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A People's Army: Civil Society as a Security Actor in Post-Maidan Ukraine

by Rosaria Puglisi

ABSTRACT

The large-scale mobilisation of Ukrainian society is the most far-reaching legacy of Euromaidan and its tragic aftermath. Civil society intervened to fill the gap created by the state's failure to fulfil key functions like the provision of security and defence. In so doing, civil society has turned *de facto* into a security actor. By proposing a narrative of collective responsibility and introducing modern and more transparent working methods in civilian and military institutions, post-Maidan civil society has displayed the potential to act as a "change agent" determined to induce substantial reforms in Ukraine. The condition for this to happen is that state institutions establish and retain arenas for functional representation and guarantee civil society's regular and meaningful access to decision-making beyond the emergency of the current crisis.

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by Rosaria Puglisi*

Introduction

The expression "people's army" (*narodnaya armiya*), has acquired in post-Maidan Ukraine, a new meaning and wide currency; not coincidentally reminiscent of references to the Ukrainian People's Army that in the spring of 1917 defended the short-lived Ukrainian People's Republic against the advancing Bolsheviks. It encapsulates the unprecedented mobilisation of Ukrainian civil society and the public at large around security issues. It goes beyond the rallying-the-troops rhetoric natural in countries at war. It identifies the collective effort of a country that, emotionally brought together by a spirit of solidarity after the Maidan movement, has seen the war in the Donbas as its first, real existential threat.

"The Ukrainian Army has become today a real people's army," said Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk, marking the day of the Armed Forces in December 2014. "Its combat-readiness and re-equipment, the competence of its soldiers and officers, the improvement of their morale have become [relevant] questions not only for the state, but for each and everyone [of its citizens]," he added.[1] "The [Ukrainian] phenomenon consists in the fact that the war is conducted by a people's army, where the majority of individuals are either volunteers or patriots of Ukraine, and this also includes professional military staff. They really fight as they see it – for the motherland," commented defence analyst Yuriy Butusov in February 2015.[2]

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[1] "Armiya Ukrainy stala deystvitel'no narodnoi - Yatsenyuk" [The Ukrainian Army has become really the people's [army] - Yatsenyuk], in *Censor.net*, 6 December 2014, http://censor.net.ua/n315163.

[2] "Fenomen Ukrainy v tom, chto voiny vedet narodnaya armiya - Butusov" [The Ukrainian phenomenon is that the war is conducted by a people's army - Butusov], in *24 Kanal*, 13 February 2015, http://24tv.ua/ru/n543457.

The large-scale mobilisation of the Ukrainian society, structured or not into formal organisations, is arguably Euromaidan and its tragic aftermath's most far-reaching legacy.[3] Although the eruption of large-scale protest movements has been a recurring feature in Ukrainian post-independence history, the countrywide mobilisation against President Yanukovich's November 2013 decision not to sign the Association Agreement with the European Union is a unique phenomenon. As such it constitutes a turning point in the country's process of state building and democratisation.

As opposed to the protest movements that preceded it, Euromaidan and the ensuing hostilities in the Donbas have produced a protracted, widespread social mobilisation and have resulted into a sort of "permanent revolution" that has extended beyond the protests. The weakness of state institutions and their temporary failure in the provision of security and defence, functions generally seen as prerogatives of the state, have created an urgency for assistance and have opened a window of opportunity for society's participation. Civil society has become *de facto* a security actor – involved first in the provision of hard security, with the establishment of self-defence units during the Maidan demonstrations and of volunteer battalions following the beginning of hostilities in the east; second, in the procurement of military equipment for the troops and the provision of logistical services (like medical or clerical work), even at the frontlines; and third, in the monitoring and the oversight of defence-related issues and military operations in the Donbas.

Civil society engagement has proved creative, varied and multi-faceted. While some of the existing organisations have switched their operations to conflict-related fields of activity, new organisations have also emerged. More importantly, people have mobilised in spontaneous networks with a fluctuating degree of membership and varying levels of commitment. Previously inactive individuals have started collecting funds to provide equipment for the army. Overnight, they have become experts on the quality of bulletproof jackets or night vision goggles required in the Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO) conducted in the Donbas. They have developed informed opinions on the functioning of the security sector and have started calling for accountability from the military institutions. The media have played an important role in creating knowledge, raising awareness and coordinating

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[3] In this paper the terms society and civil society are employed interchangeably to define the intermediate layer between the state and the individual, outside market and family, mobilising voluntarily in structured organisations as well as in spontaneous grassroots networks to engage in activities that are considered to correspond, narrowly or broadly, to the public good. This use corresponds to the distinction, increasingly common in Ukraine, between grazhdanskoe obshchestvo (civil society) and grazhdanskiy sektor (civil sector), where the former includes society at large, while the latter sees the prevalence of structured organisations. "Grazhdanskoe obshchestvo includes a wider and clearer range of organised and non-organised groups today. New civil society actors are pushing the border between sectors and experiment with new forms of organisations both online and off-line." Maryna Stavnychuk, Vitaliy Kulik and Larisa Mukrak, "Vlast-Grazhdanskoe obshchestvo: sistemnyi sboi" [Power-Civil Society: a systemic clash], in *Zerkalo Nedeli*, 19 June 2015, http://gazeta.zn.ua/internal/vlast-grazhdanskoe-obschestvo-sistemnyy-sboy-_.html.

this newly established volunteer sector. A community has emerged composed of individuals that are not only socially, but also politically, active.

The line between civil participation and militant populism is, however, slippery. The risk of demagoguery high. This is especially the case when state institutions are fragile and a country is undergoing a number of parallel crises that endanger its own survival. The academic literature on the third wave of democratisations is full of arguments highlighting both civil society's positive contributions and its negative effects on the consolidation of democratic regimes.[4] By appealing to a narrative of collective responsibility and introducing modern and more transparent working methods, to which the political and military establishment were not accustomed, post-Maidan Ukrainian civil society, a potential "change agent," has the opportunity to open up and induce substantial transformations into institutions that since independence have proved, by and large, resistant to reforms.

Provided that the state continues to recognise its positive role, establishes and retains arenas for functional representation and guarantees regular and meaningful access to decision-making processes, civil society can serve an important function of democratic oversight. It can promote transparency and accountability not only in relation to the security sector, but also within the state institutions at large. It can thus contribute to restoring the citizens' trust in the country's institutions, which the tragic events in Maidan have so thoroughly shattered. In sum, civil society can positively affect the quality of governance and contribute to the consolidation of democracy in Ukraine.

1. The Ukrainian civil society: NGOs, social movements and grassroots networks

Scholarly research has traditionally characterised Ukrainian civil society as weak; the product, *inter alia*, of a post-Soviet political culture. Together with institutional and economic factors, a general distrust for any kind of structured social activity, the persistence of informal connections and networks and the deep disillusionment with partial democratic and market reforms have been powerful disincentives for social activism in post-communist countries.[5] In the specific case of Ukraine, this has translated into a more qualitative than quantitative fragility. In the face of as many as 40,000 registered non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in 2003 – of which only 10 percent were admittedly working, Ukrainian civil society has been described as "weak, atomized and often isolated from a larger society."[6] Significantly,

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[4] See, for example, Philippe C. Schmitter, "Some Propositions about Civil Society and the Consolidation of Democracy", in *IHS Reihe Politikwissenschaft*, No. 1993/10 (September 1993), http://www.ihs.ac.at/publications/pol/pw_10.pdf.

