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Mykola Alexiyevets

PhD hab. (History), Professor,
Department of the World History and Religious Study,
Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University (Ukraine)
malexiyevets@tnpu.edu.ua
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6128-0438>

Микола Алексієвць

Доктор історичних наук, професор,
Кафедра всесвітньої історії та релігієзнавства,
Тернопільський національний педагогічний університет
імені Володимира Гнатюка (Україна)



Stepan Vasylyshyn

Postgraduate student,
Department of the World History and Religious Study,
Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University (Ukraine)
stopiks@ukr.net
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3026-9938>

Степан Васишин

Аспірант,
Кафедра всесвітньої історії та релігієзнавства,
Тернопільський національний педагогічний університет
імені Володимира Гнатюка (Україна)

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF INVESTIGATION OF UKRAINIAN-BYELORUSSIAN RELATIONS (1991–2014)

Summary. In the article theoretical and methodological foundations of investigation of contemporary Ukrainian-Byelorussian relations are being analysed by the authors. Methodological grounds of the thesis include a complex consisted of scientific principles, methods and approaches, which directed on comprehensive, integral and objective investigation of the events of Ukrainian-Byelorussian collaboration during 1991–2014. Besides, the importance of methodological instruments is fully thrown light upon, and deals with objective and integral comprehension of relations between Ukraine and Republic of Byelorussia.

Keywords: Ukraine, Republic of Byelorussia, methodology, scientific research methods, foreign policy, international relations.

ТЕОРЕТИКО-МЕТОДОЛОГІЧНІ ЗАСАДИ ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ УКРАЇНСЬКО- БІЛОРУСЬКИХ ВІДНОСИН (1991–2014)

Анотація. У статті автори аналізують теоретико-методологічні засади дослідження сучасних українсько-білоруських відносин. Методологічну основу становить комплекс, що включає наукові принципи, методи й підходи, які спрямовані на всебічне, цілісне та об'єктивне дослідження подій українсько-білоруського співробітництва упродовж 1991–2014 рр. Крім того, комплексно висвітлено значення методологічного інструментарію, що забезпечує об'єктивне та цілісне осмислення взаємин між Україною та Республікою Білорусь.

Ключові слова: Україна, Республіка Білорусь, методологія, методи наукового дослідження, зовнішня політика, міжнародні відносини.

The problem statement. The investigation of the whole ranges of different research components and the choice at the end of XX – early XXI centuries by the new independent states their own foreign policy vector, formation and realization of bilateral coordination between two sovereign countries, their sharing in international relations are based on methodology as a system of scientific principles, methods and manners of historical analysis of the problem mentioned, and the usage of contemporary conceptual and terminological instruments. Methodology of investigation and studying the history of Ukrainian-Byelorussian relations allows to analyse and synthesize the knowledge needed on theoretical level. This process means

that a certain part of them are being transformed from the simple list of facts and events, into the entire complex scientific system of historical knowledge from the problem mentioned.

In contemporary science the concept “methodology” has a rather large reckoning of definitions. However, we suppose that the most exactly the definition of this concept was given in “Philosophic encyclopaedic dictionary” (Philosophic encyclopaedic dictionary, 2002). In it methodology means the totality of approaches, manners, methods and procedures used in the process of scientific perception and practical activity to achieve the concrete aim. In scientific cognition this aim means the obtaining of objective and true scientific knowledge, or building the scientific theory and its logical grounds (Philosophic encyclopaedic dictionary, 2002: 374).

The choice of methodological instruments is based on necessity of thorough and objective investigation of foundation and development history of bilateral Ukrainian-Byelorussian relations during 1991–2014, finding of their theoretical and conceptual backgrounds, factors caused the transforming of interstate relations according to contemporary international challenges. As pointed out Ya. Kalakura, one of the most famous Ukrainian specialist in methodology, methodological instruments means a system of principles, methods, ways, manners and approaches of scientific cognition (Kalakura, 2004: 26). According to the wide list of instruments for a scientist, to our mind, it is necessary to pay attention only for those which allow to investigate Ukrainian-Byelorussian relations during the period mentioned soundly and fully, with taking into consideration all the factors, events and circumstances influencing on their formation and development.

