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"We Are Now the Orthodox!"- Religion in Times of War in Ukraine
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Introduction

The rivalry between the two major Orthodox churches – of Moscow (UOC-MP) and Kyivan patriarchates (UOC-KP) took a distinctive shape after the Euromaidan Revolution (2014), the Russian annexation of Crimea (2014) and an ongoing war in Eastern Ukraine. Since numerous statements about the Ukrainian autocephaly (canonical independence) were made by the Patriarchate of Constantinople, inter-confessional relations between Kyiv and Moscow patriarchates moved beyond temples and canonical disputes to hardline geopolitics. January 2019 decision of the Patriarchate of Constantinople to grant autocephaly to the newly created Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU) gives existing religious tension a new, ethnic-militarist dimension. What previously seemed to be an isolated skirmish between a few rural communities over the church's property became a major political issue between Ukraine and Russia. One might estimate the weight Ukrainian religious future has for Russia's geopolitical interests by the sheer fact that Ukrainian autocephaly was on the top of the Russian Federal Security Council October 2018 meeting headed by Vladimir Putin and attended by Prime Minister Medvedev, Heads of FSB (Russian intelligence) and Counter-intelligence Department, as well as Ministers of Defense, Internal and Foreign Affairs.

This paper focuses on the two competitive narratives of the two major Orthodox churches of Ukraine (prior to the creation of Orthodox Church of Ukraine). On the one hand, it analyzes the discourse of Ruskii Mir (Russian World) that arguably centers Russian-language speakers as distinct parts of Russian cultural and political domain in Ukraine. On the other hand, the paper looks at the contrasting elite narrative of "Unified State, United Church" aka autocephaly to the Ukrainian church advocated by the President Poroshenko and Kyiv Patriarchate. The paper gives a micro-sociological account of how inter-confessional relations operate at the grassroots level across eight regions of Ukraine, and macro-sociological implications of these interactions. It scrutinizes how the two churches frame the narratives over the categories of practice (e.g. belonging, statehood, identity), and later critically reflect on how those categories of practice are negotiated and modified through a process of interpretation, interaction with the state and interconfessional competition.

Binary Codes and Terms

Suffice it to distinguish a few terminological differences particularly between autocephaly and autonomy. The Orthodox branch of Christianity does not recognize the supremacy of the Pope and has no central figure to report to, unlike the organizational setup of the Catholic (Latin) Christian churches which recognize the supremacy of the Pope. Because the organizational structure of the Orthodox Christianity is so decentralized, there are a number of classifications and sub-hierarchies of churches. The two most often confusing concepts are autocephaly and autonomy. The two terms significantly differ when it comes to practice and canonical status. There are in total 14 autocephalous churches which are recognized by all the other churches. There are two more churches - Orthodox Churches of Ukraine and America - which are recognized at least by some members (in Ukraine's case by the Patriarchate of Constantinople). Autocephalous churches have the right to resolve internal issues independently and appoint their own bishops or elect a patriarch. Autonomous churches have highest-ranking bishops (often referred to as metropolitans or archbishops) appointed by the mother church (or a patron church, if one likes to use political science terminology). In Ukraine's case, prior to the creation of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU) in December 2018, the bishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP) was appointed by the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC).

The rank of the Patriarch of Constantinople aka the Ecumenical Patriarch is what Orthodox churches refer to as *primus inter pares* meaning the first among equals. The Patriarch of Constantinople is considered the successor of Andrew the Apostle. However, beyond the symbolic part, the Ecumenical Patriarch does not possess legal power over other autocephalous churches. There is no consensus (largely between Russian Orthodox Church and the Ecumenical Patriarchate) on mechanisms of granting autocephaly either. As of today, there has been the practice of two models of granting autocephaly - either through Patriarch of Constantinople or through mother church (Bremer, Senyk 2019). Both ROC and Constantinople regard Ukraine as its canonical territory. This leads to everlasting (and rather counterproductive) historical debate on why and when one particular communion of metropolitans became more canonical than the other. The problem in this debate is that both the EP of Constantinople and the ROC consider Ukraine as its canonical territory. This rather counterproductive discussion between the armies of historians, theologians and (now)

politicians, reaches a consensus on the fact that Christianity came to Kyivan Rus from Byzantium in the late tenth century.