[5] Marc Morjé Howard, *The Weakness of Civil Society in Post-Communist Europe*, Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2003.

[6] Victor Stepanenko, "Civil Society in Post-Soviet Ukraine: Civic Ethos in the framework of

according to public surveys conducted between 1994 and 2004, more than 80 percent of the population would not engage in any public activity.[7]

Because of its weak societal basis, its closeness to governmental structures, its irrelevance to policy-making, as well as the foreign source of most of its funding, this civil society has been described in terms of its elitist character, a Ukrainian "NGO-cracy" that bears its share of responsibility in the unfinished process of post-Soviet transition to democracy.[8] "When citizens are not at the heart of these organizations, they become passive consumers of democracy development aid instead of the driving force behind democratic change."[9] With a consistently low degree not only of citizens' participation, but also of donations from the population, NGOs have had the tendency to perceive themselves as the *avant-garde* in the transition process. They have claimed a better understanding of things than the average citizen and have disregarded the importance of mass movements as drivers of social change.[10]

In comparison to other post-Soviet countries, however, Ukraine has a rich history of social mobilisation and protest activism. From the students' hunger strikes and the civic movements in the late Soviet years, to the "Ukraine without Kuchma" campaign in 2001, to the Orange Revolution in 2004, to the Tax Maidan protests in 2010, Ukrainians have regularly taken to the streets to express their discontent towards the political establishment and to call for rights they accused the elites of violating. In line with the theoretical dichotomy of strong societies and weak states,[11] some scholars have ascribed this recurrence of social protest to Ukrainians' historic preference for loose communities of individuals to consolidated state structures. The concept of *hromada* (society) would be, according to this view, ingrained in the country's political culture.[12]

Reconciling the paradox of a weakly structured, socially isolated civil society against the background of periodic episodes of social mobilisation has proved particularly relevant in the aftermath of the Orange Revolution.[13] Though occasionally hailed

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Corrupted Sociality?", in *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (November 2006), p. 583.

[7] Ibid., p. 577.

[8] Orysia Lutsevych, "How to Finish a Revolution: Civil Society and Democracy in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine", in *Chatham House Briefing Papers*, 2013/01 (January 2013), http://www.chathamhouse.org/node/6710.

[9] Ibid., p. 5.

[10] Ibid., p. 4-6.

[11] Joel S. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States. State-Society Relations and States Capabilities in the Third World*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1988.

[12] Nadia Diuk, "The Triumph of Civil Society", in Anders Åslund and Michael McFaul (eds.), *Revolution in Orange. The Origins of Ukraine's Democratic Breakthrough*, Washington, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006, p. 69-83.

[13] A useful systematisation of academic research on the Orange Revolution can be found in Olga Onuch, *Mapping Mass Mobilizations. Understanding Revolutionary Moments in Argentina (2001) and Ukraine (2004)*, Basingstoke and New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

as a "triumph of civil society," the Orange Revolution has, in fact, produced only partial and short-termed transformations in its fabric and modus operandi. Born out of frustration towards the immaturity of the existing civic organisations and their inability to convey societal discontent to state institutions and to influence decision-making, the Orange Revolution mobilised society by forcing citizens to develop an opinion and take sides in the widening confrontation between the two presidential candidates, Viktor Yushchenko and Viktor Yanukovich.[14]

From this point of view, society – "mobilised masses," in the terminology employed in the study of the fourth wave of democratic transitions[15] – played a key role in the Orange Revolution, but only in terms of "resource" to be deployed in intra-elite power-struggles, rather than as a real participant in the contention. A protracted and dramatic example of elite confrontation, the revolution amounted, according to this interpretation, to nothing more than a balancing act between the soft power exercised by the opposition through their ability to mobilise society, among other things, and the hard power held by the incumbent through control over security and law enforcement agencies.[16]

Past the revolutionary phase and following the inception of the Yushchenko presidency, however, society retreated from the political arena; spontaneous networks gradually dissolved and structured non-governmental organisations returned to their splendid isolation. The substantial change in the citizens' "core belief system" that would have allowed society to become a "transformational actor," a "change agent" had, apparently, failed to materialise.[17] As a result of the NGOs' complacency and the ruling elites' paternalism, society returned, by and large, to a dimension of policy-irrelevance.[18] Significantly, as late as 2011, only 18 percent of Ukrainians would claim they had an impact on the policy-making process at the national level.[19]

Within the framework of the rich and varied repertoire of Ukrainian civil protests, Euromaidan has introduced a qualitative change in social participation. It has widened and redefined the concept of civil society and has established a causal link between the latter and social mobilisation. Self-organisation aided by social networks, neighbourhood initiatives and online sites, has emerged as the

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[14] Nadia Diuk, "The Triumph of Civil Society", cit., p. 78-79.

[15] Michael McFaul, "The Fourth Wave of Democracy and Dictatorship: Noncooperative Transitions in the Postcommunist World", in *World Politics*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (January 2002), p. 212-244.

[16] Serhiy Kudelia, "Betting on Society: Power Perceptions and Elite Games in Ukraine", in Paul D'Anieri (ed.), *Orange Revolution and Aftermath. Mobilization, Apathy, and the State in Ukraine*, Washington, Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010, p. 160-189.

[17] Serhiy Kudelia, "Society as an Actor in Post-Soviet State Building", in *Demokratizatsiya*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Spring 2012), p. 149-156, https://www.gwu.edu/~ieresgwu/assets/docs/demokratizatsiya%20 archive/GWASHU_DEMO_20_2/572RMJ77R5381N68/572RMJ77R5381N68.pdf.

[18] Orysia Lutsevych, "How to Finish a Revolution...", cit., p. 10.

[19] Ibid.

distinguishing feature of the 2013-2014 movement. A crowd of middle-aged, middle-class, linguistically cosmopolitan individuals joined the protests, both in the capital and in the regions, mainly on an individual basis, after getting messages through personal networks.[20] Relatively lacking in political membership and more concerned about violent state repression than their country's association with the European Union, protesters' participation was motivated by their desire to shape a better future for Ukraine.[21]

Based on bottom-up civil activism, volunteering and crowdfunding, Euromaidan has created new modes of political participation and has paved the way to a potentially long-lasting "civic awakening."[22] Scarred by the intra-elite bickering and their substantial failure to introduce reforms in the aftermath of the Orange Revolution, Maidan activists have been adamant that if in 2004 the country had missed an historic opportunity, the same should not happen again in 2014. They have positioned themselves as the custodians of the revolution and have sent unequivocal messages to the newly elected authorities, demanding an increased participation and an effective say in policy-making processes. By promoting an agenda of public oversight of state institutions and pressure for transparency, accountability and reform, demonstrators have thus broken the post-Soviet tradition of societal apathy, low social capital and irremediable mistrust of all public institutions.[23]

The academic literature on historical institutionalism contends that path dependency can be broken and significant institutional change introduced only during "critical junctures." In other words, "moments of exogenous shock" would be needed to "terminate the old path and allow change agents to establish a new one."[24] The violent repressions in Maidan and the war in the Donbas, unprecedented tragedies in the generally peaceful history of post-Soviet Ukraine, have created a critical juncture, *de facto* establishing channels for society's increased participation

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[20] According to a survey conducted by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation, only 6 percent of protestors had been organised by civic groups in December 2013; this percentage rose to 13 percent in February 2014. Conversely 92 percent of demonstrators came to demonstrations on their own in December; this percentage decreased to 84 in February. See Democratic Initiatives Foundation, *Maidan-December and Maidan-February: what has changed?*, February 2014, http://dif.org.ua/en/events/vid-ma-zminilosj.htm.

