Chapter 5. Observing a Developing Conflict System: The Maidan Protests in Ukraine 2013/2014

> "The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine has adopted the resolution on conclusion of the Association Agreement between Ukraine, on the one hand, and the European Union, on the other hand, at its meeting on November 21, 2013, in accordance with which for the benefit of Ukraine's national security the process of preparing for signing of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and EU is suspended." (GovUkr 21.11.2013a)

Immediately after this statement had become known, about 1.000 citizens came to *Maidan Nezalezhnosti* ("Independence Square") in the centre of Kiev to protest against president Viktor Yanukovych and his government's plans not to sign the EU Association Agreement. According to the *Maidan Monitoring Information Center* (MMIC), a Ukrainian non-governmental organisation, social media played a crucial role in helping the protests to gather momentum right from the outset.[1] Only three days later, on November 24, the largest demonstration since the Orange Revolution in 2004 took place, as the *Kyiv Post*, a Ukrainian newspaper based in Kiev, headlines in its weekly print edition.[2] According to the newspaper, estimates from people on the scene ranged from 50.000 to 100.000 participants protesting against Ukraine's abrupt U-turn in foreign policy while dubbing their peaceful rally as "EuroMaidan". Moreover, despite all the serious fears and claims the people on Maidan were determined to express, the atmosphere on Kiev's central square in those days reminded a bit of a public festival: bands performing on different stages, people singing and dancing while providing themselves with food and

1 The official "EuroMaidan" Facebook page, established by journalists and civil society activists, has garnered more than 102.000 subscribers since its beginning late on November 21. During the first days of the demonstrations the page appeared in the top 20 of Ukrainian Facebook pages (see KyivPost 1.12.2013). However, in the aftermath of the protests, a large-scale research project dealing with the role of social media relativised the widely unchallenged strong role of social media, saying that facebook in itself (or social media in general) did not make people protest (see Onuch 2015).

2 As it will be outlined, the "Orange Revolution" of 2004 represents a key reference for observers of the Maidan protests in 2013/2014 (see below 5.3; for a detailed historical perspective on the Orange Revolution in Ukraine apart from the present study see Kappeler 2014).

warmth in the tents of the EuroMaidan camp that covered the whole square (see Kyiv Post 29.11.2013: 18–20).

Less than three months later, eyewitness reports draw a fundamentally different picture of Kiev's Maidan:

> "It's an on-going crumping of flash grenades. Ukrainian policemen shoot at Ukrainian citizens. Only 15 meters away from me, a protester lost his hand from a grenade. He's stretchered off. Pungent smoke, soot, Molotov cocktails everywhere."[3]

On February 21, the KyivPost refers to central Kiev as a "war zone" where protesters catch fire as they run from burning barricades and, during the pauses, the bodies of persons slain during the clashes are inspected (Kyiv Post 21.02.2014). On the same day, after president Yanukovych and opposition leaders had signed an agreement that includes the return to the 2004 constitution and new presidential elections, Andrej Kurkow, a Ukrainian novelist, commented, "So far, there is no victory. And probably there won't be one. Ukraine has already lost. More than 100 citizens of our country are dead." (Kurkow 2014: 128). In sum, there are between 500 to 600 casualties and more than 100 deaths (protesters, policemen) that were officially declared victims of Maidan and later referred to as the "Heavenly Hundred Heroes" (Kyiv Post 26.06.2014; see also Marples 2014: 25).

From a present-day perspective, the Maidan protests in Kiev seem to mark the starting point of a long-lasting crisis in Ukraine that brought about a contested modification of the status of Crimea, separatism and war in the south-eastern regions of Donetsk and Lugansk, and newly emerging contradictions between the policies of Russia, Ukraine, the EU and the USA that led to long-term tensions (e.g. a new regime of mutual political and economic sanctions; see UCDP 2020b). Even though the overall development of the Ukrainian crisis in the long run may be highly interesting, the present case study concentrates on how the situation on Maidan, both in a material and metaphorical sense, was observed in a relatively short time frame from late November 2013 to February 2014. Throughout the history of Ukraine, particularly since the country's independence in 1991, the central square in Kiev has been perceived as a symbolically charged site.[4] During the 2013/2014 protests, once again, Maidan was seen way beyond a simple geographical venue of pro-European or anti-government demonstrations in the capital of Ukraine, it became the epitome of the country's future or, as a comment on MMIC's website says, of "Ukraine's soul" (MMIC 24.12.2013a).

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3 This statement first and foremost represents a personal perspective of an individual observer on the situation on the Maidan, February 18, 2014 (see Dathe and Rostek 2014: 9; statement by Andrij Vovk). Yet, it stands for a huge number of eyewitness reports that were published in the aftermath of the protests (see also Andrukhovych 2014; Kurkow 2014; Schuller 2014) and are exemplarily cited here to illustrate how completely different the scenery is perceived compared to the beginning of the protests. Nevertheless, within the framework of this case study, such observations would be analytically relevant only if they were broadly articulated in the (real-time) context of conflict communication (which is obviously not the case here since the reports were published in late 2014).

4 See documentation "Ukrainian Maidans are 25 years old" (MMIC 2015; see also MMIC 4.01.2014a, Kappeler 2014.

Obviously, within a short period of time, the political, economic, and social landscape in Ukraine changed in a dramatic way. Protests that had widely been observed as peaceful expressions of political will turned into civil war-like conditions within less than three months. How exactly did the protests on Maidan escalate? More particularly, how could violence become a part of the dispute? Based on the analysis of the text data, the following sections present the condensed results of the empirical case study on the Maidan protests and thus answer the questions raised.

5.1 Communication about the Maidan Protests: Cutting Swathes into Unclear Terrain

"Maidan! Ukraine, Europe."[5]

As outlined earlier, conflicts are understood as social systems in their own right. In this sense, 'Maidan' here is conceptualised as a conflict system or, in other words, as a discursive arena where contradicting communication got interlinked and stabilised over time. In order to approximately reconstruct the process of conflict escalation in the given time frame, this case study aims at setting marks into this unique discursive field of relational references called Maidan. Of course, there is a myriad of stories about how the Maidan protests are perceived by its observers at any given moment. Thus, the constitution and composition of Maidan as a conflict system or, more precisely, the attribution of issues, parties and actions to the frame 'Maidan protests' or 'EuroMaidan' was continuously changing in the course of conflict escalation. To capture this dynamic, it was necessary to clearly stake the claim of the case study's empirical basis.

In this case study, the analysed corpus of texts involves 575 documents that were selected according to the methodological approach.[6] First, there are official government documents. These mainly include speeches, statements, announcements, and press releases of the president, the prime minister and other government members that were released via the "Government portal", i.e. the official web-portal of the Ukrainian government.[7] Second, to grasp the widespread political contradiction from civil society that had been articulated through a wide range of public channels after the government's suspension of the EU Association Agreement, this analysis drew on a pragmatic auxiliary means.[8] All documents analysed were gathered from "volunteer community re-

5 This is the title of a book that depicts personal experiences and eyewitness reports from the protests on Maidan 2013/2014 (see Dathe and Rostek 2014).

6 For an explanation of the empirical working levels of this study see chapter 4.3; for details concerning sources of the text corpus see Appendix A.1 and figure below.

7 Official government statements are published in Ukrainian and Russian, which are the official languages in Ukraine. However, already well before the period of investigation, Ukrainian authorities changed over to the praxis of simultaneously releasing all official statements in Ukrainian, Russian *and English* as standard (see Appendix A.1.1).

8 Indeed, at that time, civil society experienced a kind of awakening considering the growing number of online fora, platforms, and organisations (see e.g. "Maidan Press Center", "EuromaidanSOS", "EuromaidanPress", "Institute of Mass Information"), not to mention the massive increase of discur-

sources" that are attributed to "civil society opposition", i.e. websites that collect news, articles, and posts from other websites and social media as well as commentaries from its own staff to make them available for a larger public, virtually in real-time, during the protests.[9] Third, according to the procedure on working level II, Ukraine-based mass media, i.e. print media coverage of the Maidan protests was also an essential part of the analysis. For this purpose, all weekly issues of the *KyivPost* and all biweekly issues of *The Ukrainian Week* that had been published during the investigation period were analysed.[10] Finally, the text corpus includes statements and reports from different international non-governmental organisations that reported on the Maidan protests on a more or less regular basis, particularly form *Amnesty International* (AI), the *Centre of Policy and Legal Reforms* (CPLR), the *International Crisis Group* (ICG) and the *Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union* (UHHRU).

As a matter of course, all documents collected from one of these four groups of sources express distinct observations that are specific products of the respective mode of observation behind. Although these sources represent separate perspectives, they have a stake in the (re-) production of the discursive field of the Maidan protests and thus in the joint construction of the conflict system's plot.[11]

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sive input from social media via Facebook and other social media (see Onuch 2015). Yet, it would be next to impossible to analytically cover the totality of all these sources within the framework of the present case study.

9 This case study particularly operated with texts (re-)issued by the Maidan Monitoring Information Center (MMIC) (see figure below for the website titled "Maidan – A Free Person in a Free Country"). The MMIC was chosen because it is one of the very few volunteer community resources that covers the whole investigation period and offers all documents in English. Additionally, documents from "Ukraine-Nachrichten" (UkrN), an internet platform providing German translations of much-quoted news and agency reports as well as Facebook posts and blog commentaries were included. Since information is provided only if it is evaluated as particularly significant for the cause, volunteer community resources represent a kind of self-regulating mechanisms of selection on their own.