Christianity indeed came in the tenth century from Byzantium to Kyivan Rus, the latter was a pre-modern loose federation (Bremer, Senyk 2018). Prior to the 13th century, the time when Mongols conquered Kyivan Rus, heads of churches resided in Kyiv. In the 13th century, the seat of the bishop moved to Vladimir and in the 14th century to Moscow but the head of church still had the title of Metropolitan of Kyiv at the time. Things got more complicated in 1448 when in Muscovy (Northern Rus at the time), the prince and his bishops elected a new Metropolitan of Kyiv without the consent of the Patriarch of Constantinople de facto creating an alternative to Kyivan ecclesiastical province. The latter later acquired the title of Metropolitan of Moscow. The major breakthrough in this political-religious saga, however, was the passage of Kyiv see from Patriarchate of Constantinople to Moscow in 1686. This transfer was predominantly a result of pressure exerted by Moscow to force Patriarch of Constantinople to succumb to the passage, and to ensure the legitimization of this act by enforcing other Orthodox patriarchates to agree (Bremmer, Senyk 2019: 33).

Context

Euromaidan Revolution, the annexation of Crimea and war in Eastern Ukraine arguably wrote a new chapter in church-state relationships in Ukraine (picture 1, p.6). Prior to the autocephaly of OCU in January 2019, there were three major Orthodox bodies in Ukraine. According to the data Department of Religious Affairs (in early January 2018), UOC-MP had 12,348 parishes, UOC-KP – 5,167 whereas Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC) – 1,167. Razumkov Center's 2018 poll shows that to the question "which Orthodox Church do you belong to?" 42.6% (of those who consider themselves Orthodox) identified with Kyiv Patriarchate as opposed to 19.1% of Moscow Patriarchate. This was the highest percentage for UOC-KP in the last two decades of polling. UAOC scored lowest - 0.4%. The same poll showed that 64.1% (of those identifies as Orthodox) in Western Ukraine considered themselves followers of UOC-KP as opposed to 15.2% of UOC-MP. Central Ukraine - 48.2% for UOC-KP as opposed to 17.7% UOC-MP. It is important to note that 31.8% in central Ukraine and 16.6% in Western Ukraine identified as "just Orthodox". The category of "just Orthodox" had the share of 46% of the Orthodox population in Southern Ukraine, whereas 36% were for UOC-KP and 14.7% for UOC-MP. Lastly, a similar pattern replicated in Eastern

Ukraine which had 45.2% "just Orthodox" as opposed to 24.3% for UOC-KP and 25.3% for UOC-MP. If one compares 2018 result to previous years, for example, from 2000 to 2018 UOC-KP reached its highest support and showed a steady increase as opposed to a relative decline of UOC-MP over the last decade from 34.5 in 2010 to 19.1 in 2018 (see Figure 1).
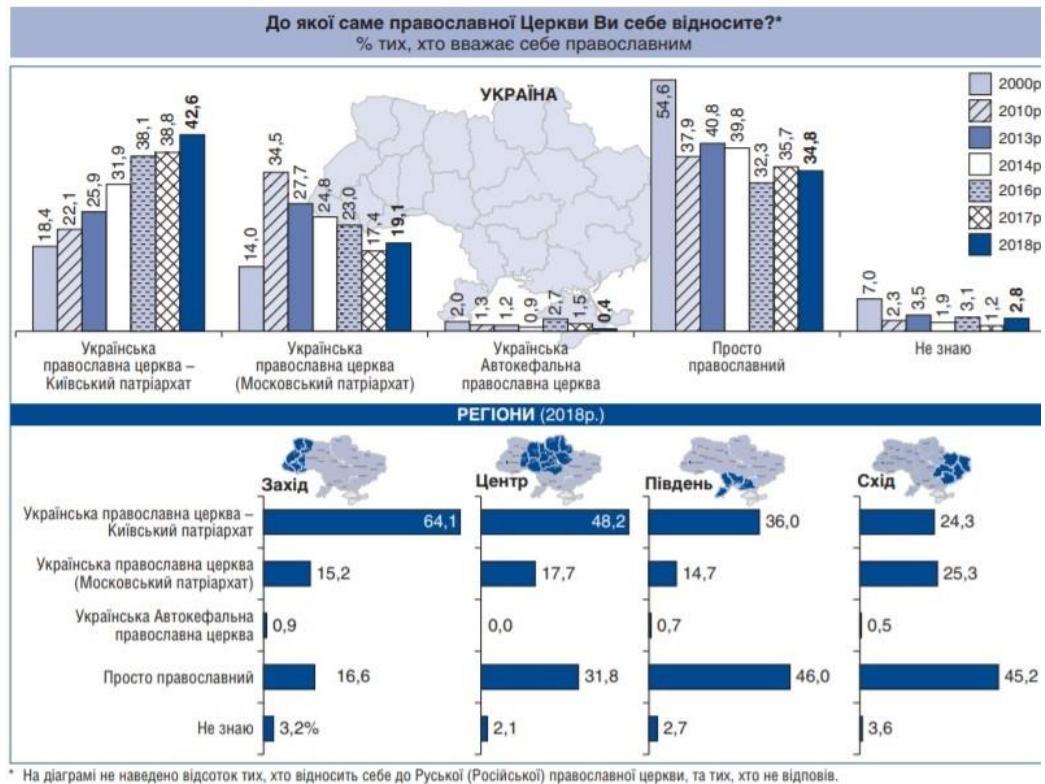

Figure 1, National Survey Results, Razumkov Center 2018.

