Narratives of Justification in Ukrainian Discourses on Reform
Constructing a Normative Foundation of Civic Culture

D I S S E R T A T I O N
of the University of St.Gallen,
School of Management,
Economics, Law, Social Sciences,
International Affairs and Computer Science,
to obtain the title of
Doctor of Philosophy in Organizational
Studies and Cultural Theory

submitted by

Bogdan Kolesnyk

from

Basel (Basel-Stadt)

Approved on the application of

Prof. Dr. Ulrich Schmid

and

Prof. Dr. Thomas Beschorner

Dissertation no. 5294

D-Druck Spescha, St.Gallen 2023

The University of St.Gallen, School of Management, Economics, Law, Social Sciences, International Affairs and Computer Science, hereby consents to the printing of the present dissertation, without hereby expressing any opinion on the views herein expressed.

St.Gallen, October 18, 2022

The President:

Prof. Dr. Bernhard Ehrenzeller

Table of Contents

List of figures **8**

List of Tables **9**

Abstract **10**

Zusammenfassung **11**

Introduction **12**

1. Foundations **21**

1.1 Post-Soviet fractures **21**

1.2 Ends of action: civic culture **26**

1.3 Means of action: discourse and power **37**

2. Theoretical apparatus **42**

2.1 Normativity **42**

2.2. Culture and modernisation **67**

2.3 Political Narrativity **80**

2.4 Research Design **91**

3. Narratives of Justification **105**

3.1 The lead-up to revolt **105**

3.2 Revolution of Dignity: the moment of belief **122**

3.3 Typology of narratives of justification **161**

3.4 Periodisation **173**

3.5 Central narratives **179**

3.5.1 Liberalism 179

3.5.1.1 National Liberalism 179

3.5.1.2 Liberism 221

3.5.1.3 Republicanism 249

3.5.2 Conservatism 275
3.5.2.1 National Conservatism 275
3.5.2.2 Neo-Soviet Conservatism 308

3.6 Alternative narratives 325
3.6.1. Nationalism 326
3.6.2 Leftism 329
3.6.3 Moderate Conservatism 334
3.6.4 Discursive residue 336

Summary 340

Conclusion 358

Literature 361

Materials 372

Curriculum Vitae 396

List of figures

Figure 1: Political discourse as cultural practice.....35
Figure 2: Qualitative change in political discourse over time.....36
Figure 3: Cultural conditions of democratic reform.....67
Figure 4: Narrative shifts.....351

List of Tables

Table 1: Features of narrativitiy.....85
Table 2: Rankings of influence.....95
Table 3: National liberalism.....343
Table 4: Libersim.....344
Table 5: Republicanism.....345
Table 6: National conservatism.....346
Table 7: Neo-Soviet conservatism.....346
Table 8: Nationalism.....347
Table 9: Leftism.....348
Table 10: Moderate conservatism.....349
Table 11: Political narratives by cultural dimension.....350

Abstract

The events known as Euromaidan or The Revolution of Dignity that unfolded between late November 2013 and February 2014 in Ukraine triggered an intense discourse about the development of Ukrainian society, the economy, and the state. While many anticipated Western-style modernisation, there were crucial differences and disagreements. The resulting discursive activity offered a unique opportunity to understand the political culture. This was attempted in this dissertation by organising the discourse on socio-political development ('discourse on reform') into a typology of narratives.

Eight narratives were identified and compared at two points of time: 2014 to mid-2016 (taken to be the period of the formation of the new status quo) and mid-2016 to mid-2019 (taken to be the period when the new status quo was stabilised and contested). Instead of a broad alignment hoped for at the time of the Euromaidan, an intensification of the struggle to shape a common future through political visions was observed. The contestation was not just about political preferences, but about the meaning of political culture as such. The central issue at stake was as follows: should the political culture be a matter of choice for individuals and communities or should it be rooted into the story of origin, binding for all? A comparison between the two periods indicated increasing disagreement regarding the answer.

In addition to describing the development of Ukrainian political culture after Euromaidan, another research objective was to evaluate the narratives identified in light of proposed normative criteria derived from the basic facts about Ukrainian society. It is suggested in this dissertation that Ukraine is best understood as a heterogenous 'cultural contact zone'. Hence, the idea of 'civic culture' is offered as the normative reference point for evaluating the discourse 'as is' and as an orientative guidance for what 'ought to be'. The idea of civic culture suggests relegating the questions of a 'strong' identity and 'thick' values to individuals and communities. At the level of polity, civic culture is defined by the general integrative principles that enable various identities and values to co-exist, but stand above these identities and values. With this kind of normativity in mind, the narrative (which can be called 'republicanism') was identified as theoretically the most consistent with the idea of civic culture.

The value of this inquiry lies in providing an orientation map to navigate Ukrainian political discourse. It allows to differentiate various political positions, to ask which of them appeal to which social groups, how they relate to institutions and to trace how they evolve over time.

Zusammenfassung

Die Ereignisse zwischen November 2013 und Februar 2014, die als "Euromaidan" oder "Revolution der Würde" bekannt wurden, haben einen intensiven Diskurs über die Entwicklung der Gesellschaft, Ökonomie und des Staates in der Ukraine ausgelöst. Während Viele als Konsequenz eine westliche Form der Modernisierung erwarteten, gab es dennoch wichtige Unterschiede und Meinungsverschiedenheiten. Die daraus resultierende diskursive Auseinandersetzung bietet eine einzigartige Gelegenheit dazu, die politische Kultur des Landes zu verstehen. Diese Dissertation verfolgt diesen Ansatz, indem sie den Diskurs über die gesellschaftspolitische Entwicklung ("Reformdiskurs") in eine Typologie von Narrativen einordnet.

Im Ergebnis, acht Narrative wurden identifiziert und ihre Entwicklung über zwei zeitliche Perioden hinweg miteinander verglichen: von 2014 bis Mitte 2016 (der Zeitraum der Herausbildung des neuen Status Quo) und von Mitte 2016 bis Mitte 2019 (der Zeitraum, in dem sich der neue Status Quo verfestigte und angefochten wurde). Anstelle eines breiten gesellschaftlichen Konsenses, wie zur Zeit des Euromaidan erhofft, lässt sich ein intensives diskursives Ringen um die Gestaltung einer gemeinsamen Zukunft durch politische Visionen beobachten. Hierbei ging es nicht nur um die politische Präferenzen, sondern um die grundlegende Bedeutung der politischen Kultur als solcher. Im Kern ging es um die Frage: Soll die politische Kultur eine Frage der Wahl für einzelne Individuen und Gemeinschaften sein oder sollte sie in einer gemeinsamen Herkunftsgeschichte verwurzelt und für alle verbindlich sein?

Ein weiteres Forschungsziel darin, die identifizierten Narrative anhand normativer Kriterien zu bewerten. Die Dissertation vertritt die These, dass die Ukraine am besten als heterogene "kulturelle Kontaktzone" zu begreifen ist. Daher wird das Konzept der "Civic Culture" verwendet als normativer Referenzpunkt. Der Idee der "Civic Culture" folgend, werden die Fragen nach starken Identitäten und Werten auf die Ebene der Individuen und Gemeinschaften verlagert. Auf der Ebene des politischen Systems dagegen verbleiben allgemeine integrative Prinzipien, die das Nebeneinander verschiedener Identitäten und Werte ermöglichen. Im Lichte dieser Art von Normativität erscheint das Narrativ, das als "Republikanismus" bezeichnet werden kann, als theoretisch am besten mit der Idee der "Civic Culture" vereinbar.

Diese Studie bietet damit eine Landkarte zur Navigation des politischen Diskurses in der Ukraine: sie erlaubt die Identifikation verschiedener politischer Positionen, ihre Entwicklung im Zeitverlauf sowie eine Bestimmung, welche Positionen welche sozialen Gruppen ansprechen, was zur Erklärung des politischen Verhaltens dieser beiträgt.

Introduction

In January 2013, a new playground for children was opened at the popular walking area in central Kyiv known as 'the scenic alley' (in Ukrainian, 'Peyzazhna alleya'). The opening was attended by the First Deputy Prime Minister Serhiy Arbuzov and Kyiv Mayor Oleksandr Popov (Kyiv City Department of Construction and Architecture, 2013). The playground, or 'art park', was called 'The Two Worlds'. It contained a series of sculptures designed to educate the responsible citizenry. The sculptures there represented the 'two worlds'. One was the world of shadows, populated by corrupt and greedy people allegorically depicted as snakes, spiders, and scorpions. Alongside it was the world of prosperity and welfare, a brightly coloured place of industrious harmony most prominently visualised as anthropomorphic taps that appeared to produce sweets. Creators explained that the first world was a desert country, where citizens did not follow their responsibilities or pay taxes. In contrast, the second one was a radiant country of abundance, where citizens paid taxes and were confident about their future (ibid). The message was endorsed by Arbuzov, at the time said to be a shoo-in for prime minister, who stated:

> This is the first playground designed to entertain our children as well as for their financial education. Based on the examples offered here, they can see how the relationship between the citizen and state works, how the law works, which things are good and bad. (Interfax-Ukraine, 2013)

By the end of February 2014, both Arbuzov and Popov were ejected from public politics and, in the case of Arbuzov, from the country by a popular uprising.

The bifurcation into the unsatisfactory present and aspirational future is the condition of Ukrainian sociality since the country's independence in 1991. Most agreed that they lived in the first of the 'two worlds', which was deficient in a way that could not become a permanent condition. Yet, for three decades, they struggled to negotiate a better alternative. Today's world existed to be superseded by a better one, which existed in various images, expectations, and discourses. Granted, such separation into what 'is' and what 'ought' to be is not unique. Still, the turbulence of Ukrainian political history in the three decades of independence, coupled with the number of revolts and regime changes, and the temperature of public discourse and ideological oppositions all testify to the fact that, in Ukraine, the chasm between social 'is' and 'ought' may be wider and deeper than in most other places. This schism into the provisional 'now' and existentially necessary image of a better future became the defining feature of Ukrainian political culture.

Since the Soviet Union's unravelling, Ukraine's *raison d'être* has been to evolve into something else. But to become what, exactly? Many scholars agree that commitment to liberal principles was foundational for Ukraine (Minakov, Kasianov, Rojansky, 2021, p. 1). Indeed, the attractiveness of the 1991 independence was premised on becoming more free and more Western. For the majority, it may not have meant a thought-through commitment to the ideas of rights, freedoms, and markets, but rather a general longing for prosperity, welfare and pleasure as depicted in Western popular culture and exemplified by consumer products of the same origin. This is where the favourable difference to the Soviet normality was clearest and appeared to be attainable. For the elites, the motive may have been to privatise the economy and govern without Moscow's straitjacket of central authority. Nonetheless, the net effect of such desires and imagined futures was a sort of orientative overlap along liberal lines. In this initial version, becoming something better was understood as catching up with the West, a 'modernisation' by transplanting the western liberal political and economic institutions. As this project either stalled or did not deliver the desired improvements as problems accumulated, corrective or other development visions appeared. It is these visions of development that constitute the object of this dissertation. More specifically: the discourses on what went wrong and what ought to be done, which can be called *discourses on reform.* Within these discourses, the development models are constructed in conjunction with various ideologies and are tested in cultural practice as competing narratives.

In the multiplicity, creativity, maximalism, and fragmentation of the narratives identifiable in discourses on reform, one can recognise another condition of Ukrainian sociality—its orientative indeterminacy— which perceptive scholars saw long ago. The historian Ivan L. Rudnytskiy wrote about the issue of absence of a 'synthesis of antagonistic political-ideological trends' (1987), which he saw as the necessary condition for Ukraine's political survival.[1] In the context of transformational changes launched by the disintegration of Soviet Union, this indeterminacy made it challenging to

[1] 'Perhaps the most portentous issue in the future evolution of Ukrainian thought will be the problem of a synthesis of antagonistic political-ideological trends. The absence of such a synthesis was a major cause of the failure of the independent Ukrainian state in 1917-21. In view of the country's precarious geographical location, its political survival will depend on Ukrainians' ability to resolve their internal differences amicably and to maintain a reasonable degree of solidarity against foreign threats and pressures. Civil wars are a luxury that Ukraine can ill afford. But what could be the meaning of such an envisaged synthesis? It certainly does not imply the reduction of antagonistic trends to a single unitary formula. It should rather be conceived as a process of mutual adjustment. The trends, which in the past were simply juxtaposed, would have to learn the art of constructive interaction. Before this could take place in the practical political sphere, and finally be institutionalized, it would have to occur first on the intellectual plane. A step in this direction would be the cultivation of an inclusive vision of history, embracing all the facets of the nation's past, even those which in their own time were irreconcilably opposed to each other. What is needed is a type of mentality which makes it possible to find in London monuments to both Charles I and Oliver Cromwell.' (Rudnytsky, 1987)

follow through with one model of development. The sociologist E. Golovakha characterised post-Soviet transformation in Ukraine as a 'reluctant' transformation. In Golovakha's reading, reluctant transformation happens:

> […](as a result of unexpected socio-political changes which led to the necessity of instantaneous and spontaneous transformation of the principles of social life). Such transformation has occurred in the post-Soviet territory, where newly formed independent states (except the three Baltic States) were not ready for extensive economic and social transformations. (Golovakha et al., 2020, p. 4)

Such directional indeterminacy manifested itself in the institutional make up of the country as 'institutional duality' (ibid, pp. 8-11), where new liberal institutions were 'not "underpinned" with their legitimation in the common and elite consciousness' (ibid, p. 9) and poisoned by the co-optation by 'shadow' institutions that emerged at the end Soviet period (cronyism, shadow economy, and oligarchy), while Soviet institutions of state paternalism maintained their traditional legitimacy in society. If so, the world of shadows depicted at the children's playground was hard-coded into Ukrainian social structures starting from the late Soviet period and became deeply embedded into institutional and cultural elements at the early stages of independence. Society had to live with this ambivalence that over time was felt more and more as collective failure: as a weight that slows down development and makes any breakthrough impossible. To explain and overcome it, two practical recipes were applied. First, there was the post-Soviet-conservative approach that, in essence, perpetuated the late Soviet/post-Soviet shadow world. The result here were attempts of autocratic consolidation that resulted in two revolts: the Orange Revolution of 2004 and the Revolution of Dignity of 2013-2014. Second, the nation-building narrative offered cultural homogenisation along ethnic lines as a solution. However, those on the receiving end either ignored or rejected it.

Orientative indeterminacy created a certain vacuum, in which best-placed and aggressive actors could pursue their interests at the macro-political level. Oligarchic clans vying for power created deep cleavages along social, regional, generational, and cultural lines. This manifested itself in the ever-increasing conflictuality of the political system (Kudelia & Kasianov, 2021, p. 11), which spilled over into society as various groups pursued their specific interests and mobilised support accordingly through integrated patronal networks spanning economic, political, and media power. No inclusive national identity (ibid, p. 12) or stable compromise emerged in such an environment. The issue was brought into sharp focus by the Euromaidan protests, known as the Revolution of Dignity (November 2013-February

2014) and in the subsequent events of the annexation of Crimea by Russia and armed conflict in Donbass.

This dissertation's impetus was given by the hopes, passions, expectations, and ideas that emerged to the surface of public life during the Revolution of Dignity. They highlighted what it meant to be Ukrainian. Some pointed to shared predicament, others to significant differences, still others to confusions. To an attentive observer, they provided invaluable insight into the very heart of political culture. The society in crisis re-examines its fundamentals: dignity and justice; the means and ends of political action; what constitutes a good or bad life; the meaning of freedom. The constitutive role of these ideas for the structural design of our social co-existence (and consequently for its impact on our individual lives) is undeniable when the entire order is put into it question. If appropriately examined, the flood of opinions, arguments, and interpretations contains many answers. Such extraordinary times of crisis push actors to reveal their hitherto implicit worldviews. The problems they articulate and solutions they offer in public discourse allow us to grasp how society perceives the moment and what it expects from the future. Within the cacophony of Ukrainian political discourse at the time of Euromaidan[2], one could discern a common thread that transcended orientative indeterminacy and connected the world of the present with the better world of the future. This was the demand for justice. Expressed with various ideological inflections, it constituted the social movement's deep motivational and ideational force and offered the integrative principle to build a shared future.

Taking Euromaidan as the point of departure, the first objective of this research project is to reconstruct subsequent discourses on reform into a set of narratives to offer a politico-cultural map. By ordering the corpus of texts, which represents the broader discourse through the conceptual framework and constructed with elements of critical theory, narratology, culturalistic ethics, this work attempts to make the interconnected problems of power and culture more visible. The indeterminacy, duality, and conflictuality can then be viewed through the optics calibrated to bring issues of justice into sharper focus. The descriptive technique that presents political discourse as a set of narratives itself already contains the normative problematic that gave the impulse to the description in the first place. Here, description is the first step towards critique, which refers to a particular 'normativity' - i.e. a position on how things should be instead of how they are. This normativity, built into the descriptive technique employed in this work, is informed by the idea that

[2] Euromaidan and the Revolution of Dignity will be used interchangeably in this dissertation. The event started in November 2013 at the central square of Kyiv (the Maidan) with pro-European agenda as a reaction to the refusal to sign Ukraine-EU association agreement by the Government (see sections 3.1 and 3.2)

Euromaidan was foremost about the demand for justice. Moreover, the history of independent Ukraine thus far is the history of struggle for a more just society. Hence, this dissertation's second objective is to interpret the political narratives normatively. Specifically, this evaluative aspect of the dissertation aims to test various political narratives on how consistent they are with the social goal of justice, understood normatively, as universal. To aid this objective, discourse analysis will be performed at two points in time: one immediately after the Euromaidan and one starting approximately two years later after the new status quo settled in. The intention here is to determine what qualitative changes occurred between the two periods in question.

The guiding ambition is hence twofold: (1) to offer an ordered typology of political narratives that can be employed in future discourse analyses; and (2) to find elements that could constitute that inclusive layer of a national, i.e. collective identity that so far has been lacking, while at the same time, taking a cue from ideas around justice as a potential integrative force.

Issues that have to with political culture are often captured via the notion of identity. Identity is a problematic concept. Individuals appeal to it in order to stabilise their individuality, as well as to make it understandable for others and psychologically comforting for the self. But the very instability and temporariness of identities means that it is by far not an expression of the essence of individuals but rather a construct that is susceptible to the whims of time, place, and particular experience. One could go as far as the British Philosopher Derek Parfit and claim that identity is 'unimportant' (1995). In his reasoning, 'identity' is an aspect of language that should not be mistaken for reality. It is part of the conceptual scheme we use to make sense of reality. Still, upon closer examination, it breaks down into deeper-level considerations (such as autonomy and self-determination) that might be relevant in themselves, but this doesn't make identities real. Nonetheless, identities become 'real', if only for a short time, precisely because they are a go-to tool used to describe individuals, groups (the distance from personal identity to collective identity is relatively short), commonality, and difference. While any such description is provisional and highly susceptible to deconstructive challenge (or suspect of serving some ulterior motive), it is still a powerful part of the common conceptual scheme used to make sense of the connection between the socio-political order and the behaviour of individuals. Belonging to an order means following norms and recognising others as part of the group to which specific norms apply. Such belonging requires understanding of symbolic forms used to communicate meaning. The concept of identity may be too reliant on essentialising this understanding and hence obscuring how transitory any 'identification' is. Nonetheless, the fact is an established part of 'ordinary language' justifies the usage of identity as an analytical concept. Identity, combined with intersubjectivity explain

how certain symbolic forms become historically stabilised and socialised in individuals. One other important aspect of identity is its moral content. As captured by Giesen, 'The identity appears as self-assertion and self-determination of acting subjects. But this self-determination succeeds only if others recognise it' (1999, pp. 18-19). Hence, understood as a tool in the fight for autonomy, the concept of identity has particular emancipatory merit. On the other hand, the problem is that the concept of identity is also laden with emotional baggage stemming from its tendency to trigger categorisations, groupings, and judgements on commonalities and differences, and inevitably: conflict. Hence possibility of cooperation and consensus relies on there being more than one layer of identity. Particular visions of good life rooted into individual or micro/meso - group values can be multiple and divergent. Social order enabling such value pluralism requires another overarching layer of collective identity that would make problem-solving, containment of conflicts, common responsibility, cooperation possible. In this work the idea of *civic culture* is offered as a possible answer.

To integrate the descriptive and normative objectives the narratives, understood as containers for various political identities in their descriptive sense and as connectable 'lego bricks' in their normative sense, will be mapped out. How individual bricks connect to each other as well as to the shared platform of justice to create overarching political culture speaks of their normative quality. This hints at a certain social-ontological position: the collective identity is a story constructed via interpretations of collective experience. The reality of it is as strong as the acceptance the story. The strong acceptance ultimately lends legitimacy to social structures: a narrative lies at the heart of political order, giving meaning to it by connecting present to the past as well as to the future. These narratives set the frame of intelligibility within which statements become meaningful, arguments become credible, visions become appealing. Discursive agents build on the pre-existing narrative structures, by tapping into the symbolic elements available therein, and then utilise them to explain, justify or challenge political action or even entire order. These stories necessarily require a *subject*. By telling what was done and what should be done, how and by whom, the scope for individual and collective agency is outlined. Stories define the roles for various actors as well as delimit what lies within the reach of their will and ability. Action is possible only if there is an entity able to perform it. This entity (e.g. individual, ethnos, nation, class) requires subjectivity to justify and execute the action. Hence arguing for a specific action already pre-supposes a subject capable of performing it. In short: narrative form imposes a certain grammar, at the centre of which is the subject. Narratives are defined by their specific subject - hence different narratives are built around different subjects. In this dissertation these subjects will be distilled from the political discourse as this is what enables to differentiate narratives and arrange them into a meaningful taxonomy.

At this point it is important to specify what kind of inquiry this dissertation attempts and demarcate the boundaries from other related ones, i.e. address the question: why research political narratives? One could approach the same problematic as sociology of knowledge. There are many sociological questions that arise when thinking about value pluralism simultaneously with generally binding normativity. What are the roles of specific classes? What legitimizes a norm emanating from one social group that is binding for all? In short, with Geertz (1973, p.197): 'The sociology of knowledge deals with the social element in the pursuit and perception of truth, it's inevitable confinement to one or another existential perspective.' While the social differentiation of these 'existential perspectives' is surely there in Ukrainian reform discourses. For example, certain narratives tend to express the interests of specific social groups. This however, isn't the main interest behind this particular project. Another way to approach the same questions could be analysis of political ideas. One could focus on the merits and problems of liberalism or conservatism and attempt an assessment of their virtues for a specific historical situation. In similar vein one could study ideologies. After all, whether something is a legitimate political idea or a dangerous ideology is contested. Study of ideology is probably the closest discipline to this dissertation because hardened narratives are examples of ideology. But this is only one instance of narrative. Not all narratives are ideological. Narrative is a form. Its content defines its quality. The object of interest in the dissertation is the content and the way in which the narrative form itself informs the content. The narrative is a cultural form. Its contents are elements of symbolic communication that acquire meaning by relating to a whole system of symbols. The same is also valid for ideology. It is powerless if disconnected from this system of symbols. As perfectly expressed by Geertz, the study of ideology is often incomplete because: 'The link between the causes of ideology and its effects seems adventitious because the connecting element - the autonomous process of symbolic formulation - is passed over in virtual silence'. Further: 'The nature of the relationship between the sociopsychological stresses that incite ideological attitudes and the elaborate symbolic structures through which those attitudes are given a public existence is much too complicated to be comprehended in terms of a vague and unexamined notion of emotive resonance' (1973, p.207).

The culturalistic analysis attempted here is meant to fill this gap. Observing how ideas and ideologies take root, asking why certain ideas do take root while others don't; why do some of them mutate beyond recognition – all of this requires reconstruction of a cultural symbolic framework that mediates the transmission and interpretation of ideas. Ideas as well as ideology work if they are given a shape that is congruent with the particular symbolic framework. Political narratives is the symbolic framework of the political domain.

Given the breadth of the topic to be tackled and potentially endless material available - the pragmatic strategy of narrowing down the corpus to the most pointed, representative and impactful strand will be undertaken. Namely, the focus will be on the intellectual public discourse, where ideas about the current state and future of the country are clearest and hence more directly identifiable. Intellectuals, intentionally or via unpredictable social dynamics tend to be originators and communicators of ideas and visions that are as much reflections of the culture as contributions to its development. Hence intellectual discourse always contains a certain reserve or surplus of material potentially impactful in the future.

The dissertation is structured in the following way.

Chapter 1, section 1.1. first lays out the immediate social-historical context of my inquiry to clarify the events and problems which shaped the research objectives. In sections 1.2 and 1.3 the conceptual foundation within which the research questions are tackled is outlined. Central concepts are examined in connection with specific problematic of Ukrainian political culture. Section 1.2 focuses on the issues having to do with social ends or goals. Here, concept of culture and its connection with normativity is discussed. Section 1.3 connects the ends with means: what means are available to achieve the ends? Here concepts of discourse and power are introduced.

Chapter 2 advances towards specific theoretical construct that will be relied on for conducting the research. Section 2.1 constructs the normative model that serves as critical reference point for the discourse analysis. Section 2.2 discusses modernisation theories and the idea of multiple modernities. Section 2.3 goes into the theory of the specific mode of discourse that is constitutive for the modern political culture – the narrative. The following section 2.4 explains the specific operational design of the research that follows from the concepts and theories described in preceding sections.

Chapter 3 contains results of the discourse analysis. After setting the scene with description of pre-Euromaidan discourse in section 3.1, the discourse of Euromaidan itself is investigated in section 3.2. This sets a baseline for the subsequent analysis. Based on the preceding two sections as well as preliminary analyses of later discourses, the typology of narratives is constructed to provide the interpretative framework for the overall political discourse (section 3.3). Section 3.4 explains the timeline taken for this work, where the texts under investigation are divided into two periods: t1=2014-mid 2016 (representing revolutionary moment and formation of the new status quo) and t2=mid 2016-mid 2019 (representing reaction to and contestation of the new status quo). Subsequent sections of this chapter will

contain exposition of each narrative, its building blocks, subjects, differences between t1 and t2 as well as resulting normative critique.

1. Foundations

1.1 Post-Soviet fractures

The collapse of the Soviet system was a time for optimism and opportunity. The grip of total state control and Leninist ideology was in the past. Along with it went the taken for granted integrality of the social sphere. The Soviet social whole had been attained through violence and maintained through repression. It nonetheless existed as a given, with lives being deeply anchored to it. Once shattered, the question was what kind of social whole should come forth instead. As argued in the introduction, this issue divided Ukraine's social existence into the unsatisfactory, provisional 'now' and aspirational 'tomorrow'. Orientative indeterminacy—where the need for change was on the one hand ruthlessly instrumentalised by the best placed and most aggressive actors, and on the other contested intransigently—brought about multiple social fractures throughout the period of independence. Sociality fractured along multiple lines: state versus society, elite versus the rest, clans versus other clans, young versus old, east versus west. To be sure, these fault-lines existed in the late Soviet period (e.g. the 'nomenklatura' versus everyone else, competing regional clans, ethnic tensions), they did however, further proliferate and deepen as new actors got involved with full intensity and fought for the power there to be seized.

The resulting fractures of the social fabric became more and more visible after every major crisis. The algorithm of Ukrainian political history after 1991 seems to have followed the following four step path: (1) accumulation of socio-economic problems (see, Yurchenko et al. 2021, pp. 95-136); (2) crisis; (3) political solutions that lack social legitimacy; and (4) a deepening of social fractures. As follows, this sequence can be observed over and over again:

- (1) The economic collapse of the early 1990s; (2) intra-government conflict of 1993; (4) establishment of oligarchy; (4) alienation of citizens from the state, clan wars, extreme income re-distribution, decline of public services (ibid), and an instrumentalisation of the media that exacerbated the fracturing.[3]

[3] Illustrative in this regard was the 2004 presidential campaign where one of most prominent images circulated through the media was the map of Ukraine with a sort of classification of inhabitants. In it, 1st-class citizens are the ones from the West of the country, second-class - from the Centre, and third class - from the South-East. The image was circulated to undermine the pro-Western camp and to consolidate the electorate in the South-East (Kravchuk, 2018)

- This fracturing generates more accumulation of socio-economic problems: (1) large-scale corruption, clan-driven autocracy with integrated economic and political power culminates in (2) the Orange Revolution of 2004 with Western orientation; (3) as the result - a new constitution that in effect strengthens oligarchic control over the political system, overuse of ethno-national issues by the state; and (4) disappointment for those who supported the Orange Revolution and alienation with those who didn't.

- Then (1) inequality dominates society; (2) permanent conflict in the government between 2005 and 2010; (3) election of V. Yanukovych; (4) alienation within a major part of the country and more clan conflicts. By this time, the state is seen as a personal asset of those who control it.

- Finally: (1) the autocratic consolidation of power under one clan, the Yanukovych 'family', and associated increase in state-sanctioned violence; (2) the Euromaidan, or 'Revolution of Dignity' in 2014; (3) change of the governing clan to one that favours informal, centralised dealing and ethno-national rhetoric; (4) alienation of those who reject ethno-national rhetoric, and those disappointed by the slow pace and direction of reforms, and further clan wars.

This sketch of post-independence political history is intended to bring one central issue to the surface that is attempted to be addressed in this dissertation. Ukraine is caught in a pattern that leaves pretty much everyone dissatisfied. My argument is that the reason is the lack of genuine legitimacy of political institutions, actions, and actors. The solutions applied in step 3 of the recurring cycle never enjoyed the required breadth of acceptance across society, which deepened fractures and perpetuated the cycle.

Institutionally, the system that formed through the period was itself fundamentally fractured. Specifically, it was characterised by 'duality' (Golovakha et al., 2020, pp. 1-34), encompassing the formal 'modernised façade' that consisted of all the right formal attributes and actual informal practice of decision-making done behind closed doors by patronal organisations (or clans) and executed through state mechanisms (see Kudelia & Kasianov 2021 pp. 33-34). The informal practice itself was a fracturing force since it reproduced divisions of interests by economic and cultural factors.

An informative entry point into the cultural dimension of this transformative period is the evolution of identities. Identities informed by this fracturing experience became on the one hand adaptive, while on the other contained the potential for major conflict. One had to adapt to the burdensome present, but visions of a better tomorrow in their pointed and often ideologized form

appeared to demand a more definite choice. Hence, political identities exhibited their own duality. This consisted in having to adapt to both the demands of the moment and the expectation of something better in the future. Therefore, even in the scholarly literature there are varying assessments of how identities evolved through 30 years of independence. Veira-Ramos and Liubyva (2020, pp. 203-228) argued that the strengthening of national identity occurred based on the empirical data. An extensive survey indicated increase in commitment to being Ukrainian among respondents. Especially in the context of the violent conflict, Ukrainians seemed to stick together:

> […] when confronted with such dramatic situations, most Ukrainians have showed their will to remain united instead of going separate ways. Even if they still have quite different opinions on how the future of the country should be configured, a sense of unity has grown stronger over the past year. (Ibid p.208)

The authors do qualify this assessment by saying that, at the same time, there was increased polarisation on 'hot issues' such as the status of the Russian language. Nonetheless, asking direct questions about people's identity yields consistent data showing a strengthening of national identity even among Russian speakers (ibid). This conclusion would weaken my assertion of persistent duality and fracturing.

Mikheieva & Shevel (2021, pp. 283-321) argued that such data likely reflects a 'declarative' identity that conceals heterogeneity and variability. Their assessment is derived from conceptual differentiations relating to the concept of identity itself: (1) between content and contestation; and (2) between nominal and activated identities. The first pair refers to various meanings of the same identity that can exist in parallel (content) and the varying degree of acceptance of specific meaning among the respective groups (contestation). The second pair refers to the fact that there is always a 'repertoire' of identities available to a social actor, which is made possible by cultural-historical repository of possibilities. However, which of these 'nominal' identities activates is dependent on the context (ibid, p. 287). The upshot of these conceptual subtleties is that identities may not be firm, teleological, or clear-cut. Multiple layers can exist simultaneously in society and even within one individual. Different aspects become more tangible 'at a given time in a given socio-political context' (ibid, p. 312), but caution is advised to not mistake that for a definitive settlement. For the Ukrainian case, this means that the actual meaning of 'Ukrainian' varies, as does the degree of acceptance regarding its different versions. This repertoire of possibilities is famously diverse. The name 'Ukraine' itself has a number of competing meanings: the cradle of east Slav civilisation; the western boundary of 'Eurasia'; a member of pan-Slavic fraternity; a mere fragment of Russia; a distinct independent nation; an integral part of Europe; a complicated

patchwork of people at the crossroad of continents (see Wilson, 2009, pp. 94-100). Some of these definitions are only compatible to a varying extent, while others are mutually exclusive. The country's independence in 1991, coupled with the establishment of the nation state, did not resolve the question of which version is correct—nor did it create a stable compromise. The problem Ukrainians have faced since 1991 is how to build and maintain common structures, norms, rules on top of an uneven cultural foundation.

A stated commitment to a particular 'Ukrainian identity' may thus conceal a highly disparate content with which different individuals and groups actually fill the generic notion of identity as well temporary compromises in a volatile environment. The country's cultural-historical repository, where Soviet experience looms large, contains a strong tendency toward:

> […] simultaneous coexistence of an ethnic identity and an all-Soviet one and decoupled ethnic identity from statehood and citizenship. Multidimensional identities were thus born, with ethnicity mixing with "international" conceptions in different proportions. (Mikheieva & Shevel, 2021, p. 312)

The authors draw the conclusion that declaring Ukrainian identity for many is a 'situational compromise' (ibid, p. 314) that is not a stable enough foundation for a political nation. It leaves issues of loyalty to the institutions and culture unresolved.

In this dissertation I will attempt to explicate what kind of identity, or rather what layer in a complex mixture of identities, could be conducive to the creation of a political nation. How could multiple ethnic and other identities develop in a pluralistic yet cooperative way? I call this dimension of political culture *civic culture*, understood as culture of citizenship, where membership in a polity is defined via attributes that are disconnected from deeply conflictual ethno-centric and neo-imperial elements. This directs the focus towards the 'content' aspect of identity described above. The first step has to be to map out political identities, differentiated by their specific content. This will be done by distilling political narratives from the discourse about development of the country that encompasses political and economic issues and, in this way, (re-)produces the actual political world of the country. How these individual narratives that constitute the range of political identities relate to civic culture is the second step in this inquiry.

Before starting to construct the conceptual foundation for the inquiry, one more general issue should be addressed. The meaning of a political and cultural entity is tied to its spatial conceptualisation. Europe, colony, empire, Eurasia, the Slavic domain, the bridge between East and West, are all conceptual images that allow to think about Ukraine as a tangible entity. Understanding the cultural history of Ukraine tends to follow either the logic

of state power or the logic of nation-building. In the first case, the subject of history is a centralised authority that, willingly or not, shaped the political culture of present-day Ukraine. For example: the repression of Ukrainian language and culture by the Russian imperial government in late 19th century gave way for Ukrainian nationalism; or Soviet power determined the present-day borders of Ukraine and at times supported certain aspects of Ukrainian culture. In the second case, the nation is the subject of history that through growing self-consciousness acquires political agency. For example, literary history allows to trace the process of development of 'Ukrainianess' that articulates itself through works of literature; history of political nationalism in the wars of the 20th century can be interpreted as a gradual maturing of the nation to the point of having autonomous will, and hence, independent statehood. While both angles offer valuable insights, the resulting picture is incomplete. Moreover, it tends to be divisive. Emphasis on state power ties the historical meaning of Ukraine too closely to formerly dominant imperial powers, turning it into a by-product of the foreign political history. The nation gradually recognising itself through cultural production and political struggle, on the other hand, is a teleological notion set against the former empires as a liberating agent that decolonises an authentic, often understood as primordial culture. The problems of nation-building become part of post-colonial or 'decolonisation' narratives that undermines the very agency that the 'nation' is supposed to embody. While containing a kernel of truth in exposing the deep influence that imperial domination has on the self-image of the representatives of subordinate cultures, postcolonial explanation, if taken to be the decisive one, consigns the national actors 'to the role of a late victim of bygone historical events' (Schmid, 2020, p. 557).

The conflict between these two conceptualisations of 'state' versus 'nation' can be followed through the 30-year history of independent Ukraine and goes a long way in explaining why neither of them enables true subjectivity and why a great tension exists between nation and state. The Ukrainian state is perennially suspected of being controlled by the despised colonisers or their stooges, while nation is suspected of being a force of disorder, that accepts the state only if it is fully controlled by authentically 'national' actors (of which there are few). Hence the question: what conceptualisation of Ukraine would retain the elements of truth contained within 'state' and 'nation'-centred explanations but more fully describe the cultural condition to make true subjectivity possible?

Ulrich Schmid proposes the concept of the 'cultural contact zone' (2020) to carry the discourse on contemporary Ukraine forward. This allows for some distance from the somewhat stale, limiting, and conflict-inducing abstractions of state and nation and to think about Ukraine as the space where various cultural processes formed specific social reality. Specifically, processes such as, 'auto-ethnography, transculturation, collaboration, hybridity,

bilingualism, mediation, parody, imaginary dialogue and vernacular expression' (ibid, p. 557). The distinguishing feature among these processes is that they all include the 'other'. Hence the cultural production that brings about the entity of Ukraine in its uniqueness and with its subjectivity already includes the ever-present 'other'. The other and Ukraine are inextricably linked and mutually-enabled. The subjectivity arises from the active communicative position that mediates between self (or 'we') and other. The other is then constitutive in the cultural contact zone. As opposed to Benedict Anderson's 'imagined community' that is a rather self-contained entity constructed around 'unifying literary culture and social institutions' (ibid, pp. 558-9), the cultural contact zone departs from any clear-cut constructions and rather shifts attention to the dialogical process of cultural reproduction. The space denoted as Ukraine becomes the location of interaction of cultures that negotiate issues against the background of historical shifts in power (ibid, p. 558). The multiplicity of cultures interacting in this space should then be taken as the basic fact that is irreducible, neither through the action of states nor through nation-building.

The emergence of a political nation that would remediate post-Soviet fractures is possible when cultural negotiation produces a layer of shared identity that creates space for the multiplicity of identities to exist and develop while ensuring overarching order that enables such pluralism on the grounds of shared norms. This is what I call 'civic culture' and propose as the normative orientation for Ukrainian political culture–i.e., a regulative idea against which actual state of affairs can be assessed and critiqued.

1.2 Ends of action: civic culture

Understanding Ukraine as an irreducibly heterogeneous cultural contact zone, where discourse on reform highlights over and over again the difficulties to cooperate across regional, social, and generational lines, leads to the question: what integrative force could create a more agreeable order? In this work it is suggested that a durable and adaptable order in an entity that consists of heterogeneous parts requires a certain kind of political culture that emphasises citizenship as opposed to identity. As laid out in the previous section, optimistic expectation that an inclusive political nation will form as a result of liberal transformation has not quite materialized thus far. To some extent, the political nation existed at the starting point of Ukrainian independence. Emerging from 70 years of the Soviet experience in 1991, Ukrainian society exhibited high levels of tolerance and a low level of conflict, while remaining institutionally in a twilight zone between its Soviet

past that had limited use in this new reality and undefined, vaguely 'westernized' future. Subsequent inertia, crises, as well as attempts to change the order repeatedly upset the social balance while new structures failed to deliver. Lack of progress on the way to better order is evident throughout the 3 decades of independence. Periodic attempts to break the stalemate had more to do with clan wars than with real political process and resulted in an escalation of social conflicts. Specifically, there were attempts to establish a more clearly defined system with either a neo-Soviet (1999-2004 and 2010-2014) or national conservative flavour (2005-2010). Both options were strongly rejected by various parts of society, either in intransigent opposition, quiet condemnation or indifference.

Based on this history, I argue that for Ukraine to function as a body politic and for reformist programs to acquire legitimacy necessary to succeed, political communication pertaining to matters of national importance should exclude the easily weaponizable, divisive ideologies that undermine dialogue and compromise. Separate, delimited spaces can exist to contain social groups, whose identity relies on these ideologies, while the political centre should operate based on civic principles, sensitive to the values of constituent groups, while keeping them at arm's length from issues of general importance. What kind of civic principle could be the foundation for a political culture that promotes reflexivity among groups that constitute a heterogeneous body politic, enables their specific way of life and cooperation across various dividing lines?[4]

The initial thought that gave impulse to this research project originates from name of the 2013-2014 revolt in Kyiv: 'The revolution of Dignity'. This reference to dignity is not accidental. It articulates the social objective and, at closer inspection, a principle that enables interaction and cooperation across socio-cultural boundaries while preserving genuinely value-based communities. Considering it as the regulative idea of interaction in the political sphere suggests a different image of a political culture. The outline of a culture of 'the general' comes into view. This is rendered possible by the concept of dignity that stands *above* various values, creating space where value pluralism could exist. The foundational assumptions behind such definition of dignity refer to the understanding of a person as:

> […][A] reasoning, justifying being - someone who needs justifications and reasons to have dignified life among their equals. To acknowledge this dignity means to see persons as beings with the right for justification of all

[4] One should resist simplifications, where dividing lines are simply between pro-Western northwest of Ukraine and pro-Russian southeast. The cultural processes of today are highly dynamic and continuously re-draw the image of society. Hence socio-cultural groupings are transient, hard to pin down, and have a complex relationship with their historical background. In addition to regional distinctions, there are generational and economic ones.

> actions that affect them in moral sense, and to see that each moral person's duty is to provide such justification. (Forst, 2016, p. 151)

This understanding of dignity goes beyond material questions of distribution of resources and opportunities but sees the fundamental respect of a person as the most important factor in legitimate political orders. Hence the situation that offends dignity the most is not one where there is material lack but one where people or groups of people are not treated in respectful manner as a rightful authority in shaping political norms.[5] This goes a long way in explaining why social conflicts intensify even against the background of economic growth, such as what happened in central and eastern Europe in the first two decades of the 21st century[6] (see Garton Ash, 2019).

My argument is that such understanding of dignity[7] has to be weaved into political culture to enable pluralistic societies to establish and maintain legitimate order. This political culture can be defined as 'civic culture' to distinguish it from narrower definitions rooted into particular national, conservative narratives and identities as well as to keep a distance from versions of liberalism that view social culture as a mere cog in the economic machinery.

Culture and Critical Theory

The distinction between values, on the one hand, and principle of dignity on the other gives rise to a two-level architecture of political order. Values are defined as orientations towards a good life, which are particular to 'ethical' communities. Principles, or norms are defined as orientations towards justice, are binding to all. The relationship between values and norms can be

[5] 'To live in poverty does not offend dignity of a person in every case, for example after a natural disaster that pushes a community directly into a state of emergency; what offends dignity of people is first of all that they *must* live in poverty, which means they are made to do so, namely by other people, which created this state and could at least rectify it but do not do it by avoiding claims of the affected or not answering to those claims sufficiently. This is the offence to dignity: to be ignored, to not count, to be legitimatory "empty air"'. (Forst, 2016, pp. 152-153)

[6] 'The origins of many of the pathologies that Central Europe exhibits thirty years on [after their Velvet Revolutions] can be traced back tot he ways in which different countries tried to (re)create the private property, and capital, indispensable to a market economy. […] All current European populisms feed off anger at the way in which liberalism was reduced after 1989 to one rather extreme version of a purely economic liberalism, without the "equal respect and concern" for all citizens that the philosopher Ronald Dworkin identified as essential to modern liberalism. But the impact of this was particularly acute in post-communist Europe, with ist raw advent of capitalism, sense of historic injustice, and societies unused to high levels of visible inequality' (Garton Ash, 2019)

[7] A more complete unfolding of the concept of dignity will be presented in section 2.1.

summarized as: general norms are a pre-requisite for multiple ethical communities to exist. This triggers a differentiation of my inquiry into two levels: descriptive and normative. The descriptive element consists in shedding light on the existing models of social normativity. This will be done by distilling narratives that I take to be the living, breathing body of the political culture. Importantly, such description is itself not completely free of the normative perspective of the one describing. The chosen way to describe political discourse, frames it in a way that lends itself to addressing the problematic already implicit in it. Meaning that it is restrictive, narrow, instrumentalized narratives that obstructs realization of principles derived from the concept of dignity that should lay at the core of a legitimate pluralistic order. The concept of the narrative of justification, borrowed from Rainer Forst (2015), further specifies the matter to be researched by focusing on the moral content present in the existing narrative models. It serves as a bridge into the overtly normative dimension: the fact that certain justifications are understood and recognized within a culture does not by itself make them valid in the context of democratic reform. The hermeneutic method of description and understanding from the point of view of social actors has to be supplemented with an evaluation (i.e. critique) through normative criteria, to put them into more general perspective of moral principles, especially since the underlying justificatory logic of political narratives rests on the normatively 'heavy' notions of freedom, justice, the common good. Here, I intend to apply the principle of practical reason as formulated by Forst: 'Normative answers on practical questions should be justified in exactly the way indicated by their validity claim' (2014, p. 32). In other words, the degree of validity of a normative claim depends on its justifiability in the eyes of the subjects affected by it. From here begins the route towards better discourses as a condition for better political order.

I hence see this dissertation as an attempt to operationalize critical theory in the sense of Forst, who defines it as a 'combination of philosophical and sociological reflection with emancipatory interest, that asks about historically possible and normatively necessary rational form of the generally justified social order as well as why such an order does not appear in light of relations of power' (2015, p.9). The approach I take combines (1) 'hermeneutic social science' (Appel, 1994) as access to the existing state of political discourse to be distilled as a set of narratives of justification with (2) overtly normative considerations of moral philosophy, which alone can chart the way out of the dead-ends of facticity.

1. In terms of the hermeneutic aspect, I follow Angehrn's thought that the motive underlying the act of critique stems from the attempt to understand (Angehrn, 2016). For a critic, the impulse behind an inquiry starts from noting something that doesn't make sense. Something that one cannot reconcile with their understanding of the world. For example, the

observations of suffering, trauma, and discontent push one to search for their reasons and to not be satisfied with answers of 'realism' that justifies these conditions as a fixed fact of life. Taking them under the magnifying glass of social critique pre-supposes that they to some extent can be avoided. The critique aims to interpret the deficiencies and outline the conditions for better alternatives.

The acts of description and interpretation are themselves already active part of critique. Honneth speaks of 're-description as critique for highlighting the moral side of social conflicts' (Boltanski & Honneth, 2016). A reconstruction of social practices in a way that increases the visibility of a specific set of problems is then the first step to be made. This will serve the purpose of 'denaturalizing, liquefying, de-reifying' (Jaeggi, 2016) these practices that opens the door to better understanding and potentially better practices. In my chosen subject matter, namely the content of discursive practices prevalent in Ukraine, the underlying suspicion is that they are deficient in the way that obstructs or narrows the meaning of social problems accessible through them. The point of hermeneutic work then becomes 'to uncover distortions, obstructions, deceptions, power-determined self-deceptions to improve the readability of the world that would satisfy the existential demand for meaning' (Anghern in Jaeggi & Wesche, 2016, p. 321).

2. The normative aspect of my dissertation seeks to outline the implications of the concept of dignity's internal logic that I take to be the necessary foundation for democratic politics in heterogeneous and hence irreducibly pluralistic societies such as Ukraine. The assertion of dignity was the force behind the Maidan protests. Dignity can (and should) also be thought of as the conceptual cornerstone for a legitimate order. This activates a number of theoretical implications that have to be brought into any serious discussion about the ends of any social practice. My intention is not to escape to the highly abstract realm of pure ideals, but, still in a Kantian spirit, use abstract concepts to order contradictory, chaotic empirical data based on principles arising from the normative position that dignity is the primary end of political order, which I argue is beyond reasonable disagreement.

The route I take is the one of practical Reason shed of the metaphysical connotations by focusing on its procedural, discursive conception in the Habermassian tradition as articulated by Forst (2015, pp. 11-12): 'Reason [Vernunft] is the ability to orientate oneself on reasons [Gründe] or justifications; and to use this ability in the best possible way means to know which justifications should be validated and how'. In other words, the role of Reason within this Dissertation is to evaluate the moral quality of politically constitutive justifications. No empirical data and analysis can provide such

criteria by itself. And yet, making normative judgements, if only in their modest limited form, is unavoidable for an inquiry into what is possible to achieve in and by society. Without appealing to authoritative metaphysical 'truths', the 'detrancendalised' conception of Reason aims only to balance the force of a validity claim with the degree of its acceptance by the subjects. In Forst's words:

> The generally valid principle of Reason or justification, that such norms are reasonable, which can redeem their validity claim in a way that is implicit in this validity claim, namely, for example, that a general-reciprocal obligation has to be redeemed in the mode of general-reciprocal justification. (2015, p. 12)

While this approach can still strike one as too heavily normative, my intention is merely to show how this line of thinking can be one of the possible strategies to counteract the issues brought to the fore by the fragmentary, fluid state of the contemporary cognitive environment. Epistemological perspectivism driven by class, culture, language, gender, etc., is a fact of life that cannot be suppressed. This by itself does not mean the non-existence of the common world that has to be looked after together through society. It requires a 'minimal' common moral perspective. The common world (i.e. lifeworld) needs the frame within which different values, goals, and desires can exist in a way that would contain or channel the destructive energy set free by the unavoidable conflicts.

The fact that practical Reason is not treated as the metaphysical fixture raises question about its proper localization (i.e. ontology). Here another concept comes to aid: culture. I treat Reason and culture as complementary concepts. In communitarian theories, culture serves as a source of constitutive common values for the individual through community, while reason is treated as an abstract construct, foreign for actual social experience. In deontological theories, concept of culture does *not* play much of a role—here attention is given to the unconditional nature of principles derived from Reason. This is extensively illuminated by Forst (1996) in his discussion of communitarianism versus liberalism. Within my inquiry, I pragmatically treat Reason and culture as complementary concepts. This requires a broad and dynamic concept of culture.

Concept of Culture

Defining culture, in a rather traditional manner, begins from distinguishing culture from nature. Nature consists of objects and phenomena that cannot be changed due to being fully determined by natural laws of physics, biology,

chemistry. Human interaction with natural laws consists of recognizing, describing, and applying them for human purposes. The natural laws themselves, however, remain in-tact and not subject to revision—only human interaction with and interpretation of them is. Culture, on the other hand, is a condition of possibility for intentionally directed learning and creation (Beschorner & Kettner, 2016, p.4) for all human activity *including accumulation and usage of knowledge about nature***.** Culture is something created by humans and as such is malleable (though not completely arbitrary, contingent, and amorphous). In such a reading of culture, Reason is a 'cultural' practice and so a matter of 'cultivation'. Whether we regard Reason as something rooted in physiological/bio-chemical traits inherent to the human brain and rewarded by evolution, or an abstract construct dreamt-up by metaphysical philosophers, both interpretations allow intentional cultivation, reflection, and learning. To set the nature vs. culture issue aside, one can simply say that human nature includes the ability to develop and evolve culture, of which Reason is part. In the context of my dissertation, what matters are the normative implications of symbolic systems created in the course of culture's historical development. Normativity cannot be disjointed from culture in two senses:

1. The existing cultures serve as sources of everyday normativity and supply meaning to normative concepts as understood by social actors.

2. More abstract normative theories are themselves creatures of intellectual cultures embedded into (or are extensions of) broader cultures and hence can be treated as cultural elements (see Beschorner, 2015, p. 319). With time, they often slip into everyday normativity through convoluted processes of popularisation. Most people have heard sayings like 'treat others the way you want to be treated' or 'what doesn't kill you makes you stronger' without ever reading Kant and Nietzsche, respectively. If abstraction serves the purpose of bringing disparate observations into some intelligible order by means of concepts, it is a second-level cultural construct.

Such a broad conception of culture is needed to imagine better social practices. Understood this way, culture is the operational medium in which learning processes can occur through deliberate efforts, not (only) by random chance or determined by unalterable natural law. This understanding of culture opens the possibility for both increased complexity—and also destruction. In the absence of any teleological process, nothing is pre-determined. Things merely become possible due to human action the only basis for which is culturally anchored, yet malleable normativity (i.e. conceptually guided aspiration for a different state).

At this point, it is important to explicate the details of such concept of culture. To activate the possibility of deliberately cultivating beneficial practices requires understanding of culture as dynamic and open-ended. In this vein, Matthias Kettner's general definition of culture seems most fruitful. Culture is the '[m]edium that enables synthetic achievements of various kinds as well as conceptual embodiment of the possibility of transmittal, crossbreeding, hybridization, combination and recombination of meaningful, and hence interpretable forms of various kinds' (Kettner, 2008, p. 18). Such a concept of culture points to the systems of meaning – not only in their linguistic form, but also in their visual, sound, movement, and behavioural forms. Hence the substance of culture is constituted by these 'interpretable forms' that coalesces into identifiable patterns or systems of meaning. These systems develop and stabilise in the course of human interaction. Increase in their complexity goes hand-in-hand with increase in complexity of interactive social processes. The importance of shared meaning of interpretable forms is evident in the interactive processes that rely on common assumptions, conventions, symbols. The more complex encultured system of meaning enables more complex interaction. To interact with other people means to receive, interpret, and communicate meaning of a wide range of symbols that have to be shared across a certain common symbolic space, accessible to subjects competent in the particular symbolic language. This space belongs equally to all subjects. The standards of validity in it are verified by the subjects communicating between each other. They are not given objectively, or generated unilaterally/subjectively, but arise from constant communicative negotiation among subjects. Kettner takes this as point of departure for combining philosophical and sociological issues as it allows to link intersubjectivity with cooperation. As he states, '[s]hared culture explains sociologically the possibility of frictionless cooperation. Intersubjectivity explains philosophically the possibility that one and the same is valid for many' (Kettner, 2008, p. 18). One needs both for an inquiry into cultural practices with an interest in how they can be shaped deliberately: culture is the material that regulates social behaviour, while intersubjectivity explains how. On the sociological side, this makes it possible to turn the argument both ways: cooperation can be said to enable shared culture and vice versa- 'socialisation' of culture allows for cooperation. The side of equation selected for a specific research case will depend on the problem's definition. In case of my Ukraine-focused research, I define the problem as a deficiency in the political culture that expresses itself in difficulties to cooperate. Thus, the issue is to be addressed at the level of intersubjectively established cultural forms (specifically narratives) that determine the immediate possibilities for action (cooperative or not). Conversely, one could access the problem from the opposite end and explore how an externally-induced necessity to cooperate enables the creation of new shared cultural forms, for example as a result of crisis, military conflict, economic hardship. This will, however, remain outside of the scope of this work.

Culture, therefore, is a meta-category, which arranges processes of intersubjective creation of interpretable forms into a dynamic model that systematically groups them into patterns. This allows to describe cultures and their constituent elements, make distinctions between them, interpret. Cultural practices understood and conceptualized this way spark the possibility for intentional change. As Kettner notes:

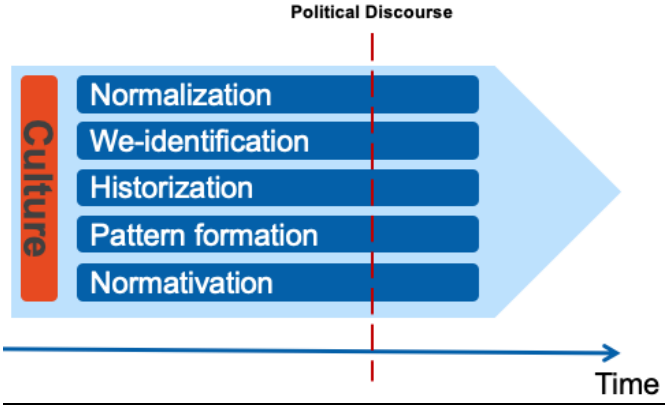
> Cultural processes as opposed to all other kinds of processes already presume reflection, this means: because and as far as orientations, regulative principles, drives are cultural, the persons can question their experience and behavior in connection with these orientations, regulative principles, drives and ask why they experience what they experience, why they behave the way they do and whether it could be otherwise and possibly better. Such "reflexive", self-referential, attitude, namely one that is connected to own experience and behavior, and not simply taken for granted as a given would not make sense in non-cultural processes. (Kettner, 2008, p. 19)

Kettner developed his concept of culture from a meta-analysis of various concepts of culture and distilled the five most general *processes* that are present in any definition of culture (Kettner, 2002):

- **Normalization:** active creative processes to bring disparate phenomena into order, ultimately to define the boundaries of normality, i.e. what is 'normal';
- **Historisation:** process of creation of practices and objects out of other pre-existing practices and objects. Everything cultural has a history i.e. it is a result of people and circumstances, producing, re-producing, combining, and shaping it over time;
- **Integration into patterns**: processes of combination, hybridization, cross-fertilization of various practices to coalesce into discernible patterns;
- **We-identification:** processes establishing the 'we' group—the common identity, that is subject to cultural boundaries;
- **Normativation**. Practices of giving intelligible and justifiable reasons that help making sense of the world.

To account for intersubjectivity, the model should be understood as discursive. In other words, the 5 processes listed above refer to practices of discourse. For political discourse, the theoretical model can be visualized in the following way:

Figure 1. Political Discourse as Cultural Practice



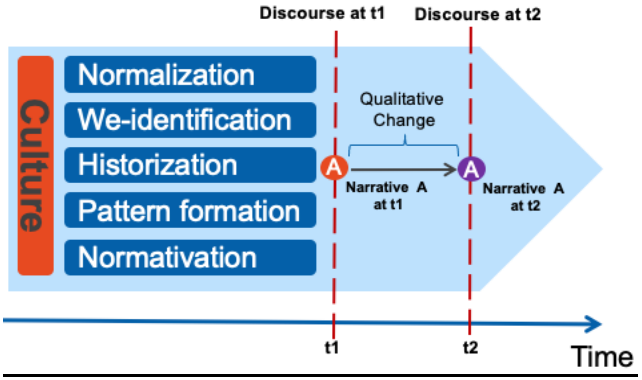
The process that interests me most is *normativation*. Arguably, there is a normative side to each of the other process of cultural negotiation. Taking normalization, for example, at a certain point what is normal becomes normative i.e. 'what should be normal'. We-identification is a highly contentious process politically, which determines both who is a subject of rights and obligations, who is the group of 'we', and the common identity on behalf of which certain actions should be undertaken. In any national story, this is the defining normative feature. Historisation too has a normative thrust in the sense that history serves as a source of reasons for justifying political action, i.e. this or that action should or shouldn't be undertaken on the basis of certain interpretations of historical experience. Pattern formation is linked to the normative through notions on the scope of the culture and its internal structure, for instance is it monolithic, modular, or diffuse? In general, what interests me most are the normative orientations that influence all of the cultural parameters as described above, the spontaneously available repertoire of reasons that justify behaviour, whether in terms of normalization, we-identification, historisation, pattern formation or normativation itself. All of these reasons taken together form a normative dimension of a culture.

Operationalizing the concept of culture

The first objective of my research is to distil narratives that constitute political discourse. Since culture is understood as a process and not a fixed state, this analysis will look at how narratives change over time by comparing them at two different points in time. This is done to register qualitative changes that

speak of potential learning effects, tension, polarization, escalating conflict. The general descriptive model can be visualised in the following way:

Figure 2. Qualitative change in Political Discourse over time



Specifying for my project[8]: discourse is reform discourse of intellectuals in Ukrainian public sphere; t1 is 2014-mid 2016 (time in the immediate aftermath of the Maidan protests) which was the high point of revolutionary optimism; t2 is mid 2016-mid 2019, the time of reduced expectations, mixed results, frustration, disillusionment and eventually - change of power; narrative A is one of the types of narrative identified; qualitative change is the change in the content of discourses on a pre-defined scales. Beschorner & Kettner (2016) define the scales for the five cultural processes as follows:

1. Normalisation: weak normality vs. strong normality.

2. Historisation: dissolution of own traditions vs. petrification of own traditions.

3. We-identification: we-group denigration vs. we-group chauvinism.

4. Pattern formation: modular patterns vs. diffused patterns.

5. Normativation: relativism/anomy vs. absolutism, fundamentalism.

Referring to these five categories and their internal scales, each narrative will contain its own range of acceptability of (1) what is normal, (2) versions of history, (3) scope of cultural belonging (who is in, who is out and what are

[8] A more complete description of the research design is provided in section 2.3.

the criteria of belonging), (4) pattern structures and (5) reason-giving conventions. These ranges will change over time by becoming narrower or wider. I also expect the dominant position within each narrative to change over time.

This framework of cultural inquiry allows for a 'culturally-reflexive analysis, second-level empirics [...]' (Kettner, 2008, p. 24) to illuminate self-referential beliefs about what constitutes good reason for a political order or action.

To conclude this section, the general theoretical discussion above should be connected with the idea of civic political culture suggested at the beginning of this section. As argued, civic culture draws a distinction between (1) the ethical conceptions, identities and values which are attributable to various communities and individuals that constitute a body politic on the one hand and (2) general norms mandatory to all, that are ultimately justified by stable pluralism on the other. These general norms are founded upon the principle of dignity that demands reciprocal respect from the various communities and individuals as an enabler of pluralism. The respect implied here can be rather minimal. It is more about the appropriate distance than a familial closeness. The distinction between values and norms clarifies conditions of legitimacy for political action. In the case of reformist visions and programs, this problematic tends to be omitted. I suggest the idea of civic culture as a normative orientation for Ukrainian politics and civil society. While it may appear as being excessively normative, i.e. abstract and disconnected from reality, I suggest this idea as a way to better understand the conflicts and the problems of Ukraine and outline *regulative principles* that would help to steer towards better order. It is not about creating a utopian perfection based on an abstraction, but rather about having the optics to see the actual issues. The theory of political culture as an intersubjective process laid out in this section indicates how development towards civic culture could be possible. Also, it raises the question about the means through which the end of civic culture could be achievable.

1.3 Means of action: discourse and power

If the right 'end' of transformative political action for Ukraine is a more just institutional arrangement, which itself relies on encultured social ethics I call 'civic culture', the next step is to inquire what means are available to navigate towards this end. It is important to state upfront that I intend to avoid treating the question of means as a kind of political engineering. Instead, the means of action I propose are modes of social interaction which should be democratically legitimate.

The research objectives outlined in the introduction point to the ambition of this inquiry to understand and typologise various positions of Ukrainian intellectuals engaging in political discourse. I do not take the content of

political discourse to be either a mere side-effect of non-intentional psychological processes 'hard-wired' into subjects, politico-economic processes external to subjects, or merely tools of their strategic interests. I treat it is as a body of autonomously generated validity claims.

Broadly speaking, there are two definitions of discourse: first, discourse as embodiment of coercive power, and second, discourse as democratic practice of deliberation. In both cases discourse is a creative force. In first one, the emphasis is on its coercive modus operandi and outcome, while in the second one, the focus is on conditions under which it becomes an emancipative force. In the first case - Foucault, defined discourses as 'practices which systematically form the object of which they speak' (Foucault in Falzon et al., 2013, p. 219). In a Foucauldian sense, discourses create and then discipline subjects through anonymous power. In the second case, Habermas famously focused on deliberative discursive practices that under conditions of equality and rationality bring about consensus among subjects, thereby authenticating their autonomy. I see both definitions as relevant and not mutually exclusive: in the absence of an active effort to bring discursive practices into the form that enables wider participation to democratise political order, discourse does become synonymous with power in its unjustified, coercive form. On the other hand, discourse ethics of Habermas relies on the wholesale suspension of power as a pre-condition for rational discourse.

Within the context of my own research—the possibility of intentional systemic transformation—power is a necessary element. To enable political processes of institution-building and concomitant discursive justification, there has to be a substantial effort that requires organised power. To keep the institutional and cultural elements together to constitute order, there also has to be power. What matters is the quality of this power. What validates and affords the power acceptance among subjects is legitimacy. The kind of power that makes concerted transformation of order possible has to be legitimate.

Rainer Forst provides a definition of 'noumenal' power that can be consistent with democratic legitimacy. In his words, it is the '[a]bility of A to shape the space of reasons of B so that B thinks and acts in the way which would not happen without A's influence. This influence must create a motivational force, which matches A's intentions, as opposed to mere side effect' (Forst, 2015 p.77). There is no outright negative connotation of power here. Since noumenal power operates in the cognitive space of reasons, there is a way to link the two aforementioned definitions of discourse. While bearing in mind that discourses are inescapably bound up with power, it is the specific form and quality of power that matters. If domination, coercion, and violence prevail, the discourse cannot pave the way towards better order. In such case,

discourse is merely a surface effect of force. Since subjects mostly comply with power voluntarily—without threat, sanction or physical force being the primary drivers of behaviour—this means that power operates through other means. It hence belongs not to the physical realm, but to the cognitive one. The notion of 'noumenal power' represents the idea that the main form political power is conceptual. It operates discursively through reasons. A state's coercive apparatus is still a factor, but when deployed without valid reasons, it destroys legitimacy of the authority. Hence, understanding power as noumenal power helps to explain its path to legitimacy: by appealing to subjects through Reason. Achieving the legitimacy of state authority therefore happens through discursive justification of political order. This justification can function over time only if (1) it is consistent with actions that affect the order (such as reforms in Ukraine) and vice versa; and (2) it is consistent with the constellation of social forces.

With regards to the last point, each group that constitutes a polity represents a certain social force. Consequently, multiple social forces require a justification of power applied towards them. A social force can be organised to some extent, or not be organised. It behaves politically in a certain way, guided by its specific social interest (oligarchic clan, social class, professional clique, regional group, etc.). An understanding of power as noumenal that operates through accepted reasons among its subjects opens an interpretative possibility: a lack of legitimacy in a specific instance indicates a misalignment between the distribution of political power and distribution of social forces. In other words, a lack of legitimacy comes from the inability to justify order to its subjects. In the case of Ukraine, this suggests that the existing order at the time of the Maidan protests in 2013-2014 became unjustifiable to specific social forces, such as the middle class, the younger generation, as well as certain clans and certain regions. Extending this thought to the topic of reform, transformative political action is an application of noumenal power that requires voluntary compliance from subjects, who tend to coalesce into social forces with various degrees of organisation. Since subjects require proof of legitimacy to comply with demands of the authorities, the proof can be provided by communicating reasons accepted as valid by the subjects.

Thus, the definition of 'discourse' should cover both aspects: discourse as coercive disciplinary mechanism and discourse as the mechanism of realising autonomy of subjects. I would therefore define 'political discourse' as the practice of public communication that creates objects which constitute a common 'discursive world' which can also be crystalised into structures. The objects can be institutional—rules, laws, and organisations—or cultural. The political order consists of both institutional and cultural elements. At the foundation of an order is its general justification, in the form of a justification narrative. The objects of my research are thus various alternative justification

narratives that can be discerned in Ukrainian discourses about the right institutional and cultural layout of the country's government and economy.

Exercising a particular narrative to justify political order can be seen as an act of coercion or a legitimate act that can be discursively validated. The difference may be obvious, as between force-based authoritarian politics and democratic politics. It can also be subtle—within either authoritarian or democratic frame the order and action can be justified to a greater or lesser extent.

What makes the order better justified, and therefore more just, is the institutional and cultural structure that allows for better discourses. It is the effort to intentionally shape the public sphere in terms of its institutional layout[9], as well discursive content, that is the pre-condition for better discourses. That is to say, discourse that affords legitimacy does not happen by itself but requires active institution-building and cultivating discursive rationality from the content. My inquiry concentrates on the latter problematic.

To access this problematic in the Ukrainian case, I intend to construct a scheme that allows for a navigation of political discourses. Such a scheme would consider how to differentiate various positions, describe their respective claims of legitimacy based on content (institutional aspect is out of this dissertation's scope) and attempt normative evaluation versus criteria used as yardsticks for legitimacy. The problematic of political behaviour is typically covered in Ukrainian studies under the umbrella of Identity Studies. Questions of national identity, linked to a regional-historical context, is a vibrant and controversial area that produces diverse conclusions. Some tend to see a more unified national identity emerging (Veira-Ramos & Liubova, 2020, p. 225) and/or argue for necessity of it for the success of the Ukrainian political project (Riabchuk, 2011, pp. 228-232). Others emphasise the continued ambivalence and multiplicity of identities (Mikheieva & Shevel, 2021). Regardless, passions run high both in scholarly communities, as well as in society at large when it comes to identity issues.

I opt for a different approach as part of this work. Instead of identity, I will utilise the concept of *subjectivity* as the primary ordering principle for a typology of political narratives. With subjectivity I mean the grammatical necessity of a subject, that is required to think about a political action. If something can be thought of as an intentional act, there must be a subject that does it. I have in mind a basic political grammar, where the precondition for a coherent statement is an existence of a political subject. As statements accumulate and coalesce into a discourse, multiple patterns emerge. These

[9] Forst speaks of 'foundational structure of justification' (2015, p.196)

patterns are narratives that make disparate statements intelligible by connecting them into an intelligible order. What makes this order comprehensible, i.e. relatively stable within one narrative, is its specific subject with a relatively stable set of attributes. Other parts of a narrative can vary, depend on context, and play with semantics, but assumptions about a subject have to stay relatively fixed—at least until a clear break occurs. Specific assumptions about a subject and its attributes is what I mean by subjectivity. Is the subject assumed to be free, individual, collective, national, primordial etc.? Answering this question and thereby differentiating subjectivities within a corpus of texts representing broadest possible discursive scope, allows to differentiate narrative patterns and elucidate a typology, a kind of politico-cultural map.

Within the theme of my research, using subjectivity offers the following advantages versus using the concept of identity. Subjectivity is by definition aimed at action: the subject is a thinking and acting entity, which in a political context more directly addresses issues of what is feasible i.e what can be potentially achieved through a political action. Identity, on the other hand, can be politically passive, inert, or simply too ambivalent. For example, an 'Orthodox' religious identity, or 'Woman' as a gender identity says little about political pre-dispositions. Even more patently clear, political identities such as 'Ethnic Ukrainian', 'Russian', 'Ukrainian citizen' conceal a great variety of different meanings that can co-exist within them. By using the concept of subjectivity, one can access this meaning. For example, identifying as a 'Ukrainian citizen' could mean different versions of political subjectivities, such as a free individual, national patriot, regional patriot, worker, member of specific ethnic community, and so on. Identity comes from a particular standpoint that is 'descent-based' (Mikheieva & Shevel, 2021 p.286, with reference to Chandra), while subjectivity shapes deep assumptions about what is possible in general, has a certain universalistic thrust, and offers integrative possibilities. In a contemporary setting, identity is more transitory, fluid, can be more declarative than genuine as well as be at the mercy of social pressures and semantic confusions. All of this obscures the link between identity and political behaviour. Against this background, I believe subjectivity offers more insight.

Since identities are multiple, fluid, and contentious, they require space where negotiation and reduction of conflict can occur. This space is discursive; in it the negotiators on behalf of different identities offer their version of a political subject. The possibility of consensus arises when these versions are able to co-exist productively. Subjectivity as an analytical concept is hence geared towards more incisive inquiry into *political* identity. As opposed to an identity pre-determined by descent, such understanding of political identity leaves more space for rational cultivation towards other models.

2. Theoretical apparatus

2.1 Normativity

The idea of civic culture requires differentiation of the social into: (1) the level of identity; (2) the level of citizenship.[10] While identities are multiple and fluid, citizenship stays relatively stable so long as it is autonomous. In contrast to the wide-spread understanding that citizenship grows out of a pre-existing historical identity, civil culture as an idea suggests the reverse. Citizenship serves as a frame and an enabler for various identities to be developed, chosen, and lived. This chapter attempts to construct the conceptual foundation at the second level, citizenship, where civil culture can exist. Appearance, development, and maintenance of such culture depends on society's creative effort. Civic culture does not exist in a platonic sense, waiting to be revealed by Reason, but has to be constructed in accordance with human ability and will. Reform is an example when social forces attempt such construction.

The selection of concepts unpacked in this chapter intends to break out of the identitarian problematic, determinism, idealistic illusions about finding one simple recipe for success and to avoid the sort of reductionism that proved to be detrimental for Ukraine's development. The concepts that would hold together the idea of a civic culture that transcends narrow, divisive elements must allow multiple particulars to coexist with the truly general. While the emphasis is certainly on the general, it does not invalidate the particular. Civic culture is not rooted into one identity but allows multiple to have a social life. With this in mind, I suggest that the conceptual base of civic culture consists of *dignity, justice, and legitimacy*. While perhaps appearing synonymous, in fact these concepts have distinct meanings and play distinct roles. Dignity is a human quality that is the reason for respecting oneself while respecting others—a basic requirement for an order aiming for freedom. Justice is a political objective pursued to actualise dignity within that order. Legitimacy is a quality of the specific order or its part (e.g. an institution) that evaluates how close the order is to the objective of justice.

Dignity, therefore, is the point of departure and merits a brief history of the concept. The concept serves the purpose to break out from the realm of narrow self-interest and naturalistic reflexes; to elevate the thought to higher common principles, pointing to more noble commitments. Not surprisingly,

[10] Rainer Forst (1996) goes further to add two more 'contexts': law and moral to address the spheres where neither identity nor citizenship regulate social behaviour. This will be discussed later in the chapter. The idea of civil culture is intended to bring into focus specific internal problems in Ukraine, which are more clearly seen by analysing the distinction between identity and citizenship.

the Latin word *dignitas* originally referred to the aristocratic nobility that came with the occupation of a political post in Ancient Rome (Kondylis, 2004, p. 635). Having *dignitas* meant having an elevated status conferred by the commitment to serve the public and achievement in this sphere at the expense of more basic pleasures. As a result, Cicero formulated an opposition between *voluptas* (pleasure) and *dignitas* (ibid, p. 642). At the same time, the idea of *human* dignity appeared that pointed to the place of humanity as such in the Kosmos (ibid, p. 643). It followed, that all humans have dignity. This dignity, however, is not a passive quality, but comes with a duty requiring action. The duty is to fulfil human determination (itself derived from possession of dignity) 'to order the World, to create the second nature within the first, the human within the divine' (ibid). The platonic idea of the human as the image of God then made its way into medieval theology. The divine is the source and the reason for dignity that imposes demands controlled by the divinely (and ecclesiastically) ordained. At this stage, a close interconnectedness of the concept of dignity arises with that of Reason and free will: 'Although all creatures indicate certain *similitudo* with God only among reasonable beings can *similitudo per modum imaginis*[11] exist' (ibid, p. 650).

In the early modern feudal orders, dignity tended to have a more socio-political function of justifying aristocratic privilege. With the approach of the Enlightenment, the distinction between the anthropological and socio-political concept of dignity became more and more clear (ibid, p. 656). During the Renaissance, 'the medieval fear of Hybris seems to disappear as God isn't perceived anymore as the rein and constant demand of modesty, but rather as an incentive and aspiration' (ibid, p. 661). In the formulation of Hobbes, dignity appears for the first time as the concept of social morality, referred to as 'the public worth of a man, which is the value set on him by the commonwealth' (ibid, p.663). In short, with the onset of modernity, the meaning of dignity shifts in emphasis from theology to anthropology and comes with its own concomitant set of problems, chief of which is the question of morality versus nature. The main difficulty becomes how to reconcile the possibility of autonomy (and hence freedom) with the world that is more and more interpreted in terms of natural causality. Kant famously set out to explain autonomy via anthropological reasoning: 'Autonomy is the reason for dignity of the human and any other reasonable nature' ; hence only 'the will that creates laws for itself', can be 'seen as end in itself' (ibid, p. 668, with references to Kant). Being the 'end in itself' is the condition of freedom. The opposite of that would be the 'means' for something else. Escape from the unfreedom of being merely a mean lies with the recognition of dignity: 'Humanity is itself a dignity; because the person cannot be used

[11] Lat. Similarity due to comparability of the image

as mere means by another person, but must be at same time treated as the end, and in that lies his dignity' (ibid, Kant quotation). While dignity on the one hand appears to be an anthropological fact for Kant, it is simultaneously a goal to be achieved in society. It has a double meaning of being an internal motivational force as well as the goal towards which this force is applied: 'Dignity is a subjective and simultaneously objective moral principle' (ibid, Kant quotation).

In what follows, I discuss the implications of the aforementioned normative concepts in the context of Ukrainian reform.

The demand for *justice* is the theme that permeates the discourse of the 2013-2014 Maidan protests (see section 3.2). This is unsurprising, given that Maidan was a social revolt precipitated by the breakdown of social communication and unjustified application of power, resulting in an escalation of conflict between several actors: the government, oligarchic groups, and politically active sections of society. Exploring justice as the revolt's and subsequent attempts' of systemic reform deepest objective, requires one to clarify the meaning of the concept and its implications for this dissertation.

Is justice a goal in itself, or is it more akin to a formal 'container' for various values, such as individual freedom, security, prosperity, and equality? The latter would mean that justice does not represent a tangible objective for political action because it does not possess autonomous content. Justice would then be a normatively dependent concept, the actual substance of which is constituted by other values. The issue that arises then is that values are always contested and cannot be ordered into a definitive scale of good and bad. Hence, the notion of justice itself would hardly be stable and clear enough to serve as a general principle for a community where there is a plurality of values at work. Understanding justice as a goal in itself requires it to have independent substance. What exactly this substance consists of is rather difficult to pin down. In a practical setting, it is easier to express what *injustice* is. In the case of Ukraine, almost everyone would agree that beating up students is unjust; so is predatory economic and political practices of a small elite; so is abrupt unexplained one-sided geopolitical decisions without any democratic recourse; so is a government take-over by private interests; and so is manipulation through media. The substance of justice would become clearer if one found the common thread between these examples, and imagined a situation where these injustices were eradicated. If so, a hypothetical situation where justice is realised would include a ban on political use of violence, open political and economic spheres governed by civilised rules, and political decision-making bound by democratic legitimacy. Such a definition of justice points towards more open, yet ordered

political and economic spheres, where people possess an unquestionable level of basic respect and rights, as well as responsibility.

The question of values would then be subordinated to the question of justice. Principle of democratic legitimacy pre-supposes acceptance of multiple values. This does not mean that values are irrelevant—on the contrary. Justice as a principle of politics is a condition for living one's values in the sense of practical life choices, and aspirations aimed at achieving a good life. Since what counts as a 'good life' is irreducibly plural, a just political order is one that accommodates this plurality. This line of reasoning elevates justice to the status of a standalone, autonomous, and primary goal of the reformist designs in post-Maidan Ukraine. In the following, I further expand on this thought by relying on Rainer Forst's systematic philosophy of justice, which provides a robust conceptual framework that enables differentiation between the general (norms) and particular (values).

1. At the base of this philosophy lies the Kantian conception of *normativity*. With normativity I mean the understanding of things as they should be, as opposed to how they are. Any critique has to start with identifying the reasons for which the critique is deployed. These reasons point to strongest notions of what is right available to the critic, which compel them to criticise the actual state of affairs, which appears deficient relative to what is right. The Kantian conception per Forst starts from grounding the possibility of justice into the autonomy of morality as *freedom*. Freedom in this sense is only possible if morality is free from any other instrumental or value objectives aimed at achieving a goal other than morality itself. Locating human motives solely in some kind of utility of either material gain, and physical or emotional pleasure means conceiving humans as 'akin to machines' (Forst, 2014, p.76), who act within a given code and are hence incapable of freedom and cannot be held responsible for their actions. The world populated by such machines does not allow for responsibility at the expense of individual advantages. Arbitrary whims govern such a world. Following instrumental motives is not an expression of freedom, on the contrary, it is a sign of the inability to free oneself. In contrast to such slavish instrumentalism, 'to be autonomous means to be in a normative space and be able to act in accordance with reasons' (ibid, p.77). The normative space, and reasons therein, are not understood platonically as an existing metaphysical realm that has to be accessed or revealed. Instead, this space is constructed intersubjectively, i.e. through people creatively interacting as autonomous subjects on an even plane where they have equal moral rights and responsibilities. The ability to act in accordance with reasons as per Kant is part of 'human nature itself', namely of the 'greatness of our nature' as 'reasonable beings'. The 'dignified origin' of all moral duties is the 'free person that elevates itself above the "fragile nature" and which

alone can be valid as a goal in itself' (ibid, pp. 88-89, with references to Kant). The possession of Reason allows humans to be morally free in the sense of acting according to reasons that they establish as intersubjectively valid with regards to their reciprocal responsibility to one another. In last point resides a correction that Forst undertakes regarding Kant. Where Kant derived the principle of practical reason from the relation to oneself, i.e. to reject moral autonomy means to consider oneself unworthy and undignified, Forst argues that it is the relation to the 'other' that is the initial fact at the foundation of practical reason. Human dignity rests on the recognition of our responsibility towards others. And being human is inherently intersubjective: being human is being *co-human*. The act of freedom becomes the act of taking responsibility for the other that is ultimately part of common humanity (see ibid p. 89). This does not mean giving up individuality, quite the reverse, membership in humanity is a condition for creating individuality, choosing identity, and living by specific values. All these being plural, the condition of the co-existence of different values (and hence identities) lies in reciprocal respect that can only arise from morality as a source of normativity 'Sui generis' (ibid, p.98), that does not require any further justification. Here, human dignity itself serves as the ultimate reason for morality, the point at which further justification should not and cannot be given. Dignity defined as responsibility for 'the other', enabled by reason as a human attribute par excellence is the final frontier of rational argumentation. Beyond this point further explanation is unnecessary and impossible. Asking for an instrumental reason for morality misses the point—there cannot be one. Bringing in a motive for morality other than morality itself negates the moral claim. Hence, at this 'deepest' possible level of normativity, there is a reciprocal connection between freedom and morality, where one is not possible without the other.

Connecting this back to society, the implication of such a conception of normativity is that freedom is possible under the condition of existence and active construction of a common world, where individuals recognise their responsibility to one another. The Kantian philosophy as per Forst maintains that they can. And this 'can; ultimately means 'should', regardless of 'want'. Constructing and maintaining such a world means creating a certain order. Any order consists of institutions, norms, and practices. The order that would be consistent with the concept of normativity presented above rests on three elements: (1) the concept of the autonomous person; (2) procedure of justification (3) the construction of norms (ibid, p. 80). Taken together, they form a normative structure that defines conditions of legitimacy. It is not a coincidence then that the 2013-2014 protests in Ukraine were called the 'Revolution of Dignity'. The appeal to dignity is a response to the offences caused to society in the form of violence towards protestors, pervasive precedence of private

interests over the common good, and the manipulation and disregard of public sentiment. All of these were signs of fundamental injustice that by end of 2013, reached the point where it became outrightly offensive, when the invocation of dignity immediately rang true and correctly articulated the sorry state of the 'common world'. Arbitrary whims reigned supreme by that point and the order lost all legitimacy.

2. Translating this foundational concept of normativity into practical questions structuring political orders leads to certain political constructivism. Its elements are:

    - In Forst's conceptual scheme, that relies on Jurgen Habermass' discourse ethics as well as Kant's general principle of practical Reason, one of the central points is 'autonomy of morality of everything that is unconditionally owed by persons to each other versus the ethical teachings and integral world-views' (Forst, 2014, p. 100). The conceptual distinction is thus drawn between ethics, as the province of beliefs that are particular, contested, plural notions pointing to versions of a good life versus morals as belonging to a separate, autonomous sphere where deontological (i.e. unconditional) principles of duty exist independently from ethics. Such autonomy is possible under the condition of separation from the 'notions of the good and the teachings of happiness' (ibid, p.101), which cannot be the principle of Reason since such notions and teachings can be reasonably rejected, and consequently, they are irreducibly multiple and contested. The principle of Reason cannot be reasonably rejected, and therefore stands on its own without being rooted into an unstable foundation of the notions of the good. Such a principle has to be independent of these notions and hence be a goal in itself, as opposed to being a means to achieve good life. Only when morality can be disconnected from the notions of the good, can it be morality of autonomous beings (ibid). In other words, moral autonomy means being able to think and act within a horizon that is broader than particular values and interests. In this broader horizon, 'people owe each other a basic form of respect as well as justification of their actions unconditionally, regardless of what divides or unites them and which notions of the good, the worthwhile, and happiness they might have' (ibid). Along this horizon, the regulative principle is that of the 'right' as opposed to that of the 'good'. The social philosophy that follows from this distinction elevates the right as the unconditional requirement for action affecting persons above of the good. The good does not thereby lose its validity, but rather is framed by the parameters of the right. Multiple notions of the good can exist within unconditional rules of the right, but not the ones that reject the right itself.

The terms ‘ethics’, ‘morals’, ‘values’, and ‘norms’ as used in this scheme can be challenging to differentiate, since conventionally, morals and ethics broadly refer to the same thing. Instead of moral norms one could therefore speak of meta-ethical principles, moral values or higher common good. The clear juxtapositions of ethics versus morals, and good versus right, serve a purpose of making the point that unconditional principles are derived from a categorically distinct foundation. At the same time, so long as the distinction of particular versus general and contested versus unconditional is maintained, other pragmatic semantic choices are possible.

- Since the question of what is good for me and my community of values (ethics) is separated from the question of what is right in general (norms), Forst (1996) differentiates four normative contexts where the questions of justice are addressed. Since there is an irreducible plurality of values that are often incompatible, it can be problematic and even dangerous to elevate certain value(s) to the level of a generally applicable norm around which political order is built.

  In modern societies various values co-exist. Communities form themselves around certain values, within which individuals acquire an identity through intersubjective recognition. Hence a political arrangement has to accommodate multiple communities; indeed, this is how pluralism can exist. Regarding values, Forst refers to normative orientations that aim for the good life, and arise from an individual’s identity. The individual has a choice to commit to an identity in line with surrounding cultural conventions or challenge these conventions (Forst, 1996, p. 388). This identity does not have to stay fixed, but is open rather to revision as part of the ongoing narrative construction of the self. Identity arises within these value-based ‘ethical’ communities wherein individuals can recognise (and hence validate) each other and live well as part of this community. Within the community there is a particular ethical world, full of ‘strong evaluations’ and ‘thick descriptions’ (ibid, p. 389). As Forst states:

  > Ethical communities are communities of memory on the basis of shared understanding of the good, which connects individual and collective identity into a ‘way of life’ with ethically ‘thick’ language. (ibid, p. 426)

  The justification of an action within such a community relies on the shared understanding of the good, constituted by values. Being consistent with one’s identity is the pre-requisite for an action that

would affect a given member of the ethical community. Since no polity can be said to be such an ethical community, but rather include many communities and provide space for various ways of life, values, and identities to co-exist, there are further normative contexts one has to consider when thinking about political actions that affect people beyond one's own ethical community. Hence Forst, in addition to context of values (1), further distinguishes context of law (2), context of citizenship (3) and context of morals (4). The moment one leaves the normative space of identity and enters a more normatively 'thin' space where one does not share an identity with other people, different principles of interaction (and therefore justification) apply.

- In the context of law, one is ought to act as equal in the eyes of the law regardless of identity and chosen way of life. The justification of an action is set by the compatibility with formal law.

- In the context of citizenship, one ought to be the co-author of the law and a responsible for all citizens. The condition of political legitimacy hence rests within the processes of norm creation, on the one hand and the quality of the resulting norm on the other. According to Forst, what makes a norm justifiable in the political context is based on principles of *reciprocity* and *generality*, which mandate respect towards various values as well as regulate elevation of a norm to the status of a generally binding norm. A norm becomes generally binding only under the condition of acceptance across value communities. Contexts of law and citizenship are complementary. Citizenship mandates the responsibility and right to be a co-author of the rules and norms which are applicable to all members of a community of citizens (as opposed to value community), while law mandates compliance with the resulting rules.

- Beyond contexts of values, citizenship and law, there is a context of morals, where people ought to treat each other as human regardless of membership in a value community or polity. At this level, what matters is common humanity, human rights which are not linked to formal status, but are attributable to everyone by virtue of being human.

- Such a fourfold differentiation of contexts within justice means also four-fold differentiation of the concept of personhood. Within one individual, four 'people' co-exist: (1) the ethical person as member of value-based community; (2) the person acting within the formal legal framework; (3) the citizen acting as an author and addressee of

political norms; and (4) a human being with respect for others. The same four-fold differentiation applies to communities (though communities here refer to the membership of the same person in increasingly large groups simultaneously): (1) the ethical community of values and ways of life; (2) the community subject to a legal framework; (3) the political community as author of political norms and decisions[12]; (4) the world community subject to human rights. As part of this dissertation, such differentiation helps assign various specific practical questions that arise as part of attempts to reform the country to the right normative context. This does not mean that political 'reality' splits into four unconnected systems. The practical task that must be tackled by human Reason is exactly how to establish an order where four normative contexts are ordered institutionally and anchored into a political culture. Conflicts will inevitably arise between ethical communities, between ethical community and polity, or even between polity and human rights (e.g. a refugee issue in the EU).

Conceptual differentiation helps in such cases to clarify the appropriate level at which specific question should be tackled. Practically, however, each level requires a process of discursive justification that determines the response to a specific issue. In the case of Ukraine, reforms aiming to establish a more just political sphere and economy require the establishment of new norms, affecting all Ukrainians (the context of citizenship). This means they should be reconciled with the interests of particular ethical communities (context of ethics), and be constructed through a procedure that validates a citizen's right to be a co-author of norms (context of citizenship that, in effect creates context of law) and be consistent with human rights (context of morals).

A classically Ukrainian problem in this regard is the diversity of values, specifically regional and generational. The concept of 'ethical communities', differentiated based on values, is helpful in order to understand this diversity. Importantly, it is just a conceptual entry point into the problematic as it is difficult to neatly divide Ukrainian society into communities, even based on much-referred to regional differences. Some regions can be considered distinct communities with their particular identities (Donbass, Crimea, Odessa, Galicia, Trascarpathia), others are too diffuse, with high internal heterogeneity. It is most helpful to think of

[12] The difference between context of the law and context of citizenship is most obvious when one thinks of the situation when one is not a citizen, but is yet subject to a law of a country. In such a situation one nonetheless has to comply with demands set by law. Actual citizens of that same country, on the other hand, would have to comply with laws as well as carry responsibility and rights for the authorship of these laws.

value communities as fluid, network-like, and ever-shifting. They can exist around an economic crystallisation point. Examples would be the IT industry in Kyiv, Lviv, Odessa and heavy industry in the Donbass. They can be rooted into a confession (e.g. Uniate Church in Galicia), or peculiarities of local history (Odessa, Crimea, Bukovyna, Volyn). With contemporary 'liquefaction of the self' (Beschorner, 2019, pp. 28-36) driven by technology, clear-cut, permanent identities are becoming a fiction. Instead, an ongoing narrative stabilisation and adaptation of the self within loose, temporary, ever-shifting coalitions is what increasingly structures societies. This further highlights the fact that multiple and often conflicting values will have to coexist in the polity of the future. This challenge exists everywhere, but as with many other challenges, it is very acute in Ukraine.

3. If values are multiple and cannot be hierarchically arranged to create a robust foundation for a social order, how do norms and rules become binding across communities and identities organised around different values? As per the section above, the conditions of validity for the claim of a norm's binding force will depend on a normative context, of which Forst distinguishes four. The institutional and cultural reform problematic ultimately touches on all of them. Deliberate designs to transform economy and government must consider all four normative contexts, but since the actions aimed at realising these designs mainly take the form of creating new binding norms for the whole society, the appropriate locus of analysis here is the context of citizenship. Here, the binding force of a new norm follows from legitimacy. Legitimacy is defined by Forst as 'the quality of a normative order which explains and justifies the claim of this order to be generally binding for its subjects' (Forst, 2015, p. 189). Therefore, on the one hand a specific new norm, rule, or law has to claim legitimacy on its own, while on the other, the entire order within which this norm is proposed requires legitimacy.

   What is the source of this legitimacy? Under closer inspection, the concept of legitimacy can be applied in two ways: (1) descriptively, which would mean the sources of legitimacy are established legal frameworks and conventions; (2) the moment these established structures are questioned, legitimacy is used normatively, while this normativity points elsewhere, such as to 'God's will, stability, rule of law, freedom, democracy, equality or justice' (Forst, ibid, p. 188). In the second normative meaning, legitimacy is a 'normatively dependent concept' (Forst, ibid p.189). Of course, already in the descriptive use of legitimacy there is a normative impulse that existing rules should be complied with. In fact, that is the objective of any order: to find an institutional arrangement within which rules appear as valid due to legitimacy of that arrangement. Still, such legitimacy can be questioned at the level of

individual norm or, in the case of systemic deficiency, at the level of the entire order. When legitimacy is questioned, those who do it, tie its content to an alternative concept thus highlighting what has to change. For example, if the order is questioned due to injustice – it is a specific, practical content of 'justice' that will determine what counts as legitimate.

In case of the 2013-2014 Ukrainian protests, the legitimacy of the entire normative order was challenged by a large segment of society, whose aspiration was social justice. With it in mind they fought for a different normative order, that would regain legitimacy in their eyes. In the practical context it becomes rather clear that questioning legitimacy, especially in large numbers, points to the democratic form of political order. It refers to, one on the one hand, (partial) reality since citizens demand to be reckoned with, while simultaneously going beyond this reality as it aims to realise the inherent dignity of each citizen via co-authorship of the norms that govern life in society.

Here, democracy comes forth as the necessary element of the political order aiming at justice, since citizenship is the only valid source of norms and rules that would constitute this justice. Justice is not only a goal but also a means. It is impossible to establish justice in an unjust manner. Improvements in quality of life coming from a well-meaning paternalistic or authoritarian system would still be unjust (ibid, p.194). Justice at its foundational level is about counteracting arbitrariness, which expresses itself in domination, violence and disrespect, all of which offend the basic dignity of a person, derived from the understanding of a person as a 'reasoning' or 'justifying' being and the concomitant principle of practical 'justifying' reason, which Forst calls the *right for justification*. Such offence cannot be neutralised by improvements in material conditions. Here, while staying in the political context, we nonetheless touch upon a moral claim: 'to be subject to no norm which one wouldn't agree with as free and equal person' (Forst, 2015, p. 190). The practice of establishing what one would agree with is democratic in nature. Hence democracy is the political practice of justice (ibid p.192). And so, democracy is also to a large extent normatively dependent, but in contrast to legitimacy, it is specifically dependent on the concept of justice.

The normative principle in the political context is justice. Based on Ukrainian discourses of protest and reform—which I then reflect on using the theoretical framework of Rainer Forst—leads me to posit justice as the right goal of transformative designs of Ukrainian reformism and evaluate and critique subsequent actions and discourses accordingly. Justice, understood as a practice of co-authorship of political norms and rules, leading to more robust legitimacy of the normative political order,

validates subjects in their dignity as free and equal. Constructing the norms in such a manner alleviates arbitrariness that is the source of injustice. This does not mean that differences in economic and social status evaporate, but makes it plausible that on the plane of citizenship, subjects have the same rights. Such an aspiration to justice realised through democratic participation goes beyond periodic voting but rather refers to continuous engagement of civil society in relevant decision making, extensive public communication on political topics between government, expert communities, civil society, and active citizenship. In the Ukrainian case, this would mean that systemic reform has to be extensively validated via public discussions, active communication and exchange of reasons, consultation with expert communities or specific regional, professional, and sectoral communities affected by the specific reform. For this to be possible, there has to be an extensive institutional structure of organisations and networks, all the elements required for democratic politics to function with common good (i.e. justice) as the objective, without being hijacked by private, instrumental interests. Forst calls this 'the foundational structure of justification' (ibid, p. 196): 'We call such normative order legitimate, which shows or believably aims at fundamental justice in the sense of foundational structure of Justification, and we call this norms and laws legitimate that are created in this space'.

Taken together, the elements described above—the distinction between good and right, four contexts of justification, the interconnectedness of legitimacy, democracy, justice and the foundational structure of justification—form a framework for political constructivism with the Kantian core principle that people must be the co-authors of norms to which they are subject.

The concepts and theories elaborated above might strike one as too heavily normative. Perhaps notwithstanding attempts to make philosophy practical by focusing on communicative or discursive Reason, it can still be seen as an unrealistic abstraction. In this regard, there are several points to mention.

(1) I see the normative arsenal explained above as, first, a set of regulative ideas. They have to guide practical problem solving, while keeping in mind that literal full realisation will remain impossible. For example, when speaking of the right of justification, I do not mean that everyone must be consulted with on every matter of significance. Minimally, it is a guiding principle for political communication and negotiation at the level of representative institutions and civil society. Further, it offers a guideline for the media, which can at least partially be operationalised. More ambitiously, the goal should be to build extensive deliberative structures with open platforms for dialogue, guiding composition, and selection of political actors, as well as self-government.

(2) Nonetheless, it is a valid challenge that rigid normativity can add up to utopian thinking, which is too far from actuality to be useful. An obvious repudiation would be that few agree that our political and social order 'as is' is already good enough. The moment we criticise 'as is' we are assuming the possibility of something else. This 'something else' of what things 'ought to be' always point to a different reality. So, the actual question is: what is possible and what is necessary? One finds that whatever theoretical or ideological angle this normative 'something else' comes from, it is far away from actuality. Nonetheless, that 'something else' has to be imagined is a precondition for creative action, for bringing about 'anything else'. This is where the ambivalent role of utopian thinking comes into focus. On the one hand, imagining a different world is a source of inspiration and energy for creating something better in the real world. On the other hand, taking what is imagined literally as the goal of politics is problematic and threatens self-defeating consequences. This is well captured by the Rainer Forst's notion of the 'double normativity' of utopia (Forst, 2011, pp. 220-222).

The meaning of utopia can be thought of on two levels. First, it can be observed where one imagines a perfect state of society, in which all conflicts are solved, and complete justice is achieved. Here, all political arrangements move 'beyond justice' and into the establishment of human happiness. The second level of thinking about utopia means reflecting on what such a utopia would actually be like. This thought experiment invariably, e.g. Thomas Moore, Pico della Mirandola, Francis Bacon etc., leads to recognition that utopia always threatens to morph into dystopia. At this level, one needs 'a moderate scepticism, questioning of the perfection thought' (Forst, 2011, p. 221). The implication of such a reading of utopia for real-world actors, is that they have a rather narrow corridor between the necessity to imagine and articulate a better future, while not letting their imagination deceive them and others into believing that literal realization of what they are imagining *by means of politics* is possible or even desirable. Political imagination steps into dangerous territory when political ideas intrude into the territory of 'visions of the human happiness as opposed to those of justice' (ibid). This limits political intentions to the considerations of how to manage *irreducible* social conflicts in a way that would allow sides of these conflicts to co-exist in an agreeable fashion, while letting them pursue their own ideas of happiness and a good life.

This is where dignity has to be defended as the principle of politics, as per Pico della Mirandola: 'The dignity of a person lies in their indeterminacy by others and ever-renewing ability to determine themselves' (in Forst, 2011, p. 222). Happiness, on the other hand, is something that: '[...] doesn't allow to be produced and to be governed' (ibid), which means it should be left to individuals and communities to define their notions of a good life, while politics should create conditions for it while staying out of its realization. In

other words, happiness should not be an object of politics: 'Happiness appears as a politically aporetic concept' (ibid). Instead, the object of politics is justice.

Justice requires the recognition of human dignity that allows for a multiplicity of ways to seek happiness and restricts intrusion from the side of politics into more the private matters of how to live a good life. Political imagination aiming for better becomes self-defeating where the line between politics as instrument of justice is overstepped into politics as an intervention into cultural affairs of various communities with a goal of some sort of uniformity at the service of efficiency, nation, history, economy. This is where good intentions have the opposite result due to an overreach of politics into areas that it should merely guard. Utopia turns into dystopia, while a bad reality turns into worse reality. I will next lay out the implications of normative ideas laid out above for the chosen subject matter of Ukrainian reform discourses.

Conditions of democratic reform

Reform can be defined as the intentional change of formal social structures, such as institutions, and norms, which is expected to bring favorable results to those affected. Whether a particular change is actually favorable needs to be ultimately verified by those whose lives are affected by it. This presents a number of difficulties. First, the results of reform take time to manifest. By the time it is possible to judge the reform's favourability, the opportunity to define what those consequences should be is gone. Reform, as a forward-looking venture, involves upfront definition of goals and, even preceding that, reasons that make those goals valid. The very objective of reform and its underlying justification should hence be legitimate in the eyes of subjects to its eventual results. Second, which criteria should be used to evaluate the favourability? Should it be impersonal, 'objective' criteria like economic growth—or the perceptions of the actual people? Certainly, the two can deviate. In cases of political polarization, ideological intransigence, propaganda, and manipulative media hijacking, the emotive elements outweigh rationality. Third, at what point in time should such an evaluation be undertaken? Results take time to bear fruit, while the immediate aftermath of a major change is rarely pleasant. These difficulties underscore a strong requirement for public legitimacy of particular reformist at two levels: (1) functional – for the change to be effective and take root, it requires acceptance and conformity resting not only on a threat of sanction, but primarily on legitimacy; and (2) normative – equal status of citizens and the demand from them to comply with the new norms, corresponds to the requirement of general legitimacy of these norms.

To formally establish the degree of legitimacy among everyone involved ahead of time, which is what an ideal democratic reform scenario would require, is hardly possible. Does this leave us with legitimacy that arises from periodical elections, which entrust institutional power in the hands of a selected group of people? What if results of their work are nonetheless seen as self-serving, corrupt, and disregarding social interest? A democratic setup would include a discursive validation through an active public sphere aiming primarily at reasonable consensus. This, however, seems like a rather remote possibility where the public sphere is highly fragmented and commercialized, such as the case in Ukraine. What is then left of such a modernist vision, of this 'unfinished project of modernity'? At the very least, broad democratic legitimacy can (and should) still function as a regulative principle for any system and actor purporting to be democratic. Letting go of it means letting go of democracy and pluralism. The present work does not obscure the fact of its own underlying normative position that (genuinely) democratic order is preferable to high-functioning autocracies.