[21] Olga Onuch, "Maidans Past and Present: Comparing the Orange Revolution and the EuroMaidan", in David R. Marples and Frederick V. Mills (eds.), *Ukraine's Euromaidan. Analyses of a Civil Revolution*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2015, p. 27-56; Olga Onuch, "The Maidan and Beyond: Who were the protesters?", in *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (July 2014), p. 44-51.

[22] Kateryna Pishchikova and Olesia Ogryzko, "Civic Awakening: The impact of Euromaidan on Ukraine's politics and society", in *FRIDE Working Papers*, No. 124 (July 2014), http://fride.org/publication/1209/.

[23] Ibid., p. 6.

[24] Aurel Croissant et al., "Theorizing Civilian Control of the Military in Emerging Democracies: Agency, Structure and Institutional Change", in *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (April 2011), p. 84. On critical junctures see, Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena. Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1991.

and creating the potential for more open, effective and democratic forms of governance.

2. Self-defence and volunteer battalions

The "general corruption" they had experienced under the Yanukovich regime and the aspiration to be "governed by the rule of law" were, in the words of the Ukrainian writer Andrey Kurkov, the core reasons behind the Maidan activists' engagement.[25] Significantly, the movement branded itself the "Revolution of Dignity." Imaginative corruption schemes and an institutionalised system of bribery – a parallel *vertikal vlasti* (power structure) replicating codes and hierarchies typical of the criminal world – had depleted the country's resources for years, stifled small and medium business and undermined the citizens' trust in their political institutions and law enforcement agencies.

Yet, it was the police brutality and the consistent abuse of authority exercised against the demonstrators that prompted a more militant attitude and engendered the feeling that the people had to protect themselves against the state. "There are situations where armed resistance must be permitted," said Cardinal Lyubomyr Huzar of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in January 2014. "When the government resorts to excessive violence, the people have the right to defend themselves with the use of force. Everyone has the right to defend himself. There is no need to write that in the constitution: it is the law of nature. I have the right to defend myself and my loved ones, as does every human being."[26]

Attempting to clean up the tent village, kidnapping and beating up activists, trying to silence the opposition, the police tactics proved ruthless. Together with the Berkut, the Alpha Group and other security structures, "organised bands of militant hooligans," the *titushki*, were also enrolled on the side of the militia.[27] Public surveys reveal that, as police brutality grew, as attacks against protesters, journalists and human rights defenders became more sustained and the movement started counting its first victims, parts of it became increasingly militant. Demonstrators' support for the idea of creating "armed formations independent from governmental structures" grew from 15 percent in early December to 50 percent in February 2014.[28]

In late November 2013, the volunteer sector started setting up organisations entrusted, whether violently or non-violently, with the movement's collective security and determined to fight the Yanukovich regime by force. Inspired to the

[25] Andrey Kurkov, *Ukraine Diaries. Dispatches from Kiev*, London, Harvil Secker, 2014.
[26] Quoted in Ibid., p. 79.
[27] On the titushki, see Andrew Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis. What It Means for the West*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2014, p. 78-79.
[28] Democratic Initiatives Foundation, *Maidan-December and Maidan-February: what has changed?*, cit.

Cossack tradition, these organisations were divided in *sotnya* (hundreds). They generally lacked central coordination and had a horizontal structure. According to Ministry of Interior data quoted by Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Nils Muižnieks, as of 1 January 2014, 3,713 civic formations had been established in the country with the purpose of protecting public order. They comprised more than 76,000 members.[29]

Pravy Sektor (Right Sector), born as a loose collection of extra-parliamentary groups ranging from an ultra-conservative to a partly neo-Nazi fringe, counted about 300 militants when it was established in late November 2013 and several thousand at its peak. It claimed to form the core of the violent resistance to the regime.[30] The group "AutoMaidan," constituted of several hundred car owners, ferried volunteers and supplies to Maidan, but also patrolled the streets against the *titushki*. Established during the 2010 Tax Maidan movement, *Spil'na Sprava* (Common Cause) was composed of mainly Kyiv-based small- and medium-sized business owners. According to one of its leaders, it could count on two groups of individuals with military experience who were authorised to use arms if the government attacked first.[31] Composed of 39 *sotnya*, for a total of 12,000 individuals, *Samooborona Maidana* (Maidan's Self-Defence) was established in February 2014 as an "all-Ukrainian, non-partisan social movement aimed at defending Ukraine's sovereignty and unity, guarding its European choice, protecting the rights and liberties of its citizens." The organisation, headed by Andriy Parubiy, developed a solid regional network.[32]

In striking contrast with previous protest movements in Ukraine, Euromaidan acquired rapidly a regional dimension. As in 2004, demonstrators travelled to Kyiv, set up their tents and displayed their regional insignia on Maidan, loudly proclaiming their local identity. This time, however, tent villages, the local maidans, were also erected in the central squares of towns and cities across the country. Frustrated by the deadlock of bad-faith negotiations, enraged by the approval of the "dictatorship laws," shocked by the violence of the battle on Hrushevsky Street, between 24 and 29 January 2014, demonstrators seized regional administrations and buildings of the local law enforcement agencies. In Lutsk the police station was besieged and police agents were forced to undergo the "corridor of shame." In Rivne and in Ivano-Frankivsk the heads of the police announced they would not

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[29] Council of Europe, *Report by Nils Muižnieks, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, following his visit to Ukraine, from 4 to 10 February 2014* (CommDH(2014)7), 4 March 2014, par. 37, https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=2166645.

[30] Anton Shekhovtsov and Andreas Umland, "The Maidan and Beyond: Ukraine's Radical Right", in *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (July 2014), p. 58-63.

[31] Oleksander Danylyuk, quoted in Andrew Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis. What It Means for the West*, cit., p. 89.

[32] "Kolichestvo boytsov Samooborona dostiglo 12 tysyach chelovek - Parubiy" [The number of Self-Defence fighters is now 12 thousand - Porubiy], in *Ukrainska Pravda*, 7 February 2014, http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/02/7/7013130.

execute "criminal orders" issued by the Yanukovich regime.[33] In Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhya, Poltava and Sumy, demonstrations were repressed by both police and *titushki*.