10 The KyivPost is Ukraine's leading English-language newspaper. It was founded in 1995 and went online in 2002. Its circulation amounts to 25.000 copies. In 2010, the KyivPost began to publish in Ukrainian and Russian. The Ukrainian Week is a weekly (in Ukrainian language) resp. biweekly (in an English edition) magazine. It was founded in 2007. Its circulation amounts to 41.500 copies. Both newspapers are managed by Ukrainian journalists and are widely referred to as independent media. In 2014, the staff of KyivPost won the prestigious *Missouri Honor Medal for Distinguished Service in Journalism*, at https://journalism.missouri.edu/the-j-school/the-missouri-honor-medal, accessed December 8, 2020). The KyivPost and The Ukrainian Week were chosen for pragmatic reasons; even though both are published in English and thus, as such, do not fully participate in the broad Ukrainian-language discourse in society, they are assumed to adequately mirror major parts of public discourse and thus of conflict development.

11 As part of the implementation of this case study, a network of resource persons was established. This network includes Ukrainian researchers from *Viadrina European University* in Frankfurt (Oder), from the *Research Centre for East European Studies* at the University of Bremen, from the *Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen* in Stuttgart as well as contact persons from the *Consulate General of Ukraine* in Munich. The successive composition of the text corpus is a result of personal consultations within the circle of these resource persons.

Table 8: Overview of the Text Data Corpus (Ukraine)

Source Type	Document Type	Number of Documents	Sample Period
Ukrainian Government[12]	official statements: announcements, press releases, speeches	305 documents (each between 100 and 2.000 words)	November 21, 2013 – February 22, 2014
"Civil Society Opposition"[13]	statements, press releases, articles, commentaries, posts (social media)	200 documents (each between 100 and 1.000 words)	
Print Media (KyivPost; The Ukrainian Week)[14]	weekly/biweekly issues	20 documents (each between 15 and 20 pages)	
(International) Non-Governmental Organisations (AI, CPLR, ICG, UHHRU)[15]	articles, alerts, briefings, reports, chronicles, commentaries	50 documents (each about 500 words)	

(Own table)

To provide assistance to navigate in the course of conflict and its presentation here, one of the main results of the sequential analysis of the data is highlighted at the very beginning: According to the week-by-week analysis, there are a few observation spots that are strikingly often referred to as turning points across the whole text corpus.[16] Se-

12 Ukrainian government documents were gathered in October and November 2015. The respective government website had been available at http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/en until 2018.

13 Documents from different contexts of Ukrainian civil society opposition were gathered in October and November 2015. The websites are still available at https://maidan.org.ua/en and at https://ukraine-nachrichten.de, even though the respective archives cannot be fully accessed.

14 Ukrainian print media coverage was gathered in October and November 2015. The websites and respective archives are still available at https://archive.kyivpost.com/PDF-archive/issue and at https://ukrainianweek.com/category/archive, accessed November 19, 2022.

15 Reports of international NGOs were gathered in October and November 2015. The websites are partly still available at https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/europe-and-central-asia/ukraine, at https://pravo.org.ua/en, at https://www.crisisgroup.org, and at https://www.helsinki.org.ua/en, accessed November 19, 2022.

16 According to the work plan introduced in Chapter 4, the sequential analysis was implemented via summarising weekly folders. Within the framework of MaxQDA, the texts in these folders were coded both in chronological order and in due consideration of their origin/source. After the first step of the coding procedure (i.e. open coding of topics and subtopics) had been completed, the code system comprised 2.971 codings (i.e. passages in the texts that were attributed one or more codes; see Appendix A.2.1 for a MAXQDA extract displaying the management of documents in monthly folders/example: January 2014/Week 4; see Appendix A.2.2 for a screenshot of initial coding, i.e. the topographic map of "EuroMaidan".

quencing these dates reveals phases of conflict development that, at this point, serve as a guidance for the following sections (see table 9).

Table 9: Phases of conflict development in Ukraine

Phase I Phase II Phase III Phase IV	November 21, 2013	suspension of Association Agreement
	(to) November 30, 2013	"cleaning" of Maidan by force
	(to) December 17, 2013	"Russia-Ukraine-deal"
	(to) January 16, 2014	adoption of "anti-protest-laws"
	(to) February 22, 2014	breakup of Ukrainian government

(Own table)

The following sections show how the Maidan protests, theoretically speaking, absorbed more and more attention and resources from its communicative environment. To show this, the sequential mapping of the text corpus was translated into an iteratively generated analytical narrative, whereby the main threads are outlined as three paths of reading the conflict with different but overlapping foci. First, in the *factual dimension*, the key themes are portrayed (chapter 5.2). In this context, beyond a simple register of discursive topics, the section illustrates how themes chronologically link together. At that, "EuroMaidan" played a crucial role as a kind of integrating umbrella term for an increasing number of thematic emphases during the protests. In a second step, the analytical focus lies on the "temporality of Maidan" (chapter 5.3). Since the whole case study is already structured according to a sequential principle, the temporality of Maidan is not intended to be an outline of the chronology of events on Maidan. Rather, the *temporal dimension* elaborates on how certain aspects of the past are actualised at a given moment of the conflict's present and, accordingly, how plans and ideas about the future are condensed in the here and now of the conflict. The temporal limits of pre- and post-conflict are thus variable, depending on those past events or future ideas being referred to as relevant to the conflict in the experienced present. In a third step, the case study deals with "Selfs and Others on Maidan" (chapter 5.4). Thus, focussing on the *social dimension*, the dynamics of emerging conflict identities and their relationship are illustrated. Beyond a mere development of the main parties to the conflict, the section is about the perceptions of each other and the corresponding expectations in the course of conflict.[17] In the synopsis section (chapter 5.5), by recombing the previous three paths of reading the conflict and outlining the modes of observation that operate in the background, critical moments of conflict development are represented in detail.

17 Nota bene: Internally, chapter 5.2. (factual dimension) and chapter 5.4. (social dimension) are structured by means of subtitles indicating the conflict phase (see definition of phases I to IV above). In order not to confuse chronology with temporality (as explained above), chapter 5.3. on the temporal dimension of the conflict, in turn, is structured according to the groups of sources.

5.2 EuroMaidan: Tracing the Career of a Pregnant Buzzword

> "Come on guys, let's be serious. If you really want to change something, don't just 'like' this post. Write that you are ready, and we can try to start something. Let's meet at 10:30 p.m. near the monument to independence in the middle of Maidan." (Nayem 2014)

Phase I (Nov 21 – Nov 30)

In the evening of November 21, 2013, hundreds of activists and journalists immediately reacted, particularly via social media services like Facebook, Twitter and VKontakte[18], to the announcement that Ukraine's government would suspend the signing of the Association Agreement with the EU (see Onuch 2015: 227–231). In the course of this, Mustafa Nayem's Facebook post (see quote from Nayem 2014 above[19]) was portrayed as a major trigger for the early stage of protest mobilisation on that day (MMIC 22.11.2013a; see also Onuch 2015: 217). In the first night of the protests about 1.000 protesters met at Maidan, Kiev's Independence Square.

The outset of the investigation period (starting with the early protests on November 21) is characterised by a certain moment of surprise. Indeed, there were many wary voices from Ukrainian civil society towards the government, notably concerning its commitment to an unquestioning orientation to the West.[20] However, concerning its public image, the government had beaten the big drum in favour of European integration for months and, both rhetorically and concerning parliamentary decisions, left little doubt about its firm intention to sign the Association Agreement at the imminent summit in Vilnius[21], as e.g. First Vice Prime Minister Serhiy Arbuzov's remarks before leaders of parliamentary factions illustrates:

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18 Similar to Facebook in the English-speaking world, VKontakte is a multilingual social media platform that is mainly used by Russian-speaking users.

19 Mustafa Nayem is a Ukrainian journalist who became widely known through his work for the internet newspaper *Ukrayinska Pravda* and an independent Ukrainian television channel, the *TVi channel*. In the October 2014 parliamentary elections, he was elected to the Ukrainian parliament on the then president's party list "Petro Porochenko Bloc Solidarity".

20 Since there were several unannounced meetings between Yanucovych and Putin shortly before the summit in Vilnius, people became suspicious. At the same time, leading figures of the ruling Party of Regions declared that they would not support European integration "at any price" (UkrN 15.11.2013; see also Kyiv Post 15.11.2013: 3) Additionally, the categorical refusal of the government to decide the "Tymoshenko-question", which was a central condition of the EU, raised scepticism in Ukrainian society. Nota bene: After the Orange Revolution of 2004, Yulia Tymoshenko was Prime Minister in 2005 and from 2007 to 2010. When Yanucovych became president in 2010, Tymoshenko was sent to prison for seven years in court proceedings that international observers criticised as being politically motivated (see AI 19.11.2013).

21 The third Eastern Partnership summit was held in Vilnius, Lithuania, on 28–29 November 2013. It brought together heads of state or government from the 28 EU member states with those of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine (see Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius, 2.12.2013).

