Communist and Post-Communist Studies 47 (2014) 227–236

Communist and Post-Communist Studies

An Anatomy of Mass Protests: The Orange Revolution and Euromaydan Compared

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Available online 19 May 2014

Keywords:
Ukraine
Euromaydan
Mass protests
Legacies of the past
Imperatives of liberalization
Government
Opposition
Conflict resolution

ABSTRACT

This article surveys and discusses the latest wave of mass protests in Ukraine, the Euromaydan. This study situates the Euromaydan within the history of the other protests in post-communist Ukraine and makes a comparison to the Orange Revolution (the Orange Revolution). The authors recognize the importance of international factors, but argue that Ukrainian domestic political factors contributed significantly not only to the emergence, but also to escalation of the latest conflict in Ukraine. This study tests a theory about the role of institutional factors versus the role of cultural-historic legacies in the process of mass protest formation and conflict development. We argue that institutional factors, such as: governmental policies; the composition of governmental, opposition, and civil society groups; corruption; and timing of legislative activity on most divisive issues in Ukraine have contributed to the conflict escalation in Ukraine.

1. Introduction

The most recent spate of the protests in Ukraine adds to the history of anti-governmental strikes in the post-communist Ukraine. The puzzling observation here is that all previous mass protests in Ukraine, such as the Orange Revolution, have developed and ended up as peaceful demonstrations, but the latest wave of mass protests, the Euromaydan, has already resulted in an escalation of violence with multiple fatalities. The question then is: what factors have contributed to the observed escalation of conflict in the 2013–2014?

This article documents and analyzes Ukrainian domestic factors that have contributed to the developments observed in the most recent mass protests of 2013–2014 in Ukraine, and makes a comparison between the Euromaydan of 2013–2014 and the Orange Revolution of 2004. Although the authors recognize the importance of international factors in this most recent development in Ukraine, and believe that an analysis of international relations and foreign policy issues can and will be useful, this article argues that domestic factors deserve closer attention from both academics and practitioners. These factors are frequently overlooked and may be lost in big discussions of international relations and the foreign policies of major international players, such as the USA, EU, and Russia. The article argues that, although domestic factors may not be sufficient in and of themselves to spark mass protests and allow for the escalation of violence, they nevertheless constitute a necessary

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http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.postcomstud.2014.04.013
0967-067X/

condition for the escalation of conflict observed in Ukraine. In other words, if these factors would have been absent, the escalation of violence would not have taken place. Moreover, this analysis of domestic factors allows for a productive discussion of plausible options for moving political developments from the stage of mass protest to a constructive political process stage. Finally, understanding these factors would allow for a productive discussion of how to prevent escalation of violence from happening in the first place.

2. Legacies of the past v. imperatives of liberalization approaches

Two broad approaches have been developed to explain political dynamics in post-communist countries, namely the cultural–historic legacies of the past approach and the imperatives of liberalization approach. The proponents of the first approach emphasize the role of past legacies and argue that the development of modern institutions depends mostly on and reflects existing historical patterns, such as culture, social relations, and traditions (Geddes, 1995). These scholars are working on pinpointing what particular legacies exercise significant influence over current institutional forms and political dynamics. For example, Putnam argues that civic culture is the most important factor influencing the effectiveness of democratic governmental institutions (Putnam, 1993). Some publications have addressed the case of Ukraine specifically, and some authors argue that institutionalism does not offer a complete explanation of the complications in Ukrainian politics. This group maintains that institutional arguments need to be complemented by cultural and historical reasoning. They further argue that the inchoate state of Ukrainian political culture and the absence of a firm tradition of civil society are important for understanding the institutional shortcomings of the Ukrainian state (D'Anieri et al., 1999: 145–146). The logic of the cultural legacies of the past argument is that historic self-consciousness contributes to the creation and maintenance of a group identity and strengthens boundaries between groups engaged on opposite sides of a conflict (Tajfel, 1978; Brown, 2000; Brewer and Miller, 1996). If we apply the cultural-historic legacy argument to the Ukrainian case, then the long history of the Ukrainian struggle for independence, its pro-European orientation, and the political traditions it manifests would be among the main factors that contributed to the escalation of conflict in Ukraine and the Euromaydan.

An alternative to cultural-historic legacies of the past approach is the imperatives of liberalization approach, which argues that the presence or absence of the right set of institutions explains the successes and failures in post-authoritarian societies (Di Palma, 1990; O'Donnel and Schmitter, 1986). This group of authors argues that as institutions mature and become fully developed, these institutions will channel societal conflicts and allow for a productive decision-making process. Another argument claims that collective fears of the future, uncertainty, lack of information, problems of credible commitments, and a security dilemma occur as a state weakens, making violent conflict more likely (Lake and Rothschild, 1996; Rose, 2000). Further, violence is likely to escalate if the government in power fails and opposition groups come to power. Thus, Posen (1993a,b) argues that when a state collapses and a state of anarchy occurs, groups are fearful for their survival, so competitive mobilizations occur and windows of opportunity can lead to potential preventive ethnic conflict involving the use of force by minority ethnic groups against other groups and government forces. Likewise, Fearon and Laitin (1996) argue that cooperation among and within groups is more likely with institutional policies of in-group policing and more information sharing, but there is no discussion of how to promote cooperation between groups and governments.

