then be with the Ukrainian church. Why are you afraid to bear this name if you are with the Russian church?[645]

Whether or not this Church will be recognized as the official state church of Ukraine has been a topic of discussion within academic circles, too. The interview data has demonstrated that this debate largely stems from Poroshenko's electoral campaign, wherein he emphasized the establishment of a national church. This led to a concern that this Church would be granted preferential treatment by the state. However, Poroshenko had frequently emphasized the importance of maintaining the church-state separation in Ukraine and underscored that the Orthodox Church of Ukraine would not be transformed into a state church. During an interview, a high-ranking state official from the Ministry of Culture highlighted the importance of protecting the religious diversity of Ukraine and stressed that the state would remain impartial, refraining from interference in religious affairs. An academician interviewed in Kyiv also stated that the Ukrainian church does not demand a privileged status, and he

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[644]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 29, 2019.

[645]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 18, 2019.

believed that preserving religious diversity will contribute to the development of the church. He stated that the Moscow-affiliated Church in Ukraine has continuously disseminated discriminative messages, especially toward the UGCC and protestant congregations, as well as pro-Ukrainian Orthodox churches. Creating the Orthodox Church of Ukraine and its productive relations with other religious organizations would promote religious freedom in Ukraine and facilitate peaceful dialogue, which the UOC-MP mainly hindered.[646]

It can be concluded from the interview data that many uncertainties surround the implementation of legal procedures about moving parishes to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. Most interviewees stated that, for a parish to move to the newly created Church, at least 2/3 of its participants must vote in favor of the transfer. While this regulation may seem practical, the interview data reveals that it raised several questions, such as defining who the church congregation comprises and the likely impact of the priest in charge of the parish. An academician brought up an important point: who has a right to vote for the transfer of the parish. The academician stated determining this is susceptible to manipulation in large cities, whereas, in small settlements where the congregation knows each other well, such manipulation is less likely. He contended that priests from the UOC-MP, who oppose the church transfer, deceitfully bring non-congregational members to vote against the transition.[647] Another academician brought up the uncertainties of the voting process, appealing attention to the manipulative role played by some priests from the UOC-MP: while the priest has only one vote like other parishioners, his symbolic power within the community can significantly influence the transfer process. That is, some priests use their power to sway the congregation in their decision-making. As the academician stated, priests do not ask the congregation directly whether they want to move to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. Instead, they ask whether or not they would deny a saint and impose that they will have rejected the saint by moving to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine; hence, people vote against the transfer. As the interviewee claims, this kind of manipulation hindered probable transfers to the Orthodox Church

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[646]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 11, 2020.

[647]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 29, 2019.

of Ukraine.[648] The metropolitan mentioned above also noted that the manipulation of priests has posed severe obstacles to the transition process:

> The question about whether or not one supports the Ukrainian or Russian churches is not asked during the voting. If this question were directly posed to the congregation, the majority would support the Ukrainian Church. Instead, the question is framed as whether one supports Metropolitan Onurfiy or not, or whether one keeps the priest himself or not. People typically respond with support, and the priest tells them to help him. Many meetings have not decided on the transition. The priests from the Russian Church have not asked whether people wish to remain in the Russian Church or not. They even do not say the Moscow Patriarchate. It is a choice between Ukraine and Moscow, but no one has ever posed the question in this way.[649]

The lack of clear legal regulations, their exploitation by the priest of the UOC, and uncertainties surrounding the presidential election is believed to have impeded the transfer of the UOC-MP's parishes to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. Besides, the interview data revealed that the Russian propaganda that the Orthodox Church of Ukraine is not autocephalous aims to undermine the legitimacy of the Church and that it affects parishioners' decision to leave the UOC-MP. An academician explained this as follows:

> Russia is making intense propaganda that Tomos is not real. Ukrainian authorities remain somewhat silent on this issue. To run a campaign against Russian propaganda, you need to know the language of Tomos. You have to know the *Tomos* terminology. There is a lack of this. Ukraine relied on Istanbul, whatever it said became true. Of course, Russia campaigns against *Tomos* otherwise its church in Ukraine will lose its legitimacy.[650]

During the interview, the Metropolitan expressed his view on the autocephalous status of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine as follows:

> The word of autocephaly indicates that the Church [the Orthodox Church of Ukraine] is independent. We are independent from both Moscow and Istanbul. We are different from churches in other countries. The merger of three churches formed us. This was not the case in other countries. If only one church in Ukraine existed, it

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[648]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 26, 2019.

[649]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 18, 2019. The transition of 'ordinary' parishes to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine is not the only issue. The situation of historically and symbolically significant churches is also a matter of importance in the transition process. For instance, notable complexes like Pochaiv Lavra and Kyiv Pechersk Lavra are leased by the UOC-MP. However, if Moscow-affiliated priests were removed from these locations, it could potentially create religious war, as noted by an academician. Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 29, 2019.

[650]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 26, 2019.

could be given independence directly. The Istanbul Patriarchate canceled the 1686 document [...] Moscow does not accept this; it is making propaganda against our Church [...] Russia [the Moscow Patriarchate] still does not have a *Tomos*.[651]

The Metropolitan also stated that a few matters, such as changing the calendar, were deliberately left to be addressed later because they could potentially lead to disagreements and division within the Church. Additionally, he addressed the claim that determining the saints, an important symbol of being an independent church is not decided by the Orthodox Church of Ukraine itself but by the Istanbul Patriarchate. As he explained, the Orthodox Church of Ukraine has the authority to determine its own Saints. However, the control of the Istanbul Patriarchate is a must for commemorating Saints by other autocephalous churches. Moreover, he stated that the accessed Soviet archives revealed that some saints could not be saints and that the Istanbul Patriarchate must check the process not to lose the Saint status later.[652]

The interview data also demonstrated that the initial non-recognition of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine by the other autocephalous Orthodox churches in the global Orthodoxy further deepened concerns about the genuinty of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. The interview data show it was due to the Moscow Patriarchate's lobbying. In other words, while the Moscow Patriarchate has vehemently opposed the recognition of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, it has exerted intense pressure on other autocephalous churches to do the same. An academician stated that there is no unity within the international Orthodox community and many other autocephalous churches have longstanding historical ties with Russia and the Moscow Patriarchate; thus, the academician stated that the other autocephalous churches are hesitant to take a stand against Russian side on the Ukrainian autocephaly. Furthermore, he claimed that Russia plays a significant role in financing the international Orthodox communities, so, he said, there is a fear that Russia may pull its financial support if the Orthodox Church of Ukraine is recognized.[653] This view was brought up by several other interviewees as well.[654] Another reason that could prevent other

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[651] Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 18, 2019.

[652] Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 18, 2019.

[653] Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 26, 2019.

[654] Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 22, 2019; Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 25, 2019; Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 18, 2019.

autocephalous Orthodox churches, such as the Serbian and Georgian churches, from recognizing the Orthodox Church of Ukraine is their internal issues. During most interviews, it was highlighted that, if these two churches were to recognize the Ukrainian Church, they fear that the Moscow Patriarchate may support similar autocephaly demands within those churches.[655] In this regard, it was frequently stated that it would take time for other autocephalous churches to recognize the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, and the importance of church diplomacy was underlined. In later periods, apart from the Istanbul Patriarchate, three churches known for their closeness to the Istanbul Patriarchate, namely Greece, Alexandria, and Cyprus, recognized the autocephalous status of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine.

During its first year, approximately 600 parishes out of the 12,000 shifted their allegiance from the UOC-MP to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, most of which were located in the central and western regions. Indeed, it was a promising start, given all setbacks, including Russia's pressure on the parishes not to decide to move to the newly formed Church, even though the number of moved parishes appeared low. The commonly held view in the interviews was that the transition process would progress, albeit slowly, when necessary legal regulations for the transfer of the parishes were made. Besides, it was stated that the Ukrainian state meticulously worked to manage the transition process and avoid any pressure on the process, leading to conflict in society, while Russia made attempts to impede the progress and provocate the religious tension in Ukraine.[656]

Simultaneously, the upcoming March 2019 presidential election was at the forefront of Ukraine's agenda. In the lead-up to the election, Poroshenko's ratings experienced a noticeable decline. As Yekelych argues:

> Poroshenko scored an easy victory in the first round [in 2014] because voters saw him as best qualifed to lead the country in a time of war. Once the war was over- which seemed possible at the time-he would be qualifed to initiate major reforms. A former foreign minister and an experienced player in Ukrainian politics, as an oligarch he also knew the rules of the game within the Ukrainian business

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[655]Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 22, 2019; Interview, Kyiv (Ukraine), March 25, 2019.

[656]Keskin, "Sovyet Sonrası Ukrayna'da Dini Canlanma."

community. However, nothing went according to plan. The war became a perennial reality, and Poroshenko's connection to the old system became a liability.[657]

Within academic circles, 'commendable' initiatives frequently centered on Poroshenko's military reforms and relations with the West. However, many remained critical of Poroshenko's other reforms, such as tackling corruption and promoting economic growth to enhance the standard of living. Volodymyr Zelensky, who "had zero political experience and the men of an honest everyman,"[658] secured an impressive victory against Poroshenko in the second round of the presidential run, garnering over 73% of the votes. In June 2019, the parliamentary election sealed the success of Zelensky, whose party secured an outright majority in the parliament. Therefore, he gained a strong position to fulfill his election promises of developing the economic situation and stopping the war in eastern Ukraine.[659]

5.7 Some Concluding Remarks and the Orthodox Church of Ukraine during Zelensky's Presidency

Following Zelensky's rise to the presidency, the state has withdrawn active support to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. This should not be viewed as an attempt to undermine the Church. Instead, it is believed to reflect religious non-interference policy. In his analysis, Kulyk put that Zelensky, coming from secular Jew family background, has been influenced by five main factors: "his personal attitude towards religion and churches, the expectations of his voters, the attitudes of his team, high public trust of religions in Ukraine, and geopolitics worldwide."[660] While Kulyk concludes that the state withdrew its backing from the Orthodox Church of Ukraine and prioritized the neutrality of the state, he states, "political losses and/or geopolitical challenges might oblige Volodymyr Zelensky to accept a tighter and

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[657]Yekelchyk, Ukraine, 151.

