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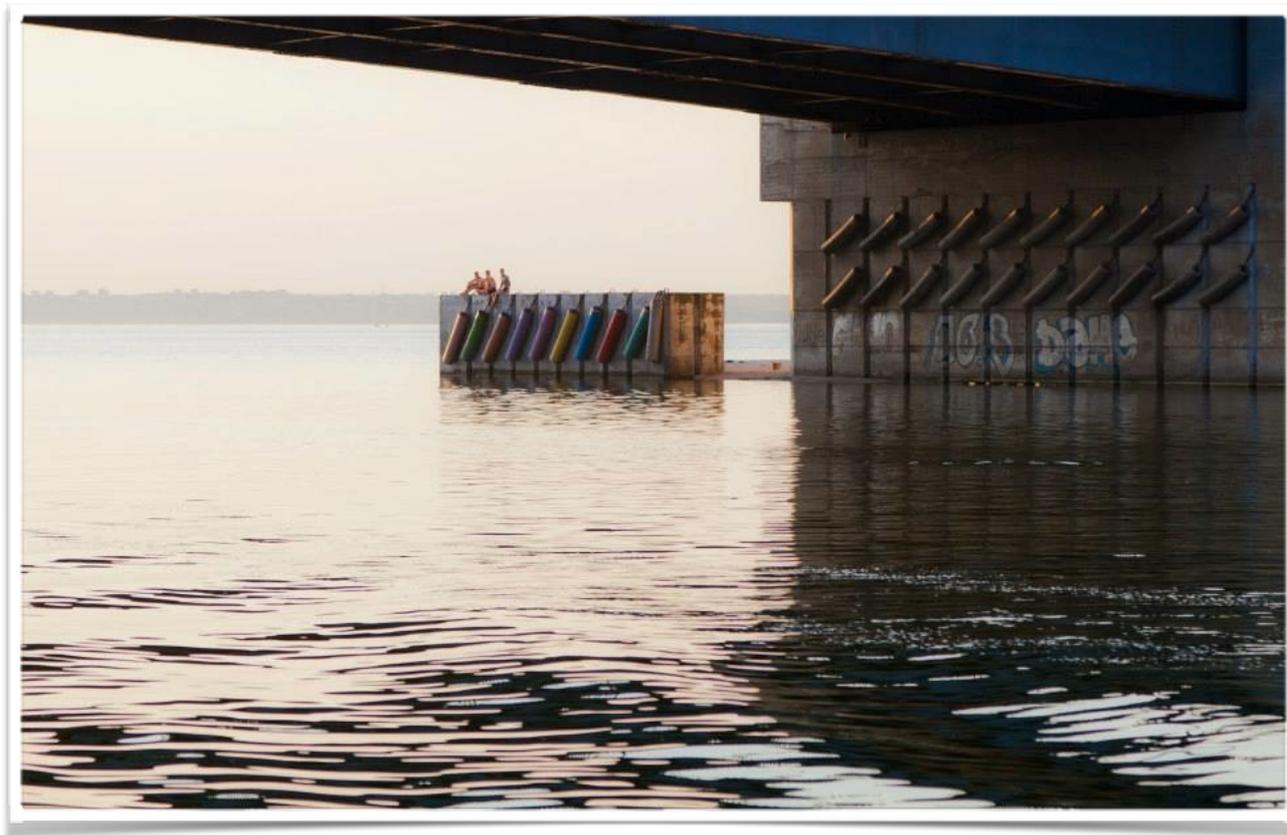
Looking Past The Present?

The Post-Soviet/The Post-Maidan

(Issue 01/2016)

MU Editorial

Forgetting and/or remembering our past.

Does our ability to experience the present lay at the crossroads between these two poles?

In "How modernity forgets", Paul Connerton showed "how modern society affects our ability to remember things". Actually, post-Soviet modern societies (and their communities' collective memories) are still in the making. As far as "memory is dependent on stability", such turmoils as the Maidan Revolution in Ukraine come to establish new contested benchmarks in our way to interpret far and recent past and to experience our present.

"A time of contested politics is a time of contested history", as stressed by Thomas De Waal. Such is the case of post-Maidan Ukraine. Last month Vitali Klichko signed a decree on renaming 77 Kiev streets and alleys within the framework of the law on decommunization. Thus, the ban of the country's Soviet past follows the ban of the national Communist party. Following these lines, it is exactly historical memory and politics that strictly intersect.

In our new issue, the question at stake is the following: Is Ukraine actually stuck between Post-Soviet and Post-Maidan contested memories and political practices?

The editors

In this issue, MU will host a selection of pictures from the project 'Post-Soviet Leisure' by the Ukrainian political philosopher Mykhailo Minakov

MU - Newsletter

Post-Maidan politics and society

- "Two years after Maidan", a project by <u>liga.net</u>, fact-checks what changed in Ukraine in the aftermath of the revolution.

- "Is Ukraine a lost cause?". <u>Carnegie Europe</u> asked a selection of experts to answer a question on the foreign and security policy challenges shaping Europe's role in the world.

- It will take Ukraine at least <u>another 20 years to join the European Union or NATO</u>, a top EU official predicted this March.

- The resignation of Aivaras Abromavicius, Ukraine's Minister of Economy, may be a signal that the country is losing its battle against corruption and cronyism, argues <u>The Economist</u>.

- Politico.com's Oliver Carrol takes a closer look at <u>Ukraine's messy battle for power</u>.

- President Petro <u>Poroshenko is now less popular</u> than his predecessor Viktor Yanukovych was before he was ousted, a Gallup poll shows.

- <u>Bálasz Járabik</u> on the state of reforms in Ukraine and resistance to them.

- Mykhailo Minakov and Maryna Stavniichuk's detailed and uncompromising analysis of <u>Ukraine's constitutional reform</u>.

- <u>Ukraine does not need Putin to "flirt with political suicide"</u>: its politicians are doing everything by themselves, argues Bloomberg.