Scholars within the camp of institutional studies argue that, "political institutions and decision rules can make a major difference in ethnic outcomes" (Horowitz, 1993, 28). Horowitz (1985) suggests that weak civil society, a lack of power sharing arrangements, sharp cleavages, and ethnic based political parties can all be influential factors associated with conflict escalation among different groups in a society and the deepening already-existing cleavages The exclusive character of immature political institutions can result in a confrontation between government and opposition groups because these newly-formed institutions do not allow all groups to pursue their particular interests within the existing political structures. In the case of such groups in sub-national territories, they are likely to demand separation from the national state in order to build their own political institutions and thus allow their own interests to be represented in the political process. Horowitz advocates changing the rules of the institutional game in order to make these institutions function more inclusively. Inclusive institutions, especially power-sharing arrangements, reformed constitutions, and a federal system, will then provide conflicting parties with the means to resolve conflicts peacefully. Political institutions play such an important role because they structure the political process, determining what political groups get to participate, what actions they can take, who gets to use what resources, and what the rewards and punishments are for each action (Wise and Brown, 1997). This role, furthermore, is a historically structured phenomenon, so that whether conflicts between the government and opposition groups are resolved violently or non-violently depends on the capacity of new institutions to deal with old legacies. If we apply the institutional argument to the Ukrainian case, we find that the conflict and the Euromaydan, then, has been the result of specific institutional failures.

We are still left with the question of whether cultural and historic factors are the main driving force behind the latest wave of the mass protests in Ukraine, or are the causes of these developments found in the institutional shortcomings of post-authoritarian Ukraine? This discussion has important practical implications, because, if cultural legacies are most important in conflict development, then all post-communist societies will necessarily face violent waves of mass protests and there is little hope for peaceful developments in the region. However, if institutional factors play more significant roles in conflict escalation and subsequent waves of mass protests, then the study of institutions can bring useful answers

concerning what specific mix of institutions and action can prevent conflict escalation the first place and find acceptable solutions for the conflicts that occur. The following sections of this article offer a discussion and application of both the cultural/historical and political/institutional perspectives to the Ukrainian case.

3. Data and methodology

The study of a phenomenon as recent as the Euromaydan is challenging because of limited and contradictory data available. The authors, therefore, have used a combination of different methods. These methods include participant observation and open-ended interviews with participants from both sides of the conflict. We used a snowball technique to find governmental supporters and protesters. In addition, we used an analysis of press and television news channel coverage in Ukraine, Russia, and the USA; social media postings; and newspapers that are listed below.[1]

The main challenge in conducting this research was in discerning reliable information from media outlets that offer very different accounts of the conflict in Ukraine. To give an overview of differences, Russian news outlets have been providing an endless stream of images of violence in Ukraine, and these images have been followed by a consistent theme: a discussion of the need to protect a Russian minority from those violent Ukrainian nationalists who were shown in the video clips or pictures preceding the discussion. Ukrainian news outlets showed multiple interviews with Russians in Ukraine who said that they did not need protection and that they had not been attacked. Some other Ukrainian minorities, such as Jews in Ukraine, have also expressed that they do not need protection. They stated that Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine are not being humiliated or discriminated against and their civil rights have not been limited. Ukrainian Jews concluded their open letter to Russian President Putin with a request for him to stop his attempts to delegitimize the new Ukrainian government (Open Letter of Ukrainian Jews, 2014). American and British news channels have predominantly focused on major political players in international relations (especially the governments of the USA and EU) that could make a difference in the conflict, and discussed the implications of different foreign policies for countries that are either involved or have a vested interest in the outcome of the conflict.

Sifting through the available news feeds and accessing reliable and trustworthy information is thus a difficult challenge. However, the above combination of different methodologies has allowed the authors to make a reasonable judgment in interpreting the existing data. Access to this first-hand information has allowed us to lay the groundwork for further discussions and analysis of the situation. The authors have gathered and processed the information available from all the channels outlined in our list of media content disseminators, regardless of the country of origin, and worked through it in order to discern the most reliable data on which to make the conclusions outlined at the end of this study.

4. The Euromaydan

The Euromaydan of 2013 began after President Yanukovych refused to sign an Association Agreement with the European Union. The government made a decision to suspend negotiations on the signing of the agreement on 21 November 2013. Yanukovych's government argued that the decision to suspend negotiations with the EU on the association agreement was an economic one. Mykola Azarov, the then Prime Minister of Ukraine, argued that Ukraine needs 160 billion Euros to proceed with European integration, but the country did not have those funds, and therefore, Ukraine needed to postpone signing the agreement and investigate the situation further (Azarov, 2013). In addition, Yanukovych met with Russian President Vladimir Putin. The result of this meeting was that Russia agreed to reduce the price of the gas it sells to Ukraine and to further assist Ukraine financially. The Ukrainian government argued that their refusal to sign the association agreement with the EU did not mean giving up on the idea of the European integration for Ukraine (Azarov, 2013). However, these arguments did not satisfy the groups of protesters who moved to the Maydan to protest the governmental refusal.

