

DOI <https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2022-3-5>

THE INFLUENCE OF THE PRESIDENCY INSTITUTE ON THE UKRAINIAN INDEPENDENT ORTHODOX CHURCH FORMATION

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Abstract. The current political situation in Ukraine shows a deep crisis in relations in many spheres of social life, including interfaith relations. The purpose of the article is to highlight the problems of the political influence of the presidency institution during the Ukrainian statehood birth and to apply this knowledge to the realities of modern society. The Orthodox Church is the dominant confession in Ukraine, but today it is in the stage of division into different jurisdictions. It has been proven that the unification of the divided branches of Ukrainian Orthodoxy will contribute to the consolidation of Ukrainian society, especially in the presence of open external aggression. It was established that the presidency institution itself plays an extremely important role in state policy in the religious sphere. The article analyzes that Ukrainian Presidents actively participated in the religious policy of the state and contributed to the formation of the United Local Church. Therefore, the church is an important factor in the consolidation of the divided Ukrainian society, therefore the state policy in this area should be directed to support the project of the Local Church.

Key words: Church, President, political institution, authority, autocephaly, political influence.

Introduction. The political sphere is a social space that is formed by arrangement of organized relationships between people. Ensuring the stability of such an organization was entrusted to political institutions that were formed during a long historical development and expressed the political interests of certain social groups. A feature of political institutions is their legitimacy. As institutions of state power, they are legitimate in origin, whose activities are regulated by legislation that defines their powers and functions.

In the political system of Ukraine, one of the types of political institutions that affects the sphere of state-religious relations is the institution of the President of Ukraine. The President is the guarantor of the state sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, compliance with the Constitution of Ukraine, human and citizen rights and freedoms in Ukraine, ensures the national security of the state by acting to protect its national interests. At the same time, as the Head of State, he has the opportunity to shape the directions of state religious policy and its implementation. In particular, the President of Ukraine is obliged to ensure the right to freedom of conscience and religion and their observance; submit draft laws regulating social relations in the religious sphere to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine for consideration; endowed with the right to prepare and introduce draft decrees and orders that determine the vector of religious policy; creation of consultative and advisory bodies in the field of religious issues; The President of Ukraine establishes presidential rewards and awards them to prominent religious figures.

The purpose of the article is to highlight the transformational processes of the presidency institution and its importance in modern state policy in the field of religion. All presidents in the Ukraine's independence history introduced their own bills and pursued original policies regarding Orthodox churches. Therefore, the attention of the research is focused precisely on attempts at state regulation and attempts to establish inter-confessional and state-church relations. The task of the research is an attempt to develop a new, alternative approach to the problem of influence and state regulation of state policy in the religious sphere in Ukraine by the presidency institution.

Research methods. The lack of a developed methodology and significant political interest leads to the emergence of new theories and state-church interaction systems. Development of new approaches in domestic and foreign scientific literature regarding possible directions of harmonization and synchronization of relations between state and religious institutions stimulate the need to systematize existing and new methodological developments. The distinction of the methods from the researched subject into groups that will allow for a comprehensive understanding of the subject of state religious policy and autocephalous issues is significant, in our opinion: general scientific, special and interdisciplinary.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Nowadays, the state of scientific development of the chosen topic is ambiguous. Thousands of speeches, public statements and official letters of Ukrainian Presidents and high-ranking government officials. It is important to note that individual state leaders, such as V. Yushchenko and P. Poroshenko, did not hide their affiliation to the UOC of the Kyiv Patriarchate (OCU). At that time, V. Yanukovych openly supported the Moscow Patriarchate. To a large extent, this influenced the state policy regarding the "privileged" and "hostile" churches. From here, we state the presence of religiously engaged literature and relevant draft laws. The positions of the leading Ukrainian hierarchs of various denominations mirror the state's policy. Polemics and debates between hierarchs of different denominations lead to twisting and distorted interpretation of ancient canons and historical church practice. We must state that the signing of the Tomos for Ukraine once again attracted the attention of the hierarchy and secular scientists from all over the world.