Overall, most Ukrainian citizens recognize the importance of the role of the church in public life. According to the aforementioned Razumkov Center's survey (2018), 71% of Ukrainian citizens saw the value of religion in enhancing the spirituality and morality of people; 64% considered religion to be one of the most important factors for the making of national consciousness and 50% were sure that church was one of the factors of a democratic society. Trust in the church remains one of the highest compared to other public institutions, along with volunteer organizations and the military. However, compared with 2010, when the level of public confidence in the Church reached a maximum (73%), now this figure is lower - 60%. There is also a regional difference in attitudes towards the church. Church remains most trustworthy in western Ukraine, whereas out of all regions, Eastern Ukraine trusts church the least. One might argue that the high level of trust in the church is more a reflection of attitudes toward religion than attitudes toward church representatives. Only 19% of respondents are confident that representatives of the church are deeply moral and ecclesiastic, and the number of those who think so is gradually decreasing. 26% believe that most clerics are primarily

money-oriented, not spiritual. 35% do not consider them to be moral authorities. Citizens' positions on this issue have a certain regional character: the Church is the moral authority for 74% of Western Ukrainians, significantly lower are the indicators in the Center and in the South (41% and 39%, respectively), and only 28% in Eastern Ukraine. 74% of all respondents expect that church will respond to the decisions of the authorities that may affect the standard of living of the population and engage more actively in socio-political life (Razumkov 2018).

Methods of Data Gathering

Picture 1. A massive banner, central Kyiv, Maidan Square (author's photo) April 2, 2018

For understanding the contextual specificity of how religious organizations operate and in what ways has religion interacted with politics in contemporary Ukraine, I examined an understudied phenomenon of intra-denominational conversions from the UOC-MP to the UOC-KP. Intra-Orthodox conversions occurred ever since the separation of Kyiv and Moscow Patriarchates in the aftermath of the Soviet collapse (Moroz, Kalenychenko 2016). The reason for the separation between Kyiv and Moscow has been largely organizational and political. After the Moscow-Kyiv split, however, Kyiv Patriarchate headed by the former bishop of ROC Filaret Denysenko, has sought recognition of its autonomy by the rest of the Orthodox world, yet ROC has consistently blocked this on international Orthodox Christian scene. The Euromaidan aka Revolution of Dignity and the ongoing war in eastern Ukraine increased the scale of conversions. If prior to the post-Maidan events transfers were in single digits, just from 2014 the amount went to 70 religious communities and around the same amount in legal disputes over church property undergoing court hearings. The autocephaly granted by the Patriarchate of Constantinople to the newly-formed OCU has dramatically increased the total number of inter-confessional changes to 502 parishes by March 17, 2019 (MAPA Project 2019).

Picture 2. a memorial sign built to commemorate the transfer of church to UPC KP, village Sudobychi, Dubens'koho region, Rivne oblast, author's photo.

In line with symbolic interactionist tradition (Gross 2007, Benzecry, Winchester 2017, Heritage 1987 and others), through participant observation in churches and community life, I looked at how the two major Orthodox Christian churches (UOC-MP and UOC-KP) framed narratives on national identity and belonging, statehood and religion. I examined how the meaning of these narratives has been negotiated and modified through a process of interpretation in which parishioners of these churches communicated and practiced those categories (e.g. being Ukrainian, Western Ukrainian, Orthodox, Russian-Ukrainian, belong to Russian World and etc.). I employed a nonrandom technique of purposive sampling (Gobo 2004) by which I selected and identified most information-rich cases of a phenomenon of interconfessional changes from UOC-MP to UOC-KP. For analytical and operational reasons, I categorized the phenomenon of transfers in three types:

1) Illustrative cases (in which both movable and immovable property of the church, as well the religious community of parishioners completely moved from one church to the other);

2) Problematic cases (in which interconfessional transfer was not smooth, the community was divided and interconfessional violence occurred);

3) Deviant cases (in which movable and immovable property and services operated by both churches under agreed sequence).