> "We need to take the final steps that will lead our country to a higher level of relations with the EU. I'd like to remind you that our responsibility is extremely high. […] The positive effects of integration the country can feel when our economy will interact with European economies on an equal footing. Your legal work will help ensure European standards of life of our citizens. I hope that the proposed drafts [in preparation of the AA] will be taken." (GovUkr 18.11.2013)

Hence, in an atmosphere of (albeit slightly sceptical) EU-enthusiasm, the announcement of suspending the process of rapprochement with the EU for an indefinite period of time was clearly perceived as an abrupt U-turn in civil society. After the first wave of indignation had erupted online and then crystallised around the notion of "EuroMaidan"[22], the political contradiction on the streets followed immediately:

> "Closer to midnight, hundreds of citizens came to Maidan Nezalezhnosti. Some of them had EU flags, some came with posters in support of the European future of Ukraine." (MMIC 22.11.2013a)

> "On Thursday, November 21, Ukrainians went on the streets to show their pro-European stand. Promptly, quickly, and motivated." (UkrN 23.11.2013)

Right from the outset, the decision of the Ukrainian government was linked to the larger topic of security ("[…] for the benefit of Ukraine's national security"; see introductory quote to Chapter 5., GovUkr 21.11.2013a). Thereby, economic considerations were described as a central part of national security, which was at this point declared to be intimately associated with a close (economic) cooperation within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States[23]:

> "The Resolution has been adopted with a view to study and work out a complex of measures in details, which Ukraine has to take in order to restore the lost production output and areas of trade and economic relations with Russia and other CIS member states, form an appropriate level of domestic market, which would provide equal relations between Ukraine and EU member states that is the basis of economic security of the state." (GovUkr 21.11.2013a)

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22 During the analysis, it became apparent that the central reference term has been used in two orthographical versions: "Euromaidan" and "EuroMaidan" with a capitalised internal letter. As further illustrations will show, observations referring to EuroMaidan do highlight *both* the desire to undoubtedly orientate Ukraine towards Europe ("Euro-") *and* the idea of a sovereign country determining its fate independently through the will of its people, even when people express themselves apart from the conventional political institutions, for example on "Independence Square" ("-Maidan"). Hereafter, to equally satisfy both dimensions, "EuroMaidan" will be used.

23 The member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgizstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. The regional organisation was formed after the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991. In 2010, under the aegis of Russia, members of the CIS have established the Eurasian Customs Union (member states in 2015: Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia), referred to as "Customs Union" hereafter.

> "Ukraine can never make a sacrifice of economic sovereignty, so the recent Governmental decision of Nov 21 concerning signing the Association Agreement with the EU was adopted in order not to afford social and economic fiasco and achieve more favourable conditions for Ukraine." (GovUkr 27.11.2013e)

In marked contrast to the statements that highlight the government's foreign (security) policy decision as an economic necessity without any alternative, voices from civil society disagreed and picked up the idea of national security differently. Under the header of EuroMaidan, the protesters highlighted security notably as sovereignty of the Ukrainian people and, therefore, as the possibility and the right to realise Ukraine's self-determination as a European country through the will of its people:

> "Euromaidan – Citizens of Ukraine stand up and try to make their voice heard in Europe which does not end at the eastern border of the EU. They fight for their European future in a united Europe. […] Today, more than ever, Ukrainians need Europe's attention. They need attention and support of the European citizens who already enjoy those European values." (UkrN 24.11.2013)

In this context, EuroMaidan is mentioned in the same breath with desirable European values "that have been commonly achieved after wars and crises in Europe's history" (UkrN 24.11.2013). In this regard, the Ukrainian civil society is represented as a 'natural' member of the 'European family' that expects other members to accept responsibility for each other.[24] Moreover, civil society's unequivocal expectation towards the Europeans is not to be passive and, particularly, not to give in towards neighbouring Russia that is observed as a hegemonic power, which ruthlessly plays its trumps in the post-Soviet orbit:

> "What happened on November 21 in Kiev – the illegitimate decision of the Ukrainian government to stop the proceedings of the Association Agreement – is a moral, psychological, and political defeat of the EU. […] Russia doesn't know compromise, nor balance of interests or win-win-situations. Russia's policy is exclusively targeted at preserving its interests. In its foreign policy, Russia is guided by the idea that its role as a trading partner for energy resources like natural gas, crude oil, coal, or nuclear power is unique and indispensable." (UkrN 28.11.2013)

As the analysed statements from civil society sources reveal, communication with reference to the Maidan protests tends to locate itself in a geopolitical context of 'sink or swim', e.g. relating to issues of energy supply. On that account, the statements are particularly characterised by direct addresses towards the political, economic, and social environment in Europe and beyond.[25] Hence, as the example of the references to European

24 As it can be retained from the topical analysis, the idea of being an obvious and self-evident part of Europe regularly appears in all phases of conflict development. Thereby, the images of "European family" and "common European values" run like a golden thread through civil society commentaries and media reports (see exemplarily MMIC's (17.02.2014a) commentary on "Ukraine's returning to the European family" or The Ukrainian Week's (22.11.2013) article on the "Homo Europaeus").

25 As the opening (which was triggered by an unprecedented "storm" of social media) made clear, EuroMaidan immediately adopted a "corporate design" (e.g. EuroMaidan as catchphrase, use of na-

values shows, observers are called upon to take up the point and to react in one way or the other. This is all the more true for media coverage.

According to the analysed media reports, EuroMaidan, at least in its initial phase, represents a kind of unconventional societal venue for debating a specific foreign policy issue: the decision of the government to suspend the signature of the AA with the EU.[26] Largely, media reports adopted the interpretation after which this decision constitutes a turning away from the process of European integration in the west and thus a turning to Russia in the east, although the government frequently made an effort to balance this reproach:

> "The Government guarantees: Ukraine will further its course towards European integration, as it is for the benefit of Ukraine, for the benefit of our nation." (GovUkr 28.11.2013)

In sum, the analysed media reports offered three main views of the situation: First, the Government's decision is located between the (normative) poles of Europe as the embodiment of "established values, self-improvement, discipline and development" as opposed to "the world of complete unpredictability, paternalism, hierarchies, absolute power and inert obedience" (The Ukrainian Week, 22.11.2013: 6). Second, the suspension of the AA with the EU is portrayed as a policy question that can be, in principle, rationalised in terms of economically quantifiable pros and cons:

> "President Viktor Yanucovych in a recent speech said that the total cost would be $217 billion, roughly equal to the nation's annual economic output. Kyiv officials insisted on compensation. […] EU enlargement commissioner Stefan Füle said the so-called ajustment costs cited by Ukraine are 'neither proportional nor credible. This deeply contradicts the experience of the EU accession countries'." (Kyiv Post 29.11.2013: 7)

However, the image of the societal debate about European integration, as the analysed media sketched it, is not only shaped by economic considerations. Third, it is also described as a strategic decision, which is directly linked to great power politics:

> "Russia intensified its trade and other economic-related sanctions toward Ukraine this year to dissuade it from pursuing closer ties with Europe." (Kyiv Post 29.11.2013: 7)

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tional and European colours, no political party symbols; see Kyiv Post 29.11.2013: 16–18) and developed professionalised media strategies. "Attention can only be gained through media campaigns: Short reports about people on the many EuroMaidans; telling their stories will make it possible to raise other Europeans' awareness for what is happening in Ukraine." (UkrN 24.11.2013)

26 Following the example of EuroMaidan in Kiev, the media reported on further "EuroMaidans" coming up in Lviv, Lutsk, Ternopil, Donetsk, Kharkiv and other Ukrainian cities in all parts of the country: "Organizers of EuroMaidan have been spectacularly successful at turning out tens of thousands of people on the streets of Kyiv and other cities in Ukraine and enlisting support internationally in opposition to the government's decision." (KyivPost 29.11.2013: 6).

It can be stated that, in the first phase, the protests on Maidan were principally referred to under the nominal header of EuroMaidan, according to the sources of the analysed text corpora. Thereby, the political contradiction crystallised around the announcement that the Ukrainian government would not sign the AA with the EU at the imminent summit of Vilnius. After the government definitely carried out its announcement, this decision seemed to sound the bell for a period of strained relations between the EU and Ukraine. Subsequently, EuroMaidan again attained an unprecedent level both concerning the throng and the determination, as published interviews with protesters on Maidan illustrate:

> "EuroMaidan will turn into a 'massive watchdog' focused on putting pressure on the government to follow through with its initial promise to sign the association and free trade deal with the EU at a later date. […] Smaller, more radical factions of EuroMaidan [can] organize themselves and storm government buildings. But [we] would prefer peaceful, 'more European' demonstrations. […] We would like to see methods of civil disobedience." (Interview with Oleg Rybachuk[27], Kyiv Post 29.11.2013: 6)

Related to statements as the above cited, the topic of public security and – associated with this – a debate about legitimate means of protest increasingly dominated the discursive agenda of EuroMaidan in the aftermath of Vilnius where, from the perspective of the protesters on Maidan, a unique opportunity had been missed while the movement realised that it was not able to change anything in Ukraine's policy to this date. This moment of self-awareness, together with the protesters' (and INGOs') observations in the night of November 30/December 1 mark the first turning point in EuroMaidan's topical sequence:

> "At 4 a.m. this morning the troops of riot police, Berkut, violently dispersed the peaceful Euromaidan at Independence Square." (MMIC 30.11.2013b)

> "According to eyewitnesses interviewed by Amnesty International, Berkut officers first told the demonstrators to disperse because the demonstration was 'illegal', then started to beat those that remained. Video footage shows Berkut officers beating protestors and in some cases pursuing men and women in order to beat them. About 35 people have so far been charged with hooliganism under the Administrative Code and dozens of people are being treated for their injuries." (AI 30.11.2013)

Phase II (Nov 30 – Dec 17)

After police forces began to clear Maidan by force, at one blow, EuroMaidan was observed in an altogether different light. Immediately, the main topics debated changed from the

27 Oleg Rybachuk served in high-level state functions, e.g. as chief of staff to former president Viktor Yushchenko. During the Maidan protests, he is referred to as a public activist and leading Euromaidan figure (see e.g. Kyiv Post 29.11.2013: 6).

rather abstract controversial subject of geopolitical, economic and social merits of European integration to very concrete issues, e.g. concerning the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression.

