

Chris Collison

## **Two Maidans: How Competing Power Bases During Ukraine's 2013-2014 Revolution Paved the Way for a New Civic Culture**

WORKING DRAFT

### **Introduction**

In the three years since Ukraine's 2013-2014 Euromaidan protest movement, networks of urban activists have appeared in Ukraine's major cities to address issues such as building codes, smart city planning, and historic preservation. These small-scale projects seem to have grown out of increased civic activism stirred up by the 2013-2014 uprising. Accounts in popular media often portray the revolution as a pro-European Union movement led by the opposition that turned violent in the winter of 2014. A closer look at the dynamics of the revolt reveal that Euromaidan was never monolithic. In fact, there were two Maidans working in parallel: The political opposition and the public. Both competed for power and influence and cooperated only when necessary. When the street protests ended, the public's activity continued, as some activists headed to the front lines as soldiers and others returned to their neighborhoods to embark on new projects. Euromaidan was not the country's first mass uprising, but it is the first to see sustained civic participation that has been able to produce results after the end of the street protests. This phenomenon is changing the relationship between citizens and their cities and neighborhoods in today's Ukraine.

In 2004, the Orange Revolution raised hopes that a Ukrainian civil society would usher in

a new era of reform, reduce corruption, and curb the influence of anti-democratic elites. Despite high expectations, reform efforts faltered and jubilation gave way to disillusionment as the newly elected leaders turned on each other and failed to deliver on their promises. Viktor Yanukovich, denied the presidency when that uprising overturned the results of a fraud-ridden vote, returned in 2010 and won the presidential election, ushering in an era of unprecedented corruption and creeping authoritarianism. The promise of the Orange Revolution seemed to have ended in a humiliating retreat. But in 2013, mass protests returned to Ukraine's streets, eventually ousting Yanukovich. What seemed initially to be a repeat of 2004 turned out to be something entirely different. While the grassroots groups that populated Kyiv's streets in 2004 largely evaporated in the aftermath of the Orange Revolution's success, regular Ukrainians have turned their efforts to a number of civic causes since the Euromaidan Revolution.

A closer look at the Orange Revolution and Euromaidan reveals starkly different power dynamics between the political opposition and the public during those movements. These dynamics offer clues to why the two revolutions had different effects on civic participation. While observers hailed the Orange Revolution as a victory of civil society, examining the history of the actors who shaped that movement and the events that led to it reveals that it was at heart a victory of an opposition political elite over the establishment political elite. Euromaidan, by contrast, was less centralized and the opposition political parties found themselves competing for power and influence with grassroots elements as the protests played out during the winter.

After establishing the mechanisms that drove both the Orange Revolution and Euromaidan, this paper seeks to demonstrate through interviews with activists involved in urban initiatives and civic activism how the grassroots dynamic of Euromaidan and that movement's rejection of political elites set the stage for a more active urban civic culture in Ukraine. By first

comparing the two mass protest movements, and documenting the growth of the political opposition, this paper seeks to show how distrust of political parties before and during Euromaidan and the competition for influence between those two groups allowed the grassroots to assert itself in a way it had not done during the Orange Revolution. Finally, by speaking with activists who participated in that movement, this study seeks to better understand how Euromaidan serves as a symbol of sacrifice and struggle while activists continue efforts to remake Ukrainian society.

## **Chapter I, Part I**

### **Competing for Influence: The Dynamics of Ukraine's 2013-2014 Revolution**



*Thousands attend a viche in Kyiv on December 8, 2013 (Chris Collison)*

## **European Aspirations**

On a cold and wet day in November 2014, a group of about 2,000 people gathered on Kyiv's main square, Maidan Nezalezhnosti. They were there to protest signals from the government of President Viktor Yanukovich that he would abandon a long-sought economic and political agreement with the European Union, which he had repeatedly promised to conclude prior to that autumn.<sup>1</sup> According to popular narratives, these people—mostly activists, journalists, and students—headed to Maidan in response to a Facebook post by activist-journalist Mustafa Nayyem, who had called on those upset by the government's decision to organize rather

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<sup>1</sup> "Yanukovich: Ukraine hopes Vilnius summit will produce practical results in signing of EU-Ukraine Association Agreement." Interfax-Ukraine. 6 June 2013. Available: <https://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/ukraine-politics/yanukovich-ukraine-hopes-vilnius-summit-will-produce-practical-results-in-signing-of-eu-ukraine-association-agreement-325249.html>

than “like” his post.<sup>2</sup> Other prominent figures, including Arseniy Yatsenyuk, who led the largest opposition party, also called for protests on November 21, but it is Nayssem who is remembered in most popular accounts.<sup>34</sup> The date was also the anniversary of the runoff election that sparked the Orange Revolution nine years earlier. The gathering would be repeated on the following day, the 22nd, which marked the anniversary of the beginning of the Orange Revolution. Whether those who joined during the initial first two days were there because of Nayssem’s call to action, pleas by opposition politicians, or to mark the anniversary of the protest movement nine years earlier remains a source of debate among small factions of Ukrainians. Those who support Nayssem, who now holds a seat in parliament, tend to adhere to the popular story, while his critics are more likely to believe the anniversary narrative. Few will admit that they followed the lead of the political opposition parties. While on the surface the debate may seem like nitpicking between activists and politicians, it serves to illustrate a dynamic that would characterize Euromaidan and Ukrainian society in the years to follow—namely, the distrust between grassroots activists and the political establishment.

That dynamic was clear from the earliest stages of Euromaidan. Protesters were told not to bring any signs bearing political party logos or slogans, worrying that the movement would be taken over by the parties and their interests.<sup>56</sup> From the beginning, Euromaidan had a complicated relationship with the opposition political parties. The grassroots wing of the protest

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<sup>2</sup> See Mustafa Nayssem’s original Facebook post: <https://www.facebook.com/Mustafanayssem/posts/10201177280260151>

<sup>3</sup> See: Twitter account of Arseniy Yatsenyuk: <https://twitter.com/Yatsenyuk> AP/status/403453433648148481  
See also: Call to action by opposition leader Yuriy Andreev: [http://blogs.korrespondent.net/blog/pro\\_users/3289622-uvaha-zbir-sohodni-na-maidani-nezalezhnosti-o-2230-video](http://blogs.korrespondent.net/blog/pro_users/3289622-uvaha-zbir-sohodni-na-maidani-nezalezhnosti-o-2230-video)

<sup>4</sup> See Olga Onuch’s discussion of the role of Nayssem and other journalists in organizing journalist-activist networks in: Onuch, Olga. “Maidans Past and Present.” In Marples, David R., and Mills, Frederick V. (eds). *Ukraine’s Euromaidan: Analysis of a Civil Revolution*. Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society. Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2015.

<sup>5</sup> “Maidan 2.0: A Protest With Reservations.” The Interpreter. 25 November 2013. Available: <http://www.interpretermag.com/maidan-2-0-a-protest-with-reservations/>

<sup>6</sup> See: <http://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-protests-generational-divide/25182439.html>

movement and the political parties occupied two separate spaces during much of the demonstrations—grassroots protesters stayed largely on the main square, the “Maidan,” while the political parties centered around European Square, located two blocks away.<sup>7</sup> This physical and psychological distance became especially evident on November 24, when the opposition parties—Batkivschyna (led by Arseniy Yatsenyuk), UDAR (led by Vitaliy Kitschko), and Svoboda (led by Oleh Tyahnybok)—called for a weekend protest. According to the opposition politicians, the protest was meant to send a signal to Yanukovych ahead of his trip to Vilnius, where he was expected to formally suspend work on the European Union Association Agreement at a summit of the Eastern Partnership.<sup>8</sup> That day established two distinct Maidans by giving them two physical homes: the central square, which was largely controlled by nonpartisan activists, and European Square, which political parties used as their base of operation.<sup>9</sup>

Students held a demonstration on November 26, marching from Taras Shevchenko National University to the Maidan. Organizers again told students not to carry political party signs and instead bring Ukrainian or European Union flags.<sup>10</sup> As with the Orange Revolution, students were an integral part of mobilization efforts, especially in the earliest phases, and the average protester on the Maidan was about ten years younger than the national average.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Natalia Otrishchenko discusses the importance of geography to the protest and the symbolism of Maidan in its association with independence. See: Otrishchenko, Natalia. “Beyond the Square.” In Marples, David R., and Mills, Frederick V. (eds). *Ukraine’s Euromaidan: Analysis of a Civil Revolution. Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society*. Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2015.

<sup>8</sup> See: Text of “The Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit, Vilnius, 28-29 November 2013”

<sup>9</sup> Katya Gorchinskaya, “Echoes of Orange Revolution: Volunteers Kick into Action for EuroMaidan Protests,” Kyiv Post, 24 November 2013. Available: <http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine/volunteers-who-run-euromaidan-332400.html>.

<sup>10</sup> Authors notes from interviews with protesters on 26 January 2013.

<sup>11</sup> See Anna Chebotariova’s demographic data: Chebotariova, Anna. “Voices of Resistance and Hope: On the Motivations and Expectations of Euromaidaners.” In Marples, David R., and Mills, Frederick V. (eds). *Ukraine’s Euromaidan: Analysis of a Civil Revolution. Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society*. Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2015.

## Phase Two: Mass mobilization

By the end of November, the protest had failed to bring in the huge numbers of protesters that had made the Orange Revolution a success, and the movement relied mainly on local students, activists, and supporters of the opposition political parties. The largest gathering, on November 24, brought an estimated 100,000 people to central Kyiv—far fewer than the larger demonstrations in 2004.<sup>12</sup> When Yanukovich suspended EU Association agreement talks during the Vilnius summit, it looked like the protest movement was destined to fizzle out.