We would like to highlight, that one of the most important methodological task in historical science is to increase scientific and conceptual significance of methodology in the context of building of investigation theoretical foundations, and also to throw light upon conceptual and categorical apparatus. We would like to point, that in this context is right to study and specify separate terminological questions and some development peculiarities of Ukrainian history, which would be useful for well-grounded, thorough and objective throwing light upon the main stages and tendencies of formation and development bilateral Ukrainian-Byelorussian relations in new geopolitical realities. In the context of research work, to our mind, the priority significance has the following key concepts: “foreign policy”, “international relations”, “interstate links”, “political cooperation”, “economic relations”, “strategic partnership”. But according to the world experience, key historical concepts are not constant, and are variable. It depends on the status of society development and concrete historical period. We would like to highlight, that most attention in the world history of international relations is paid for interstate activity in the foreign policy and bilateral relations between separate countries. But even now the questions mentioned are actual and debatable. Interstate relations can be characterized by their own specificity, as their content, directions and forms are being influenced by home or international challenges. In such conditions bilateral relations can be characterized as variable and abrupt.

Purpose of the article is to analyse theoretical and methodological foundations of investigation of contemporary Ukrainian-Byelorussian relations, and also throw light upon the complex importance of methodological instruments dealing with objective and integral comprehension of Ukrainian-Byelorussian relations.

The analysis of the sources and recent researches. Theoretical basis for understanding of content and substance of bilateral relations between Ukraine and Republic of Byelorussia, their permanent development in contemporary geopolitical conditions consists of the research works of the following Ukrainian and Byelorussian scientists: L. Chekalenko (Chekalenko, 2006), M. Doroshko and N. Shpakova (Doroshko, Shpakova, 2011), S. Vidnianskyi (Vidnianskyi, 2004), Yu. Makar (Makar, 2008: 189–198), M. Aleksiiévets and Ya. Seko (Aleksiiévets, Seko, 2016: 34–49),

V. Snapkovskiy (Snapkovskiy, 2013; Snapkovskiy, 2014: 210–239), K. Kamyshev (Kamyshev, 2005: 51–56), V. Ulakhovych (Ulakhovich, 2003: 99–116), V. Shadurskiy (Shadurskiy, 2011: 33–38), O. Sharapo (Sharapo, 2006: 15–22) and others. These works contain great massive of valuable information and analytic materials concerning foreign policy of Ukraine and Byelorussia, the status and problems of contemporary international relations, and also geopolitical changes at the end of XX – early XXI centuries. Researchers propose contemporary theoretical and methodological approaches, and also help theoretical comprehension of foreign policy activity of the states and international coordination.

The presentation of the basic material. The proclamation of independence of Ukraine and Byelorussia in 1991 caused building of theoretical backgrounds concerning foreign policy vectors and interstate coordination between both states. We would like to point, that good relations with neighbouring states were of a key importance for the both sides. To our mind, this task was actual in 1991, and continue to be so now, as in the conditions of contemporary international challenges the question of Ukrainian and also Byelorussian states existing depends on it. In the process of studying of Ukrainian-Byelorussian relations is important to specify such key concepts, as “foreign policy” and “international relations”. We should point out, that despite the great quantity of scientific research works from the problem mentioned, there is no unitary definition of foreign policy and international relations phenomena.

In Ukrainian diplomatic encyclopaedia A. Subotin pointed, that foreign policy is a system of actions being done by international actor directed on influencing on behaviour of another subjects of international relations, and adaptation to the results of the processes of international system. Foreign policy of any actor does not include only separate discrete acts, but has a character of foreign policy activity concerning formal strategy of behaviour in international surroundings. According to its functional content, foreign policy actuates the interests in individual, corporative and universal aspects, and also in subnational, national, regional and global dimensions (Subotin, 2004: 458).