The classic scientific basis for substantiating the problem of the autocephalous system, canonical territory and state-church relations in general is revealed in the works of well-known domestic researchers and canonists I. Vlasovskyi, O. Kyrydon, P. Kraljuk, O. Lototskyi, Y. Mulyk-Lutsik, O. Sagan, L. Filipovych, Y. Chornomorets and others, who repeatedly drew attention to the problems of state power and its influence on the church paradigm. It is also worth including scientists with a world name: V. Asmus, D. Bingham, A. von Harnack, J. Hoffmann, J. Zizioulas, I. Isichenko, J. Robertson, A. Kartashev, E. Kesariyskyi, N. Milash, E. Smirnova, S. Smirnova, K. Skurat, K. Ware, F. Uspensky and others.

The importance and relevance of the chosen topic is evidenced by a number of modern dissertation studies, for example, by V. Butynskyi, M. Hergeliuk, A. Didkivskyi, E. Zaremba. Particularly important and thorough are the works of the domestic scientist, who is one of the most famous ideologues of Ukrainian autocephaly in modern Orthodoxy, Archimandrite Kirill (Hovorun).

It should be noted that the history of state-church relations is considered in a significant number of works of domestic and foreign scientists of a geopolitical nature. It is noteworthy that a significant part of them is designed to determine the place and role of the presidency institution in the formation of a new independent Ukrainian Orthodox Church. It is the United Church that should contribute to the formation of Ukraine in the new geopolitical space of Europe. In particular, an integrated collective monograph of domestic scientists edited by Professor Felix Rudych (Rudych, 2002) is devoted to this issue.

Important for the article is the research of O. Balakirev and Y. Sereda, who, based on a wealth of statistical and sociological data, showed the restoration of religiosity after the collapse of the USSR and the role of each of the Ukrainian Presidents in this process. According to the study results,

religious organizations in Ukraine were more developed both in terms of number and diversity than, for example, in Russia. To a large extent, this is connected with the special attention of the highest-ranking officials to the religious issue in Ukraine. In the monograph, the authors highlighted the influence of the religious factor on democratization, trust in social institutions, volunteering and environmental protection.

It is necessary to prove a significant scientific, political and theological aspect of the chosen problem relevance, as well as the presence of a number of thorough works on the topic. However, today the problem of the relationship between the state and the church in Ukraine, the possible models of their cooperation, and the place of the presidency institution itself in this dialogue remains poorly understood and fragmented. Therefore, the presence of a number of understudied scientific problems, in particular the selected one, regarding the structure and models of state-church interaction and the role of Ukrainian presidents in the religious policy of the state significantly actualizes the autocephalous topic.

Results and discussion. On the democratic principle of separation of church and state, the President of Ukraine within the limits of his constitutional powers has an influence on the formation of religious policy and religious processes in Ukraine, which usually depends on their personal attitude to religion and the church, denominational affiliation and relations with religious leaders (Sahan, 2001: 212].

The activities of the first President of Ukraine, L. Kravchuk, touched upon the issue of policy implementation in the sphere of religious relations of state authorities and church institutions. While in the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, L. Kravchuk led an ideological direction that spread atheistic propaganda and fought against religion in every possible way. Instead, the political events of the 80s and early 90s of the 20th century led to the transformation of approaches to religion – from struggle to acceptance and revival. During the tenure of L. Kravchuk, on April 23, 1991, the Law of Ukraine "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations" was signed, which was aimed at ensuring the right to freedom of conscience and religion. The policy of the first president in the sphere of state-church relations contributed to the formation of a new approach in electoral technology, according to which religion was considered as a tool for achieving political goals.

For the first time, the issue of the Local Orthodox Church was raised during the presidential campaign in 1991 at the All-Ukrainian Interreligious Forum, which was held on the initiative of L. Kravchuk. The presidential candidate appealed to representatives of religious organizations with the need to build an independent church that functioned in independent Ukraine. However, in the presidential program of L. Kravchuk, this issue was not raised, causing the formation of speculative tendencies of politicians in the field of religion. As a result, the President of Ukraine found himself in the conditions of the existence of two parallel Orthodox church structures, which were being revived, and the existing conflict between the Orthodox and Greek Catholics, caused by the politicization of religion.