That all changed during the pre-dawn hours of November 30, when Ukraine's elite riot police, the Berkut, raided the protest camp on Maidan, brutally cracking down on the several hundred activists who had camped out for the night. The troopers ruthlessly beat activists, mostly young students, sending several to the hospital.<sup>13</sup> Ukrainians awoke a few hours later to images of bloodied students and journalists—scenes that went viral online and sparked outrage across the country.<sup>14</sup>

A day later, on December 1, huge crowds flooded Kyiv, demanding justice for the brutal beatings they had seen online and in opposition publications. It was at this point that the movement transformed from a relatively limited protest against government policy into a mass mobilization effort. The government's violent crackdown brought out a diverse group of people, many of whom had no opinion about the association agreement. Ukrainian researchers found that after December 1, about 70 percent of protesters said they were responding to government

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<sup>12</sup> Kuhn bon Burgsdorf, Elias. "The Euromaidan Revolution in Ukraine: Stages of the Maidan Movement and Why They Constitute a Revolution." 2015, Vol. 7 No. 2. Available: <http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/986/the-euromaidan-revolution-in-ukraine-stages-of-the-maidan-movement-and-why-they-constitute-a-revolution>

<sup>13</sup> "Berkut Rozhnav Maidan." Ukrainska Pravda. 30 November 2013. Available: <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2013/11/30/7003683/>

<sup>14</sup> For example, see RFE/RL video of the crackdown: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UkAHmtZtaA4>



violence on November 30, while about half cited the president's position on the association agreement as a reason for attendance.<sup>15</sup>

The mass protest phase of Euromaidan saw much higher levels of participation that were sustained throughout December. An estimated 350,000 people attended on December 1, and weekly Sunday meetings, which came to be known as “viches” (the word used to describe people's councils held during the times of Kyivan Rus')<sup>16</sup>, brought similarly large numbers throughout the month. On December 8, known as the “march of millions,” an estimated 800,000 people attended a viche in the capital, while protests spread to cities across the country.<sup>17</sup> A large stage was built, where speakers from various activist groups, politicians, musicians, and regular citizens were allowed to speak throughout the protest movement. It proved an especially important element of the weekly viches.

By the mass protest phase of Euromaidan, the demonstration became more linguistically, ethnically, and geographically diverse. While media reports often painted the movement as primarily composed of Western Ukrainians, who are geographically closer to Europe and tended to support the Orange coalition in elections more than their Eastern counterparts, survey data found that protesters from eastern and southern Ukraine made up a significant number of demonstrators—about 20 percent.<sup>18</sup> Those who primarily spoke Ukrainian at home made up just over the national average of 51 percent, while Russian and bilingual speakers made up about 40

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<sup>15</sup> “Oblychichya YEveromaidanu (sotsial'nyiy portret uchasnykiv protestiv.” Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation. 12 December 2013. Available: <http://dif.org.ua/article/oblichchya-evromaydanu-sotsialniy-portret-uchasnykiv-protestiv-v-infografitsi>  
Also See Chebotariova's article with Maidan activists.

<sup>16</sup> “Viche.” Internet Encyclopedia of Ukraine. Available: <http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages%5CV%5CI%5CVicheIT.htm>

<sup>17</sup> “Timeline: Protests and political crisis in Ukraine.” Reuters. 17 December 2013. Available: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-ukraine-timeline-idUSBRE9BG10N20131217>

<sup>18</sup> Chebotariova, Anna. “Voices of Resistance and Hope: On the Motivations and Expectations of Euromaidaners.” In Marples, David R., and Mills, Frederick V. (eds). *Ukraine's Euromaidan: Analysis of a Civil Revolution. Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society*. Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2015.



percent. These numbers are worth noting, considering popular narratives that the protest was dominated by Ukrainian speakers from the far west. Protesters were also more likely to be from cities, highlighting the urban nature of the movement, which saw Kyiv as an important symbol of the country's future. Protesters from rural areas were only about 18 percent of the movement, even though rural dwellers made up about 31 percent of the population more broadly. Most importantly, demographic surveys reveal the non-partisan nature of the movement. One survey found that 13 percent supported a political party, while another survey found that only 3.9 percent considered themselves political activists.<sup>19</sup>

Throughout December and into January, acts of violence and harassment against protesters and activists, including the disappearance of several prominent journalists, increased dramatically, drawing condemnation from European leaders.<sup>20</sup> Hired thugs, known as *titushky*, were sent to the streets to provoke fights and to provide fodder for pro-Yanukovych media to paint the protest movement as a fascist uprising.<sup>21</sup> Although these instances of violence and harassment appeared to be an attempt to intimidate and discourage people from protesting, large numbers of people continued to occupy Kyiv's central square. There, activists built barricades using bags filled with snow, benches, and pieces of metal from the New Year's tree. Viches and protests continued into the new year, with activists preventing the government from finishing the steel-framed New Year tree. The tree had become a symbol of resistance after the government insisted that the reason it had cracked down on protesters on November 30 was to continue

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<sup>19</sup> See: Chebotariova, 166.

<sup>20</sup> See tables by Marta Dyczok showing the number of attacks reported each month against journalists throughout the protest movement: Dyczok, Marta. "Mass Media Framing, Representations and Impact on Public Opinion." In Marples, David R., and Mills, Frederick V. (eds). *Ukraine's Euromaidan: Analysis of a Civil Revolution. Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society*. Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2015.

<sup>21</sup> Kuzio, Taras. "Vigilantes, Organized Crime, and Russian and European Nationalism." In Marples, David R., and Mills, Frederick V. (eds). *Ukraine's Euromaidan: Analysis of a Civil Revolution. Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society*. Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2015.

See also: Zawada, Zenon. "Ukraine's Euro-Maidan: a timeline through December 17." *Ukrainian Weekly*. 2 February 2014: 13-15.

construction of the tree and to make way for the holiday market.<sup>22</sup>

### **Phase Three: Violent Upheaval**

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<sup>22</sup> “Khronika Evromaidana. 30 noyabrya – 5 dekabrya.” LB.ua. 30 November 2013. Available: [http://lb.ua/news/2013/11/30/243433\\_razgon\\_evromaydana\\_hronika.html](http://lb.ua/news/2013/11/30/243433_razgon_evromaydana_hronika.html)



*A protester holds a Ukrainian nationalist flag on Hrushevskoho Street during a ceasefire in January 2014. (Chris Collison)*

The third phase of the protest began on January 16, 2014, when the country's parliament passed, by a show of hands, a package of draconian laws targeting protesters. This legislation, which became known as the "dictator laws," gave the government expanded power to shut down the internet, created a blacklist of so-called "foreign agents," and made it a crime to wear a helmet at a protest, among other bans meant to cripple demonstrations.<sup>23</sup> The move provoked a reaction among activists, who on January 19 called for another mass viche on Maidan. That day, a group of protesters booed the political opposition leaders who were speaking on stage, broke away from Maidan and began an attempt to march toward government buildings up the hill.

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<sup>23</sup> Englund, Will. "Ukraine enacts harsh laws against protests." The Washington Post. 17 January 2014. Available: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/ukraine-enacts-harsh-laws-against-protests/2014/01/17/365f377a-7fae-11e3-93c1-0e888170b723\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.9fcc6b78f7f0](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/ukraine-enacts-harsh-laws-against-protests/2014/01/17/365f377a-7fae-11e3-93c1-0e888170b723_story.html?utm_term=.9fcc6b78f7f0)

Berkut riot police pushed back, and violence broke out. The government forces and protesters clashed for days, with protesters lobbing bricks and Molotov cocktails toward police, who beat them with clubs, threw tear gas canisters, and fired rubber bullets. It proved increasingly difficult for the opposition politicians to control Maidan protesters. In one infamous video, protesters were filmed spraying Vitaliy Klitschko, a former boxing champion and leader of the UDAR party, with a fire extinguisher while he tried to stop demonstrators from clashing with police on Hrushevskoho Street.<sup>24</sup>

On January 22, Serhiy Nigoyan, a 20-year-old protester of Armenian descent, was shot and killed on Hrushevskoho Street—the first protester killed by gunshot wounds during the demonstrations.<sup>25</sup> His death, and the deaths of two others not long after, marked an escalation in tension between the government and Euromaidan activists, ushering in a more violent and unpredictable phase that left the opposition political parties less able to influence the events on the ground as emotions ran high and grassroots elements further mobilized self-defense groups with no explicit partisan allegiances.