[658]Yekelchyk, 172.

[659]David. R. Marples, "Introduction," in *The War in Ukraine's Donbas: Origins, Contexts, and the Future*, ed. David R. Marples (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2023),1.

[660]Volodymyr Kulyk, "Religious Policies under President Zelensky," *International Center For Law and Religious Studies*, January 9, 2020, https://talkabout.iclrs.org/2020/01/09/religious-policies-under-president-zelensky/

more intrusive model of church-state relations, even to interfere in the inter-Orthodox conflict, just as every president of Ukraine has done before."[661]

According to Alder, Kakar, and Minney,

> [i]n the eyes of the public, Zelensky's distance towards religious matters is seen as apathetic towards the OCU against the background of a historically close church-state relationship. As such, the loss of political support within Ukraine and the lack of support across other global autocephalous churches has weakened the new church. The OCU's leadership has done little to communicate these limitations or to manage believers' expectations. Hence, the public's excitement for the OCU has dampened and the church is increasingly seen as a primarily political project.[662]

Yekelchyk argues:

> The OCU also became weakened by the conflict between its head, the young and energetic Metropolitan Epiphanius, and his former mentor and head of the Kyiv Patriarchate, Metropolitan Filaret. Opinion polls show that the OCU has more public support in Ukraine than the pro-Moscow church, but it is unclear whether the OCU really has the 7,000 parishes it claims. The division of the Ukrainian Orthodox Christians into the "all-Russian" and "Ukrainian" orientations continues.[663]

Clearly, a range of factors mentioned above have slowed down, and in some cases halted, the moving of parishes from the UOC-MP to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. Denysenko presents similar factors, including the information campaign launched by the UOC-MP that the Ukrainian side unlawfully seized its parishes to impede the transition process. Also, he has highlighted the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the process, which interrupted daily life. However, he has also noted that the process of transferring parishes has gained momentum once again, after Russia's full-scale war, which began on February 24, 2022.[664]

Although it is difficult to provide a comprehensive analysis, one can argue that after the war initiated by Russia, Zelensky began to support the Orthodox Church of

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[661]Kulyk, "Religious Policies under President Zelensky."

[662]Cora Alder, Palwasha Kakar, and Leslie Minney, *Ukraine: The Religious Dimension of the Conflict* (CSS Analyses in Security Policy No.259, 2020).

[663]Yekelchyk, *Ukraine*, 68.

[664]Nicholas Denysenko, The *Church's Unholy War: Russian Invasion of Ukraine and Orthodoxy* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2023), n.a

Ukraine actively and emphasized its significance for the security of Ukraine, while Russia tried to justify war using religious rhetoric. All these changes revived not only old discussions, such as whether the UOC-MP served Russian interests but also Ukrainians' patriotism, as in after 2014. In an interview conducted in Ankara to understand the importance of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine during the war in Ukraine that started in 2022, a Ukrainian historian said that Putin's usage of religious rhetoric to justify the war against Ukraine in 2022, and the intelligence activities of priests from the UOC-MP to support Putin can only surprise those who did not heed the significance of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, and its security dimension for Ukraine.[665]

To sum up, the establishment of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine can be attributed to a multitude of factors, including a favorable internal as well as international dynamics. Furthermore, the efforts of Poroshenko played a pivotal role in mobilizing these various forces towards the ultimate goal of achieving autocephalous status. Moreover, as interviews conducted have shown, the security dimension of Ukrainian autocephaly is prioritized while the threat perception is fed by both the imperial vision of Russia and Russia's violations of Ukraine's territorial sovereignty in 2014 and the ongoing war in eastern Ukraine. A preliminary conclusion for Zelensky's period and especially the war that began in 2022 once again points to the security dimension of Ukrainian autocephaly.

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[665]Interview, Ankara (Turkey), November 19, 2022.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Based on semi-structured elite and expert interviews conducted in Kyiv in 2019 and 2020, and Ankara in 2022 and 2023, this study aimed to understand the motives behind the establishment of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in 2019 and the factors that made it possible. It sought an answer to the question 'How was the Church established in 2019 while the previous attempts had failed?' and examined the significance of the Church for the state-building of post-Soviet independent Ukraine.

Regarding factors contributing to the establishment of the Church in 2019, this study suggests that they are complex and multi-dimensional. In other words, the establishment of the Church was influenced by many factors and explaining the process with one single factor would be an oversimplification. Therefore, the present study viewed the establishment of the Church as a process in post-Soviet Ukraine rather than only focusing on the efforts made during the Poroshenko period, during which the Church was founded. To this end, the failure to obtain an autocephalous Orthodox Church under the previous presidents has been analyzed in relation to the establishment of the Church in 2019.

As explained in Chapter Four, all presidents except Yanukovych tried to establish a church independent from the Moscow Patriarchate. Kravchuk, Kuchma, and Yushchenko, all failed due to similar difficulties. To name a few, their attempts were ineffective because of fragmented Ukrainian Orthodoxy exacerbated by personal power struggles among churches, firm opposition of the Moscow Patriarchate to Ukrainian autocephaly, and its strong influence on the UOC-MP, Patriarch Bartholomew's hesitant attitude in the divided Ukrainian Orthodoxy, the internal political instability, the geopolitical and civilizational oscillation between West and Russia, weak national identity, and existence of regions with dissimilar historical

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experiences and memory. Each president faced different, mostly interconnected, challenges in their endeavors to establish an independent church.

Among the three presidents, Kravchuk and Yushchenko wished to obtain an autocephalous church as well as emancipate Ukraine from Russia's political and religious influence. This marked the orientation of the country towards the West, but the divided Ukrainian politics immobilized both presidents. The old communist *nomenclatura,* which garnered support from eastern and southern Ukraine and defended Ukraine's Russian orientation, was still influential in Kravchuk's term. Yushchenko encountered political crises only one year after becoming president. Kuchma adopted a multi-vectorial foreign policy, improving relations with the West and Russia, and he refrained from pursuing bold identity politics not to alienate different regions of Ukraine. His second presidential term, during which he attempted to obtain autocephaly, was characterized by an authoritarian regime and political scandals, leading to loss of Western support and a shift towards closer relations with Russia.

The findings related to the attempts of Kuchma and Yushchenko have demonstrated that merely having a desire is insufficient to get an autocephalous status for the Ukrainian church. The unification of Ukrainian Orthodoxy required well-organized attempts. As stated in Chapter Four, although both emphasized the importance of solving the division in Ukrainian Orthodoxy, in practice, they hardly took an influential role. Notably, Kuchma was criticized for his ambiguous religious policy. Kravchuk and Kuchma's ineffective attempts manifested that it is crucial to analyze factors thoroughly before taking an action and to predict all possible outcomes. Kravchuk' endeavors to establish an autocephalous church and expectation of taking advantage of the opportunity presented by the dissolution of the Soviet Union further fragmented Ukrainian Orthodoxy. To increase the chances autocephaly, Kuchma supported the UOC-MP, which was the leading church in terms of the number of churches, and this significantly strengthened the position of UOC-MP in Ukraine.

None of the three presidents could get Patriarch Bartholomew's open support for Ukrainian autocephaly. This can be attributed to various factors. As previously

stated, Bartholomew refrained from intervening in the divided Ukrainian Orthodoxy, which was mainly controlled by the UOC-MP, and was hesitant to confront the Moscow Patriarchate, which claimed Ukraine as part of its canonical territory. In short, the attempts of the presidents lacked national (such as struggle among churches and division in domestic politics) and international (the active involvement of the Istanbul Patriarchate in Ukrainian autocephaly) support. These unfavorable conditions, which were not mutually exclusive, affected the presidents' attempts. When combined with the presidents' miscalculations, they made it impossible to establish an autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

As explained in Chapter Five, the political, social, and religious circumstances in Ukraine dramatically changed after the Euromaidan Revolution, Russia's annexation of Crimea, and the war in eastern Ukraine against Russia-backed separatists. These hurled Ukraine into turmoil, and Poroshenko had to overcome many problems that mounted in the war conditions. However, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has led to a decrease in pro-Russian sentiments in Ukraine, and it has consolidated the Ukrainian national identity. On the other hand, the inhabitants of the occupied regions could not participate in national elections, which resulted in the removal of the votes, most of which went to pro-Russian politicians. This provided the pro-Western wing to form a majority in the parliament for the first time in Ukrainian politics, previously divided into pro-Western or pro-Russian. In other words, the oscillations between pro-Western and pro-Russian politics since the independence became entirely Western-oriented. Regarding the religious circles, the pro-Ukrainian churches increased their prestige by supporting Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty. As a result of the pro-Russian activities of the UOC-MP, it was perceived as an 'agent' of Russia and began to raise doubt. All these prepared the favorable conditions for the establishment of an independent Ukrainian church.