I have stopped at the intersection of symbolic interactionism and phenomenology in line with Katz (1998; 1999; 2001; 2002). In a nutshell, I focused on situational contexts of symbolic interactions and taken-for-grantedness of the categories of practice from phenomenology. To an extent echoing the phenomenological tradition (Tavory, Eliasoph 2013; Benzecry, Winchester 2017), I identified what I categorized as (an ideal-type) *motive narrative* for intra-denominational change. The motive narrative is how parishioners justified own choices on controversial public matters. According to the typical motive narrative in a sample of 77 interviews, UOC-MP was characterized as an anti-national and pro-Russian organization

with detachment from contemporary political context. From an epistemological point of view, the research operated at the intersection of a grounded theory approach (Becker 1998; Katz 2001; Charmaz 2006) and what Pierce et al called an "abductive" (Tavory, Timmermans, 2009) as opposed to an "inductive" approach. In an abductive approach, "searching for interesting contradictions between theories and data necessitates in-depth familiarity – not defamiliarization – with a number of theoretical frameworks (Benzecry, Winchester 2017: 65)." Therefore, approaching data gathering from the position of a well-informed "theoretical agnostic" rather than simulate "theoretical atheism" (Tavory, Timmermans, 2009) allowed greater intellectual flexibility and openness for development of new frameworks and operationalizing of new concepts.

## The Narratives of Identity: Russkii Mir vs Unified State, United Church

"The Ukrainian Church for the Moscow Patriarchate has a great, not only religious significance, but also political significance, because if there were no Kiev Patriarchate, today Putin would have reigned in Ukraine!"
- Patriarch Filaret (Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Kyiv Patriarchate).

" A body cannot be free, when the soul is in captivity. Let them hear us today in Constantinople, Moscow and the Vatican. We have a firm intention to cut off the last tie with which the empire desperately tries to bind us. We are determined to put an end to the unnatural and non-canonical presence of a significant part of our Orthodox community in subordination to the Russian Church. The Church that blesses Putin's hybrid war against Ukraine, which prays day and night for the Russian authorities and for the army, is also Russian" (President Petro Poroshenko August 24, 2018).

A closer look at the geography of intra-denominational transfers (see map 1 which is my research trajectory) reveals that large share of transitions occurred in the two surrounding regions of Pochaev Lavra in Western Ukraine: Ternopil and Rivne (27 religious communities of total 77 at the time of my fieldwork April – August 2018).
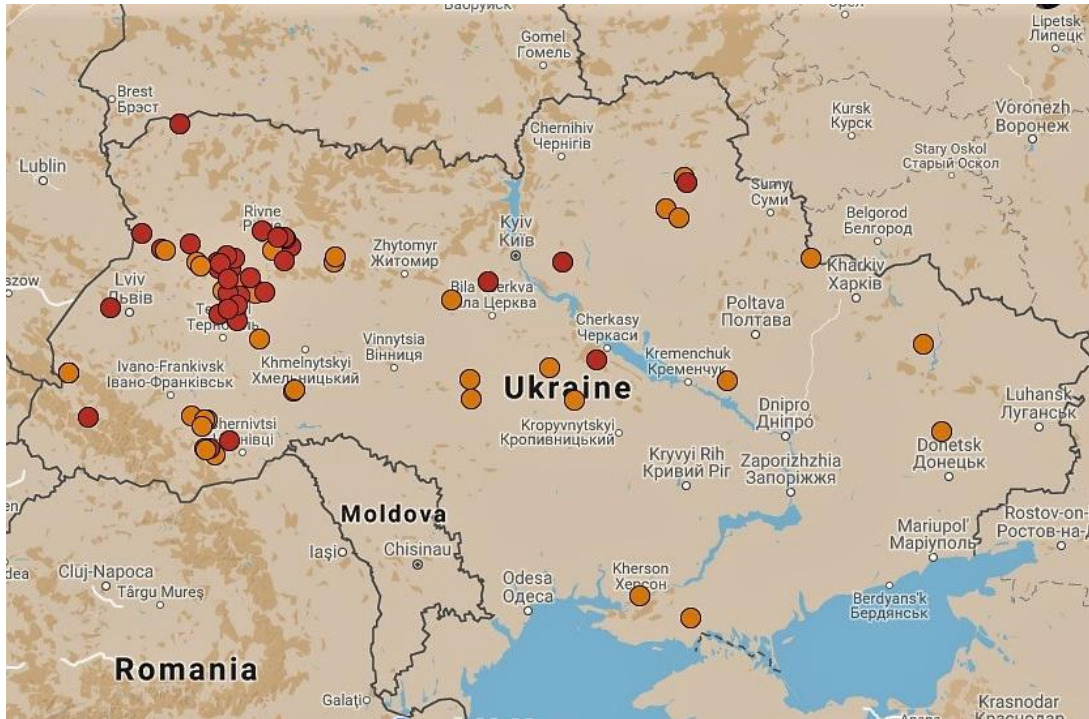
Map 1. In red full transition, in yellow when parish was divided. 90% of typical cases of full transition and partial transition are covered in this paper. Courtesy of Religious Information Center of Ukraine (RISU)
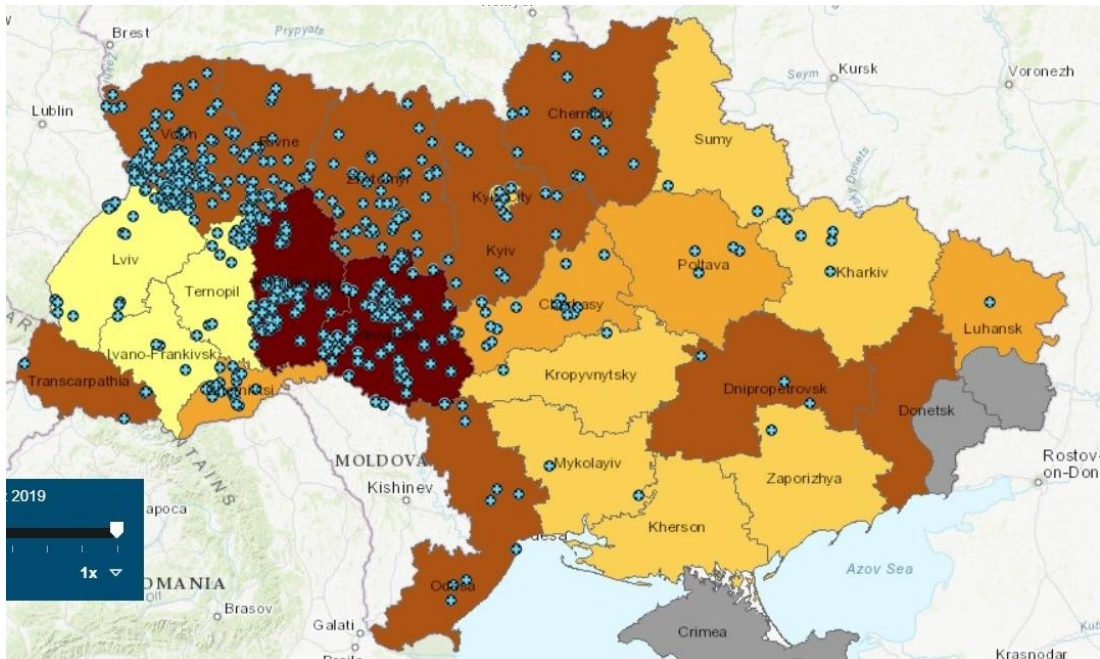
Map 2. Transfers from UOC-MP to the newly formed OCU.