The idea of creating an independent Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which would be close to the government, did not leave L. Kravchuk for a long time. He personally appealed to Moscow Patriarch Alexy II with a request to grant autocephaly to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, but Russia tried in every possible way to keep ecclesiastical Kyiv in its own force field. Insane pressure was being created on the pro-Ukrainian hierarchy. The bishops' council of the Russian Orthodox Church blocked consideration of L. Kravchuk's appeal as interference in church affairs, instead forcing Filaret to promise to renounce the metropolitan chair (Philip (Saliba), 2008). The Kharkiv Cathedral was held without the participation of Metropolitan Filaret, which led to the election of a new head of the UOC MP – Metropolitan Volodymyr (Sabodan). Relations between L. Kravchuk and the new Primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church gradually improved due to the latter's pro-Ukrainian position: "I cannot accuse Volodymyr of pursuing an anti-Ukrainian policy. In no case." However, the President of Ukraine had a negative attitude to the visits of the Head of the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Kirill and Russian church leaders to Metropolitan Volodymyr, seeing a threat to state sovereignty: "their goal is the formation of a single spiritual space and the revival of Holy Kyivan Rus, where

Russia and the Russian Orthodox Church will be the leaders. They are coming to create a full-fledged Moscow Metropolis in Ukraine" (Documents of the Sobor, 2016).

The religious policy of the President of Ukraine, L. Kravchuk, is unequivocally evaluated. On the one hand, he contributed to the processes of religious revival, building relations between the state and the church, and the desire to create a single Local Orthodox Church. Many of these processes contained a political component and were aimed both at solving religious problems and at increasing his own authority in religious circles. Instead, Kravchuk's unprincipledness led to a fiasco in the formation of the Ukrainian Local Orthodox Church, the cessation of inter-church confrontation, and the full protection of the right to freedom of conscience and religion.

Considerable attention was paid to religious policy in Ukraine during the presidency of L. Kuchma. In the pre-election programs for the post of President of Ukraine in 1994, L. Kuchma declared "equal attitude of the state to all religions and confessions and non-interference of authorities in their affairs" (Kirylo (Hovorun), 2019: 121). Note that, unlike his predecessor L. Kravchuk, Kuchma provided the electorate with a detailed plan for the development of state-church relations, proving his understanding of the role of religion in the political sphere. However, the focus of the President's policy on harmonizing relations with Russia was reflected in the issue of the independence of the Ukrainian church. If L. Kravchuk focused on the UOC-KP in his religious policy, L. Kuchma, on the other hand, openly supported the UOC-MP. The president openly demonstrated his affection for Metropolitan Volodymyr (Sabodan), systematically visited churches and was present at church services. Moreover, L. Kuchma awarded clergymen of the UOC MP with state awards and contributed to the return of religious buildings and property under the jurisdiction of this church. A similar policy was followed by the closest entourage of the President, causing the tendency of politicians to demonstrate their religious affiliation for dividends in the next elections.

Public support of the UOC MP did not prevent L. Kuchma from implementing the principle of equality of religions, faiths and religious organizations before the law. For the first time, he started the tradition of the participation of religious figures in the inauguration events of the President of Ukraine.

L. Kuchma paid considerable attention to the issue of the unity and independence of Ukrainian Orthodoxy, realizing the political necessity of the state to have an independent church: "There seem to be 15 Orthodox states. And only Ukraine and Belarus do not have an autocephalous Church. Belarus, of course. It is part of the union state with Russia. And God himself ordered Ukraine to have its Local Church" (Papkova, 2011: 211). By maintaining close relations with the hierarchs of the UOC MP, L. Kuchma hoped that this would allow him to obtain autocephaly from the Russian Orthodox Church.

The priority direction of the religious policy of the President of Ukraine V. Yushchenko was the creation of a single Local Church. In his pre-election program, he particularly focused on "promoting the unity of the people of Ukraine, the orientation of society and the state to universal human values, which will live according to God's and human law" (Sahan, 2004: 206). In the sphere of state-church relations, he continued to develop the policy of L. Kravchuk and L. Kuchma built on partnership principles.