- <u>Mykhailo Minakov</u> on separation of powers in contemporary Ukraine.
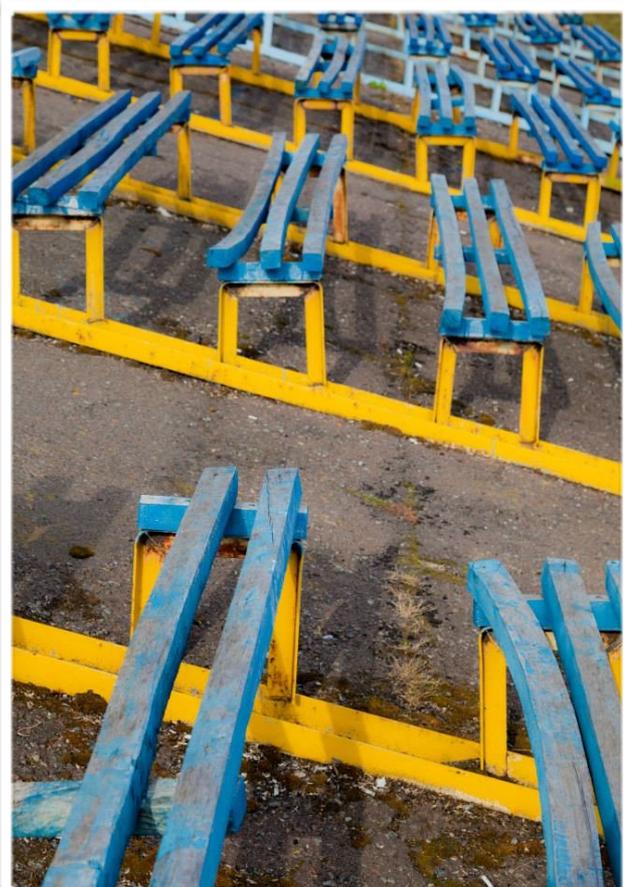
- Mussolini came back (to the streets of Kiev): "Will Ukraine have a junta?", asks Anton Shekhovtsov.

Case Study: Post-Maidan Lviv and Gender (In-)equality?

- An equality festival in Lviv has recently been cancelled due to the opposition of far-right groups and lack of support from the city authorities.

- Judith Gough, British ambassador to Ukraine and a declared lesbian, describes what life is like in Ukraine for her, her partner, and their children – and how she tackles homophobia while promoting LGBT rights.

- Krytyka's Oleh Kotsyuba on homophobia in Ukraine and Ukrainian intellectuals' indifference.

- Is Lviv a "traditionalist-clerical" or a "European city"? (Politeka).

- Ostap Drozdov's provocative musings on Lviv's superimposed Ukrainianness and the consequent lack of historical memory in the contemporary city's cultural text.

- Taras Vozniak's emotional answer to Drozdov.

Post-Soviet Grey Areas

- The European Council on Foreign Relation has collected seven reports from Europe's breakaway republics: Donetsk, Luhansk, Crimea, Transnistria, Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh. This is the first collection of a series dealing with unrecognised entities in the eastern neighbourhood. The next collection will look at policy aspects relating to the entities.

- Pavel Kanygin's reportage on violations of human rights and kidnappings in the self-proclaimed DNR and LNR.

- Peter Pomerantsev reports from Ukraine's Donbas region.

- Andrii Portnov takes a look back at the beginning of the war in Donbas and tries to understand why Kharkiv took a very different trajectory from Donetsk and Luhansk.

- Two years have passed since the annexation of Crimea to the Russian Federation. Even if the Russian government has already launched an investment planning for the region, Andrew Wilson shows how nowadays "the situation is not one of stable incorporation into Russia".

Russia and Post-Crimean (and Post-Syrian) aftermaths

- Carnegie Russia investigates the meaning of war for post-Crimea Russian society, pointing out its crucial role in building Putin's political consensus.

- According to Viatcheslav Morozov, in his search for the meaning of the Russian 'national interest' in the contemporary political debate, "even though the Russian political debate has lost its domestic orientation to an unusual degree, the problem is hardly unique". Actually, "there are striking parallels between Italy as analyzed by Gramsci and other stepchildren of European civilization, such as Russia, Turkey, and South America".

- Michail Iampolskii on the myths of the contemporary political ideology under Putin.

- Aleksandr Rubtsov on modern and post-modern political practices.

- From "social pact" to "social conspiracy": Andrei Babitskii takes a dismal look at the last two years of Russian political conduct and the growing number of its victims.

- A bitter analysis of 16 years of Putin's leadership in Russia and their "catastrophic consequences" for the country.

- Russians and their reception of the 'official truth' (<u>Vedomosti</u>).

- Vedomosti's Maxim Trudolyubov on <u>the differences in political and social language in Russia and Ukraine</u>.

- Carnegie Russia's Denis Volkov explores <u>the last 25 years of Russian anti-Americanism</u> and its four different waves.

- <u>Andreas Umland</u> deconstructs the arguments and rhetorical strategies of Putin's political supporters among Germans.

- Alexander Tabachnik on the current outlook of <u>Russia's military involvement in Ukraine and Syria</u>.

- Andrew Wilson elucidates <u>the Soviet and Imperial Russian background of Russia's "active measures"</u> - i.e. "hybrid war" and diversionary policies – in its "near abroad".

- Ludmila Alekseeva, chair and founding member of the Moscow Helsinki Group, sketches a dismal picture of <u>the increasing difficulties human rights groups</u> are now facing in Putin's Russia.

- The final conclusions of the <u>Litvinenko report</u> are available online.

- <u>BBC</u> unveils how Putin's riches are hidden.

- The Washington Post discusses a "secret military pact" possibly signed between Russia and Syria in August 2015. The seven-page contract dates August 26, 2015 and was posted on a Russian government website.

- On March 14, Vladimir Putin announced that Russian air force would pull out of Syria. How should we interpret this decision? While in Vedomosti they tried to interpret the reasons behind this choice, in The New York Times we can check a series of maps showing Russia's accomplishments in Syria from September 2015 to March 2016.

Moldova

- Medium explains what is going on in Moldova, where the civil society seeks to bring down the present government.

- The *Revue d'études comparatives Est-Ouest* hosts a dossier on Moldova and the "multiple crises" the country is currently facing.

Poland

- Towards a Putinisation of Central Europe?

- The Law and Justice Party is abandoning the institutions of political democracy, argues David Ost on *The Nation.*

- Poland conservative government could soon take control over public media for the first time since the fall of Communism, writes Adam Easton for BBC.