The last statement raises one further concern, namely that democratic order contains the seeds of its own destruction. If the decisions on how society is run are truly left to the popular majority, this majority might opt to abolish the democracy itself, if it is not protected by measures that are in a direct sense non-democratic. Such a contradiction is inherent in liberal orders. It puts the source of legitimacy of democratic liberal state in doubt. If the liberal democracy cannot guarantee its own existence, it means that a different source of legitimacy is needed, such as religious or quasi-religious one (see Schmid, 2014, p.232, with reference to Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde). While this problematic is beyond the scope of this work, it is important to note that the requirement for the discursively established legitimacy is still necessary for pragmatic compromises in orders that might be far from ideals of democracy. For someone interested in recovering (or defending) the positive content of political progressivism and utilizing it in a pragmatic program when all else fails, the requirement of discursively established legitimacy is unavoidable. This requirement however does impose high demands on everyone involved. Meeting them needs conscious effort of cultivating special kind of attitudes and abilities, which can be described as 'discursive rationality' (Kettner, 1999) and will be addressed in more detail below.

I suggest to distinguish between two attributes of democratic reform that require detailed definition and systematic examination:

- **Agency.** Reform is an intentional political change, which means it can be traced back to *deliberate* actions of agents aimed at achieving specific goals;

- **Justifiability.** Reform can be considered justifiable if the reason behind it, means by which it is implemented and its (expected) result can be defended as *legitimate* in front of those whose lives are impacted. Justifiability and legitimacy are tandem concepts pertaining to the same problem: how to ensure acceptance and compliance. Legitimacy is the goal, which can be reached by justification

In contrast to accidental consequences or by-products of non-controllable external events, processes, or individual drives and compulsions, self-directed and intentional change is done by someone who can viably claim to act in the general interest rather than just their own. While deliberateness is a more or less obvious descriptive characteristic of any reform (at least as it appears in political discourses), justifiability is a more normative category that points towards demands for democratic legitimacy, which in the real world is often left unmet.

The validity of both attributes depends on the human ability to generate, receive, and interpret reasons behind their actions and act accordingly. Without it, intentional and justified political action would not be possible. An inquiry into the conditions of democratic reform should therefore be founded upon the understanding of humans that includes such an ability. Rainer Forst, addresses the issue thusly:

> In philosophy a lot hinges on which determination of humans is put into the centre of inquiry, and there are many different definitions of humans which come into question: reason-endowed, social, evaluative, cultural, historical, communicating, free or bound, autonomous or limited beings just to name some examples. These attributes can be linked in a way that incorporates the most important content of each. For this we must see humans as justifying beings. Correspondingly, we understand Reason as the ability to orientate oneself in the world by using good justifying reasons, in both theoretical and practical domains. The possession of Reason allows us to stand and answer to our opinions and actions. From there other human attributes also find their place. Such standing and answering is a social practice of evaluative, cultural, historical, and communicating Beings who are, on the one hand, free to choose and assess their reasons, while on the other, limited by the reasons available to them and which reasons are accepted as good and valid. (2015, p. 37)

Through the practices of reasoning, we give our actions direction (agency) and establish why this direction is right (justifiability). The most fundamental condition for the deliberate shaping of our social life is, thus, the human ability to generate, interpret, and select reasons—and act in line with them. As subjects, we have to answer the question of why we do what we do, decide whether the answer is adequate and if not, seek a better alternative. Granting

the status of a 'subject' to each other necessitates that we also grant each other the right to co-shape the structures of our (common) social life embodied in norms, institutions, and orders. A practical application of this right lies in discursive practices where questions and answers about the means and ends of political action should be processed to arrive at or sustain legitimate order. If one accepts these presuppositions, better discourse is ultimately the only medium through which a greater justified order can be reached so long as we stay within democratic parameters. Next, I inquire into specifics of the two attributes of reform.

Agency

Reform or any other deliberate action in the political sphere has an originator. Since my focus is on reform and not revolution, the agents who perform the actions have to be located in relation to existing political state institutions to exercise power and claim legitimacy.[13] This is difficult: individual agents have to reform the institutions of which they themselves are part. The impulse to reform can therefore come from either (1) within state institutions, where a reform is driven by a political actor; (2) from outside state institutions from broader societal discourses, in which adequacy or even legitimacy of institutions and actors gets questioned; or (3) from organized interests of extra-state actors such as corporations, oligarchs, lobbies, and other states.

To realize reformist change there needs to be power. Systematic reform needs systematic action, and systematic action requires the exercise of power. For actions to bring intended consequences, there needs to be a strong link between goals, actions, and results. These can only be established and maintained by an organizing and directing force. Given the sheer complexity and number of actors involved in such endeavour, power is the unavoidable resource needed to establish and maintain that link. Power should not be equated with or necessarily involve domination, coercion, or violence. Foucault's position that power is exercised on free subjects (Foucault, 2015, p. 240) provides the basis for a more nuanced understanding of power. For Foucault, each historical epoch contains power-dependent discursive formations that provide subject-constituting 'regimes of truth' that determine individuality and motives. For Foucault power is oppressive, but also enabling. This concept of power is not synonymous with ruling or subjugation. Meaning, it gives subjects self-understanding, which can be empowering. The Foucauldian concept of power however retains a negative

[13] In contrast to revolution where institutions are overthrown as illegitimate, in the context of reform, institutions retain their legitimacy, but depending on the degree of radicalism of the change aspired to, the only way to preserve that legitimacy might be to reform.

'disciplinary' connotation by focusing on the lack of autonomy involved in subject constitution. Rainer Forst, on the other hand, suggests a concept of power that is 'neutral', meaning power can be positive or negative (Forst, 2015, pp. 58-81) depending on the mode in which it functions. For Forst, there are different kinds of power defined by the degree of reliance on oppression and rigidity of the justification practices. *Noumenal power* is embodied first of all in arguments and justifications. It operates through discourse and targets subjects' space of reasons located in the cognitive realm. It exists where someone is able to influence acting and thinking of someone else through arguments.[14] Such power relies on the acceptance of subjects to validate someone else's reasons and act in accordance with them. Noumenal power relies on the justificatory force of reasons accepted by those who are subject to this power, based on those reasons' appeal. This goes beyond the concepts of power that emphasise coercion, domination, and violence. Those kinds of power also exist, but generally fall outside of democratic parameters as understood in light of the aforementioned right of subjects to co-shape social norms, rules, and institutions. Use of force rather signifies a lack of legitimacy and is associated with insecure political orders.

The issue arises when the state of a society at a given historical moment does not leave much space for moral reflection, that would enable enough subjects to be justificatory authorities. In such a case, fuller subjectivity can be sustained only out of intersubjective interaction in discourse. Forst differentiates power based on how much free room it leaves in the discursive space of reasons. Power can be exercised as (1) noumenal, (2) legitimate domination (3) domination, and (4) violence. In the context of reform, power is a pre-condition. To bring about intentional change, there should be power capable of realising it. The mode of power that corresponds to democratic aspirations is noumenal. The democratically legitimate reform is possible if sufficient *noumenal* power is mobilised and operationalised in discourse. Hence, relations of power themselves need to be brought into a constellation conducive to reformist change. Defining relations of power with Forst as relations of (discursive) justification (2015, p. 81), opens up possibilities to critique existing power and to suggest better alternatives.

Justifiability

Justifiability refers to a second condition of reforms within democratic parameters which needs to be fulfilled so that power is applied to the right

[14] Forst's full definition of noumenal power: 'Ability of A to shape the space of reasons of B so that B thinks and acts in the way, which would not happen without A's influence. This influence must create a motivational force, which matches A's intentions, as opposed to mere side effect' (Forst, 2015 p.77)

ends and informed by a reciprocal recognition of subjects as rightful co-authors of norms, rules, and institutions.

Fulfilling this second condition means ensuring that underlying reasons for goals and actions (that are realised through power) can be defended if front of the one whose life is impacted. In other words, justifications should be evaluated against normative criteria that allow us to see the quality of the justification, and help answer the question of whether specific justification is defensible in front of free subjects.

Standards of validity in everyday life are not set by scientific or philosophical rigor but rather by historical and cultural predispositions of the specific time and place. Those everyday standards can yield reasons that are false, incomplete, restrictive or serve narrow interests. This is why they have to be tested against normative criteria consistent with the chosen normativity, which is something as justifying beings we are able to do. Forst derives his normative criteria from what he calls the 'right for justification' which states that humans are equally entitled to be a justificatory authority in shaping norms and institutions to which they are subject. He therefore proposes *reciprocity* and *generality* as the normative criteria that should be used to evaluate order-constituting justifications. Reciprocity follows from the Kantian imperative to treat each person as an 'end in itself'. Justification is only valid if its addressee accepts it. No one should be made to accept something they would not accept freely. Even if someone who applies pressure believes it is in the interest of the one coerced, such action would still offend the right for justification. It amounts to treating a person as means to something else and not an end in themselves (Forst, 1996, p.64). It is wrong to presume someone's needs and goals if they are not validated by the subject in question. Reciprocally, whoever has the power to act in a way that affects someone else—as is the case with political action—only has the same right when it comes to defining the reasons for and objectives of this action as someone affected. This stance becomes troublesome if the reasons invoked in a specific situation are not accepted as right by the various parties involved due to value pluralism. The rejection of a reason by the addressee of the justification could stem from either incomprehension or interpretation of the reason as not good enough. The first case requires better communicative/hermeneutic effort. In the second case, the judgement on the quality of the communicated reason will inevitably filter through value-systems, which are diverse. For example, the reasons that invoke religion are only likely to be accepted by those who share the same religion (see Forst, 1996, pp. 64-65).

If we run into value-contradictions when trying to establish common ground for political action, the question becomes whether different value-systems can co-exist in one polity—and if so—at what level should justification of

such pluralist political order be located? This is where Forst introduces the second criterion of justification, he calls *general acceptability (or generality).* Since value heterogeneity is a social fact, a justified order should not suppress it, but rather enable the possibilities to define what constitutes a good life in line with those different values. Such coexistence does however presuppose a minimal agreement on certain common premises. At the very least that such value pluralism is worth preserving and that the political system should build on principles morally acceptable to all ethical value frameworks existing under one political umbrella. Hence the criteria of acceptability must be located at the moral level that lies outside of the conceptions of the good life. For Forst, this does not mean subordination of ethics to morality. Rather, it means the existence of different contexts of justification (1996). Some contexts are driven by considerations of ethics, or values that lead to a good life; while others are driven (or rather should be driven) by considerations of basic moral principles that should be acceptable by all, independently from their ideas about what constitutes a good life. The justification for political action that demands general compliance belongs to the latter context (Forst, 1996 pp. 347-413). Individuality, family and community belong to the former. Ethical reasons can become moral ones, but for this to occur, they need be intersubjectively validated as generally acceptable. Intersubjectivity helps to alleviate the rigid dichotomy between the subjective (beliefs, opinions) and the objective (eternal truth). Through intersubjective practice of discourse, the truthfulness of a particular reason, depends on the agreement of whether it meets the conditions to be true among the various parties involved.

There are two steps involved in normative evaluation. First, the distillation of normativity, present in existing more or less institutionalised practices. Each society or subgroup within it has everyday standards against which they make a judgement on whether a norm fulfils conditions to be a norm. Beschorner & Hübscher (2016, p. 9) call this life-world normativity 'normalizing normativity'. By being anchored into the everyday 'normal' life, this normativity is often taken for granted and appears as being without alternative. It may contain, however, one-sided, reified, ideological elements. Hence, a second, reflexive evaluation is needed, where justifications are evaluated against normative criteria derived from the internal logic of the right for justification. This corresponds to what Beschorner and Hübscher call 'reflexive normativity' (ibid), denoting valid normative orientations beyond what is anchored into everyday practice and pointing to (potentially) better justified orders.

Next, a deeper exploration into the two forms of normativity is needed.

1. **Normalising Normativity**. A descriptive approach is necessary to understand what makes existing norms into norms. This can be distilled

from existing discursive practices. Here, one particularly relevant observation is that different communities have different argumentative practices (see Kettner, 2002, pp. 187-188). The validity of a reason can thus be said to have a cultural limitation. Generalisability of a claim tends to be limited by the degree to which its meaning is shared between subjects. This meaning itself is established in the communicative practices that are relative to the 'discursive world'.[15] These culture-specific standards of validity are themselves part of a broader 'structured webs of meaning that go across all practices' (Geertz in Beschorner, 2013, p. 350) that define a culture. While culture explains how something can be understood in the same way by multiple subjects, it also imposes a limit on who can be expected to share the same understanding spontaneously, without major interpretative effort.

The validity of a reason can therefore be linked to culturally-bound meaning that is present in all real social contexts and will vary with time and place. To attempt to understand how meaning gives direction to individual and collective action and behaviour, one has to pre-suppose that we generally require our actions and behaviours to be meaningful.[16] In the political sphere, actions are meaningful when deliberately chosen according to reasons that subjects accept as most meaningful. Meaningfulness, as a general pre-requisite for validity of a reason, in turn will vary in terms of form and content depending on culture-specific communicative practices that establish what counts as meaningful.

To distil standards of validity of a specific culture, one needs to identify cultural variables with which meaning (and hence culturally-bound validity standards) 'co-varies'. M. Kettner's social ontology process model of culture suits this purpose well due to how it supports inquiries into cultural relativity of commonly accepted good reasons (Kettner, 2008 p.15). The model defines culture as ongoing process (as opposed to fixed state) consisting of five dynamic processes that set the ranges of acceptability in communicative practices:

- Normalisation: ordering the world by defining boundaries of normality;
- Historisation: tracing of cultural practices and objects back to other practices and objects;
- Integration into patterns: combination of practices into discernible patterns;

[15] Kettner defines 'discursive world' as a 'world of problematizing and justifying practices that establish the structure of argumentation' (Kettner, 2002, p. 188)
[16] Max Weber's theory of action provides basis to this claim (see Kruse & Barrelmeyer 2012 pp.87-92)

- We-identification: recognition of the group that is subject to cultural boundaries;
- Normativation: giving intelligible and justifiable reasons that help making sense of actions.

Political discourse is a cultural practice because it takes on various forms defined by language and the specific historical experience of a society. It exists and functions as a system of symbolic expression. Since political discourse is a cultural practice, agents situate their claims in relation to the five features of culture outlined above to make those claims understandable, meaningful, and effective, or in other words—to create noumenal power. For statements to be meaningful to the target audience and therefore effective (noumenally powerful), they have to address one or more of the five constitutive features of culture. For example, any election campaign will contain language on:

- Normality or non-normality of a certain situation, problem, or event (normalisation);
- Collective identity of the target audience (we-identification);
- History of the target community: how its past affects its present and future (historisation);
- Assumptions about homogeneity or heterogeneity of behaviours and practices (pattern-formation);
- Reasoning on why policies, positions, and attitudes are right or wrong (normativation)

The social-ontology process model of culture allows us to descriptively examine the normalising normativity of a particular society, or a sub-group within it. In so far as a particular 'discursive world' allows examination of its own norms and hence expanding the standards of what counts as normal, descriptive analysis can also yield insights into reflexive normativity.

2. **Reflexive normativity** represents an attempt to establish whether existing norms are right or not. To do that, one needs a normative reference point independent of the set of reasons taken for granted in everyday life. It needs a way to refer to more general principles that help define what is right, beyond the facticity of social conventions. Reflexive normativity arises from the 'deliberative thinking' (Beschorner and Hübscher, 2016, p. 9 in reference to Wallace) that asks if what is counted as normal withstands a test by criteria set by the chosen normative idea's internal logic. In this dissertation, these criteria arise from a recognition of fellow subjects as the rightful co-authors of the rules by which we live our common life (i.e. recognition of dignity).

In short, reflexive normativity lets us identify a gap between what is accepted and what is valid.

This raises a question: are possibilities of further moral development of a society restricted to existing normativity (normalising and reflexive) of a particular culture? Is the solution to social conflict a fuller institutionalisation of normativity or a more radical transcendence of immanent world views as well as opening up to new reasons and more fundamental changes? Axel Honneth (2012, pp.169-191) argues a 'normative surplus' exists in every society. This concept denotes the normative ideas which are already there in people's minds and (to some extent) social practices, but not yet fully realised and institutionalised. Normative surplus sets the bar for justified, legitimate social order higher than what is the case at a given moment in a given society. This restricts the horizon of possibilities, but also produces change on the way to a fuller unfolding of the immanent human quality of autonomy. Honneth's theory favours 'what is already there' in the society as the horizon of immediate possibility of moral progress. On the other hand, Rainer Forst (2011) insists that the nature of Reason lies in its ability to go beyond immanent social ethics and foray into radically new territory, not per se bound by what has preceded it. For Forst, it is ability to reason and concomitant obligation to justify, and right to justification, that is the right principle of social interaction. Here, the right for justification is the imperative of political life that cannot be dismissed so long as we understand each person as a subject that requires reasons to orientate and act in the social world (Forst, 2011, p. 106). While both thinkers look for conditions for realising autonomy of human beings, they locate them in different philosophical spaces. For Honneth, the possibility for autonomy lies in subjects' recognition of each other as autonomous subjects, itself being the necessary pre-condition for the emergence of and subsequent unfolding of consciousness which is an immanent teleological process (Honneth, 2012 pp. 3-19). For Forst, autonomy is the nature of Reason, that finds its practical expression in the morally imperative right for justification (Forst, 2011).

In addressing the question of whether the source of moral progress is immanence or transcendence, Forst argues that demand for justification is 'the most everyday thing of all' (Forst, 2015, p. 39). This he substantiates with historical examples of moral progress which were sparked by demands for justification previously alien to established social morality (Forst, 2015, pp. 15-16). Examples imply that sticking to strictly immanent normativity often does not allow for adequately addressing conflicts. It seems plausible that at some historical junctures, demanding better justified social conditions needs transcendence. The final verdict on whether this comes from the 'normative surplus' that is

already there in accordance with Honneth's (Hegelian) theory of recognition, or from Forst's (Kantian) right for justification can be set aside.[17] In the social practice the concepts of both, normative surplus and of right justification can be a powerful source of ideas for positive change.

Synthesising the two angles in a non-contradictory way, one can say that reciprocal recognition of subjects as rightful co-authors of the norms, institutions and orders is the condition for realising autonomy. Whether such recognition arises from the immanent teleological process reflected in the 'normative surplus' or normative ideas that have to be found through the application of the right for justification aimed at transcending the boundaries of acceptability is not immediately evident and depends on the underlying assumptions about human nature. Normativity in the end is a product of discourse, happening in a particular discursive world. The justifiability of the intentional changes such as reform, with reform being clearly normative, can be ensured only through argumentative discourse as this is where reflexive normativity has traction and can pave the way for better justified norms, rules, and institutions. As Kettner states:

> There is nothing over and above, or under and below appropriate argumentation that could ultimately settle determinate and possibly divergent appreciations of the reasons we take ourselves to have for doing the things that we think it makes sense for us to do for those reasons. (Kettner, 1999, p. 332)

If so, this 'appropriate argumentation' is the condition for achieving justifiability required for democratic reform. Kettner therefore argues for 'discursive rationality', which 'consists in properly dealing with a set of commitments for whose acceptance and observance one cannot help to be held responsible whenever one aims to act as, or is taken to act as, a rational appraiser, i.e., as a licensed evaluator of reasons in argumentation' (1999, p. 334). Such a regulative notion of discursive rationality helps to control the discourses of justification, where reasons for and against specific actions are established. The more rational the discourse, the more justifiable are the reasons for reform. Discursive rationality, however, is present in different

[17] Honneth himself mentions that in case of 'ethically damaged and demoralized social relationships' one would have to resort to an external 'impartial standpoint in order to not wholly lose sight of the principles of social justice' (Honneth, 2012, p. 48). While Forst argues that juxtaposing transcendence versus immanence is false as Reason is immanent itself (Forst, 2015)

cultures to different extents. Democratic political process requires cultivation of discursive rationality, as it itself has to evolve and/or be preserved.

One other consideration may be: why worry with democratic legitimacy? Literature on reform is full of historical examples, where reformist change was brought about by authoritarians. Examples are China, Russia, (see Acemoglu & Robinson 2013 pp. 437-46), Singapore, Chile, and Georgia. Broadly speaking, legitimacy of reform can be achieved either democratically or top-down. For reform to be democratically legitimate, some kind of general will should be formed in order to settle first on the right reasons, and then on the reforms' means and ends. The preconditions for it, as claimed in preceding sections are noumenal power and discursive rationality. Undemocratic or top-down produced reform is imposed by agents possessing power who omit or fabricate processes of deliberation and justify their actions by future results favourable to broader society that they claim to know how to define. In the context of noumenal power, this means power is exercised by restricting the space of reasons, which are claimed to be without alternative. Here, dissent is disregarded or suppressed. The general tendency in cases of top-down reform (or similarly, top-down obstruction of reform) is to justify it in terms of 'objective' necessities and absence of alternatives. The political reasons in such cases are claimed to be dictated directly by supposedly un-political factors such as nature, history, markets, religion, and geography. Directly, because they are put into the centre of justification by the central power, and omitting, imitating or fabricating democratic validation through public discourse. The same reasons can be democratically (but not yet reflexively) justified if they undergo a discursive test, but for that 'spaces of justification' (Forst, 2015 p.30) should be sufficiently open and free.

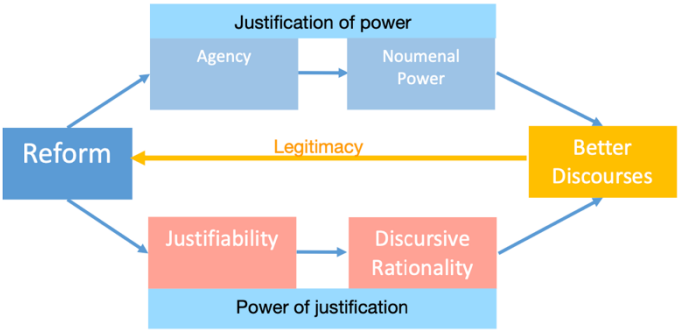
The top-down approach carries the danger of exacerbating social conflicts stemming from violation of the right for justification. Denying this right offends dignity (Forst, 2011) and makes attempted changes, even if positive in their intent, suspect of not representing the common good and risks being perceived as illegitimate. As a consequence, the possibility of realisation of reform is either reduced, disappears altogether, or the reform is forced on the subjects—which again exacerbates social conflict, and makes the change short-lived and reversible. In accordance with the position that actions should be both meaningful and we are generally able to autonomously generate or select reasons that are meaningful to us, one has to insist on an inclusive process of justification.

To sum up, attributes of democratic reform are agency and justifiability. The conditions that need to be fulfilled for democratic reform are noumenal power and discursive rationality. Both refer ultimately to the social practice of discourse that is culturally-grounded and hence can (and should) be

cultivated. They are, on the one hand, relative to the particular discursive world (i.e. culture with its specific symbolic system), while on the other, their improvement requires pushing for a higher quality of reasoning, which often requires going beyond cultural conventions.

The operational normative framework is summarised in Figure 3**.**

Figure 3. Cultural conditions of democratic reform:



2.2. Culture and modernisation

The idea of re-organization of society, economy, and government based on Western examples was one of the ideological pillars of independent Ukraine in 1991. Loosely and unevenly, it existed as a preoccupation with consumption, fondness for western movies, music, public order and services. The failure of the Soviet Union was accompanied by the vague expectation that what comes after will resemble the imagined West. The recipe seemed straightforward: transplant arrangements from the West since they rest on a universally valid assumptions about the nature of individuals and society, as proven by the end of the Cold War.

This idea has enjoyed an eventful life in theory as 'modernisation theory'. It offered a clear path to prosperity, order, and freedom as a global historical convergence towards a universal set of institutions and cultural practices already predominant in 'the West', assumed to be historically ahead of the rest who would gradually catch up. Ostensibly proven by the disintegration of the Socialist bloc and conversion of China to capitalism, by the early 1990s, the assumption that post-Soviet countries would embark on that path was a given. The motion towards a free market economy, and a democratic government by institutional design transplanted from the West, was a staple

of reformist discourse of Ukrainian politicians and intellectuals. More than that, it was the *only* big idea. Even if real attempts to reform the country hardly happened before the second half of the 1990s, the expectation of a large part of Ukrainian society was firmly connected to a vague and often unarticulated notion if westernization. Quality of life, consumption, freedoms, and social protection were understood to come with western-style arrangements in the economy and government. The 'end of history' (Fukuyama, 1989) was intensely felt at the dawn of Ukrainian independence first of all as an *expectation* that something akin to the West would have to eventually appear in Ukraine. As this failed to materialise quickly, the question 'how so?' became central in reform discourse.

Within the logic of modernisation theory, inertia, passivity of the society as well as incompetence or malevolence of the elites, was seen as just a delay on the way to a clear end point. Society must pass through pre-determined checkpoints. The only unknown is the speed. After 30 years of attempts to actualise this logic, it proved problematic for Ukraine. The social, regional, and ideological complexity of Ukrainian society does not seem to be compatible with a rigid reading of modernisation theory. If so, it must be at least relativised and, at most, superseded by a more complex and cautious theory. High conflictuality has become the dominant characteristic of Ukrainian development. Views associated with convergence theory of modernisation add ideological fuel to the conflicts. Post-Soviet (as well as Neo-Soviet) conservatism opposing it, on the one hand, and national conservatism (overlapping to a large extent with liberalism) dogmatising it on the other, created centrifugal forces that were hard to contain.

To break out of this vicious circle, one may have to let go of the certainty that classical modernisation theory and its corollaries afford, such as the normative economic program of marketisation. The reassuring teleology that allows to interpret setbacks as just one more learning on the way to the one normative modernity has become ingrained in the reformist discourse. To open up other paths and to adapt to the evolving world, the reform discourse needs intellectual material and nuance that goes beyond modernisation theory. Specifically, a certain 'loosening' of the notion of modernity is needed: while accepting the one core of the meaning of modernity, one has to accept the multiplicity of its forms. In other words, if what creates dangerous conflictuality is an excessively rigid definition of the objectives of social development in favour of divisive normative vision that that cannot be bridged by neither material nor intellectual effort, the answer may lie in an irreducible plurality of objectives that must be accommodated. The normative vision then shifts away from 'value-thick' normative assumptions about one modernity, and rather towards the normativity of pluralism itself as the defining characteristic of modernity.

Before diving into the deeper discussion of what this means theoretically, some conceptual clarifications. While *modernisation* is a broad historical process that involves rationalising life in general[18], *reform* refers to deliberate actions by agents within institutions aiming to change institutions (or establish new ones) to achieve intended outcomes. Reforms always purport to have progressive intent in the sense of improving the previous state of affairs. In Ukraine, reform is the vehicle of modernisation. Whether a particular reform is actually modernising depends on the normative 'optics' of the analyst. From different positions the same reform might appear as modernising, regressive, empty, futile. For example, in attributing a primarily economic meaning to modernisation, a government might introduce a reform, which reduces requirements of consensus between employees, management, investors, and local community as part of corporate governance, which is politically a regressive move for someone arguing from the positions of republican liberalism (see Ulrich, 2010, p. 75). But as the goal of such a reform is to improve economic performance, it will appear as modernising for someone taking the side of economic liberalism, whose normativity lies in 'freeing up' market mechanisms from as much external control as possible (see section on 'Liberism'). Judgement on progressivity towards a more modern state of affairs is dependent on the narratively stabilised normative position of the one judging.

Modernisation theory and culture

Modern society is characterised by differentiation into spheres defined by function and values. The process of differentiation is driven by the increasing cultural complexity of society that rationalises life in response to deep shifts in the understanding of human agency, i.e. towards the larger scope of human agency. For the purpose of this work, I distinguish between the following social spheres: economy, government, art, science, religion, media, education, and civil society. The System Theory of Niklas Luhmann extends the notion of differentiation all the way to a 'self-referential', 'operational closure' of social spheres which become 'sub-systems' (Luhmann, 2015, p.9). This means they separate from one another and divide social reality into pieces defined by their unique binary code. For example, the binary code 'pay vs. don't pay' (Luhmann, 2015, p.47), expressed through the communicative medium of money, coordinates action within the sub-system of the economy

[18] I refer to Max Weber's definition of modernity which puts rationalisation into the center. The main characteristics of modernisation according to Weber are differentiation of society into spheres of value, bureaucratisation, contradictory ethical standards (see Kruse & Barrelmeyer, 2012, pp. 111-135)

and rejects foreign rationality derived from non-economic values. The common critique of system theory is (1) it places a one-sided emphasis on technical rationality (e.g. Jürgen Habermas in his Theory of Communicative Action), (2) it does not address the problem of reification of the social world, which appears to its participants as norm-free, objective, and not modifiable (see Forst, 2015, p. 69), and (3) it reduces culture to the 'determined result of functional requirements of autopoietic systems' (Apel, 1994, p. 43) thereby discounting normativity and hence malleability. Notwithstanding this criticism, there is a way to reconcile systems theory with a culturalist approach by asking how culture can change to overcome the existing systemic reification, and establish new rational structural arrangements that correspond to society's needs.

Pollack (2016, p. 225) argues the fact that sub-systems are defined by a code point to the cultural constitution of the sub-system. In this sense, the code as well as conditions of its fulfilment, are not separable from the guiding values of the respective sphere of life and hence connect functionality to culture.[19] This connects to my interpretative method in that '[e]ach social order in general and each sub-system in particular rests on a specific *understanding* of the purpose, goals, and rules of this order or system – they are hence normative orders (respectively - spheres) - Justification orders' (Forst, 2015, p. 70). Through a culturalist approach, one can avoid functionalistic reductionism on the one hand and strong distinction between system and lifeworld by Habermas on the other. Rather, it undertakes an attempt to reintegrate function and culture by arguing that sub-systems such as the economy are 'patterns or culture' (Beschorner & Kettner, 2016, p. 2).

That rationality which drives functional differentiation is in itself a cultural variable. Intentionally pushing the process of modernisation means cultivating rationality. Such cultivation cannot go all the way to Luhmann's 'autopoiesis', as it stays bound by overarching normative principles (however minimal). There is a danger, however, that functionalistic logic challenges this overarching normativity, in the famous formulation of Habermas – gets 'colonized'. Hence, Pollack speaks of taming functional efficiency imperatives by self-restriction, moderation (2016, p. 236) through de-centring, self-criticism, and learning as well as correction enabled by the very

[19] 'Both are important: the differentiation of area-specific codes as well as a differentiation of area-specific institutions. This is the starting point where cultural theory and differentiation theory can be connected. So long as social institutions are treated as culturally constituted and social sub-systems are treated as "generalized orientation horizons of action" centered around guiding values and codes (Schimank, 2011, p. 262), cultural theory and differentiation theory overlap' (Pollack, 2016, p. 226)

self-referentiality of modernity.[20] Completely detaching functional logic from its cultural foundation is, therefore, not even possible, while attempts to do so represent a pathology with worrying consequences.

What does this mean for modernising reform? One string of theories that directly tackle the question of how modernisation happens and what aspiring modernisers ought to do are known as modernisation theories. They date back to late 1950s with Seymour Lipset's (1959) argument on the systematic relationship of interdependency between political democracy, technical progress, scientific discovery, and capitalist economy. Improvement in one of these aspects ought to trigger an improvement in others. This understanding of modernisation presumes that it happens in the same way independently for countries. The physical and social resources of a country determine the prospects of modernisation. Resulting from this are the notions of 'catch-up' modernisation and 'convergence' of backward countries towards the most successful examples from the West: 'In so far different countries undergo the same development, they will achieve the same goal but at different times' (Holzer, 2015, p. 151). The condition for this convergence is that the independent development takes place in a contained territorial unit. This condition does not hold in the present with globalized economy. Also, change in one sphere, does not necessarily mean a positive change in another. If anything, change in one sphere is likely to upset the balance and create tension and even conflict, for example between the economy and government (Holzer, 2015 p.152). In expecting a convergence from different countries towards a 'uniform' western model, varying starting positions and historical context start to become an issue. At a time when global complex economic and cultural interconnections exist, expecting countries to pass through the same route as Western Europe and North America did over the previous 300 years is hardly feasible. Modernisation theory then, at best, offers an insight into the elements contributing to development, at least as it can be understood from an optimistic standpoint of liberal economic progress. As this standpoint itself creates social problems that cannot be solved within it and assumptions about its universality and permanence start to dilute, modernisation theory requires correction. Otherwise, it risks becoming another petrified ideological narrative.

[20] 'A performance ideology corresponds to the creation of competition forums, which challenge an individual to increase their own competitiveness and pursue life-long learning. This performance ideology has, for a long time, long not possessed the absolute validity in highly modern societies of Western Europe, but is rather reflexively cushioned and connected with a norm of moderation, self-containment, and tension-balancing. An increase in performance does not happen at any price, for example to the point of social incompatibility and physical ruin. It is not a goal in itself, but is put in relation to other goals. At the least, self-discipline and self-preservation set in when an increase in performance starts to undermine itself' (Pollack, 2016 p. 236).

Aspirations and issues of Ukrainian modernisation

Classic modernisation theories tend to focus on structures and institutions (see Pollack, 2016, pp. 219-240) and less on culture. This is the route that Ukrainian reformers argue for: creating institutions based on western examples and formal rules demanding universal compliance, which eliminate previously existing ones. In this they presume and communicate the assumptions that closely resemble the classic modernisation theory described above. Convergence and catch-up modernisation are still both the templates for reformist practice.

What is missing is the consideration of socio-cultural preconditions for the new norms, rules, and institutions to take root. This issue is best illustrated by the problem of 'facade-modernity' (Holzer, 2015, p. 154). The problem arises when formally modern institutions and universal rules are created, but actual social practice continues in parallel largely unaffected by them. This has to do with the fact that universal rules clash with established practices of particularism. Moreover, from the modernising standpoint, such particularism often means corruption. From the standpoint of the broader society, it can have a legitimate socially integrative role. For example, clientelism may not simply be a system of exclusion, but also provide a mechanism for inclusion through personal relationships.[21] A frontal attack on it with modernising efforts may prove fruitless as universal rules should be understood and accepted as legitimate.

Therein lies the major problem for Ukrainian reformers. Due to neo-patrimonial social context, in which both economic and political power is concentrated in the hands of competing groups, even genuine attempts to establish commonly accepted norms or rules are greeted with scepticism or even hostility. There, it is seen by the public merely as an attempt by one interest group to gain the upper hand. More often than not this is in fact what happens. Distrust is actively spread by the media, which itself is mostly controlled by various interest groups, who use it to undermine their opponents. In such an environment, changes happen only with permission of the interest groups. In most cases, reforms stall because someone who stands to lose mounts an anti-campaign. The particular interests are only aligned with modernising change when they stand to win from it or if there is an even bigger threat to their power and influence. The solution could be authoritarian

[21] 'It is not the rational planning that determines political decisions but the question which clients are important and which benefits can they be served with. What can appear as abuse of office, i.e. corruption, is in this case covered by social norms and expectations. One would disregard these and this sense act "wrong" if he sticks to the formal law and roles. What is actually legitimate is to make resources of the Government and other organizations available to clientelistic networks' (Holzer 2015 p. 158)

modernisation, led by a highly centralised enlightened power suppressing any dissent and crushing challengers with force. This option appears in different guises throughout recent history (e.g. Chile, South Korea, China). For Ukraine, the authoritarian option seems unlikely to succeed due to its heterogeneity. Attempts to centralise control under one regime and group so far resulted in forceful rejection from other groups. Both Maidans (2004 and 2013-2014) can be read this way. The other options are a difficult search for minimal social consensus, bottom-up organisation, trial and error struggle in order to make small incremental changes over the long-term. As argued in previous sections, such democratically legitimate and therefore sustainable modernisation can be guided and sped up by modernising the culture. This means cultivating discursive rationality and noumenal power. This is what I mean with civic culture: practices of consensus-building that accept irreducible pluralism on the one hand, while sustaining overarching citizenship on the other. This requires a view of modernisation that does not pre-define the end objectives of development, as classical modernisation does with market economy, electoral democracy, and scientific progress. Doing so radicalises these principles to the point where they undermine development itself. Instead, they should be relegated to the status of non-exclusive tools. Applied selectively, along with other tools such as deliberative democracy, selective state leadership in the spheres relevant for the social balance, they can serve the end of modernisation. This way they are tempered in relation to other objectives such as justice, order, cohesion. If so, modernity may not be as uniform in line with modernisation theory as one imagined.

Multiple Modernities

A different understanding of modernity was suggested by Shmuel Eisenstadt, who saw it as a cultural program originating in conceptual shifts about human nature and ability, which has the consequence of pluralising the resulting cultures (Eisenstandt, 2002, pp. 1-30). Instead of one normative program assumed to have a global homogenising force, there are multiple programs arising from cultures reacting to the same problem.

Quoting James D. Faubian's reading of Weber, Eisenstadt locates the departure point of modernity in 'a certain deconstruction' of, as he writes:

> the ethical postulate that the world is a God-ordained and hence somehow meaningfully and ethically oriented cosmos […] The threshold of modernity may be marked precisely at the moment when the unquestioned legitimacy of a divinely preordained social order began its decline. Modernity emerges—or, more accurately, a range of possible modernities

> emerge—only when what had been seen as an unchanging cosmos ceases to be taken for granted. (Faubian J.D. in ibid, pp. 3-4)

Therefore, modernity is born at the point of disappearance of ontological certainty as the principle of social order. Classical modernisation theory assumes that this universal problem determines development path that is just as universal. Eisenstadt's multiple modernities idea denies this conclusion. While problematic of the loss of certainty is general, the response to it isn't. If the history of modernity is that of 'constitution and reconstitution of cultural programs' (ibid), then each cultural program will make its imprint on the response to the loss of certainty. Ontological assumptions that may no longer enjoy unquestioned authority vary across different cultures. First, this means that the response to the deconstruction will also be different. Second, it does not mean that these assumptions are scrapped altogether. Instead, their place in the legitimatory discourses change. While most states may not be theocratic anymore, it does not mean that their transcendental legitimation disappeared. Nuances of attitude to political authority and social status absorbed into specific political cultures may not be legally codified, but nonetheless shine through. This is not a kind of cultural conservatism, where old practices persevere regardless of modern façade. Societies do change as a result of the onset of modernity. But the outcome is not uniform. Different cultures encountering the same existential problem transform and reconstitute, but the outcome relies on different cultures creating different orders.

The consequence is that 'Modernity and Westernization are not identical; Western patterns of modernity are not the only "authentic" modernities, though they enjoy historical precedence and continue to be a basic reference point for others' (Eisenstandt, 2002, pp. 2-3). Having this reference point doesn't necessarily lead to having an example to model the future on. At the base level, as Eisenstandt continues:

> the cultural program of modernity entailed distinct shifts in the conception of human agency, and of its place in the flow of time. It carried a conception of the future characterized by a number of possibilities realizable through autonomous human agency. The premises on which the social, ontological and political order were based, and the legitimation of that order were no longer taken for granted. An intensive reflexivity developed around the basic ontological premises of structures of social and political authority – a reflexivity shared even by modernity's most radical critics, who in principle denied its validity. (ibid, p.3)

Again, on the one hand we have reflexivity as the cognitive engine of modernity that is a universal. Reflexivity means asking the questions of, 'why do I do what I do?' and 'why do I think what I think?' Asking the same

question about the social 'we' leads to the recognition of ideological and institutional patterns that bear the mark of the respective culture. While the same reflexivity allows contestation of the basic assumptions, it doesn't mean it leads to the same outcome everywhere.[22]

Even from this brief discussion a certain tension between universalism and pluralism in modernity transpires. On the one hand, modernity brings with it the 'possibility that society could be formed by conscious human activity' (ibid, p.5). Such possibility carries danger of a totalistic over-extension that realizes various eschatological, radical visions or, in a softer version assuming a single path to a single end-point. In such a case, different values and rationalities are homogenised into a totality. Eisenstandt mentions the Enlightenment as a carrier of this tendency due to that fact that its concept of reason 'subsumed value-rationality under instrumental rationality into a totalising moralistic utopian vision' (ibid, pp. 7-8). Pluralism is therefore a counter-concept first of all to utopianism. It counteracts universalism in so far as it undermines irreducible pluralism but does not deny the universalism of pluralism itself. In so far as universalistic vision brings about homogenization, pluralistic and universalistic visions clash. Thus, there is another tension: between the civic and the utopian. Homogenising (or totalising) utopianism always runs counter to the (potential) societal consensus built out of civic deliberation. Historical examples of popular support of such utopianism rested on deactivation of any civic process and opposition.

The cognitive engine of reflexivity that guides the dynamics of modernity is a highly adaptable problem-solver that nonetheless leaves the foundational issue of ontological and ethical uncertainty intact. If there is a plurality of views and beliefs about what can and should be universal, it is the political and cultural structure that affords these views and beliefs to co-exist while containing dangerous conflicts.

---

[22] Arnason (2002) assigns a major role to reflexivity in his discussion of Soviet version of modernity. Importantly, for him the Soviet empire was 'a distinctive but ultimately self-destructive version of modernity. If so - crisis and collapse of the Soviet empire may have some bearing on the question of more general crises tendencies inherent in modernity' (p.61). Thus, the Soviet experience should be understood within the problematic of modernity and not outside of it. Vice-versa, reasons for its ultimate failure may contain insights into the issues of modernity as we experience them today, long after the Soviet Union is gone. The role of reflexivity is one of those insights: 'Educational and scientific institutions were subordinated to the guidelines of an ideology that claimed to represent a scientific word view but was defined by critical observers as a secular religion. With regard to the human sciences, the ideological framework was much greater importance: whole disciplines were delegitimized, authoritative paradigms were imposed [...] All of this limited the role of reflexivity in social life: ability to confront problematic aspects and consequences of modernising processes was undermined by a priori restrictions' (p. 68).

Further loosening the assumption that modernity's single normativity comes with questioning a widely assumed commonality of modernity in its ostensible epicentre: Western Europe and North America. Bjoern Wittrock argued that it is '[…] simply not true that all these countries have had roughly similar types of economic and political institutions […] Throughout the last two centuries there have been deep differences between Western countries in the way a society, a market economy, and modern political forms are best organized' (Wittrock, 2002, p. 33). And these differences are not merely technical—they are profound. As an example, Wittrock mentions the 'much more' prominent role most European countries assign to the state overseeing and indeed shaping market interactions than has North America: 'In many of these countries the state has not been seen just as a form of rulership, but, to paraphrase Hegel, as the embodiment of the idea of ethical life, with specific task of shaping the framework for all other societal interactions, including the economy and the family' (ibid).

The differences come into sharper focus if one considers electoral democratic politics and liberal market economy as prime attributes of modernity. If so, then modernity hardly existed even in Europe until mid-20th century (ibid, p. 36). Later, western European countries shared the preoccupation with order as a consequence of the Second World War, but their response to the problem of order was marked by the respective cultural conception of order. Differences here are just as important as similarities.

If single modernity is deconstructed, what remains? Wittrock follows down a path similar to Eisenstadt. Profound changes did occur during the age we call 'modern'. Empirical observation of the multiple institutional ways modernity manifests itself points back to the cultural constitution of modernity. Institutional elements such as nation states, market economy, education, and science are all based on a shift in conceptual understanding about human subjectivity, i.e. 'their rights and agency' (ibid, p. 36). This subjectivity's expansion created 'promissory notes that came to constitute new affiliations, identities, and, ultimately, institutional realities' (ibid). In other words, the collapse of the old order and authority's presumed permanence, which rested on ontological certainty, created a set of expectations that surpass institutional realities and push them toward fulfilling these expectations. Modernity, then, is a set of expectations that structures worldviews, political orders, and discourses. Its institutional fulfilment tends to lag behind expectations, which thus remain never truly fulfilled. These expectations or 'promissory notes' for Wittrock are a truly 'global condition' (ibid, p. 55), as no one (i.e. no culture) can avoid the problematic of expansion of human agency and fundamental uncertainty. Cultures have to formulate a response while being inside this problematic. The condition is global, but the response retains cultural specificity.

Private versus common spheres

Understanding modern societies as differentiated into spheres (i.e. the economy, government, arts, science, religion, media, education, healthcare and civil society) poses a question about the relationship and interaction between these spheres. The empirical question relevant to this dissertation would be how people navigate these spheres and participate simultaneously in all of them. The normative question would be what should the relationship between these spheres be in light of chosen normative objective (in the case of this work—justice). A fruitful way to look at these problems is to think about the social spheres as arranged according to the criteria private versus common (or public). As laid out in section 2.1, the normative question guiding this work is what kind of social arrangement is conducive to justice, understood as an accommodation of pluralism. Hence, certain aspects of social life are assumed to be deeply private; these are aspects that have to do with beliefs, lifestyles, and values. Here, pluralism is irreducible. But it can only exist within a structure where commonality, balance, and moral normativity (stabilised politically) are the structuring principles. If so, different social spheres would have private and common elements in them with proportions varying depending on the sphere. In addition, these proportions will be highly contested. Some examples pertinent to this work:

1. **Economy.** Businesses might be private, but the framework of social acceptability of business practice is common. What elements of social acceptability should be regulated and how far do they intrude into the private will be contested. Nevertheless, insofar as the premise of private business, is that private initiatives are socially beneficial, the 'privateness' will be more pronounced than commonality. The economy, however, does not only consist of private business. Here, of course, there is even more contestation. But seeing that the state is involved in shaping the economy, it does so under the premise that the power is applied for the collective benefit. The economy will thus have a strong private side as well as an important common dimension, with an actual border between the two being highly contested.

2. **Government.** The institutional political power lies in the common sphere and should be protected from private interests. That much is undebatable. The scope of common interest is highly contested.

3. **Civil society.** Between public institutions of the government and individual interests of citizens (economic, political, ecological, and social) there is a space for civil society, where citizens can deliberate, formulate problems, stage conflicts, and communicate solutions. This is the space where the private becomes public, with the objective to influence institutional power. This is the space of discourse, where

consensus is the regulative idea. While the literal society-wide consensus is unlikely to be achieved, staging conflict via discourse, channelling energies, establishing communication, and exposing various positions all contribute to negotiating acceptable policies.

To what extent certain social spheres are private and hence left to self-develop according to a plurality of options available is highly debatable. The arguments in such a debate will depend on one's normative position. Normativity explained in the previous section suggests that art, for instance, would be highly private in its creative origin. Exhibiting it permanently in a public space would represent an attempt to bridge the private and the common. Science**,** on the other hand, has a strong premise of commonality. Whatever scientific method is able to tell us about the world – the world is shared, hence the consequences potentially affect everyone. Media**,** at least that which conveys information about events, and interprets social, political, and economic issues is a common sphere and creates the world itself via the language, images, and emotions it produces. Religion**,** notwithstanding its historical cultural weight and continued social importance, is a matter of private belief. Certainly, it affects the common sphere, but from a highly diverse array of creeds, confessions, interpretations, and standpoints available for deeply personal commitment.

Within a particular order, all social spheres have to be arranged with a consideration to the private versus common differentiation. While specific degrees of privacy and commonality will be contested, there are some clear limits that most should agree with. For instance, that the government acts in the common interest; legitimate private business relies on private initiative; a plurality of beliefs and values is irreducible; media conveys publicly vital information; and that art is about individual vision and expression. Conflicts will arise about how to actualise these principles, for example, is private or state media (or some regulated mixture thereof) more capable to convey accurate information? In the end, just orders may include both private and public solutions to the problems that concern media, education, science, healthcare but with underlying premise that they are spheres of common interest.

Intellectual discourse

I suggest that in a just order that enables plurality, a substantial part of the economy, art, faith, matters of family are part of the private sphere. This is one side of the equation that allows a plurality of values and life choices to co-exist. The other side of it is the common sphere. Here, the remaining part of the economic sphere reside, the government, civil society, media, science,

healthcare, education. The common sphere is the locus for the idea of civil culture as practices that allow this sphere to work for the common interest. The practices in question are discursive. The discourse aimed at promotion and defence of the common interest is the practice of noumenal power and discursive rationality. Hence, the objective of my research is to analyse the sections of the discourse where such practices may develop.

My hypothesis is that the earliest signals of such development could be found in the intellectual discourse, understood broadly as public communication of ideas, visions, and critique pertaining to the development of the country and society. In the case of Ukraine, I call it *discourse on reform.* I take such communication to be more than idle chat, political games, or economic interests disguised rhetorically. Quite often it is all of those things. Nonetheless, anyone who dips in the Ukrainian discourses will notice real attempts to understand predicaments, articulate them publicly and suggest solutions. The resulting discursive formation is a snapshot of the political culture, where one can discern certain narrative patterns that could signal various potentialities for the future development. Scholars in this area often refer to the importance of intellectual discourse for the ongoing reproduction of social realities For example, Eisenstadt made the connection between intellectual activism and social action: 'Ongoing reconstructions of institutional and ideological patterns are carried forward by specific social actors in close connection with social, political, and intellectual activists and also by social movements pursuing different programs of modernity' (Eisenstadt, 2002, p. 2).

What makes the research of Ukrainian intellectual discourse between 2013 and 2019 exciting is that this time period provides a wealth of discursive information that, if arranged using the right conceptual optics can yield valuable insights. This a chance to map out a political culture and set the baseline for future interpretative and analytical efforts. In short: 'Intense intellectual activities of a critical, historical and reflexive nature are among the key defining features of periods of major cultural crystallization (Wittrock, 2002 p. 55).

An important dimension of this cultural crystallisation is the 'fight for recognition' (Giesen, 2016, pp. 118-132) of different identities and the contestation of what should count as collective identity. In a major social event such as Euromaidan, previously disparate actors undergo an intense experience of collective action that makes a collective actor out of them. As Giesen states: 'The existence of a collective actor cannot be separated from the practice of its action and concomitant construction of collective identity' (ibid p.119). This means that collective actors create themselves, while collective identity chrysalises at important historical junctures, where collective action is possible at a large scale. The issue then becomes that this

collective actor and collective identity does not cover the entire society but is instead confined to a certain sub-group. Thus, there is an ongoing process of negotiation of identity, compromise, and limits of acceptability between multiple social factions. An actual shared identity can only rely on voluntary agreement, or non-coercive assimilation. This is where discourse shapes the actual cultural compromises as opposed to idealised versions of unified collectivity, often assumed in foundational myths as having to do revolutionary heroism and struggle against foreign oppressors. In the words of Giesen: 'Such internal discourses about common identity are fundamentally dependant on free recognition and consensus - coercion and deceit are incompatible with a notion of collective self-determination; this is only successful when all participants equally voluntarily recognise themselves in the image of identity' (ibid p. 121). In the case of post-Euromaidan Ukraine, this means an intense demand for the recognition of certain versions of identity that risks being over-extended toward collectivities that do not accept it. The clash and negotiation of compromise happens first of all discursively, most pointedly, in the intellectual discourse.

2.3 Political Narrativity

The reform discourse is structured narratively. Models of development function as stories that have characters, i.e. subjects who connect present to the past and offer visions of future. The political logic unfolds in the narrative from the assumptions about the subject who acts to bring about the desirable future. The ontology of the subject, its composition, agency, history, and quality are all contained within the narrative. Behind individual claims of political actors and intellectual activists about the development of the country, there must be a larger story within which these claims acquire meaning. Such stories purport to provide explanations of the current state of affairs in a society and contain an expectation or a vision of a future (shaped by normative assumptions).

Such stories provide insights into their tellers' assumptions about the world. Disseminated through public discourses, where existing configurations of power gives them their shape, such stories coalesce, accumulate, and harden with time into political cultures and institutional realities. Various narratives produced by discursive agents should thus be seen as much as expressions of the concurrent political culture as 'contributions' to this political culture's development over time. The central feature of political culture consists in it being the source of models of subjectivity available to individuals and groups. In what follows, I attempt to connect ontological, epistemological, and political aspects of narrative theory to a culturalist social science method.

Political culture is constructed through narratives. The concept of culture, as described in sections 1.2 and 2.1 rests on understanding of culture as a continuous process. Culture is continuously re-produced as the result of discourses. In this processual model, discourse moves the process forward (and hence reproduces culture). Changes that happen along the way do not come out of nowhere: the formation of a new cultural element can be traced back to a preceding cultural element. The time dimension, along which culture exists as a process, requires a narrative toolkit to grasp, describe, and influence it.

Stories constitute a political culture. Individual narratives can vary or even clash, they can contain subplots and accommodate a wide range of worldviews, but to be constitutive part of one culture, they have to share some overarching motif(s), character(s), and idea(s). For example, Patterson & Monroe (1998) spotlight the notions of 'liberty' and 'American dream' as shared elements in all American political narratives. Communicating meaning successfully in the political domain, thereby claiming power, needs connection to a more general symbolic system. It provides conventionally stabilised rules which allow to establish plausibility and acceptability of the communicated meaning. A specific political stance, argument, or vision can be understood only in relation to this general symbolic system. Standalone claims are meaningless. Even the most concise utterances in the political sphere have to be formulated in such a way as to activate a whole network of recognisable meanings connecting the particular instance of language use to general story that lends plausibility and ultimately—legitimacy.

The ontological point, that political culture is constituted by narratives, is only viable if we accept the constitutive role of narrative in the social, i.e. political reality as we experience it. This implies that events become politically 'real' if they are recognized in light of certain principles of narrativity. Experiences do not appear to us as isolated happenings, but are understood as in some way connected. They become meaningful when presented within a story that lends them coherence, where parts are no longer random but are related. Making sense of the world and especially communicating this sense further, in the context of social interaction, requires us to put our experiences into some meaningfully connected chain as opposed to seeing them as a mere succession of fragments. Such cognitively-mandated[23] narrativity triggers creation of narrative models of thought and communication with implications for action and behavior. These models acquire causal power of their own. Each new experience has to get its place

[23] The question whether this mandate arises directly and necessarily from the natural structure of the mind, or has more to do with cultural history is out of scope for this dissertation. The logical hypothesis within the context of this inquiry would be that cultural aspect of narrativity is significant.

in a larger story. If an experience does not fit into the larger story as it was told so far, the story itself has to be re-written, and subsequent actions shall be made consistent with the new story.

While such a general 'anthropological' narrative way of ordering experience of the world can be thought of as near-universal (at least in the European cultural tradition), specific narratives differ in terms of the content of their constitutive elements and meaning-construction resulting from them. Narrative discourse is culture-specific due to dependency on particular symbolic worlds. The cultural boundaries are fluid and ever-shifting but one can outline them, however provisionally, by establishing differences between the contents of narratives. Cultural boundaries will thus be visible where there is a difference between the content and significance of the same narrative element. This task is made more difficult by the fact that political discourse is a site of cultural contestation, where conflicting views are expressed. In the maze of disagreements, one can yet recognise a pattern, consisting of certain 'nodal' ideas/concepts (e.g. the American dream) that define a political culture, even if through disagreement itself. Here, narrative becomes also a tool of analysis.

Narrative therefore plays a multi-faceted role, namely: ontological (constitution of social reality), communicative (form of inter-subjective communication), cognitive/epistemological (mode of knowing the world for both the social actors and the researcher), and political (mode of claiming, maintaining, and increasing power). To operationalise such thinking for social research, one has to elucidate what separates narrative from other forms of thought, representation, and analysis, in finer detail to arrive at a workable definition of narrativity.

Concept of a Narrative

The concept of the narrative has its roots in literature. In literary theory, it refers to a formal structure of a literary work most commonly associated with a genre of novel. Its prominence in literary theory goes back to the historical rise of prose in the 19th and 20th centuries and establishment of novel as the main literary genre of modernism (see Zink, 2010, p.164). Narrative literary theory was traditionally concerned with technical aspects of narration in a text. Some general examples are:

- Typical action sequences that are shared between different stories and can be seen as a universal structure underlying certain genres (famously Vladimir Propp (1895-1970), with his 'Morphology of Magical Tale');

- The role of the narrator as the medium in fiction, as opposed to immediate presentation (see W. Schmid, 2014, p.1) and;

- The distinction between story and plot where the former stands for the actual content of the events being presented while the latter stands for causal-chronological chain of action (Zink, 2010, p.165).

Drawing on this tradition, W. Schmid provides a minimal definition of narrative text as a presentation of change in the state of a subject (2014, pp. 1-9). Per W. Schmid's definition, the main characteristics of narrative texts are:

- **Temporal structure.** There must be at least two states at two different points in time;

- **Equivalence.** The two states must be equivalent and refer to the same characteristic of a subject. For example, presenting something as large at the first point in time and round at the second does not constitute a narrative since 'large' and 'round' are not equivalent (unless one makes a case that in some sense they are). Examples of equivalent states in this context are life and death; struggle and contentment; poverty and wealth, and so on.

- Reference to the **same subject.** The narrative form exists where the state of the same subject is referred to in the text at both points in time.

The feature that distinguishes narrative texts from other types of texts is the dynamism that brings the changes affecting the same subject at (at least) two different points in time to the centre of the discourse. The change itself is the discourse. Narratives therefore have a temporal structure as opposed to descriptive texts that present static states or situations. One further feature of a narrative is causality between the two or more states presented in the text. While in literary texts, such causality often stays implicit or it remains open whether it exists at all (W. Schmid, 2014, pp.1-9), narratives in the social setting such as politics tend to express causality directly.

Literary narratology thus focuses on the narrative forms as encountered in text as part of inquiry into the aesthetics of prose. It was then extended into anthropology by structuralists, such as Claude Lévi-Strauss. Structuralism aimed to uncover 'deep' structures of language that could explain human thought (and by extension—action). Here narratology served the purpose of searching for universal plots to reflect and shape all human experience. Post-structuralism, on the other hand, argued against universality and focused on the fragmentary, and the contextual. General, all-embracing narratives were dismissed as illusory as part of the challenge to 'centred' explanations of the

world as such. The role of the narrative here was to show the lack of a unified centre from which the world as a whole can be understood.

A different set of theories of narrative stems from observation that we generally tend to perceive occurrences that follow each other as connected. This opens up a broad possibility of enquiry that touches on other fields, such as psychology and anthropology. Perhaps the structure of stories as they are told, regardless whether fictional or not, explains more than the aesthetic appeal of a work of literature. Perhaps it also tells something about how the human mind interacts with its environment and how it makes sense of its surroundings and evolves with them. Influential ideas in this area come from Jerome Bruner (1915-2016), who applied literary theory and the philosophy of language, associated with narratology, to the study of human mind. Here, narrative becomes 'a form of ordering experience'. Bruner's line of thought starts from a critique of the theories dominating the study of mind, which focused either on universal mechanisms of the mind (rationalism), or the mind's interaction with the natural environment (empiricism). Both traditional strands of theory in this area presented the growth of the mind as a linear, standard process spanning all areas of human experience. Bruner, on the other hand, emphasised the 'domain-specific', 'non-linear' nature of knowledge, arising from the fact that 'cultural products like language and other symbolic systems mediate thought and place their stamp on our representations of reality' (Bruner, 1991, p. 215). Departing from the classical Enlightenment position, which stressed innate logic and/or determinable reactions to the external physical environment as the basis to all types of knowledge, Bruner suggested narrative as an alternative form of creating knowledge.

In this view, certain domains are narratively constituted. Specifically the ones of human interaction. This implies a kind of 'blind spot' of scientific inquiry in social sciences. Since the focus was on verifiable propositions and/or logical necessity, social domains and knowledge thereof were explored as if it consisted of predictable, universal elements analogous to the physical world. If our knowledge of social domains and behaviour of social actors within them arises from narrative constructions through culturally-situated symbolic systems, rather than being a more or less mechanical function of the mind, an enquiry into problematic of social interaction (e.g. cooperation, consensus, conflict, negotiation), has to look for the narratives that social actors rely on when making sense of the world. Narrative, consequently, can be thought of as another form of perception, organisation, and representation of *social* reality (by which I mean all domains of human interaction). Such a wide application of the concept of narrativity is due to the impossibility of disentangling forms of representation (narrative discourse) from the mode of thought itself (Bruner, 1991, p. 216). They are always mutually enabling.

Important consequence of assigning epistemological role to Narrativity is letting go of full objectification of social actors. Narratives provide insight into the reasons for the things that subjects do, rather than direct causes. The subjects themselves are assumed to have some degree of agency in choosing the reasons for their actions. This is what Bruner calls 'intentional state entailment' (1991, p. 218); one of the basic features of his concept of narrative. Since subjects possess a narrative ability, they are also able to answer why they think and act the way they do, which necessarily includes a narrative account. Answering the 'why' indicates an ability to act in accordance with one's own intentions. By answering the 'why' questions about personal actions, the very self is constituted. Hence 'the self' is primarily a narrative construct that evolves as the self-told story changes (see Bruner, 2003, pp. 63-87). When it comes to social research, enquiry into narratives cannot provide a fully objective causal explanations of actions, but rather a basis for their interpretation stemming from information distilled from narrative accounts of subjects. Bruner identified following 10 formal features of narrativity (1991, pp. 217-230):

Table 1. Features of narrativity

	Feature	**Description**
1	Narrative diachronicity	Contains account of events occurring over time.
2	Particularity	References a particular happening which could fall into a more general type.
3	Intentional state entailment	People acting in a setting with some degree of agency/freedom, which is never full—it only refers to the subject's perception of the situation.
4	Hermeneutic composability	Parts are expressions of the whole, while the whole is constituted by functional parts.
5	Canonicity and breach	Contains the element of surprise—otherwise no need for narrative.
6	Referentiality	Basis for acceptability is verisimilitude (not verifiability of truth).
7	Genericness	Assignability to genre with implications for ontology (creating realities depicted) and epistemology, or shaping models of thought.
8	Normativeness	'Breach presupposes a norm' (Bruner,1991, p. 225).

9	Context sensitivity and negotiability	Instrument of cultural negotiation.
10	Narrative accrual	Narratives accrue into shared cultures, traditions, and histories.

The last feature—narrative accrual—connects Bruner's general anthropological theory of narrative to cultural theory as described in preceding sections. In short, we move from a construction of 'the self' to a construction of 'the we'. The tendency of narrative accounts to accumulate and harden into cultures prompts questions about their workings in the various cultural areas. Since the topic of this dissertation is political culture, the next step is to make use of the narrative theory in the inquiry into the content of political culture and how it changes with the flow of time.

Politics is a social domain that heavily relies on stories. Here are some examples of how this fact can be used to create a research methodology:

1. Sommers & Gibson (1994) single out the following features of political narratives:
   - **Relationality of parts**: individual parts can be joined into a connected chain to ultimately form a whole
   - **Causal emplotment**: individual parts can be located in a plot that determines the causal relationship;
   - **Selective appropriation**: some information is omitted for the sake of narrative coherence;
   - **Temporality**: narratives contain an internal time scale along which individual parts can be located.
2. Patterson & Monroe (1998) speak of the following characteristics of the political narrative:
   - **Agency:** narratives assume agency of their actors;
   - **Focus on the out of the ordinary**: the main reason to construct a narrative is to bring attention to something unexpected and surprising;
   - **Sequential ordering of events**: the sequence itself generates meaning;

- Expresses **narrator's perspective**: provides the speaker's sense of self and their surroundings.

3. U. Schmid (2014) performed a literary analysis of the Soviet and Russian constitutions to identify 'discursive ideology' (p. 432) within the texts of these constitutions in the form of narratives. The focus here was on the meaning conveyed by the generic and rhetorical characteristics. The texts were analysed to establish the (master) plot, characters, central events, 'visions of salvation', and 'promise of the happy end'.

4. U. Schmid (2018) also analysed the writings of the Ukrainian writer and politician, Wolodymyr Wynnytschenko (1880-1951), who in 1918 became the head of the short-lived Ukrainian state project, UNR, which existed between the collapse of Russian empire and establishment of Soviet control (1917-1921). The analysis focused on the evolution of Wynnytschenko's political ideology as reflected in his literary writings. The narratives contain the mix of ideas that shaped his very understanding of political subjectivity, i.e. the role of individual in history as opposed to various teleologies (Marxist or Hegelian), and show how these ideas evolved with the changing circumstances. The choice of the literary genre here played a role to emphasise the shifts in interpretation of ongoing events. The struggle to create the Ukrainian nation and the role of subject in this process was represented as diary writings, epic drama, short novel (in chronological order). Depending on the genre, political subjectivity was depicted with various degrees of autonomy and by utilising different ideological mixes comprising elements borrowed from Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche.

5. E. Bacon (2012) provided an analysis of public political narratives[24] of the Putin-Medvedev era in Russa by describing the following elements:

   - **Central motifs**: the main themes of the political discourses (e.g. stability, unity, and patriotism);

   - **Temporalities**: the time scales that determine temporal relationships between individual events and frame the overall narratives by establishing the beginning, locating the present, and hinting at the future;

   - **Symbols:** the most prominent symbolic elements, such as anthems, national holidays, and historical references;

[24] 'Public political narrative consists of a sequential account given by dominant political actors connecting selected, specific developments as to impose a desired order on them' (Bacon, 2012, p. 771).

- **Agency:** heroes, victims, and villains;
- **Plots and sub-plots**: liberal-democratic, social-conservative, and state patriotic views accommodated within one story as sub-plots;
- **Alternative Narratives**, Alternative futures: other possibilities that emphasise the correctness of the chosen path.

6. Klymenko L. (2016) distilled a set of historical narratives depicting the Second World War in contemporary high school history books in Ukraine and Russia. The resulting narratives are thought to be nation-building ideological tools with concomitant weight given to support Russian or Ukrainian national projects.

Narrative of Justification

The concept of narrative of justification is borrowed from Rainer Forst, who defines it as: '...Forms of embodied rationality as this is where images, stories, rituals, facts and myths harden into impactful general narratives which serve as resource to giving meaning to the order'. (Forst, 2015, p. 87) The addition of 'justification' to 'narrative' seeks to account for reason-giving that is a normative requirement for social communication in general and especially of political communication. This grounds narrativity normatively into 'moral' rationality. Based on the definition of Reason as an ability of humans to orient themselves in the world and recognise responsibility through justifying reasons, with Forst:

> This orientation and taking responsibility for oneself is a social practice of culturally and historically situated beings, which are on the one hand free to choose the reasons, but on the other hand are bound by the reasons available to them. The space of reasons is a space of justifications, that legitimate not only separate actions, but also complex action orders, meaning social arrangements and political institutions. (Forst, 2015, p. 85)

The 'reasons available' are weaved into narratives of justification accepted as credible and hence serve as a socially effective, ideational foundation that makes sense of common experiences and expectations. Narratives of justification, therefore, carry a normative power that is a necessary resource to legitimise the establishment and continued existence of social structures in the shape of norms, institutions, systems, and orders. The fact that the justification narrative and concomitant normative power exist does not yet mean that the resulting order is justified. Analysing political narratives as narratives of justification already implies that justifications can be of varying quality. This opens possibilities for critique of political arrangements in terms

of their justifiability. The 'reasons available' can be better or worse. Analysing justification narratives thus requires a descriptive method and then a reference to (however minimal) normative criteria of quality, significant disregard of which helps to explain social conflicts. Normative evaluation, however, is always challenging as it lays bare the researcher's own normative stance, which has to be justified in its own right. This aspect was addressed extensively in section 2.1.

Hayden White suggested that giving narrative form to events and experiences means imposing an order on them that serves the purpose of moralising judgements. The wish to see coherence, consistency, and pattern indicates the origin of the narrative in the moral ideas that give form to whatever narrative structure is ultimately imposed on reality. There has to be motivational impulse for a narrative—and if there is no normative (e.g. moral) point to be made—the account of events and experiences would be merely descriptive. The narrative appears where an explanation of why/how things occurred the way they did and/or what should follow is wanted. Such will is a claim of agency.

'What else could narrative closure consist of than the passage from one moral order to another?' (White, 1981, p.77). Here White's point seems to be that a conclusion within an account of events is only possible by assigning significance to an event on the grounds that it indicates a shift in moral meaning—a passage from one moral state to another—a qualitative shift in the content of experience. Such a conclusion is a device necessitated by the narrative form, itself derived from the desire to present reality in a particular way. There is the desire to understand it, but always through inescapable prism of implicit value-judgements. This dissonates with the scientific requirement of objectivity in reality representation. Narrative as a scientific tool (e.g. in historical writing) can therefore never be fully objective. It recounts events and experiences by putting them into a connected chain based on the reasons that the narrator recognises as valid. The acceptance of this narrative account by others will depend on the intersubjective validity of these reasons—not on objectively determinable criteria. This analysis of narratives, as I intend to conduct it, does not (and cannot) aim at objectively establishing the state of political culture, but only at taking a snapshot of what actual actors see it as. Because someone's account of political culture is narrative in form, I direct my inquiry towards reasons that they communicate via their narratives. These reasons form a moral substructure for any cultural practice. It is discursive contestation of existing reasons and of what counts as a (good) reason that changes the cultural practice. The flaws inherent in the narrative representation of events have to be counteracted by critical distance. In White's words:

> I have sought to suggest that this value attached to narrativity in representation of real events arises out of a desire to have real events display the coherence, integrity, fullness, and closure of an image of life that is and can only be imaginary. (White, 1981, p.78)

This, in my view, does not invalidate narrative as a way of makings sense of reality. It shifts the focus away from the supposed objectivity of narrative to the (intersubjective) validity of reasons either communicated directly or implicit in the narrative. As per White, the narrative as a concept incorporates normativity already. The issue therefore is not the methodological objectivity of the narrative but the status of normativity that is included into the narrative. Can this normativity be objective? As part of this work I assume that most one can aim for is not objective, but the intersubjective validity of moral claims.

Normativity is a common conceptual element in all the theories raised in this research project. To start, there is Kettner's concept of culture (see section 1.2), where normativation is one of the basic elements of culture. Then, Forst's 'right for justification', which is a normative requirement for just order, to Bruner's argument for fundamental necessity of narrative for cognitive comprehension of reality that includes 'normativeness' as one of the constitutive elements. Next, White's critical argument that brings normativity (in the form of morality) into the very definition of the concept of narrative. The objective of this work is to reconstruct the political discourse as narratives of justification in order to make normativity explicit and interrogate it in light of general normative criteria derived from Forst's right for justification. Therefore, the next step has to specify how a narrative of justification will be distilled from the broader discourse.

What are the identifiers of such a narrative—and what would a narrative of justification consist of? Reasons weaved into temporal account of some aspect of political reality is one consideration. Other elements of political narratives that were already mentioned above (causality, master plot, genre, agency, central motifs, and symbols) will also help illuminate the nature and quality of a particular narrative. The more descriptive statements will be present as well as overtly normative ones, while both together have to be considered to distil the normativity. Based on the synthesis of theories described in preceding sections, I take narratives to be normative by definition, hence descriptive statements in narratives of justification serve the ultimate purpose to convey some kind of moral message. In addition, the practice of narrative can be summarised as 'claim of subjectivity'. Telling a story, especially in the political domain is about claiming subjectivity. The details on operational design of the research to follow are described in the next section.

2.4 Research Design

The objective of this research project is to order the political discourse in Ukraine into a typology of narratives and attempt to evaluate them in light of the normative idea of civil culture. The Maidan protests sparked an intense exchange of arguments and visions out of which one can construct a snapshot of the political culture in time, in its discursive form. The notion of 'reform' is taken to be the thematic 'stabiliser'. Reform encapsulates the central issue of change in contemporary Ukrainian society. Virtually no one sees existing order as good or even sustainable, hence virtually all political communication revolves around issues of change: transition, transformation, development—all of which are conventionally captured by the notion of reform. With time, the rhetoric of reform has become somewhat nebulous and has become a stand-in to mean almost anything. In Ukraine, after almost three decades of reform, the language of reform in the political mainstream has become a rhetorical staple. On the one hand, it tends to have a technocratic tint, often bound-up with the normative program of marketisation. From the 1990s onwards, reform meant primarily deregulation, and institution of free market structures borrowed from the West. On the other hand, the never-ending nature of reform made it into an overused, catch-all label deployed to describe any initiative.

In the context of this research project, I take 'reform' as a generic thematic reference point, a signal term for all language on intentionally promoted political, economic, and social change. According to observable public discourse in Ukraine, reform is the thematic anchor, around which various other ideas (sometimes favourable to the idea of reform, sometimes not) float. Discourse on reform hence includes transition, transformation, development, and even revolution. Consistent with existing discursive practice, I define contemporary Ukrainian political discourse primarily as 'discourse on reform'. This calibrated description points to the need to differentiate between rhetorical conventions and actual discourse. In the first instance, words can be used rather arbitrarily and creatively to denote different things. While in the second, the communicative practice adds up to a certain symbolic formation with tangible, provisionally stabilised meaning. Reform, being the default term to denote deliberate change in various functional spheres of society, is present in most texts and debates that constitute contemporary Ukrainian political discourse, though one has to consider that often the function of the word 'reform' articulates something other than reformism. By making a generalisation that Ukrainian political discourse is a discourse on reform I open the corpus of the texts to be analysed towards the general theme of the visions of common future.

With a distinction between the rhetorical convention of reform and discourse 'on reform' I also aim to avoid a direct normative implication embedded into the title of this work. The presence of 'reform' in the title is not intended as

the first brick in the foundation to justify specific functional reform. It merely highlights that the concept of reform structured political discourse in Ukraine for 30 years.

To reconstruct the discourse as a set of narratives distinguishable by content, I assembled a body of texts containing an intellectual framing of politically actionable change in the spheres of government, economy, and society. The texts are in written form as well as include video speeches and debates, which provides a wealth of 'live' cultural data. I refer to both forms of information as 'text' as part of the methodological approach where fragments are interpreted as parts of the whole. Meaning, separate textual units constitute a discourse that has narrative structure. The narrative itself is held together by its formal elements that transcend one textual unit, author, mode of delivery, time, or place. In this sense, different authors who write and/or speak at different times in different places through various communicative channels nonetheless contribute to the same 'text', the structure of which is narrative. The narratives are differentiated based on their content and ordered by type by comparing formal narrative elements.[25]

The selection criteria for the units of text that constitute the corpus are (1) impact and (2) quality:

1. It is important to capture discourse which has the highest immediate impact in the sense of the widest quantitative reach. The more people are exposed to the message, the larger the immediate impact. This requires selecting the most visible/audible voices shaping public opinion. Texts selected based on the criteria of widest reach originate from authors who are prominent in the public eye. Their names are taken from the various public rankings of influential people, writers, journalists, and bloggers. Emphasis is placed on figures whose public function it is to create meaning: provide arguments, visions, explanations, and interpretations. Hence, it is not the actual position in the ranking that matters, but the meaning-creating status of a particular actor. A businessman or a government official at the top of the ranking, who does not directly contribute to the discourse is not relevant in this case, while a journalist or professor who is at the bottom of the ranking but whose job it is to provide meaning to society, is.

2. Concentrating on mere rankings and mainstream leaves out currents of thought that influence society more subtly. The Ukrainian public sphere is very far from a power-free platform for deliberation. Media resources are famously instrumentalised by their oligarchic owners (see Nikitina, 2020). There is an invisible filtering process that selects people for prominence. Social media too is plagued by paid trolls, echo chambers,

[25] Discussed in Section 2.3.

self-serving partisanship, and non-transparent algorithmic compartmentalisation actively leveraged for strategic power tactics. This means that what is visible on the surface is not enough for deeper understanding. Furthermore, what is most visible may not be the most impactful over the longer term. Certainly, there are power-distortions involved that bar certain discourses from unfolding in plain sight. If the media landscape is characterised by power-political instrumentalisation, its most visible content excludes elements that do not fit into the instrumental 'menu'. Even when multiple, even antagonistic discourses are visible, they are suspect of being part of nuanced choreographing by the gate-keepers of that sphere, their worldview, and interests. If one aims to capture slightly more than what is on the surface, there has to be a certain qualitative judgement on the part of the researcher, a sensor to perceive potential alternatives brewing deeper in the society. Here, this kind of judgement could detect future shifts in the mainstream, other modes of thinking, and political ideas emerging that may become more prominent in the future or are already subtly making their impact below the radar.

The media landscape's fragmentation, driven by the proliferation of social media and YouTube, allows access to an almost limitless supply of commentary. Here, smaller communities coalesce around certain figures. They may not be famous and impactful in the overall society immediately, but could become so later on either directly or by mainstream taking on their ideas. The tell-tell signs of this potentiality are (1) noticeable (though quantitatively relatively small) followings among smaller social groups, meaning less public intellectuals, experts, literary and culturally interested, non-mainstream opposition, counter-culture; and (2) quality of the discourse: more advanced thought tends to exist outside of the noisy epicentre of the public sphere and yet be publicly present in order to influence a smaller circle of people. Selection of such material will naturally involve certain subjective judgement on the part of the researcher. Occasional glimpses into political discourses obscured from view by the public sphere's structure occur during continuous engagement with the blogosphere, old and new media. Here, there is endless referentiality: links are shared, people are tagged, and political spats turn into waves of debates of varying degrees of civility. In this vortex of information, the researcher can yet identify patterns. Some arguments and communities are more numerous, durable, and articulate than others. It is this element that I aim to capture by including the texts by authors who cannot be claimed to be shapers of public opinion by sheer numbers. The texts selected on the basis of my own media monitoring in the search of subtle undercurrents and future alternatives emerging outside of the mainstream originate from authors who are articulate and possess some niche profile.

In aggregating the texts into a specific narrative, I did not distinguish whether underlying text came from a prominent figure or niche figure. There will be both within one narrative. However, there are tendencies where certain narratives are less mainstream than others. For example, the leftist narratives are all but marginalised, the republican narrative is one of elevated intellectual debate, while certain varieties of conservatism and liberalism are pervasive.

Another consideration is the status of the authors whose texts were included into the corpus. While the focus lies with intellectual discourse, the authors may not be exclusively intellectuals in the traditional sense. Classical intellectuals, such as publicly active academics, philosophers, artists, and journalists, are considered. At the same time, so are various bloggers, media personalities, and politicians, who may not be particularly intellectual. Yet, they engage in 'meaning creation' and influence it more directly than actual intellectuals. What interests me is to map out political communication in connection with normativity, all of which is intellectual in the sense of being a product of theorising about the world. The quality of such theorising can vary, while the connection of this quality with the impact on the society is often unclear. Surely, in our contemporary world, it is not intellectual credentials that play the top role—nor the quality of intellectual argument either. Mainstream political discourse, even in the segment tasked with communicating ideas, is dominated by simplified, emotionally calibrated, instrumental language.

One other aspect of a classic intellectual—their moral authority—is also difficult to claim in many instances here in the selected corpus. There are former dissidents, courageous activists, and genuine visionaries who made it into the collection, but so did authors with less noble biographies. What mattered in my selection was to capture both kinds of communication of political ideas: one with a mass audience, regardless of moral and intellectual quality, and one with a degree of moral and intellectual quality—regardless of whether there is a mass audience following along.

To capture the more publicly visible part of the discourse, the texts were collected from Facebook posts, online newspaper articles, YouTube videos, websites, and several compilation books that already collected relevant texts, albeit for a different purpose (i.e., memories and reflections of the Maidan protests). The selection happened based on the name of the author. The names were originally taken from various rankings of influential figures and bloggers prepared by popular media outlets:

Table 2. Rankings of influence

Year	Name of publication	Hyperlink
2013	Top 100 of Correspondent Journal. The Complete list of the most influential people of Ukraine	https://ua.korrespondent.net/ukraine/politics/1595101-top-100-zhurnalu-korrespondent-povnij-spisok-najvplivovishih-lyudej-ukrayini
2014	Top 50 Ukrainian bloggers in Facebook and Twitter. Rating of NV	https://nv.ua/publications/virtualnye-geroi-politiki-i-zhurnalisty-tesnyat-pop-znamenitostey-v-facebook-i-twitter-infografika-nv-22945.html
2015	Ukrainians Filatov and Sharij top the ratings of popular bloggers of Russian-speaking Facebook	https://ain.ua/ru/2015/06/05/ukraincy-filatov-i-sharij-vozglavili-rejting-samyx-populyarnyx-blogerov-russkoyazychnogo-facebook/
2015	Top 100 bloggers of 2015	https://ictv.ua/ru/100bloggers/
2016	Top 100 bloggers of 2016	http://bloggers.fakty.com.ua/2016/
2018	Top 100 bloggers of 2018	http://bloggers.fakty.com.ua/2018/
2019	Top 100 most influential Ukrainians	https://focus.ua/rating/430859-100_samykh_vliiatelnykh_ukraintsev-reiting-2019/
2019	Exposion of super-novices. NV released the rating of the most influential people of Ukraine	https://nv.ua/ukr/ukraine/politics/novoe-vremya-zhurnal-nv-nazvav-top-100-nayvplivovishih-lyudey-ukrajini-2019-novini-ukrajini-50037593.html

To include the non-mainstream names into the analysis, two moves were performed. (1) Any current of thought outside of the mainstream was investigated separately in order to find a voice. For example, leftist views are not represented in the mainstream. Including them into the analysis required looking for relevant communities and media. (2) Continuous monitoring of diverse media - social networks, niche publications, YouTube channels, led to the discovery of smaller communities and less widely known voices that offered more different angles, critique, new ideas which already subtly

influence smaller social groups and possess potential to shift from the niche to the mainstream.

Out of the hundreds of names collected this way, only those were selected whose prominence originates in meaning creation. By that I mean journalists, writers, publicly active academic intellectuals, artists, spiritual leaders, prominent political analysts, engaged businessmen, and professional bloggers with the widest following and relevant thematic content. Politicians were occasionally considered, when they had the status of a primary communicator of ideas. For example, in leader-centred Nationalist strands of discourse, the political leader tends to be simultaneously the main conduit for ideological content.

The individual texts were collected from Facebook posts, online newspaper articles (taking into account popularity rankings of online resources), YouTube videos (often copies of traditional TV broadcasts), and anthology books that already collected relevant texts for a related purpose.

Thematic filtering of texts was performed based on the semantic identifiers linking the text to the topic of reform - words like 'reform', 'transformation', 'change', 'transition', 'revolution', 'national idea', and 'identity' (in connection to political or economic change). The texts identified were then analysed and the content was broken down into narrative elements as defined in section 2.3.

The temporal structure of the research followed this gradation: (1) the lead-up to the Maidan revolt (section 3.1); (2) the Maidan protests from November 2013 until February 2014 as a major historical milestone that highlighted social conflicts, brought change of government and societal expectations for systemic change (section 3.2); (3) The time period between 2014 and approximately mid-2016, after the Maidan, when new visions were articulated and attempted to be realised; (4) Early to mid 2016, when a certain settlement of the new status-quo occurred and expectations of the fundamental change waned (see section 3.4); (5) after mid-2016 until approximately mid-2019, when a contestation of the new status quo ends in the change of the ruling group, which signified a rejection of the new status quo.

In line with this temporal division, the research proceeded as follows:

1. I began by setting a point of departure for the entire research project: the Maidan events that occurred between 2013 and 2014. The Maidan itself is taken to be a historical milestone that concluded the 'post-Soviet period' and amplified changes within Ukrainian society. Discursively, this was manifested by the massive outpour of views, ideas, interpretations, and visions that up to that point had not been so widely

articulated. My first step was to look at the discourse that chronologically preceded these events. This was done to provide a high-level description of positions that shaped debates and actions that preceded the event to gain understanding of its origin.

The next step was to compile the account of discourses accompanying the Euromaidan protests. The eruption of anti-status quo sentiment provided a wealth of information about various actors' presuppositions about the world that would otherwise remain obscure. The texts selected, which contained these presuppositions, were broken down into their narrative elements as defined in section 2.3 and the first generalisations were made across the corpus. The results are presented in section 3.2. The intention here was to set the scene for later analysis by capturing the kind of discursive vortex underway at the time. At this point, my description and re-construction is rather loose. The revolt brought out a palette of emotions that adds a dimension of authenticity to the inquiry best served not by dry aggregated analysis, but by capturing the mood of the time. The narrative connections were established by means of a meta-narrative, where contents of disparate texts are ordered around formal narrative elements to identify patterns, make connections, and think about the fragments as parts of the whole.

2. Next, based on the outcome of the first inquiry into pre-Maidan and Maidan discourse, I abstracted out the typology of narratives of justification. In order to do so, the narrative form requires two basic formal conditions to be met: subjectivity and passing the subject from one state to another. Political narratives can be differentiated by type based on what kind of distinct thinking and acting agency (i.e. subject) is being presupposed in the text. The grammar requires a subject. Passing this subject from one state to another in the text is the second formal condition of the narrative. These two formal elements allow to differentiate narrative types. For example, the subject in the text might be an abstract, free individual or a collective subject 'nation'. An individual subject passes from one state to another by having external obstacles removed or erected, such as saying the 'nation is built by strengthening shared values'. While rhetorical 'decorations' (signal words, ideological labels, emotional triggers) might be instrumental and hence often used frivolously, assumptions about subjectivity are the foundation without which there is no political discourse. These assumptions, therefore, should be relatively stable. Identifying and differentiating them establishes a relatively robust typology of narratives, which was done in section 3.3.

3. The next step was to illustrate the timeline according to which discourse analysis was performed. The first Post-Maidan period (2014-2016) was a

time of reformist maximalism. Then, a juncture point came in 2016, after which the period of 'post-revolutionary' high expectations was over and a new status-quo emerged (section 3.4). After the juncture, the main theme of the political discourse was not articulation of visions, but rather contestation along the dividing line regarding the new status quo.

4. After the basic scheme for the inquiry, in the form of typology of narratives of justification and periodisation, was set, the next phase was to fill this scheme with content from the time after the Maidan—between early 2014 and midway through 2016. This was a time of new visions and high expectations. Every narrative identified is elucidated in more detail in line with the model of political narrativity outlined in section 2.3. Hence every narrative was provided a description in reference to the following elements: (1) temporality & sequencing; (2) subjects and actors; (3) surprises or breaks in normality; (4) motifs; (5) selectivity; and (6) concepts.

   The ultimate product of the analysis is the master plot of the narrative. The master plot secures the normative thrust of each narrative, of what makes it into a 'narrative of justification'. The central idea here is that the moral content that makes each narrative into a justification one arises from the requirement to comply with assumptions about the subject. Assumptions about the subject create a 'normative force' that holds the narrative together. They do not merely describe what subjectivity is, but construct what the political subject is ought to be with accompanying implications for political action (i.e. what action is possible and desirable). This normative thrust says: if the subject is x, the right set and sequence of actions is a,b,c, *because the subject is x.* For example, if the subject is an individual, then the sequence of actions of a,b,c should free-up the individual because it is the subject.

   After the juncture, the following step was to re-run the same discourse analysis using texts from the time between late 2016 and mid-2019. This second time window, defined as the end of the post-revolution cycle, signified the change of government and coming to power of new forces that contested the post-2016 status quo. Re-running the analysis allowed for new insights from the comparison between 2014 - 2016 (time point 1) and 2016-2019 (time point 2). The results of analysis of both t1 and t2 are presented as a meta-narrative in sections dedicated to the individual narratives.

5. The concluding part of each section dedicated to individual narrative consisted in generalising insights collected from the discourse analysis in t1 and t2 to the level of culture. In line with the concept of culture discussed in section 1.2, as borrowed from M.Kettner and Th.Beschorner, culture is a process consisting of five sub-processes we-identification,

historisation, pattern formation, normalisation, and normativation. Here, I related justification narratives identified previously to these five cultural processes and laid out the results as per the following matrix:

	Narrative X	Narrative Y	Narrative Z
We-identification			
Historisation			
Pattern Formation			
Normalisation			
Normativation			
Reciprocity			
Generality			

Each narrative provides different input to the cultural processes. They articulate different constructs of 'we', different approaches to seeing history; different patterning of culture (homogenous vs modular); different visions of normality and of course various normative perspectives.

- **Normalisation** refers to the continuous reproduction of the norms of behaviour; a process which forms, sustains, and changes communicative practices that are taken for granted and do not require explanation and justification in everyday political practice. Practices, that constitute 'spaces of normality'.
- **Historisation** pertains to the fact that each cultural element is traceable to another cultural element that pre-dated it. The new elements are created through combination, hybridisation, re-constitution, while their genealogy can be reconstructed historically. Within the culture, the ultimate stabilisation happens in the form of *tradition*, which is, however, never final as otherwise it becomes 'petrified' (Beschorner & Kettner, 2016, p.6). What is important is that movement through time and concomitant qualitative changes do not only occur randomly, as is the case with natural processes of evolution (ibid, p.4), but can be 'intentionally produced, self-directed increase or decrease in cultural complexity' (ibid).

- **Pattern formation** is defined as the tendency of cultural practices to form patterns of various degrees of heterogeneity, while never closing into self-contained totalities. As Kettner states, 'Since products of cultural processes (Ernst Cassirer called them "symbolic forms") show no non-arbitrary limits of their dissemination and combination, "cultures" cannot be seen as islands' (Kettner, 2008, p. 24). Cultural practices mix and form hybrids in a more or less spontaneous and arbitrary way. Within the process of historisation, each such hybrid can be traced back to some other elements preceding it, but there tends to be little logic which can help to predict which practices will mix, which will not, and what the result will be.

- **We-identification.** The grammar of political action requires a subject. In political discourse this subject is some kind of 'we' that is articulated directly or implicitly. The content of this 'we' will differ across different narratives. The 'we' establishes the position of the speaker, clarifies what broader community they belong to, as well as clarifies conditions of membership in this 'we' for others. Conditions can be strict or open to various degrees.

- **Normativation** refers to the cultural process that provides rational reasons which are needed for nothing less than 'general existential sense making' (Beschorner & Kettner, 2016, p.5). Without reasons, even the spontaneous, everyday structures of meaning would not hold. Practically, they are the sources of intelligibility, responsibility and criticisability. Crucially, the reasons offered by the culture are not necessarily the philosophical or scientific truths. What is meant here rather is a certain readily available stock of reasons that are generally accepted and that do not require a lot of additional explanation. Beschorner & Kettner call it 'weak normativity' (ibid). Since the focus of my inquiry is on the intellectual discourse, which often goes beyond what is generally accepted, the connection to this weak normativity is two-fold. First, as mentioned, the reasoning that first originated from intellectual discourse may later penetrate into the general culture and become a communicative staple and second, when intellectuals communicate reasons in the public sphere, they rely on the available language and try to make their words accessible to the broader public.

  I further breakdown the normative element into descriptive or 'normalising' and reflexive normativity (Beschorner & Hübscher, 2016). Normalising normativity denotes a repertoire of reasons that are spontaneously available within a culture or narrative without additional justification effort. They are known as the taken for granted reasons that are accepted due to their familiarity. Reflexive normativity refers to evaluation of quality of normativity in light of

criteria taken to be the (general) measure of legitimacy. The criteria are borrowed from Rainer Forst's work, which he derived from a Kantian line of reasoning where inter-subjective justification is the discursive principle consistent with justice. Reflexive normativity can be analysed in the intellectual discourse as a meta-level issue, as legitimacy of the specific concept of legitimacy identifiable in the discourse. Put more simply, intellectuals offer ideas about legitimacy which influence *actual* political legitimacy. Rainer Forst (1996) proposed two conditions of discursive justification that translate into conditions of political legitimacy: (1) reciprocity; and (2) generality. The theoretical foundation for these principles, as well as their linkage to the topic at hand, was laid out in section 2.1. I used criteria of reciprocity and generality to perform an attempt of my own normative evaluation consistent with the idea of civil culture. More specifically, the two normative conditions refer to conditions of political subjectivity:

- **Reciprocity** refers to Kantian principle of treating people as ends in themselves. In the discourse one has to look for language denigrating certain groups as ones deprived of subjectivity for no valid reason. Specifically in Ukrainian case, reciprocity can be seen as the principle of *pluralism*. With reciprocity, I follow Forst's interpretation of the Kantian principle which 'insists on the fact that it is immoral to force someone to share a goal, of which he or she isn't convinced, even if the person who applies pressure feels sure that this is to the benefit of the other. This way, speaking in a Kantian way, a person is being uses as means to an end that they do not approve of' (Forst, 1996, p. 64, with reference to Nagel 1987). If so, the regulative principle should be to treat people or groups as end in themselves, whereby only they can authorise an action that affects them.

  In connection to the reformist political agenda in Ukraine, and in light of the inquiry into political narratives of intellectuals presented in this work, I see as the most productive to utilise this insight by thinking it as condition for political pluralism. Much-referenced Ukrainian political pluralism would then mean a principled acceptance of multiple political subjectivities. As opposed to insisting on one 'correct' subjectivity, such a principle would insist on a simultaneous validity of multiple subjectivities. The condition for accepting specific subjectivities into the pluralistic pattern of the entity 'Ukraine', as well as principle regulating conflicts between them, would then be reciprocity: the kind of narrative that denies, disrespects, and undermines other subjectivities becomes incompatible with pluralism. Anticipating

a challenge that such a principle is too vague, tries to combine the incompatible or simply opens the door for the most aggressive force to take over the rest, I would insist that in fact the principle of reciprocity is a robust regulative mechanism to existing Ukrainian pluralism. In fact, it imposes quite strict rules on political interaction and conflict negotiation. For example, it is incompatible with chauvinistic attitudes of either neo-imperial or nationalist kinds. Denying subjectivity of an existing social force disqualifies a political actor, program, or group from the pluralistic system.

- **Generality** (derived from Forst's term 'Allgemeinheit' (Ger.) refers to the ability to detach from particular 'ethical convictions' (Forst, 1996, p. 65) and assuming an 'impersonal', 'universal' position (ibid). A political foundation has to consist of general moral principles that are not the same as values (i.e. ethical convictions), of which there is a great multiplicity. To explain this fundamental distinction, Forst says the following: '[t]he justification of morality has to correspond a higher standpoint of general agreement, while the justification of ethics is on the other hand a matter of "individual rationality' (ibid). To get the sense of such inclusivity within particular political culture based on analysis of the discourse, I looked for language pointing to the awareness of the normative necessity of this impersonal standpoint. This in itself relies on making a distinction between own values (or values of the own group) versus moral principles necessary to sustain coexistence of own values with that of others. Whenever particular values and ethical convictions are promoted as ones that have to be instilled top-down politically, generality is compromised. At the same time, generic appeals to everyone to get along without taking into account deep fault lines, genuine historical grievances do not help generality either. Understanding various particular standpoints is a first step in assuming a 'universal' position. According to Forst, 'it is illegitimate to refer to the truth of an ethical conception to justify a legal obligation', (Forst, 2016, p. 65). This suggests a two-level architecture of normative orientations in the political sphere. Ethical conception is not one. Multiple ethical conceptions exist simultaneously—this is the meaning of pluralism. To enable such pluralism, there should be a higher-level principle, a norm binding for everyone regardless of the ethical conceptions they live by.

Values are the province of ethical conceptions and hence cannot serve as the integrative principle. On top of values are the overarching principles

constructed to enable a pluralism of values. These norms have to be valid for everyone. Values, on the other hand, are rooted into beliefs or the truths of the kind that are not (yet) generally justified. Hence a value can, in principle, be elevated to the level of a norm and this way be generalised. So long as it is not, they can be only seen as a belief of a particular individual or group. To clarify, this idea is not one of relativism, where there are no common values. Rather, there is a strong condition for a value to be elevated to the level of universality so that it becomes a binding principle. This condition is an inter-subjective acceptability (ibid, p.67) tested in the public sphere through contestation of reasons. Hence, there is a normative division (ibid, p.65) between private and public spheres. What is valid in one isn't necessarily valid in another. If an idea is not tested properly in the public sphere in terms of its acceptability across social groups, it cannot claim general validity and hence be used as justification for political action that affects more people than the social group that directly benefits from the idea. A binding norm has to be legitimated by reciprocal-general justification. This means that legitimacy can be only gained in a discourse that is sufficiently broad and open to establishing the level of inter-subjective acceptability. As shown in this work, there are many subjectivities at work in the Ukrainian political conversation. The normative ideas offered for general validity have to undergo a 'baptism by fire'— a discourse where various subjectivities are at work, to qualify for inter-subjective validity.

To conclude the work, I compared the insights from discourse analysis of t1 (2014-2016) and t2 (2016-2019) by putting them side-by-side with reference to the normative criteria unpacked above. Doing so will allow to identify several high-level trends and provide a general interpretation of the years after the historical events of 2014. The central question to answer here is: How did political culture evolve in five years? A change in narratives of justification will attest to the general tendencies.

The following challenges were encountered in the course of the research and presentation of its results. Since the objective was to find order in the political discourse, the central challenge is *disorder* resulting from centrifugal dynamics, such as increasing fragmentation and fluidity. Actors frequently change positions—sometimes announced, sometimes not. This can be sign of strategic calculations, ideological creativity, frivolity. This can also be sign of learning. The same words are used to mean different things and articulate opposing views. For example, in the name of freedom and rights, one narrative strand revolves around constitutional change, while the other on using the state to promote ethnic values. The fact that both invoke freedom and rights makes the task of differentiating the two difficult at first. Similarly, a specific actor may cultivate an image that appears to belong to a certain line of thought and hence use particular rhetoric. Upon closer examination, it may

transpire that the self-promoted image is different from the actual content. This can occur for various reasons: cultural creativity, strategic calculation, a lack of awareness, and/or partisan intentions. One must, therefore, distinguish between rhetoric and the 'actual content' (i.e. actual discourse).

These challenges were addressed in the following way:

- The emphasis was placed not on individuals, but on the content. The same authors may appear in different narrative strands simultaneously or move between them over time. This can provide a separate set of insights from the inquiry, but it should not and will not affect the typology of narratives. It rather characterises behaviour of a particular actor or group, which could be a separate research project altogether.

- I anchored my narrative typology into abstract principles, lending it relative stability. The following abstract principles are inherent to the narrative: (1) the existence of a subject (i.e. subjectivity) and (2) its passage from one state to another over time. These are minimal conditions for the narrative to exist. So long as one agrees that political discourse is a set of stories, each of those stories can be reduced to the bare skeleton of the acting subject and what happens to this subject over time. Stories can then be differentiated based on who the subject is and what it does.

This task becomes more difficult when rhetoric is more instrumental and fragmented. Specific positions become hard to discern. In such a case, the typology will provide a valid structure to order political language only after a considerable analytical effort to separate the wheat from the chaff. One must break through to the foundational assumptions of each text to counteract rhetorical frivolity. Beyond a certain point of such frivolity, the main insight may not lie in the content of discourse but in strategic behaviour of the actors.

Another limitation to keep in mind is that corpus selected, while anchored into extensive research of the Ukrainian public sphere, does not cover all of it. While the intention is to be as systematic as possible while avoiding the bluntness of mere digital word counting, the ultimate completeness cannot be claimed by any means. The degree of completeness rather depends on the perceptivity of the researcher's sensory devices, that have to prove themselves 'in action'. Realistically, one can aim to construct a tentative order that will have to be adapted continuously. It will nonetheless provide the necessary starting point.

Worthwhile mentioning that extensive quoting included into the next chapter consists of my own translations from Ukrainian and Russian. To order various texts and authors into a coherent meta-narrative, I selected representative fragments and included them into resulting reconstruction.

3. Narratives of Justification

3.1 The lead-up to revolt

At the start of his presidency at the beginning of 2010, Victor Yanukovych was widely regarded as a pro-Russian politician. However, for a while it seemed like his government was doing more for the European integration of Ukraine than any of his predecessors. This included steps like passing the law on '[t]he foundations of internal and external policy' that defined the 'European vector as the main priority of the Government' in June 2010; aligning the plan to introduce visa-free travel for Ukrainians with Brussels in November 2010; and finalising the text of the EU-Ukraine association agreement throughout 2012 (Chizhov et. al., 2018, pp. 40-47). At the same time there were other actions, such as a constitutional change to strengthen presidential power and imprisoning Yanukovych's main rival—Yulia Tymoshenko. These actions indicated authoritarian tendencies. The usual ambivalence of Ukrainian politics carried on, while the stakes continued to rise. In public, political discourse revolved around the geopolitical choice between the EU and the alternative project led by Russia, called the Unified Economic Space (or Eurasian Economic Space), which required membership in the so-called Customs Union (CU). Media coverage and general discourse seemed to tie the future of the country to the choice between these two projects. The adherence to one or the other became an ideological marker.

All the way up until late summer in 2013, it seemed like the EU vector was most likely to win. Ukrainian officials were negotiating with the CU to have the status of an observer with limited voting rights as opposed to full membership. There were frequent interactions with EU representatives and abundant media coverage. All main TV channels at the time were owned by various Ukrainian oligarchs. These channel's main purpose was to promote and protect the owner's interests. The common view among many analysts was that these interests were better served by a deeper integration with the West, since it would open new possibilities for the oligarchs' companies. Other reasons included opportunities for business expansion, legitimisation of shady capital, and protection from aggressive Russian oligarchs. The coverage by the oligarch-owned channels indeed favoured the EU option (ibid, p. 58).

The fateful decision was scheduled for November 19th, 2013, when the EU-Ukraine association agreement would be signed at the summit in Vilnius. Up to a point, the messages from the Government representatives indicated commitment to Europe. The head of the presidential parliamentary faction, Alexandr Yefremov, said in the fall of 2011: 'Ukraine's course remains

unchanged, specifically: our priority is cooperation with European countries' (ibid, p. 51). Similarly, the speaker of the parliament and former mayor of Donetsk, Vladimir Rybak, stressed that signing the association agreement with the EU would help systematic modernisation of the economy, and the political and social infrastructure, with EU membership being one of the main priorities of the government's policy (ibid). A number of politicians from the pro-government camp argued for a careful analysis of the costs and benefits of both EU and CU by trying to maximise wins and minimise losses on both sides. This, however, never resulted in a public challenge of the 'official line' prioritising EU integration.

The open challenge came from the actors who were engaged in promoting the integration of the post-Soviet states into the Russia-led projects. Victor Medvedchuk, the former head of the presidential administration under President Leonid Kuchma, was an informal middleman between the Russian and Ukrainian governments. Medvedchuk had been the principal promoter of close ties between Russia and Ukraine since the early 2000s. In the lead-up to the fateful events of 2013 and 2014, he created a platform called 'Ukrainian Choice', which was said to be financed with Russian money (Chizhov et al., 2018, p. 49) and involved a number of prominent personalities, including Vladimir Putin's aids. The Russian president himself once visited a round-table organised by Medvedchuk. Among other things, 'Ukrainian Choice engaged in countering the pro-western, pro-EU media coverage. It voiced 'the whole spectrum of ideological cliches, which subsequently became mainstream of Russian television: from "Gayropa" to "revanche of fascist Banderites"' (ibid). Alongside such propaganda, there were economic arguments that favoured pragmatism, continuity and spoke the language of economic interest and social stability. At a conference that took place in Luhansk on September 20th 2013, Medvedchuk, sitting next to Sergey Glaziev (Putin's close advisor), delivered a speech laying out the reasons why association agreement with the EU should be rejected and the choice be made in favour of the Customs Union and Unified (Eurasian) Economic Space. He said '[t]he main criterium determining the decision to sign the EU association agreement mentioned by our opponents is criterium of civilisational choice […] They don't have any other arguments' (Ukrainskij Vybor, 2013, 2:50).