In addition, the ongoing competition between the patriarchates of Istanbul and Moscow for the leadership of global Orthodoxy intensified after the Moscow Patriarchate refused to attend the Pan-Orthodox Council in 2016, organized by the Istanbul Patriarchate. The interview data demonstrated that Patriarch Bartholomew regarded the act of the Moscow Patriarchate as a challenge to his authority. Thus, Patriarch Bartholomew, who had been closely monitoring the religious landscape of

Ukraine since 2014, abandoned his previous attitude on the issue of Ukrainian autocephaly and took conclusive steps to grant autocephaly to the Ukrainian church. Many interviewees stated that Bartholomew aimed to strengthen the prestige of the Istanbul Patriarchate considering the number of Ukrainian churches and believers and thereby, to undermine the claim of the Moscow Patriarchate on the leadership of Eastern Orthodoxy. This development can be regarded as a favorable international condition for establishing an autocephalous Ukrainian Church.

The research also demonstrated that Poroshenko had been actively interested in Ukrainian autocephaly since 2015. He became a leading actor in facilitating the dialogue between pro-Ukrainian Orthodox churches. Even if the unification negotiations between the Kyiv Patriarchate and the UAOC were disrupted in 2015, he persevered in improving relations with the Istanbul Patriarchate. In 2016, he pioneered the efforts towards the official autocephaly, submitting the Istanbul Patriarchate shortly before the Pan-Orthodox Council. The interview data revealed that his timing was regarded as a strategic maneuver at a time when the tension grew between the patriarchates of Istanbul and Moscow. In 2018, meetings were held intensively between the churches in Ukraine and the Istanbul Patriarchate, and also with other autocephalous churches, to receive their support for the establishment of the Ukrainian Church. Poroshenko took an active part in these meetings. It is understood from the interview data that none of these processes were smooth. Especially in the unification council of the Churches in November 2018, various problems arose, but Poroshenko played a critical role in resolving these. An interviewee attributed this to Poroshenko's skill in crisis management. In short, national and international favorable conditions must have prepared effective grounds to pursue autocephaly demands during the Poroshenko period. The research data also demonstrated that Poroshenko successfully mobilized these conditions toward realizing Ukrainian autocephaly. Furthermore, given Poroshenko's significant and timely reforms for strengthening state sovereignty and national identity, this study advocates that relating Poroshenko's efforts towards an independent Church free from Moscow Patriarchate's influence to his political career is unfair.

Considering historical relations between Ukraine and Russia regarding Orthodox Christianity, this study also argued that creating the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in

2019 is important for the institutional consolidation of Ukraine and building of a sovereign, fully independent state. As stated in Chapter Two, the question of who has the legacy of the Kyivan *Rus'* state and the ancient Kyiv Metropolitanate is a heated debate between Ukrainian and Russian national historiographies. A series of political and religious re-configurations in ancient Ukrainian land after the fall of the Kyivan *Rus'* state paved the way to conflicting narratives regarding the historical trajectory of the Kyiv Metropolitanate, with Ukrainian and Russian scholars defending their own perspectives. As an interviewee has put, Russian sides distort historical facts to construct a consistent narrative and to justify that Ukrainians have no right to an autocephalous church. One of the salient examples is the 1686 decision of the Istanbul Patriarchate, which the Moscow Patriarchate regarded as conclusive evidence to its ecclesiastical authority on Ukraine. However, as stated in Chapters Three and Five, this decision itself is not considered as historical injustice by Ukraine, yet the manipulation of this decision by Russia is perceived as historical injustice.

Besides, as stated in the Chapter Two, the narrative of Russia defines the year 1654 – the subordination of the Cossacks to the Russian Empire- and the year 1686- the transfer of the Kyiv Metropolitanate to Moscow Patriarchate as the political and religious re-unification of Ukrainians and Russians. Nonetheless, the interview data revealed that the re-unification narrative is perceived by Ukraine as part of Russian imperial policies, which have continued during and after the Soviet period. Basically, this narrative left no room to the independence and sovereignty of the Ukrainian state and Church. In addition, after seizing the Kyiv Metropolitanate in 1686, the Church was subjected to the Russification policies, which is interpreted by many interviewees as the rupture of Ukrainian Orthodoxy from its Western connections dating back to the 10th century.

As stated in Chapter Two, Ukrainian clergy tried to form an autocephalous Orthodox church in the 1920s and 1940s, as it did in the Balkans in the 19th century; however, they failed for various reasons, most importantly due to the Russian authorities' domination in these regions. It is also noted that when the close link between the nation and the Orthodox church was established in the Balkans in the age of

nationalism, the ethnic Ukrainians were already divided into: Greek Catholics and Orthodox Christians. Therefore, this close link in the Balkans was not true for Ukraine. Furthermore, due to the instrumentalization of the Orthodox Church for the Russification policies under the Russian Empire and paradoxically during the Soviet period, the Orthodox Church was far from being the mobilizer and the protector of the Ukrainian nation. This distanced the church from the Ukrainian intellectuals.

When Ukraine became an independent state in 1991, the attempt to create an autocephalous Church was accompanied by the consolidation of state sovereignty, which started with Kravchuk shortly before the dissolution of the Soviet Union. In fact, the core intention of this attempt was similar to the Balkan case, as discussed in Chapter Two: modern state formation. Kravchuk's main aim was to free the Ukrainian Church from the influence of the Moscow Patriarchate. The autocephalous Orthodox Church of modern times is mostly followed by an independent state formation, and the territorial boundaries of the Church -canonical territory- mostly overlapped with the state's political borders. However, as stated earlier, the Moscow Patriarchate regarded the Soviet borders as its canonical territory. That is why Kravchuk emphasized the idea "for an independent state- an independent Church." As discussed in Chapter Four, the Russian political and religious circles have consistently refused to accept Ukraine as a sovereign state and have persistently denied the existence of a distinct Ukrainian identity. Interviews showed that the Russian narrative reflected on different policies, concepts and ideas, such as Holy *Rus* and Russian World.

According to the interview data, the normative understanding of "independent state - independent church" valued by some segments of the Ukrainian society, especially since the Kravchuk period, was so wide-spread among the Ukrainians that the Russian influence through the UOC-MP on Ukraine was seen as a threat. The illegal invasion and annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the war on Donbass, which began soon after and turned into a full-scale war in 2022, have reshaped Ukrainians' perception of Russia independently of their ethnicity. As a result, Russia is defined as an aggressor state denying the sovereignty of its neighbor, whom they called as the brotherly nation. This "Russian aggression" led to real concern related to national

security, which persisted because of imperial policies at the expense of human rights and international law. However, the Russian violation of international and all other agreements related to territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine, and the activities of the UOC-MP against Ukrainian national security and Ukrainian people in the war condition, such as supporting Russia, denying the ongoing war, and refusing to participate in the funerals of Ukrainian soldiers, made it clear that an independent Church serving the national interests and preventing Russian influence was urgent. That is, the normative understanding of Church independence turns into an immediate need for Ukraine.

An autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox Church means securing national borders in the sense of overlapping the political boundaries with the canonical territory. This also means securing the independence and sovereignty of the Ukrainian state. Furthermore, this will help form a solid modern state, which will be followed, as in many post-Soviet countries, by nation formation. From this viewpoint, the Russian invasion of Ukraine seems to have become the main factor strengthening the national identity, uniting a divided society, and nourishing ideological homogenization of the society. Interestingly enough, the UOC-MP was one of the threats to the unity of the nation and the sovereignty of the state.

It is also noted that, as it was discussed in Chapter Five, most of Russian propaganda undermines the newly established Church. One of the core assumptions related to the new church was that Poroshenko violated the rules of the modern secular state formation. However, as discussed in Chapter Two, the collaboration between the church and the state does not necessarily challenge the secular state. Many Orthodox Christian countries, even the Protestant ones, constitute ideal examples of that. Also, the UOC-MP and the Moscow Patriarchate frequently use the terms 'uncanonical' and "schismatic' to refer to the Ukrainian Church in a pejorative sense. To sum up, the creation of Ukrainian Church does not represent symphonic relations between the Ukrainian church and the Ukrainian state. On the contrary, first and foremost, it aims to abolish the strong symphonic relations between the Russian Federation, the Moscow Patriarchate, and the UOC-MP in Ukraine.

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu tez, Sovyet sonrası dönemde Ukrayna cumhurbaşkanlarının, Ortodoks dünyadaki *otosefal* kiliseler tarafından *eşitler arasında birinci* olarak kabul edilen İstanbul Patrikhanesi tarafından tanınması amaçlanan otosefal bir Ukrayna Ortodoks Kilisesi kurma girişimlerini analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Tez özellikle, Ukrayna'nın bağımsızlığından itibaren kilisenin kurulmasına yönelik birçok çaba sonuçsuz kalırken, 2019'da başarıya nasıl ulaşıldığını anlamaya çalışmaktadır. Bu çalışma ayrıca, Ukrayna Ortodoks Kilisesinin Ukrayna'nın Sovyet sonrası devlet inşa sürecindeki önemini anlamayı hedeflemektedir.

Günümüz Ukraynası'nı anlamak için, Litvanya Büyük Dukalığı, Polonya Krallığı, Polonya-Litvanya Birliği, Polonya, Avusturya-Macaristan İmparatorluğu, Osmanlı Devleti, Rus İmparatorluğu ve Sovyetler Birliği gibi birçok siyasi gücün ülkenin tarihinde bıraktığı ve günümüze kadar süregelen etkilerini anlamak gerekmektedir. Ukrayinler bağımsız siyasi yönetimlerini elde etmek için mücadele etmiş olsalar da Ukrayna tarihinin büyük kısmı, yukarıda bahsedilen siyasi güçlerin Ukrayna üzerindeki güç mücadeleleriyle şekillenmiştir. Bu nedenle, Ukrayna'da sürekli olarak sınır değişiklikleri yaşanmış ve Kırım'ın 1954'te Ukrayna SSC' ye dâhil edilmesine kadar bu sınır değişiklikleri devam etmiştir. 1991 yılında Sovyetler Birliği dağılmış ve Ukrayna bağımsız bir devlet olarak dünya siyasetinde yerini almıştır. Bu bağlamda, Sovyet sonrası bağımsızlık döneminin Ukrayna tarihinde bir dönüm noktası olduğunu söylemek yanlış olmayacaktır.