- The pillars of Poland's democracy are being destroyed, argues Timothy Garton Ash.

- Russia and its neighbors in Eastern Europe are too much alike - racist, conservative, authoritarian, argues the Spiegel.

- Political scientist Ivan Krastev explains how in today's Poland the "conspiracy theory" behind Kaczyński's death is becoming a marker of national identity and a powerful tool of political control.

- A more nationalist and Euroskeptic Poland would be dangerous for Europe and its neighbors while certainly pleasing Russia, argues Judy Dempsey on Carnegie Europe.

- The NYT's editorial board on Poland's Constitutional Crisis.

Eastern Europe (and the Refugee crisis)

- The EU's post-Communist eastern states refuse to abide by the Union's rules, especially on immigration, a stance that many political analysts define as "nationalist conservative authoritarianism".

- As the refugee crisis gets more difficult to manage for big EU countries, the PM of Slovakia – itself barely involved in the refugee flows – used it to boost his chances of winning a third term in next month's parliamentary elections.

- A thought-provoking interview with George Soros on the future of the European Union and the current state of affairs in Eastern Europe.

- Two former heroes of the Eastern European revolutions against Communism – Mikhail Gorbachev and Lech Wałęsa – are accused of betraying their countries, another striking symptom of the populist insurgency advancing in Eastern Europe, argues Ivan Krastev.

Books, Journals and Book Reviews

- How to build the Russian Nation? In the new Kontrapunkt issue several scholars, such as Marlene Laruelle and Aleksandr Verkhovsky, try to answer the question.

- The *Center for the National Interest*, a Washington-based non-partisan public policy institution established by former President Richard Nixon in 1994, published The United States and Russia after the Ukraine Crisis: Three Scenarios. The book features articles by Matt Rojansky, Paul Sanders, and Samuel Charap.

- Peter Lang published *Anna Akhmatova et la poésie européenne*, a new collection of essays on Anna Akhmatova.

- The European University in Saint Petersburg is now releasing *Mikhail' Semenko i ukrainskii panfuturizm. Manifesty. Mistifikatsii. Stat'i. Kritika*, a Russian translation of the selected works of Mikhail' Semenko, the founding father and charismatic leader of the Ukrainian futurist movement.

- *Vladimir Gel'man* reviews Henry E. Hale's *Patronal Politics: Eurasian Regime Dynamics in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge University Press 2014).

- The collection of essays Zhinki tsentral'noii ta skhidnoii Evropy u druhii svitovii viini (Kyiv, Art Knyha 2015) explores the difficult relation between war and gender in Eastern Europe.

- A two-volume collection of studies in honor of George G. Grabowicz, published as volumes 32-33 of "Harvard Ukrainian Studies", has recently been released.

- The latest issue of "East/West: Journal of Ukrainian Studies" (3/1 - 2016) is now available online.

- The latest issue of the Italian academic journal "Studi slavistici" (12 - 2015) features a thematic block on Taras Shevchenko and his reception, as well as other articles and book reviews devoted to Ukrainian culture.

- The latest issue of the German Russian-language journal "Forum noveishei vostochnoevropeiskiei istorii" (2 - 2015) contains several Ukraine-related articles.

- Hiroaki Kuromiya's review of Pavel Gubarev's 2016 book on Novorossiya and on the complex nature of contemporary "Littlerussianism".

- Russian historian Tat'iana Tairova talks about the cultural challenges of writing a "History of Ukraine" addressed to Russian readers.

Art, Photography and Multimedia

- *L'inachevé - The Unfinished,* <u>a series of 60 photographs by French photographer Julien Lombardi</u>, explores Armenia and "the complexities of a young nation in the midst of a building process".

- Bird in Flight hosts <u>a selection of pictures of pre-revolutionary Kyiv</u> from the open archives of New York Public Library.

- In the photo series "<u>Ukrainian marshrutkas</u>" Canadian photographer Joe Wang explores Ukraine's everyday's life.

- *New Territory,* <u>a photo series by Russian photographer Fedor Shkliaruk</u>, reflects peripheral areas of Moscow and their uncanny balance between the urban and the wild.

- Photographer Siarhej Lieskiec captures <u>a new generation growing up in the Bielorusian countryside</u>. The main subject of his research are the agro-towns created through the Rural Development Program.

- Digital journalist Yan Matushevich explores <u>the School of Kyiv</u>, an art biennial that took place in Ukraine's capital between September and November 2015.

- *How a Plaza Became the Maidan: A Spatial History of Celebration and Protest in Modern Kyiv*, HURI's latest Vasyl and Maria Petryshyn Memorial Lecture by Serhy Yekelchyk, Professor of History and Germanic & Slavic Studies at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, is available on <u>Youtube</u>.

- The roundtable "Ukrainian Humanities and the challanges of contemporary world", sponsored by Krytyka and Kyiv's Fullbright Office, took place in Kyiv on December 24th featuring Harvard Professor of Ukrainian Literature George G. Grabowicz, literary critic Tamara Hundorova and politologist Katya Smagly. A video of the event is available on Youtube.

- Harvard Professor of Ukrainian Literature George G. Grabowicz speaks on Hromads'ke Radio on Ukrainian culture, Ukrainian cultural reforms and Ukraine's role in the current geopolitical scenario.

- Andrii Portnov comments upon the new "History of Ukraine" for Russian readers.

Resources for Scholars

- Polona is an online Polish library featuring many rarities.

- The Russian Historic Library made available a collection of 145 Futurist books.

- Ann Komaromi (University of Toronto) has created and launched online the electronic archive "Project for the Study of Dissidence and Samizdat".

Dossier - Religion and Politics

Looking for The Head(s) of the Orthodox Church

- At the end of 2015, we witnessed <u>revolutionary changes</u> in the Russian Orthodox Church. Its main spokespersons, such as Vsevolod Chaplin and Sergey Chapnin, have been dismissed. It follows an internal reorganization of the Church communication and information strategies and institutions. According to Chapnin, who harshly criticized the decision, we witness a '<u>new silence</u>' in Moscow Patriarchate: "In the public sphere, actually, we can now listen only to Kirill's voice".

- A "fight over churches" reflects political and social conflicts in the 'post-Crisis' Ukraine, according to James Marson (<u>The Wall Street Journal</u>).