To counteract such alleged superficiality, he then singled out several arguments. One is a disparity of power relations inherent in the EU agreement. Ukraine would be pushed into a 'transformation of the economy, characterised by acceleration, coercion and submission to the current and future rules and norms of the EU, while Ukraine will never have a say in constructing these rules and norms' (ibid, 6:00). In other words, Ukraine would take on a huge one-sided burden. The second argument noted that a comparison of 2013 Ukraine to Central European countries of early 2000s (when they joined the EU) was fundamentally flawed for two reasons—

economic and civilisational. The economic one says that at the point of joining the EU, CEE[26] countries recovered from the transformational crisis, while EU itself was at the hight of its economic growth. Ukraine today, on the other hand, is still in the recovery mode. This, in turn, stems from the fact that CEE countries laid the foundation for such integration by inviting large transnational capital to participate in privatisation of the 90s. Ukraine on the other hand opted for privatisation through 'workers collectives and national capital that in principle did not have the necessary resources to modernise the economy' (ibid). Therefore, economic modernisation had not yet even begun in Ukraine. The civilisational element consisted of the following, according to Medvedchuk:

> In the CEE countries movement towards the EU was perceived as the national idea. In our case, the national idea cannot be put into the centre when choosing our direction of economic integration because at least half of the country see it differently. (ibid, 9:00)

Hence, the question of economic integration must be disconnected from civilisational choice and concentrate on hard facts; anything else carries a potential for conflict. Hard facts constitute the third anti-EU association argument, which describes the risks that such an association would carry. The risks stem from an economic reality where Ukraine is positioned unfavourably across the board. Ukrainian labour productivity is four times lower than in the EU (ibid, 11:27); scientific-technological component of EUs economies is seven times larger; energy efficiency is four times lower in Ukraine; social support per citizen in the EU is over EUR 13.000 dollars, while in Ukraine it is just EUR 200; and the fabled might of the Ukrainian agrarian sector is nothing in light of heavily subsidised European agriculture. In any case, any competitiveness would be killed by the prohibitive requirements of standardisation and certification that the EU would impose on Ukrainian imports, according to the association agreement (ibid, 17:20). Economic asymmetry between the EU countries and Ukraine leaves Ukraine at a total disadvantage and results in 'colonial dependency' on EU's economies (ibid, 17:40). Since no financial support to modernise the economy was foreseen by the association agreement, its dire consequences would be a:

> […] radical reduction in state budget income. Production will contract as national producers will be squeezed out by the EU producers. Hence closure of thousands of major companies, increase in unemployment, while nothing will really change for the distribution of our goods in the EU markets versus today. Yes, gates will open formally, but things we have to offer will not be in demand. (ibid, 23:11)

[26] Central, Eastern Europe

Medvedchuk then said that, in the end, signing the EU agreement would mean that the basic resource-based nature of the Ukrainian economy as it is was in 2013 would be conserved, which will would lead to social consequences as large parts of population would not have an opportunity to find employment, and whole sectors of advanced education, engineering, production, construction that Ukraine still has would no longer be needed. Medvedchuk: 'All of this means that Ukrainian economy, its foundations that still exist, could be destroyed' (ibid, 28:55).

In addition to the economic dangers, Medvedchuk also spoke of the legal ones. In his view, the association agreement was 'a shameless violation of the constitution' (ibid, 34:50) as it foresaw creation of supra-national governing bodies. This point was forcefully rebuked by Minister of Justice Olena Lukash. The official position of the ministry stated that the agreement was strictly within legal norms and did not foresee any supra-national governing bodies (Chizhov et al., 2018, p. 53)

All of this economic argumentation provided aimed to prove that Eurasian integration offered more prospects for modernisation without the shocks and stresses of accelerated transformation. What it did not say is how such a move would omit the conservation of the same status quo and really offer any opportunities for modernisation. The implication was that trade preferences and potential direct financial support from the 'Eurasian' partner(s) would trigger the right kind of modernisation in the economic sphere at the right pace.

On the civilisational plane, the 'Ukrainian Choice' promoted a view that represented a wider cultural program underpinning economic integration projects such as Customs Union and Eurasian Economic Community. This view was popularly known as 'Russkiy Mir', i.e. 'Russian World' which supposedly united East Slavs from the post-Soviet countries into a distinct civilisation with specific religious, linguistic, and value characteristics. At another 'Ukrainian Choice' conference, well-known historian and archaeologist Petr Tolochko offered the view on European integration from the 'Russian World' standpoint. According to his perspective, the very existence of separate countries is a historical injustice that stands to be corrected. Looking from the depth of ancient history, the present political situation is simply wrong according to Tolochko: 'It is obvious that we are one, we stem from one root. For the ancient Rus, for this big Russian World, it would be a nightmare to imagine that one day some of us will be Ukrainians, some will be Russians, some Byelorussians' (Ukrainskij Vybor, 2013a, 2:50).

And if it is the deep ancient roots that ought to determine our actions today he continued, then any notions of civilisational choice are nonsense. The choice is not ours to be made. It has been made many centuries ago and

shouldn't be revised: 'As a specialist on the history of Kiev Rus, I struggled to understand all this talk of civilisational choice […] We all see today when this choice had been made and that there is no reason to change it' (ibid, 3:25).

Deviations from the ancient civilisational choice can only be traced back to malicious intent of enemies, which, implicitly, are those Europeans, conspiring against the Russian world throughout history. 'If in 1596,' continued Tolochko, 'because of Union of Brest, Galicia and part of Volyn were violently severed from the great orthodox mother continent, why can't they do the same for the entire Ukraine today?' (ibid, 4:05).

The change of the course is nothing less than a betrayal, an immoral act, and even a sin according to Tolochko: 'By signing the agreement, Victor Fedorovych Yanukovych, who presents himself as orthodox will commit a great sin towards orthodoxy. Same with the talk about civilisational choice. If we are responsible, moral people, then there can be no change of choice' (ibid, 5:15).

Economic pragmatism aimed at keeping the status quo, paired with cultural conservatism, was the language of 'Russkiy Mir' spoken by its Ukrainian promoters. For a while they seemed to be on the margin, regardless of the big players and big money involved (Chizhov et al, 2018, p. 49). The government's rhetoric remained favourable towards the association agreement towards the EU.

The first signs of the internal tension within the government camp appeared only in late summer 2013. On August 6th, the deputy head of the presidential parliamentary fraction questioned EU integration as potentially unconstitutional. Similarly, one of the deputies from the same group, Vadim Kolesnichenko, registered a law proposal on August 30th that would require a national referendum to approve integration projects. (ibid, pp. 52-53). A number of similar signals followed, focusing on the adverse economic consequences of the pro-EU choice. But all of this was met with public criticisms from various influential government actors, sticking to the previous pro-EU public stance. Various internal tensions were said to have existed within the government. In its parliamentary arm, there were representatives of industries that completely depended on Russian markets and were hence vulnerable to Russian retaliation in the form of trade wars. It also included groups of openly pro-Russian deputies who were the first to voice doubts about the prospect of integration with the West. They deployed the whole arsenal of the same ideological instruments that emanated from the openly pro-Russian forces in Ukraine (see above). Within the cabinet, there was an ongoing power struggle between the conservative 'old-guard' Prime Minister Nikolai Azarov and his first deputy, the leader of the so-called 'young reformers' group, Sergey Arbuzov. Arbuzov and a number of ministers

around him were close to the president's son and constituted the so-called 'family', which since coming to power accumulated a lot of wealth and resources and were hence becoming the main source of president's power. Arbuzov orchestrated an intense PR campaign in favour of Euro-integration. In the lead-up to the Vilnius summit, the Ukrainian media space was full of experts commenting favourably on the association agreement. Segments of various news programs were dedicated to the issue and aimed to convince the public of absolute favourability of the EU agreement. As some analysts have put it:

> The impression was that all forces were thrown to form in the public opinion the idea that association with the EU is without alternative as the only possible path towards "radiant future". The topic was worked with such an intensity, that any disruption guaranteed wide-scale shocks – and that's what actually happened in autumn, after the decision by the cabinet to postpone the signing of documents in Vilnius. (Chizhov et al. 2018 p. 60)

In mid-October, the confrontation between the 'economic pragmatists' and 'national liberals' was heating up. Passions were running high on Ukraine's numerous political TV talk shows. In one of them, Vadim Kolesnichenko, an MP from the president's party, outlined the argumentation that incorporated points from openly pro-Russian actors, such as Medvedchuk, and attempted to present a kind of pragmatic balance that had first and foremost economic expediency at its core:

> […] One shouldn't juxtapose the Asian and European direction, where we can earn for Ukraine some income and dividends, this is business, it is politics of the state aimed at increasing own prosperity, strengthening sovereignty and economy. One should under no circumstances put euro-integrative aspiration against customs union. Customs union is also a strategic priority. (Kolesnichenko, in ICTV Channel, 2013, 31:22)

> […] we are at the border: we must neither have friendship with Europe against Russia and nor with Russia against Europe. I remind of Putin's own words: "I have no issue with extending borders of the EU, from Brussels to the Ural Mountains", it is obvious, these are markets! (Ibid, 31:50)

> In the context of globalisation, one shouldn't isolate oneself in the narrow mini-national project. One has to realise clearly and unequivocally: either you stay on the side-lines of the world civilisation, or you can try to jump onto this departing boat. Today's government does what depends on it. And here it is very important that we find common understanding. Even these quarrels here are a language of conflict. This way we will not find something in common. Let's unite not around the question of joining

> Europe, but on the question of modernisation of both our economy and political system. (ibid, 32:45)

Nonetheless, at that point, Kolesnichenko still maintained that: 'I know for sure: association will be signed. Europe is interested in it more than Ukraine because it is a question of global political struggle with our northern neighbour. In this struggle we have to earn our dividends' (ibid, 11:58).

The intellectual discourse of civil society in the lead-up to the revolt revolved around issues of nation building, modernisation as westernisation, and liberal reform. It can be tentatively labelled 'national liberalism', while keeping in mind that the 'liberalism' was to some degree rhetorical (see subsequent sections). The umbrella notion of 'national liberalism' can be used to describe quite different actors and discourses by identifying several intersection points, such as the importance of the national project based on western examples, a freer economy, and a strong rejection of Soviet legacy and of anything that appears to conserve or reproduce post-Soviet political arrangements. Individual positions, of course, varied. Some had a more conservative definition of 'nation' in mind than others, with some placing more emphasis on meritocracy, and others on free markets. Before November 2013, representatives of a wide range of positions were united in opposition to the kind of post-Soviet politics of money and power preferred by the government and the ruling class in general. The association agreement with the EU was considered by them an absolute non-negotiable priority.

One characteristic example of the ideas that drove the younger generation of activists, was the article published in the influential weekly newspaper, in July of 2013. It was written by a group of activists who would later become significant figures of the Euromaidan and take-up official positions in the post-Maidan government. Among them were: Yegor Sobolev, a former journalist who entered politics as public activist, was one of the leaders of the Maidan revolt, head of the lustration committee and an MP after the Maidan; next, Victoria Sumar, a journalist and public activist focused on media oversight, as well as an MP and head of parliamentary committee on questions of freedom of speech and information policy after Maidan; Volodymyr Vyatrovych, a historian who later became the head of the Ukrainian institute of national memory as well as MP; Ihor Lutsenko, a journalist, activist, and one of leaders of the Maidan who was famously abducted during the events, and who later became an MP and head of the parliamentary committee on combating corruption; finally, there was Hanna Hopko, a journalist, activist, and later an MP and head of parliamentary committee on foreign affairs. These authors outlined an ambitious, almost all-encompassing view of what had to be done: 'The point is to change people's attitude to the country, to rules, understanding of rights and responsibilities, to nature, one another, to ourselves' (Sobolev et al, 2013).

Observing the situation in mid-summer 2013, the authors described Ukraine as a country in decline: 'The indicators of Ukraine in the research of UN, World Bank, other international organisations over the last 10 years deteriorated inexorably. This is a completely objective assessment, which testifies of the institutional and functional inability of the Ukrainian state to ensure development in a world that develops fast' (ibid). This present precarious state was actually an anomaly if one considers the favourable material preconditions that offered great opportunities, they continued: 'Regardless of obvious advantages such resources, territory and market, Ukraine remains far from subjectivity even at the regional level' (ibid).

The current situation was thus a harsh indictment of the existing ruling class. Current leadership, people of status quo, clinging on to the past led the country into a dead end. The authors maintained that it is the fault of the ruling elite that society at large exhibits unhealthy traits – it is paternalistic and harbours inferiority complexes: '[The] […] political elites are unable to formulate and agree on strategic priorities, offer a plan of reform and realise it; Ukrainian society did not overcome the Soviet "legacy", and still gravitates to paternalism and post-colonial complexes' (ibid).

Consequently, the issue of a bad attitude pervaded the entire society and had to be fixed there, at the root. At this point, the authors entered the discourse of values by referencing the work of well known historian and public intellectual Yaroslaw Hrytcak. The framework popularised by Hrytcak juxtaposes survival values to self-expression values (this will be discussed in more detail in section 3.5.1.1 on national liberalism). The former ones are more characteristic of Ukraine and other 'closed' societies, while the latter refer to more open societies, capable of change and development. The authors then juxtapose the values of Ukrainians as they are versus the values 'we aspire to have'. Four pairs are presented: (1) We are freedom-loving but we aspire to be freedom-loving and responsible; (2) We are conservative but we aspire to be open to innovation and respect traditions; (3) We are individualistic but we aspire to be oriented towards personal development, capable of protecting the common good; and (4) We are patient but we aspire to be capable to find mutually beneficial solutions without giving up principles (ibid).

Here, authors implied that these are the right aspirations for Ukrainian society in general. Moving from what 'we are' to the aspired alternative is possible:

> The experience of many countries proves that values can be changed. Values are transformed when the elites start to act differently and demonstrate in practice the success of alternative value attitudes. Change in values in society happens within the context of global transformations and challenges and always starts from the transformation of values of the economic and political elites, their WILL to change the reality. (ibid)

The change, according to the authors, should hence originate from the meritocratic, yet moral elite who possess the unique will to behave in accordance with values that they consciously grasp and commit to live by. These values go beyond the existing social conventions and in large measure contradict them. The moral position cemented by the will allows them to withstand external pressure of conformism and corruption. The immense effort needed on the part of this new elite necessitates the 'ideology of the Will' (ibid). The will appears as a creative force that unveils and brings forth a high-minded set of ideals guiding political action: the primacy of the individual and self-realisation; development not as mere quantitative growth but as acquisition of new meanings and perspectives; justice as equivalence between action and punishment, co-existence of inequality of initial conditions simultaneously with equality of opportunities for realisation (ibid).

These ideals indicate a desire to overcome the narrow conception of material growth dominating the modern world. It thereby attempts to enter the competition of ideas, while siding firmly with a meritocratic view favouring 'equality of opportunities' against 'equality of outcomes'[27].

Making the will expressly moral, not aimed at accumulating power but working for the common good, seemingly redeems the idea of meritocracy by tying it to the common good. Having such a benign, moral, resolute force on their side, the authors construct a fittingly far-reaching program of reform. The first phase, or 'Reanimation', would be aimed at the 'renewal of effectiveness of the government structures while simultaneously making it impossible to use them to usurp the power and destroying business, set the foundation for future reform and create systems capable of implementing them…' (ibid).

This foundational stage would involve reorganising judicial and law enforcement, where the main process would be mass dismissals of existing manpower, competitive process of selection, re-attestation, and new education institutions and policies. The same path was proposed for general reform of the civil service, where the preference would be given to innovative digital solutions:

[27] Such distinction is highly debatable as it obscures the actual issue. Counterposing 'outcome' against 'opportunity' does not work as in reality they are one and the same. Meritocracy itself is just as debatable. Already in 1971, Talcott Parsons questioned meritocratic assumptions by suggesting that abilities affording success are 'mediated through a complex series of stages in the socialization process' (Parsons in Honneth, 2012, p.184). Similarly, Honneth & Hartmann insisted that in actual social practice, 'origin or class-specific *habitus* trumps the characteristics that depend upon achievement' (ibid, p.185). More recently, Michael Sandel famously criticised meritocracy as fundamentally flawed and highly detrimental as an idea governing social values. (Sandel, 2020).

> Whenever possible, it is necessary to implement computer programs. All documentation has to become electronic and openly available on the Internet. Where we can do without regulation - it has to be dispensed with […] It is necessary to create complete accountability and transparency of the bureaucratic apparatus. (ibid)

In the sphere of the economy, wrote the authors, the main attention would be given to 'ensuring the property rights' through a set of institutions such as courts and the anti-trust authority to maintain conditions of 'free competition'. This would, they wrote,

> stimulate the expansion of the class of owners, who are, as per definition of one of the foremost modern economists Hernando de Soto - the main engine of reform. The demand for the rule of law arises among the owners, who understand clearly what do they lose without functioning laws and courts as well as effective government. (ibid)

The owner class is supposedly that meritocratic elite meant to carry and disseminate the right moral values. Therefore, the right conditions have to be created to increase their numbers. This would boil down to: 'implementation of the basic liberal economic reform, which would facilitate development of small and mid-sized business by means of implementing a transparent and easily manageable system of taxation and open access to capital' (ibid). After such foundational transformations are undertaken, the next phase would be the 'breakthrough', where attention shifts towards administrative setup of the state, with emphasis on self-government, and longer-term reforms of education, science, defence, as well as healthcare. If successful, the following phase would be 'leadership', where Ukraine takes a leading role on the world stage in areas where it has advantages such as 'innovative technologies of energy efficiency, organic agriculture, space' (ibid).

The condition for this ambitious vision is freeing up the will that would disseminate the right moral values to ensure that the proposed reforms bear fruit for the common good. The 'liberal' reform was presented as the way to do that. The political subject that emerged from the text is that of meritocratic elite, that possesses the moral values and the will to protect them, act in line with them and shape the larger society by being a successful reference group. At this point it is important to secure this particular type of subjectivity as the normative anchor to tie this strand of discourse to. It brings with itself a list of conditions for the moral profile of a true citizen. This profile is prescribed to the society in general. The bar for belonging is set high. The ones not qualifying are potentially suspect of paternalism and/or post-colonial complexes. By way of creating an ideal political subject, that appears to be taken literally as the objective of political engineering, the authors risk erecting exclusionary barriers as well. The image of the right citizen acquires particular attributes that become mandatory for everyone. In a subtle

way, hierarchical principles structure the seemingly inclusive and open meritocracy. The exact ordering of the hierarchy can then be thought either socially or ethnocentrically.

On the intellectual plane, the national liberal discourse can be exemplified by two prominent intellectuals, whose views overlapped on commitment to the western vector of development, but deviated on the image of society that could accomplish the task. Literary critic and political essayist Mykola Ryabchuk is one of them. The main theme of his work is the post-colonial essence of Ukrainian culture and politics, and issues of identity as a condition for the full-fledged nation state. His language is that of nation-building: 'It is not about EU versus CES (Common Economic Space), or NATO versus Tashkent Treaty […] It is about the choice of certain national and civilisational identity, certain cultural codes and symbols, certain visions of the past and correspondingly – the future' (Ryabchuk, 2011, p. 220).

The choice Ryabchuk has in mind has to be clear, binding, and final. Any compromises aiming to reconcile the two sides of this civilisational divide, attempts to find consensus or the mode of close co-existence for him are indicative of psychological infirmness of society. As Ryabchuk states:

> A lot has been written about the societal ambivalence of Ukrainians from the transformation period, many public commentaries addressed their "post-communist schizophrenia"—simultaneous orientation towards incompatible and mutually exclusive values […] This consciousness isn't so much schizophrenic as infantile: a child often struggles to pick between parents that are getting a divorce and so it rejects the choice completely. (ibid)

The clear and final civilisational choice is derived from a just as clear-cut view of the world, where there are winners and losers. Deciding who is a winner is governed by hard laws of political reality structured by national identities. This reality only offers us a 'take it or leave it' scenarios:

> It is worth saying clearly: there is no third way, regardless of how desired and attractive it seems to someone. In fact, whether we like it or not, there is only first world and third. And there are certain global laws, which determine that those who are not able, or cannot, or want not advance to the civilisational core of this world system, are condemned to vegetate at its periphery […] and the question is not whether this world system (world-economy as per Immanuel Wallerstein) is good, just and complete. Most probably it isn't, and furthermore – Wallerstein proves quite convincingly that countries of the core prosper exactly because of marginalisation and exploitation of the periphery. But nonetheless, this world-system is a reality in which we live and most probably will continue to live in the immediate future. (ibid, p. 221)

For Ukraine, Ryabchuk presents the choice between Western-oriented and Russia-oriented vectors of development as a choice between two antagonistic entities. Hence trying to reconcile them as part of some kind of 'third way' leads: directly to the 'third world' (ibid, p. 222). The choice is:

> […] translating into the language of concrete geopolitical realities, between Atlantic Europe and Eurasian Russia. It is completely obvious that France, Japan, and Finland retain their cultural authenticity and sovereignty, even though they are part of the first world, or, at least, as Estonia, Poland or Slovenia become part of it in front of our very eyes. So it is based on the experience of these countries, and not on pathologically sick and civilisationally without prospect Russia should we search for answers to question, how to integrate into the first world, while retaining our cultural authenticity in light of challenges of globalisation, unification and commercialisation. Orientation towards Russia doesn't contain this answer a priori, because it doesn't foresee for Ukraine neither preservation and development of full-fledged culture nor real modernising leap. (ibid)

For Ryabchuk, the world consists of civilisational givens that are structured by national identities. The connecting tissue between these identities is what determines whether they are part of the first world (the winners) or the third world (the losers). While the first world contains multiple national identities, they all share a certain civilisational principle that determines their success. The only logical choice for Ukraine is to join the winners, as anything else means falling into the category of losers. The reason for doing this is to preserve and develop Ukrainian culture. The culture in such as scheme is not static. It can develop, but within a strictly defined ethnocultural frame:

> every nation is political and simultaneously has certain ethnocultural (national) nucleus [...] politics – is a process of making collective decisions. It is hence impossible to imagine a "non-political" nation, because the very essence of a nation are citizens who make political decisions. (ibid, p. 29)

Here Ryabchuk critiques the common distinction between the political and ethnic nation, where first one denotes a democratically constructed community regardless of ethnic backgrounds of its members, while the second one stands for political communities constructed around an ethnicity, defined by origin. Per common definition, in the first case, political arrangements create a nation—while in the second case—ethnic group creates a nation. Ryabchuk attempts to eliminate this distinction by arguing that both terms are sides of the same coin and one cannot exist without the other: '[The] juxtaposition of "political" nation and "ethnic" nation, in the Ukrainian context is a part of manipulative strategy, directed towards slowing down the formation of the modern nation and prevent the transformation of docile serfs into conscious and demanding citizens' (ibid, p. 231).

Ryabchuk writes that every nation ultimately has an 'ethnocultural nucleus', while a distinction between the political versus ethnic nation merely describes the way those nations evolved. In the end,

> even the most political nations, such as French or American ones have a clear ethnic nucleus and ensure lingo-cultural domination of the "titular" group through direct (such as in France) or indirect (like in the USA) discriminatory measures against everyone else. (ibid)

For Ryabchuk, the ethnic inclusiveness of the concept of the political nation in Ukrainian context is thus something that prevents formation and activation (i.e. coming to power) of that 'ethnocultural nucleus', required for any true nation, regardless of what one calls it, since it includes retrograde elements ('docile serfs'):

> the submissive masses with and identity of homo sovieticus, full of blind devotion to their feudal masters and the same blind hate of citizens, equated in their imagination with the hated West, even more hated "nationalists", suspicious and hence also hated freedom. (ibid, p. 232)

This impedes the very nation building that is the pre-condition for modernisation. Here, 'civil society as the foundation of modern nation' (ibid) is the true vanguard of development and hence an enemy of the elites and their inept, servile political base. This civil society, for Ryabchuk, clearly must have distinct ethnic characteristics, united by linguistic and cultural commitments, to become that very nucleus:

> Without a shadow of a doubt, the Ukrainian nation is forming, as a nation of all citizens of Ukraine, who have equal political rights, but also have adequate political loyalty. Specifically, those who accept and respect the Ukrainian ethnocultural nucleus of the political nation, accept that on the territory in question it is the Ukrainians, not creole colonisers, who realise their right for self-identification. (ibid)

This way, Ryabchuk defined the condition to be a rightful citizen of Ukraine: it is the political loyalty to Ukraine which has a strong ethnic meaning. While the form is political, the content must be ethnic. This leaves a large part of Ukraine in the category 'docile serfs' or 'creole colonisers', who have to either change, comply, or made to do so.

While Ryabchuk's language is mostly borrowed from liberal discourse, with abounding references to equal rights, freedom, and the liberal West as beacon for democratic development ('[…] European continent, where normative value of liberal democracy is considered undeniable' (ibid, p.230)), the political subject he discursively constructs is rooted in conservative notions of linguistic-cultural homogeneity, which is the only viable mode of being for a robust national nucleus. The underlying concept of culture is defined

within ethnolinguistic confines, which allows development only within these borders and with little space for hybridisation, spontaneous combinations, and open-ended creativity. This illustrates the issue with many national liberal discourses in Ukraine: their rhetoric is liberal, while the content is manifestly conservative. In Ryabchuk's case, sharp distinctions between the right citizens and the rest are drawn. This highlights the conflictual potential of this way of thinking. Within its frame, attempts to build consensus are doomed to fail. The result is a position of intransigence. The emotional force of such intransigence is drawn from the kind of 'rugged realism', that purports to see the world as it is and soberly invites to play by its rules. In Ryabchuk's case, this world is full of threats to the cherished national culture within the country and to the east of it. This contains a kernel of truth. But this also risks falling into the trap of hardened resentments that only leave frontal conflict and no space for mutual adjustment. The implication is the goal to establish some version of ethnocultural domination. This, given the cultural heterogeneity of Ukraine, further increases the potential for conflict.

The second influential intellectual that exemplified the 'national liberal' discourse in the lead-up to the events of 2013-14 was historian Yaroslaw Hrytcak. His was the language of modernising breakthrough he called 'overcoming history'. Differently from Ryabchuk, Hrytcak argued that nation building is no longer the foremost task of Ukrainians:

> First, the Ukrainian society, as various surveys of the last 20 years show, exhibits the necessary minimum of national consciousness which ensures the functioning of Ukraine as a relatively stable and relatively democratic state. Second, and more importantly, as transpires from "the great debate": the national consciousness is not "the X factor. (Hrytcak, 2011)

The 'great debate' Hrytcak refers to is the intellectual discourse on why some nations are rich while others aren't. He singles out the two basic arguments in this discourse: first one posits the centrality of the factor 'depending on the situation, called mentality, culture, civilisation, social capital, historical heritage - or simply, "the x-factor" (ibid); and the second argument, which contests the validity of the first, posits that 'the secret of success lies in creating political conditions, with help of which, the work of individuals turns into social wealth' (ibid).

Hrytcak then proceeds to reconcile and unify the two arguments in the Ukrainian context by stating that both of them are to some extent valid. He writes: 'History/culture is important—where we will end up depends on where we came from […] Ukraine was unlucky three times: it was communist, belonged to the Russian empire, and is a part of eastern-Christian civilisation' (ibid). At this point, Hrytcak references the World Values Survey, a research program spanning several decades, led by American political scientist Ronald Inglehart. Based on the results of the survey, authors

present a cultural map, where the position of a country is determined by its scores on two scales. The first looks at traditional versus secular-rational values while the second scale considers survival versus self-expression values. As a result, certain clusters emerge. The most economically advanced and politically free countries exhibit high scores on self-expression values (as opposed to survival values) and secular-rational values (as opposed to traditional) values.

This is often interpreted in light of theories of modernisation proving that economic performance and political freedom depends on the evolution of cultural values towards self-expression and instrumental rationality. This anchors a certain normative position of what modernity is in a generalised Western form. This normative modernisation then determines the path to prosperity and freedom as path towards the 'right' values. The World Values Survey is taken as a guide towards the version of success that Ukrainians aspire to. Thus, the historical misfortune of being in the 'unlucky' sector of the cultural map is not a final verdict. There is a roadmap to something better, as shown by the Western countries. One has to follow this roadmap, and, Hrytcak continues, thereby 'overcome history':

> History, with all its numerous legacies has influence. But this influence can be overcome or at least neutralised as far as possible. Simply speaking, the Ukrainian and Belorussian political elite have to try harder and longer than the elites of neighbouring Lithuania or Poland. At the end of the day, everything depends on our choice. First of all, it depends on the choice of whom we elect as our political elite. Second, it depends on whether this elite has the political will to drive the necessary change after coming to power. (ibid)

Hrytcak's argument is that Ukraine's location on the cultural map means there is a long way ahead. The path is more winding than others due to historical and cultural factors, namely: a longer experience of communism, Russian imperialism before that, and a thousand-year history of Eastern Christianity—all of which appear as obstacles to the normative 'western' models of modernisation. Nonetheless, a concerted effort by the national elite could bring the country there. Therein lies the main difference between Hrytcak's and Ryabchuk's discourses. Where Ryabchuk focuses on nation-building and demands a much more robust ethnic political subject, Hrytcak says that the nation is already there and the attention should shift towards real political efforts of that subject on reform: 'That part of Ukrainian elite which justifies their lack of political will for change with weak national consciousness, reminds me of bad dancers, who struggle to dance because of you know what' (ibid). The nation is basically built, now it is about ensuring it starts living better, which in Hrytcak's case means it has to be modernised

economically and politically by the elite with the right values and a powerful will to institute them in the society at large.

At this point one can secure on the major crystallisation point in the analysis of intellectual discourse: the nature, agency, and ability of the political subject. The individual positions of various thinkers can be more clearly juxtaposed, compared, and tentatively categorised based on the political subject in their texts. Around it revolves issues of agency, legitimacy, time-scales, and social ontology. The individual thinkers themselves appear as not just observers who provide insights from a distance of expert knowledge, but as acting examples of the very political subjectivity they are constructing and positing normatively. The intellectual analyst and social actor merge in a specific version of subjectivity as portrayed in the text as having to be extrapolated to the society, or at least, to the elite.

This solves an important methodological issue for the meta-analysis of the discourse, attempting to distil different positions into identifiable narratives. The rhetoric may change between texts and contexts of the same author or within the same narrative. The more 'strategic' the discourse is, the more it will utilise concepts from various political ideologies to achieve desired effects. The element that nonetheless will hold the narrative together regardless of the rhetorical bells and whistles is the political subjectivity that must stay consistent until a clear shift occurs. Hence, the methodological approach of distilling the specific version of political subjectivity from the texts as the principal identifier of a type of political narrative will be used throughout the following sections.

In the lead-up to the events of 2013-2014, several main narratives informed political positions. The main distinction can be drawn between the 'conservative pragmatism' that spoke the language of economic expediency, continuity, and caution in the face of the social costs of forceful transformations; and 'national liberalism', which saw Western-style liberalisation as without alternative, which spoke the language of meritocracy and nation-building. The quotation marks are meant to indicate the relative nature of these two labels. Rarely did actors commit to any specific ideology. They may even themselves object to these particular labels. This is especially true of 'national liberalism'. In most cases it is not really liberalism even though the originator themselves uses the word to describe their views (e.g. Ryabchuk); in others it is a kind of liberalism, while the originator never uses this term (e.g. Hrytcak). Nonetheless, what makes the discourse tentatively 'liberal' in both cases is the language of freedom, rights, and 'Western' values. What makes the discourse 'national' is the importance of nation as political subject, even though the actual content of the nation differs substantially (for example 'ethnocultural nucleus' for Ryabchuk and moral meritocracy for Hrytcak).

Hence, the two main camps existed as tentative intersection points of certain conceptions of political subjectivity. After all: 'Politics hinges in the long view of history, on elementary oppositions and polarisations' (Sartori, 1987, p. 372). And so, by the end of 2013 in the Ukrainian public discourse, these two camps were crystallised and pitted against each other. Where one professed to take the best from the immediate past and proceed into the future in a controlled, managed fashion, the other advocated for a radical break with the past which held back the country. Where the former protected status quo, the latter aimed to overturn it. The social actors adhered to one or the other position based on their worldviews and accompanying understanding of interests. The 'conservatives' represented forces tied deeply into post-Soviet political and economic arrangements, wanting to update them while leaving their base principles intact. The 'liberals' were activists and intellectuals who existed outside the system and experienced it only negatively, as the source of restrictions and threats. Within each camp there existed more nuanced differences that were, for now, secondary. The issue of geopolitical choice between the EU and Eurasia highlighted the polarisation and antagonism of the two camps. Based on media coverage, many of the most powerful players (the oligarchs who owned the media) tended to favour the EU option. And within the incumbent government there was tension. However, for a while it seemed like the president might be manoeuvring towards the EU if only to retain power and avoid being fully subordinated to Russian dominance.

In early November 2013, the change of heart at the top started to openly manifest itself (Chizhov et al, 2018, p. 55). On the eve of the Vilnius summit, the cabinet released a decision to 'halt European integration', which stunned the country. This was a U-turn at the very last minute. By many this was seen as proof that professed Western integration was a game all along, a smokescreen that concealed the true plans to perpetuate and extend the power of a subsection of Ukrainian elite as vassals to the Russian suzerain. By others, it was seen as a result of primitive bargaining, where the destiny of the country and desires of a major part of its citizens were subordinated to a cynical calculation of power and money. What had been said publicly for years was crossed out in a second and any remaining social trust was destroyed. The public discourse of the government was revealed to be a strategic lie. The fracturing of the social fabric that had gone on since the early 1990s now culminated in the antagonism, where positions were not reconcilable, and where the status quo became existentially unacceptable. Space for dialogue and the minimal trust required for it were destroyed.

3.2 Revolution of Dignity: the moment of belief

The revolt started on November 21st, 2013, as 'Euromaidan'—a festival-like event, an 'oversized disco with a pinch of geopolitics' (Zhadan, 2014, p. 57). The urban middle class, students and the intelligentsia[28] protested against the government's abrupt and unexplained U-turn away from the widely anticipated signing of the EU association agreement.

The political discourse in the lead-up to the protests presented two starkly opposed visions for the future of Ukraine. The choice to either align more closely with the EU by signing the association agreement or opt for closer ties with the Russia-led customs union, was presented by many intellectuals and commentators as the civilisational choice where the societies involved were fundamentally at odds. For the ones looking longingly to the West, it meant a choice between a 'European future' and lingering in the hopelessly backward neo-Soviet periphery. For the ones defending historical continuity and economic expediency, it amounted to a reckless gamble and betrayal. Thus, while ostensibly the EU association agreement was a mere trade pact, it actually stood for something more. Those hoping for a Western-style rule of law, prosperity, and modernisation saw the agreement as a way to fundamentally correct the country's course to positively transform society as a whole. In the words of the Nestor Group intellectuals: 'Agreement for association is the first step to free, predictable and safe country, in which we all want to live' (Nestor Group,[29] 2013). Similar sentiments dominated among various civil society actors:

> I came to Euromaidan because European values are very important for me, because a human is at the centre of these values. Human life, health, rights, caring about the other, mutual help – these are the supreme goods, not just in words, but in action. (Bulatov[30], 2014, p. 35)

The discourses surrounding the topic of the association agreement moved way beyond a rational weighing of the pros and cons of economic integration. The conversations were elevated to the level of the struggle for the vision of future. As literary critic and essayist Mykola Ryabchuk put it:

---

[28] For the sociological profile of the protest see Banakh (2014) pp. 17-24.

[29] The Nestor Group consists of high-profile liberal intellectuals from various spheres: Yaroslaw Hrytcak (historian), Oleh Rybachuk (former deputy prime-minister and expert in European integration), Mykhailo Dubynyanskiy (economist), Oxana Forostyna (media expert, editor), Yevhen Hlibovytskiy (journalist and public activist), Orest Drul (political analyst and essayist), Myroslav Marynovych (former dissident, human rights advocate, vice rector of the Ukrainian Catholic University) and many others.

[30] Dmytro Bulatov was one of the activists who started 'AutoMaidan' which involved large number of cars blocking properties of the top government officials. He was later to be abducted and tortured. After the end of the protests, he became a minister in the first post-Maidan government.

> It is not that people expected to profit directly from the association agreement: its meaning was first and foremost symbolic. It stood merely for a chance to peacefully get rid of the kleptocratic regime that plundered their country and gradually get closer to the rule of law and a "normal life" in a normal country. (Ryabchuk, 2014, p. 152)

The notion of a 'normal country' has become an aspirational trope in reformist discourses. It intended to signify simultaneously a certain modesty and achievability of the goals, while putting the reference point for 'normality' somewhere in the central Europe—which seemed attainable. The implication here was that the actual situation in Ukraine was not normal. The country had been torn away from normality by design and/or incompetence of its elite. Normality had become an aspiration. Achieving it required following what other 'normal' countries do, which among other things means a return back to the juncture where the paths of normality and abnormality had deviated. Normal life meant different things to different people, but however distant their visions of better life were, they did share the view of current state of affairs not being normal by any stretch of the imagination.

On the night of November 29th, the special forces brutally attacked the remaining participants of the first wave of the Maidan protests. At that point the protests consisted mainly of students sitting calmly at the centre of the main square and were obviously running out of steam. The resulting outpouring of anger towards the authorities who ordered the attack swelled the number of protesters as well as transformed their agenda. The emphasis shifted away from a pro-EU demonstration by students and intelligentsia towards a broader protest against the incumbent political leadership and political system as a whole. It became a protest against its arbitrariness, corruption, and now unprecedented level of violence. In addition to the previous accusations of incompetence and lack of accountability, the protests acquired an intensely moral dimension. Journalist Mustapha Nayyem, whose Facebook post in November 22nd sparked the first wave of the protests, wrote on November 30th, after the police attack:

> Last night I made my choice—I do not want to live in an unfree country. Any fear is disgusting to me, especially fear deliberately prompted by violence, by the law of the baton and animalistic force […] That is why, tomorrow at 12 o'clock I will come to T.G. Shevchenko's monument in Kiev. I will come first of all as a citizen. (Nayyem, 2013a)

The moral motif from now on took precedence over the geo-political and economic ones:

> I support the idea of Euro-integration, but I think that Maidan started because there was no justice in the country. Corruption is everywhere—there is no truth in any court—only money can solve problems, regardless of whether you are right or wrong. Health and safety authorities, fire department, tax authority, police, prosecution – everything can be bought, and this cannot but infuriate the people. And now one day, this stupefied government, beats up children like animals. Yes, the people's revolt started with peaceful Euromaidan, but millions wouldn't get engaged for the European idea. But when the children were beaten, people couldn't keep calm and started to come to Kyiv en masse. (Poyarkov, 2014, p.69)

> […] This was a protest not only against exemplary attempt to humiliate Ukrainian society and make it docile, demonstratively based on the order from Putin to not sign the association agreement with the EU. This was an explosion of the protest against a savage cynicism and amorality of that government. This was a protest of dignity. (Vozniak, 2014, p. 88)

> […] They stood for their own dignity, for completely simple things, which it is so hard to define, to not look at each other with shame, out of an almost physiological need to simply stay human and to defend the own right to be human. (Petrowskaya, 2014, p. 40)

Seeing the number of people on the streets increase dramatically, their resolve to act, and risking persecution, injury, or death led many intellectuals to describe what was happening in epiphanic terms. For many of them, the Maidan had become a magical place where there was true freedom, solidarity, truth, mutual support, and determination: 'At the Maidan, all the ills of Ukrainian society were suspended, thereby revealing the path to the more general healing of society. The concept of Maidan lost its geographical meaning, it turned into a state of unity and trust' (Maljartchuk, 2014, p. 79).

Maidan was experienced by many participants as the space that transcends the usual. One that opens possibilities for different futures: 'A place, where a new political consciousness emerges' (Mishchenko, 2014, p. 20). The key to all problems of Ukrainian society seemed to lie there, which led to conclusions such as: 'All of Ukraine has to become a Maidan' (Portnikov in Espresso.TV., 2013).

Looking back at these accounts and reflections written or spoken at the time of the events, the common thread that emerges between them is that of *belief*. People with quite different worldviews, whose commonality emerged in their rejection of the post-Soviet reality, felt confirmed in their expectation of unavoidable change. Seeing the events snowball into an apparent revolution, with larger and larger numbers of people seemingly pushing into the same direction, informed the belief that far-reaching, accelerated social change was

possible—and even inevitable. Belief in a better society, articulated by the means of moral concepts was present in social media posts, blogs, and essays written by intellectuals and activists during and in the immediate aftermath of the Maidan events. While the exact meaning of 'better society' varied and spanned a wide spectrum of beliefs, the existing political system and people in charge of it revealed themselves to be lacking basic decency and hence united different groups in their moral opposition. The moral resolve that arose from this collective experience was seen by many as manifestation of an unstoppable historical force:

> [...] there is a universal yardstick, and it is within each of us. Yes, we do not know all the consequences. But most of us always speak out: for freedom - against tyranny, for peace - against violence, or knowledge - against ignorance, for honour - against cruelty. The list goes on. Maybe we are wrong, and posterity will brand us for this with contemptuous verse. But we believe in certain values and act on this basis […] Those of us who believe that the Almighty leads the world along the outlined path, so everything is for the better. The rest are content with the idea of progress or something else. But in general, by and large, it turns out that the world is slowly, with rollbacks, but still irreversibly becoming kinder, smarter, wealthier, healthier. All in all, it becomes a more pleasant place to live. (Pekar, 2013a)

A belief in the possibility of a better society is inherent in any social action. Large-scale social movements, such as Maidan, obviously need such a belief to act. And yet, there is a threshold beyond which this belief undermines the development of a better society. The issue of utopia haunts idealistic elan. Metaphysical tendencies in the discourse cautions about the presence of utopia.

The discourse of Maidan did not necessarily contain all-out utopianism that characterised the revolutionary events of the past. Intellectual discourse supporting Maidan typically contained cautious, and sometimes ambivalent or anxious notes. It was often infused with a kind of 'qualified realism' that existed alongside idealism. One cannot accuse most of the intellectual supporters of the revolt of the same kind or revolutionary maximalism that was the attribute of the French or Bolkshevik Revolutions. For the French revolutionaries and Marxists, it was the new, radically different world in its totality that was at stake, while the revolutionary intellectuals were its promethean seers. As if anticipating the accusation of naiveté, misplaced optimism, ideological blindness, or hunger for power, Ukrainian intellectuals that took the side of the protests, cared to inject qualifying statements, remarks of caution into their speeches and texts. When hopes have been dashed many times over, there becomes no place for promises of a radiant tomorrow. The cautionary notes were also directed towards the world outside,

whose opinion mattered (mainly to the West). The 'realism' as a discursive technique is necessary in order to get sceptical people listen. And yet, this does not mean that wishful thinking or utopianism was dealt with. The realism often served to ground the articulation of illusions. The intellectual discourse of Maidan was stretched between two poles – the world-wary realist one and the utopian one. This stretch expressed a tension between 'is' and 'ought'.

This is where the ambivalent function of utopia comes into focus. On the one hand, imagining a different world is a source of inspiration and energy for creating something better in the real world. On the other hand, taking what is imagined literally as the goal of politics is problematic and leads to self-defeating consequences. See page 44 for a deeper discussion of the issue.

The *discursive stretch* between realism and utopia, between 'is' and 'ought' is inescapable. No social movement is possible without arranging ideas, concepts, and emotions into a tissue that links the precarious present with a better future. But the tissue can be stretched too thin and even tear and break. The practical situations continuously test it and pull us back to the 'is' state. The breaking point could come under the weight of reality pulling one way while the desired alternative pulls too hard in the other direction.
What follows is my attempt to trace how this ambivalence was navigated by intellectuals and commentators during the Maidan events by reconstructing the main narrative elements from the Euromaidan discourse.

Subjectivity

The story of the Maidan protest is, first of all, a story of a new political subjectivity asserting itself. Amid apathy and disillusionment after more than two decades that felt like a collective failure, there suddenly appeared strength and determination. This, in itself, was the narrative break of normality that structured the discourse and infused it with emotional force. Against the background of cynicism and disengagement belief and activism erupted. Energy that did not seem to exist before suddenly surfaced to prove the very existence of citizens that were hitherto politically mute. The foundational narrative of all the intellectual accounts and commentary of the protests provided by their participants and supporters is about the assertion of their own social existence, made palpable by recognising oneself in the others.

However reluctantly and temporarily, they all were willing to merge into a directed force, a tangible acting entity, otherwise known as a subject. To individuals who embraced this reading, it amounted to finding meaning in the social part of their life. This was an exhilarating, intense experience of the

self through recognition of the self in others. Subjectivity, seemingly buried under a thick layer of disillusionment, proved that it was merely lying dormant while accumulating energy and gradually nurtured by the negative experiences of reality and increasing expectation that one's own visions are ought to be realised.

Tapping into the emotive resonance of self-assertion, Mustapha Nayyem articulated his reasons for joining the protest on his Facebook page on November 24th:

> I am going because the road to Europe is my conscious choice, and I genuinely believe that my personal engagement can change something. I work in political journalism for a long time, and believe me, I have more cynicism and mistrust than any of you. I am also tired and disappointed; I also don't like party flags. But today it doesn't matter who supports what I myself believe in. It is important to make a personal contribution. Come, this is our chance. Irrespective of how many people show up, the country will be in Europe sooner or later. We can either speed up this process and witness the new country ourselves. Or we can passively wait till others do it, but after us. I don't want and will not wait. (Nayyem, 2013)

A mixture of resolve, belief, historical determinism, and rugged 'realism' was a recipe for a well-received social media post, speech, or article in those early days of the protests. This was the time for anti-status quo intellectuals and commentators to shine. Students, the middle class and the intelligentsia could come onboard with statements such as the one by a professor at the business school in Kyiv and frequent public speaker, Valerij Pekar: 'The main task of the Euromaiadan is to turn the Ukrainian people into the subject of politics' (Pekar, 2013). The implication was that the protest finally turned 'Ukrainian people' into a force to be reckoned with. Beyond that, more radical intellectuals, such as the self-professed right-wing artist Olexa Mann pushed this logic further by arguing the movement created a new type of citizen which made Maidan a nascent new society:

> In front of our eyes, a new type of human forms. I have never seen so many decent people in one place […] Maidan is self-government of free people, which works effectively on both the intellectual plane as well as in mundane, every day one. And this has to spread to all of the country. At the moment, two different processes are happening in parallel at jet speeds: 1) Creation of the FREE individualist-citizen. The dignified and hardy European, who constitutes a productive community. One with the right to fight and possibility of individual manoeuvre and structural actions and self-government for solving strategic issues, 2) Struggle for the INDEPENDENCE of the country. (Mann, 2014, p.212)

The new subjectivity could be located in the civil society, the very existence of which was hitherto questionable. Serhiy Rakhmanin, a well-known political journalist from a high-end weekly newspaper stated: 'We can now speak of the civil society as an obvious fact' (Rakhmanin, 2013). Adding a required dose of sober realism:

> It will have to go through a traumatic, possibly, long period of growing-up. But the statement "active position" transferred from the category of "expectations" into the category of "reality". The ordering of bloody suppression, which was given with high degree of probability by the commander-in-chief himself has made the process of the nation growing up, in essence, irreversible. (ibid)

Similarly, one of Ukraine's best-known writers and civil activists, Serhii Zhadan, wrote: 'The Ukrainian revolution is a civil movement, in it the civil society is born' (Zhadan, 2014 pp. 62-63). The goal of this newly conscious subject embodied in civil society is clear: 'It is about real changes. Everyone wants to renew the country from the ground-level, to *reform the system*' (ibid).

Who exactly did this civil society consist of? Intellectuals who supported Maidan argued that, the protagonists on the central square in Kyiv were the best the country had to offer. They were the most proactive, courageous, socially conscious, and carriers of the right values:

> One should understand the Ukrainian revolution as the revolution of values. It was a revolution of the middle class, of citizenry against the post-Soviet system of oligarchic quasi-feudalism. Almost two-thirds of the demonstrators according to surveys were people with higher education. Academics, businesspeople, creatives. (Ryabchuk, 2014, p. 152)

Valerij Pekar commented similarly: '[…] students were joined by the Kyiv's middle class (what is left of it) and professionals […] Students + small and mid-sized business = completely different force' (Pekar, 2013b). This coalition represented the new driving force for a better country: 'There was never as many determined people and such impressively mobilised society to carry out the radical break with Soviet and post-Soviet domination' (Ryabchuk, 2014, p. 152). The quality of the people involved in the protests were seen as that of a: '[…] very mature society, that doesn't want to destroy, but to build' (Ljubka in Dathe et al, 2014, p. 18). Their level of organisation and responsibility contrasted sharply with the usual indifference observed in the Ukrainian society on the day-to-day basis: '[…] people sent their representatives to Maidan while others continued to work to avoid collapse' (ibid). The exciting sense of self-worth of the entire community permeated the accounts of the Maidan events:

> During the revolution, it turned out that we have surprisingly many wonderful people. We even started to talk about ourselves as if we are the best people in the world. Well, this is of course an exaggeration. We are not the best, but not the worst for sure. (We, or at least a part of us, are simply ready to become normal people). (Boychenko, 2014, p. 157)

The newly active middle class at the Maidan also appeared preferable to the available political leadership, which was widely ridiculed and dismissed as a serious contributor:

> It is clearly visible that the civil leaders understand the situation better and deeper than their colleagues from various parties […] people who I know well from the "time of peace" as simply specialist professionals, grow in front of our eyes as new civil leaders. (Pekar, 2013b).

To fix the country, the new leaders emerging from civil society should be different from the old ones first of all in their ethical constitution:

> Society is looking for a leader. The leader does not appear […] The country is bankrupt. Not only financially – morally bankrupt. Want to know why new leaders aren't emerging? Because the historical task before them is to change the very nature of power. It's not about modernising the economy, joining somewhere or holding transparent elections. This goes without saying. Leaders of the new era can be opinion leaders […] Everyone says that a leader starts with taking responsibility. This is not true. The leader begins by taking a position. This position cannot be other than value. It is, after all, about values and about conscience. (Arestovych, 2013)

As the protest changed from a creative gathering into a violent clash with the authorities, the emphasis shifted away from the elite quality of the participants, towards the grassroots nature and diversity of social backgrounds of the Maidanites:

> The people came from everywhere to defend their city and their Ukraine from the government and its dictatorial behaviour. I saw men in balaclavas or wearing ski glasses, Cossacks with their mops of hair, bike helmets, clubs, some in skiing clothes others is in self-designed military uniforms of an unknown army. (Petrowskaya, 2014, p. 37)

> Peasants, farmers, writers, painters, managers, programmers, football ultras and doctors are all fighting this war. Everyone rose up. Next to completely disenfranchised outcasts who do not have anything to lose, stand dudes with three higher educations, who speak five languages fluently, have own businesses and serious offices. This colossal diversity of characters. Next

> to a Ukrainian in the line, covered by self-made shields, there stands a Russian, a Jew, an Armenian, a Tatar, and a Belarusian. (Mann, 2014, p. 213)

> Kyiv is not Moscow and not Bolotna[31] square, where the OMON[32] beat up the people and the rest ran away. In our case, even more people came as a result. And people came with their children, responsible grown-up citizens, who have things to lose. The salt of the earth: those who work, those who hold the state together. Industrious smart businessmen. Same with the workers. All classes of society were present at the Maidan: students and housewives, pensioners, all of conscious Ukraine became engaged here. (Poyarkov, 2014, pp. 69-70)

This force seemed capable of breaking the vicious circle of recent Ukrainian history and propelling the whole country towards better future. It appeared to have backbone and resolve, something that Ukrainians were often accused of lacking: 'Enough with tears and complaining that we are being beaten up! Too many people shout the same thing to the world. But the world cannot help everyone. It helps only the ones who defend themselves' (Ryabchuk, 2014, p. 148).

These actors are resolute, up for the challenge on the historical scale while sourcing their resolve from the internal imperatives which are then being consciously converted into real-word action: 'We believe in certain values and act accordingly' (Pekar, 2013a). The peculiar feeling of shared predicament permeated the accounts by literary intellectuals of those months. The 'I' wanted to reconcile with the 'we':

> I arrived to the Euromaidan on December 1st, the day of the most powerful protests, triggered by (at that point) unprecedentedly savage violence towards the peaceful activists in the night of November 30th. This was the beginning of the war that Yanukovych launched against all of us. The capital and the country as a whole answered with a million of protestors. It was necessary for me to find myself among them. (Andrukhowytsch, 2014, pp. 7-8)

The 'we' became heroic, noble, determined and thereby attractive to individuals: '[…] How could you not win with such people? […] People organised themselves in barely a few hours, wrestling their land away from the regime. The word "we" in such instances is felt much more intensely – "WE" (ibid, p. 150).

---

[31] Bolotna square was the epicentre of the Russian 2012 anti-Government protest
[32] Russian special police forces

The common predicament also transcended social class and origin, according to Petrowskaya (2014, pp. 41-42): 'The more or less well-off middle class took the poor under their protection, the capital cared for the province which came to the city to defend the common values'.
This 'WE' seemed to be large enough to contain everyone and channel their energy into the creation of the common good: '[…] I wanted to believe even more into the common future of all free people of our free country'. (Andrukhovych, pp.15-16).

This 'WE' was also large enough for individualists, who may have avoided wider society before. The 'WE' of the past was a source of threats and disappointments – a trap that does not allow for an escape from the past. The Maidan seemed to offer a formula for rapprochement with that wider society on agreeable terms:

> The old myth about unity is exposed as a myth. What kind of unity of a large people can we speak of when everyone, same as me, acts as they see right [...] And there is no authority, which could tell you that what you long for is forbidden. We left the school of sameness. Schools of orders and instructions too. The time has come when one's own choice has the power. In the end, this is the only demand of the time—to act as you yourself see as necessary. (Prohasko, in Dathe et al, 2014, pp. 30-33)

In short: 'We liked ourselves in this protest' (Ljubka, in Dathe et al, 2014, p.28). Maidan was where the usual sense of alienation was suspended. The collective subject asserted itself against all odds, against the recent experience of apathy, alienation, and humiliation. Self-denigration has become normal in pre-Maidan Ukraine according to the writer Tania Maljartchuk who described her journalistic project that involved traversing the country in search of positive stories to dedicate to independence day celebration as follows: 'In 23 years, nothing appeared apart from embarrassment and hate: the Ukrainians we met either didn't want to be Ukrainians or were embarrassed that they were' (Maljartchuk, 2014, p. 74). Now, the Ukrainian itself was rising from the ashes: 'Everything Ukrainian was dead, and it wasn't just me who felt it. Ukraine as an autonomous political entity produced nothing but corruption, lies, abysmal kitsch and fear. The principle of "the stronger" ruled without restriction' (ibid, p. 74). The contrast of this dark background to what was happening at the Maidan was striking to its participants and sympathetic observers. It was nothing less than a 'miracle of togetherness and strength, which comes from agreement' (ibid, p.78). It felt like one's own identity had been recovered from a lifetime of disappointment, alienation, misunderstanding:

> Would you believe me if I said that I trust no one, absolutely no one? [...] Would you believe me if I told you that I cannot answer the question: "What

> is your five best qualities?" I can't name one. I would be glad if it was only me affected by such personality disorder […] But there are millions of my kind. The question: "Which five positive qualities does Ukraine have?" would also remain unanswered by them. Or they would say the only thing that still made sense: Ukraine is not Russia. The national idea of the Ukrainians relied on this negation for at least the last hundred years. (ibid, pp. 74-75)

Within such a bleak context, the association agreement with the EU was about much more than economic policy:

> […] The feeling of the inevitable defeat of one's own generation. Exactly this overpowered me as it became known that association agreement with the EU was not going to be signed. That we were sold like cattle to Asia, together with our dead grandparents, with our values and views, with our friends and strangers, to where we do not belong, where we are alien. Our remaining roots were dug out and thrown into the trash, far away from any soil, where they would have a chance to grow. (ibid, pp. 77-78).

The generation(s) that Maljartchuk referred to were young people in their early twenties to early thirties at the time of the Maidan. The first wave of the protest especially had a clear generational profile[33]: a protest of young people hoping for better world. This was widely noted and celebrated as a sign that an alternative future was possible through the younger generation. They imagined and expected a better country and society and were prepared to act to bring it closer to reality even if odds were stacked overwhelmingly against them. Serhij Rakhmanin wrote emphatically:

> The definition of freedom that I feel closest to is the ability to fly even when the whole world doubts your ability to walk. "We can't take off" is the standard conclusion of the life-hardened opposition politicians. But those who are in their early 20s, and who are the genuine masters of the Euromaidan, are free from the extinguished hopes, tired disappointments, and frozen fears […] they came. It seems to me they would fly if they really wanted to. They made a move that is absolutely obvious to them and absolutely non-obvious to us. And so, they brought lightness into the chilly routine of the public-political life. The breakthrough of the students is perhaps the only impressive victory of the country against the background of the humiliating capitulation of the state […] Our revolution seems improbable, but it is real. It found space to breathe. The young ones, who went to Maidan are breathing THIS way. Regardless of what was going on around us for the last two decades. They are ready to live THIS way […]

[33] See Ukraine-Analysen, 2014, pp. 17-24.

> Not everyone who seems to genuinely argue in favour of the association agreement and the free trade zone understands that this isn't a ticket to paradise, it is an access pass into the purgatory. Not a prosperous retirement for us today, but a possibility for our children to quench the natural thirst, the healthy hunger to realize themselves […] The political Europe, offended by the rudeness of Yanukovych, can turn away from Ukraine. The only reason why it shouldn't, are thousands of very young glowing faces at the Euromaidan. They turn the postponed dream into almost tangible reality […] An arithmetic of bribes, kick-backs, fines, and jail terms does not connect with the geometry of free space. Physics of the free- (or, if you will, non-free-) fall is powerless against the alchemy of the free flight. (Rakhmanin, 2013)

The experience of the collective protest that later moved into collective struggle where their very survival was at stake sparked an intense questioning on the part of these young people. Many questioned their views about society and their place in it. For example, someone holding the convictions of a leftist intellectual to find themselves amid national and liberal rhetoric dominating the protest, had to reconcile with what they saw:

> I was perplexed by the scale of my alienation from the social reality in Ukraine […] I had not the slightest idea what kind of people lived around me […] When I saw people with EU flags, it looked to me as if they invited a new economic burden and that the European stars on their backs heralded nothing more than disappointed expectations of imagined Europe […] [But] [w]e decided to fight for a different Ukraine, the one of our dreams […] firmly convinced that only my own environment could be the avant-garde of a possible revolution, I obviously got confused by the many fluttering Western theories, economic analyses and my own views on Ukrainian society. Running in circles was over as I went together with the others to the square and got to know my fellow citizens. (Mischchenko, 2014, pp.20-21)

As the events unfolded, an intense simultaneous experience of fellowship, comradeship, and freedom was seemingly expanding and blanketing an ever-growing geographical space. It also brought an intense desire for learning where the experience of a political struggle naked and unfiltered by the media fed directly into the minds of the actors and transformed them. The experience was that of direct action, driven by innermost values, delivered in unison with a large number of people whom one never before identified as part of the same community. The spontaneous connection created new community, and formed a new political subject that was larger than the individual but did not appear to be in any conflict with it. This subject kept growing in scope and quality:

> The chains were destroyed and the community already emerged; it was simultaneously a means and an end of our action. Our Maidans didn't only mean that protests spread through all of Ukraine and every regional capital now had its own Maidan. It was also about the political consciousness of each individual, about individual transformations and development. My convictions were scrambled over and over again—the reality incessantly re-coded. (ibid, p. 21)

The profound effect the event had on the people involved is a recurring theme among many who attempted to describe their experiences. The assertion or discovery of their own subjectivity seemed to come from having to face a radical choice—to act or to perish (symbolically and in many cases literally):

> But now all my friends have changed. They are more mature, determined, active. Just recently they kept away from the noisy street, for aesthetic reasons or out of resignation. And now here they all were at the Maidan, because there were no politics anymore, the politics sucked out all the air and everyone went to the Maidan as there was no other way to oppose the despotism of the government, or, to put it plainly, to continue living (Petrowskaya, 2014, p. 40).

Existential challenge that came with a choice to commit to a vision of political change sped up personal growth and transformation which seemed to make such transformation possible for the entire society:

> One experiences this rarely, maybe only once in life, that people change themselves radically, they take something out of their inner-self, which no one would have expected [...] and so it was, as if the people were made to make the most difficult decisions and, in that process, uncovered fully unexpected spaces in their souls. (ibid, p. 41).

This stood in sharp contrast with the perceived habitual passivity and indifference of the Ukrainians rooted in popular culture by the folkloric saying, 'my house is on the edge', which meant that a Ukrainian removes themselves from common affairs and only cares about their small little world. At the Maidan, things were looking different[34]: 'The people became stubborn and determined, even when there was no hope' (ibid, p. 42).

[34] This view was popular at the Maidan, not only among the intellectuals. One of the popular heroes 'Cossack Havrylyuk', who became known due to footage showing him maintaining his dignity while being abused by the police said '"My hut is on the edge, I don't care" – this shouldn't be about our people. If one needs help, if one has to save Ukraine, without fearing anything – neither death, nor spilled blood, one has to go and defend it to the end'(Havryliuk 2014, p. 41).

In a more analytical fashion, Ryabchuk referred to empirical evidence of a fundamental shift in values:

> The shift of values in Ukrainian society results from processes of modernisation and is simultaneously their driving force. The World Values Survey that is done in many countries of the world shows a significant change in the last 10 years from the values of survival towards values of self-expression […] It reflects the withering away of the paternalistic consciousness of "homo sovieticus", who holds on to the status quo and sceptically opposes any change because every change, in his view, leads to something worse. From the other side, the study reflects the growth of the middle class, which views change positively and wants to influence or even trigger it. (Ryabchuk, 2014, p.154)

For Ryabchuk, demography seems to contribute to these trends too: 'All surveys show a close relationship between age and pro-Western orientation. The younger people are the more they are shaped by the West. This relationship is clearly visible in all regions, ethnic and linguistic groups of Ukraine' (ibid).

Similarly, Yaroslaw Hrytcak stressed the factor of youth at the early stage of the protest while speaking during a demonstration in Lviv in November 2013 (Hrytcak, in Petro Didula, 2013):

> The foundational difference between people who made Orange Maidan and Euromaidan is the participation of the young. It is the revolution of the young, this is the role of the generation which we today call contemporaries of independence […] It is more akin to occupy Wall Street, or Istanbul. This is revolution of young, very educated people who interact through the internet, who are very mobile, who have education (90% have education) but do not have future. They do not have guarantees that they will have careers, unless they are a child of Yanukovych or someone else. It is their revolt, of people who should have been middle class, but in reality are more and more like proletariat. The only option for this generation is not to change the politicians, but to change the country itself […] This is an attempt to give birth to a new Ukraine.

Simultaneously with the youthful quality of the revolt, it was widely asserted that Maidan signifies the maturity of the people involved:

> I'm being asked: "Do people, who came to Maidan understand all the advantages and problems of this-or-that agreement about the association?" Of course, not everyone does. People went to Maidan due to sheer fact that they have the right to choose their destiny. The right to their own mistakes

and their own victories. Just based on this fact. It is time to grow up. 22 years old after all[35]. (Pekar, 2013c)

The essayist and psychoanalyst, Jurko Prohasko, wrote of the *heroic* as the defining quality of what was going on at the Maidan: 'In the days of our Revolution I experienced not only pride, recognition, admiration, drama and tragedy, but also got to know the authentic emotion of the heroic' (Prohasko, J., 2014, p. 88). Heroism as descriptions of people acting at the frontline of the protests comes up in many accounts in one way or the other. They were mostly positive, as in Prohasko's case, but sometimes problematic on account of moral fervour that led many to start believing in their superiority (Belorusets, 2014, p. 53). The theme of the heroic was always present through the widely-used call and refrain that all protestors used: 'Glory to Ukraine, glory to the heroes'. This phrase originates from the nationalist underground fighters of the Second World War. It was arguably reframed in the Maidan protest to simply mean patriotism and commitment. The slogan yet again underlines a sudden burst of self-assertion, heightened to the level of an unbending will of a determined hero.
As the protest turned into a revolt and then reached a horrifying climax in the second half of February 2014, the heroism on the square reached historical proportions. Echoing acts of defiant bravery of battles almost a century ago, bloody events looked set to become another chapter in the history of sacrifices that is Ukrainian political history:

Exactly now, in an online mode, unfolds the formation of the new heroic Ukrainian concept. Of the new heroic myth. Those who are fighting Berkut[36] on the frontlines at the moment, will take the place of those guys who died at the Kruty.[37] (Kazarin, 2014)

There was a sharp distinction between the heroes (the young, the brave, the resolute) and the anti-heroes—the Ukrainian political class. Even the politicians from the opposition, who were on the side of the protests, were dismissed as ineffectual, cowardly, and manipulative. In short, they were not worthy to be the leaders of the new Ukraine. Against this grey background, Maidan seemed to produce a qualitatively different kind of leader. As a micro version of what a better future society could look like, new leaders emerged according to the evolving demands of the circumstances at the Maidan:

The face of the Maidan evolved with the situation. The face of the country if, God forbid, something happens will be different. The resistance will be

[35] Reference to the 22 years of Ukrainian independence in 2013
[36] Ukrainian special police forces deployed to fight the protestors.
[37] The 1918 battle as part of the civil war in the wake of the October Revolution, where outnumbered students and Cossacks were crushed by the Bolshevik army.

> represented by those people, called by the time. Same as it was at the time of Maidan "heat" when out of nowhere emerged talented commanders, fearless warriors, selfless doctors, competent builders of the barricades, voluntary suppliers of provisions and wood and just courageous people who found their precise place on their own in the unfamiliar system of coordinates. They were not appointed by any of the "leaders". They were authorised by their conscience and duty. They will be realists. And so they will do what the leaders for some reason deem impossible. They will do it calmly and without any fuss. (Rakhmanin, 2014)

Projecting the assertion of subjectivity back into the geopolitical arena, where the original trigger for the rebellion stems from:

> The factor of Ukrainian subjectivity was routinely ignored. And in this abandonment within rhetorical routines a mental routine manifested itself, from the Russian, as well as from other (Western) side. The whole discourse about what Ukraine could be, what should become out of Ukraine and what has to be "offered" to her in return. (Prohasko J., 2014, p. 130)

Further and more specifically:

> We have to be perceived as decisive, free and reliable. With the European rapprochement it is not about the loss of our not yet hard-won identity, but about the institutionally grounded recognition of our will and our capability to realise it in practice […] The core of our revolution consisted of finally wrestling-out our subjectivity, to acquire esteem and respect for the decision to be ourselves and to take History in our own hands. (ibid)

In conclusion, the pro-Maidan camp of intellectuals either heralded the arrival of this new political subjectivity or, at the very least, argued that the events signified a shift in society that made this protest possible in the first place—and therefore made more far-reaching change conceivable. Very common were metaphysical sentiments that framed what was happening as revelation. Many saw Maidan as part of the true pattern of history that unites them with the larger world, as the instance of universal values bringing people together against evil. A kind of transcendence was observable and tangible at the protests, to the extent that allowed many intellectuals to make a leap of faith and attempt to assert the country's new quality of political subjectivity. While the goal is yet to be reached, the moral foundation is in place:

> Yes, we are not Europeans yet […] But we did make a conscious and decisive choice who we WANT to be. A person is given a freedom of choice, the freedom to change for better and the biggest injustice is to take this freedom away. (Pekar, 2013)

By the end of the Maidan events there was a sense that nothing would stay it had been before, that a dramatic shift had occurred in one's own very self-perception, which once again raised the hopes of many, regardless of the ominous signs indicating the struggles to come. The individual 'I' have found an identity:

> The fear has not disappeared, it was here and it stays here. Freedom breeds anxiety. Responsibility breeds anxiety. But there is finally a system of coordinates and firm ground under our feet. It seems to me like I begin to get an idea of who I am. (Maljartshuk, 2014, p.79)

The discovered identity promised new cohesion and subjectivity for the society in general. It felt like the 'we' was on the way to political crystallisation: 'The people on the Maidan felt themselves as the creators of history. Today Ukraine is forming as a nation' (Poyarkov, 2014, p.72).

The Other

What united the actors involved in the intellectual discourse of the Maidan was the negative view of Soviet past and post-Soviet actuality in Ukraine. Hence, their antagonists were those who represented both that past, the current status-quo, and its extension: the newly emerging conservative Russia. The references to Belarus, USSR, Putin, Putin's Russia as well as groups inside of Ukraine presumably entangled with those symbolic entities, were meant to draw the line between the new Ukraine and the others. Hence, Facebook posts of the pro-Maidan opinion leaders were full of negative references to the symbols of Soviet and post-Soviet politics:
'Everyone who will stay home during the next political event will watch the "Swan Lake"[38] till the end of their lives'. (Butusov, 2013); 'Belarusiation and morono-russification of the country in 5 minutes'[39] (Bondar, 2013); 'One year of standing at the Maidan is better than further 6 or 26 years of Belarus' (Lutzenko, 2013); 'Victor Yanukowych turned into Aleksandr Lukashenko' (Nayem, 2013b).

Many argued that it was the deep structures of the former empire that was crumbling under the weight of Euromaidan:

[38] A reference to the Swan Lake ballet being broadcasted on the Soviet TV in 1991 during the attempted coup by the Soviet conservative hardliners. It has become a symbol of keeping the public in the dark
[39] Description of the violent dispersal of the student activists by the police in the night of 30.11.2013

> Obviously, USSR is only now dying off, at the essential level only now the empire is ending. Not at the level of communist ideology, a point of view joyfully accepted by the West in 1989, meaning end of communism – and that's it, "good won against evil", Fukuyama proclaimed "the end of history" […] But it wasn't about communism. Essence of the USSR is in the "internal party", according to Orwell, which since grew into a massive, cosmic scale tumour of FSB-esque "managed democracy. (Zabuzhko, 2014, p. 182)

In the immediate aftermath of the Maidan, as Russia was attempting to undermine the new Ukraine, its intentions were often commented upon as reactionary:

> The true reason for the military invasion of Russia is the unconditional will to prevent the successful and fruitful Ukrainian revolution, to make it impossible, to tarnish it, to forever banish thoughts of Ukrainians and first of all Russians to resist the "Russian world. (Prohasko, J., 2014, p.119)

Heading the efforts to counteract the positive vision of change was the Kremlin's dark master who was the chief antagonist of the Maidan: 'Putin overshadows our Revolution. First he wanted to steal our Europe, then our revolution, now he stole Crimea. In reality, it is about extinguishing the promethean fire, to prevent a precedent' (J. Prohasko, 2014, p. 131).

Within the country, the government, especially the president and politicians in general[40] were depicted as the carriers of a fatal gene of corruption, deceptiveness, and selfishness. A common sentiment can be summarised as: 'I hate my state but love my country' (Ljubka in Dathe et al, 2014, pp.16-23).

The state was widely seen as kind of 'administration-mafia' with closed circle of administrative officials, prosecutors, judges, and police. This type of bureaucratic machinery from Soviet times made the life of people outside of this closed circle a constant struggle (ibid). The president himself was seen as an embodiment of clan paternalism. Fittingly, his inner circle was popularly known as 'the family'. His son and those close to him amassed fortunes during his presidency. As the circle tightened around them during the Maidan events, the family became the literal core of government power:

[40] Expressed by one of the popular Maidan figures: 'Politicians are unhappy people because they aren't free. Simple people are free – we can do what we want. While politicians are under pressure from their business-interests, corruption schemes, lobby-groups, commitments, blackmail. These people are slaves' (Parasyuk, 2014, p. 67).

> Who is responsible for planning the political moves of the president Victor Yanukovych? According to the sources in the administration, there is a special "family" political headquarters created, which runs the operational planning. This HQ is headed by the president's son – Aleksandr. (Butusov, 2014)

The civil society saw president Yanukovych as power hungry, short-sighted, incompetent and an all-around disgrace:

> The most interesting was the conversation of Yanukovych with Merkel. In Ukraine he is all tough. But when he was approached in Vilnius by Merkel he averted his eyes, started to blink, tightened up his lips, and couldn't understand a word of English. He began to complain that for three and a half years he is one-on-one with Russia. (Leshchenko, 2013)

The President's bargaining on the international stage wasn't about national interests, but about fear and pettiness: 'Yanukovych didn't bother about choosing geopolitical path. He looked for "protection" and a donor. And was preparing to go wherever they give more and demand less' (Rakhmanin, 2013a). An ineffectual, greedy, cowardly, president, paired with a fierce Russian counterpart hell-bent on destroying Ukrainian statehood, were the main adversaries of the Ukrainian citizenry asserting their political subjectivity. These were the agents of the system that mobilised against the civil society (ibid). Summed up by Julia Mostova the editor-in-chief of an influential weekly newspaper:

> Yanukovych, who is asking for help from the club of life-long rulers is ordered to go through an initiation ceremony. Kremlin is ready for the consequences: scenarios of Ukraine's disintegration, based on Russian media, is the favourite topic for their political analysts and experts […] Kremlin step by step, but practically seduces Bankova[41]. And Bankova is excited: Russian loans will help to even out the situation ahead of the elections [...] In reality, Kremlin applies tactics of a million cuts, to drain the will for self-determination, to independence and competitiveness. (Mostova, 2013)

A good summary of the general condemnation of the main villains in the eyes of the Maidan can be borrowed from Taras Vozniak, chief editor of the cultural monthly 'Yi':

> Yanukovych made a clear claim for an extremely violent usurpation of power in 2015. Absolutely brutally crossing out the Euro-integration along

[41] Metonymy for presidential power. Bankova street is the location of presidential administration in Kyiv.

> with the hopes of a large nation for at least some kind of future he acted truly courageously. Protecting himself and "the family", he and his regime in effect challenged a large part of the nation – to simply cross them out. Yanukovych entered a rough confrontation with everyone, who still dares to hope for something. Student Maidans, citizen Maidans buried the "show-offiness" of the three-headed, but more accurately, headless opposition. The crisis of leadership is evident. One cannot be partly pregnant. One cannot make a revolution without cutting the umbilical cord with Bankova […] Looking for analogies, then the situation with not signing the association agreement with Ukraine, hence an actual "giving-up" of Ukraine, reminds "giving up" of Czechoslovakia in 1938. Geopolitical gluttony isn't smaller than that of Hitler. Hitler also had a smaller army than Czechoslovakia, just as Putin has an economy which is 10 times smaller than EU's economy. But they won. Although temporarily. Putin keeps on building his new "evil empire." (Vozniak, 2013)

In Voznyak's assessment, the three leaders of the parliamentary opposition were suspect. Quite generally, the part of the political class that was supposed to be representing the anti-status quo position within the institutions, i.e. the leaders of the opposition, were seen as clueless and were distrusted and ridiculed: 'One shouldn't expect a lot from the opposition triplet. Considering their personal traits and the way their parties are financed, they already do almost impossible' (Sheremeta, 2013).

An interesting social phenomenon were the so-called 'titushki'. It is a collective term for hired street fighters, typically used by the shady organisations close to the government, police or private oligarchic organisations. They were normally employed to intimidate civil society. The name itself was based on the surname of one notorious representative, who attacked journalists in summer of 2013—Titushko. These small-time street thugs typically belonged to various sports clubs and came from poor backgrounds. During Maidan they often clashed with protestors. They camouflaged as pro-government demonstrators ('Anti-Maidan'). They simultaneously evoked dread and pity:

> Apropos Titushki: they are grumpy, pathetically playing tough guys—but they are also our children. Neglected by someone. They didn't dream to become cheap mercenaries when they were kids. There are no bad children, there are bad parents. Our government turned out to be bad mother, and Yanukovych a bad father. (Rakhmanin, 2013)

Other fault-lines that were thematised in the Maidan discourse were regional and cultural. The writer Serhij Zhadan, himself born and raised in the far east of Ukraine and living most of his life in the north-east city of Kharkiv, early on emphasised the complexities of East Ukraine. The distrust and apathy

were too strong there to expect the masses to rise up in the same way as in Kyiv and the West of Ukraine (see Zhadan, 2014). For more than a decade, the 'Two Ukraines' has been a recurring issue in the political discourse. One Ukraine (West and Centre) was supposed to be civilisationally more Western, while the other one (South and East) more Russian. This division has been studied by intellectuals for a long time. Samuel Huntington mentioned Ukraine's East-West divide as an example of his 'clash of civilizations" (Huntington, 1993). Notoriously, this divide was used by the political strategists working for the Yanukovych campaign in the 2004 election. A TV ad and series of posters showed Ukraine split into three categories of people, where the 'South-East' was showed as belonging to the third and lowest category—a division that would ostensibly be the result of pro-Western government in Ukraine. The Maidan discourse however tended to downplay this dividing line. The presence of activists from the South-East at the Maidan as well as attempts in various eastern cities to start their own smaller Maidans were taken to be a sufficient sign of unity. The real divide was taken to be more subtle, cultural. Mykola Ryabchuk wrote:

> The main dividing line is not between East and West, Ethnic Russians and Ukrainians, or Russian speakers and Ukrainian speakers […] It is past versus future. Soviet versus anti-Soviet thinking. Clientelism versus civil citizen attitudes […]Twenty percent of Donetsk are pro-EU, twenty percent of Kyiv are pro-Russian; a one-third of Ukrainian Russians are pro-Western; and one-third of Ukrainians are Sovietophiles. All of this shouldn't have any influence on our commitment to fundamental values. (Ryabchuk, 2014, pp.154-155)

For some, the divide was however still there and represented a threat to the country. Attempts for reconciliation were futile and dangerous. This was the black-and-white division the upshot of which was that either one side had to change or the country should be reformatted. Compromises were detrimental in this view:

> I will say unambiguously: it is the sobornicks[42] with their twenty-year-old lie, who are guilty that Russia currently can shake the whole Ukraine. A state[43] cannot contain the territories, inhabitants of which hate this very state. If there is enough strength, one has to remake these inhabitants. And if there isn't—and this is our case—one has to let these territories go in

[42] The concept of 'Sobornist' denotes unity of multiplicity based on common faith and values

[43] What catches the attention here is the use of the word 'state'. In Ukrainian it is 'derzhava' and is often used interchangeably as state and country. It seems in such cases the country is equated with the state. Another typical instance of this: 'Maidan became the space where "derzhava" was contested' (Parasyuk, 2014, p. 65)

> peace. Galicians and Crimeans are one people? Somehow, I cannot imagine, if, for example Ternopil region was invaded by Russian troops, the locals meeting them with bread and salt and in a fit of joy, singing the hymn of Soviet Union. We aren't one people. (Boychenko, 2014, p. 159)

Internal divisions in this view might mean that certain groups will not find their place in the future Ukraine unless they change:

> Currently the challenge was accepted by the Maidan. Not for the first time. Just as by the larger part of Ukraine. Not all of it. All of it isn't ready yet. And maybe, will never be ready. This happens. And then, these people, as it is hard to define them as the people, simply fall out from history – become inhabitants of a territory. (Vozniak, 2014, p. 89)

The representatives of paternalistic clans were ridiculed and despised even at the level of aesthetics. The absence of taste, kitschy conspicuousness, and narrow materialism were all supposedly attributes of the post-Soviet elite and had to be fought with sophistication, imagination and individualism:

> [The] merging of glamour and criminal aesthetics gave birth to the whole epoch, where a hero was replaced with anti-hero. There he is, in the main hall of the Verkhovna Rada, voting with other people's cards. Here he is, speeding in his Bentley through the red light, hits a person who later dies and leaves the jail after two weeks since "money fixes everything". Here he is in the celebrity gossip columns showing off his $100k watch, while his wife does the same with a dress, handbag and shoes from Louis Vuitton of approximately the same price. Here he is at the concert of Poplavskiy,[44] here he is, hugging Iosif Kobzon,[45] here he is flying a plane […] He is copied at all levels. Everyone dreams to be like him: from the taxi bus drivers to the mid-ranking civil servants. His wife is envied by all prostitutes, all housewives and talent show contestants. Because "money fixes everything". Rednecks rule! Cynicism and permissiveness, the absence of any moral principles, decent upbringing, education or even elementary conscience and honour. (Mukharskiy, 2014, p. 221)

Aesthetics mattered. The ugly was matched with evil, the beautiful with the good. In the words of the writer Yurii Vynnychuk:

> It is enough to look at the faces of the "heavenly hundred"[46] and compare these beautiful, enlightened faces with those of Yanukovych, Pshonka,

[44] Mykhailo Poplavskiy – a curious Ukrainian popstar, whose name has become synonymous with bad taste.
[45] The Russian singer that professed loyalty to the Russian Government.
[46] A collective description of people who died during the Maidan protests.

Kernes, Dobkin, Mogylyov, Arbuzov, Klymenko[47] and several thousands of their paid mercenaries, titushkis, and it becomes obvious at once: it was a *war of good against evil*. (Vynnychuk, 2014, p. 173)

Motifs

1. **Maidan – the blueprint for new a society.** One of the central recurring themes in the intellectual discourse of Maidan was its representation as an embryo of a new society. The organisation and its values all seemed to prove that an alternative was possible and here it was realised. Those same principles were to be extended to the entire country in order to achieve the coveted transformation. Everyone and everything seemed to have its place in this utopia incarnated in the middle of, yet ring-fenced from, the nasty reality:

> Here has the "Open University" its seat, which had earlier had its own stage at the Maidan till it got cold. A lecture on the women's movement just ended. A poetry marathon is about to start. At the edge of the hall there is a collection point with lists: drugs, clothes, mattresses, technical appliances. A massive social re-distribution of valuables. A massive bedlam with a strict order […] Here is also a Maidan-library. A young couple started to collect books for the Maidan. (Petrowskaya, 2014, p. 39)

For a while, the reality of Maidan seemed to have been experienced as a piece of best possible future that came to life:

> With our own power we created and protected a space, several magical hectares of land, where the laws of the ugly current state system do not function. With our own will we produced a piece of the future Ukraine. We have time and inspiration to develop it exactly as a piece of the future. For example, there is an IT tent, which can be the beginning of a series of tents from the leading IT companies. The digital community can work and create ground-breaking software products directly from the Maidan. Garbage sorting and processing, and technologies for water cleaning will be presented at the Maidan very soon. Maidan already contains the first sprouts of the free community of artists and painters who have opportunity to create and present the results of their creative work right there at the Maidan. A free university already functions, which is a logical extension of the worldwide popularity of TEDx. In short, we have an opportunity to develop Maidan as, among other things, an ecologically

[47] All names are of the politicians.

clean place, as a tech park of sorts, as free artistic space and as a space where new forms of self-government are created for Ukraine, and of course – for Kyiv. Out of chaotic set of tents a completely *new community* can be born. (Lutzenko, 2013)

Many felt that Maidan set right what was wrong in the everyday life. As a spontaneous and organic experiment in social organisation is seemed to prove that a better system was possible and within reach:

> A constant exchange of thoughts, ideas and news, giving away of food, clothes, attention, work and help – these processes founded completely different political principles than those of the ruling ideology and its media which determined our consciousness. Our interaction was not based on bribes. Questions and answers were not determined by money. (Mischenko, 2014, p. 23)

A pluralistic harmony, united by the love of freedom: 'Maidan is a cross-section of society […] everyone who exists in the country is represented here […] all nationalities, ideological camps and worldviews are fighting for their right of freedom next to each other' (Mann, 2014, p. 214).

2. **Europe.** An idealised image of Europe was the normative reference point in Maidan discourse. It represented the aspiration, not only material but also civilisational. A characteristically favourable and emotional view on all things European was delivered by Ukraine foremost rock star and on-and-off politician, Svyatoslav Vakarchuk, speaking on the early Maidan gathering in front a crowd of students:

> The European choice is a long, difficult but very rewarding path […] I am convinced that "everything will be well"[48]. You came here from every corner of the country – from the west and from the east, people who speak Ukrainian, people who speak Russian, and even those people who understand and speak English as well […] Our shared value is freedom, freedom of choice, freedom of a person, freedom of an individual—this freedom of choice that was first described in the Old Testament made Europe what it is today. Democracy, market economy, independent courts, pluralism, freedom of speech—all of these unalterable attributes of Europe came from there, from one fundamental value, freedom of the person. Where someone was raised, how much money they have, which position does one have, in which conditions did he live, where he was born cannot be worse or better, we're all equal, dignified people. This is the fundamental European principle. (Vakarchuk in VESTI, 2013)

[48] A reference to his band's hit song that instantly generates cheers from the crowd

The slogans disseminated through the Maidan by artists and writers conveyed a similarly high-spirited messages: 'Europe – is your right to revolt' (Mann, 2014, p. 208). Or in more playful/provocative way: 'EU – rave. CU[49] – trash' (ibid).

Another, more specific European theme that was present in the more literary segment of the intellectual discourse was the one central Europe (or, with frequent reference to the Czech author Milan Kundera – Mitteleuropa[50]). The writer Andrij Ljubka decribed Kiyv as Mitteleuropa with its historical tragedy of small nations which are constantly threatened by imperialistic powers but romantically fight for their rightful place (Ljubka, in Dathe et. al, 2014). Jurko Prohasko spoke of the entire Ukraine as 'classic Mitteleuropa, which isn't consulted with and decisions are made about it without caring for what its people think' (Prohasko J., 2014, p. 130). Writer Serhij Zhadan compared Maidan with Polish movement Solidarność, which in the 80s contributed to the fall of communism (Zhadan, 2014, p.62). Similarly, Taras Vozniak argued:

> Maidan won because, just like the Polish Solidarność movements and Lithuanian "Sajudis" and People's Movement of Ukraine, it was part of a world trend. At the Maidan of 2013-2014 two worlds collided: world for which *pacta sunt servada*[51] makes sense, and the world of revanche and violence, *il fine giustifica i mezzi* (ends justify the means). (Vozniak, 2014, p. 88).

In general, Europe as a trope stood for civilisation in an age-old fight with retrograde forces: 'This is a revolt of civilization against barbarism' (Mann, 2014, p. 209).

3. **Children.** The image of children was permanently present as: (1) the first protestors and heroic actors pushing the country ahead (i.e. students); (2) The threatened and abused by power due to violent actions of the authorities. These 2 aspects were already described in the previous sections (see quotes of Rakhmanin, Hrytcak, Ryabchuk above). The third motif (3) was children as those to whose benefit, adult citizenry has to act decisively to ensure the right future for their own progeny:

[49] Customs Union – Russia-led geopolitical initiative called to bring economies of states from former Soviet Union closer.
[50] Kundera wrote of the 'Tragedy of the Mitteleuropa' in 1983 as the condition of central European countries 'kidnapped' from their home European civilisation by the Soviet imperialism, rooted into alien historical tradition.
[51] Lat. agreements have to be followed

> So what will I leave to my children? This weekend on the Maidan, I will give my children a lesson where I will explain what it means to be a citizen and how a citizen should act. I will post a notice for my neighbours to come to the Maidan too. I will not do this for the sake of parties and politicians. But because I want to leave a European future for my children. I urge all my friends and readers to go to the Maidan. Where all those who are not indifferent come together, Europe will begin in Ukraine. (Butusov, 2013a)

4. **Clarity of moral choice.** An overwhelming sentiment among the Maidan actors and intellectual commentators was the one of clear moral choice. In the world of grey zones and ambiguity, for once there was moral clarity on which side was good. Malyartchuk wrote: 'The more obvious the lack of honour and dignity of the other, the more evident becomes what one has to decide for' (2014, p. 88). Moral clarity was expressed universally in the pro-Maidan camp:

> For me personally, the choice in this confrontation is unambiguous. When there is a war of good against evil, I am on the side of good. My Jewish ethics demands this from me. By the way, this is why the majority of Ukrainian Jews are on the same side, and no propagandistic special ops will change this. (Roytburd, 2014, p. 245)

This moral clarity did ultimately draw the line between 'us and them', between those in the in-group and the others. The traumatic events, and the violence in the last days of Maidan tied the knot of commitments tightly. In the Maidan camp, everyone knew someone who was killed or injured. It had become a community of loss, where the 'others' were responsible for that loss and hence were condemned. But as expressed effectively here by Oksana Forostyna, this did come at the additional price of losing part of the self:

> After the deaths, after the terror on the streets, after we became convinced that it is possible to get used to explosions in just a few hours, we learned to recognize "one of us" by their eyes. I know for sure that now we can't, we don't have the right to continue to communicate normally, send happy birthday wishes, visit and go on picnics with people who were on the side of the Yanukovych regime. We, of course, will have to learn to live together somehow, to live peacefully. But we can't pretend they just have "different views." What can be the "other views" on torture? Other views on the fact that people were shot in the eye? That the wounded were burned alive? […] [Do] not cling to the illusion that it will be possible to return to normal life, that we will shake the ashes, wash away the soot, drink and live as before. Many of us will have to come to terms with the fact that we no longer have a large part of our past and we really will not

be the same as before, because having lost the past, we lose a part of ourselves. (Forostyna, 2014)

Perhaps the period between February 18th and 21st 2013, when most deaths occurred was the moment when irreparable damage was done. Damage that would later result in divisions that may prove intractable. Moral clarity of the Maidanites divided the world into 'people' and 'non-people':

> […] the people not only were not scared (as expected), but the people en masse (I just want to write it in capital letters: EN MASSE) came out to defend their cities: in Kiev, and in the west, and in the east, and in the south and it the centre. Everywhere. Organizing themselves. Without waiting and asking for leaders […] it became clear that we arrived to the edge: yesterday's execution was beyond the last line of human feelings, it was Nazism, it was Stalinism. Consequences: 1. The country and people will never be the same as before. 2. The world was sharply divided into *people and non-people*. 3. Ukraine is not Russia, well, everyone finally understands that. (Pekar, 2014)

Presence on the Maidan in the final days seems to have been elevated to the badge of honour that signifies true citizenship:
The one who today did not do everything for victory, will be ashamed of himself. Today we do the most important thing in our life's work. (Butusov, 2014b)

5. **Foreboding.** The intellectuals supporting Maidan rarely expressed completely one-sided optimism. They took care to inject certain cautionary statements to temper the idealism by referring to future challenges, and the long-term nature and difficulty of the task at hand. The discursive stretch between realism and idealism required balancing the language in a certain way so as not to appear gullible. The literary intellectuals often included certain melancholy and a sense of forewarning. Andrii Ljubka spoke of a 'Sisyphus revolution' (in Dathe et. al, 2014) and referred to Milan Kundera's notion of Central Europe and its specific historical tragedy where small nations are constantly threatened and crushed by big powers but continue their irrepressible fight for the future. Writing about a visit to the eastern town of Saporizhjya, Yurii Andrukhovych evoked, (alongside of optimistic passages speaking of the will to believe into something better), the reality of beatings, chases, and rampaging criminals (2014. p.16). This tension between the 'is' and the 'ought' led to a dark conclusion: 'It appeared to me that one had to ruthlessly remove a whole layer of the country's soil and only when the freshly created space was smoothed out, would begin the thankless task to build a new foundation'. (ibid p. 17)

There indeed was a sombre undercurrent throughout the Maidan period. It was well-captured by the melancholic notes in the following passage of Julia Mostova, acknowledging the geopolitical trap the country found itself in and anticipating struggles to come:

> Ukraine was once called the bridge between Russia and Europe. We still are, but only now both ends do not reach the shores and are drowning in a sea of Russian money, which has long since received a visa-free residence in the EU. Here is Euromaidan, hated by Moscow, unnerving Washington, and platonically loved by Brussels. It stands with a tense abdomen, ready to kick back. It stands like a wall, without a leader. Without a plan to win and without a desire to give up. And you have no one, Euromaidan, except the country. And the country has no one but you. (Mostova, 2013)

6. **Messianism.** In the immediate aftermath of the Maidan, certain messianic tendencies could be observed among Ukrainian intellectuals. They tried to convey the point that the moral clarity also existed in the West. They called on Europe and the West generally to clearly speak of good and evil, support good against the evil and put pragmatic considerations aside. Maidan stood for an entire ethical worldview that had to trigger a change of self-understanding not only in Ukraine, but also in Europe. Ukrainians reignited the promethean fire and showed it to the Europeans to remind of their true selves:

   > The Ukrainian revolution has mercilessly clarified the extent of danger to Europe. "Europe" on the other hand doesn't seem to be thinking about this, to rethink itself. Wasn't a revolution in self-understanding not overdue? We don't have to have delusions of grandeur to recognise: the shared European revolution, as a sum of shared experiences, as shared insights, that define and name our intuitions and intentions, refresh our feelings, push required values again into the right places – is this not urgently needed? (Prohasko, J., 2014, p. 123)

   > An idea is spreading that the European Idea could detach itself from EU-Europe and would fare in Ukraine better than there. At any rate, there is a strong sense of moral superiority. Or we are saying ourselves: we can only rely on ourselves. Putin is a clear, defined enemy, we cannot rely on Europe, there is no "West." What is good about all this is the feeling of self, which was chronically underdeveloped among Ukrainians. (ibid, p. 124)

The moral superiority allows a conclusive verdict of hypocrisy towards pragmatists siting in the EU offices, who are in the end the dim serfs of history: 'Any crime that goes unpunished gives birth to new ones, in the next generations. So today, any collaboration between the EU and Gazprom is a

direct result of the collaboration with Stalin that occurred the day before yesterday' (Zabuzhko, 2014, p.185).
The intersection of various forces, the meeting point of cultures, the battleground of values and ideologies—this revolutionary Ukraine apparently bore vital significance for the entire world. The very destiny of humanity is being decided in Ukraine according to the writer Oxana Zabuzhko:

> Today Ukraine is God's Playground, as per Norman Davies, a playground that is much more intense than Poland was in September of 1939. We are being the test subjects of many important algorithms needed for the civilization to survive and transform in the XXI century. Here we should be ready for this mission not just at the level of consciousness, but, without exaggeration, at the existential one, the deepest one. But even now we do not quite grasp just how central we really are in humanity's fate. (ibid)

Concepts

Maidan intellectual discourse relied on a list of concepts that established the order of values, thereby drawing the lines between the in and out groups and articulating visions of the future. As already outlined in the previous sections, on the good side, there were concepts of freedom, dignity, justice, Europe, (rule of) law. The bad side was structured by the concepts of corruption, paternalism, Soviet communism, and Russian imperialism.
Laid out in various patterns and applied to different contexts, these concepts reproduced similarly structured arguments over and over. In its simplest form, it could be expressed in one sentence as follows: 'Society expects a more honest, *just* power which is not connected to *corruption* and respects social desires' (Portnikov, in Espresso.TV., 2013).
In a speech at an early Maidan demonstration on November 23rd media expert and public intellectual, Yevhen Hlibovytsky, unfurled a story that skilfully encapsulates the liberal ideas at the heart of the initial 'Euromaidan'. It hits all the notes mentioned previously throughout this section, starting from the leitmotif of asserting subjectivity, adorned with determination, optimism and required dose of 'realism', guided by the rhythm of historical temporality into the morally attractive version of Europe:

> It is time we finish business. In 1991 a miracle happened, the country became independent […] Now is the time to inject meaning into this independence. The question is—what does European Ukraine mean? *Europe* is not only signing the agreement with the EU. Europe is not only when we can move without visas. Europe is when we have clean streets. When we *respect* each other, Europe is when we play by the rules, Europe is when drivers do not park their cars on sidewalks, while pedestrians cross the streets on the zebra crossings […] each time you throw garbage out

> missing the bin, ask yourself if you act in a European way, ask your relatives and friends if they are paying taxes, or if they are giving bribes, ask people if they do their work honestly […] because that's Europe. Nine years ago we shouted 'Yushenko!"[52] Back then we were a young and immature democracy, we didn't know that one has to shout something else—*democracy, freedom.* Because if there is democracy, then any president that stops doing his duties, ceases to be a democratic president. It is very important for us to not be seduced by *arbitrariness*, because arbitrariness leads to non-freedom, and it doesn't matter which language does this non-freedom speak […] If we want to be part of the developed world, if we want to have prosperity, if we want to have security, if we want our children to get good education and have opportunities—it is only Europe. There is no alternative in our part of the world. Again, regardless of which church we go to or which language we speak, and what our roots are. Here the most fantastic people gather together, not only those who share good convictions, but also those who have courage, and most importantly, feel the *responsibility* to act. (Hlibovytsky, 2013)

In this passage, one can clearly see the original civic normativity of the protests, emphasising democracy and responsibility regardless of language and faith. This was something that was later side-lined by the violent turn of events.

And of course, at the heart of the intellectual discourse was the moral aspect of Europe. It is the institutionalised morality that draws the true political borders. As put by one of the famous Soviet-era dissidents, human rights advocate and writer Yevhen Sverstiuk:

> The choice is a *choice of values* […] When they say, "European choice", then they mainly mean political orientation and material sufficiency. In fact, what is behind this concept is foundational values- choice of *freedom, human rights, rule of law* […] The thing is, that in the West, since the time of Roman law, the law was strict, but one and the same for everyone. In the Russian empire, whether before the revolution or after, the law wasn't "applicable" to certain persons, bit it was applied very harshly only to the enemies or those who criticized the power […] And so Moscowia and Russia was spoken of as the country of *serfdom*, by both foreigners and Russians themselves. Consequently, people escape to the West en masse. (Sverstiuk, 2014, p. 120)

On the opposite side from European moral universalism is the relativism that was the consequence of communism in the Soviet world: 'The *moral*

[52] Victor Yushenko, the third president of the independent Ukraine who came to power as the result of the 2004 Orange Revolution.

relativism of the *communist* upbringing, actually eroded the foundations of a person' (ibid, p. 123). In view of the problems of the modern West, Maidan appears as the promethean fire, that has the potential to re-ignite the universalism along the lines of European tradition: 'In the 21st century, the history is marked with the commercialism and scandals, and it is only Ukrainian Maidan shined like a rainbow and got covered with clouds' (ibid, p. 128).

Within the strands of discourse that focused more on institutional design and social structures, interesting public commentary via various TV appearances came from political philosopher Andriy Yermolayev, who up until late December 2013 was the Head of the Institute of Strategic Studies designed to support presidential administration. After leaving his position at the institute, he stated in January 2014 that what was happening at the Maidan was a 'genuine social movement, that aims at actually realizing the constitution, not revolution' (Yermolayev in Hromadske, 2014a). In a similar spirit, he described the Maidan activists are a legitimate force 'signifying a new process of internal transformation pf the country' (Yermolayev in TSN, 2014). Yermolayev offered a more measured interpretation of the symbolic significance of Europe. In his assessment, the European myth is shared even by those who do not share romantic images of the continent but expect that alignment with EU will necessitate actions on the part of authorities to do things that everybody sees as right: realise *democracy*, organise just courts, create more favourable rules of economic activity. This shouldn't have to lead to sharp civilisational distinctions and leaves space to pragmatism:

> The conservative approach wouldn't work: Russia is also changing, the EU is changing. We need a prospective plan, such us building up the infrastructure of the continent: infrastructure, communication, technological areas maintained after Soviet collapse, aerospace, nuclear, new innovative structures. We have a closely connected scientific space in fundamental science. This pragmatic approach is not connected with discussions about integration […] joining an integration project is a socio-political question: social because it is the choice of the people and political because of the effect on the future of the state. (Yermolayev, in The Rada Channel, 2014)

The central mechanism within the new Ukraine, according to Yermolayev, must be the 'new *institutions* of *dialogue*' (ibid). One has to remark here that ideas about the institutional dialogue were not at the central of the Maidan discourse. As violence escalated, the space for dialogue that was almost non-existent from the start disappeared altogether. Referring to this issue, philosopher Serhij Datsyuk traced back the origins of the crisis to the fundamental balance of the country getting upset:

> The civil protest started because of whole range of separately existing relationships, which constitute the whole ,were thrown out of *balance.* […] Critical for the survival of the country is not the stopping of development, even if it happens in the context of the world crisis, but the loss of balance. This is especially critical for Ukraine which objectively is a buffer between two civilizations, both of which has its historical roots inside the country. […] Any one-sided and inflexible choice in favour of Europe or Russia is mortally dangerous. Ukraine as a buffer state can survive only by keeping the geo-political balance. Otherwise, there will be a split of the country. This was the main balance upset by the fourth president'. (Datsyuk, 2014, p. 99)

According to Datsyuk then Maidan stands not so much for the single-minded commitment to Europe. Rather, it represents a search for civic balance. The Maidan is a response to and an attempt to rectify the situation that was thrown out of balance: 'Maidan of 2013-2014, based on its pre-conditions – is a lengthy attempt to overcome the stupor of the ruling class of Ukraine and re-establishing the *balance* through actions of the *civil society*' (ibid, p. 101).

Expanding the meaning of Maidan to the whole world, Datsyuk also spoke in messianic tone, arguing it represents a radical challenge to the entire world order and radicalizes civic organisation: 'Maidan is already the proto-image of the new world. […] Maidan is the new reality of the world of network communities, which stands against the world of states and balance the new power of corporations' (ibid, p. 106).

