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REFORM IN UKRAINE AND THE INFLUENCE OF FOREIGN ACTORS AFTER EUROMAIDAN

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As the mounting protests from Maidan Square in Kyiv led to the resignation of President Viktor Yanukovych, Ukrainians found themselves at an unavoidable fork in the road in their history. For years the country had become a new frontier of Western influence, forcing a decision between tightening economic and cultural ties with the West or with Russia. The basic question many Ukrainians faced included choosing between their Soviet past or a potential liberal democratic future. Furthermore, the Russian takeover of Crimea became the first major invasion of a European country since 1968.

The goal of this article is to examine how Western versus Russian institutions and agents influence a third actor, Ukraine, in the postcommunist world. The following discussion will peel back the various layers of government, businesses, nongovernmental organizations, and people, both domestic and foreign, in the area of reform in order to establish how policymaking in Ukraine has been shaped. I consider the competing uses of hard and soft power in Ukraine's reform movement, focusing on democratization and the role of specific anticorruption initiatives. Democratization concerns the liberalization of politics, loosening restrictions on policies, and developing responsive institutions. Anticorruption efforts target illegal activity propagated by an entrenched graft culture that undermines democratization efforts. I interviewed Ukrainian political elites, examining their perceptions of the ways in which foreign actors shaped reform policies. I contend that Moscow has used both hard power and soft power to undermine reform efforts. The West has relied on financial aid to bolster civil society groups and a new generation of civil servants to promote institutional capacity to further reform initiatives.

Keywords: Ukraine; Euromaidan; Soft Power; Democratization; Civil Society; European Union; Russia

As the mounting protests from Maidan Square in Kyiv led President Viktor Yanukovych to flee the country in 2014, Ukrainians found themselves at an inevitable fork in the road of their history. For years the country had become a new frontier of Western influence, forcing a choice between tightening economic and cultural ties with the West or with Russia. Intellectual discourse in Ukraine has been framed around the question of whether the country is on a "European" or "Eurasian" path (Prizel 1997:333). This question has persisted since independence in 1991. As Oleksandr

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Sushko and Olena Prystayko put it when referring to the Orange Revolution of 2004, "Ukraine is a borderland country between democratic Europe and authoritarian, corrupt, post-Soviet Eurasia" (2006:128). Ukrainians faced this dilemma through the Euromaidan protests of 2013, which was then highlighted by the Russian invasion of Crimea in 2014.

As Ukraine struggled to separate its political system from that of the Kremlin, many activists inside and outside government realized the importance of achieving broader domestic reforms. The difficult task of state building has hampered efforts to adopt a sovereign, democratic regime. Three core issues since transitioning from a Soviet republic to an independent state include: developing a strong civil society, a democratic polity, and a national identity (Motyl 1993:18). Democratization and anticorruption efforts throughout the country constitute a domestic issue, yet foreign governments have played an outsized role in shaping the course of reforms.

Ilya Prizel defines democracy in the context of post-Soviet regimes as countries guaranteeing civil liberties, an independent judiciary, an accountable civil service, a free press, and competitive elections, all of which have existed to limited degrees throughout Ukraine's independent history, starting in 1991 (1997:330). Two weak elements of Ukraine's democracy include civil society and national identification. A lack of trust in existing institutions contributes to the inconsistent civic activism in Ukraine (Emeran 2017:1). Taras Kuzio sees the case of the 2004 Orange Revolution, especially the activism in Western Ukraine against election fraud, as a case illustrating the positive correlation between a stronger sense of "civic nationalism" and democracy building (2010:285).

The Ukrainian *oligarkhiia*, relatively powerful vis-à-vis the state, has been the greatest obstacle to democratic transition. As democratic reform relies heavily on a united political leadership, the oligarchs have effectively stifled progress within Ukraine by fragmenting the elite class (Prizel 1997:330). Serhiy Kudelia contends that Ukrainian politicians, who seek to unify the country, have been unable to provide enough patronage to citizens, nor a coherent ideology to maintain power, giving oligarchs leverage to exploit the policy process (2012:418).

From an academic perspective, modern Ukraine presents an excellent case study in political science and international relations. This country—and recent events that have taken place there—lends itself to an almost infinite number of research questions on postcommunist development, democratization, marketization, geopolitics, energy politics, and foreign influence. The aim of this article is to examine how Western versus Russian institutions and agents influence a third actor, Ukraine, in the postcommunist world.

The following discussion investigates the question: How have Ukrainian political elites experienced foreign influence in policymaking, specifically in the area of reform measures, from Western and Russian actors? I concentrate on the ways in which Western governments and Russia have influenced Ukraine's reform movements, focusing on democratization and the role of specific anticorruption initiatives through three periods: 1991–2004, 2004–2014, and 2014–2016. The analysis of foreign influence is framed around Joseph S. Nye's conception of "hard" and "soft"

power. Hard power tactics use "coercion" or "payments" to alter behavior, whereas soft power uses "attraction" to persuade external actors (Nye 2004:x). I contend that both Western states and Russia have used hard and soft power to influence reform efforts. Russian hard power has been characterized by a military intervention in Crimea and Donbas, "administrative interference" in elections, and lucrative energy contracts, allowing Ukrainians to pay below-market value for gas (Petrov and Ryabov 2006:157; Vanderhill 2013:145–146). The main vehicle for Russian soft power is "[t]he historical interconnectedness between Ukraine and Russia [which] have penetrated every aspect of their current relationship" (Motyl 1993:3). The Russian government runs media campaigns that emphasize this connection and exploit ethnolinguistic divisions (Vanderhill 2013:145).

The West has relied on financial aid to bolster civil society groups, specifically election monitoring groups (Sushko and Prystayko 2006:134; Delcour and Wolczuk 2015:463). The United States and European Union also offer aid and loans directly to the government but with significant conditions. My research supplements the work of Sushko and Prystayko, which posits that Western states generally agree on the goals concerning Ukraine, but the EU tends to use "carrots," while the US uses "sticks" (2006:132–133). While the EU offered a visa-free regime with Ukraine to entice policymakers to meet certain conditions, the US has threatened cutting aid or invoking sanctions to extract concessions from Ukrainian leaders (133).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is a case study examining the influence of Western institutions, agents, and culture, contrasted with Russian approaches to foreign policy on policymakers in Ukraine, from a *Ukrainian* perspective. I use interviews with political elites to analyze their *subjective perceptions* of the ways in which foreign actors have shaped reform initiatives. The "West," for the purposes of this discussion, is defined as the United States (US) and European Union (EU) member states as well as their constituent international organizations (IGOs). Although I use the "West" as a broad category, I fully acknowledge the limitations of using such a general term, considering the disparate tools and policy goals between not only the US and EU but also among the various member states of the EU. The US tends to be more aggressive and often uses negative reinforcement, while the EU is more accommodating, using positive reinforcement.