Although the issue of the Ukrainian association agreement with the EU was certainly a starting point for the Euromaydan, many believed that the movement would subside and disappear soon after it started. They were proved correct when on November 29, 2013, only 200 students remained on the Maydan. These students decided to stay there until December 1, to celebrate the anniversary of the Ukrainian referendum on independence from Russia. This dwindling crowd was coupled with the prediction of a bitterly cold and snowy winter coming to Kyiv, which also furthered the belief that the Maydan would end soon.

The government may have fueled a new wave of protests on the Maydan by sending special police units ("Berkut") to forcefully dismantle the Euromaydan. Early on the morning of November 30, 2013, the Berkut attacked protesters on the

[1] Web sites: **The USA**: http://www.cnn.com/http://www.foxnews.com/http://www.washingtonpost.com/http://www.nytimes.com/**Russia**:http://www.1tv.ru/http://www.ntv.ru/tv/http://rtr-planeta.com/http://rutv.ru/http://www.5-tv.ru/http://themoscownews.com**Ukraine**:http://www.5tv.com.uahttp://inter.uahttp://www.gazeta.zn.uahttp://www.1plus1.ua/http://kanalukraina.tv/https://www.kyivpost.com/http://www.pora.org.uahttp://www.pravda.com.ua/http://espreso.tv/new/http://news.liga.net/http://www.5.uahttp://3s.tv/home/http://glavred.info/http://korrespondent.net/allhttp://gazeta.comments.ua/http://news.liga.net/http://www.unian.net/http://podrobnosti.ua/http://news2000.com.ua/http://newsdaily.com.ua/http://argumentua.com/novostihttp://vovremya.info/http://cvk.gov.ua/http://allprices.com.ua/news/Politikahttp://vlasti.net/http://rada.gov.ua/http://112.ua/http://glavcom.ua/ **Other News Networks (English Speaking):**http://www.bbc.com/http://america.aljazeera.com/http://RT.com.

Maydan and applied force to send them home. People reported multiple injuries and the use of unjustified force against peaceful protesters. Media outlets provided rather contradictory reports, with some reporting brutal beatings by the Berkut, while others reported no violence at all. However, given the use of social media and cell phone I-reporters on the internet, the government could not possibly hide the truth, and thus it became clear that the government had used brutal force against peaceful protesters. The violence kept escalating; *The New York Times,* expressing alarm at the escalating death toll, reported that Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany and President François Hollande of France blamed the security forces of President Viktor F. Yanukovych for the violence (Mayers, 2014).

The government's violent response to the Maydan attracted the attention of the public at large, and the numbers of the Maydan protesters has begun to increase rapidly. These violent clashes with Berkut forces shifted the focus of the Maydan protesters from Ukrainian foreign policy issues and the EU integration process to domestic Ukrainian policies, and brought to the forefront issues within Ukrainian politics and policy that have not found resolution in post-Soviet Ukraine. They have also exposed some of the most painful and deeply felt issues for many Ukrainians. Specifically, the Maydan discussion moved from arguing about European integration to the discussion of human rights, civil liberties, the right of people to assemble, and the right to express "no confidence" in the government.

The situation escalated even further because of Yanukovych's decision to organize an "anti-Maydan," which included organizing groups in southeastern Ukraine, which in turn were transported to Kyiv to protest the Euromaydan. At the same time, Western regions were sending groups of people to support the Maydan. This contributed to a further escalation of animosity which has been rapidly shaping into a traditional regional conflict between western and southeastern Ukraine. However, in reality, the true conflict had remained between the groups in power and groups of civil society in Ukraine.

When ousted president Yanukovych left Ukraine, and the opposition came to power and formed an interim government, the violence, intensity, and scale of the conflict escalated even further. The actions of this new government have alienated some groups in southeastern Ukraine, many of which were at first supportive of the Maydan. This came to a head when the new parliamentary majority voted to repeal the Law on Languages.[2] Although the interim president did not sign it into law, the outcome of the parliamentary vote was the final indicator that convinced some groups in southeastern Ukraine that nationalists, extremists, fascists, and anti-Semites came to power in Kyiv. The population of this region has already experience extreme financial hardship, and has had a strong distrust of the national government and its policies. This act convinced many in the southeast that they may be marginalized even further in the Ukrainian policy process, and their apprehension about this has convinced them of the need to fear the new Kyiv government.