Due to EuroMaidan's high level of attention from (social) media and INGOs, reports on the incidences on November 30 spread immediately. In fact, for the first time since the beginning of the protests, large-scale collective violence between protesters (throwing stones) and police forces (deploying teargas and batons) was observed. According to the analysed documents from civil society opposition, November 30 was also the starting point for new human rights initiatives emerging from EuroMaidan.[28] In this context, the responsibility for the outrages was clearly attributed to the authorities:

> "Unlawful use of force to subdue the EuroMaidan demonstration: President Yanuvovych's brutal and unsparing use of force to quash Ukrainian citizens' rights of peaceful assembly and speech." (MMIC 2.12.2013a)

> "The context of the events leaves no doubt that the order to commit crimes against peaceful citizens came from the highest echelons of power." (UHHRU 1.12.2013)

Referring to this, the analysed media reports involved detailed accounts on the night of November 30, which resulted in hundreds of casualties, including particularly protesters, at least 40 journalists and about 100 officers of special police units.[29] Thus, media coverage addressed the use of force both by the police and by the protesters:

> "On Nov. 30, all the evidence shows that police were the instigators of a deliberate and violent crackdown on 400 or so demonstrators. Eyewitnesses and video showed indiscriminate beatings. […] As for Dec. 1, we'd definitely like to know who commandeered a bulldozer and three Molotov cocktails at police. Those are illegal, violent and potentially dangerous acts that can be punished, not merely 'provocations". (KyivPost 6.12.2013: 4)

In the light of these incidences, massive public indignation translated into resurgent protests early in December when about 100.000 protesters gathered on Maidan. Shortly after this new wave of protests started, the government, at least rhetorically, accepted

28 See e.g. "EuromaidanSOS" mentioned earlier; the organisation was committed to collecting and publishing information on human rights violations. For this purpose, an independent public commission to investigate actions of the authorities (and the protesters) in Kiev and across Ukraine during the protests was established, whereby existing human rights organisations and lawyers were invited to join the commission (see UHHRU 3.12.2013a).

29 To be exact, considerations about the concrete attribution of responsibility (in the sense of order/execution) played an important role in media reports, see exemplarily KyivPost (6.12.2013: 8): "It is unclear who exactly gave the order for Berkut to attack. Speculation ranges from President Viktor Yanukovych and Interior Minister Vitaliy Zakharchenko."

responsibility for the events on November 30[30] and, at the same time, pointed out that state authorities had enough power to put the Maidan protests in their place at any time:

> "On behalf of the government, I'd like to apologize for the actions of our law enforcement agencies on Maidan. Both the president and the Government deeply regret what happened." (Prime Minister Mykola Azarov, speech in Parliament; GovUkr 3.12.2013d)

> "We are ready to discuss with peaceful demonstrators all terms of our agreements. We stretch out our hand. If we find a fist, I say frankly – we have enough forces." (Mykola Azarov, GovUkr 3.12.2013e)

Notwithstanding the above, in the first week of December, protesters began to openly term their project as a "revolution" (e.g. in statements, on banners and as graffiti) and started to block and/ or occupy government buildings (e.g. Cabinet building, Kiev's city administration). Furthermore, feeling certain about the broad support of a cross-cleavage mass movement behind, EuroMaidan's revolutionary voices confidently called for the president and the government to resign as a precondition for any peaceful transition.[31]

As opposed to this, the government straightaway appealed to the protesters that those practices do not represent the "European way" of expressing civil society's will (see GovUkr 3.12.2013f), especially as a majority of Ukrainian citizens beyond the capital is described as being supporters of the government.[32] Therefore, the government rejected the blocking of governmental bodies as an illegitimate means since it is equivalent to a blocking of the state's social life veins (e.g. entailing negative repercussions for the payment of pensions and social assistance; GovUkr 4.12.2013a). Concerning the demands to resign, it was clearly stated:

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30 At the same time, government officials tried to portray the use of force by the police as a reaction to "provocations" from the protesters' side (e.g. throwing of bottles and stones), tracing back to the far-right spectrum on Maidan (see GovUkr 5.12.2013l). In contrast, according to the assessment of KyivPost (6.12.2013: 4), even if there were such provocations, chasing people down the streets and beating them indiscriminately is here seen as an entirely disproportionate reaction. According to the analysed media reports, those overreactions can also be explained by miscalculation, or, in other words, by the "unpreparedness for the scale of the rally on November 24. […] It appears that the government counted – and still does – on organizational impotence of the protesters" (The Ukrainian Week 3.12.2013: 10–11).

31 In this context, the protagonists are pointing to an increasing "common sense of Ukrainian identity" that is believed to sustain a peaceful transition realised by "a short-term unity government of technocrats" that would be empowered to implement "tough reforms Ukraine needs to avoid short-term economic collapse and to restore credibility to a judiciary" (MMIC 4.12.2013b).

32 Here, government statements refer to sessions of Ukrainian regional councils, "in which three fourth of our population" is represented and "the support for the course of the President and the Government had been approved" (GovUkr 2.12.2013a; see also GovUkr 6.12.2013c). It was one of the most cited arguments in government communication that society, by a majority, supported the president and its government. In contrast, at this point, media reports increasingly attested "an enormous disconnect between the government and the people." (KyivPost 6.12.2013: 1).

> "We stand for an issue of power to be solved exceptionally through elections." (GovUkr 5.12.2013c)

Together with other statements confirming the role of the Ukrainian military as a guarantor of security and stability on occasion of the Day of the Armed Forces (see GovUkr 6.12.2013a), those messages show a certain determination on the government's side to defend the "national interest", i.e. the interests of the majority of Ukrainians that had elected the president and were not (yet) present on Maidan (see GovUkr 6.12.2013e). By contrast, protesters on Maidan and supporters of the political opposition who arrived from all parts of Ukraine "don't always behave as they should" were thus portrayed as being a "serious threat to the security of our citizens" (GovUkr 6.12.2013f). At the same time, while confirming to continue negotiations with the EU, the government announced its new initiative to conclude a strategic partnership with Russia. Thereby, speculations about Ukraine's clandestine orientation to the east were fuelled:

> "Russian leadership has stated clearly that the signing of the [Association] Agreement means that it makes no sense to further discuss trade and economic regimes. We were told clearly: we are ready to discuss the problems in a tripartite format but you should postpone the signing of the Agreement, then we'll sit at the table for negotiations, and then sign it." (Interview with Prime Minister Azarov, The Ukrainian Week 3.12.2013: 8)

Although pertinent statements suggest that the president and the government denied preferring (and aiming at) a closer integration within the framework of the Russia-led CU, other statements confirmed that issues of industrial cooperation, trade and economic relations and gas issues were topics of newly opened negotiations with Russia (see e.g. GovUkr 7.12.2013a). In marked contrast to these government statements that outlined the rapprochement to Russia as a necessary counteraction to an externally caused recession[33], the analysed media point to the "homemade nature" of the economic decline and the possible dire consequences for the government:

> "Chronicle of a systematic recession: The factors triggering this decline are at home, not abroad, as the government insists." (The Ukrainian Week 3.12.2013: 18–19).

> "But time is against them. Every day that the protests persist, political risks increase, and the economy, already in recession, suffers more and more. The government's debts, such as wage and pension arrears, which already amount to some $10 billion, are increasing, diminishing the government's chances for survival." (KyivPost 6.12.2013: 4)

33 In this context, president Yanucovych stressed trade the turnover with Russia as an essential factor in Ukrainian national economy: "If trade with Russia deteriorates, jobs would be lost. This year 85.000 people lost their jobs in industry, 32.000 in trade, 17.000 in transport and 15.000 in construction." (Interview with four Ukrainian TV channels on December 2, citied in KyivPost 6.12.2013: 6)

At this point, in an effort to correspond to the still pressing claims of EuroMaidan, the parties of the political opposition noticeably entered the stage of EuroMaidan.[34] Yet, neither the initiation of a no-confidence vote in parliament (on December 3) nor the attempt to block the parliament simply by absence (December 4–6) advanced the declared purpose: the resignation of the government.[35] Against this background, the protests on Maidan rapidly sparked at a higher level. According to the analysed civil society sources and media reports, on December 8, between 500.000 and one million protesters gathered on Maidan in a "March of Millions" seeking the resignation of the government within 48 hours. In the course of this, further government buildings were blocked, existing barricades were reinforced, and additional tents were set up. Following civil society sources, the protests in this phase again changed their character:

> "There are more people on the streets today than last week, and more than we ever saw during the Orange Revolution. […] Whereas last week people were guided by their emotional reaction to the Nov 30 beatings, today people [come] motivated by a rational desire to be part of a revolutionary change." (MMIC 9.12.2013)

Moreover, supporters of EuroMaidan referred to themselves in terms of strategic advances: Even though special police forces tried to dismantle the barricades, protesters were able to maintain their positions on Maidan square and in the occupied buildings (particularly Kiev's city administration).[36] To underline their immediate claims (release

34 At that time, there are three political opposition parties referred to as the most important ones: 1. *All-Ukrainian Union Fatherland*: Arseniy Yatsenyuk (leader), party of imprisoned opposition leader and former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, Ukraine's biggest opposition party (89 seats in parliament; total: 450 seats); 2. *Ukrainian Democratic Alliance for Reform* (UDAR): Vitali Klitchko (leader), second largest opposition party (42 seats in parliament), ideology similar to Germany's Christian Democrats, strong parliament faction, weak regional units; 3. *All-Ukrainian Union Svoboda* [Freedom]: Oleh Tyahnbok (leader), grassroots party that gained mass popularity, with an aggressive radical wing and xenophobic ideas, goal: creation of a nationalist state, methods: political and militant (characterisation based on KyivPost 14.02.2014: 2–5). For a detailed account on the role of political parties during the Maidan protests see Malygina (2013: 4–5), Marples (2014: 11–12) or Banakh (2014).