The most recent data (map 2 by Harvard's Ukrainian Research Institute, MAPA project) shows that 502 parishes have changed from the Russian canonical jurisdiction to the newly

formed Orthodox Church of Ukraine by March 17, 2019[1]. The pattern is of interconfessional change echoes the patterns observed on my research trajectory map. Most parishes which changed canonical jurisdiction are in Western Ukraine, surrounding Pochaiv Lavra. A property of the Ukrainian state and run by the UOC-MP, the Lavra is widely assumed to be the backbone of "Russkii Mir" (Russian World) - a hybrid of an idea, ideology and project. As an idea, Russkii Mir advances Russian culture and language abroad by providing "informational support for compatriots abroad as well as foreign citizens interested in Russia." (Russkii Mir Foundation website). Russkii Mir as a project, vividly advocated by Patriarch Kirill of Russia, constitutes an ideological foundation of Russia's foreign policy towards its neighboring former Soviet states, an important attribute of what Marlène Laruelle calls Russia's Eurasianism (Laruelle 2008). Russkii Mir as an ideology is the readiness to embrace the value systems and political institutions of the past, establish the new regimes based on old value systems (Snyder 2018). In cultural sense this ideology legitimizes a profound and fundamental rejection of the Ukrainian distinctiveness from Russian socio-cultural and historical discourse. By the same token, Russkii Mir reveals civilizational superiority of Russian Orthodox value system being both beyond and between national identity, to echo a famous formulation (Brubaker 2000). A closer look at the monumental address of Patriarch Kirill at the Opening Ceremony of the Third Assembly of the Russian World illustrates key features, directions, and pillars of Russkii Mir as a hybrid of idea, ideology and project.

