

**Czech University of Life Sciences Prague**

**Faculty of Economics and Management**

**Department of Humanities**



**Bachelor Thesis**

**Political Economy and Social Movements: The Revolution**

**of Dignity in Ukraine**

**Mariia Poliak**

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## BACHELOR THESIS ASSIGNMENT

Mariia Poliak

Economics and Management

Thesis title

**Polical Economy and Social Movements: The Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine**

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### **Objectives of thesis**

This thesis will consider the connections between social movements and political economy using the example of the 2014 'Revolution of Dignity' in Ukraine. Alongside traditional political actors like states and parties, social movements are increasingly considered as important drivers of both political and economic change. A political economy approach to social movements raises various significant questions, including what material interests drive people to participate in such movements, what resources are Available to movements, what economic models and ideas are implicit and explicit in their goals and demands, and the long-term consequences of such movement for economic policy.

The so-called 'Revolution of Dignity', which took place at the beginning of 2014 in Ukraine, began with peaceful protests in response to former president Viktor Yanukovich's refusal to sign the Association Agreement and Free Trade Zone with the European Union, but became the driver of significant change in Ukraine. The Euromaidan will be taken as an example to reveal the topic as it has become one of the most crucial drivers of massive alterations inside the country. The thesis will focus on these events, considering the motivations of participants, their explicit and implicit economic goals, and economic consequences.

### **Methodology**

Literature review representing concepts of social movements, and their connection with the political economy concerning the Maidan Revolution. Case study research into the protests and the subsequent 'revolution' using interviews with participants.

## **The proposed extent of the thesis**

30-40 pages

## **Keywords**

Social movement, Political Economy, Revolution, Ukraine, Protests

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## **Recommended information sources**

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## **Declaration**

I declare that I have worked on my bachelor thesis titled "Political Economy and Social Movements: The Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine" by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis. As the author of the bachelor thesis, I declare that the thesis does not break any copyrights.

In Prague on 05.03.2024

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I would like to express gratitude to my supervisor Daniel Swain for his time, help and advice during my work on this thesis. I also want to thank all the respondents for their participation, time, and patience with me.



# **Political Economy and Social Movements: The Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine**

## **Abstract**

My thesis focuses on the relationship between political economy and social movements. The literature review introduces the concept of politics and its branches, including political economy and the ways of governing modern countries, needed for a better understanding of social movements. Political process theory explains the reasons behind engaging in protests and demonstrations.

The practical part of my thesis includes research on the Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine. By opting for the qualitative approach, I have chosen interviews as the main technique of data collection. My goal was discovering protestors' goals and motivations, and how political and economic situations shaped their collective actions. In total, I have interviewed 5 respondents from a range of backgrounds.

**Keywords:** Social Movements, Political Economy, Ukraine, Maidan, Collective Action, Revolution, Protests, Social Changes

# **Politická ekonomie a sociální hnutí: Revoluce Důstojnosti na Ukrajině**

## **Abstrakt**

Moje práce se zaměřuje na vztah mezi politickou ekonomikou a sociálními hnutími. Literární přehled seznamuje s konceptem politiky a jejích odvětví, včetně politické ekonomie a způsobů řízení moderních zemí, potřebných pro lepší pochopení sociálních hnutí. Teorie politických procesů vysvětluje důvody zapojování se do protestů a demonstrací.

Praktická část mé práce zahrnuje výzkum Revoluce Důstojnosti na Ukrajině. Výběrem kvalitativního přístupu jsem jako hlavní techniku sběru dat zvolila rozhovory. Mým cílem bylo odhalit motivace protestujících a jak politické a ekonomické situace utvářely jejich kolektivní akce. Celkem jsem vyzpovídala 5 respondentů z různých prostředí.

**Klíčová slova:** Sociální Hnutí, Politická Ekonomie, Ukrajina, Majdan, Revoluce Kolektivní Akce, Protesty, Sociální Změny

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## List of Abbreviations

**UDHR** – Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**NABU** - National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine

**NAPC** - National Agency for Prevention of Corruption

**CPI** – Corruption Perception Index

**FDI** – Foreign Direct Investment

**EU** – European Union

# 1. Introduction

This work provides insights into the interplay between the economic structures of different political regimes and societal mobilization. It delves into the dynamics of social movement while maintaining a specific focus on the Euromaidan.

There is an exploration of historical and contemporary factors that led to the uprising. For deeper analysis, I focused on examining the political and economic situation of Ukraine, starting from 1991. As the country used to be a part of the Soviet Union, it is necessary to evaluate and assess post-Soviet hardships and their impact on the country. Furthermore, I pay particular attention to the Orange Revolution of 2004, which significantly shaped people's motivation for further collective action.

To understand the reasons behind the protestors, I will conduct interviews with the participants of the Maidan. We will investigate the similarities and differences between people's motivations and how participants assess the results of their efforts. The main goal is to analyze the behavior of societies once the abuse of power becomes prominent.

The explanation of political process theory gives a better understanding of how major social systems within the country influence the success of social movements. In general, the theory emphasizes how certain political conditions, organizational resources, and collective identities induce the emergence of protests.

## **2. Objectives and Methodology**

### **2.1. Objectives**

This thesis will consider the connections between social movements and political economy in the example of the Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine. Alongside traditional political actors like states and parties, social movements are seen as important drivers of political and economic change. A political economy approach to social movements raises significant questions, including what material interests drive people to participate in collective action, what resources are available to movements, and what economic models and ideas are implicit and explicit in their goals and demands.

The Revolution of Dignity, which started as Euromaidan and took place at the end of 2013, began with peaceful protests in response to former president Viktor Yanukovich's refusal to sign the Association Agreement with the European Union. Eventually, it has become the driver of meaningful alterations within the country. My work also considers the motivations of participants, the explicit and implicit economic goals of the protestors, and the economic and political consequences of such an uprising.

### **2.2. Methodology**

The literature review represents the concepts of social movements and their connection with the political economy. As I am taking a qualitative approach, there is a case study research into the Euromaidan protests done with the help of interviews.



### **3. Literature Review**

#### **3.1. Politics**

The modern term "politics" is defined as the study of the organization and governance of human communities, particularly the city-state (Miller, 1998). In ancient cities like Athens or Sparta people did not recognize a need to differentiate between various aspects concerning political life. Thus, the study encompassed plenty of different things such as society, state, citizens, morality, etc.

According to Aristotle, politics is a science that controls all practical disciplines, its main purpose is to undertake an investigation of the human good and to regulate human affairs (Kraut, 2002). While living in a society, we must constantly ask ourselves about the prospects of existing in large communities. As we face conflicting interests, everyone should possess an understanding of virtue and the common good. Moreover, an individual's interest in the political community is a way to ensure the well-being of all citizens and cultivate moral excellence.

Going back to the modern world, the definition of "politics" has been extended a lot. It embraces strategies and ideologies of how to properly rule and manage countries. Nowadays politics is not limited by finding compromises within society since people have learned to protest for their beliefs as centuries go by. Conflicting interests are still a part of our lives, whereas the methods of coping with them are different.

Discussing politics anticipates mentioning sovereignty as it plays a crucial role in shaping a country's political system and decision-making processes. Thomas Hobbes, the English political philosopher, viewed it as the central authority that possesses absolute power and control over a given territory. In his influential "Leviathan," he advocated for the establishment of a sovereign ruler to prevent the state of nature, which he described as a condition of perpetual conflict and chaos.