Anarchistic energy of the Maidan was commented upon by many intellectuals. The state was clearly an enemy. It seemed to be an anachronism. The state stood in the way of the freedom-loving spirit:

> People rose against the government, who in the last 22 years have learned to live and survive without state. They, these people, actually do not need much from the state – *security, just* taxes, *clear rules of the game, rule of law* and, of course, *freedoms*. They do not need government. They can make do without it. They would do better without any government at all. […] Spontaneously, a union of individualists seems to come into being, in a kind of macabre, weird *anarcho-liberal-nationalist* atmosphere, who, again, do not need much. They need *freedom.* (Bondar, 2014, p. 165)

With such a diverse ideological mix, Maidan itself can be thought of as an institution of dialogue. And this institution apparently indicated an agreement. An inclusive agreement, aiming to give freedom to all parties involved. And it this freedom that can provide a firm ground for reform:

> Maidan today is a laboratory of the *social agreement.* Here we have something, the most important thing, which Ukrainians, so broadly represented here, didn't have for many years. Agreement. We do not need a father. We do not need a leader. We need *freedom.*[53] Without freedom, there will not be any *reform* nor *modernisation*'. (ibid, p.166)

While speaking in front of a crowd at 'Maidan University' on a cold December evening, Philosopher Mykhailo Minakov used the concept of social contract to explain the ongoing events. The social contract was torn up by the actions of the elite and hence had to be established anew: 'Each time we go to the streets - we demand new *social contract,* [We say] "These are our *rights* and you must respect them"'. (Minakov in NZ Maidan, 2014, 23:40)

Associated with contractualism is the requirement of a space of public reason, a description the Maidan at that time seemed to fit until violence escalated. To preserve this creative function, a dose of calm rationality had to be maintained to sustain public space as a *space of reason*: '[…] When we build systems, let's stay away from emotions' (Minakov, in Shkola Grazhdanskogo Prosvesheniya, 2013, 1:02:40). For a while it looked like genuine civic politics could take root and then spread from the central square of Kyiv. Civil society was working out a new social contract, while day-to-day organisation of the Maidan was a testing ground for the principles of government that would correspond to the new social contract. In this sense, the Maidan was a giant experiment of self-government. Given complexity of Ukraine, self-government of different communities was a vital aspect of development. In the words of Minakov: 'Practices of *local self-government* is the best laboratory for *democracy*' (ibid, 1:32:40-1:32:46). Up until mid-January 2014, when the first killings happened, the events could be read optimistically as unfolding of new civic liberty through an impressive collective effort. The sight was heart-warming indeed for a political philosopher: 'Public use of *reason* works' (ibid, 1:33:12). This is the aspect of Maidan that was destroyed by violence later.

The views of 'others'

The 'others', meaning the opposition to Maidan, were those who did not reject the Soviet legacy and the ties with Putin's Russia. The narratives of this side emphasised *continuity*. This historical template was set by the story of the common origin and destiny of east-Slavic people. This narrative was exemplified by the historian, Petr Tolochko, who spoke in front of a large

[53] Bondar uses here the word *воля* ('volya'), which can be translated as both freedom and will.

audience in December 2013. In this line of historical thought Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus are all branches of a single Slavic culture of ancient Rus, all belonging to the big 'Russian World'.
This common history has several nodal points that impart certain political normativity when it comes to the present and the future. The common cultural origin is the Church Slavonic language of the medieval Kievan Rus. Later, in the early modern period, the intellectual ground for the Russian Empire was laid in Kyiv:

> Feofan Prokopovych, the professor of Kyiv-Mohyla academy, was an ideologist of imperial Russia. […] He gave the definition of tsars imperial power as the power from God. You can't separate us from this. You can't imagine the birth of the Russian empire without Feofan Prokopovych. (Tolochko in PORT MONE TV YOUTUBE, 2013)

This point is mentioned frequently on all sides in Ukraine. On the national-conservative side, this is a proof of the civilisational superiority of Ukraine, while for the Soviet-conservative side, it is a proof of the shared origin with Russians and Belarusians. This shared origin then produced successes throughout the centuries: 'If we look at the history from the unification of hetmanate Ukraine and Russia, potentials were combined, not only Russia gave to Ukraine, but also Ukraine gave to Russia and this continued through history' (ibid).

Thus, the condemnation of the colonial relationships between Russia as imperial center and Ukraine as an oppressed colony, which is a common theme among the Ukrainian westernizers, are not valid:

> You wouldn't find a case where an Indian was chancellor for the English Queen[54], […] Ukraine was never a colony, […] Ukraine was always an original territory. […] And it couldn't be [a colony] just because Russians didn't consider us separate people. (ibid)

The detachment of Ukraine from the organic whole of the East Slavic world is hence an error, which is manifested in the ills that plague Ukraine since 1991:

> We didn't create anything valuable during the time of independence. Why? Because we are savouring our independence, we did not depend on anyone, we did not want to talk to anyone, and as a result we lost the cultural environment, where we were competitive, where one had to compete with creative skills and not political loyalty. (ibid)

[54] Rreference to Alexandr Bezborodko, who was a chancellor of Russian empire end of 18th century

The conclusion follows that a better solution to the current predicament would be to re-instate the historical unity: 'It seems to me: separately we can do less than what we could do together with Russia. As opposed to what is happening now' (ibid).

In this line of thinking, the Europe is outright dangerous. According to this view, Europe is not something to aspire to, but something to escape from. The historical Pereyaslow Treaty[55] is an example of just this fortunate escape. Back then, in 1654, Ukraine narrowly avoided the true disaster of being fully incorporated into Europe: 'we already were in Europe and if it wasn't up to Bohdan Khmelnitskiy – we wouldn't have made it out. If it wasn't for the Pereyaslaw agreement, it could've ended badly' (ibid).
And of course, for Tolochko, the Maidan itself is deplorable, offensive sight: 'Europe! Europe! I went through that Europe yesterday. Such a stench everywhere. […] I have just one wish: take them all away to Europe, this entire barbarian camp' (ibid).

The conservative political analyst and consultant Mikhail Pogrebinskiy spoke in a typically dismissive fashion of the protestors' naiveté of and the incompetence of the opposition leadership:

> I talk to my colleagues who stand on the side of Maidan, who dream of a better life—a European life. I try to ask them: why did you come, can you explain in clear words why you are standing there? Tens of thousands of them. Yes, some can [answer me], they think they will get visa-free travel. Some think they will get a system without corruption, [but] who exactly will create it? Yatzeniuk, the Klitshckos, Tyagnybok—these very non-corrupt people? Somebody has to say the truth here, that the king is naked. (Pogrebinskiy in Ukrainskij Vybor, 2013c)

According to Pogrebinskiy, the vagueness of the protestors' demands, the lack of clear political program and apparent hidden conflict between civil society and the leaders of the formal political opposition indicated that the whole endeavour was destructive and ill-fated:

> What exactly does this have to end with: a change of power, the system changed by people […] who will do that? Who will change the

[55] 1654 agreement between Ukrainian Cossack leadership and the Tsarist Russia that laid ground for the absorption of the Ukrainian territory into Russia. It is seen as the historical juncture that determined the political divisions of the future. Again, the interpretations here are indicative of political preferences. Simplifying: for one side it was regrettable decision by Ukrainian leadership to turn their backs to Europe, while for the other side it was a return to authentic historical and cultural state.

> constitution? I offered to change into parliamentary republic – [but] Tymoshenko [and] Yatzeniuk were against it. They fight for strong presidential power. (ibid)

The real force behind the protests, according to this view was the West. Its official representatives legitimized the actions of protestors actions, thereby intruding into the affairs of a sovereign state:

> What the hell is this—why do we have barricades on the main street of the country? This is because European and American guests come and say, "No, you can't touch them, this is a peaceful protest, so let it be, this is okay" […] These guests come to the unlawfully occupied buildings – thereby legitimising [the occupation] – for example the aid to the state department secretary of the US, Victoria Nuland, who is Jewish, shakes hands with Tyahnybok—who is number five on the list of top anti-Semites in the world. […] They do a press conference there […] The Right Sector[56] occupies spaces that no one else has access to, even police […] probably full of weapons – how does one interpret this? (ibid)

This insistence on the manipulation, covert instigation and artificial sustaining by the malign West as the true drivers behind the Maidan revolt is the centrepiece of the view that will structure the interpretative counter-effort of the conservatives. This is the exact opposite of the assertion of own subjectivity so dear to the Maidan, designed to neutralise any arguments and discussions. It attacks the very basis of Maidan beliefs, thereby undermining any possibility of dialogue. The civil society here is, at best, a group of misled simpletons and at worst—stooges of the foreign agency.

The conservative commentators and government representatives continuously insisted on formal legal mechanisms as the way out of the crisis. Appealing to constitution and democracy, they reiterated that elections would be the right way to express legitimate concerns with the government and to replace it in due time. The Maidan side, distrusted such talk and dismissed it outright as a distraction tactic, arguing that compromising now means there would not be any free elections. Moreover, the government by that time had a track record of adapting legal frameworks according to their desires (such as in the case of revision of the Constitution of 2010) as well as interpreting it selectively, guided by the political expedience. One concession that conservatives were prepared to give was that some Maidan protestors were genuine and their wishes understandable. But what was really going according to this view as that the short-sighted, intellectually lightweight liberals, were hijacking the political agenda:

[56] Radical right-wing organisation that formed during the Maidan

> Maidan doesn't have one will—there are many great people there—nice and beautiful girls and boys, who are there for various reasons. And of course it is right that the absolute majority wants to live like humans, but what does it have to do with what is going on? [...] Take our liberal activists. [...] I'm especially infuriated by some [...] Some of them are not well educated, lack basic understanding, like Mustapha Nayem and others, well ok, that's what they are [...] But there are many smart people I see participating in these demonstrations - director of the institute of philosophy, First of December Group where there are people I deeply respect. Very few had the courage to leave and say I can't take part in this. Their voices are absent. (ibid)

For Pogrebinskiy, the way out was a dialogue. The formula offered is indeed an admirable example of civility. The trouble was that conditions for it were completely absent and the government systematically dismantled them way before:

> Yes, there has to be a dialogue, but not of the Government with Maidan. The survey shows, people are split 50/50. Maidan today represents only a part of the country. So one part should talk to the other part to work out how to live together. And the Government has to be an arbiter in this situation. And not ring each other's necks. Although only one side wants to get at their throats, the other side sits at home. But that would be the right dialogue. Country can survive if there will be a dialogue of these two parts. Hrytcak has to talk to Tolochko for example. (Ibid)

Having a conversation between the West-Ukrainian, liberal historian Yaroslaw Hrytcak and the conservative historian Petr Tolochko moderated by the neutral government was an admirable idea. There was, however, no one in Ukraine at that time who could conceive of this being a possibility. Neutrality was already destroyed in the street battles and by heavy ideological warfare. Speaking later at a roundtable in Kharkiv in mid-February, with several East-Ukrainian leaders, when it became clear that the current government is on its way out, Pogrebinskiy spoke of Ukrainian South-East as a distinct entity that has to act its own interest and raise its voice:

> […] when we say that the East has to assert itself, I want to say that it shouldn't speak of itself as a force supporting the acting government. There will be elections, that's where people should make a choice, our matter (the matter of the East) is not to identify with an instrument that will install this or that person or party into power, but that our voice should be heard. What does this mean? First of all, we should clearly articulate those values that we are ready to protect up to creation and organizing of some self-defence. And this for sure is not merely Russian culture, language, television, and

> so on. This is more to do with that fact we represent an industrially developed region, where its own culture of relationships between worker and owner exists. After last couple of years, they were damaged compared to what we used to have […] we went from one extreme to the other: from socialist to ultra-capitalist. And there is stuff to change here. (Pogrebinskiy, in Andrey Rektorov, 2014)

On the one hand, change is needed, which could potentially be the basis for dialogue with the rest of the country. On the other hand, such dialogue has not been equal from the beginning. Pogrebinskiy reserves superior cultural and intellectual role to the South-East:

> I think if there is a chance for a constructive and substantial idea on how to change the country to appear somewhere – it is here, it will not appear in Galicia, it has to appear here. And this idea has to for sure include modernisation of our society starting from the east and south. (ibid)

Even if the Maidan ostensibly split Ukrainians in half, as per Pogrebinskiy, these halves are not equal in any prospective dialogue. Pogrebinskiy's point is that the South-East should play the dominant role. What actually happens, in his view, is the hegemonisation of Maidan underpinned by the West:

> All of the media of Europe and America repeat exactly the mantra of the Maidan that there is government and there are people. While in reality, there is a lot of data that says (and they know about it) there is a 50/50 split for and against [it]. (ibid)

Pogrebinskiy, in trying to give the voice to the opinions of the part of the Ukrainian population who are not in favour of the Maidan, emphasizes the need of dialogue and civility but in the end puts a specific part of the country above the rest. According to him, those protesting aren't really the party of the dialogue, they are mere puppets of the West. Thus, the country arrived to a worrying juncture. Everyone recognized the need for a dialogue. Who are the legitimate voices to be included into such a dialogue could not be agreed anymore.

Conclusion

The original Maidan protest was a reaction to the government making its sudden, unexplained U-turn that left a major part of society convinced that years of officials' pronouncements in favour of European integration was mere manipulation. The public communication, which eroded over the last two decades has broken down completely. Deep aspirations of a large part of society were disrespected by the government. Then, its ostentatious

deployment of violence converted latent tension brewing below the surface into a social explosion and revolt. This led to many comments such as this, made by a lawyer and activist Gennadiy Druzenko on his Facebook page:

> Back to the sources. Why did I come out to the Maidan on the 21st of November and then kept coming over and over? To overthrow Yanukovych? No. To demand the signing of the association agreement (with the EU)? To be frank, also no (as an expert I view this "golden key" rather soberly). I came out to signify my objection to the deceptiveness of the system, which for three years told me from all TV screens that we should join Europe and sign the association agreement, and now suddenly, without asking anyone – changed its mind. I came out to remind the power that I'm not just a bio-mass and one cannot treat me in this fashion. (Druzenko, 2013)

Such sentiments are congruent with idea that the deepest offence politically is to disregard someone's subjectivity[57]. In other words, there was a general moral offence committed. The story which was told consistently by the government was revealed to be a lie, thereby making it plain that the expectation of even the minimal kind of democratic recourse was laughable. The choice between the antagonistic civilizational poles was itself, to a large extent, a product of political manoeuvring and power struggles. The blatancy with which the elite weaponised geopolitical options and used them in an unwise power game was for many the last straw:

> It wasn't us who came up with the alternative "Russia or Europe". This alternative was dreamt up by the politicians because they brought economy to collapse with their incompetent actions. And afterwards, requiring money, they forced the country to choose between signing one of the two association agreements, and for this they created a myth of an urgent choice. And so, we chose. We would be glad to live happily and prosperously in a Ukraine without any association agreements. But when we are told "Choose!", we choose. And this is where games are unacceptable [..]. It was those in power who agitated the public opinion when they needed support. Do not tease a hungry lion! You wanted public support for the signing of agreement with the EU—you have it. You can't just turn the other direction after several years of diligent preparation and mass-propaganda. This will result in injustice, and this kind of injustice people will not forgive. (Pekar, 2013)

Maidan became a truly large-scale historical event when the authorities' violence made it a zero-sum game. The distrust which was the result of

[57] See elaboration of this based on Rainer Forst's political philosophy in section 2.1

complete breakdown of public communication prevented dialogue and made the revolt into 'us' or 'them' story and eventually dragged the whole country into this scheme. The experience on the part of pro-Maidan actors as reflected by the accounts of intellectuals, was life-changing. Identities were created, subjectivity asserted, patriotism invigorated:

> My life went in such a way that I never had my own country. She didn't like me and I hated her. And I didn't have anything to expect or hope for here in this country. In 1991 I had some illusions that I finally got what I was looking for. And then the country disappeared again. Together with the illusions. And I lived all these years without a country. And only during Maidan I understood one important thing for me: I finally got a country. (Podervyanskiy, 2014, p. 237)

For the large part of Maidanites, it was a metaphysical experience, a revelation: 'The mystery of the Maidan was religious throughout. Without a Christian spirit it would be impossible to keep thousands of people in the discipline on non-violent resistance' (Sverstiuk, 2014, p. 125).

The 'discursive stretch' between the poles of realism and idealism, between 'is' and 'ought' was setup very ambitiously. It extended far into the realms of abstract ideas of freedom, justice, individualism, as well as a new type of citizen and nation. It went even further into outright metaphysics, flirting with utopia. Various actors placed emphasis differently with tensions built-in from the start. The resilience of the tissue of reformist aspiration, stretched thinly between the poles of realism and idealism, was yet to be tested by the upcoming events. The new divisions, tensions, and utopian overstretches that crystallised in the Maidan will influence attempts to reform and transform the Ukrainian political system and economy in the years to come.

3.3 Typology of narratives of justification

In the discursive whirl presented in the previous section, it is rather difficult to distil clear ideological positions and identify groups that represent them. The prevalence of the liberal language of rights, freedom, liberal reform used at the Maidan can be misleading. It does not mean that everyone who used this language was actually a liberal. In pre-2014 Ukraine, political narratives tended to aggregate into two opposing 'pro' and 'against the status quo' categories that I labelled 'Conservative Pragmatism' and 'National Liberalism' in section 3.1. During the Maidan, this polarisation became more extreme. Still, within the two categories there was further diversity of opinions and in-between some who tried to avoid falling into either.

Even among intellectuals, there were few clear-cut expositions of political ideology. Words alone were not enough to assign the speaker to a certain strand of political thought as everyone spoke of Europe, rights, freedom, justice, but various speakers meant different things. This is due to understandable and necessary attempts to create new meaning for the new, radically changing Ukraine. Old ideas had to be re-interpreted, adapted to what was happening. Potential new hybrids a combinations could be tried out in fertile environment when the new society was seemingly being created. This lent certain creative freedom to the thinker and communicator; indeed, ideas and concepts may have different meanings depending on the context. Due to sheer youth of the political entity in Ukraine, the discursive practice of civil society arguably has not developed very far and political thought was often articulated rather loosely. This looseness was part of working out more sophisticated positions and testing them in the discourse and hence should not be seen as a sign of intellectual deficiency. It was likely exacerbated by the global trends that both fragment and allow to instrumentalise culture, such as digitalisation. The resulting texts are rather difficult to pin down and categorise based on the word content as the same words seem to mean different things and are used to convey different or even opposite messages.

However, one element does make it possible to break through to the actual content and create a typology of narratives, tentatively categorise various texts, and (even more tentatively) categorise various intellectuals. The element that holds the articulated position together independently from semantic tactics is *the subject constructed in the text*. The subject, as an acting and thinking entity, is a necessary grammatical component of a narrative as per the definition presented in section 2.3. The grammar of the political sphere requires a political subject. Any political statement requires an acting and thinking entity assumed capable to act and think with some degree of agency. The political subject is a political acting and thinking entity. The specific assumptions about this subject, such as its ontology and degree of autonomy, determine the substance of political narratives, which tell a story how society is ought to be governed and by whom. The subject is abstract: it is constructed out of assumptions, and knowledge or beliefs about human nature, society, history as well as material conditions. Often it is derived from anthropological assumptions about what humans can and cannot do, such as one's capacity for self-determination. It may have specific cultural, ethnic, or racial characteristics. It may carry a composite structure, where multiple elements exist at the same level of political subjectivity. It could be derived directly from what 'is' or normatively postulated out of a certain moral or ethical perspective. However, the subject should not be confused with specific individuals, leaders, or groups. It is rather an imagined entity that the real political actors can merely resemble. Exhibiting characteristics of this imagined entity becomes the condition for political subjectivity of real-world actors. With time, these characteristics become institutionalised through

rules, norms, and laws. Their origin lies in the discourses of the political culture of which texts and speech of intellectuals are the most concentrated forms.

The contemporary tendency driven by the internet is to liquefy the discourses of this kind, which unsettles and atomises subjectivity. Beschorner writes of the 'transition from the classical subject to the new self' (2019, p. 34). Instead of the centred, rooted subject of classical modern philosophy, the new self is multiple and highly unstable. The new self that is 'strongly expressive' (ibid, p. 31) and 'understands itself as singular' (ibid, p. 34), becomes the acting and thinking entity, which complicates political organisation and belonging through classical forms of 'parties, religious communities, trade unions, associations, NGOs' (ibid). Nonetheless, in the political sphere, discourses still have to construct some version of community, at least to present particular interests as general. So, the 'self' has to have a corresponding 'we', at least provisionally, to achieve a political goal. Anyone, therefore, who consistently engages in the political discourse must build the arguments and visions around a certain agency to realise those visions. This subject, even if highly unstable and dependant on the fluid 'we', has to stay relatively consistent within the texts of one author or strand of political thought—at least until a clear break and transition to a different 'we' occurs.

Focusing on political subjectivity adds a certain reflexive quality to this analysis. In constructing the political subject, the intellectual lays out assumptions about the world that she represents. The intellectual herself must be detectable within these assumptions. The publicly articulated position aimed to achieve impact beyond expert circles such as academia, makes an intellectual into a participant rather than a dispassionate observer. The political subjectivity itself has to then be reconcilable with the intellectual's life. In order to be credible, the intellectual must herself comply with conditions she constructs as political subjectivity. Put simply, the intellectual has to be seen as a (at least partial) embodiment of that very political subjectivity she offers to the society at large.

Taking the formal element if subjectivity as the constant that all narratives must have allows us to typologise the narratives, even if the lexical content is either highly variable and arbitrary or homogenous and strategic.

Based on discourse analysis performed in this dissertation, the following narrative types emerge as heuristically fertile for an enquiry into Ukrainian political discourse.

1. **National liberalism.** Liberalism is difficult to define. The practical uses of the term diverge from its philosophical and historical meaning. Historical meanings differ in English, French, and German traditions (see Sartori, 1987, p. 369). The practical uses in turn are multiple, elastic, and

tend to express certain sectarian party-political arrangements of a particular country (ibid). What is commonly called liberal in the US is more on the left. In Europe, on the other hand, liberal means centre-right or conservative. The idea of freedom sits at the core of any liberalism, but its specific version depends on whom the freedom is meant for and for which purpose it is being deployed. This suggests not only a variability stemming from strategic political considerations but also cultural variability. If so, it is important to establish the core of liberalism from which its various versions spring and develop. From this starting point, one can derive what liberalism means in Ukraine. Sartori (1987) synthesised the original, classic liberal idea as 'theory and practice of the juridical defence through the constitutional state of individual political freedom, of individual liberty' (p. 380). Thus, one can locate the initial impulse of liberalism in the high value assigned to the individual who has to be protected from intrusions in their affairs from outside. The value of the individual must be maintained regardless of the desires or whims of that power—be that of a ruler, state, neighbour, or competitor. Hence subjectivity, constructed in the narratives that can be described as liberal, is first of all about an individual, whose freedom political arrangements have to defend.

Why add 'national' to liberalism? Looking at the Ukrainian political discourse, one immediately notices the issue of the country's imperial past, first of all in the form of USSR, but also in the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires. Defending an individual in Ukraine historically meant defending them from the invasiveness of those powers. The notion that the nation is the main counterforce to the invasive power went hand-in-hand with the notion of individual freedom, such as in the writings of Mykhailo Drahomanov (1841-1895), who argued for individual civil rights as well as self-government of regions and nationalities within the Russian empire (see Lusyak-Rudnytsky, 1987). Freeing up the Ukrainian individual was connected to the freeing up the Ukrainian nation from the state that is culturally alien and politically repressive. This link still exists today. Being liberal thus means rejecting imperial legacy and committing to a national identity that allows individual freedom from the state that is suspected of carrying the genes of invasive authoritarianism. Thus, political subjectivity in liberal narratives (the 'we') into which free individuals coalesce is that of a freedom-loving nation. It consists of individuals joining forces as the collective political subject to create political arrangements to defend themselves from external threats. To identify liberal narratives in the political discourses one has to look for language that points to the kind of political subjectivity described above: the value of the individual, the principle of defence from power external to the individual, and the conditions for the legitimate collective subject in leaving enough free space for the individual. For instance, the language

of *freedom* in Ukrainian political discourse before and during the Maidan revolt was pervasive. This does not mean that anyone that evokes freedom is a liberal. A more nuanced analysis is required to understand whose freedom, which imagined entity, is being implied to separate liberalism from conservative, nationalist, socialist versions of freedom. Depending on the topic and context, one would expect certain correlated concepts to accompany normative individualism in liberal narratives, such as democracy, meritocracy, constitutionalism, rights, and rule of law. All of them, while having a role to play in liberalism, can also exist separately and appear along other ideological threads. Depending on the variety of liberal thought, these concepts may or may not be a means to an end, where the end is individual freedom from external coercion. Various liberalisms can relegate democracy, meritocracy, or the constitutional process, while still staying committed to the ideal of individual freedom. Without individual freedom from external invasion however, liberalism collapses.

2. **National conservatism.** Another narrative pattern that emerges from the survey of the pre-Maidan and Maidan discourse is national conservatism. The structure of political subjectivity holding this discourse together is more narrowly defined along ethnic lines. Very often the language deployed is identical to the liberal discourse. References to freedom and rights abound. In fact, it often professes to be a liberal discourse as such. Upon closer examination, however, the political subject constructed or implied in the text is more hierarchical, while the conditions for entry into the collective political subjectivity tend to be certain cultural features of language and values defined by origin. The plurality of these cultural features is restricted by a clear-cut division of good and bad. Those who hold bad values do not have the right be part of the political community. They will not be part of the polity unless they comply or are made to comply with certain values. In national liberalism conditions for political subjectivity lie primarily in the abstract commitment to individual liberty while the historic-cultural attributes of the individual do not define the membership in the collective subject. In the national conservative narrative, the relationship is the other way around: representatives of the right values form political subjectivity that affords them liberty. The right values meant here are on the one hand ethnic (mainly language), while on the other hand are elitist values of the educational, intellectual, and noble kind (all within boundaries set by the ethnic imperative), with social status assigned based on the advancement in the respective hierarchies.

   What complicates the matter is that these hierarchies do not exist per se in Ukraine. Their proponents suggest establishing different kinds of hierarchies rather than defend the existing ones. In fact, existing

hierarchies are abhorrent as people currently at the top do not have the 'right' values. These hierarchies ought to be scrapped. Therefore, the discourse is geared towards change with a concurrent arsenal of moral concepts, such as freedom, meritocracy, and responsibility. This change would replace existing hierarchies, which are remnants of systems where Ukrainians were subservient to alien, malign powers, full of 'colonisers' and 'creoles', with more authentic hierarchies, consistent with the historically accurate ethnic culture. Thus, conservative in the 'national conservative' refers not to preservation of social and political arrangements as they are, but to *values* towards which these arrangements should be transformed. This conservatism can be deduced from the political subject which emerges from the respective texts. This subject is conservative due to restrictive conditions of social and ethnic homogeneity as pre-conditions to belonging. Here, I make a certain judgement: the narrowing of subjectivity is associated with conservatism, while expanding it is associated with progressivism. This relies on understanding social history as the struggle to extend political subjectivity. In this reading, social history went from non-existent political rights in feudal and absolutist systems to their introduction and gradual extension by means of constitutional republicanism, attempts at revolutionary leaps through socialist and communist ideologies with ambivalent or detrimental consequences (see Forst, 2015, pp. 16-18). No determinism or teleology is assumed here: what I call 'progressive' is occasional, historically observable yet non-permanent shifts in conditions of legitimacy for political subjectivity in favour of more inclusivity that is then institutionalised. The outlook that puts socially and culturally clear-cut, defined subject at the centre of discourse I refer to as conservative. The nation here again serves the purpose to elevate this defined subject to the status of collective 'we', which is postulated as the force that should govern society.

3. **Liberism.** A strong ideological current felt throughout preliminary discourse analysis is that of economic freedom. In various scholarly and critical traditions, the associated strand of thought is variously called neoliberalism, capitalism, economism, right-libertarianism, and laissez fair. They all carry specific ideological connotations as well as descriptive and analytic utility. For the purpose of my analysis, I borrow an Italian term *liberism* (Sartori, 1987 p. 374), used to denote political thought where economic freedom is the chief principle of social organisation. The reason for picking the term is to create distance from traditional disagreements. From the start, the other words mentioned above carry a value judgement and in large measure pre-determine the angle of analysis and critique. Using a label having specific ideological connotations that from the beginning puts analysis within the worn-out frame of critique limits the attempt toward independent thinking.

Liberism, on the other hand is sufficiently obscure a term to leave the possibility to be filled with new content, while still being meaningfully anchored into conceptual history. What is important is distinction of liberism from political liberalism. Notwithstanding frequent conflation of the two in political struggles and ideological battles, they must be separated. The concern of liberism is individual freedom first of all expressed in material possession, accumulation, and exchange. Within the framework of liberism, the role of politics is limited to institutionalising, maintenance, and defence of mechanisms that enable such freedom. Any forays of politics beyond these limits are met with suspicion. The concern of liberalism, on the other hand, is political freedom, meaning that there is protection from the threat of external powers invading into the life of individuals. The exact relationship between the two kinds of freedom is a matter for deeper analysis. How they enable each other, whether they undermine each other, whether one is the pre-condition for the other—all of these are essential questions for such an analysis. The starting point for this examination is the distinction between liberism and liberalism stemming from the observation that they deviate narratively.

Liberism speaks the language of markets, competition, and capital and applies these economic categories to other spheres with accompanying inclinations to measure, rank and assign value accordingly. Economic freedom is assumed to lie in removing politically erected restrictions. The assumption underlying this removal is that seeking material benefit is a human's supreme natural trait that must be recognised and nurtured. Where political liberalism sees the means to freedom in the constitutional process which contains potential for a wide array of institutions, liberism looks to remove obstacles or only create institutions that facilitate economic freedom based on economic theory alone. Ultimately, economic and political freedom should be thought of together, as both are part of individual freedom. The reason for drawing a distinction is the intuition that putting sole emphasis on economic freedom could in the end undermine individual freedom by restricting the kinds of individual freedoms that exist outside of economic sphere. More precisely: building a social system around economic imperatives would demand everyone to become an economic agent, with economic utility, with financial measurability being the main principle of assigning status and worth to an individual. This would undermine non-economic freedom. Full individual freedom should include the possibility to be something other than an economic entrepreneur. Different social roles, whose principle of worth are not primarily economic (see Boltanski &Thevenot, 2006, p. 215) should be possible and maintain equal moral status.

The subjectivity at work in liberist narratives is that of 'homo economicus': the utility maximising, rational being who continuously weighs the cost and benefits and acts accordingly. The fact that real people are, by and large, not like this does not automatically invalidate the liberist ideas. The concept, as with all political subjectivities, is abstract and has only an indirect connection to the real-world actors. In the context of political discourse, it should be seen as a normative orientation or regulative idea that promises the best results if we accept the guidance of 'homo economicus' in closest possible approximation to reality.

4. **Nationalism.** The next narrative, the contours of which are visible within the Maidan discourse, is nationalism. The problematic of the nation is present in aforementioned narratives: the liberal and the conservative. With its imperial past still looming large in Ukraine, the nation is a logical counterpoint and crystallisation point for subjectivity that is independent from external powers. In the case of both—national liberalism and national conservatism—the nation is a collective subject uniting smaller constituent elements. In national liberalism, the smaller elements are individuals united by the defence of their liberty. In national conservatism, the cultural sub-group is united by their status and values. One could say that nationalism is embedded into both of these currents of thought to the extent that both foresee a collective subject 'nation', though the content, structure and rigidity of the nation will vary. This would enable an assessment of nationalism's intensity along the scale the nation's openness and stringency of the conditions for belonging. How could one then separate 'nationalism' into a separate type?

   Based on the Maidan discourse, it is again a specific kind of political subjectivity that distinguishes this narrative. In nationalism, the nation is not further subdivided into constituent elements. It exists as an organic whole. Belonging to it is not a means to an end as it is with national liberalism, where collective subject nation is a mean to establish individual liberty politically. It has no multi-level hierarchical structure as with national conservatism. In nationalism, the national whole arose out of the depths of history. It is often understood as primordial, with a homogenous texture, emotions, and interests ('consciousness'). The changes it undergoes must have a reference point from the past. The history as it unfolds, does so within a certain corridor of national destiny that necessitates and justifies action. Since the nation is understood as a self-contained entity or even totality, everything outside of it must belong to a different self-contained entity and is hence suspect. At best it can exist as a remote alien, at worst it is an object of hostility or source of threat. Nationalism speaks the language of internal sameness, cultural homogeneity, cultural conflict, and collective rituals where individuals

merge into an organic whole from which they originate: 'the people'. Society, nationality and the state overlaps within nationalism (admittedly, to various degrees depending on the intensity of the nationalism). The central driving force down this path is that of the national subject. Here, individuals possess no internal distinction: everyone is absorbed into the national whole so long they exhibit the right cultural traits and thereby combine into a collectivity where there is moral equality and solidarity underpinned by national consciousness. This allows everyone to sense each other intuitively, with little need for internal reasoning and debate. The discourse is only directed to the outside, while internally within the collectivity, there is a shared consciousness that dispenses with many aspects of reciprocal inter-subjective communication. The subject is first of all collective.

There are two major subtypes of nationalism that can be observed in Ukraine: traditionalist and primordialist. Traditionalism can be inclusive so long as a potential member takes part in traditional rituals without questioning them. Traditional 'coding' grants inclusion on the basis of respect for tradition. Primordialist nationalism sets the boundaries for community strictly within ethnic or even racial confines. These boundaries are seen as permanent and are basically insurmountable for an outsider.

5. **Neo-Soviet Conservatism** emphasizes continuity with the Soviet period. Looking favourably at the Soviet history and refusing to consign it to the dustbin, this narrative often speaks the language of nostalgia. But it also goes beyond nostalgia by envisioning a new ways to embody 'objective' geographical and economic factors in the updated political organisation. Economic and political centralism in neo-Soviet Conservatism go hand-in-hand with social paternalism. The paternalist state is its main political force. In the neo-Soviet variety, all the elements mentioned above are sharpened into an updated version of statehood that derives its legitimacy from the achievements of the Soviet past and see the future as an extension of those achievements. This comes with a geopolitical preference for Russian-led projects, and general distrust or even hatred of the West as the historical source of threat. In the more concentrated versions, there is a certain dose of paranoia and conspiracy theorising. This stems from the common assumption that dark Western powers and nefarious capitalists are responsible for the misfortune of people in the post-Soviet countries. It often comes hand-in-hand with a certain brand of Christian orthodoxy that lends historical legitimacy to the civilisational alliances of East Slavs and adds a spiritual dimension to the political ideology (see Schmid, 2016). Common stylistic attributes of this narrative are certain all-knowing cynicisms, grand explanations resembling the historical materialist tradition, global theorising, and

close-ended arguments where everything can be explained by their material interests. The subjectivity that can be traced in the text is the state whose scope of agency is determined by objective geographic and economic factors. These factors have irresistible force that shouldn't be tampered with. Attempting to do so is rather hopeless. An important achievement of history shaped by objective factors is the sovereign state that must be respected. In the absence of the former ideological monopoly that underpinned this state, there is a compensatory tendency towards neo-patrimonialism, known as the systems of 'personal rulership' (Skygin, 2019, p. 93), where political and economic power is concentrated around certain figures. The functionality of this narrative relies on playing with the residuals of 'the Soviet imagination of a preordained and predestined future' (Etkind & Minakov, 2019, p. 5). The endpoint might have changed, the way to get there too, but the main principle of subjectivity is intact. Political and economic power are fused into a dense core of the state that ultimately bears responsibility for those who live under its authority, which is legitimised objectively and is hence unquestionable.

6. **Leftism.** The left is certainly a broad group. It is the central issue of equality that allows for a discussion of leftism as a type of narrative. Here, I am specifically referring to economic and social equality. The means regarding how equality should be achieved differs drastically between Marxist, Anarchist, Socialist, Social Democratic variants of leftist thought. The drive towards equality is nonetheless the common thread. In Ukrainian discourses and politics, the left is largely marginalised. The issue of equality has been taken up by various other currents, such as nationalism, liberalism (so long as we are talking about 'equality of opportunity'), and post-Soviet conservatism. But none of these discourses consistently speak of the plight of the poverty-stricken and socially disadvantaged groups in society as a systematic issue that could be solved through a different form of political organisation. The distinguishing mark of the left is speaking the language of social and economic equality as a moral necessity. This allows the left to critique other narratives as self-serving, partial, and instrumental. However, the Maidan events have split the left. The more Marxist wing kept a distance and primarily watched the game of the oligarchs and international capital play out, while many others were active and supportive of the Maidan as a social movement demanding justice.

   The strict insistence on socio-economic equality as the political principle has an important role to play in the political discourse of any society. The fact that it is marginalised in Ukraine is both partly historical (i.e., the result of discredited soviet Leninist ideology), and partly intentionally political, meaning that it is a result of systematic ideological weeding out.

The subjectivity at work in the left discourses will again vary depending on the particular strand of left thought, but the following shared features can be identified: subjectivity arises from social-economic history that has the shape of struggle for equal social-economic rights; the relations between social groups is the result of arbitrary and unjust distributions of power, designed to protect privileges for some at the expense of others; and the legitimacy of a political action is judged by how and whether it addresses inequalities.

7. **Republicanism.** An important current of political imagination is republicanism. It manifests itself narratively as rational eclecticism. Republicanism argues for constitutionally assured inclusivity that aims to accommodate multiple values and ethnicities into a polity. On first sight, republicanism is semantically related to liberalism as many of their features overlap. In fact, republicanism is a variation of liberalism, but with a stronger deliberative element and an open-ended value content of the envisaged polity. Where national liberal narrative starts from the normative individualism and meritocracy and sees constitutional republic as the institutional mechanism to realise it. Republicanism (as I see it in Ukrainian context) starts from the concept of citizenship. Citizenship that can accommodate individualism along with other values is the regulative idea of republicanism. A republican polity in the sense of republicanism could, in principle, allow substantially deviating values to exist in parallel communities. Individualists, democrats, liberals, socialists, ethno-conservatives, and even paternalists can all potentially carve out spaces for their respective communities and interact through a set of rational norms where the paramount principle is justice standing on its own, independently from specific non-generalisable values. The original Maidan language of inclusion, articulation of dignity, insistence on the secondary importance of issues of language, origin, and even political ideology so long as higher-level solidarity of human dignity was upheld—all of this made such a vision seem attainable. In fact, for a while Maidan itself was presented by many intellectuals as a real entity where such a pluralist arrangement came to life and functioned.

   Political subjectivity here is fundamentally multiple or ‘composite’. The philosophical pillars sustaining it is self-determination and rationality, together activating the possibility of rational public discourse. Beyond this, subjectivity is not defined as such. In the specific social circumstances, it is constructed inter-subjectively. It can therefore be thought of as a certain free space, only filled with content as the result of interaction in discourse. As opposed to a tangible centre of an individual, nation, ethnicity, social group, or state, republican subjectivity is a result of inter-subjective discourse, with no centrally fixated value-content apart from rationality and justice.

Importantly, I suggest to distinguish three sub-types of republicanism: (1) left-liberal, (2) social-democratic, (3) Right-republicanism. Their commonality lies in insistence on the centrality of the constitution, necessity of institutional national dialogue and most importantly – irreducible cultural complexity of Ukraine. Their differences lie in the specific characteristics of citizenship. This is covered in more details in the dedicated section 3.5.1.3.

8. **Moderate conservatism** represents a small but interesting narrative strand. Its main distinguishing feature is its rejection of nationalism and liberalism and instead the appeal to classical conservative ideas, often connected to spiritual traditions. Conservatism in this case refers to a rejection of various kinds of progressivisms (liberal, left, national), and instead emphasises the continuities that stand against enthusiastic transformative visions, whether it is the French revolution or Ukrainian neo-liberal reforming. Not surprisingly, the canon of Western conservative thought such as Edmund Burke, Roger Scruton, Thomas Aquinas as well some contemporary representatives are referenced often. The subjectivity at work here is that of no-nonsense meritocracy, protected from the noise of ideology and modern digital cacophony by the time-tested truths that make meritocratic aristocracy, which transcends national and economic frames, the true political subject.

9. **Others: narrative residue**. There is a certain narrative residue that one can classify more by style than content. Frivolous drifting from one position to another, sometimes playful cynicism, emotional amplification with no anchoring into identifiable set of ideas even at the basic level of subjectivity. Fragmented public space is conducive for this kind of discursive gaming. One instance of it are various populist politicians, who try to create the widest possible surface to reflect popular worries. It is also the province of certain anti-politics where power is activated and accumulated by collecting various resentments though affective techniques. On the one hand - this is the province of populist political actors, on the other - conspiratorial bloggers, on-line groups and most disturbingly, organised online trolls deployed for political warfare. The difficulty is to understand which is which. Case in point - blogger Anatolij Sharij. Talking about politics in the style of a kind of comedy show a là John Stewart's Daily Show, but with expressly cynical overtones and much less nuanced humour, was enough to gather a substantial following. Pointing out absurdity of the events, deplorability of people involved and all-round cynicism strikes a chord with many. In absence of discursive connecting points to other groups, preferring self-indulgence and savouring vulgar negativity, it is hard to see how the result can be anything other than destructive.

This is a simplified and not exhaustive list of narratives that I suggest to order Ukrainian political discourse based on the review of pre-Maidan, Maidan texts as well as first analysis of the broader corpus from 2014-2019, presenting visions of Ukraine's past and future in connection with design of social life in the spheres of government, economy and society. The subsequent analysis will allow to identify specific features of each narrative that would help to better differentiate them and understand their functioning as cultural constructs.

3.4 Periodisation

Maidan united different actors in moral opposition to the old status quo represented by the ruling class. The fragile ideological connecting threads between different actors were patriotism (for some civic, for many – ethnic) and a certain liberalism. For some they were genuine, for others merely rhetorical. For some they were authentic, for others pragmatic or even instrumental. Politically this manifested in the external orientation towards Europe and an internal commitment to reform the system towards rule of law. In the aftermath of the Maidan events, against the background of war in Donbass and loss of Crimea, actual attempts were undertaken to implement reforms. Discursively this was accompanied by intense articulation of visions, plans, and arguments. For a while, the 'liberal' intersection point of intentions of various anti status quo actors held up. The new government announced more and more reforms. Civil society was engaged and provided tentatively favourable assessments (VoxUkraine, 2015). The association agreement with the EU was finally signed and ratified on September 16th, 2014.

This reformist post-Maidan course held up approximately until beginning of 2016, when a major political crisis occurred (Carnegie, 2016). The result was the change of the cabinet, broad strengthening and consolidation of President Poroshenko's power across branches of government regardless of the constitution, a shift towards more overtly nationalist rhetoric, and the amplification of illiberal tendencies in civil society. The split could also be observed among intellectuals, hitherto united by their anti-status quo stance, into those overtly critical of the new status quo that was emerging and those supporting it or abstaining. In more clear-cut cases, this meant a disagreement between liberal and more national-conservative or nationalist camps. Less obvious were disagreements within respective camps about means and ends. Many saw consolidation of state power in one centre as well as the top-down promotion of more homogenous values as necessary for liberal reforms. And of course, the war loomed large. Emotional and material burden, the brunt of which was born by civil society (Zarembo, 2017), took its toll. The general

public was affected by the continuing traumas of the previous two years, which diverted attention and energy away from reforming the country towards protecting what little security remained. Some observers argued that this emotional background was also actively shaped by the oligarchic media, which intentionally maintained the atmosphere of fear that served primarily the oligarchic elites (Petik & Herasym, 2016). The overall public was tired, not least from the 'slow Ukrainian reforms' (Tyshkevych, 2016).

By the beginning of 2016, signals started to multiply that a shift away from reformism was happening. The new status quo was being established. To those critical, what was happening raised many red flags, indicating a de-prioritisation of reformist change—or even a new authoritarian drift. First there were signals directly from the top:

- The cabinet was reshuffled, the prime minister and many other members of the government were fired and those loyal personally to the president were installed instead. This happened in blatantly unconstitutional manner (Minakov & Mylovanov, 2016). Legal norms were all but disregarded, while actual decisions were taken through unofficial agreements behind the scenes as a result of consultations between clans (Minakov, 2017). Appointment of the prosecutor general happened in a similar fashion. Constitutional amendments were passed, strengthening the president's control over judiciary (Minakov & Mylovanov, 2016). Overall, power of the presidential institution was rising largely by consolidating informal power, which was constitutionally highly questionable and an obvious future source of instability and conflict (Averchuk, 2016)

- Reforms in key areas were stalling, apparently due to forceful pushback of organised private interests (Carnegie, 2016; Tyshkevych, 2016) pervading the government.

- There were attempts to subordinate the newly created anti-corruption agencies to the president as well as attempts to use them for political ends (Minakov & Mylovanov, 2016).

- The actual decision-making across the executive, the legislative and the judiciary was done through a 'shadow politburo', known as 'The Strategic Eight' (Kochetkov, 2016), consisting of top officials with complete disregard of constitutional division of power. While all of them represented formal institutions, their composition and mode of decision making was seen by many as an expression of the new 'oligarchic consensus' (ibid).

In contrast to the high post-revolutionary expectations of systemic change these events and tendencies testified of the deep entrenchment of a neo-patrimonial system of clan dominance. Increasingly, this system operated in

an authoritarian way, while maintaining a reformist facade. The facade underwent a kind of face-lift, while the actual system was ever more clan-driven. Personal composition of the ruling political elite underwent a rotation, and its rhetoric and communicative style became more nuanced and attentive to a wider set of sentiments within the activist part of society—including sensitive ideological markers of both nationalism and liberalism. This lent the system a more accommodating form, that was continuously and consciously calibrated to retain and increase power. In terms of substance, for those expecting genuine change, this amounted to a failure of true Maidan agenda:

> Every revolution in our country leads to further deterioration in terms of freedom. We became disoriented in mid-90s, scared by the sudden freedom, and this fear influenced the design of the state in which we live. The Revolution of Dignity is ending and a completely different revolution begins. Here I agree with Ukrainian far-right, who consider that this phase was their revolution. It's true, they grabbed the torch, their time has come and the conservative revolution in Ukraine has won. But if you look who actually made use of this conservative revolution, it is of course not the nationalists. It is still the same people who ruled in 1990s and 2000s. They are able to use the contradictions in society. They took the Euromaidan program of reform, political agenda and by pitting them against each other, these two types of reform, were able to re-establish the rule of clans in the country. (Minakov, 2016)

A more favourable view on the consolidation of power in the hands of the president (or rather, president's clan) was that this was actually done to enable reforms. If the main issue is sabotage of reforms by the organised interests, the one way to counteract them is to have sufficient force in the centre that will break those interests (Tyshkevych, 2016). Such an approach of 'authoritarian modernisation' was known from the history of other nations (Singapore, Chile, Georgia), but carried a risk to be left only with 'authoritarian' but without 'modernisation'. The broader trends in society made this danger very real. Apart from the entrenching neo-patrimonial oligarchic mode of government, there were signals from the wider society that a more illiberal agenda was taking root:

- Frequent attacks on journalists that left most of society indifferent, while the patriotic activists often participated in the attacks or dismissed them as a problem, blaming journalists themselves (Miller, 2016). Some observers argued that political elites were directly responsible for 'terror against the journalists' (Eristavi, 2016), while others pointed to a more fundamental problem deep within society. Namely, some observers saw distrust to journalism being rooted into pervasive lack of critical thinking and black-and-white judgements among civil activists (Petik & Herasym, 2016).

- One scandal was symptomatic. Personal details of journalists working in the war-torn Donbass region were made public through the website called 'Myrotvorets', branding all of them 'traitors' and 'collaborators'. Again, the reaction from a large part of civil society was either indifferent or even supportive of the leak (ibid).

- Attacks on the Inter television channel deemed not patriotic enough (Eristavi, 2016). More general pressure from the state on many other television channels was to become common later on (Minakov, 2017).

- An increasing aggression on the part of certain sections of civil society that arguably turned 'uncivil':

  > […] in the last two years, the democratic function of civil society has disappeared. It has become illiberal. […] Civil activism turned out to be dangerous for civil freedoms and rights and began to regenerate collectivistic forms of control of rights of the individual and minorities. Civil society partially fell under the influence of new financial-political clans. (Minakov, 2016)

- The sheer intransigence and incompetence of this new generation of politicians, promoted from the ranks of civil society who came into the official institutions, but proved incapable of dialogue:

  > If we look at our parliament today, it is a place where there is no national dialogue. To a large measure it is the radicalism of the new young politicians that lead with a refusal for dialogue. The political "old guard" are also to be blamed: their dialogue was always a lie. […] Politics as communication for common good, as dialogue, is upset by the war and new generation of politicians. (Minakov, 2016)

- The overall cultural situation that appears to favour black-and-white judgements, opposed to critical thinking (Petik & Herasym, 2016), or even pointing towards archaisation (Minakov, 2016; Kovtun, 2016).

At the intersection of the political leadership's authoritarian tendencies and illiberal tendencies in the wider society was the so-called 'decommunisation'. Ostensibly a program to deal with totalitarian past, similar to ones undertaken in other post-communist societies of Balitcs and Central Europe, it became an ideological centrepiece of the new status quo. A package of laws were passed by parliament that dealt with the 'legal status and celebration of memory of Ukrainian independence fighters in XX century'; 'condemnation of the communist and national-socialist totalitarian regimes in Ukraine and ban on propaganda of its symbols'; and the 'day of memory and reconciliation'. The main promoter of the laws and broader agenda of

'decommunisation' was the now head of the Institute of National Memory, Volodymyr Vyatrovych. A major part of the justification on his part was tying decommunisation to reformism:

> Decommunisation, the overcoming of totalitarian legacy, is an integral element of reform happening in the country that desires to be democratic. We shouldn't say that it should happen before or after economic and political reform. It should happen simultaneously with economic and political reform because this is an integral part of exactly these kinds of transformations. […] It is easy to notice if we take, for example, the map of Eastern Europe from around 1985 and mark where monuments to Lenin were and take the map from 2015 and mark where there are still monuments of Lenin. We will see where they disappeared. Those countries developed like normal European democratic states, members of the EU, NATO, and so on. (Vyatrovych, 2016)

Decommunisation created new tensions and conflicts. Not least in the South-East, where the Soviet past was still seen by the majority as the golden age. The laws passed suddenly banned the symbols that were still important to substantial regional and generational groups. Highly inconsistent, selective, and open to interpretation, the laws were harsher than similar ones from other Central-Eastern Europe countries (Pilash & Artyukh, 2016). They rather seemed to aim to establish a particular view of history as the correct one and throw the weight of the state behind it. Specific cannons of heroes were henceforth to be respected and any criticism was potentially punishable. To the numerous critics of the laws, this was the sign that 'aggressive minority was able to push its own, national-conservative version of history, to the entire country' (ibid).

The result was international condemnation (ibid), internal conflict, and diversion of attention from actual reformism. A substitution of systemic changes with compensatory ideological program was happening (See Hrytsak, 2017; Minakov, 2016). To sum up, the shift from reformism to the status quo of updated neo-patrimonialism came into view in the first half of 2016. It appears to have happened when the war colonised the society. With that, fear blocked the view of the future. One could say this is understandable since an actual war was happening. At the same time, the hottest period of that war was over by 2016. The strong suspicion was that the Ukrainian elite, which prevailed as the result of Maidan, all too eagerly used the conflict to operate in the habitual way, enjoy the fruits of power and concentrate on self-preservation:

> 2016 was a critical year for Ukraine's development. Euromaidan's democratic potential was finally exhausted and its civil revolution finally ended. Rather than a flourishing democracy and civil society, 2016 brought

> the non-democratic and non-legal consolidation of power by and around the president. (Minakov, 2017)

All in all, for the committed reformists this meant that post-revolutionary window of opportunity was closed without much success to speak of. It was time to re-group:

> […] The window of opportunity has closed again. […] We again got to the point where the majority of Ukrainians yet again saw that "nothing ever changes" and it is time to take care of personal affairs, and not the affairs of the country. […] My discussions with my businessmen acquaintances prove that this assessment is correct. They say, "Once again, you cannot make business in Ukraine unless you have access to political power". […] You can deduce a rule: every time a revolution is exhausted, our government and our parties push the language-historical button. This happened during Yushenko's time. This, I'm afraid is the case now. And if so, let's admit that this revolution has ended. And let's prepare for the next one. (Hrytcak, 2017)

The discourse analysis performed in this dissertation in remaining sections will observe the following timeline: (1) t1—period of reformism: early 2014 to approximately mid-2016; (2) and t2—the period of contestation of the new status quo, from mid-2016 to mid-2019, when the power was re-distributed once again with election of Volodymyr Zelenskiy. The threshold separating the two periods, as outlined above, consisted in an accumulation of signs around first half of 2016, that indicated dissipation of reformist energies and establishment of the new clan status quo.

3.5 Central narratives

3.5.1 Liberalism

3.5.1.1 National Liberalism

2014-2016: Hope of reform

Temporality

Within the discourse, one can discern both short and long temporality. Long temporality refers to an attempt to locate Ukraine in a global historical context. Modernisation being the central theme for Ukrainian liberal thinkers, their master plot relies on the understanding of social history as the movement of societies from tradition to modernity.

The movement happens along a global 'highway' where major milestones are events signifying transition to more freedom such as: the Magna Carta in the U.K., development of institutions of proto-civil society in the city-states of northern Italy, the emergence of republican states, revolutions, colonialism, and so on (Hrytcak, 2014a, pp.46-51). Historically, all societies were in a 'state of nature', characterised by oppression and violence, but some (i.e. western societies) managed to become societies of 'open access', distinguished by an open competitive process in politics and economy (ibid, p. 50). It is this very transition that Ukraine is attempting to undertake now. The historical background is taken to be rather unfavourable for such a transition: the Eastern Orthodox Church, the Russian Empire, communism - all these factors bring a legacy and trauma that make modernisation difficult. In the words of literary critic Vadym Skurativskiy: 'Hundreds of years of dependence on alien state structures, on ideological plots have their consequences from which we have to set ourselves free' (Skurativskiy, 2014). The hope of liberation comes from western influences which historically date back to Polish domination in the 14-18th centuries in most of modern-day Ukraine as well as later Austro-Hungarian rule in the West of Ukraine. These influences are the fragile cultural thread connecting the actual 'state of nature' today to the potential 'open access' in the future.

In another similar exposition, there is a global historical process of development where the world moves through identifiable stages: the 'world of tribes and superstition', then to the 'world of force and power', followed by 'status and order', and finally, 'progress and capital' (Pekar in TEDx Talks, 2015, 1:35). Ukraine today lives in a kind of 'middle ages' as manifested by the closed oligarchic economy that equals to neo-feudalism, clan political systems, paternalistic thinking, the state managing its citizens

instead of serving them, exhibits narrow materialistic values, has a weak civil society, and the political nation is not formed (ibid, 3:50). At the same time about 15 percent of Ukrainian society already lives in modernity as manifested by their modern, responsible, civil values (ibid, 4:26). The chief proof of this was the Maidan. Hence the most 'civilisationally advanced' segment of society literally lives in a different historical epoch, into which the rest of society has to be brought through the political program of modernisation.

Looking ahead within the long temporality-while taking the West as a historical template in its transition from closed to open societies—the current global historical trend offers a chance according to the intellectuals of Nestor Group:

> [The] transition to the open access in the West coincided with transition from agrarian production to industrial. However, most countries were able to industrialise without moving to open access (hence their trajectory is marked by periods of fast growth and then systemic crises and stagnation). Transition from industrial to post-industrial phase offers a chance to move to sustainable development. (Nestor Group, 2015, p. 6)

In the meantime, the pace of change is affected by the logic of decolonisation of the entire post-Soviet space. According to the philosopher Vakhtang Kebuladze, we are still in the process of disintegration from one of the worst empires ever: the Russian Empire. The Soviet Union was its re-incarnation which didn't end in 1991. The answer is a process of decolonisation: the dismantling of imperial structures and culture. Russia has to be decolonised in this sense as well although it has to happen gradually since abrupt change is extremely dangerous (Kebuladze in hromadske, 2015a, 38:00-39:50).

Short temporality started with the collapse of the Soviet Union, emerged with the independent Ukrainian state in 1991, and extends into the future until the actions of present day bear fruit. Ukrainian independence was seen as a chance to overcome unfavourable history. In 1991, based on economic analysis and assumptions made at the time, Ukraine had the best chance for prosperity out of all former Soviet countries (Hrytcak, 2014a, p.11). At that point, actual economic performance and the level of prosperity was equal to that of Poland. Since then, the story of independent Ukraine has become a story of lost chances and dashed hopes. Short temporality so far has been comprised of a cycle of crises. On the plus side, the relative democracy as well as some years of economic growth created new social forces (i.e. the aforementioned minority of modern citizenry) able to carry out modernisation. Within this short temporality, Euromaidan is the crucial point in which these forces asserted themselves. In the immediate aftermath of the protests, it can be asked whether the heavy historical legacy 'completely burned down in the fires of Euromaidan' (Hrytcak, 2014a, p. 99). Extending

the liberal vision into the future, within 25 years the country has the potential to reach the coveted, more advanced modern society and state characterised by 'open access' and 'sustainable development' (ibid). Essentially the Maidan is open-ended: it will not be complete until required political and economic reform happens. It is just the beginning of a successful transformation; indeed, the revolution itself is ongoing. Moreover, there are multiple revolutions operating simultaneously on different time-scales according to Pekar: (1) an economic revolution is happening on the form of fight for reforms and against corruption, which in the case of favourable political conditions can be completed within one and a half years; (2) national-liberation as a 'struggle for senses, to find place on the map as for example France or Japan already have - when we know who we are, the world knows who we are', but this will take longer than three to five years if the conditions are favourable; (3) and lastly, there is a revolution of values—here a whole generation is required, hence it is a question of seven to ten years (Pekar in TEDx Talks, 2015, 6:45-7:50)

Immediately after the Maidan, there was a very strong sense of urgency. The time has accelerated. Short temporality became shorter. In contrast to the pre-Maidan era, where we were like a 'snail, moving slowly not knowing where, constantly oscillating between East and West' (Hrytcak, 2014b), there was now a strong sense of the 'new political reality', where 'Ukraine demands change' and so 'let's act immediately' (First of December Group, 2014). The reforms had to happen fast: 'Evolution in Ukraine doesn't work […] the backward countries of Eastern Europe can become developed only by making a leap. Every delay leads to stagnation and decline' (Hrytcak, 2014b). The sense of urgency was underlined by the frequent use of the 'window of opportunity' metaphor, which was supposedly opened by the Maidan but was closing rapidly (Pekar in Shuster online, 2014). Under pressure from the perceived sense of 'time running out', the liberal commentators elevated modernising reform to the question of survival: 'The country will not make it to spring without reform' (Pekar in hromadske, 2014, 5:20).

The national-liberal narrative in Ukraine requires a certain stoic optimism to sustain its argument. Things tend to not shape up favourably in the short-term for liberals in Ukraine, hence the ultimate success is postponed into the future. Liberals must stay strong in the face of unfavourable social and political conditions and extend the temporality of change up to the point when society will finally take the right shape to fit the model. An alternative strategy would be to change the assumed model of society to the one that is more 'real' but perhaps less 'liberal'. In the meantime, since the Maidan is central to the narrative, it is important for the liberal intellectuals to interpret ongoing events positively as otherwise there is a risk of jeopardising the reforms. Thus, regardless of the hardships of 2014 and 2015, Pekar insisted that 'In these two years we covered more distance than in the previous 20

years' (Pekar in TEDx Talks, 2015, 8:34). The baseline against which the progress of 2 years is measured is the ruins of March 2014: 'without an army, without state machinery, without government, without currency' (ibid, 15:00). Following this perspective: the fact that the country did not collapse in 2014 meant it is on the right path. One must remain unwaveringly forward-looking: 'the future unites, the past splits' (ibid, 15:18). On the questions of the past, there was a tendency to de-prioritise what had come before and instead focus on building the right future: 'symbols and heroes overladen with meaning does not lead to ultimate truth. Everyone has their own truth. From the happy 2020, these will not appear as problems' (ibid, 15:50). In 2015, a happy and 'modern' 2020 was conceivable.

Sequencing

I define sequencing as a temporal pattern identifiable in the narrative that determines the causal string of changes that must happen to realise the justification narrative. In the national-liberal narrative, justification is ultimately grounded into normativity of individual freedom with the nation as the second level collective subject that ought to enable this individual freedom. In the selected section of discourse, this normativity is attached to modernisation theory, i.e. it is modernisation that frees up an individual. Yaroslaw Hrytcak spoke of the 'logic of change' (2014a). Valeriy Pekar spoke of 'the logic of modernisation' (TEDx Talks, 2015). Modernisation in this case is understood as, first of all, a change in societal values from 'values of survival' to 'values of self-expression' with reference to the World Values Survey and the theories of Ronald Inglehart. Hence the story has to be arranged in such a way as to highlight trends in the evolution of values, highlight the successes, but also explain the failures. The scale of success versus failure is defined by the degrees of movement towards values of self-expression: 'The answer to the question "can we or can we not" depends on the changes in values of society' (Hrytcak, 2014a, p. 64). When it comes to defining the actions to realise the normativity of modernisation, and in this way to bring about a better future, they have to affect the values in order to move them into the right direction. The medium of change in values is argued to be the economy. As Hrytcak states: '[…] the economy really is the decisive factor. But it operates indirectly, through values that people hold' (ibid,p. 59). Hence the values that people hold are mainly determined by their economic conditions: 'The better the quality of life, the stronger are values of self-expression' (ibid, p. 62). The 'quality of life' in Ukrainian refers first of all to material prosperity (literal translation would be 'level of life'). The way to achieve a positive outcome is to follow the classic 'pyramid of needs'. Once basic needs are met, the values of self-expression will switch on. Historical patterns borrowed from the West are assumed to apply universally:

> […] The shift begins when the industrial revolution is essentially complete. Increasing the proportion of the national income starts not in industrial sector, but in service sector (design, communications, education etc.). […] At this point, our basic needs for food, clothes, shelter are already met. Values of self-expression come then to the foreground, which leads to democratisation. (ibid)

The focus on the economy as the background driver shaping the consciousness, and hence the values of people, means that the sequence of actions to achieve freedom starts from allowing individuals to improve their economic lot:

> The first task is to implement the deregulation of business. The degree of prosperity of society stands in reverse proportion to the time it takes a person to open a business. If it takes a whole month, as it does in Ukraine, it means this is poor country which is ruled by rich elites. (Hrytcak, 2014b)

I contend that arguments for these political actions are first of all actions to create an individual. Put differently: they add up to creation of an institutional matrix that should produce a certain kind of individuality. Of course, in the logic outlined above, the individuals already exist either as an anthropological universal or as a cultural specificity that applies to Ukraine. Since both assumptions are highly questionable in terms of their generality, at best they can be legitimately directed at a certain social group that already possesses the 'right' values. Hence the frequent mentioning of the middle class as the moral vanguard of modernisation. When it comes to the rest of society, they have to yet become (or be made into) those individuals who can join modernity—first of all economically as entrepreneurs, and then politically as responsible citizens. Here Hrytcak stresses the importance of political change:

> […] to reach sustainable development, economic changes have to go hand in hand with political ones. […] The economy can only work in a political frame, which corresponds to social needs instead of the interests of the elite. Otherwise, we will again live from crisis to crisis and from revolution to revolution. (Hrytcak, 2014a, p. 120)

The political change Hrytcak has in mind is democratisation on the one hand, which, on the other hand, seems to primarily serve the purpose of economy, which determines the values of self-expression.

Subjectivity

The general thrust of national-liberal narratives in Ukraine is an assertion of individual subjectivity and its derivatives against the historical odds that ostensibly favour paternalism. While the individual is the unit of humanity

that serves as normative foundation for the liberal ideas, in the political sphere, a certain collective subject is constructed that should allow individuals to wield power. The most general form of this collective subject is 'the people'.

In the case of the Maidan, the subject includes all Ukrainians simultaneously, as if they all act in unison: 'The people protected their beloved country, affirmed its unity and *sobornist*[58], approved the European choice' (Husar, 2014). Although 'the people' is not a very common term in Ukrainian liberalism, which sees itself as staunchly anti-populist, it does appear in formulations aimed at the general public as in this case by the First of December Group. The function of the word is to underscore unity of the nation and address all at once. In such cases, the internal multiplicity of 'the people' is suspended. Everyone merges into this abstraction. The more specific the discourse is however, the more one has to clarify who the people in question are. Depending on the narrative employed, the specific characteristics of 'the people' will be different and point to the conditions of belonging. In liberal narratives, this specification runs through several stations:

> In reality Ukraine has one major resource - educated and self-sufficient population. It will find a way and adapt to any conditions - so long the state doesn't interfere. For this reason Ukraine needs democracy, to take the lid off where enormous energy brews. And then gradually, through laws and new rules of the game understandable and equal to all, it will direct this energy towards peaceful and civilised channel. (Hrytcak, 2015a p. 108)

Thus, the Ukrainian people carry certain positive qualities that afford them agency and that have to be expressed politically through democracy. The moment we are in the space of democracy one has to introduce the concept of a citizen as a creative force that constitutes democracy: 'There is an opportunity to open the path for new political forces and new generation of Ukrainian citizenry. […] Our nation is being made by the solidary spirit of Ukrainian citizens' (First of December Group, 2014).

Who is this 'new generation of Ukrainian citizenry'? In the national-liberal narratives the answer is very clear. Depending on the context they are called: 'the young generation', 'the middle class', 'the active minority', and 'the 15 percent'. They are the foundation for the future new elite that has political will and the right values to change the country. They are the ones who do not accept the 'middle ages' (Pekar, 2015), who are able to sacrifice (Pekar, in hromadske, 2014). They are the same ones that spark protests around the world, who demand change not because of hunger but because of aspirations for better life (Hrytcak, 2014a, pp. 96-97). In Ukraine, their progress is

[58] A Ukrainian term meaning unity in multiplicity.

obstructed by the political system: 'Realisation of life goals of the middle class doesn't fit into the political system build around privilege for a narrow circle of people, therefore this class will try to destroy this system' (ibid, p.129). Hence the force of the modernising change in Ukraine is this new group of active citizens who 'demand expansion of the sphere of personal and social freedom' (The Nestor Group, 2015, p. 6). They are at the forefront of the transformation of the broader society. The broader Ukraine 'craves change' (ibid, p.1), but it is up to those possessing the 'courage for moral dissidence', 'who will ultimately form the backbone of the new social organism' (ibid, p. 7).

Spearheading this movement are the meritocrats: graduates of western business schools, Harvard, entrepreneurs, and top managers (Pekar, in hromadske, 2014, 24:00-25:00), who are supposed to lead the country as part of future governments and the free economy. In the meantime, it is civil society that houses the force of modernity. It crystallised and expanded during the Maidan. It sent some of its representatives to the post-Maidan government. It now needs to dig in for a long-haul: 'Effective elites appear only of there is a pressure from below. I'm talking about durable civil initiatives, platforms, effective media, of which we have very few of. To support reform, we need movements akin to Polish Solidarity' (Hrytcak, 2014b).

Immediately after Maidan, there was a widespread appeal to institutionalise the influence of civil society. As the Head of Ukrainian Greek Catholic church Lubomyr Husar said in one of his impassioned appeals: 'Civil society has to strictly control activity of all levels of power' (Husar, 2014). The experience of the Maidan proved that there should be a productive cooperation between civil society and authorities, which would democratise politics and open paths for elite renewal:

> One has to institutionally fixate the responsibility of the power in front of the civil society, for example prime minister meets monthly with a civil senate of sorts, this has to be institutionally grounded, perhaps into the constitution, this is how society can influence politics - through an institutional frame. (Yermolenko in TVi, 2014, 22:47)

Such determined optimism was the dominant tone in the liberal discourse after the Maidan. When it comes to subjectivity, the main question was whether the meritocratic middle class was numerous and strong enough to realise the reformist vision. This was far from a done deal. The intellectual discourse in 2014-2016 contained a lot optimism: 'We are lucky—we have the critical mass. This makes our modernisation basically unavoidable: these people will not accept an old Middle Ages-like order which is comfortable and understandable to the post-Soviet elites' (Pekar, 2015). It also contained signs of caution: 'by becoming the revolution of dignity, Euromaidan

highlighted a significant value shake-up and opened the window of opportunity for the sustainable value shift' (Nestor Group, 2015, p. 8). In other words, the shift itself had not yet happened to the extent to be considered 'sustainable', but merely opened a 'window of opportunity'. Building on this optimism and some initial success, the immediate course of action offered at the time was (1) for the active minority to consolidate and stay united for the paramount goal of realising the common vision of the future (Pekar, 2015); (2) involve the passive majority as they determine the pace of change because an excessively fast tempo can result in temporary backslides, such as what happens in Georgia (ibid); (3) Some civil society representatives who made it into the state power structures need to gain some muscle, create reformed 'islands' within the sea of corruption, that would accommodate good people in the future and allow them to gradually expand these islands (Forostyna in hromadske, 2015b, 8:05-8:45).

Here we come to the role of the state. On the one hand, there is a traditional liberal thrust against the state as a threat, interfering into the affairs of citizens. On the other hand there is an acceptance of the larger role of the state in modernising Ukraine, which compensates lack cultural-historical preconditions (Hrytcak, 2014a, p. 99). The state power has to become the instrument of modernisation. Since it hasn't been that so far, there has to be a qualitative change to make modernisation by design possible. For this, one needs the right kind of actors inside the state. The meritocratic middle class should this be the source of state officials who 'think about the next generation' as opposed to politicians, who 'think about the next election. If we look at other countries, reforms were made by professionals, technocrats' (Pekar in hromadske, 2014, 2:40-2:50). These technocratic state officials exhibit certain higher moral qualities, i.e. the right values that lead them do the right thing regardless of their private material gains and narrow-minded opinions of the majority: 'Those who make reforms are surgeons who make difficult, painful work and then get their share of people's hate—remember Saakashvili and Balcerowicz[59]' (ibid, 3:00-3:20). References to the reformers of other countries that are perceived to be more successful than Ukraine are a frequent feature of the liberal discourse. They appear in contrast to the hopelessly ineffectual and corrupt Ukrainian elites:

> Our elites avoided difficult decisions for 23 years, being afraid of losing power. And this fear was justified: those who will start changing the country will not be popular in the first three to five years. Look at Mikheil Saakashvili. In 50 years, they will build monuments in his honour. (Hrytcak, 2014b)

This brings us to the collective political subject, that is supposed to act on a historical scale. This subject is one that allows individual freedom to be

[59] Reformers from Georgia and Poland respectively

realised systematically. The subject of historical development in the national-liberal narrative is *the nation.* It is the nation that undergoes a historical process to achieve sustainable development: 'Nations that have less tradition of self-governance and independence in their past, or underwent a trauma of communism, have to apply more effort and will need more time to achieve sustainable development' (Nestor Group, 2015, p. 6). What the image of this nation is becomes a point of contention within the national-liberal narrative. There is a tension between questions of identity and pluralism. It seems like, in theory, every liberal would agree with the need of 'political nation' in Ukraine and downplay the ethnic issues. On the other hand, the discourse of 'values' appears to be easily 'ethnicised' by tying certain 'right value' to origin-based, collective traits. This connection transpires, when Pekar states that one revolution ongoing in Ukraine is the national-liberation one as 'struggle for senses, to find place on the map as for example France or Japan already have: when we know who we are, the world knows who we are' (Pekar in TEDx Talks, 2015, 7:15-7:40). While the underlying understanding of the nation may be political as opposed to ethnic, the discourse of national-liberation carries latent ethnocentrism, which in Ukrainian situation can be politically legitimate only for particular groups. Hence the conflictual potential as well as the possibility of sleepwalking into a more ethnocentric discourse is present in the very narrative structure of national-liberal discourse.

Yaroslaw Hrytcak tries to address the issue. With reference to the historian Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky (1919 – 1984), who was referred to as a 'realist' ('realitetnyk' in Ukrainian) during his career, he mentioned a 'different, non-Galician image of a nation, united not around Ukrainian language, but around the political will of Ukrainians and other inhabitants of Ukraine to live an independent political life' (Hrytcak, 2014a, p. 125). Developing the argument further, he referred to a study comparing Lviv and Donetsk, the two cities considered to be the opposite cultural and political poles of Ukraine:

> Working on this project convinced me that, for the former Russian-Soviet space, the thesis about the centrality of nation is an exception, not the rule. For the majority of the inhabitants there the main questions are social, not national. They perceived nation and nationality as something alien or even hostile. (Hrytcak, 2014a, p. 126)

> […]that is the issue with the concept of centrality of nation. It works in Lviv but it doesn't work in Donetsk. Furthermore, surveys have shown that even though Donetsk is almost entirely Russian-speaking, the number of people who consider themselves Russian is quite small, in any case, lower than those who consider themselves Ukrainian. The majority thought of themselves not as Ukrainian or Russian but as "donteskians", "workers", or (depending on the age) "pensioners". (ibid, pp. 127-128)

In Hrytcak's version of Ukrainian liberalism, there is a certain social pluralism that has to be accommodated by the political order. Hence, he always insisted that 'national consciousness is not the X-factor' (Hrytcak, 2011). In the program of Nestor Group (of which Hrytcak is a member), the question of the nation is handled somewhat differently. Here, the emphasis is once again on modernisation, but based on the contention that the nation is already built:

> So far, the national idea of Ukraine consisted in formation of the Ukrainian nation. Today, the Ukrainian nation, united by collective successes and collective pain, is formed. Therefore modernisation, not nation-building, should become the new national idea of Ukraine. (Nestor Group, 2015, p. 2)

This can be seen as an attempt to formulate the vision that has most chance for consensus across society. Yet again it highlights the tension between universalism and particularism.

There is one further level of belonging that national liberal narrative produces: belonging to Europe. Since the Maidan started out as 'Euromaidan' and turned into 'Revolution of Dignity', where many thousands of people waved EU flags and saw the European vector of development as the only chance for the country to become better, in the immediate aftermath of the protests, it felt like the movement towards Europe had accelerated: 'Ukraine is quickly entering European civilisational space, where the main concept is that of human dignity' (Yermolenko in TVi, 2014, 1:25).

The active minority, the young generation, and the middle class that constituted the force that drove Maidan, and brought it to victory, appeared to be not just European but even more than that. It felt as though their energy had the power and potential to reinvigorate the rest of Europe:

> Based on sociological studies on the Maidan itself, the values of people were hyper-European. Hence part of our society is the avant-garde of what is happening in Europe, as opposed to Europe itself where there is problem of tiredness, old age, while new dynamic countries such as Poland and Ukraine can change them. (ibid, 2:30- 3:05)

Thus, we came full circle. The individual force unleashed on the Maidan came into existence as a civil society. Here we saw an organised force of responsible citizens that in the future must gradually penetrate the structures of power and transform the country towards political democracy and free economy. Somewhere along the way the political nation has to come into being. Whether it was already there or not was a point of contention in 2014-2016. Every form of liberal subjectivity tied into a general idea of Europe as a beacon of dignity and freedom, the idea that appeared to be on the decline in Europe itself, which hence needed fresh air from Ukraine:

> We are young people, who are highly mobile, and highly creative. We experienced great danger and hence know life better than other people that are used to living in a "greenhouse". The problem of western-European elites - they are elites created in the greenhouse as opposed to ones from 1950s. We are more dynamic, more creative. But we have another problem: we do not like rules. There is a Europe of rules and a Europe of faith. We are a Europe of faith. We have the faith, which they had lost. (ibid, 24:40)

Motifs

I understand motifs as certain recurring themes that characterise the emotional tone of the narrative. Among such motifs, within national-liberal narrative one can single-out the following:

1. The tendency towards putting a positive spin on events and developments. This *optimism*, sometimes cautious, determined, or stoic was the default emotional register of liberalism between 2014-2016. This manifested itself in various ways. For example, in social networks, liberal intellectuals focused on bringing attention to positive developments, ideas, and actions. Amidst the typical negativity that pervades Ukrainian politics, liberals saw it as their mission to bring out and focus on the positive ways that diverged from the adversarial and/or cynical mode of discourse[60]. The general position was that 'corruption, regardless of history, can be overcome in the present. One only needs political will—here and now—with the thought about the future and without looking back into the past' (Hrytcak, 2015a, p. 85). Another example is the insistence that the war unfolding in the East Ukraine in 2014 was an opportunity for reform, not a drawback. Both Hrytcak (2015a, p.187) and Pekar (2015) emphasised this. The typical reference point here is Israel, which held up as the example of modernising while at war (Hrytcak, 2014b). Hrytcak even provided a spiritual justification for this positivity:

   > There was a philosopher and a priest Joseph Tischner, the spiritual leader of the Solidarity movement in Poland. He offered a bright image: you can say that you are all sinners, because of you Christ suffers on the cross! But you could say instead, "Look how beautiful you are. For your sake he accepted death." It is important to think positively. (Hrytcak, 2014b)

2. After the assertion of civil society's subjectivity at the Maidan, the national-liberal narrative contained a certain *resolve, determination* and *moral confidence.* This concerned the reforms directly: 'If you cannot fix anything, you can take, demolish, and build anew - and this is our task'

[60] See for example Hlibovystky (2014) and Kurkov (2015).

(Pekar in TEDx Talks, 2015 19:24). This also reflected upon the resolute position of strength in the face of civilisational challenges—be it from Russia or more generally from forces challenging the Western way of life. Consequently, European society outside of Ukraine was criticised for supposedly not being able to give an answer to violence (e.g. jihadist attacks in Paris, ISIS, Russia). There was an image of Europe as weak; unable to defend its values: 'sometimes own rejection of violence has to be defended by force' (Yermolenko in hromadske, 2015a, 26:00). Ukraine, in this regard, was argued to be more vital and ready to fight. As the war in East Ukraine set in, the motive of moral strength that lent legitimacy to the use force was becoming more accepted:

> It is not normal that a Ukrainian should be killed and denied the life he wants to have. In this regard, the economic crisis in the context of war is tolerable. A Ukrainian will survive it. He has hands, head, garden, barn and cellar […] he doesn't need much. He needs to not get killed. And for that, to not get killed, he has to kill. Here, on his own soil he has the sovereign right to take life of the occupants and intruders. (Bondar, 2015)

A certain moment of reflexivity was present in the intellectual discourse when discussing contentious issues of the past. As the new ethnisation of the Ukrainian political project was gathering force, the issues of national memory were presented ever more clear cut. The state-driven position was that Ukrainians were the victims and heroes. In the depth of intellectual liberal discourse, one could find more reflection: '[A] certain amount of responsibility for Soviet crimes lay with Ukrainians, we were not only victims' (Yermolenko in hromadske, 2015a, 27:10). Here, the moral resolve translated into readiness to accept responsibility: 'Only seeing us as victims of Soviet Union allows us to forgive ourselves for lot of things and doesn't allow us to move ahead' (ibid, 35:30). Such a reflexive position lead back to the constitutive multiplicity of Ukrainian society: 'Collective memory has to be multiple, plural […] if your collective memory is one-dimensional, you are done as a society' (ibid, 37:50).

3. One other recurring motif worth mentioning is that of *normality as aspiration*. Liberal discourse tends to frame the vision of the future as a relatively modest expectation of being 'normal' when measured against the Central and Western European examples. This normativity of normality is pervasive among the liberal intellectuals. As Bondar suggests: 'The price of the issue is massive, humongous. This is a chance to jump towards normality and development' (Bondar, 2015). Normality appears as being within reach. It is very close geographically and appears to be intelligible culturally. It should not take much to achieve normality. In fact, it implies that Ukraine was once normal already and fell back on

the way. The fact that achieving normality requires a revolution and decades long, painful program of transformation testifies just how not normal Ukraine currently is.

Concepts

The following concepts form the operative conceptual apparatus of Ukraine's liberal narrative:

1. First and foremost—*modernisation*. As we have seen, modernisation is the main idea that structures the liberal discourse in Ukraine. Modernisation is a narrative in itself. It helps to explain the past, view the world today, as well as guides activities to bring about the desired (or anticipate the inevitable) future. Modernisation was elevated to the status of the new national idea by the Nestor Group (2015):

   > So far, the national idea of Ukraine consisted in formation of the Ukrainian nation. Today, the Ukrainian nation, united by collective successes and collective pain, is formed. Therefore modernisation, not nation-building, should become the new national idea of Ukraine. (Nestor Group, 2015,p.2)

   Over and over again, whether in the sphere of economy, politics, society or culture, modernisation and modernity were postulated as a descriptive measure, and even more forcefully, as a normative orientation. Descriptively, modernisation explained what was happening: 'All of the events in the last one and half years are united with one common principle: the principle of modernisation' (Pekar, 2015). But no description is free of normativity and hence modernisation becomes an orientation device which justifies the actions today to shape the future. It is important to note here that modernisation is understood by Ukrainian liberals strictly in its Western meaning and normative content (see Hrytcak, 2014a, pp. 36-40). The origin of modernity in the West of Europe is taken to set the single correct track for modernisation. Alternative 'multiple modernities' are not part of the discourse and tend to be rejected. The philosopher Vakhtang Kebuladze claims: 'There is only one civilisation - the Western/European/Western-Christian one.[61] […] Everything else is something else. […]' (Kebuladze, in Channel 5, 2015, 10:45-12:00). In the Ukrainian case, Westernisation is an extremely important normative vector since it is counterposed to the Russian one. With contemporary Russia acting as a conservative power that offers a 'Eurasian' alternative and undermines everything European, discussing

[61] Kebuladze then adds that with this he doesn't mean to say that non-European cultures are worthless, but they are not civilisations in the strict meaning of the word.

different kinds of modernisation does not align well with the current geopolitical polarisation in Ukraine. It risks diluting the normative vision of modernisation as Westernisation. Any order that does not strive towards Westernisation is then non- or even anti-modern. The relevant example of anti-modernity is of course Russia: 'Russia is a shadow of civilisation: following its shape, existing within its outline but there is darkness inside, only ruin and death' (ibid, 13:58-15:00). The implication for Ukraine is then clear: Ukrainians have to become civilised or end up in the shadow.

2. *Dignity* is another common concept. The notion describes the deepest, most basic of values: the measure of human behaviour in the world. With Maidan being often called the 'Revolution of Dignity', the word has become immensely prominent in the intellectual discourse. Its function is, on the one hand, an integrating force called to appeal to common humanity across dividing lines, while on the other hand, sets moral conditions for the membership in humanity. This integrative impetus appeals to the 'good' and 'right' present in everyone regardless of arbitrary divisions: 'This language doesn't lead to the fight against someone - communists, liberals, nationalists. It leads to the fight for something. And this something is human dignity' (Hrytcak, 2015a, p.52). At the same time it allows to distinguish the good from the bad as those who can be argued to stand on the other side of political divide due to lack of dignity end up on the side of evil. Within the liberal narrative of the Ukrainian case, it is first of all the corrupt elites within the country. The greater evil is Russia (sometimes just the leadership, often more or less the entire society). The dignity of other parts of Ukrainian society, those outside the 'enlightened' 15 percent, is always in question. While they are the clay from which the new majority will be made, on the flip side, their resistance to the charms of Western-style modernisation puts into question their dignity—suggesting that it is not inherent but contingent. Nonetheless, dignity is the concept that encapsulates the universalistic thrust of Ukrainian liberalism, that in the wake of Maidan (i.e. 'Revolution of Dignity'), saw itself at the frontline of the global cultural struggle. In this global struggle, Ukrainian liberal intellectuals were offering a positive program: 'Dignity is something you can propose to counter the global problem of relativism, cynicism, emptiness, and the notion that everyone lies' (Forostyna in hromadske, 2015b, 1:00-2:16). Within the narrative of modernisation, dignity is the most general principle of action and being: 'Honour would be something premodern, dignity is modern' (ibid), hence it was an 'intuitively appropriate concept for Maidan' (ibid).

3. *Democracy.* The use of this concept is not even. Among the thinkers included in this analysis, only Yaroslaw Hrytcak systematically deploys it in his own writings:

> In reality, Ukraine has one major resource: the educated and self-sufficient population. It will find a way and adapt to any conditions, so long the state doesn't interfere. For this reason, Ukraine needs democracy to take the lid from that can where enormous energy brews. And then gradually, through laws and new rules of the game, understandable and equal to all, it will direct this energy towards a peaceful and civilised channel. (Hrytcak, 2015a, p. 108)

His is the classical combination of liberalism and democracy as a balancing act between freedom and equality. It seems like many intellectuals in Ukraine avoid the word democracy. This is in part due to a certain inflationary overuse of it over the last decades, as well as because of certain perceptions in broader society. Many dismiss democracy on account of it being a fiction, a naive faith, or ideological manipulation. But there also may be a deeper reason. It appears that many liberals in Ukraine are suspicious of equality. With Soviet legacy looming large, equality is suspect of a link to paternalism. Even if taken genuinely, some liberals conflate it with populism. Many seem to believe that equality compromises modernising aspirations. Since the majority of society is seen as a backward mass living in the Middle Ages, political equality expressed through democracy means their dominance and hence sliding away from modernising path.

4. The two main ideas deployed to clarify what modernisation means for Ukraine in practical terms are *sustainable development* and *open access.* Sustainable development is called to overcome the vicious cycle of crises that Ukraine constantly finds itself in. The authors of the Nestor Group define it quantitatively as 'the expansion of all six capitals of a country: human, social, intellectual/creative, industrial/creative, natural, and financial' (Nestor Group, 2015, p.2). Sustainable development is described as the trajectory that a society has to embark on. Being on such a path means having mechanisms to deal with crises and after each crisis being able to resume development that manifests itself in cumulative, continuous growth. Once a country is on the trajectory of sustainable development, the impact of crises is less profound, as there is always a way to find a solution to the crises and stay the course. This is contingent on a 'number of conditions that must be met and which apply independently from geography or historical culture: primacy of the rights, eradication of corruption, guaranteed right of property (ibid p.2), political will, social activism and certain state of social morality (ibid p.3). Once these conditions are met, there will be mechanisms to deal with crises and stay on track. Politically, this means transitioning to an open access

system. Open access[62] refers to a form of political organisation based on a principle of meritocracy by which access to economic resources and political power is granted to those who win in honest competition—as opposed to the restricted access system which functions through arbitrary privileges and personal loyalties. What constitutes honest competition in the open access system is established through rules that apply universally without exceptions, while the restricted access system is characterised by arbitrariness. This arbitrariness stems from the zero-sum game mindset in restricted-access societies: someone wins only if someone else loses. Consequently, the Nestor Group argue that economy of restricted access is supported by the desire of the disadvantaged towards justice of equal redistribution instead of justice of equal opportunities.. Those who control of what is available by force and by arbitrary rule-application run the system based on personal loyalty. In the open access system, the principle of competition is not personal loyalty, but professionalism and competence. The broader social impact of the open access system is achieved through a new mindset where:

> we think in the spirit of social benefit – creation of the new through collaboration, where the result is larger than the sum of parts, where collaboration makes sense not only for the participants, but also for the society in general. (ibid, p. 5)

5. To achieve such a positive outcome Nestor Group suggested to establish a new *social contract***.** The authors refer to the preceding 'informal social contract' that existed before the turning point of the Maidan as a 'corruption consensus', where corrupt practices where normalised and reciprocally enabled. The predatory nature of the pre-Maidan government upset this arrangement and the revolution itself cleared the way for the new social contract. The notion of the social contract that is suggested in the text serves the purpose of clarifying the 'new rules of the game, framework for interaction, agreement between the power and society fixated in the common imagination' (ibid, p. 9). Historically, the contractualist narrative appeared and was deployed against the paternalistic orders that stood on the grounds of God-given authority to the kings (Forst, 2015, p.91) – 'the natural' order. The notion of the social contract was aimed at dismantling these orders by suggesting that political authority arises as a result of a free agreement between individuals, who are equal and free in the eyes of God. There are many versions of contractualism. In the initial version of Hobbes, the contract is needed to overcome the state of nature, disorder, in which there is war of all against all. The Hobbesian contract entrusts the complete political

[62] The concept is borrowed from the work of Douglas North et al. "Violence and Social Orders: A Conceptual Framework for interpreting Recorded Human History (2009)

authority to the one absolute 'sovereign', which Hobbes saw as the only safeguard against the horrors of disorder. The contract in the philosophy of Locke serves the purpose to secure natural (God-given) rights of life, freedom, and property equally attributable to all. Rousseau's theory of the social contract argued for the formation of the general that would allow individuals to transcend their narrow personal desires and act for the common good. This general will would constitute a 'second-level totality' (Boltanski & Thevenot 2006, pp. 108-110) to mediate relations between individuals in order to deactivate individual capriciousness.

The positions of the social contract suggested by the authors of the Nestor Group try to reconcile private interests with the common good in such a way as to create open access and sustainable development. This would be done through: prioritising actions vital for the strategic goal; cooperation instead of zero-sum game thinking; recognising social and regional heterogeneity; rethinking of the role of the state as the instrument society uses to guarantees security, dignity and open access, while each citizen is responsible for self-actualisation; individual responsibility; transparency of rules; and respect for dignity, including respecting the choice to stay passive (Nestor Group, 2015, p.10*)*. The social contract proposed by the authors outlines a conception of the 'general will' which aims to free-up rather than contain 'individual will'. The individual wills thus freed up are expected to act in accordance with the morality aimed at the common good (which is defined as achieving sustainable development) while self-actualising. The political subjectivity constructed by the contract includes awareness of and agreement on the necessity of the progressive change towards open access and sustainable development, where individual choices are made based on one's own will to self-actualise while acting in a socially beneficial way. The sum of ensuing individual self-actualisations shifts the whole society toward sustainable development, presumably after reaching a certain tipping point.

A new social contract appeared in many contexts during the post-Maidan liberal discourse. The two main points being an obsolesce of the previous social contract and the need for a 'new social contract that will give substance to the Ukraine of our hopes' (First of December Group, 2014)

6. In the liberal discourse of values, liberal intellectuals make an important distinction: *values* versus *identities*. Trying to distance themselves from historical identity politics, which in Ukrainian case means conflicts over issues of historical memory and language, the scholars emphasise values as the cultural variable that is not historically fixed. Values here are understood as universal and integrative as opposed to particular and conflictual issues of identity. Ukrainian discussions on historical memory make the 'civilisational jump' advocated by the liberals impossible. Liberal argument is that people care about security, poverty, and

corruption more than they do for historical issues, but politicians and their consultants manipulate society by throwing 'historical mines' (Hrytcak, 2014a, p.105). To achieve a breakthrough, issues of identity have to be set aside and more general, common guidelines for social cooperation must be established based on universalistic values. The values meant here are 'self-expression' values taken from the much-referenced World Values Survey and related work by Ronald Inglehart.[63] Here, the values are placed on the scale 'survival values' on the side of backwardness and 'self-expression' values on the side of modernity and progress. To achieve modernisation, society needs a critical mass of self-expression values that guide the actions of those in charge politically and a significant part of (preferably entire) society engaged in the economy. In the understanding of Ukrainian liberals, such as Yaroslaw Hrytcak and other members of the Nestor Group, these values have to be disconnected from identity. They are overarching and hence an integrative force. These values should sustain the 'meritocratic' principles (Hrytcak, 2015b) of governance and economy. As mentioned before there is tension, however, built into the notion of values: they can be easily 'ethnicised' by connecting them to a particular view of history accepted by some and rejected by others.

7. Interestingly, the notion of *liberalism* is used quite infrequently. The outright commitments to specific ideologies are rare in the Ukrainian political centre. When liberalism does appear as a concept, its use is rather cautious. What appears to be typical among Ukrainian liberals is a rejection of the left versus right distinction. Right and left (although more left than right) both tend to be used in a negative sense. Being a liberal seems to mean distancing from both labels and defining oneself in opposition to both left and right. Both sides are deemed needlessly and dangerously radical in their outlook and hence have little constructive to offer in the sphere of practical politics (see Kebuladze in hromadske, 2015c, 18:15). From this standpoint, Kebuladze argued that the 'ideology of Maidan was liberal, it wasn't right or left'. In fact, it was ideology of equal rights (ibid, 6:10). This can appear as surprising in light of the common accusation of nationalism within the Maidan at its later stages, when violent clashes ensued. Nonetheless, Kebuladze argued that the 'right-wing ideology wasn't represented at the Maidan' (ibid, 5:15). Discussing ideological groupings and making ideological distinctions seems to be a mine field in Ukraine—even more so than in most other places. Most liberal commentators try to avoid it and argue from the position of universality. Ideological labels tend to appear mainly in negative connotations. When Kebuladze speaks of left- and right-wing radicals as opposition to liberals, he singles out the attitudes regarding

[63] https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp

power as a way to distinguish the two main ideological positions (liberals vs radicals.). The radicals conflate power and violence (ibid, 18:24). For them power is violence and there is no difference. For liberals there *is* a difference.

The gap between power and violence is a space for civil society as a legitimating force. Power in liberal sense is a communication that makes it possible to avoid violence. Through communicative power, civil society can bring about just power more generally, by enabling common action and integration (ibid, 21:00). In the case of Ukraine, power often operated though violence, while civil society believes that under no circumstances shall it cooperate with authorities and concentrated rather on criticising and monitoring. In the post-Maidan era, things began to look better: civil society delegated certain representatives into formal structures of power (ibid, 21:40). The example of Maidan has shown that violence destroys power: 'Weak power deploys violence, strong power doesn't need violence' (ibid, 24:30).

8. While liberals may be distinguishing themselves from radicals regardless of whether they are right or left, there is an insistence on a different kind of radicalism: the radicalism of *reform*. This radicalism is aimed at a calculated re-design of values and institutions, guided by the modernising intentions within the parameters of individual freedom. Therefore, the main radicalism is embedded into the concept of reform. The line of thinking seems to be that it is not the revolution that is the most radical act—it is reform. What is commonly referred to as *revolution* happens on the streets within a short amount of time. Whether the revolution actually happens systemically is determined afterwards by the implementation of systemic changes that would take root for revolution to be ultimately impactful. Thus: 'Reforms without revolution are possible but revolution without reform is not. Revolution requires reform. […] Revolution without reforms becomes reaction and stagnation' (Yermolenko, 2015). So, it is not revolution that changes society, it is reform (ibid). One can draw the distinction between the one-time explosion of energy of the revolution and a consequent, conscious and creative activity that is reform, which converts this energy into productive, lasting outcomes. Such longer-term activity doesn't allow this energy to reverse direction or disperse. Reform here is nothing less than 'the art of changing society' (Ibid).

In conclusion, the conceptual apparatus of Ukrainian liberalism attempts to ground action into rationality. It sees itself as the avant-garde of modernisation, in opposition to the backward post-Soviet actuality which is liable to irrationality exemplified by reliance on personal connections as foremost to social integration, corruption, and violence. On the world stage, irrationality is also seen as the threat to liberalism:

> We are entering a period of completely irrational politics, which never existed before […] while even fascism was more or less rational and you knew what to expect, politicians now rely on impulsive reactions of the electorate which become more and more simple, primitive. At the same time, in global politics there is no obvious opposition, only situational, temporary alliances exist. This offers a highly unstable picture. Hence it is important to come back to some rationality and enlightenment. […] The impulse is important in the private sphere, but in politics it has to be banned. (Yermolenko in hromadske, 2015a, 42:30)

Break in normality

The element of surprise, which can be expressed as a certain challenge to expectations (or break in normality) is the primary formal element of a narrative. Without it there would be no reason to construct a narrative in the first place. It is this quality of departing from expectations that lends stories their appeal and conveys their importance.

Since the 'real' normality that exists in Ukraine (as opposed to 'normative normality' that serves as aspiration) is seen as negative, the narrative strategy in the liberal discourse is to assert that positive change is possible. Hrytcak postulated the forward-looking vision for the country as: 'Become 26th percent'—referring to the fact that only 25 percent of the world enjoys prosperity, hence Ukraine has to become the 26th percent. This hopeful position gives rise to Hrytcak's frequent call to 'overcome history'. The surprise being here that history can be overcome, which is not a given from the point of view of passive and deterministic positions that characterise 'real' normality in Ukraine.

Similarly, in the writings of the Nestor Group, the proposition that the Ukrainian nation is formed represents the surprise in or break with normality. The conventional national discourse in Ukraine revolves around nation-building, strengthening, and defending. The Nestor Group (2015) argues that this should be consigned to the past and goes on the offensive: the nation is there, and the next step is to modernise it. The very same point was made by Yaroslaw Hrytcak separately on many occasions: 'Stop building the nation and start modernising it. The nation is built' (Hrytcak, 2015a, p. 177-179).

This similar positivity, that goes against conventional defeatism, was articulated by Valerij Pekar: 'Mission impossible is possible' (Pekar, in TEDx Talks, 2015, 12:15). The current problems are just opportunities in disguise: 'when old is weak and ruined, it doesn't have strength to resist, but we can quickly build the new world' (ibid, 12:22). In the same vein, Hrytcak wrote:

> If our revolution was made for the sake of modernising Ukraine, one shouldn't forget that the war is one of the biggest modernising factors. One simply has to change the angle on the war: not only as a threat but also as a chance. (Hrytcak, 2015a, p.187)

Ultimately, this positivity has an objective foundation according to Hrytcak: 'We are condemned for modernisation' (Hrytcak, 2014b). This forceful statement is deployed to undermine anti-modern reaction at the level of economic fundamentals: the argument is that since Ukraine doesn't have carbohydrates that would allow to conserve the regime such as in Russia, the only alternative is modernisation (ibid).

Narrative of justification

The narrative of justification for Ukrainian liberals can be called *moral meritocracy.* Since the justification narrative focuses attention of the moral message within a political vision, one has to unpack this moral message in more detail.

As we have seen, the foundation on which the open access system shall be built is certain social morality. This is what ought to prevent the misuse of the open system for narrow personal gain at the expense of society. Here, it helps to analyse in-depth one specific document that is representative of the overall discourse. Published in February of 2015, 'The Contract of Dignity for Sustainable Development' is a document laying out a vision for the future of Ukraine by a group of well-known Ukrainian intellectuals, and public figures, called the Nestor Group.

The authors speak of the 'transition to the new value norm' (Nestor Group 2015, p.7). It is recognised that 'values connect economic and political modernisation and create favourable space for both', while 'attempts of institutional change without considering values invariably failed (Russia, Ukraine, Iraq, Afghanistan)'. The evolution of social values is described in the text in terms of Ronald Inglehart's model. A transition to sustainable development and an open access system is therefore associated with movement from values of survival connected to paternalism, zero-sum game thinking, passivity, to the values of self-expression connected to individual responsibility, creativity, flexibility and where 'dignity is the fundamental value' (ibid, p. 7). Predomination of the values of survival restrict possibility of a civilisational leapfrog. Maidan, in authors' view, is:

> […] the result of the appearance of new social groups, for which dignity, freedom and self-expression became central values, for which they were ready to risk own safety and even life. However, transition to sustainable development and open access will become possible when people will

> learn not only to fight for these values, but also live according to them. (ibid)

Interestingly, the authors were not entirely clear on how close Ukrainian society was to meeting this condition when they wrote the 'contract' back in 2015. They wrote that:

> […] it is about appearance of significant group of Ukrainians, who, living in the corrupt society and having courage for moral dissidence, will finally establish the new value norm. They will therefore create the backbone of the new social organism, in which moral behaviour will not lead to loss, but to success. (ibid)

It is not clear if the authors suggest that this special group is already there, being the ones who started and made the Maidan possible. Or do the authors say that this group is yet to appear? The difference between the two interpretations is significant. In the former case, the vanguard of reformist change is already there and is ready to act, while in the latter, there is simply material that could develop into this societal moral backbone, but has yet to prove it can 'not only fight for these values, but also live according to them' (ibid). The concluding passage of the section about values seems to indicate that the authors incline to a more cautious assessment consistent with the second interpretation: 'by becoming the revolution of dignity, Euromaidan highlighted a significant value shake-up and opened the window of opportunity for the sustainable value shift' (ibid, p. 8). In other words, the shift itself has not yet happened to the extent to be considered sustainable, but merely opened the window of opportunity. This is consistent with the data from the World Value Survey done based on Inglehart's methodology. The data gathered over the period from 2010 to 2014, characterises Ukraine as one of the most security-oriented countries.[64]

If so, how could the transformation happen? The authors advise: 'to change to a different way of life, there should be internal effort of each person, the will to change personal and social rules instead of justifying breaking them' (ibid, p.8). And, supposedly once there is a critical mass of such moral dissidence in the elite, they should further disseminate the new values in the society. This, in turn, can happen by 'eliminating threats to security (in various aspects) and form desired values through education, mass-media, religious organisations, and so on' (ibid).

Plot

The distilled narrative plot can be summarised in the following way:

64 http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSContents.jsp retrieved on 25.12.2019

After having gone through historical traumas over the centuries, and several crises since 1991, the Ukrainian nation took shape. The 'corruption consensus', the ad hoc post-Soviet social arrangement, broke down under pressure from the predatory elite and resulted in the Revolution of Dignity, which was a sign of a partial shift in social values due to the country's relative democracy and economic growth. From this point forward, the path to a better life lies in building on this partial shift to drive deep cultural transformation of the principles of social interaction. This then creates a meritocratic system of open access, which will put the country on track for sustainable development as exemplified by the societies of the West.

The narrative plot can be expressed in an abstract way based on a model that is applicable to all narratives of justification. It consists of four sequential elements: (1) Positing the subject that creates the normative conditions; (2) describing the dire consequences of disregarding the subject; (3) offering a way out; and (4) describing the end result achieved by correctly treating the subject.

In the case of Ukrainian national liberalism the four elements possess the following content:

1. The subject is a free individual who voluntarily participates in a collective subject known as the 'nation'. The normative conditions arising from it are institutional configurations of power (open access) and cultural constitution (values of self-expression).

2. The dire consequences of disregarding the normative conditions were observable in Ukrainian day-to-day life before Maidan. It amounted to a kind of Hobbesian 'state of nature', where arbitrary power ruled unchecked.

3. The response to this is releasing the subject and creating a new moral elite that would act to the benefit of society. Euromaidan was a milestone that signifies that this subjectivity already exists—now it has to be nourished and extended.

4. The future that beckons if the new moral elite comes to power is the prosperity and freedom that will result from an open institutional system and political culture.