- The long (and arduous) road to the Great Council of the Orthodox Church: Is it really going to take place? And where? Istanbul and Moscow between religious and political struggles (<u>La Stampa</u>).

- An "<u>historical meeting</u>" took place on February 12, 2016 in Cuba, between the Roman Catholic Pope and the patriarch of Moscow. As stressed by Alexander Baunov (<u>Carnegie</u>), "Pope Francis's characterization of the civil war in Ukraine as 'fratricidal' provoked a storm of criticism". There followed several reactions from representatives of the Ukrainian and Russian churches:

• The <u>document</u> signed by Pope Francis and Patriarch Kirill.

• The <u>reaction</u> of the Major Archbishop of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, <u>Sviatoslav Shevchuk</u>.

• The answer of the <u>Moscow Patriachate</u>. According to Metropolitan Hilarion, the head of the Synodal Department for External Church Relations, "Ukrainian Greek-Catholics have aggressive rhetoric".

MU - *Papers*

MU #5 - Papers will be focused on new methodological proposals for the study of Eastern Europe.

Solidarity Without Unity as a Force For Political Change

Lack of common identity in the Kiev and Skopje demonstrations

Rastko Koshcka

Determining Europe along fault-lines / Being and Nothingness

The approach to the Other is crucial in determining both the politics and the identity of an individual, a state, or any measure of community. This is because politics and identities begin at the same moment, at the point of meeting with the Other. The European identity has been on ruthless trial in the current political climates of the refugee "crisis", the financial crisis, and the crisis of the democratic deficit of the European Union (EU). [1] It follows, then, that a re-examination of its approach to its Others is underway, just as these crises require. The Others against which Europe has historically defined itself have been multifarious, yet among these there has always been an insider – at least, geographically speaking – belonging to the territory of Europe but not upholding the same values.[2] Those values remain evasive, however; not only have attempts at superimposing a common identity onto EU members failed, but also the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe (2004) went unratified.

All the same, a scale of democratic progress has been used across the continent to codify the countries. The West has become synonymous with "developed", leaving the East as merely "developing". The scale of democratic progress actually has a dark underside as state building processes actually tend to go together with conflict. The expansionist ambitions of warring states enabled much of the organization we associate today with "progress": standardized dialect, well connected and kept roads, food distribution, technology, armies, industry, and an effective postal network. Are we talking, then, of democratic progress or of something else? What the scale fails to recognize is that there isn't just a single direction of development. Many of these "developing" countries in Eastern Europe have adopted, instead, regimes of competitive authoritarianism (to use a term meant to replace "hybrid regime").[3] In such cases, formally democratic political institutions exist to contest for legitimacy but function under authoritarian principles, especially showing patience for – or even depending on – widespread corruption.[4] All the countries of Other Europe are considered to belong to this category in this paper, as is the almost undisputed sentiment.

Czesław Miłosz determines the characteristic trait of Other Europeans in the twentieth century as lacking in form externally and internally. [4] He embodies this trait of formlessness both as a Lithuanian-born Pole defected to the West and, professionally, as a poet. Observing the Second World War, Miłosz finds that unifying and subjugating the masses is achieved in authoritarian regimes by dehumanization. "Today man [*sic*] believes there is *nothing* in him, so he accepts *anything*, even if he knows it to be bad, in order to find himself at one with others, in order not to be alone".[6] Alienation was more horrifying than crimes against humanity. To this day, Other Europe continues to be politically terrified of its nothingness, of being alienated from the more "developed" or "better-formed" states.

Demonstrating Change / Changing Demonstration

Without the sanction of its subjects, a state government cannot but be considered in tug of war with its people. It is not a fair game, as it is the state that throws the rope to the public and says, metaphorically, *make of this what you can*. They are in control of laws that determine rights of assembly and association as well as determining the punishments incurred. Yet there comes a point at which it incurs less damage for citizens to practice misconduct than to conduct oneself according to prescribed laws. This is when demonstrations take place. Demonstrations are typically viewed in the light of liberating people *from* authoritarianism,[7] yet recent studies have redirected the conversation. In a report on a trend of Western nations violating the right to use public space for democratic demonstration, Richard Seymour concludes: "The reorganisation of states today in an authoritarian direction is part of a longer-term project to contain democracy while retaining a minimum of democratic legitimacy. That is what the anti-protest laws are about".[8]

Douglas Rutzen reports that the attack on civic spaces is a direct consequence of 2001's war on terror proclamation; civil society organizations became threats to security overnight, and not just in the US. "This concern heightened after the so-called color revolutions", Rutzen continues. "The 2003 Rose Revolution in Georgia roused Russia, but the turning point was the 2004 Orange Revolution in Ukraine. Russian president Vladimir Putin viewed Ukraine as a battleground in the contest for geopolitical influence between Russia and the West".[9] This position of the battleground was also used to describe the Balkans at the start of 2015 by US Secretary of State John Kerry.[10] The Arab Spring brought even more legislative restraints, Figure One shows, with Europe and Eurasia being among the higher offenders.[11] The most recent well-known example is Spain's Citizens' Security Law 2015, which prohibits demonstration in front of governmental buildings or politicians' homes, among other restrictions, with fines of up to €600,000.[12] On the other side of the continent, in Russia, crippling fines were already put in place in 2012 for unsanctioned demonstrations[13] and increased two years later along with potential prison sentences.[14]

Maina Kiai, the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, makes a direct plea in the 2015 Annual Report, saying that "we're well past the point of talking about "shrinking" civic space. In many places, that space is long gone. The challenge for 2016 and beyond is not simply to reverse the trend; we are in a crisis [yet another one], and we need to re-order our approaches to address this crisis and get that space back".[15] If democracies are being "contained to offer only a minimum of rights to salvage their legitimacy in spite of authoritarian trends, should they be interpreted as at all different to competitive authoritarian regimes?

Maidan moments everywhere, so why not in Macedonia too?