Liberalism, as advocated by social contract theorists, asserts that the government's legitimacy and authority mainly derive from the consent of the governed. Sovereignty must be self-perpetuating, undivided, and eventually absolute, it is established by the authority conferred by society (Aderibigbe, 2015). Consequently, if the government fails to fulfil its obligations or violates the terms of the social contract, individuals have the right to resist or alter the established system.

As we know from the history, legitimate power has not always been the one people can fully rely on when it comes to representing their rights and beliefs. The famous “Wherever Law ends, Tyranny begins” implies that the breakdown of a legal framework might breed oppressive and authoritarian rule. If the abuse of power comes from exceeding one’s legal authority, the one ceases to be the magistrate and invades the rights of others (Locke, 1689). Should tyranny take place within a country, we emphasize the existence of civic power and its importance. For this reason, an informed and involved citizenry is crucial for both a thriving society and the preservation of political freedoms.

### **3.1.1. Political Economy**

Politics and political economy are closely interconnected. Political economy tends to examine how various political processes and institutions shape economic outcomes and vice versa. From the point of view of macroeconomics, political actors – governments, legislatures, and political parties – make decisions that affect economic variables such as taxes, regulations, trade, fiscal and monetary policies. A well-functioning economic system could contribute to the stability and prosperity of a nation.

When it comes to the classification of political economies, one of the options to do that is through assessing the level of government intervention in the existing economy. In this case, theorists differentiate between capitalist and socialist economies. The latter implies significant government ownership and extensive control over resources and means of production, while the first one is characterized by private ownership, with minimal government interference.

According to Stanley and Goodwin, social movements emerge in response to the inherent conflicts and inequalities produced by the capitalist political economy. Economic inequalities, exploitative labour practices, and exclusionary policies create grievances and thus motivate groups to mobilize for social change. Moreover, political economy shapes the framing and narratives usually employed by social movements. Movements emphasize the drawbacks of the capitalist system with the help of economic language, which assists in raising awareness about societal imbalances and advocates for alternative economic amendments.

Such individuals as John Maynard Keynes, Karl Marx, and John Stuart Mill believed that government intervention is a key agent in coping with injustice and ensuring a more equitable distribution of resources. Although, nowadays people feel as though they

possess enough power themselves to combat social inequalities or transform the entire economic system itself. Those, who share similar concerns, happen to create alliances and labour unions to challenge dominant capitalistic structures. Taking the example of truckers, they have significant structural power, which implies their ability to tie up traffic and thereby seriously disrupt social and economic life (Stanely & Goodwin, 2022).

### **3.1.2. Political regimes**

By continuous evolution as human beings, our methods of governing each other have expanded a lot. Nowadays we live in nation-states, each of them is ruled in its way and consequently operates under different convictions and understandings. A political regime embodies certain functions that are structured and patterned into different institutions (Macridis , 1986). The definition encompasses the distribution of power and the relationship between the government and its citizens.

The nature of the political regime defines the state's response to social movements and their demands. There are different ways of governing modern countries but let us focus on the major ones. Roy Macridis proposes three main “patterns”: democratic, totalitarian, and authoritarian. Understanding these dynamics is crucial to grasping the contextual factors that shape the outcomes of collective action and economic struggles.

Democracy is supposed to comply with all the normatively desirable aspects of our social and economic lives, such as freedom, dignity, rationality, etc. It emphasizes a sharp distinction between people and the state as everyone possesses their inborn right to decide on and choose their convictions without any further influence.

Totalitarian society, as opposed to democracy, implies the dominance of political elites over the citizens. It is based on a single guiding ideology that is constantly being carried forward into the masses and is right no matter what. The whole society is expected to abide by established beliefs and norms.

Authoritarian regimes do not provide citizens with civil liberties supporting the strict obedience and compliance with the centralized power of each society member. Suppressing dissent or restricting political freedoms (freedom of speech, assembly, and association) are common characteristics of authoritarianism. As there is a lack of mechanisms for holding leaders accountable, corruption and human rights violations have become common features of authoritarian societies.

The table below illustrates the fundamental differences and similarities between all the above-mentioned forms of government. Realizing the distinctions significantly helps us to assess the level of citizens' free will.

*Table 1 Similarities and Differences of Democracy, Authoritarianism, Totalitarianism*

	<b>Democracy</b>	<b>Authoritarianism</b>	<b>Totalitarianism</b>
<b>Official ideology</b>	Weak	Weak	Strong
<b>Protection of individual rights</b>	General	Weak	Weak
<b>Penetration of citizens by political institutions</b>	Limited	Weak	Strong
<b>Pro-leader movement</b>	None	None	Strong
<b>Mobilization for support</b>	Selective	Weak	Strong
<b>Violence</b>	Very weak	Selective	Strong
<b>Parties</b>	Many	Weak	Single

*Source: Macridis, 1986*

Once the abuse of power takes place in either regime, people can demonstrate their dissatisfaction through the means of collective action.

## **3.2. Societal role in Politics**

### **3.2.1. Human Rights**

According to the Oxford Dictionary, human rights embody equal and fair treatment of every individual, especially by the government, which should refrain from violating basic citizens' freedoms. The modern understanding of civil liberties came in the

aftermath of World War II with the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948. By defining universality as its cornerstone, the United Nations states that all people are entitled to protection regardless of their sex, race, religion, nationality, language, or other distinctions (United Nations, 1948).

While deepening into the nature of civil liberties, we can learn the distinguishment between vertical and horizontal effects of human rights, proposed by Robert Dworkin at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The second impact represents the relationship between individuals and private entities, including other citizens or non-governmental organizations (Gardbaum, 2003). Everyone should learn to uphold and respect the rights of others as *the horizontal effect* highlights the importance of individual responsibility for promoting and safeguarding human rights in societal contexts.

*The vertical effect* has gained more attention within the political sector as it emphasizes interactions between the state and its citizens. The government's duty is to ensure the enforcement and promotion of each and everyone's basic freedoms within its jurisdiction. According to Article 21 of the UDHR, citizens are also expected to participate in the political processes of the country while their will shall remain the basis of authority (United Nations, 1948). Thus, once the violation of civil liberties becomes prominent, people are entitled to challenge the state's actions or policies.

### **3.2.2. Pluralism**

According to Abraham Lincoln's famous phrase, democracy is a government "of the people, by the people, and for the people". We can say that the goal of many social movements is to create a democratic society based on the protection and promotion of each and everyone's human rights.

For a long time, pluralism has been considered the basic principle of every democratic state referring to the recognition and acceptance of diversity in society, particularly in terms of different beliefs, values, and perspectives. It is the idea that multiple groups and individuals with varying interests and ideologies can coexist and participate in the political process. Alexis de Tocqueville, the vivid supporter of American democracy, strongly promoted citizens' voluntary engagement in political affairs stating that no liberal, wise, and energetic government could possibly emerge from the support of obedient people. The involvement of citizens through group association

creates more abilities in terms of generating the loyalties needed to maintain a stable regime with minimum compulsion (Connolly, 1969).

Looking from the perspective of political theory, pluralistic ideas started to gain dominance during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century being unwrapped within English society. They became prominent in the works of Harold Laski, Fredrick Maitland, William Connolly, and many other researchers.