VARIABLES

The variables I use in my analysis of the policy process in Ukraine include institutions, agents, policies, and culture. In the words of Rom Harré, institutions are "defined as an interlocking double-structure of persons-as-role-holders or office-bearers and the like, and of social practices involving both expressive and practical aims and outcomes" (1979:98). I define civil society as "a form of political society based on a dense network of nongovernmental associations and groups established for the autonomous pursuit of diverse socioeconomic interests and prepared to rebuff state

efforts to seize control of these activities" (Parrott 1997:22). I include the development of institutions, both governmental and nongovernmental, since independence in 1991 and their basic composition since the start of the Euromaidan protests in 2013.

I classify as agents the individuals within the political realm making decisions. In the words of sociologist Georg Simmel, "[e]very social occurrence as such, consists of an interaction between individuals. In other words, each individual is at the same time an active and a passive agent in a transaction" (1896:169). I use "politician" to describe elected officials, while using "policymakers" in a broader sense to include all members involved in that decision-making process (for example, politicians and civil servants). The ideological struggle in Ukraine among political elites has been characterized by a conservative, "Sovietophile" project versus a "Ukrainian national" one (Riabchuk 2012:443–444).

Policies refer to the outcome of decision-making, including laws, regulations, and agreements devised by both state and nonstate actors. Although policies in Ukraine may not always be executed, their intended purpose can convey what the state desires or what the state thinks its citizens or other states want from the Ukrainian government.

The most abstract but arguably the most influential variable centers on the role of culture in the policy process. Knowledge, values, and behaviors passed down to succeeding generations can shape policymaking. In the context of politics, political culture embodies a "particular pattern of orientations to political action" (Almond 1956:369). I specifically use history, language, and ideology throughout this article to illustrate their influence not only within Ukraine but in the competing value systems of the West and Russia.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH AND INTERVIEWING

Although I employ a mixed-methods approach in analyzing policymaking in Ukraine, the methods that best allow me to assess the dynamics of foreign influences on Ukraine are primarily qualitative in nature. Investigating the ways in which agents influence policy processes requires questioning representatives who are directly involved in the policymaking process and are well informed regarding specific issues and, thus, able to answer questions requiring open-ended responses. While elite responses do not always demonstrate conclusive causal links between attempts at influence and policy outcomes, such answers help researchers to detect which foreign institutions are active and which issues they are targeting to maximize their influence.

I analyze the current political landscape in Ukraine as a case study, showing how foreign actors can influence a nation-state, particularly in postcommunist Europe. In the words of John Gerring, "the case study [is] an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of similar units" (2004:342). Although a study limited to 31 interviews in a country of roughly 45 million citizens makes generalization difficult, it does shed light on particular conditions at work in the Ukrainian policy process. Elite interview responses also highlight specific inter-

pretations concerning policy decisions, which are naturally shaped by the language, thought processes, and emotions that influence those decisions (Seidman 2013:26). In-depth elite interviewing provides an ideal platform for extracting important observations and rationalizations from those involved in decision-making. My respondents highlighted the reasons why they had embraced, accepted, or rejected various policies. Regardless of the outcome, my interview partners were able to explain the reasoning behind their own decisions and interpretations.

My core methodology in this study is, to a degree, interpretivist in nature. In contrast with a positivist approach, which claims that all political events can be verified through scientific inquiry, interpretivism acknowledges that the political environment has been socially constructed and, therefore, cannot be completely understood by applying methods common in the natural sciences (Wedeen 2010). The interpretive method used here is unique to Ukraine, in that my questions relate to current political events and cannot be "retested" in another context (Lynch 2013:40). Whether discussing the formal policymaking processes, addressing the ideas that motivate various decision-makers, or analyzing how language shapes thought, I allow my respondents to create their own accounts of political events in order to interpret the political landscape.

My point in interviewing people was to *evaluate*, not test hypotheses (Seidman 2013:27). Many respondents in my study readily recalled recent events, shedding light on certain policy outcomes and various ways in which foreign agents had influenced those policies. I sought to capture behaviors concerning specific actions in the recent past (Beckmann and Hall 2013:196). Rather than amass data sets or conduct major surveys with a large number of observations, I pinpointed individual behaviors, which enabled me to zoom in on particular cases and deeper process dynamics (197).

Because policymaking involves many direct and indirect variables (both known and unknown), interviews with elites help one to more accurately identify the most relevant factors. The problem of unknown variables plagues most survey research. Without working knowledge of the specific political culture, even a well-designed survey can ask the wrong questions (Leech et al. 2013:197). Interviewing Ukrainians highly familiar with the political scene gave me a chance to discover new variables through discussion.

Analysts often use this technique to gather background on the activities of government and nongovernmental agencies that cannot be found in the public record (Leech et al. 2013:198). This is a particularly acute problem in Ukraine, where the policy process is relatively opaque. Policymaking in Kyiv relies heavily on informal networks consisting of members of the *oligarkhiia*. As defined by Heiko Pleines, oligarchs are a small group of self-interested "entrepreneurs who use their wealth to exert political influence" (2016:106). One respondent, a presidential aide, was able to recite specific phone conversations from past Ukrainian presidents and prime ministers. In these conversations the formal power brokers were keenly aware of the various interests of the oligarchs. Interviewing elites also is the best method for examining the dynamics of lobbying (Leech et al. 2013:200). Seventeen of my inter-

viewees operated outside the Ukrainian government, advocating for various initiatives. These respondents elaborated on how they were able to influence government decisions or how foreign actors, in turn, shaped their lobbying efforts.

To corroborate information gathered from my respondents, I utilize supplementary data from various sources, including media reports, academic literature, statistics from leading international agencies, and think tank papers. I triangulate information by combining interview responses with publicly available data. This is particularly important with political elites who might have incentives to lie or evade directly answering questions (Gallagher 2013:181).

SAMPLING

My sample included 31 political elites, all of whom appeared to have intimate knowledge of policymaking in their respective policy spheres. Although not representative, this sample provides detailed information on specific policy issues from experts or officials with personal experience (Mosley 2013:26). Many of my respondents had either lobbied the state themselves or had worked for the government and could therefore discuss how lobbying affected them. Analyzing lobbying and its effects requires a nonrandom sample (Leech et al. 2013:201).