Selectivity

As in any narrative, there is selectivity at work in the national-liberal story. To increase the impact of the message, the pieces of information that would weaken the argument are omitted. This is justified given the purpose of the narrative. Every narrative focuses on what it assumes to be more important

and subdue what it deems secondary. In the context of critical analysis, highlighting what remains unsaid is illuminating.

The main instance of such selectivity in the national-liberal narrative is evident when the reference is made to the positive examples of the existing modern societies ostensibly characterised by sustainable development and open access. Such societies are ones found in Western Europe, North America, East Asia and, importantly, central Europe, the Baltic states and Georgia. Whether there is an open access system in, say, the US, is a highly contentious question. Answering it is beyond the scope of this work. It is enough to say that a large part of US society would probably disagree as a contemporary discourse on the problems of meritocracy testifies (Sandel, 2020). Similarly, in portraying countries of the central Europe as clear winners from the post-socialist capitalist transformation obscures problems such as population drain, susceptibility to populism, social conflicts, and even return to authoritarianism (Hungary). One could respond to such critique that this still represents a different level of problems versus the ones that Ukraine faces, i.e. 'we'll cross this bridge when we come to it'.

And yet it is crucial to keep these problems in sight for someone willing to establish a genuinely open system. If ostensibly the most open of societies such as the U.S.A, is currently facing an urgent problem of restricted social mobility based on education, which is accessible to very few and the access has often to do with inherited privilege, what does this mean for a country trying to emulate it? Similarly, if Central European countries are taken as templates for sustainable development, how do we qualify the sliding back into authoritarianism of Hungary, attempts by populist conservatives to restrict civil freedoms in Poland, the domination of oligarchs in Czech Republic, Slovakia, and all-round anti-liberalism throughout the region? Positioning these countries on the 'trajectory of sustainable development' offers an answer: these problems are temporary. After all, the Nestor Group authors admit that countries on the sustainable development path are not free from crises. Nor are they free from moral crises. But an open access system ensures that there is a competition, where well-intentioned, morally upright and capable professionals eventually win power. The open access system will eventually filter out the hostile elements and ensure sustainable development continues. In this outcome, the problems will hopefully be solved. And yet it is important to consider whether a competition-based open access system does not simply replace one unaccountable elite with another—or even simply reproduce the old order with a slightly updated facade. And how would it hold up in the face of the technological challenges of surveillance, social media, propaganda and rising new authoritarianisms that undermine open access countries today to the point of challenging their future?

As laid out above, the authors of the Nestor Group address this issue indirectly by discussing social morality and values. While touching on the

problems of the West, Yaroslaw Hrytcak in his own writings links lack of solidarity in Europe and the general struggles of the West to the decline of Christian values. The discourse of values for many Ukrainian liberal intellectuals has the ultimate foundation in Christianity, which for them is the real origin of modernity balanced with morality. Consequently, modernisation as Westernisation has its limit somewhere in the process of secularisation. This particular aspect of Westernisation, according to Hrytcak, should not be followed (Hrytcak, 2015a, p. 23). The problems that we do see on the Western front can thus be addressed through commitment to Christian morality in this line of thought.

Taking the long view (2016-2019)

As the Maidan revolution subsided, the conflict in East Ukraine grew long-term, social tensions continued, institutional power was consolidated by the president, and reformism as a state policy took a back seat to issues of war and conflict. These challenges, while to a large extent real given an armed conflict and loss of territory, at times were all too readily used by the actors in power as an excuse to avoid reformist action.

This departure from reformism had to be interpreted. Liberal intellectuals attempted this in following ways:

1. **The problem majority.** As we have seen, liberals have always defined themselves in contrast to the majority by elevating themselves above it—in particular, morally. However, back in 2014-2016, the general tendency was to say that liberals would have to work with the rest, and treat them as a chance to expand its own ranks. By 2018, the relationship had become, more antagonistic. Now liberals saw the majority in one way or another, as an obstacle to real breakthrough after the Maidan. It was assigned a role of the social 'other', pulling the liberal minority back into the past through its passive opposition. The dividing line was being drawn more and more sharply: the minority of the active, productive, modern, proponents of reforms, versus the majority of passive, infantile, and fearful paternalists. The Maidan of 2013-2014 appeared not as a concerted action by entire society now, but as a minority matter:

   > It turns out that it was a passionate minority and that the majority is constantly in doubt. Against the background of infantilism and the absence of an awareness of its own political needs, this majority is becoming an empty marker, an audience which will think as any populist wants it to. (Korablyova in *How to build Social Trus*t, 2019)

   According to the liberal logic, the problem is that 'real majority are Soviet people' (Denysenko, 2019, p. 180). Connected to that is the fact that: 'Ukrainian society behaves like a little child' (Gongadze, 2018). The

majority of the population have paternalistic attitudes, they want a 'strong hand', which leaves the real 'asset' of the country, the liberal minority in the position of 'superfluous' people (Pekar, 2018). This majority is hence also acting and voting irrationally. While only '15% want reforms in Ukraine' (Pekar, in Radio NV, 2019, 19:10), about '80% does not support reform - just wants the state to give a bit more money' (ibid, 20:00). Thus, while the discourse right after Maidan was focused on 'the 15 to 20 percent' as the source of hope about the future, now the focus to a large extent shifted to explain failure or slow progress to the 'other 80 percent', who were obstructing the progress, those who 'do not want any change at all' (ibid). During the presidential election of 2019, this elitist position came to the foreground. The so-called 25 percent, who voted for incumbent Poroshenko insisted on this choice being the only rational, responsible position. A popular at the time Facebook avatar proclaimed its owner to belong to 'the 25 percent', meaning they're a proud representative of responsible citizenry.

2. **The problem elite.** Existing elites are still seen as the enemy to the more liberal segment of society. To create a new, moral, and responsible elite remained the aspiration. In the meantime, discourse frequently touched upon historical and cultural reasons behind this lack of the right elite. The issue of the elite is a special one in Ukrainian history by virtue of elites being representatives of various foreign imperial centres that ruled parts of the country throughout its history. The Ukrainian proto-elite, in the form of the Cossack upper echelons in the 17th century, was often portrayed in historiography as traitors due to their role in the absorption of Ukrainian lands into the Russian Empire. Hence in the 'populist' streams of Ukrainian national history, ideology, and politics, the elite is juxtaposed to the 'people' in an antagonistic way. Later, in the 20th century, there were attempts to 'rehabilitate the elites' by conservative thinkers (Plokhy, 2019). Nonetheless, suspicion towards elites is common in Ukraine. Liberal intellectuals both exemplify this suspicion, while also decrying it as it makes it more difficult to build meritocracy—i.e. a new elite. Five years after the revolution, the new elite was still nowhere in sight: 'The problem we have now is the need of a political class that really has the will to change the country, not through words, but through actions' (Hrytcak, in UA First, 2019, 4:30-4:45). The people who are still in charge today came out of the late Soviet and post-Soviet realities, which were not conducive to cultural development, sophistication and morality:

> Most of our powerful people raise their children like spoiled brats: "Here is a cool ride, here is a watch, here is the dough. Most had poor childhood so they didn't play enough. Their next generation will have the attitude to life like, "I am allowed to do anything, I am the coolest,

> and everyone else is a loser". And then, maybe, the next generation after that will realise that there are more important values than toys and cars. Look at the palaces of our most powerful—they look like outsized henhouses. Compared to that, houses where former presidents of America live are mud huts. (Roitburd, 2018, p. 256)

Expressed in the most pointed way: 'There are no elites in Ukraine at all. There are no people who would live for politics, society, country, who couldn't imagine their life without it. Predominantly they are businessmen' (Tereshenko, 2019, p. 73). The businessmen in politics are not a force of reform: '[…] Today's quasi-elite does not want to change and do real reform' (ibid, p. 75). Connected to the issue of the elite's unsavoury qualities, the state is correspondingly inadequate. Back in 1991, the appearance of an independent state could be seen as fortuitous and not truly fought for by those who ended up at the helm: 'Our politicians got the state, if we are being honest, like snow from the sky. Only now Ukraine starts to understand that independence has to be fought for' (Roitburd, 2018, p. 256). In the meantime, the same old patronal system stays in-tact, while 'the state acts in the interests of those groups which control it' (Pekar, 2017).

3. **The culture problem**. Anarchism, short-sightedness, lack of trust, trauma, weak self-identification, split-personality, lack of rationality, post-colonialism and more, all appeared as explanations of deeply-ingrained issues that have not yet been dealt with and hence obstruct progression into a better, more 'modern' future. The central issues that liberal intellectuals attempted to deal with is the lack of rationality understood mainly instrumentally. Borys Gudziak, the Archeparch of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and president of the Ukrainian Catholic University spoke of 'our propensity to being emotional. Traditionally our poetry is stronger than prose, our song is more powerful than analysis […]' (Gudziak, 2018, p. 13). While on the other hand, 'we struggle to structure normality' (ibid, p. 14). Liberal intellectuals have put a lot of effort in to explain the sources of these tendencies and their implications for the future.

   Yaroslaw Hrytcak wrote in the key of economic history to explain the genesis of Ukrainian political culture. The one constant of Ukrainian history throughout the centuries, that forms the foundation of its most general historical explanation, is the country's fertile earth. Starting from ancient civilisation up until now, it served as the main structuring force of social practices. From the very beginning, inhabitants of these lands were settled agrarians, constantly struggling with attacks from aggressive nomads. The agrarian economy and constant contestation for the land among various external powers formed modern Ukrainian culture, deeply

anchored into the village, with attitudes which were quite suspicious of modernity:

> Ukrainian modern culture consciously positioned itself as a culture of the village. This to a large extent corresponded to reality: after it almost completely lost its elite because of Polish or Russian assimilation and acculturation, Ukrainian nation became a peasant nation with peasant virtues: hard work, friendliness, hospitality. Traditional agrarian society, regardless of the hard-working conditions, gave a sense of familial warmth and safety, in contrast to modern world with its individualism and cold rationality. Traditional society also means patriarchal control of women and a high level of xenophobia […] Peasants treat intellectual work with suspicion and scepsis: in their eyes it isn't work at all. (Hrytcak, 2019, pp. 35-37)

Volodymyr Yermolenko develops the sources of Ukrainian culture out of a similar juxtaposition of settled and nomad identities. The historical battle between the two happens in the spatial locus determined by geography: the steppe. He talks of the:

> split between settled and nomad identity, between the search for the roots and uprootedness as one of the keys to understanding Ukrainian culture and history (Yermolenko, 2019, p. 107).

> Settled versus nomad culture, republic versus empire, hedonism versus sadism—all these contradictions to a large extent determine Ukrainian history and identity. (ibid, p.116)

Within this interaction between the light and dark forces that brought conflicts, violence, conformism to survive and this way shaped Ukrainian culture, Yermolenko locates the sources of 'amnesia and short-sightedness—the great Ukrainian cultural ailments—that might have been born out of the steppe identity, in which history doesn't leave traces and which doesn't allow to plan future' (ibid, p.117). Such shortcomings can be also noticed by linking Ukrainian cultural history to that of the West. Here, Yermolenko sees a kind of dialectic:

> If we simplify, then classical modern European cultural cycle looks approximately as follows: "rational" Renaissance then religious, "irrational" Baroque than "rational" Enlightenment, then "irrational" Romanticism. But the high points of development of Ukrainian culture were the "irrational" epochs: Baroque and Romanticism. The epoch of Renaissance is connected here to the loss of a certain separateness as a result of Polish expansion, while Enlightenment is connected to the loss of autonomy—this time through the pressure of the Russian Empire. Hence Ukrainian culture is a culture that stands on one leg, an irrational leg, so to speak. (Yermolenko, 2019b, p.66)

As a part of the liberal story, this adds another nuance as a powerful explanation of contemporary struggles with a modernising society. The requirement of systemic action and cooperation relying on will to change clashes with this lack of rationality.

A similar angle on this issue that frequently comes up in Ukrainian discourses is that of anarchy. Here, the presumed individualist tendency of a typical Ukrainian is, on the one hand, a strong counterforce to authoritarianism, while on the other, always risks disorder, complicates cooperation, divides society and makes it ungovernable. The writer Andrii Kurkov wrote of the 'matrix of democratic anarchy' as the historical force shaping Ukrainian political culture: '[…] hostility to monarchy and to power in general created in the Ukrainian society of 16-17th centuries matrix of democratic anarchy, which was reborn again in the post-Soviet society' (Kurkov, 2019, p.90). This 'matrix', according to Kurkov, means that Ukrainians learned to survive and be self-sufficient as individuals, without relying on higher powers. At the same time, it doesn't facilitate long-term planning and vision:

> To plan for five, or especially ten, years ahead is not something typical of us. Even when successful, Ukrainians tend to not want to develop it. We rather try to conserve the success, make it permanent and not very visible to others. We are emotional and situational. We react to danger only after it appears. (ibid, p.95)

Hence this suspicion of authority is a double-edged sword: it keeps Ukraine safe from outright tyrannies, but prevents cooperation and long-term planning.

The idea that the Ukrainian culture misses the element of rationality and is therefore incomplete is a recurring one. The writer Andrii Bondar, in a Borgesian way, enumerated all the things that Ukrainians have and those they don't have (Bondar, 2019, pp. 132-133). In the 'have not' category are things having to do with the origins of modern institutions: 'reformation, enlightenment, industrial revolution, modernism and modernisation, sexual revolution, protestant ethics and spirit of capitalism, national aristocracy, national bourgeoisie, lasting historical memory, political elite' and the list goes on. In the 'have' category are mainly diffuse cultural elements and aspirations:

> large reserves of patience, a culture of music performance, freedom of speech, low level of aggression in society, religious tolerance, irreducible gene of freedom and insubordination, great wish to move from the mode of survival to the mode of life, quite a high level of openness, a talent for weathering difficulties, the demand for justice, the wish to live in dignity, and the wish to live. (ibid)

Following the logic of this enumeration, Ukraine still does not have rationality embodied in durable structures, but it does have some pre-conditions for establishing it in the realm of culture. In 2019, Ukrainians still demonstrate the 'inability to bring collective goals to a desired and irreversible result' and the 'inability to consider one's own mistakes and learn from others' mistakes' (ibid).

Connecting to the discourse before 2016, when most liberal intellectuals argued that the chief movement underlying modernisation was changing societal values from that of survival to that of self-expression, now, in 2019 'survival is again our default mode of being' (ibid) and 'Ukrainians are world champions in survival' (Yermolenko, 2019, p.118). The state of the country's values still holds its modernisation back.

The lack of social integration and cooperation is the core issue in post-Maidan Ukraine. It is especially pointed in the liberal narratives after it became clear that reforms were stalling around mid-2016. The main reason behind this according to liberal for intellectuals was evidently the lack of support of the reformist modernising agenda in Ukrainian society. For liberal intellectuals, the answer to this predicament lay in expanding the ranks of those who could stand behind the modernising vision. Views on how to do this differed among different intellectuals substantially. It is here where one starts to notice important differences between positions, of which some under circumstantial pressure, seem to evolve away from liberalism. Sometimes, they enter into grey zones with other narratives, sometimes to the extent where it is difficult to say if liberalism as a description still applies. As we have seen, the motif of incompleteness of Ukrainian culture is pervasive in the liberal discourse. Explaining this incompleteness forces many intellectuals to look for a more robust national identity that would contain the right features and become the subject of modernisation:

> Our country rolled into the 21st century in a disintegrated, abused and deformed state. We never developed, only chaotically formed and deformed in a mode of constant losses/lack. Regimes were various: sometimes cruel, sometimes moderately-repressive, sometimes authoritarian. But they were never ours. They were thrown at us top-down, with their rules, restrictions and laws. And to survive in each of these regimes, to grab onto life was the most important. Is our distrust to innovation and progressive ideas not from here? Is the suspension between survival and development, between identities and values, between East and West not from here? The question, "Who are Ukrainians and what do they want?" we still cannot answer because problems arise during self-identification. Who should be considered Ukrainian? Correspondingly, the second part of the question is lost in the incertitude of the first one: if we still do not know who are

> Ukrainians, how can we find out what they want? (Bondar, 2019, p.123)

Bondar seems to connect here the clarity and robustness of 'Ukrainianness' to the possibility of progressive change. In this line of thinking, there has to be a clear national self-identification to enable political action consistent with the desires of this 'nation'. The actual content of the nation, while not specified, is indicted by counter-posing East and West as antagonists. This 'lack' as the Ukrainian condition arises from a 'division' into antagonistic and incompatible elements, whose co-existence within one entity is destructive. Bondar uses the example of 19th century writer, Mykola Gogol, who wrote in both Ukrainian and Russian, and in large measure created a popular image of Ukrainian culture in Russophone literature and is often held up as an example of an organic combination of the two cultures. As Bondar writes about Gogol: 'His division between Ukrainian and Russian currents constitutes the main nerve of his art. […] Division turns from an affectation into one more Ukrainian archetype, which in 20th century, in new historical conditions will bear its bitter fruits'. (ibid, pp.128-129). From this logic, it follows that these deeply historical forms of cultural identification and commitment determine subjectivity today and that such internal cultural divisions have to be counteracted. The culture has to be made whole again for qualitative change to become possible. How can this be done? Bondar provides an answer: 'No successful socio-economic project in Ukraine is possible without solving the main issue: a complete and final exit from empire and its structures—political, cultural, psychological, which only sustain our duality and incompleteness' (ibid, p.131).

Hence, to act politically requires knowing 'what Ukrainians want', which depends on the fact that they are Ukrainian. The meaning of 'Ukrainian', in turn, has to be solidified by cleansing it from historical aberrations. This differs from a more universalistic views, where what is being wanted does not depend on the questions of national identity, but rather refer to general needs of everyone in safety and justice. For example, Yaroslaw Hrytcak:

> There is no "national character" or mentality. This is made-up. National character is changeable. In reality, people are the same. Nobody wants an unjust court, their daughter raped or wife kidnapped. This is not a question of mentality. People want to live well; this is universal. (Hrytcak in UA First, 2019, 7:18-7:42)

Bondar exemplifies a certain particularistic tendency visible among many liberal intellectuals. The narrative sequence in this strain of thought is: the history of violence towards everything national lives on today within

the culture, which is manifested in all the shortcomings of Ukrainian society. The gravest of these shortcomings originate from outside, from alien imperial power which ended up colonising consciousness of large part of Ukrainians. Unless this collective consciousness is decolonised and a more robust subjectivity is constructed that rejects the alien elements, no modernisation is possible. This logic, which aligns well with a more conservative understanding of society, appears very frequently in the discourse after 2016 as in the following example:

> Our national identity was eroded. […] The greatness of the Soviet person was built at the expense of denigration of other people. […] Hybrid people marched during demonstrations. Decisions were made at party meetings by Hybrid people. Hybrid people governed and submitted […] (Denysenko, 2019, pp.174-175)

If so, whatever remains from the Soviet time is alien and detrimental to the modern Ukrainian project. The liberal sensibility remains: 'The ethno-dictatorship is very humiliating and illegitimate […] for me it is not about linguistic identification, but about foundational one' (ibid, p.179-180). But there is a subtle shift whereby the scope of subjectivity contracts due to narrower conditions of membership imposed on it. The most straightforward expression of this subtle shift can be seen in the following statement:

> Language, Army, Faith: more than a conservative slogan and short political program of the candidate for presidency, Petro Poroshenko, infuriated and sometimes bewildered the liberal part of society. But even though I myself am a person belonging to liberal worldview, I understood why this is important. (ibid, p.172)

Hence, the model of better social integration implied in this narrative puts more weight on the national identity with clear-cut borders drawn versus the other, which is the source of all the evil - the Soviet legacy. This is where 'consciousness of the Soviet person was schizoid-dual' (Kebuladze, 2019, p.186), where 'poisoning of consciousness with Soviet propaganda' occurred (ibid, p.188).

Another vector along which liberalism evolved under pressure from unfavourable conditions is *liberism*—a version of liberalism reduced to economic freedom. Pekar is an example of this development. Conceding that in 2018, Ukraine was still a 'closed access' society, Pekar advocated for opening society up, and hence also creating a more robust subjectivity, through expanding the ranks of an entrepreneurial bourgeois class. This could be achieved by focusing on economic freedom as central policy:

> We are in feudalism: oligarchs are everywhere at every level, with "closed access", special tariffs, monopolies, and overregulation based on

> preferences. We are society of closed access. We never had a bourgeois revolution. We always had different kinds of feudalisms: classic, socialist-bureaucratic, and oligarchic. […] This is because we didn't have a critical mass of the bourgeois. (Pekar in Radio NV, 2018, 5:50-6:42)

Pekar goes on to say that 'Bourgeois revolution needs bourgeois class. Nothing will happen till we have enough of them. […] So we have to create the right business climate […] people should get the opportunity to get rich. […] The recipe is simple: open, open all the systems' (ibid, 10:35-11:51). The alternative better system to the current oligarchic feudalism that Pekar proposes is 'liberal capitalism' (ibid), where there is a single-minded focus on economic freedom: 'While the entire world moves to more economic freedom, while people's energy is used for development, not survival, we are backpedalling' (Pekar, 2017). It leads to some contentious statements:

> Ukraine today is a country with quite a high level of political freedom. This means there are two options. Either politically free citizens will reach economic freedom as well, or to prevent economic freedom we'll have to at some point sacrifice political ones. (ibid)

Whether political freedom is indeed of a 'high level' in Ukraine is questionable. The idea of economic freedom being the problem to be fixed via deregulation and marketising as many spheres of life as possible (market for land being a particularly problematic area in Ukraine) is even more so.

Out of many Ukrainian liberal intellectuals analysed, Hrytcak appeared as the most consistent. He consistently de-prioritised issues of national identity (see above) as well as stuck with liberal democracy. Instead of dwelling on imperial legacies, post-colonialism and the like, he insisted:

> History is not a prison, history leaves choice, rational choice. Those who doesn't want to do reforms appeal to history. We need to overcome history. Do not think about history, memory, but instead do radical reforms; first of all, political ones. (Hrytcak in UA First, 2019, 7:53-8:15)

Constitutive for a better future in his view wasn't civilisational conflict of East versus West, but a universalistic vision of the future (Hrytcak, 2016). In the years after Maidan, by 2017 he conceded that the 'revolution was over' (Hrytcak, 2017) without much reform to show. On the plus side, Hrytcak stated that the years after the Maidan and beginning of the conflict in the East proved that Ukraine had resilience (in UA First, 2019, 15:05) and even after all the disappointments, the demand for change remained:

> What is happening in the last five years somewhat facilitates modernisation. At no point before did we implement so many reforms as now, and in some areas quite radical, but there is no sense that we crossed the point of no return. The point of no return would be independent courts.

> Until they appear, the money will not leave the 'socks'—there will be no investment, no modernising leap. (ibid, 12:00-12:40)

In what follows, I briefly summarise semantic shifts that occurred in other formal narrative elements in the second period under analysis: 2016-2019. The study was based on all the texts already referenced above.

Overall, due to limited progress of modernising program the *temporality* of change within liberal narratives had to be extended into the future. Since quick transformation failed, one hay to extend the timeline of transformation: 'Historians say that duration of transformation is about 50 years - we are just in the middle' (ibid). This correction leads to a change in approach to real world action towards stoic patience:

> Sustainable development doesn't mean quick development [...] We should stop orienting towards windows of opportunity, but set for sustainability, constant interaction. This is not sprint, it is a marathon. (Hrytcak & Hlibovystkiy, in TEDx Talks, 2016 9:45-12:22)

The *motifs* were: past traumas and resulting ambivalence and incompleteness of Ukrainian political culture; and a general sense of fragility of the world being swept by populism and various other anti-liberal threats. To some extent, disappointment was articulated by liberal intellectuals that things after Maidan did not progress as hoped for, but the correctness of the path was confirmed. A tone of stoic resolve and 'glass half full' attitude predominated. And of course, the chief problem of reconciling the constitutive Ukrainian multiplicity with the national political project created various tensions and indicated a certain internal division within Ukrainian national liberalism.

Concepts used within the liberal discourse in 2016-2019 that characterise the semantic shift that occurred versus the previous period can be separated into following two categories: (1) concepts referring to problems with modernisation and reform:

- *Trauma*. Used very frequently to explain the impact of the past on present day issues.
- *Trust*. 'Lack of' it or distrust characterised as one of the ills of Ukrainian society.
- *Mentality*. Very frequent topic of discussion and intellectual effort. Another common explanation of why things do not work as they should in Ukraine.
- *Rationality*. As laid out above, a frequent topic in the sense of the absence of rationality to accept liberal reforms as the only correct way forward.

- *Anarchy*. The default mode of Ukrainian behaviour that supposedly prevents cooperation.

- *Populism.* The main threat to the rational liberal policies.

(2) Concepts referring to solutions to the problems above. Most solutions did not change versus post-Maidan time. The ones worth mentioning refer to departures from political liberalism:

- *Decolonisation*. Often appears as *'decommunisation'*. Stands for efforts to clean-up public life and culture from Soviet elements, which are ostensibly to blame for everything non-modern.

- *Economic* freedom. The most direct instrument to create the entrepreneurial class that would be that moral meritocracy that would bring about modernity and prosperity for the entire country.

Summary

Under pressure from disappointments that challenged the optimistic liberal progressive vision and expectation of fast-paced change towards political and economic modernisation there were:

- Attempts to explore and communicate the deeper conditions of subjectivity for modernising change. This meant going further into the reasons why society was not ready for full-speed modernisation. Many of these reasons identified were the deep-seated ones of *culture* and *history*;

- To continue articulating the liberal vision, the following narrative strategies were applied: (1) *extend the temporality of change*: namely, extend the timeline when the better result can be expected into the future and extend the genesis of the problems obstructing action today into the past; (2) and *extend the spatial scale* of events affecting what is going on in Ukraine. As opposed to full subjectivity residing inside the entity of 'Ukraine', the sources of threats are extended to the scale of former imperial power, while the source of opportunities is extended to the global world where modernity operates.

- There was a tendency on the part of some intellectuals towards a certain *reductionism*. This meant that requirements from the subject that should bring about the desired state of affairs in Ukraine were sharpened into a more unambiguous subjectivity. Since the actual society was not fit to modernise, it must undergo a more foundational transformation to be able to think and act in a way consistent with modernity. This is where, in one instance, *ethnocentrisms* crept back where national identity was once again an object of engineering. In another instance, *economic liberism*

superseded political liberalism where social structure was an object of engineering.

This seems to point towards an inherent fragility of liberalism. Since liberalism in its most wide-spread formulation is understood as a certain 'negativity, (i.e. an absence of intervention into affairs of individuals by organised power) it strives to create a certain free space for individual freedom to exist. Hence Isiah Berlin's famous definition of 'negative freedom' (2017, pp.166-217), as freedom 'from' coercion, intervention, and violence. The existence of the 'empty' space that enables freedom, however, is highly fragile in reality as well as in theory. In reality, attempts to create and sustain liberal orders collapse or run into difficulty, when the space of freedom is hijacked by the reactionary forces and/or simply narrow interest. In realm of the intellectual public discourse, challenges with converting ideas into realities invites a certain calibration or revision of ideas. Creating the free space required for liberal freedom requires complex cultural pre-conditions, which in reality are never completely met (but can be met to a greater or lesser extent). Where these pre-conditions are weak, establishing and sustaining liberal order triggers compensatory efforts that in essence depart from liberal principles. Rather, it becomes a one-sided effort on the part of those who are most committed to the liberal idea for whatever idealistic or self-serving reasons, to create the cultural conditions top-down through strategies of political and cultural engineering.

National Liberalism and Ukrainian political culture 2014-2019

Narratives are embodiments of culture. Political narratives embody political culture. Since there are multiple narratives within a culture, all of them contribute to its subsequent historical development. As a whole, culture cannot be understood as a closed totality, but rather as dynamic collection of practices constantly open to hybridisation, cross-fertilisation, and a 'self-directed increase or decrease in cultural complexity' (Beschorner & Kettner, 2016, p.4). To make a distinction between cultures, one has to look for high-level principles of normality, acceptability, and intelligibility that both span all the narratives while also separating the culture in question from others. The differences in content between various narratives and clashes of meaning between them indicate divisions within society.

When it comes to one specific narrative, such as national liberalism, it offers its own image of a political culture. On the one hand, it reflects the understanding and worldview of a particular group and this way explains their political behaviour. On the other, with representatives of this group participating in public discourse, through dialogue the narrative reaches other social spheres and groups. This makes a narrative not just a descriptive tool,

but also a creative force that influences various actors. First, (1) if appealing: it generates positive reaction and thereby growing the ranks of the originating camp; (2) if encountering rejection: it clarifies or sharpens political divisions; (3) and for strategic actors, it offers narrative as asset for political competition. In these three ways, the particular narrative contributes the overall cultural processes.

In line with process ontology concept of culture borrowed from Kettner & Beschorner (see section 2.2), the contribution to political culture of national liberalism can be outlined with regard to the five constituent cultural processes as follows:

1. **Normalisation**.

   - **Period 1** (2014 to mid-2016). The national liberal narrative offers the following interpretation. The Maidan dealt a blow to political normality—and this is a positive thing. The normality that existed before was rotten and had to be fundamentally transformed. It was a weak normality that turned out to be not resilient in the face of challenges due to the mismatch with the nature of Ukrainian society. It was characterised by: corruption, the absence of commonly accepted 'rules of the game', unfair privileges, disregard or even violence towards those who stood outside of the 'closed system', pervasive distrust, passivity, and paternalism. The Maidan set out to create a new normality, building on the new cultural foundation, that to some extent has already been normalised, but not yet fully unfolded and embodied institutionally. This part of Ukrainian normality contains its love for freedom, pluralism, courage, energy, and faith in European values. While normality in 2014-2016 was not taken to be already transformed, the discourse of liberal intellectuals stressed its malleability and offered a toolkit to expand the part of normality that they took to be the precursor of a new reality and the foundation for Ukrainian modernisation.

   - **Period 2** (mid-2016 to mid-2019). The old corrupt normality, resisting modernisation has largely re-asserted itself and still dominates. The cultural practices promising a potential breakthrough remained confined to the Maidan and social groups associated with it. The perverted normality proved to be resilient and rather strong. Thus, the liberal discourse centred on the genealogy of this normality to explain reasons for its resilience and longer strategies on how to dismantle it. The good part of normality, exemplified by some reformist successes, resilience of the country in the face of external aggression, and economic hardship can all be traced back to the same cultural positives that enabled Maidan—its historical links to the West. That remains source of hope and, in the last analysis, pre-

determines the future success of the program of modernisation. The harmful part of normality has its durable roots in historical traumas and/or long historical and geographical factors which make modernisation more difficult and prolongs its timeline.

2. **Historisation**

- **Period 1** (2014 to mid-2016). The emphasis of the liberal discourse was on contemporary Ukrainian culture's deep historical ties to European traditions. Here, the implication was that the democratic and individualist features made forcefully evident by the Maidan, stem from connections to European cultural history, through Polish and Austro-Hungarian influences. European culture is embedded deeply into the tissue of popular culture. Hrytcak makes a distinction with Russia, where there is a history of the European high culture that entered through the doors of monarchy. In Ukraine, there was no such high culture. Instead, individualistic and democratic attitudes took root over the centuries of dominating European early modern social structures: Polish aristocratic society, multinational cities of Austria-Hungary, and waves of reformation as well as the Counter-Reformation. The era since 1991 has been interpreted as a time of cycles of crises, fumbling for identity and growing pains of the new middle class that will become the vanguard of modernisation. The historical sources of anti-modern cultural practices, Eastern Orthodoxy, Russian imperialism and Soviet communism, encountered the universal forces that would see to 'overcoming history'.

- **Period 2** (mid-2016 to mid-2019). As challenges overshadowed liberal optimism, historisation turned to the historical sources of the ills of contemporary Ukraine. Historical traumas, imperialism, violence, and incomplete membership in Western culture and geopolitical space were all factors in the present struggle to modernise. The ills of contemporary Ukraine tend to be historicised mainly through reference to the Soviet Union and Russian Empire. Admittedly, many intellectuals avoided the simplified juxtaposition 'Good West', 'Bad East' as complete explanation of Ukraine's predicament. Hrytcak anchored his 'longue durée' argument into geopolitics of fertile land that made Ukraine a staunchly peasant society as well as a coveted prize of various conquests. Volodymyr Yermolenko also turned to the geography in the form of 'steppe'. The steppe for him means exposure to the whims of nomadic forces that erase memory and history, making Ukrainians of today amnesiac and short-sighted. Nonetheless, in the public discourse, with its tendency to rely on simplification, it is the East versus West story that becomes the default description of the historical genesis of present-day

conflicts. Within Ukraine, this brings the danger of perpetuating this conflict currently between groups, regions, individuals, or, more importantly, within individuals.

3. **Pattern formation.** Given an admission of liberal intellectuals that Ukraine is pluralistic society, what kind of pattern do they imagine this pluralism to form?

    - **Period 1** (2014 to mid-2016). With many references to the new middle class (the young generation of responsible citizens as carriers of the meritocratic values of modernity) the main pattern that can be discerned is a *social pattern*, where the ordering principle is being pro or against progressive values. Regional and ethnic patterns were taken to be secondary. The pattern's shape was taken to be rather modular. Social units of society displayed different political behaviours based on the respective values and hence affected the whole differently: the progressive part pulled it into modernity, while the passive majority slowed it down. The conflict played out between these two main parts.

    - **Period 2** (mid-2016 to mid-2019). The principle of social patterning remained broadly intact, but there were also tendencies towards identitarian patterning. Setting out to explain the difficulty to modernise the country, many intellectuals pointed to detrimental diffusions that occurred historically via imperial violence perpetrated on Ukrainian soil that re-shaped the pattern and 'deformed' it (Bondar, 2019). Tension arose on whether it was the pattern itself that had to be re-shaped again to fit the modernising aspiration or whether principles should be found to make the existing pattern work. With collective subjectivity being still too weak for a modernising breakthrough, making it more robust, for some liberals, required certain engineering work. This meant either nation-building, through which one should disseminate the correct values and discourage the wrong ones, or marketisation, where economic incentive would itself expand the class with the right worldview.

4. **We-identification.** The liberal subject is first of all an individual. Political action requires a collective subject. The collective subject liberals see themselves part of is a certain progressive responsible citizenry. This collective subject should be the true content of the nation. In reality, the actual 'we' that can be said to represent the entire Ukraine is deeply ambivalent. It is on the one hand free, plural, tolerant, passionate, individualistic, freedom-loving, European but also paternalistic, traumatised, incomplete, anxious, passive, conservative, suspicious. In the liberal narrative, this ambivalence is often resolved by allocating the good qualities to one social group, while the bad qualities

to another. The ambivalence becomes a socio-political division: sometimes clear-cut based on some objective principle, such as geography, or sometimes the dividing line goes through the individual consciousness.

- **Period 1** (2014 to mid-2016). The emphasis here was on the positive side of the 'we'. While political power of this 'we' was not taken to be a complete fact by everyone, the assumption was that a non-coercive expansion of the 'good we' will ensue. 'Critical mass' quantitatively was either already there or it was assumed to be a matter of time until it materialises. Getting there was taken to be a more or less a pre-determined fact within the logic of modernisation.

- **Period 2** (mid-2016 to mid-2019). The focus shifted to the shortcoming of the 'we'. Often, the existing 'we' was denigrated, with internal social divisions stressed based on moral principles, where 'values of self-expression' were elevated to a higher status. The discourse of solutions then focused on engineering strategies on how to change this situation and expand the 'we' around the existing core of the meritocratic middle class.

5. **Normativation**

- **Period 1** (2014 to mid-2016). Important here was the 'normativity of normality'. According to it, the reason for making effort to be modern was to become 'normal'. The normality hence is located somewhere in Central Western Europe, while Ukraine represents the case of abnormality that has to be normalised. Hence, the normality of 'Europe' becomes normative. The reference to normality is an example of making complex ideas intelligible and impactful in the broad public discourse. The deeper reason for a modernising program that intellectuals articulated are certain general values, such as freedom and self-expression. The assumption on the part of liberal intellectuals was that these values should guide political, economic, and social transformation. My critical interpretation of the 'value' discourse is that over-stretching such claims beyond social legitimacy contains coercive potential. Argumentation around 'values' is susceptible to an error of misrepresenting the particular interest as universal value. For example, 'self-expression' and 'national' values are vulnerable to the hostile takeovers by more elitist or identitarian discourses.

- **Period 2** (mid-2016 to mid-2019). In the second period under investigation, the reasoning, while still universalistic in its thrust, shows more signs over-stretching the assumptions of what is universal. Inadequate reformist subjectivity explained through the

prism of identity often elevated questions of identities to the general level. Identity-related reasons crept in, bringing in victimhood, and history with concomitant collection of resentments perpetuating divisions. A similar tendency arises when reasons for unsatisfactory reform are derived from values. Here it is important what values one presumes to be general: there is an important distinction to be made between values necessary to be shared across all of society for national political integration and social cooperation versus values which are particular to groups and have little chance to be extended beyond them. The danger lies in conflating the second kind of values with the first. Among Ukrainian liberal intellectuals there were tendencies of this kind. Identity-specific values such as commitment to patriotism based on specific view of history, culture, heroes, and language are not generalisable. At most, a space has to be created to accommodate them - a space of recognition. They cannot and should not become a guideline for state policy and social interaction.

The same problem can arise with so-called values of self-expression. While as a concept they are utilised to signify independence, subjectivity, and worthy personal and social traits, the argument can quite easily be amplified to a kind of elitism that praises the self-expressing minority and denigrates the security-seeking majority. The solution then offered is to set the minority free to become the new 'moral meritocracy', a new elite which will pull the rest out of its medieval shackles. How exactly this new elite will be moral and not turn into a different version of oligarchy then becomes the question. The default assumption seems to be that simply by virtue of being younger, growing up in different conditions of 'relative democracy' and 'some economic growth', and/or having a Western education, the new elite will be ethical and will not be seduced by power. This optimistic assumption is so far rarely confirmed in the Ukrainian reality.

There is one more level of reasoning however, as exemplified by one of the most consistent Ukrainian liberals – Yaroslaw Hrytcak. Correctly identifying the issue of social morality as the foundation for a meritocratic order where, he then diagnoses the problem that compromises Western meritocracy today as excessive secularisation (ibid p.22-27). Thus, we have arrived to the final, metaphysical, normative frontier. The ultimate, stable source of morals that would constitute the new elite rests in Christian values (ibid). To say to what extent this can be a true integrative force is beyond the scope of this work. Observing the intensification of religious life in Ukraine and extensive political instrumentalisation of religion, the question that

has to be asked is how to avoid reproducing the same social conflicts, this time in the sphere of confessional belongings and church politics.

This concludes the exposition of descriptive or 'normalising' (Beschorner & Hubscher, 2016) normativity. What remains is the *reflexive normativity* (ibid), meaning evaluating the quality of normativity in light of criteria taken to be the measure of legitimacy.

- ***Reciprocity***. Specifically in the liberal narrative, there is an insistence on pluralism, which creates potential for a legitimate political order. There is also increased sensitivity to the overbearing tendencies of various forces wishing to restrict pluralism from the side of neo-Soviet or outright nationalist camps. At the same time, as a reaction to the challenges with implementing a modernising reformist agenda, there is an increasing tension within Ukrainian national liberalism between pluralism and the more partisan desire to re-make society in its own image. This is where ethnocentrisms and political engineering emerges. During Maidan, the discourse of liberals was unambiguously pluralistic under the assumption that the entire society was sick of corruption, injustice, poverty, and restriction of freedoms. The consequences of this discontent were far from clear and had to be politically processed while considering the interests of different groups. In the first period under investigation that lasted from 2014 to mid-2016 (especially in the immediate aftermath of the revolution), there were frequent appeals from liberals to the 'new social contract' that had to be established (i.e. the Nestor Group or First of December Group). In the suggestion of the Nestor Group, there was an idea of having an agreement between different social classes, where those who want to accelerate development are allowed to do it under the condition that the rest keeps the right to continue living as before: the 'respect of dignity of the other has to involve respect of its right to be passive as way of life, under the condition that the mass passivity will not block opportunities for the proactive members of society' (Nestor Group, 2015, p. 10). There were both related calls to engage, through civil society, and mediate between the broader society and the powers that be, as well as set aside divisive topics and focus on the common future. This did not manifest in an appeal to create structures and institutions of dialogue where various social interests could be negotiated and conflicts softened. Sharing certain pre-defined values seems to have been the main condition to even enter the communication. If it wasn't met, the process of reciprocal communication which is a source of legitimacy could not happen.

- This brings us to the second condition of discursive justification, which is the condition of political legitimacy defined as ***generality***. With regards to the national liberal narrative and its normative program of modernisation that posits a certain set of values as universal (and hence,

generally valid), the actual social validity and acceptability of those values is questionable. In the first period under investigation (2014-2016), and especially during the Maidan, the assumption seems to have been that Maidan was that general communicative space where the social contract was outlined. The people at large seemed to have fought for those very values, thus the rest was taken to be the question of technique of implementation. There was consensus, as demonstrated by the Maidan, now it was about articulating a rational program of change and implement it through political machinery. The lack of social support only put the speed into question, not the direction of movement. As the reformist agenda stalled, in the second period under investigation (2016-2019), the national liberal intellectuals elaborated conditions of 'correct' subjectivity for modernisation to succeed in the more distant future. There was little indication of attempts of inter-subjective dialogue. Instead, the conditions for the right subjectivity were rooted into assumed universality of 'values of self-expression'. The only way they could provide a normative foundation of the kind of deep political transformation advocated by Ukrainian national liberals was through building up legitimacy through broader discourses with other subjectivities. This has yet to happen. Otherwise, at best, they can be said to describe and represent a particular part of society and stay within the confines of their ethical conception. This affords this ethical conception a right to be part of the political landscape and be reckoned with by others, but not become the basis for broader political consensus.

3.5.1.2 Liberism

2014-2016 The 'shock therapy' that wasn't

With 'liberism', I mean a narrative whose subject follows, first of all, economic rationality. This subject can be described as 'homo economicus'. The term 'liberism' is a lexical reduction of 'liberalism' parallel to the reduction of freedom to economic freedom.

Liberist intellectuals take economic incentives as the most powerful driver of social behaviour. Each event has an economic undercurrent that provides the best explanation from their standpoint. Their central argument is: hard economic reality eventually catches up with everyone. Typical for the liberist narrative thread in Ukraine is to refer to examples of market reform in Central-Eastern Europe in the 1990s and Georgia in the 2000s. The period of fast and intense reforms these countries went through is often called 'shock therapy. Those who wanted radical market reforms in Ukraine in 2014-2016

advocated for the same. Especially in the wake of the Maidan, which appeared to have made radical market-oriented reform possible.

The architect of Georgian radical market reforms and an avowed 'libertarian', Kakha Bendukidze, has become a sage figure for many intellectuals and policymakers in Ukraine. In a book of conversations about reform with journalist Vladimir Fedorin, he explains the economic undercurrent in Ukraine since Maidan as overcoming irrational economic behaviour of the state. Before the Maidan, Bendukidze contends that: 'Yanukovych got deep into debt, making the country accustomed to an "extravagant" budget' (Fedorin, 2015 p. 418). For Bendukidze, state budget spending should be kept to a minimum. Drawing on historical examples from across the world, he sees a recurring pattern where an increase of state expenditure in one phase leads to weakness in the following (ibid). Conversely, cutting expenditure now will improve things later on. The example of this was the Polish reformer Leczek Balcerowicz, who was in charge of Poland's market transformation in the early 1990-s. In view of Bendukidze, Balcerowicz is the unsung hero, from whom Ukrainian reformers should learn: 'Many Poles today do not like Balcerowicz. Back then, they struggled. But thanks to those reforms, they live in prosperity' (ibid p. 419). In this interpretation, the hard and thankless task of market reform ensures prosperity at the later stage. However only the morally upright and intellectually strong can see the connection between those difficult decisions and ensuing development: '[…] To understand this, one must create a complex logical chain'(ibid). The distance between those who do not understand the objective reality of economic determinism and the enlightened entrepreneur-minded elite is constitutive of the liberist narrative. The entrepreneurs are a moral minority who see the world as it is and struggle against the implicit alliance of the corrupt (politicians) and the lazy (majority). This alliance is embodied in the ultimate enemy: the state. The state has to be reduced to 'night watchman' status, concentrating on law and order with a strong emphasis on protecting private property and other market institutions. The state must therefore be expelled from all other areas of social life (e.g. healthcare, education). In those areas organisations have to be privatised and be run as businesses. Hence another constant theme: the reduction or elimination of taxation. Businessman and blogger Hennadiy Balashov even founded a political party called '5.10', the main stated objective of which was to introduce 5% sales tax and 10% income tax. All other taxes and charges should be abolished to limit the government involvement in the economy:

> By removing the state from the economy, we are destroying a whole army of layabouts; out of 450 thousand civil servants, only 50 thousand will remain. Ukraine will ignite like a supernova for the entire humanity. The lustration of the system of plunderers is the second phase of the revolution.

> A tax initiative of 5/10 (5% sales and 10% income tax) is a clear objective, which only plunderers don't understand. (Balashov, 2014)

Such a view of the problems afflicting Ukrainian state institutions and the economy is rendered attractive by the pervasive corruption and ineffectiveness that everyone agrees exists. Thus the straightforward answer calling to simply eliminate entire organisations and institutions appears reasonable to many. Only the bluntest instruments appear to be effective against the entrenched networks of corruption. The sledgehammer of total deregulation can be realistically presented as the tool to increase justice since it could destroy those networks. In the circumstance of time pressure, lack of resources and support of society, the only way left to push things into the right direction is to cut the Gordian Knot. The immediate consequences might be hard for the people, but this is justified by the future benefits.

Intellectuals advocating for such approach imagine it as a removal of artificial obstacles that would allow the natural human instincts aimed at utility and profit to flow freely. The resulting individual decisions would then get automatically and spontaneously coordinated by economic rationality and result in the greater prosperity for all.

Temporality

In liberism, there is little space for the past and long-term continuities. Instead, there is an intense insistence on speed when it comes to reform. References to more extended history paint an image consistent with liberal history in general (see section on national liberalism). It seeks to 'normalise' Ukraine in the broader context of European history: 'Ukraine is a European political nation. It is old and new at once. Ukraine is just as ancient as any other European country. The Greek colonists wrote the older pages of its history, the same as in France. (Lozhkin & Fedorin 2016, p. 11).

The typical starting point to explain the issues of today are the 1990s. This is seen as the period of lost chances and the source of today's perverse reality:

> Postponing painful reforms in the 1990s led to significant social and political losses. If the Ukrainian governments implemented a more decisive economic policy, the decrease in the quality of life wouldn't be as pronounced, many human dramas and tragedies could be avoided. The experience of the 1990s should be seen as purely negative. One of the side-effects of Ukrainian gradualism was the domination of oligarchs in the economy, while in politics, it was of populists and clan parties. (Ibid p. 158)

In the liberist thinking, Ukraine and the other former Soviet countries are stuck in-between the past and modernity and must make a decisive step towards the latter: 'I think, the main reason for the incomplete transformation

of the Soviet state and society is that Ukraine and Russia are still stuck in the 'post-soviet'. Our socio-political systems represent a chimaera-like mixture of modernity and the archaic. (Ibid p. 107). What epitomises modernity is free market economy and minimal state. The Maidan appears as the turning point that opened a window of opportunity for quick action to create such modernity in Ukraine. The conditions in the political culture are already met: 'In my opinion, The Revolution of Dignity between 2013-2014 became the final accord of establishing the modern Ukrainian nation' (ibid p.12).

When it comes to the pace of reform, speed should come before quality: 'one shouldn't implement things calmly, slowly, but one has to do what is possible today, as we may not have tomorrow' (Bendukidze in Fedorin 2015 p. 400). Specifying in a different place of the text: 'There were two waves of reform in Georgia, "quick and dirty" and then "slow and clean", improvements of sorts. One might think: Wow, how well they planned everything. Retrospectively, one could distort the story and say that we planned everything from the beginning. But that would be a lie' (ibid. p. 393). Hence, Liberist reformers act in an ultra-short temporality created by exceptional circumstances. Deep reforms are only possible in the situation of intense urgency: 'Leczek Balcerowicz wrote about the fact that reforms have to use a short period when extraordinary politics is possible' (Lozhkin & Fedorin, 2016, p.102).

Looking ahead, one historical-temporal line imagined by liberist thinkers was that of the 'fourth republic'. This idea establishes a succession of efforts starting from the 1st republic (UNR of 1917-1919), through to second republic (Soviet Ukraine), third republic (Ukraine 1991-2014). The new attempt to create a modern Ukraine after the Maidan – 'the fourth republic' is the new beginning, a new and unique chance for modernisation. Moving on from the corrupt third republic to the fourth republic means a break with the past:

> The third republic's weakness was, among other things, stipulated by the slow and inconsistent reform of the 90s. Instead of modern market capitalism, our predecessors built an unstable, unjust and ineffective oligarchic model. We shouldn't repeat their mistakes. (ibid, p.13)

Advocating radical, rapid transformation, liberist intellectuals recognised the signs that such transformation is not materialising in post-Maidan Ukraine early on. Already by the end of 2014, some voiced their disappointment: 'As 2014 was nearing its end, Ukrainian reforms were becoming more and more abstract' (Fedorin, 2015, p.385). After his brief post-Maidan tenure, the former minister of economy Pavlo Sheremeta said, 'No one of us wanted to believe that the transition will take 40 years, as Moses lead the Jews. But we'll have to believe'. (ibid, p.409). The outgoing head of presidential administration, Boris Lozhkin, called for a last-dash acceleration of efforts in

2016: 'Political forces, which got into power after the victory of Maidan have the last window of opportunity left: and that is the winter-spring of 2016. Without acceleration of reforms, Ukraine will be stuck in the zone of risk' (Lozhkin & Fedorin, 2016, p. 159)

Sequencing

The sequence in the liberist narration is organised by the logic given by the economic view of society. For reform, this means the primacy of tax, spending cuts, deregulation, which appear first in the sequence of steps to be undertaken on the way to the free economy. As the investment banker, Tomas Fiala, declared: 'We did not have any disagreements on the central issue here. Of course, it is tax reform, without which Ukrainian economy will not see either investment or growth.' (Fedorin, 2015, p.5).

The cornerstone of Kakha Bendukidze's plan for Ukrainian reform was a 'radical reduction of budget expenses, reduction of tax burden together with tax amnesty, and maximal deregulation' (Fedorin, 2015 p. 9). The assumption here is that the path from unsatisfactory today to better tomorrow lies via freeing up the economy from the grip of irrational state actors. The political dimension of this logic is presented as building a society of equal opportunities and inclusive institutions. According to this view, the over-regulation and taxation are signs of a system working for particular interests instead of the common good. Reforming such a system then means pushing out these particular interests and making the economy an equal playing field where everyone has the same rights and opportunities:

> We have to build a society of equal opportunities, in which the political elite is accountable to the citizens, while groups of interests cannot obstruct social and economic progress. Using the terminology of the authors of the well-known book *Why Nations Fail by* Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, we have to replace extractive political and economic institutions, which serve a minority, with inclusive ones, or ones open to everyone. […] People demand justice, and the people in power have to provide it. The minimum task is to punish those who continue their corrupt activities even in these dark times. Simultaneously, one has to remove the foundations of corruption, reducing the presence of the state in the economy and social life. In parallel to this, one has to strengthen the state where one can speak of its basic functions - first of all in the law and order system. (Lozhkin & Fedorin 2016, pp. 107 - 108)

Hence, the stated objectives contain an emancipatory thrust towards 'equal opportunity', 'inclusive institutions' and 'justice'. The sequence of steps to achieve these objectives includes wide-scale deregulation, emphasis on the

judiciary tasked with protecting market institutions and the creation of an open capitalist economy.

Subjectivity

The subject at work in the liberist narrative is that of an individual exhibiting characteristics of *homo economicus*. The rational maximiser of utility, the individual profit-seeker, whose freedom depends on the size of the sphere of exchange where he can act unencumbered by external restrictions and interact with other individuals based on the principles of mutually beneficial exchange. Homo economicus sees society as a collection of individual interests. Whether it is driven by virtue or vice, the pursuit of personal objectives is valid as long as it finds the buyer for the result. Intersections between wishes of individuals under conditions of freedom establish a balance that can be measured financially: the wish of a seller intersects with a buyer's wish, and both converge towards an equilibrium by agreeing on the price. Hence social interaction is about establishing the right prices. The motivational force behind negotiating a favourable price is looking for individual advantage. How skilfully one handles this negotiation determines how successful one is in life. The strongest aim high and a lack of ambition relegates one to an object. The archetypal story of success is about riding the waves of adversity to come out on top and beat the competition in the noble pursuit of maximising one's potential. The sum of the potentials of competitive individuals is the potential of society. Liberist intellectuals are inclined to understand not only the economy, but all social spheres through this lens. In the liberist reality, instrumental rationality reigns. Hence, true motivation to work is only one of financial gain:

> Can I become a billionaire by running a pension fund? […] 'No' means that there is an adverse selection. You push talented people out of pension fund management because they can't earn much money there. And so, the pension industry is full of people who cannot earn much and ultimately entrust money to those who can. Like hedge-fund managers, for example. (Bendukidze in Fedorin, 2015, pp. 20-21)

On the other end of the spectrum are people whose motivation is to do less and thus accept less money in exchange for their general ineffectiveness:

> Civil service works in the following way: you have to find people who are ready in exchange for calm life to get a smaller salary and work less. […] Why would you expect, the civil service effectiveness would be higher—I don't understand. (ibid, p. 413)

The example of clarity of objectives and transparency of motivation is economic activity: 'Business has simple criteria for success. This is the sphere of human life that is easily quantifiable. Either there is money, or there

is none' (Ibid). By that token, all spheres to be reformed according to principles of rationality must function as a business: 'Education is one of the most archaic types of business. […] Business-model of universities in its present form has existed about 800 years already. It involves too much integration, which is not effective anymore' (ibid pp.34-35). Therefore, most social spheres should be run as a business.

In the liberist narrative, the economy is an acting subject in itself. It is understood as a natural force that individuals have to learn how to navigate. Those who do not understand these forces will be wiped out. Bendukidze tells a story of the 1984 New Zealand election when the labour party came to power. After realising that 'socialist politics will not solve country's problems' (ibid, p. 60), their finance minister converted to libertarianism. He 'took a sharp turn right' (ibid) and implemented a strictly liberist reform program. Bendukidze presents this as an example of a naïve politician recognising the inevitable forces of economic incentives at work and complying with them for the benefit of society.

Turning to the political dimension of liberist reforms during his tenure in the Georgian government, Bendukidze asserted that 'starting the reforms, we didn't aim to reach a certain pace of economic growth. Our first priority was to unite the nation' (ibid p.64). Referring to the same problematic in Ukraine, he continued:

> How will Ukraine become a unified country? By singing together? The only recipe to unite a nation is: trade and trade. Glory to trade! When the residents of Lviv will be free to bring their cheese to sell in Odessa, while residents of Odessa sell herring to Kyiv, when Ukrainians will understand that their country doesn't have internal borders [...] I don't know another technology to build unity, especially outside the economy. (ibid, p. 65)

Thus, the economic sphere is the space in which unity of the country ought to be created. Collective subject 'nation' is created via economic policy aimed at individual economic freedom. The way there lies through riding the waves of adversity according to Bendukidze: 'You implement reforms where there is crisis. Same as with companies: no one reforms a successful company because everything is fine […]' (ibid, p. 388). If so, the agents of reforms must communicate this adversity by scaring people to comply with demands of reforms: 'To implement reforms - one has to scare [people] that otherwise, things will get worse. This is very important. I was warning people that things will get worse, we'll fall behind.' (Ibid p.389). The practical advice of Bendukidze is to unite people around the reformist drive by appealing to envies, complexes, national animosities: 'Do you know what offends the national pride of Hungarians most? That the Slovaks are richer than them. They get really annoyed if you tell them that. […] These are backward

peasants from our former periphery, the poorest one, where there was nothing. […] One has to scare.' (ibid, pp. 389-390).

Based on this logic, the unfolding war in the east of Ukraine has an element of neighbourly envy of its own: 'One of the reasons behind what is happening in the east, in addition to the Russian aggression, is the fact that Donetsk used to be richer than Rostov in Soviet times' (ibid, p. 391).

For liberist intellectuals, reforming is about speed and conviction strong enough to go against sentiments of the masses and interests of sections of the elite who are unsupportive of reforms. The reformer is like a hammer that breaks through the walls of ignorance: 'You have to implement the reforms fast. Speed is the key element because afterwards the elite consolidates against the reforms' (ibid).

Speaking of the true agents of reforms, the first post-Maidan minister of economy, Pavlo Sheremeta, decried: '[…] the deficit of the elite. Of an elite, which could take on a leadership role' (ibid p.407-8). The need for such leadership comes from the fact that 'you can create a societal mood' (ibid), more favourable towards reforms. Hence liberist political communication is about creating a certain acceptance for the pre-defined objective 'top-down'. This stance is different from the view of political communication as creating a general will 'bottom-up'.

Sheremeta delivers a first-hand witness report about the elite that was in charge of reforming in 2014-2015: 'bureaucratic instincts won' (ibid p. 414). His tone was that of disillusionment: '[…] my main disappointment was with the fact that leadership of the government had a too strong bureaucratic instinct and a too weak liberal one. Their main paradigm is to "manage stuff"' (ibid, p. 415). The glimmer of hope, according to Sheremeta was President Poroshenko: 'Among positive tendencies, I would count that the president has a reformist instinct. He is a person from the business world, a business that created value, and not in oil and gas industry' (ibid). Thus, involvement in business is the measure of progressiveness and positivity for liberist reformers. Those who know how to run a business have the right instincts, while those who dislike business are the problem: 'I think the main problem of Ukraine is a hostile attitude towards business on the part of the state, the elite and people in general' (ibid, p.424). From a liberist standpoint, they are the morally upright minority that stands against the paternalist majority: 'Liberals are 5%, while 60% believe in the good Tsar who spends and protects' (ibid, p. 419).

Answering the question of why Ukraine is not reforming, Sheremeta states: 'First of all – society did not apply enough pressure' (ibid, pp. 407-8). Things are too easy, and Ukrainians have it too good: 'a lot of black earth, cheap fruit, beautiful girls. They even had some money. There has to be the right package of emotions: on the one hand, there is envy and desire. On the other,

there is what they call in English. “an existential threat”’ (ibid). Therefore, favourable reforming conditions involve severe threats to people’s well-being and a certain state of social psyche where primal drives take over, mobilise the energy of fear, and push society towards a different state of being.

Regarding true motivational force behind reforms, Bendukidze formulates a poignant question: ‘Does such a thing as political will exist, or are reforms born out of necessity’ (ibid, p. 409)? Vladimir Fedorin offers an answer: ‘“War is father of all things”, said Heraclitus’ (ibid). Bendukindze concurs: ‘So as long thunder does not strike, nothing happens. I think one of the problems of Ukraine today is that she did not have to fight for her independence’ (ibid, p. 409). The independence of 1991 occurred without bloodshed, which in the interpretation of Bendukidze, is the reason for sluggish transformation and economic struggles. He further expands on that point: ‘Ukraine received independence during the collapse of USSR very painlessly. What is happening now should have happened 20 years ago’ (ibid). Bendukidze argues that the most important driver of political behaviour is the necessity that operates anonymously. Circumstances determine the behaviour of individual actors who are not free per se but merely surrender to their circumstances. Individuals may have their own motives, but even those point to drives and emotions:

> There is such a thing as the role of a personality in reforms. Some people turn to changes for personal reasons, to flatter their ego, to take revenge on the enemy, or realise an idea. But generally, reforms require inevitability. (ibid)

In other words: the worse the circumstances are, the better the chance is for serious reform.

Within the liberist narrative, the Maidan of 2013-14 represents a significant milestone. According Boris Lozhkin, media magnate and head of the presidential administration in 2014-2016, the Maidan gave the conclusive answer to the question of nation-building: ‘The Revolution of Dignity has shown that the task of creating a political nation in Ukraine has been accomplished’ (Lozhkin & Fedorin, 2016, p. 12). From a liberist standpoint, Ukraine is already ‘a European political nation’ (ibid, p. 11), but it has to be underpinned by the right institutions. The idea behind these new institutions is that:

> New rules must ensure the freedom of self-actualisation of the active minority: entrepreneurs, managers, civil activists, and people of creative professions. Create conditions under which no one can take away the fruit of your labour […] If the active minority has their hands untied, we will have new jobs and increase the welfare of all other members of society. In the new reality, an individual has more rights than the state. In this, there is

> a profound departure from the Soviet past. European thinking starts with the individual. (ibid, p. 76)

Hence, the specific social class is the agent of change. Freeing it up from the historical legacy of an out-sized state will benefit everyone.

When it comes to the question of Ukrainian identity, Lozhkin and Fedorin have the following to say: 'The second president of Ukraine said once: "We created Ukraine, what is left is to create Ukrainians". Revolution of Dignity completed this task' (ibid, p.77). In their view, the revolution of 2014 gave a conclusive answer to questions about identity, which means society can move on and build the new system accordingly. Tracing back his personal national awakening, Lozhkin maintained:

> […] I can say based on my own experience: Ukrainian identity is not something given once and for all. It is a process, which happened over the last two decades, first unnoticed and then suddenly accelerated. The favourable result of the Maidan is that it accelerated the crystallisation of the moral majority. (ibid, p. 77)

Lozhkin sees a connection between commitment to Ukrainian identity and the 'crystallisation of the moral majority' (ibid). The outcome of the Maidan in his view is that this majority has emerged.

Motifs

The recurring motifs in liberist texts are:

- A Darwinian emphasis on *survival* and *competition*, which, on the one hand, is the natural state of the world that should not be tampered with. On the other hand, it is a marker of the moral worth of someone who lives by this principle—and a deviation indicates weakness, ignorance or ill intent.
- A firm commitment to *economic rationality* that confers an air of inevitability. Rhetorically this manifests itself in clear-cut and somewhat coarse judgements. The liberist intellectuals like 'calling a spade a spade' (Fedorin 2015, p. 9). The arguments are presented as having no alternatives.
- *Insistence on one's objectivity*. There is a distinction between politics/ideology and supposedly pure reforms that are above politics. Bendukidze appears to think from the point of view of 'pure effectiveness'. Politics is nothing but a superficial struggle of slogans by politicians. At the deeper level of society's and individuals' true needs and desires, everything is stable and calm. There is an assumption of permanence and uniformity in his thought. Actual needs and wants are

given and must be understood as they are and let to function as they already do. Opponents either obstruct this or try to subject it to human influence via political contestation (pp.92-93). That explains the emphasis on technocracy in the government.

- *Ambition.* In the immediate post-Maidan era, the more extravagant liberist voices anticipated a free-market paradise emerge imminently:

> Do you feel how Kiev becomes more powerful than Moscow? Kiev has already become a capital of a European state, Kiev is wholly concentrated on the 32 trillion market of Europe and the USA. Kiev is opening borders for global finance and is transforming into a geopolitical centre between Europe and Asia. Kiev is dictating political fashion; in Kiev the anti-bureaucratic revolution of the entire world begins. People do not want to tolerate plunderers anymore and new political forces are being born. I am happy to be at the forefront of the new political modernity. […] Earn your money! (Balashov, 2014a)

Concepts

Following concepts characterize the liberist narrative.

1. *Economy*. The intellectuals from the liberist school access all social and political reality through specific economic logic. The economic sphere, in their understanding, has to be the space of freedom, where individuals of equal legal status compete to achieve the highest possible profit. The individual wealth of these individuals is the wealth of society. Shared responsibility lies in maintaining law and order in the economy to enable competition and non-interference of organised interest of the non-economic kind. The profit motive is supposed to drive the organisation of most spheres via private initiative. For example, education, healthcare must be deregulated and privatised as much as possible. Common ownership risks diluting responsibility, reducing efficiency and most importantly, bringing impure motives of power (versus honest money-making), i.e. corruption. The state must be minimised to the essential functions needed to maintain institutional conditions for such an order. This includes border security, judicial processes, police monitoring, and minimal tax collection required to sustain these functions.

   The liberist intellectuals see economics as hard science. Hence Bendukidze's comment on its theoretical deficiency:

> The problem with economics as a science is in the absence of axioms […] Imagine if those working in an architect's office were people who accepted Euclid's theory of geometry? […] What would become of such a bureau? It is as if you simultaneously teach caloric theory and

> chemistry. Organise exams, experiment with the theory of phlogiston. This is impossible […]. Keynesianism is a theory of phlogiston. The absence of axioms leads to the situation when charlatans and obscurantists call themselves economists. (Bendukidze in Fedorin, 2015 p. 37)

Bendukidze demands that the rigour of natural science be applied to economics. Relative to this demand, he finds academic economists to be inadequate. Economics professors from Sorbonne, Yale and Harvard in his view are 'Trotskyists' (ibid, p.35).

Rigorous free-market logic leads Bendukidze to question the orthodoxy of the existing financial system based on one central bank and one currency as insufficiently free. In his view, establishing the National Reserve system in the US was a hostile takeover by the government. He prefers the free banking era when there were many currencies and no central banks (ibid, pp. 16-19). Consequently, in his view, the 2008 global financial crisis was the result of flawed government policy (Ibid). As a matter of principle, he characterises every state action as 'leftist'. Bailing out investment banks and General Motors after the financial crisis meant a huge shift to the left. According to Bendukidze, this means people are not punished for making errors. Hence collective responsibility is no responsibility at all (ibid pp. 22-23).

When it comes to reforming the Ukrainian economy, the liberist thinking is global in scope, so too is their understanding of the economy. Their goal is to increase private investment to jump-start the economy. The way to do it is: (1) reduce state expenditure; (2) introduce private property rules for land market; and (3) change currency policy by tying it to the Euro or the USD or letting it float freely to escape monetary policies that do not conform to strictly liberist policy. Essentially, the proposal is to outsource monetary regulation to a presumably more competent authority, driven by the right motivations instead of whims of local politics. (4) What follows is tax reform aimed at reducing the burden while expanding the number of people paying, shrinking the shadow economy, including tax amnesty whereby those who did not pay in the past are either excused or pay a minor penalty; and (5) pension reform: liquidate pension funds by making pensions part of the annual budget, which avoids deficits, reduces bureaucracy, unifies pensions, and eliminates privileges (ibid, pp. 221-235). These actions are part of putting out the fire. Next, after the fire is dealt with, comes judicial reform. This includes the creative idea of importing a foreign court practice, such as Singapore outsourcing its supreme court to the UK or German judges working in Bosnia. Furthermore, create free cities where reform goes deeper and faster if it does not work nationally. Next, create regions that can radically reform the judicial system (p. 235).

Bendukidze's thinking is radical for making the kind of system consistent with liberist worldview. For this purpose, Ukraine is an exciting space to experiment. The leading example is his arguments favouring free banking, which eliminates the central bank and only maintains some financial cushion and minimal central financial authority. Bendukidze claims that a central bank is a luxury for developing countries that they cannot afford (ibid, pp. 235-241).

2. What provides the value foundation under the liberist narrative is a particular understanding of *freedom*:

> Radical reform in Ukraine is unavoidable […] there is nothing more productive than freedom. Freedom is needed, like air, and not only for separate persons, but also whole countries. Freedom triggers progress, violence leads to a dead-end. (Fedorin, 2015, pp. 9-10)

To achieve this freedom, intellectuals and policymakers of the liberist kind rely on assumptions about human 'natural' inclinations to seek profit. This implies a relatively reduced concept of freedom: being an entrepreneur. Surely, this is something worth accommodating in a truly free society. This, however, opens such understanding of freedom to critique based on (1) the possibilities of (and against) other freedoms that are not profit-seeking in nature; (2) the credulity of the egalitarian and progressive claims of liberism; (3) the relationship between imagined free market society and its pre-conditions. With the last point, I mean that the argument might explore how market society undermines itself by creating a kind of institutional structure with minimal common elements. More specifically: privatising education and healthcare could be seen as the destruction of the national foundation needed for economic freedom itself.

3. In contrast to scientific piety towards the economy in libersim, *politics* appears as a primitive business: 'Politics is a herd thing. Left and right live in herds' (Fedorin, 2015, p. 91). When it comes to politics, adherents to liberism like to think about pure technocratic effectiveness, where actions and policies inevitably arise out of necessity. The necessity is the objective, and the role of a political actor is to recognise it and adhere to the logic of inevitability ultimately grounded into human nature as a profit-seeker. Hence liberist intellectuals like to make a clear distinction between left and right based on the normativity of *homo economicus*. Within this division, they proudly identify as 'right' based on the understanding that right-wing means individual responsibility, effort, focus on personal achievement and the noble pursuit of excellence. 'Left' is the opposite: it is a space for populism, laziness, and captivity:

> Left and right is first of all rhetorical. Especially left. Why? Because rhetoric is populism, while right-wing populism is less effective,

> especially in Europe[65]. In the US, maybe, right-wing populism is somehow working. […] Basically, mainstream populism is left-wing. (Fedorin, 2015, p. 92)

Fedorin expands: 'Left is: "Man, here is some money, you can do nothing, you can divide it up, you can rest more, work less, get closer to the original state of humans before the committal of the original sin"' (ibid). Bendukidze offers his general view of politics:

> I think the political process has nothing to do with deep philosophical investigations. Politics is an appeal to basic feelings, depending on society's level of development or rottenness. The left says: "These idiots want to increase the price of natural gas and you will spend more!". If you can't counterattack with just as juicy a slogan - you lose. […] You don't need to be Foucault to dive into the depths of left thought, construct some pretty logical edifice on why being left-wing is correct. Everything is much easier. Only after the fact there appear scientists, thinkers, who try to build a neat hypothesis. Then out of this theory new monsters are born - such as in the case of Marx. But the monsters arise not from the depth of Marxism, but from its surface. This is like a sea that is stormy on the surface, while down below it stays calm. (ibid, pp.92-93)

The true needs and desires stay the same regardless of political discourse. This truth is obviously better served by what liberists understand as 'right-wing'. Bendukidze: 'It is clear that any help actually spoils. On the one hand, one has to help, but on the other, as Nietzsche taught us, they grow weak because of it and lose motivation […]' (ibid, p. 93). This is a picture of human nature that informs liberist thought and lends it confidence and inevitability. Thus, Bendukidze insists that political discourse is in the end a petty affair. Real life lies deeper and those who understand it will correctly convey this truth regardless of ideological orientations: '[…] all these thoughts are in the heads of politicians. This is where struggle happens, and it is not deep but superficial. This is a storm at the surface, inside - nothing happens. This is essence of politics, unfortunately' (ibid, p. 95).

When it comes to Ukraine, politics has clearly lost its way, and its relationship to the economy has to be recalibrated to the advantage of the latter:

> If political struggle is a concentrated reflection of economic interest, then in the case of the third republic, it would be more correct to say the reverse: the economy is the extension of politics through other

[65] Notable here is that Bendukidze seems to be oblivious to the rise of right-wing populism in Europe.

means. The mission of the current generation of reformers is to separate the economy and politics into opposite corners of the ring, depoliticise the decision-making in the sphere of law, regulation, and business. (Lozhkin & Fedorin, 2016, p. 164)

The actual political process today constantly puts roadblocks of inefficiency in Ukraine. Since optimal politics for liberists is about quick decision making and technocratic implementation, the reality is far from favourable according to Lozhkin: 'A lot of time and energy is wasted in look for consensus, but consensual decisions are far from optimal […] Today's architecture of the power puts into doubt the possibility of fast, effective reformation of the country' (ibid, p. 101). Hence, constitutionally, one has to address this lack of efficiency: 'I think one of the key issues, which has to be solved in the country's reformation - is the duality of power. The parliamentary-presidential model is ineffective' (ibid, p. 102).

4. Connected to the previous discussion of economy and politics is the concept of *ideology*. Seeing his position as the correct kind of *right-wing*, Bendukidze states:

> Actually, there are almost no right-wing parties in Europe - all of them are right-centrist […] electorally it is impossible to realise the right-wing economic policy […] a right-wing budget can exist only if it was like that historically. You can't make one out of the left-wing one. Even the great governments reduced state expenditures by more than 5% of GDP. Thatcher and Jose Maria Aznar didn't create a right-wing budget. It became right-centrist. (Fedorin, 2015, p. 90)

Bendukidze offers a purist version of what right-wing means along liberist lines: individual freedom and responsibility reflected without restriction in the economic system. Anything that deviates from this is then 'left'. Even regarding a famously clear-cut case of fascism, Bendukidze says: 'I actually do not understand why fascists are called right-wing, where did you find right-wing stuff there? […] Hitler was a socialist' (ibid, p. 88). Here, the economistic understanding of politics comes through in full clarity. Fascism can be understood as left-wing by only considering the redistributive economic policies associated with it. The aspect of this redistribution that determined *to whose benefit* property and resources were redistributed is manifestly ignored or not understood. The extreme narrowing of subjectivity according to primordial (i.e. extremely conservative) belonging in fascism cannot be grasped within the frame of liberism.

The relationship between the reform and ideology, according to Bendukidze, is that of a pure technocratic goal and instrument reluctantly applied by the true reformer: 'The logic of struggle forces the competitors

to use arguments of an ideological kind, which you have to answer with political counter-arguments. In the end, non-partisan reform becomes quite partisan' (ibid, p. 88). In other words, the liberist reformer is dragged into ideology by the political trickery of their opponents, while they are trying to stay outside of it on the plain of technocracy: 'At first, you open the custom borders, intending to fight poverty, but then someone starts to talk about protecting national producer and bad globalism. A whole range of connected narratives shifts into the political plane' (ibid, p. 88). The assumed ideal here is pure technocratism derived from the only correct normativity of liberist economic freedom. All political discourse, on the other hand, is ideology.

Interesting in this regard is the story of ideological evolution from the first post-Maidan minister of economy Pavlo Sheremeta:

> My transformation over the last six years was as follows. I left Malaysia as a liberal. Three years in Malaysia showed me the possibility of a different path. Let's call it a path with an active role of the state […] An active state role is not only found in Malaysia, but also in Korea and Taiwan. I thought this could be possible here too. But after half a year in the [Ukrainian] government, I would like to re-join your environment[66] […] because I saw what the difference […] decisions there [in Malaysia] are made by people, whose education level, experience and understanding are much higher than that of people here […] When people in our apparatus decide where to invest the money, into which "Olympic games", they have a completely different outlook: "What is my fee?" they wonder. With all due respect, they cannot be given the right to make such decisions. (Sheremeta in Fedorin, 2015, p. 420)

The person whose curriculum vitae includes heading a prominent educational institution (Kyiv School of Economics) and economics ministry in the immediate aftermath of the Maidan acknowledges the complete incompetence and moral rot of people tasked with steering the country. In such a case, liberism, which appeals to reducing the space and resources available to such people, appears as the correct idea. Liberism is the narrative for dysfunctional society arguing that the right way to deal with this dysfunction is to take human influence out of the equation as far as possible and let the society function according to clear basic instincts unpolluted by group interests, dreamt-up values and ideologies. This attitude also appears appealing by reading the Soviet history as attempt to create something unnatural based on vile errors of Marxist ideology.

[66] Sheremeta refers here to Bedukidze and Fedorin.

The collapse of the Soviet Union is understood as the return to something more natural, which luckily already existed in the West: capitalism.

The moment of realism comes when Bendukidze contends that Libertarianism can exist politically only in a 'halved' version, as otherwise, it destroys politics (ibid, p. 37). Libertarianism and politics are antagonistic. Libertarianism, in this liberist understanding, is against politics. It is about the economy deciding the design of the common world: '[…] attempts of the government to do something good is extremely hazardous' (ibid).

5. Other concepts worth mentioning are a group of connected 'diseases': *corruption, oligarchy,* and *state.* Bendukidze connects corruption and state as follows: 'Corruption is where there is a lot of regulation. Lao-Tzu said: "more laws, more criminals"' (Fedorin, 2015, p. 62). Lozhkin spoke in a similar vein:

   > The radical reduction of the state sector in the economy is one of the fronts of fighting the oligarchy, which is nurtured, in part, through symbiosis with state "managers" and monopolistic exploitation of state property. Private business has to be separated from the state to the max. (Lozhkin & Fedorin, 2016, p. 135)

6. Corresponding to the triplet of diseases, there is a triplet of treatments: *market, reform* and *privatisation*. Lozhkin describes his approach while in government as follows: 'My assumption was that building some kind of anti-oligarchic strategy is pointless. One just has to implement market reforms - even out the rules of the game and eliminate privileges used by the "chosen ones"' (ibid, p. 142). The market here appears as the heaviest hammer to break the oligarchic system favouring a more inclusive arrangement: 'Where the market is at work, oligarchs can simply not appear' (ibid, p. 153). This portrays market-based systems as those where oligarchies are impossible. Privatisation is the most potent antidote to corruption: 'The issue of privatisation is not only one of money. The coming of private investment will end the corruption schemes, which covers our state sector like a spiderweb' (ibid, p. 84).

A break in normality

The element of surprise in the liberist narrative is the assertion that the seemingly impossible is possible. The story of liberist intellectuals emphasise the force of true motives of human behaviour that operate at the level of instincts. Human nature pushes individuals to seek advantages and compete. For those who understand it, adversity should compel one to look for new opportunities, the opportunity should push one to act. The element of surprise

incorporated into liberist story-telling is that events, actions and words may appear as one thing, but in fact they should be interpreted in light of human instinct to seek utility and profit. If correctly reflected in the political and economic system, these natural tendencies will create prosperity and freedom. Hence, adversity, at first sight, is unpleasant, but it should be a powerful motivator: '[…] the negativity that engulfed Ukraine should stimulate' (Bendukidze in Fedorin, 2015, p. 393).

Knowing how people tick allows making seemingly counter-intuitive judgements:

> A good friend of mine who ran McDonald's in Russia […] had a principle: do not hire people with experience in the sphere of Soviet catering. He didn't hire anyone, not a soul. If a person said yes, I have experience, I worked as an accountant or a cook—that's it, goodbye. (Bendukidze in Fedorin, 2015, pp. 412-413)

In other words, experience can be a bad thing in the context of a profound societal transformation. To achieve results, one has to start from a clean slate and separate the past from today in a radical way. Transferring such logic to the topic of reforming: 'I see you have too much of such continuity, attempts to build a system out of these people' (ibid). Hence continuity, experience, compromise with the past have no place in a vision of a better future.

Removing the obscuring veils of false ideology and committing to true motivational forces makes way for the seemingly impossible:

> Karl Popper compared the process of reforms with Baron Münchausen pulling himself out of the swamp by his own hair. It appears impossible, but I'm afraid there is no other way. To enter the struggle, drive several reforms simultaneously - otherwise we cannot leave the swamp. (Lozhkin & Fedorin, 2016, p. 110)

Narrative of justification and plot

The liberist narrative of justification can be called *economic freedom above all*. According to this view, economic freedom creates justice in society. Curtailing it equals restricting justice. The normative force of this claim is sourced from the understanding of subjectivity as *homo economicus*. The claim is that human nature is directed towards individual success. This success should be embodied in economic achievements. The correct system is consistent with this view of human nature. Reform should hence be guided by creating the most space for the competition of economic ambitions.

The basic plot can be expressed abstractly based on a model that applies to all justification narratives. It consists of four sequential elements: (1) Positing

the subject that creates the normative conditions; (2) describing the dire consequences of disregarding the subject; (3) offering a way out; and (4) describing the end result achieved by correctly treating the subject.

In the case of liberism, the four elements possess the following content:

1. The subject is the naturally profit-seeking rational individual, i.e. *homo economicus.*
2. The dire consequences of disregarding the normative conditions for the subject's success can be seen in Ukraine all around: laziness, corruption, and oligarchy.
3. The response to this should be uncompromising market reform that would free the natural energies to earn money and create prosperity and freedom.
4. If the right market reforms are undertaken, the future that beacons for Ukraine can be seen in the West today. Given enough reformist boldness, Ukraine can even surpass many countries of the West that too timidly give in to populist leftism and become a true capitalist paradise with low taxes, full freedom of entrepreneurship and a minimal state.

Selectivity

The liberist narrative's selectivity comes from the reductive concept of freedom to follow the profit motive. This simplifies things intellectually as well as politically:

> Knowledge of several principles frees you from knowing a large number of details. "Wait until people can people can create contracts—that's their freedom". If you follow the principle that freedom is better than unfreedom, as Dmytro Anatoliyovych Medvedev[67] said, you can find answers to the question of which reforms to implement or how to make decisions. (Bendukidze in Fedorin, 2015, p. 401)

According to economistic logic, the true problems are located in the economy as everything else is secondary. Therefore, the challenges of today have their roots not in the political sphere, but the economic one: 'While with state-building and democratic institutions the situation was more or less tolerable, the Ukrainian economy at the beginning of the 1990s did not get its Balcerowicz or Gaidar[68]' (Lozhkin & Fedorin, 2016, p. 49). Consequently,

[67] This is an ironic reference to the Russian president 2008-2012.
[68] Yegor Gaidar was a famous Russian reformer of the 1990s.

the solution to current problems lies first of all in fixing the economy by cutting it loose from politics:

> […] [the] disillusionment inside [Ukraine] can be overcome only by radical reform across the board, the most immediate aim of which is achieving macro-economic stability and all-encompassing liberalisation of economic life. Political freedom, earned through the Maidan, must be supported with radical freeing-up from the corrupt and ineffective state […] The engine cannot be state expenditure […] To get on the path of convergence with the developed world, Ukraine has to show its citizens and to the world a radical break with the past. The Ukrainian state has to refrain from executing functions of creating and concentrating on protecting national sovereignty and supporting the fair rules of the game in the economy and social life. (ibid, pp. 171-72)

The economic imperative imposes the logic on all the other spheres of life to the extent that they are absorbed into the economy. While being in the government, Lozhkin spoke of marketising education and healthcare as a significant reformist achievement:

> The budget for 2016 is, perhaps, one of the most important reformatory documents after the victory of the Maidan. Its core idea is reducing state pressure on the economy. […] This plan foresees deep reform simultaneously in three spheres: education, healthcare, and social provisions. The idea that lies at the heart of first 2 reforms is simple: the low quality of the educational and medical services offered by the state sector is explained not only by under-financing, as incorrect incentives, which economic agents do follow in these areas. One has to ensure that *educational and medical businesses*—the same as businesses in other sectors of the economy—concentrate on client interests, not on squeezing money from the state budget. It is about a new social contract. (ibid, pp. 181-182)

The social contract appears to be encoded into the state budget document that cuts education, healthcare, and social support expenses. Admittedly, given often absurd state budget allocation in Ukraine, this can be defended on the grounds of injecting some much-needed rationality. What is important is what kind of rationality is being injected. The description of these spheres as 'businesses' leaves no doubt: economic rationality should guide education and healthcare.

In the liberist narrative, the central justification is the value of freedom. What kind of freedom is clearly based on the following quote of Lozhkin: 'The main principle of the transformations should be the maximisation of freedom. The only path that ensures independence and prosperity is economic and spiritual freedom.' (ibid). In short, it is economic freedom that shall guide the

transformation. Society will consist of businesses. This will amount to a full-blown 'market revolution' (ibid) in all social spheres:

> To pull education (first of all, the tertiary one) and healthcare out of its permanent crisis, we have to leverage market mechanisms in these spheres. The market's revolution in the social sphere will be supported by discrediting the left ideas in Ukraine. (ibid, p. 184)

While much of liberist language overlaps with liberalism, and intellectuals representing this narrative thread tend to see themselves as the true liberals, there is a significant difference between liberalism per se and liberism. With liberalism, I mean commitments to ideals of freedom, which accepts forms of freedom that are not only economic. On the other hand, with liberism, I mean a set of ideas and associated stories that presume that personal freedom is ultimately grounded into individual economic freedom. Hence, every activity, whether in trading, education, medicine, media, science, or art, must have its own profitable financial underpinning. If an individual or an institution cannot ensure their economic survival, they have to reform to be able to, or perish regardless of the associated societal loss. Liberism represents a reductionist view where social, political and cultural issues are seen only through their respective market-economic dimension and are dealt with accordingly.

2016-2019 - Opposition to the status quo and new opportunities

In what follows, I briefly summarise the main characteristics of the liberist narrative in the period between 2016-2019.

Quite early on, radical economic reformers recognised the signs that radical economic reforms were unlikely to happen: 'In autumn of 2014, our nervous anticipation was superseded by a philosophical serenity' (Fedorin, 2015, p. 407). The bureaucratic instincts within government officials and corrupt practices of the elite and society at large have won for the time being while the war channelled attention and energy away from reforming. At the same time, liberist intellectuals continued reiterating their arguments. In their view, hardly anything was appropriately done after the Maidan. In fact, the permanent reformism that never really ends and never really bears fruit undermines the idea of reforming, which should be quick and visible:

> The actual tragedy of Ukraine is that ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union for a quarter of a century, we have been living in a state of constant reforming, half-hearted reforms never ended. A reform that wasn't completed is often worse than reform that never started. This is because in the process of endless reforming, powerful groups of interests appear, who are not interested in ending the reforms. The oligarchs are the clearest example of this. (Fedorin, 2017)

The tendencies that some intellectuals saw were, if anything, negative for truly market-oriented reform:

> During the Ukrainian independence, the support of such market reforms as privatisation or land market reform decreased. This coincided with the popularity of populist parties and the spread of left-populist rhetoric. (Protsenko, 2018)

For liberists, this trend has been mainly economic: crises, shocks, falling incomes, and unemployment. These factors create an environment of fear and hence distrust towards reforms. There are some non-economic factors to be considered: perception of reforms as illegitimate, real or perceived inequality, injustice, trust to politicians and institutions (ibid). While looking for explanation of resistance of society to the kind of large-scale liberalisation of economic liberists, some discover more nuanced reasons. Within the liberist logic, these reasons are still irrational: radical market reform is precisely what is needed to address legitimacy, inequality, and lack of trust. Refusal to see it this way equals ideological confusion.

When it comes to the assessment of the performance of the people in power since Maidan, it is manifestly negative:

> Unfortunately, there is a high likelihood that Poroshenko will get through to the second round and win the election […]. Poroshenko plans to create corruption schemes for himself and his inner circle in three sectors of the economy, calling it the country's economic strategy. The president said economic strategy dictates the necessity to define priorities and emphasises those sectors of the economy, where we can become leaders […] This is not how the modern economy works! The market dictates tendencies of development itself. Financial flows, new products and services, start-ups—all this is not done by the state and state servants. This is the sphere of the business. Create conditions, and the businessman will do everything else. […] Poroshenko does not think like the head of the state […] he thinks like a billionaire who got his capital with help from the state. (Balashov, 2019)

In other words, the president is still more of a post-soviet oligarch than a reformer. Thinking of the state and economy together by definition clashes with the realities of the all-encompassing market and places anyone outside the modernising aspirations. Beyond misunderstanding the modern market economy, Poroshenko is liable for further errors:

> Poroshenko's main opponent is the people. The masses use elections as a chance of revenge to authorities and their thieving for all the struggles and insults. […] Poroshenko is guilty of breaking off contact with the Ukrainian people. He got carried away with reforms demanded by the West at some point. Instead of implementing reforms popular among and necessary for the people, he concentrated on satisfying the IMF. […] The people of

> Ukraine didn't see the end of the war in Donbass and did not get the opportunities to earn money. (Balashov, 2019a)

Notable here is the view of 'people' as impatient entrepreneurs eager to earn their money but restricted by a corrupt state. Also noteworthy is the blunt rejection of the war as an excuse for the absence of reforms. More than an externally-imposed conflict that absorbed all the energy of post-Maidan Ukraine, it is portrayed as a collusion, exploited as much as by Ukrainian elite as it is by the Russian one: 'This time the tricks with Putin will not work. People don't believe in scary stories anymore, made up by Poroshenko's team, where everyone is the Kremlin's agent and full-scale military aggression is imminent' (ibid).

The above is a concentrated version of the liberist rhetoric by a business-person, turned libertarian party leader and presidential election contender Gennadiy Balashov. Admittedly, such amplified rhetoric is part of the election game. Nonetheless, it is consistent with assessments of government performance from 2014-2019 by most liberist intellectuals. Their expectation of quick and uncompromising market reform was simply not met. Hence in the presidential election of 2019, they opposed the incumbent forces and openly or tentatively supported their challenger. For example, two days before the second round of the presidential election Vladimir Fedorin, on his Facebook page, wrote '[…] on the 21st of April in Odessa, I will vote for Volodymyr Zelenskiy. I chose 21st century over 19th. A platform over hierarchy. Freedom over fear. P.S. I am hiring an employee, not choosing a boss.' (Fedorin, 2019). Also interesting in this regard is the initial closeness of people who considered themselves 'libertarian' to the new president. For example, the former banker and finance minister, Olexandr Danyulyuk (Romaniuk, 2019; LB.ua, 2016). In addition, Zelenskiy's party in the parliament, which later won the absolute majority, described their official ideological position as 'libertarian' (Sereda, 2019).

On the whole, liberist intellectuals continued insisting on pervasive marketisation and privatisation as the path to freedom. The more that this kind of reforming did not materialise, the more radical were policy proposals from some corners. NGO called 'The Citizen's Movement for Free Economy' published a document titled 'Program of reform "Free Economy"'(Chernyshev & Monin, 2019). Among other things, it called for a 'permit to carry firearms to all citizens of Ukraine'; 'Transfer to private education of the tertiary, professional-technical and specialised categories. All state educational institutions (apart from secondary schools and pre-school establishments) are to be privatised'; 'Complete transfer to private insurance medicine'; 'State science institutions are to be privatised or liquidated' etc.

When it came to the identity issues such as that of the Ukrainian language, which sat at the core of national-conservative reforming, liberist intellectuals stuck with free choice. Thus, they mainly avoided heated debates about promotion of national memory, culture and language and concentrated on the questions of economy. At the sharp end of the discourse as exemplified below by Genadiy Balashov, himself an unrepentant Russian-speaker there was an outright irritation with attempts to dictate linguistic practices:

> A new generation of Ukrainian citizens who were born in an independent country with its own borders saw two revolutions, the annexation of Crimea, and armed conflict in Donbass, and form their own language. More precisely, two languages, because most of the population is fluent in Ukrainian and Russian. […] Ukraine has its own Russian language. And we should not reject the language we made our own. The linguistic wealth of Ukraine is our competitive advantage. […] The new generation is choosing itself which language to speak. And today it is not Russian or Ukrainian. It is English. […] Our society needs to be supplied with money. Let Europeans and Americans work on our territory. When Ukraine becomes prosperous to the point when our citizenship will become the object of envy, our languages will be learned and cultivated not only by the inhabitants of Ukraine but also by those of other countries. For this, we need a system of economic freedom. (Balashov, 2019b)

Hence the question of language is instrumental in light of the economy's demands. State intrusion into this area is akin to an intrusion into the free market.

Summary

The single focus on economic freedom characterises the liberist narrative. This fixation goes beyond functional specialisation aimed at the best possible organisation of the economic sphere. Instead, it tends to see other spheres through an economic lens. Liberist optics make other social spheres appear part of the economy, while the economy itself becomes co-extensive with society. While liberalising the economy in the wake of Soviet experiments is indeed needed, as long individual freedom is the objective, the elevation of economic freedom to a central value risks ultimately restricting that very individual freedom. A distinction should be made between the organisation of the economy, where the economy is understood within the boundaries of material reproduction and hence is but one functional sphere in society alongside others (politics, government, healthcare, education, art etc.). Granted, these various spheres overlap and rely on each other reciprocally, far from Niklas Luhmann's idea of functional 'autopoiesis', which means there is an economic dimension to political, social, cultural, and family life. Nonetheless, reducing behaviour in all of the spheres to the economic profit

motive does not allow us to see other sources of normativity even in the economic sphere itself. The insistence on the normative authority of the market principles in shaping all common norms, supposedly justified by consistency with human nature understood in Darwinian terms, ultimately narrows down the individual freedom to the freedom offered by market competition. Other freedoms and needs that rely on factors that markets cannot provide for—or even undermine and destroy—fall outside the liberist frame of understanding. Science, education, and medicine, if financially unprofitable, cannot exist on their own terms.

Historically, given the non-existent economic freedom in the Soviet Union, the opportunity to earn money means expanding individual freedoms. The post-Soviet domination of clan interests in the Ukrainian economy and politics also means that liberalisation can potentially expand the space of freedoms. Liberist views are understandable from the standpoint of those who crave more business opportunities and distrusts the state authorities, which are indeed mostly corrupt and ineffective. Liberism in this regard is the most powerful ideological tool that can cut the Gordian Knot of entrenched corruption. Deployed selectively in the areas where economic rationality of the market kind is genuinely lacking, it can be a productive tool for extending individual freedom. Where its logic is overstretched to areas of vital social infrastructure such as public sphere, healthcare, education, it becomes yet another dangerous ideology. This is not to say that these areas cannot contain market elements. Some education, healthcare, media establishments can function as businesses. Their institutional underpinning can include market mechanisms. The ultimate regulative principle in these spheres should be understanding of their vitality for individual freedom: economic *and non-economic*.

2014-2019 - Liberism and Ukrainian political culture

The version of political culture that the liberist narrative offers for the broader discourse, thereby influencing the development of this very political culture, revolves around issues of economic freedom of the subject understood as instinctive profit seeker (*homo economicus*), which serves as the source of normativity.

1. **Normalisation.**

    - **Period 1** (2014 to mid-2016). Post-Soviet normality ran its course and was challenged by the Maidan. Normality where corruption and unfair privileges, embodied in extensive and intrusive states, determine the economic sphere's functioning and limits freedom of

individuals to engage in productive activity—thereby enriching themselves and the country. These restrictions had to be forcefully removed through radical market reforms modelled on those in Central-Eastern Europe in the early 1990s and resulted in a noticeable increase in the prosperity of countries like Poland, Czechia, Slovakia, the Baltics, and Hungary. Early on, liberist intellectuals noticed signals that reforms of such radicality are unlikely in Ukraine of today. Thus, normality remains deficient and has to be continuously attacked with forceful arguments supporting radical market transformation. People, in general, are pre-disposed to individualism and entrepreneurship. Deviation from this are instances of false ideologies. Ukrainians in particular, are well-positioned to realise the true human calling to be individually economically autonomous.

- **Period 2** (mid-2016 to mid-2019). The new status quo is far away from reformist aspirations. The new power perpetuated the oligarchic influence, bloated state, and populist politics. Among Ukrainians, there is fear of and lack of trust in market reform due to deliberate efforts of the corrupt elite. The change of power in 2019 is society's revenge for failing to change things for the better when it comes to economic freedoms. Renewed attempts from incoming political actors are very much welcome and supported.

2. **Historisation**.

- **Period 1** (2014 to mid-2016). History, in general, is not featured prominently in the liberist narrative. When it is used in the discourse, it is the source of examples for more or less permanent economic logic which itself is rooted into understanding of human nature. When Ukrainian history does feature, it overlaps with the liberal national history and argues that a political nation is formed; hence, there is no need to obsess about identities and values. Political development is on track, but attention to the economy was neglected. The good news is the historically provable Ukrainian propensity to individual freedom, entrepreneurship, private property, and European values. On this basis, political action should be aimed at creating a corresponding institutional structure, meaning removing as many social institutions as possible and creating those needed in a market society.

- **Period 2** (mid-2016 to mid-2019). No particular change could be observed when it came to historisation. The discourse analysis confirmed a radical orientation of the liberist narrative towards the future. Radical market transformation is always possible given sufficiently adverse circumstances that can be correctly interpreted

and applied by the skilled, enlightened leaders who are motivated by personal success.

3. **Pattern formation**

   - **Period 1** (2014 to mid-2016). The imagined pattern in the liberist view of the culture is essentially global. Just as an economy that operates according to the constants of human nature is global, Ukrainian culture is embedded into the worldwide pattern of being shaped by the economy. To be truly part of it, one must implement radical market reform. The Maidan and aspirations to transform the country into a capitalist powerhouse brought Ukraine into the epicentre of the global world.

   - **Period 2** (mid-2016 to mid-2019). The failure to properly reform increased the distance between the global world of opportunity and Ukraine that provincialises itself by failing to open up to the world markets fully.

4. **We-identification**.

   - **Period 1** (2014 to mid-2016). While the abstract subject that structures liberist discourse is a instinctively rational value-maximiser, the actual social embodiment of it in Ukraine is the enlightened entrepreneurial class, i.e. those who do not depend on the state's handouts. In a more heightened version, the Ukrainian people in general are all entrepreneurs eagerly awaiting market reforms to end their economic hardships. Free market capitalism, in this view, is the most egalitarian and just organisation for the society of entrepreneurs.

   - **Period 2** (mid-2016 to mid-2019). The 'we' did not change in the second period under investigation. What did change is the sense of who is not part of the liberist 'we', i.e. those who support the post-Maidan status quo out of ignorance or confusion.

5. **Normativation**.

   - **Period 1** (2014 to mid-2016). Normativity is strictly bound by market-economic rationality. Hence, good reasons favour the expansion of economic freedom via markets. An institutional design of the country is dictated by the objective of economic freedom, which is calculated to lead to prosperity and as a result to the development of all other spheres of life. The subject as an individual value maximiser requires the removal of as many institutional 'obstacles' as possible. As such, it needs a state only in so far as to be

protected from outright criminality. Its dignity and respect require eliminating the post-Soviet bureaucracy's offensive absurdity. It seeks self-realisation that manifests itself in economic productivity that accrues not only to the individual in question but to society more generally. The rational value-maximiser is rendered believable by appealing to human nature's quest for material success. Appealing to other motives of behaviour tends to be met with scepticism—they are mere economy in disguise. Reasons that explain events, actions, and issues ring most true if they appeal to intuitively ineligible personal interests of the material kind as this is most tangible. Stepping outside of this frame is immediately suspect of ideologisation, confusion, and lack of realism. In the first period under investigation, the optics of liberism allowed intellectuals to recognise early that the kind of reforming they wanted is not going to happen.

- **Period 2** (mid-2016 to mid-2019). Normativity in general, hasn't changed. Since the underlying assumptions about the subject are highly abstract and assumed universal and permanent, the reasoning relied on the same reservoir of normative judgements. An increase in the marketisation of society increases individual freedom—the expansion of the state, on the other hand, decreases it. Reasons having to do with freeing-up *homo economicus* are the good ones.

This concludes the exposition of descriptive or 'normalising' (Beschorner and Hübscher, 2016) normativity. What remains is *reflexive normativity* (ibid), meaning the evaluation of the quality of existing normativity in light of criteria taken to measure legitimacy.

- *Reciprocity.* When it comes to identities and connected issues of language, regionally differing historical memories, and specificities of regional cultures, all of this can be accommodated by liberism in so far as they do not clash with its requirements for the market-oriented individual subject. It therefore does not matter whether people speak Ukrainian or Russian. The key point here is that they speak the language of the market. However, if some cultural aspect clashes with market logic, this is the limit for pluralism. Hence, those with a post-Soviet attitude to authority have to be re-educated by the market forces. Those who expect economic redistribution for other reasons also have to recognise the supreme authority of the market. The same goes for the pockets of archaic orders connected to religious authority or local estate, regional privileges and loyalties.

- *Generality.* The liberist narrative elevates market-economic rationality to the general norm that binds not just Ukrainian but global society together. Since market logic is assumed to be general, it centres all the reformist programs not only of the economy but also healthcare, education, culture,

without much space for reasoning with those who might disagree. According to the liberist view, disagreement with market forces can come only from ignorance or corruption. The market reform has to go over the heads of those affected. The broadest possible interests are assumed to be served by the market reform regardless of the reservations or objections.

3.5.1.3 Republicanism

With republicanism, I mean the political narrative built around a composite subject. This subject consists of various social parts that combine into a social whole through political communication and is stabilised through institutionalisation. De-prioritising history as the driver of political behaviour, separating cultural-historical identities from joint issues, republicanism argues for a normative integralism, where the social whole is taken as is, with its entire regional, social, and generational complexity. The list of concerns of republican intellectuals has highlighted the issues that undermine the whole, either by parts drifting away from each other or by attempts to absorb one piece by the other. The constituent parts of the whole are irreducible in their uniqueness. Undermining them individually means undermining the common subjectivity. The social whole is then not subjected to top-down engineering, however well-meaning, through either cultural homogenisation towards particular cultural-historical identity or economic theory. Both would represent an arbitrary act of disrespect and potentially violence. The mode of existence and development of the complex social whole, consisting of various parts, is the political discourse, including institutionalised dialogue and resulting institutional structures manifested first of all in the constitution. Notably, republicanism's concentration on the social whole does not mean normative collectivism. Instead, in line with the etymology of the classical term, *res publica* (lat. public affair) stands for an intentionally created and wilfully maintained space where autonomous subjects address common problems. The absence of the social whole would mean the lack of commonality, order, and therefore, justice and freedom, which are only possible via agreement by the parties involved. Where the commonality loosens, spaces for coercion and violence appear.

2014-2016 – 'Re-launch the Republic.'

Republican thinkers were alert to the centrifugal, fracturing tendencies of post-Euromaidan Ukraine. Demanding requirements of republican politics for democratic legitimacy stood in sharp contrast with the mainstream colonised by the logic of conflict.

The republican narrative, and associated intellectuals, can be further subdivided into three sub-narratives: (1) *social-democratic*, where the statehood is the embodiment of the social whole, and is an important creative force; (2) *left-liberal*, where rights are the normative principle and solidarity of individuals is the driving force that finds its expression in a strong state limited to the areas of common concern; and (3) *right-republican*, that emphasises reducing the state to a minimum and extolls the virtues of a free responsible individual citizen.