According to Laski, pluralism was formed as a response to *the monistic theory of sovereignty* which advocates for a single supreme authority that would act as the absolute source of power (Anto, 2021). While pluralists practice negotiations and seek compromise, monism supports constant control of subordinate entities by imposing its will. John Austin, who embraced the monistic theory, emphasizes that sovereign power is indivisible and absolute, there is no higher authority above it. On the other hand, Lacki holds a different view and promotes its dispersion within a state.

The fundamental axiom of pluralism supports the view that no single group or interest can dominate or control the process in democratic societies (Dahl, 2005). Instead, power must be shared and negotiated among various groups, leading to a more inclusive and participatory form of governance.

Furthermore, pluralism is closely connected to social movements since they often emerge as a response to perceived injustices or the need for social change. In my opinion, it provides a framework within which social movements can operate, allowing for the expression of diverse viewpoints and the mobilization of different groups to pursue their goals within the democratic process.

### **3.2.3. The Arena and Umpire Views of Pluralism**

William Connolly suggested two different perspectives on how pluralism might be perceived, each entails a different distribution of power.

According to *the arena theory*, society operates as a competitive arena where various interest bodies and individuals hold themselves in a permanent struggle for power and influence. That power never resides in the hands of a single group since it is dispersed among all competing members of society meaning that no single entity has enough prevalence to establish utter dominance. In this view, pluralism is characterized by a dynamic and ongoing contestation of interests, with different groups vying for their goals

and objectives. The government is seen as a neutral referee that ensures fair competition and mediates conflicts within society.

In contrast, *the umpire theory* of pluralism emphasizes the role of a central authority that is provided with the rights of the impartial umpire to manage the diverse interests within a country (Connolly, 1969). According to this theory, power is not evenly distributed among rival groups, but rather concentrated in the hands of a governing body. The authority's main purpose lies in balancing arising disputes and ensuring that no single group becomes too dominant or oppressive. They are obliged to prioritize the well-being of society by adjusting the decision-making process to citizens' best interests and acting as neutral arbiters.

To my mind, these theories cannot be considered mutually exclusive as different aspects might vary depending on states and their societies. However, judging from the democratic perspective, the arena view of pluralism embodies democracy better than the umpire one giving the governed more freedom to engage in political advocacy. The USA serves as a perfect example of the first theory due to its vibrant social participation in shaping public policy. They are well-known for giving life to numerous civic organizations that assist in promoting political views through non-profitable and voluntary participation.

### **3.2.4. Political Repressions**

Once the citizens demand complying with their political rights, certain regimes resort to suppressing those demands accepting only their beliefs, views, and convictions of governing. Political repression is one of the most widespread forms of coping with rising societies, groups, or individuals that have the potential power to endanger the established political system. It can be traced back to ancient civilizations, where rulers often employed violence, imprisonment, or exile to restrain dissent and maintain their power. Examples include the persecution of political opponents in ancient Rome and the use of secret police in medieval Europe.

The 20th century became the rise of totalitarian regimes such as Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler and the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin. Both leaders employed extensive political repressions to eliminate perceived threats to their power, targeting political opponents, ethnic or religious minorities, intellectuals, and dissidents. Mass arrests forced

labour camps, such as the Gulags in the Soviet Union, and state-sponsored violence were common features of these repressive regimes (Kataieva, 2022).

Such tactics of keeping one's power might deter citizens from anti-government movements. However, they are also capable of strengthening people's ambitions in attempts to fight for their beliefs and freedoms. In the following chapters, we will see how political repressions of the 21st century turned the tides of social movements increasing society's motivation to engage in anti-government activities.

### **3.3. Social Movements**

#### **3.3.1. The history of social movements**

Social movements have the goal of promoting changes within the society. Considering different time frames and geographical locations, those alterations tend to differ in terms of scales and goals.

The name of Charles Tilly is strongly associated with the origins of social changes as he was one of the first writers who properly introduced us to the concept of movements. He described a seventeenth-century incident in Narbonne, France, referring to it as a *petite movement* (Staggenborg, 2011). A group of women gathered to throw stones at the tax collectors to show their dissatisfaction with the new taxes on grain.

Tilly defined social movements as “a deliberate collective endeavor to promote change in any direction by any means, not excluding violence, illegality, revolution or withdrawal”. He argued that no collective action is possible without *a repertoire of collective action*, which embodies the range of protest-related tactics and strategies needed for achieving one's goals within a certain time frame (Tilly, 1977). Examples of such tools include peaceful marches, civil disobedience, online activism, lobbying, etc.

Karl Marx explored the idea that economic problems, including subsistence crises, played a significant role in shaping class struggles. According to him, severe economic hardships, such as food shortages, high prices, or unemployment, have been the driving force of past social movements encouraging people to act in response to a lack of necessities.

The French monarchy had a clear understanding that one of the ways to have submissive subjects was to ensure the full satisfaction of their basic needs (Tarrow,



2011). Fearing Parisians' capabilities to overthrow the government, the state officials strictly controlled the quality of grain and other products entering the capital. Once they failed to maintain the standards, conflicts over provisions became a pivot for the spread of the French Revolution. While the Europeans wanted to eradicate the monarchy and feudal system, the situation overseas was different as the Americans struggled for their independence from Britain by promoting social movements within the colonies.

Through diving into history, we can observe that the tactics of contemporary movements have been dramatically shaped and altered as now they address a wider range of social issues (Stagennborg, 2011). Once popularly known as charivari where local communities defended established community norms violated by a certain individual have been replaced with frantic protests to support gender equality, environmental protection, or civil rights.

In the late 1960s, scholars developed the term "new social movements" and agreed on the decreasing relevance of interclass conflicts. According to Alberto Melucci, new movements attempt to contradict the intrusion of the state and market into social life, recovering the rights to define society's characteristics and determine their private lives (Porta & Diani, 2006).

### **3.3.2. The life cycle of social movements**

Herbert Blumer's model, developed in 1969, is crucial for a better understanding of the topic. However, not every movement necessarily goes through the proposed life cycle: some might skip certain stages or experience them in a different order. Generally, the first phase represents the beginning of the movement which is usually followed by coalescence within participants. As the movement develops, we can observe how it undergoes bureaucratization and eventually declines.

The phase of *emergence* starts to take shape once the society recognizes certain social problems and identifies ways of overcoming them. It is important to mention that the discontent tends to simultaneously stem from different areas of life such as economic, political, or cultural. Should state institutions cease promptly responding to people's dissatisfaction, the social movement comes into existence (Porta & Diani, 2006). During the first stage, people share their perspectives, views, and concerns to determine

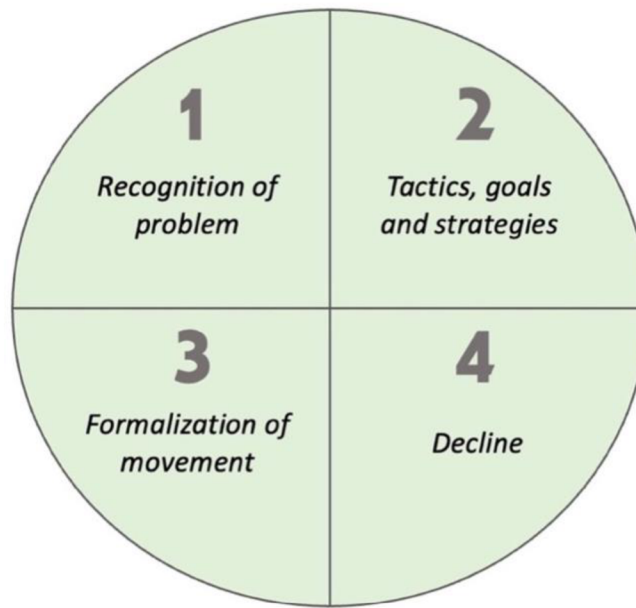
appropriate approaches for further actions. In attempts to increase awareness and entice potential participants, they may also engage in protests or informal meetings.

