



## **SCIENTIFIC FINAL REPORT**

Regnr Östersjöstiftelsen: **2016-0016**

Project manager: **Yuliya Yurchuk**

Project title: **Religion and Politics in Ukraine: The Influence of Churches and Religious Traditions in Formation of Collective Memory**

### **1. Purpose of the project**

**The aim of my study was to deepen the knowledge of the role of religion in Ukraine in the process of formation of collective memory.** Religious and political spheres in Ukraine are tightly connected. One of the fields where such deep connection can be observed is memory politics. This aspect of the role of religion and concrete churches in dealing with the past is understudied both in memory research and in the studies of religion. Previous research on memory and religion was dedicated to specific questions in realm of theology or history. What was lacking was interdisciplinary research which would shed light on complex role of religion and different churches specifically in dealing with the past. With my project I managed to considerably fill in the gap in the existing scholarship on memory and religion.

The project concentrated on three main aspects which shed light on the role of church and religion in the process of reevaluation of the past. The first aspect is the role of religion per se on the formation of collective memory. Secondly, I aimed to look at the role of each of main churches in Ukraine in the process of reevaluation of the past. Thirdly, I looked on political engagement of these churches and their clergy and how this political engagement was related to the activities dedicated to reevaluation of the past as well as how they were received by the “audiences” to whom these politics is addressed.

My aim was to enrich our understanding of not only complexity of Ukrainian identity but also the political and societal role of churches and religion in the processes of nation-building, social mobilization, and such seemingly polar processes as liberalization (often understood as “Europeanization”) and restoration of old Soviet regime (which can be called Eurasianization, closer integration with Russia and alignment to the idea of “Russkij Mir” –



Russian world). Taking into consideration the recent situation in Ukraine, whereas the country is involved in the conflict with Russia, such study is even more topical as at the times of crisis the role of religion is re-actualized and the churches' political potential is mobilized. It should be added that during the turbulent times of Orange Revolution in 2004 and of Euromaidan in 2013/2014 churches became highly politicized and this politicization was often performed on the terrain of memory politics. In my project, I also tackled the engagement of the Churches in commemoration of the protestors that were killed in the Euromaidan protests.

## **2. The three most important results of the project and what conclusions can be drawn from them**

Three most important results of the project are:

### **1) Building the network of the researchers interested in the relationship between**

**memory and religion.** For developing the network, I organized two events that drew together researchers from different fields, countries, and disciplines. The first conference took place in Warsaw in October 2018. It was *Memory and Religion*, Conference within the framework of Memory Genealogies Series, organized by Network of European Remembrance and Solidarity. I and Zuzanna Bogumil were responsible for academic organization of the conference. The second conference took place at Södertörn University in September 2019.

In summer 2021, I together with other scholars from this network will have a special event at the Memory Studies Association annual conference which will take place in Warsaw. The purpose of this event is to present the ideas about the “post-secular” turn (presented in p.2 below) in memory studies and to form a working group within the Memory Studies Association which will continue working on the questions of memory, religion, and postsecularity. MSA is a global interdisciplinary forum connecting scholars and practitioners interested in the ways people draw on, shape, and are shaped by the past, and our plans are to develop a bigger project on memory and religion from global perspective on the basis of the network that we've built since 2017.

### **2) Formulating a new approach within memory studies which draws attention to the mutual interaction of the secular and the religious within memory studies.**

Together with my colleague Zuzanna Bogumil we refer to this approach as a “postsecular” turn in memory studies. It is a groundbreaking proposal for memory



scholars to include the analysis of religion into the research of collective memory. The main premises of the approach were formulated in the Introduction to the edited volume that will be published by Routledge (forthcoming 2021). **The selection of topics presented by the volume demonstrate that the region of Baltic Sea and the Eastern Europe are especially interesting laboratory** for the studies of memory and religion as in these societies religion was banned from the public space for the years of the Soviet rule and with the revival of religion in the public space in 1990s, the Churches became actively involved in memory projects in these countries. **The project resulted in two edited volumes (a book and a special journal issue) and several articles on memory and religion.** These publications laid the ground for postsecular approach to memory, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, these studies were among the first that approached memory work in Ukraine from religious perspective. The project concentrated on three main aspects which shed light on the role of church and religion in the process of reevaluation of the past. The first aspect is the role of religion per se on the formation of collective memory. Secondly, I aimed to look at the role of each of main churches in Ukraine in the process of reevaluation of the past. Thirdly, I looked on political engagement of these churches and their clergy and how this political engagement is related to the activities dedicated to reevaluation of the past as well as how they are received by the “audiences” to whom these politics is addressed. My project **enriched our understanding of not only complexity of Ukrainian identity but also the political and societal role of churches and religion in the processes of nation-building and social mobilization.** The studies also reflected on the recent situation in Ukraine, the involvement of the country in the conflict with Russia, as well as the gaining of the independence of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. In such a way, the project demonstrated that religion has recently re-actualized Churches’ political potential.