The government of Russia, and especially Vladimir Putin, has fueled these beliefs even further by flooding multiple television channels with violent images of Ukrainian nationalists threatening governmental officials. Many of these images have been proven to be either doctored or old images, taken out of their historical context and presented as something ongoing and current instead (BBC Hard Talk, 2014a). Nevertheless, this tactic has been effective in further deepening the cleavage in Ukraine between regions with Ukrainian- and Russian-speaking majorities. This cleavage was manifested democratically when Crimeans voted for independence from Ukraine and in favor of joining Russia. This in turn led many Ukrainians to fear large-scale separatist movements in multiple regions of Ukraine, with some joining the Russian Federation (BBC Hard Talk, 2014b).

5. Institutional dynamics

The Ukrainian political system consists of multiple political groups. "Government" and "opposition" are the terms most commonly used to characterize the dynamics of the latest conflict in Ukraine. However, this classification misses one significant player in the Ukrainian politics, namely the groups which make up the civil society, and who do not necessarily identify with either governmental or opposition groups. These civil society groups are frequently labeled as oppositional forces because they oppose the government. However, these groups also oppose an official opposition, and can more accurately be seen as an opposition to opposition. Collectively, these groups represent a large range of political ideologies, from the far right to the far left, from communist to laissez-faire capitalists, and from extremist nationalists to cosmopolitan groups. Therefore, understanding the composition of these groups, as well as the actions of governmental and opposition groups, regarding these groups of civil society provides an important part of the analysis.

[2] The law "On the Principles of Language Politics" (Law on Languages) was adopted in 2012. Political observers argue that this law was intended to increase Yanukovych's reelection chances as well as chance of his supporters. (цечетов об оШозиции и законе о языкач: Мы ич развели, как котят http://news.liga.net/news/politics/690419-chechetov_ob_oppozitsii_i_zakone_o_yazykakh_my_ikh_razveli_kak_kotyat.htm 3 июля 2014 Года). The Law on Languages gave the right to cities and regions to pass legislation that would give Russian (or any other minority language) the status of an official language, if 10% or more of the population of that region speak it as a native language on August 8, 2012. The government argued that this law would reduce the cleavage between different groups in Ukraine. However, the law was criticized sharply by the opposition as well as by nationalistic civil society organizations and large portions of the populations in Western and even Central Ukraine. Russian speakers celebrated, but Ukrainian speakers were afraid that their language would be marginalized again, as has happened many times before in Ukrainian history.

5.1. Government

The "government" in Ukraine before the Euromaydan consisted of at least four main powerful groups. The most significant of these were *Semya* (the Family) group, the Akhmetov group, the Firtash group, and the Kluev group (Pyrovich, 2014a,b,c,d).[3] This classification also included about 10–15 additional political groups, all of which were competing for both political power and economic gains. Growth in the power of the Family group was one of the main trends in pre-Euromaydan politics. This development happened at the expense of the power wielded by other groups.

The crisis brought to light emerging cleavages inside the Party of Regions. Specifically, some groups affiliated with the Party of Regions supported a decision that would involve compromise with protesters (Bogoslovska, 2014). For example, the press services of Akhmetov's System Capital Management groups and Firtash's Federation of Job Creators both called for peaceful resolution of the conflict and a more active involvement of the Ukrainian parliament in the process of the conflict resolution (Espresso, 2014).

Further, when parliamentary opposition offered a draft law to repeal a law of January 16, 2014 that would limit the rights to organize protests, many legislators from the Party of Regions were ready to join the opposition and vote in favor of this law. However, President Yanukovych came to parliament in person, and threatened legislators from his own party with party sanctions. This pressure from the president made these legislators vote against the law proposed by the opposition. This, however, did not unify the Party of Regions; instead it found itself fragmented, as multiple groups began leaving the Party of Regions. Thus, groups that support a peaceful resolution and groups that support a military and forceful solution have both left the presidential camp (Nebozenko, 2013). The bloc of 36 legislators from his faction who voted with the opposition on February 21–22, 2014 (Espresso, 2014b) signified a power split within the party which proved disastrous for the president, who was ousted shortly after this and left for Russia to seek asylum.

Some other groups inside the Party of Regions supported more forceful intervention, and even a military solution to the unrest seen in the Maydan. Berkut, the Special Forces Unit that split from the presidential camp deserves special attention because of its military training and its subsequent ability to make a difference in the case of mass protests. This unit consisted of highly-trained military personnel, and was trusted with the protection of the government in December 2013–February 2014. The military leadership of this unit supported a forceful means of dealing with protesters. Berkut has remained loyal to the government; its members did not leave their protection posts until President Yanukovych was ousted and the new government dismantled the unit. Some parts of this unit left Kyiv for Crimea, where the population greeted them as heroes; this part of Berkut took the side of Crimean separatists. Having well-trained military personnel has aided in strengthening the separatist movement in Crimea. Some other parts of this unit participated in takeovers of government buildings in other southeastern cities of Ukraine, such as Donetsk and Luganks, and aided pro-Russian and separatist groups there as well (Ukrainian Latest News, 2014).