*Coalescence*, which is considered the second stage of Blumer's life cycle, begins once the problem gains significant attention and support. This period is strongly associated with the organization of movements' strategies, tactics, and goals as people gradually end their discussions and resort to more serious actions. After the leadership has been established, the movement develops clear objectives and creates slogans to promote its goals. Moreover, the phase implies recruiting new members and possibly creating alliances with those who share similar ideas and values. Contentious collective action is the main and sometimes the only source to challenge power holders by resorting to conventional and challenging repertoires of action (Tarrow, 2011).

The third phase, *bureaucratization*, entails an important milestone – during this time the movement either succeeds or fails (other options contain co-optation and repression). As participants might seek legal support or recognition, the formation of bureaucratic institutions is a common feature of this stage. This can involve the creation of formal leadership roles, procedures, and rules for better coordination and efficiency. On the other hand, this phase presents a great deal of possible dangers. Once the movement becomes more controlled, the decision-making power is concentrated in the hands of a few individuals, potentially declining the grassroots protests, and reducing the movement's ability to respond to changing circumstances (Piven & Cloward, 1979).

The life cycle of social movements ends with *decline* (also called resurgence) – the movement either succeeds in achieving its objectives or gradually dissolves without reaching any goals. If the latter option takes place, it is believed that the movement still has the potential to re-emerge with enhanced tactics and strategies.

Figure 1 Life Cycle of Social Movements



Source: Blumer, 1969. Own figure

### 3.3.3. Types of social movements

There is a plenty of different ways to classify social movements relying on different criteria such as scope, timeframes, targeted issues, etc. Ralph H. Turner, an American sociologist, proposed a classification based on the public definition of collective action. According to him, respectable movements do not pose any threats to society's values or interest when revolutionary ones are seen as those that endanger established interest groups and their power. Turner also mentions peculiar movements, "seen as odd but harmless, encounters ridicule and has limited access to legitimate means".

Now let us focus on David Aberle and his book, "The Peyote Religion Among the Navaho", where he described the four types of social movements considering their magnitude of desired changes.

*Revolutionary and redemptive* movements are both formed to seek radical and profound alterations. However, while the latter focuses on specific individuals or groups, the first goes deeper by transforming established social systems and creating new ones.

Revolutionary motives tend to arise once people have been deprived of their niche (e.g., economic, or political positions) and left with no decent replacement (Aberle, 1986).

*Alternative* movements are much more limited in their goals as they advocate minor changes by promoting alternative beliefs and lifestyles. They often emerge as opposed to mainstream institutions or beliefs. *Reformative* actions share some similarities. However, they seek alternations within the existing social structure and focus on specific aspects of society.

Figure 2 Types of Social Movements

		How much change?	
		Limited	Radical
Who is changed?	Everyone	Reformative Social Movements	Revolutionary Social Movements
	Specific Individuals	Alternative Social Movements	Redemptive Social Movements

Source: Aberle, 1986.

The world has experienced a wider range of changes which also included religious, utopian, migratory, self-help, and one-goal social movements.

### 3.3.4. Political Process Theory

While understanding the external processes such as life cycles, it is also necessary to dive into the internal environment to recognize patterns of people's motivations behind engaging in social movements.

The political process theory encompasses and explains the relationship between political opportunities and framing processes of possible social changes – any movement cannot rise and achieve its goals without civic potential being present (Crossman, 2019). People's inclination for movements is evoked by a myriad of political circumstances, e.g., changes in regimes or social structures. According to Tarrow, who viewed social movements from the perspective of contentious politics, once political opportunities become favorable, movements launch in *a cycle of contention*, “a phase of heightened conflict across the social system”.

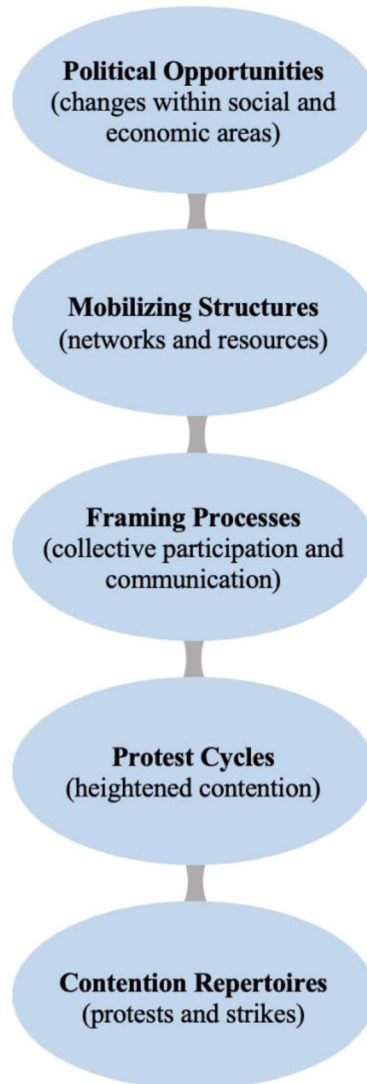
The formation of collective identity is associated with *insurgent consciousness* which is formed in response to society's grievances (Imhonopi, 2013). As citizens develop political awareness, they realize that the root causes of society's hardships and inequalities come from social or political structures. Those shifts in consciousness have the potential to establish a strong commitment to collective mobilization and social movements in general. Although, people are not overwhelmed by a collective mentality, as many researchers believed before, but instead can go through a decision-making process and draw their conclusions before resorting to collective action (Carren, 2007).

Talking about the origins, the theory was developed in the 1980s by Douglas McAdam, the American sociologist, to describe the civil rights movement in the United States and give insights into African Americans' fight for racial equality. However, it has been so popularized worldwide that now we use it to describe a wider range of social movements.

The political process theory has managed to evolve a lot. For example, cognitive liberation, proposed by McAdam in the last century, has been shaped and replaced with mobilizing structures. Considering more recent studies, now the political process theory embodies 5 major components needed to achieve set objectives: political opportunities, mobilizing structures, framing processes, protest cycles, and contentious repertoires. The participants can succeed only if they demonstrate their dissatisfaction by exploiting the

right resources, taking favorable opportunities, and framing their goals with clear judgment.

*Figure 3 Key Components of Social Movements*



*Source: Caren, 2007. Own figure.*

### **3.3.5. Social Movements around Europe**

As Europe experienced a myriad of political changes throughout 20-21 centuries, we can already predict that many of them were accompanied by social movements. For the

sake of better understanding, I will address those which aimed at overthrowing or changing political regimes within specific countries.

The Velvet Revolution, which claimed to eradicate the long-established communist regime, took place in Czechoslovakia at the end of the last century. Nonviolent protests and strikes started as the students filled the Wenceslas Square in Prague where protestors were demanding the resignation of government (Tůma, 2007). As a result, Czechoslovakia was divided into two separate countries, Czechia and Slovakia. Vaclav Havel, a former dissident playwright, became the new president of Czechia, and the political regime shifted from communism to democracy.