Since a new Ukrainian revolution broke on Maidan Square in November 2013, similar protests in cities of Other Europe have been faced with inevitable comparisons to Kiev. "Maidan moments" have been springing up in Sofia, Yerevan, Chisinau, Prishtina, to name but a few. To treat these Other Europe protests as co-relative is one strategy among the re-ordered approaches of addressing the crisis of civic space. Unfortunately, this hasn't been happening on a serious level as yet – which would properly challenge the continued practice of measuring all experiences against the West – but more to the extent that newspapers bandy about the term "Maidan moment" to excuse deeper study. An in depth study, it follows, might actually be very revealing in determining what a Maidan moment is and why comparisons are reserved for countries of Other Europe. Is there more than ignorance to it? Are we in the process of creating an analytical language for these phenomena?

Recently, I have researched one of the instances of superficial comparison with Ukraine: a mass-scale demonstration in Skopje, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia that started on 15 May 2015. [16] In this section of the present article, I wish to uncover what light a deeper comparisons might put to the   problems posed above. Also, what can we really take from looking at the protest publics of these very different cases together? In actual fact, the 2014 protests in Macedonia are more like the Ukrainian attempt to oust president Kuchma in 1999 for corruption than like Maidan. In this work, nevertheless, I will pursue comparison with Maidan since this is more telling of European and Other European perceptions which is our primary focus. On the level of state identity, both Ukraine and Macedonia lack a pre-existent historical state they can lay claim to restoring, both suffer from endless and seemingly unsolvable border disputes, and neither are nationally or ethnically homogenous. These conditions lend themselves to national mobilization, which was indeed happening in both countries but by different actors and to serve different ends. Let's use this as a starting point.

On the one hand, in the Ukraine the nation was viewed as an integrated political entity by the former President Viktor Yushchenko. In his own words, their aim was "to integrate every region in Ukraine as deeply and as quickly as possible into a united entity called the Ukrainian nation. By that I mean a political entity. I anticipated that a policy of national development was the best answer to Putin's aggression. Because a united nation cannot be defeated".[17] Elites were more concerned with securing deals with Russia or the West for badly needed economic relief.[18] The nationalisms present on Maidan Square intending to mobilize crowds were a bottom-up movement, then. At first, these were in support of the government's initial policy by challenging the u-turn then-President Viktor Yanukovych made when he suspended the EU Association Agreement to protect trade with Russia. More radical anti-government sentiment and far right nationalist groups [Svoboda, Right Sector, Trident] surfaced in the protest camps only after the 30 November police brutality, but were never representative of the entire demonstrating body – as Russian propaganda would have it. Although "the two nationalist candidates in the presidential campaign received less than 2% of the vote between them" at the 2014 parliamentary elections, [19] tolerance of far-right politics and symbols was widespread in spite of this. [20] A third phase began with the passing of ten "turbo" laws repressing freedoms of association and speech on 16 January 2014, or Black Thursday; stern protestors' demands to remove Yanukovych and the occupation of administrative buildings began only then. [21]

Macedonian nationalism, on the other hand, was the political project of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation – Democratic Party of Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE) Government. The Party, which had ruled for nine years at the time, had implemented a major restructuring of the physical space of the capital with the nation-building project Skopje 2014. It appears to be an attempt to lay claim to the Macedonian name – which has long been disputed by Greece and, in 2008, prevented NATO membership. To date there are 27 new buildings, 6 façades, 8 multi-level parking lots, 73 monuments and sculptures, 2 fountains, 4 bridges, and 5 squares, among other details. Changes were Prime Minister-initiated, decided without voting. Competition between architects, construction firms, and sculptors was unfair and usually not transparent. Protests against construction were, and continue to be, systematically suppressed. The costs of Skopje 2014, at the time of writing, have already exceeded eight times the 80 million Euro estimation made upon announcement of the project in 2010 – by which point, construction was already under way. [22] Meanwhile, a quarter of the country's population lives in poverty. It will come as no surprise that the project has very little public support: a study of the Brima Gallup Institute found that this represents only 25.4% of the population while 49.5% expressed direct opposition. [23] The 15 May protests began in response to a wire-tapping scandal that revealed widespread ministerial corruption and intelligence activity on civilians; demands to remove Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski were on the immediate agenda.

Although evidently different, there is a crucial shared point between the demonstrations in Macedonia and Ukraine. Both made calls to modernize and democratize their respective states, which the people felt was a neglected jurisdiction by their representatives – elected under questionable circumstances as in all competitive authoritarian regimes. Even the nationalisms found on Maidan, I would argue, can be interpreted as an attempt to progress the state; they have as a model the supposedly homogenous societies of nation-states to which the EU is tailored and to which they would have to contort if ever to conform. That is in fact a prime example of how modernization and democratization have violent potentials or, at the very least, lead to public discontent: for the sake of the state, a position against the state is taken up. A strictly identity-based reading would be blind to such observations – it would categorize ideals as either pro-European or pro-Russian, perhaps as pro-democratic or pro-authoritarian.[24] Even problematising the associations of Russia axiomatically with authoritarianism or Europe with democracy is often not done by critics. Furthermore, "Othered" countries aren't respected as actors who have the capacity to change or innovate.[25] This will continue to be a problem so long as academia is bound to using identity-centric Europe and Russia, not to mention the US, as pillars for comparison. Going beyond identity questions can move the frozen debates forward.

Other Europe might hold some of the answers. Certainly the means of association between protesting publics there exhibits serious change in the politics of identity, the approach to the Other. Reports of Maidan participants from the first phase of the protests consistently boasted the "good vibes" journalist Mustafa Nayyem told everyone to bring on the Facebook post of 21 November 2013 that started the revolution. There was a lot of voluntary first aid and shelter assistance, artists were drawn to the publics and the potential for change, and a general sense of solidarity and openness prevailed. [26] "The Maidan itself turned into something of a canvas"[27] or hotpot of creativity and liquid identities. The so-called "Yid-Banderites" – people of Jewish descent sporting flags of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army – embodied the plurality and insignificance of identity.

As a result, a "post-identity form of solidarity" was celebrated in Ukraine which could also be part of what defines a Maidan moment.[28] Something similar was seen in Skopje where demonstrators took a stance against politically-imposed nationalisation. The Macedonian majority and Albanian minority, who have had a long and even recent history of turmoil, were now protesting together with shared goals. Their flags were raised side by side at the demonstrations, alongside flags of other minorities including non-ethnic ones such as the LGBTQI community. This showed the good will of people to get past ethnic divides, revealing them to be little more than attempts at political mobilization. [29] What's more, party affiliates chanted with anarchists, and when it came down to making demands the release and amnesty of captured demonstrators – in both countries – was made a priority. It was an exhibit of solidarity without unity.