The diversity of the sample was intended to ameliorate the problems associated with the small sample size (Mosley 2013:34). My 31 interviewees included experts in the fields of defense, economics, education, energy, and anticorruption initiatives. Among their ranks were eleven civil servants, three members of parliament (Rada), ten lobbyists, four policy analysts, two academics, and one journalist (see Table 1). All but one of my respondents, a Japanese citizen, were Ukrainian citizens. My strategy for recruiting potential interviewees relied on the "snowball" method approach, using the networks of respondents to connect to new interviewees.

Snowballing can limit the range of potential interviewees as some informal networks of policymakers in Ukraine may identify as "pro-Western" versus "pro-Russian." Although I offered to conduct interviews in both English and Russian to reduce interviewer effects, many of my respondents—but not all—self-identified as "Euro-Optimists" (ЄвроОптимісти), the loosely defined group of policymakers who rushed into power in 2014, pushing for closer relations with the EU. I suspect that many pro-Russian policymakers and academics were not as eager to speak publicly about their perceptions due to the divisive political question of Crimea and the unresolved conflict in Eastern Ukraine.

During my three months of fieldwork, from September to December 2016, I interviewed officials in Kyiv and was able to acquire contact information for other potential interviewees. The interviews were conducted almost entirely in English (except for specific terms and phrases outlined below), as all respondents preferred this language to Russian and I do not speak Ukrainian. Questions focused on the period during and after the Euromaidan protests, but many respondents provided examples of foreign influence before this period as they started working on policy issues much earlier, some as early as the mid-1990s.

Table 1. **Respondents' characteristics**

Civil servants / Politicians	Lobbyists / Advocacy groups	Academics / Policy analysts / Journalists
14	10	7
11 CSs / 3 MPs	—	2 ACs / 4 PAs / 1 J
3 - Economics 4 - Security 1 - Education 1 - Energy 5 - Other	2 - Anticorruption 3 - Democratization 3 - Humanitarian 2 - Environment	1 - Economics 1 - Education 1 - Security 4 - Other
Deputy Vice Speaker of the Rada Former aide to President Viktor Yushchenko Strategist for the National Institute for Strategic Studies (NISS) European Union official	Reanimation Package of Reforms (RPR) Euromaidan SOS German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) DiXiGroup Ukrainian Institute for International Politics (UIIP)	Razumkov Centre Hromad'ske TV Institute of World Policy

Interviewing respondents involved in different stages of the decision-making process helps to provide a more comprehensive picture of how policies are made (Martin 2013:107). For example, some interviewees were activists who had been directly involved in the 2014 protests on Maidan Square, while others had advised former Ukrainian presidents. In the words of Cathie Jo Martin, "experience is more multifaceted, casual relations are less easily revealed, and investigators may go up blind alleys" (2013:103). I used a semistructured approach to interviewing to allow for a degree of consistency and continuity in my conversations with each expert.

UKRAINIAN REFORMS IN 1991–2004

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Ukrainians welcomed not only their own independent state but also a chance to reform the politico-economic order inherited from the USSR. Although a nationalist movement had been gaining momentum in Ukraine through the late 1980s, the decision to grant independence relied on elites in Moscow, which dominated policymaking before the Soviet Union's dissolution (Motyl 1993:17; Yekelchyk 2007:177). This left the newly independent Ukraine with the task of state building and developing a national identity. Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev dismantled communism without implementing a viable, alternate economic system (Motyl 1993:18). This later exacerbated widespread corruption that already existed in the Soviet Union in the form of black markets and bribery.

From the outset, Ukrainian leaders struggled to build strong democratic institutions and an independent, market-based economy. The main constitutional debate centered around the centralization of power in Kyiv and the independence of the judiciary. Ukrainians inherited a highly centralized political system as a result of its Soviet legacy. Power emanated top-down from Kyiv, leaving little authority to regions and administrative districts (D'Anieri, Kravchuk, and Kuzio 1999:102). Another major constitutional question concerned presidential powers and would not be set-

tled until the ratification of new constitution in 1996 establishing a semipresidential republic, which the *oligarkhiia* supported (98).

Another legacy of the system included the well-connected Communist Party members, the *nomenklatura*, who quickly appropriated key industries, allowing them to acquire quasi monopolies. One study estimated that 85 percent of all shares of former Soviet enterprises sold in Ukraine went to managers and "employee groups." This uneven distribution of resources during privatization laid the groundwork for the rise of the *oligarkhiia* (D'Anieri et al. 1999:186). The main business sectors that oligarchs targeted for takeover were heavy industries, which relied on foreign export markets (metals, chemicals, and arms manufacturing) and financial institutions (Pleines 2016:112). As a veteran journalist who has reported on the *oligarkhiia* in Ukraine for 12 years explained, they often maintained power through fostering "war, corruption, and a black market" ("війна, корупція та контрабанда").[1] By using their massive wealth and keeping their dealings away from public scrutiny, they could hold reform hostage. The first constitution took five years to create, and the country effectively had no constitution from independence in 1991 to 1996 (Prizel 1997:358). Democratic institutions were created only after appeasing the five major political parties at that time, which were heavily supported by the *oligarkhiia* (Diuk 2001).

Ukrainians also sought to redefine their identity, separating themselves from Russian culture. The government implemented policies to promote the Ukrainian language as the language of record for state activities and the main language of instruction in schools (Kulyk 2015:284). Activists met stiff resistance from a complex legacy of entrenched and sometimes competing values. According to Alexander Bogomolov and Oleksandr Lytvynenko (2012:3):

> As a newly independent state, Ukraine has relied on three key myths of the future: the ethno-national one—a state that embodies the historical aspirations of the Ukrainian people; the liberal-democratic one—a state that protects the liberty of all citizens, irrespective of nationality; and the European one—a state that is an inalienable part of European civilization.

Russian soft power generally targets people who already identify as Russian to strengthen their sense of identity. This is in contrast to the Western mode of soft power, aiming to expand to new groups the attractiveness of one's *own* culture (Bogomolov and Lytvynenko 2012:16).

Western influence over reform measures remained superficial through the 1990s. Various aid programs aimed to help the transition also set reform conditions. One example was the 1992 US Freedom Support Act (FSA), which promoted free market and democratic reforms in former Soviet countries, allowing 410 million dollars in aid and a 12-billon-dollar increase in IMF funding (Bush 1992). Such initiatives opened the door to Ukrainian policymaking but did not ultimately change the corruption-filled political and economic environment.

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[1] Interview with Respondent 29, October 27, 2016.

