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THE CONFRONTATION, INTIMIDATION AND NEW DIVISIONS? A CONTROVERSIAL PATH TO THE CREATION OF THE AUTOCEPHALOUS ORTHODOX CHURCH IN UKRAINE

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Abstract: This article analyses the establishment of the autocephalous Orthodox Church in Ukraine. It explains the main steps that were taken in Ukraine towards obtaining autocephaly for the Orthodox Church, namely for two non-canonical groups — 'Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church' and 'Ukrainian Orthodox Church -- Kiev Patriarchate', which formally merged in December 2018. A special attention is devoted to the analysis of the events in 2018, starting from the April 2018 request of the Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, addressed to the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos. I argue that the move towards autocephaly was dictated primarily by politico-ideological reasons and was accompanied by the rise of confrontation and a lack of cooperation. The majority of Orthodox, belonging to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), opposed this process, which made them the subject of intimidation campaigns. It appears that in Ukraine there is an ongoing process of constructing a "radical other", and much effort is being devoted to making the Ukrainian Orthodox Church this "radical other", since the actions of this Church have been often interpreted in the most negative ways. Overall, the move towards autocephaly, instead of uniting Ukrainians, has brought about new dividing lines in Ukraine and has contributed to the split in global Orthodoxy.

Key words: Orthodox Church; identity; religion; Ukraine; autocephaly; Ecumenical Patriarchate; Moscow Patriarchate.

1. Introduction

15 December 2018 was designated by the then President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko as "the day of achieving final independence for Ukraine" (SPZh 2018). On that remarkable Saturday in mid-December, bishops of the Kiev Patriarchate (KP) and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC) assembled in the Church of St Sophia in Kiev, in order to start a new Church structure in Ukraine. This event, called the Uniting Council, was presided over by Metropolitan Emmanuel (Adamakis), hierarch of the Ecumenical (Constantinople) Patriarchate. The composition of the Council reflected the roles and proportional significance of the Churches which took part in it. There were 42 bishops from the KP and 12 from the UAOC (plus accompanying priests and laypeople; however, only hierarchs were given the right to vote in the elections for the head of this new Church). The presence of the Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko (in office in 2014-2019), who was sitting in the presidium among the Church hierarchs, was particularly notable: this was a clear reflection of the head of state's role in the autocephalic process. Although various sources predicted that there would be quite a sizeable presence of the hierarchs of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC), reality sharply differed from this prediction: only two hierarchs (out of 97) attended this Council, and even their formal membership of the UOC on the day of the Council was questionable, since it became known that they were admitted in the Constantinople Patriarchate before the Council.

The founding of the new Church, which received the name of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU), was the outcome of a chain of events, that followed the April 2018 request from Petro Poroshenko to the Patriarch in Istanbul. However, the head of the new Church, elected at the Council, could hardly be called a preferential figure for those who orchestrated this process. Metropolitan Epiphaniy (Dumenko) did not belong to the pool of the ideal candidates approved by the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Ukrainian President, who would have preferred to see Metropolitan Simeon (Shostatskiy) in charge of the OCU. They both canvassed and worked for the election of Shostatskiy; but even their efforts and influence were not sufficient to overcome the manipulative skills of the KP's head Philaret (Denisenko), who was actively promoting Epiphaniy. Metropolitan Epiphaniy, aged 39 (at the time of his election), became the youngest primate of the local Orthodox Church in the world.

In this article, I shall analyse how and in what context the creation of the autocephalous Orthodox Church of Ukraine proceeded. The theoretical foundation for this analysis has been constructed around key points addressing the issues of religion and national identity. Religion is an important element of national identity (Mudrov 2016) and, furthermore,

the religious affiliation is "one of the main sources shaping people's identities". The religious identities can be politicised, in order to mobilise support for political and religious purposes, and, furthermore, they can be securitised (Saleh and Kraetzschmar 2015, 550). In some cases, the securitising discourse "simultaneously ties the state to ethnicity/nationhood and ethnicity/nationhood to religion" (Tromble 2014, 529). Consequently, a group, feeling that its identity is under threat, will use various means, including force, to defend it. Further complexities may be provoked by the imposition of certain parameters of identity (for example, religious affiliation, language, interpretation of history), which are not acceptable for a particular section of society (Cram 2009, McLaren 2004). This is in line with the theoretical model for nation-state policies, developed by Stepan, Linz and Yadav, who claim that these policies presuppose "various forms of social pressure and coercion" for the assimilation into the nation-state identity and preventing "the emergence of alternative cultural identities", or their erosion if they exist. This approach will be contrasted with the "state-nation" policies, directed at respect and protection of "multiple but complementary sociocultural identities" (Stepan, Linz, and Yadav 2010, 53).