Georgians began the 21<sup>st</sup> century with their fight for democratic freedoms as a response to electoral fraud during parliamentary elections. When the demonstrations in Tbilisi were growing bigger with each day, Shevardnadze, Georgia's president at the time, declared that he did not intend "to resign at the demand of individual politicians and a few dozen young people waving flags. If there were at least a million people, it would have been different" (Kandelaki, 2006). National petition managed to gather 1 million votes, which eventually led to the Shevardnadze's resignation from the post.

Disputed presidential elections in Ukraine were followed by mass protests and riots, later known as prerequisites for the Orange Revolution. Supporting pro-European beliefs, urged Ukrainians started to gather at Kyiv's Independence Square demanding fair elections as they had no intention to accept the allegedly elected Yanukovich. The protests unfolded throughout the western Ukrainian cities and eventually reached their initial goals. This revolution will be discussed more in the practical part of my thesis since it has had a significant impact on the shaping of national identity for further collective action.

In conclusion, the three revolutions serve as examples of successful nonviolent movements that led to major political alterations in the respective states. The post-Soviet economic hardships, such as stagnant economy, corruption, and high unemployment, have played a significant role in triggering the color revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine. The protestors of both countries demanded transparency and accountability of their governments.

## 4. Practical Part

### 4.1. Conduction of research

As mentioned before, I decided to take qualitative approach and conduct interviews among the participants of the Maidan Revolution, which started as the pro-European social movement. My primary goal was analysing protestors' goals and motivations behind engaging in collective action with respect to political and economic situation in the country. I was also trying to access, compare and evaluate pre- and post-revolutionary environment based on received answers.

For deeper research, I have chosen respondents which belong to different age group and vary in the occupations. It is important to mention that everyone was asked the same set of questions preliminary created by me but not expected to answer all of them – voluntary participation was my key approach. Thus, the durations of interviews varied between 30 minutes and one hour.

Now let me introduce you to my respondents:

- **Mykola Novosol** – used to work as a foreman at the brick factory but retired a couple of years prior to the revolution.
- **Ivan Khoroshun** – became a Maidan protestor in his mid 30s, later joined the Armed Forces of Ukraine.
- **Anna Boyko** – was a student at Taras Shevchenko Kyiv National University, also a member of the Student Coordination Council.
- **Andriy Savchenko** – took part as a fifth-year student at Ivan Franko Lviv University, attended protests in both Lviv and Kyiv.
- **Olena Kaznacheivska** – a university teacher of foreign languages who became a volunteer during the revolution.



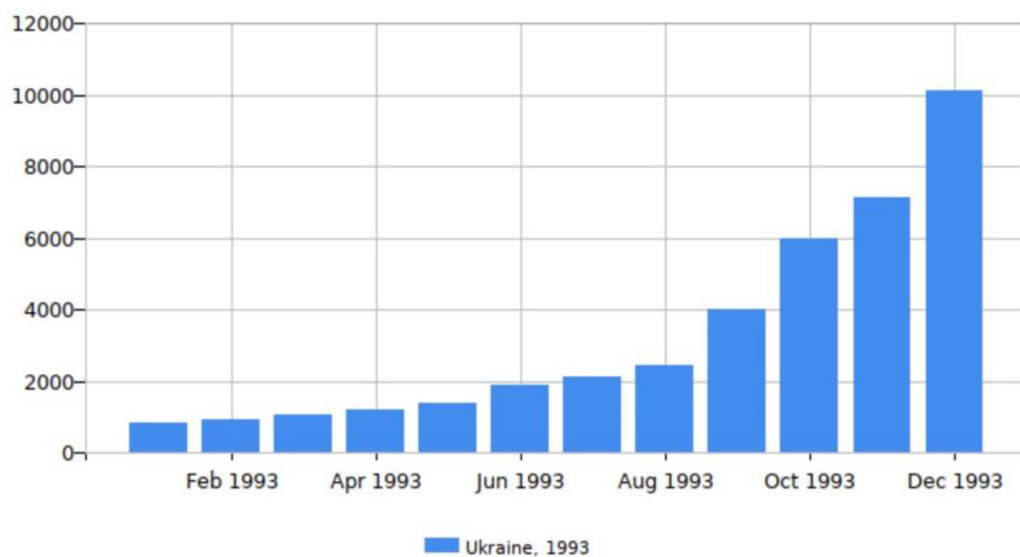
## 4.2. Ukraine before the revolution

A great deal of historical and contemporary movements are targeted at reaching economic outcomes that appear in reaction to subverting political regimes (Giugni & Grasso, 2019). For this reason, the emphasis will be placed on the economic well-being of Ukraine starting from the moment of its independence to the Maidan Revolution itself.

The country witnessed the All-Ukrainian Referendum on December 1, 1991, which intended to unite citizens for the sake of creating a new sovereign country. Secession from the Soviet Union was inevitable as the government announced the results - approximately 92% of participants supported the Ukrainian Declaration of Independence (Council on Foreign Relations, 2022).

Leonid Kravchuk, the first elected president of Ukraine, started his rule in attempts to shift from a centrally planned organization to a *market economy*, a system that implies the voluntary exchange of goods and services (Boyko & Hiryk, 2022). Such changes resulted in hyperinflation within a time frame of 1992-1993 which led to a sharp decline in the industrial sector and severe disruptions in supply chain management. Big problems started once Ukraine fully left the ruble zone in 1992 – prices have increased by 135 percent in the seven months since November. The monthly inflation was in the range of 15-23 percent from February to May (Ustenko & Johnson, 1994).

Figure 4 Monthly Inflation Rate in 1993, %



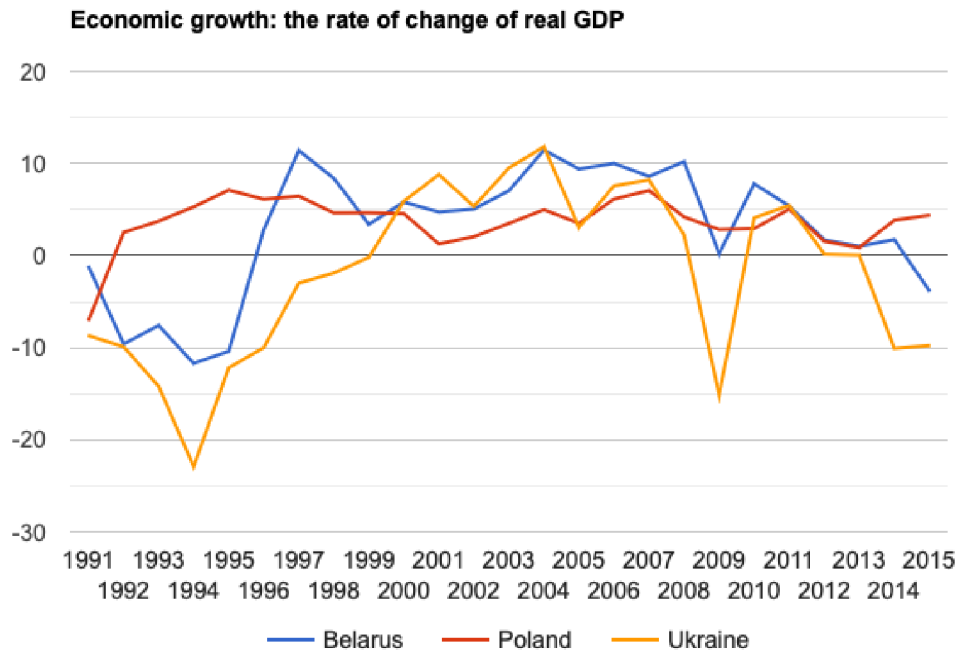
Source: StatBureau

As people's savings and salaries started to sharply erode, the motivations to affect the situation were growing higher. Thus, economic hardships fuelled people's desires for collective action and caused mass strikes around miners in Donbas. Ukraine experienced the biggest strike among miners on June 3, 1993. Around 220 thousand workers gathered in the center of Donetsk to show their dissatisfaction with Kravchuk while calling for the dissolution of the Verkhovna Rada.