The next day, violence stopped temporarily when the two sides agreed to a ceasefire and resumed negotiations, leaving a barricade of burned-out police buses to separate protesters and riot police on the street leading to the parliament building.<sup>26</sup> Over the next several weeks, the two sides observed an uneasy truce as the opposition parties, European Union leaders, and the government attempted to come to some sort of agreement. Meanwhile, “self-defense groups” trained in combat techniques on Maiden Maidan in anticipation of further violence. Hostilities

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<sup>24</sup> Watch the video of protesters spraying Vitaliy Kitschko with a fire extinguisher: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MjUWYKaVRAU>

<sup>25</sup> Butenko, Victoria and Loiko, Sergei L. “3 Ukraine protesters die as clashes with police escalate. The Los Angeles Times. 22 January 2013. Available: <http://www.latimes.com/world/worldnow/la-fg-wn-ukraine-kiev-protests-turn-deadly-20140122-story.html>

<sup>26</sup> Herszenhorn, David M. “Claims of Police Brutality in Ukraine Amid Talks to Quell Unrest.” The New York Times. 23 January 2014. Available: [https://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/24/world/europe/ukraine.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/24/world/europe/ukraine.html?_r=0)

resumed on February 18, when riot police made a push to retake the central square after Yanukovych ordered protesters to leave by 6 pm that day.<sup>27</sup> Riot police descended, setting fire to protest tents and pushing toward the main stage. People from around the country flooded Kyiv to defend the encampment as violence quickly escalated, culminating on the morning of February 20, when the death toll climbed to more than 100 after dozens were killed by government troops wielding Kalashnikovs and sniper rifles on Institutska Street.<sup>28</sup>



*Berkut riot police crack down on the main Euromaidan encampment on February 18, 2014. The trooper on the left appears to be flipping the bird toward protesters. (Chris Collison)*

<sup>27</sup> Kuhn and Burgsdorff.

<sup>28</sup> Sources differ when reporting exactly how many were killed on February 20. Ukrainian media identifies 115 protesters who confirmed were killed in the revolution: “Spisok pogibshikh v khode aktsiy protesta v Ukraine (yanvar’-mart 2014). 15 March 2015. Available: [http://lb.ua/society/2014/03/15/256239\\_spisok\\_pogibshih\\_hode\\_aktsiy\\_protesta.html](http://lb.ua/society/2014/03/15/256239_spisok_pogibshih_hode_aktsiy_protesta.html)





*A protester stands on the charred remains of the Euromaidan protest camp on February 20, 2014. (Chris Collison)*

On February 21, the political opposition signed an agreement with the Yanukovych regime, brokered by European leaders, which would restore the previous 2004 constitution, create a coalition government, and schedule early presidential elections no later than December 2014.<sup>29</sup> When the opposition leaders announced the agreement from the stage on Maidan, the crowd roared in anger, prompting Vitaliy Kitschko to apologize for bargaining with the regime. Volodymyr Parasyuk, a 27-year-old who led a volunteer self-defense group, climbed up to the stage and announced that his volunteers would reject the opposition's deal with Yanukovych, calling the previous day's massacre inexcusable. He warned that if Yanukovych didn't resign by

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<sup>29</sup> Text of the agreement available here: [http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/cae/servlet/contentblob/671350/publicationFile/190051/140221-UKR\\_Erklaerung.pdf](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/cae/servlet/contentblob/671350/publicationFile/190051/140221-UKR_Erklaerung.pdf)

10 am the next morning, he and his volunteers would storm the presidential building.<sup>30</sup> The grassroots wing's rejection of the compromise between the political opposition and the regime showed just how deep the gulf between the political parties and protesters on the ground had grown in the three months since the movement began. The opposition had fought for control of the movement during crucial moments of the revolution, and the violence pushed the two sides further apart as anger reached a boiling point. The two competing leaders of the revolution—the political wing and the grassroots—proved to be a marriage of convenience. The grassroots needed the opposition for political bargaining with the regime and European diplomats, while the political opposition needed the grassroots for mobilization and day-to-day operations.

Little did either side know that even before there were plans for a siege on the presidential building, Yanukovich had secretly left Kyiv, fleeing first east to Kharkiv, and then to Crimea from which he left Ukraine for Russia.<sup>31</sup> The revolution had ousted the president from power, but distrust between the political opposition that would soon assume power and the grassroots was there to stay. There would be no honeymoon.

## **Chapter I, Part II**

### **Ukrainian Revolutions: Changing Dynamics of the Public Sphere**

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<sup>30</sup> Watch Volodymyr Parasyuk's speech: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ys0FDfXQak>

<sup>31</sup> Higgins, Andrew and Kramer, Andrew E. "Ukraine Leader Was Defeated Even Before He Was Ousted." The New York Times. 3 January 2015. Available: [https://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/04/world/europe/ukraine-leader-was-defeated-even-before-he-was-ousted.html?hp&\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/04/world/europe/ukraine-leader-was-defeated-even-before-he-was-ousted.html?hp&_r=0)





*Protesters gather on November 21, 2014 to mark one year since the beginning of the Euromaidan protest movement. The banner on the left reads, "No - corruption; Yes - Lustration." The second banner reads, "Rights are not given. Rights are taken." (Chris Collison)*

Large-scale protest movements were nothing new in Eastern Europe by 2013. Ukraine itself had experienced three major demonstrations in 15 years—the Revolution on Granite in 1990, which preceded the collapse of communism and the disintegration of the Soviet Union; Ukraine without Kuchma in 2000-2001, which brought together prominent activists but was quashed by the government; and most notably, the Orange Revolution of 2004-2005. While the Revolution on Granite and Ukraine without Kuchma were relatively high-profile events, the Orange Revolution eclipsed them both in scale and in terms of outcome. The mass protest movement was among a wave of so-called “color revolutions” that swept through the former

Soviet Union in the early 2000s, coming on the heels of the Rose Revolution in Georgia, which brought to power a new political alliance headed by the flamboyant, Western-educated Mikheil Saakashvili. Similarly, the Orange Revolution brought in a new, pro-Western coalition headed by Viktor Yushchenko, a charismatic banker who promised reform and closer relations with Europe.

The protest movement erupted after a runoff presidential election between Yushchenko and Viktor Yanukovich, a Donetsk power broker who was hand-picked by the increasingly unpopular President Leonid Kuchma and had support from the Kremlin. The events of the election brought to focus widespread reports of fraud throughout the country.<sup>32</sup> Yanukovich was declared the official winner of the vote, although exit polls indicated that Yushchenko had beat him by wide margin. Throngs of people filled Maidan in the wake of the announcement, calling for the results to be annulled and demanding a do-over. The courts eventually relented, allowing international election observers into the country as Ukrainians returned to the polls to elect Yushchenko.

Heralded by Western observers as the beginning of a new democratic chapter in Ukraine, the revolution seemed to vindicate the prevailing neoliberal consensus that the world was witnessing the “end of history” as the countries of the former Soviet Union moved slowly toward democracy.<sup>33</sup> The assumption followed that Ukraine and other countries would see a blossoming of civil society and democratic institutions in the wake of these demonstrations of people power.

But the high hopes raised by the Orange Revolution soon gave way to disillusionment as

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<sup>32</sup> Åslund, Anders, and McFaul, Michael (Eds). *Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine's Democratic Breakthrough*. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006.

<sup>33</sup> The essays throughout the book edited by Åslund and McFaul, written in the immediate aftermath of the Orange Revolution, paint an especially rosy picture of the prospects for democracy and civil society in Ukraine.

the political coalition found itself mired in bitter infighting.<sup>34</sup> Change proved slow and halting under Yushchenko, who was beginning to face challenges from other politicians in his own coalition—most notably Yulia Tymoshenko, a one-time ally who served as prime minister under Yushchenko and would go on to run in the next presidential election. Eventually, Yanukovych, thought to be forever defeated by the forces of civil society and democracy, returned to triumph over Tymoshenko in the 2010 presidential election in a vote declared fair by international observers.<sup>35</sup>

Much has been written about the Orange Revolution and its outcome, especially during the initial jubilation surrounding the success of the protest movement. In the years that followed, however, social scientists, many of whom expected to see the consolidation of democracy and the emergence of newly enlivened civil society, largely concluded that neither took place in the years following the mass mobilization movement. To understand why, it is important to look at the dynamics of the movement itself—the demographic and political makeup of the revolutionaries and the events that led to the events of 2004. Doing so reveals a number of similarities with Euromaidan, but also some important differences, namely the central role of the political opposition and the focus on electoral outcomes. These important distinctions provide a roadmap for understanding how grassroots civic engagement is expressed in different forms than during the years between the Orange Revolution of 2004 and the events of 2013-2014.

## **Origins of the Orange Revolution**

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<sup>34</sup> Greene, David. “Disillusionment Strong in Post-Revolution Ukraine.” NPR. 15 January 2010. Available: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=122584545>

<sup>35</sup> Marson, James. “Ukraine’s New President: Is the Orange Revolution Over?” Time Magazine. 11 February 2010. Available: <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1963613,00.html>

Although it caught some Western observers off guard, the Orange Revolution did not happen spontaneously. It was the result of months of careful planning by the opposition coalition and volunteers ahead of the presidential vote of October 2004 and the runoff between Yanukovych and Yushchenko in November. But its origins can be traced back even further. The seeds for the revolution were planted as early as 2000, when opposition journalist Georgiy Gongadze was kidnapped and decapitated by unknown assailants.<sup>36</sup> The release of cassette tapes of recordings implicating President Leonid Kuchma and his associates of involvement in Gongadze's disappearance and murder sparked what would come to be known as the "Ukraine Without Kuchma" protests, which brought people to the streets in the first major anti-regime protests since independence.