Our theoretical proposition is that the state-nation policies did not acquire adequate support among the Ukrainian ruling elites. On the contrary, via the dominance of the nation-state policies, successive Ukrainian governments were reinforcing the strength of nationalist identity, whilst the canonical Orthodox Church (UOC) was depicted as alien. This led to the alienation of a substantial portion of the Ukrainian population – mainly those who did not support nationalist ideas as building blocks for a new (or revised) national identity. These developments revealed the possible transformation of increasing identity tensions into long-lasting and deep divides, of ethno-national and ethno-religious character. Regarding the essence of the nation-state policies in Ukraine, one could recount a typological parallel with the Stuart Croft's depiction of the "Muslim other" in the UK, subdivided into (1) minority "radical" other and (2) majority mainstream other, with the former rejected and latter accepted (Croft 2012). In the Ukrainian case, clergy and faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church were depicted as "aliens" (radical other), who had to be marginalised and eventually replaced by more "patriotic" Church, acceptable to the ruling political elites and their domestic and foreign policies.

2. An Autocephalic Movement and the Ukrainian Orthodoxy

The Ukrainian authorities, starting from the first months of independence in Ukraine, generally favoured autocephalous ideas, although the level of their support varied. The first Ukrainian President,

Kravchuk (1991-1994) contributed to the split in Ukrainian Orthodoxy in 1992, giving his support to Philaret (Denisenko), who established a new Orthodox Church in Ukraine—Kiev Patriarchate, not recognised by the Orthodox Churches worldwide (Risu.org.ua 2011). In 1993, Kravchuk sent his representative, Deputy Prime Minister Zhilinskiy to discuss this issue with the Ecumenical Patriarch in Istanbul. However, at that time Patriarch Bartholomeos was convinced that the solution to the Ukrainian problem was only possible with the cooperation of the Moscow Patriarchate (Vlasov 2018). The next President, Kuchma (1994—2004), maintained a more balanced position towards autocephaly, although he was gradually leaning more in favour of it. Yelenskiy suggests that there was quite a subjective and personal reason for the Kuchma's change in the attitudes towards autocephaly. Reportedly, Kuchma was unhappy about paying a visit to Jerusalem without "his own" Patriarch, seeing at the same time that the heads of state of Russia, Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia where accompanied by the primates of their own national Churches. In any case, at the end of his second term Kuchma expressed his regret that he did not manage to gain an autocephalous status for the Orthodox Church in Ukraine (Yelenskiy 2018).

The idea of autocephaly and, in the first instance, the recognition of Ukrainian non-canonical Churches became of utmost importance for President Yuschenko (2005-2010). In the hope of ensuring support from Istanbul, he invited Patriarch Bartholomeos to the 2008 celebrations in Kiev, dedicated to the 1020th anniversary of the Baptism of Rus'. Yuschenko personally approached Bartholomeos during his visit to Ukraine with a request to grant autocephaly; however, there was no response from the Patriarch—neither positive, nor negative. Reportedly, Bartholomeos was ready to recognize the non-canonical Churches as a part of his Patriarchate, reinstating Kiev Metropolia under his supervision; however, this idea was rejected by Philaret who aimed at an independent Church. Basically, in 2008 the Ecumenical Patriarch was less willing to interfere in Ukrainian religious life: a stark contrast with what happened 10 years later.

During the Yanukovich Presidency (2010-2014), there was no support for autocephaly at the top political level. However, this changed rapidly following the ousting of Yanukovich and the election of a new Parliament and President. The Parliament (Verkhovna Rada) elected in 2014 on a post-Maidan nationalistic wave repeatedly confirmed its consolidated support of autocephaly. In June 2016, Verkhovna Rada submitted its appeal to Patriarch Bartholomeos, claiming that according to all criteria "Orthodox Church in Ukraine is ready ... to get the status of the Local Autocephalous Church". By making such an appeal and using such wording in its official documents, Parliament implicitly took on the theological function of identifying the "readiness" of the Church for obtaining a specific and very important ecclesiastical document. This judgment could hardly be appro-

priate for this or any political body, not composed of theologians and experts in canon law. Furthermore, Verkhovna Rada elaborated concrete recommendations to Istanbul, asking Ecumenical Patriarch: (1) to cancel the decision, taken in 1686 [to pass Kiev Metropolia to Moscow Patriarchate]; (2) to convene "all-Ukrainian uniting council to resolve all controversial issues and for the unification of Ukrainian Orthodoxy"; and (3) to issue Tomos of Autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in Ukraine (Postanova 2016). The Parliament's resolution was supported by 245 MPs, with only 20 MPs voting against.