The situation gained certain stability once Leonid Kuchma, the second president of Ukraine, had implemented strict monetary measures such as increasing interest rates, regulating the money supply, and eventually signing the agreement with the International Monetary Fund. On the other hand, Ukraine had been still struggling with the long-lasting impact of the Soviet Union which embodied monopoly, corruption, bureaucracy, and lack of environmental protection, etc.

One of the ways to assess a country's economic situation would be to look at its Gross Domestic Product. Ukraine's GDP was fluctuating because of ineffective structural reforms and experienced a massive collapse by almost half within 3 years, 1991-1994 (Sutela, 2012). According to Anatoliy Amelin, a Ukrainian financial expert, the country's economic performance was characterized as very slow compared to the neighboring states. From 1991 to 2020, GDP experienced the following dynamic: in Poland, the growth equalled 480%, in Belarus – 278%, in Ukraine – 89% (Zhurii, 2021). While defining negative patterns, Amelin describes a 30-year-old path of independence as “degradation”.

Figure 5 The Rate of Change of Real GDP, %



Source: The World Bank

The graph above demonstrates considerable fluctuations in the GDP level of Ukraine. The lowest result was recorded in the aftermath of hyperinflation whilst the highest one coincides with mass protests known as the Orange Revolution. The period from 2000 to 2005 was characterized by a substantial increase as Ukraine experienced its record change in 2004, +12,1 % to the GDP level. Such improvements were achieved due to the expansion of foreign trade, the profits increased from 21\$ to 44\$ billion within five years (Vasylytsova, 2015). On the other hand, one of the sharpest recessions was recorded in 2009 when the country's GDP fell by nearly 15%. Looking at Poland, they managed to remain relatively stable during the economic development as their economic performance has not witnessed substantial diminishments. Implementing structural reforms and joining the European Union have become determining factors of the country's growth.

All post-Soviet states such as Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, etc. are notoriously known for acquiring the same economic hardship – corruption. According to Transparency International, in 2005, Ukraine was ranked 107th in the rating of the least corrupted world nations sharing the same perception index of 2,6 with Kazakhstan and Belarus. In 2013, around 47,3% of Ukrainians considered the judicial system to be totally

absorbed in bribery, compared to law enforcement (45,4%), government (44,9%), medicine (40,6%), etc (Ukrainian Institute of Strategies of Global Development, 2015). To overcome the long-lasting hardship, Poroshenko, the former president of Ukraine, signed decree No. 217 and established the National Anti-Corruption Bureau in 2015.

Despite economic difficulties, Ukraine also struggled with freedom of speech as media outlets faced pressure from political elites and oligarchs. The murder of Georgiy Gongadze, the famous Georgian-Ukrainian journalist, caused a major concern among the citizens in 2000. In the late 1990s, Gongadze founded the online publication “Ukrainian Pravda” where he exposed the corruption schemes of Leonid Kuchma, the second president of the country, and his immediate political circle (Mamo, 2021). The journalist was last seen on September 16<sup>th</sup> while entering the mysterious taxi. Two months later, his body was found 70 kilometers away from Kyiv and later recognized by the family members.

Only 13 years later, the court announced the verdict of Gongadze’s killer, Oleksiy Pinchuk, sentencing him to life imprisonment. Between 2000 and 2010, 16 journalists were killed in Ukraine (Matviyenko, 2023).

#### **4.2.1. The Orange Revolution**

The government’s inability to maintain a highly efficient national economy contributed to human discontent. Falsification of elections became the determining factor of people’s revolutionary motivations in 2004, the year when Ukrainians stood against President Viktor Yanukovich for the first time.

The first round demonstrated the significant superiority of Viktor Yushchenko, the leader of the Our Ukraine party, in the western regions of Ukraine, whilst Yanukovich gained the most support in the eastern and southern parts. Since none of the candidates received a majority of votes, the Central Electoral Committee announced the second round, where Yanukovich won with 812 thousand more votes than his opponent. Yushchenko could not reach the acceptance of his defeat and started questioning the whole electoral process, he ultimately urged his voters to protest in response to the rigged elections. "We do not trust the calculations of the CEC. We appeal to our supporters to come to the Independence Square and defend their victory”, he said.

The protests continued under orange banners and flags, hence the name of the revolution. People's motivations have been reinforced by concerns of authoritarian tendencies, support of democratic freedoms, and desire for European and NATO integration. Ukrainians perceived Yushchenko as a president capable of fulfilling their visions since his electoral campaign promised "a state that protects the interests of ordinary citizens and does not serve merchant oligarchs" along with "...the orientation of society towards universal values – freedom, democracy, inter-ethnic and inter-confessional harmony..." (Ukrainska Pravda, 2004).

On December 3, after 2 weeks of all-Ukrainian protests, the Supreme Court of Ukraine made the following announcement, "Given the impossibility of publishing the official results of the second round of elections, a repeat vote will be held on December 26, 2014". The main goal of the revolution was achieved once Yushchenko won in the third unscheduled round.

In conclusion, the movement resulted in increased political pluralism, a more transparent electoral process, and greater respect for democratic principles in Ukraine. Yushchenko's inaugural speech included promises for integration into European structures which earned his trust among many Ukrainians. In turn, on January 13, 2005, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the results of the Ukrainian Election. They stated that membership in their union "is an option for all European countries that satisfy the relevant conditions and obligations" emphasizing their expectations of "a sustained transition in Ukraine that would bring country this objective" and commitments "to assisting and supporting Ukraine in this process" (European Parliament, 2005).

### **4.3. The Revolution of Dignity**

2013 is written in history as the year when Ukrainians encroached on Yanukovych's power for the second time. The start of Euromaidan dates to November 21<sup>st</sup> when several hundred people occupied Independence Square in response to the government's decision to suspend the preparation of the Association Agreement with the EU (Zelinska, 2017). That night, Ukrainians came to the Maidan, held their hands, and shouted: "Ukraine is Europe!". Now students were the driving force of the movement since they became the first participants and contributed on a big scale.

According to Mustafa Nayem, one of the organizers of Euromaidan, "...the beginning of the protest was in no way related to the person of Viktor Yanukovich. It was not a protest "against". It was a protest "for" - for signing an agreement with the European Union" (BBC Ukraine, 2017). However, the situation escalated after riot police named "Berkut"<sup>1</sup> beat and dispersed the students on November 30. The brutal crackdown on demonstrators and disregard for human rights showed a dire need for transformation of the political landscape. Now the movement promoted not only European integration but also the possible resignation of Yanukovich and his cabinet.

Numerous attempts to suppress the protests were unsuccessful as everyday people from Lviv, Kharkiv, Donetsk, and other cities were coming to support their fellow citizens. Ukrainian resistance has drawn the attention of foreign politicians and diplomats, one of them was Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative for Foreign Policy. According to her interview, the negotiations on the Association Agreement had been lasting for 7 years but never came to a certain conclusion (Kennedy, 2023).