Bağımsızlığın ardından Ukraynalı siyasi seçkinler ulus ve devlet inşasına girişmişlerdir. Ancak ülkenin çoklu tarihsel deneyimleri neticesince belirginleşen bölgesel farklılıkları, Ukrayna'yı modern bir ulus kimliğinden mahrum bırakmıştır. Farklı siyasi aidiyetler ve bölgelerin eşit olmayan ekonomik altyapısı, Ukrayna'nın devlet inşası sürecinin önündeki başlıca engeller olarak değerlendirilebilir. Ayrıca

Ukrayna, bağımsızlığını kazanan diğer eski Sovyet cumhuriyetlerinde olduğu gibi, yolsuzluk ve siyasi otoriteye güvensizlikle karşı karşıya kalmıştır. Ancak, Rusya ile uzun tarihî geçmişi nedeniyle Ukrayna'da ulus ve devlet inşasının zorlukları, diğer devletlere kıyasla daha çetrefilli olmuştur. Öyle ki Ukrayinlerin Ruslarla olan tarihî, dinî ve kültürel bağları, Sovyet sonrası dönemde Ukrayna'ya karmaşık bir miras bırakmıştır. Akademik çevrelerde Ukrayna toplumunun Batı yanlısı ve Rusya yanlısı olarak ikiye bölündüğü ve bu bölünmenin çoğunlukla Ukrayna'nın Batı'nın bir parçası olduğu ve Rusya'nın yörüngesinde olması gerektiği şeklindeki karşıt görüşleri yansıttığı dile getirilmektedir.

1991'deki siyasi bağımsızlığın ardından Ukraynalı siyasetçilerin birçoğu, ülkenin Batı ile ilişkileri geliştirerek, Ruslardan farklı bir Ukrayna ulusal kimliği ve devleti fikrine karşı çıkan Rusya'ya karşı Ukrayna'nın toprak bütünlüğünü ve bağımsızlığını korumaya çalışmıştır. Ancak bu çabanın, Ukrayna toplumunda ve siyasi seçkinler arasındaki Batı ya da Rusya yanlısı olarak ifade edilebilecek bölünmüşlük, ağırlıklı olarak Rus nüfuslu doğu Ukrayna ve Kırım'la ilgili ayrılıkçı hareketlerden duyulan korku ve Rusya ile ekonomik ilişkiler dikkate alındığında zorlu bir göreve dönüştüğü görülmektedir. Diğer taraftan Rusya, günümüz Ukrayna topraklarının Rus ulusal anlatısında ve Rus ulusal kimliğinde hayati bir öneme sahip olması ve Ukrayna'nın Rusya'nın güvenlik politikası açısından önemi gibi çeşitli nedenlerle Ukrayna'yı kendi etki alanında tutmaya çalışmıştır. Ukrayinlerin ve Rusların 'kardeş halklar' olduğu yönündeki Rus anlatısının propagandası, Rusya'nın Ukrayna'yı kendi yörüngesinde tutma çabalarının önemli bir ayağını oluşturmuştur. Bu bağlamda, 10. yüzyıldan itibaren Ukraynalılar ve Ruslar arasında ortak inanç olan Ortodoks Hristiyanlık, Rusya'nın Ukrayna'da 'kardeş halklar' anlatısının sağlamlaştırılması için elverişli bir zemin oluşturmuştur. Özellikle, Ukrayna topraklarında 10. yüzyılda kurulduğu kabul edilen Kıyiv Metropolitliğinin, 1686 yılında İstanbul Patrikhanesinin tartışmalı kararıyla Moskova Patrikhanesine devredilmesinin ardından Ortodoks kilise çeşitli Rus siyasi otoriteleri tarafından Ukrayinlerle Rusların sözde kardeşlik bağlarını güçlendirmek ve Ukrayinlerin Ruslaştırılmasına yönelik Rus emperyal politikalarının uygulanmasında araçsallaştırılmıştır. Bu nedenle, Sovyet sonrası Ukrayna'nın ulus ve devlet inşası sürecinde karşılaştığı önemli zorluklardan biri de Rusya'nın Ukrayna'da 'ajanı' olarak görülen Ukrayna

Ortodoks Kilisesi-Moskova Patrikhanesinin (UOK-MP) ülkedeki Ortodoks nüfus üzerinde etkili olduğu kiliseler ekseninde parçalanmış Ukrayna Ortodoksluğudur.

2018'deki Birleşme Konseyi'ne kadar Ukrayna Ortodoksluğu üç Ortodoks kiliseye bölünmüştü: UOK-MP, Kıyiv Patrikhanesi ve Ukrayna Otosefal Ortodoks Kilisesi. UOK-MP, Sovyet döneminde Moskova Patrikhanesinin Ukrayna koluydu. Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılmasından kısa bir süre önce bu kilisenin adı *Ukrayna Ortodoks Kilisesi* olarak değiştirilmiştir. Çoğunlukla Rus ya da Ruslaşmış Ortodoks Ukrayinlerin yaşadığı ve Rus egemenliğinin tarihsel olarak Ukrayna'nın diğer bölgelerine göre daha uzun sürdüğü ülkenin güney ve doğu kesimlerinden destek görmüştür. Kendisini bu kiliseye bağlı hissedenlerin ve kilisenin sahip olduğu dinî bölge sayısı dikkate alındığında UOK-MP, Ukrayna'nın önde gelen Ortodoks kilisesiydi. 1992'de kurulan Kıyiv Patrikhanesi, UOK-MP'den sonra ülkenin en büyük ikinci Ortodoks Kilisesiydi. Çoğunlukla ülkenin batı ve merkez bölgelerinde desteklenen kilisenin faaliyetleri bu bölgede yoğunlaşmıştır. Ukrayna Otosefal Ortodoks Kilisesi ise Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılmasından kısa bir süre önce kurulmuş, ağırlıklı olarak Ukrayinlerin yaşadığı batı Ukrayna'da az sayıda Ortodoks cemaatiyle faaliyetlerini sürdürmekteydi. Kıyiv Patrikhanesi ve Ukrayna Otosefal Ortodoks Kilisesi Ortodoks dünyada kanonik olarak tanınmazken, UOK-MP, Moskova Patrikhanesi tarafından kendisine özerklik verildiğini ve dolayısıyla Ukrayna'nın tek kanonik Ortodoks Kilisesi olduğunu iddia etmekteydi. Ayrıca, Ukrayin milliyetçiliğinin önemli destekçileri olan Kıyiv Patrikhanesi ve Ukrayna Otosefal Ortodoks Kilisesini ayrılıkçı olmakla suçlamaktaydı. Bu iki Ortodoks kilisenin yanı sıra Ukrayna Grek Katolik Kilisesi tarihsel olarak Ukrayin milliyetçiliğinin önemli bir savunucusu olmuştur. Ancak kilisenin etkisi Ukrayna'nın batı kesiminde oldukça bölgesel düzeyde kalmıştır. Ek olarak, bu Kilise Ortodoks Hristiyanlığın ayin ve ritüellerini korusa da papalık otoritesini kabul ettiği için çoğunlukla Ukrayna'daki Ortodoks kiliselerin birleşme sürecinin dışında kalmıştır.

Sovyet rejiminin din karşıtı politikası, 1980'li yılların ortalarından itibaren Gorbaçov'un başlattığı reformlar sayesinde yerini liberal din politikalarına bırakmıştır. Sovyetlerin din karşıtı politikasının yumuşaması Ukrayna'da dinî canlanmayı tetiklemiştir. Her ne kadar Ukrayna siyasi seçkinleri liberal din

politikalarını benimsemiş ve ülkede dinî özgürlüğü teşvik etse de Moskova Patrikhanesinden bağımsız otosefal bir Ukrayna Ortodoks kilisesi kurma konusu siyasi ve dinî gündemde kalmaya devam etmiştir. Öyle ki, ilgili akademik çalışmalarda sıklıkla Rusya yanlısı duruşuyla anılan Viktor Yanukoviç dışındaki Ukrayna cumhurbaşkanları otosefal Ortodoks kilise kurulması fikrini desteklemişler ve bu amaç doğrultusunda çeşitli girişimlerde bulunmuşlardır. Ancak girişimleri çeşitli sebepler nedeniyle başarısızlıkla sonuçlanmıştır.