Democratic and anticorruption reforms tapered during the 1990s as a result of the *oligarkhiia* extracting rents from the government and consolidating their hold on key heavy industries (Åslund 2006:10). Prosecutors and judges, many of them Soviet holdovers, refused to charge and convict oligarchs. By law, high-ranking state officials (MPs, ministers, and the president) were immune from criminal prosecution, while few oligarchs were convicted of crimes in Ukraine before 2010 (Trochev 2010:127; Pleines 2016:117).

One successful case, however, is the conviction of the former Prime Minsiter Pavlo Lazarenko. The Ukrainian government had been unable to arrest and charge him due to corruption throughout the judicial system. The US government detained Lazarenko and charged him with money laundering, wire fraud, and extortion in 1999 (Kuzio 2014). A former aid to Viktor Yushchenko, who at the time was head of the National Bank of Ukraine, described how Ukrainian authorities coordinated with US officials on Lazarenko's capture.[2] Russia's interest in Ukraine also increased as President Vladimir Putin, elected in 2000 after a short stint as acting president, made a concerted effort to ensure that pro-Russian politicians led Ukraine, even if that meant interfering in Ukrainian elections (Kuzio 2005:491).

THE ORANGE REVOLUTION AND REFORMS IN 2004–2014

President Leonid Kuchma (elected in 1994) became embroiled in a scandal involving his possible role in the assassination of a journalist, later termed Kuchmagate, which started in 2000 and slowly eroded his popularity (Kuzio 2006:48). This incident opened the door for new candidates to compete in the 2004 presidential election. A close aide of Yushchenko, who was elected country's president in late 2004 in an election, which was marred by electoral fraud and sparked the Orange Revolution, noted that he asked the new Ukrainian leader what he wanted to accomplish while in office. Yushchenko simply uttered: "de-Sovietizing the government."[3] His response highlighted the desire to reform politics and maintain distance from the Kremlin. After his election, Freedom House rated Ukraine as "free," in contrast to "partly free" under Kuchma (Pleines 2016:111).

A current member of the Rada, the Ukrainian parliament, claimed that policymakers in Kyiv at the time felt a renewed interest from the US government, providing tremendous support to President Yushchenko.[4] A principle initiative during this period was the Threshold Agreement, enacted by the US government in December 2006, that provided 45 million dollars to aid anticorruption efforts (Millennium Challenge Corporation n. d.). American officials targeted Ukrainian civil society groups as a vehicle for producing reforms by funding those NGOs directly.

Yushchenko brought two smaller but prominent oligarchs into his government in an attempt to recruit powerful people who might also be amenable to some reforms.

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[2] Interview with Respondent 6, October 12, 2016.

[3] Interview with Respondent 6, October 12, 2016.

[4] Interview with Respondent 12, November 9, 2016.

Eventually a tripartite ruling coalition emerged between President Yushchenko, Prime Minister Iulia Tymoshenko, and Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council Petro Poroshenko (Olszański and Wierzbowska-Miazga 2014).

The post–Orange Revolution coalition's push for reforms quickly stalled as divisions among its leaders developed (Vanderhill 2013:141–142). One major point of contention between Tymoshenko and Yushchenko concerned reforms in the energy sector. Tymoshenko consistently fought the "gas lobby" to institute policies that would increase transparency and force payments in cash (Balmaceda 2013:116; Whitmore 2014:4). According to Yushchenko's former aide, the US government worked feverishly, and unsuccessfully, to mend the conflict between the two parties.[5] As their disagreements spilled over in public, their fragile alliance crumbled. After President Yushchenko called for Tymoshenko's resignation in 2005, the US Embassy called Yushchenko to apply pressure to not dissolve the government. Yushchenko informed the US ambassador that an informal deal had been made between himself and Tymoshenko, staving off political chaos.[6]

When discussing the collapse of post—Orange Revolution reforms, one official lamented how the high hopes of Ukrainians dwindled as Yushchenko started issuing more presidential decrees and reviving "dualism in executive power," resembling his predecessor, President Kuchma.[7] As he called for more resignations and issued more decrees, Yushchenko's popular support waned. At one point he appointed Viktor Yanukovych, who had been prime minister under Kuchma, as prime minister, only to force his resignation and reappoint Tymoshenko (Feifer 2010).

By 2010 popular support for Yushchenko had deteriorated with one poll reflecting only a 5 percent popularity rating; his chances of winning reelection that year appeared bleak (Vanderhill 2013:150). He faced Yanukovych, leading the Party of the Regions (Партія регіонів), a pro-Russian faction with strong support from the eastern region of Ukraine, and his former ally, Tymoshenko. After losing in the first round of voting, Yushchenko publicly opposed the election of Tymoshenko in the second round against Yanukovych (Vanderhill 2013:152). Putin saw Yanukovych as a pliable agent in Kyiv and helped the Party of the Regions to persuade Ukrainians that Yushchenko and his policies were a tool of Western meddling (Whitmore 2014:5). Yanukovych won the 2010 election in the second round of voting.

The Kremlin asserted influence over officials in Kyiv by manipulating elites and swaying public opinion through civil society groups. Russian officials supported "illiberal" and "nondemocratic" elites through financial assistance (Vanderhill 2013:141–142). Another method utilized Russian-sponsored NGOs, like Ukrainian Choice (Український вибір), to cultivate more Russian-friendly attitudes among Ukrainian citizens (Bogomolov and Lytvynenko 2012:7). This group is primarily led by the oligarch Viktor Medvedchuk, who is a friend of President Putin (Marten

[5] Interview with Respondent 12, November 9, 2016.

[6] Interview with Respondent 6, October 12, 2016.

[7] Interview with Respondent 12, November 9, 2016.

2015:196). Civil society groups also faced less favorable conditions under Yanukovych as he reduced freedoms of assembly and expression (Solonenko 2015:224).

By the end of 2012 the Yankukovych regime had jailed its political opponents, including Iulia Tymoshenko and the Minister of Internal Affairs Iuriĭ Lutsenko, both for abuse of office. Almost immediately the US government began pressuring Yankukovych to release them in order to encourage political competition. The US Senate Foreign Relations Committee passed a resolution calling for the unconditional release of Tymoshenko (Chaly 2012). Meanwhile, from 2010 to 2014, Yanukovych embezzled state funds, estimated between 70 and 100 billion dollars (Kuzio 2014:196).

While President Yanukovych struggled to maintain power, he also dealt with a narrowing foreign policy path. His "dual-track" strategy, pursuing friendlier relations with both the West and Russia (employed also by former President Kuchma), cracked under the competing interests of the two foreign actors. Yanukovych also continued to use the crime ring developed in Eastern Ukraine to intimidate political opponents through 2013–2014 (Kuzio 2014:196). The November 29, 2013, deadline for reforms laid out in the EU's Association Agreement (AA) approached and soon the timetable forced Yanukovych to choose a closer economic relationship with either the EU or the Russian Federation. After he decided not to sign the AA at the Vilnius Summit in November 2013, his support plummeted, leading him to flee the country.