The protestors' *economic power* significantly helped in achieving the movement's objectives. Many people engaged in fundraising efforts to provide essential resources such as food, shelter, medical aid, etc. They also occupied key economic locations (Trade Unions Building, Kyiv City Council, etc.) in cities across the country to disrupt governmental activities and the functioning of a whole regime.

On January 16, 2014, the authorities adopted so-called "dictatorial laws" aimed at restriction of citizens' freedoms. "It was after that "voting with limbs" that Euromaidan finally turned into the Revolution of Dignity. More precisely, it was a revolution for people - for those who were not afraid to die for Dignity", says journalist Maksym Krechetov. The bloodiest events began to unfold right after the adoption of acts – the demonstrators occupied Hrushevskoho Street where "Berkut" opened fire on defenseless people. Serhii Nihorian, an Armenian from Dnipro, was killed by a shot in the chest. By the end, the number of dead protestors exceeded a hundred currently they are referred to as the "Heaven Hundred" (Shveda & Park, 2015).

As a result of the revolution, Yanukovich fled to Russia on February 22. The next day, members of Parliament adopted the resolution "On self-removal of the President of Ukraine from his constitutional authority and early elections of the President of Ukraine" (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2014)

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<sup>1</sup> A former police unit controlled by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine.

## 5. Interviews

When it comes to the reasons for protests, Mykola Novosol says, *“Like the majority, I was outraged by the fact that Yanukovich never came to Vilnius to sign the agreement. We, as a country, have been following the path of European integration for several years, but here he decides to stop or even change the direction to the east. No one likes a president who cannot keep his promises in such an obvious way”*. Incidentally, the negotiation process regarding the agreement with the EU began back in March 2007. As a result, Ukrainian citizens developed a clear vision of moving into the European future within the following years.

Olena Kaznacheivska adds *“When it comes to the level of corruption in Europe, we have always been among the leaders. It was my secondary motivation, but the economic hardships had been piling up for years on end”*. Since Ukraine gained independence, corruption has always remained one of the biggest problems. In 2010 the country’s Corruption Perception Index (CPI) equaled 2,4<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, Ukraine was ranked 146 out of 178 states, which was on the same level as Pakistan, Maldives, and the Philippines (Transparency International, 2011). Unemployment, nepotism, and lack of opportunities are listed as other reasons for mass demonstrations.

Andriy Savchenko explains his motivation, *“Our geopolitics and sense of injustice were bothering me a lot. Although then geopolitics did not cause such a big reaction within the society, it did start the protests”*. Ukrainians already fought for justice in 2004 (4.1.1. The Orange Revolution), which made Maidan their second mass attempt to oppose political elites and the government itself.

The question of geopolitics raises the issue of relationships with the neighbors. Ukraine has deep historical, cultural, and economic ties with the Russian Federation, dating back to centuries of shared history. The strong influence of Russia in Ukrainian politics and society has heightened geopolitical tensions, particularly in the context of aspirations toward closer connections with the European Union. Savchenko explains: *“If we moved towards integration with the Russian Federation, I couldn’t see my future in Ukraine. At that time, I often traveled to the EU, attended training programs, and saw clear prospects for the movement towards European integration. I have been to Russia as*

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<sup>2</sup> The highest possible score is 10. Singapore was ranked first with the result of 9,3.

*well and witnessed the situation there. Personally, a movement in the other direction was associated exclusively with nepotism, stagnation, corruption, and lack of prospects both for myself and my country*". By making the comparison, Russia's Corruption Perception Index of 2010 equaled 2.1 as the country was ranked 154 out of 178 states (Transparency International, 2011).

As I mentioned before (4.1. Ukraine before the Revolution), the influence of the Soviet Union has played a significant role in the establishment of the Ukrainian economy. The authoritarian regime left a legacy of centralized control, censorship, and suppression of dissent, which has influenced Ukraine's political landscape, leading to struggles for democracy and freedom of expression. Thus, many participants saw Maidan as a chance to open new horizons and move towards Western values and institutions. Ivan Khoroshun explains: *"I was against Yanukovich's regime, but my spirit for protests appeared after the beating of students who wanted to live in a free European country, not in the Soviet Union"*.

4 respondents agreed that physical violence against students was a turning point and caused the biggest wave of protests. Mykola Novosol says, *"I was inspired by our youth, who came out in the terrible cold to protest for their European future. Sometimes we must follow the younger ones, that's what I did. I think beating students was a big mistake and caused massive problems for the whole political elite"*. To his opinion, the situation could be peacefully maintained if, Vitaliy Zakharchenko, the former head of the State Security Service, was fired for his violent orders. As it never happened, the pro-European movement entered the stage of *coalescence* in December 2013<sup>3</sup> and gained significant attention across the whole country (3.3.1. The life cycle of social movements).

Ivan Khoroshun adds, *"The Berkut has beaten our children for the sake of one person's interests. As a father, I could not pass by and ignore it, like thousands of Ukrainians. It was the concerned youth with a clear desire for European development who became a symbol of the revolution"*. Initially, the Maidan started as a *redemptive social movement* since the protestors were focused on changing Yanukovich's decision. As the escalating violence took place at the end of November, the Maidan started undergoing a *revolutionary transformation*, and eventually, the change of regime became the main goal of protests. (3.3.3. Types of social movements).

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<sup>3</sup> November 30 – the beating of students. More details can be found in 4.2.1. The Orange Revolution.



While talking about students' participation, Anna Boyko mentions, "*At the very beginning, we would organize rallies by the entire Student Coordination Council.*" Such involvement makes us look at Euromaidan through the lens of *the political process theory* as we can see the interplay between the main components of social movements. The economic crisis has become one of the *political opportunities* for the start of the protests. Civic groups and student organizations served as the sources of *mobilizing structures* while the violent crackdown on the youth strengthened *framing processes* and public support (3.3.4. Political Process Theory).

Andriy Savchenko, a member of the Student Coordination Council, explains the formation of his revolutionary motives: "*I was influenced by music. The band Muza and some others (Lyapis Trubetskoi), whom I admired at school and during my student years. At the time they had many songs of a revolutionary/protest nature. Literature, in particular Orwell, set me against a potential dictatorship. Moreover, Yaroslav Hrytsak's speech at the Lviv Euromaidan convinced me that these would all be historical events that I wanted to see and participate in myself, and not to read about them later*".

All my respondents agreed with the outcome of Euromaidan and the change of authoritarian regime. Despite this, in their answers, they put a significant emphasis on negative consequences. Ivan Khoroshun explains: "*Yes, European investments have done their job, but the economic situation hasn't significantly improved inside the country. And politically, we made friends in the form of the EU and USA and a clear enemy in the form of the "brothers" from the Russian Federation*". On the other hand, Anna Boyko says: "*Our democratic institutions began to actively develop, society started to change. Everything took time but seemed very natural to me. Personally, there was a feeling that we were moving forward and not staying in a swamp, even though the pace or certain individual problems could be unsatisfactory*". Therefore, the European Union provided financial and technical assistance to support Ukraine's reform process after the revolution, including efforts to combat corruption, strengthen the rule of law, and improve governance. In turn, the USA provided loan guarantees and economic aid for promoting and stabilizing growth.