The movement was largely organized by a handful of well-known activists and politicians--including Yuriy Lutsenko and Tetiana Chernovol, who would participate in both the Orange Revolution and the early phase of Euromaidan.<sup>37</sup> Ukraine Without Kuchma never transformed into a mass movement on the scale of the Orange Revolution and was snuffed out by the Kuchma regime in March 2001, but it brought together these prominent activists, and helped solidify a recently formed opposition party headed by Yulia Tymoshenko that would soon form an alliance with future President Viktor Yushchenko.<sup>38</sup>

Yushchenko, who was well regarded by the Kuchma government for his stewardship of the country's national bank, was appointed prime minister in 1999 to help Ukraine out of a growing financial crisis. He was sacked a month after the Ukraine Without Kuchma protests

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<sup>36</sup> Karantnycky, Adrian. "The Fall and Rise of Ukraine's Political Opposition: From Kuchmagate to the Orange Revolution." In Åslund, Anders, and McFaul, Michael (Eds). *Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine's Democratic Breakthrough*. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006., pp. 33

<sup>37</sup> Lynch, Tammy. "Social Mobilization and the Orange Revolution." In D'Anieri, Paul J. *Orange Revolution and Aftermath : Mobilization, Apathy, and the State in Ukraine*. Washington, D.C. : Baltimore: Woodrow Wilson Center ; Johns Hopkins UP, 2010., pp. 52-53.

<sup>38</sup> Kartnycky, pp. 31

ended for angering oligarch power brokers by canceling hundreds of state subsidies and privileges for their companies.<sup>39</sup> During his brief stint as head of government, Yushchenko managed to successfully steer Ukraine's faltering economy back on course, ushering in an era of growth and earning a reputation as skilled technocrat who was willing to implement reform, despite oligarch pressure.

After his dismissal, Yushchenko, along with a number of opposition figures, formed the Our Ukraine party, which allied with Tymoshenko's Batkivshchyna (Fatherland) party. Together with the Socialist Party, the opposition campaigned as a bloc in the 2002 parliamentary elections, nearly gaining control of parliament, although negotiations to include the Communist Party in a ruling coalition dragged out long enough for pro-Kuchma factions to grab power. The election saw physical abuse against opposition campaign staff and candidates, highlighting intimidation tactics pro-Kuchma elements were willing to carry out against the opposition, which was growing in popularity.<sup>40</sup> However, the election demonstrated that an organized opposition was possible and was seen as a dry-run for the presidential election of 2004.<sup>41</sup>

By 2004 the opposition coalition was in a position to wage a strong political campaign and to mobilize thousands of volunteers to the cause, tapping growing frustration with the Kuchma government over the cassette tape scandal and endemic corruption—issues that amounted to what Tucker calls an “accumulation of grievances.”<sup>42</sup> Yushchenko prepared for the fall elections by holding rallies throughout the summer that attracted increasingly large crowds

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<sup>39</sup> Åslund, Anders. “The Ancien Regime.” In Åslund, Anders, and McFaul, Michael (Eds). *Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine's Democratic Breakthrough*. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006., pp. 12-14

<sup>40</sup> See reports compiled by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in: “Treatment of the Social Democratic Party of Ukraine (SDPU); relationship with the National Salvation Forum (FNB); treatment of FNB members [UKR41890.E].” Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. 14 August 2003. Available: [https://www.ecoi.net/local\\_link/103230/199808\\_en.html](https://www.ecoi.net/local_link/103230/199808_en.html)

<sup>41</sup> Åslund, pp. 14-16

<sup>42</sup> Tucker, pp. 25

of supporters, while positioning himself close to the charismatic Tymoshenko, who was effective at reaching out to more radical voters. He embarked on a whirlwind tour of the country, mobilizing volunteers and empowering his campaign to develop the Pora! (“it’s time!”) group, which would prove instrumental in bringing protesters to Maidan for the Orange Revolution.<sup>43</sup>

Pora, formed principally at the initiative of Vladislav Kaskiv, who was tapped by pro-Yushchenko lawmaker Taras Stetskiv, always had a close relationship with the Yushchenko campaign, but also attracted together other civic organizations, including student groups (the Association of Law Students, Young Prosvita, the Christian-Democratic Youth of Ukraine, etc.) and pro-democracy NGOs, which were brought together under the umbrella of Pora.<sup>44</sup> The group was responsible for providing information to voters and getting people to the polls—and eventually the streets. Pora spent months drafting strategies, coming up with slogans, and learning to respond to state oppression through targeted media campaigns and by participating in several local elections. Pora eventually split into two groups: Black Pora (the civic and youth wing) and Yellow Pora (the political wing), although both ended up cooperating during the events of the Orange Revolution and for all intents and purposes were the same organization in the lead-up to the election.<sup>45</sup>

The election was a fundraising bonanza as oligarchs poured money into the campaigns, especially the campaign of the candidate preferred by the establishment—and the Kremlin. Yanukovych raised an estimated \$600 million, while Yushchenko raised about \$150 million for both the election and the Orange Revolution. Total spending amounted to more than 1 percent of Ukraine’s entire GDP, roughly 100 times the amount spent on the 2004 US presidential election

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<sup>43</sup> Karatnycky, pp. 33, 36-37

<sup>44</sup> Demes, Pavol and Forbrig, Joerg. “Pora - ‘It’s Time’ For Democracy in Ukraine.” In Åslund, Anders, and McFaul, Michael (Eds). *Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine's Democratic Breakthrough*. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006., pp. 87-88

<sup>45</sup> See Lynch (2010) and Shukan (2010) for more on the organizational structure of Black and Yellow Pora

in terms of percent of GDP.<sup>46</sup>

When other opposition candidates were knocked out of the first round of voting, they gave their full support to Yushchenko. Anticipating foul play, Yushchenko and his supporters prepared for a challenge to the November 21 vote, purchasing tents and supplies for a large-scale protest in advance. Pora was especially active and was ready for a fight after spending months practicing mobilization tactics, holding training retreats in Crimea and the Carpathian mountains, and building a nationwide network of activists.<sup>47</sup> When the results showed Yanukovych winning, despite exit polls showing him far behind, Yushchenko called for a protest on Maidan for the next morning, November 22. The Orange Revolution had begun.

Pora and party volunteers brought thousands of people to the streets, setting up a tent city and coordinating with the municipal authorities to organize garbage removal. The mass protest itself lasted 17 days—much shorter than Euromaidan—and saw no major acts of violence.<sup>48</sup> The spectacle caught the attention of the international press, which broadcast images of Ukraine's capital awash in a sea of orange, further pressuring the embattled government. When the country's high court on December 3 ruled the initial results invalid and scheduled another vote for December 26, the protest began to dwindle.

Among the most striking indications that the energy from the Orange Revolution had receded in the aftermath of the election was the near disappearance of civil society groups. Pora, most notably, spun off into different organizations. One iteration was a political party, which ran

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<sup>46</sup> Åslund pp. 20

<sup>47</sup> Diuk, Nadia. "The Triumph of Civil Society." In Åslund, Anders, and McFaul, Michael (Eds). *Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine's Democratic Breakthrough*. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006., pp. 78-79.

<sup>48</sup> Karatnycky, Adrian. "Ukraine's Orange Revolution." *Foreign Affairs*. March/April 2005. Available: [http://www.nytimes.com/cfr/international/20050301faessay\\_v84n2\\_karatnycky.html?pagewanted=1&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/cfr/international/20050301faessay_v84n2_karatnycky.html?pagewanted=1&_r=0)



in the 2006 parliamentary elections but only gathered about 1.5 percent of the vote.<sup>49</sup> Another project became the International Democracy Institute, a think tank.<sup>50</sup> After the election, Pora never regained the stature it had during the Orange Revolution. Some members formed OPORA, a group that educates civil activists and organizes pro-democracy lobbying and campaigns.<sup>51</sup> Pora and the movements that spun off from it played a minimal role in Euromaidan compared to the group's efforts in 2004. The civic groups that had become prominent between the Ukraine Without Kuchma protests and the Orange Revolution focused primarily on election issues such as monitoring, mobilization, and election law.<sup>52</sup> It seems that with an election victory, these groups quickly became less relevant and were not sustainable as the opposition suddenly became the establishment.

### **The last electoral revolution?**

The Orange Revolution was among a number of mass protests movements during the late 1990s and first decade of the 2000s that would be known as “color revolutions.” Looking back at these events, it is clear they followed a certain pattern. Valerie Bunce and Sharon Wolchik characterize these movements as “electoral revolutions” because they brought opposition political parties to power during election years as the result of successful civic protests—the Rose Revolution in Georgia, the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan, and the Orange Revolution.<sup>53</sup> These movements had a clear political goal: The electoral success of the opposition political

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<sup>49</sup> Election results: [http://da-ta.com.ua/mon\\_mainnews/916.htm](http://da-ta.com.ua/mon_mainnews/916.htm)

<sup>50</sup> Demes and Forbrig, pp. 100

<sup>51</sup> OPORA's website: <https://www.oporaua.org/en/about-us>

<sup>52</sup> Diuk, pp. 72

<sup>53</sup> Bunce, Valerie, and Sharon Wolchik. "International Diffusion and Postcommunist Electoral Revolutions." *Communist and Post - Communist Studies* 39, no. 3 (2006): 283. Available: <http://ducis.jhfc.duke.edu/wp-content/uploads/archive/documents/BunceReading.pdf>

party or coalition. Georgia's "electoral revolution" was a coordinated effort by NGOs and civil society groups, who prepared long in advance for the election by borrowing techniques and strategies from the Balkans.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, the Orange Revolution was carefully planned and rehearsed by political elites and groups like Pora. During Euromaidan, the political opposition, elites, and social movement organizations played a much smaller role in 2013-2014 than 2004 and that the protest by and large was loosely organized, so that movement does not fit in the same category.