Almost two years later, in April 2018 President Poroshenko appealed to Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos in a two-page letter, in which he also requested the issue of a Tomos of Autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in Ukraine. Speaking as a head of state who "represents its citizens, including those belonging to the Orthodox community", Poroshenko identified Bartholomeos as "the only person in the world" who had the right and authority "to solve such [religious] issues". The President's reasoning was centred on the people's freedoms, rights and sovereignty, with the suggestions that the Tomos "will strengthen even more religious freedom and inter-confessional peace in Ukraine, and will improve the rights and freedoms of [its] citizens". Besides, Poroshenko specified that the Tomos would complete the consolidation of sovereignty and independence "in the spiritual dimension" (Poroshenko 2018). This request was quickly endorsed by the Parliament: the resolution to support Poroshenko's appeal was registered on 18 April; and on the next day, on 19 April, it was included in the agenda and endorsed by the vast majority of the Members of Parliament, with 268 MPs voting in favour and only 36 against. Almost all Parliamentary factions unanimously supported the pro-autocephaly decision; the votes against were mainly coming from the "Opposition Bloc". In the explanatory note for this resolution, MPs pointed to what they regarded as a political role of the Moscow Patriarchate, stating that it "more and more often has the nature of the propaganda of annexation of Crimea and the support for the armed invasion of Russia in the east of our state". The parliamentarians also specified that there was a growing support of autocephaly among the people, as seen "in the recent sociological poll". The declared objective of the resolution was predominantly political: to hasten "the change of status of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and to establish its independence from the aggressor state" (Verkhovna Rada Ukraini 2018).

The April actions of the President and Parliament highlighted the substantial degree of mutual agreement of the post-Maidan political elites in their quest for autocephaly of the Orthodox Church. To add a religious component to this political symbiosis, signatures of the bishops of the Kiev Patriarchate and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church were enclosed with the President's request (Ukrinform 2018). In principle, the 2018 autocephalic movement could manifest itself as a reflection of state-

nation policies, should it gain the support of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. However, the lack of this support turned the whole process into quite a different enterprise. In fact, the UOC refrained from supporting the 2018 initiative from the very beginning. After the Parliament's resolution was adopted, the press-service of the UOC specified that the appeals from the state authorities to Patriarch Bartholomeos with the requests to grant autocephaly can only be regarded as an "abuse of authority" and "interference in Church affairs" (Strana.ua 2018). Only a handful of its priests have publicly supported the move towards autocephaly. This is especially meaningful in view of the fact that this Church has retained the largest number of practicing Orthodox faithful in Ukraine. Thus, it became a unique situation in the history of Orthodoxy and in the global Orthodoxy at present: the minority Orthodox groups, heavily supported by the state authorities, have aimed at autocephaly, while the majority Church has consistently opposed it. The movements of the 19th century, when the Greek, Romanian, Bulgarian and Serbian autocephalous Churches were established, have not encountered such paradoxical divisions (Damian 2011). The 19th century autocephalies were gained in the atmosphere of the unity of clergy and faithful – a stark contrast to the 21st century Ukraine. The establishment (or, more correctly say, imposing) of autocephaly from above, with the opposition from the largest Church in Ukraine, has further underlined the artificiality of this process and its conformity to the nation-state rather than state-nation policies.

3. UOC as the Largest Church

The domination of nation-state policies and the construction of the "radical other" from the UOC looks like a particularly dubious enterprise in these circumstances, given that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church maintains the majority Church's status. It is not surprising therefore that some efforts have been made to prove that the UOC, especially after the 2014 Revolution of Dignity, ceased to be the largest Church in Ukraine. During the Maidan events, the UOC KP and UAOC, as well as Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC), were showing their unstinting support to protesters, both by declarations and actions. For the UOC, the issue was much more delicate, since the faithful of this jurisdiction were on the both sides of the conflict—among those who actively supported the protests as well as among those who fiercely opposed the change of power in Ukraine and did not approve the growing nationalist sentiments. However, since the protesters emerged as the winners, it is not surprising that the post-Maidan authorities were creating less favourable conditions for the UOC MP compared to those prior to 2014. As noted earlier, the objective was to minimise the influence of the UOC and turn it into the minority Church.