35 On the contrary, the government's reaction suggests that it interpreted the situation as if it had gained further legitimisation to stay in power: "Yesterday the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine has expressed confidence by a majority vote to our Government. This is an unambiguous solution of the only legitimate legislative body of our country. And it must be accepted as a legal fact by all." (GovUkr 4.12.2013a; see e.g. KyivPost 6.12.2013: 4)

36 Spurred by the encouragement on *International Human Rights Day* (December 10), the protesters unfearfully articulated that their rights and freedoms had been violated and that they would continue this struggle for the right to live in a democratic and European country (see e.g. MMIC 10.12.2013c). As media coverage highlighted, this struggle was backed by a successful fundraising campaign since EuroMaidan activists were not only able to raise monetary donations but also tangibles worth millions, such as food, clothing, fuel, medicine, and labour (as to logistic organisation, public relations, and legal assistance).

of arrested protesters, punishment of those responsible for the beatings, end of repressions), even survey data[37] was brought into public effect:

> Among reasons, which made people came out to the Maidan, three most widespread were: brutal beatings of demonstrators at the Maidan on November 30 night and repressions (70%), Viktor Yanucovych's refusal to sign the AA with the EU (53.5%) and desire to change life in Ukraine (50%). Rather pronounced were also desire to change authorities in Ukraine (39%). The majority of Maidan protesters (72%) answered that they would stay there 'as long as necessary'. (DIF 10.12.2013)

Based on the analysed statements, the government's reaction at this point was twofold: On the one hand, the president carried out the (former presidents') idea of inviting all political forces, the clergy, and representatives of EuroMaidan to a national roundtable in which Yanucovych would participate in person. In this context, under the header of dialogue and compromise, the government again confirmed its pro-European course, promised a complete investigation of the violent incidences of the preceding weeks, and offered a broad participation in order to manage the current crisis. On the other hand, it accused its addressees of being responsible for the situation by provoking and fuelling tension on the streets, by spreading misinformation and insecurity, by endangering essential state functions, by being unorganised and not able to bear political responsibility and, most importantly, by confusing a noisy minority with the pro-government majority in Ukraine's society as a whole (see e.g. GovUkr 11.12.2013a).[38]

The analysed media reports picked up these Janus-faced public signals of the government: While the president issued invitations for a national roundtable of dialogue,

> "Early on Dec. 11 the stakes were raised when riot police and National Guardsmen attempted to disperse the protest calling for the government's ouster." (KyivPost 13.12.2013: 1).

Moreover, based on an increasing number of reports about violent incidences (e.g. concerning the use of teargas and batons while trying to 'clear' the city administration and dismantle barricades) and about the first severe court sentences of arrested protesters, media coverage was particularly characterised by further signals of 'raising stakes':

> "EuroMaidan supporters emerged from their all-night clashes with police early Dec. 11 even more defiant and determined. They built even bigger barricades after po-

37 On December 7 and 8, the *Democratic Initiatives Foundation* (DIF) (in cooperation with the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology) conducted a survey among protesters on Maidan (random sample, 1037 respondents) to figure out key motivations and demands. The DIF calls itself a "leading Ukrainian think tank and focuses its activities on developing reasonable recommendations in the sphere of democratic transformations and Ukraine's European integration for decision makers and civil society representatives." It was founded in 1992 and is particularly engaged in research, monitoring and dissemination of information about political processes and public opinion polls (see DIF 2015).

38 In this context, EuroMaidan was even blamed for jeopardising the chances to host the 2022 Winter Olympiad in Lviv (GovUkr 12.12.2013a).

> lice and emergencies ministry workers removed them during the night. Moreover, new massive rallies are planned through the weekend starting on Dec. 13. […] For its part, the ruling Party of Regions is planning a rival rally. Andriy Pinchuk, leader of the party's youth wing, said 200.000 people are expected to arrive in Kyiv to oppose those at Independence Square. Many observers fear that all on the government payroll will be forced to take part (KyivPost 13.12.2013: 14)

At this point, statements from the protest movement on Maidan were not only marked by a certain distrust concerning the credibility of Yanucovych's roundtable but also, and particularly, concerning the negotiations about the new cooperation agreement between Ukraine and Russia that had constantly been promoted[39] and would be signed on December 17:

> "Yanukovych and Putin pencilled a significant economic rescue package for Ukraine, but the Russian President added a condition: all protests in Kyiv must be cleared before the December 17 official signing date. For this reason, Yanukovych, in a hurry to clear the protesters from Independence Square, ordered riot police into the streets of Kyiv." (MMIC 12.12.2013a)

Distrust mounted up even more, when, on December 15, the European Commission announced that talks (about any form of cooperation) with the Ukrainian government would be suspended due to contradictory signals from president Yanucovych.[40] In sum, in this phase, releases associated with the civil society opposition depicted an atmosphere of increasing confrontation and insecurity.[41] At the same time, however, after severe common experiences, the attitude of having reached a certain point of no return became more and more apparent, even despite most difficult weather conditions:

> "The stand-off between the protestors on Independence Square and the regime continues with no end in sight. The Euromaidan is in no hurry to disperse. […] The regime has attacked peaceful demonstrators in the center of Ukraine's capital three times (Nov. 30, Dec. 1, Dec. 11). This fact has consolidated Ukraine's people in

39 In doing so, the government lost no opportunity to point to the economic disadvantages of the alternative, see e.g. GovUkr (13.12.2013f): "In September the three countries of the CU approved a decision that in case the agreement on free trade area with the EU was signed, Ukraine would lose advantages of a free trade area with the CIS member countries. During the year it would add to the negative balance another USD 8 billion. And then the negative balance of trade with the countries of the CU in 2014 would make up USD 15 billion."

40 Besides Ukraine's obscure initiatives to intensify relations with Russia and the harsh crackdown of the Maidan protests, incidences in the context of the parliamentary by-elections on December 15 raised EU's scepticism: While 4 of 5 seats were won by Yanucovych allies, irregularities (including vote buying and unauthorised persons present inside the polling stations) had been observed (see e.g. MMIC 17.12.2013b).

41 INGO reports substantiated this widely shared perception by highlighting single cases of disproportionate use of force and ill-treatment of detained protesters by police forces, especially by Berkut units (see e.g. AI 13.12.2013). Nota bene: The Berkut (Ukrainian for "Golden Eagles") was a special police force in Ukraine. This unit was particularly deployed to contain demonstrations and violent upheavals. In late February 2014, the new government dissolved the Berkut.

> protest: people want personal dignity, rules-based government, and peace. (MMIC 15.12.2013a)

> "It is ridiculously cold out there. As the week wore on, protesters learned how to make the cold their ally. Protesters poured water outside Revolution HQ to create an ice-rink for the officers to slip on. Demonstrators chipped the ice and used it to reinforce the barricades. They built walls by stacking sacks of snow. The Maidan is no longer a public square; it's a winter fortress." (MMIC 15.12.2013b)

Seemingly not being responsive to the determination of EuroMaidan protests at this stage, statements from the government place special emphasis on the economic situation. In this view, due to the new deal between Ukraine and Russia, which was ultimately negotiated and signed on December 17, a decisive turning point was reached: As Russia agreed to buy state bonds worth 15 billion USD and to reduce the gas price from 400 to 270 USD/1000m^3, Ukraine would not only be able to face the severe economic crisis in all markets (under conditions of a global crisis) but also, as Prime Minister Mykola Azarov outlined, to become

> "[…] perhaps the only European country that continues the policy of raising social standards, an increase wages, pensions and social security. […] Agreements of presidents of Ukraine and Russia allow us to plan the coming years, as the years of development and confidence of peoples in stability of course of life. Therefore, we will not allow anyone to undermine the situation, which has been normalized in such difficult efforts. (GovUkr 18.12.2013a)

Phase III (17 Dec – 16 Jan)

After the "Russia-Ukraine-Deal" had been concluded, the government's public communication was marked by an effort to send appeasing signals: Once again, European integration and the rapprochement to European (normative) standards were declared key priorities of the government (see e.g. GovUkr 19.12.2013a). To emphasise this intention, the parliament adopted a law on the amnesty of detained Maidan protesters. Though, the law was also intended to grant amnesty for those members of the police and special forces that had been accused of disproportionate use of force against protesters. The parliamentary opposition parties responded to this perceived affront by quitting the president's roundtable (which Yanucovych yet left before) while protesters on Maidan felt even more vindicated "to remove a corrupt regime and link their nation's future to the values and norms of the EU" (MMIC 19.12.2013b). According to the analysed media, Yanucovych flaunted the deal with Russia and enjoyed presenting himself in the role of a skilful negotiator. At the same time, the population, at least the EuroMaidanian part of it, was supposed not to follow his assessment:

> "'This loan was definitely very lucrative because Russia didn't make any conditions for us', Yanukovych said. He confirmed a freeze in relations with the EU in favor of a tilt back towards Moscow. [He] insisted that he did not offer in return to join Putin's pet project – a Eurasian customs union. […] He called the EuroMaidan demonstra-

tions against him a 'low blow'." (KyivPost 20.12.2013: 2)

"The nation now knows two things for sure: Russia is our new friend, and it paid a price of $15 billion and cheaper gas for this friendship." (KyivPost 20.12.2013: 4).

Notwithstanding the above, further government releases stated the declared merits of the deal, including a strengthening of Ukraine's (economic and financial) independence and an improvement of its social stability (e.g. by acquiring a stronger position in IMF negotiations and by enabling the state to increase its welfare spending; see e.g. GovUkr 21.12.2013d). Driven by the sudden dynamics in the course of the Russia-Ukraine-deal[42], as portrayed in the analysed media, protesters on Maidan were put on the spot to change their strategy in order to achieve progress concerning the long-term goals and thus not to lose their broad public support.[43] At this point, opposition party leaders discovered their chance to offer EuroMaidan a political venue:

"Opposition leaders today announced the creation of the Maidan political movement […] that will target 'a new constitution and removal of corrupt judges and prosecutors', said Arseniy Yatsenyuk." (MMIC 23.12.2013a)

Triggered by the beating of a prominent journalist and opposition activist on December 25, Tetyana Chornovol[44], the protests again picked up pace and drew attention to the newly established "alliance" of opposition party leaders and EuroMaidan activists. Motivated by restored passion, protesters claimed the resignation Ukraine's interior minister (see MMIC 26.12.2013a).