In addition to losing support at the national level, President Yanukovych also lost the support of regional groups and administrative structures. For example, the Kharkov regional administration, headed by Mikhail Dobkin, called for the Congress of Deputies of Southeast Ukraine and called for the establishment of the Ukrainian Front (Liga, 2014). Finally, some of the regional leaders left the Party of Regions, such as the Mayor of Chernigov (UNIAN, 2014). This was the beginning of regional leaders taking on roles which were independent of the president, then developing their own regional policies that they believed were best suited to deal with the Maydan. The combination of these regional, national, and military splits from the presidential camp fractured and destabilized the power base of the existing government, and ended with the opposition coming to power.

5.2. Opposition

The notion of "opposition" itself is an interesting phenomenon in modern Ukraine. The existing Ukrainian Opposition, official and well-recognized, consisted of multiple groups. These groups included the three main parties that are represented in the Ukrainian Parliament: Batkivschina (Fatherland), UDAR (Ukrainskii Democraticheskii Alyans za Reformy) and Svoboda (Freedom). The Opposition also included other powerful groups that are not represented in the parliament, but nevertheless hold considerable power, such as a group led by the former minister Petro Poroshenko. These groups differed significantly in their ideological foundations and policy ideas. For example, UDAR did not accept the nationalism and radicalism of Svoboda (Kuzio, 2012). Vitaliy Klitschko later on dropped out of the presidential race and pledged his support for Poroshenko.

[3] Akhmetov group was one of the first three clans that were formed during Kuchma's first term as a president. Thus, Rinat Akhmetov gained the position of the most important oligarch in the Donetsk group. This group also consisted of a number of sub-clans and subgroups, including the Industrial Union of Donbass (ISD) owned by Serhiy Taruta and Vitaliy Hayduk and the group controlled by the Klyuyev brothers, Andriy and Serhiy. Viktor Yanukovych, who was the governor of the Donetsk Oblast in 1997–2002 and the prime minister of Ukraine in 2002–2005 during Kuchma's second term, became the main political representative of this clan (Matuszak, 2012). Klyuev is one of the many actors present on the Ukrainian political scene who are difficult to classify firmly as either politicians or businessmen. Andriy Klyuyev was the secretary of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine, who was until recently first deputy prime minister. Firtash, with help from Energy Minister Yuriy Boyko, placed his men in the management structures of Naftogaz (Yevhen Bakulin became its Chief Executive Officer) and in the subsidiaries of Naftogaz, including Ukrgazvydobuvannya, Ukraine's largest gas producer, and Ukrtransgaz, a company dealing with gas transport. Firtash managed to ensure that a number of decisions were passed which were beneficial for him. This made it possible to rebuild the position of RosUkrEnerg (RUE) at a fast rate (Matuszak, 2012).

Some groups demonstrated the leanings to more radical organizations. For example, *Spilna Sprava* (Common Cause) took over the buildings of the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Agrarian Policy. Pravyi Sector (Right Sector), which has its roots in western Ukraine, has been focusing on Ukrainian nationalism, and took Stepan Bandera, leader of the Ukrainian nationalist movement which fought for Ukrainian independence and proclaimed an Independent Ukrainian State in Lviv in 1941, as an example of the true Ukrainian national. This group organized its own armed confrontation with governmental forces. However, these groups have never had strong cross-regional support, because their ideology has not been shared by groups in other regions of Ukraine. Moreover, as the crisis progressed, some leaders in western Ukraine were developing a more moderate stance and were clearly toning down their nationalist rhetoric. Some even gave interviews in Russian rather than in the Ukrainian language.

Groups of the official opposition have been making multiple attempts to gain control of the civil society groups involved in the Euro Maydan, and have been attempting to construct at least a temporary union with them, but have not succeeded (Spilnobachennya, 2013). This temporary union may have allowed those excluded from both governmental representation and opposition groups to become included in the political process via the already-existing official opposition, but the former refused the offer and proceeded with their demand to change the constitutional system. These groups have been part of the All Ukrainian Union 'Maydan' (All Ukrainian Union 'Maydan', 2014). These groups have continued with mass protests in the Euro Maydan and pledged to stay there until their demands were met fully.

6. Orange Revolution and Euromaydan Compared

The Orange Revolution of 2004 certainly left a legacy, but the Euromaydan is a different phenomenon. The main difference here is that the Orange Revolution was organized by an opposition that was supported by the civil society. However, the Euromaydan was organized by civil society groups, and the opposition was an unwelcome and distrusted appendage. During the Orange Revolution, the opposition wanted their leaders to come to power and become the government. As a result, opposition leaders indeed assumed such power. Victor Yuschenko became the president and Yuliya Timoshenko became the Prime Minister. Nevertheless, the rise to power of these leaders did not bring about the desired changes to the lives of common Ukrainians. The lasting legacy of the Orange Revolution in Ukraine is that protesters no longer seek for their leadership coming to power as a main goal, but rather seek a change in the constitutional system, the election laws, and the governing practices. Sample postings on social media sites presented a tenor of resentment: "Do they think we are stupid? They get to the pork barrel ("koryto") and celebrate victory as victors and this is the victory that we fought for"; or "we did not fight this hard to have another 'guarantor' of our rights. We fought to have our own voice and ability to stand up for our rights without guarantors, who are now treated as heroes." (Volunpost, 2014; Nayyem, 2014; Ioffe, 2014).