Relying on the outcomes of some sociological polls, one could even assume that this aim was achieved, but I believe that such reliance constitutes a flawed argument. Indeed, the polls have produced contradictory and at times extremely polarised results. On the one hand, according to 'Razumkov Centre', in 2016 only 14.9% respondents identified themselves as affiliated with the UOC, while 25.6% stated that they belong to the Kiev Patriarchate. The figures are similar for the year 2018: 12.8%-- UOC, 28.7%—KP (Osoblivosti 2018). On the other hand, the 'Ukrainian Sociology Service' in a poll, conducted in September 2016, identified that 39.4% of the respondents belong to the UOC, while the belonging to the KP was declared by the 25.3% of the respondents (Rian.com.ua 2016). In view of these sharply incompatible figures, the statistics for the number of religious communities and clergy look more reliable and more representative. The latest information is given in Table 1.

Table 1. **Religious statistics for Ukraine -- Orthodox (as of January, 2018)**

	Number of parishes (religious organisations)	Number of priests	Number of monasteries/monks and nuns
UOC	12069	12283	251/4412
KP	5167	3640	62/216
UAOC	1167	693	12/15

Source: Religiyniye Organizatsiyi v Ukraine

Here the following should be noted. First, there were no substantial changes in these numbers even after 2014, for all three Churches—UOC, KP and UAOC. Second, the share of the parishes of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church continues to keep the substantial majority: slightly more than 66 percent of all Orthodox parishes are in this Church. As for the clergy, the share of the priests in the canonical Church is slightly more than 70 percent. Monks and nuns keep their undisputable loyalty to the UOC: only around 5 percent of them chose to be in the Kiev Patriarchate or the UAOC. It is therefore pertinent to claim that the most devout Christians, the spiritual and intellectual elites of Orthodoxy have remained in the canonical Church and refused to change sides. This statistics reflects an overwhelming domination of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, especially in view of the fact that, according to Mitrokhin, the UOC parishes are generally more numerous and better attended on Sunday and feast services than the parishes of the KP and UAOC.

4. The Autocephaly, Confrontation and Intimidation

The 2018 autocephalic initiative followed, as has been noted, "the substantial preparatory work", and certainly came at the right time for Poroshenko. Indeed, on the eve of 2019 elections and in the view of his declining popularity, the actions to promote autocephaly could become the decisive method by which Poroshenko increased his popular support and his chances of re-election. As was admitted by Cyril Hovorun, Poroshenko needed "some sort of breakthrough ... in the period when the country enters the electoral cycle" (Hovorun 2018). Although some observers believed that the 2018 appeal for autocephaly would be as failing as the previous ones, the reality turned to be sharply different. Responding to the April's request from Kiev, the Ecumenical Patriarchate declared that it regards itself as a "true Mother Church" [for Ukraine] and decided "to closely communicate and coordinate with its sister Orthodox Churches concerning this matter [request for autocephaly]" (Strana.ua 2018a). The attempts from the Moscow Patriarchate to somehow influence Constantinople's approach did not succeed: even the personal visit of Patriarch Cyril to Istanbul on 31 August 2018 and his negotiations with Bartholomeos did not alter the latter's perspectives. Constantinople's decisions were straightforward and decisive; these were coming amid the protests from the UOC, which raised its voice against the Presidential-backed push towards autocephaly and unilateral interference from Istanbul in Ukrainian religious life.

The UOC has already entered into a path of ordeal for its non-conformist perspective. In fact, this Church became the subject to unpre-cedented intimidation campaigns soon after the Maidan forces gained power in 2014. In principle, the Ukrainian mass-media has never been sympathetic towards the UOC (Interview with Vecheria 2016), but this degree of antipathy varied. The first strong negativity against the Ukrainian Orthodox Church was revealed in the early 1990s, when the non-canonical Churches as well as the Greek Catholics were actively forming their new structures in Ukraine. Indeed, as Metropolitan Antoniy (Pakanich), chancellor of the UOC admitted, comparing the present-day situation with the events which occurred more than 25 years ago, "there was something similar in the 1990s: Churches were captured, priests were thrown out, believers were persecuted". But difference was also observed: even in the 1990s, which began the years of the post-Soviet ordeal for the UOC, "there was no such an amount of lies against the Church, which we have observed now". As can be seen from the opinion of Metropolitan Antoniy, the information attacks against the UOC have climbed to unprecedented levels (Mitropolit Antoniy 2016, 1-2).