Temporality

The timescale of the republican narrative is set by the origins of the current political reality. Little attention is given to long historical continuities, traumas, or grievances. Hence, the timescale tends to be short and emphasise the real possibility of institutional and cultural change at any time, given the proper application of will and effort. Instead of explaining current predicaments by looking far back into the past, their sources tend to be seen primarily in the now and can be dealt with now rationally. To the extent history is present in the narrative, it searches for the most recent shifts in power distribution that created the current power configuration. This is what determines the possibilities for action today. Hence the most common starting point for the republican narrative is 1991. According to Andriy Yermolayev, what is happening now is the 'second redistribution of power' (Shuster Online, 2016, 0:47), itself a manifestation of the 'second transformation' (UBR, 2015). According to this view, events in Ukraine are a conflict between regimes that have to do with catch-up post-Soviet realignment. In 1991, the states formed too quickly and easily under spontaneous circumstances. Now, there is a re-alignment that has to do with new generation of elites gradually taking over leadership roles across the post-Soviet space. These power struggles instrumentalise ethnic and social tensions (ibid). Mykhailo Minakov spoke about the period between 1991-92 as a time of vast expectations for democratic politics and a free economy, which evaporated by the mid-1990s due to neoliberal values. Initial optimism gave way to desperation, fear, and disorientation, which triggered a shift towards oligarchic order (IDEALIST.media, 2016, 1:26-2:00). The subsequent development followed a cyclical path from one revolution to the next. The Orange Revolution (2004) as well as the Revolution of Dignity (2013-2014) brought back the promises of 1991 only to fail and trigger the next cycle (ibid). After the Revolution of Dignity, republican intellectuals recognised the signs that the pattern would continue early on. They had been cautiously optimistic during the Maidan time and saw it as the signifier of new social subjectivity: 'Society is reformatting. The Maidan movement and its activists are not terrorists or one party; they are all different. We likely entered a serious process of transformation, with new attitudes, and new

approaches' (Yermolyaev in, TSN, 2014, 3:22-3:40). But at the end of 2015 Yermolayev spoke of 'the year of counter-Revolution of Dignity' (Pershiy Kozatskiy, 2015) and the 'year of degradation' (Telecompaniya Era, 2015). Similarly, Mykhailo Minakov's verdict by early 2016, was clear: 'Our daring attempt to build the third republic did not bear fruit. We still live by the rules of oligarchic post-Soviet Ukraine: the second republic' (ARU TV, 2016, 14:10-14:27)

To the extent there is a larger time scale within the republican narrative, the concept of modernity sets it. Back in December 2013, when Maidan was still bloodless, Minakov located it within the story of modernity: 'We live at the end of modernity, which permeates us completely, with new risks and opportunities. Maidan is one such opportunity' (Minakov, 2013, Shkola Grazhdanskogo Prosvesheniya, 1:20:15-1:21:15). One of Minakov's definitions of modernity was 'an ability to care, retain dignity, and respect others' (Hromadske, 2015, 22:26). Looking for reasons why such a positive vision of modernity wasn't realised after the revolution of 2014, republican intellectuals tended to conclude that whatever modernity did exist in Ukraine was incomplete. For example, Minakov proposed that differentiation between private and public never quite happened in the post-Soviet space (ARU TV 2016b 2:00-4:50). Could failures to establish democratic political and economic institutions stem from a category error, i.e., some confusion on what is public and what is private?

Sequencing

The sequencing used to describe what is going on in Ukraine by the republican intellectuals is dialectical. It follows the model where flawed attempts to modernise result in 'demodernisation' (Minakov, Shkola Grazhdanskogo Prosvesheniya, 2013, 7:15). The original impulse of this dialectic came from post-Soviet adjustments: 'Capitalist modernisation led to a demodernising reaction in most post-Soviet countries' (ibid, 1:03:50). As a result of conflict and manipulation by the elites, in the post-Maidan period this demodernisation was exacerbated. At the end of 2015, Yermolayev spoke of 'the new medieval period' (Telecompania Era, 2015, 4:30) of which Ukraine becomes a prime example:

> In the current condition of the world, we have all the means and opportunities to save and develop the life of every human. Instead, we solve problems through "Grads" [69] and language characteristic of medieval times—in black and white. This is happening in our country, the Middle

[69] Name of a rocket-launcher weapon. The name directly translates to 'hail'.

East, and Africa. […] Consequently, we should speak of de-evolution'. (ibid, 1:50-2:30)

Yermolayev sees in this a 'profound crisis of humanism' (ibid, 11:29). This regression is most evident for him in the destruction of the welfare state:

> The social welfare state is the product of the last century. At the beginning of the 20th century, states spent 10% of national income on army, security, and governance. At the end of the 20th century, 30-50% went to healthcare, pension, culture, and education. […] Today in Ukraine, we only talk about tanks and the army. When was the last time we talked about theatre, new cultural TV channels, and modern education for our children regardless of social status? The army and military have become the only common topic. I consider this a regressive tendency. (ibid, 5:38 - 7:18)

A second major indicator of regression is the obsession with money and business:

> Do you think all people want to be businessmen? I don't think so. In reality, people want dignified work and self-realisation. […] In this sense, being a mechanic is cool, being an engineer is cool, being a teacher is cool. It is better than being a businessperson […]. What is going on, therefore, is degradation. (ibid, 7:20-7:52)

The revolutionary cycles Ukraine experiences manifest that same dialectical principle: 'The elites were scared for about two years after the revolution and then reverted to bad behaviour' (Minakov in Hromadske, 2015, 6:10-6:25). Hence the sobering verdict by Minakov on the consolidation of power by the president in 2016: 'We went from a revolution of dignity to a cabinet of shame'. (ARU TV, 2016, 0:54-1:00)

When it comes to the forward-looking sequencing of the proper steps aligned with the republican vision, it starts from political reform. Specifically, constitutional reform would trigger a 're-launch of the Ukrainian republic' (Minakov in, ARU TV 2016b 19:22-19:27). Such a re-launch must be premised on the 'image of the common future' (Yermolayev, in Pershiy Kozatskiy, 2015, 18:40-18:55) shared by the constituent parts of the republic, which in turn requires a 'different language about the future' (Yermolayev in Telecompania Era, 2015, 12:00) and a 'new cultural policy of the "Ukrainian World[70]"' (ibid, 19:50).

[70] Counter-move to the 'Russian World' policy of the Russian state.

Subjectivity

The collective subject in the republican narrative is composed of different parts that must be integrated into a social whole through discourse and institutional design. In that regard, what exists is a 'whole, complex country' (Yermolayev in UBR,2015, 36:23). This complexity is irreducible and can only acquire subjectivity through a careful balancing act. The vision of the common future, this new model of the country has to be negotiated in the 'national dialogue', which itself must be institutionalised (Yermolayev in Hromadske, 2014a). The nation itself is the result of such a dialogue. According to Yermolayev, such dialogue would have to consider the obvious complexities of post-Soviet countries such as:

> The nuclei of the new national projects have formed. […] They are led by youth who started to create new political nations. […] But in all countries, the Soviet enclaves remain, which were most successful at the time of the Soviet Union. These are the most vulnerable places in the national projects. (UBR 2015, 33:40-34:37)

However, this does not mean that these enclaves should be subordinated or given up on. For Yermolayev, the same social issues triggered events in South-Eastern Ukraine as did Maidan in Kyiv: 'It was social issues that made Donbass explode' (112 Ukraine, 2015, 1:00). The subsequent events that culminated in an armed conflict was determined by how the social issues that, in reality were the same across the country, were politicised in a divisive way. Therefore, Maidan itself could not be accepted by the majority of Donbass inhabitants as legitimate: '[The] citizens of the South-East are regular, good people, but what happened they perceive as unjust' (Yermolayev in Hromadske, 2014a, 13:40-13:53). A related nuance that requires a careful balancing act and institutional coordination has to do with different social identities:

> We have a mixture of two cultures today in Ukraine: one is "liberal-entrepreneurial", irrespective of whether they own a business or work under the new modern rules, new management that lives in a new way, with a new consciousness. Then there is also the Soviet arrangement, with giant regions and factories where people are used to stability, order, and a high-level of organisation from the top. They also want to change this, but they think about it differently. They should not be ignored or seen as retrograde or misguided. One has to consider that they are dependent on that traditional arrangement. If we do not find a way to include both, politicians will misuse this division. (Yermolayev, in Telecompaniya Era, 2014)

The type of politician needed to guide Ukraine through this challenge is an 'integralist', capable of thinking of the country as a whole (Yermolayev in UBR, 2015, 38:25). Instead, people who came to power are:

> […] "small" Ukrainians who gave up Crimea and Donbass to retain power over a version of Ukraine that they see as governable. […] In this condition, Ukraine, without consolidation, will not be able to create an economy. It means permanent dependency on loans and investors. (ibid, 37:35-38:00)

In fact, the quality of people who govern the country are narrow-minded: 'Those who came to power think that the only thing people think about is money and business—however, this is not true' (Telecompaniya Era. 2015, 7:50-8:00). With them at the helm, 'the fight against corruption takes the form of settling scores between various groups of influence' (Yermolayev in Pershiy Kozatskiy, 2015, 15:50). State politics remains personalistic, weakly institutionalised, and lacks democratic legitimacy. Moreover, among the republican intellectuals, there was a strong suspicion of the complicity of political elites in the war: 'For both the prime minister and the president, the war is favourable for their political businesses' (Minakov in ARU TV, 2016, 6:00-6:18). Republicanism offers critical optics. Viewed through it, the often-lauded Ukrainian political pluralism is highly ambivalent:

> In Ukraine, we have an interesting situation. Through two revolts, we did not [allow to] build a unified authoritarian system. We did not allow one person or one clan to dominate all public space. We still have various groups that carry authoritarian values. Still, because they are disparate, there is a situation of permanent political struggle, political public corruption, which you can talk about because there is free press as opposed to Russia and Belarus. (Minakov in ARU TV, 2016a, 5:03-5:55)

Other sources of past optimism, such as the younger generation, also seem to play an ambivalent role: 'Ukrainian education produces students with a black and white view of the world' (Minakov in Channel 5, 2016, 16:00-16:30). The cultural trend generally seems to point away from rational modernity: 'Simplified, "magic" thought prevails […] New collectivism—meaning faith in the nation—and neo-traditionalism has spread through schools. On the other hand, individualism is retreating' (ibid, 16:15-17:25). Radical forces emerging from such cultural context are worrying. Extreme actors want to create powerful institutions to control private lives, such as one church and language.

In short, in republican thought, there is an active search and construction of social agreement that has to rely on principles of solidarity, rights, and responsibility (with emphasis put differently depending on the version of republicanism). This should be actualised in politics as discourse, communication, and dialogue, where constituent parts of society, however one divides it (regionally, economically, generationally), must have a voice in defining the common future. Instead, by 2015, Ukraine had a 'crisis of the national project, which was attempted to be re-loaded. But as a result, we have a very high level of intolerance, criminality, growth of the shadow

economy and a great migration' (Yermolayev in Pershiy Kozatskiy, 2015a, 3:55-4:07).

Glimpses of optimism can be seen in the fact that 'Ukraine follows the same tendency as Russia and Belarus, but there is an in-built mechanism in the culture that saves us from durable authoritarianism' (Minakov in IDEALIST.media, 2016, 3:29-3:42). Therefore the opportunity for change is always there. Furthermore, 'we did reach a certain minimum of political and media pluralism […] strong civil movements that control the elites' (Minakov in Hromadske, 2015, 5:44-6:05). What must be done is the re-construction of the 'sense that "we" includes all of the country, including the Crimeans, those in Donbass […] atheists, heterosexuals, homosexuals, as well as active and passive citizens […]' (Minakov, IDEALIST.media, 2016, 12.00:13:20). Attempts to create a common identity through heavy-handed conservative methods counter such aspirations: 'We are a secular country […] with different beliefs. We must not install one confession as dominant […] it is a private affair' (Minakov, Hromadske, 2015, 18:00-18:40). Instead, the answer lies in the shift to being Ukrainians based on 'civic self-consciousness and rights' (Yermolayev in Pershiy Kozatskiy, 2015a, 8:40).

The kind of subject that stabilises republican discourse is, on the one hand, as mentioned, composite in the sense of inclusive of multiple identities that must be left intact and without establishing a moral hierarchy through either cultural or regional principles. In this sense, republicanism is normatively pluralist. The communication and cooperation between different constituents presuppose certain minimal commonality, making them a collective subject. This minimal commonality is understood in a universal and humanistic sense. Solidarity, rights, responsibility are human qualities that create mutual respect, which is necessary for the republican project to be possible. These traits have to be shared by everyone involved to qualify for true citizenship.

While Minakov often speaks of solidarity, representatives of right republicanism prefer to speak of responsibility. According to Druzenko: '[The] cornerstone of reform should be the radical reduction of state regulation and interventions of public authorities into the economic, cultural, and private life of free citizens' (Druzenko, 2015). Here, the same concern regarding the separation of public and private transpires as among other republican thinkers, but with a more demanding requirement of 'individual responsibility' and suspicion of the state. Consequently: 'Our New Deal must consist of reducing the role of the state and public authority in general and increasing the role of a person and society in future Ukraine' (ibid). Thus, this type of republicanism tends to contrapose state and society instead of a more social-democratic view where statehood is an institutional enabler of a fair society. Therefore the re-launch of the republic, according to Druzenko, steers toward a more particular subject:

> Reforms have to ensure foundational transformation of the state as well as society from post-Soviet paternalist to a liberal-partnership model. From the cultivation of subordinate-dependant to the nurturing of a free and responsible citizen. From the state as a patron to the state as a partner. (ibid)

Motifs

Republicanism is a demanding democratic position that relies on real bottom-up politics, the free public sphere, the institutionalisation of social dialogue, and the connection of democratic deliberation to real actions. In post-Maidan Ukraine, conditions were far from ideal for such arrangements. Consequently, the tone of republican intellectuals ranged from early optimism in the immediate aftermath of Maidan to later disillusioned, stoic, and almost withdrawn. Minakov gave a sober verdict on the attempts to reform relatively early: 'We didn't use the chance to reform, Ukraine stays unreformed' (IDEALIST.media, 2016, 0:00-0:17). To create the new social whole and re-launch the republic through genuine dialogue is an 'ueber-task, we need stoicism, rationality, and perseverance to do it' (ibid). This emotional environment was at times truly disappointing to those thinking in terms of humanism:

> Psychologically, Ukraine looks like a society of poor children, which didn't know love when they grew up. We turned out to be cruel in everyday life. […] The country that is proud of its Revolution of Dignity, in fact, turned out to be incapable of respecting everyone. (Yermolayev in Telecompaniya Era, 2015, 8:30-9:08)

Another characteristic of republican discourse is the manifest lack of sentimentality and guarded stance towards emotions. The kind of rationality defended by republican thinkers abhors emotionalising actual politics: 'When we build systems, let's stay away from emotions.' (Minakov, in Shkola Grazhdanskogo Prosvesheniya, 2013, 1:02:40). Similar point of view was conveyed by Yermolayev: 'There is too much emotion on the Ukrainian side. We have to play by the rules of the geopolitical game.' (Yermolayev, in Hromadske, 2014a, 7:20-7:40). Mythologising of events represents a departure from rationality that should be avoided at all costs: 'Do not exaggerate the weight of the Maidan, listen to others. Through dialogue, one has to sew the country together (Minakov in IDEALIST.media, 2016, 11:43-11.56).

Concepts

Key concepts of the republican narrative:

1. *Legitimacy.* Uniquely among various narratives, republicanism puts legitimacy at the very centre of the discourse. In the immediate aftermath of Maidan, when the majority of national liberals and national conservatives took the victory of the protestors as a sufficient enough sign of legitimacy for their desired political changes, it was the republican voices who emphasised that social legitimacy is yet to be established: 'We need a proposal for a new political agreement that would deal with the issue of legitimacy, based on inter-regional dialogue' (Yermolayev in Hromadske, 2014a, 15:40-16:26). The objective to establish legitimacy should also inform the new institutional arrangements: 'Administrative decentralisation is vital for legitimacy and national stability' (Yermolayev in Dobroho Ranku, Ukrayino!, 2014)

2. *Justice.* The concept of justice plays a systematic role in the constitution of a state in the republican narrative: 'the foundational idea of any state is justice' (Minakov in IDEALIST.media, 2016, 0:51-0:59).

3. *Self-government.* Since society is understood as a complex patchwork of different groups, the chief principle of governance in public affairs is self-government. In Ukraine, this has, first of all, a regional connotation as the most obvious differences can be observed regionally. To ensure that these parts form a whole that enjoys democratic legitimacy in managing common concerns and maintaining an environment where different identities can develop unimpeded (i.e. actualise the principle of justice), these parts need autonomous space to organise themselves in their preferred way, setting priorities and guiding values as they see fit. Reform of local self-government is therefore vital for republican politics.

   > The main task for the new president and government is to form a national institutional dialogue in several directions: with a (1) constitutional process (new edition of the constitution through experts like the constitutional assembly), referendum, a reboot of the political system (parliament, judicial, local self-government), and new parliament elections; (2) a forum of national unity in the form of a periodical assembly, which would include entire parliament, with representatives of local governments to pre-empt issues with territorial integrity and lay the foundation to the reform of local self-government. (Yermolayev in Dobroho Ranku, Ukrayino! 2014)

   Related is the concept of *decentralisation* and *decentralisation reform,* which the post-Maidan Government widely used. Republican intellectuals worried it may conceal yet another way to maintain control by the oligarchic powers:

   > We should demand real decentralisation instead of the one promoted by the president attempting to create super-presidential power. […]

> First of all, the decentralisation should be in the interest of local communities. […] Local communities should possess and carry as much power as possible. What they can't do themselves should be delegated to the centre. (Minakov, IDEALIST.media, 2016, 5:00-5:50)

4. *Constitution.* In republicanism, the constitution creates the common subjectivity of a complex, pluralistic society. A true polity Ukraine can only really appear after a constitutional reform.

5. *Institutions* are rules and norms stabilised as social practice according to republican thought. The rational design for a complex body politic consists of institutions. Ukraine has a chronic problem here. Hence: 'Reform is the creation of new institutions' (Minakov in Hromadske, 2015, 11:10). The subjectivity of Ukraine on the international stage itself depends on the establishment of institutions. Sovereignty is supported by republican and democratic institutions, which Ukraine does not have. There were multiple attempts to create vertical power, which meant no democratic control, no rotation of people in charge, and the republic's death. Both Maidan events interrupted this and created conditions for strengthening democratic institutions.

6. *Rationality.* The concept of rationality within the republican narrative is different from other narratives. While instrumental rationality predominates in national liberalism and liberism, here rationality has a markedly moral tint:

   > Ukraine is for everybody […] the sense of "we" that includes the whole country, including Crimeans, Donbass as opposed to a tiny group, has to be returned. […] Ukraine is not a territory but a common republic of all citizens. […] This dialogue is the ueber-task, and we need stoicism, rationality, taming of emotion, and perseverance to do it. (Minakov in IDEALIST.media, 2016, 12:00-13:20)

   Rationality here is not functionalist but primarily a moral category. It is not a tool to reach a pre-conceived strategic objective but a regulative principle. It is more akin to the wisdom guiding socially necessary actions and guarding against hasty conclusions, emotional leaps, and utopian overstretches.

7. *The private and public spheres.* As mentioned above, the public versus private sphere division is central to republicanism. Dialogue and reform should first aim at realigning and regulating what issue belongs to the public sphere and which to the private. The corruption that permeates Ukrainian society is nothing else than a 'blurred line between public and private spheres […] using public for private' (Minakov in ARU TV, 2016b, 2:00-4:50). Beyond conflating private economic interests with public political ones, cultural issues also require re-assessment regarding

their proper localisation in the public-private continuum. For example, considerations of religion should be consigned to the private.

8. *Solidarity* and *rights* are moral sources of normativity regulating republican logic. The capacity of solidarity-based action proves that the nation has a future.

9. *Ideology* is present in the republican discourse in a tangible way. As opposed to other narratives, ideology tends to be addressed explicitly in republicanism: 'What is most important is the formation of a more clear, anti-crisis / anti-depressive course with elements of social-democratic politics' (Yermolayev in 112 Ukriane, 2015, 21:15-21:28). On the one hand, ideological clarity seems to be a necessary precondition for democratic politics, while on the other hand, an excess of ideology is a problem that indicates attempts of domination and manipulation. Describing an ideological map of Ukraine, Minakov said: 'There is no liberal idea in Ukraine. […] There are national-patriotic parties of varying virulence. There is no left either' (Hromadske, 2014b, 0:30-0:50).

10. *Modernisation/demodernisation.* Modernisation is the one historical concept most relevant to the republican narrative. The gradual improvement of the world through rational mastery is understood as moral progress that realises human longings for dignity, self-actualisation, and freedom. The counter-concept to modernisation is demodernisation, which is increasingly utilised in republican narratives to describe what is going on in Ukraine (see section on sequencing above).

Break in normality

Republican intellectuals tend to go against the grain of the Ukrainian mainstream, which in the post-Maidan Ukraine meant exposing ideological confusions and manipulations and bringing attention back to the real issues at hand. In this reading, the Maidan and Donbass conflict were a result of social discontent that had the same social sources across the country: 'Social injustice and the demand for economic freedom, adequate pay, dealing with shadow economy […] social issues made Donbass explode: local oligarchies, low-paid work, unemployment' (Yermolayev, 112 Ukraine, 2015, 1:00-1:18). The new authorities' subsequent failures had less to do with the war, than with the fundamental misunderstanding of the real problem: 'there was not an attempt to solve the social issue, it wasn't even understood by those who came to power' (ibid, 1:18-1:25). And when one thinks about the social whole, then main predicaments are those shared across arbitrary boundaries: 'How does the social plight of Volyn citizen differ from one in Donbass?' (Yermolayev in Pershiy Kozatskiy, 2015a). Thus there was also a deep suspicion of complicity in the war by the people in power. The war was 'useful' in many ways: 'The war is holding back the social unrest […] peace

would unleash it' (Yermolyaev, 112 Ukraine, 2015, 17:05-17:25). Those years in Kyiv felt 'staged, operetta-like, aimed at keeping the party of war which fears to be thrown out of office in power' (Yermolayev in 112 Ukraine, 2016). Similarly, Minakov argued that; 'Many elite groups that appeared in post-Maidan Ukraine benefited from the small unsuccessful war. […] It can be used to suppress the critique of the government. […] War creates its own political culture and political irresponsibility' (ARU TV, 2016, 8:20-9:23). Statements that cut through the mainstream obsession with the war, national-conservative rhetoric, utopian optimism on the liberal side do so by refusing any sugar-coating. When it was in vogue to extol the newly found national cohesion acquired in a struggle against an external enemy, republicans insisted that the main problem was inside: 'It is the crisis of the national project' (Yermolayev in Pershiy Kozatskiy, 2015, 3:55). As Maidan was becoming mythologised, republicans offered a more complex view: 'The first phase of the Maidan was about dignity and human rights. Later radicalisation triggered other processes' (Minakov in Hromadske, 2015, 2:35-3:00). Maidan itself was subverted at its later stages. For the subsequent reforming, this meant a built-in conflict:

> Two years after, we found ourselves in the field of tension between the two programs: one program is that of Euromaidan—political and economic freedoms. The other program is the war program: a powerful president, strong army, and obstructing the dialogue and discussion. (Minakov in IDEALIST.media 2016, 3:54-4:30)

The main element of surprise in republicanism was that the opportunity to change was always there. Historical or systemic factors are secondary and have more to do with ideological distractions than reality in the last analysis. Will and rationality can make an impact now: 'The metaphor of a window of opportunity is imprecise. We always have a chance to reform the country' (IDEALIST.media, 2016, 0:30-0:37). Ambitious steps towards democratisation are possible even though they might appear utopian. In fact, in Ukrainian cases, utopia is trying to avoid democracy.

Plot

The plot can be expressed abstractly based on a model that applies to all justification narratives. It consists of four sequential elements: (1) positing the subject that creates the normative conditions; (2) describing the dire consequences of disregarding the subject; (3) offering a way out; and (4) describing the end result achieved by correctly treating the subject.

In the case of republicanism, the four elements contain the following content:

1. The subject consists of various parts that acquire collective subjectivity through universalistic principles of solidarity, rights, and responsibility. The nation can exist if the different constituent parts adhere to institutionally and normatively stabilised agreement to be a part of the body politic and rally around a common vision of the future. Weakening one constituent part means weakening the entire body politic. Otherwise, attempting to culturally homogenise the complex social, regional, and cultural landscape of Ukraine undermines the republic. The condition for the common subjectivity to be institutionalised in the form of the republic is a systematic realignment of common and private. Here there can be differences depending on the kind of republicanism. Democratic deliberation is the legitimate source of recalibrating the shared scope.
2. The consequence of disregarding plural humanistic subjectivity lies in demodernisation. Turn to conservatisms of various kinds, primitive thinking, distrust, obsession with money are all manifestations of demodernisation observable across post-Soviet space. These tendencies obstruct the realisation of dignity, freedom, rights, and solidarity principles.
3. The way out lies through 'stoicism, rationality, and perseverance' (Minakov in IDEALIST.media, 2016, 12.00:13:20). Effort and sheer will can push things in the right direction. Deliberative, inclusive, democratic, civic practices and resulting institutions are possible and unavoidable if one wants to improve things.
4. The ultimate goal of the republican remedy is a decentralised body politic with strong self-governance that lives by true European principles of modernity, where humanism trumps petty squabbles of money and identity.

Selectivity

The republican narrative begins and ends with the possibility of a better society and political actors. Beyond the ideological manipulations of power there is solidarity, humanism, responsibility, and unity that do not contradict individualism. As fractures increasingly characterise Ukrainian society and the wider world, references to such things might strike one as idealistic wishful thinking which is far from reality. The republican critique of actual events, people, and action begins from high-minded principles. During the profound crisis in Maidan's immediate aftermath, republican intellectuals argued for a republic re-launch through constitutional re-design and national dialogue. This was a risky path in case the goodwill of the participants of these processes turned out to be non-existent. As such, republican solutions could be vulnerable to attacks from any side that denies the real-world actors'

fundamental goodness and moral rationality. The arguments are lined up based on commitments to these ideals. These ideals are felt intensely by the republican thinkers. While they have a high philosophical and practical pedigree, they can be undermined by the very reality built around cynicism. This is why the post-Soviet space is problematic for the implementation of republican politics. Hence, the aim has to be nothing less than to change that cynical layer of reality itself. And this is truly an 'ueber-task'.

2016-2019- Counter-revolution and reaction

The tone of the republican narrative between 2016 and 2019 was rather pessimistic. In the view of republican intellectuals, the developments after Euromaidan went in the wrong direction to the extent of defeating the visions and aspirations that gave birth to it. Instead, the ills of oligarchic capitalism, systematic corruption continue to dominate, now sustained by deeply illiberal and centrifugal trends in the broader society. The message is sobering:

> Each one of our revolutions leads to freedom's decline. We got disoriented in the mid-90s, were scared by the freedom that fell from the sky, and this fear influenced the construction of the state in which we live. (Minakov, 2016)

The tension built into the original phenomenon of Maidan—whereby the initial protest was about the demand of social justice, rights, freedom and later became radicalised along national-conservative and even nationalist lines—was for now resolved in a way that favoured conservatism, not modernisation and reform. The verdict was clear by the end of 2016:

> The Revolution of Dignity is ending, and a completely different revolution begins. Here I agree with the Ukrainian far-right, who think this stage was their revolution. Indeed, they grabbed the torch, their time has come, and the conservative revolution has won. But if you look at who used this conservative revolution, it is not the nationalists. It is the same older people who ruled in the 1990s and the 2000s. They know how to use contradictions within society. They appropriated the reform program of Euromaidan, political agenda and by clashing the two types of reform were able to re-establish the rule of clans in the country. (ibid)

In the following sections, I lay out the major shifts in the republican narrative in the second period under investigation.

Temporality

The time scale of the republican narrative is still distinctly short. Several years after the Maidan of conflict and fear dominated the public space, the demodernising dialectic brought Ukrainian society into a 'post-modern

Middle Ages' (Yermolayev in UKRLIFE.TV, 2019, 2:51): 'The thin layer of modernity that formed in Ukraine in the 20th century now completely collapsed. It was helped by globalisation and media that learned to work with misinformation as a technology' (ibid, 1:37-2:00). The broad historical current within which republican narrative flows is still that of modernisation, which in Ukraine means looking primarily at the experience of the 20th century, when Soviet modernisation occurred. Notwithstanding all the horrors and limitations that this entailed, Ukraine arrived at the juncture of 1991 as a tolerant republic:

> We were born a civic political nation […] with a tolerant attitude to ethnic composition and diverse cultures. The new idea of Ukraine of that time is not only about ethnic markers but also common ones that were going to be retained and cultivated. (Yermolayev, in 112ua.tv, 2016, 16:29-16:49)

Looking a little further back than 1991 can explain the soft-end of the Soviet period and the optimism that predominated with independence:

> The late Soviet period of soft national re-birth (time Shelest, Sherbitskiy[71]) was good in the sense of creating a tolerant society (selective opening of national literature, culture). The Ukrainian republic was the least tense in 1991. Without these pre-conditions there may not have been a Ukraine of 1991. (Yermolayev in UKRLIFE.TV, 2017)

Erasing this layer of modernity means falling back into irrationality and archaism highlighting the counter-modern trend: 'Today's "decommunization", for example, is a magical action, which became possible only due to people not knowing the history of their country' (Minakov, 2016).

Subjectivity

Sobering conclusions are also drawn from the experiences of civil society and the younger generation on the political stage:

> Civil society partly fell under the influence of new financial-political clans. It was armed (suddenly became part of the police) to some extent. The ideology of these people is far from democratic and liberal. […] The illiberal moment, with its disrespect of freedom, to different points of view, to minorities, is becoming a norm of civic action. (Minakov, 2016)

The expectation that energetic and committed younger activists will become the backbone of the new European political class in Ukraine also did not bear fruit:

[71] Surnames oft he Soviet-Ukrainian leaders

> The least hope lies with the 'passionaries'[72] because their main trait is the incapability of rational action in solidarity. […] Our parliament today is a place where there is no more national dialogue. To a large extent, the radicalism of the young politicians led to the refusal of dialogue. Political "elders" are also at fault: their dialogue is always a lie. (ibid)

Consequently, the political subjectivity of society is near non-existent: 'Politics as collective survival in Ukraine is dysfunctional: solutions to the most basic problems of the population is absent. Politics as communication for the common good, as dialogue, has been violated by the war and the new generation of politicians' (ibid). The current order is far from the open, modern, democratic, arrangement. Yermolayev described it as: "autocratic, monopolised state based on military organisation of political and business nomenklatura" (see UKRLIFE.TV, 2017); ""police Hetmanate[73]" – meaning strong central militarised power with a large, controlled budget" (UKRLIFE.TV, 2018,3:43). Minakov, emphasized the centralised, autocratic aspect and spoke of: "strategic 9 that governed Ukraine is a nationalistic Komsomol[74]" (OstWest, 2019, 15:11). Thus, there was a certain continuity with the time of Yanukovych, when the attempt to monopolise power was cancelled by the Maidan. After the Maidan and amid fear and conflict, other players completed this project. After the first half of 2016, all power levers were concentrated in the president's hands (see Mylovanov & Minakov 2016, Minakov 2017). The president, his inner circle, and clans forming concentric circles around the epicentre of power belong to a particular social group formed by specific experiences of the late Soviet period and early independence:

The Soviet sociopaths who disrespected the common rules were able to win. They grabbed property, power, or perished. Those who survived are today's top 100 most wealthy—and they rule the country. After each revolution, they re-establish their control (not necessarily with the same surnames). (Minakov, 2016).

Now, having captured the state, these elites deploy heavy postmodern ideological weaponry to re-assert and maintain its control:

> The state openly identified itself as a "nation-creator", including state interests and national interests. It moulded the country into what they needed. Now it is not us citizens who create a republic with a democratic

[72] Refers to the 'passionate' activists who are led by emotion

[73] Reference to Cossack Hetmanate – the name of the early Ukrainian state in 17-18th centuries, led by a 'Hetman'. On other occasions Yermolayev used other terminology from that period to highlight the demodernising tendencies. For example he used the word 'Shlayhta', historical meaning of which referred to the Polish (or polonised local) nobility, to describe the emerging class of regional elite.

[74] Communist youth organisation in Soviet Union

state, but the state makes us who we are. (Yermolayev in UKRLIFE.TV, 2017, 10:50-11:19)

With civil society either marginalised, distracted, or co-opted, social dialogue is frozen and consciously prevented, 'Euromaidan's democratic potential was finally exhausted, and its civil revolution finally ended' (ibid). No common, republican subjectivity could develop in such an environment. Instead, a full-blown counter-revolution attacked republican principles of collective subjectivity as social communication:

> After one and a half years, experts characterised the developments as counter-revolutionary (as folding in the cultural, institutional social climate of change), now we see a period of reaction, manifested in freezing of all positive social processes in the country[…] institutional social dialogue is on pause in all spheres […] deliberate conservation of all institutions that could ensure the national dialogue. (Yermolayev in TOPINFORM, 2017, 1:25-2:27)

The voluntary unity of free people, the very pre-condition for republican politics, is shrinking: "More and more people do not see themselves as part of this unity, and hence do not see a future and so do not share a common meaning' (Yermloayev in 112ua.tv, 2016, 17:20-17:30). The kind of Ukraine constructed by the autocratic leadership and clans that is suitable for top-down governance and undisputed rule is increasingly small (in cultural weight and civilisational ambition), demodernizing, conservative: 'the more social space becomes archaic, the more simple and aggressive it is in its reactions' (Yermolayev in UKRLIFE.TV, 2019, 31:00).

The answer lies yet again in the recovery of what precious little is left from Ukrainian commonality and building a new cultural project around it:

> I am a proponent of the Ukrainian world. […] Do not equate it with ethnic issues. There is a large population outside of our borders. The Ukrainian world can be, first of all, a social organisation. Who is a Ukrainian? Do ethnic markers define them, or do they carry a new alternative ambition of social organisation? I think the Ukrainian idea should be connected to the alternative social organisation. […] Independent society of free and educated people […]Ukraine will be realised as a cultural project not as an alternative to Russia but as an alternative to the Soviet Empire. Without a problem of which language, ethnic composition, and hierarchy are in the pantheon of heroes. […] Ukraine, for me, is a social and national ideal, not ethnic and historical-cultural ideal. (Yermolayev in 112ua.tv, 2016, 18:10-21:40)

Such a vision requires a revision of the clear-cut, heavily ideologised, ethnonational, militant discourse and return to the real issues of the social conflict: 'We will not be able to build an inclusive socio-economic model so

long as we do not understand why our political system ignores the interests of the subordinate social groups' (Minakov, 2016). The focus should be on the genuinely common interests: 'First of all, we must create affordable and high-quality healthcare. Second, transfer authority to local communities, because people's quality of life and social security depends on it' (ibid).

Concepts

The concepts listed in the section covering the period between 2014 and mid-2016 are still very much relevant in the second period analysed. The concepts below were selected to shed light on the shifts that occurred in the republican segment of discourse in the second period.

1. *Monopoly* was used to describe what was happening in the various areas. 'The complete establishment of the *ideological monopoly* will lead to a further fracturing of Ukrainian society and possibly to new separatist projects' (Minakov, 2016). Examples of attempts to establish such a monopoly were 'decommunisation laws', language wars, confessional and church politics, and banning Russian social networks. Monopolisation and presenting of ideological issues as friend or foe had further detrimental consequences: 'Turning the church and faith into an aspect of political identification could lead to further divisions in Ukrainian society' (Yermolayev, in Selector Channel, 2018, 3:23).

   > Banning Russian social networks is a constitutional crime as it directly violates freedom of speech.[…] There is also an impact on identity, which is the continuous process of self-definition. […] If your psychological space is denied, you might change your self-definition. […] The result, in this case, might be that many Ukrainians will end up defining themselves as Russian. (Yermolayev in UKRLIFE.TV, 2017, 1:15-4:20)

   Minakov states that 'this so-called 'decommunisation' is the establishment of a new ideological monopoly. Today we are much closer to Bolshevism than to the freedoms of 1991' (Minakov, 2016). Similarly, monopoly was used as a way to describe consolidation of the state power: 'The corporate oligarchic system was destroyed by the revolutionary events and by the nature of new power, which functions differently. It functions not as an oligarchic corporation, but an autocratic monopoly' (Yermolayev in UKRLIFE.TV, 2017a, 1:00-1:23)

2. *Localisation* and *provincialisation* were terms used to describe the centrifugal force the conservative politics had on the complex and fragile unity of Ukrainian regions: 'this new localisation—a de-coupling of regions from the national centre where people build their comfortable local environment—is driven by the will to live in this country, but without this state' (Yermolayev in UKRLIFE.TV, 2017, 32:45-33:14). In

the absence of coordination and economic and institutional linkages, this means narrowing the scope of local concerns to small-scale issues determined by the size of the region, interests, and vision of their local elites. Economically, this means disintegrating the common economic space, with less space to create an economy with regional specialisations systematically. Politically, the implication is the bureaucratisation of local state institutions and the feudalisation of local elites. With the scale of activity diminished, the ambition, status, and possibilities to have nationwide projects also diminishes. The same can be observed at the level of the country in general:

> In 2018, Ukraine confirmed itself as a big European periphery […] unfortunately this *provincialisation* is accompanied by *archaization* which means change to the habitual industrial arrangement of our life […] new Ukrainian utopia is different from illusions that characterised Ukrainians of the early 90s [connected to the European integration], when we heard about prosperity, industrial breakthrough, space programs […] the new utopia is more mercantile and simple. It represents a mercantile ideal of a commoner that includes evened-out standards of life, individual opportunities, domestic freedom, consumption […] The flip side of this utopia is - hard separation from the rest of the post-Soviet space; conflicts with the eastern neighbours […] Within this myth, Russia is a historical enemy. […] All of this restricts social capital that can be active in the project of new Ukraine. It leads to loss of millions of people through annexation, separatism, war, labor migration […] It will continue, which means that millions of people cannot support the new provincial Ukrainian project - the *Small Ukraine*. (Yermolayev in Selector Channel, 2019)

3. *Mediatisation.* In the republican discourse, the loss of reality is a characteristic of Ukrainian politics. The mediatisation of politics means the domination of staged, ritualistic, and demonstrative actions over practical, social-action and rule of law which led to the fact that it is important to say things in the right way. The media was instrumentalised ruthlessly: "The last couple of years Ukrainian society is immersed into a kind of informational totalitarianism' (Yermolayev in NEWSONE, 2019, 2:05). Already in 2016, Yermolayev warned of the sinister tendencies that instrumentalization of the media results in: "[…] the current power is predisposed for the modern neo-totalitarian dictatorship - operating through media, repressive apparatus, psychological pressure" (Yermolayev in Pershiy Kozatskiy, 2016, 2:32). Many events have a certain 'stage-like' quality. Even the main event that completely dominates headlines and determines policy is cynically staged by the powers in the background, even though direct participants are not aware of it: 'The war is staged' (Yermolayev in NEWSONE, 2017). Before long, the media colonises

reality: ‘Thousands of young civil activists did media tricks instead of engaging in real [political] action’ (Yermolayev in NEWSONE, 2019). Unsurprisingly, ‘Imitation is the main instrument of the election process’ (ibid).

4. Yermolayev used *national-etatism* to describe the character of power after 2016: **‘**The current power’s ideology is national-etatist, where the state claims the right to create society and even nation that suits it.’ (Yermolayev in UKRLIFE.TV, 2017, 11:00-11:20).

5. *Conservatism***.** From the point of view of republicanism, the overarching trend of ideology was a particular brand of conservatism. For Minakov, the post-Maidan time is the time of continuing conservative revolution:

> One of the groups’ that used the moment are revolutionary conservatives, i.e. nationalists of different kinds. They are winning. Their revolution is continuing. Conservative revolution is strengthening. They managed to establish an ideological monopoly. Now the same happens with linguistic and assimilatory practices. This restrict opportunities for Ukraine to re-integrate the lost territories. It may even provoke further separatist movements. In general , this represents a conservative, anti-modern trend, which started to win in Ukraine. (Minakov in UKRLIFE.TV. 2017b, 43:58-44:50)

In Minakov’s view, conservatism is the right way to describe the dominant ideology in Ukraine. While in the past the program of national liberation contained emancipatory force, in the post-Maidan Ukraine this force disappeared after nationalism merged with conservatism:

> In Ukraine, the tendency of ethno-nationalism/ national conservatism is very strong. In the past, there was competition between nationalists and conservatives, but now they unified. Nationalist projects have lost their democratic force, which was there at the beginning of the 90s. This was at least argued by some philosophers and political scientists believed it to be there. But now toxic conservative values took over it. (Minakov, in UKRLIFE.TV., 2019a, 27:30-29:02)

It is important to note that the types of republican thought described in this section were left-liberal (Minakov) and social-democratic (Yermolayev). To complete the picture, several points on right-republicanism must be added. At this end of the spectrum, similar criticism of the actual Ukrainian state affairs was offered by Gennadiy Druzenko:

> The system against which we rose in 2013 was reborn. It didn’t become more humane. It didn’t turn its face to the ordinary person. It didn’t start to serve instead of extracting resources out of the country and re-routing them into the pockets of the “anointed ones”. It was re-painted

> mainly into yellow-blue colours and decorated with an EU flag. (Druzenko, 2019)

The recipes for change were different from other republican currents:

> In terms of worldview, I am a typical republican, who believes into the free unity of free people, the need for limited government, the right to own weapons, and electing most positions of power. In short, the destiny of each person is first of all their own responsibility and that paternalism of most of Ukrainians is an enemy more dangerous than Putin. (Druzenko, 2018)

The imagined common subjectivity is that of fiercely independent, self-sufficient people who live to protect this independence and self-sufficiency from the intrusions of others, mainly in the form of the state. From that standpoint, the proper right-wing is not present in Ukrainian politics:

> The people who are able to risk, self-organise and create added value are not represented in today's Ukrainian politics. On the contrary, almost all parliamentary forces compete for who is the bigger paternalist at the expense of the budget. (Druzenko, 2018a)

Therefore, the dreams of a more socially-oriented policy are naive:

> Socialism and left ideas as such are not a bad thing. But before fairly distributing, one has to earn. When you are in the poorest country in Europe, you must limit yourself to the most urgent instead of giving "each to their needs". And what is most critical is not the "army, language, and faith"[75], but "freedom, security, and justice. (ibid)

The vision of the proper Ukrainian conservatism in this republican vein accounts for complex reality. It stops with the pale imitation of the professed enemy and infantile attempts to force homogenisation:

> At the moment, the main problem of the Ukrainian movement on the right lies in the conviction that you can win against Russia only by becoming its smaller copy that you can only build a true Ukraine through centralisation, unification, and assimilation. One language, one historical narrative and preferably one national church. Plus, one national leader at the helm of a unified nation. (Druzenko, 2019a)

A more sophisticated and workable conservatism is possible by actualising the true conservative values of individual responsibility,

[75] Slogan of incumbent President Poroshenko's election campaign in 2019

staunch independence, respect for tradition and the minimal state as opposed to the current pervasive paternalism:

> Ukrainian conservatism only has a real chance once it starts to defend local traditions. When it gives up quarrels regarding which Ukrainian is better, and when it stops trying to fix a unified standard. […] Ukrainian conservatism has to protect the tradition of each Ukrainian family, community, school, church, university – all of these "sacred institutions", in which citizens' personalities are formed, against the unificatory intrusions of the state. (ibid)

Republicanism and Ukrainian political culture - 2014-2019

The version of political culture that the republican narrative offers, thereby influencing development of this very political culture revolves around the issue of political constitution of Ukraine. Its chief concern is the possibility of voluntary, inclusive arrangement that could create a coherent political entity guided by principles of justice and freedom.

1. **Normalisation**

- **Period 1** (2014 to mid-2016). The normality of the Ukrainian political existence reached the point of degradation and encountered a push-back by the citizenry on Maidan. Broader social conflict manifested in the events in Crimea and Donbass. The new set of norms had to supersede the dysfunctional, unjust arrangement. The chasm between the elites and the citizens became normalised and therefore had to be bridged politically after the Maidan. The matter of fact normality, i.e. Ukrainian cultural complexity and resulting political plurality, had to raise its voice in the discourse and find its expression in the formal arrangements of the state. This new normality had to be an active democratic participation and constitutional, civic collective identity. That was supposed to be the means and ends of post-Maidan reforming. Quite early on, according to the republican narrative, this normalisation was subverted by the logic of war and fear. What normalised were utopian, black and white attitudes, isolation, disengagement of social communication, and reliance on emotional instinct.

- **Period 2** (mid-2016 to mid-2019). The second period saw a deepening of negative trends. The war became normalised in the very psyche of Ukrainian society. The concomitant exacerbation of demodernisation, dehumanisation, a zero-sum game logic, the staged, imitative quality of politics and social communication overall all

became normal. The conflict as the algorithm of the political process with little space for problem-solving was normalised.

2. **Historisation**

   - **Period 1** (2014 to mid-2016). The historical origin of the current political state of affairs and social distribution of power lies in the late Soviet period and 1991. More remote past is highly complex and diverse. Assessment of history depends on where you are in Ukraine. Nonetheless, the civic nation and pre-conditions for the independent republic were a product of the second republic (Soviet Ukraine). Regardless of the historical horrors of the Soviet period, erasing this historical experience is equal to erasing the vital elements of modernity that are needed to progress towards a better modernity. The republic of 1991, though containing important cultural pre-dispositions of ethnic tolerance, non-conflictuality, certain educational, industrial and social sophistication, was incomplete. Having no tradition of modern democratic self-governance it fell prey to neoliberalism in the 1990s. The history after 1991 followed a recursive process of revolutionary loops, none of which addressed the real issues, entrenching malignant elites at the top and culturally impoverishing the society. Maidan was yet another milestone: the end of the second revolutionary cycle. The period immediately after would determine whether Ukrainian society could break out of this pattern. Quite early on, circa early 2015, the verdict of republican intellectuals was sobering: the country was still caught in a downward-sloping dialectical pattern.

   - **Period 2** (mid 2016 - mid 2019). The period started from the counter-revolution. The question now was how the current cycle would end. Would it be another revolution? More separatism? All-out war? Disintegration? As the third decade after 1991 came to a close, generational change set in all over the post-Soviet space. The problems that neoliberal or conservative efforts did not address would require more systematic solutions. In case of absence thereof, spontaneous new conflicts and fractures became possible. However, the new generation in Ukraine didn't seem to be ready or have a positive impact on political reality. The predominance of zero-sum game thinking, black-and-white views, and imitative, media-driven actions did not give much reason for optimism. The broad social demand for integrity, common sense, authenticity, and commonality created a demand for new political actors untainted by the oligarchic autocracy.

3. **Pattern formation**

- **Period 1** (2014 to mid-2016). The pattern of political culture that emerges from the analysis of the republican narrative is modular. The values, historical cultures, and traditions are localised and highly variable across the territory of Ukraine. Thus, various political cultures exist simultaneously. It is a rational, intellectual, and moral effort to understand them and agree on the least conflictual and more just arrangement. Moreover, given an extreme generational divide that is less dependent on the regional location (i.e. younger people tend to be more similar to each other across the regions than to the older ones from the same region), there is another layer of complexity to consider on top of historically-determined regional differences. This layer has to do with more forward-looking attitudes spread through globalised media and culture, where identities are more fluid and diverse. This modularity would leave space for a truly pluralist society, where matters of history are accommodated as well as matters of individual choice. Therefore, the overarching collective identity should be humanist, civic and emphasising universal values that afford respect to the parts. While the parts would be self-governed, they would be in dialogue based on the culture of recognition and respect. During the period between 2014 and 2016, the possibility of such culture was becoming ever slimmer. Instead, tendencies of homogenisation dominated. The imagined unity spanning entire Ukraine was ever more understood ethnocentrically with a state that claimed to be the guiding force of nation-building. A commitment to the correct version of culture and the state has a monolithic structure that clashes with actual multiplicity.

- **Period 2** (mid-2016 to mid-2019). The homogenising tendencies worsened so that the reality of pluralism had to re-assert itself. This happened through a rejection of the government's divisive rhetoric and voting in a non-systemic political neophyte, Zelenskiy, in 2019, who ran on a unifying message.

4. **We-identification**.

- **Period 1** (2014 to mid-2016). The 'we' that the republican narrative posits as the subject of republican politics is principally inclusive. The Maidan had the potential to create such a 'we'. The same issues resulted in Maidan and the events in Crimea and Donbass. Had there been proper social communication and politics leading to the awareness about the common problems, the tragic outcome of annexation, war and conflict could have been avoided. By early 2014, the civic 'we' fractured. The explosion on the Maidan heralded the arrival of civil society on the political stage. Its original incarnation (the early Euromaidan) was truly inclusive, open, and reformist, without linguistic, ethnocultural, or social hierarchisation. It was

conceivable that an inclusive 'we' could develop subsequently. The later radicalisation of the protest—that was very likely deliberately manipulated into the nationalist direction—coupled with events in the East, and the war, undermined the truly inclusive 'we'. The 'we' of 2014-2016 was a temporary compromise between national liberalism, national conservatism, and nationalism. The political monopolisation by national conservatism meant a forceful shift to the right, orchestrated by the ruling clans. The resulting policies aimed for collective forms of control of public and, to a large extent, the private sphere guided by a narrow set of ethnocentric values. The central power was attempting to establish an ethnocentric 'we' that in fact excluded large groups of the population who would never subscribe to them.

- **Period 2** (mid-2016 to mid-2019). In the second period under investigation, the same trend continued. The narrowing of the national 'we' parameters contributed to the unsolved situation in Donbass, and an increase in emigration. The success of Zelenskiy in 2019 can largely be explained by the fact that, however populistically, he attempted to re-create a more inclusive 'we' that felt more real than Poroshenko's heightened national conservatism.

5. **Normativation**

- **Period 1** (2014 to mid-2016). The normativity of the republican narrative is sourced from the assumption of the universalism in specific human abilities: solidarity, freedom, and responsibility. To actualise these abilities, autonomy and rationality are necessary conditions. Rationality serves here as a moral category that doesn't primarily serve instrumental purposes of achieving specific goals but is rather a moral category regulating the use of human abilities for the greater common good (justice) as well as for individual self-realisation. Rationality should guide the reformation of the common world by re-categorising practical problems between private and public spheres to balance common good and individual interest. The mechanism that would realise this in a way that is consistent with objectives is politics as communication (national dialogue, deliberative democracy, and discourse). In light of this sophisticated view, the actual normative landscape of post-Maidan Ukraine was far from ideal. It was dominated by the irrational: emotional reflexes, fears, and utopias.

- **Period 2** (mid-2016 to mid-2019). Given the universalistic position of republicanism, the normativity didn't change after mid-2016. It provided an ever-sharper contrast to the actual developments in Ukrainian political and social life. Hence the tone of republican

intellectuals was becoming more pessimistic. The old elite, as well as new younger actors, seemed to be pushing the country in the wrong direction. Broader society was disoriented and disengaged. Against this background, the shift of power in 2019 was predictable and confirmed the demand for balance and justice by the broader society.

This concludes the exposition of 'normalising' (Beschorner & Hubscher, 2016) normativity. The *reflexive normativity* remains (ibid), meaning the evaluation of the quality of the republican version of normativity in light of criteria taken to be the measure of legitimacy.

- *Reciprocity.* With consistent pluralism that stands on a universalistic foundation, the republican narrative is most compatible with the criteria of reciprocity out of all other narratives explored in this work. The various identities and regional, cultural, generational groups are afforded subjectivity based on a rational moral principle. Then, their interaction is structured as communication, where power arises as 'noumenal'. Individuals and social groups are seen as ends in themselves and not as mere material to be shaped via a top-down application of power. Political competition, normatively required by the republican discourse, operates through institutionalised deliberative fora and is about the creation of noumenal power.

- *Generality.* As with reciprocity, the republican narrative is consistent with the principle of generality. Those principles and values are elevated to the national level, where they are most universal and can be as disconnected as possible from various identitarian issues and particular values beyond providing a framework in which those could exist. It offers the most fertile theory to reconcile pluralism with the common good. Various versions of republicanism do contain the potential to make reductive assumptions about the underlying political subject. On the liberal end, individualism could be exaggerated beyond reason. On the conservative end, traditionalism and atomism can be somewhat restrictive. So long as the communicative rationality is the regulative principle, there is a mechanism to verify the range of legitimacy for such assumptions.

3.5.2 Conservatism

3.5.2.1 National Conservatism

2014-2016 - Liberating the Nation

With national conservatism, I mean a narrative whose subject exhibits characteristics of an ethnocentric ideal. Such a subject is assumed to have formed locally over centuries of history, coded into the national DNA by poets, writers, important figures (political or intellectual) assaulted by malign invaders, resurrected, and now must be paid its due by the dedication to national memory and shoring up national identity. Crucially, all of this is embodied in the Ukrainian language elevated to the single true marker of loyalty. This subject, and its history, hold together the political normativity of the narrative. This means that for the organisation of socio-political life, the first principle and foundational reason is the respect and dignity of the ethnocultural subject in its local specificity of language and national history, which are taken to be the basis for social cohesion, cooperation, belonging, and recognition. For this reason, Ukrainians have to go back to the historically authentic national self-image: 'Without a return of the "spiritual body", self-recognition of the people is impossible' (Zabuzhko, in Hruslinska, 2014). Notably, the locality is understood as co-extensive with national political boundaries. Nation and locality overlap.

The national conservative strand of political thought and storytelling is highly present in Ukraine. It offers a view of political history as an assertion of national subjectivity against that of the empires in strong connection to an individual sense of the self and collective understanding of the 'we'. Defining the self, the 'we', the other, and the nation happens via the same identification processes. Hence the self, 'national consciousness', political organisation, and economic success are closely interconnected and reciprocally enabled in this narrative.

The credibility of such an ethnocentric angle comes from the reading of national liberation discourse going back to mid 19th century. The social, political, and cultural issues all overlapped in a struggle against injustices of the time. National poets, writers, and thinkers took the existence of different Ukrainian stand-alone languages and cultures as the starting point for the political existence of Ukraine, which, in turn, was the way to address those injustices. Of course, what kind of separate existence was contested since the beginning of the national movement. Since the political separateness of Ukraine was connected to social issues, national liberation discourse evolved

with historical conditions and so exhibited a plurality of ideological forms[76]. National conservatism today broadly continues within the tradition of national liberation, while adapting to the conditions of the time that appear to demand stronger national identity. The presence then in this segment of modern-day writers and poets who see themselves as the national voice and spirit is not surprising.

The 'liberation' genesis of this discourse, on the one hand, gives rise to the themes of freedom, overcoming imperial oppression and totalitarianism, openness to the world (at least the part of the world that supports the favoured identity), and often democracy (though here, ways of many individual representatives of national conservatism depart). Hence the rhetoric is often hardly distinguishable from liberalism. Still, there is an important difference. The 'liberal' element comes with a strong conditionality attached: freedom, democracy, dignity, and resistance to imperialism are all rooted in the strong binding cultural foundation. The most critical aspects are language and local traditions full of 'thick' judgements on good and evil, history, memory, heroes and villains, etc. Therefore, the often professed liberal values do not stand on their own. They are seen as only standing on a firm ethnocultural foundation that should hold the entire national political community, which otherwise cannot exist. This means a narrowing of subjectivity. While those who follow the demanding code of 'national consciousness' are elevated to the true national subject, those who try to expand the boundaries of what counts as a national subject beyond one language and single correct historical memory are suspected of treason.

It has to be said that, since a lot of the content of the national conservative narrative is shared with the national liberal one, this can be seen as a 'normative surplus', which offers possibilities for dialogue and compromise. As per Axel Honneth (2012), 'normative surplus' refers to a larger ethical content present in the discourse beyond what is realised institutionally. Parallel to this definition, I contend that a large portion of the national conservative discourse contains a 'liberal surplus' that creates the possibility of dialogue, compromise, and evolution. As I argue in the section about National Liberalism, under pressure from unfavourable circumstances, the liberal discourse seems to evolve away from a firm commitment to freedom in favour of a more prescriptive position that roots freedom in thicker subjectivity—ethnic or economic. In the case of national conservatism, circumstances matter even more. Since a conservative argues from the standpoint of 'reality', professes to see things as they are, a shift in reality demands adaptation. To do 'realpolitik', one has to follow reality. As 'reality'

[76] For example: Cultural autonomy in Pan-Slavic federation (Mykola Kostomarov), Social-democratic liberalism (Mykhajlo Drahomanov), communist nationalism (Mykola Hvylyoviy), Integral Nationalism (Dmytro Dontsov), humanitarian national liberalism (the dissidents of the 1960s).

is often nothing more than a discursive construct, especially prone to manipulation in an unfree public space, it is precarious. For those who have reality as a normative measure, changing reality can lead to re-evaluation. Put simply, if external conditions change, national conservatism has to evolve. The national liberation narrative over centuries came in nearly all ideological packages. Its current national conservative packaging is, to a large extent, the result of external conditioning.

Temporality

The sense of time in national conservatism is permeated by the reverence of history and its political stepchild: national memory. The writer Oxana Zabuzhko stated that the 'country without history cannot be a regional leader' (in Shvadchak, 2015) and consequently: 'The creation of our own story is the absolute must for a state; without it, no reform will be successful' (ibid). In Zabuzhko's reading, history itself is a source of normativity and the only graspable source of self-understanding which are the preconditions for reform. The state has to ensure the proper 'historical' story is constructed to ensure the right kind future:

> I encounter complete stupidities - "Let's forget history, let's think about future". But there is no future yet. Future does not exist. One can forecast it, plan, one has to construct it, but relying on what you have. In reality, there is actuality, which is the result of those incredibly long "tails". (Ibid)

The centrality of history in the transformation and development of the country is emphasized very often in the national conservative discourse. Knowing one's own history according to Zabuzhko is the measure of competence, self-respect and self-awareness: 'In Western countries, knowing one's own history is an absolutely vital attribute for the ruling class, elites, and decision makers' (ibid). The knowledge of history lends a sense of continuity between the past and the present as well as providing firm foundation for projecting the future: 'Europe is where a villager in the roadside tavern will tell you that his vinery was opened by his great-grandfather in 1784 and he is still working in this winery. This is a continuity of tradition and cultural memory' (Zabuzhko, in Klymenko, 2016).

Conversely, in the absence of the due respect of national history and memory, society suffers from all sorts of interconnected ills:

> At the point of the proclamation of declaration of independence, Ukraine wasn't ready for it either institutionally, cadre-wise, or intellectually. For this reason, the easiest path was selected: reformatting the old communist elites into post-colonial. For Ukraine, the Soviet Union did not end in 1991, while no one cleaned Augean stables left by the Soviet system. Out of all incomplete tasks, *the absence of societal memory* is the true curse. This is

> true for both individuals and nations. Bolsheviks understood this perfectly. Hence, they interrupted the connection between generations and proclaimed war to the "forsaken past". The shorter society's memory is, the easier it is to manipulate. So, our society has permanent amnesia. (Zabuzhko, in Hryslinska, 2014)

Therefore, continuity is vital for national history and has to be re-established for society to heal. Such a logic of return, circling back to the point where things went wrong and re-starting to build from that point where interruption occurred, permeates national conservative discourse. This informs the view of history as a cumulative process with identifiable stages that must be passed in a certain sequence. If a delay or a deviation occurs, one has to return to that stage later and continue from there onwards. Hence, the long temporality is set by the entire history of national development that goes back centuries—as far back as one wishes to look for ethnocultural markers. In contrast, short temporality is the stage that the nation is currently at. The current stage appears to be regeneration and rediscovery after the national catastrophe of Soviet rule. 1991 is the point of re-entry into national history. As Volodymyr Vyatrovych (2014), who later became the head of the Institute of National Memory wrote,

> After the euphoria of the re-establishment of Ukraine's independence in 1991 has settled, it became clear: Ukrainians face many problems. As in other postcolonial states, a lack of responsible political elite is felt here, which would be capable of decisive reform, developed political culture, the readiness of people to participate actively in social-political life. (Vyatrovych, 2014)

The history of Soviet rule represents an 'interrupted process of creation of a nation, which for other countries was completed in the 19th century' (Zabuzhko, in Hruslinska, 2014). It is the resumption of national history that was (unsuccessfully) attempted in 1991, later once again in 2004-2005 during the Orange Revolution and now forcefully and decisively through the Maidan 2013-2014.

A correlate of such normative a view of staged national history are perspectives on the historical process that appears to be knowable and ought to be followed to achieve a positive result. Admittedly, most sophisticated commentators do not directly claim they know the logic of history. And yet, dedication to the past seems to carry with it a tendency to linearly extrapolate it into the future assuming a general model. The most obvious example of this can be found at the sharp end of the discourse among the media commentators less concerned with intellectual validity and more concerned with emotional impact, such as pundit Vitaliy Portnikov:

> I'm realistic. I see the situation while understanding how history is moving. History is, unfortunately, a capricious lady who doesn't see human life as

> the highest priority, while I do. So, I am not an optimist, I understand how many people could still die, how many broken lives, unmet expectations, how many young people may not realise themselves. (Portnikov, UKRLIFE.TV. 2014, 58:10-58:45)

Such 'realism' and understanding of history generates some 'spectacular insights'. Portnikov painted the vision of the imminent disintegration of Russia and the resulting arrival of Ukraine to the Euro-Atlantic world: 'I think this process will be quicker than it seems because the speed of historical processes has increased, so everything optimistically speaking might take around five years' (ibid, 58:45-59:06). In his view there is an obvious pattern of continuity which one simply has to grasp and manage:

> Historically nothing has changed through millennia […] we are at the civilizational border […] civilizational threat continues to come from the East - from China - through steppes that then became Rus and then towards Kiev where it stopped because of exhaustion […] Nothing changed. We are still the vital point of the Mediterranean world, while beyond it lies Mordor. (ibid, 1:03:45-1:04:23)

Sequencing

Narrative sequence that transpires from the discourse analysis sets off from the formation of a national subject. Robust national identity is the precondition for reform and a better common world. Hence the social and political past is seen through successes and failures to build national identity. Breakthroughs at the hands of the wise few and assaults at the hands of external enemies (typically imperial villains) and internal willing or unwilling collaborators (clueless masses, spiritual weaklings, egoistic opportunists, and tragic fools). The sequence of steps to be undertaken to bring about a better state of affairs again aims to create a more robust national subject. A 'new political class' must appear and understand that 'creation of our own story is an absolute must for a state' (Zabuzhko, in Shvadchak, 2015). The reforms that have to happen should aim to strengthen the state's ideological foundation along the national lines. The 'national' state is the goal and the means: 'Without consistent state policy, memory doesn't accumulate into social experience' (Vyatrovych, 2014), hence: '[…] programs of reforms should, first of all, contain policies to overcome totalitarian past' (ibid). An example of an issue stemming from the totalitarian past is:

> consequences of deformation of the social structure we see today in the power-citizen relations and personal relations when we encounter a lack of individual initiative to overcome problems and inflated expectations towards power (paternalism). The connection of these factors results in an

> expectation of a "strong hand", which in the end led to increasing authoritarian tendencies. (ibid)

To cure such socially ingrained paternalism, one has to apply reforms that will push people to take more individual responsibility:

> The process of becoming accustomed to responsibility, such as refusing social support of the state, which was the legacy of the Soviet Union, has continued for too long. If it happened faster, society would react to change much better. But now, all of us ended up in a difficult economic situation. Nonetheless, I'm convinced that unpopular reforms teach people certain responsibility. (ibid)

Consequently, a sequence is built. The history of national suppression results in social deformation today that has to be set right by removing the deformation via reform that will teach citizenry to be more responsible, to show individual initiative, and be independent, and hence strengthen the state. These reforms should aim to elevate national memory and present the correct version of the national past at the deepest level. This soon materialised in controversial 'decommunisation laws' aimed at regulating which symbols are allowed to be publicly displayed and how specific themes and personalities from 20th century history ought to be treated. To the joy of Portnikov (in Espresso.TV., 2015a): 'Finally we have a law on decommunisation, our most important reform, a reform of moral consciousness'. Other ways of strengthening the citizen and strengthening the state are offered as well: 'What we need to implement fundamental economic reform, eliminate all regulatory functions from government officials who slow down development of businesses' (Portnikov in UKRLIFE.TV,2014, 53:00-53:12); 'All efforts should be concentrated on creation of rule of law, which we never had and still don't have' (Ryabchuk, in Espresso.TV, 2015, 21:55). Taken separately, the last two statements could easily fit into a more liberal narrative. Their embeddedness into national conservative discourse highlights how they connected to a more restrictive subjectivity.

Subjectivity

Voices from the national conservative strand see it as their primary task to crystallise the clearest possible boundaries for 'Ukrainianess'. Identity that was underdefined for a long time, under suspicion or threat from imperial rulers and political competitors, now finds its voices among the literary intellectuals who serve as guardians of the language, fighting for its cultural prestige, as well as 'national entrepreneurs' of various kinds who see an opportunity to ride the intense wave of emotion that comes with identitarian discourse.

Shoring up national identity in the minds of Ukrainians, who are suffering from ambivalence and insufficient loyalty triggers attempts to filter out all the impurities from 'Ukrainianess', and overcome uncomfortable presence of the 'other'. In this view, society's problems originate from insufficient separation of the truly Ukrainian from the 'other'. The difficulty is that the 'other' exists within the country, most evidently in the regions like Donbass and Crimea that do not accept the clear ethno-centric nation-state line. Still, even more challenging, the 'other' exists within every person as the mental structure inherited from Soviet time. It is this ambiguity that ought to be overcome to break through to freedom, the rule of law, and Europe. Politically, this means aiming for a maximum overlap between the unambiguously ethnocultural Ukrainian and the political organisation.

With regards to the complexity of Ukraine as it is, Yurii Andrukhovych, one of the best-known modern Ukrainian writers has the following to say: 'Ukraine continues to be a constant attempt of unnatural combinations' (Andrukhovych, 2015). By 2015 attempts to find compromises were taken by Andrukhovych to be self-defeating: trying to be 'here and there' made Ukraine into a 'deviant with unclear orientation' (ibid). Search for compromises and reconciliation is then nothing more than futile attempts of 'combination of what cannot be combined' (ibid).

Themes of unnaturalness, quasi-biological incompatibility between Ukrainian national material, and elements clashing with it structure the discourse. A prime example of such a clash that obstructs social development is the presence of Donbass as part of the Ukrainian state. Its lack of patriotism explains the conflict in the East and the preceding crisis[77]. Solving the issue requires deep interventions into local foundations: 'People in Donbass should be rescued by military force and urgent top-down implementation of new norms of existence, and elementary civil (including economic) freedoms' (Andrukhovych, 2015a). Andrukhovych accepts a possibility that people of Donbass could have evolved themselves into more loyal Ukrainians, though ultimately he sees a structural flaw preventing such a happy outcome:

> It is completely possible that by starting his hybrid war, Putin beat us by 10-15 years. Exactly in this period, there could have formed a critical mass of a generation of freer people who would be predominantly loyal towards Ukraine. But it is also possible that it would not have formed. Because the local feudal fifth column, which in 2010 became central power, was opposed to such a formation of a freer generation. (Andrukhovych, 2015a)

The way things stood in 2015, attempts for dialogue and consensus were plainly dangerous for Andrukhovych:

[77] Pre-Maidan Government was dominated by people originating from Donbass

> But now, of course the situation was pushed into a much more harsh current, with crimes against humanity for example. And if, in favour of some ethereal "understanding" and "reconciliation", just as ethereal "territorial integrity" all these crimes will be left unpunished out of the goodwill of Kyiv and all of us, this will become the most disastrous defeat of Ukraine. (Andrukhovych, 2015a)

An even more clear division is evident in the writings of Olexandr Boychenko. He himself referred to his angle as 'Huntingtonian' (Boychenko, 2015), meaning theories of Samuel Huntington, who famously posited the 'clash of civilisation' as the principle of future global divisions. Huntington mentions Ukraine as an example of a country divided between Eastern orthodox civilization and Western Catholic one (Huntington, 1993). In Boychenko's reading, Ukrainian reality confirms Huntington's theory. Consequently, the wisest thing to do it to admit civilisational incompatibility and adversarial reality. Donbass specifically appears as an alien element in the national body and hence a burden: 'Either Donbass or reform and Europe […] we really need peace for the kind of reform of the country that Maidan demanded. The trouble is that with such "special" Donbass hanging around our neck, we will not get neither peace nor reform' (Boychenko, 2014).

Before institutional reform can be undertaken, society has to deal with the issue of inferior inhabitants of civilisationally compromised parts of Ukraine: 'If we want to keep Donbass and Crimea within Ukrainian borders, we have to consider the opinions of the population of these regions, however mentally inferior it, in its overwhelming majority, is' (Boychenko, 2014a).

In post-Maidan Ukraine, everyone has to pledge loyalty to and comply with the single, non-ambiguous identity and direction of development:

> […] Those who want to stay in Ukraine have to make peace with its unitary constitution, with one state language (of course in connection with guaranteed protection of all minority languages) and with slogans "away from Moscow" and "For EU and NATO". (ibid)

Boychenko further follows with a realpolitik argumentation: 'Actually, it is not so important whether Huntington is correct in his division of the world into separate civilisations. What does matter is that politicians-practitioners from the West (to varying extent, openly or clandestinely) agree with Huntington' (2015).

Clear cultural divisions, clear civilisational choices, clear political alignments: the world appears in these interpretations as straightforwardly divisible and ought to be managed accordingly. Elements that do not fit the grid have to be made to do so: 'Ukraine gave two mutually exclusive answers, which testify that one, a probably bigger part of Ukraine belongs to the West, while the other to "russkiy mir"' (ibid). And further: 'So long as Donbass or

any other civilisational alien part stays in Ukraine, so long will the West perceive Ukraine as alien. And so, Ukraine will not have a chance for free development and formation of its own identity' (Ibid). Putting forward a similar point, with his characteristic emotional emphasis, Vitaliy Portnikov said: 'Ukraine has to be where Ukrainians are: where there are no Ukrainians. You'll get God knows what' (Portnikov in UKRLIFE.TV., 2014, 22:10).

Throughout the national-conservative discourse, there is a clear hierarchy of national 'worthiness': 'Ukrainian political nation was so far confined to the West and the centre, while the East […] was the realm of Anti-Maidan and indifference […] now these borders widened towards the Eastern regions of the country'. (Portnikov in UKRLIFE.TV., 2014, 2:00-2:53). Here, the genuine Ukrainian life originates from Western Ukraine and gradually expands through the territory eastwards until it encounters a civilisational border. The conflict in the East is then about defining that border of Ukrainian subjectivity. Does it go all the way to the official Eastern borders? Does it stop at Donbass or Dnieper? One way or another, Eastern and Southern regions are suspected of disloyalty and must be taught to be Ukrainian.

The ultimate enemy of this subjectivity is, of course Russia. The theme of Russia as an evil empire, not surprisingly given its involvement in the war in the East of Ukraine, dominated the discourse between 2014-2016. Russia served here as a negative reference point. National conservatives competed in devising the most biting rejections of Russia. For example, writer Taras Prohasko referred to it as a 'virus, imprinted in your genetic code' (2015). This virus spreads by: 'disrespecting anything that wants to be better, that believes in morals, in humanity, in shame' (ibid). Many referred to it as 'failed state' (Zabuzhko, in Klymenko, 2016) in response to the same accusation mounted towards Ukraine by Russian propaganda. A favourite theme at the time was to foresee the rapid disintegration of Russia. Nearly all commentators imagined this to be imminent. Portnikov: 'Our national security lies in the disappearance of the main threat at the northern border" (in UKRLIFE.TV., 2014, 25:00). Portnikov then foretold how in the upcoming event of violent disintegration of Russia, Ukrainians would have to protect some Russian cities as part of a peace-keeping mission. (ibid, 59:45-59:56).

The source of the national subjectivity is, of course, history, which 'same as an individual, nations carry their history like a snail carries its shell' (Zabuzhko, in Hruslinska, 2014).

A typical Ukrainian preoccupation with the quality of the political elite hence also gets a historicist explanation. The currently existing elite do not pass for the true national elite. History contains a tragic answer: 'Our elite were lost in the catastrophe of 1930-1934' (Zabuzhko, 2015). The existing elite is from a 'broken generation' of post-genocidal Ukraine (Zabuzhko in Hruslinska,

2014, also Vyatrovych, 2014) and hence represent nothing more than a 'Ukrainian subsidiary' of true masters living in Moscow (Zabuzhko, 2015). They are mere 'half-colonial political elites' (ibid).

The actual subjectivity has a somewhat mystical quality that comes from being local and feeling it. In the reading of Zabuzhko (2015):

> Special contract exists in Ukraine that governs relationship between people and power. The force of this contract lies in its implicitness as it isn't written down anywhere. To follow it, one has to feel it - to be local, rooted […] it works indiscriminately, regardless whether you known it or not, like laws of physics […] politicians lose when they ignore this contract - meaning if they ignore Ukrainian subjectivity

Subjectivity hence grows out of deeply historical fabric, found locally, access to which is granted by roots and feeling. It creates unseen connections between people, who become a collective national subject in their shared rootedness. Of course, the trouble is that only a minority understands this, so the rest has to yet arrive at the right conclusion or be taught a lesson. A better arrangement can grow out of the present struggles:

> Putin's aggression prevents the realisation of the reform potential created by Maidan. This way, it holds back the development of our state. But, however paradoxical this is, precisely owing to this, the Ukrainian nation has reached yet unseen development. In this struggle, Ukrainians become a true nation. And this means we can sort out the state too. (Vyatrovych, 2014a)

In the national conservative discourse, the state is sacralised as the main form of national political subjectivity. The Ukrainian nation-state was the dream for centuries, which now, although formally realised, does not exactly fit the authentic national image. Hence the generally statist tendency of the national conservatives to solve historical, cultural, social issues via the logic and the toolkit of the state, which is simultaneously the end and the means, i.e. creates the state via top-down nationalising policies of the state. Therefore, a lot of rhetoric is dedicated to state-building, the fragility of the state, as well as the deficiency of the state. Ethnocentric nation-state is the objective and the source of prestige and pride.

Maidan offered another chance to correct prior deficiencies: 'Only now begins the process of building Ukrainian statehood […] Creation of the real European, democratic, Euro-Atlantic civilised state' (Portnikov in Espresso.TV., 2014).

Motifs

1. National conservative commentary tends to be communicated in a *didactic* fashion from the lofty heights of 'true knowledge'. The all-knowing voices alternate between wise, playful, confidence and sarcastic exasperation at the sight of pitiful shallowness of the objects of critique (masses, elites, foreigners, intellectuals who disagree): 'What brings tears to my eyes while observing the Ukrainian, so to speak, intellectual discourse, is the curious ability to voice correct premises in combination with pitiful inability to make conclusions out of them' (Boychenko, 2014b).

2. *Broad-stroke visions* of global geopolitics, where the centre-piece is Russia's inevitable collapse, were the favourite frame for public commentary of national conservatives in 2014-2016: 'Imminently a great reformatting must occur: the end of resource empire, which without a doubt, is already running aground. But the majority in the West still thinks it will be a great humanitarian catastrophe when it turns out that the truly failed state is Russia, not Ukraine—and tries to prevent this. This will happen sooner or later, still in our lifetime [namely] reformatting of inter-state alliances […] Now begins the phase that will last for a decade, when "sujets", which started possibly 300-400 years ago get activated' (Zabuzhko, in Klymenko, 2016).

3. Looking inside the country, the dominant theme of national conservatism, as laid out above, are civilisational incompatibilities of various parts of Ukraine, with a normative view that this heterogeneity has to be removed through top-down assimilation or formal political separation. This represents a motif of *'realism'*. The reality of civilisational divisions have to be recognised as natural and reflected politically: 'In today's world, Ukraine has only one true enemy: Russia. And only one true friend: Poland. The word "true" here doesn't imply love or hate for these countries as such but is dictated by their national interest' (Boychenko, 2014a).

   Normative conclusions should be derived directly out of such 'realism', while everything else is either devious malignancy, stupidity or naïveté: 'The West will not start helping us in earnest until it is clearly marked with a state border fault line between the two mutually exclusive worlds. Because one founded on clearly structured thought doesn't want to waste time, strength, and money to enculture the hopeless and "lawless" wild steppe' (Boychenko, 2015).

Concepts

There are three groups of concepts structuring the narrative:

1. *Concepts that explain the present-day deformity of Ukrainian society*. Chief among them is *colonialism***.** Its versions are postcolonial, half-colonial, post-totalitarian, and post-genocidal (Vyatrovych, 2014). They all refer to the ostensibly central fact of Ukrainian reality: the fact that Ukraine came out of the Soviet Union within which it existed as an oppressed colony within an *empire*. Before the Soviet Union, a similar colonial relationship existed within the Russian empire. The *post-colonial* condition of Ukraine helps explain the lack of institutions, culture, distorted social structure, and so on. Within the logic of post-colonialism, the present-day conflict with Russia acquires deeply historical dimensions as a conflict between neo-imperial reactionary power and the newly liberated former subject trying to emancipate itself. The direct antagonism between empire and nation draws clear borders between 'us' and 'other'. Clear loyalties and resulting groupings enable unambiguous judgements and prescriptive recipes.

2. *Concepts that explain ideology or values.* Here, there is a significant rhetorical overlap with liberalism. In fact, none of the intellectuals referenced in this text so far openly describe themselves as conservative. They would likely protest the label. Most seem to maintain to stand on realist positions above and beyond standard ideological divisions. Occasionally some actually refer to *liberalism*. Their system of political coordinates seems to be structured as follows: they differentiate themselves from post/neo-Soviet conservatism, radical nationalism, and anything leftist. This leaves some broad pragmatic liberalism as the ideology most consistent with being pro-Western. For example, Mykola Ryabchuk (2015 in Espresso.TV.) states: 'I as a consistent liberal (5:05) […] I consider that person is more important than the state or anything else […] Democracy without liberalism is ochlocracy (6:10)'. Through rhetoric alone this would qualify as liberalism. Putting this statement into the broader context of Ryabchuk's ideas (see analysis of 2016-2019 in this section) shows how liberal rhetoric ultimately works as part of a conservative narrative. Most actors analysed are concerned with *freedom, democracy,* and *citizenship*. But none of these values really stand on their own. They grow out of the fabric of national culture understood ethnically and existing through correspondingly ethnic forms. As an example, some statements from Volodymyr Vyatrovych: 'The Soviet Union nurtured a passive citizen, who was ready to trade their own freedom and possibilities to self-actualise for the sense of security. It was a citizen who did not want to take responsibility for their own life and for life of their family' (Vyatrovych, in Kozliuk, 2015). In contrast to this helpless Homo Sovieticus still dominating society today, Vyatrovych wishes the middle-class to drive democratisation: 'The middle class in any society - is the main engine of change in the direction of democratisation. These are independent people who

want freedom, are able to take initiative, ready for responsibility' (ibid). Again, this is the rhetoric of liberalism. If one combines this with Vyatrovych's radical drive to use the state for ethnisation of public space via 'decommunisation' (see above), language laws, politics of memory it becomes clear that such a responsible, free, active person must speak Ukrainian, reject everything remotely connected with the Soviet Union and Russia. The same goes for the future democratic society: membership in such a democracy will be regulated by ethnic loyalty, where conditions for admission are pre-defined accordingly.

3. *Concepts laying down structural elements for a better future society*. They are *state/statehood, nation, identity, and reform.* As already mentioned, the state is simultaneously the means and the ends. It is an instrument to create a more robust national subjectivity by cleaning out all the elements that stand in the way and a goal to bring due status to Ukraine as a nation on par with the western examples. The state ought to be cherished and protected as the ultimate insurance from subjugation and destruction by malign neighbours. Israel is mentioned frequently as an example. Nation rhetorically is often described as the 'political nation'. In the classical distinction between the ethnic nation, where homogenous ethnicity is the subject, versus political nation, where multiple ethnicities may come together to form subjectivity based on constitutional principles, the rhetorical emphasis on the latter seems to again place discourse analysed in a more liberal segment as opposed to conservative. Nonetheless, at closer inspection, it turns out that this political nation is premised on conditions that are ethnic in nature. Ryabchuk, for example, says that any political nation ultimately relies on an 'ethnocultural nucleus', so distinction into political versus ethnic is false to begin with (see section 3.1). And, of course, this political nation should exclude 'civilisationally alien' (see Boychenko above) elements. In other words, the political nation is a label, while the content is all but ethnic. Not surprising then, is the frequent occurrence of 'identity', with 'national' as a prefix. The fragility of identity coming out of the imperial past, demands it to be fortified with a total commitment on the part of the state, its protection, and systematic development. This is the condition for all kinds of reform. Until citizens of the country are clear on their national identity, cooperation and compliance with norms is not possible. Thus, long-term engineering is required to instil the national consciousness, as broadly as possible, via language, church, 'decommunisation' and only then socio-economic reforms. Here is another example of the co-existence of liberal rhetoric and conservative content:

> Reforms in Ukraine should not be for the West to give us money, but to remove the block on internal potential by opening internal floodgates and switching on internal social lifts: to breathe life into the machine which finalises its inertial rotations, same as the motherboard with a centre in Moscow. (Zabuzhko, 2015)

A break in normality

The typical element of surprise in the national conservative narrative is the 'I told you so' move. It is not characteristic of authors in this strand to doubt, admit mistakes, revise views, or enter into dialogue. Instead, they convey their points from the elevated position of superior insight, where nothing is surprising, but rather proves they were correct all along:

> […] I received confirmation that in 1994, writing my book, I was exactly right. Literature is always ahead of formal knowledge. But you know, it is a hell of a pleasant thing when strangers tell you how much quicker you were than all of them. (Zabuzhko, in Klymenko, 2016)

The intellectual imparts their wisdom to the uninitiated: 'Imminently a great reformatting must occur' (ibid). Armed with such confidence, things become clear and calculable. The past and current events are explained concerning 'historical processes' (ibid), where everything is natural, and as such, unsurprising:

> It is clear that one always wants more, but when you can't achieve two goals simultaneously, so you have to choose, which one is more important. Ideally, one would like to keep all territories and implement reforms required for integration into Europe. Unfortunately, sometimes - for example at this stage of our history - only one thing is possible: either Donbass or reforms and Europe. (Boychenko, 2014)

The emotive force of the unexpected (but of course expected by the intellectual) is evoked to straighten things out and prove that current problems are a natural stage on the way to national success: 'In this struggle, Ukrainians become a true nation' (Vyatrovych, 2014a).

Plot

The generalised plot of national conservative narrative has the shape of national teleology. I mean that history, events, and actions—including those which matter for reformation—are understood and presented as fitting into the model that sees an increase in national subjectivity as natural and necessary. The end-point is the assimilation of all Ukrainian citizens into a demarcated national subjectivity. Such teleology doesn't necessarily appear as the 'iron law of history' and the like. The more sophisticated end of the intellectual discourse takes care not to expose their views that challenge teleology directly:

> Usually, the Ukrainian narrative has unfolded like this. Ukrainians fell out of the historical process at some point. Still, such an approach means the positivist view regarding the historical process as a linear process, as seen in Hegel and Marx. This is a teleological vision of history, which has to unfold based on certain logic and plan. In principle, this model stays relevant, as this is how history is still primarily understood. But it doesn't cancel the fact that this is a simplified model. (Zabuzhko, in Hruslinska, 2014)

Hence, the teleological tendencies of Ukrainian national conservatives can be understood as either (1) metaphysically: as something necessitated by the logic of history itself; or (2) normatively: as a constructed approach necessitated by a desire for a specific way of life. In practical terms, the difference is minimal.

The plot can be expressed abstractly based on a model that applies to all justification narratives. It consists of four sequential elements: (1) Positing the subject that creates the normative conditions; (2) describing the dire consequences of disregarding the subject; (3) offering a way out; and (4) describing the end result achieved by correctly treating the subject.

In the case of Ukrainian national conservatism, the four elements possess the following content:

- The subject is the nation. Notwithstanding the insistence that ultimately, it is the individual that is most important by most intellectuals analysed in this work, realising individual freedom politically for them relies on a commitment to national subjectivity on the part of individuals. This national subjectivity exhibits liberal characteristics: anti-authoritarian, pro-democratic, and pro-Western. Its rootedness in local culture and radical separation from everything deemed foreign is a necessary condition to defend from illiberal, neo-imperial threats and internal challenges. In the strict insistence on pre-defined national subjectivity, that elevates ethnocentric characteristics of language and historical memory to the conditions of membership, national conservative discourse departs from individual freedom as paramount value. It sees subjectivity normatively through national history that demands compliance rather than a product of open discourse or possible social consensus. The normative conditions for realising such subjectivity are assimilation into or exclusion from a clear-cut national subject.

- The dire consequences of disregarding the normative conditions are observable in low quality of the elites, Donbass disloyalty, Crimea, many civilisational alien citizens across Ukraine (but mainly in the East), as well as the inability to reform the country along Western lines.

- The response to this should be a single-minded drive for nation-building through the top-down institution of national historical memory, language policy, assimilation or exclusion of those who do not follow ethnocentric ideals, concurrent institutional changes in the legal system, and an economy that builds off existing national solidarity and anticipates its further gradual increase.
- The future that beacons can be seen in Poland, where necessary nation-building steps occurred earlier. This included full membership into the Euro-Atlantic block, economic prosperity and freedom.

Selectivity

Selective filtering of sense and meaning is most evident in the national-conservative discourse when the virtues are assigned to the Ukrainian nation and its presumed civilisational home ('the West'). At the same time, the vices are unilaterally assigned to the civilisational enemy, Russia and the extent that Russia is present internally within Ukraine as cultural practices within the population. This is the infected tissue that ought to be amputated or cured. The view of the West as a normative value in itself ties the discourse to a particular version of the West: the Euro-Atlantic, monolithic West of the 'end of history' kind that should guard its ideological foundations and project its power confidently. The kind of West that questions such self-image is seen as confused, or decadent, in need of rejuvenation by the fresh perspective from the East (i.e. Ukraine).

2016-2019 - Flow of history and the new status quo

In what follows, I briefly summarise semantic shifts that occurred in other formal narrative elements in the second period under analysis: between 2016 and 2019.

The temporality of the national conservative is constituted by long historical continuities. Various intellectuals offer slightly different periodisations but what links them is a certain confidence of knowing the broad historical logic of how society evolves. Thus, specific events are never really surprising but rather unfold within a logic of national history.

Juriy Andrukhovych likes to refer to the history of Central-Eastern Europe (CEE) as an explanatory source for Ukraine's contemporary predicament (2017). The former Habsburg lands provide a cultural 'metatext' (Andrukhovych, 2019, p.67) for the geographically evolving area. Being Eastern means here an inevitable loneliness and exposure to harsh, cynical geopolitics that over more than a century determined destinies of the people

under the condition of ambivalence and 'in-betweenness'. This split personality turned to the free, democratic and prosperous West, and on the other side to the menacing, authoritarian, backward East. As history evolves, so does the geography of CEE. With the expansion of the EU at the beginning of 2000s, swathes of CEE land became 'normalised':

> Our Western neighbours, just as the Baltics were preparing to become 'normal' Europeans without any '-Central' or especially '-Eastern' qualification. On the other hand, Ukraine was forever left in the grey zone of the so-called post-soviet space. (Andrukhovych, 2017)

The countries' to the west of Ukraine suspension in the CEE was over:

> Ambivalence of being in-between disappears on all levels - from unification of landscapes to pragmatisation of mentality. Meanwhile, it is the consciousness of being between East and West that is foundational for CEE self-recognition. Recognition of the fact that you are something like road sign. (Ibid)

Ukraine's most recent history is an emotional roller-coaster according to Andrukhovych, where the moments of optimism or euphoria coming from democratic explosions such as Maidan are succeeded by disillusionment: 'Geopoetics of the large orange carnival overcame geopolitics […] turned out, Europe in its Bruxelles/ bureaucratic form doesn't want to become larger' (ibid). Today, the centre of Europe is Kharkiv. This is where the true cultural border lies. Everything to the West of it being obviously Western, while everything to the East is correspondingly alien and threatening. The centre is in-between in its ambivalence. The historical legacy stemming from the Habsburg world gradually moves eastwards by virtue of offering more freedom and more meaning. In its poetic appeal, it often overcomes the cynical geopolitics. The violent end of the 2014 Maidan is a signifier of the appearance of a new country: 'a tragedy, that one hopes is, in the end, optimistic', as the subsequent Russian aggression left only one choice: Europe (ibid). Hence, ambivalence is an existential threat and has to be eliminated. With such a deep connection between the aesthetic ideals sourced from a particular historical vision of the Habsburg world that provides the 'metatext', culture becomes the central battlefield where the forces of good gradually push the line of ambivalence eastwards.

> On that battlefield, the villain revealed itself in 2014. The enemy acts within its own historical continuity. 'Russkiy Mir (The Russian World) is a Stalinist project, possible only because there was so far no re-boot of historical narratives of 20th century, set at Yalta by the allies. (Zabuzhko, 2019)

Since we are located within a broad historical continuity where events, if not fully pre-determined by objective forces, unfold according to a specific path

dictated by the requirement of national development (i.e. national teleology may not be transcendental, but normatively constructed), this lends a certain distance to the ongoing events, to the noise of the everyday. The long-term forecasts can be given, where this general continuity is at work. The national conservative narrative relies on a model of historical development of nations, which lasts for centuries. Ukraine is understood to be returning to the beginning of that road. The nation has to be built step by step. The degree of development of the 'national consciousness' determines possibilities to reform.

Illuminating in this regard are the ideas of Mykola Ryabchuk. Ryabchuk's historical continuity sets off from the historical link to Poland: 'The foundation of the Ukrainian mentality was laid down in Rzeczpospolita – the aristocratic, noble republic that ingrained the instinct of freedom we now have […] and which is expressed through our various Maidans' (Ryabchuk in Channel 5, 2018, 9:49-10:11). History being the source of virtues, it is also the source of vices: ' […] it did not ingrain the "rule of law" consciousness […] existing within alien states Ukrainians distrusted governments […] This is still the case, though it is partly the state's fault, which didn't become the one people wanted' (ibid,10:11-10:40). This deficiency will take time to fix, which must be approached with a calm outlook rooted in the historical awareness that should counteract the infantile impatience predominating in the society: 'This took Europe centuries to build; we cannot do that in a couple of years. Many are impatient "we hoped, but in fact – nothing" - hence all of these constant insinuations about how bad everything is and how miserable we all are' (ibid, 10:43-11:08). All threats and ambivalence considered, the gradual progress observed over the last 25 years affords confidence: 'I think we will complete this journey' (ibid,12:15).

The post-2014 period leads still to a certain re-assessment of the nation-building process. Ryabchuk, has famously spoken of the 'two Ukraines' ever since the 90s. Most commonly, this was interpreted as civilisational division and conflict between Western-oriented and (post) Soviet Ukraines. In an interview to liberal philosopher Volodymyr Yermolenko given in 2019, Ryabchuk clarifies and builds off his prior analyses to interpret the present:

> The "Two Ukraines" was not meant to represent one progressive Western Ukraine and one regressive Soviet/post-Soviet East- and South Ukraine. I understand that any region and nation can be progressive; there are many variables. The metaphor was written in 1992, and my point was: I didn't see a fundamental difference between East- and West Ukraine. The difference is that it is one nation but at various stages of development and nation-building. My point was that West Ukraine was in more suitable historical circumstances and was able to go through phases of nation-

creation in the 19th century [78]. The Habsburg empire was more liberal. It allowed it to happen. According to the model of Miroslav Hroch the phases are: 1) the romantic infatuation with folkloric culture; 2) cultural dissemination and transmission from the narrow environment of the intelligentsia to the broader masses through education, culture, and theatre; and 3) political mobilisation and demands of autonomy or independence. All stateless people went through these stages in Europe. Galicia went through it and had formed the Ukrainian nation by the beginning of the 20th century. Interestingly, it did so using Dnieper ideas - Kozak, Rus myths. Elsewhere, this did not happen—it became repressed around the second stage. One has to understand that it is tougher for the East and South. So, my question was whether Dnieper Ukraine could quickly go through these stages. […] This original position was recalibrated based on criticism and reality which didn't develop that way. Catch-up as such didn't happen, but something else happened. In some sense, the Molorossian project became state-friendly and nationalised, so a second, alternative project appeared, as a counter-balance to the ethnocultural project of Galicia. This is also Ukrainian identity, but it did not position itself as 'other' versus Russia, as a regional project of the broader empire, as 'almost the same people' as per Putin […] So henceforth, I spoke about two projects. Two Ukrainian projects. (Ryabchuk, in Hromadske, 2019, 17:40 – 23:28)

Thus the movement of national history is set along two timelines and different political histories with two competing political projects. In the wake of Maidan, it transpired that both projects were nationwide, but they were in a long-term competition with each other. Resolution is still far away in the future. Nonetheless, clear state interests and national aspirations unambiguously point one way, even if the time scale is long, and one shouldn't expect swift success.

On the question of the future, Portnikov has following to say: 'In some measures we are behind contemporary Europe by 50-60 years' (Portnikov, 2019). Based on this, we need 20-30 years to be in Europe and about 50-60 years to modernise the consciousness (Portnikov in Vremya Politiki, 2019, 5:08-5-15). This is rooted in the notion of an objective historical process:

> I always believed that historical processes cannot be overcome or changed. Hence since childhood, I was convinced that Ukraine would be independent. I also realised that Ukrainian independence contains an ongoing conflict with Russia. I discovered that all attempts of Ukrainians to be between two worlds, the way we lived from 1991 to 2014, will anyway end with having to choose one world. (Portnikov, 2019)

The history works its magic, so:

[78] Czech historian and political scientist

> It doesn't depend on you and me whether Ukraine will be the way we want it to be. So I assure you: it will be! But it does depend on us whether we will see it with our own eyes, or time will decelerate to the extent that only our children and grandchildren will see it. (ibid)

Consequently, we act within a broad current of national history where intentional efforts only affect the speed of the movement. According to most intellectuals of the national conservative kind, such efforts should concentrate first of all on nation-building in the sphere of national identity.

Based on the text above, one can see differences between various intellectuals, some staunchly conservative on ethnocentric positions, while others are on a more liberal side. The more liberal conservatives speak a liberal language and, to a large extent, seem genuine in their commitment to the 'Liberal West'. What sets them apart from the National Liberal strand is the choice of means. According to them, the ends of liberal society can be achieved through nation-building, where, notwithstanding the claims of the political nation they are after, the terms of belonging are ethnocultural. Hence the narrative presents a national ethnocentrically-driven subjectivity. In a more liberal fashion, this goes as per Ryabchuk's logic outlined above. Similarly, Andrukhovych kept distance to rigid identitarianism:

> If identity is still important, then I want to represent the language. It is in many ways more important than the country, or to put it more moderately, is not less important than the country, especially when it is about understanding between people with the help of something written. (Andrukhovych, 2017a)

The strictly conservative version, as expressed by former president Viktor Yushenko, went as follows:

> To build the Ukrainian nation, to build a Ukrainian national consciousness, we have to go through politics of language, culture, memory, and national heroes and create a united Church. Then we'll get to smaller tasks, but they are resonant with this precondition. (2018, p.107)

In the national conservative narrative, subjectivity evolves within the logic of nation-building. The more conservative the angle, the more ethnocentric is the national subject:

> The Pole will never debate the question of the Polish language. But we are taught that one can live with two languages in terms of status. Or the discussion about Ukrainian Orthodoxy, where we are told that one can live with four national churches. But you cannot find that in Russia, Armenia, Georgia or Greece. (ibid, p. 104)

Therefore, questions of reform are subordinated to the question of unity that should supposedly be founded on narrow set of values to cement an organic

whole: '[Striving for] order, unity, integrity, to become consolidated organism. Because only the consolidated nation can set any objectives and achieve them' (ibid p.104). And, of course, the principal national value is language:

> The first place among the values of a nation is occupied by language. Language is the essence of everything national. […] Followed closely by culture. […] Third is memory. […] The fourth is the church. […] Then it is customs and traditions. All of this is the basis of national integration. (ibid, pp. 105-107)

Within the logic of nation-building, conservative commentators emphasised throughout 2016-2019 that nation-building is incomplete and has to continue with renewed force. For example, according to writer Yuri Vynnychuk: 'Language is the most important part of national identity, especially with regards to the significant Russification of Ukraine. Unfortunately, this national identity for many people hasn't yet formed' (Vynnychuk, 2019). And so, to form this identity, concerted efforts are needed, with the use of the state:

> Things like language are strategic, just as strategic as names of towns. I don't think that inhabitants of a town should decide its name because we know how these towns were populated in the last 100-300 years. These people cannot speak for these towns. It is laughable to listen to their reasons. (Vynnychuk, 2016)

The fact that some of these inhabitants speak Russian shows the regrettable socio-cultural deformity of Ukraine, which is inconsistent with the beacon of political culture, i.e Europe:

> All of Europe is mono-linguistic. I was in Switzerland. Nowhere in Geneva can you speak German. Same with French in Zürich. You may get understood a bit, but it's not like you go to a restaurant in Zurich and start speaking French. In Norway, there are two literary languages. But there is no TV channel where they would speak two languages. This does not exist anywhere—only we have it. (ibid)

This is a curious passage that very clearly articulates the rejection of cultural hybridity, which is present in all aforementioned countries. A clear separation and hierarchical ordering of cultural practice through an ethnocentric principle is the desired future state of affairs: 'The crisis of identity is our main problem. […] All economic transformations, fight against corruption, political changes will not have any meaning if Ukraine will not become Ukraine. If Ukrainian culture will not develop, if Ukrainian language will not win […] (Portnikov, 2017). Hence the formation of identity is the main goal of the state. It outweighs economic reform and fight against corruption' (Portnikov, 2018).

Here, one starts to notice the internal differences within the national-conservative camp again. The statist position that nation-building must be forcefully pushed top-down with the state power for a more robust Ukraine is one end of the spectrum. The more liberal end offers an abundance of liberal rhetoric and, individual representatives even identify as liberal (to the extent that they would probably reject the designation 'national conservative'). Their discourse is of liberal values, freedom, the rule of law, and the political nation. Yet, at closer inspection, the possibility of such values for them cannot be detached from the ethnocentric foundation that demarcates the scope for liberalism. Such a stance arises from the historical opposition between liberalism and former imperial masters: the Russian Empire and Soviet Union. This brings liberalism and national conservatism close to each other. To be liberal for a long time meant opposing the empire. To fight for national independence, at least since the post-Second World War settlement, meant to appeal to other free nations and universal values. A prime example of this kind of symbiosis is Mykola Ryabchuk, who calls himself a 'liberal nationalist' or 'Ukrainian cosmopolitan'. He maintains:

> I call myself liberal nationalist and Ukrainian cosmopolitan; I don't see the contradiction […] I would emphasise liberalism - these are absolute values on which modern civilisation is built, so the only perspective for the future is built around liberal values, but I'm a nationalist because many problems are not solved in the area of nation-building, they require our efforts. […] Once they are solved - nationalism becomes banal. […] A nation that develops normally doesn't realise its nationalism, because this nationalism exists on some basic micro-level […] such as a flag over the post office. […] But if something is wrong and people start waving it, this flag is a sign of mobilisation […] it awakes when there is danger. (Ryabchuk, in Hromadske, 2019, 42:00- 44:12)

Ryabchuk accepts that 'nations arise in two ways: either ethnically, out of respect to the language and culture (the so-called ethnonationalism) or politically - out of citizens' trust towards institutions. In the second case - people have to be proud of this state, government, parliament, courts […] If there is neither, than there is nothing to work with' (in Channel 5, 2017, 11:48-12:35). He also argues that:

> Each nation, even American, which is the best example of a political, civic nation, has its ethnocultural nucleus. In Ukraine, it is natural that this ethnocultural nucleus is Ukrainian, but it is inclusive and gives opportunity to different people to be and feel part of this nation. (Ryabchuk, in Channel 5, 2018, 2:58-3:17)

In the specific situation of 2016-2019, this stance forced Ryabchuk to clearly separate suspect citizens of Ukraine and exclude them from the nation: 'If we couldn't normalise, civilise, or Europeanise these regions in normal

conditions, how can we think we can do this during the war or after the war?' (Ryabchuk in Channel 5, 2017, 6:58-7:10). Hence a significant part of Ukrainian society is deeply suspicious: 'A third of Homo Sovieticus is a threat, especially in the context of war and media manipulation' (Ryabchuk in Channel 5, 2018, 14:00-14:10). Ultimately it is a kind of national loyalty that underlies any institutional trust, development, or reform:

> I argue that there are incontrovertible overarching values, irrespective of whether you are in opposition or not, such as feeling of patriotism and everything that comes with it: the respect of the state, of institutions, and respect of the law. (Ryabchuk, in Channel 5, 2018, 11:43-11:55)

In 2016-2019, the national subjectivity for the conservative intellectuals underwent significant strengthening under conditions of war and economic hardship. In their eyes, the nation matured:

> We realised in 2014 that we can deal with problems ourselves and that this is, by the way, an important factor to political maturity. Before the war, Ukrainians had not just an inferiority complex but actual external paternalism. It was the infantile hope for the foreign 'grown-up', some wise European, Shevchenko's 'German' who would come and explain everything to us who are small and dumb. And then it turned out we are not as small and dumb. We can give ourselves lessons in resistance, and they can learn some things from us. (Zabuzhko, 2019)

The boundaries between Ukrainian and the non-Ukrainian adjusted favourably for the Ukrainian. On the more conservative side, this was argued to be the direct consequence of war and concerted state effort, while on the more liberal side, more nuanced positions were offered. For Ryabchuk, as outlined above, two competing projects of Ukraine transpired. There was the preferred 'ethnocultural' one and an alternative one, the 'Malorossia'. This became national and pro-European and offered an 'Irish' option for Ukraine, but was still, on the one hand, carrying threats, while on the other - not viable on its own in the long run and had to further 'Ukrainianise' (in Hromadske, 2019). The more pessimist notes could be heard from another liberal representative of the national intelligentsia, Yurii Andrukhovych, who, while looking at the massive emigration of the young and bright wondered:

> We are left hoping that the future prosperous nation is born outside of the borders of our own country. Are such historical perversions possible? Why not? [How about] extra-territorial Ukraine that will consist out of millions of private "I's", well-adjusted, educated, prosperous and the main thing - free? In my opinion [this is] a promising theme for the renewed national project. (Andrukhovych, 2016)

The more pessimistic outlook also led Andrukhovych to interpret the coming to power of Volodymyr Zelenskiy in strictly negative terms as a return to the pre-Maidan situation:

> Project "Ze" is a muted version of the Party of Regions[79]: a quiet revanche of the old political professionals under the guise of "apolitical comic-neophyte".