The author mentioned also gave the definition of international relations phenomenon. According to A. Subotin, international relations is a special form of social relations, taking part in which realize an international subjectiveness of individual or joint actor. The main function of such relations is to realize the civilization and anthropological union of humanity. In contemporary theory there are three macroconceptions of international relations: political science concerning the priority of state as a unitary international actor, and in structure of international relations points the interstate relations; sociological, which considers the international character of a certain transaction depending on the character of its object; systemic, which depends on idea, that any international actor is secondary to the system of international relations. According to the attributive features, the most popular criteria of differentiation of international relations are the following: criterion of geographic localization (global, regional, subregional, local); criterion of time localization (short-termed, middle-termed, long-termed); criterion of the quantity of mutual actors (bilateral, multilateral, universal); criterion of correlation status of actors (symmetrical, asymmetrical); criterion of the sphere, which is an object of relations (economic, scientific, cultural, military etc.); criterion of character of actor’s coordination (coordination, conflict) (Subotin, 2004: 100).

That is why we investigate the interstate links as multifunctional, complex system with its own dynamic structure. The main directions of interstate coordination should take into consideration national interests of all sides, subordinate to the processes of their development, and also to norms of international law. In contemporary conditions Ukraine and Republic of Byelorussia are connected by geographic factor (both countries are situated in Eastern Europe, and were parts of a great state formations),

and a certain common interests deal with all aspects of social and political life of both states. According to investigation of Ukrainian-Byelorussian interstate links, contemporary model of bilateral coordination is a many-sided integral system of mutual coordination in different spheres.

Theoretical and conceptual definition of such concepts, as “political relations” and “economic relations” is of a key importance in the context of throwing light upon bilateral Ukrainian-Byelorussian links during 1991–2014. We would like to point out, however, that the separation of main directions, tendencies and forms of relations between Ukraine and Republic of Byelorussia, its detailed analysis depends on the content and substance of the concepts mentioned. So, political relations are, to our mind, one of the part of Ukrainian and Byelorussian activity in international relations, and is a union of different mechanisms and means of their coordination in all spheres of life. Ukrainian-Byelorussian political relations are based on such points, as: bilateral diplomatic coordination, different official and working visits of Presidents, Prime-Ministers, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Parliament Speakers of both countries, leaders of a certain political parties, etc. During such visits the representatives of Ukrainian and Byelorussian political elites usually realize negotiations from a certain questions of bilateral relations, or key international problems. Also they legally fortify the arrangements achieved. We would like to point, that the process of political coordination is useful not only for the rapprochement of both states, but even for the protection from internal and foreign challenges.

Interstate economic relations, as pointed M. Dudchenko and M. Rubtsova, may be studied as a system of different economical (industrial, monetary and financial, scientific and technical etc.) links between national economics of both countries based on international work distribution. Economic links are characterized by coordination of juridical and natural persons of both states. The formation and development of interstate economic relations is determined by strengthening of mutual links and interdependence of both economics. It is specially influenced by scientific and technical progress, liberalization and strengthening of economic globalization tendencies. Interstate economic links include bilateral trade, industrial, scientific and technical, monetary and financial, transport and communicational cooperation (Dudchenko, Rubtsova, 2004: 100–101).

At the beginning of XXI century cooperation between Ukraine and Republic of Byelorussia got new forms of bilateral relations and became strategic. That is why we would like to give a definition of the concept “strategic partnership”. According to A. Pyvovarov, strategic partnership is a higher level of trade and economic cooperation, mutual help in foreign policy, effectiveness of state and political, financial and industrial, scientific and cultural elite (Pyvovarov, 2009: 8–9).

During the process of studying of the main stages of formation and development contemporary bilateral Ukrainian-Byelorussian relations we used the following principles: historical principle, objectivity, scientism, systemic and integral principles.

Historical principle is the most important, as it provides throwing light upon the main facts, events and occurrences of Ukrainian-Byelorussian relations in connection with a concrete situation, foreign and home policy of both countries.

The next principle used in this work, is an objectiveness. In the process of its usage the author paid attention both to positive and negative factors of bilateral relations.

The principle of scientism was also very important. It helped to avoid the descriptive character and publicistic style in the process of throwing light upon Ukrainian- Byelorussian relations during 1991–2014. Besides, this principle provided the academic level while investigating this topic and using of contemporary theoretical and methodological approaches.