In fact, what was happening in Ukraine since 2014 in relation to the UOC was the creation of what Croft described as the "other" or even "radical other" (Croft 2012). The UOC has always been a part of Ukrainian

society, embracing people of different political and ideological views. Hovorun claims that two Ukrainian Presidents—Kuchma and Yanukovich supported UOC; while Kravchuk and Yuschenko were extending their support to the Kiev Patriarchate. However, the deliberate construction of an image of an enemy, as radicalized as it is portrayed today, has never occurred in the history of independent Ukraine. The accusations, made against the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, have been persistent, strong and radical, involving current relations between Ukraine and Russia, the military conflict in the Donbas and the secession of Crimea in 2014. In fact, these accusations have been extremely political, with the use of language which can only be regarded as hate speech and with speculations which are not only hard to prove but are also hard to believe. The Church is accused of being a fifth column in Ukraine, of acting in a manner not compatible with the interests of the state and Ukrainian people. It is depicted as a "Kremlin organisation", which initiated (or contributed to the beginning of) the war in Ukraine, which aims to undermine Ukrainian sovereignty and acts against the independent Ukrainian state. The actions of the Church are often interpreted in the worst possible manner; sometimes 'facts' are simply invented, in order to prove the statements which would have looked implausible otherwise. According to Oleg Denisov, negative information about the UOC has been on the rise: since 2015 there were about 700 negative and intimidating publications in various mass-media (Golos.Ua 2018). In this context, the reasoning of Archbishop Kliment Vecheria is quite understandable: „For the whole period of the existence of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the inde-pendent Ukraine, I could not remember the time when mass-media (especially those which are supported by the state) were loyal towards the UOC. In general, mass media have been focused on the creation of certain bad rep jackets and intrigues, thus raising their ratings on the confrontation. Therefore the UOC became a convenient victim, the object for manipulations. It happened in the past, but now it has gained a tougher character. I can say for sure that one of the central TV channels, such as "1+1" regularly publishes information about the Church life and 99 percent of this information is false" (Interview with Vecheria 2016).

In most cases, the lies remain unpunished; and even the apologies from those who distribute the hate and lies are rare. The constraining mechanisms, which somehow worked before 2014, were largely abandoned after the Revolution of Dignity, which paved the way for certain ideological clichés in relation to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. This ideological justification is also conveniently used for more radical actions, such as the intimidation from authorities and the spread of violence. As a testimony to that, from 2014 to 2018 there were around 50 cases of illegal and violent seizures of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church's buildings (Zakvasin and Lushnikova 2018).

5. The Interference from Istanbul

In general, the Patriarchate of Constantinople has turned a blind eye to these campaigns of intimidation. Instead of supporting the suffering UOC, Bartholomeos has proceeded with the autocephalic initiative, knowing well that it would be resisted by many Orthodox Ukrainians. In early September 2018, he appointed two exarchs in Kiev (Daniil and Hilarion), who were tasked with negotiating in Ukraine with the parties interested in promoting/acquiring autocephaly. The UOC protested; Metropolitan Onufriy (head of Ukrainian Orthodox Church) declined to meet these exarchs, and the UOC Synod asked them to leave Ukraine (UOC 2018). However, one month later the Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, held on 9-11 October in Istanbul, took decisions further propelling misunderstandings and conflicts. Constantinople "re-established" its Stavropegion in Kiev and cancelled its own 17th century decree, giving the Moscow Patriarch the right to ordain the Metropolitan of Kiev. The Ecumenical Patriarchate reinstated into their ecclesiastical ranks the heads of KP and UAOC -- Philaret Denisenko and Makariy Maletich, although it did not recognize them as the heads of two independent Ukrainian Churches. Interestingly, the same day the decision was announced – on 11 October -- Philaret stated that "I have been and I shall remain Patriarch", thus publicly challenging the decision taken in Istanbul (Gurianov 2018). The EP's Synod also underlined that it would "proceed to the granting of Autocephaly to the Church of Ukraine" (Ecumenical Patriarchate 2018).