A NEW WAVE: THE 2014–2016 REFORMS

After the Euromaidan protests average Ukrainians became far more involved in reforming the political landscape, adopting a "grassroots" approach to democratization and rooting out corruption. Two defining characteristics of the post-Euromaidan movement included a "bottom-up" strategy and more sustained engagement from the West. Russia's invasion of Ukraine's eastern region produced an unintended consequence: a common foreign enemy galvanized Ukrainian society. Western governments made a concerted effort to penetrate Ukrainian society through sustained initiatives aiding civil society groups. After many failed attempts at reforming the political system, disparate groups among the fractious elite class coalesced to address reform out of necessity.

In 2014 Ukrainians elected Petro Poroshenko as president, handing power again over to a member of the "Orange camp" (Pleines 2016:121). Before 2014 political officials avoided media outlets, sometimes completely ignoring journalists. With oligarchs owning many of the major television channels, news outlets avoided hard questions directed at friendly politicians (Jarabik and Minakov 2016). As one interviewee observed, speaking of the ruling elite before the protests, "they thought they were safe."[8] Politicians had little incentive to democratize institutions and enforce civil liberties, in order to avoid confrontation with corrupt oligarchs.

[8] Interview with Respondent 29, October 27, 2016.

Balazs Jarabik and Mikhail Minakov see the fight against corruption as intertwined with state building. Despite the growth of civil society and reform of institutions after Euromaidan, corruption still "erodes state legitimacy" in Ukraine (Jarabik and Minakov 2016; Konończuk 2016:88). After Euromaidan the ruling elites could no longer ignore citizens' frustration and the demand for a stronger civil society. The entrenched bribe system, a legacy of the Soviet past as well as a critical vehicle for maintaining corrupt practices, dramatically weakened, while rent seeking became decentralized (Jarabik 2016). The reform movement, led by NGOs, has focused on increasing transparency, building a more independent judiciary, decentralizing power, promoting individual rights, and dismantling corrupt business networks, particularly in energy and heavy industry.

The greatest manifestation of grassroots reform included the Reanimation Package of Reform (RPR; Реанімаційний пакет реформ), which consists of almost 100 different NGOs.[9] A policy analyst who works with a think tank in Kyiv describes RPR as an effective coalition of civic organizations in that it pursues a pragmatic legislative agenda.[10] This umbrella organization became a leading force for change after Euromaidan.

Western powers since then have taken advantage of the new political landscape in order to further democratic and anticorruption initiatives. A diverse group of entities, consisting of the US government, the EU, individual EU member states, and various Western NGOs, targeted Ukrainian civil society as the main catalyst to achieve reform. The EU, for example, desires a "restoration of governance" in Ukraine, aiming to build regional capacity and to combat the rebels (повстанці) in Donbas (Solodkyi 2016). My respondents saw such state building as a way to provide an alternative to residents of Eastern Ukraine who might have been sympathetic to the separatist cause.

The US government also devoted resources to Ukrainian reform initiatives by keeping pressure on policymakers to adopt certain measures. One interviewee with intimate knowledge of the current Ukrainian administration maintained that former US Vice President Joe Biden was very influential in pushing President Poroshenko on anticorruption measures, placing calls a few times a week.[11] The West is now using Kyiv's reliance on many aid programs to establish lasting reforms in the judiciary, law enforcement agencies, and the civil service.

The reform movement in Ukraine has met many obstacles, however. The greatest threat to progress is the ongoing conflict with Russia over Crimea and the separatists in Donbas. Balazs Jarabik (2016) writes:

> As Russia reacted to the Euromaidan Revolution with the drastic step of annexing Crimea and aiding the armed resistance in Donbas, Ukraine was stretched between reforms and war. Key political and judicial reforms were hijacked with

[9] Reanimation Package of Reforms, "Who We Are" (http://rpr.org.ua/en/en/about-us/who-we-are/).

[10] Interview with Respondent 26, September 29, 2016.

[11] Interview with Respondent 6, October 12, 2016.

the emergence of the Donbas war, which has become the unfortunate legacy of the protracted Maidan saga. Thus, the reforms have suffered from half-hearted measures.

Western leaders recognized the importance of reform as the main guarantee of Ukrainian independence. As the former US Ambassador to Ukraine Geoffrey Pyatt told one of my respondents when discussing a plan for how to combat foreign intervention, "It's not Russian tanks but corruption" that is threatening democracy.[12]

The following paragraphs detail my conversations with Ukrainian policymakers and advocates in Kyiv concerning the reform movement and the ways in which foreign actors influence those efforts. Based upon my respondents' statements, the following discussion focuses on some of the most salient reform issues in post-Euromaidan Ukraine, including (1) the criminal justice system; (2) transparency initiatives; (3) election reform; and (4) decentralization. Each respondent illustrates the ways in which the policy process works in their respective arenas and the extent to which foreign entities influence their work.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORMS

One policy analyst with a private think tank, which produced reports on the criminal justice system, expressed moderate optimism that the Ukrainian government was making serious progress; but reforms are slow and sometimes cause negative, unintended consequences.[13] One initiative he highlighted concerned combating corruption within law enforcement. Since the 1990s many Ukrainians saw the police as helping the rise of "gangster capitalism" by taking bribes and oligarchic patronage (Harasymiw 2003:320). When discussing the US government's programs supporting police reforms in Kyiv with Ukrainians, he received positive feedback from the public. Many felt that law enforcement, with the aid of American funding and technical expertise, had become more professional and less corrupt.[14] A 2016 poll found that 60 percent of Kyiv residents approved of the job of local police ("Ukrainian Municipal Survey" 2016).

This respondent also discussed the ways in which civil society has affected the criminal justice system after Euromaidan. He asserted that NGOs could place more pressure on Ukrainian officials with the help of Western governments. Many advocacy groups stress the importance of public buy-in to policymakers.[15] These groups use the requirements of international agreements, which also provide critical funding to the Ukrainian government, to their advantage. As civil society groups started to lose influence over the national government in 2015, activists alerted EU and US officials directly, prompting Western governments to threaten Ukrainian policymakers. When

[12] Interview with Respondent 6, October 12, 2016.

[13] Interview with Respondent 26, September 29, 2016.

[14] Interview with Respondent 26, September 29, 2016.