In Patriarch Kirill's own words, for the Russian World, the physical territorial borders of the states are relative as the idea is about common historical memory, culture, religion, and language:

> "The foundation of Russian world today is Russia, Ukraine and Belorussia, and Saint Lavrentii Chernigovskii expressed this idea with the famous phrase 'Russia, Ukraine, Belarus – this is all Rus'... Despite being divided by state borders and incompatibilities with certain policies, we continue to remain spiritually one nation and in the majority - the children of the Russian Orthodox Church...Of course, we must admit that these borders, at least for today, with the present character of all these border situations, create unnecessary obstacles between the peoples of the Russian world. At the heart of the Russian world lies the Orthodox faith, which we found in the common Kievan font of baptism...another support of the Russian world is Russian culture and language. Russians, Tatars, Ukrainians, and Georgians can belong to Russian culture, because it absorbed the traditions of many people. Russian culture is a phenomenon that does not fit within the borders of one state and one ethnos and is not connected with the interests of one state, which is very important today to understand..." (Patriarch Kirill 2009, author's translation).

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[1] For a more nuanced account of mechanisms of interconfessional transfer and institutional logic of inter-confessional competition, please consult my forthcoming paper (Metreveli 2019) or talk at Harvard University, available online.

Separate question in this discussion is what does it mean to accept Russian spiritual and cultural tradition as the basis of national identity for any non-Russian nation-state? "Despite being divided by state borders and incompatibilities with certain policies," Patriarch Kirill asserted in his address, "we continue to remain spiritually one nation and in the majority - the children of the Russian Orthodox Church." He later reiterated this statement during his meeting with the Ecumenical Patriarch in 2018 (Orthodoxia 2018). Hence, as the argument goes, Russkii Mir is beyond borders, it is about supranational collaboration echoing Kyivan Rus traditions, yet it privileges Russian civilization at the expense of relativizing the territoriality:

> "Thanks to the historical choice of Saint Prince Vladimir, our ancestors joined the family of Christian nations and began to create a powerful united Russia…the "Russian World", is not an instrument of political influence of the Russian Federation…The foundation of the Russian world is the common historical memory and common views on social development. Our people have a strong consciousness of the continuity of the Russian state and social traditions, beginning with the time of Kievan Rus and ending with the present Russia, Ukraine, Byelorussia, Moldova and other countries under the historical space of Russia. Our ancestors together built and developed Russia, defended it from foreign invaders. **This was the case throughout the existence of our one homeland, regardless of the prevailing political system. However, independent states existing in the space of historical Russia and aware of their common civilizational affiliation could continue to work together to create the Russian world and view it as their common supranational project**. One could even introduce a concept such as the country of the Russian world. It would mean that the country relates itself to the Russian world if it uses Russian as the language of interethnic communication, develops Russian culture, and stores general historical memory and common values of social construction" (Patriarch Kirill 2009, author's translation).

One of my informants recalls his first-hand experience of encountering how Russkii Mir operates on the grassroots level in Pochaiv Lavra echoes general dimensions outlined by the Patriarch of ROC, yet when applied to local context, it emerges as a hybrid form of ethno-cultural nationalism and religious particularism:

> "…I come to Pochaiv, we often go to Pochaiv, we transport people with special needs who are mentally ill or physically disabled. If the priests of the Kiev Patriarchate come there - they take their inner cassocks (not to be identified as a member of the Kyivan church), the cross - they come there like that. And when UOC-MP monks or clerics see a priest dressed in non-Russian cassocks, they instantly start a conversation like this: so I am bringing the boy who has cerebral palsy, his hands do not work, his legs do not work, and he is a believer of UOC-MP. His sister, Tetyana who is a parishioner of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, in the community of her city there. We enter the church. UOC-MP priest tells us: 'write me a note to file for prayer.' I bring a letter to him and he says: 'Tetyana, as well as all others, shall be written in the Ukrainian language'. I write in Ukrainian. For the health of Tetyana, Dmytro and so on. That monk takes that note and his first question is 'From which patriarchy are they (Tetyana and Dmytro)?' I say: 'Here is Dmytro from the Moscow Patriarchate, his sister Tetyana, - I say, - from the Patriarchate of Constantinople.' And what confused him most of all was that it was not written "Tatyana" (Russian version of the name Tetyana, insertion added) and "Dmitrii." Everything has already gone that far: 'Why,' he says, 'do you write their names like that? And where do you come from?' I tell him where we come from (a city in Western Ukraine famous with the popularity of Kyiv Patriarchate). He directly tells me: 'from which church and which parish are you from?'…After our parish's name did not tell him anything, he asks if it was Kyiv patriarchate's parish. Straight away his attitude and tone change. Once I tell him that our bishop is of Russian Orthodox Church, he becomes instantly open yet surprised. 'Then why are you

not together (with your bishop)?' – he asks. After hearing that our bishop blessed us to serve in Ukrainian, for unified local church (the term used to denote what later became Orthodox Church of Ukraine, insertion added) and in Kyivan recension of old Slavonic, so that we write our names they way they are in Ukrainian, he instantly cuts me off and says 'you are not canonical! Tell me who you really are?!" (Interview Western Ukraine 2018, names of the informants have been changed to protect their anonymity).