2014'teki AvroMeydan Devrimi ve ardından meydana gelen olaylar zinciri- Kırım'ın Rusya tarafından ilhakı ve Ukrayna'nın doğusunda Rusya destekli ayrılıkçılara karşı savaş- sonrasında Moskova'nın etkisinden bağımsız ve Ortodoks dünyada kanonik olarak tanınan kilise kurulması fikri, Ukrayna'nın siyasi ve dinî gündeminin öncelikli konulardan biri haline gelmiştir. 2014-2019 yılları arasında Ukrayna'da cumhurbaşkanlığı yapan Petro Poroşenko'nun çabaları neticesinde Ukrayna'da otosefal bir kilise kurma süreci birbirini takip eden üç aşamada tamamlanmıştır. İlk olarak, 11 Ekim 2018'de İstanbul Patrikhanesi, 1686 yılında Kıyiv Metropolitliğinin İstanbul Patrikhanesinin dinî yetki alanından Moskova Patrikhanesine 'transfer edilmesi' kararını iptal etmiş ve Kıyiv Patrikhanesi ve Ukrayna Otosefal Ortodoks Kilisesi liderleri üzerindeki aforoz kararlarını kaldırmıştır. İkinci aşamada, 15 Aralık 2018'deki Birleşme Konseyi'nde diğer otosefal Ortodoks kiliseler tarafından tanınmayan Kıyiv Patrikhanesi ve Ukrayna Otosefal Ortodoks Kilisesi kendilerini feshetmiş ve UOK-MP'den iki metropolitin katılımıyla Ukrayna Ortodoks Kilisesi kurulmuştur. Kilisenin lideri olarak metropolit Epifaniy seçilmiştir. Üçüncü aşamada ise İstanbul Patrikhanesi Patriği Bartholomeos, 6 Ocak 2019'da İstanbul'da düzenlenen törende Ukrayna Ortodoks Kilisesine otosefali veren belgeyi -*Tomos*-kilisenin liderine vermiştir. Moskova Patrikhanesi, Ukrayna'nın kendi dinî yetki alanında olduğunu iddia ederek İstanbul Patrikhanesinin Ukrayna Kilisesine otosefali verme sürecini engellemeye çalışsa da başarılı olamamıştır. İstanbul Patrikhanesinin tarihî kararıyla Sovyetler Birliği'nin çöküşüyle ivme kazanan bağımsız bir kilise kurma girişimleri başarıyla neticelenmiştir.

Bu tez, 2019 ve 2020 yıllarında Ukrayna'da (Kıyiv) ve 2022 ve 2023 yıllarında Türkiye'de (Ankara) yapılan saha araştırmalarının verilerine dayanarak, 2019 yılında

Ukrayna Ortodoks Kilisesinin kurulmasının ardındaki nedenlerin çok boyutlu ve çok yönlü olduğunu ve bu nedenlerin çok az araştırmacı tarafından incelendiği öne sürmektedir. Rusya'nın etkisinden bağımsız ve Ortodoks dünyada kanonik olarak tanınan Ukrayna yanlısı bir Ortodoks kilise kurma fikrinin ardındaki nedenlerin, Rusya'nın Ukrayna'nın toprak bütünlüğünü ve devlet egemenliğini ihlal etmesiyle tetiklendiğini savunmaktadır. Bu bağlamda çalışma, 2013'ten itibaren Ukrayna'da yaşanan olaylar zincirinin, 2019'da Ukrayna Ortodoks Kilisesi'nin kurulması için elverişli ulusal ve uluslararası koşullar yarattığını iddia etmektedir. Poroşenko ise bu elverişli koşulları başarılı bir şekilde kilisenin kurulması yönünde harekete geçirmeyi başarmıştır. Ayrıca bu tez, Ortodoks kilisenin Ukrayna-Rusya ilişkilerindeki tarihsel rolünü değerlendirerek, bağımsız bir Ukrayna kilisesinin kurulmasının Ukrayna'nın Sovyet sonrası devlet inşası için kritik bir önem taşıdığını iddia etmektedir.

Yukarıda belirtildiği gibi bu çalışma, Ukrayna cumhurbaşkanlarının Ukrayna'da otosefal bir Ortodoks kilise kurma girişimlerini analiz etmeyi ve kilisenin Ukrayna'nın Sovyet sonrası devlet inşası sürecindeki önemini tartışmayı amaçlamıştır. Bu hedefler doğrultusunda; Kıyiv ve Ankara'da akademisyenler, Ukrayna devlet yetkilileri, Ukraynalı din adamı, sivil toplum örgütü temsilcileriyle toplam 23 adet yarı yapılandırılmış uzman ve elit mülakatları gerçekleştirilmiştir. Mülakatlardan elde edilen veriler tematik analiz ile analiz edilmiştir. Tematik analiz, nitel verilerin analizi için güçlü tekniklerinden biri olarak görülmekte ve bu nedenle nitel araştırma yapan araştırmacılar tarafından yaygın olarak kullanılmaktadır. Araştırmacılar birbirinden farklı tematik analiz teknikleriyle ilgilenmektedir. Bu çalışma, Braun ve Clarke tarafından detaylandırılan ve tematik analiz için rehber olarak görülebilecek beş aşamayı takip etmiştir: Verilere aşina olmak, başlangıç kodlarını oluşturmak, temaları aramak, temaları tanımlamak ve adlandırmak ve rapor üretmek. Bu aşamaların doğrusal olması gerekmemektedir. Diğer bir deyişle, araştırmacı tematik analizin bahsi geçen aşamalarına dönebilir, ek değerlendirmeler yapabilir. Mülakat verilerinin tematik analizinin yanı sıra bu tezde, Ukrayna ve Rusya'daki bazı üst düzey siyasi ve dinî seçkinlerin ve İstanbul Patrikhanesinin resmî açıklamalarından ve medya röportajlarından da yararlanılmıştır. Ayrıca araştırma konusuyla ilgili mevcut akademik çalışmalar, ulusal ve uluslararası sivil toplum kuruluşlarının raporları ve Ukrayna devletinin ilgili resmî belgeleri

kullanılmıştır. Bahsi geçen kaynaklar, bu çalışmanın saha araştırmasından elde edilen verilerine yardımcı kaynak olarak kullanılmıştır. Diğer ifadeyle, çalışmanın merkezinde mülakat yapılan elit ve uzmanların araştırmanın sorularına ilişkin duygu, düşünceleri ve algıları yer almaktadır.

Çalışmanın literatür araştırmasında ilk olarak, Sovyet sonrası Ukrayna'da otosefal bir Ortodoks kilise elde etme çabalarının amacını değerlendirmek için modern otosefal Ortodoks kiliselerin ortaya çıkışı ele alınmıştır. Bu bağlamda, ulusal Ortodoks kiliselerin ortaya çıkışını kavramsallaştırmayı amaçlayan çalışmaların, Doğu Ortodoksluğunun kurumsal özelliklerini ve Bizans İmparatorluğu'nun senfoni yani karşılıklı iş birliği olarak ifade edilebilecek kilise-devlet ilişkilerindeki mirasını öne çıkardığı görülmüştür. Ayrıca ilgili çalışmaların, ulusal Ortodoks kiliselerin ortaya çıkışına ilişkin 19. yüzyıldaki gelişmelere odaklandığı anlaşılmıştır. Bu dönemde, Osmanlı Devleti çeşitli nedenlerden dolayı giderek zayıflamış ve bu süreçte sınırları içersinde ulus devletlerin ortaya çıkışına tanıklık edilmiştir. Balkanlarda Osmanlı Devleti'ne karşı verilen bağımsızlık mücadeleleri, tüm Ortodoks Hristiyanların başı olarak faaliyet gösteren İstanbul Patrikhanesinden bağımsız ulusal Ortodoks kilise elde etme arayışıyla paralel ilerlemiştir. Dönemin karmaşık dinî ve siyasi dinamiklerin bir sonucu olarak, Yunanistan, Sırbistan, Bulgaristan ve Romanya'da olduğu gibi ulusal Ortodoks kiliseler ortaya çıkmıştır. Her bir kilisenin dinî yargı yetkisi, karşılık geldiği ulus devletin siyasi sınırlarıyla sınırlanmıştır. Bu bağlamda, bağımsız bir devlete sahip olmak daha sonraki dönemlerde otosefal bir kiliseye sahip olma arzusunun temel gerekçesi olduğunu söylemek yanlış olmayacaktır. Otosefal Ortodoks kiliselerin kurulmasının, Rus İmparatorluğu'na ve ardından onun selefi Sovyetler Birliği'nin yönetimine tabi diğer Ortodoks Hristiyanlar için geçerli olamamıştır. Ancak 19. yüzyıldaki gelişmelere ilişkin elde edilen görüşler, birçok araştırmacının 1991'de Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılmasından sonra bağımsızlığını elde eden devletlerde yükselen otosefali taleplerini anlamaları için bir rehber olarak görülmüştür.

Çalışmanın bu bölümünün ilgili kısımlarında Doğu Ortodoksluğu'ndaki kilise-devlet ilişkisiyle Katolik ve Protestanlıktaki kilise-devlet ilişkileri kısaca karşılaştırılmıştır. Tarihsel olarak bir değerlendirme yapıldığında, Batı'daki papalık otoritesinin devlet