In the immediate aftermath of Yanukovich's flight on 22 February 2014, police units and special forces disappeared from the streets. What many Ukrainians had viewed as a police state crumbled almost overnight. "On our way out of Kyiv," wrote Andrey Kurkov in his diary on 1 March, "the central traffic police station was empty: not one policeman, not one car, the windows dark." "Even if none of my fellow citizens likes the police very much, due to their corruption," he added on 3 March, "their absence provokes the feeling that the country is lawless."[34] Fearing retribution, a number of police and security forces officers absconded, left their jobs or shifted sides. In the Donbas region alone, between 25 and 30 percent defected to the separatists, according to a Ministry of Interior estimate.[35] In Odessa, half of the police were rumoured to be still on Yanukovich's payroll at the time of the 2 May clashes.[36]

In the capital and in the regions alike, unarmed citizens' networks and self-defence organisations stepped in to patrol the streets. When, after this hiatus, the police resumed its functions, volunteers started shadowing them to provide the *narodnyi kontrol* (the people's control) that many reputed essential to restore the public's trust in the law enforcement agencies. In line with the 2000 law, *On Citizens' Participation in the Defence of Public Order and State Border*,[37] volunteers took part in the protection of state and regional property, conducted occasional special operations with the police against arms and drugs trafficking and intervened in cases of poaching. Especially in the southeastern regions neighbouring the Donbas, volunteers were invited to join the police in the manning of roadblocks.

When the security situation in the East started deteriorating and full-scale hostilities broke out, both the police and the army proved unable to address the crisis. Akin to European gendarmeries and placed under the authority of the Ministry of Interior, the National Guard was established in March 2014 to partially fill in for them. Volunteers were encouraged to join the newly established corps,[38] while

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[33] Author's interviews, Lutsk, Rivne, Ivano-Frankivsk, May-June 2014.

[34] Andrey Kurkov, *Ukraine Diaries. Dispatches from Kiev*, cit., p. 138 and 143.

[35] Author's interview, Kyiv, 3 February 2015. Aleksandr Khodakovsky, head of the Ukrainian Security Services in Donetsk, for example, became the commander of the notorious pro-Russian Vostok battalion. See Catherine A. Fitzpatrick, "Russian-Backed Separatist Leader Khodakovsky Changes His Story to Reuters - or Does He?", in *The Interpreter*, 24 July 2014, http://www.interpretermag.com/?p=16556.

[36] Author's interview, Odessa, 6 June 2014.

[37] Law No. 1835-III of 22 June 2000: *Zakon Ukrayni pro uchast' gromodyan v okhoroni gromadskogo poryadku i derzhavnogo kordonu* [On Citizens' Participation in the Protection of Public Order and State Border], available in the Bulletin of the Ukrainian Parliament, No. 40 (2000), p. 338, http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/anot/en/1835-14. See also Council of Europe, Report by Nils Muižnieks..., cit., par. 36.

[38] "Natsionalnaya Gvardiya Ukrainy priglashaet dobrovoltsev" [The National Guard of Ukraine calls for volunteers], in *NBNews*, 16 March 2014, http://nbnews.com.ua/ru/news/115766.

legislation was issued ordering the disarmament of all illegal armed formations.[39] The government estimated that about 20,000 volunteers, including Maidan's Self-Defence activists, would enter the National Guard.[40] Three volunteer and reservists battalions were in fact established and later transformed into special purpose regiments. Volunteers were also urged to join the territorial defence battalions (under the authority of the Ministry of Defence) and the special police battalions (under the authority of the Ministry of Interior) that were being set up at a regional level.[41] By the summer, the Ministry of Defence had established 32 territorial battalions; of these, 10 were volunteers'. Thirty-three battalions were set up as special police units and tasked to maintain law and order in the regions.[42] By spring 2015, all major volunteer formations, with the exception of DUK *Pravy Sektor*, were dissolved, incorporated into the army, the police or the National Guard and subject to the same chain of command of all other Ukrainian forces fighting in the Donbas.[43]

Membership in the volunteer formations has proved socially, linguistically, nationally and politically varied.[44] Yet, what brought the volunteers together was

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[39] Decree No. 1174-VII of 1 April 2014: *Pro nehayne rozzbroyennya nezakonnykh zbroynykh formuvan' v Ukrayini* [On the Immediate Disarmament of Illegal Armed Formations in Ukraine], available in the Bulletin of the Ukrainian Parliament, No. 18-19 (2014), p. 14, http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1174-18.

[40] "V sostav Natsionalnoi Gvardi voidut okolo 20 tysyach dobrovoltsev - Yarema" [About 20 thousand volunteers will get into the National Guard - Yarema], in *Korrespondent.net*, 11 March 2014, http://korrespondent.net/ukraine/politics/3317886.

[41] "V 19 oblastyakh Ukrainy sformirovany dobrovolcheskie otryady - Rechinskiy" [In 19 regions of Ukraine volunteer units are being established - Rechinskiy], in *Censor.net*, 15 April 2014, http://censor.net.ua/n281231.

[42] "Avakov: Seichas' deystvuyut 34 dobrovolcheskikh battal'yona. Odin rasformirovan v svyazy s neobratimymi protsessami" [Avakov: 34 volunteer battalions are currently working. One was dissolved in connection with irreversible processes], in *Censor.net*, 26 September 2014, http://censor.net.ua/n304387.

[43] Pravy Sektor's reluctance to disband, their fragmentation and the tendency of some of its splinter groups to become locally involved in criminal activities or take justice in their own hands, as the 10 July 2015 shooting incident in the town of Mukacheve has shown, is a cause of concern. See David Stern, "Ukraine clashes raise questions over Right Sector militia", in *BBC News*, 15 July 2015, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-33523869.

[44] Despite the widespread attention that elements of the far right have attracted in the Western media, the claim that they constitute the overwhelming majority of fighters in the volunteer battalions is not substantiated by experts. Author's interview, Kyiv, 29 June 2015. More than their political orientation, what concerns Ukrainian observers is volunteer battalions' connections with oligarchs and their tendency to become involved in intra-elite power struggles, as demonstrated by the recent deployment by oligarch Ihor Kolomoisky of armed men, probably Dnipro 1 battalion veterans, outside the offices of the company Ukrnafta. See Volodymyr Petrov, "How Kolomoisky's private army barricaded Ukrnafta headquarters in Kyiv", in *Kyivpost*, 23 March 2015, http://www.kyivpost.com/multimedia/photo/ukrnafta-building-is-barricated-with-unknown-armed-men-384177.html. The display of force by other far-right veterans, like the march in Kyiv on 3 July 2015, are interpreted as a "public show" aimed at attracting oligarchs' interest towards manpower available to be hired for the "anti-establishment, populist" fight the oligarchs are engaging in against the current Ukrainian authorities. See Anton Shekhovtsov, "On the far-right march yesterday in Kyiv…", in *Facebook*, 4 July 2015, https://www.facebook.com/anton.shekhovtsov/posts/10204780492727955.

a strong motivation and patriotic commitment to fighting what they saw as their country's first war of independence.[45] Underequipped and lightly armed, volunteer battalions held the front through spring and summer, thus giving the Ukrainian security forces the time to regroup and organise a defence. Many in Kyiv admit that had it not been for the volunteers, the line of demarcation with the separatists would run today along the Dnipro River.[46]

3. Procurement and support networks

In July 2014, the Ukrainian weekly *Focus* published a detailed assessment of the costs to equip a Ukrainian fighter taking part in the Anti-Terrorist Operation. The price for a helmet would range from UAH 1,250 (about 20 euros at the exchange rate of the time) to UAH 4,800 (77 euros); a bullet-proof jacket from UAH 2,100 (34 euros) to UAH 22,800 (367 euros); a GPS from UAH 749 (12 euros) to UAH 5,700 (91 euros). All in all, it was estimated that providing a soldier with the equipment required, excluding weapons, would cost between 571 and 3,600 euros.[47] These figures were not idle talk, but they were concrete indications to a general public that, since the beginning of the ATO in early April, had become expert in the evaluation and procurement of military equipment.