Dmitriy Razumkov, one of the strategists of Zelenskiy's team, later to become Head of the Parliament, was honoured by Andrukhovych, who bestowed the title 'Soft-version of the unforgettable Tabachnyk'[80] for the reason that Razumkov suggested to 'bracket out of faith, language, and history'. (Andrukhovych, 2019a)

The 2019 change of power threatened the recently established, more ethnocentric status quo for the national conservatives. Therefore, they saw it strictly negatively: 'The forces that came to power now are obviously anti-Maidan, anti-national and anti-state' (Vynychuk, 2019).

In what follows, I briefly lay out other important semantic characteristics of the national conservative narrative between 2016 and 2019:

1. As was extensively shown above, the first priority for transformations and reforms, is the space of national identity. Hence, the sequences of arguments start from national identity. The slight departure from this can be observed among the more liberal representatives of national conservatism. For example, Mykola Ryabchuk, emphasised the primacy of the rule of law and that the importance of the reform of the state institutions to the advantage of the individual freedom. In the case of Ryabchuk, both ethnocentric and universalist strategies were pragmatically combined and articulated simultaneously, suggesting the mutual re-enforcement of national commitments and institutional reforms.

2. The conceptual framework used in the narrative suggests a grouping into two buckets:

   (1) The ethno-national core, where following concepts dominate:

   - *national identity* - defined through language, religion, local culture;
   - *colonialism*, which according to Ryabchuk, means 'the colonised are looking at themselves through the eyes of the colonisers' (Ryabchuk, in Hromadske, 2019, 40:10 – 40:15). Colonialism is a controversial term in Ukraine. Ryabchuk attempts to clarify:

[79] Dominant political party before the Maidan
[80] Dmytro Tabachnyk - notorious former Head of Presidential administration and deputy prime minister who is remembered by many as the chief Ukrainophobe

> I never said that Ukraine is entirely a colony […] but certain aspects, certain instruments of post-colonial analysis apply; admittedly, the most critical component absent is race […] but there is a component of domination. There is a centre that defines politics, the economy and culture. There is a periphery that doesn't have any voice. Moreover, Ukraine up until recently was presented through Russian sources, books, professors. The discourse is really Moscow-centric. (Ryabchuk, in Hromadske, 2019, 35:50-37:09)

- The word colonial and post-colonial gets thrown around in Ukrainian discourse a lot and without such a nuanced qualification as above by Ryabchuk's.
- *The nation*, the integrated nation, and national unity are all understood in ethnocentric terms, notwithstanding the rhetoric of the *political nation.*

(2) Liberal function (with statist tint) where following concepts dominate:

- *reforms* – most notably in the sphere of national memory such as ***"decommunisation"***, the pace of reform was on the whole positive;
- *private property, market***,** - all appeared as mechanisms to realise the desired social arrangements;
- *populism* - the chief threat to the positive trends in Ukraine owing to the general immaturity of the masses.

At the more liberal end of national conservatism – *the rule of law* was also an important concept, brought into the mix (e.g. Ryabchuk); The *state* as means and the end is a staple of national conservative discourse. It is, in a sense, more than simply a mechanism of organisation. It results from centuries-long national struggle, a symbol of prestige, an assurance of national freedom, as well as insurance against existential threats. For most intellectuals of this segment, the state is a guardian and promoter of national culture. Again, a more liberal stance of Ryabchuk is worth noting:

> We, first of all, have to answer what we consider the most important. Is it country for people or people for the country? Do we prioritise the interests of a person: their freedom, rights, and welfare? Or is it more abstract, like nation, state, or national idea. For me, as a liberal – the person is a priority […] Fighting for the state should be done to the extent it frees the individual. The state is just a tool—not the goal in itself. (Ryabchuk in Cahnnel 5, 2017, 5:37 – 6:24)

What, in my opinion, still ties Ryabchuk to the national conservative discourse is that 'freeing the individual' in his view has to happen via nation-building along ethnocultural lines.

3. The motifs and tones are generally communicated at the register of superior knowledge, which depending on the speaker, takes the form of *disappointed mentor, sarcastically upbeat seen-it-all,* and *professorially confident lecturer*. The following motifs are worth mentioning: the *European choice* as life and death, coupled with an unrequited love for Europe and the *messianic message* aimed to teach Europe their actual needs that are more clearly understood in Ukraine than in Brussels, Berlin, Paris and Rome. *Global political conflicts following Russian interests*: 'All of these local conflicts are connected and form, if you look closely, interesting map of "Gazprom interests" […]' (Zabuzhko, 2019). A hidden driver of all that's terrible happening around the world is nefarious Russian influence. Since everything connected to Russia is automatically rejected as extension of the enemy, the Russian language in Ukraine is an identifier of enemies too, whether they know it or not: '[…]Kurkov[81], whom I tenderly love and who is driven by good intentions, in fact leads a bunch of morons and useful idiots shouting: "We won't give away Russian language to Russia" […] They publicly voice absolutely illiterate stupidities' (Zabzuhko, 2019).

   Next, there is a *denigration of the masses* within Ukraine: Ukrainians are seen as children who continuously disappoint intellectuals who are akin to demanding parents. At the sharp end of such an attitude, one can see the social implications of national conservative normativity: 'There is a type of people who will never work. This fact doesn't change with the economic level of life in various countries. Some people do work, but don't want to change anything around them. They will always be dissatisfied' (Vynnychuk 2019a). Further: 'Empathy is an affliction that I don't want to ever experience. How can you empathise with a happy person?' (ibid). Transferring this attitude to present-day problems in Ukraine: 'There was an article about the impoverishment of pensioners. […] If there is no problem, we have to dream one up and nurture it like a little hamster. Nothing unites us as much as complaining, whinging, and cursing' (Vynnychuk, 2019b).

4. Symbols used in the national conservative narrative can be best understood while differentiating two groups as embodiments of (1) virtues and (2) vices. The first group includes the names from the pantheon of national heroes, especially those of the national poets who appear frequently. Of course, T.Shevchenko[82] is ever-present. Also

[81] Andrey Kurkov – the best-known contemporary Ukrainian writer who writes in Russian
[82] Taras Shevchenko (1812-1861) – the national Ukrainian poet

noteworthy is Ivan Franko, fittingly brought up by Yurii Andrukhovych (2016a), who stands on the more liberal end of the national conservative camp. Spatially, the Habsburg Empire and its modern descendant, Central Eastern Europe, is a spatial metaphor that lends historical depth and western anchoring for the Ukrainian national being. It is a pointed specification of 'Europe' that is normative, the 'monolinguistic' Europe (see Vynnychuk above), the Europe where everyone knows and respects their century-long history (see Zabuzhko above) and naturally exists within long historical continuity, not disturbed by external aggressions. The second group that contains symbolism around Ukraine's presumed post-colonial condition ranges from sarcastic 'Sovok', which is short-hand for everything Soviet from architecture to behaviour, meaning a small shovel; to questionable 'creole'. Ryabchuk first used it to describe sections of Ukrainian society that do not conform with ethnocentric conditions of brlonging. Ryabchuk recently tried to distance himself from biological connotations of the term:

> Based on the criticism of my colleagues, I corrected my prior radical view on the 'creole' concept. I might have essentialised it too much; I describe it as a homogeneous mass and imply negative connotation—true, I might be simplifying too much. But the problem remains. The question is how to articulate it. […] The term 'creole' I use carefully today […] I want to avid perception of it being pejorative as sometimes it is interpreted through the link to ethnicity or language. In fact, I meant something else: ideology, created by colonisers, that expresses itself through the denigration of aborigines - racism of sort. […] Arrogance [directed at the aborigines] is internalised by aborigines - who then become creoles. (Ryabchuk in Channel 5, 2017, 2:00-4:26)

Notwithstanding such constructivist distancing, 'creole' gets used casually by many in an overtly pejorative way (see Kyrychenko, 2018)

5. The main element of surprise in the storytelling of national conservatives lies in the insistence that regardless of temporary setbacks and hardships, within the overall flow of national history things are on track. Those who challenge lack of reform are weak in spirit. In fact, there are plenty of reformist achievements according to Vynnychuk:

> Decommunisation, medical, pension, education reforms, visa-free travel, and removal of dependencies on the Russian economy, even better - severing ties to Russian social networks, films, TV series, channels, books, renewal of combat-readiness of our army, Prozorro[83], support Ukrainian language in the media, automatic VAR

[83] Online system for government purchasing

reimbursement, the creation of NABU, NAZK[84] […] Is this not real? (Vynnychuk, 2018)

If the level of reforming at any particular moment corresponds to the level of development of national consciousness then there is no point in complaining about insufficient reform. One can further strengthen national identity via policies on language, culture, historical memory, church, and army. These efforts will eventually pay off in the institutional makeover of the state.

The more liberal the outlook, the less patience there is to wait for history to bring about the desired improvements. Hence, Yurii Andrukhovych looked at the trends of emigration of the young and wondered if there is a possibility of an 'extra-territorial Ukraine' as the new national project where the desired freedom can be finally actualised (2016). This ominous trend is signified for him also in the surprising observation that the Ukrainian language is losing its ground even in the Ukrainian ethnocultural stronghold of Galicia (Andrukhovych, 2019)

Summary

In summary, the national conservative narrative is about deep historical continuities that shape the national subject. The nation's success, including prospects of reformation, depends on how strong the national identity is. The historical development of a strong national identity sets the temporal scale, along which the nation progresses towards a higher level of maturity and national consciousness. Possibilities for institutional reform only reflect the state of national subject at any given moment. An increase in acceptance of ethnocentric values of language, national memory, religion (through the patriotic churches), expands the space of freedom and solidarity for those loyal to the right set values. Under this condition they can develop the necessary trust, respect to the state, recognition and respect of each other. The period between 2014 and 2019 saw a strengthening of national identity according to most national conservative intellectuals. The war, hardships, and traumas brought people together and let them discover their true friends and enemies. The state policies, language support, the particular reading of national memory, media censoring to exclude Russian, Russian-language or neo-Soviet content are hugely welcomed. The new, ethnocentric status quo established by 2019 is preferable to anything preceding it and should be further built on to promote deep transformations in culture and institutions. Threats come from anything that could weaken nation-building: Russian-

[84] National Anti-Corruption Bureau and National Agency on Corruption Prevention respectively - new organisations tasked with fighting corruption

language influence, and political novices gaining power in 2019 with questionable ethnic loyalties.

National Conservatism and Ukrainian political culture between 2014-2019

The version of political culture that the national conservative narrative offers, thereby influencing the development of the actual political culture, revolves around issues of national identity and history, both of which serve as sources of normativity.

1. **Normalisation**.

    - **Period 1** (2014-mid 2016). Maidan unblocked the natural flow of history. Ethnocentric values were normalised by war, existential danger, and state support. For the first time, Ukraine could genuinely boast a truly Ukrainian state.

    - **Period 2** (mid-2016 to mid-2019). Essentially, things were on track with multiple reforms proving a positive dynamic in national identity. Further transformations were restricted by the insufficient national commitments of the elite and broader masses. Regarding the presidential election of 2019, these threats increased and endangered the progress made since 2014. The question going forward is just how serious is the setback and how long will it take to go back to the natural national development.

2. **Historisation**.

    - **Period 1** (2014 to mid-2016). The centuries-long process of nation formation manifested itself spectacularly at the Maidan. Long continuities of national history were revealed and made their way into the consciousness of the Ukrainian people. Yet again, it was confirmed that national history is essentially a history of conflict with the imperialistic enemy that has to be fought first of all at the level of mental structures. The history is essentially an incremental increase in national awareness, mostly understood teleologically. Even if there is no objective historical process, it must be intentionally constructed via conscious effort, rooted in the national subject's will. National teleology can hence be constructed. In the model of history as a succession of stages, one has to go through necessary nation-building. Insufficient nation-building does not progress on to the next stage. If a delay or deviation occurs, the national subject has to come back later and re-enter the process at the point where the break occurred.

- **Period 2** (mid-2016 to mid-2019). There was no particular change in the historicising of the natural conservative narrative. Further details and nuance were added to actualise and highlight the historical continuities, where national liberation connects mid-19th century poets, 20th century fighters, dissidents, 21st century Maidans, contemporary reformers, and cultural crusaders. Fittingly, conservative intellectuals did not deviate from the notion of history as an inescapable continuity and, therefore, a source of normativity. The only thing that changed were time calculations: how long will the path to national subjectivity take. The anti-status quo trends manifesting themselves in 2019 might mean further delay.

3. **Pattern formation**.

- **Period 1** (2014 to mid-2016). The heterogeneity inherited from the cruel history of the 20th-century results in a socio-cultural ambivalence that poses an obstacle for development. This heterogeneity has to be reversed by setting clear boundaries within conditions of membership in the Ukrainian nation along the ethnic lines, and corresponding loyalty markers. Heterogeneity inherited from the Soviet past was imposed through unfair and evil imperial actions. The resurgence of the Ukrainian nation means to reversing this heterogeneity and re-engineering society through cultural assimilation. If that fails - via exclusion. This attitude can be broadly termed 'Huntingtonian', referring to Samuel Huntington's idea of the clash between civilisations (Hungtington, 1993).

- **Period 2** (mid-2016 to mid-2019). Essentially the same reading of the national layout persisted among unbendingly ethnocentric intellectuals. At a more liberal end of the spectrum, certain important nuances could be observed. Mykola Ryachuk relativised the strict civilisational divisions in the following way:

> […] The Malorossian project became state-friendly and in a sense nationalised. So a second, alternative project appeared, as a counter-balance to the ethnocultural project of Galicia; this is also Ukrainian identity, but one that did not position itself as 'other' versus Russia, a regional project of the broader empire, 'almost the same people' as per Putin […] Henceforth, I talked about two projects, I won't say which one is better, both can be successful, both can be European or retrograde, I can imagine 'fascisation' of the ethnocultural project, but even easier can imagine 'fascisation' of the Malorossian project. (Ryabchuk in Hrodmaske, 2019, 22:22-23:55)

This has the following consequences for the future: 'I still see possibility of two different projects: 1) Ukraine with certain Ukrainian ethnocultural nucleus; and 2) Ukraine something like Ireland' (ibid, 24:35-24:55). This once again highlights a telling specificity of many national conservatives in Ukraine. On the one hand, liberal rhetoric predominates. In the case of Ryabchuk, there is even a constructivist sub-plot: 'The issue with Huntington's civilisational clash is: no division is eternal; all these ideologies are constructed. I am not a primordialist' (ibid, 25:21-25:36). At the same time, there is an essentialist position that, for example equates the techniques of power deployed by Russian state propaganda with the real essences of all who willingly or unwillingly fall under its spell:

> Still, I also do not see anything wrong with saying to some people, "You think like Putin, you equate yourself with a reactionary, retrograde civilisation". I don't want to act as if they are the same as us, because they are not. Those people shooting at us at Donbass are not the same as us, I'm sorry. These are Putin's people, who belong to a different civilisation. (ibid, 24:40-26:07)

4. **We-identification**.

   - **Period 1** (2014 to mid-2016). The Ukrainian language and ethnocultural patriotism were forcefully promoted as the Ukrainian 'we' markers. The non-compliant ones were 'othered'. Even though references to the 'political nation' abounded, the condition of membership in the political nation was restricted ethnically, in a way that puts at least a third (according to Ryabchuk) of society outside of the collective subjectivity.

   - **Period 2** (mid-2016 to mid-2019). Again, the basic views on the 'we' characteristics did not change. On the one hand, the 'we' was strengthened by the new status quo, while on the other was once against threatened by the insufficiently Ukrainianised elites and masses.

5. **Normativation**.

   - **Period 1** (2014 to mid-2016). Within the national conservative narrative, history and resulting national identity are the sources of normativity. The valid reasons justifying actions revolve around consistency with historical continuities that have to serve the end of strengthening national identity (i.e. national subject), out of which everything else follows, including successful reforms. Hence 'decommunisation' is the prime example of the correct reform that

rightly targets the fabric of national subjectivity and aims to clean it up from pollutants. Reforms aimed at pluralism, on the other hand, weaken national identity and hence are less welcome. Economic reforms are argued to be good or bad concerning how well they map onto the national identity. For example, market reforms are welcome as they are assumed to match the natural propensities of Ukrainians. In contrast, constitutional reforms are suspicious because the parties involved in the determining the new constitutional arrangement would be insufficiently Ukrainian. A similar logic applies to democracy in general. There is a broad mass of Ukrainians who are either not Ukrainian enough or hopelessly infantile. Therefore, democratic processes are seen as problematic or even dangerous to national development, whether this concerned hypothetical referenda or actual outcomes of the 2019 presidential election.

- **Period 2** (mid-2016 to mid-2019). Again, sources of normativity did not change in the second period under investigation. The discourse acquired more detail and nuance owing to historically intense times since 2014. The national-historical normativity was more forcefully asserted due to the war and actions of the state. It acquired a more widespread legitimacy among society's expanded 'patriotic' segment. The threat from outside lent it some armour against questioning and ammunition against critics who could easily be portrayed as traitors.

This concludes the exposition of descriptive or 'normalising' (Beschorner & Hübscher, 2016) normativity. What remains is the *reflexive normativity* (ibid), meaning the evaluation of quality on national-conservative normativity in light of criteria taken to be the measure of legitimacy.

- **Reciprocity.** The national conservative narrative offers one 'correct' subjectivity of the national subject. While many intellectuals insist that this national subject is inclusive, this should be questioned. As laid out in the analysis above, there are steep entry barriers into the national collective subject that demands something quite impossible from a significant part of society: full acceptance of the ethnocentric views as foundational for the state, political and broadly social interaction. This narrows the inclusiveness of society. This topic is difficult because the proponents of national conservative views maintain the exact opposite. They maintain that they fight to expand subjectivity and wish to correct the historical injustice inflicted on Ukrainian citizens who were rendered voiceless by the former totalitarian masters. This is, to a large extent, true. Ethnic values were brutally suppressed during the time of the Soviet Union. After its collapse, the suspicion of Ukrainian national discourse persisted among the post-Soviet elites and masses. Old antagonisms were instrumentalised in new ways. The national voices thus operated from the

position of minority under threat. The events of 2014-2019 were understood as a clear continuation of the zero-sum-game conflict between irreconcilable civilisations where the Ukrainian nation is in the position of the historical victim that has the moral right to forcefully assert its claim over entire Ukraine through ethnisation, which is justified by violent history and universal validity of the national subject. The depth of divisions assumed by both sides created the kind of animosity that leaves little space for compromises. Therefore, national conservatives took a position of intransigence, where dialogue about the nation's content and compromises across the ethnic lines are seen as opening the door for the enemy to undermine the national project. Hence, those who do not exhibit the expected values must be converted through top-down policies. Moreover, those who refuse are invited to leave. The instruments of dialogue, consensus-building, and civil society are laughed off as the other side is too uncivilised and only understands the language of force. Therefore, one cannot speak of the principle of reciprocity being active in the national conservative discourse. People are mere ends for nationalising politics.

- **Generality**. The national conservative narrative presents ethnic values as general values. The access to them is open regardless of the origin and often things like race and sexual orientation (though differences exist between hardcore conservatives and more liberal wing). However, challenging the primacy of a specific reading of history, the Ukrainian language, and national memory automatically disqualifies anyone. Hence, at the level of values, national conservatives offer a homogenising project. In short, national conservative intellectuals see themselves as expanding and democratising the subjectivity by asserting the Ukrainian nation against suppressive neo-imperial forces, who aim to restrict it. In that drive, national conservative intellectuals over-extend the liberatory logic of nation-building to the self-defeating extent when a nation becomes a homogenising project of its own. Ethnic values do deserve representation and voice. As with all value-driven normativity, it is only justifiable to a particular group and cannot claim to be the basis for general political norms.

In conclusion, it is worth mentioning the tendency of most national conservative intellectuals to utilise liberal rhetoric once again. The linkage between the national project and the westernising reform is firmly established by the historical antagonism between the empire in the East and the nation trying to escape from it 'to the West'. The geo-political calculations and associated cultural models require a substantial overlap or even complete unity/entity between the Ukrainian nation and the West. Hence, especially on the liberal end of the national conservative milieu, the language consciously reflects these calculations. The disconnect between ends and means is what

still distinguishes a national conservative from a national liberal. Since the liberal values do not stand on their own, but are planted into an ethnocentric foundation, the means to achieve freedom and rule of law can be rather non-liberal. Take, for instance, statements like this:

> The Ukrainian nationalist is compelled by circumstance to be West-oriented, absorb the Western values and rhetoric and ultimately, behaviour […] nationalism is not a holistic ideology […] It can combine with anything else […] Mahatma Gandhi and Hitler were both nationalists. But they have nothing in common. (Ryabchuk, in Hromadske, 2019, 46:19-46:56)

Nationalism here appears to be a tool to achieve the liberal end. It appears as if, according to national conservative discourse, liberal values can only be actualised on a firm nationalist foundation. Nation-building is the instrument of liberalisation. This distinguishes the national conservative from the national liberal, for whom liberalisation is the instrument of liberalisation.

3.5.2.2 Neo-Soviet Conservatism

I call 'neo-Soviet conservatism' the narrative whose subject is the state that has direct continuity with the Soviet past. Associated with it is the state's promise to solve social and economic issues centrally and deep distrust and rejection of everything 'liberal' and 'Western'. This segment of the discourse is uniquely preoccupied with the problem of subjectivity. In the 'neo-Soviet' reading, political subjectivity equals statehood. The larger and stronger the state is, the higher Ukraine's subjectivity is. The state itself is the territory of both the most capable and robust elite opposed to democratic competition, which is at best a distraction and, at worst, a manipulative technique of the enemies of Ukrainian subjectivity—the West.

The 'neo' in 'neo-Soviet' highlights a particular shift in the early 2010s, especially visible after the Maidan. As an ideology, it does not aim to re-establish the Soviet Union. Instead, it emphasises that the Soviet Union is the source of state-centred rationality in Ukraine and in the post-Soviet space in general, which offers the best answers to the problems of society. While 'post-Soviet' refers to attitudes, behaviours, and structures that are direct products of the Soviet era—used to maintain the ad hoc, inertial social and political order cobbled together out of institutional and cultural remnants of the defunct system—neo-Soviet stands for the idea of a new system with an updated ideological framework, geopolitical, and institutional organisation that emphasises continuity with the Soviet period. At its root lies the unchangeable, completely objective geography that is deemed the determining factor of social organisation.

2014-2016 The West destroys Ukraine

Maidan was, in the opinion of a neo-Soviet brand of conservatives, 'a tragedy' (Tolochko in Ukrainskij Vybor, 2014, 4:45), an 'an armed coup' (ibid, 4:10), where 'one oligarchic elite succeeded another' (ibid, 5:00); indeed, a 'palace coup that strengthened oligarchic essence of the system as the result' (Djangirov, in TOPINFORM, 2014, 1:30). Most importantly, it was a tool to deprive Ukraine of subjectivity: a 'political project organised by the West and the Americans' (Tolochko in Ukrainskij Vybor, 2014, 1:50), where 'strings were being pulled from the American embassy' (ibid, 2:00). The idea that permeates this segment of political discourse is the nefarious 'West' and specifically 'the Americans', or more broadly: the forces of the global capital, are the puppet masters behind the Maidan events. Their chief intention was to force the subsequent harsh program of liberalising reform to deprive Ukrainians of subjectivity, i.e. weaken their statehood and consume their natural, financial and human resources.

Temporality

The time scale of the neo-Soviet narrative is short. Deeper factors such as geography and the resulting political economy which Neo-Soviet intellectuals take to be decisive in shaping societies, have much longer time scales. Still, they are not prominently featured in the public commentary. They are present as the fixed background, inevitably asserting their objective status and determining force. Instead, most attention is given to the current dynamics of power. Real power is defined by the amount of capital and how well it is organised. Hence, there is the following hierarchy: local Ukrainian oligarchs are at the bottom; then comes the Ukrainian state, followed by the IMF; finally, at the top, there is the USA, the main shareholder of the IMF. All these actors ultimately represent capital; hence the time horizon for the practical discourse is set by the capital seeking to assert its hegemony and expand. Therefore, little attention is given to the remote past, historical grievances and ethnic squabbles. For the Neo-Soviet thinkers, all of that belongs to the sphere of ideology leveraged by the capitalists to distract the population. Hard power of capital is what determines political reality. For example, the government posts are allocated based on oligarchic interest: 'Capital of the oligarchs is not proportionately represented in the cabinet, and consequently, new oligarchic consensus will be needed' (Djangirov in UKRLIFE.TV., 2015, 4:45). Similarly, policies of the government are merely serving the externally imposed agenda: 'Processes of change will start the moment IMF money shows up on the account' (ibid, 5:40).

The historical tracing of the issues of today typically stays with the 30 years after 1991. The broader temporal frame is the Soviet experience. Beyond that, the past typically appears as the source of archaism. The legacy of that past is something to be overcome: 'What is going on is also our fault. Each time something is created, we tear it apart' (Tolochko in Ukrainskij Vybor, 2014, 8:30). The Cossack past, celebrated by the Ukrainian patriots and even taken to be the foundational for Ukrainian statehood by many historians, in the Neo-Soviet reading appears as source of barbarism: 'Sich[85] was like Maidan today, it was the same kind of people then that didn't allow Ukraine to develop' (ibid, 9:20). Euromaidan of 2013 was therefore part of the continuity of barbarism and archaism: 'The main problem of Ukraine today is Maidan as political institution' (ibid, 10:35). For the cohort of intellectuals and commentators representing the neo-Soviet segment of the discourse, the Soviet period was a time of breakthrough, when archaic practices of the past were overcome or contained. In Maidan and subsequent reformism, they see the return of barbarism and dismantling of the hard-won achievements of the Soviet state and society.

Sequencing

When describing Ukraine's situation, the intellectuals of the neo-Soviet camp emphasise the downward trend that started from the Euromaidan and that becomes inexorably exacerbated by the malevolent reforms, the true meaning of which is the complete de-subjectification, de-industrialisation and degradation of Ukraine. This dour prediction applied to various spheres. Ideological pressure was set to increase: 'Censorship will strengthen, propaganda will strengthen (Djangirov in UKRLIFE.TV., 2015, 1:30). The economy was going to suffer: 'Unemployment will increase' (ibid, 2:05). Importantly, the burden will first of all fall on the most vulnerable: 'The logic of our reforms is that they are paid by the poor' (Djangirov in UKRLIFE.TV., 2014, 4:25). Most importantly, reformism is undermining the very statehood of Ukraine: 'There is a huge risk to the statehood of Ukraine. This reform program pushes towards the disintegration of the state' (Pogrebinksiy in UArgument, 2014, 3:00). The narrative sequence of Neo-Soviet conservatism is based on the hierarchy of economic power. True decision-making happens in the USA by large capital that controls the government and then is implemented through the networks of direct or indirect influence. Hence the Euromaidan was a staged event that triggered a more or less calculated chain of other events that ultimately serve the interests of the masters across the Atlantic as well as their affiliates, dependants and stooges. Reforms are but a

[85] Reference to the Zaporizhska Sich - a Ukrainian proto-state in 16-18th century organised by the cossacks. The historical connection between Sich and Euromaidan was celebrated and emphasised by the protestors in 2013-2014.

formalisation of their will. Neo-Soviet commentators, therefore, interpret any event or action within this framework: each reformist action is a step towards de-subjectification of Ukraine that leads to the ultimate disappearance of the state and, therefore Ukrainian society, culture, and way of life.

When it comes to the true interests of Ukrainians, and what must be done to fix the situation, this lies in reversing the trajectory. This means increasing subjectivity by strengthening the state. Any steps towards improvement are steps towards a more vital Ukrainian state that can be the only decision-making authority that determines the economic and political development of the country. Due to Maidan, so the Neo-Soviet story went, this authority resides with foreigners who only care about their financial interests.

Subjectivity

Subjectivity is critical to the neo-Soviet narrative. It is equated with the strength and size of the state. Due to its Bolshevik roots, true sovereignty, the ability to decide for oneself, the capability to solve social problems and develop culturally are all contingent on the scope and strength of the state. Sovereign state is the only force that can reign in the fragmented power of local oligarchic capital and resist the relentless pressure of global capital. In the wake of Euromaidan, the loss of central state power was taken as a tremendous blow. Djangirov spoke of the scale of subjectivity, consisting of (from weakest to strongest): 'territory, country, state' (Djangirov in TOPINFORM, 2014, 0:55), where Ukraine was currently below 'country' but not yet at the level of 'territory' (ibid, 1:00). Hence it now needs to return to being a 'country' and get closer to being a 'state' (ibid). The situation, however, was dire: 'We have now completely lost subjectivity' (ibid, 15:35). Solutions offered by the new authorities and their foreign allies to fix the situation would only further exacerbate it: 'The harsh program of reform pushed from outside is a major part of the agenda […] where is our economic subjectivity here?' (ibid, 16:20). The answer was clear: 'We don't have economic subjectivity; we completely depend on external trends' (ibid, 21:50). Thus Ukraine became an externally-managed entity without much of a say in managing its own affairs: 'The president listens to the main shareholder of the creditors […] so the real power today is located in the US embassy' (Djangirov in UKRLIFE.TV., 2015a, 7:50).

The scope of freedom for the true political subject—the state—is determined by geography: 'Our geopolitical choice is determined by the geographical, not civilisational parameters. Geography, in turn, determines economy. The economy depends on geography much more than it does on civilisational choice' (Djangirov in TOPINFORM, 2014, 52:20). If so, all the talk of the choice of Westernisation by liberals is misguided. This is because geography has already determined the path of economic development. Going against it

means going against the objective reality—it is destined for failure. Aligning with the West equals to the disappearance of Ukraine as all the material and human resources will be sucked out of it by the deliberately cruel reforms. Human capital is especially vulnerable to the misguided reformism: 'I follow the Marxist attitude: our primary treasure is our people. As opposed to nationalists who think the main treasure is the land and its resources (ibid, 51:00). The advances made during the Soviet period still sustain some level of social development, which comes under more and more pressure. The association agreement with the EU that liberals desired so much means that the fruits of labour of Ukrainian human capital will be enjoyed by the EU: 'We lost two-three generations of students, but still have a little bit of highly educated, not expensive work force. This is our resource. What we are signing with Europe[86] means this resource will work for Europe' (ibid, 51:40).

Motifs

The language of the neo-Soviets is full of sarcasm, cynicism, and condescension. It is peppered with piquant language, risqué jokes[87], and playful cruelty. The neo-Soviet commentators like to emphasise the absurdity of everything and laugh in response. Underlying the humour is a sense of certainty of knowing the source of absurdity. Politics and public discourse is a mere surface of the interests of the big capital. Anyone who believes what they hear from government officials, journalists, businesspeople, intellectuals are hopelessly naive. This all-knowing, condescending tone is constitutive of the neo-Soviet narrative. It is a language of veterans of late Soviet and post-Soviet political life, who saw systems unravel, elites destroyed and formed, and societies impoverished and transformed. Their conclusion from the various traumatic experiences is that world is cynical. To survive in it, one must be cynical too. Sarcasm is then a psychological coping mechanism that makes reality bearable. In response to the interviewer mentioning the fact that Russian banks are taking part in the Ukrainian Government's bond sales to support the war effort Djangirov shrugged: 'Come on, it's nothing personal. It's just business' (Djangirov in TOPINFORM, 2014, 24:50).

Break in normality

The element of surprise that constantly appears in the neo-Soviet narrative is the view that nothing is surprising. Since mainstream discourse is simply an

[86] Implying the EU-Ukraine association agreement was the original reason for the Euromaidan.
[87] Some of these jokes cross the line to the extent of not being directly quotable in this dissertation (see, Djangirov 2014 1 3:20)

ideological playing field to defend and expand the power of capital, everyone must be constantly reminded about the underlying harsh reality. These reminders may sound surprising or even shocking; however, the more shocking, the better it can help the ideologically blinded see what is really going on. In early 2015, Djangirov cheerfully stated the following about the conflict in the East of Ukraine:

> The war is over. Both sides are telling stories about the imminent advancement of the enemy. […] Look, since the time of Chapek[88], who said "the enemy's anti-aircraft guns brutally attacked our airplanes that peacefully bombed their cities", nothing new was invented in the sphere of propaganda. (Djangirov in UKRLIFE.TV., 2015, 0:15)

Concepts

Following concepts structure the neo-Soviet narrative:

1. *Subjectivity.* As mentioned, this concept is uniquely frequent in the neo-Soviet discourse. Subjectivity is understood first of all geopolitically and thus equated with the strength of the state. A strong state means the ability to decide what goes on inside the country and withstand malign foreign forces aiming to exploit it. Society and its different groups are too loose and weak. The true acting authority can only be the state. The state acts to counteract the forces of the local and (increasingly) global capital that has little use for Ukrainian autonomy, freedom and well-being of its people. There are different names for capital: oligarchs, IMF, USA, EU, corporations, and individuals representing these entities. Thus, there is a clear enemy that Ukraine as a subject (i.e. Ukrainian state) has to fight. After the Euromaidan, the enemies consolidated their power: '[The] current oligarchic consensus lies in accepting the program of IMF to reduce state budget at the expense of social programs instead of tax loopholes for the largest corporations' (Djangirov in TOPINFORM, 2014, 2:20). The only subject that can counteract this capitalist front is a sovereign state.

2. *Economy.* In line with Marxist roots, the neo-Soviet narrative is founded on the idea that social development is determined first by economic factors. More specifically: it depends on the distribution of economic power. The state has to control distribution of economic power in order to maintain own subjectivity, which otherwise would be undermined or even destroyed by a concentration of economic power by other capitalist actors. Instruments available to the state to regulate economic power are known: 'Tax the rich' (Djangirov in UKRLIFE.TV., 2014, 4:15); and 'Inflation is the most just tax because it equally affects the rich and the poor' (ibid, 4:50). Hence the state

[88] Czech writer Karel Chapek (1890-1938)

needs to establish economic subjectivity and protect it (geo)politically. Political and economic subjectivity are two sides of the same coin and depend on each other.

3. *Oligarchy* is the description of the Ukrainian political economy. The only force that could take on the oligarchy would be the state acting on behalf of the common interests of society. In reality, the state itself is controlled by the oligarchy. Elections and the distribution of government posts are the result of oligarchic consensus. Since consensus is unstable and oligarchic groups are fragmented in Ukraine, there is a semblance of political competition and rotation of elites. Whoever comes out on top and controls the state, even temporarily, amplifies their power to defend and grow their assets. Without the state power, an oligarch is exposed. In Ukraine, oligarchy and the state exist symbiotically: 'An oligarch is powerless against the state. He is an appointed oligarch. The state can always take back what the state has given them' (Djangirov in UKRLIFE.TV., 2015a, 0:02). Here Djangirov refers to the history of the Ukrainian oligarchy, which was famously and intentionally created in the time of President Kuchma (1994-2004), by the state giving away the assets to select groups and individuals to create the national class of capitalists. The irony of the situation is that the oligarchs, over time, started to dominate to the extent of determining who controlled the state, which created temptation by the incumbent to use the state to their advantage. Therein lies the reason why political power is contested in Ukraine to a much larger degree than in other post-Soviet countries. Case in point, the Maidan events staged by the oligarchs to justify ousting of the previous President: 'Why did other oligarchs not like the Yanukovych family? The family started to muscle-out more assets for themselves at the expense of what has been distributed before' (Djangirov in TOPINFORM, 2014, 6:00). Consequently, oligarchic consensus is what determines the shifts in power.

4. *State.* As mentioned above, the state is the only form of organisation that can counteract the oligarchy and capital so long as it acts not with an oligarchic interest in mind but according to the state interest. The notions of country, territory, society and various groups within it are all subsumed into the concept of a state that absorbs and focuses all its energy and directs it towards creating and defending subjectivity in geopolitical and economic spheres, which are two sides of the same coin. A state can represent the general will, the common interest by fighting off the interests of others, which in the present means the organised forms of capital acting through other states, international institutions, corporations.

5. *Ideology* as a critical concept is present throughout the neo-Soviet discourse. It serves as a tool of critique deployed to explain the behaviour of various actors. A great degree of analytical clarity and professed certainty is achieved by the Neo-Soviet intellectuals by interpreting the details as a manifestation of the whole. If society as a whole is structured by the logic of

capital, then political power follows capital. Behaviour of the major political actors such the President and oligarchs should be explained accordingly: 'The capital cannot incur losses because it is by definition oriented towards profit' (Djangirov in UKRLIFE.TV., 2015a, 6:10). Armed with such certainty, the intellectual treats the world as easily readable and predictable. The actions and opinions of others can be read in a correspondingly definitive way, ultimately rooted in the ruthlessness of the struggle for economic power. Ideology serves this struggle:

> European Machiavellianism means transparent cynicism: open manipulation with double standards and notions of national and economic interests. They talk about humanistic values or their own national interests depending on what is more profitable. […] Russia has a Byzantine approach, which is non-transparent cynicism: decisions are made based on a strange mixture of current interests and ideological messages (e.g. struggle for Ukraine in Russia is about avoiding expansion of NATO, as well as an increase in presidential ratings, patriotic sentiment, and discrediting liberal values). (Djangirov in TOPINFORM, 2014, 12:20-14:50)

Fittingly, the main agent of ideology is an economic institution, specifically, the IMF. This institution has its own ideology that has to be exposed: 'The postulate of the IMF is: market capitalism is what people do when no one disturbs them.' (ibid 19:36). This reductive view of people and society determines the lending policy towards Ukraine that undermines its subjectivity. The hegemonic objectives of the IMF should be therefore understood as geared towards destruction of states: 'Logic of IMF is: capitalistic market system is stable, while state is a source of distortions and crises. Hence the role of the state has to be reduced to that of a night-watchman' (ibid 18:20-18:50). In this reading, the ideology of IMF is then not even liberal in the original sense: 'IMF is only liberal in theory. IMF wants to equalise taxes […] but small businesses depend on simplified taxation' (ibid 17:00-17:50).

6. *Reform* is pervasively criticised in the Neo-Soviet strand of discourse. Reform is presented as a Trojan Horse designed for the take-over of the state and economy: 'Program of reform pushes towards the disintegration of the state' (Pogrebinskiy in UArgument, 2014, 3:00). In fact, reform itself is an ideological label, concealing an act of aggression towards Ukrainian subjectivity. It has little to do with institutional design, and more with destroying social welfare. In the logic of the Neo-Soviet narrative, reform is the 'program on budget expense cutting that looks like a report to IMF' (ibid, 1:40). Since the struggle for economic power is the permanent undercurrent of political processes, reform is one of the instruments used in this struggle against those who cannot defend themselves:

> Liberal reforms in a poor country are extremely unjust because they are paid by the poor. […] The rich do not pay for them. On the contrary, the point is that taxes are reduced, the other side of which is the cut of the social sphere. (Djangirov in UKRLIFE.TV., 2014, 0:00-0:20)

The dire circumstances the Ukrainian state found itself in 2014 meant the country was trapped in the never-ending circle of indebtedness that would arrest development, undermine subjectivity and disproportionately affect the economically weak: 'IMF loans are supposed to bridge, to cushion the hard times of reform, but in fact they are used to cover previous debts' (ibid, 0:48). Hence, regaining some subjectivity will require 'restructuring the debts' (ibid, 3:10)

Plot

Plot can be expressed abstractly based on a model that applies to all justification narratives. It consists of four sequential elements: (1) Positing the subject that creates the normative conditions; (2) describing the dire consequences of disregarding the subject; (3) offering a way out; and (4) describing the end result achieved by correctly treating the subject. In the case of neo-Soviet conservatism, the four elements acquire the following content:

1. The subject is the state that is co-extensive with country and society. The state is the culmination of social development. It is the only force that can defend the g common interest of all against the inevitable aggression from the side particular interests, embodied in the institutions and actors of global capital.
2. The events in Ukraine and the hardships of its people is what happens when the state is weakened by the local capitalists and external forces that use internal contradictions to solve their own problems. All sides ruthlessly exploit weaknesses and the weakest and poorest ultimately pay the cost.
3. The way out of this cruel situation is to assert the subjectivity of Ukraine through forceful actions of the state. This must be done in the economic sphere (debt restructuring), the geopolitical sphere (accept the objective reality of geographic location and balance East and West orientation), and the political sphere (strongest possible state-minded elite in power).
4. There is no shining utopia that awaits even in successfully applying the right solution. The award will be to decide on the essential issues for Ukraine inside of Ukraine. This means more economic justice for the broader society. When the dust settles, the normalisation of ties with Russia will occur, as dictated by geography.

Selectivity

The clarity and sense of certainty characterising the neo-Soviet narrative is achieved by disregarding a rather obvious elephant in the room. Connecting subjectivity that makes it possible to solve social issues to the strength of the state, intellectuals and commentators downplay the problems of the past, when the state was much more robust, but economic and social issues were nonetheless pervasive and arguably brought that system down. The further back one goes in the 30-year history of Ukrainian independence, the stronger the post-Soviet state becomes. Yet, few would say that things were much better. Looking even further back into the Soviet past, intellectuals naturally emphasised its positive aspects: the ostensible social equality, healthcare, and education. This is highly debatable. Even if one accepts certain achievements of the Soviet era, the repressive core of the totalitarian state, the large-scale social experiments, the re-engineering of ethnic compositions of Soviet republics, the economic backwardness, ideologisation of the humanities, the lack of reflexivity in the culture – all of this is worth considering while looking for a better future. Whatever new designs emerge, they have to directly account for what brought the old design down.

2016-2019 - Ukraine in the spiral of decline

In the second period analysed, the neo-Soviet narrative was defined by a tone of vindication. Commentators emphasised that their dire predictions had come true. No positive surprises occurred: the cynicism of the global capitalist order consigned Ukraine to the declining colonial periphery with a very dim prospect of ever recovering.

Temporality

Neo-Soviet intellectuals stayed firmly within the short time scale. Their discourse on the country's predicament continued to focus on the distribution of the economic power, which operates now. In fact, for them, the debate around cultural history has more to do with an ideology that conceals actual power struggles: 'The elites should make decisions for the concrete time frame with clear criteria of success. No decisions are made forever. You are being deceived when you are told about civilisational choice' (Djangirov in UKRLIFE.TV., 2017, 18:00).

When history did appear in the neo-Soviet language, it tended to refer to the better times of the Soviet Union: 'Sovok functioned as *care for the weak, work for the strong*, while the Jlobok works according to the principle: *the*

strong into slaves, the weak into coffins[89]' (Djangirov in UKRLIFE.TV., 2017a, 6:50).

Looking into the future, Ukraine approaches a breaking point by gradually degrading demographically and economically. In the near future, the ongoing processes of deindustrialisation and depopulation will erase remnants of subjectivity and complete the conversion of Ukraine into an externally managed territory: '[…] at the point when there is not enough manpower to support infrastructure of the country, the question of "effective owner" of the country will be raised' (ibid, 6:30). The conclusion that follows foresees the final take-over of Ukraine by foreigners, specifically: 'The Chinese will come to Ukraine' (ibid, 8:00).

An alternative, better future is possible under one condition: 'I want to see a Ukraine that returned its subjectivity' (Djangirov in UKRLIFE.TV., 2017, 7:58-28:30). However, external factors determine the conditions for this. Today's Ukraine is too weak to do anything. In case a robust and state-minded elite appears at the point when the political balance is shifting in Europe, that elite could attempt to break Ukraine out of its serf-like existence: 'Chance will appear again when conservative Europe wins over modern liberal Europe: The Europe of nations versus the Europe of regions. This conflict is ongoing and the outcome is not pre-determined, but Ukraine will have a chance to get back its subjectivity once there is a resolution (ibid, 10:00). Interestingly, Djangirov, who defines himself as Marxist, hopes to shift towards national conservatism in Europe. The true enemy is the liberal order that serves capitalism. National conservatism in Europe would shift the paradigm away from the concentration of power in the hands of international capital towards the national subjectivities. That would be the point when the chains of capital would loosen just enough to break away and carve out space for the Ukrainian subjectivity in its own right.

Looking for historical precedents, Djangirov spoke of two options on how the shift in economic power to the advantage of nations could occur: 'Countries rise either by ruthlessly kick-opening the doors for themselves like Japan and China did or thanks to some geopolitical fracture, like Switzerland or Sweden' (ibid, 1:25:00). Thus, Ukraine needs the determined, state-minded elite and a major geopolitical event akin to the Second World War. As far as the first of these two conditions is concerned, the Ukraine of 2019 was clearly the opposite. The change in political leadership in 2019 was merely another iteration in the oligarchic consensus coupled with the infantility of the Ukrainian electorate:

[89] The characteristically sarcastic tone is amplified by words like 'Sovok' - the colloquial short-hand for the Soviet Union that means a small shovel. 'Jlobok', an equivalent rhyming word that describes the post-Soviet degeneration by sounding close to 'jlob', a derogatory term that approximately means 'redneck' or 'simpleton'.

> The election of Zelenskiy is the continuation of the first part of the Maidan, when the youth came out to protest the EU decision. This was a wish of a good leader, who would do the right thing and lead towards Europe—but without nationalist excesses. (Pogrebinskiy in Perviy Kanal, 2019, 26:00)

Sequencing

The description of events and actions between 2016-2019 by neo-Soviet intellectuals followed a pattern of decline. Textually, this manifests itself through ordering the narrative elements into the sequence that highlights the decline. Since the Maidan of 2013-2014, external forces drive the inescapable process of destruction of Ukrainian subjectivity: 'We think we are moving according to the mainstream. In fact, we are moving downwards in a vortex' (Djangirov in Kapital, 2019 , 9:00). The socio-economic degradation leads towards destruction of the state and loss of the remaining subjectivity: 'Demographic and de-industrialising vortex is leading to the destruction of the state and infrastructure of life of the Ukrainian political nation inside Ukraine […] it now exists as a mere object' (Djangirov in UKRLIFE.TV., 2017a, 9:40).

The logic of decline and de-subjectification is the key to understanding all current events and actions. The drivers of decline are found externally. They follow the logic of increasing their own economic power: 'We live by the foreign demographic cycles. Poland and Eastern Europe, in general, solves its demographic issues with Ukrainians' (Djangirov in UKRLIFE.TV., 2017a, 5:10). The meaning of reformism is to facilitate the decline and de-subjectivation by establishing a vicious circle that serves external forces: 'Liberal reform is completely consistent: younger people are leaving, so pensions are falling, the state pension fund overall is reduced, which is a vicious circle that reduces the population' (ibid, 1:40).

Moving forward, the sequence ends with the complete disappearance of Ukraine. The dim possibility to prevent this lies in the radical rejection of liberal mainstream solutions. Escaping the vortex is possible only by a forceful push sideways (Djangirov in UKRLIFE.TV., 2017), that only a powerful elite could manage. It becomes more possible to succeed if the vortex itself is weakened, i.e. the liberal capitalist order is diminished in its Western stronghold by internal contradictions (see above the section on temporality).

Motifs

The sense of superior knowledge, condescension, and cynicism remained the favourite emotional mode of the neo-Soviet commentators. The absurdity and

cruelty of the world dominated by liberal capitalism required a proportionately acidic tone to expose its self-serving morality. Invoking the terrorist attack on the employees of the French satire magazine in 2017, Djangirov said: 'A life of one pervert from Charlie Hebdo is worth 100-200 Ukrainians' (Djangirov in UKRLIFE.TV., 2017b).

Acerbic sarcasm can be a useful tool for media attention. After all, a great deal of fun can be had at the expense of earnest reformers, who cheerfully stick to the liberal line: 'If you confuse of the light at the tip of the intestinal probe with the light at the end of the tunnel—you are in deep shit indeed' (Djangirov in Kapital, 2019, 15:09)

The serious tone appeared when it came to the plight of simple people: 'The bills are degrading people' (Pogrebinskiy in Perviy Kanal, 2019, 28:00). Since the state was weakened, the Ukrainian population suffered at the hands of those who control the state on behalf of international capital.

Subjectivity

Even more than in the first period analysed, subjectivity was the cornerstone of the critique by the neo-Soviet intellectuals. It was understood as the ability to relentlessly pursue own interests by fighting for separate economic power that benefits the highest number of citizens. Only a strong state dominated by a powerful elite is capable of that. Hence, the talk of historically-determined civilisational choice in line with the essence of local identity, which was a staple of post-Maidan national discourse, was antithetical to actual subjectivity: 'Choice of the path can be changed. This is what subjectivity is. The country and its elites can do it. We cannot choose once and forever. That is not subjectivity.' (Djangirov in UKRLIFE.TV., 2017).

As understood by the neo-Soviet intellectuals, Ukrainian subjectivity was undergoing a terminal decline. It enjoyed a better time before the liberal reforming started:

> Ukraine had subjectivity during the rule of President Kuchma[90]. That subjectivity was deficient, but there was space for manoeuvre, which consisted in multi-vector approach[91] […] decisions were made inside the country […] [Now] decisions about Ukraine's destiny are made outside of it. (ibid, 12:20)

Between 2004 and 2017, Ukraine was weakened to the point of becoming an amorphous object of others' interests: 'The model of Ukraine today is the

[90] 1994-2004

[91] Multi-vector approach meant balancing between the West and Russia as well as playing them off against each other.

"workforce reservoir". Conditions outside must be kept better than inside to stimulate emigration' (Djangirov in UKRLIFE.TV., 2017a). After the Maidan, Ukraine experienced de-population (ibid, 3:20). Continuing along the same path will lead to the formal transition of authority to another subject: 'Liberalism is very consistent: there is a notion of the effective owner. Ukrainians turned out to be ineffective owners of this land and its resources. So another effective owner will come' (ibid, 2:30).
The better future is possible if a better quality elite surfaces: 'I dream of an elite with subjectivity' (Djangirov in UKRLIFE.TV., 2017, 27:00). Whether Ukraine will be able to use future chances offered by political realignment in Europe 'will depend on whether the elites at that point possess subjectivity as opposed to now' (ibid, 11:50).

When it comes to historical culture and identity, the neo-Soviet narrative emphasised continuity with the Soviet-style polyethnic approach. 'Ukrainian' here contains two equally constitutive cultural parts: Russian and Ukrainian. Through this, it becomes a special case, a special kind of civilisation in its own right:

> I identify myself as a representative of Russian-Ukraine. Ukraine, in my opinion, was and stays a bi-cultural country. Russian-Ukraine is not Russia; it's a special part of the Russian world in a broad sense. Literature and the arts all have clear characteristics of Russian-Ukraine. Take, for example, literature from Odessa. It is not Petersburg's literature; it is part of Russian Ukraine. […] I do not think it should be part of Russia. It should be its own small civilisation, and it is good if it exists in symbiosis with Ukrainian-Ukraine. (Pogrebinskiy in Perviy Kanal, 2019, 1:00- 2:34)

Concepts

The same concepts stayed in use in the neo-Soviet narrative between 2016-2019 as compared to 2014-2016. Their usage became more pointed to the critique of the consequences of the events and reforms of those years. For example, *ideology* was used extensively as a critical tool: 'We live in a paradox. Ideologically conservative Ukraine follows the liberal-modern path, while clashing with conservative Europe (e.g. Poland). Ideology contradicts the path.' (Djangirov in UKRLIFE.TV., 2017, 14:30).

Speaking about the local specificities of ideological orientations, Pogrebinskiy noted that 'Liberals in Ukraine and Russia are more right-wing. […] They are anti-social'. (Pogrebinskiy in Perviy Kanal, 2019, 38:00). In his opinion, this represented a curious inversion of the meaning of liberalism: 'This is a completely opposite meaning of liberalism compared to the US, where it means 'left' (ibid, 39:00). This anti-social *liberalism* is mainstream

in Ukraine in his opinion. The change of the president in 2019 didn't change anything in that regard: 'Zelenskiy is that kind of liberal' (ibid).

There was a clear tendency of the neo-Soviet intellectuals to use the main concepts of the national-liberal and national-conservative discourses negatively. This served the purpose of critique of the post-Maidan reforms. For example, the notion of reform itself was a sign of the ongoing deliberate disassembling of the country: 'The fundamental national idea today is, "Save yourselves". […] The reforms are signalling exactly that' (Djangirov in UKRLIFE.TV., 2017, 1:23:20). Similarly, democracy is a false path according to the Neo-Soviets: 'Democracy is good in stable regimes. But when you have serious challenges, democracy doesn't work. It makes things worse. It brings power to completely incompetent people or authoritarians—as what happened in the 1930s' (Pogrebinskiy in Perviy Kanal, 2019, 13:00-13:30).

Indeed, subjectivity remained the supreme concept of the neo-Soviet narrative. The worldview offered by the narrative was that politics was about subjectivity embodied in the state: it can be stronger or weaker. Strengths ultimately depends on economic factors. Hence, *economic* subjectivity has to be created through politics. 'Subjectivity relies on the industrial sector, systems with high degree of labour differentiation, high scientific content, and a high level of education' (Djangirov in UKRLIFE.TV., 2017, 50:00-50:25). In this regard, the Soviet period looks like an achievement: 'Like it or not, the Soviet system ensured this pyramid of the division of labour. […] We now see the primitivisation of the Ukrainian economy' (ibid, 52:00-52.10). The decline of the industry is not compensated by anything new and pushes Ukrainians back in development. A popular argument regarding the booming IT industry in Ukraine was dismissed as yet another proof of the country turning into a resource colony: 'Ukraine has the highest number of programmers per capita worldwide, but they are not working for Ukraine's economy, they work as contractors' (ibid, 52:50). If so, the European integration of Ukrainians is succeeding, but not with Ukraine as a subject, but merely of some individuals. The path to clawing back subjectivity starts from dealing with the financial issue of debt, which is the main instrument of foreign interest: 'Without regaining subjectivity by refusing the debt-related burden, there is no way to get out of the vortex' (ibid, 1:24:20).

Neo-Soviet conservatism and Ukrainian political culture 2014-2019

The version of political culture that the neo-Soviet narrative offers, thereby influencing the development of this very political culture, revolves around the subjectivity embodied in the strong state that alone can protect its people.

1. **Normalisation**

- **Period 1** (2014 to mid-2016). The normality according to the Neo-Soviet logic was the pervasive cynicism rooted in the logic of economic power. This was a given state of the world overall. Ukrainians simply needed to be cynical to their own advantage. Instead, nationalist ideology, oligarchic interests and foreign influence erode the rationality of the state that protected its people, exacerbating the negative trend that dragged the country down and threatened its destruction. If a normal state of affairs meant having a stronger state, then the actual normality was weak and was getting weaker.

- **Period 2** (mid-2016 to mid-2019). The downward trend continued and acquired grotesque features. What had become normal was incompetence, ideological blindness, and perversion. The all-around degradation had the potential to lead to the eventual disappearance of the state and the country. The extent of the issue could now be measured demographically. De-population, deindustrialisation, pirimitivisation have become the norm. The escape from Ukraine as a life goal for individuals became normalised. Furthermore, normality weakened further.

2. **Historisation**.

   - **Period 1** (2014 to mid-2016). The political traditions of the Soviet past were disintegrating to the detriment of the broader social interest. Establishing new ones based on ostensible national history was an ideological camouflage for oligarchic and Western power games.

   - **Period 2** (mid-2016 to mid-2019). The negative trend of dissolution of political tradition continued.

3. **Pattern formation**

   - **Period 1** (2014 to mid-2016). The pattern of the political culture became increasingly fragmented as opposed to the needed robustness to sustain a strong state that should exist above any regional, ethnic, generational groups claiming special needs and interests.

   - **Period 2** (mid-2016 to mid-2019). The fragmentation continued.

4. **We-identification**

   - **Period 1** (2014 to mid-2016). The ‘we’ embodied in the state had all but ceased to exist. The kind of shared identity suggested by national conservative ideology became a mere distraction. Those who followed the siren call of nationalism or neoliberalism deserve to be denigrated. Their version of the ‘we’ also deserved to be criticised. The real ‘we’ with substance and future was preserved in some

pockets that survived under solid Soviet legacy (education, healthcare, some sectors of economy) was evaporating due to unbearable conditions brought about by liberal reformism.

- **Period 2** (mid-2016 to mid-2019). The sense of 'we' becomes hardly discernible. Beyond multiple layers of ideology, there is very little sense of shared interest left. The remnants of human capital are under pressure to leave due to a system designed to push them to emigrate. The complete disintegration of Ukraine as a coherent entity is in sight and can be seen in the demographic trends. The ultimate endpoint is the formal take-over of the country by foreigners.

5. **Normativation**

- **Period 1** (2014-mid 2016). The rampant cynicism of the global capitalist order left little space for the niceties of morality. The world was cynical, and whoever wanted to defend their interest should be cynical. Hence, the validity of reasons behind actions in the political sphere became relative to one's own interest. The highest level of enlightenment lay in understanding that the state is the only possible protector of the interests of the inhabitants of a country. Therefore, doing or saying something that touches the issues of politics, power, the economy had to be consistent with the understanding of the cynicism of the outside world and the objective of a vital state. Ukraine after Maidan was moving away from this normativity. It opted to trust the West as the fair guide and reduce the state.

- **Period 2** (mid-2016 to mid-2019). The same trend continued. The West was not helpful in any way but proceeded to de-subjectify Ukraine. The world was as cynical as ever, and people in power in Ukraine were a prime example of it. The only chance for a future was for a different elite to appear with subjectivity and return Ukraine's subjectivity through a forceful action away from foreign masters. Relativism and degenerate ways of West-dominated globalised capital that infected Ukraine could be counteracted by the clarity and objectivity of economic interests at the service of subjectivity. In striving to achieve these interests, the ends justify the means: reasons for action are determined by how they affect the goal of attaining subjectivity. If they serve this purpose, they are the right reasons.

This concludes the exposition of descriptive or 'normalising' (Beschorner & Hübscher, 2016) normativity. What remains is *reflexive normativity* (ibid), meaning an attempt to evaluate the quality of the neo-Soviet version of normativity in light of criteria taken to measure legitimacy.

- *Reciprocity.* The neo-Soviet narrative has little time for the subtleties of pluralism. The subjectivity resides with the state or with capital. Society is amorphous. Civil society is the instrument of the state or capital or is easily instrumentalised by them. Ethnic cultures are more or less matters of the past that shouldn't directly influence the way society is organised. The factor of ethnic cultures should be settled by acknowledging the bi-cultural makeup of Ukraine. In short, whatever parts one divides the Ukrainian society into, their interests are best served by the most vigorous possible state, controlled by the strongest possible elite. This pre-determined principle is not up for democratic debates. It is about the highest possible concentration of political and economic subjectivity to withstand capital pressure. The efficiently organised enemy requires an efficiently organised subject to resist it. Hence the neo-Soviet narrative justifies the pursuit of power based on strong convictions about the world. It offers a closed logic where goals of power justify means. As expected, it is easy to see that this is inconsistent with the principle of reciprocity that requires that no interests are pre-determined by someone else apart from those subject to the resulting order.

- *Generality.* Similarly, generality in the sense of basing the order on the norms acceptable to different value groups belonging to a polity is not considered in the neo-Soviet discourse. There is nothing to generalise since value-based communities are non-existent or represent some ideological fictions or decadent aberrations for the neo-Soviets. The discourse with civil society is not a discourse because there is no civil society. It is a mere agent of capital and foreign influence that must be counteracted. Following the logic of the neo-Soviet narrative, general norms are pre-determined by the imperative of the strong state. Hence, those norms will be generally valid, cementing the state as the only form of political subjectivity. The political culture consistent with such norms does not need broad discursive rationality. It requires power-centred elites and politically inert, economically productive masses.

3.6 Alternative narratives

In the previous sections, the central narratives of the Ukrainian political discourse were laid out in detail. Next, to complete the picture, three *alternative narratives*, which I identified during my discourse analysis will be briefly summarised. Alternative narratives are those that exist somewhat aside from the mainstream political discourse. *Nationalism* and *leftism* can be described as 'alternative' because they are both further away from the political centre than the other five main narratives. In addition, they are both discursively marginal (though in different ways and for different reasons). One other alternative narrative worth mentioning is *moderate conservatism*.

It can be considered an alternative narrative due to having a relatively small presence in the public discourse. The other two conservatisms—national and neo-Soviet—which are described in previous sections, dominate the conservative segment. Nonetheless, moderate conservatism is a potentially growing niche that could become more prominent in the future. In this brief summary the focus will be on the two most foundational structural elements of the narratives: subjectivity and temporality.

3.6.1. Nationalism

Colloquially, what is called nationalism is more akin to national conservatism. When various commentators decry the problem with nationalism in Ukraine, what they actually mean is the culturally homogenising tendencies of national conservatism. In this sense, nationalism is a characteristic of various political beliefs that involve the collective political subject 'nation' and the policies called to strengthen it. Hence, one can have nationalism embedded into various narratives (liberal, conservative, left) to a larger or smaller degree. To single out 'nationalism' into a separate narrative that exists on the same discursive plane as the other narratives, one has to find single out its specific subject. Nationalism is the narrative with a collective 'nation' subject at the centre. It is different from other narratives, such as national liberalism and national conservatism, due to a more primordial and monolithically collectivistic understanding of the nation. The status of the individual is subordinated to that of the collectivity is understood as a kind of familial kinship of blood relations:

> Nationalism is anti-egoism, where person believes there is more to the world besides oneself. In fact, you have close friends and a big family—your nation—which should feel like a common destiny, a common existence. I feel deeply that my future, the future of my child, is connected to my nation. That if the nation does well, then I will too. This is nationalism. (Biletskiy in V gostiah u Gordona, 2019)

It is important to note that Ukrainian nationalism has a strong social element. In fact, the social and national problems are treated as the same. Hence the nation and society are understood as completely overlapping. Society and nation should essentially be the same:

> But this feeling cannot be created in a country with a grave social divide. If we have a measles epidemic on one side, like in medieval ages, and on the other hand, others purchase expensive cars, what unity can exist among these people? (ibid)

The nation is rooted in ancient history, and its membership is defined by origin. Typically, this requires a blood connection. Ukrainian nationalism

leaders seem also to allow membership in the nation based on the commitment to their of versions culture and traditions of national collectivity: 'To be a Ukrainian nationalist today is to believe in values, not racial prejudice' (ibid). Nonetheless, while in national liberalism, the nation is a civic notion with a voluntary association of free individuals, in national conservatism, the nation is defined by the allegiance of individuals to language and ethnic culture. In nationalism, collectivity comes first. It arises from ancient history and gathers its force directly from attachment to the land, traditions, and mythology - whether based on direct origin or deliberate commitment. There is a strong tendency towards primordialism in nationalism. Depending on the version of nationalism, an outsider can join the national collective under total commitment to its cause—but the criteria for membership are fixed. Those who don't fit remain on the periphery and are seen as a potential threat: 'In 2014-2015, Germany, France, and England showed the world the consequences of the 'rejuvenation' of its own population, which is getting older by large quantities of immigrants, who belong to a different civilisational and religious culture' (Biletskiy in Piecyh, 2016). Even more forcefully than multiculturalism, anything to do with the rights of sexual minorities is rejected: 'The internal enemy kills the soul' said the leader of the Right Sector[92], Tarasenko, in reference to a LGBT pride event in Kyiv (Tarasenko, in Channel 5, 2018).

Consequently, the nationalists voiced a strong rejection of geopolitical blocs that clashed with the nationalist worldview. During the Maidan, the notorious right-wing movement 'Right Sector' emphasised that they are against Ukraine joining any political bloc as this, in their view, a comprise to the political subjectivity of the Ukrainian state regardless of which alliance it enters: 'The Right Sector is against Ukraine becoming part of the EU. We think Ukraine should be a subject, not an object of geopolitics. We are for non-bloc status. Furthermore, we are against NATO bases and against NATO membership' (Yarosh in LB.ua, 2014).

The head of the far-right 'National Corpus', Andriy Biletskiy, on the other hand, spoke of alternative esoteric geopolitical arrangements:

> Our idea is that we are neither East or West—we are "Intermarium", inter-sea, we are the Baltic-Black Sea community. Eastern Europe has a shared history, a difficult one as our neighbours also have. The history of Ukraine is closely linked with Belarus, Poland, and the Baltics. The creation of the Baltic-Black sea union, the core of which should be Ukraine and Poland. This mechanism will allow us to withstand external threats, such as the Eurasian monster: Russia. (Biletskiy in V gostiah u Gordona, 2019)

[92] Right Sector is a far-right organisation that emerged on the Maidan in 2013

The particularistic thrust of nationalism is also visible in the portrayal of ideology:

> One must separate Italian fascism from Hitler's National Socialism. Fascists did not care about questions of ethnicity. For fascism, the state is the most important thing. Then there is such an ideology as Ukrainian nationalism. In the modern version, it goes back to Mykola Mykhnovskiy, Konovaletz, Dontzov, Lypa, and Syborskiy. It is a purely Ukrainian movement, which does not have any connection to the European currents. Imagine blaming Ukrainians for what the Vikings did in Western Europe! (Yurchenko in Anatolij Sharij, 2018)

Another important feature of the nationalist discourse is that it often co-opts liberal rhetoric. For example, Oleg Tyagnybok, the head of the far-right party 'Svoboda', was one of the three leaders of the opposition at the time of Euromaidan. He used language hardly distinguishable from the liberal mainstream. He spoke of Europe, rights, and democracy:

> Our common victory will be a new power and a new European state. We are changing mentally already. Maybe we haven't yet reached what we demand, but psychologically there is already a different Ukraine. In the last couple of days, many ambassadors of European and world countries as well as ministers of foreign affairs, using the fact there is the OSCE meeting going on, the Maidan visit, and they are not scared to come here and solidarise with Ukrainian people in their struggle for human rights, for democracy. We will have a different society through a power reboot. Speaking of which, states are born through such struggle. (Tyagnybok, in VO 'Soboda', 2013)

Such rhetoric resonated with moderates. This once again underlines the need to distinguish rhetoric from discourse. The discourse indicates the actual objectives at hand. The nation has to create a state. Ukrainian state that existed hitherto was not Ukrainian. Only a struggle for a different society, a more Ukrainian society will bring about the right state. The kind of state imagined is:

> Our model of citizenship is "Sich"[93], the minimal cultural identity requirement for which you even get time to study things like the language, Christianity of those times. The main thing is the readiness to protect your

[93] Reference to the Zaporizhska Sich - a Ukrainian proto-state in 16-18th century organised by the cossacks. Note the opposite, negative view of the cultural meaning of Sich in the Neo-Soviet narrative (p.266)

country—even at the cost of your own blood. (Biletskiy in V gostiah u Gordona, 2019)

Thus, nationalism as identity can be learned but is still a matter of 'blood' commitment, which demands readiness to fight and die for the national collective. In short, 'nationalism' as a separate narrative is defined by the blood bonds between the primordial collectivity of the nation and an extended temporality that goes back to ancient history and mythology.

3.6.2 Leftism

I call the narratives 'leftist' when they share the notion of equality as a constitutive principle of subjectivity. There are numerous 'sub-plots' within the left narrative (Marxist, social-democratic, anarchist, socialist, communist, etc.); however, the specific analysis and comparison of these is beyond this work's scope. A high-level description is possible by aggregating them into a kind of meta-narrative, defined by the principle of equality. The subject of politics in the leftist narrative is a society composed of individuals that are equal in terms of their rights and hence entitled to an equal share of political subjectivity. This equal political subjectivity has to then translate into equal economic subjectivity. The various subplots differ according to the instruments proposed to achieve such equality. For example, the state's roles in executing the left's objectives are contested by the different strains of leftist thought. Thus, the Maidan events have since split the left.

The Marxist wing tended to be more critical. One vocal representative was a sociologist from Kyiv Volodymyr Ishenko. He attempted a balanced view, summarised in the following way in his article addressed to the left-wing intellectuals of the world: 'Support Ukrainians, but do not legitimise the far-right and discredited politicians'[94] (Ishenko, 2014). The balance Ishenko tried to strike was between people genuinely trying to fight for the right things on the one hand, while warning that their emotions and actions are being manipulated by the far right and oligarchic interests on the other. The protests were first of all naive: 'The majority of protesting Ukrainians coming to the rallies hope for a just, fair and democratic society even if naively connecting this hope to an idealised Europe' (ibid). There were many things about the Maidan that were dear to the left. The egalitarian thrust was inspiring:

> The level of civic self-organisation in the protest camp is impressive. The mass rallies bring hundreds of thousands of people not involved in any

[94] The article was a response to the letter signed by internationally well-known intellectuals in support of the protests, who in Ishenko's view were oversimplifying the situation and legitimising the reactionary elements within the protest movement.

> political parties or even civic organisations hoping to win fundamental change towards the European dream. (ibid)

On the other hand, the looseness of the movement meant that ultimately, no coherent new political subject was likely to emerge. The Marxists felt that a stronger political organisation was the condition for revolution. The emphasis was on organisational efficiency. In the absence of that, the victory of the Maidan would be a victory of questionable political actors:

> […] the only political representation of the protests are Ukraine's three main opposition parties: one of them is the far-right 'Svoboda', the other two (led by Arseniy Yatseniuk and Vitali Klitchko) are full of people who have already discredited themselves while being in power after the 'Orange Revolution' and are well-connected to some Ukrainian oligarchs. They have neither the intention nor the ability to seek socio-economic reform to the Ukrainian model of oligarchic neoliberal capitalism. If the Euromaidan succeeds, these same parties will come to power. Ignoring this fact and blindly celebrating any alternative to the corrupt and brutal regime is politically irresponsible. (ibid)

Furthermore, Ishenko brought attention to the partiality of support of the Maidan and the deep-seated divisions underlying it:

> Yet, Euromaidan is not a conflict between the Ukrainian government and society as a whole. Just before the start of the protests, Ukrainian society was almost evenly split between the proponents and opponents of the EU association agreement. In early November, the EU association and Customs Union with Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan each had the support of roughly 40% of Ukrainian citizens, while at the same time, many citizens supported both agreements simultaneously and others rejected both of them. (ibid)

Thus the principle of equality of the political (and consequently economic) subjectivity was only superficially addressed by the protests. Ishenko supported the revolt in principle, but not this specific form of it:

> The Ukrainian progressive grassroots movements and civic organisations really do need international support in defence of the urgent social-economic rights of impoverished Ukrainian citizens and in building their genuine political representation from below. But pathetic and superficial words about 'European values' and naive castle-in-the-air proposals for a Ukrainian 'Marshall Plan' at a time when the EU is unwilling and unable to help Greece and other Southern European economies in crisis are not helping them in any way. (ibid)

Analysing Ishenko's critique of Europe further clarifies the scepticism towards the pro-EU protest. In a different article, he noted the European left-leaning parties: 'Even if not all of them are tough Eurosceptics demanding the immediate exit from the EU, in any case, they radically oppose its original and unchanging neoliberal, racist, and imperialist content' (Ishenko, 2013). Thus, the existing 'neoliberal' Europe is to be rejected. The emancipatory promise is still there, but it lies in the very utopia of Europe that could produce something better:

> […] the utopia of "Europe" is at least a promise of a radical and large-scale breakthrough toward a better life for the majority, and at the same time, salvation from the demonised Mordor of the Customs Union. This very naive and barely conscious desire for radical changes drives the masses in Euromaidan not involved in political parties and civic organisations who "suddenly" burst into Ukrainian politics. (ibid)

In other words, the masses' desire for radical change is commendable; however, the direction and lack of political organisation of this desire destined it to failure. It is then not a breakthrough, but simply a symptom that Ukraine is at a particular historical stage as the struggle for a better future intensifies: 'The question is how we reconnect the dream of a revolutionary breakthrough to a fundamentally better society with a socialist agenda and left-wing political forces' (ibid).

The left was nevertheless present and active in the Maidan protests. In a speech to the British House of Commons in the left-wing activist Zakhar Popovych defended Maidan as a genuine social movement trying to address real socio-economic problems:

> […] the left was in the Maidan not as individuals, but with its own view, with its own program of social change. First of all, I want to emphasise: Euromaidan is a real mass popular and grassroots movement, a mobilisation of the public, and not some artificially created phenomenon. […] The demonstration consisted mostly of ordinary Kyivans, who were outraged by the arrogance of corrupt, inefficient, and greedy authorities. It was a demonstration against the government of oligarchs who robbed the Ukrainian people. The economic and political system of modern Ukraine, built by the oligarchs, is carefully adapted precisely to legalise this robbery, to make it as intensive and convenient as possible. (Popovych, 2014)

In this reading, the emancipatory content of Europe outweighs the neoliberal aberrations. Modifications to the EU-Ukraine association agreement aimed at defending economic subjectivity would make it a beneficial tool in the struggle for social justice:

> […] For most people in Ukraine, "Europe" means goodness and justice—first and foremost social justice! I met many workers and trade unionists on the Maidan. […] We demand a reform of the judiciary and the rule of law in our country. The Association Agreement includes a commitment to judicial reform, which is why we are demanding that the government sign it! That is why the left opposition also supported the association, but without signing a free trade agreement. The political part of the Association Agreement with the EU also contains several contradictory points. Still, in general, it can help us achieve greater democracy and freedom of thought in Ukraine, and help us to ensure the rule of law. (ibid)

The left activists insisted that the left agenda is something that all Ukrainians could sign off on, regardless of various divisions:

> […] And I want to emphasise that all ten items of the program of social change from the 'left opposition' generated sincere support and applause. In the hall of the Ukrainian House, there were people from Western Ukraine who considered themselves anti-communists and people from Eastern Ukraine who viewed themselves as anti-Bandera.[95]. Still, they all believe that social justice is needed! They all support a radical program of social lustration! The idea of social justice is the only idea that can unite Ukraine. (ibid)

Unsurprisingly, the anarchist arm of the left was more excited about the Maidan than the Marxist one: 'During the Maidan we all saw how powerful self-organisation and solidarity are, how quickly you can find support when you fight for justice and freedom. […] This system doesn't work. Anarchy works.' (Biletskiy, B., 2014)

The leftist discourse in the post-Maidan years concentrated on the critique of the 'neoliberal' reform program and 'nationalist' cultural agenda that countered the objectives of equality, social justice, and even Europe. The program of reform was misguided in the view of the left:

> "Ukraine needs radical economic reform!" The Ukrainian mass media frequently repeated this mantra. And we will not argue with them. It is badly needed indeed. But what sort of transformations should they be? The deregulation of economic activity? A reduced tax burden and number of inspections as foreign consultants and government officials advised? What this leads to is quite clear if you look carefully. The tax burden is already

[95] Stepan Bandera was a controversial west-Ukrainian nationalist leader in the Second World War.

> lower than European norms, but the European living standards are still far higher. Preserving the remnants of social standards and science-intensive production is, in our opinion, a consequence of the incomplete implementation of such ultra-market recommendations for Ukraine. It is time to question approaches to economic management alternative to neoliberal ones. (Kravchuk, 2015)

In the left's reading, neoliberalism and Ukrainian reformism wrapped into the language of 'rights', 'democracy', and 'freedom' are social warfare tools. Thus, the left's narrative strategy was to create an element of surprise by revealing where is being said and done by the reformers is not what it seems. There is a veil of ideology that concealed the truth. The texts of the left intellectuals are explicitly constructed to lift that veil. They show that reality is the opposite of neoliberal discourse: 'The Ukrainian Government presents the energy reform as creating an "effective energy market". But it serves the interests of wealthy asset owners at the expense of poor consumers' (Dutchak et al. 2018). This element of surprise is applied to counteract other common narratives of the all-knowing West:

> In Ukraine, there is an illusion that everything is different in the West. But the biggest difference is in the longer history of capitalism. The connections between governments and oligarchs are more nuanced and less obvious. We see the same violations of the democratic process, empty populism, and politicians' business interests. Large capital sponsors political parties, although there are some differences here. In Europe, there are certain restrictions, while in the USA there are none. The capital re-wrote the rules that govern society according to its own interests, but even those are often violated. **(**Yurchenko in Bidochko et al, 2019)

The temporality of left discourse is expressly short. Possibilities for action and change exist now. The social-economic problems that exist right 'now', require immediate action to achieve an immediate effect. History is needed to explain the inequality, but the actions to counteract it today are required today. Appeals to cultural history as an obstacle to political action today, or extending the timeline far into the future when today's action will finally bear fruit (characteristic of national conservatism and national liberalism), is a mere distraction, suspect of ideological manipulation. Looking back in history lifts the ideological fog and explains the social conflict's genesis. These aspects do have a longer timeline. To overcome it, one has to think and act now. Here is another example attempting to deconstruct neoliberal mythology by looking back at the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia:

> The main demands were of democracy, a rejection of violence, humanity and—what is extremely interesting—a better or more authentic version of

socialism. People in 1989 longed for democracy, which had to follow the dictum "never again about us without us". (Rykhetskiy & Fiala, 2014)

3.6.3 Moderate Conservatism

With moderate conservatism, I suggest a narrative with a meritocratic elite that is distanced from both nationalising conservatism and market-fundamentalism of liberism as its subject. This brand of conservatism expressly distances itself from 'national' and 'neo-Soviet' conservatisms, nationalism, and liberalism. This discursive thread represents a relatively small niche that became more visible relatively recently as an intellectual challenger to the dominant national conservatism. For that reason, I include a text from 2020 into the corpus as it clearly articulates ideas that were voiced already in 2014-2019, but started reaching wider audiences more recently. It is worthwhile to include this narrative into the analysis regardless of its niche status because I believe it could expand its reach and influence in the future.

The narrative offers tools of critique of the current situation in Ukraine that is seen as highly inadequate and on the wrong track. The most clearly-cut representative of the moderate conservatism in the public discourse is philosopher Andriy Baumeister. He, in parallel with teaching a the Shevchenko University in Kyiv, became increasingly visible on various YouTube channels and panel discussions in the second period under investigation (mid 2016-mid 2019). His criticism was addressed to the post-Maidan status quo:

> Let's take the Ukrainian right. What should they talk about? About the right to earn, the right to self-actualise. Instead, they follow leftist ideas. They talk about subsidies, state support, and new groups in society that should be supported. This is infantilism in the perception of the state as an institution that ostensibly should give you money, help and support. […] A person grows up only when they are responsible for their life and destiny. (Baumeister in Rafeyenko, 2016)

Consequently, the national conservatives and the nationalists and liberals are all guilty of leftist views that appease the broader masses' infantilism. Such poisonous leftism resides in the haphazardly constructed ideology that dominates in Ukraine: 'hybrid of liberalism and nationalism, that includes archaic world of the 19th century and attempts to throw away industrial Soviet past' (Baumeister in Kyrylenko, 2020). The central issue for Baumeister here is the artificiality and shortness of history underlying this construct. This set of ideas 'were not discussed and didn't have a long historic-cultural probation' (ibid). Hence the temporality of moderate conservatism is long in the sense of positing long continuities as a pre-

requisite for creating an agreeable order. Measured against this more extended scale, in Ukraine, there is a 'history of discontinuity' (ibid) that narrowed the scope to establish a more organic and natural order. At the same time, in Baumeister's criticism of the national discourse, he argued that: 'We shouldn't appeal to the "long history", and search for the profound reasons why everything isn't right today' (ibid). While long continuities determine who we are as a society, but one shouldn't rely on them when trying to change things in the present moment.

A positive shift can occur when 'people come to power who did something in their lives apart from getting rich in a questionable way[96]' (Baumeister in Rafeyenko, 2016). While earning money may be an acceptable life goal for an independent and self-sufficient citizenry, post-Soviet capitalism legitimised the 'questionable way' of doing it. The politics of post-Soviet Ukraine, with its wild capitalism as the driving force, is less like politics and more like 'biology' (ibid). This has to change by having different kind of elite running things.

The difference between moderate conservatism and national conservatism is most obvious in its treatment of the issue of colonialism:

> I do not like the musings about colonialism. For me, the question is open whether Ukraine was a colony. I'm not too fond of the statements about the lack of statehood because most countries did not have statehood in Europe. […] I do not share the thinking about the status of the victim. We made up an excuse, appealing to history, which we constructed just now. We say our problems are due to us being victims of large empires. Since we were victims, we couldn't succeed, because we were not allowed to. […] We should destroy this myth. (Baumeister in Kyrylenko, 2020)

All the 'national' narratives either expressly rely on the concept of colonialism as an explanation of all that goes wrong in Ukraine (e.g. national conservatism) or struggle to reconcile it with some version of progressivism (e.g. national liberalism). Moderate conservatism rejects the whole premise. The critique goes something like this: 'I contend that we made our identity too narrow.' (ibid). In fact Ukrainian identities are far more diverse:

> We can travel from the Zhytomyr region, where local geniuses and cultural worlds exist. For example, in Berdychiv, you have Carmelites, Grossman, Josef Conrad. In Zhytomyr, they have their own, so too in Volyn, Galicia, and Kyiv. These are different worlds. The world of culture and literature in Odessa is an entirely different world. Instead, we say: this isn't ours, that

[96] 'Getting rich in a questionable way' refers of course to the existing Ukrainian elites, that relied too heavily on the state as the source of assets and protection.

> isn't ours and none of it has anything to do with us. Ours is just this little piece. (ibid)

The same problem appears in identitarian reductionism if one expands the lens beyond the borders of Ukraine:

> The dominant ideology says: Mykhaylo Bulgakov is not ours, neither is Lev Shestov, Berdayev and Vassyl Grossman. They were all born here, and in my opinion, we have to learn to fold these brilliant minds into our story. We will become richer this way. (ibid)

Baumeister's standpoint interprets the culture of post-Maidan Ukraine as a lack of consciously managed and systematically cultivated pluralism: 'We couldn't build unity in multiplicity and accept different cultural, political, historical lines in this multiplicity' (ibid). Thus, this brand of conservatism is moderate due to less of a homogenising potential built into the underlying understanding of subjectivity. As opposed to national conservatism, where the subject is normatively defined as ethnic and/or ethnically patriotic, moderate conservatism dismisses that as an instance of ideology and emphasises cultural pluralism instead. Its conservatism lies in narrowing social subjectivity by extolling virtues of personal responsibility, self-sufficiency, and independence. Therefore, the alternative recipe for success is in a minimal state: 'The middle class, small businesses, and civic groups must learn to cooperate, and create something without looking at the state. So long as the state orders the music, and offers its ideology, nothing will work out' (ibid). The moving force of this vision will be small groups of meritocrats: 'everything is decided by small groups. If such groups appear, with a certain code and ritual, they will be able to do anything' (ibid).

3.6.4 Discursive residue

After distilling the eight narratives identifiable in Ukrainian political discourse, what is left is a certain 'discursive residue'. Under this category, I place the difficult-to-separate discourses into a coherent type, defined by specific and relatively stable subjects. One manifestation of it is populism. It is characterised by narrative amorphousness and instability. It is rather difficult to pin down what kind of subjectivity structures populist discourse. It is full references to 'the people', 'the Ukrainian people', 'Ukraine', and 'us'. What defines them as a political subject and how it structures the political and economic order remains unclear and generally follows emotionalised rhetoric, lacking specifics and consistency. Populism works through amplification and arbitrary combination of other narratives. Sometimes 'Ukraine' or 'the people' is more ethnically defined, otherwise

more geographic or economic. What is constant in populism is the appeal to emotion. The narrative elements serve as emotional amplification of whatever message is being conveyed. Indeed, politicians make the most use of populism. A prominent characteristic here is the tendency to personalise and focus on the qualities of the specific person as the embodiment of 'the people'. Oleg Lyashko, the leader of the so-called Radical Party, had the following to say as part of his presidential campaign in 2019:

> As the guarantor of rights and constitution, the president is responsible when people are hungry, unhappy, don't have a good salary, pension, and don't have enough to pay the bills or buy medicine. The president is a guarantor of constitutional rights and should do everything so that Ukrainians are looked after, fed, have a job salary and a full fridge. […] I am ready to be responsible for everything. (Lyashko, 2019, 0:20-1:30)

This kind of paternalistic emotionalised eclecticism is one typical instance of populism in Ukraine. Another person widely seen as a populist did become a president in 2019. Volodymyr Zelenskiy had this to say about the country's direction in the early days of his presidential campaign:

> Our national idea should be to be a bloody great, liberal, free country. I would do as much as possible for the dough to be safe here, so that all the big companies come here and invest. This is one of the alternatives to military unions. Let's bring in the Amis, the Chinese, and give them licenses to extract gas. Let's see who would then invade and bomb us. We have all this land and half-alive factories; let's give it all to them. (Zelenskiy in V gostiah u Gordona, 2018, 4:35-5:40)

It is not surprising that in the first attempt to formulate a coherent ideology by the new president's party, 'libertarianism' was used. At the same time, Zelenskiy extensively used the default populist device of personalisation paired with an organic connection to 'ordinary people: 'I am not a politician, I am just a person, a simple person that came to break this system' (Zelenskiy in 112 Ukraine, 2019, 15:00-15:20) All in all, populism is a kind of projection surface designed to capture as much attention as possible by appealing to emotions linked to the personality of the speaker and the audience. Discursively, it is highly unstable and narratively loose.

Another manifestation of this 'discursive residue' is seen in the blogger Anatoliy Sharij's work. He represents a harsh but ideologically vague attack on the Maidan and everything in the post-Maidan Ukraine. He amassed a significant following and became a loud counter-Maidan voice. He even founded a political party. His attacks are noteworthy due more to their style than content. His work is essentially an exercise in trolling, amplifying distrust, conspiracy theories, and a denigration of everyone (Ukraine and patriotic Ukrainians especially). This style appeals to a certain kind of cynical

pessimism. Where Neo-Soviet narrative combines cynicism and pessimisms in a way that appeals to the older generation, Sharij does it in a way that appeals to younger audience. Sharij employed scathing sarcasm to render every political point absurd:

> In principle, the issue of signing the association is not what is being addressed at Euromaidan. However, it is the issues of a small group of people: political losers like Yuri Vitalievich, pretentious and weak politicians like Arseniy Petrovich [97], and small-time thieves, who continually stuff their pockets at this kind of staged mass-entertainment events. That's it. The rest is a smokescreen. Extras in a play, morons, layabouts, eternal revolutionaries like to beat their chest, feeling like a part of something big. But there is nothing big. There are selfish interests of a handful of wealthy citizens who spend more in restaurants in an evening than the extras earn in six months. The extras do not understand that no one in the EU will ever accept Ukraine. (Sharij, 2013)

Sharij professed equidistance towards Kremlin and Kyiv to claim a kind of radical independence:

> From the other side, another crowd is approaching and demanding to join the Customs Union. It seems to them that Ukraine will become part of a large and powerful "new USSR". It seems to them that numbers and percentages will be reflected in their pockets. This is a war of dreamers in which the generals are cynical pragmatists. And the crowd, as always, will be wiped out at the end of the battle and will retreat to snack on "Mivina"[98] in their wretched little cars. (ibid)

Reading Sharij's social media output is quite a roller-coaster ride. The moments of apparent earnestness were succeeded by the dismissive cynicism. His caustic ridiculing of the European aspirations, while using questionable metaphors, could be the main thrust of one Facebook post (Sharij, 2013b), while graphically exaggerated earnestness could be the main point of a Facebook post the following day:

> I will believe in the changes and in the desire to change something, when not V changes to Y, or A to S, but when the prosecutor's office is demolished, when Interior Ministry investigators begin to hide in the

[97] Sharij refers here to the leaders of the oppositions. The first one was Yurii Luzenko, who was a political prisoner at the time of Maidan and later became the prosecutor general. The second is Arseniy Yatzeniuk, one of the leaders of the opposition during the Maidan and who became prime minister afterwards.

[98] A brand of cheap, pre-packed noodles.

> woods, when judges are hanged on Khreshchatyk[99]. Because it is this, and not Azarov or Yanukovych, that is the base of the pyramid called "nightmarish Ukrainian reality". (Sharij, 2013c)

Sharij's favourite targets included (1) the pro-Maidan politicians: 'The opposition's task is to merge everything onto the plane of rallies, slogans, petitions, chatter and dances' (Sharij, 2013d); (2) patriotic activists: 'The logic of those who today call themselves 'patriots' and 'fighters against the power' painfully reminds the logic of typical armchair ass-for-a-head commies. These pies are made from the same dough' (Sharij, 2013e); as well as (3) the adversaries of Maidan too, as we have seen above.
Substantial insight into Sharij's polemical prowess can be gained from his quasi-philosophical musings that revealed true 'gems of wisdom':

> As far as I remember, all ancient philosophers considered democracy to be the worst form of government. According to Plato, 'the power of the envious poor.' However, it's really about the fact that "I hate you for your luxurious house because I want the same one", "I will burn your car because I don't have one", and "I will shoot you, dictator, because I want to move into your mansion." The loser's hatred is overflowing today. Offended, beggars, drunkards, poor. They demand DE-MOC-RA-CY. Philosophers of antiquity. […] What did those idiots know, right? (Sharij, 2014)

All of this provocative disrespect and sarcastic winking does have an appeal. A feel-good nihilism, a sense of being above the fray and generally superior to the objects of ridicule, is a whole strand of post-Soviet political culture. It is reminiscent of the Russian techniques of postmodern authoritarianism, pervading Russian media space, where the main objective is to deactivate rationality and overburden with emotion (see Pomerantzev & Weiss, 2014). In other ways, the form of delivery via vlogs on YouTube is a nod to American political comedy shows such as Jon Stewart's The Daily Show, although with much worse humour and an absence of any sense of responsibility in its application. Ridiculing everyone, to bring attention to the absurdity of what is happening around us can be an effective satirical strategy. In the case of Sharij, it degenerated into unabashed nastiness with an intended destructive effect. No discourse is possible when an insult is the chief style of communication. Interestingly, when Sharij created his own political party, its claim was to be 'libertarian'. The program of the party was hence full of individualistic, market-economy language that, given the blogging style of the leader, read like an officialised, cleansed version of his blogs (see Sharij.com.ua).

[99] The main street of Kyiv

Summary

As part of this dissertation, eight narratives of justification were identified. Tables 3-10 contain the summaries of the main narrative elements distilled from the discourse of intellectuals. Placing them side by side allows for comparisons. The tables provide a tentative map of the Ukrainian political discourse between 2014 and 2019. Subsequent analyses of the political discourse have the opportunity to use it as a starting point. It provides a summary of semantic identifiers that could help differentiate positions of various political actors. Since many of the same words are used across all narratives, the differentiation between various positions can only happen by relating the words to the elements of narrativity: temporality, sequence, subject, motifs, selectivity, plot, and break in normality. Putting specific words and concepts into their narrative context helps specify their actual meaning and role in articulating the particular position. For example, 'citizen' as a concept frequently appears across the ideological spectrum. But the meaning and the role of the word will inevitably vary. Only in republicanism does 'citizen' become an independent concept that defines the subject of politics. In other narratives, 'citizen' will be subordinated to other forms of subjectivity, i.e. the 'nation', 'homo economicus', the 'state', and so on. This means that conditions of citizenship will be defined by something else other than a principle of civic rights. A different, 'thicker' type of subject will define the narrative and anchor this narrative's normativity. In each case, this subordination triggers a certain narrowing of subjectivity by imposing specific value conditions for who is considered a citizen. Another example is the content of the concept known as the 'state'. In the neo-Soviet narrative, it is the subject of politics. In other narratives, it is the extension of other subjects with various degrees of rigidity and inclusivity (e.g. the ethnocentric nation, primordial nation, and the association of citizens). Hence, when analysing the discourse, words have to be related to other narrative elements as summarised in Tables 3-10 to discern which narrative a particular piece of discourse belongs to. For this reason, this tentative map can be heuristically productive.

One example of how the insights distilled in Tables 3-10 can be applied in practice is in the analysis of the actual language of political actors. Looking at the inauguration speech of President Petro Poroshenko, delivered in front of the Parliament and the telecameras on July 6th 2014, the following words stand out in terms of their sheer word count: *peace, life, state, time, Europe*. At the time, the conflict in East Ukraine was gathering pace. Preserving the *peace* was hence on the minds of most people. *Life* stood for the optimistic affirmation of a new beginning (Poroshenko's election slogan was 'To live in a new way'). This 'new way' was connected with *Europe* as the source of normativity for cultural and institutional change. The role of *time* was to emphasise the urgency, the imminence of positive change that was sure to

materialise momentarily. The temporality of the president's story was short since the change was expected immediately.

The conflicts in the south and east dominated the news at the time, and thus there were numerous mentions of the *army* and *defence* as policy priorities in the speech. Nonetheless, the president's main message was for peace and internal balance. Furthermore, there were several appeals to the *constitution*. Other words used were *unity, modernisation, reform, decentralisation,* and *justice*. At some point the president even switched to Russian and appealed to the citizens of East and South Ukraine:

> What will I, as president, come to you in the near future? With peace, with the project of government decentralisation, with a guarantee of the free use of the Russian language in your region, with a firm intention not to divide Ukrainians into "the right kind" and "the wrong kind", with a respectful attitude to the specifics of all regions, to the right of local communities for their own nuanced views on historical memory, pantheon of heroes, and religious traditions. (Poroshenko, 2014)

By relating the choice of words, and their arrangement into a power-generating text, to the narrative elements summarised in Tables 3-10, the overall thrust of the president's speech looks republican. The theme of unity in multiplicity, constitution, rights, decentralisation, and appeal to cultural differences as well as regional nuances all belong to the pluralistic discourse of republicanism. Drawing such a conclusion at the time and setting the expectations from the new president and his government accordingly would have been justified. The promise of the positive program of modernising change while defending the country from external threats and internal discord was an appealing and reassuring message for the country at the time. Those wary of the revolutionary upheavals heard moderation and reason. Those expecting reform and change heard commitment to the right principles:

> Ukraine and Ukrainians worldwide united around the ideas of independence, freedom, dignity, rule of law, and European integration. The people said their part during the revolutionary events, during resistance to the aggression, during the elections. Now it is up to us, the government. (ibid)

Cut to four and half years later, when President Poroshenko was delivering his final address to the Parliament before the next presidential elections. Here, the most frequent words used were *defence* and *army*. Military themes dominated. *Russia* was mentioned 13 times. The motif was Ukraine as proud people under siege, who continue to maintain internal discipline in the face of external aggression. The president ran on the conservative platform, with

the official slogan: 'Army, Language, Faith'. The military theme was supplemented by the cultural one. The state-sanctioned language policy and the issue of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church were the centrepieces of the second half of Poroshenko's term. Hence his claims of successful nation-building efforts under his leadership:

> It was us who built an effective army. We returned The Ukrainian Church its rightful status in the Orthodox world. Very importantly we now finally protect, develop and strengthen the Ukrainian language, which is the constituent part of the power and success of our nation. We will continue implementing effective measures to strengthen the official status of the Ukrainian language and intensify and expand its use in all spheres of public life. (Poroshenko, 2018)

The end of Poroshenko's rule was therefore characterised by clear national-conservatism. Out of the initial republican rhetoric from 2014, very little remained. There was only one reference to the constitution as part of the appeal to enshrine the goal to become part of the EU and NATO into the text of the constitution, which in the Ukrainian context aligns first of all with national conservative priorities.

Taking these two texts as indicators of the ideological evolution of the official rhetoric between 2014 and 2019, a shift from liberal republicanism to national conservatism can be suggested. The reasons for this are complex and are still passionately debated in Ukraine. Was this a natural result of the war? Was it a necessity in the context of Russia's apparent denial of the very statehood of Ukraine? Is holding on to some reduced version of Ukraine the only way to preserve at least some Ukraine? These are the arguments used widely by the practitioners and sympathisers of national conservatism. The fact that Poroshenko lost the election in 2019 and a candidate with more uniting message won suggests that they remained the arguments of a minority that was not representative of the entire country.

The narrative maps allow us to ask various further research questions. It enables a comparison of positions, beliefs of actors—all at various time points. One can build on top of these insights and ask questions about political sociology. Already based on the small-scale analysis of intellectual discourse, it is valid to say that, for example, liberism might be appealing to younger entrepreneurs and businesspeople. Those with socio-economic dependency on the older arrangements (old industry, state support) might sympathise with neo-Soviet conservatism. National liberalism is likely to be somewhat unstable, i.e. with fluctuating degrees of support. It most likely appeals to students and West-oriented intellectuals at the level of beliefs and emotional commitments but morph into liberism or national conservatism regarding

practical choices and political behaviour. Republicanism seems to be the province of sophistication, where the main voices are philosophers and constitutional lawyers. Politicians dip into it when inclusive rhetoric is needed only to abandon it when it comes to actual governance. National conservatism seems to be a default mode of the literary-cultural intelligentsia. More broadly, it appears to be deeply encultured among the older and middle-aged generations in the West and to some extent in central Ukraine. It is also likely to appeal to people searching for a clear-cut identity anywhere in Ukraine. These conjectures should, of course, be tested through sociological studies. The narrative map built as part of this dissertation provides a reasonable basis for them. The outcome would be a dynamic sociological map with attention to nuance in the political culture, that avoids oversimplification by region, age or class. Most likely, one narrative will appeal to multiple groups with complex social profiles combining various dimensions. As might be expected, the appeal will not be static. Another set of questions that can be asked refer to the evolution of political views over time. For example, based on the analysis performed in this dissertation, those who sympathise with various versions of liberalism, under the pressure of circumstances, may pivot towards conservatism (mainly national, but possibly moderate in the future).

Table 3

National Liberalism	
Subject	**Meritocratic and moral middle class**
Time	Short - liberal reforms as fast as possible; Long - global history of modernisation
Sequence	Economic improvement brings new values; 'Trickle-down' effects from the meritocratic class to the masses; Quasi-natural process of progress
Tone	Optimistic, faith into progress as natural process, normality as aspiration
Concepts	Modernisation, Democracy, Sustainable Development, Open Access, Social contract, Values of self-expression, Reform.
Break in normality (element of surprise)	It is possible to change society fast through the reforms; Modernisation is unavoidable; Things are better than they seem

Plot	(1) Nations undergo modernisation if following conditions exist: open access and values of self-expression; (2) In the absence of these conditions, individuals linger in a 'state of nature' where brute force rules; (3) New moral elite has to come along and create these conditions; (4) General prosperity and freedom result from open institutions and success-oriented social values
Narrative of justification	Moral meritocracy; Overcome history
Selectivity	Downplays the contradictory, ambivalent aspects of 'classical' modernisation

Table 4

Liberism	
Subject	'Homo economicus'
Time	Very short - shock therapy of market reform
Sequence	Remove obstacles to release the natural entrepreneurial spirit that will bring prosperity
Tone	Survival of the fittest, competition, objectivist (economic rationality), ambition
Concepts	Economy, economic freedom, the market, privatisation, reform, corruption, oligarchy, state, politics (as populism and ideology), the right (wing).
Break in normality (element of surprise)	The impossible is possible given correct understanding of instincts behind human behaviour, i.e. seeking of individual advantages
Plot	(1) The subject is a profit-seeking rational individual, 'homo economicus', who needs economic freedom to thrive; (2) In the absence of economic freedom, there is corruption, laziness, oligarchy; (3) 'Shock therapy' of uncompromising market reform would unleash natural energies of people hitherto restricted by the unfair system; (4) There is a possibility to turn Ukraine into a paradise for free markets

Narrative of justification	Shock therapy; Economic freedom above all
Selectivity	Reduces freedom to economic freedom

Table 5

Republicanism	
Subject	The citizen
Time	Short - constitutional / political reform as soon as possible; Middle - evolution of power distribution since 1991.
Sequence	Dialectical: Ukraine undergoes demodernisation. To break-out of the negative dialectic constitutional/political reform is needed
Tone	Cautionary, balancing, discursive, universalistic
Concepts	Legitimacy, justice, self-government, constitution, institutions, (communicative) rationality, dialogue, solidarity, rights, modernisation /demodernisation, responsibility.
Break in normality (element of surprise)	The public sphere in Ukraine is overloaded with ideological distractions, confusions and utopias. The true social interest lies in balance and consensus
Plot	(1) Ukraine is very complex and cannot be reduced to one identity. The political subject should be rooted into most general human principles - rights, solidarity, responsibility; (2) Attempts to homogenise the culture along ethnic or social lines leads to demodernisation; (3) The way out of this predicament is an 'uber-task' that requires rationality, inclusive dialogue,perseverance while staying true to democratic, civic principles; (4) In case of successful application of republican politics, there is less danger of Ukraine's disintegration, instead - more decentralised governance and general return to modernity
Narrative of justification	Re-launch the republic
Selectivity	Starts from commitment to moral ideals

Table 6

National Conservatism	
Subject	The ethnocentric nation
Time	Long - historical continuity of nation-building.
Sequence	Nation-building teleology: gradual increase in national loyalty through commitments to historical culture, memory and language will ensure development.
Tone	Didactic; sense of certainty that follows from convictions about the 'flow of history';
Concepts	(Post-)colonialism, decommunisation, state/statehood, the nation, identity, reform, democracy, freedom.
Break in normality (element of surprise)	Nothing is a surprise - everything follows the natural course of national history.
Plot	(1) The subject is a an ethnocentric nation that needs clear civilisational alignment externally and robust homogeneity internally; (2) In the absence of this, no program of transformation is possible due to external interference and internal cultural incompatibility; (3) The project of nation building should continue to strengthen the national subject by clearly demarcating historico-cultural conditions for political membership; (4) Institutional reforms will follow the increase in 'national consciousness'. The end-point is predetermined: Euro-Atlantic military alignment, integration into Western economy, which will bring prosperity and freedom.
Narrative of justification	Nation-building
Selectivity	Black and white view of the world where civilisations oppose each other

Table 7

Neo-Soviet Conservatism	
Subject	The state
Time	Short - capitalists fight for power; Long - Soviet period.