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üzerinde kontrol talebinde bulunduğu ve bunun kilisenin belirlenmiş siyasi sınırlarda egemenin gücüne meydan okuduğu görülmüştür. Kilise ve devlet arasındaki çatışmalı tarihsel süreçle birlikte kilise, Batılı devlet inşası sürecinde kurumsal olarak devletten ayrılmıştır. Doğu Ortodoksluğu söz konusu olduğunda, yüzyıllardır süregelen otosefali kavramı, 19. yüzyılda birçok araştırmacı tarafından dile getirildiği gibi modern halini almıştır. Buna ek olarak, 19. yüzyılda yeni kurulan ulus devletlerde otosefal Ortodoks kilisenin kurumsallaşması modern devlet inşası sürecinin bir parçası olarak görülmüştür. Ortodoks Kilisesi ve ilgili ulus devletin aynı toprak sınırlarına dayandığı ve devlet inşasında önemi göz önüne alındığında, kilise ve devletin egemenliklerinin birbiriyle çatışmalı olmaktan ziyade, -19. yüzyılda Balkanlarda olduğu gibi- birbirlerinin egemenliklerini destekler nitelikte olduğu kanaatine varılmıştır. Bu bağlamda, araştırmanın teorik çerçevesi kilise ve devlet ilişkilerine yönelik eleştirisel bir bakış geliştirerek, çağdaş kilise-devlet ilişkilerinin çeşitlilik gösterdiği ve ikisi arasında katı bir ayrımın ne tek bir model olduğu ne de devleti seküler olarak tanımlamak için gerekli olduğu sonucuna varmıştır. Dolayısıyla Ortodoks kilise ile uzun süredir emperyal güçler ya da dini kamusal ve özel alanda yasaklayan totaliter komünist ve sosyalist rejimler tarafından yönetilen Ortodoks çoğunluklu ülkelerin devlet inşa süreci arasındaki yakın bağ vurgulanmıştır. Diğer bir deyişle, Ortodoks kilise, bağımsız ve egemen bir devlet kurmayı amaçlayan 'işgalciye' karşı siyasi aktörlerle iş birliği yapmış ve bunu devletin siyasi sınırları içinde otosefal bir kilisenin kurulması izlemiştir. Bu bağlamda, Ukrayna örneği bu perspektiften analiz edilmelidir çünkü Sovyetler Birliği'nin çöküşü ve bağımsız Ukrayna devletinin kuruluşu, Rusya'nın siyasi etkisi devam ettiği için tamamlanamamıştır. Rusya'nın etkisi, Ukrayna topraklarında hem siyasi hem de dinî kurumlar aracılığıyla ve Ukrayna'yı kendi kanonik topraklarının bir parçası olarak tanımlayarak devam etmektedir. Bu durum, otosefal bir Ukrayna Ortodoks Kilisesinin egemen, bağımsız ve modern bir Ukrayna devleti için hayati önem taşıdığını göstermektedir.

Çalışmanın üçüncü bölümünde, Ortodoks Hıristiyanlığın Ukrayna topraklarında yayılmaya başlamasından 1991 yılına kadar olan tarihsel seyri, ilgili siyasi arka planlar çerçevesinde, Ukrayna ve Rusya'nın birbiriyle çatışan ulusal tarih anlatılarından yola çıkarak sunulmuştur. Bu amaç doğrultusunda, bir kurum olarak

Kıyiv Metropolitliğine odaklanılmıştır. Ayrıca Kıyiv Metropolitliğinin Ukrayna ulus kimliği ve devlet oluşumundaki rolü gibi bazı konulara da değinilmiştir. Bu bölüm kapsamında doğrudan veya dolaylı olarak ilgili tüm konuları ele almak mümkün olmadığından, 2019'da Ukrayna Ortodoks Kilisesinin kurulmasına ilişkin Sovyet sonrası tartışmaların anlaşılmasını mümkün kılan anlatılar öne çıkarılmıştır. Daha önce belirtildiği üzere, Ukrayna topraklarının çeşitli bölgeleri tarih boyunca farklı siyasi yönetimlere tabi olmuştur. Buna ek olarak, Ukrayna toprakları Ortodoks ve Katolik merkezleri ve iki önemli Ortodoks Hristiyanlık merkezleri (İstanbul ve Moskova) arasındaki sürekli rekabete tanıklık etmiştir. Ukrayna topraklarında siyasi ve dinî alanlarda çeşitli değişiklikler olsa da Kıyiv Metropolitliği siyasi otoriteler için bir prestij ve meşruiyet kaynağı olarak konumunu büyük ölçüde korumuştur. Ancak 1686 yılında Kıyiv Metropolitliğinin Moskova Patrikhanesine bağlanmasıyla Ukrayna Ortodoksluğu Rus hâkimiyetine girerek, Ruslaştırma politikalarının önemli bir aracı olmuş ve bu bağlamda Ortodoks kilise Ukrayna ulusal örgütlenmesinin bir figürü olmaktan uzak kalmıştır. Diğer taraftan, Kıyiv Metropolitliğine ilişkin anlatı inşasında öne çıkan şey, tarihsel sürekliliğe dayanan devlet kavramıdır. Başka bir ifadeyle, Ukraynalılar tarihlerinin büyük kısmında istikrarlı bağımsız bir devlete sahip değilken, Ruslar Ortodoks Hristiyanlığın gelişiminde önemli rol oynayan etkili siyasi otoriteler kurabilmişlerdir. Bu durum, daha sonra Rus anlatısında Ukrayna topraklarında gelişen Ortodoks Hristiyanlık üzerinde hak iddia edebilmenin önemli bir aracına dönüşmüştür.

Çalışmanın dördüncü bölümü, bağımsızlıktan 2014'ün başına kadar farklı cumhurbaşkanları dönemindeki otosefali taleplerini incelemeyi amaçlamıştır. Ayrıca Ukrayna'daki Ortodoks kiliselerin birleştirilmesine ve otosefal bir Ukrayna Ortodoks kilisesi kurmaya yönelik girişimler, cumhurbaşkanların çeşitli politikaları çerçevesinde detaylandırılmaya çalışılmıştır. Bölümün öncelikli hedeflerinden biri - daha sonra kısaca bahsedileceği üzere- Kravçuk, Kuçma, ve Yuşçenko'nun başarısız girişimlerinin ardındaki nedenleri detaylandırabilmek olmuştur. Beşinci bölümde ise AvroMeydan, Kırım'ın Rusya tarafından ilhakı ve Ukrayna'nın doğusunda Rusya destekli ayrılıkçılarla savaşın Ukrayna üzerindeki etkileri kısaca değerlendirilirken, Poroşenko'nun ulus ve devlet inşasına yönelik politikalarına yer verilmiştir. Ayrıca 2019'da Ukrayna Ortodoks Kilisesinin kurulmasına giden yoldaki girişimlerin

değerlendirilmesi yapılmıştır. Bu bölümde aynı zamanda gerçekleştirilen saha araştırmasının verileri sunulmuştur.

Saha araştırmasının verileri, Ukrayna Ortodoks Kilisesinin 2019'da kurulmasının ardındaki önemli nedenlerden biri olarak Ukrayna Ortodoksluğunun karşılaştığı tarihî adaletsizliklere karşı Ukraynalıların uzun süredir devam eden mücadelesinin olduğunu göstermiştir. Dolayısıyla İstanbul Patrikhanesinin Ukrayna Ortodoks Kilisesinin otosefal Ortodoks kilise olarak tanıması, görüşmecilerin birçoğu tarafından tarihî adaletin gerçekleşmesi olarak görülmektedir. Görüşme verileri aynı zamanda tarihsel adaletsizlik algısının, Ukraynalıların tarihsel ve kanonik olarak kendi bağımsız Ortodoks Kilisesine sahip olmaları gerektiği görüşünden beslendiğini göstermiştir. Görüşmelerde, tarih boyunca Rus siyasi ve dinî otoritelerin Ukrayna'nın Rus etkisinden kurtulmasına karşı çıktığı belirtilmiştir. Kısaca, görüşme verileri Rusya'nın, Ukrayna'yı bağımsız bir Ortodoks kiliseden mahrum bıraktığı ve tarihsel adaletsizliğin kaynağı olarak görüldüğü belirtilmiştir.

Mülakat verileri, İstanbul Patrikhanesinin 1686 yılında Kıyiv Metropolitliğini Moskova Patrikhanesine devrettiği iddia edilen kararın, Ukrayna Ortodoksluğuna ilişkin tarihsel adaletsizliğin temel kaynağı olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Mülakatlardaki ortak görüş, Moskova Patrikhanesinin, Kıyiv Metropolitliğini kilise kanunlarına aykırı bir şekilde kontrol altına aldığı yönündedir. Mülakatlarda İstanbul Patrikhanesinin kararının neden kilise kanunlarına aykırı olduğuna yönelik iki alt tema vurgulanmıştır. Mülakatlarda daha az dile getirilen alt tema, Moskova Patrikhanesinin dönemin İstanbul Patriğine, Kıyiv Metropolitliğini Moskova Patrikhanesinin dinî yetki alanına devretmesi için rüşvet verdiği ve Patriği bu hususta zorlamasıdır. Bu bağlamda, dönemin değişen dinî ve siyasi dinamiklerinin İstanbul Patrikhanesini, Moskova Patrikhanesinin yasadışı hamlelerine karşı savunmasız hale getirmiş olabileceği belirtilmiştir. Tarihsel adaletsizliğe yol açtığına ilişkin daha çok dile getirilen diğer alt tema ise Moskova Patrikhanesinin Kıyiv Metropolitliğini ele geçirmek için bahsi geçen kararın kasıtlı olarak Moskova Patrikhanesi tarafından yanlış yorumlanmasıdır.

Mülakat verilerinde, Ukrayna Ortodoks Kilisesinin otosefali elde etmesini mümkün kılan bir diğer neden olarak, İstanbul ve Moskova Patrikhaneleri arasında Ortodokslukta lider olma rekabeti öne çıkmıştır. İlgili akademik çalışmalarda ve gerçekleştirilen mülakatlarda, her ne kadar bu rekabetin tarihsel köklerine vurgu yapılsa da 1991 yılında Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılmasından sonra bağımsızlığını kazanan devletlerde kurulan Ortodoks kiliselere hangi patrikhanenin otosefali verme yetkisine sahip olduğunun Ortodoks dünya liderliği çerçevesinde önemli bir konu olduğu vurgulanmıştır. Görüşme verileri ayrıca, Ukrayna'nın Ortodoks Hristiyan olduğunu belirtenlerin ve kiliselerin sayısı göz önüne alındığında hem İstanbul Patrikhanesinin hem de Moskova Patrikhanesinin Ortodoks dünya liderliği iddiasında önemli bir yer tuttuğunu ortaya koymuştur.