Mark Beissinger argues that the Orange Revolution was characterized by a large-scale "negative coalition"—a large group of consisting of diverse preferences on "politically salient issues" but united by their rejection of an outcome, namely the fraudulent election of Viktor Yanukovich (Beissinger 576). Citing what he believes was the key common factor bringing protesters together—their "extreme rejection of the incumbent regime," Beissinger argues that the Orange Revolution fits this definition. But by his own admission, nearly all social revolutions could be characterized as negative coalitions "to some degree." Using Beissinger's definition, by the mass protest phase Euromaidan could certainly be classified as a negative coalition, given the movement's opposition to the Yanukovich regime. He cites Robert Dix's descriptions of negative coalitions in Latin America, where in the most successful negative coalitions, moderate elements are pushed into loose cooperation with more militant elements due to the "alienating policies undertaken by the regime." This certainly happened during the Orange Revolution, when actors with varying political beliefs were brought together—most notably the more radical elements who supported Tymoshenko in alliance with the more moderate Yushchenko bloc, and it happened even more overtly during Euromaidan, when moderates were forced into coalition

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<sup>54</sup> Angley, Robyn. "Escaping the Kmara Box: Reframing the Role of Civil Society in Georgia's Rose Revolution." *Studies of Transition States and Societies* 5, no. 1 (2013).

with groups such as the nationalist Right Sektor, which was willing to use violence to advance its goals. But the term “negative coalition” is too broad to differentiate Euromaidan from the Orange Revolution, or any mass protest event in Ukraine since independence for that matter—all of which defined themselves in opposition to those in power and brought together a variety of different elements of society.

What separates Euromaidan from the Orange Revolution in terms of internal dynamics is the role of political parties and the overtly political goals of the Orange Revolution. While it is true that the Orange Revolution revolution itself was the result of a broad coalition, that coalition was largely the result of efforts by organized political factions, namely the Yulia Tymoshenko bloc and the Our Ukraine (Yushchenko) bloc, which would come to form the Orange Coalition once Yushchenko assumed the presidency and Tymoshenko was named prime minister. The political nature of the Orange Revolution was also evident in the groups used to mobilize participants. For example, groups such as Chysta Ukraina and Pora, which Beissinger characterizes as “politically oriented civil society associations” were instrumental in getting people to the polls and mobilizing protesters.<sup>55</sup> But those groups, especially Pora, were closely aligned with the political opposition and cooperated closely with the Yushchenko campaign.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, their near disappearance in the aftermath of the Orange Revolution demonstrates how closely linked they are to the election process and the opposition political groups, casting doubt on claims that the Orange Revolution was fundamentally a grassroots movement.

Sociological data, while incomplete, further suggests that the participants of Euromaidan felt less connected to the political opposition. A Ukraine Monitoring Survey, compiled by Mark R. Beissinger, found that 21 percent of participants of the Orange Revolution belonged to a

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<sup>55</sup> Beissinger, Mark R. R. "The Semblance of Democratic Revolution: Coalitions in Ukraine's Orange Revolution." *American Political Science Review* 107.3 (2013): 574-92.

<sup>56</sup> See accounts of Pora's formation and activities in Karatnytsky (2005) and Diuk (2005)

social or political association, compared to 13 percent of Euromaidan participants who supported a political party and 3.9 percent of who said they considered themselves political activists.<sup>57</sup>

Beissinger's research also found that commitment to democratic values among participants was "conspicuously weak" and that a majority of Orange Revolution participants were not motivated by the "desire to defend democratic values." According to his research, 40 percent chose "to defend the values of a just, democratic society" as one of the two main reasons why they were protesting.<sup>58</sup> Finally, 90 percent reported that they had voted for Yushchenko in the election.

While the overwhelming majority of Orange Revolution participants voted for Viktor Yushchenko in the first round of the presidential election, it is important to remember that the revolution was fundamentally a coalition of various political groups. Not all who voted for Yushchenko considered him their first pick. A Forty-six percent reported that their vote for him was conditional on endorsements from other politicians, such as Yulia Tymoshenko and Oleksandr Moroz (Beissinger). Thus, it is possible to better understand the diversity of political beliefs among participants. Beissinger has a breakdown of political leanings among participants, finding that protesters came from a broad array of political beliefs—the largest being "nationalist or national-democratic" (34 percent), socialist or social-democratic" (26 percent), and unaffiliated (26 percent). Still, the overwhelming majority reported that they had voted for Yushchenko in the first round of the election—the key common factor among participants.

Writing in 2010, Anna Fournier argues that the Orange Revolution called into question the relationship between citizens and the state, although she concludes that protesters were mobilized largely by economic considerations and a desire for "order."<sup>59</sup> If the Orange

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<sup>57</sup> See Chebotariova, pp. 166 and Beissinger's breakdown of the Ukraine Monitoring Survey

<sup>58</sup> Beissinger, pp. 582

<sup>59</sup> Fournier, Anna. "Ukraine's Orange Revolution: Beyond Soviet Political Culture?" In D'Anieri, Paul J. *Orange Revolution and Aftermath : Mobilization, Apathy, and the State in Ukraine*. Washington, D.C. : Baltimore:

Revolution—and other social movements—do indeed call into question the relationship between state and citizen, opposition political parties might well have seemed in 2004 to be one way to create a link between citizen and state. When the citizens demanded accountable government, and the Orange Coalition raised hopes that it could accomplish exactly that, putting those politicians in the government seemed like the logical way to achieve that goal. Without a electoral system, protest was the best way to force the state's hand to hold an honest vote. But when the political parties failed to show results, it stands to reason that the people who put their faith in political actors became disillusioned and disengaged from partisan politics, paving the way for Yanukovich's victory in 2010.

Paul D'Anieri argues that the Orange Revolution was essentially a battle of elites against elites.<sup>60</sup> If that is so, then Euromaidan might be viewed as a battle between elites and a loose alliance of a mostly non-politically aligned public and a weakened group of opposition elites. Following that logic, it could be expected that when Euromaidan again brought up the relationship between citizen and state, participants began to look beyond political parties, realizing they had failed them before. Indeed, Anna Chebotariova's interviews with Euromaidan participants demonstrated that while a reported 62 percent of Euromaidan participants had protested during the Orange Revolution, they were not optimistic about the ability of the political system to work for them, with one protester calling Euromaidan "less romantic and more conscious" and saying that "people do not trust politicians."<sup>61</sup>

The absence of a near ubiquitous mobilizing force like Pora and a leading opposition political figure further suggests that the movement could be viewed as civil society's rejection of

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Woodrow Wilson Center ; Johns Hopkins UP, 2010., pp. 52-53.

<sup>60</sup> D'Anieri, Paul. "Civil Society in Ukraine--From Despair to Hope...and Back." In D'Anieri, Paul J. *Orange Revolution and Aftermath : Mobilization, Apathy, and the State in Ukraine*. Washington, D.C. : Baltimore: Woodrow Wilson Center ; Johns Hopkins UP, 2010., pp. 52-53.

<sup>61</sup> Chebotariova, pp. 172

party politics and as a roadmap for a new civic culture that seeks to redefine its relationship with the state. Finally, the violence that characterized the final weeks of Euromaidan was the most dramatic departure from the pattern of the Orange Revolution. Olexander Shulga describes the demonstration as a symbolic revolution, which he believes created a “semantic core capable of becoming a unifying matrix for society,” predicting that the violence on the Maidan will act as a symbol of the struggle for independence and nationhood for younger generations as they become politically active.<sup>62</sup>

## **Chapter II**

### **Maidan Ongoing: Ukraine’s New Urban Activists**

Unlike the Orange Revolution, which largely disappeared from Maidan following the election of Viktor Yushchenko, tents remained on Kyiv’s main square for nearly six months after Yanukovych’s ouster.<sup>63</sup> Their presence served both to remind the authorities of the sacrifice during the revolution and as a public forum to express opposition to Russia’s annexation of Crimea and the crisis erupting in the Donbas. The continued presence of activity on Maidan was also a symbol of ongoing efforts to change Ukraine’s political landscape and implement reform by holding the interim authorities accountable.

But despite lofty hopes in the first months that followed the ouster of Yanukovych, Ukrainian civil society found itself preoccupied with a range of unexpected activities that had

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<sup>62</sup> Shulga, Olexander. “Consequences of the Maidan: War of Symbols, Real War and Nation Building.” In Stepanenko, Viktor., Pylynskyi, Yaroslav (Eds), *Ukraine after the Euromaidan Challenges and Hopes*. Bern: Peter Lang AG, Internationaler Verlag Der Wissenschaften, 2015. Print. *Interdisciplinary Studies on Central and Eastern Europe*.