Community without community / Solidarity without unity

Solidarity without unity signifies a radically new way of approaching the Other: with mutual respect, heterogeneity, and love.[30] It is present on the terrain of these, and many other, demonstrations today; this is a crucial new characteristic of the changed nature of protest publics. How does it happen? Firstly, it is essential that the demands be post-identity concerns as in our examples, backing out of political promises and corruption. Secondly, the protesting body cannot start as an already-established party or movement but have more organic roots and be open to all sympathisers. Both in Kiev and in Skopje many previously unengaged citizens took to the streets, civic and party camps gathered spontaneously – to start with – and only later merged.[31] Thirdly, the various sectors cannot absolutely integrate ideologically, although the debate between them that is made possible by their physical contact is important. Contentious politics are not sustainable, of course, but sustainability should not be our aim since any political system that is self-perpetuating is totalitarian.[32] Fourthly, the discontented must find new grounds of associating and means of protesting. States with repressive laws of association and assembly set up the preconditions of dissent based on solidarity without community since they forestall the formation of non-governmental organisations, social movements, or even oppositional parties. We are yet to find examples of solidarity without unity in institutionalised politics.

It is a surprising source of uprising. That these people could emerge without a common signifier or distinct ideology is, in itself, remarkable. Seemingly, it is no coincidence that examples of solidarity without unity arose in Other Europe – the Europe of weak identity but strong oppression. Could this be where there is great potential for meaningful demonstrations today, the site of important developments against neoliberal, nationalist, and anti-immigration policies? Perhaps, but Other Europe does not hold a monopoly over weak identity and top-down oppression. Postcolonial and third-world countries would probably also be fine territories for this.[33] Such regions could use what is normally treated as their impediment to their advantage by nurturing post-identity and postmodern publics. Instead, political projects in these parts have been focused on modernizing, which has always meant mindlessly following the "developed" countries into nationalism, neoliberalism, and capitalism. They have been inspired by scales of democratic progress and, often, have seen the intervention of already "developed" countries to bring them in line with their vision of democracy. Yet it is not just places that are regressive on the scale of democratic development that can house solidarity without unity.

We've already learnt that it is possible anywhere, tested by the global Occupy Movement which was built on the same grounds – but also depreciated for it. Such loosely united collectives that don't present alternatives couldn't be conceived of as threatening to identity-focused politics of Western Europe, Russia, America. What appears to have happened is that the subjectivity of global civil society changed in an environment of inflexible political systems.

G ö r a n Therborn points how the social base that is necessary for the creation of movements has been swept from beneath the feet of the masses since

> social cohesion is much less vital for the ruling elites of today than it was for their counterparts in previous centuries. Conscript armies have largely been replaced by mercenary ones; the mass media have helped to make domestic elections 'manageable'; prevailing economic wisdom holds that the sentiment of international investors counts for more in delivering growth than developmental unity.[34]

Therborn shows how, instead, the fight against capitalism [which is the case-study of his article, but equally applicable here] is now most threatening when combined with groups gathering across identities and generations for other political aims. Wider socio-political engagements fall outside the grip of capitalist systems. The author does not quite say, but alludes, that any single-mission demonstration can easily become consumerised and thereby defused. The polyvocality may not be a weakness, it follows, rather the source of these demonstrations' strengths - and, in the cases of repressive regimes, the only means of demonstrating at all. The same elements that have ended social movements that Therborn lists - a lack of social cohesion, more independent actors, changes in media, globalization - serve as the foundation of what comes next.

Solidarity without unity exemplifies a change that is happening: the nothing inside us becoming the very thing holding us together. The Poet Milosz wrote in 1959, "I see an injustice: a Parisian doesn't continuously have to exhume her city out of nothingness" [35] – the sentiment being that Paris is so well formed it doesn't need advocates. More than half a century later, society is rejecting the illusion of good form. Postmodern culture is creating a different society with the assistance of the present political environment, technological advancements, a general distrust of all-encompassing ideology, and a departure from seeking answers in master narratives. If state structures prove not to be impenetrably rigid, then they too will adapt to these changes. Working on postmodernizing politics means bringing an end to ethno-nationalism, stopping the myths of TINA [36] self-creation (the American dream), minimizing the personalization cults of political leaders, rethinking interventionist foreign policies, reopening closed borders, restructuring property rights, ensuring transparency of information, and not obliging individuals to certain or strict conduct on any grounds.

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29. As described in Howard, Lise Morjé. "The Ethnocracy Trap." *Journal of Democracy*. No. 23 / 4 (2012): 155-169.

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31. As has been explained, they didn't come to a single ideology even after merging. Nevertheless, popular media do not yet have the language to discuss such collectives and tend to over-simplify dangerously, as we saw with the reduction of Maidan to neo-Nazism.

32. "The logic of the absolute violates the absolute. It implicates it in a relation that it refuses and precludes by its essence", writes Jean-Luc Nancy. Trans. Peter Connor, Lisa Garbus, et. al. "The inoperative community". *Theory and History of Literature 76*. 1991: 4.Fedorenko, Kostiantyn. "The Two Movements: Liberals and Nationalists during Euromaidan". *Ideology and Politics*. No. 1 (5) 2015: 19.

33. The territorial aspect is not a sole determinant. Timing is also important: with today's technological advancements, most significantly the introduction of social media, traditions of dissent can be transplanted into formerly non-dissenting publics [as was the case in Macedonia] and postmodern culture can be spread

34. Therborn, Göran. "New Masses?" *New Left Review*. No. 85. January / February (2014): 13.

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The Use and Misuse of Post(-)colonialism in Mirroring the Former Soviet Union and its 'Old Periphery'

The Western Lens

Giorgia Zino

After 1991 Russia's various efforts to regain and preserve its influence over the former Soviet space have increasingly restored the idea among Western observers and public opinion of some sort of Moscow's inherent imperial attitude, manifested in its unwillingness to retreat from the so-called "near abroad". This idea has gained strength after Russia's interference in the Ukrainian pro- Western Euromaidan revolution, the controversial annexation of Crimea, the pro-Russian uprising in Donetsk and Luhansk regions, and the repeated violations of Baltic airspace by Russian aircrafts. Associated with the usual range of hostile Kremlin's measures and pressures over the area (energy cut-offs, trade embargoes, instrumental use of Russian minority populations, cyber activity, information warfare) these recent events have spread new feelings of fear and insecurity in the former Soviet space, especially beyond Russian Western borders.