Mülakat verileri, İstanbul ve Moskova Patrikhaneleri arasında Ukrayna Ortodoksluğu üzerinde yaşanan rekabetin 1990'larda açık bir şekilde yaşanmadığını göstermiştir. Gerçekleştirilen mülakatların bazılarında, İstanbul Patrikhanesinin, Moskova'ya bağlı Ukrayna Ortodoks Kilisesinin hâkim olduğu parçalanmış Ukrayna Ortodoksluğuna aktif bir şekilde müdahale etmekten kaçındığı dile getirilmiştir. Gerçekleştirilen mülakatlardan hareketle, İstanbul Patrikhanesi Patriği Bartholomeos'un, Ukrayna'da Moskova Patrikhanesi ile açık bir çatışmadan kaçındığı ve Ukrayna Kilisesine otosefali vermesi durumunda bunun kendi prestiji üzerinde yaratabileceği olası olumsuz etkinin farkında olduğu söylenebilir. Bu nedenle Patrik Bartholomeos Ukrayna otosefali konusunda dengeli bir duruş sergilemiştir. Bu bağlamda, görüşme yapılan kişilere, Patrik Bartholomeos'un Ukrayna otosefali meselesine yönelik tutumunun değişmesinde neyin ya da nelerin etkili olduğuna ilişkin sorular sorulmuştur. Mülakatların birçoğunda, 2016 yılında İstanbul Patrikhanesi tarafından düzenlenen ve Moskova Patrikhanesinin katılmadığı Pan-Ortodoks Konsil'in, Patrik Bartholomeos'un tutumunun değişmesine neden olduğu sıklıkla vurgulanmıştır. Moskova Patrikhanesi, Konsil'in hazırlık toplantılarına katılmasına rağmen Konsil'e kısa bir süre kala katılmayacağını duyurmuştur. Patrik Bartholomeos'un özel önem verdiği bu Konsil'e Moskova Patrikhanesinin katılmaması, Patrik tarafından Moskova'nın İstanbul Patrikhanesinin Ortodoks kiliseler nezdindeki statüsüne muhalefet olarak görülmüştür. Kısaca, mülakat verileri Konsil'den sonra daha da yoğunlaşan İstanbul ve Moskova

Patrikhanesi arasındaki rekabetin Ukrayna kilisesinin otosefali elde etmesinde önemli bir etken olduğuna işaret etmiştir.

Mülakat verilerinin öne çıkardığı bir diğer tema ise Ukrayna'da otosefali elde etme çabasının, Ukrayna'nın Rusya'ya karşı egemenliğini koruma mücadelesiyle yakından ilgili olduğudur. Rusya'nın 2014 yılında Kırım'ı ilhak etmesi ve Ukrayna'nın doğusunda Rusya destekli ayrılıkçılara karşı devam eden savaş, Ukrayna'yı derin bir krize sürüklemiştir. Öyle ki, 2014 yılından itibaren Ukrayna, uluslararası alanda tanınan ülke sınırları üzerindeki devlet egemenliğini kaybetmiştir. Rusya'nın, Ukrayna'nın devlet egemenliğini ve toprak bütünlüğünü ihlal etmesinin ardından, Rusya'nın, Ukrayna'daki müdahale araçları devlet düzeyinde güvenlik kaygılarını artırmıştır. Mülakat verileri, UOK-MP'nin Ukrayna'da Rusya yanlısı bir kurum olarak algılandığını ve Ukrayna'nın Rusya destekli ayrılıkçılara karşı doğu Ukrayna'da yürüttüğü mücadelesini baltalamak için Rusya tarafından araçsallaştırıldığını ortaya koymuştur. Bu nedenle, mülakatların birçoğunda, Ukrayna'nın tek kanonik Ortodoks kilisesi olduğunu iddia eden UOK-MP'nin, Rusya'nın Ukrayna'daki saldırganlığını çeşitli seviyelerde desteklediğini ve bu nedenle Ukrayna'nın ulusal güvenliğini güçlendirmek için Ukrayna yanlısı bağımsız bir kilisenin kurulması gerektiği dile getirilmiştir. Bu bağlamda, otosefal Ortodoks kilisenin güvenlik boyutu sıklıkla vurgulanmıştır.

Çalışmanın sonuç bölümünde, daha önce belirtildiği gibi, 2019 yılında Ukrayna Ortodoks Kilisesinin kurulmasına katkıda bulunan faktörlerin karmaşık ve çok boyutlu olduğu öne sürülmüştür. Diğer bir deyişle, Kilisenin kurulmasının birçok faktörden etkilendiği ve Kilisenin kurulmasını tek bir faktörle açıklamanın yanlış olacağı savunulmuştur. Bu iddianın ardında, Kilisenin kurulduğu Poroşenko dönemindeki çabalara odaklanmak yerine Kilisenin kuruluşunun Sovyet sonrası Ukrayna'da bir süreç olarak değerlendirilmesi yatmaktadır. Bu nedenle, önceki cumhurbaşkanlarının otosefal bir Ortodoks kilise kurma girişimlerindeki başarısızlığın nedenleri, Kilise'nin 2019 yılında başarıyla kurulmasıyla birlikte analiz edilmiştir.

Daha önce dile getirildiği gibi, Yanukoviç hariç, tüm Ukrayna cumhurbaşkanları – Kravçuk, Kuçma ve Yuşçenko- Moskova Patrikhanesinden bağımsız, İstanbul Patrikhanesi tarafından otosefal Ortodoks kilise olarak tanınan bir Ukrayna Ortodoks kilisesi kurulması için çaba harcamışlardır. Ancak her biri çeşitli nedenlerden dolayı başarılı olamamışlardır. Diğer bir taraftan bu üç cumhurbaşkanı, girişimlerinin sonuçsuz kalmasına sebep olacak bazı benzer zorluklarla karşı karşıya kalmışlardır. Bunlardan birkaçını belirtmek gerekirse; kiliseler arasındaki kişisel güç mücadelelerinin şiddetlendirdiği parçalanmış Ukrayna Ortodoksluğu, Moskova Patrikhanesinin Ukrayna Ortodoks Kilisesinin otosefal statüsü elde etmesine katı muhalefeti ve UOC-MP üzerindeki güçlü etkisi, Patrik Bartholomeos'un bölünmüş Ukrayna Ortodoksluğuna müdahale etmede tereddüt etmesi, ülke içi siyasi istikrarsızlık, Ukrayna'nın Batı ve Rusya arasındaki salınımı, zayıf ulusal kimlik ve farklı tarihsel deneyimlere ve toplumsal hafızaya sahip bölgelerin varlığı gibi sebepler örnek olarak verilebilir.

Kravçuk ve Yuşçenko'nun bağımsız bir Ukrayna Ortodoks kilisesi kurma çabaları Ukrayna'yı Rusya'nın siyasi ve dinî etkisinden kurtarma çabalarıyla paralel gitmiştir. Bu, ülkenin Batı'ya yönelmesinin bir işareti olsa da bölünmüş Ukrayna siyaseti her iki cumhurbaşkanının da otesefali elde girişimlerini olumsuz etkilediği söylenebilir. Ukrayna'nın doğu ve güney bölgelerinden destek alan ve Ukrayna'nın Rusya yönelimini savunan eski komünist rejimin siyasi seçkinleri Kravçuk döneminde hâlâ etkiliydi. Kuçma, Batı ve Rusya ile ilişkileri geliştirmeyi amaçlayan çok yönlü bir dış politika benimsemiş ve Ukrayna'nın farklı bölgelerini ötekileştirmekten kaçınmıştır. Otosefal bir Ukrayna Ortodoks kilisesi elde etmeye çalıştığı ikinci cumhurbaşkanlığı dönemi ise ilgili çalışmalarda sıklıkla otoriter rejim ve siyasi skandallarla karakterize edilmiştir. Bu durumun, Batı'nın Ukrayna'ya desteğinin azalmasına ve Ukrayna'nın Rusya ile yakınlaşmasına zemin hazırladığını söylemek yanlış olmayacaktır. Yuşçenko'nun cumhurbaşkanlığı ise göreve başlamasından kısa bir süre sonra siyasi krizlerle çevrelenmişti.

Kuçma ve Yuşçenko'nun otosefal bir kilise kurulmasına yönelik girişimleri, bu hususta isteğin yeterli olamayacağını, parçalı Ukrayna Ortodoksluğunun birleştirilmesi için iyi organize edilmiş girişimlerin ne denli önemli olduğunu ortaya

koymuştur. Her iki cumhurbaşkanı Ukrayna Ortodoksluğu'ndaki bölünmenin sonlandırılması gerektiğini vurgulasa da pratikte etkili bir rol üstlenememişlerdir. Özellikle Kuçma, kilisenin kurulması doğrultusunda net bir politikaya bağlı kalmaması nedeniyle eleştirilmiştir. Diğer taraftan, Kravçuk ve Kuçma'nın etkisiz girişimleri, harekete geçmeden önce ilgili faktörleri analiz etmenin ve olası tüm sonuçları dikkate almanın ne kadar önemli olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Öyle ki, Kravçuk'un bağımsız bir kilise kurma çabaları Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılmasının sunduğu fırsattan yararlanmayı amaçlarken, Ukrayna Ortodoksluğunun daha da parçalı bir hal almasına neden olmuştur. Otosefal statüsünü alma şansını artırmayı amaçlayan Kuçma, kilise sayısı bakımından önde gelen UOK-MP'sini desteklemiştir. Mülakat verilerinden hareketle, bu hamlenin Rusya yanlısı olarak görülen kilisenin Ukrayna'daki konumunu önemli ölçüde güçlendirmesine neden olduğu söylenebilir.