According to Ministry of Defence data, as of early 2014, only 4 percent of the Ukrainian military was provided with life-saving items, like helmets and bulletproof jackets.[48] With the beginning of combat operations in the east, a large number of both regular soldiers and volunteers would be deployed without basic equipment or vital protection. Under the heat of summer the army would be unable to supply bottled water. Blankets and medicines were missing. Reports circulated of military units left without food provisions. A volunteer said that in his front-line unit three guns had to be shared among five fighters.[49] According to another, the only bulletproof jackets that were delivered were armoured to level 1, 2 or maximum 3, when the intensity of the fighting and the type of ammunition utilised would have required at least a level 4.[50]

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[45] For more on the volunteer battalions see Rosaria Puglisi, "Heroes or Villains? Volunteer Battalions in Post-Maidan Ukraine", in *IAI Working Papers*, No. 15|08 (March 2015), http://www.iai.it/en/node/3820.

[46] "Esli by ne dobrovol'cheskie batal'yoni, razmezhevanie s rossiskimi terroristami prokhodilo by gde-to po Denpru - Anton Gerashenko" [If it had not been for the volunteer battalions, the line of demarcation with Russian terrorists would be somewhere on the Dnipro River - Anton Gerashenko], in *Censor.net*, 9 November 2014, http://censor.net.ua/n311039.

[47] "Skolko stoit sobrat' na voinu boitsa ATO" [How much it costs to equip an ATO fighter], in *Fokus*, 17 July 2014, http://focus.ua/society/310532.

[48] Evgeniya Reznichenko, "Narodnaya Armiya: Kak Ukraintsy pomogayut voennym" [A people's army: how Ukrainians help the military], in *Prostobank.ua*, 6 August 2014, http://www.prostobank.ua/finansovyy_gid/byudzhet/stati/narodnaya_armiya_kak_ukraintsy_pomogayut_voennym.

[49] Author's interview, Kyiv, 31 January 2015.

[50] Dmytri Sinyak, "Kak maidanovtsy srazhayutsya s separatistami i na ch'ei storne okazalos' Minoborony" [How Maidan activists are fighting against separatists and on whose side is the

Society mobilised rapidly and extensively. Responding to an appeal of the Armed Forces, already by the end of March 2014, donors deposited around UAH 70 million (about 5.4 million euros at the exchange rate of the time) on a "Support the Ukrainian Army" bank account.[51] From 21 May to 16 June, the State Saving Bank of Ukraine sold war bonds for more than UAH 16.8 million (about 1 million euros).[52] Fundraising for the provision of fighters became a major concern of grassroots networks and civil society organisations. Individuals would contribute as they could. Some would donate as little as even a few hryvnas. Others would bring homemade food to collection centres for the army. Volunteer *sotnya* (the hundred-strong units reminiscent of the Cossack military tradition) emerged spontaneously to collect, produce and distribute goods to satisfy the fighters' primary needs. The sewing *sotnya* in Dnipropetrovs'k would craft, for example, basic clothing from donated fabric samples.[53] The pharmacy *sotnya* would buy medicines and assemble first aid kits for soldiers.[54]

Crowdfunding sites started operating to acquire non-lethal military equipment, like drones or night visors.[55] A website proposed to adopt and equip a full battalion, thus turning it into "the first people's marine battalion."[56] They raised around 4 million euros in six months, with individual donations averaging around 20 euros.[57] Commanders would advertise their unit's wish list on their Facebook pages – ranging from metal protection plates for their vehicles to cigarettes – and open collection campaigns.[58] Other commanders would travel as far as Canada or the United States to raise awareness on the logistical situation of the army and gather financial support, mainly from the Ukrainian diaspora.[59] The scale of volunteers' involvement in the procurement of military equipment has become so large that a fair was organised in January 2015 in Kyiv, by volunteers for volunteers, where

Ministry of Defence], in *Focus*, 10 July 2014, http://focus.ua/society/309870.

[51] "V poddershku Ukrainskoi army Ukraintsy perechislili 70 mn grn" [In support of the army, the Ukrainians have transferred 70 million hryvna], in *Zerkalo Nedeli*, 1 April 2014, http://zn.ua/UKRAINE/v-podderzhku-ukrainskoy-armii-ukraincy-perechislili-70-mln-grn-142359_.html.

[52] Kateryna Pishchikova and Olesia Ogryzko, "Civic Awakening", cit., p. 8-9.

[53] Youtube video *Ukraina. Narodnaya Armiya. Dnipropetrovsk* [Ukraine. People's Army. Dnipropetrovsk], http://youtu.be/iaWhFAqHVsU.

[54] Facebook page Aptechnaya Sotnya [Pharmacy unit], https://www.facebook.com/pages/АРМИЯ-SOS-Аптечная-Сотня/290968201083993.

[55] Oksana Grytsenko and Luke Harding, "Ukrainians crowdfund to raise cash for 'people's drone' to help outgunned army", in *The Guardian*, 29 June 2014, http://gu.com/p/3qgjq/stw.

[56] Denis Kornishev, "Ukraintsy reshili sozdats' pervyi narodny desantnyi batal'on" [The Ukrainians have decided to create the first people's marine battalion], in *Komsomol'skaya Pravda v Ukraine*, 28 March 2014, http://kp.ua/politics/445756.

[57] Author's interview, Kyiv, 13 July 2015.

[58] See, for example, Batalyon Spetsianloho Priznacheniya NGU Donbas [Specially Appointed National Guard battalion Donbas], "Potrebnosti batal'yona Donbasa na 9.02.2015" [Donbas Batallion's needs on 9.02.2015], in *Facebook*, 8 February 2015, https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=8594706541145542&id=849793758415565.

[59] Michael Weiss, "Crowdfunding the war in Ukraine - From Manhattan", in *Foreign Policy*, 4 February 2015, http://t.co/PSm2u8Ao6Q.

anything, apart from weapons, could be tried and acquired, from camouflage uniforms to drones, from resuscitation kits to sophisticated optical material.

At enormous personal risks, volunteers would also organise themselves to provide crucial assistance to the frontlines. An IT battalion was established operating a fleet of short- and long-range drones to conduct aerial reconnaissance for artillery units.[60] Teams of physicians and paramedics formed to offer first aid assistance to combatants outside the disorderly and inefficient military structure.[61] When rumours started circulating that volunteer-collected goods would not reach soldiers at the front, but would disappear, probably to be sold in shady smuggling deals, volunteer groups took upon themselves the physical transportation of these items to the ATO area. They would photo-document on social media their delivery to individual battalions.[62]

With the advancing of the military operations, activism in support of the army has become more structured and organised. Spontaneous mobilisation and almost accidental expertise have crystallised in a number of organisations, like *Kryl'ya Feniksa* (the Phoenix Wings), *Armiya SOS* (SOS Army), *Narodnyi Proekt* (People's Project), *Vernis' zhivym* (Come back alive). By skilfully employing social media to reverberate the military's needs and to drum up their support activities, they have kept up and channelled society's collective engagement, while bringing a much-needed degree of effectiveness and transparency to the fields of military logistics and procurement. They have in a way professionalised voluntarism and forced state institutions to a measure of accountability.[63]

Part of a common institutional culture of corruption that since independence has produced "phantasmagorical manifestations of human greed and irresponsibility" and has drained state resources at large, the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces have missed more than one opportunity to maintain, reform and develop the army in peacetime.[64] Disposal of redundant arms and procurement of other military equipment have been traditionally rated as "the most non-transparent

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[60] Leonid Ragozin, "Ukraine's IT Brigade supports the troops", in *Bloomberg Business Week*, 20 November 2014, http://buswk.co/1BRCHhl.