<sup>63</sup> “Last of ‘Euromaidan’ Barricades Cleared in Downtown Kyiv.” Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty. 9 August 2014. Available: <http://www.rferl.org/a/maidan-taken-down-kyiv-ukraine/26522116.html>

little to do with political or government reform. Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014 prompted large numbers of Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars to flee the peninsula and relocate to mainland Ukraine. Volunteers set up temporary housing for the internally displaced. One such center, in the Kyiv suburb of Pusch-Vodytsia, housed about 120 residents from Crimea in April 2014.<sup>64</sup> By October, those families would share the space with residents displaced by the war in the Donbas. Other services, such as the Frolovska 9/11 Volunteer Center would provide clothes and medical services to the internally displaced.<sup>65</sup> A report by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe reported in 2015 that civil society had become more active in Ukraine, but noted that a large number of organizations were providing "immediate assistance" to those affected by the conflict, including the internally displaced and Ukrainian servicemen. In Kharkiv Oblast, for example, 21 out of 29 groups surveyed by the OSCE were providing services to the internally displaced.<sup>66</sup>

The government's inability to provide sufficient services to soldiers and the internally displaced prompted volunteer and nongovernmental organizations to step in. International observers report that civil society groups have since been "distracted" and that their resources have been diverted toward providing resources and filling gaps in the social safety net left open by the government, which has not been able to provide adequate humanitarian support for wounded soldiers and those who have been displaced by the conflict in the east.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Author's notes for reports produced for JN1, Transterra media, and Ukraine Today in April and October 2014. Available: <https://www.transterramedia.com/media/33113-refugees-from-crimea>

<sup>65</sup> Author visited Frolovska 9/11 in December 2015. See also: <http://life.pravda.com.ua/volunteers/2015/07/17/197359/>

<sup>66</sup> OSCE: "Thematic Report: Civil Society and the Crisis in Ukraine." Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. 11 February 2015. Available: <http://www.osce.org/ukraine-smm/141046?download=true>

<sup>67</sup> For further discussion of post-Euromaidan civil society activity in providing services to IDPs and soldiers, see: Cleary, Laura. "Half Measures and Incomplete Reforms: The Breeding Ground for a Hybrid Civil Society in Ukraine." *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 16, no. 1 (2016): 7-23. Also: Kräftner, J., L. Maï, and C. Druey. 2014. *Ukraine 2014*. "Civil society creating space between past and future:



Meanwhile, civic activity in Ukraine's major cities has continued to organize and develop. One of the first notable expressions of civic activism came in October 2014. Kyiv's oldest cinema, Zhovten, was set on fire during the screening of an LGBT-themed film that was being shown as part of an international film festival. The fire was an apparent arson carried out by two people who identified with the far right.<sup>68</sup> The Zhovten building was located on an attractive block of the city's historic Podil neighborhood, and many locals expected a development company that had been eyeing the property to use the opportunity to snap up the charred remains at a discount and build a new luxury apartment block in its place—a common practice in Ukraine.<sup>69</sup> Local activists rallied around the historic cinema, swiftly organizing a campaign to lobby the city government to save the property and block any redevelopment. Shortly after the arson, they organized a protest outside Kyiv city hall, where hundreds gathered wearing yellow clothing and ribbons.<sup>70</sup> The campaign, which registered as an NGO, succeeded in mobilizing a vocal public outcry and forced newly elected Mayor Vitaliy Klitschshko to allow the cinema to be rebuilt and to donate some of his own money to reconstruction efforts. A related charity foundation, supported by the mayor, solicited donations from locals and international supporters.<sup>71</sup>

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Informal follow up discussion." KOFF Roundtable Bern: Centre for Peacebuilding.

<sup>68</sup> The two men were convicted, but questions remain about the handling of the case. Read more about the rebuilding of the cinema: Petrov, Volodymyr. "Renewed Zhovten cinema." Kyiv Post. 24 October 2015. Available: <https://www.kyivpost.com/multimedia/photo/renewed-zhovten-cinema-400557>

<sup>69</sup> This issue was raised by activists during interviews in autumn 2014 in the fire's aftermath. One of those who brought up the concern was *INTERVIEWEE F*, who I first met while reporting on the fire in Kyiv.

<sup>70</sup> See images from the rally by Andrii Prots: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/freund2/sets/72157646728793664>

<sup>71</sup> "Klitschko creates charitable foundation to restore Zhovten cinema in Kyiv." Interfax-Ukraine. 31 October 2014. Available: <https://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/ukraine-politics/klitschko-creates-charitable-foundation-to-restore-zhovten-cinema-in-kyiv-370199.html>



*Smoke and flames billow from the roof of Zhovten Cinema on October 29, 2014. (Chris Collison)*



*Interior of Zhovten Cinema on October 30, 2014. (Chris Collison)*



*Serhiy Shchelkunov of Save Zhovten stands near Zhvten Cinema during reconstruction in August 2015 (Chris Collison)*

One of the main organizers of the “Zave Zhovten” campaign and NGO, *INTERVIEWEE F*, said he felt compelled by the events on Maidan to participate in civic activism.

“For me it was kind of a moral obligation to continue what we started,” he said. “We paid a really high price for this chance and we shouldn’t waste it. I guess my main motivation was the protest—the peaceful protest that we had at the beginning and the victims on Maidan.”

The aftermath of Euromaidan saw a proliferation of grassroots initiatives in Ukraine’s major cities. An online database called Mistosite, organized by Ukrainian social research organization CEDOS, listed 213 civic initiatives throughout Ukraine in February 2017.<sup>72</sup> Those projects are involved in a wide range of activities, such as volunteer legal services, smart city planning, and the promotion of artists. Those interviewed echoed *INTERVIEWEE F*’s belief that

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<sup>72</sup> See Mistosite database: <http://mistosite.org.ua/initiatives>

Euromaidan was a reason for increased involvement in local communities and that the focus on values during that protest movement was an important motivating factor for participating in both Euromaidan and subsequent urban projects.

Urban activists indicated that the results of the protest were difficult to measure, but they shared the belief that the movement had changed people's perceptions of their roles and responsibilities in society. Without prompting, three people interviewed used the word "values" to describe reasons for the revolution and the results it achieved. .

"I think that it was good and we have many people who changed their values. We have many people who understand that they should share their resources with other people—that they should volunteer," *INTERVIEWEE C* said. "They learned how to volunteer. I think the main good result of Euromaidan is that we got more people who are involved in this 'third sector.'"

*INTERVIEWEE F* invoked the importance of values to compare Euromaidan to the Orange Revolution.

"I do think that Maidan, the recent one, had more values and ideas," *INTERVIEWEE F* said. "It was a more complex phenomenon than the Orange Revolution."

Asked what those values were to him, *INTERVIEWEE F* responded:

"I believe it started from—it's probably not proper to say democratic—but self governance and the right to influence the life of your country and the future of your country. That's how it all started in November—those marches we had. And then I think it was about solidarity, equality, dignity, and I guess the nation at some point."

*INTERVIEWEE A* said Euromaidan for him was a struggle for "liberal values" and "European values."

"For me that was a mental revolution of people," *INTERVIEWEE A* said. "I connected

with liberal values—the values of the rule of law, of liberty, of independence and of being a subject and a whole as a country. And for getting closer to what is called ‘European values.’ So that was the goal of Euromaidan for me as for now ... Euromaidan asked the right questions. Everybody should have answered them. I answered them in this way, which brought me to local politics. Other people, maybe they are doing the same job but in a different way. That is the basic answer.”

At least in Kyiv, activists tend to be young and few were adults during the Orange Revolution. All of those interviewed agreed that civic culture had become more active since Euromaidan, and all had participated in that protest. The only activist I spoke to who was old enough to participate in both the Orange Revolution and Euromaidan, *INTERVIEWEE D*, told me that the difference between the Orange Revolution and Euromaidan was that participants of the first movement put their faith in politicians rather than taking matters into their own hands:

*“The thing is that during that first attempt—the Orange Revolution—everything about the authorities was bad. So people thought that if they changed the authorities, changed one president for another one, everything would automatically become better. When that didn’t happen, for totally natural reasons, they became very disappointed. This disappointment brewed for 10 years and then boiled over in 2014 during the Revolution of Dignity [another name for Euromaidan]. When the revolution happened for a second time, people realized that simply changing the authorities won’t give you anything and that something will occur only when you make the changes that you want.”*

When asked if he also put his faith in politicians during the Orange Revolution,



*INTERVIEWEE D* said that he “probably thought like the majority,” adding, “I can’t say that I was so clever and could see 10 years into the future.”

When asked about the difference between the Orange Revolution and Euromaidan, *INTERVIEWEE A* said he saw the Orange Revolution movement as a “paternalistic” movement.

“Ukrainian society is deeply paternalistic,” he said. “The usual answer is that 10 years ago nobody created the network of these initiatives and the people who were on that Maidan weren’t active afterward because they were standing not for what I think are liberal values, but for an exact person who should be president. So for me it was a paternalistic action. All the hopes for the country were on that person.”

*INTERVIEWEE C* also used the word “paternalistic” to describe Ukrainian society and its relationship to the state and political establishment before Euromaidan. She said she believes Ukrainian society has become less paternalistic since then, suggesting that the relationship between citizen and state is changing. She also emphasized the role of values in Euromaidan, saying that people have a more sober view of what can be accomplished.

*“Euromaidan was not about the president--not about a person,” she said. “It was about values. That is the difference. It didn’t matter who became the president because we have this feeling about dignity. It’s strange, but people feel this dignity. They have dignity about their quality of life, not about their vote for president. They understand that they should have quality of life and a future for their children. I think it’s also about the future for their children. People understood that nothing will change in a few years, but maybe it will change in 10 years. I think that this idea that something will change, not today but maybe tomorrow, people still believe in the idea of Euromaidan. This is the difference*



*from the Orange Revolution. The Orange Revolution was more about a person.”*

She said activists like her feel they don’t have much influence on a national level but they can contribute on a local level and “solve some small problems.”

The rejection of political parties during Euromaidan was also a common theme among activists.

*INTERVIEWEE B* said he thought the results of the protest were mixed, and saw it largely as an attempt to save Ukrainian independence.

“At least we saved our independence,” *INTERVIEWEE B* said. “Otherwise, we would have lost it. Sure, our expectations--my expectations--were not so high because I realized that the three politicians were connected to oligarchs and there has not been so much change.”

He said he had lost his faith in political parties before the revolution.