[15] Interview with Respondent 26, September 29, 2016.

in 2016 President Poroshenko appointed Prosecutor General Viktor Shokin, whom civil society groups often criticized as corrupt, Western governments applied pressure, threatening to cut Western aid, and Shokin resigned after a few months of serving with a formal dismissal from the Rada later that year (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty 2016).[16]

TRANSPARENCY REFORMS

Another interviewee worked for a civil society group the Anticorruption Action Center (Центр Панічного Креативу, TsPK), which tracks the financial activities of politicians in an effort to stem corruption. Sometimes the organization conducts investigations and sends evidence directly to lawyers and media outlets that are looking into potential abuses of power. The NGO, in coordination with others, has developed a database for tracking the assets, both domestic and foreign, of elected officials and ensures that their information matches each official's respective asset filings, formally known as an eDeclaration.[17] An eDeclaration states the wealth of each MP, with an itemization of assets, and filing is required by law. The system applied to roughly 300,000 government officials and is a condition for Ukraine to receive 1.6 billion dollars in loans from the IMF and visa-free travel privileges to the EU (Rasmussen Global n. d.). Furthermore, the organization tracks government procurement contracts to prevent fraud and embezzlement of public funds. Various politicians since independence have used infrastructure projects as a prime means for embezzling from the state (Åslund 2014:66). TsPK worked with Western governments and IGOs on medicine procurement, which by 2016 saved the government 40 percent from before the program existed (UNDP Ukraine n. d.).[18]

Activists created TsPK in 2012 and lobbied MPs during the Yanukovych years for anticorruption reform, but they made little progress until 2014. Since Euromaidan, they have helped push 21 bills on anticorruption through the Rada, one creating the National Anticorruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU). The organization also uses the media to publicize regressive bills that may undermine reforms. One campaign worked with the newspapers *KyivPost* and *Ukraïns'ka pravda* to expose draft legislation that had proposed to end the eDeclaration system. The group of protesters wore shirts that read in English "What the F**K."[19]

TsPK relied on Western support for funding and lobbying. The Dutch government, the US Agency for International Development (USAID), and private donors are their chief financial contributors.[20] Some funds go directly towards specific programs to strengthen anticorruption investigations. For example, the US funded a polygraph system in Kyiv to screen local police detectives (Durbak 1999).[21] When a Ukrainian

[16] Interview with Respondent 26, September 29, 2016.

[17] Interview with Respondent 21, October 10, 2016.

[18] Interview with Respondent 21, October 10, 2016.

[19] Interview with Respondent 21, October 10, 2016.

[20] Interview with Respondent 21, October 10, 2016.

[21] Interview with Respondent 21, October 10, 2016.

prosecutor threatened the group after it started investigating specific politicians, the US Embassy pressured officials to drop the charges.[22] Western agencies often act as a third party between the state and NGOs in order to ensure the enforcement of reforms.

Another interviewee worked on reform initiatives through the German government at the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) Ukraine, which targets the entrenched bribery culture in public finance. Her colleagues push local government officials to adopt transparent fiscal policies through training sessions on public accounting.[23] This NGO also has to communicate properly what decentralization means for citizens.

As to the ways in which foreign countries influence public opinion concerning reforms, she noted the stark differences between the Western and Russian approaches. She mentioned, first, that Russian-speaking television is more popular than Ukrainian media, particularly entertainment. Because many Ukrainians maintain personal ties to Russians, Russia emphasizes the idea of a common culture between the two countries and depicts Euromaidan as a Western-orchestrated coup (Kuzio 2015:159).[24] Western countries employ a hard power approach by using military support and providing financial assistance in the form of direct aid and IMF loans (Nye 2004:99). However, Western governments have attempted to make inroads through soft power as well. The EU has established a visa-free regime with Ukraine, likely to increase the cultural influence of Western Europe. It also sends technical experts from both the EU and US to advise the decentralization process. When pressed on why visa-free travel was so important, she observed that Ukrainians want access to the West. The desire to access the West could simply be curiosity since Ukraine has been tied so closely to Russia for so long.[25]

Members of the Rada were also inclined to see foreign agents as trying to corrupt the rule-making process, funding antireform candidates and propaganda. One MP reported that the Kremlin invests in roughly 100 pro-Russian politicians, many of whom serve in the Opposition Bloc (Опозиційний блок) and All-Ukrainian Union "Fatherland" (Всеукраїнське об'єднання «Батьківщина»). These politicians, in turn, support a pro-Russian agenda—although they do not state this publicly—and oligarchic business interests. Complementing direct funding to MPs, Russian money finances "experts" and NGOs who broadcast their views through various media outlets as part of Moscow's "hybrid war" with Kyiv, calling nationalist groups "fascist" (Kuzio 2015:159).[26] Tracking such funding is difficult, but NGOs are pushing for better accounting practices to reduce the influence of foreign money.

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[22] Interview with Respondent 21, October 10, 2016.

[23] Interview with Respondent 16, September 22, 2016.

[24] Interview with Respondent 16, September 22, 2016.

[25] Interview with Respondent 16, September 22, 2016.

[26] Interview with Respondent 12, November 9, 2016.

Another MP I interviewed accused former members of the Party of the Regions, more marginalized after 2014, of taking Russian money and copying laws from the Russian Duma in drafting Ukrainian legislation—although these allegations are hard to prove. This contrasts with the Western approach, whose money and support is not funneled directly to politicians. She highlighted how European and American officials provide technical advice to NABU and specific programs like the eDeclaration system, which require public officials to disclose their finances. Most important for reform, however, are the talks "behind closed doors," as when Vice President Biden pushed President Poroshenko to fire Prosecutor General Shokin, with the support of many civil society organizations (CSOs) threatening to withhold 40 billion dollars in aid (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty 2016).[27]

Starting in 2014 Western governments have also helped to reform Ukraine's civil service to promote a more ethical culture. Ukrainian ministries have tried to hire and train a new generation of government workers, for which the EU has provided 120 million euros, both for supplementary pay and to hire experts providing technical advice (European Union External Action 2016).[28] One requirement for European aid entails barring civil servants from being official members of a political party. Such measures are meant to ensure the apolitical nature of institutions. A former civil servant, who now works for an NGO advising the government, stressed the ways in which Moscow tries to undermine reform efforts. Typically, agents and pro-Russian media outlets target reform politicians and try to expose their potentially unethical behavior.[29] By undermining their credibility, the Kremlin hopes to taint their policy positions. A recent case involved a reform-minded deputy, Serhiĭ Leshchenko. Media outlets tried to portray Leshchenko as a corrupt, wealthy politician because he bought a high-rise apartment in downtown Kyiv (Pfeile 2016). Leshchenko acquired the apartment by way of his wife, but the story persists as a "scandal" despite the fact that oligarchs ruling the country live in far greater luxury.