The role of parties with bases in western Ukraine has changed between the two Maydans as well. Western Ukraine has the highest civic activity of any Ukrainian region and the highest number of those who are ready to participate in civil society (Kuzio, 2010). These groups of civil society demonstrate high intensity and a determination to reach their goals. This significant level of public support for certain ideals is evidenced by the fact that western Ukrainians have turned out in larger numbers in elections and have established a greater number of local branches of political parties. Lviv, Rivne, Trans-Carpathia and Poltava, four oblasts that supported the Orange Revolution, have produced the largest turnouts in Ukrainian elections (Kuzio, 2010). They are also those regions most likely to favor change over status quo (Kuzio, 2010). These groups have sought a very different type of changes in 2004 and 2013. They supported a change of government, or a transition of power, in 2004. However, by 2013, their demands had changed; here they demanded a change of the constitutional system upon which the government itself is based.

This change came as a result of the Orange Revolution falling short of its goal to move Ukraine into the ranks of consolidated democracies. During his five-year term (2005–2010), President Viktor Yushchenko and his team failed to reform state institutions and devoted little effort to entrench the rule of law (Zielys, 2014). Moreover, the president abused his authority over the judiciary, even going so far as to abolish the court which ruled in favor of his political opponents (Human Rights Watch, 2008). Both ruling and opposition politicians continued to bribe judges, arbitrarily sack them, and even storm the courthouses (Trochev, 2010). In sum, the overall failure to establish a clear division of power and an effective system of checks and balances has left Ukraine vulnerable to sliding back toward authoritarian rule (Zielys, 2014). Scholars were questioning whether the Orange Revolution represented any revolutionary change at all (Hale, 2006; Katchanovski, 2008; Lane, 2008).

In short, the changes after the Orange Revolution did not go any further than changes in personnel on the grounds of political loyalty (Bogomolov and Lytvynenko, 2009: 78). The system, however, remained the same, and the situation between the 2004 and 2013 deteriorated considerably with regard to basic rights and freedoms for Ukrainians. This is further supported by interviews, analysis of documents and observation of opinions expressed by Euromaydan participants. The dominant view is that the ongoing dissatisfaction of the population with the government has been rolled in with a number of factors which contributed to the escalation of tension and violence in the Maydan:

- Public perception of a high level of corruption within the government.
- The inability of large segments of the population to contribute to the policy development process.
- An overwhelming feeling of powerlessness among Ukrainians.
- The government's use of repressive tools in exerting its influence.

- The government's inability to develop effective checks on the use of power by the judiciary.
- The persistence of police brutality.
- The existence of "*bespredel*" (the unlimited abuse of power of those in power).
- The continual barriers to business development.
- The creation and maintenance of policies that many believe are "suffocating" them.

In the face of such conditions, Ukrainians resorted to this form of self-government which has become very familiar to them, the Maydan. Many believed that it was the only tool at their disposal in order to have their voices heard.

7. Ukrainian legacies of the past: a historic perspective

An understanding of the latest wave of mass protests in Ukraine would be incomplete without a brief discussion of historic legacies in this country and the meaning that Maydan has for Ukrainians. Ukrainian history has deep meaning for Ukrainians, and some parts of it, if brought to the present, can influence the intensity of the present conflict. We can see such a legacy even in the use of terminology. The latest wave of mass protests in Ukraine has been known as the "European Square" (the Euromaydan). The name of this phenomenon has deep cultural, historic, and ideological implications for Ukrainians. The word "square" translates in Ukrainian as either "maydan" or "ploshcha". Protesters in Ukraine have named the square as 'Euro Maydan'. The literature on the issue has referred to this wave of mass protests as 'Euro Maydan' and has never addressed it as 'Euro Ploshcha' The Ukrainian language reflects that these two different connotations have deep cultural and historic meanings. An analysis of the Ukrainian literature demonstrates that "maydan" is perceived as much more than a geographical location in a city; it also refers to a form of self-government that is equivalent to the practice of direct democracy known in Ancient Greece and later translated into different forms of self-determination throughout the world. Specifically, the usage of the word "maydan" can be seen in the history of Ukraine when villagers would come to the main square of a village to exercise their right of self-governance in a form of a direct democracy. This term also has a strong connotation concerning the history of civil disobedience in Ukraine. It reflects Ukrainian history, which is marked by long periods of struggle for independence from seemingly never-ending occupations of its territory by the Mongol Yoke, Germany, and Lithuania, just to name a few. The role of the Ukrainian language in the Ukrainian society has remained a long debated and heated issue given this history.