Bunlara ek olarak, Kravçuk, Kuçma ve Yuşçenko, kilise kurma girişimlerinde İstanbul Patrikhanesi Patriği Bartholomeos'un desteğini almakta başarılı olamamışlardır. Bu durum çeşitli nedenlerle açıklanabilir. Daha önce ifade edildiği gibi Bartholomeos, esas olarak UOK-MP hâkim olduğu parçalı Ukrayna Ortodoksluğuna müdahale etmekten kaçınmış ve Ukrayna'nın kendi kanonik topraklarının bir parçası olduğunu iddia eden Moskova Patrikhanesi ile karşı karşıya gelmekten çekinmiştir. Kısaca, cumhurbaşkanlarının girişimleri ulusal (kiliseler arası mücadele ve iç politikadaki bölünme gibi) ve uluslararası (İstanbul Patrikhanesinin Ukrayna'nın otosefal Ortodoks kilisesine aktif katılımı) destekten yoksundu. Birbiriyle bağlantılı olan bu olumsuz koşullar cumhurbaşkanların girişimlerini de etkilemiş, başkanların yanlış hamleleri de eklenince bağımsız bir Ukrayna Ortodoks Kilisesi kurulması mümkün olmamıştır.

Ukrayna'daki siyasi, toplumsal ve dinî manzara, AvroMeydan Devrimi'nden, Rusya'nın Kırım'ı ilhak etmesinden ve Doğu Ukrayna'da Rusya destekli ayrılıkçılara karşı yapılan savaştan sonra dramatik bir şekilde değişmiştir. Tüm bunlar, dönemin cumhurbaşkanı Poroşenko'yu savaş koşullarının yol açtığı birçok sorunla karşı karşıya getirmiştir. Diğer taraftan, Rusya'nın, Ukrayna'nın toprak bütünlüğünü ihlal etmesi ve ülkenin doğusunda devam eden savaş, Ukrayna'da Rusya yanlısı

duyguların azalmasına yol açmış ve bağımsızlığından bu yana zayıf bir ulusal kimliğe sahip olduğu iddia edilen Ukrayna'da ulusal kimliğin güçlenmesini sağlamıştır. Buna ek olarak, işgal altındaki bölgelerde yaşayanların ulusal seçimlere katılamamaları, çoğu Rusya yanlısı politikacılara giden oyların seçimlere dâhil edilmemesine neden olmuştur. Bu, daha önce Batı yanlısı ve Rusya yanlısı olarak ikiye ayrılan Ukrayna siyasetinde ilk kez Batı yanlısı kampın parlamentoda çoğunluğu oluşturmasını sağlamıştır. Başka bir deyişle, bağımsızlıktan bu yana Batı yanlısı ve Rusya yanlısı siyaset arasındaki salınımların tamamen Batı odaklı hale geldiği söylenebilir. Dinî manzarada ise Ukrayna yanlısı kiliseler, Ukrayna'nın toprak bütünlüğünü ve egemenliğini destekleyerek toplumsal prestijlerini artırmışlardır. UOK-MP' sinin Rusya yanlısı faaliyetleri sonucunda bu kilise, Rusya'nın Ukrayna'daki bir 'ajanı' olarak algılanmaya başlanmıştır. Bütün bunların bağımsız bir Ukrayna Ortodoks Kilisesinin kurulması için ülke içi uygun koşullar hazırladığı düşünülebilir. Buna ek olarak, daha önce belirtildiği gibi İstanbul ve Moskova Patrikhaneleri arasındaki Ortodoks dünya liderliği rekabeti, Moskova Patrikhanesinin 2016 yılında düzenlenen Pan-Ortodoks Konsil'e katılmaması neticesinde şiddetlenmiş, diğer faktörlerle birlikte İstanbul Patrikhanesi Patriği Bartholomeos'un Ukrayna otosefali konusunda önceki tavrına kıyasla daha net adımlar atmasını sağlamıştır. Bu durum, Ukrayna Ortodoks Kilisesinin kurulmasını sağlayan elverişli uluslararası koşul olarak görülebilir.

Mülakat verileri ve ilgili akademik çalışmalar, Kilisenin kurulması için elverişli ulusal ve uluslararası koşulların yanı sıra Poroşenko'nun 2015'ten itibaren Ukrayna'da otosefal bir Ortodoks kilisenin kurulmasıyla aktif olarak ilgilendiğini ortaya koymuştur. Poroşenko, Ukrayna yanlısı Ortodoks kiliseler arasındaki diyalogun sağlanmasında öncü bir aktör olmuş, kiliseler arasında birleşme müzakerelerinin sekteye uğradığı 2015 yılında, İstanbul Patrikhanesi ile ilişkileri geliştirmeye devam etmiştir. Mülakat verileri, 2016 yılında, Moskova Patrikhanesinin Pan-Ortodoks Konsil'e katılmaması sonucu İstanbul Patrikhanesi ve Moskova Patrikhanesi arasında gerilimin arttığı süreçte, Poroşenko'nun resmî olarak İstanbul Patrikhanesine otosefal statü için başvurmasının stratejik bir hamle olarak değerlendirilebileceğini ortaya koymuştur. Kısaca, Poroşenko döneminde ulusal ve uluslararası elverişli koşullar, otosefal statü için uygun bir zemin hazırlarken

Poroşenko'nun da olumlu olarak değerlendirilebilecek bu koşulları bağımsız bir kilise kurulması doğrultusunda başarıyla harekete geçirdiği söylenebilir. Bu bağlamda, 2014 yılında göreve başlamasının ardından Poroşenko'nun Ukrayna'nın devlet egemenliğini ve ulusal kimliği güçlendirmeye yönelik önemli reformları dikkate alındığında bu çalışma, Poroşenko'nun Moskova Patrikhanesinin etkisinden kurtulmuş bağımsız bir kilise kurulması yönündeki çabalarını kendisinin siyasi kariyeriyle ilişkilendirmenin doğru olmayacağını savunmaktadır.

Diğer taraftan, Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılmasının ardından otosefal bir kilise yaratma girişimleri, Ukrayna'nın devlet egemenliğini pekiştirecek diğer politikalarla beraber düşünülebilir. Kravçuk döneminde görüldüğü üzere otosefal Ortodoks bir kilise kurma girişimlerinin, 19. yüzyılda Balkanlarda kilisenin devlet inşa sürecindeki rolüyle benzerlik gösterdiğini söylemek yanlış olmayacaktır. Daha önce de belirtildiği üzere, ulusal Ortodoks kiliselerin kurulması çoğunlukla bağımsız bir devlet oluşumunu takip etmiş ve Kilisenin toprak sınırları -kanonik bölge- çoğunlukla devletin siyasi sınırlarıyla örtüşmüştür. Ancak Moskova Patrikhanesi, Sovyetler Birliği dağıldıktan sonra Sovyet sınırlarını kendi kanonik bölgesi olarak kabul etmiştir. Bu nedenle Kravçuk'un "bağımsız bir devlet - bağımsız bir Kilise" fikrini vurgulaması şaşırtıcı değildir.

Çalışmanın birçok yerinde vurgulandığı gibi Rus siyasi ve dinî çevreleri Ukrayna'yı egemen bir devlet olarak kabul etmeyi reddetmiş ve Rusya'dan ayrı bir Ukrayin kimliğinin varlığını inkâr etmiştir. Mülakat verileri de Rus tarafının bu tutumunun 'Kutsal Rus' ve 'Rus Dünyası' gibi farklı politika, kavram ve fikirlere yansıdığını göstermiştir. Bu bağlamda, Kravçuk döneminden itibaren Ukrayna toplumunun bazı kesimleri tarafından önemsenen "bağımsız devlet-bağımsız kilise" normatif anlayışının 2014 sonrasında Ukraynalılar arasında yaygınlaşmayı başladığı ve UOK-MP aracılığıyla Rusya'nın Ukrayna üzerinde bir güvenlik tehdidi olarak görüldüğü söylenebilir. Bu bağlamda, savaş koşullarında UOK-MP'nin Ukrayna ulusal güvenliğine ve Ukrayna halkına karşı faaliyetleri, ulusal çıkarlara hizmet eden ve Rusya'nın etkisini önleyen bağımsız bir Kilisenin acil bir ihtiyaç olduğunu açıkça ortaya koymuştur. Yani Kilise bağımsızlığının normatif anlayışı Ukrayna için acil bir ihtiyaca dönüşmüştür. Diğer bir deyişle, Ukrayna Kilisesinin kurulması, Ukrayna

Kilisesi ile Ukrayna devleti arasındaki senfonik ilişkileri temsil etmekten ziyade Rusya Federasyonu, Moskova Patrikhanesi ve UOK-MP'nin Ukrayna'daki güçlü senfonik ilişkilerini ortadan kaldırmayı amaçladığı söylenebilir. Tüm bunlara ek olarak, otosefal bir Ukrayna Ortodoks Kilisesi, siyasi sınırların kanonik bölge ile örtüşmesi dikkate alındığında Ukrayna'nın ulusal sınırlarının güvence altına alınması anlamına gelmektedir. Bunun aynı zamanda Ukrayna devletinin bağımsızlığının ve egemenliğinin de güvence altına alınması anlamına geldiğini söylemek yanlış olmayacaktır.

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2. "Sovyet Sonrası Ukrayna'da Dini Canlanma ve Ortodoks Kiliseler: Ukrayna Ortodoks Kiliselerinin Birleşmesi", *Sovyet Sonrası Ukrayna'da Devlet, Toplum ve Siyaset – Değişen Dinamikler Dönüşen-Kimlikler* (Der. Ayşegül Aydıngün ve İsmail Aydıngün), Ankara: AVİM, 165-206.

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