Sequence	Ukraine is in a downward spiral of degradation and colonial subjugation by the forces of global capital. To break-out , a strong elite is needed to actualise Ukrainian souvereignty.
Tone	Sarcastic, cynical, pessimistic, sense of certainty that follows from Marxist analysis of dynamics of capitalism.
Concepts	Subjectivity, the state, the economy, oligarchy, ideology.
Break in normality (element of surprise)	Nothing is a surprise - everything follows the logic of capitalist hegemony.
Plot	(1) The only subject capable to protect Ukraine that is being torn apart by the forces of capitalism is a strong state that can defend its economic and political subjectivity; (2) The Euromaidan and subsequent events testify to the fact that once the state is weakened, the result is social degradation and colonial dependance on the agents of global capitalism; (3) To get out of the trap, strong elite must get into power and use the cracks in the global liberal order to break free; (4) If this plan succeeds, no radiant utopia awaits, just sovereign subjectivity for the state that will lead to slightly more economic justice for the population.
Narrative of justification	Sovereign subjectivity
Selectivity	Disregards issues of the Soviet past, of the order that existed then and its influence on the independent Ukraine.

Table 8

Nationalism	
Subject	Nation as collectivity of blood relations
Time	Very long - continuity from primordial, ancient past.
Sequence	Nation fights against the enemies for its rightful place in the world.
Tone	Force, strength, collectivism, determinism, particularism.
Concepts	Nation, Nationalism, State, History, Civilisation, Solidarity
Break in normality (element of surprise)	The undercurrent of all events is a struggle of the nation against its enemies.

Plot	(1) The nation as the collectivity of blood relations is the true subject of history that fights for Ukrainian interests and destiny. The strong Ukrainian state should be the extension of this nation; (2) Repression of the nation through the history resulted in the current perversions and struggles, where the state does not belong to true Ukrainians; (3) Strengthening of the nation in the fight against internal and external enemies will strengthen the state; (4) Social and economic transformation will be driven by the state according to the interests of the nation
Narrative of justification	State at the service of the nation.
Selectivity	Posits the condition of membership in the nation based on origin/blood relation. State ought to directly serve the interests of this nation.

Table 9

Leftism	
Subject	Society of political and economic equals
Time	Short - critique of current power relations and possibilities of counter-action now.
Sequence	Better social organisation is needed to counteract the forces of neoliberalism and conservatism.
Tone	Sceptical/suspicious (Marxism), occasional optimism (anarchism and others during the Euromaidan), oppositional to all mainstream narratives.
Concepts	Equality, The Left, Revolution, Socialism, Anarchism, Marxism, Socio-economic rights, Neoliberalism
Break in normality (element of surprise)	Lift the veil of ideology that pervades the mainstream discourse: society is manipulated
Plot	(1) The subject of politics are citizens with equal socio-economic rights combined into a society; (2) Forces of capitalism/neoliberalism are systematically undermining this subject around the World and in Ukraine; (3) Better social organisation of popular movements for socio-economic rights could improve the situation and even bring a true revolution (there was disagreement among the left on whether Euromaidan was an example of such social organisation); (4) Improvement of life in society would lie in the equality of socio-economic rights for all citizens.

Narrative of justification	Social organisation based on solidarity of equal citizens against forces of conservatism and neoliberalism.
Selectivity	Tendency to dismiss emancipatory impulses of the Maidan, Europe, and Liberalism (mainly in the Marxist strand).

Table 10

Moderate Conservatism	
Subject	The meritocratic elite of classical conservative values
Time	Short - changes are needed now without appeal to historical continuity in a society characterised by historical discontinuity; Long - continuity of classical conservative values
Sequence	Historical cataclysms brought discontinuity to Ukrainian history, which explains current struggles. To deal with them, one has to create a new continuity according to universal conservative principles.
Tone	Critical of national and liberal ideas, metaphysical.
Concepts	Responsibility, independence, multiplicity, the small state.
Break in normality (element of surprise)	Nation-centric and liberal views are wrong. The true right-wing should concentrate on cultivating qualities such as self-sufficiency, personal responsibility, and meritocracy independently from ethnic markers and false liberal prescriptions.
Plot	(1) The true subject is a hardy, self-sufficient, responsible citizen whatever language they speak; (2) Historical discontinuities that plagued Ukraine didn't allow such subject to strengthen. Globally - left-wing liberalism poisons the culture; (3) Reducing the size of the state and concentrating on individual responsibility, self-sufficiency of small groups would bring about a better order; (4) A new continuity of social development would start from actualising correct conservative principles.
Narrative of justification	Small state and individual responsibility for a culturally diverse Ukraine.
Selectivity	Imagines a soulful aristocracy as the subject of politics.

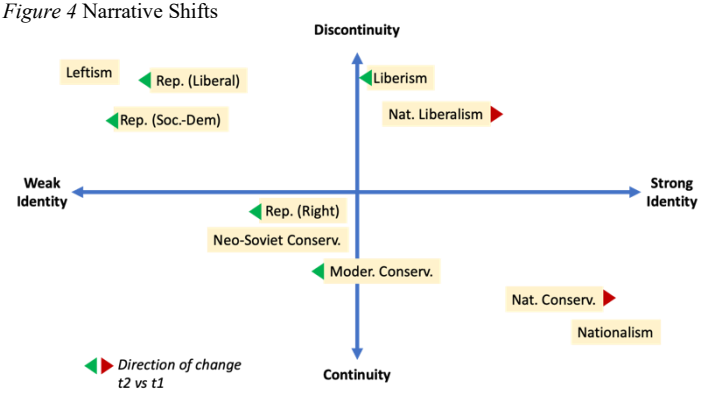
A further step to order Ukrainian political discourse is to place the narratives in relation to each other. This serves to outline the contours of the entire political culture. The most general dimensions of the political culture that can be derived from the inquiry into narratives as performed in this dissertation refer to the *nature of the political subject* and the *conceptualisation of time*. The nature of the political subject is best described in terms of the degree of its reliance on identity. Hence, one dimension will differentiate a weak versus a strong identity. The conceptualisation of time can be described in terms of dependence on continuity. Thus, the second dimension will differentiate continuity versus discontinuity. Ordering political narratives based on cultural dimensions requires sub-dividing republicanism into its three versions (liberal, social-democratic and right-wing). Based on this, the narratives can be ordered as follows:

Table 11. Political Narratives by cultural dimension

	Weak Identity	**Strong Identity**
Discontinuity	Liberal Republicanism; Social-Democratic Republicanism; Leftism	Liberism; National Liberalism
Continuity	Neo-Soviet Conservatism; Moderate Conservatism; Right-Republicanism	National Conservatism; Nationalism

To clarify: 'weak' identity refers to less reliance on 'thick' value requirements from the political subject. Strong here stands for "prescriptive". In the case of a weak identity, citizenship is less determined by cultural-historical factors but by more abstract factors (rights, equality, and sovereignty). On the other hand, a strong identity requires a more definite cultural-historical profile for a citizen regarding language, views on history, or class values. The last point is critical: the upper-right cell differs significantly from the lower right cell. Liberism and national liberalism narrow down conditions of subjectivity based on class (i.e. meritocratic elite), while national conservatism and nationalism do the same based on theories about historical process. National liberalism is especially difficult to anchor as there are many tensions between weak and strong identity sub-plots within it. In some cases, it appears more 'historical'; in others, it is more 'elitist' or 'republican'. Category assignments in Table 11 should not be seen as fixed but rather as general tendencies identified in the discourse from 2014 to 2019. The relative positions of these narratives to each other are not fixed. Comparing t1 (2014-2016) and t2 (2016-2019) can be visualised as follows:

Figure 4 Narrative Shifts



The arrows next to each narrative indicate the directional change in attitude to the political subject identified during the discourse analysis. Hence, national conservatism and national liberalism drifted further towards the requirements of a strong national identity rooted in historical images of origin. Nationalism, neo-Soviet conservatism and leftism cannot be said to have moved either way. All the other narratives argued for reducing reliance on a strong version of national identity. This means that the initial hope for a harmonious symbiosis of civic and ethnic values, under the pressure of circumstances, was replaced by a critique of strong ethnic identity. One further clarification is required on the continuity/discontinuity axis. 'Continuity' here refers to a systematic reliance of the narrative on ideas about history that bring about their own normativity. This normativity is most robust in nationalism and weaker on the 'progressive' end of the spectrum. The 'discontinuity' stands for the systematic reliance of the narrative on a certain spontaneity—meaning the open-ended possibility of change that as such does not depend on history, but always exists in 'the now'.

In order to draw the conclusions on what the discourse analysis of 2014-2019 says about the overall political culture in Ukraine, each narrative was related to the five basic cultural processes (as per section 1.2 - we-identification, historisation, pattern-formation, normalisation and normativation) at two points in time – t1 (2014-2016) and t2 (2016-2019) to allow for comparison.

First of all, the political discourse in Ukraine is about *creating the political culture*. It is less about defining and describing what is, but to provide a vision of change based on which a relatively loose cultural material should be arranged into something better-ordered. Individual narratives identified during the discourse analysis hence offer their vision of what political culture *should be*. In line with the concept of narrative, as borrowed from Jerome

Brunner, one of its features is 'narrative accrual' (see section 2.3). It denotes the fact that the narrative discourse over time accrues into cultures, traditions, and histories. The discourse between 2014 and 2019 represents the *intensification* of efforts to create a Ukrainian political culture. Hence it was characterised by heightened *contestation*. At first, many have thought that The Revolution of Dignity has already given the answers (e.g. many adherents of national liberalism and national conservatism). Approximately two years after the event, it was clear that Ukrainian society was far from agreeing on the model of that shared future. Moreover, cultural contestation was not just about what the Ukrainian political culture should be, but what the political culture means as such. Is it the result of the collective historical experience, or a function of open-ended individual choices? And what if both exist side by side – how should the resulting conflict be handled? This predicament is of course not uniquely Ukrainian (see Reckwitz, 2020, pp.29-62), but as with many issues – it is more acute and obvious in Ukraine, which since 2013 turned into a kind of pointed micro-version of global cultural transformation and experimentation. In the following, I attempted to provide a high-level summary of the change in cultural processes between t2 and t1 taking narratives of justification as explanatory cultural material:

1. **We-identification.** The Ukrainian 'We' remains under-defined and contested.

    - The contest to shape the Ukrainian 'we' in 2014-2019 included three strategies: (1) visions based on the strength of *ethnic-historical identity* (national conservatism, nationalism, partially national liberalism); (2) visions based on the strength of *social identity* (liberism, partially national liberalism, partially moderate conservatism); (3) visions based on *abstract principles* (leftism – equality; republicanism – rationality, freedom, responsibility; neo-Soviet conservatism – sovereignty; partially – national liberalism, liberism, moderate conservatism). Important to know that within these three groups there were radical differences. For example, abstract principles differ radically between neo-Soviet conservatism and republicanism.

    - In the disagreements and conflicts, three general issues that result from the contested 'we' transpired: (1) the issue of elites (i.e. who qualifies to be the ruling class?); (2) the issue of the state (what 'we', if any, should the state embody and promote?); (3) the issue of maturity of the 'we' (are political judgements of Ukrainians in general infantile, and if so, what should be done?).

- Consequently, assessments of the period between 2014 and 2019 from the standpoint of various narratives differed: (1) according to national conservatism, nationalism, to some extent national liberalism, things have improved because there is a better defined national subject at the heart of the state with cultural nationalisation as policy priority; (2) view from the neo-Soviet, republican, leftist, moderate conservatism and liberist sides was that the period saw colossal damage done to the true collective 'we', which must be rectified in the future.

2. **Normalisation.** The Ukrainian 'normality' remained highly deficient. No commentator analysed here was satisfied with the Ukrainian order by mid-2019. Notably, however, representatives of various narratives differed in their assessment of the post-Maidan time:

    - From the standpoint of national conservatism, nationalism, and partially national liberalism, the years since the Euromaidan brought improvement. Cultural-historical values were normalised as guiding lights for social development and state policy.

    - From the standpoint of liberism, republicanism and some versions of leftism (e.g. anarchist and socialist), the windows of opportunity to achieve normality through radical reform were squandered early after the revolutionary events. Starting from late 2015, the country was moving further away from normality.

    - From the standpoint of neo-Soviet conservatism, leftism (in the Marxist version), it was never even on the agenda to move towards normality after the ill-fated revolt. Everything that happened in Ukraine since November 2013 was part of the oligarchic game designed to promote the interests of capital. Hence the 'degradation' observed was completely predictable.

3. **Historisation.** History became a true battlefield. There were two ways in which history was leveraged in the cultural contestation. Here, a relatively straightforward distinction between progressive and conservative worldviews could be observed:

    - 'Overcome history' – stands for emphasis on discontinuity, the possibility of change based on will, ability and effort. This was the attitude toward history and characteristic of national liberalism, liberism, (to a lesser degree) republicanism (in a different way), and leftism.

- ‘Commit to history’ – stands for various forms of historical continuity, where history itself has normative status, i.e. generates orientations for political actions. Conservative ideologies, while fighting for radically different histories, all rely on the normativity of history: for national conservatism, it is continuity of nation-building, where Ukrainian political history has to be re-written as the history of colonisation and de-colonisation; for nationalism, the ancient continuity of origin and continuity of familial/blood relations; for moderate conservatism, the continuity of universal conservative values and aristocratic traits; and for neo-Soviet conservatism, the continuity of Soviet legacy.

4. **Pattern Formation.** Cultural patterns that underlie various narratives can be differentiated based on the relationship of parts to the whole. The directly articulated or assumed arrangement of elements into a ‘whole’, that can represent ‘Ukrainian political culture’, varies between narratives. The main dividing line is heterogeneity versus homogeneity. Heterogeneous patterns include multiple parts with different cultural characteristics that combine into a whole based on some integrative principle while retaining their specificities. Homogenous patterns range from a monolithic oneness to some degree of pluralism, restricted by the core requirement for an integrative principle. The competing narratives contain different ideas of what the ‘whole’ is and the right integrative principles that create this ‘whole’.

    - Heterogeneous patterns are, first of all, characteristic of republicanism. Here, the structure imagined is modular: cultural parts maintain membership in the polity via robust constitutional design. National liberalism can, to some extent, be said to assume similar pattern, but there is always a shadow of ethnocentrism that follows its typical discourse of ‘values’.

    - National conservatism represents a clear example of a homogeneous pattern. The whole is constituted by the ethnohistorical integrative principle (language, view of history, religious tradition, and national heroes). Those who do not follow this principle are excluded from whole, which therefore becomes smaller. At the same time, Ukraine as a whole belongs to something bigger – the Western civilisation that itself has a high degree of internal homogeneity.

    - National liberalism oscillates between conservative homogeneity and republican heterogeneity. It can be said to have a kind of ‘centred’ pattern, where parts are arranged around a nucleus of a moral, national elite. Integrative principles are simultaneously ethnic (based

on historical-cultural values) and social (meritocratic middle class), while the two are often conflated.

- Nationalism is resolutely homogenous to the point of imagining a monolithic, primordial community of origin.

- Liberism assumes a global cultural pattern based on human instincts and the resulting dynamic of the global economy. In this scenario, Ukraine should itself be part of the bigger whole: the modern global economy.

- Neo-Soviet conservatism requires homogeneity established top-down by the state. Therefore, parts may have some ethnic or cultural specificities, but their political aspects should be completely deactivated.

- Moderate conservatism imagines a heterogeneous pattern, while the integrative principle lies in universal conservative values, such as self-reliance, meritocracy, the aristocracy of the spirit, individual responsibility, and a rejection of liberalism and nationalism.

- Leftism contains different structural designs for the political culture, depending on its specific version. However, at its foundation is the assumption of socio-economic equality for all individuals, which suggests homogeneity. In the Marxist variation, this homogeneity is cemented by a powerful, central political subject: the state. In the anarchist variation, various parts self-organise and associate voluntarily. The resulting association has nonetheless one integrative principle—socio-economic equality—which again suggests homogeneity. In the case of leftism, this homogeneity is social and not ethnic.

- The evolution between 2014 and 2019 was most favourably seen by the national conservatives, nationalists, and to some extent national liberals, as the pattern of Ukrainian culture was being re-shaped along more clearly ethnocentric lines.

5. **Normativation** refers to the cultural process that establishes which reasons are considered good. Each narrative offered its own source of good reasons. These reasons then competed for the widest possible acceptability, in other words: a status of normality.

- National liberalism argued for the 'values of self-expression' (in contrast to 'values of survival') as normative orientation for the modernising society. Therefore, whatever action expanded their reach in Ukraine was considered good. Quite often, these 'values of self-expression' were conflated with ethnonational values that have their normative anchor in national history.

- Liberism sourced its normativity from understanding human nature as competing for individual success unimpeded by politically and socially erected restrictions. Therefore, whatever expanded the space for this 'negative', economically-understood freedom was a good action.

- National conservatism, nationalism, and partially national liberalism, had their normative sources in history, which was understood as a process of nation-building. Hence, whatever supported nation-building could be considered good. Versions of history could diverge between these narratives, but the status of history as a source of normativity remained.

- Republicanism placed abstract principles of (communicative) rationality, solidarity, freedom, and responsibility into the normative core of its discourse. Hence, 'thicker', more specific and less generalisable values could (co-)exist at the lower level of social organisation. At the same time, the overarching political sphere was understood as a space of rational negotiation for compromise between irreducibly multiple parts.

- Neo-Soviet conservatism placed sovereign subjectivity as the normative principle. Thus, whatever actions strengthened the state as an indivisible political subject would be considered good.

- Leftism had the principle of equality, which informed what ought to be considered a good reason. Different versions of leftism offered different instructions for how equality should be realised. An assessment and critique of real actions followed from these directions, all of which revolved around the requirement of better social organisation to push against liberalism and conservatism (or their malignant hybrid: neoliberalism).

- Based on the language pervading Ukrainian mass media and the rhetoric of the top officials, the actual discourse in Ukraine between 2014 and 2019 ultimately followed the normativity of history as

nation-building. While in the first period under investigation (2014 to mid-2016) there was much more national liberal and even republican language in the mainstream, in the second period (mid 2016-mid 2019), national conservative normativity was normalised in the official rhetoric and media mainstream. On the other hand, the proliferation of various social media- based channels also normalised open contestation and free circulation of various narratives. In terms of reach, this still could not compete with the oligarch-owned mass media which, as part of the 2019 presidential election, could stage a stand-off between conservative ideologies of limited social appeal and the vague emotionalised reaction to them.

What remains is to draw conclusions about 'reflexive normativity', a judgement on the various models of normativity offered by different narratives described above. The fact that some argumentative strategies are normalised does not yet qualify them to be sources of general norms. Here, another reflexive level of analysis and judgement is required, one where the concept of normativity as described in section 2.1 is taken as the general reference point. The ideas that rest at the foundation of this dissertation – *cultural contact zone, civic culture* – generate their own normative requirements. Since the purpose of these ideas is to reflect the facts about Ukrainian political and social reality with a vision to actualise justice as the integrative principle, the final step should be to identify the narrative of justification that aligns best with these ideas.

Conclusion

The political order's loss of legitimacy in Ukraine at the end of 2013 was about more than disapproval of the particular regime. It was about the contestation of the vision of a shared future. In the turbulent period from 2014 to mid-2019, this contestation intensified. Its motivational force was to overcome the *orientative indeterminacy* characteristic of Ukrainian society, meaning multiple and often conflicting values informing political understanding and behaviour without mechanisms of synthesis and compromise. The consequence for the structural design of the state and economy was persistent *institutional duality*, where formal institutions remained more or less a façade for informal dealings of private interests organised into clans. Together, orientative indeterminacy and institutional duality resulted in a highly conflictual and unjust order that left most citizens powerless.

To create the new kind of power to hold together the complex society and transform institutions, eight different narratives competed to define the source of general norms in the post-Euromaidan period. Each narrative was defined by its specific subject that served as the ultimate source of normativity. Each narrative should then be considered a *narrative of justification* since the 'good reasons' that justify political actions arise from assumptions about the specific subject. Each narrative's subject was characterised by a varying degree of cultural 'thickness'. In other words, each constructed a political identity in conjunction with specific values and consequently with a different level of strength. As these identities were politicised in a competition for power, some narratives were 'ideologised' to serve restrictive, instrumental agendas.

The primary contest between 2014-2019 unfolded between the conservative imagination that relies on national past that brings about an ethnocentric subject (national conservatism), and various versions of liberalism that emphasise will and freedom to act based on the visions of the future (mainly national liberalism, and to a lesser extent, liberism and republicanism). National conservatism was about clearly demarcating the conditions of political belonging and loyalty requirements based on cultural-historical markers (mainly language and nationally 'correct' version of history), narrowing the acceptance among those who wouldn't unconditionally comply. National liberalism was about the belief in progress – a quasi-natural process of expanding freedoms that ultimately benefits everyone. National liberalism represents an optimistic and appealing view that exists in utopia's shadow. As such, it was challenged by the Ukrainian reality with a frequent consequence of national liberalism either dissolving in a more robust national conservatism or being reduced to the more straightforward liberism. Both national conservatism and national liberalism contain a certain latent

teleology, where the end-point of social development is pre-defined, and actions are staggered in such a way so that once triggered from the top, they cumulatively (and at some point inexorably) lead to the correct end-point. In this teleological tendency lies the danger of submitting to some impersonal, 'objective', even metaphysical forces that are supposed to guide societies to the promised land. Overstretching this logic leads to a loss of true autonomy.

The concept of a *cultural contact zone* best captures the facts about Ukraine's cultural make-up. The heterogeneous parts exist in constant, mutually reinforcing dialogue. The other is constitutive from the beginning and cannot be 'narrated away'. In the political sphere, this means developing what can be called *civic culture.* Value-laden historical cultures and social identities are not generalisable as sources of shared norms. This does not mean they are irrelevant or do not deserve recognition. Quite the opposite. Nonetheless, they are parts, not the whole. The overarching political culture of the cultural contact zone can only be based on more general principles and not rely on 'thick' cultural assumptions. In this sense, civic culture generates a 'weak' generalisable identity, as opposed to a strong narrow one, that is relegated to the level of communities. Furthermore, the contemporary tendency of 'singularisation' (Reckwitz, 2020), where in urban, globalised parts of society, culture becomes individualised to the extreme and identities are assembled out of a global repository of values, underscores the need for an integrative principle to make democracy possible. While individual choices and lifestyles might be 'singularised', political culture is ultimately about the 'we'. In fragmented, pluralistic societies, the we-identification's integrative principle can only be a more general (and perhaps abstract) value that contains and enables the more specific values to exist side-by-side. Democratic political cultures will have to increasingly rely on these abstract, generalisable principles through will and communicative rationality. In other words, they will have to become 'civic' political cultures.

In this dissertation, the conceptual principles to integrate the parts of a culturally heterogenous contact zone through discursive processes that establish common norms were borrowed from Rainer Forst: *reciprocity* and *generality*. Reciprocity refers to the equal moral status of the subjects to a political order, independently from specific values they hold. This subject's status must not be violated on the grounds of efficiency, growth, and history via political designs and specific actions. Political designs and actions should follow the principle of generality, which demands consideration of how broadly the specific value can be accepted. Designs, such as reforms that require compliance from everyone subject to the political order should therefore have reciprocity and generality as *regulative principles*.

Out of the narratives identified and analysed in this dissertation, republicanism is most consistent with the concept of normativity constructed

for the cultural contact zone such as Ukraine. At the moment of writing, this feels like a rather sombre conclusion; indeed, the Ukraine of today seems rather far away from republicanism. Admittedly, it is quite a demanding, complex idea. It is not accidental that republican thinkers analysed as part of this dissertation struck a rather disillusioned, disappointed, even pessimistic tone as they saw the country move further and further away from where it should be. The insight generated by this inquiry might then derive predominantly from the last part of Forst's definition of critical theory as:

> [the] combination of philosophical and sociological reflection with emancipatory interest, that asks about historically possible and normatively necessary rational form of the generally justified social order as well as why such an order does not appear in light of relations of power. (Forst, 2015, p. 9)

Indeed, relations of power precluded the success of republicanism in Ukraine between 2014 and 2019. Noumenal power remained weak.

However, this does not invalidate the argument put forward in this dissertation. In the future, 'regulative republicanism' may yet prove to be the life-saving straw. By this, I do not mean that Ukraine will become a beacon for democratic republicanism, but that the ideas associated with it may enable various syntheses between moderate traditionalism, liberalism, perhaps leftism. Improvements versus the situation in the middle of 2019 will likely be contingent on the spontaneous and crisis-driven 'republicanisation' of Ukrainian political culture.

Literature

Introduction

1. Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Basic Books

2. Giesen, B. (1999). *Kollective Identität: Die Intellektuellen und die Nation*, Suhrkamp

3. Golovakha E., Liubyva T., Veira-Ramos A. (2020). Introduction: Ukrainian Society Under Reluctant Transformation and Institutional Duality pp 1-18 in Veira-Ramos A., Liubyva T., Golovakha E. eds (2020) *Ukraine in Transformation From Soviet Republic to European Society* , Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, Switzerland

4. Interfax-Ukraine (2013, January 14). *У Києві на Пейзажній алеї відкрито дитячий арт-парк "Два світи."* Retrieved December 10, 2021, from https://ua.interfax.com.ua/news/general/135823.html

5. Kudelia, S. and Kasianov, G. (2021). Ukraine's Political Development after Independence, in Minakov M., Kasianov G., Rojansky M. (eds.) *From "the Ukraine" to Ukraine, A Contemporary History, 1991-2021*, pp. 9-53

6. Kyiv City Department of Construction and Architecture. (2013). *На Пейзажній алеї відкрито дитячий арт-парк "Два світи."* KGA.gov. Retrieved December 10, 2021, from https://kga.gov.ua/rss/274-na-pejzazhnij-aleji-vidkrito-dityachij-art-park-dva-sviti

7. Minakov, M., Kasianov, G., Rojansky, M. (2021). Introduction: From "the Ukraine" to "Ukraine"; in Minakov M., Kasianov G., Rojansky M. (eds.) *From "the Ukraine" to Ukraine, A Contemporary History, 1991-2021,* pp.1-9

8. Parfit, D. (1995). The Unimportance of Identity, In H. Harris (ed.), *Identity*. Oxford University Press. pp. 13-45 (1995)

9. Rudnytsky, I.,L. (1987), Trends in Ukrainian Political Thought in Essays in Modern Ukrainian History, Unpublished manuscript. Retrieved November 10th, 2021 from : http://www.ditext.com/rudnytsky/history/trends.html

1.1 Post-Soviet fractures

1. Golovakha E., Liubyva T., Veira-Ramos A. (2020). Introduction: Ukrainian Society Under Reluctant Transformation and Institutional Duality pp 1-18 in Veira-Ramos A., Liubyva T., Golovakha E. eds (2020) *Ukraine in Transformation From Soviet Republic to European Society* , Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, Switzerland

2. Kudelia, S. and Kasianov, G. (2021). Ukraine's Political Development after Independence, in Minakov M., Kasianov G., Rojansky M. (eds.) *From "the Ukraine" to Ukraine, A Contemporary History, 1991-2021*, pp. 9-53

3. Mikheieva, O., and Shevel, O. (2021). The Development of National Identities in Ukraine, in Minakov M., Kasianov G., Rojansky M. (eds.) *From "the Ukraine" to Ukraine, A Contemporary History, 1991-2021*, pp. 283-320

4. Minakov, M., Kasianov, G., Rojansky, M. (2021). Introduction: From "the Ukraine" to "Ukraine"; in Minakov M., Kasianov G., Rojansky M. (eds.) *From "the Ukraine" to Ukraine, A Contemporary History, 1991-2021,* pp.1-9

5. Schmid, U. (2020). Contact Zone vs. Postcolonial Condition: On the Relevance of a Concept from Latin American Studies for Research on Ukraine. In Achilli, Alessandro; Yekelchyk, Serhy & Yesypenko, Dmytro (ed.): *Cossacks in Jamaica, Ukraine at the Antipodes.* Brookline: Academic Studies Press, 2020, S. 554-571.

6. Veira-Ramos, A., Liubyva, T., (2020). Ukrainian Identities in Transformation pp 203-228 in Veira-Ramos A., Liubyva T., Golovakha E. eds (2020) *Ukraine in Transformation From Soviet Republic to European Society* , Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, Switzerland

7. Wilson, A. (2009). *The Ukrainians. Unexpected Nation*. 3rd edition. Yale University Press. New Haven/London

8. Yurchenko, Y., Kutuev, P., Yenin, M., Korzhov, H., (2021). Class Divisions and Social Inequality in Independent Ukraine, in Minakov M., Kasianov G., Rojansky M. (eds.) *From "the Ukraine" to Ukraine, A Contemporary History, 1991-2021*, pp. 95-136

9. Kravchuk, O. (2018, September 12). *Політична реклама в Україні: президентські вибори-2004 – три сорти українців, розкол та "нашизм."* Channel 24. Retrieved November 15, 2021, from https://24tv.ua/politichna_reklama_v_ukrayini_prezidentski_vibori_2004__tri_sorti_ukrayintsiv_rozkol_ta_nashizm_n1029351

1.2 Ends of action: civic culture

1. Angehrn, E. (2016). Hermeneutik und Kritik. In R. Jaeggi & T. Wesche (Eds.), *Was ist Kritik?* (4th ed., pp. 319–338). Suhrkamp Verlag.
2. Apel, Karl-Otto (1994). Die Hermeneutische Dimension von Sozialwissenschaft und ihre normative Grundlage. in K.-O. Apel, M.Kettner (1994) *Mythos Wertfreiheit?* Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag
3. Beschorner, Th. (2015). Erkundingen zu einem noch nicht gefundenem Ort des "moral point of view"*,* in *St.Galler Wirtschaftsethik Programatik, Positionen,Perspectiven.* Ethik und Oekonomie, Band 16 (pp. 305-336), Hrsg. Beschorner Th., Ulrich, P., Wettstein, F., Metropolis-Verlag, Marburg
4. Beschorner, Th., & Kettner, M., (2016). Cultural (Business) Ethics. A Conceptual Framework. Conference paper, 9th TABEC at St.Gallen 2016
5. Boltanski, L. & Honneth A. (2016). Soziologie der Kritik oder Kritische Theorie? Ein Gespräch mit Robin Celikates. In R. Jaeggi & T. Wesche (Eds.), *Was ist Kritik?* (4th ed., pp. 81–116). Suhrkamp Verlag.
6. Forst, R. (1996). *Kontexte der Gerechtigkeit: politische Philosophie jenseits von Liberalismus und Kommunitarismus*, Suhrkampf, Frankfurt am Main
7. Forst, R. (2014). *Das Recht auf Rechtfertigung. Elemente einer konstruktivistischen Theorie der Gerechtigkeit*, Suhrkampf, Frankfurt am Main
8. Forst, R. (2015). *Normativitaï und Macht. Zur Analyse sozialer Rechtfertigungsordnungen*, Suhrkampf, Berlin
9. Forst, R. (2016). Der Grund der Kritik. Zum Begriff der Menschenwürde in sozialen Rechtfertigungsordnungen [The Reason of Critique. About the Concept Human Dignity in the Social Orders of Justification] in Jaeggi & Wesche (2016): *Was ist Kritik?* [What is Critique?] Suhrkampf, Frankfurt am Main
10. Garton Ash, T. (2019). Time for a New Liberation? The New York Review of Books. October 24 /Volume LXVI, Number 16 pp. 54-57
11. Jaeggi, R. (2016). Was ist Ideologiekritik?. In R. Jaeggi & T. Wesche (Eds.), *Was ist Kritik?* (4th ed., pp. 266–298). Suhrkamp Verlag.
12. Kettner, M. (2002). Kultur, Kulturrelativität, Kulturrelativismus. in Ethische Ökonomie. Beiträge zur Wirtschaftsethik und Wirtschaftskultur, Volume 7, pp 166-193. Berlin/Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag

13. Kettner, M. (2008). Kulturreflexion und Grammatik Kultureller Konflikte. In Baecker, D., Kettner, M., Rustemeyer, D., *Ueber Kultur* (2008), pp.17-28, Beilefeld: transcript Verlag

1.3 Means of action: discourse and power

1. Falzon C., O'Leary T., Sawicki J. (2013). *A Companion to Foucault*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

2. Forst, R. (2015). *Normativitaï und Macht. Zur Analyse sozialer Rechtfertigungsordnungen*, Suhrkampf, Berlin

3. Mikheieva, O., and Shevel, O. (2021). The Development of National Identities in Ukraine, in Minakov M., Kasianov G., Rojansky M. (eds.) *From "the Ukraine" to Ukraine, A Contemporary History, 1991-2021*, pp. 283-320

4. Riabchuk, M. (2011). *Postcolonial Syndrome*, K.I.C.

5. Veira-Ramos, A., Liubyva, T., (2020). Ukrainian Identities in Transformation pp 203-228 in Veira-Ramos A., Liubyva T., Golovakha E. eds (2020) *Ukraine in Transformation From Soviet Republic to European Society* , Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, Switzerland

2.1 Normativity

1. Acemoglu, D. & Robinson, J.A. (2013). *Why Nations Fail. The origins of power, prosperity and poverty*, Profile Books, London

2. Beschorner, Th. (2013): Kulturalistische Wirtschaftsethik: Grundzüge einer Theorie der Anwendung, in: Zeitschrift für Wirtschafts- und Unternehmensethik, 14/3, S. 346–372

3. Beschorner, Th. (2019). *In Schwindel-erregender Gesellschaft. Gleichgewichtsstörungen der modernen Welt*, Murmann, Hamburg

4. Beschorner, Th. & Hübscher, M., (2017). Quellen der Normativität. Erkundungen einer kulturalistischen (Wirtschafts-)Ethik. In: Unternehmen der Gesellschaft : Interdisziplinäre Beiträge zu einer kritischen Theorie des Unternehmens. Theorie der Unternehmung, Band 65 Metropolis-Verlag, Marburg, 337-362.

5. Forst, R. (1996). *Kontexte der Gerechtigkeit: politische Philosophie jenseits von Liberalismus und Kommunitarismus*, Suhrkampf, Frankfurt am Main

6. Forst, R. (2011). *Kritik der Rechtfertigungsverhaltnisse. Perspektiven einer kritischen Theorie der Politik*, Suhrkampf, Berlin,
7. Forst, R. (2014). *Das Recht auf Rechtfertigung. Elemente einer konstruktivistischen Theorie der Gerechtigkeit*, Suhrkampf, Frankfurt am Main
8. Forst, R. (2015). *Normativitaï und Macht. Zur Analyse sozialer Rechtfertigungsordnungen*, Suhrkampf, Berlin
9. Foucault, M. (2015). *Analytik der Macht*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkampf
10. Honneth, A. (2012). *The I in We*, Cambridge, Polity Press
11. Kettner, M. (1999). Argumentative Discourse, Good Reasons, and "Communicative Rationality" , In: J. Nida-Rümelin et al. (Hg.): *Rationality, Realism, Revision. Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference of the German Society for Analytic Philosophy (GA*P), Munich 1997. Berlin: Springer 1999 (S. 331-338).
12. Kettner, M. (2002). Kultur, Kulturrelativität, Kulturrelativismus. in Ethische Ökonomie, Beiträge zur Wirtschaftsethik und Wirtschaftskultur, Volume 7, pp 166-193. Berlin/Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag
13. Kettner, M. (2008). Kulturreflexion und Grammatik Kultureller Konflikte. In Baecker, D., Kettner, M., Rustemeyer, D., *Ueber Kultur* (2008), pp.17-28, Beilefeld: transcript Verlag
14. Kondylis, P.. (2004). Würde in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, Band 7 eds. Brunner O., Conze W., Koselleck R., Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart
15. Kruse, V. & Barrelmeyer, U. (2012). *Max Weber: Eine Einführung*, Konstanz und München, UVK
16. Schmid, U. (2014). *POLITICAL RELIGION IN RUSSIA. The Constitution 1993 as a Holy Scripture,* Логос №3 [99] 2014, retrieved on 07.10.2019 from https://www.alexandria.unisg.ch/234750/1/Schmid%20Logos%20Constitution%20in%20Russia%202014.pdf

2.2. Culture and modernisation

1. Apel, Karl-Otto (1994). Die Hermeneutische Dimension von Sozialwissenschaft und ihre normative Grundlage. in K.-O. Apel, M.Kettner (1994) *Mythos Wertfreiheit?* Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag
2. Arnason, J.P. (2002). Communism and Modernity. In *Multiple Modernities*, eds. Eisenstadt, S. (2002). Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, New Jersey

3. Beschorner, Th., & Kettner, M., (2016). Cultural (Business) Ethics. A Conceptual Framework. Conference paper, 9th TABEC at St.Gallen 2016
4. Eisenstadt, S. (2002). *Multiple Modernities*, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, New Jersey

5. Forst, R. (2015). *Normativitaï und Macht. Zur Analyse sozialer Rechtfertigungsordnungen*, Suhrkampf, Berlin
6. Fukuyama F. (1989): The end of history? The National Interest https://www.embl.de/aboutus/science_society/discussion/discussion_2006/ref1-22june06.pdf . retrieved on 06.10.2019

7. Giesen, B. (2016). *Kollektive Identität. Die Intellektuellen und die Nation 2*, Suhrkampf, Frankfurt am Main

8. Holzer, B. (2015). *Politische Soziologie*, UTB Verlag

9. Kruse, V. & Barrelmeyer, U. (2012). *Max Weber: Eine Einführung*, Konstanz und München, UVK

10. Lipset, S. M. (1959). Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy. The American Political Science Review. Vol. 53, No 1 (Mar., 1959) pp. 69-105. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1951731 assessed 05.07.2017

11. Luhmann. N. (2015). *Die Wirtschaft der Gesellschaft*. Suhrkampf. Frankfurt am Main

12. Pollack, D. (2016). Moderniseirungstheorie-revised: Entwurf einer Theorie moderner Gesellschaften. Zeitschrift für Soziologie 2016; 45(4): 219–240

13. Ulrich, P. (2010). *Zivilisierte Marktwirtschaft. Eine Wirtschaftsethische Orientierung*. Haupt. Bern

14. Wittrock, B. (2002). Modernity: One, None, or Many? European Origins and Modernity as Global Condition. In *Multiple Modernities*, eds. Eisenstadt, S. (2002). Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, New Jersey

2.3 Political Narrativity

1. Bacon, E. (2012). “Public Political Narratives: Developing a Neglected Source through the Exploratory Case of Russia in the Putin-Medvedev Era.” Political Studies 60(4): 768-786.
2. Bruner, J. (1987). Life as Narrative Social Research Vol. 54, No. 1, Reflections on the Self pp. 11-32
3. Bruner, J. (1991). The narrative construction of reality. In *Narrative Theory: Critical Concepts in literary and cultural studies* ed. Mieke Bal, Volume IV Interdisciplinary. Routledge. New York (2004)
4. Bruner, J. (2003). *Making stories. Law, literature, life*. Harvard University Press. Cambridge Massachusetts
5. Forst, R. (2015). *Normativitaï und Macht. Zur Analyse sozialer Rechtfertigungsordnungen*, Suhrkampf, Berlin
6. Klymenko, L. (2016). Historische Narrative und nationale Identität: Der Zweite Weltkrieg in russischen und ukrainischen Geschichtslehrbüchern, Ukraine-Analysen, Nr. 162, 27.01.2016, pp. 13–16, retrieved on 20.03.2019 from https://www.laender-analysen.de/ukraine-analysen/162/historische-narrative-und-nationale-identitaet-der-zweite-weltkrieg-in-russischen-und-ukrainischen-geschichtslehrbuechern/
7. Patterson, M., Monroe, K. R. (1998) ‘Narrative in Political Science’, Annual Review of Political Science, 1, 315–31.
8. Schmid, U. (2010). *Literaturtheorien des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Reclam. Stuttgart
9. Schmid, U. (2014). POLITICAL RELIGION IN RUSSIA.The Constitution 1993 as a Holy Scripture Логос №3 [99] 2014 https://www.alexandria.unisg.ch/234750/1/Schmid%20Logos%20Constitution%20in%20Russia%202014.pdf retrieved on 07.10.2019
10. Schmid, U. (2018). Volodymyr Vynnyčenko as Diarist, Historian and Writer. Literary narratives of the “Ukrainian Revolution”; “Studi Slavistici”, xv, 2018, 2: 111-124
11. Schmid, W. (2014). *Elemente der Narratologie*. De Gruyter
12. Somers, M. R., Gibson, G. D. (1994) ‘Reclaiming the Epistemological “Other”: Narrative and the Social Constitution of Identity’, in Calhoun, C. J. (ed.), Social Theory and the Politics of Identity. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 35–99.
13. White, H. (1981). The value of narrativity in the representation of reality. In Narrative Theory: Critical Concepts in literary and cultural studies ed. Mieke Bal, Volume I Major issues In *Narrative Theory*. Routledge. New York (2004)
14. Zink, A.(2010). Narratologie, In *Literaturtheorien des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Schmid U. (2010), Reclam. Stuttgart

2.4 Research Design

1. Beschorner, Th., & Kettner, M., (2016). Cultural (Business) Ethics. A Conceptual Framework. Conference paper, 9th TABEC at St.Gallen 2016
2. Beschorner, Th. & Hübscher, M., (2017). Quellen der Normativität. Erkundungen einer kulturalistischen (Wirtschafts-)Ethik. In: Unternehmen der Gesellschaft : Interdisziplinäre Beiträge zu einer kritischen Theorie des Unternehmens. Theorie der Unternehmung, Band 65 Metropolis-Verlag, Marburg, 337-362.
3. Forst, R. (1996). *Kontexte der Gerechtigkeit: politische Philosophie jenseits von Liberalismus und Kommunitarismus*, Suhrkampf, Frankfurt am Main
4. Kettner, M. (2008). Kulturreflexion und Grammatik Kultureller Konflikte. In Baecker, D., Kettner, M., Rustemeyer, D., *Ueber Kultur* (2008), pp.17-28, Beilefeld: transcript Verlag
5. Nikitina, T. (2020). The Ukrainian Media Landscape, in *Ukraine, in: Transformation. From Soviet Republic to European Society (pp.167-202)*, eBook, Palgrave MacMillan

3.1 The lead-up to revolt: conservative pragmatism versus national liberalism

1. Chizhov, G., Mosenceva, T., Samohvalova, L., Shvec L. (2018). *Perelomniye gody. Stranicy ukrainskoy revolyutcii [The Critical Years. The Pages of the Ukrainian Revolution].* Kyiv, Laurus
2. Honneth, A. (2012). *The I in We*, Cambridge, Polity Press
3. Sandel, M. (2020). *The tyranny of merit*, Penguin Random House, UK
4. Sartori, G., (1987). *The Theory of Democracy Revisited. Part Two: The Classical Issues.* Chtham, New Jersey.

3.2 Revolution of Dignity: The moment of belief

1. Forst, R. (2011). *Kritik der Rechtfertigungsverhaltnisse. Perspektiven einer kritischen Theorie der Politik*, Suhrkampf, Berlin,
2. Huntington, S., (1993). Clash of Civilizations? Foreign Affairs, Summer 1993

3.3 Typology of narratives of justification

1. Beschorner, Th. (2019). *In Schwindel-erregender Gesellschaft. Gleichgewichtsstörungen der modernen Welt*, Murmann, Hamburg
2. Boltanski, L., Thevenot L. (2006). On Justification. Economies of Worth, Princeton, Oxford:Princeton University Press
3. Etkind A. & Minakov M. (2019) *Ideology after Union. Ideological Processes in Post-Soviet Societies*, Stuttgart, ibidem
4 Forst, R. (2015). *Normativitaẗ und Macht. Zur Analyse sozialer Rechtfertigungsordnungen*, Berlin, Suhrkampf
5 Lusyak-Rudnytsky, I. (1987). *Trends in Ukrainian Political Thought* in Essays in Modern Ukrainian History, retrieved on 14.08.2021 from http://www.ditext.com/rudnytsky/history/trends.html
6 Sartori, G. (1987). *The Theory of Democracy revisited. Part Two: The Classical Issues* New Jersey, Chatam House Publishers
7 Schmid U. (2016): *Technologien der Seele. Vom Verfertigen der Wahrheit in der russischen Gegenwartkultur*, Berlin, Suhrkampf
8 Skygin, P. (2019). Putin's Russia as a Neopatrimonial Regime In Etkind, A. & Minakov, M. (2019) *Ideology after Union. Ideological Processes in Post-Soviet Societies*, Stuttgart, ibidem

3.5.1.1 National Liberalism

1. Berlin, I. (2017). *Liberty: Incorporating Four Essays on Liberty* (H. Hardy, Ed.). Oxford University Press, USA.

2. Beschorner, Th. & Hübscher, M., (2017). Quellen der Normativität. Erkundungen einer kulturalistischen (Wirtschafts-)Ethik. In: Unternehmen der Gesellschaft : Interdisziplinäre Beiträge zu einer kritischen Theorie des Unternehmens. Theorie der Unternehmung, Band 65 Metropolis-Verlag, Marburg, 337-362.

3. Beschorner, Th., & Kettner, M., (2016). Cultural (Business) Ethics. A Conceptual Framework. Conference paper, 9th TABEC at St.Gallen 2016

4. Boltanski, L., Thevenot L. (2006). On Justification. Economies of Worth, Princeton, Oxford:Princeton University Press
5. Forst, R. (2015). *Normativitaẗ und Macht. Zur Analyse sozialer Rechtfertigungsordnungen*, Suhrkampf, Berlin

6. Sandel, M. (2020). *The Tyranny of Merit*, Penguin Random House, UK

3.5.1.2 Liberism

1. Beschorner, Th. & Hübscher, M., (2017). Quellen der Normativität. Erkundungen einer kulturalistischen (Wirtschafts-)Ethik. In: Unternehmen der Gesellschaft : Interdisziplinäre Beiträge zu einer kritischen Theorie des Unternehmens. Theorie der Unternehmung, Band 65 Metropolis-Verlag, Marburg, 337-362.

3.5.1.3 Republicanism

1. Beschorner, Th. & Hübscher, M., (2017). Quellen der Normativität. Erkundungen einer kulturalistischen (Wirtschafts-)Ethik. In: Unternehmen der Gesellschaft : Interdisziplinäre Beiträge zu einer kritischen Theorie des Unternehmens. Theorie der Unternehmung, Band 65 Metropolis-Verlag, Marburg, 337-362.

3.5.2.1 National Conservatism

1. Beschorner, Th. & Hübscher, M., (2017). Quellen der Normativität. Erkundungen einer kulturalistischen (Wirtschafts-)Ethik. In: Unternehmen der Gesellschaft : Interdisziplinäre Beiträge zu einer kritischen Theorie des Unternehmens. Theorie der Unternehmung, Band 65 Metropolis-Verlag, Marburg, 337-362.

2. Honneth, A. (2012). *The I in We*, Cambridge, Polity Press

3. Huntington, S., (1993). Clash of Civilizations? Foreign Affairs, Summer 1993

3.5.2.2 Neo-Soviet Conservatism

1. Beschorner, Th. & Hübscher, M., (2017). Quellen der Normativität. Erkundungen einer kulturalistischen (Wirtschafts-)Ethik. In: Unternehmen der Gesellschaft : Interdisziplinäre Beiträge zu einer kritischen Theorie des Unternehmens. Theorie der Unternehmung, Band 65 Metropolis-Verlag, Marburg, 337-362.

3.6 Alternative narratives

1. Pomerantcev, P. & Weiss, M. (2014). *The Menace of Unreality: How the Kremlin Weaponizes Information, Culture and Money*. Digital City Services, LLC (New York). https://imrussia.org/media/pdf/Research/Michael_Weiss_and_Peter_Pomerantsev__The_Menace_of_Unreality.pdf

Summary

1. Forst, R. (2015). *Normativitaï und Macht. Zur Analyse sozialer Rechtfertigungsordnungen*, Suhrkampf, Berlin
2. Reckwitz, A. (2020). *Das Ende der Illusionen. Politik, Oekonomie und Kultur in der Spätmoderne.* Suhrkamp

Materials

3.1 The lead-up to revolt: conservative pragmatism versus national liberalism

1. Hrytcak, Y. (2011, August 24). *Не цілком ювілейні замітки*. ZAXID.NET. Retrieved April 3, 2020, from https://zaxid.net/ne_tsilkom_yuvileyni_zamitki_n1234467
2. ICTV Channel [Телеканал ICTV]. (2013, October 15). *Свобода слова - 14.10.2013* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EjJpke-Y-2M
3. Ryabchuk, M. (2011). *Postkolonialniy syndrom. Sposterejenya [Postcolonial Syndrome. Observations]*. Kyiv: K.I.C.
4. Sobolev, Y., Syumar, V., Vatrovych, V., Lutsenko, I., Hopko, H. [Соболєв, Є., Сюмар, В., В'Ятрович, В., Луценко, І., & Гопко, Г]. (2013, July 12). *Воля змінити країну*. Зеркало Недели | Дзеркало Тижня | Mirror Weekly. https://zn.ua/ukr/internal/volya-zminiti-krayinu-_.html
5. Ukrainskij Vybor. (2013, September 20). *Виктор Медведчук: "Украину ждёт колониальная зависимость от стран ЕС"* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IzR12BjKa7w
6. Ukrainskij Vybor. (2013a, July 30). *Петр Толочко: «Европейские «ценности» не приживутся на нашей земле»*[Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=no7-xk0WBaE

3.2 Revolution of Dignity: The moment of belief

1. Andrey Rektorov [Андрей Ректоров]. (2014, February 12). *12 02 14 Украина посткризисная Добкин и Погребинский. Круглый стол с экспертами 18* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOYDHY1ayVw
2. Andruchowytsch, Y., (2014). Sieben Raue Februartage oder Die Rolle des Kontrabasses in der Revolution [Seven rough February days or the role of the Contrabass in the Revolution], (2014). In Andruchowytsch, Euromaidan [E-book]. Suhrkamp Verlag.

3. Arestovych, A. (2013, December 29). *SEDE VACANTE* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/alexey.arestovich/posts/639957802734970
4. Banakh, M., (2014). Die Orange Revolution 2004 und der Euromaidan 2013/2014: Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschiede. *Ukraine-Analysen*, *128*, 14–23. https://www.laender-analysen.de/ukraine-

analysen/128/die-protestierenden-auf-dem-maidan-2004-und-2013-2014-im-vergleich/
5. Belorusets, Y., (2014). Niedrlage, Nacht und ewige Verwegenheit [Defeat, Night and Eternal Audacity] In Andruchowytsch, (2014). Euromaidan [E-book]. Suhrkamp Verlag.

6. Bondar, A. (2013, November 30). *Belarusiation and morono-russification of the country in 5 minutes* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/andrij.bondar/posts/10151694846546599
7. Bondar, A. (2014). The Revolution of the Will , In Mukharskiy, A. (2014). *Maidan (R)Evolutsiya Dukhu [Maidan (R)Evolution of the Spirit]*. Nash Format. pp.162-170
8. Boychenko, O., (2014). The Complete Mystery oft he Revolution, In Mukharskiy, A. (2014). *Maidan (R)Evolutsiya Dukhu [Maidan (R)Evolution of the Spirit]*. Nash Format. pp.154-161
9. Bulatov, D. (2014). Governemnt is you and me In Mukharskiy, A. (2014). *Maidan (R)Evolutsiya Dukhu [Maidan (R)Evolution of the Spirit]*. Nash Format. pp.34-38
10. Butusov, Y. (2013, November 29). *Next Political Action* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/butusov.Yurii/posts/673301066043526
11. Butusov, Y. (2013a, November 22). *Take your Children to the Maidan. This is their Future*. Censor.net. Retrieved August 18, 2018, from https://censor.net/ru/resonance/260586/vozmi_deteyi_na_mayidan_eto_ih_buduschee
12. Butusov, Y. (2014, February 18). *Who is responsible for planning the political moves of the president Victor Yanukovych?* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/butusov.Yurii/posts/714932845213681
13. Butusov, Y. (2014a, February 19). *Proud of our People* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/butusov.Yurii/posts/715399591833673
14. Butusov, Y. (2014b, February 19). *Today we do the most important thing in our life's work* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/butusov.Yurii/posts/715674481806184
15. Dathe, C., et al.(Ed.). (2014). *MAJDAN! Ukraine, Europa* Edition.fotoTAPETA.
16. Datsyuk, S. (2014). Preconditions and the Meaning of the Maidan , In Mukharskiy, A. (2014). *Maidan (R)Evolutsiya Dukhu [Maidan (R)Evolution of the Spirit]*. Nash Format. pp.98-106
17. Druzenko, G. (2013, December 23). *SMALL GOVERNMENT VS. PATERNALISTIC STATE* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=10151890645798412&set=a.10151153361773412

18. Espreso.TV. (2013, December 23). *Віталій Портников: Вся Україна має стати Майданом* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_jpPEoClBV4
19. Forostyna, O. (2014, February). *About the Past and the Future*. Krytyka.Com. Retrieved November 3, 2017, from https://krytyka.com/ua/articles/pro-mynule-i-maybutnie
20. Havryliuk, M. (2014). I didn't want my Child to be a Slave, In Mukharskiy, A. (2014). *Maidan (R)Evolutsiya Dukhu [Maidan (R)Evolution of the Spirit]*. Nash Format. pp.39-44
21. Hlibovytsky, Y., (2013, November 23). *Євген Глібовицький. Виступ на Євромайдані 23 листопада 2013* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SGIEtOU5sY4&t=2s
22. Hromadske. (2014a, January 26). *Андрій Єрмолаєв на Hromadske.TV* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQEPnJLha8I&t=114s
23. Kazarin, P. (2014, February 18). *Формирование нового украинского героического концепта* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/kazarin.pavel/posts/608355239212805
24. Leshchenko, S. (2013, November 28). *Yanukovych talks to Merkel* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/leshchenko.ukraine/posts/567386576665348
25. Lutzenko, I. (2013, December 20). *Waiting for the order to attack В очікуванні команди на наступ*. Pravda.Com.Ua. Retrieved August 19, 2017, from https://blogs.pravda.com.ua/authors/lutsenko/52b4720714a13/

26. Maljartschuk, T., (2014). Mehr Als Einer [More than One] In Andruchowytsch, (2014). Euromaidan [E-book]. Suhrkamp Verlag.

27. Mann, O., (2014). The FB-dairy oft he Citizen-Artist, In Mukharskiy, A. (2014). *Maidan (R)Evolutsiya Dukhu [Maidan (R)Evolution of the Spirit]*. Nash Format. pp.206-217
28. Mischchenko, K., (2014). Ein Schwarzer Kreis [A Black Circle], (2014). In Andruchowytsch, Euromaidan [E-book]. Suhrkamp Verlag.

29. Mostova, Y., (2013, December 6). *Independance Square [Майдан Независимости]*. Зеркало Недели | Дзеркало Тижня | Mirror Weekly. Retrieved June 18, 2016, from https://zn.ua/internal/maydan-nezavisimosti-_.html
30. Mukharskiy, A. (2014). *Maidan (R)Evolutsiya Dukhu [Maidan (R)Evolution of the Spirit]*. Nash Format.
31. Mukharskiy, A. (2014). Maidan. The Art of Resistance, In Mukharskiy, A. (2014). *Maidan (R)Evolutsiya Dukhu [Maidan (R)Evolution of the Spirit]*. Nash Format. pp.218-231

32. Nayyem M. (2013, November 23). *Segodnia bolshoi den (Today is a big day)* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/Mustafanayyem/posts/10201196017448569
33. Nayyem, M. (2013b, November 30). *Victor Yanukowych turned into Aleksandr Lukashenko* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/Mustafanayyem/posts/10201233913715952
34. Nayyem, M., (2013a, November 30). *Vchera nochyu ya sdelal svoi vybor [Last Night I made my Choice]* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=10201237323441193&set=a.1078519169258
35. Nestor Group, (2015). Dogovir Gidnosti zarady stalogo rozvytku [The contract of dignity for sustainable development], retrieved from http://nestorgroup.info/docs/ on 04.02.2017

36. NZ Maidan. (2014, January 7). *Михайло Мінаков, Український вчений філософ, доктор філософських наукКольоровіреволюції* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=je16BrTzoes&t=2502s
37. Parasyuk, V. (2014). This Nation is Unbeatable, In Mukharskiy, A. (2014). *Maidan (R)Evolutsiya Dukhu [Maidan (R)Evolution of the Spirit]*. Nash Format. pp.63-67
38. Pekar, V. (2013, November 26). *Головна задача Євромайдану — перетворити український народ на суб'єкта політики* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/valerii.pekar/posts/10200495412702512

39. Pekar, V. (2013b, November 29). *What did yesterday's Maidan show us* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/valerii.pekar/posts/10200510798087137
40. Pekar, V. (2014, February 21). *Pogrom as the Strategy has failed* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/valerii.pekar/posts/10200937416912341
41. Pekar, V. [Валерій Пекар]. (2013a, December 29). *Про исторический процесс* [About Historical process], [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/valerii.pekar/posts/10200663768551303
42. Pekar, V.,. (2013c, November 26). *Пора стать взрослыми* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=10200495997557133&set=a.1386736323118
43. Petro Didula. (2013, November 25). *Ярослав Грицак: різниця між революціями 2004 і 2013 рр.* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FQNFzpFatuM&t=19s
44. Petrowskaja, K., (2014). Mein Kiew, In Andruchowytsch, (2014). Euromaidan [E-book]. Suhrkamp Verlag.

45. Podervyanskiy, L. (2014). I gained a country , In Mukharskiy, A. (2014). *Maidan (R)Evolutsiya Dukhu [Maidan (R)Evolution of the Spirit]*. Nash Format. pp.232-237
46. PORT MONE TV YOUTUBE. (2013, December 13). *Украинцы в России - академик Толочко П П* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hlgzGAyP_q0
47. Poyarkov, S. (2014). Revolution. AutoMAIDAN In Mukharskiy, A. (2014). *Maidan (R)Evolutsiya Dukhu [Maidan (R)Evolution of the Spirit]*. Nash Format. pp.68-75
48. Prochasko, J., (2014). Kleine Europäische Revolution [Small European Revolution] In Andruchowytsch, (2014). Euromaidan [E-book]. Suhrkamp Verlag.

49. Rakhmanin, S, (2014, March 14). *IN RE*. Зеркало Недели | Дзеркало Тижня | Mirror Weekly. https://zn.ua/internal/in-re-_.html
50. Rakhmanin, S. (2013, November 29). *Чайка по имени Евромайдан*. Зеркало Недели | Дзеркало Тижня | Mirror Weekly. Retrieved September 19, 2016, from https://zn.ua/internal/chayka-po-imeni-evromaydan-_.html
51. Rakhmanin, S., (2013a, November 22). *Lock, Stock, Two Maidans [Карты, деньги, два майдана]* Зеркало Недели | Дзеркало Тижня | Mirror Weekly. Retrieved November 8, 2016, from https://zn.ua/internal/karty-dengi-dva-maydana-_.html
52. Roytburd, O. (2014). The Imperial Diarrhea, In Mukharskiy, A. (2014). *Maidan (R)Evolutsiya Dukhu [Maidan (R)Evolution of the Spirit]*. Nash Format. pp.238-250
53. Ryabchuk, M., (2014). Vier Monate Winter [Four Months of Winter] In Andruchowytsch, (2014). Euromaidan [E-book]. Suhrkamp Verlag.

54. Sheremeta, P.,. (2013, December 19). *One shouldn't expect a lot from the opposition triplet* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/pavlo.sheremeta/posts/797605926922458
55. Shkola Grazhdanskogo Prosveshenoya [Школа гражданского просвещения]. (2013, December 14). *Михаил Минаков ("СМИ и общество", Голицыно, 12–15 декабря)* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dphe5i_e9zI&t=4530s
56. Sverstiuk, Y. (2014). Inconstant Winds of Time , In Mukharskiy, A. (2014). *Maidan (R)Evolutsiya Dukhu [Maidan (R)Evolution of the Spirit]*. Nash Format. pp.118-130
57. The Rada Channel [Телеканал Рада]. (2013, December 10). *Власний погляд 10.12.13 Андрій Єрмолаєв* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVGdqB_mD0k&t=170s
58. TSN [TCH]. (2014, February 20). *Андрій Єрмолаєв назвав етапи реформування країни* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8q-9exFEAGM

59. Ukrainskij Vybor. (2013c, December 30). *Михаил Погребинский: «Майдану нужен неполитический диалог между Востоком и Западом Украины»* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V5h_WFokkhs
60. VESTI. (2013, November 28). *Вакарчук выступил на Майдане с речью и спел "Вставай"* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a3SSTVh6TVM
61. Vozniak, T. (2013, November 26). *The Air has cleared. Darkness ahead*. Ji-Magazine.Lviv.Ua. Retrieved August 25, 2017, from http://www.ji-magazine.lviv.ua/anons2013/Voznyak_Poperedu_morok.htm?fbclid=IwAR3VSNGXX5xUDxaupTt0HwDkuvmQ0d75nPvtJhyPquPkeb6mgfO52IFeQRE
62. Vozniak, T. (2014). The Meaning of the Maidan In Mukharskiy, A. (2014). *Maidan (R)Evolutsiya Dukhu [Maidan (R)Evolution of the Spirit]*. Nash Format. pp.82-90
63. Vynnychuk, Y. (2014). The Imperial Diarrhea, In Mukharskiy, A. (2014). *Maidan (R)Evolutsiya Dukhu [Maidan (R)Evolution of the Spirit]*. Nash Format. pp.171-179
64. Zabuzhko, O. (2014). Maidan. The forgotten lessons of History, In Mukharskiy, A. (2014). *Maidan (R)Evolutsiya Dukhu [Maidan (R)Evolution of the Spirit]*. Nash Format. pp.180-187
65. Zhadan, S., (2014). Vier Monate Winter [Four Months of Winter] In Andruchowytsch, (2014). *Euromaidan* [E-book]. Suhrkamp Verlag.

3.4 Periodisation after Euromaidan

1. Averchuk, R. (2016). Presidential Power in Ukraine: A Comparative Analysis, retrieved from: https://voxukraine.org/en/presidential-power-in-ukraine-comparative-perspective-en/
2. Eistavi, M. (2016). The terror against Ukraine's journalists is fuelled by political elites, retrieved from: https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/terror-against-ukraine-s-journalists-is-fueled-by-political-elites/8.

3. Hrytcak, Y. (2017). Kinets Revolutsii? [The End of the Revolution?], retrieved from: https://gazeta.ua/articles/grycak-jaroslav/_kinec-revolyuciyi/751588)

4. Kochetkov, A. (2016). "Strategicheskay vosmerka" kak vysshaya stadiya oligarchicheskogo konsensusa, ["The Stratgeic Eight" as the highest stage of oligrachic consensus], retrieved from: https://hvylya.net/analytics/politics/strategicheskaya-vosmerka-kak-vyisshaya-stadiya-oligarhicheskogo-konsensusa-v-ukraine.html

5. Kovtun, T. (2016). Conservatysm zavdayye udaru u vidpovid. Navischo povertayut “tradyciyne” vyhovanya [Conservatism strikes back. Why is “traditional” upbringing is being brought back], retrieved from: https://commons.com.ua/uk/conservative-step/

6. Miller, C. (2016). In Ukraine, Attacks On Journalists Chill Media Landscape , retrived from: https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-attacks-on-journalists-media-landscape-press-freedom/27923284.html

7. Minakov, M. (2016). Pochemu vse ne tak [Why is everything wrong], retrieved from: http://argumentua.com/stati/pochemu-vse-ne-tak-filosof-mikhail-minakov

8. Minakov, M. (2017). Reconstructing the power vertical: the authoritarian threat in Ukraine, retrieved from https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/reconstructing-power-vertical-authoritarian-threat-in-ukraine/

9. Minakov, M., & Mylovanov, T.(2016). Ukraine’s authoritarian signals, retrieved from: https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/ukraine-s-authoritarian-signals/

10. Petik, O. & Herasym, H. (2016). Critical Thinking at (the) stake: Ukraine’s witch hunt against journalism, retrieved from https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/critical-thinking-at-stake-ukraine-s-witch-hunt-against-journali/

11. Pilash, D. & Artyukh, V. (2016). “Dekomunizaciyna zakonotvorchist”: chym shkidlyve nove antykomunostychne zakonodavstvo. [“Decommusation law-making”: why is the new anti-communist law harmful], retrieved from: https://commons.com.ua/uk/dekommunizacionnoe-zakonotvorchestvo/

12. Tyshkevych, I. (2016). Kak Poroshenko menyayet podhody k vnytripoliticheskim kompromissam [How Poroshenko changes his approach to inner-political compromises], retrieved from: https://hvylya.net/analytics/politics/kak-poroshenko-menyaet-podhodyi-k-vnutripoliticheskim-kompromissam.html

13. Vox Ukraine (2015). Index for Monitoring Reforms (IMoRe). Release 5, retrieved from https://voxukraine.org/en/index-for-monitoring-reforms-imore-release-5/

14. Vyatrovych, V. (2016). Dekomunizaciya – ce nevidyamniy element reform v krayini, yaka prahne staty demokratychnoyu [Decomunisation is the vital element of reform in a country that aspires to be democratic], retrieved from: https://ua.112ua.tv/mnenie/dekomunizatsiia-tse-

nevidiemnyi-element-reform-v-kraini-iaka-prahne-staty-demokratychnoiu-301415.html
15. Zarembo, K. (2017). Substituting for the State: The Role of Volunteers in Defense Reform in Post-Euromaidan Ukraine. Kyiv Mohyla Law and Politics Journal 3 (2017: 47-70, National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy

16. Carnegie Endowment (2016). Ukraine Reform Monitor April 2016, retrieved from: https://carnegieendowment.org/2016/04/28/ukraine-reform-monitor-april-2016-pub-63486

3.5.1.1 National Liberalism

2014-2016: Hope of Reformism

1. Bondar, A. [Andrij Bondar]. (2015, February 24). *Ненормально для українця, коли його вбивають і відмовляють йому в житті таким, яким він хоче бути.* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/andrij.bondar/posts/10152513265261599

2. Channel 5 [5 канал]. (2015, April 4). *Вахтанг Кебуладзе: Ми перебуваємо в процесі руйнації Російської імперії – інтерв'ю* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UF4SPhuuYZ8

3. First of December Group. (2014, June 6). Zayava initsiatyvnoyi grupy: 'Moralniy obovyazok vlady – nevidkladni vybory parlamentu' [Statement of the group: 'The moral responsibility of the authorities is to urgently organised parliamentary elections], retrieved: http://1-12.org.ua/2014/06/06/3124

4. Hlibovytsky, Y. [Yevhen Hlibovytsky]. (2014, March 26). *призначення Zurab Alasania в НТКУ* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/yevhen.hlibovytsky/posts/803214833040539

5. hromadske. (2014, October 29). *Успішні реформи роблять люди, які не розраховують на наступний термін – Валерій Пекар* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0w6oQYUd1Yk

6. hromadske. (2015a, December 12). *ДІАЛОГИ: Кремль, терор, радикалізм — Володимир Єрмоленко та Вахтанг Кебуладзе[Dialogues: Kremlin, Terror, Radicalsim – Valydymyr Yermolenko & Vakhtang Kebuladze],* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJ4U7W7IOhQ

7. hromadske. (2015b, November 21). *Що таке гідність? Михайло Мінаков та Оксана Форостина про два роки після Революції* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x4cjIo9V2lY

8. hromadske. (2015c, February 22). *Вахтанг Кебуладзе: Идеология Майдана была либеральной. А «Правый сектор» - просто неудачное название* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UTu-3ODoJH8

9. Hrytcak, Y. (2011, August 24). *Не цілком ювілейні замітки*. ZAXID.NET. Retrieved April 3, 2020, from https://zaxid.net/ne_tsilkom_yuvileyni_zamitki_n1234467

10. Hrytcak, Y. (2014a). *26-iy Procent, abo yak podolaty istoriyu.* [The 26th percent or how to overcome history]. Poroshenko Fund, Kyiv 2014, retrieved from: http://uamoderna.com/images/biblioteka/yak-podolaty-histiry.pdf

11. Hrytcak, Y. (2014b). Evolutsiya v Ukraine ne rabotayet – Ya utverjdayu eto kak istorik [Evolution in Ukraine doesn't work – I insist as a historian], retrieved from: https://nv.ua/ukr/opinion/kak-pomeshat-planam-putina-udushit-ukrainu-10904.html

12. Hrytcak, Y. (2015a). *Kudy ruhayetsya svit* [Where is the World going], Grani-T.

13. Hrytsak, Y. (2015b, February 17). *Сможет ли Украина переломить ход истории*. Nv.Ua. Retrieved October 3, 2017, from https://nv.ua/ukr/opinion/-34814.html

14. Husar, L. (2014, July 27). Mayemo sumlinno I vidpovidalno ne tilky krytykuvaty vladu ale y yiyi obyraty in kontrolyuvaty [We have to not only responsibly criticize the authorities, but also elect and control them]. http://1-12.org.ua/2014/07/27/3165

15. Kurkov, A. [Andrei Kurkov]. (2015, September 2). *В "Мистецькому Арсеналі" прошла дискуссия* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/andrei.kurkov/posts/10200934175993605

16. Nestor Group, (2015). Dogovir Gidnosti zarady stalogo rozvytku [The contract of dignity for sustainable development], retrieved from http://nestorgroup.info/docs/ on 04.02.2017

17. Pekar, V. (2015, June 25). Модернизация Украины как вызов и возможность. Nv.Ua. Retrieved July 27, 2018, from

https://nv.ua/opinion/modernizaciya-ukrainy-kak-vyzov-i-vozmozhnost-55700.html

18. Shuster online. (2014, November 25). *Валерій Пекар. Шустер LIVE. 25.11.2014* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A98RYXSYsMM

19. Skurativskyi, V., (2014, December 30). Radykalna Energia Suspilstva Moje Ponovytysya [The Radical energy of society could reappear], retrieved from: http://1-12.org.ua/2014/12/30/3348

20. TEDx Talks. (2015, December 13). *Модернізація України у глобальному контексті | Валерій Пекар | [Modernisation of Ukraine in the global context. Valeriy Pekar], TEDxKyiv* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cBYArsMyjLw&t=455s

21. TVi. (2014, June 6). *Володимир Єрмоленко: Ми - молода пасіонарна нація* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=brQOBZV88cM

22. Yermolenko, V. [Volodymyr Yermolenko]. (2015, May 24). *революції, на відміну від реформ, не змінюють суспільств. Навіть коли вони перемагають.* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/volodymyr.yermolenko/posts/10152929867768358

Taking the long view (2016-2019)

1. Bondar, A. (2019). The Split Heart of Incompleteness, In V. Yermolenko (Ed.), *Ukrayina v istoriyah i opovidyah. Esseyi Ukrayinskih intelektualiv. [Ukraine in Histories and Stories. Essays of Ukrainian Intellectuals]* (pp. 119–134). Інтерньюз-Україна., retrieved from: https://ukraineworld.org/storage/app/media/ukrhisstorukrinternewsmfweb.pdf

2. Denysenko, L. (2019). Majority as minority. In V. Yermolenko (Ed.), *Ukrayina v istoriyah i opovidyah. Esseyi Ukrayinskih intelektualiv. [Ukraine in Histories and Stories. Essays of Ukrainian Intellectuals]* (pp. 167–182). Інтерньюз-Україна. retrieved from: https://ukraineworld.org/storage/app/media/ukrhisstorukrinternewsmfweb.pdf

3. Gongadze, M. (2018). Media - Myroslava Gongadze. In M. Davydiuk (Ed.), *Yak probity Ukrayinu uspishnoyu [How to make Ukraine successful]* (pp. 146–161). Smoloskyp.

4. Gudziak, M. (2018). Mentality – Borys Gudziak . In M. Davydiuk (Ed.), *Yak probity Ukrayinu uspishnoyu [How to make Ukraine successful]* (pp. 11–25). Smoloskyp.

5. *How to Build Social Trust: Ukrainian Intellectuals Discussed This at the UCU Kyiv Center*. (2019, May 30). Ukrainan Catholic University. Retrieved September 8, 2018, from https://ucu.edu.ua/en/news/yak-rozbuduvaty-suspilnu-doviru-pro-shho-ukrayinski-intelektualy-dyskutuvaly-u-kyyivskomu-tsentri-uku/

6. Hrytcak, Y. (2016, September 26). *Лінія розриву для України*. Nv.Ua. Retrieved December 15, 2018, from https://nv.ua/ukr/opinion/linija-rozrivu-dlja-ukrajini-227437.html

7. Hrytcak, Y. (2017). Kinets Revolutsii? [The End of the Revolution?], retrieved from: https://gazeta.ua/articles/grycak-jaroslav/_kinec-revolyuciyi/751588)

8. Hrytcak, Y. (2019). Ukraine: Short but Global History of Ukrainian Bread. In V. Yermolenko (Ed.), *Ukrayina v istoriyah i opovidyah. Esseyi Ukrayinskih intelektualiv. [Ukraine in Histories and Stories. Essays of Ukrainian Intellectuals]* (pp. 23–40). Інтерньюз-Україна., retrieved from: https://ukraineworld.org/storage/app/media/ukrhisstorukrinternewsmfweb.pdf

9. Kebuladze, V. (2019). To Gain the Fatherland, In V. Yermolenko (Ed.), *Ukrayina v istoriyah i opovidyah. Esseyi Ukrayinskih intelektualiv. [Ukraine in Histories and Stories. Essays of Ukrainian Intellectuals]* (pp. 183–199). Інтерньюз-Україна., retrieved from: https://ukraineworld.org/storage/app/media/ukrhisstorukrinternewsmfweb.pdf

10. Kurkov, A. (2019). Ukrainians. From Historical Matrix till today, In V. Yermolenko (Ed.), *Ukrayina v istoriyah i opovidyah. Esseyi Ukrayinskih intelektualiv. [Ukraine in Histories and Stories. Essays of Ukrainian Intellectuals]* (pp. 85–98). Інтерньюз-Україна., retrieved from: https://ukraineworld.org/storage/app/media/ukrhisstorukrinternewsmfweb.pdf

11. Pekar, V. (2017, May 6). *За экономическую свободу*. Nv.Ua. Retrieved February 17, 2019, from https://nv.ua/opinion/za-ekonomicheskuju-svobodu-1096803.html

12. Pekar, V. (2018, November 10). *Лишние люди [Superfluous people]*. Nv.Ua. Retrieved December 18, 2018, from https://nv.ua/opinion/lishnie-ljudi-2506234.html

13. Plokhy, L. (2019). Rus, Cossacks and Ukrainian Identity. In V. Yermolenko (Ed.), *Ukrayina v istoriyah i opovidyah. Esseyi Ukrayinskih intelektualiv. [Ukraine in Histories and Stories. Essays of Ukrainian Intellectuals]* (pp. 41–58). Інтерньюз-Україна., retrieved from: https://ukraineworld.org/storage/app/media/ukrhisstorukrinternewsmfweb.pdf

14. Radio NV [Радіо НВ]. (2018, December 4). *Валерій Пекар про ліберальний капіталізм, реформи, відтік мізків та підприємництво* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ECXJCNyiDOI

15. Radio NV [Радіо НВ]. (2019, April 2). *Що врятує Порошенка від поразки? Валерій Пекар про другий тур виборів*[Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BSpdsGaxotY

16. Roitburd, O. (2018). Art – Olexandr Roitburd. In M. Davydiuk (Ed.), *Yak probity Ukrayinu uspishnoyu [How to make Ukraine successful]* (pp. 246–271). Smoloskyp.

17. TEDx Talks. (2016, October 27). *Субсидіаризуйтесь — поборете | Ярослав Грицак & Євген Глібовицький | TEDxKyiv* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-lEAUGpWTp8&t=764s

18. Tereshenko, M. (2018). Elites – Michelle Tereshenko . In M. Davydiuk (Ed.), *Yak probity Ukrayinu uspishnoyu [How to make Ukraine successful]* (pp. 246–271). Smoloskyp.

19. UA First [UA:Перший]. (2019, February 6). *Складна розмова з Ярославом Грицаком. Чи існує національний характер?* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8UaaIyBdas

20. Yermolenko, V. (2019). The Steppe, Empire and Cruelty. In V. Yermolenko (Ed.), *Ukrayina v istoriyah i opovidyah. Esseyi Ukrayinskih intelektualiv. [Ukraine in Histories and Stories. Essays of Ukrainian Intellectuals]* (pp. 99–118). Інтерньюз-Україна., retrieved from:

https://ukraineworld.org/storage/app/media/ukrhisstorukrinternewsmfweb.pdf

21. Yermolenko, V. (2019b). Interview with Yurii Andrukhovych, Ukrainian culture and literature. In V. Yermolenko (Ed.), *Ukrayina v istoriyah i opovidyah. Esseyi Ukrayinskih intelektualiv. [Ukraine in Histories and Stories. Essays of Ukrainian Intellectuals]* (pp. 59–84). Інтерньюз-Україна., retrieved from: https://ukraineworld.org/storage/app/media/ukrhisstorukrinternewsmfweb.pdf

3.5.1.2 Liberism

1. Balashov, H. (2014, February 28). *Lustration of the System* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/balashov.gennadiy/posts/596862033724032
2. Balashov, H. (2014a, June 30). *Kiev is becoming more powerful than Moscow* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/balashov.gennadiy/posts/660951020648466
3. Balashov, H. (2019, January 30). *Dead-ends of Poroshenko* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/balashov.gennadiy/posts/2114336861976534
4. Balashov, H. (2019a, March 27). *The main opponent of Poroshenko is the people* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/balashov.gennadiy/posts/2202860416457511
5. Balashov, H. (2019b, February 28). *About the issue of Russian language* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/balashov.gennadiy/posts/2159847604092126
6. Chernyshev, M., & Monin, D. (2019). *ПРОГРАМА ТА ЗАКОНОПРОЕКТИ*. The Citizen's Movement for Free Economy (Freeeconomy.Org.Ua). Retrieved August 28, 2021, from http://freeeconomy.org.ua/programa-ta-zakonoproekty/pdf_3.html?fbclid=IwAR3hg7-oDlo0xHntuGN-GTOWt3qLqFLkaC7sioIVBCXWy_tpKVPxRMbZTqI
7. Fedorin, V. (2015). *Goodbye Empire. Conversations with Kakha Bedukidze*. Vydavnytstvo Starogo Leva. Lviv
8. Fedorin, V. (2017, August 4). *About Reform* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/bfmc.ua/posts/1995984923760466
9. LB.ua. (2016, April 16). *Міністр фінансів назвав себе лібертаріанцем, але податки знижувати відмовився*. Retrieved

August 21, 2021, from https://lb.ua/news/2016/04/16/333072_ministr_finansov_nazval.html
10. Lozhkin, B., & Fedorin, V. (2016). *Chetverta Respublika (The 4th Republic)*. Folio.
11. Protsenko, V. (2018, May 7). *Falling support of Market Reform* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/bfmc.ua/posts/2416556391703315
12. Romaniuk, R. (2019, July 3). *Александр Данилюк: Зеленский апеллирует к людям, а Порошенко всегда говорил "мои люди."* Pravda.Com.Ua. Retrieved August 20, 2021, from https://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/articles/2019/07/3/7219859/
13. Sereda, Y. (2019, December 16). *"Слуганародуїзм". Яку ідеологію сповідує партія влади*. Pravda.Com.Ua. Retrieved August 27, 2021, from https://www.pravda.com.ua/articles/2019/12/16/7234910/

3.5.1.3 Republicanism

1. 112 Ukraine. (2015, May 21). *Андрей Ермолаев, политолог, - гость "112 Украина", 21.05.2015* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4WFtkUu43m0
2. 112 Ukraine. (2016, March 12). *Андрей Ермолаев, Директор Института стратегических исследований - гость "112 Украина", 12.03.2016* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dy-qQwPwyPs
3. 112ua.tv. (2016, December 15). *Директор НИСИ Андрей Ермолаев – гость ток-шоу "Люди. Hard Talk". Выпуск от 14.12.2016*. Retrieved October 21, 2021, from https://112ua.tv/hard_talk/direktor-nisi-andrey-ermolaev--segodnya-v-tok-shou-lyudi-hard-talk-359198.html
4. ARU TV. (2016, March 7). Мы прошли путь от Революции достоинства до Кабинета позора – Михаил Минаков [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zW6f_lYwgao&t=359s
5. ARU TV. (2016a, March 23). Коррупция в Украине и как ее победить – профессор Михаил Минаков [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mcNRrWC537I
6. Channel 5. (2016, February 2). Михайло Мінаков (політичний філософ) - ексклюзивне інтерв'ю "5 каналу" [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HYOkFcmru_A
7. Dobroho Ranku, Ukrayino! (2014, May 30). *"Доброго ранку, Україно! ". Гість студії Андрій Єрмолаєв.* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8h_vXZ6Bl4
8. Druzenko, G. (2015, July 10). *About the Philosophy of Reform* [Facebook status update]. Facebook.

https://www.facebook.com/gennadiy.druzenko/posts/10153083128373412
9. Druzenko, G. (2018, September 2). *One more time about relationship with YVT* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/gennadiy.druzenko/posts/10155900810918412
10. Druzenko, G. (2018a, November 24). *Right wing: Freedom, Security, Justice* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/gennadiy.druzenko/posts/10156079603428412
11. Druzenko, G. (2019, February 14). *The cost of the Incomplete Revolution* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/gennadiy.druzenko/posts/10156251192698412
12. Druzenko, G. (2019a, November 5). *Chance for the Ukrainian right-wing* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/gennadiy.druzenko/posts/10156857601303412
13. Hromadske. (2014a, March 5). Андрій Єрмолаєв: Хто знає як, і хоче - той може [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lku-deLPups
14. Hromadske. (2014b, October 25). *Украинцы не поддерживают идеологию радикалов - Михаил Минаков* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OiFyTQudGsU
15. Hromadske. (2015, November 21). *Що таке гідність? Михайло Мінаков та Оксана Форостина про два роки після Революції* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x4cjIo9V2lY
16. IDEALIST.media. (2016, April 22). Михаил Минаков о возможностях модернизации Украины (укр) [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fQcC4RHZYHI
17. Minakov, M. (2016). Pochemu vse ne tak [Why is everything wrong], retrieved 21.06.2021 from: http://argumentua.com/stati/pochemu-vse-ne-tak-filosof-mikhail-minakov
18. Minakov, M. (2017, June 29). *Reconstructing the power vertical: the authoritarian threat in Ukraine*. OpenDemocracy. Retrieved June 10, 2021, from https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/reconstructing-power-vertical-authoritarian-threat-in-ukraine/
19. Mylovanov, T., & Minakov, M. (2016, July 5). *Ukraine's authoritarian signals*. OpenDemocracy. Retrieved July 9, 2021, from https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/ukraine-s-authoritarian-signals/

20. NEWSONE. (2017, March 28). *Ермолаев: украинская власть осуществляет контрреволюцию Майдана. "Утро на NewsOne" 28.03.17* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2V-KeYPGzTY
21. NEWSONE. (2019, April 3). *Ермолаев: феномен Зеленского в том, что он из среднего класса, а не миллиардер 03.04.19* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7LlRYJ3xJUA
22. OstWest. (2019, May 4). *Михаил Минаков: Путин и раздача паспортов, мастер Зеленский, Порошенко — версия комсомола* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74RE3yajzBE&t=1353s
23. Pershiy Kozatkiy. (2016, December 23). *Репрессии в Украине превратились в системную практику: Андрей Ермолаев* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxQrQJRykdQ
24. Pershiy Kozatskiy. (2015a, October 12). Отношение к переселенцам это повод для импичмента. Андрей Ермолаев [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZAUuNPQiCek&t=171s
25. Pershiy Kozatskyi. (2015, December 27). Итоги 2015: Год контрреволюции достоинства. Андрей Ермолаев [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E1-OAsqgJUs
26. Pershiy Kozatskyi. (2015a, September 1). *Кризис власти неизбежен. Андрей Ермолаев* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8KGQzh_NMTY
27. Selector Channel. (2018, December 25). *Создание Православной Церкви в Украине и политические спекуляции на этой теме / Андрей Ермолаев* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CovvyayGzZg
28. Selector Channel. (2019, January 5). *Украина как провинция Европы / Андрей Ермолаев* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hyL3q7bUHsk
29. Shkola Grazhdanskogo Prosveshenoya [Школа гражданского просвещения]. (2013, December 14). *Михаил Минаков ("СМИ и общество", Голицыно, 12–15 декабря)* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dphe5i_e9zI&t=4530s
30. Shuster online. (2016, October 20). *Андрій Єрмолаєв: "Нема конфлікту України з Росією, є конфлікт режимів"* [Video]. YouTube. *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n_ENna3OxBM*
31. Telecompaniya Era. (2015, December 21). Від першої особи: Андрій Єрмолаєв (21 12 15) [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0z38K1Subpo
32. TOPINFORM. (2017, December 18). *2014-2018: От революции к контрреволюции. Андрей Ермолаев* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I2qHZe-H8aA

33. TSN. (2014, February 20). Андрій Єрмолаєв назвав етапи реформування країни [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8q-9exFEAGM

34. UBR. (2015, February 7). Итоги недели с Искандером Хисамовым 21 12 2014, гость программы Андрей Ермолаев [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fD5H8JLDKqg
35. UKRLIFE.TV. (2017, May 18). *Как новая индустриализация приведёт к объединению Украины, - Андрей Ермолаев* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KQsEk_nmD3w
36. UKRLIFE.TV. (2017a, July 7). *Олигархическая модель Украины переросла в модель автократической монополькы, - Андрей Ермолаев* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qqrOBwp4NT8
37. UKRLIFE.TV. (2017b, December 14). *Режимы Украины, России и Белоруссии подпитывают друг друга, - Михаил Минаков* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b_c6UgQ7O48
38. UKRLIFE.TV. (2018, April 13). Досрочные выборы президента – шанс оппозиции расстроить план Порошенко сохранить власть, – Ермолаев [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kuh9wMUs1K8
39. UKRLIFE.TV. (2019, April 26). Андрей Ермолаев: Котигорошко и битва за Украину как за ресурс [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HR713F6mrv4

40. UKRLIFE.TV. (2019a, July 17). *Альтернативный Запад объединяется с авторитарным Востоком, - Михаил Минаков* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Se_BHppE-Y&t=4s

3.5.2.1 National Conservatism

2014-2016 - Liberating the Nation

1. Andrukhovych, Y. (2015a, March 20). *Недодана вартість*. Zbruc. Retrieved August 15, 2021, from https://zbruc.eu/node/34047
2. Andrukhovych, Y., (2015, April 3). *Латентно амбівалентно*. Zbruc. Retrieved August 15, 2021, from https://zbruc.eu/node/34595
3. Boychenko, O. (2014, September 18). *Якщо все так добре, то чому все так погано?* Zbruc. Retrieved August 19, 2021, from https://zbruc.eu/node/26983
4. Boychenko, O. (2014a, May 15). *А оце вже ні*. Zbruc. Retrieved August 18, 2021, from https://zbruc.eu/node/22363
5. Boychenko, O. (2014b, December 29). *Гідний наслідування приклад*. Zbruc. Retrieved February 10, 2021, from https://zbruc.eu/node/30982

6. Boychenko, O. (2015, September 10). *Гавел і Конституція*. Zbruc. Retrieved August 17, 2021, from https://zbruc.eu/node/41268
7. Espreso.TV. (2014, May 26). *Портников про п'ятого президента України* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXBHCQOA03A&t=2s
8. Espreso.TV. (2015, January 24). *"Вечір із Миколою Княжицьким" Тарас Возняк та Микола Рябчук* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b-Zt0sLtbGY
9. Espreso.TV. (2015a, May 21). *Портников про декомунізацію* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o0stkgL6Akg
10. Hruslinska, I., (2014, December 31). *Журнал Театр. • Оксана Забужко: Музей покинутой идентичности*. Theatre Journal [Журнал Театр]. Retrieved August 10, 2021, from http://oteatre.info/oksana-zabuzhko/
11. Klymenko, V. (2016, April 23). *Оксана Забужко: "Письменник завжди самотній, за визначенням, бо його завдання – витворити свій власний світ."* LB.Ua. Retrieved August 12, 2021, from https://lb.ua/culture/2016/04/23/333434_oksana_zabuzhko_pismennik_zavzhdi.html
12. Kozliuk, S. (2015, May 21). *Володимир В'ятрович: Деколонізація України - незворотна*. Tyzhden.Ua. Retrieved August 5, 2021, from https://tyzhden.ua/Society/136888
13. Prohasko, T. (2014, March 12). *Гепатит Ру*. Zbruc. Retrieved September 18, 2021, from https://zbruc.eu/node/33721
14. Shvadchak, N. (2015, December 12). *Оксана Забужко: Країна без своєї історії не стане регіональним лідером*. Pravda.Com.Ua. Retrieved August 12, 2021, from https://life.pravda.com.ua/culture/2015/12/12/204689/
15. UKRLIFE.TV. (2014, October 9). *Украина одержала впечатляющую победу, - Портников* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cl4VpDG7og8&t=90s
16. Vyatrovych, O. (2014a, May 23). *In this struggle Ukrainians become real nation* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/volodymyr.viatrovych/posts/10202091256222413
17. Vyatrovych, V. (2014, March 21). *(Не)подоланий тоталітаризм. Український урок*. Зеркало Недели | Дзеркало Тижня | Mirror Weekly. Retrieved August 15, 2021, from https://zn.ua/ukr/HISTORY/ne-podolaniy-totalitarizm-ukrayinskiy-urok-_.html
18. Zabuzhko, O. (2015, August 10). *Росія 2.1: Перезавантаження, або пастка для еліти*. Radio Svoboda. Retrieved August 18, 2021, from https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/27179774.html

1. Andrukhovych, Y. (2016, April 8). *Ексодус*. Zbruc. Retrieved August 12, 2021, from https://zbruc.eu/node/50031
2. Andrukhovych, Y. (2016a, June 10). *Без Франка в голові*. Zbruc. Retrieved August 10, 2021, from https://zbruc.eu/node/52566
3. Andrukhovych, Y. (2017, June 16). *Центрально-Східна Європа: коротка історія мутацій*. Zbruc. Retrieved August 10, 2021, from https://zbruc.eu/node/67327
4. Andrukhovych, Y. (2017a, September 18). *Благословенія*. Zbruc. Retrieved August 9, 2021, from https://zbruc.eu/node/70756
5. Andrukhovych, Y. (2019) Interview with Yurii Andrukhovych, Ukrainian Culture and Literature, in Yerlmolenko, V. (Ed.). (2019). *Ukrayina v istoriyah ta opovidyah: Esseyi Ukrayinskih Intelektuaiv. [Collection of Essays by Ukrainian Intellectuals]*. Internews Ukraine, UkraineWorld., pp.59-84
6. Andrukhovych, Y. (2019a, April 20). *Кар'єра Володимира З., яку ще можна спинити*. Zbruc. Retrieved August 11, 2021, from https://zbruc.eu/node/88318
7. Channel 5 [5 канал]. (2017, April 3). *Микола Рябчук про колаборантів в ОРДЛО // "За Чай.com" - 03.04.2017*[Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-crk1gleOo
8. Channel 5 [5 канал]. (2018, August 27). *Україна незалежна - точка неповернення / Микола Рябчук | Інфовечір | 27.08.2018* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GvfjeQ9AGLM
9. Hromadske. (2019, February 20). *Микола Рябчук - про дві України, колоніалізм і львівський андеграунд / Україна розумна* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-EgWTrm9acc&t=1050s
10. Kyrychenko, V. (2018, May 23). *About the Creole Bloggers* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/omnitip/posts/1897877870270130
11. Portnikov, V. (2017, December 30). *Добре жити в Україні. Культура і мова – запорука успіху*. RadioSvoboda. Retrieved December 20, 2021, from https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/28947123.html
12. Portnikov, V. (2018, November 11). *Портников: Формування української ідентичності – головне завдання держави. Її не замінять економічні. . .* Gordonua.Com. Retrieved December 20, 2021, from https://gordonua.com/ukr/news/politics/-portnikov-formuvannja-ukrajinskoji-identichnosti-golovne-zavdannja-derzhavi-jiji-ne-pidminjat-ekonomichni-reformi-497676.html
13. Portnikov, V. (2019, February 19). *Майдан врятувала архаїка*. Zbruc. Retrieved August 9, 2021, from https://zbruc.eu/node/87088

14. Vremya Politiki [Time of Politics]. (2019, January 31). *Виталий Портников: Реформы в Украине никак не связаны с реформами в России* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z90wNzGJx_U
15. Vynnychuk, Y. (2016, August 17). *Лінгвоцид і мовна шизофренія*. Zbruc. Retrieved August 12, 2021, from https://zbruc.eu/node/55082
16. Vynnychuk, Y. (2018, March 25). *Месії з Росії*. Zbruc. Retrieved August 10, 2021, from https://zbruc.eu/node/78012
17. Vynnychuk, Y. (2019, May 29). *Закон як дишло*. Zbruc. Retrieved August 10, 2021, from https://zbruc.eu/node/89670
18. Vynnychuk, Y. (2019a, January 2). *Для щастя так мало треба*. Zbruc. Retrieved August 10, 2021, from https://zbruc.eu/node/85809
19. Vynnychuk, Y. (2019b, February 24). *Свято нескінченних поразок*. Zbruc. Retrieved August 11, 2021, from https://zbruc.eu/node/87234
20. Yushenko, V. (2018). Politics – Viktor Yushenko. In M. Davydiuk (Ed.), *Yak probity Ukrayinu uspishnoyu [How to make Ukraine successful]* (pp. 102–129). Smoloskyp.
21. Zabuzhko, O. (2019, January 27). *«Яка ж прекрасна ідея людської смертності!»*. Zbruc. Retrieved August 11, 2021, from https://zbruc.eu/node/86306

3.5.2.2 Neo-Soviet Conservatism

1. Kapital. (2019, September 14). *Либеральная реформофрения. Дмитрий Джангиров* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5h_wl7iGp8Q

2. Perviy Kanal. (2019, April 23). *Гость Михаил Погребинский. Познер. Выпуск от 22.04.2019* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZM84M7ygyg8

3. TOPINFORM. (2014, June 11). *Джангиров: Трезвый взгляд на Украину. 10.06.2014.* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RbawUBXdhmI

4. Ukrainskij Vybor. (2014, December 18). *Осмыслить и извлечь урок* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INHSJvNgekk

5. UKRLIFE.TV. (2014, December 18). *Реформы в Украине будут происходить за счет бедных, - Джангиров*[Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XdrnWWzXjZk

6. UKRLIFE.TV. (2015, March 22). *Прогноз от Дмитрия Джангирова* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8im-RKsW9nA

7. UKRLIFE.TV. (2015a, March 30). *Коломойский был вынужден сдаться, - Дмитрий Джангиров* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_i3GB8Ozto

8. UKRLIFE.TV. (2017, November 8). *Джангиров vs Пасхавер: В какой Украине мы хотим жить? Дебаты на UKRLIFE.TV* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=92BC5eeEisM

9. UKRLIFE.TV. (2017a, October 11). *Дмитрий Джангиров: Украина находится в демографической воронке* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kS3nEPWvbNE

10. UKRLIFE.TV. (2017b, June 1). *"Полторы священные коровы" США, - Дмитрий Джангиров* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sW9NkOg5Vn4

11. UArgument. (2014, December 13). *Михаил Погребинский о реформах на фоне войны* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nhPiMBHCHG4

3.6 Alternative narratives

1. 112 Ukraine. (2019, April 19). *Дебаты Зеленского и Порошенко на Олимпийском 19 апреля 2019* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FfcCFrRqp5w

2. Anatolij Sharij. (2018, February 24). *Eduard Yurchenko, Naz Corpus* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KY5u4duvMDI

3. Bidochko, L., et al. (2019, May 29). *Україна після виборів: шанси на деолігархізацію і соціалістичну альтернативу — інтерв'ю з Юлією Юрченко*. Commons. Retrieved November 10, 2021, from https://commons.com.ua/uk/yuliya-yurchenko/

4. Biletskiy, B. (2014, July 2). *Які перспективи у реформи вищої освіти?* Commons. Retrieved November 10, 2020, from https://commons.com.ua/uk/yaki-perspektivi-u-reformi-osviti/

5. Channel 5. (2018, November 27). *За Чай.com - Голова політичної партії "Правий сектор" Андрій Тарасенко | За чай.com* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iEUxVvyxaXE

6. Dutchak, O., et al. (2018, December 26). *Що не так із реформами в Україні*. Commons. Retrieved November 9, 2020, from https://commons.com.ua/uk/sho-ne-tak-z-reformami-v-ukrayini/

7. Ishchenko, V. (2014, January 7). *Support Ukrainians but do not legitimize the far-right and discredited politicians!*Lefteast. Retrieved April 12, 2020, from https://lefteast.org/support-ukrainians-but-not-far-right/

8. Ishenko, V. (2013, December 29). *Долой Евросоюз! Да здраствует борьба за абстракции!* Retrieved November 21, 2020, from https://commons.com.ua/uk/doloj-evrosoyuz-da-zdravstvuet-borba/

9. Kravchuk, O. (2015, December 8). *Україна офшорна. Історія формування вітчизняної моделі економіки*. Commons. Retrieved November 9, 2020, from https://commons.com.ua/uk/ukrayina-ofshorna-istoriya-formuvannya-vitchiznyanoyi-modeli-ekonomiki/

10. Kyrylenko, O. (2020, September 6). *Что не так с национальной элитой Украины. Дискутируют Юлия Мостовая, Александр Ройтбурд и Андрей Баумейстер*. UkrPravda. Retrieved November 12, 2020, from https://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/articles/2020/09/6/7265416/

11. LB.ua (2014, March 5). *"Правий сектор" виступає проти членства України в НАТО*. LB.Ua. Retrieved November 14, 2021, from https://lb.ua/society/2014/03/19/259918_praviy_sektor_vistupaet_protiv.html

12. Lyashko, O. (2019, March 29). *Інтерв`ю з кандидатом в президенти Олегом Ляшко. Повна версія.* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BSARqwbhavg

13. Piecyh, M. (2016, October 18). *Андрей Белецкий: Аваков - человек системы, а эту систему я считаю крайне негативной*. UkrPravda. Retrieved October 10, 2021, from https://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/articles/2016/10/18/7123983/

14. Popovych, Z. (2014, March 12). *Вимагаємо визнання українського тимчасового уряду та якнайшвидших перевиборів Верховної Ради!* Commons. Retrieved November 2, 2020, from https://commons.com.ua/uk/vimagayemo-viznannya-ukrayinskogo-tim/

15. Pykheckiy, L. & Fiala, Y. (2014, December 23). *Зраджена революція 1989 року*. Commons. Retrieved November 9, 2020, from https://commons.com.ua/uk/zradzhena-revolyutsiya-1989-roku/

16. Rafeyenko, V. (2016, March 10). *В XXI веке войны начинают только аутсайдеры, — Андрей Баумейстер*. Focus. Retrieved November 9, 2020, from https://focus.ua/ukraine/346422

17. Sharij, A. (2013, November 23). *Euromaidan* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/anatolijsharij/posts/10202667717202523

18. Sharij, A. (2013b, November 24). *Europeans* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/anatolijsharij/posts/10202675236110491

19. Sharij, A. (2013c, November 25). *Nightmarish Ukrainian Reality* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/anatolijsharij/posts/10202683453395918

20. Sharij, A. (2013d, December 1). *Opposition* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/anatolijsharij/posts/10202731249110781

21. Sharij, A. (2013e, December 12). *Own point of view* [Facebook status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/anatolijsharij/posts/10202820823590087

22. Sharij, A. (2014, February 13). *Philosophers* [Facebook status update]. Facebook.

23. *Sharij.com.ua (ППШ)*. (2020). *Программа Партии Шария*. Retrieved December 10, 2020, from https://sharij.com.ua/program

24. V gostiah u Gordona. (2018, December 25). *Владимир Зеленский. 3/3. "В гостях у Дмитрия Гордона" (2018)* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPE2hv8qbBc&t=506s

25. V gostiah u Gordona. (2019, March 29). *Андрей Билецкий. "В гостях у Дмитрия Гордона" (2019)* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=paQBjBdAmbY

26. VO 'Soboda.' (2013, December 7). *Майдан 6 грудня / Олег Тягнибок про подальші дії опозиції / Революція гідності // 2013* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PFmnGvFoVW0

Summary

1. Poroshenko, P. (2014, June 7). *Урочисте засідання*. Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Official Webportal. Retrieved December 31, 2021, from https://www.rada.gov.ua/meeting/stenogr/show/5631.html

2. Poroshenko, P. (2018, September 20). *Послання Президента до Верховної Ради (повний текст)*. Ukrinform.ua. Retrieved December 30, 2021, from https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-polytics/2541989-poslanna-prezidenta-do-verhovnoi-radi.html

Curriculum Vitae

Kolesnyk Bogdan
Schorenweg 38, 4058 Basel
+41 79 536 88 82
bohdan.kolesnyk@gmail.com
D.O.B - 05.05.1985

Professional experience

11/2019 – current	**Head Clinical Workforce Insights** at Novartis, Basel
03/2013 – 11/2019	**Sr Finance Manager** at Novartis, Basel
01/2011 - 03/2013	**Sr Business Analyst** at Novartis, Basel
08/2008 – 12/2010	**Financial Analyst** at Huntsman, Basel
01/2008 – 07/2008	**Analyst** at Goldman Sachs Bank AG, Zürich

Education

07/2015 – 02/2023	**PhD Organizational Studies and Cultural Theory** *University of St. Gallen, Switzerland*
09/2009 – 09/2011	**CMA (Certified Management Accountant)** *Institute of Management Accountants, New Jersey, USA*
09/2006 – 12/2007	**MSc in International Business** *London South Bank University, United Kingdom*
09/2002 – 10/2007	**Master of International Economics** *Kiev National Economic University, Ukraine*