As a reaction, significant attempts have been made to revisit historical representations that linked the old periphery to the old Soviet centre. In Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, given also the peculiar circumstances of their incorporation into the USSR under the provision of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact in 1940, and again in 1944 after the Nazi occupation, a significant rejection of the Soviet past had already taken place immediately after independence. In these states, the principle of continuity with the pre-Soviet republics provided the legal framework for what Richard Sakwa has called the "restitutive model"[1] of post-Soviet national development: a pattern based on feelings of complete detachment from the experienced past and on the need for compensation, reparation and restoration in the present. At first, considering the Soviet years illegal vis-à-vis the international law, this interpretation seemed to have easily resolved the issue of juridical transition. However, it soon gave rise to significant domestic problems, especially to the question of Russophone minorities' statelessness in Latvia and Estonia.

In Ukraine the situation was more complex, due to the close cultural, ethnic and historical ties with Russia before, and the Soviet Union after. However, a similarly homogenizing restitutive attitude is recently gaining ground in Kiev's new government. The decommunization process, which was finally sanctioned in May 2015 after more than ten years of attempts, and which entails the removal of communist monuments and the renaming of public places with previous communist-related themes, is a clear sign of this tendency. As part of the same phenomenon, the increasing limitations imposed on the three Ukrainian communist parties, ultimately banned last December, raised the concerns of OSCE about freedom of expression in the country, while the European Court of Human Rights is currently considering the appeal of KPU (Communist Party of Ukraine).

These measures resemble similar legislations already adopted in other European countries formerly belonging to the Soviet Union and the communist block. They are certainly a reaction to Russian post-Soviet foreign policy, but such kinds of responses are not entirely ascribable to ordinary relations with the Russian Federation as a contemporary political subject. Rather, they go well beyond a simple clash of strategic interests, as they aim to eradicate those historical roots that they used to share with their eastern neighbour, and to present a more nuanced picture of questions of representations, memory and identity. In different ways and from different perspectives, those dynamics are increasingly catching the attention of the observers, even outside the former Soviet space.

At the same time, Moscow's effective and persistent interferences in the area after 1991 cannot be denied. These interferences have been interpreted through the lens of long-lasting Russophobic stereotypes and prejudices existing in Western culture, justified by some as a defensive behaviour vis-à-vis a Western counter-expansion, and by others as a sort of historical right upon a geopolitically natural sphere of influence. Whatever the views, beyond simplistic extremes, it is undeniable that Russia's involvement goes hand in hand with continuous references to a shared past.

Therefore, political, social and cultural developments in the area that was once under Moscow's influence are still strongly affected by Russia's imperial past and its aftermaths. As a consequence, they cannot be observed without elucidating this past, and the dynamics it has created and re-created nowadays. Those argumentations, revised and strengthened on the basis of last years' developments, have recently sparkled a debate, inside and outside the strictly academic context, concerning the forms of power and subalternity exerted in the former Tsarist/Soviet space, and their reflections in the current post-Soviet reality. In particular, postcolonial theory is becoming an increasingly used instrument, against the classical "transitology" school, which limited the analysis to patterns of economic liberalization and democratization. This new perspective, instead, is gradually shifting the focus of discussion towards concepts of coloniality, subalternity, hybridity, orientalism, and other representation's constructs, introducing a predominantly cultural approach in (post)Soviet studies.

In order to evaluate and discuss the potentialities of such a trend, it is necessary to make a preliminary distinction between post-colonial and postcolonial. Post, in the first connotation, refers to a condition following a precise historical periodization, defined in relation to a set of political and economic developments. It basically describes the state in which a newly independent subject finds itself after formal colonization. This use of the term takes colonialism and coloniality themselves to have some analytic value as an explanatory construct, as implying relations of structural domination and exploitation of the heterogeneity of the subjects involved. According to this usage, then, post-colonialism is a historical, legal, and political term to be analysed in relation to a specific set of patterns of domination, subaltern conditions and political struggles.

The second use of the term postcolonial, derives from the field of academic studies emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s, mostly associated with literary studies. The scholars who gave rise to this field, instead of thinking about post-colonialism as primarily or exclusively a form of historical periodization, began to use the term referring to a mode of theoretical analysis. Their primary objective was to deconstruct and "provincialize" Western forms of knowledge and their universalistic pretentions, being predominantly concerned with questions of identity, representation, hybridity, etc., than with direct forms of structural domination.

Relating to the region under discussion, the first acceptation of post-colonialism refers to all the subjects that fell under Tsarist rule before and the Soviet Union after, and their post-1991 condition. Post-colonialism, in this respect, aims to investigate and question the nature of the existing power relationships, the hierarchical position of the subjects engaged and their identity, the circumstances of the breakup and subsequent dismemberment of the Soviet Union, and its aftermath. More specifically, in most of its applications, it concerns the nature of Russian imperial relationship with all the other cultural groups, assuming the establishment of a colonial pattern of domination that is not really dissimilar from classic Western European overseas colonialism, if not for its continental nature.

According to this interpretation, the Soviet Union is basically seen as a perpetuation of the previous Tsarist colonialism under new label and forms. In this context, the term "internal colonialism" has been recurrently adopted, in order to refer to a model of national development based on domination and exploitation of subaltern ethnic groups within a formally single state. Here I would like to discuss the applicability of the "internal colonialism" paradigm to Soviet historical experience, by analysing the pattern of relationships between Lithuanians and Russians within the Soviet context through the lens of the internal colonial model. The aspects taken into consideration are: the historical circumstances of Lithuania becoming part of USSR; the institutional relationships; the representativeness and autonomy of Lithuanian decision-making process within the state; the existence of economic dependence from Moscow and cultural division of labour; education, cultural autonomy, forms of cultural discrimination and acculturation.