**3) By my study “Building a Patrimonial Church: Uses of the Past by the Orthodox Churches in Ukraine”** I proposed to approach the complexity of religious situation in Ukraine through the theory of patrimonialization – promoting a Church as the most authentic and traditional Church in the society. While most of the population in Ukraine subscribe to Orthodoxy, which we can conceptualize as a patrimonial religion, the question of belonging to a certain Church is still fluid. That is why the whole process of patrimonialization in Ukraine can be framed as a quest to establish a ‘patrimonial Church’ able to define different,



believing communities within the boundaries of one state. Hervieu-Léger wrote that patrimonial religion ‘nurtures the dream of a continuing shared identity able to survive the accelerating pace of change’ (2015:20). In Ukraine, each Orthodox Church constructs historical narratives that nurture this ‘dream of a continuing shared identity’. Thus, several different identities are being nurtured during the patrimonialization process in Ukraine.

### **3. The project’s contribution to the international research frontline**

The results of the project contributed to the international field of memory studies and through the focus on Eastern Europe, particularly on Ukraine, my studies showed that in our postsecular world there is an intricate interplay between secular and religious actors and ideas. If we include both religious and secular elements into our analysis, we will better understand how modern societies function. This becomes especially visible on the example of memory work in the societies. The project succeeded in bringing together scholars from different disciplines and continents and on the examples of different countries throughout the world we could see that there are religious structures that are common to memory work in many contexts (both religious and secular). In such a way, religion is one of the elements that shape “global memory”. This role of religion was largely neglected in the field of memory studies. I hope that the work started by the project will continue and further theoretical developments of religious and postsecular elements in memory studies will be pursued.

### **4. New research questions that the project has led to**

The project led to important new research questions on the borders of religious and secular in post-secular societies: what are the limits between sacred and profane (as famously elaborated by Durkheim and the scholars in the 20<sup>th</sup> century)? Can we speak about the secular sacred and sacred profane? What is the role of religious groups and organizations in secular memory projects? Are there some elements of the memory work that are common to all humanity, that transcend the borders of nations, cultures, political structures? Is such structures are influenced by religion, what is left of these structures in post-religious or postsecular spaces? The focus on memory presents a good entry point that can lead to the discussions of these questions and shows that in 21<sup>st</sup> century we need revisit concepts which we are used to take for granted.



### **5. The contribution of the research to the knowledge of the Baltic Sea Region and Eastern Europe**

The results of the project demonstrate that the Baltic Sea region and Eastern Europe are especially interesting laboratory for the studies of memory and religion as, as it was stated above, in these societies religion was banned from the public space for the years of the Soviet rule and with the revival of religion in the public space in 1990s, the Churches became actively involved in memory projects in these countries. In many ways, the tendencies that we could distinguish in this region (religious involvement in memory work and the role of religious structures of meanings in the formation of memory) are visible in other societies, even in those which are considered to be highly secularized.

### **6. The contribution of research to multidisciplinary knowledge formation**

The project contributed to multidisciplinary knowledge as it aimed at building a dialogue with historians, anthropologists, sociologists of religion and a multidisciplinary field of memory studies. The project truly aimed at broadening the limits of history and show that historians' investigations can go beyond the strict boundaries of their discipline. The publications resulted from this project demonstrate very well that the questions of memory and religion can (and indeed should) be approached by scholars from different disciplines. Each of us who worked on the outcomes initiated by the project individually as well as collectively in collaboration with other colleagues could see that cooperation and attentive observation of the works of the colleagues of other disciplines contribute to our deeper and better understanding of the reality. Life itself is not divided in disciplines. It is we who divide it into smaller and more "understandable" pieces. We need courage and willingness to cross the boundaries and the studies of memory often are the best demonstrations of this. With my project I could contribute to this boundary-crossing.