As the year was drawing to the end, government statements are characterised by a mixture of stressing the main achievements and blaming the (civil society) opposition. In this context, the government referred to its positive economic performance, including e.g. the fulfilment of social obligations (salaries, pensions, allowances etc.), the stabilisation of the economy (stopping recession, removing trade restrictions) and the improvement of consumers' situation (stopping devaluation of the currency, stabilising tariffs and prices). According to the government, all of this was even exceeded (and backed up)

42 Against the background of Yanucovych's repeated public warnings to Europe and the US not to meddle in Ukraine's domestic affairs, INGOs observed an incrasing number of violations of freedom of assembly, of freedom of expression, as well as unfair trials and abusive use of force against activitsts and journalists (see AI 23.12.2013).

43 Indeed, difficult weather conditions and increasing repression by the government began to demoralise the protest movement. At the same time, as the analysed media reports highlight, there was a quite presentable list of EuroMaidan's victories: "Virtually all people arrested after December 1 clashes were released; several top officials were under investigation for the violent crackdown on peaceful protesters, and the main thing: Ukraine did not enter the CU!" (The Ukrainian Week 23.12.2013: 4).

44 Tetyana Chornovol is a 36-year-old deputy (People's Front) of the Verkhovna Rada. During (and already before) EuroMaidan she worked as a Ukrainian opposition activist and journalist. Thereby, she was known for her investigations about corruption among senior state officials. According to civil society sources, she was assaulted "near the capital Kiev hours after an article she had wrote on the assets of top government officials was published." (MMIC 25.12.2013b)

by the decision to suspend the course of European integration in order to materialise national interests within the framework of a strengthened cooperation with Russia, referred to as "historic":

> "Current year ends by historic agreements of presidents of Ukraine and Russia. Restoration of full partnership with Russia averted the worst scenario for our economy. Finally, the fair market price for gas was determined, restrictions in mutual trade were lifted, and strategic projects in industrial cooperation were determined. Russia in a very short time had decided to allocate Ukraine a credit in the amount of $ 15 billion on very favorable terms. Now there is no doubt in financial stability of Ukraine." (GovUkr 31.12.2013a)

On the other hand, the government blamed EuroMaidan for campaigns of disinformation about the government's agenda (concerning an alleged Moscow-induced accession to the CU; GovUkr 24.12.2013a), for economic naivety (concerning rising consumer prices after the AA; GovUkr 27.1.22013a) and, most importantly, for hiding their true intention behind noble speak of Europe and democracy: the fight for power (see GovUkr 27.12.2013d).

In contrast, end-of-year reviews from civil society opposition make use of a broad "historic" perspective to spell out their attributed meaning of EuroMaidan:

> "In Kiev's Independence Square, hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians have gathered, and there they remain, demanding that the regime respect their dignity. The actions have demonstrated more than just the courage and resilience of the Ukrainian people. They have allowed us to see the cowardice and treachery of the ruling regime. They have laid bare to the world Vladimir Putin's new doctrine and his attempts to create a new version of the USSR (MMIC 31.12.2013d)

As further statements show, in this perspective, EuroMaidan represented itself as an all-Ukrainian movement (including 'traditional' opposition parties) that not only fights for an elimination of state repression and a democratisation of the political system in Ukraine but also for setting a successful example of reform for other post-Soviet countries (see e.g. MMIC 31.12.2013b, d).

After tens of thousands peacefully celebrated New Year's on Maidan[45], the beginning of the year was characterised by a sparse information policy of the government while the EuroMaidan camp continued to deliver "status reports". At this point, more and more nationalist or even far-right militant factions began to become rhetorically and physically visible on Maidan (e.g. by holding a torchlight procession on New Year's Eve) and to argue in favour of more radical measures. Nevertheless, statements from EuroMaidan suggest that the core of the protesters was still convinced that such strategies would jeopardise

45 On this occasion, the following New Year's greeting in various languages (along with individual snapshots) from Maidan protesters was published on MMIC's website: "Dear friends! We, Ukrainians, would like to express our sincere gratitude for your support in our struggle for freedom and human dignity. We wish you all a peaceful and fulfilling New Year!" (MMIC 6.01.2014)

the true power of the movement: its diversity. According to this view, in the weeks before, EuroMaidan had developed into an "impressive cross cleavage coalition" which involved like-minded people of all ages and backgrounds: activists, organisations of writers, students, journalists, sports people, experts, show business representatives, ecologists, medical workers, lawyers, military veterans, trade unions, opposition party leaders and their supporters, clerical leaders and believers of all faiths.[46] To draw on more radical strategies would thus not only result in a massive bloodshed but also in a possible breakup of the EuroMaidan movement and, as a consequence, in a breakup of the country (see MMIC 1.01.2014). In sum, despite ongoing and new forms of intimidation and repression[47], EuroMaidan described itself as an exceptional social movement that, up to this point, had achieved a great deal and, on the other side, was uncertain about how to continue the whole project:

> "Whatever the eventual outcome, this is an event that has marked the lives of thousands of people and transformed Ukrainian civil society. […] At present Mr Yanukovych's position does not appear to be in danger. But it is very hard to imagine that the whole astonishing scene could end with a whimper. The fate of this movement, which took Ukraine by surprise when it started, is scarcely any more predictable now than it was in November." (MMIC 7.01.2014)

In marked contrast to this self-description, government statements highlighted that protests, barricades, and occupations had achieved nothing so far but creating political, social and particularly economic disturbances (see e.g. GovUkr 8.01.2014a). As compared to this, the government presented itself as guarantor of stability and development that was able to ensure concrete improvements for the people, such as stable gas prices or reliable social payments. In this regard, Prime Minister Azarov particularly vaunted the Russia-Ukraine-deal as an adequate measure to "resolve fundamental problems of sustainability of state finances and economic development" as well as to create "hundreds of thousands of jobs" in relation to the free trade agreements within the CIS (see GovUkr 9.01.2014a; 10.01.2014d).

Considering that the anti-government protests on Maidan had been an uncoordinated association in the first phases, at this point, there was increasing evidence for an unprecedented quality of organisation and countrywide coordination of EuroMaidan. In this context, the constitution of the "All-Ukraine Euromaidan Forum" in mid-January represented both a highly symbolic act and a pragmatic move towards creating a kind

46 See particularly MMIC (3.01.2014a; 4.01.2014a; 5.01.2014a).

47 Here, the example of "AutoMaidan" can be cited as pertinent: As AutoMaidan had implemented various campaigns in the weeks before (e.g. protests by car to block the streets or car processions to the president's and other high positions' controversial residences outside Kiev), the government established a new traffic police special force to prohibit demonstrations by car. Moreover, AutoMaidan activists and journalists who took part had visits and were threatened at home (see MMIC 3.01.2014c).

of representative planning authority for EuroMaidan.[48] Therefore, its first resolutions included issues of nationwide communication and coordination:

> "The Forum also approved a new joint defence strategy, a transparent and secure budgeting mechanism, a plan for artistic cooperation between cities, a joint information strategy and a civic education plan designed to increase the number of euromaidan activists. In addition, the Forum approved a strategy for spreading euromaidan ideas outside of the protest movement as a top priority." (MMIC 13.01.2014)

According to EuroMaidan statements, the first meeting of the forum in Kharkiv (January 11–12) was attacked several times: online attacks on the organisers' website, repeated acts of arson and vandalism against offices, police persecution of activists, and brutal aggression by unknown thugs against leaders and journalists reporting from the forum.[49] In this phase, the analysed reports revealed that EuroMaidan activists observed themselves not only as opposed to the government and its security forces. Also, they acted as counterpart of an emerging pro-government camp from civil society that protested in favour of 'law and order', the Russia-Ukraine-deal and Yanucovych's stay in office till the end of the term (see MMIC 14.01.2014a). In this situation, reports from INGOs talk about new attempts of police forces to disperse and beat peaceful protesters on Maidan. At this point at the latest, it was taken as demonstrated that there was a well-planned strategy to subdue public debate and activism by force. As a consequence, the immediate resignation of the minister of the interior, Vitaly Zaharchenko, was claimed (see e.g. UHHRU 13.01.2014).

To protest against the government's dealing with EuroMaidan and the increasing violation of human rights in Ukraine, the political opposition parties decided to block the parliament on January 15, right before the scheduled adoption of the 2014 budget, as long as a commission of inquiry would be installed to shed light on the massive use of force by police units on Maidan. In the government's view, this measure represented as a serious provocation, as Prime Minister Mykola Azarov's statements illustrate:

> "I want that all citizens realize: the opposition wants to force responsibility to the authorities for possible delay in payments of increased salaries to state employees, social benefits for mothers and children, the disabled persons, etc. due to not passed budget. […] I ask if the people of Ukraine need a destabilization of the social and economic life. Especially in times of global economic crisis. The answer is clear: those who are blocking the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine continue to work against Ukraine." (GovUkr 15.01.2014a)

48 According to its founders, the forum had its origins in a meeting of Ukrainian pro-democracy activists who participated in Kiev's EuroMaidan in late December 2013. There, they had the idea to call for a "national conference" of representatives from across the country, to be held in the eastern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv. In response to that call, public assemblies were held in as many as 43 cities or towns. Together they approved about 118 delegates (see MMIC 11.01.2014).