This interview has been what I refer to as an illustrative case of binary narrative – in this case canonical/uncanonical. Belonging to a canonical domain has exclusively been linked to UOC-MP. The contrasting binary narrative of "Unified State, United Church" advocated by religious elites of the Kyiv Patriarchate and President Poroshenko intertwines elements of civic nationalism, territoriality, and religious particularism. State emerges as a staunch defender of secularism and national security yet it does not distance from responsive involvement into religious affairs. Yet again, justified by the national security necessities:

> "The state remains in debt and has the duty to support the rights and freedoms of citizens and helps them to realize these freedoms. All citizens who identify themselves with Orthodoxy, whether they are belonging to the church of the Moscow Patriarchate, or not, they have the right to have their own church which is recognized by other churches. In a similar vein, other citizens have the right to have their own church too, especially if we are talking about tens of millions of people. On the other hand, it is very important to understand that in the course of Russian aggression we are dealing with the following fact: Russian aggressor very actively uses the religious factor in its operation against Ukraine and issues of church-state relations cannot be overlooked. Speaking on behalf of the president of Ukraine, **the state cannot interfere in these (religious affairs) matters, but it cannot disregard the interference of aggressor state in these affairs either**…The state will never interfere in the internal affairs of the church and other religious organizations. **Therefore, we are only talking about the realization of the rights of citizens to freely and equally of the realization of their rights and equal treatment for all**" (Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration, author's translation, 2018).

In President Petro Poroshenko's own words, "Ukraine, as an independent state, is not just entitled but obliged to create such a Church and demonstrate the same unity regarding this issue, as all the Churches have shown" (Poroshenko 2018a). As the argument goes, religion becomes analogous to nationalism (Brubaker 2012). Hence in line with binary narrative it is 'patriotic', 'Ukrainian', 'civic' to become a member of own church and leave a church of 'the occupant state'.

> "Christianization came to us from the mother church of Constantinople, and it was from Kiev that it spread across the wide spaces of Eastern Europe. Ukrainian Christianity has more than a thousand years of history, its own theological, liturgical and church traditions. It is in the same set of issues as the strengthening of the army, the protection of the language, the fight for membership in the EU and NATO. It is yet another strategic landmark on our historical path, a significant component of our independence" (President Poroshenko 2018).

An institutional logic of elite-driven nationalism was backed up with the legal framework that the state proposed to promote and perpetuate what I called elsewhere 'hybrid nationalism' (Metreveli 2016). The state proposed three legal initiatives 53.09 'about the names

of churches', 41.28 'about mechanisms of transfers' and 45.11 'about special status of the church whose head office is in the aggressor state' which number of my respondents from UOC-MP clergy and parishioners interpreted as 'nationalist'. The hybridity of elite-driven nationalism manifests in simultaneity and intertwinement of nationalist discourses with a constitutional framework that allows religious plurality and decentralized mechanisms for interconfessional change. According to the most recent regulations (January 2019), for an interdenominational change the community must gather two-third majority vote of the religious community members. Each community decides on rules of membership based on simple majority (50% + 1 vote). The process is decentralized on the village-to-village level. If two-thirds of those present at the community member meeting vote in favor, the transfer to another jurisdiction can happen. The remaining part has the right to create a new community, jointly use the temple or divide movable and immovable property. Yet again this procedure applies with a number of nuances written in regulatory documents of communities.

Political rhetoric and institutional angle of church-state relations are somehow in contradiction with church's discourse over autocephaly. As the argument goes, the UOC-KP is in harmony with the state which advocates for Unified State, United Church narrative, yet portrays itself as being beyond religious particularism. Church sees itself as a pillar of Ukrainian civic nationalism. Belonging to the church is not stipulated by one's ethnic or religious background, but by loyalty to the idea of Ukrainian statehood – which one might estimate as church's rather liberal stance:

> "I want to emphasize that we do not share the opinion that Ukraine should have a state religion, and Kyiv Patriarchate or a new church must emerge as a sort of a national church when autocephaly is granted. Even if the state offered and the Ukrainian citizens supported it we were and will remain against this status. The experience of other (Orthodox) churches and states shows that there are always more negative consequences for state religion (versus state-church separation)…we formulate our position like this: we are not a state religion and we don't want to be one, and we will not be. We are public's church that is - we support sovereignty, we take a patriotic position, but we do not want to intervene in each other's functions and we are against when bishops pick state ministers, and vice versa. Therefore, I think that fear of de-secularization are unfounded, but it is important to talk about this so that this is not used against the very issue of autocephaly" (Bishop Zorija, 2018).