[61] Olena Maksimenko, "Yak voyuet batal'on medikiv" [How the paramedics' battalion fights], in *Ukrainska Pravda Zhittya*, 2 April 2015, http://life.pravda.com.ua/volunteers/2015/04/2/191923.

[62] Peter Shuklinov, "Ya govoril, chto otchetov ne budet" [I said there would be no reports], in *Facebook*, 24 January 2015, retrieved on https://www.facebook.com/Zlobyn/posts/769099116505711.

[63] More details on these and other organisations can be found on their websites: Phoenix Wings, http://wings-phoenix.org.ua/en/news/results-foundation-joint-project; Army SOS, http://armysos.com.ua/en; People's Project, http://www.peoplesproject.com/en; *Povernis' zhivym*, support to the army, http://www.savelife.in.ua; Bulava, http://bulava.org.ua/en.

[64] Leonid Polyakov, "Corruption Obstructs Reforms in the Ukrainian Armed Forces", in Joseph L. Dserdzinski and Valeriya Klymenko (eds.), *Almanac on Security Governance in Ukraine 2012*, Geneva and Kyiv, DCAF and Razumkov Center, 2013, p. 82, http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/Almanac-on-Security-Sector-Governance-in-Ukraine-2012.

sectors."[65] Their mismanagement has obviously hindered Ukraine's defence capabilities and set in place corruption habits that, even at the most difficult of times, have proved hard to kill.[66]

"Problems in the procurement of equipment, weapons and military assets for the Ukrainian army have been discussed enough in the past [...]. There is no doubt that these are systemic problems. Having penetrated all levels of all military structures, corruption and lack of professionalism have created a fertile environment for the dealers who are roaming around the flows of budget resources allocated for the country's defence. Yet today there is a more substantial argument. Behind the words 'combat-capability' and 'combat-readiness' of the Ukrainian army stands the life of our soldiers," wrote a commentator in June 2015.[67]

Corruption scandals, episodes of gross bureaucratic mishandling, incompetence and negligence, regularly reported by the Ukrainian media, have only reinforced the general public's conviction that increased transparency in the allocation of resources and a systematic people's control would contain the waste of precious little budget resources and make more effective the production and delivery of provisions for the army. In an attempt to bridge the gap between the state and society and to make use of the skills developed within the volunteer sector, as of early January 2015 a small team of volunteers, selected through open competition and directly reporting to the President and the Minister of Defence, has been working in the Ministry: a "virus within the Ministry of Defence," as a newspaper has defined it.[68] The brainchild of another volunteer-turned presidential adviser, Yuriy Biryukov, the team is mandated to "break the system from within" in order to make it reformable from without.[69] "In the ministry I have seen precise and absolutely legal corruption schemes," remarked one of the team members. "They are 'programmed' within the system."[70]

Without any illusion that decades-long practices can be eradicated overnight, the team has been working to assess and transform procurement procedures, bringing in rules and practices generally employed in the business world. They have introduced electronic tender procedures and curtailed paperwork. They have discontinued state contracts that appeared patently lossmaking. They have started advertising broadly the launching of new tenders, thus widening the number of

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[65] Ibid., p. 84.

[66] For more details on the Ukrainian army after Maidan see Rosaria Puglisi, "General Zhukov and the Cyborgs: A Clash of Civilisations within the Ukrainian Armed Forces", in *IAI Working Papers*, No. 15|17 (May 2015), http://www.iai.it/en/node/4221.

[67] Dmitryi Mendeleev, "Ochered v spinu" [A queue behind], in *Zerkalo Nedeli*, 26 June 2015, http://gazeta.zn.ua/internal/ochered-v-spinu-_.html.

[68] Anastasiya Ringis and Galina Tytysh, "'Virus' v Ministerstve Oborony" [A 'virus' in the Ministry of Defence], in *Ukrainska Pravda*, 28 January 2014, http://www.pravda.com.ua/cdn/cd1/2015year/volunteer.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

state contractors beyond the circle of traditionally well-connected businesses. They have reported through both traditional and social media the awarding of contracts and the finalisation of projects. They have voiced their frustration for delays, duplications and contradictions within the system that might cost soldiers' lives or make their service impossible.

"At the moment the work system in the Ministry is based on consensus-building, not on real results," commented Nelly Stelmakh, responsible in the team for commercial tender procedures. "Officials are afraid of responsibilities, they are afraid to make decisions, they write notes from one department to the other. [...] They fear us, or at least they show they do, but we have the feeling that volunteers are performing a powerful societal control, despite the fact that we are just a few."[71]

4. Monitoring and democratic oversight

Since independence, democratic oversight of the armed forces and the security sector in general has been perfunctory. The legacy of a Soviet tradition – in which the military and the law enforcement agencies were firmly subordinated to the Communist Party and formed an indivisible elite with the political powers – meant that relations between the political and the security organisations have been, even in the post-Soviet period, close-knit. Control has been left mainly to the executive, in the person of the President, as Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces and other military formations, and, on his behalf, to his unelected administration.[72] The Parliament, including its Committee on National Security and Defence, has been marginalised in defence policy and has played a secondary role in exercising formal control on security institutions.[73] Despite provisions to the contrary included in the 2003 Law *On Democratic Civilian Control of State Military Organisation and Law Enforcement Bodies* and in the 2012 *Strategy of National Security*, civil society's involvement in the matter has been limited.[74]

In the general shake-up produced by Euromaidan first, and the war in the Donbas later, and as a result of the altered balance of power between security actors, practices of civilian control – or rather *narodnyi kontrol* (people's control) – have

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[71]   Ibid.

[72]   James Sherr, "Ukraine: Reform in the Context of Flawed Democracy and Geopolitical Anxiety", in Timothy Edmunds, Andrew Cottey and Anthony Forster (eds.), *Civil-Military Relations in Post-Communist Europe. Reviewing the Transition*, London and New York, Routledge, 2006, p. 157-173.