This nation-based analysis provides many reasons and evidences for Lithuanians to consider themselves as being colonized in the period they fell under Soviet rule, even with some adjustments due to the particular nature of the Soviet Union as political and economic system. For instance, in spite of discontinuous efforts to nativize the communist leadership in Lithuania, which gave significant results considering the Soviet average for national representation in the republics, the decision-making system, both at federal and party level, always remained strongly centralized in the hands of a predominantly Russian elite based in Moscow. The Soviet constitution secured central control and planning of economy and finances, leaving budgetary and economic decision making to Moscow, with significant exception in the first years of sovnarkhozy reform, between 1957 and 1962. At the same time, many Russians were imported within the Lithuanian Communist Party in order to swell its ranks and control the untrustworthy Lithuanian members; the practice of Russian watchdogs as Party's Second Secretary was common to all the Baltic republics and for almost all the Soviet years.

As far as economy is concerned, even if Lithuania, as well as Latvia and Estonia, could not conform with the traditional pattern of economic colonialism deriving from the experience of Western European colonies (extraction of raw materials and natural resources and exporting of finished products – which instead seems to fit better with Central Asian republics), its integration into the Soviet socialist planned system still implied a sort of economic monopolization aimed at the transformation of the Baltic region into an overspecialized modern industrial periphery. Thus, collectivization led to the creation of an agricultural proletariat and to the disappearance of independent farming, the main economic activity in pre-war Lithuania, while providing workforce for the industry. Rather than producing effective benefits for Lithuanian economy and people, this pattern of industrialization fostered distorted development and strong dependency from Moscow, as most of the outcome of Lithuanian industry was destined to other areas of the Union, particularly Russia.

Moreover, Lithuanian industries requiring raw materials from Russia, Ukraine, or other parts of the Soviet Union, were given primary consideration, although their products were of little use to Lithuania itself. At the same time, those industries that would fit the natural structure of Lithuania's economy, for which raw materials were locally available, and which certainly would contribute to the country's general welfare, were neglected or underdeveloped. Other distortions resulting from the Soviet rule and resembling a colonial-like pattern of development are: the appearance of large clusters rather than graduate and diffuse industrialization, proportionate to the needs of the territory; the dismantlement of agriculture and farming; the dependence on Russian energy infrastructures. Therefore, Soviet economic policy appears colonial in both its aims and outcomes.

Such a picture prompts some reflections on the relation between colonialism-dependency and state centralization, socialist in this case. Under this light, the Soviet economic system seems to conform more to the general patterns of organization for continental empires, with their strong regional specialization and centralization of the decision-making process, and less to the model of classic capitalist European overseas colonialism.

Nevertheless, the more the analogies with the model of internal colonialism proved to be feasible and suitable for discussion in relation to the subaltern position of Lithuanians vis-à-vis Russians, the more it became evident that such an approach could give only a partial picture of the power relations in the Soviet Union. In particular, several questions remain open. First, the long-standing issue regarding the dilemma between Russification and Sovietization - i.e. between a national and post-national project of development and/or domination. Second, the question as to how the Russian population as a whole benefited from the colonial relationship and, more importantly, it did not suffer from the same colonial practice. This does not mean that Lithuanians did not experience colonization in the Soviet Union. On the contrary, what I would like to stress here is that a model of internal colonialism that relies only upon the national factor is not sufficient to highlight all the dynamics and dimensions of domination and subalternity that composed the Soviet universe from the political, socio-economic and cultural point of view.

Moreover, we should not overlook the interesting, if not thorny question of the Baltics' peculiarity in comparison with other Soviet republics. On one hand, the particular circumstances of their annexation to the USSR – Soviet occupation during the II World War with clear strategic objectives and under the provisions of a secret pact with a third power, the fierce resistance of Baltic populations, Lithuanians in particular – have traditionally given credit to the colonial thesis. On the other hand, we witness an unusual – at least for the narrative of Western colonialism – lack of feelings of cultural inferiority of the colonized vis-à-vis the colonizer and, furthermore, a reversed relation concerning orientalizing constructions.

All these considerations escape from the usual, nation-based pattern of interpretation and structural analysis, and should prompt us to question the meaning and relevance of such methodology.

In this regard, the methodology of analysis deriving from postcolonial studies, what we called "the second post", results more suitable. Moving from a critical cultural approach and investigating not only power relationships, but also mechanisms of identity construction, self-definition, hybridity and orientalism, the postcolonial reading escapes from a strict definition of historical responsibility in terms of colonizer/colonized, oppressor/oppressed.

Even if power and hegemony are always at the core of the analysis, the post-structuralist perspective, which stands at the basis of the postcolonial approach, has the advantage of leaving room for "grey zones" and casting light on the multidimensionality of the post-Soviet condition, which could help to provide a deeper comprehension of it.

In conclusion, to come back to the initial question, "is a (post)colonial representation of the (post)Tsarist/Soviet space really useful for its understanding?", I think that the matter should be disjuncted from a strictly naming process, i.e. from any process that aims to establish whether the (post)Tsarist/Soviet space is (post)colonial, how and where exactly. This is an open field for speculation, given the remote opportunities of reaching a univocal conclusion and the political implications that are at stake. Therefore, this question is likely to remain unanswerable and, as such, it holds little heuristic value.

Moreover, we may even go as far as saying that the post-colonial approach implies a postcolonial project in itself. In fact, to consider Western European colonial experience as the guiding principle of colonial studies in general is just another operation of cultural colonization. It means to elevate something that is nothing more than a particular historical experience, even though crucial, to a model, a zero-point of coloniality, from which everything else has to be analysed, compared and placed in a hierarchical scale of sameness.

By contrast, I think that the matter can be also reversed. Any strict analogies with Western conceptions of colonialism proved to be contrived and of doubtful usefulness, while a more elastic approach seems to be more creative and fruitful, besides better picturing the area under discussion. This latter attitude has made possible to raise a discussion about the very concepts of coloniality, postcoloniality, subalternity and about the identity of the subjects involved in a colonial-like relationship. In this way, it could be reasonable to ask how post-Soviet studies might contribute to post(-)colonial studies, i.e. whether the application of a methodology constructed upon a determined historical experience to an unusual context could enrich the field, detaching it from the empirical case it refers to. It might represent an ultimate de-colonial project against the Eurocentrism of post(-)colonial studies, as they are understood in the West nowadays.

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