The top-down elite discourse over the role of religion in Ukrainian state and societal life has divergent replications on the grassroots level. On the one hand, a typical motive narrative for interconfessional changes were the responses of priests to the tragedies of war which generated antagonism among the population. As one of my informants argued: "the more corpses of younger villagers started to arrive at home, the more people realized how they [UOC-MP] served the interests of the occupant state [Russia] and not of our people" (Interview

with a male, 29, Ternopil region, April 16, 2018). Another interviewee vehemently recalled: "…they [the priests of UOC-MP] prayed in Russian, they prayed for [the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church] Kirill, they disregarded our Heavenly Hundred [people killed during Maidan protests] (Interview with a female, 41, Kharkiv, June 17, 2018)." As a former military man, 56, a father of two, told me in a private setting "you cannot commit to dying for Ukraine and pray for Moscow at the same time. It became an an-either-or question for me" (Interview with a male, Dnepr, June 22, 2018). If, however, priests did commemorate the victims of war or executed service in Ukrainian language, parishioners at times even did not realize whether the church was of UOC-MP or UOC-KP. Yet again, when this either-or-ness of choosing one identity over the other was imposed or felt to be imposed by the elites, identitarian in-betweenness became a distinct category of practice. As in the most memorable conversation during entire field work, a woman, 77, from Western Ukraine recalled:

> "Why shall I be either in there or here (meaning Moscow vs Kyiv Patriarchates, insertion added)? I used to go to the church which was closer to my house because sometimes I have swollen legs and it is hard to move. And suddenly we are now the Orthodox! We are now the Ukrainians! And I have to ignore an eye contact with my neighbor if I go one way or angry my relative if I go another. I did not want to stay without church, but this is too much. Too much to be patriotic enough and believing enough. So I decided not to go to church anymore. Let them fight with each other over this and I will remain as a declarative believer" (Woman, 77, western Ukraine).

With binary codes and narratives imposed by religious and political elites, the grassroot responses to organizational discontent was disenchantment with hybrid nationalism of the state.

The Two-dimensionality of the Meaning-making

This paper took the cultural sociology approach and looked closely at the processes of producing and communicating meaning. Yet, where does this lead us to? Firstly, it attempted to demonstrate how the two competing discourses of Russkii Mir and Unified State, United Church operate on elite and grassroots levels. In doing it, I focused on examining the process of interconfessional changes from UOC-MP to UOC-KP. Studying the communities that took part in interconfessional changes gave a rare insight into how religion interacts with nationalism on the grassroots level and vice versa. The point of analysis was looking at the processes of communicating and producing of meaning at two levels. One level is the narrative

level. In this case the elite-level contrasting discourses – Russkii Mir versus Unified State – United Church. Echoing classical accounts of Durkheim, Jeffrey Alexander shows (2006) how the civil society structured as a binary cultural code depends on the symbolic meaning of pure (sacred) and impure (secular). As the argument goes, the motives, relationships and institutions apply similar binary logic. These binary discourses canonical/uncanonical, rational/irrational, active/passive etc. might spin out of control, but in the situations where the civil society is stronger (in Alexander's research the US civil society), which is often disconnected from the media partisan politics and violence, those discourses do not influence breaking down civil society structures and turning into political violence.

Another angle which this paper unfolds is local action and in particular the reaction to organizational discontents. One might reflect on Albert Hirschman's classical account (1970) of activist reaction to discontent with their organizations, to later reconsider it and propose a distinct category of practice. There are two main types of responses to organizational discontent, according to Hirschman: voice discontent while continue to be a member or exit the organization. This paper however argues there is yet another way of local response – to remain in identitarian in-betweenness. As opposed to multiple identities, when people can identify with a few or several identities at the same time, identitarian in-betweenness is a hybrid category. It is characterized by undecidedness in motive narratives and fluctuation in interconfessional behavior. Identitarian in-betweenness occurs in response to civic nationalism when people are intentionally or unintentionally forced to choose one identity over the other. Civic nationalism of the Ukrainian political elites puts the category of religion as a vital element of Ukraine's national security and statehood. As the argument goes, if one is patriotic, 'Ukrainian enough', the choice is between being pro-Ukrainian and loyal to the cause of freedom vs pro-Russian and anti-national. Despite the legal attempts and the rhetorical statements in defense of the Ukrainian secular identity on the behalf of the Kyiv Patriarchate as well as the Ukrainian government, the secular identity of Ukrainian state is volatile and fluid. Whether and to what extent identitarian in-betweenness explains interconfessional behavior shifts (or significant lack of thereof) remains to be tested.