Reacting to these decisions, the Moscow Patriarchate gradually loosened its ties with Constantinople. The appointment of exarchs was viewed as a gross interference in the canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC). In response, Moscow prohibited its hierarchs from concelebrating with the hierarchs of Constantinople and withdrew from the theological/ecumenical commissions, chaired by the representatives of the Constantinople Patriarchate. The October decisions in Istanbul were perceived in Moscow as a decisive unfriendly move against the Russian Orthodox Church. At its Synod, held in Minsk on 15 October 2018, the ROC decided to break the Eucharistic communion with Constantinople. Also, it appealed to other Orthodox Churches to discuss the Ukrainian problem with a suggestion to hold a Pan-Orthodox meeting (Russian Orthodox Church 2018). The Moscow Patriarchate's decision was accepted by Kiev: at the Bishops' Council on 13 November, the UOC ceased the Eucharistic communion with the Ecumenical Patriarchate and declared the "unlawful interference" of Constantinople as "unacceptable" (Department 2018). This break of communion between two Patriarchates has continued up to the present day; however, the communion was preserved with 13 other local Orthodox Churches. Some of them (Serbian Church and Polish Church) have already decided not to recognize the decisions, taken

at Constantinople, particularly the reinstating of Philaret and Makariy in their ecclesiastical ranks. Metropolitan Sawa, head of the Polish Orthodox Church, said that those who are defrocked by the decision of the canonical Orthodox Church, will not be recognized "until their repentance" (Interview with Hrycuniak 2018).

Overall, the 2018 path towards autocephaly was accompanied by confrontation and uncooperative language, while the reasoning in favour of autocephaly lacked specifically religious arguments. In fact, the reasoning has been overwhelmingly secular: a surprise to those who wished to see in an independent Church religious enterprise rather than the fulfilling of politicians' dreams. Poroshenko has repeatedly pointed out that the issue is related to "our national security and our defence in the hybrid war, because the Kremlin considers the Russian Church as a key instrument to exert influence in Ukraine" (Khomenko 2018). Immediately after the 11 October decision of the EP's Synod, Poroshenko declared that "The issue of Tomos and Autocephaly … is a matter of our independence, … our national security, … our statehood. This is a matter of the entire global geopolitics" (President of Ukraine 2018). Interestingly, not only politicians, but even some Church leaders spoke in a similar non-religious language, putting their vision of the state's interest in first place. Philaret was adamant in claiming that "to save Ukrainian state, we need not only strong army, we need Church, for spiritual foundation. To make this foundation strong, Orthodoxy should be united, and the Tomos is necessary for that". In a further confrontational move, Philaret suggested that those from the UOC who would refrain from entering a new Church should be renamed by a vote in Parliament—as the "Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine", and should not be allowed to use the word "Ukrainian" in their name. He also stated that Lavras in Kiev and Pochaev must belong to the [new] Ukrainian Church, emphasizing that "it cannot be otherwise", even if the opinion of monks living in these Lavras is different (Koshkina 2018).

6. Misinformation and Further Division

The path towards autocephaly, reflecting the politisation of religious identities, was accompanied by the proliferation of false and biased information. The parties were misquoting each other; there were attempts to interpret some decisions and declarations in ways, looking more favourable for supporters of autocephaly. In some cases, flawed information was created at the top political levels. For instance, the then Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration Rostislav Pavlenko distorted the Polish Orthodox Church's opinion on the issue, denying the existence of the Church's call to coordinate granting of autocephaly with all other Orthodox Churches. In fact, this decision, initially taken in Warsaw in May 2018, was further confirmed by the Polish Church in

November, at the Bishops' Council, which clearly stated that a Pan-Orthodox meeting is desirable for the solution of Ukrainian problem (Polski Autokefaliczny Kościół Prawosławny 2018). Chairman of Ukrainian Parliament, Andrei Parubiy, after paying his visit to Tbilisi, stated that the Georgian Patriarch expressed his hope "for the positive solution of this issue [autocephaly]". In reality, the Patriarch did not express any support for autocephaly; his assessment was quite neutral and reserved, he only spoke about the need "to refrain from premature assessments" (Pravmir.Ru 2018).