ELECTION REFORMS

Another area of rampant corruption involved voter manipulation. Oligarchs and their subordinates often bought party members and paid voters. Although specific data is difficult to ascertain, the oligarch's practice of buying candidates has existed since the 1990s and continued throughout the 2000s (Pleines 2016:120–122). Increased enforcement has now reduced the impact of such practices.[30] The NGO of one interviewed policy analyst pushed for better election monitoring and secured funding from Western governments for more election monitors by lobbying their diplomats. In the 2014 general election, independent foreign election monitors reported that no candidate misused public funds for their campaigns (Flintoff 2016).

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[27] Interview with Respondent 9, October 27, 2016.

[28] Interview with Respondent 9, October 27, 2016.

[29] Interview with Respondent 1, September 15, 2016.

[30] Interview with Respondent 26, September 29, 2016.

DECENTRALIZATION OF DECISION-MAKING

A more contentious issue is decentralization. CSOs wanted to dismantle Ukraine's strict vertical power structure in order to distribute authority more equally among the regions and administrative districts (Harasymiw 2003:327; Jarabik and Minakov 2016). Western countries have encouraged such measures, but the concepts of "decentralization" and "federalization" are often misunderstood and sometimes used by critics to block progress. The Opposition Bloc and pro-Russian groups sometimes manipulate the definition of decentralization to imply that it means certain "autonomous" regions, such as Crimea, should be independent.[31]

With decentralization reforms not properly explained to them, citizens do not pressure their representatives to pass such measures. These shortcomings fuel a growing skepticism of the political system, feeding populism.[32] According to one poll, Ukrainian respondents gave the government an average of 1.99 points on a scale of 1 through 10, making it the least trusted government on the European continent (Shveda and Park 2017:85).

A respondent from the Ukrainian Institute for International Politics (UIIP), who also worked on decentralization issues, helped communities to *amalgamate*—a process by which towns and villages consolidate in order to gain more autonomy from the central government. Traversing the country and visiting various towns to hold workshops, she noticed the difference between eastern and western groups. While most towns in Western Ukrainian responded well to the idea of decentralization, cities like Odessa, Kherson, Donetsk, and Luhans'k were not receptive.[33] Many residents of these areas were cynical towards delegating more power to the local level. They suspected that such a change, after decades of perpetuating corruption, would lead to Kyiv abandoning their interests. As Kuzio has hypothesized, Russian identity is a continuation of Soviet identity, which the Kremlin leverages for its agenda (2015:159). Although Moscow played little direct role in these negative attitudes, my respondent suspected that Russian-speaking media, produced in both Russia and Ukraine, had shaped the population's attitudes. According to one survey, between 11 and 29 percent of residents of Eastern Ukraine consumed Russian television news sources, depending on the region, versus 4–7 percent in Western/Central Ukraine (Internews 2017). The western administrative districts, however, directly supported UIIP's decentralization efforts. Their funding came almost exclusively from the US and European governments.[34]

Shifting topics to the influence of foreign entities on her work, the UIIP respondent addressed both Russian and Western initiatives. Public organizations, like USAID, fund many of her group's projects; she likewise receives technical advice from EU member states on how to better formulate party platforms and discourse on reforms.[35]. From 2014 through 2016 US aid totaled 373 million dollars, whereas be-

[31] Interview with Respondent 26, September 29, 2016.

[32] Interview with Respondent 26, September 29, 2016.

[33] Interview with Respondent 17, September 27, 2016.

[34] Interview with Respondent 17, September 27, 2016.

[35] Interview with Respondent 17, September 27, 2016.

tween 2014 and 2017 the EU granted 1.1 billion euros in assistance, not including loans (European Commission n. d.; USAID n. d.).

Russian officials and oligarchs subvert decentralization reforms, albeit in different ways. President Putin has condemned decentralization through the Russian-speaking media, which is still consumed by some Ukrainians, while business representatives try to sway politicians by accusing them of disloyalty.[36]

During the 2013 protests the Yanukovych administration targeted the main organizers and put key leaders on a list of "civic activists," banding them as enemies of the state and Russia. My respondent personally knew many activists from the Euromaidan protests who were put on this list; they have been denied travel to Russia and Belarus.[37] Russian officials still target Ukrainians active in civil society groups seen as a threat to the Kremlin's influence.

We concluded our conversation with a discussion of the most important tools for Western groups influencing NGOs in the respondent's policy sphere. She contended that Western funding remained the most vital tool but criticized Western governments for not imposing enough restrictions on the Ukrainian government. She believes that Western attention to corruption has forced the Ukrainian government to become accountable. Furthermore, she hopes to see more exchange programs between Ukraine and the West, particularly with the EU; these help to advance a more liberal political culture through personal interactions.[38]

The representative from the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) also worked on the implementation of decentralization measures. This German organization provides a nation-wide training program, educating local politicians and civil servants on how to run their state and local governments. GIZ deals mostly with the Ukrainian central government and the EU in order to coordinate planning for empowering regions and administrative districts.[39] One of their central projects includes the decentralization of the tax structure, whereby lower governments can make more spending decisions. In 2015 the Rada passed a law granting lower-lever governments the ability to collect taxes and develop their own budgets (Jarabik and Yesmukhanova 2017). Prior to 2015 small villages had to lobby the Rada to secure funds for simple public works projects such as road maintenance.[40] Some local governments attained the authority to tax and spend by meeting certain provisions, namely consolidating with other villages (спроможний) in order to reach sustainability. Western organizations like GIZ are helping to advise local leaders on how to use this financing tool to make their own spending decisions. These towns now use a competitive bidding process for contracts, undermining corrupt officials and businesses.

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[36] Interview with Respondent 17, September 27, 2016.

[37] Interview with Respondent 17, September 27, 2016.

[38] Interview with Respondent 17, September 27, 2016.

[39] Interview with Respondent 16, September 22, 2016.

[40] Interview with Respondent 16, September 22, 2016.

As mentioned above, opposition groups often manipulate the concept of decentralization. Ukrainian Choice advocates the establishment of redundant institutions (new institutions with the same mission as existing bodies) as a way to "decentralize" the current political system, while other groups raise fears that the president's ability to choose prefects is further *centralization* (Jarabik and Yesmukhanova 2017). The language Ukrainian Choice uses to garner support promotes duplicate institutions that are more "accountable to the people" and claims that current officials are "all corrupt!"[41]

The policy analyst concluded, however, on a positive note. He felt that fellow Ukrainians were optimistic about overall security, institutional reform, and the promotion of Western values. When asked about effective tools for combating regression, he mentioned public demand, the strength of civil society, and international pressure.[42] Many of my interlocutors conveyed the sentiment that Ukraine's independence depends ultimately on Ukrainians, but Western pressure is welcome as long as it bolsters democratic institutions. In his opinion, the specific tools Western entities use most effectively are funding NGOs and providing technical advice.