Like previous presidents, V. Yushchenko openly declared his affiliation and commitment to the UOC KP, participating in the services of this church, contributing to the building of relations with Patriarch Filaret, whom he called a "spiritual guide." However, personal religious affiliation did not prevent the president from conducting a productive dialogue with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church: "this cooperation depends to a lesser extent than before on the personal likes and dislikes of one or another politician" (Oleksandr (Drabynko), 2018: 320). The establishment of V. Yushchenko's close cooperation with Orthodox denominations was conditioned by an attempt to overcome church division and promote the unity and independence of Ukrainian Orthodoxy: "I believe that the establishment of the Unified Local Orthodox Church will be a great historical truth and justice for Ukraine". The presence of a single Local Church would allow V. Yushchenko not only to fight for the presiden-

tial seat for a second term, but also to strengthen Ukrainian statehood, raise its status on the international arena, and establish national identity, contributing to the consolidation of Ukrainian society.

During his presidential term, V. Yushchenko tried to initiate a dialogue between the UOC and the UOC KP. He repeatedly appealed to Metropolitan Volodymyr to support his initiative. At the end of 2006, the president met with the hierarchs of the UOC, at which the president presented his solution to the problem. At the beginning of 2007, V. Yushchenko made a proposal to the UOC to create a joint commission, which developed a mechanism for uniting the two jurisdictions into a single church structure. However, in 2009, the Holy Synod of the UOC decided to renew the negotiation process with the UAC without the president's interference in church affairs (Gergelyuk, 2014: 106).

Religious policy was an important component of the activities of the President of Ukraine V. Yanukovych. Despite the declaration of equal rights and opportunities for all religious organizations and denominations, he created favorable conditions for the functioning of the UOC. Later, already openly, V. Yanukovych demonstrates his religious affiliation and commitment to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which supported him in the presidential election campaigns. The open lobbying of the interests of the hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate was determined by political motives: "the Orthodox Church has always been considered as an electorate for the authorities. She likes to rely on priests to achieve her political goals" (Herhelyuk, 2014: 152).

V. Yanukovych was not particularly concerned about the formation of a single Ukrainian local church. Unlike his predecessors, the president did not raise the issue of autocephaly with Russian Patriarch Kirill and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. V. Yanukovych's religious policy was severely criticized by representatives of various denominations and religious organizations.

The President of Ukraine P. Poroshenko actively participated in the process of autocephalization, who sent Bartholomew a personal letter and confirmed the desire of the political elite to resolve the religious problems of the Ukrainian Church as soon as possible. In his repeated appeal dated April 17, 2018, the President of Ukraine expressed a request to provide the Orthodox Church in Ukraine with a Tomos on autocephaly. The head of state was convinced that such a step would strengthen religious freedom and interfaith peace in Ukraine, strengthen the rights and freedoms of citizens, complete the affirmation of Ukraine's independence and autonomy in the spiritual dimension, and raise the authority of the Ecumenical Patriarch among Ukrainians to new heights (Dokumenty Soboru, 2016).

P. Poroshenko's initiative to the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew regarding the granting of autocephaly to the Ukrainian Church was supported by a special resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine dated April 19, 2018. In addition, the resolution contained the signatures of all the hierarchs of the UOC KP, UAOC, as well as two representatives of the UOC MP.

The active position of the political parties of Ukraine did not go unanswered by the Ecumenical Patriarch. Taking into account the numerous appeals of the President of Ukraine, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and the hierarchs of Ukrainian churches, Bartholomew took the initiative to resolve the church issue (Hovorun, 2019: 341). He started a set of procedures aimed at granting autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in Ukraine.