“There were a few years when I lost my illusions about political systems and I understood what was really happening,” *INTERVIEWEE B* said. “I became conscious about oligarchs, about post-Soviet legacy, and I was searching for the key to change it. For a long time I thought political parties were the key, but it wasn’t working. There is no real political party. There are political projects created by oligarchs, and they convert political power into money-making.”

The emphasis on values and the symbolism of the leaderless movement were important for finding meaning in the events of 2013-2014. For some activists, the city of Kyiv itself seemed to serve as a symbol of the struggle to build a new, cleaner civic identity.

*INTERVIEWEE E* headed the effort to build the “Heavenly Hundred” park in central Kyiv, just up the hill from Maidan across from St. Michael’s Cathedral.<sup>73</sup> The site, located behind an apartment building, spent years as a derelict square where locals would throw their garbage. In

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<sup>73</sup> “Heavenly Hundred” refers to the approximately 100 people who were killed during Euromaidan.

2014 *INTERVIEWEE E* helped organize a cleanup of the site and mobilized volunteers to plant trees and install playground equipment and art.

“Local citizens showed their dignity,” she said. “They want to show that they don’t want to live in a garbage place anymore.”

The most prominent feature of the Heavenly Hundred park is a mural depicting Serhiy Nigoyan, a 20-year-old of Armenian descent who was the first Euromaidan activist to be killed by gunshot wounds in January 2014. Looking down on the park, his image seems to serve as a reminder to Kyiv residents of the sacrifice carried out by activists during the protest. To the urban activists, the significance of Euromaidan seems to be less about the political results of the uprising and more about the expression of common values and the possibility of building a new civic culture in which individuals work together to achieve their goals.



*Zhenya Kuleba, who helped organize the Heavenly Hundred Park, stands in front of the park's mural of slain Euromaidan activist Serhiy Nigoyan. (Chris Collison)*

## Trust Issues

While the number of urban initiatives is high and more people seem to be participating in urban activism, trust remains a challenge in Ukraine. This issue has been discussed by scholars since independence. In one study from 2000, Martin Aberg attributes low levels of trust between Ukrainians and institutions to the Soviet historical legacy and the proliferation of “exchange networks” that exist in lieu of functioning state institutions.<sup>74</sup> In his famous work, *Bowling Alone*, Robert Putnam describes trust as an important component of social capital. To Putnam,

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<sup>74</sup> Aberg, Martin “Putnam's Social Capital Theory Goes East: A Case Study of Western Ukraine and L'viv.” *Europe-Asia Studies*, 52:2, 295-317, 2000 : <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09668130050006808>

trust between citizens and between non-state actors and organizations is a crucial way of measuring and realizing social capital, which he sees as a central lubricant in democratic society and civic culture.<sup>75</sup>

Trust in most Ukrainian institutions in Ukraine remains low, as measured by surveys conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology. Their work found that political institutions are the least trusted. A 2016 survey finding that only 5.3 percent trust the parliament and 13.7 percent trust the president, numbers that are actually several points lower than those found by a survey conducted in 2012, before Euromaidan. There are only three institutions in the survey that more than 50 percent of respondents reported they trust: The church, volunteers, and the armed forces. “Volunteers” was not a category included in the 2012 survey, but that report does measure trust in “civic organizations,” which received 27.1 percent in 2012 and increased to 37 percent in 2016. The most dramatic increase in trust was, perhaps not surprisingly, the armed forces.<sup>76</sup>

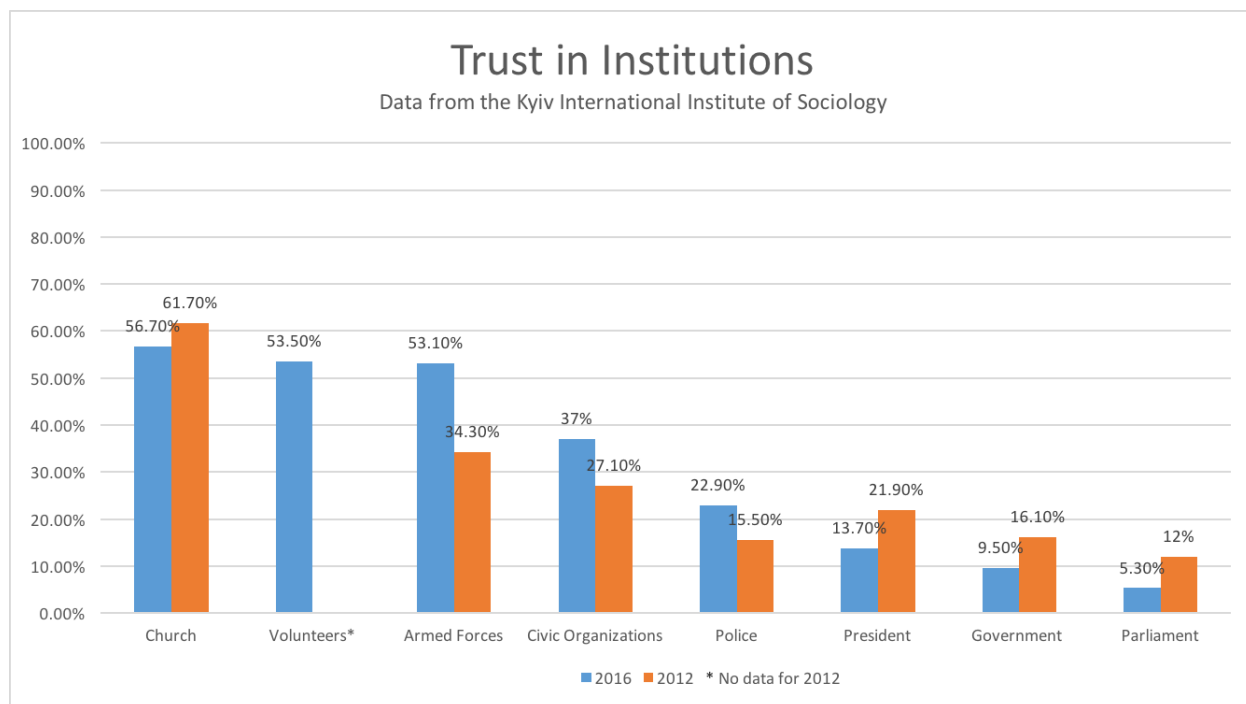
Addressing Putnam’s theory, Aberg claims that the absence of trust in institutions does not mean that Ukraine is lacking in social capital, but rather that it exists in a different form--namely, these informal exchange networks. The existence of these informal networks in Ukraine could provide evidence of latent social capital in the post-Soviet period. The growth of informal civic organizations and urban activist initiatives also seems to point toward the existence of social capital. Still, trust issues characterize relations between urban civic groups. Many of the teams of activists who work on an individual initiative remain small and groups struggle to

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<sup>75</sup> Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone : The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000.

<sup>76</sup> “Dovira Ukraynskiv Do Sotsial’nykh Institutsiy.” Kyiv International Institute of Sociology. 18 April 2012. Available: <http://kiis.com.ua/?lang=rus&cat=reports&id=81>  
 “Doverie Sotsial’nym Institutam.” Kyiv International Institute of Sociology. 1 February 2017. Available: <http://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=rus&cat=reports&id=678&page=1>

coordinate and cooperate with each other. This may be due to the relative newness of participating in the public sphere. It also may be a symptom of the traditionally low levels of trust among citizens and toward institutions more broadly.



Activists have been making some efforts to improve cooperation and understanding between their organizations. During two meetings organized by CEDOS in June and July 2016, representatives from about two dozen initiatives met in Kyiv to talk about the goals of their individual projects and to discuss ways to coordinate with other groups. They discussed mission statements, better methods of communication, and compiled a list of common values.<sup>77</sup> One of the organizers of CEDOS, *Interviewee C*, said that a chief challenges facing Ukrainian civil society is that many activists feel that they are in competition with others and resist sharing knowledge and resources.

<sup>77</sup> Author's notes from meetings attended during summer 2016.

*INTERVIEWEE F*, who in addition to working on Save Zhovten became involved in other urban projects and lobbying efforts, agreed that coordination with other initiatives and with the local authorities is a major obstacle for civic groups.

“It is obvious that those groups will need to consolidate and learn how to cooperate,” *INTERVIEWEE F* said. “It is really hard—and that is the challenge I see—that civil activists have to find a way to coexist with the authorities.”

### **New Media: Opportunities and Challenges**

The growth of urban initiatives and the formation of networks of activists and citizens likely owes part of its success to the internet. Facebook was an important method of communication during Euromaidan protest, and social media remains the main avenue of communication between activists and the public. Facebook, in particular, is where the overwhelming majority of civic initiatives operate. But Facebook has proved both an asset and a limitation for these groups. The platform provides a cost-efficient, reliable, and instant way to engage and mobilize—the ability to share information and photos, plan meetings, and solicit feedback about projects.

*INTERVIEWEE D*, for example, whose project develops new maps for the Kyiv metro and designs signage for underpasses and pedestrian walkways, solicits feedback on designs and uses Facebook as a platform for dialogue with other designers and the public to talk about ways to improve city navigation. His Facebook group has about 2,000 members, who talk about projects, offer suggestions, and critique designs. His open-source approach to city planning is an enthusiastic embrace of public process in working on city initiatives.

However, as two interviewees complained, social media limits communication to a rather narrow group of people. Those who are not active on social media, especially older generations, are largely excluded from the conversation.

*INTERVIEWEE F*, whose Save Zhovten initiative was active on social media but managed to also attract the attention of more traditional news outlets, said he believes urban initiatives are missing opportunities by concentrating their work online.