### **7. Dissemination of the results of the project within and outside the research community**



**Organized Conferences:**

*History, memory and religion in Eastern Europe* workshop, Södertörn University, September 2019.

*Memory and Religion*, Conference of Memory Genealogies Series, Warsaw, October 2018.

**Papers presented at the Conferences:**

*“Transformations of Memory of Christianization of Kyivan Rus’ in Ukraine from 1988 to 2018”*, CBEES Annual Conference, Södertörn University, November, 2019.

*“Making Martyrs in Ukraine: The Role of Orthodox and Greek Catholic Churches in Ukraine in Formation of Memory of Soviet Past”*, Conference organized by St. Gallen University, Switzerland, Lviv, 16 -18 September, 2019.

*“Memory and Religion: Remembering the Christianization of Kyiv Rus’ and the Quest for Patrimonial Religion in Ukraine”*, Vinnytsia, 12-13 September, 2019.

*“Ecclesiastical Remembrances of War: Involvement of Religious Actors in the Formation of Memory of World War II in Post-1991 Ukraine”*, Conference of Ukrainian-German Historical Commission, Dnipro, 6-8 September, 2019.

*“Religion and Memory Entwined: The Role of Religious Actors in Holocaust Remembrance in Ukraine”*, Memory Studies Association, 3rd Annual Conference, Madrid, June 25-28, 2019.

*“Religious Encounters in Formation of Commemorative Culture in Ukraine”*, Conference *Everyday Diplomacy: Religious Encounters* organized by St. Gallen University, Switzerland, Kyiv, 14-16 June, 2018.

**Teaching within the Project:**

Lecture **“Memory of the War and War of Memories: Why Do we Need Remembrance?”** Ostrih Akademi, Ukraina (15 June 2020)

Teaching at summer school **“Why the Cities (not)remember?”** organized by “Mnemonic Educational and Research Center”, Rivne, Ukraine (7 – 11 August 2017)

**Publications**

**Edited Volume:**



Zuzanna Bogumil, Yuliya Yurchuk (eds.) “*Memory and Religion in a Post-Secular Perspective*”, Routledge, (forthcoming 2021).

**Edited Special Issue:**

Yuliya Yurchuk (ed). *The Role of Religion in the Ukrainian Political Landscape*. Baltic Worlds, 2020, Vol. XIII: 2–3. Open Access: <http://balticworlds.com/back-issues/>

**Peer-Reviewed Chapters in edited volumes:**

Yuliya Yurchuk. *Building Patrimonial Church: Uses of the Past by the Orthodox Churches in Ukraine*, in: Zuzanna Bogumil, Yuliya Yurchuk (eds.) *Memory and Religion in a Post-Secular Perspective*”, Routledge, (forthcoming 2021)

Yuliya Yurchuk, *From Subversive Memory to the Cult of Heroes: The Memory of the OUN and UPA in the Case of the Hurby Battle Commemoration*, in: Hausmann, Guido / Sklokina, Iryna (eds.): *The Political Cult of the Dead in Ukraine. Traditions and Dimensions from Soviet times until now*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, p. 145-169 (forthcoming).

**Articles:**

Yuliya Yurchuk. *Monuments as Reminders and Triggers. A contemporary comparison between memory work in Ukraine and the US*, Baltic Worlds, 3:2017, p 12-17). Available <http://balticworlds.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Baltic-Worlds-3-2017-uppslag.pdf>

**Popular science publications:**

Yuliya Yurchuk. *Memory and history in Ukraine after the Euromaidan*, ZOIS-spotlight, 24/2018. <https://en.zois-berlin.de/publications/zois-spotlight-2018/memory-and-history-in-ukraine-after-the-euromaidan/>

**Book Reviews:**

Yurchuk, Y. (2020). *Religion, Expression, and Patriotism in Russia: Essays on Post-Soviet Society and the State*. Nordisk Østforum, 34, 83-85. <https://tidsskriftet-nof.no/index.php/noros/article/view/2325>