On the part of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, the main condition for granting autocephaly was the unification of Ukrainian Orthodox churches. On December 15, 2018, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew invited the hierarchs of all Ukrainian Orthodox churches (UPC KP, UAPC and UOC MP) to participate in the Unification Council. However, the church leaders of the UOC MP forbade its representatives to attend this Council. Instead, all the hierarchs of the UOC-KP, UAOC and even two metropolitans of the UOC-MP took part in the Council's congress. On the part of the state and authorities, the President of Ukraine P. Poroshenko and the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine A. Parubiy confirmed their presence.

On December 15, 2018, the Council made a historic decision to unify Ukrainian Orthodox churches into a single religious organization – the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. At the same time, the Statute

of the OCU was approved and its Primate was elected – "Metropolitan of Kyiv and All Ukraine" Epiphany. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew invited the head of the newly formed church to Istanbul to present him with the Tomos on autocephaly (the President of Ukraine P. Poroshenko and the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine A. Parubiy were also present at the presentation of the Tomos). Finally, on January 5, 2019, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew signed the historic document in Istanbul, and the next day solemnly handed it over to Metropolitan Epiphanius of Kyiv and All Ukraine. So, the long struggle of Ukrainian Orthodoxy for autocephaly ended with the signing and handing over of the Tomos.

After the election of Epiphany as the Primate of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, he made several statements of a political content, which amounted to the constitutional right to separate the church from the state and to condemn the use of the church for political purposes. The Metropolitan of Kyiv and All Ukraine also emphasized the need to de-occupy Crimea and the territory of Donbas.

Instead, the Russian Orthodox Church launched a broad anti-Ukrainian propaganda campaign involving Russian President V. Putin. On his initiative, the Ukrainian church issue became the subject of discussion at an operational meeting with permanent members of the Security Council of the Russian Federation. Also, the head of the Kremlin initiated a telephone conversation with Bartholomew and convinced him of the falsity of the decision (Bartholomew, 2019).

Another important issue that remained unresolved after the creation of the OCU was the status of the UOC MP. Note that according to the statute of the Russian Orthodox Church, Ukraine is a canonical territory over which its jurisdiction extends. The UOC can maintain relations with the Local Orthodox Churches of the world only through the Russian Orthodox Church. The Primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church takes office only after his presentation to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, blessing and handing over of the "Blessed Letter". The head of the Russian Orthodox Church must approve the Statute of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which is approved by the Council. The Primate of the UOC, Metropolitan of Kyiv and All Ukraine, is a permanent member of the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church. The duty of the UOC Cathedral is to maintain canonical unity with the Russian Orthodox Church. The Council of Bishops of the UOC must act on the basis of the resolutions of the local and bishop Councils of the Russian Orthodox Church. So, the content of the UOC statute determines the subordination and dependence of the Ukrainian church on the Russian one.

Conclusions. Therefore, the presidency institution as a whole is a key element of Ukrainian politics both within the country and on the international arena. The first Ukrainian presidents took a significant part in the formation of the very idea of the United National Independent Orthodox Church creation. The total influence of the Moscow Patriarchate led to negative pro-Russian narratives, especially in the South and East of the country. The division of Ukrainian Orthodoxy into different jurisdictions is a significant conflict-causing factor that divides the young, unformed Ukrainian society. We must state a certain inconsistency in the actions of Ukrainian state leaders. Although L. Kuchma spoke about the need for his own Orthodox Church, he did not make any efforts to do so. V. Yushchenko started a new stage of the struggle for universal recognition of Ukrainian Orthodoxy in an independent status, but at that time the desired goal was not achieved, and his successor radically changed the vector of state policy, including in the religious sphere. P. Poroshenko managed to achieve success in the matter of declaring church independence. The Ukrainian Church received the long-awaited Tomos. However, this historical event did not lead to the unification of the divided branches of Ukrainian Orthodoxy. In addition, local churches were divided into those who supported such a decision and those who opposed it.

Thus, the single Local Church is a sure step on the way to the formation of a new domestic civil society based on the European model. The presidency institution in Ukraine tries to form partnership relations with various denominations in accordance with the Constitution of Ukraine and without giving advantages and preferences to any of the religious organizations. Such an approach can be a guarantee of success in the implementation of an effective state religious policy.

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