Historically, eastern Ukraine had been part of Russian empire and then the USSR for over 300 years. Language has been one of the most divisive issues in the history of relations between Ukraine and Russia. Russian Tzars and their governments have been taking steps to increase the role of the Russian language at the expense of regional languages, such as the Ukrainian language (Silver, 1974). The rulings surrounding this issue have been varied, but the most important have been those that seem to circumscribe the use of the Ukrainian language in favor of the Russian language. Thus, in 1863 the Tzar's Ministry of Internal Affairs issued an order that prohibited publishing books in the Ukrainian language (Smoliy, 1997). This was followed by the Tzar's order of 1876, which further limited usage of the Ukrainian language by prohibiting not only publishing and importing books in Ukrainian, but also by prohibiting theaters from performing plays in the Ukrainian language (Bazan, 1985).

The Soviet government, which came to power in 1917, continued these policies. Beginning in 1958, parents were given the right to decline classes in the Ukrainian language for their children in all schools, including those in Ukraine. In 1983, the Soviet government issued a ruling titled "On Increasing the Role of Studies of the Russian Language in Schools," which offered a special increase in pay specifically for teachers of the Russian language all over the Soviet Union, including in Ukraine (Zagreba, V. 2007). During the Perestroika years, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR issued an order (1990) giving the status of an official language of the USSR to the Russian language in all Soviet republics, including the Ukraine.

These policies resulted in the majority of schools in southeastern Ukraine—as well as those in western Ukraine, where ethnic Ukrainians had a dominant majority — using the Russian language as their primary language of instructions. The result was that Russian-language schools constituted over 90% of the schools in southeastern Ukraine, and over 60% of those in western Ukraine, even though less than 53% of the population of southeastern Ukraine, and less than 20% of the population of western Ukraine, considered Russian their native language (Kubiyovich, 1971; Kravtsiv, 1972; Kolyaska, 1970; Census, 1973).

Some Ukrainians have considered themselves bilingual. In 2007, 25.5% of the population of southern Ukraine, and 32.5% of the population of eastern Ukraine, considered themselves bilingual. In total, 21.5% of all Ukrainians at that time thought of themselves as bilingual. While this may seem to be a significant percentage, it is nevertheless a rapidly-declining one. In 1992, 32% of Ukrainians considered themselves bilingual. And in 2011, only 17.1% of Ukrainians considered themselves bilingual. The groups of people who considered themselves primarily Ukrainian or Russian speakers increased accordingly over these decades of post-Soviet rule (Kramar, 2012). This decline in bilingual groups and concurrent increase in both Russian- and Ukrainian-speaking groups has been an indicator of the increasing split between the western regions of Ukraine, where the Ukrainian language has gained not only more speakers but also cultural significance, and the southeastern regions of Ukraine, where Russian has shown similar growth. All these developments have made the population sensitive to governmental policies concerning the use of language.

8. Discussion

The change that the Euromaydan is seeking should culminate in new elections that are scheduled for May 25, 2014. But the two main candidates for the presidential elections are not new: Timoshenko and Poroshenko. Timoshenko has been a well-known leader of the official opposition who was able to use her party support to garner greater public support and higher ratings. Poroshenko's business background has allowed him to position himself strongly as an outsider to the official politics. Thus, despite the fight that the Euromaydan has put up against the establishment, we still see two old leaders who work within the establishment as the top candidates in the new election. Despite the acquiescence to these old ways, the list of presidential candidates in Ukraine is still very long, and does contain some new faces, such as Dmitriy Yarosh, who is the leader of the Right Sector. In addition to the former opposition candidates competing for the presidential office, the former camp of the government has competitors as well. The Party of Regions refused support to Oleh Tsarev and Sergiy Tigipko, but they nevertheless run for the office.

Moreover, the leaders that many saw as rising stars of the new Ukrainian state gave way to these old leaders from well established political elites in Ukraine. Thus, Vitalii Klitchko, a favorite of some influential civil society groups on the Maydan, has offered his support to Poroshenko. Klitchko, who has frequently opposed not only the government but also the official opposition, gained popularity as a self-made man who is an embodiment of the dreams of common Ukrainians. Having Russian as his native language allowed him to position himself strongly to win votes in southeastern Ukraine, while his platform and proposed policies secured votes in western Ukraine. However, when he made a choice to come to some agreements with the Batkivschina and Svoboda factions, this ended his popularity with southeastern Ukrainians.