“I hope that this culture will get out of the social networks and be more offline and have direct contact with citizens,” *INTERVIEWEE F* said. “Right now, I believe it’s a more Facebook-populated culture. It has to become more offline. The civil activists are more or less the same age group, more or less same income, and they consider Facebook to be this beautiful, useful tool for communication and solving their tasks.”

*INTERVIEWEE C* agreed, adding that civic initiatives will not be effective politically if they don’t find ways to reach beyond social media. She noted that the authorities are more effective at reaching a broad audience through traditional means than urban activists, who communicate largely with young and educated.

“So when using Facebook, while we can provide all the information over that channel, the result is that the people who are not on Facebook can’t find out what these initiatives are doing,” *INTERVIEWEE C* said. “So only a small percentage of Kyiv residents know about the existence of these city initiatives. That’s the big contradiction. Those who vote and elect, the Babushkas, the people over the age of 50—Klitschko influences them by giving them new roads and painting the children’s play areas so they will vote for him.”

A study published by CEDOS in December 2016 evaluated awareness of civic activism among residents of Kyiv’s Obolon neighborhood. Of the 472 people surveyed, 69.1 percent

could not name a single initiative. The study also found that only 29.9 percent reported social media as a source of information about their neighborhood, underscoring the challenge of reaching out to a large audience using only online tools.<sup>78</sup>

## **Rebuilding the City and Nation**

City cleanup and urban revival is a common theme among many urban projects. One activist, *INTERVIEWEE B*, co-founded an initiative called Podolyanochka, which seeks to provide information about public services, events, and protest actions in the Podil neighborhood. *INTERVIEWEE B*, through this group, also helped organize a project to redevelop a small piece of vacant land rented by the Russian Embassy into a park. The project brought together neighborhood activists to install a vegetable garden, art, and play toys for children. He said those two groups, interactions on social media, and the process of organizing the garden, has helped to improve relations between neighbors.

“Trust is growing,” he said. “Maybe not as fast as I wanted, but I became connected to many very nice people and we started to invite each other to meet as guests or to walk dogs, things like that. We also made some routes to clean the city of illegal advertising. We worked in teams of four. I think it’s a good thing and it’s continuing to grow.”

*INTERVIEWEE B* said that although he participated in some civic projects prior to Euromaidan, the protest movement made him more optimistic that change was possible. He said he had considered emigrating prior to Euromaidan, believing the government would have further restricted civil liberties.

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<sup>78</sup> Gryshcheno, Podnos, et al. “Doslidzhennya zv'yazku sotsial'noho kapitalu, rozvytku mistsevykh spil'not ta mis'koho prostoru Obolons'koho rayonu Kyieva.” CEDOS Analitychnyy Tsent. 6 December 2016. Available: <http://mistosite.org.ua/en/articles/obolonskyj-rajon-potencz%D1%96al-do-gromadotvorennia>



“I think Ukraine would have lost freedom of speech and all other freedoms and we would become a proxy state of Russia, maybe like Belarus. If you don’t have freedom, there is no sense.”

Like the organizations that formed in response to the government’s inability to provide services to the displaced, many civic organizations see themselves as fulfilling roles that the state is unable or unwilling to play. CEDOS, for example, conducts specialized urban research, including sociological studies, to provide planners with better data to make decisions about construction and development. *INTERVIEWEE C* said the Ukrainian education system does not provide contemporary urban studies, which is why CEDOS and other organizations try to provide such research.

“We have no urban studies in our universities,” *INTERVIEWEE C* said. “We have sociology and urban sociology, but that’s only one course at the university. We have architects, but architects don’t know how to do research in the city. We have cultural studies, but we only have one or two courses on culture in the city. We don’t have a system of urban studies. We don’t have that many people who know how to work in multidisciplinary fields and how to work in the city, and not many organizations do research for the city, because they have no money.”

Another non-governmental organization called CANActions holds classes to engage architects, designers, and journalists with “European” approaches to city planning and urban development. The school, which opened in autumn 2015, draws on the expertise of urban planners from various countries around the world. Students then implement small-scale urban projects designed through collaboration in the class in various cities throughout Ukraine.

“There is gap for sure when it comes to linking education and reality,” one of CANActions’ coordinators said in an interview. “The idea is to focus on real events and real

situations instead of just being theoretical.”

Such independent schools aren’t limited just to urban development. Seminars for journalists designers, and computer programmers have also sprung up...

## Looking Forward

As Ukraine nears three years at war, a few activists say they fear what some have called a “third Maidan” -- a much more violent revolution led by soldiers and far-right groups.

*INTERVIEWEE F* said that among his motivations, he felt a duty to participate while soldiers were continuing to fight, adding that he fears what could happen when they return from the front lines.

“I disagree with the concept that soldiers have to come back from the front line and change the country from the inside,” he said. “That’s one of the popular theses or messages that people articulate -- like, ‘Oh, as soon as the war is over, the soldiers will be back home and they will make it right.’ I kind of doubt that soldiers can make it right when they are back from the front line and they have a different violence barrier. I don’t think I would like to see it.”

Nationalist groups, most notably the political and paramilitary organization known as Right Sector, have staged periodic rallies and marches against the Ukrainian government, often choosing days of national importance such as the Day of Defenders and the birthday of controversial nationalist figure Stepan Bandera.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Miller, Christopher. “Ukrainian Nationalists Stage Torchlight March in Kyiv As New Far-Right Party Is Born.” Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty. 14 October 2016. Available: <http://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-nationalists-torchlight-march-azov-party/28053936.html>

See also: “‘Svoboda’, ‘Natsional’ny korpus’ i ‘Pravy Sektor’” provedut marsh v Kieve.” Censor.NET. 14 February 2017. Available: [http://censor.net.ua/news/427878/svoboda\\_natsionalnyyi\\_korpus\\_i\\_pravyyi\\_sektor\\_provedut\\_marsh\\_v\\_kieve](http://censor.net.ua/news/427878/svoboda_natsionalnyyi_korpus_i_pravyyi_sektor_provedut_marsh_v_kieve)

*INTERVIEWEE C* said the rise of nationalist groups was one of the negative effects of Euromaidan. She said the failure of establishment political parties to change and reform has emboldened nationalist groups and strengthened their position in society, even if many of their supporters don't agree with their political positions.

*"They became popular—people wanted to support organizations like Pravy Sektor [Right Sector] just because they saw that they now have power," she said. "They know how to influence the decision-making process. That's why people want to join. But not all of their ideological positions are good for me, and I'm afraid of that. For example, we don't have very many left parties or left organizations. We only have right organizations. Our administration even supports them. It doesn't mean they have the same ideology, it means that they are afraid because these groups are popular. I think it's just because they are afraid and they don't know what to do with them. Maybe it's because of the war. During this crisis and the war, these right organizations show that they are more effective, so they can influence the government."*

*INTERVIEWEE C* also expressed disappointment in the activists who joined political parties in the aftermath of Euromaidan and now serve in the government, explaining that the political parties are still beholden to oligarchs and are not transparent in their activities..

*"Even the activists from Euromaidan who became part of these big parties, I don't see what they do. I don't have any information about what they do in the parliament," she said. "I voted for them, but now I have no information about what they do or what opinion they have and what things they provide. This is another problem. How can I evaluate what they have been doing during this period? The lack of information is a big problem."*

## Conclusion

Despite its success at ousting Yanukovich, Euromaidan was not monolithic. The movement was marked by an internal power struggle between the political opposition and the grassroots public. That friction was the result of nearly a decade of disillusionment with party politics and made for a less cohesive, more unpredictable uprising in 2013-2014 than 2004. When the smoke cleared and Yanukovich fled, the split between the grassroots and the political opposition did not heal. The first Maidan, the political opposition, assumed power in the parliament and city councils across the country and set out on a course of halting and incomplete reform. The second Maidan, the grassroots, found itself on the front line as soldiers and on the streets of Ukraine's major cities as the country's new urban activists. The latter group, which never trusted the political system, is attempting to break the cycle of political apathy by working on small-scale projects in neighborhoods and cities.

For this new civic culture, distrust of the authorities and the political system is proving both an asset and a challenge. On the one hand, these new urban activists hold no illusions about politicians and their promises to act in the best interests of the people. They waste no time waiting for the authorities to act and have begun implementing projects and discussing ways to change their cities through the public process. On the other hand, distrust makes it difficult and politically risky for these groups to work with the authorities on issues where cooperation could benefit both sides. Trust issues, characteristic of the post-Soviet experience, also makes grassroots projects more cautious about pooling their resources and coordinating.

Ukraine's civic culture is young, and it is impossible to predict how it will develop.

Continued political instability and the fatigue and resource drain from the War in the Donbas pose a particularly acute challenge. In the aftermath of Euromaidan, there is little question that urban activism is more visible. New tools such as social media make it easier than ever to communicate and organize. However, these groups lack diversity and their reliance on social media makes it difficult for them to reach a broad audience. If these groups choose to enter electoral politics or address larger issues, they will need to find ways to reach broader sections of Ukrainian society, namely older generations who are less tech savvy but crucial for local elections.

Three years after Euromaidan, the revolution endures as a powerful symbol for activists in a way that the Orange Revolution could not. The regular Ukrainians who sacrificed their lives on the Maidan and in the Donbas inspire a sense of responsibility among activists and serve an especially important role in attempts to build a collective national and civic identity in independent Ukraine.

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