CONCLUSION

The Euromaidan revolution breathed new life into democratic reforms that had stalled in Ukraine, buttressed by a robust civil society and Western support. Many challenges remain, given domestic obstacles like oligarchs, who have amassed tremendous wealth and power over time, their parochial infighting eroding elite consensus and the judiciary. Poroshenko, an oligarch himself, stated in 2015 that "Deoligarchisation is my key starting position. We are trying to introduce order in the country, and they are the chaos" (Konończuk 2016:17).

Western countries have devised a multipronged strategy for fostering reforms: provide financial aid directly to NGOs and the Ukrainian government but withholding funds from Kyiv if it does not abide by certain conditions. The US, EU, and EU member states constantly communicate with CSOs to ensure the politicians are responsive to their needs. This may involve requiring the government to create formal institutions like NABU or pushing Poroshenko to remove corrupt agents. Empowering civil society allows NGOs to act as the monitoring arm of Western aid that targets government accountability.

The West's soft power also influences the mission of many NGOs. Civil society in Ukraine wants elected officials to adopt policies that mirror Western standards in the areas of anticorruption and human rights. NGOs are pushing the Rada to endorse liberal values that lead to more transparency, less corruption, and more legal protections for citizens.

All the persons I interviewed agreed that Western financial and technical support to civil society groups was the most important tool for positively influencing

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[41] Interview with Respondent 16, September 22, 2016.

[42] Interview with Respondent 26, September 29, 2016.

democratic reforms in Ukraine. Many want Western governments to apply more pressure in order to break up the *oligarkhiia*. Some CSOs want the West to support political "outsiders," not connected to the *oligarkhiia*, for the highest government offices, like they did with Poroshenko and former Prime Minister Arseniĭ Iatseniuk.[43] Diminishing the concentration of wealth and power provides a window to establish lasting change with new agents. Also, NGOs in Ukraine recognize the importance of information as the greatest weapon against corruption.

Russia has maintained a few effective channels of control. "Local elites, who support Russia, hide their loyalty," but they "support Putin and unification."[44] In such locations in the east and south of the country, local officials discourage CSOs and their actions to mobilize democratic participation. Moscow is catalyzing constant turmoil, inciting public dissatisfaction.[45] The Kremlin is pushing a wait-and-see approach, hoping that the reform movement will lose steam, providing an opportunity to reassert power.

Ukraine's experience is part of a question facing the wider region: What is the way forward for postcommunist countries in state building and developing their respective national identities? How can these countries leverage foreign influence to achieve anticorruption and democratic reforms? The influx of Western aid starting in 2014, as the result of a tragic conflict, can provide Ukrainians with an opportunity to utilize foreign aid as a tool against their own elites to force change. The Russian government could take advantage of civil discord to maintain the status quo, keeping Ukraine in its sphere of influence and likely supporting pro-Russian oligarchs.

If state building and developing national identity are key factors in democratization, then the civil unrest has forced Ukrainians to a decision point to that end. Strengthening institutions with the help of Western aid—and demarcating their identity more clearly from Russia—reduces the power of oligarchs and enables a path to reforms. The more average citizens perceive Western influence as aiding their domestic anticorruption efforts and see the Russian government as an aggressor, the further Ukraine moves from a Eurasian society to a European one.

One of my informants lamented that reforms after Euromaidan were once again too slow to take root. He sees dissatisfaction growing and contends that the most critical period for engineering change occurred was the six months after Maidan.[46] Many of my respondents were optimistic but keenly aware of their democracy's fragility. In the words of one MP: "We don't need another revolution, we need reform."[47] As another member of the Rada exclaimed to me, "Ukraine cannot keep repeating the first phase of reform."[48]

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[43] Interview with Respondent 28, October 5, 2016.

[44] Interview with Respondent 28, October 5, 2016.

[45] Interview with Respondent 31, November 7, 2016.

[46] Interview with Respondent 31, November 7, 2016.

[47] Interview with Respondent 9, October 27, 2016.

[48] Interview with Respondent 13, November 29, 2016.

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УКРАИНСКИЕ РЕФОРМЫ И ВЛИЯНИЕ ИНОСТРАННЫХ АКТОРОВ ПОСЛЕ ЕВРОМАЙДАНА

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Когда нарастающие протесты на площади Независимости в Киеве привели к отставке президента Виктора Януковича, украинцы оказались на неминуемом историческом перепутье. Многие годы Украина находилась на передовой западного влияния, и в итоге возникла необходимость принять решение, с какой из сторон укреплять экономические и культурные связи – с Западом или с Россией. Множество украинцев были вынуждены выбирать между советским прошлым и потенциальным либерально-демократическим будущим. Помимо того, захват Крыма Россией стал первым масштабным вторжением в европейскую страну с 1968 года.

В настоящей статье рассматривается, каким образом в нынешнем посткоммунистическом мире западные и российские институты и агенты оказывают влияние на третьего актора – Украину. В работе представлен анализ связанной с реформами деятельности различных украинских и зарубежных государственных и бизнес-структур, негосударственных организаций, а также простых граждан. Этот анализ помогает отследить как осуществляется выработка курса государственной политики Украины. В фокусе этой статьи – конкуренция между Западом и Россией в использовании жесткой и мягкой силы для влияния на реформаторское движение в Украине, особенно в сфере демократизации и антикоррупционных инициатив. К демократическим реформам относится либерализация политики, ослабление законодательных ограничений и создание институтов, реагирующих на волю и нужды населения. Меры по предотвращению коррупции направлены на противозаконную деятельность, порожденную закоснелой культурой подкупа и подрывающую процесс демократизации. В ходе исследования были проведены интервью с представителями украинских политических элит. В центре внимания в этих интервью были вопросы о восприятии того, как иностранные акторы формируют политику украинских реформ. Автор утверждает, что Москва использует как жесткую, так и мягкую силу для подрыва реформ. Запад в свою очередь полагается на финансовую поддержку групп гражданского общества и содействует инициативам в области реформ, помогая создавать новую институциональную базу.

Ключевые слова: Украина; Евромайдан; мягкая сила; демократизация; гражданское общество; Европейский союз; Россия