Our research indicates that the strength of civil society may be secondary to the role of governmental institutions in protecting the space necessary for the operation of the civil society and in establishing power-sharing arrangements. The exclusive character of immature political institutions has resulted in a confrontation between government and civil society groups in Ukraine because governmental rules did not allow all these groups to pursue their interests within the existing political institutions. The Maydan was the only tool of self-governance that these groups could use to bring about a desired change. Our research confirms that such groups in sub-national territories, such as in Crimea, are likely to demand and pursue separation from their nation-state, Ukraine. Our research further confirms Horowitz's argument about changing the rules of the institutional game in order to make institutions function more inclusively. However, our research adds to it that the timing of these changes is crucial for the conflict escalation. The creation of power-sharing arrangements, reformed constitutions, and a federal system may eventually provide conflicting parties with the means of resolving conflicts peacefully. But the development of such inclusive institutions takes a great deal of time. However, as the case of the Ukrainian Euromaydan demonstrates, the leisurely pace of "politics as usual" is no longer appropriate, for conflicts escalate as quickly as a forest fire. Therefore, some intermediate solutions are needed to move the process towards more constructive and peaceful resolutions.

The intermediate solution of the interim government may be to avoid taking on those policies which would most likely satisfy their political base but may prove to alienate some other important groups in the society. The Ukrainian government taking on language policies at the time of an ongoing crisis has proven to be a divisive action that alienated some Russian speaking groups in southeast Ukraine and contributed to further escalation of the conflict. Perhaps offering inclusive policies that can unite the nation and bring different groups together can reduce the level of social animosity among those groups. Attempts to placate with policies any extremist groups that may be on the rise may prove to be fruitless, as these groups thrive on the conflict between the government and civil society.

Perhaps offering autonomy to the regions where these groups have their base, coupled with the application of both domestic and international pressures could be a more productive solution, as these groups, as our research shows, are in the absolute minority in the society, while the majority of the population is in favor of more moderate and inclusive policy choices. There is one place where any government would be better off in drawing a hard line, and this is where one group is attempting to dominate the political process, dictating to the others or limiting the rights of the other groups. Our research shows that this is where the majority of all groups would support the government in a state like Ukraine, where the majority of the population is rather moderate in their political beliefs.

This study demonstrates that the Ukrainian government and its policies has played a major role and contributed significantly to the escalation of the conflict in Ukraine. Blaming the USA, the EU, or Russia seems to be a trend in media outlets on more than one side, but this leaves Ukrainians themselves as victims who have no power to make their own future. We grant that international factors are of major significance in this case and need further study, but understanding the domestic factors allows Ukrainians take control over their own national destiny, instead of looking solely for outside actors to come up with a working solution to the crisis.

9. Conclusions

This article has addressed the question of the factors that have contributed to the latest wave of mass protests in Ukraine. The analysis demonstrates that the public protests in Ukraine are indicative of the significant role of domestic political institutions in both fomenting and quelling mass protests. The role that past historic and cultural legacies play in these matters is more symbolic. At the same time, legacies of the past present a significant challenge to the government, especially in this time of crisis. Whether the conflict between the government and opposition groups is resolved violently or non-violently depends on the capacity of new institutions to deal with old legacies in a way that unifies the nation. Divisive

governmental actions may have merely symbolic meaning and never gain power of law, but nevertheless, the perceived threat they carry can invoke a response that is a strong as one in response to an actual threat in the presence of strong historic legacies.

This article has provided an analysis of both governmental and opposition groups and the role of group dynamics in the escalation of the conflict. The splitting of multiple groups from the presidential camp has been coupled with the government and opposition groups losing their legitimacy with the general population, and this in turn led to the rise of those civil society groups that formed the Euromaydan. In general, the government of Ukraine had already lost a significant amount of power prior to Euromaydan due to the population's perception of governmental corruption and the rather exclusionary character of the Ukrainian political process, where only those close to the groups in power could contribute to the political process. This has led to the weakening of governmental groups and their subsequent inability to manage the situation within the existing political institutions. Opposition groups, which came to power after the ousted president Yanukovych had left Ukraine, have faced a very similar challenge with the lack of legitimacy among groups of civil society, and therefore, could not reduce the intensity of conflict to any significant extent.

The position of civil society groups in leadership roles in 2013–2014 indicates differences between the Euromaydan and Orange Revolutions. Civil society groups were present in the Orange Revolution as well, but they acted together with the official opposition, for they were led and organized by the official opposition, which was seeking power. Political parties and factions of the opposition took on leading roles and used the support of civil society to come to power. However, the dynamics of the Euromaydan differed significantly from those of the Orange Revolution. Many leaders of civil society groups on Euromaydan refused to support either the government or the official opposition, and instead developed goals that differed from the goals of both. These groups targeted a change of the constitutional system and some of these groups, such as Pravii Sector, has been leaning towards more radical political agenda.

A key projection that must remain for another analysis is what the political situation in Ukraine will be like after the Euromaydan. At the time of the writing of this article, the Maydan was still active, and the Russian President Putin has moved Russian troops into Crimea. This maneuver has moved the discussion from a question about the process of democratization in Ukraine and the creation of Ukrainian domestic politics into the domain of international relations. The most pressing question has now become the one of Ukrainian territorial integrity. Will Ukraine remain an independent country? Will the long-suppressed Ukrainian dream of freedom and liberty materialize, or remain just that, a dream? If so, the mass protests that had democratization as their main goal would achieve the opposite result. However, further research on future developments will be needed to find answers to these questions.

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