49 See particularly MMIC (11.01.2014; 12.01.2014) and UkrN (12.01.2014).

At the same time, other statements suggest that the government continued to do a good job for the country: the bilateral trade turnover and volumes of mutual investments with CU were just about to increase (see GovUkr 15.01.2014j), the work of social patrols and warm-up facilities during the cold weather was ensured (see GovUkr 16.02.2014f), promising initiatives of industrial cooperation with Russia were started (see GovUkr 16.01.2014g) and even the annual program of cooperation between Ukraine and NATO was approved (see GovUkr 16.01.2014a). Ultimately, regardless of the opposition's blocking of (i.e. absence from) the parliament, the government's majority adopted the 2014 budget by show of hands, without any opposition representative being present.

Phase IV (Jan 16 – Feb 22)

In the parliamentary session of January 16, in addition to the 2014 budget, the government majority adopted a legislative package commonly titled "anti-protest-laws".[50] From EuroMaidan's perspective, apart from the dubious adoption procedure (no preceding debate, opposition parties excluded, and adoption by simple show of hands without systematic registration), those amendments implied an unprecedented limitation of citizens' freedoms and rights and thus corresponded to a permanent state of emergency that was proclaimed "to disperse civil society and get rid of the civic protests across Ukraine" (UkrN 16.01.2014). In detail, the legislative package involved:

- libel as a criminal act, e.g. in the context of journalistic investigations collecting information about law enforcement officers (punished by substantial fine up to imprisonment);
- setting up tents or wearing helmets represents a violation of restrictions in context of mass demonstrations (punished by imprisonment of up to 15 days);
- any unsanctioned movement of five or more vehicles (punished by revocation of driver's license for up to two years and confiscation of the vehicle);
- "extremism", i.e. producing and circulating information claiming resignation of government or change of constitution (punished by substantial fines or imprisonment up to 3 years);
- unsanctioned rallies (punished by imprisonment from 10 to 15 years);
- work of internet media not registered as "news agencies" (substantial fines and confiscation of media and equipment);
- blocking of government buildings or private properties of high-level state functions (punished by imprisonment up to 6 years).

According to EuroMaidan activists, as the anti-protests laws came into force, the government not only suspended constitutional rights of Ukrainian citizens and gave itself a mandate of arbitrary crackdown against the judiciary, the press, civil society organisations and citizens but also created an instrument to obscure its crimes of the preceding

50 Officially, the Draft Law No. 3879 included 10 amendments and is named "On making Amendments to the 'Law of Ukraine on the Judiciary and the Status of Judges'" and on "Procedural Laws on Additional Measures for Protecting Security of Citizens".

months. In this regard, the new laws stated that members of the Berkut special police unit, as police forces in general, could not be persecuted for the disproportionate use of force against journalists and protesters on Maidan.[51]

Based on the analysis of media coverage in January 2014, EuroMaidan was portrayed as an unprecedented protest movement that has survived despite all adverse circumstances, including severe winter conditions and persistent repression by the government. Regarding to this, media reports left no doubt that the anti-protest laws were widely interpreted as a serious attack on human rights leading Ukraine back into its undemocratic past:

> "The Party of Regions on Jan. 16 rammed through, without public notice or debate, a raft of draconian laws that drop any pretense of transforming Ukraine into a European-style democracy. […] Ukraine will regress back to the dark ages of authoritarianism, indistinguishable from most former Soviet republics where dictatorships flourish." (KyivPost 17.01.2014: 4)

Nevertheless, according to prominent EuroMaidan figures interviewed by the KyivPost (17.01.2014: 2), the protest movement did not let itself be intimidated by the many attempts of silencing and smashing. Quite the contrary, EuroMaidan spontaneously developed new forms of protest and would continue to do so, as Viktor Kylymar, one of the student strike leaders of the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, stated:

> "We started marches to Mezhyhirya (Yanukovych's house), we are going to organize the stopping of Yanukovych's motorcade and we have been picketing government offices and businesses of representatives of Party of Regions." (KyivPost 17.02.2014: 2)

Related to this, the media draw the attention to a form of protest that became increasingly important: boycotting businesses. Based on the idea of threatening various busi-

51 Sources from civil society opposition meticulously substantiated their statements by comprehensive data: According to its statistic, from November 22 to January 13, 386 people were intimidated illegally, 222 people were physically attacked and 23 cars damaged. In detail, the reported "crimes" include: road police stopping buses driving to EuroMaidan in Kiev; mass systemic intimidation of activists via phones, SMS, media; intimidation of journalists (acquiring personal data, publishing to compromising data); turning off electricity; stealing equipment; violent dismissals of EuroMaidan demonstrations by the police (in Mykolayiv, Cherkasy, Dnipropetrovsk, Chernivtsi, Odesa, Kiev); asking internet service provider to switch off services on government order; hacker attacks on media and NGO sites; intimidation of local governments; direct intimidation of participants of protests; direct intimidation of organizations that help the protests; hiring goons ("Titushki") for violent actions against protesters; intimidation of opposition politicians (email hacked, phones monitored); intimidation of students who participate in protests (threats to dismiss from Universities); banning the driving license for participants of automotive protests; systemic obstruction of First All-Ukraine Forum of Euromaidans (attacks on buildings, tear spray and pepper gas, noise grenades, loudspeakers used to mute the assembly, attacks of Titushki, turning off the electricity during the plenary session, beating of activists); Ministry of Culture threatens to ban Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church because of participation of clergy in protests (see MMIC 16.01.2014b; see also UkrN 17.01.2014).

ness groups with revenue losses, initiatives like "Economic Resistance", a group of civic activists, had already begun to draw up a well-researched list of businesses owned by the president's entourage in order to offer Ukrainians the possibility to influence politics by means of boycott; as it turned out, according to media reports, with considerable success.[52]

In an overall view, both the analysed media and INGO reports are suggesting that the adoption of the anti-protest laws on January 16 represented another fatal turning point in the history of the EuroMaidan protests. Yet, it was taken as demonstrated that the adoption not only constitutes a "circumvention of the usual procedures" in parliament but would also have a "devastating effect on freedom of expression, association, and assembly" (AI 17.01.2014).[53] In order to react to this situation, the analysed INGO statements increasingly and openly claimed to impose EU-sanctions on the president, government members and on further persons and companies in the ruling parties' environment (e.g. by blocking bank accounts; see e.g. UkrN 17.01.2014).

From EuroMaidan's perspective, the days after the adoption of the anti-protest laws were characterised by rapidly increasing tension and confrontation. From EuroMaidan's perspective, the president personally accounted for this new wave of countrywide protests against the government and, more precisely, against the new anti-protests laws that led to a massive use of force between police forces (using batons, flash grenades, teargas, water guns) and protesters (making use of stones, fireworks, batons, Molotov cocktails while reinforcing the barricades). Driven by the dynamic of the events, protesters on Maidan, referring to themselves as incarnation of the "Popular Assembly"[54], even adopted resolutions on "the formation of alternative state institutions", including the parliament, the government, local police forces and new elections in Kiev (see UkrN 20.01.2014a). However, while rumours about the redeployment of military and police units (from other parts of the country to the capital) that had been blocked by protesters spread (see MMIC 20.01.2014a), the "right sector" and other militant protesters formed a civil defence militia and engaged in organised fights with the police. In the course of this, police cars were torched, and rubber bullets were used.[55]

Against the background of about 200 injuries on all sides up to that point and given the stand-off on Maidan, political opposition parties declared to be willing to resume

52 In January, Economic Resistance's boycott list included more than 200 companies (and the property schemes behind) (see KyivPost 17.01.2014: 6).

53 See also a statement from *Reporters without Borders* ("[…] the Law represents a decisive step back from democracy"; cited by MMIC 16.01.2014d), from the *Centre of Policy and Legal Reforms* ("All these laws were adopted in violation of principles of the rule of law"; CPLR 21.01.2014) or from the *International Renaissance Foundation* ("No lawyer in the country could give you a clear understanding of what these laws are about"; cited by MMIC 21.01.2014g).

54 In Ukraine, the People's Assembly or, in Ukrainian, "Veche" traces back to medieval times, when in the federation of the "Kievian Rus" free citizens assembled to discuss question of public interest and to adopt legally binding resolutions.

55 In the light of the violence observed on Maidan, more and more self-critical voices from EuroMaidan spoke up: "The stand-off seems to suit both sides: the regime is getting footage that it can use to justify an attack by riot police on the demonstrations while young protesters have an ideal outlet for their anger, and a means to prove their heroism. Lots of testosterone flowing tonight on the protesters' side." (MMIC 20.01.2014c)

the roundtable talks with the president on condition that the anti-protest law package would be withdrawn. According to government statements, "irresponsible politicians from Maidan" who instrumentalised the Russia-Ukraine-deal to inflame fears about a new Soviet Union had induced the current situation. Therefore, the afore-said politicians are not only accused of "cheating people with their demagoguery", as Prime Minister Azarov stated, but also bear responsibility for those resorting to violence on Maidan (see GovUkr 20.01.2014a). In this context, particularly voices from the ruling Party of Regions advocated for a rigorous application of the "anti-protest laws":

> "We can state for sure: The dramatic events have confirmed the actuality and the punctuality of the anti-extremist laws that were adopted by the Verkhovna Rada. Violence and aggression have to banned behind a reliable legal shield." (Party of Regions, cited in UkrN 20.01.2014b)

> "Radical people resorted to illegal acts that required the response of law enforcement agencies. These illegal actions occurred despite numerous calls for their cessation, including from some members of the opposition." (GovUkr 21.01.2014b)

Indeed, as protesters' sources reported, the government even elaborated its methods of intimidation and repression by using modern technologies of cell phone tracking – a measure that again increased the determination of the protesters.[56] Against this background, the government's plan to initiate a countrywide dialogue while all sides should renounce further violent scenarios and provocations was not taken as a serious plan to promote a peaceful settlement of the situation.