[73]   Natalie Mychajlyszyn, "The Euro-Atlantic Strategic Culture, Democratic Civil-Military Relations and Ukraine", in Natalie Mychajlyszyn and Harald von Riekhoff (eds.), *The Evolution of Civil-military Relations in East-Central Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, Westport, Praeger, 2004, p. 191-210

[74]   Both the texts of the Law on Democratic Civilian Control and of the Strategy can be found in Philipp Fluri, Marcin Koziel and Andrii Yermolaiev (eds.), *The Security Sector Legislation of Ukraine*, Kyiv, Center for Army, Conversion and Disarmament Studies, 2013, p. 87-99 and p. 122-136, http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/The-Security-Sector-Legislation-of-Ukraine2.

been emerging by default. These are scattered, varied, at times informal, often uncoordinated, not always effective and not yet formalised efforts, but amount to important experiments in checks-and-balances. The product of mistrust towards the security structures and civil society's self-organisation in response to unsatisfied needs, these practices fit into a widening worldwide trend towards the consolidation of an extra-institutional control of the security sector.[75] How sustainable they will be in the medium- to long-run and how capable of producing long-lasting results remains to be seen.

Regional civil society advisory councils started emerging with the beginning of the regional maidans and the ejection of the Yanukovich-appointed regional elites. Formally established during President Yanukovich's term in office, these councils were originally conceived as an instrument to demonstrate Ukraine's adherence to international standards on civil society's inclusion in policy-making processes. According to a less benign interpretation, they were an attempt to introduce a form of Russian-style "managed democracy" and resulted in the established of *karmannie* ("pocket", in other words easily controllable) institutions.[76] Whatever the reasons for their creation, civil society councils did not really work. They were, however, resurrected in the early post-Maidan days as a way to co-opt, channel, control or give a real institutional voice to the Jacobin spirit that erupted with the "Revolution of Dignity."

Consolidated third-sector organisations or newly emerged grassroots networks were called to control and validate regional administrations' decisions on security or anti-corruption policies or to shadow the police and other regional security structures. Sometimes law-enforcement agencies would deliberately delegate some support functions to civil society defence structures, which would be, in their view, better placed to perform them.[77] Throughout spring and summer of 2014, the experience of these councils and the degree of effective civil society participation in the administration of political and security affairs have been diverse. At a time when new or recently reinstated regional elites feared for their own survival or, depending on the region's geographical location, felt they had to rally the troops in the face of a possible Russian invasion, regional administrations tried to "employ civil society as a useful shield."[78] In other cases, regional councils of defence, bringing together both law enforcement agencies and security-related civil society organisations, would instead be used as a genuinely democratic instrument; they would operate by consensus and would make binding decisions.[79]

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[75] See, for example, Yagil Levy and Kobi Michael, "Conceptualizing Extra-Institutional Control of the Military: Israel as a Case Study", in *Res Militaris*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Winter-Spring 2011), p. 1-22, http://www.resmilitaris.net/index.php?ID=1013779.

[76] Author's interview, Kherson, 22 May 2014.

[77] Author's interviews, Lutzk, 12 June 2014.

[78] Author's interview, Kherson, 22 May 2014.

[79] Author's interviews, Ivano-Frankivsk, 23-26 June 2014.

With the formal introduction of new procedures for the selection and the appointment of the security agencies leadership, civil society has become involved in both regional and national panels as a way to guarantee the fairness and the merit-based conduct of the processes. The Ministry of Interior Human Resources Committee, for example, included in the spring of 2014, the Head of the Lustration Committee, the Director of the Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group and a reputable journalist.[80] Yet, to this day, only one single appointment, the head of the L'viv police, has taken place following this procedure, with obstructions coming from within the Ministry of Interior, which allegedly saw this practice somehow destabilising.[81]

In line with practices emerged also in other fields, civil society has formally participated in the drafting of legislation related to the fight against corruption or the functioning of security structures. The process around the drafting of the law for the reform of the police, for example, has seen the engagement of civil society organisations and a fierce debate between them and representatives of the Ministry of Interior, reflecting conflicting views on the police and their role within society. The Ministry of Interior Expert Council, a consultative body called to advise also on the reform, has been chaired by a reputable human rights activist. Beyond an initial phase of openness, however, civil society representatives were not invited to review, advise or comment on the text of the law finally approved on 2 July 2015.[82] The Expert Council has not met since the spring.[83] As a way to re-calibrate civil society's presence in the debate, a National Public Platform "Reforming the Ministry of Interior: Transparency and Accountability" was established in early 2015. What sort of interaction it will have with the ministry is still unclear.[84]

In a presidential-parliamentary system, often unbalanced in favour of the executive, the legislature, the Verkhovna Rada, has been traditionally employed to rubber-stamp decisions made by the former. This has been the case also in the field of security and defence. Following the Maidan, as part of an attempt to redress the balance between the two branches of power, the Verkhovna Rada has tried to reposition itself as the real repository of the "Revolution of Dignity." The October 2014 elections have seen the ascendance of a number of civil society activists and Maidan leaders. Motivated, in their words, by the urgency to reform the army and by the desire to bring into policy-making the voice of those who are fighting in the

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[80] "V kadrovuyu kommissiyu MVB voshli glava lustratsionnogo komiteta Sobolev, pravozashchitnik Zakharov i glavred tsensor.net Butusov" [Head of the lustration committee Sobolev, human rights activist Zakharov and Chief Editor of Censor.net Butusov appointed to the human resources committee of the Ministry of Interior], in *Censor.net*, 18 March 2014, http://censor.net.ua/n276426.

[81] Author's interview, Kyiv, 2 July 2015.

[82] "Parliament passes law on creating national police", in *Censor.net*, 2 July 2015, http://en.censor.net.ua/n342361.

[83] Author's interview, Kyiv 30 June 2015.

[84] More information on the Platform can be found on the initiative's website, http://police-reform.org/en.

ATO, a number of volunteer battalion commanders or military officers have also gained a seat in parliament.[85]

Also thanks to the efforts of journalists and civil society activists that have given them public resonance, hearings of the Parliamentary Committee on National Security and Defence have returned to be the *locus* for debate on the conduct of the military operations in the east. Partially reported by the press, because of their confidentiality, hearings took place following both the battles of Ilovaisk and Debal'tseve.[86] Closed committee hearings were called to discuss the Commander-in-Chief's and the Head of the General Staff's responsibility in the operations in the Donbas. Members of the Committee have, however, lamented that as of July 2015, the Chief of the General Staff's has not taken part in any of these hearings.[87]

Through the pages of his publication, *Censor.net*, and through social media, the journalist Yuriy Butusov has often acted as a sort of intermediary between his readers and the committee, collecting questions prior to parliamentary debates and relaying the results of the discussions to the wider public.[88] In relation to the downing of the Ukrainian military plane IL76 in June 2014 and the Ilovaisk defeat in September 2014, Butusov has bravely raised also the extremely controversial question of the military leadership's accountability and of the immunity that subordination to the political power affords them.[89]

Often partisan and vehemently confrontational but definitively pluralistic, post-Maidan media have proved to be a key element in this newly emerged function of extensive societal oversight. Alert and critical, Ukrainian journalists have challenged and undone unconvincing heroes.[90] Unprecedented in the history of

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[85] The Ukrainian legislation foresees the incompatibility between military positions and party membership. Following their election to parliament, both volunteer battalion commanders and military officers have been forced to abandon their positions. Volunteer battalion commanders now occupy a sort of honorary command position in the battalions, while military officers have taken unpaid leave. Author's interview, Kyiv, 26 June 2015. For more details on the commanders' electoral campaign, see "Novye Litsa: radi chego kombaty idut v bol'shuyu politiku" [New faces: why are volunteer battalion commanders going into big politics], in *Ukrainska Pravda*, 20 October 2014, http://life.pravda.com.ua/person/2014/10/24/182635.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Author's interview, Kyiv, 13 July 2015.