As a result, the level of political consciousness and collective participation have significantly increased among Ukrainian citizens. In some cases, 2013-2014 events drastically changed people's priorities and occupations. Olena Kaznacheivska explains: "*As a result, the level of political consciousness and collective participation has significantly increased. In some cases, the events drastically changed people's priorities*

*and occupations*". Ukraine has gained a lot of volunteers and charitable organizations, which also happened in response to the conflict with Russia. In May 2014, Vitaliy Deynega, a volunteer, founded one of the biggest funds in the country, Come Back Alive, which provides military assistance to the Armed Forces of Ukraine to this day.

Ivan Khoroshun also explains: *"After the revolution, I went to war. Before that, I was a civilian, but I changed and moved up the career ladder. Greater love and pride for Ukraine have been overwhelming me since the time we managed to achieve our revolutionary goals. I have also developed a strong belief that my country must be protected at any cost - whether I do it with demonstrations on the Maidan or with a gun on the battlefield"*.

## 6. Results and Discussions

The theoretical part of my thesis began with a discussion of politics and how it's connected to the economy. Economic inequalities tend to promote engagement in collective action. Then I also delved into the explanation of political regimes as the abuse of governmental power is known as one of the key reasons for the start of social movements.

After that, my focus moved to citizens' human rights when it comes to participation in the political life of their countries. Pluralism provides a framework for the operation of social movements and allows the expression of different viewpoints.

As I moved to a more detailed explanation of collective action (history, types, life cycle of social movements), political process theory helped me to understand people's motivations to protest. It embodied 5 main components needed to achieve protestors' goals and objectives.

The practical part was specifically focused on the Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine, which took place across the whole country, especially in Maidan Nezalezhnosti in Kyiv. We saw how post-Soviet economic hardships were posing a threat to the development of Ukraine. Moreover, I paid special attention to the Orange Revolution of 2004 as it considerably shaped people's desires for establishing justice and laid a foundation for the Euromaidan of 2013.

For a better understanding of the pre-revolutionary environment, I have conducted interviews among the participants of Maidan. According to my respondents, Viktor Yanukovich's refusal to sign the Association Agreement was the main reason for the protests. In my opinion, political process theory can people's motivations.

First, the political instability of the regime allowed the movement to gain momentum. The youth have become the first participants and organized the protests through the usage of social media platforms. After engaging enough people, they started *framing* their demands with the discourse of democracy. Through collective engagement, the youth invented slogans such as "Ukraine is Europe", "Ukraine is above everything" and many others. In the process, *insurgent consciousness*<sup>4</sup> was amplified and thus *the protest cycles*

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<sup>4</sup> This concept is a part of Political Process Theory. More explanation can be found in the theoretical part (3.3.4.).

took place. The violent dispersion of students on November 30 has become a period of heightened contention and has drawn more attention from adults and retirees.

Eventually, all my respondents approved of the change of Yanukovich's regime but also mentioned a lot of drawbacks. After the end of Euromaidan, political instability across Ukraine has been used by Russia and led to the annexation of Crimea.

To summarize, the country has been dealing with the consequences of Maidan until the present day. Talking about positive results, the revolution has become an uprising against tyranny and imperialism. It also paved the way for transparency, democratic reforms, accountability of political elites, and respect for human rights.

## 7. Conclusion

In conclusion, pro-European citizens of Ukraine had a strong desire to eradicate post-Soviet influences, but the government hasn't managed to do so. Yanukovich's refusal to sign the European Association agreement caused public discontent and caused the start of Euromaidan, a social movement that laid the groundwork for the Revolution of Dignity.

Initially, the Euromaidan started as a redemptive social movement as people were seeking justice and reform. The early stages were driven by a sense of moral outrage and a quest for dignity and accountability in the face of political oppression and human rights abuses.

The heightened pluralism brought together diverse segments and cultural backgrounds of Ukrainian society, united by a shared commitment to reclaiming their freedoms. Mustafa Nayem, who sparked the start of Euromaidan, is an ethnic Afghan who was born in Kabul. The fallen heroes of the "Heaven Hundred" had Armenian and Belorussian backgrounds, these are Serhii Nihoyan and Mykhailo Zhyznevski. Furthermore, Russians and Crimean Tatars also came together, demonstrating a commitment to mutual coexistence. When it comes to the recognition of diverse beliefs, Ukraine has also witnessed peaceful short-term Antimaidan protests. Therefore, the Revolution of Dignity demonstrated the embodiment of diverse cultural groups as everyone had a chance to express their convictions, ideologies, and interests.

As the escalating violence took place, the Maidan underwent a revolutionary transformation. A repertoire of contention, comprising barricades, mass protests, and calls for systemic revolution, underscored the departure from mere redemptive goals towards a more revolutionary agenda of profound societal alterations. Ordinary citizens have developed their political awareness and realized the importance of civic activism.

The movement has undergone the life cycle of social movements and resulted in the overthrow of Yanukovich. The General Prosecutor, Viktor Pshonka, and Vitaliy Zakharchenko, the Minister of Internal Affairs, left the country with the former president. On February 25<sup>th</sup>, a few days after the end of the revolution, Arsen Avakov, acting Prime Minister, signed decree Number 144 on the dissolution of the Berkut unit in response to their forceful dispersal of demonstrators and crimes against human rights.

At the time, it was hard to evaluate the changes from the economic perspective as Euromaidan was followed by the abrupt start of the Ukrainian-Russian war. On the other hand, some long-term improvements have been noticed within the following years.

- 1. The Association Agreement with EU** – On March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014, The Prime Minister of Ukraine, Arseniy Yatsenyuk, signed the Association Agreement with the European Union. The economic part of this agreement was later signed by Petro Poroshenko, the fifth president of independent Ukraine, on June 27<sup>th</sup>.
- 2. Visa liberalization with EU countries** - Euromaidan attracted the attention of many international politicians and significantly improved Ukraine's relations with the European Union. Since 2017, citizens, who hold biometric passports, are entitled to visa-free trips that last no more than 90 days within six months.
- 3. Promotion of democracy** - Ukraine managed to establish several democratic institutions, such as the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine, the National Agency for Prevention of Corruption, and the High Anti-Corruption Court. As a result, in 2020, the country's democracy index was rated at 5.81, which puts it among the states with a "hybrid regime". However, it is the best result since 2010 (Ukrinform, 2021).
- 4. Increased foreign investments** - After the revolution, Ukraine was struggling with its business climate but still managed to attract investors from different countries after a couple of years. The improvement of Foreign Direct Investment was especially noticeable in the banking sector - the recapitalization of foreign-owned banks caused the growth of FDI stock from Austria (Raiffeisen Bank Aval and UniCredit) and Hungary (OTP) (Averchuk, 2018). In recent years, the Netherlands has become the biggest investor in Ukraine: around 951.5 million dollars came from them in 2018 (DFL Ukraine, 2020). In addition, Foreign Direct Investments can assist in creating new workplaces and thus improving unemployment rates within the country.
- 5. Military reforms** - As the conflict with Russia had been escalating, Ukraine opted to invest in military improvements. As a result, the army increased its level

of training and took 15th place in the world ranking of military power (The Global Firepower, 2023).

To conclude, social movements tend to arise in response to economic grievances and social inequalities, whereas the causes of collective action can be rooted in the governmental structures. Once the political opportunities become evident, protests attempt to establish democratic societies using the repertoires of contention.

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