Misinterpretations took place even at the level of the Foreign Ministry. The Ukrainian Ambassador in Cyprus, after meeting Archbishop Chrysostomos II, said that the Church of Cyprus supported autocephaly, which was contrary to the information published on the Church's website (SPZh 2018a). Perspectives of the Catholic Church were also presented in a distorted way; therefore, the MFA's statement that the Vatican "respects the decision of Ukrainian people regarding the creation of the United Local Church" was immediately corrected by the Apostolic Nunciature in Kiev, which claimed that "the Holy See never did and has no intention whatsoever of expressing any evaluation, in any venue" (Apostolic Nunciature in Ukraine 2018).

It might be possible that some politicians and civil servants were acting in, what they think, were the best interests of Ukraine (at least in the way that they understand them). However, they decided to use the Church to promote these interests, despite the Church and its faithful never having asked for their assistance or their interference. The way that was chosen to promote these interests was obviously not acceptable to a substantial portion of Orthodox believers and was, in fact, harmful to the largest Orthodox Church in Ukraine and its followers. The actions undertaken did not lead to unity in Ukraine; in fact the opposite appears to be true, as seen from the latest sociological polls. Indeed, in spite of the 37% support for the establishment of the Single Local Orthodox Church [percentage of those who are 'fully supportive' as of September 2018], this idea has failed to turn into an enterprise, which could potentially unite Ukrainians. Arguably, the main cluster of support has formed in the western and central regions of Ukraine. This statistically is seen in the following: in the western Ukraine, 51% of the respondents are fully supportive of the Single Orthodox Church, while in the centre of Ukraine this equals to 39%. This decreases to 27% in the southern Ukrainian regions and to 25% in the eastern. No information is available for Crimea and the parts of Lugansk and Donetsk regions not controlled by the Ukrainian government, but it is likely that in these regions the support for autocephaly will be negligible.

The highest support for the Single Orthodox Church has been registered, paradoxically, among the non-Orthodox: 64% of Greek Catholics are fully supportive of this enterprise. Even among the faithful

of Kiev Patriarchate the share of supporters is lower -- 56%, while in the UOC it drops to 15%. Also, most people supporting autocephaly are more than 51 years old— 44% in this age group support the formation of the Single Orthodox Church, while for a younger generation (18-35) this figure is only around of 27% (Rating 2018). In view of this data, it is fair to claim that the most vivid support for autocephaly is found among those clusters of Ukrainian believers who are more favourable towards the nation-state policies (the faithful of UGCC and KP). At the same time, one can observe that attempts to mobilise all-Ukrainian support for religious purposes, as required for politicizing and securitising of religious identities, have generally failed.

7. Conclusions

The religious events of 2018 mean a U-turn in the Church-state and inter-jurisdictional relations in Ukraine, as well as the inter-Orthodox relations on the global level. It is very unlikely that Ukraine will return even to the relative stability of early 2018; most probably, the future will bring more uneasiness and trouble. The following should be noted in this regard.

First, in spite of the creation of the (formally) independent Orthodox Church in Ukraine, it is very probable that Constantinople will keep its firm control over the newly established Church, as envisioned in its Statute. Indeed, the Tomos signed by Patriarch Bartholomeos in Istanbul on 5 January, 2019 established a high degree of dependency of the OCU on the Ecumenical Patriarchate—more substantial than the dependency of the UOC on the Moscow Patriarchate. In these circumstances, Constantinople has already encountered resistance from those who wish for real Church independence, rather than dependence on another foreign entity, this time in Turkey. On the global level, there will be an increasing split and growing tensions between the Ecumenical and the Moscow Patriarchates, with a further distancing between the Churches, which accept/reject Constantinople's approach to Ukraine.

Second, the actions of Constantinople, although welcomed by the Ukrainian authorities and a fraction of Ukrainian Orthodox, may potentially deepen the divisions in Ukrainian society. It is likely that the vast majority of the UOC will remain as it is: in communion with Moscow Patriarchate, without changing jurisdiction. However, the enemisation of the UOC will probably continue, thus increasing the level of hatred towards it and potential violence. Indeed, following the establishment of OCU some radical nationalist groups have threatened the UOC and attempted to seize some Churches; and at times the local authorities have been involved in actions against UOC parishes (Strana.ua 2019). It is therefore logical to expect that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church will be

continuously featured as a "radical other"; however, it will equally continue to enjoy the support of a substantial portion of Ukrainians. As a result, the new dividing lines will further alienate people from different regions and different Church jurisdictions in Ukraine, pushing aside the prospects for unity and reconciliation.

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