[88] See for example, Yuriy Butusov, "Uvazhaemye narodnye deputaty..." [Dear people's deputies...], in *Facebook*, 21 January 2015, https://www.facebook.com/butusov.yuriy/posts/917212898319007; "Uvazhaemye narodnye deputaty!" [Dear people's deputies!], in *Facebook*, 10 February 2015, https://www.facebook.com/butusov.yuriy/posts/927441880629442; and "19 Voprosov k Muzhenko" [19 questions to Muzhenko], in *Facebook*, 23 February 2015, https://www.facebook.com/butusov.yuriy/posts/934305363276427.

[89] Yuriy Butusov, "U generalov net tragediy. Pochemy blokiruyutsa sudy po IL76 I Ilovainsk" [Generals suffer no tragedies. Why court cases on the IL76 and Ilovaisk are blocked], in *Zerkalo Nedeli*, 29 May 2015, http://gazeta.zn.ua/internal/u-generalov-net-tragediy-pochemu-blokiruyutsya-sudy-po-il-76-i-ilovaysku-_.html.

[90] See, for example, the bruising attitude of the journalists who interviewed Donbas battalion Commander Semenchenko for *Ukrainska Pravda* on 23 December 2014: http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/articles/2014/12/23/7053033.

independent Ukraine, the uncovering by investigative journalist of alleged cases of corruption has resulted in the resignation of top law enforcement officials.[91]

Conclusions

Euromaidan and the unexpected eruption of war in the Donbas have induced profound and possibly permanent transformations in the core belief system of individuals, in the dynamics of society, and in the forms of civil society engagement. The large-scale mobilisation and the collective commitment to perform functions, like security and defence, which the state has proved unable to fulfil, seem to have cracked and maybe done away with the post-Soviet tradition of societal apathy. While mistrust in the state institutions is still a fundamental component and even the main motivator of this extraordinary wave of civic activism, Ukrainians seem to have internalised the link between participation, individual responsibility and sustained long-term transformations. Significantly, in a country where levels of trust in the state remain lower than in the volunteer sector at large and where citizens declare to place their confidence first in the volunteers, second in the volunteer battalions, third in the church and fourth in civil society organisations, every second Ukrainian would define himself today as a volunteer.[92]

"In general the war has touched me greatly. I look at everyone now through the lenses of a volunteer. The war will end and everything will go back to its place. I will return to business, will earn money, I will be able to finish the restructuring of my house and to travel again. But certainly I will not forget who I have been and how I have behaved these days. This is too important. Too many masks have been broken," wrote a volunteer summing up the newly-emerged *ethos* of practically half of the Ukrainian population.[93] "We, as civilians came to the war to help our country, to help the army. […] All these years, we have lived only for ourselves; we would buy nice cars, flats, but nobody ever thought about the army. The freedom that we received was given to us somehow easily, peacefully. We did not go through the building of [our] nation," wrote a soldier, who, in civilian life, is an engineer.[94]

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[91] "Ukraine's Top Traffic Cop Resigns Amid Evidence Of Lavish Lifestyle", in *Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty*, 20 May 2015, http://www.rferl.org/content/ukraine-traffic-police-chief-exposed-lavish-lifestyle/27027219.html.

[92] According to a 2014 end of the year survey published by the weekly Zerkalo Nedeli, the volunteer sector is what Ukrainians trust the most, followed by volunteer battalions, the church, the army and civil society organisations. The President, the first of the formal state institutions mentioned in this survey, is ranked sixth. See "Pesnya o Rodine. Slova narodnyye - Narod i vlast" [The song of the Motherland. The words of the people - People and the power], in *Zerkalo Nedeli*, December 2014, http://opros2014.zn.ua/authority.

[93] Vitaliy Deynega, "Moi voyennyye professional'nyye deformatsii…" [My military professional deformation…], in *Facebook*, 24 May 2015, https://www.facebook.com/deynega/posts/1118725211476818:2.

[94] Vika Yasinskaya, "Soldat Evgeniy Kovtun: 'Idti po vzletke – eto 99 is 100 – smert', no ya ponimal, chto pogibnu s oruzhem v rukakh, I v plen menay ne vozmut" [Soldier Evgeniy Kovnut: To cross the airport was 99% death, but I understood that I would die with a weapon in my hand and I would

While individual engagement remains high, despite the fatigue of a mobilisation that started in November 2013, by and large, volunteers seem able to project their work forward and to frame it within the wider context of a country that realises it has to reform to survive. "I am not here to carry *kefir* and hamburgers around in the hospital," said another volunteer. "I want real changes in the country."[95] Volunteers are not dreaming of permanently parallel structures to replace an inefficient state; they want the state to play its leadership role in the process of structural transformations.[96] They understand the difference between volunteerism and professionalism.[97] Yet they know that, in order to become a modern and functional state, Ukraine needs to keep a genuine dialectic between the state institutions and society. "I think that even in our chaotic civil society, the state is ready to receive signals, as far as the administration is concerned, and to react to problems, on the conditions that those signals are sufficiently strong. The task of society is to formulate correct and systematic signals. Without being scared," wrote journalist Yuriy Butusov.[98]

Scholars of democratic transitions have drawn a distinction between "electoral democracy," based on the assumption that free, fair and democratic elections constitute a democracy, and "liberal democracy," based on "human empowerment" and participatory mechanisms that allow citizens to express their preferences and impact deeply on policy-making. A democracy becomes "effective" when it succeeds in establishing a "developed social infrastructure, which includes not only economic resources, but also widespread participatory habits and an emphasis on autonomy among the public."[99] Should societal participation remain high and forms of civic interaction become institutionalised beyond the emergency of this post-revolutionary phase, Ukraine will have made the shift from an electoral to a liberal democracy.

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not be captured], in *Censor.net*, 5 April 2015, http://censor.net.ua/n330574.

[95] Anastasiya Bereza, "Volontyor Irina Soloshenko: 'Ya ne nosilshchik kefira I kotlet po gospitalyu. Ya khochu real'nikh izmeneniy v strane", [Volunteer Irina Soloshenko: I am not here to carry kefir and hamburgers around the hospital. I want real changes in the country], in *Censor.net*, 31 May 2015, http://censor.net.ua/n338291.

[96] "Vlast' tol'ko i mechtaet, chtoby volontery volonterili do pensi- Konstantin Zinkevich" [The authorities are dreaming [if they think] that volunteers will do volunteer work till retirement], in *Censor.net*, 26 May 2015, http://censor.net.ua/n337562.

[97] Yuriy Butusov, "10 pravil ukrainskikh reform" [10 rules of Urkainian reforms], in *Facebook*, 17 May 2015, https://www.facebook.com/butusov.yuriy/posts/982349801805316.

[98] Yuriy Butusov, "V rukovostve VSU nachalo menyats' otnoshenii mezhdu voennosluzhashchimi i rukovodstvom" [In the leadership of the Ukrainian armed forces they have started changing the relations between the soldiers and the leaders], in *Facebook*, 1 June 2015, https://www.facebook.com/butusov.yuriy/posts/989816147725348.

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