Systemic principle helped us to study the integrality of Ukrainian-Byelorussian cooperation in new geopolitical conditions in the context of interconnection with events taking place during the end of XX – early XXI century.

The integral principle provided throwing light upon the problem investigated according to interconnection of all its aspects. So, in our work we wanted to study the relations between Ukraine and Byelorussia, including such directions of bilateral activity: cooperation in political and diplomatic, trade and economic, scientific and technical spheres; interregional and boundary links etc. We would like to point, that investigation of different aspects of Ukrainian-Byelorussian interstate cooperation helped to integral studying of the problem mentioned and its deep analysis.

The application of the principle mentioned is closely connected with the usage of the following scientific methods: common scientific, special scientific and concrete scientific. From all these methods, to our mind, should be analyzed only those which were used more often to solve our investigational tasks.

During the process of investigation, the most valuable from all common scientific methods became the following: analysis, synthesize, induction, deduction. The basic methods of analysis and synthesize were used in such cases: during all stages of studying of general range of Ukrainian-Byelorussian relations; providing of the connection between the whole and its separate parts; throwing light upon the key aspect of interstate coordination. Having analysed the great massive of sources, the usage of the methods mentioned allowed us to unite different information, and to create complex system of knowledge about Ukrainian-Byelorussian relations during 1991–2014.

For the problem analysed historical and chronological method is of a key importance. Its usage allowed us to observe and analyse the major facts and events of Ukrainian-Byelorussian relations in chronological order, in dynamics of its development, and also to find the majority and peculiarities of separate stages of foundation and development of Ukrainian-Byelorussian relations during 1991–2014. The usage of historical and chronological method allowed to open the internal content of the main stages of bilateral relations, and also to separate few concrete aspects and study them in time sequence.

The usage of historical and comparative method was also quite important. This method helped to understand integral character, mutuality, and even contradiction in Ukrainian-Byelorussian relations, accenting on the searches of common and different features in various stages of development. Historical and comparative method allowed to compare the major events in Ukraine and Byelorussia during the period analyzed, find some regularities, and also investigate the specificity of the status of Ukrainian-Byelorussian relations in contemporary conditions.

In the process of throwing light upon the problem mentioned the usage of historical and typological method is necessary. It is directed on the investigation of the topic by separate concrete features, their regulation, finding interconnections between concrete and general. During investigation the Ukrainian-Byelorussian relations, the method mentioned helped to regulate the historiographic and source base of the work, pointing out of the main tendencies and priorities of Ukrainian-Byelorussian cooperation in the conditions of contemporary challenges characterized by their own features and typological levels. The usage of historical and typological method became possible generalization and systematization of concrete events and facts, their division into a few types and throwing light upon some key aspects being characterized bilateral Ukrainian-Byelorussian relations.

Also we should point out the usage of concrete and historical methods, especially systemic and structural, and statistic. Systemic and structural method of scientific cognition helped to the establishment of reason and result links between the concrete facts and events, understanding the real content of interstate coordination, realizing the

main tendencies and key links between the countries in the context of international relations.

Statistic method of scientific cognition allowed us to throw light upon the main directions of Ukrainian-Byelorussian coordination (first of all, in the trade and economic sphere) on the basis of the using of analyses of statistic materials, and quantitative indexes of Ukrainian-Byelorussian coordination. The usage of this method allowed us to make some generalized conclusions about the major events and tendencies in interstate coordination which were not represented directly in statistic information. Also we could point out the certain perspective aspects of further widening of bilateral relations.

Conclusions. So, the wide usage of certain theoretical and methodological instruments realized the deep and subjective investigation of Ukrainian-Byelorussian relations during 1991–2014, opening its real content, core, and also the dynamics of formation and development in objective reality. During the period analysed Ukrainian-Byelorussian collaboration is characterized by such indications, as permanent evolution and dynamic changes caused by national interests of both countries, and foreign challenges. The fully usage of methodological instruments in the process of considering this problem allowed authentically, systemically and integrally throw light upon the entire complicated and multifold system of bilateral relations. Also owing to this, the realization of investigation purpose and tasks was ensured.

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