On January 22–23, Maidan's first lost lives were officially declared. Based on the analysed EuroMaidan sources, between 5 and 7 activists died during battles with the police, most of them were shooting victims. In addition, dozens of people were missing, among them also the leader of AutoMaidan (see MMIC 23.01.2014; UkrN 23.01.2014a). As INGO reports point out, based on the shootings, the use of live ammunition obviously no longer represented a taboo. In the light of these extreme acts of violence by security forces, Amnesty International, for example, observed an environment of "pervasive police impunity in Ukraine" (AI 22.01.2014).

Based on the analysed government statements, the responsibility for the escalation of the conflict was exclusively attributed to the protesters, as Prime Minister Azarov stated:

> "I officially declare victims, which unfortunately we already have, are on the conscience and the responsibility of the organizers and participants of mass unrests. I require that the law enforcement agencies thoroughly and vigorously investigate

56 According to affected protesters on Maidan, the government was able to use provider information to pinpoint the locations of cell phones in use near clashes between riot police officers and protesters. Thereby, protesters received a text message saying, for example, "Dear subscriber, you are registered as a participant in a mass disturbance" (MMIC 21.01.2014e). Moreover, activists reported on the adoption of a "double strategy" of the authorities: Thus, in addition to the "usual" attacks by police forces on Maidan, individual participants were chased and hassled, e.g. by beatings, breakings, torchings of cars and buildings (see e.g. UkrN 23.01.2014a).

> these crimes. […] Obviously, that some extremists by bitter irony are trying to rape all Ukraine, constitutional order and legality." (GovUkr 22.01.2014a)

On top of that, while the political opposition announced the formation of a revolutionary government and an increasing number of Ukrainian towns obviously refused to apply the "anti-protest laws", protesters were qualified as "cynical and amoral terrorists" preparing a coup d'état (see GovUkr 23.01.2014e). However, despite rhetorical irreconcilability and ongoing clashes in Maidan, government and EuroMaidan protesters agreed on a temporary cease-fire in order to enable opposition leaders to attend a second round of negociations with president Yanucovych, in which, according to the government, all critical issues (European integration, democratic elections, anti-protest laws) would be on the agenda.[57]

In the analysed media coverage, the period after the adoption of the anti-protest laws was represented unambiguously: When the protests on Maidan reached another crescendo after the dubious adoption of the January 16 law package whose substance was widely observed as undemocratic, violent repression by police forces increased dramatically and deliberately. As the first deaths became known, this was identified as another turning point:

> "Police atrocities awaken nation – As clashes between police and protesters intensified since Jan. 19, including the deaths from gunshot wounds of at least two demonstrators, the nation has awakened to realize the brutality and ruthlessness of its police force. Multiple images of tortured victims, pieces of ammunition and leaked photographs and video evidence exposed mass atrocities." (KyivPost 24.01.2014: 2)

Moreover, the media particularly focussed on the increasingly violent experiences of journalists on Maidan. In this regard, the obvious finding was that journalists covering the protests were "under attack". Since journalists received injuries from stun grenades and rubber bullets, there was a strong suspicion that journalists were even specifically targeted despite clear identification as members of media. Based on these experiences, the main message of the media was to "call on security forces to respect the rights of journalists to work in safety" and "to urge the government to repeal the laws, which gave Ukraine some of the most repressive media legislation in Europe." (KyivPost 24.01.2014: 3).

In marked contrast to the government highlighting its unabated support in major parts of the Ukrainian population[58], the analysed media suggested that the government's and the president's position began to weaken: As public anger stoked after the first roundtable sessions ended without any result, further public buildings throughout

57 On this, see both government and civil society opposition sources: GovUkr (23.01.2014f), MMIC (23.02.2014).

58 More precisely, the government repeatedly invoked the loyalty of its core clientele, as the following statement of Prime Minister Azarov illustrates: "Our conviction is based on the fact that southeast of Ukraine, where three fourth of GDP output is focused, didn't yield to provocations and are working stably and support the policy of the President and the Government. We have on whom to rely." (GovUkr 24.01.2014c)

the country were occupied[59] and clashes between police forces and protesters on Kiev's Maidan continued, including e.g. Berkut units storming into the spots marked with the Red Cross and hundreds of militant protesters throwing stones, stun grenades and Molotov cocktails at the police (see KyivPost 24.01.2014: 8–12). In sum, at this point, the media detected a dramatically increasing propensity towards violence on all sides both rhetorically and physically. In an atmosphere of swirling rumours about the imminent proclamation of martial law, protesters on Maidan began to systematically form self-defence units while more and more evidence about the use of life ammunition by the police became known.[60]

In late January, based on the analysed statements and reports from all sides, the events followed in quick succession: On the one hand, further government buildings in Kiev were occupied (e.g. Ministry of Justice) or there were attempts to do so (e.g. Ministry of Energy and Coal Industry) (see GovUkr 27.01.2014a). Also, irregular state-sponsored goon squads ("Titushki") systematically began to beat up protesters while regular police units started to seize injured protesters directly in hospital (see MMIC 25.01.2014b). On the other hand, the roundtable talks resulted in agreements on unblocking streets and government buildings, on granting amnesty for detained protesters and on the revocation the January 16 anti-protest laws in parliament. Ultimately, on January 28, even Mykola Azarov resigned from the position of Prime Minister, in order to defuse the severity and danger the conflict represented for the country, as his last statement indicates:

> "The conflict situation which has arisen in the state is threatening economic and social development, constitutes a threat for the whole Ukrainian society and every citizen in it. […] For the sake of a peaceful settlement of the conflict, I took my personal decision to ask the President of Ukraine to accept my resignation. […] The most important today is to preserve the unity and integrity of Ukraine. That is much more important than anybody's personal plans and ambitions." (GovUkr 28.01.2014)

Even tough Azarov's successor, acting First Vice Prime Minister Serhiy Abuzov, immediately continued to send conciliatory and conversational signals (including e.g. a confirmation of the amnesty for detained activists; see GovUkr 29.01.2014e), EuroMaidan's sceptical voices still dominated its communication. Based on the statements from civil society opposition, protesters were still determined to stay on Maidan since they were

59 According to the KyivPost (24.01.2014: 12), protesters took over gubernatorial buildings in Lviv, Ternopil, Cherkassy, Rivne, and Khmelnytsky. Attempts were also made on the regional councils of Sumy, Ivano-Frankivsk, Zhytomyr and Vinnytsia, where demonstrations took place. Furthermore, here and there police units were reported to have joined EuroMaidan activists.

60 As the protests on Maidan took a deadly turn, statements from the US, Russia and the EU were frequently cited in civil society sources as well as in the media: While the Russian parliament blames extremists and Western politicians for escalating the conflict, the US started to impose sanctions against high level government officials. The EU, however, left it at diplomatic warnings and adjourned the decision to impose sanctions to February 10, when the next meeting of the EU Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs would take place – a fact that was commented critically: "World War III could have, perhaps, changed the old ossified order, but not the bloody events in Ukraine. Bureaucracy in Europe remains as stagnant as everywhere." (The Ukrainian Week 30.01.2014: 20; see also MMIC 25.01.2014a)

convinced that it was their responsibility to hold the government accountable. In this view, Azarov's resignation did not change much about the initial situation, which had been marked by the civil society's profound desire not just to change leading positions but to change the whole system (see UkrN 29.01.2014a, b). Other statements thus portray the situation as an atmosphere of unabated tension:

> "Tension is particularly high near the barricades where defenses are most comprehensive, but also where police lines are in plain view of the demonstrators. Standing next to a burning barrel (temperatures have dropped to about -15 C during the day) listening to conversations between helmet-clad young men, it seemed that a single "spark" would be enough to rekindle violence. […] the regime changed its tune exceptionally quickly. Whereas yesterday the entire country seemed to be preparing for a declaration of martial law, suddenly today, Azarov was fired and the "dictatorial" legislation passed on 16 January was rescinded." (MMIC 29.01.2014a)

By releasing statements about the renewed rapprochement to the EU (on the occasion of a meeting with a mission of the European Parliament; GovUkr 30.01.2014d) and about other 'ordinary' official news (e.g. concerning Ukraine's selected logo for the Winter Olympics 2022 in Lviv; GovUkr 30.01.2014f), the government tried to convey an impression of easing and going back to normal – with limited success, as media reports suggest:

> "On The Brink Of Civil War – Civil war has been averted, for now. But what some are calling a revolution in the making – pitting anti-government protesters against a corrupt government that they say uses terror and state-sponsored attrition – is taking its toll. (KyivPost 31.01.2014: 1)

> "During these critical days, time in Kyiv is running out much faster than in Brussels. And if the EU fails to mobilize in the near future, this temporal gap will deepen even more. The problem on the table will not be just the murder of a democratic country, but the EU's own suicide." (The Ukrainian Week 30.01.2014: 21)

In a nutshell, the analysed media reports characterise the situation as a highly tense and volatile one. Thereby, the status quo, both referring to the capital[61] and the country as

61 KyivPost's "Visual Guide to EuroMaidan" (31.01.2014: 3; descriptions taken over from the article), an illustrated account on occupied public buildings, squares and streets in Kiev conveys the impression of a "report from the frontline": *Ukrainian House Building* (2 Khreshchatyk St.), one of the latest additions to buildings occupied, taken on Jan. 26, it hosts a medical aid unit, clothing donation point, overnight shelter and canteen; *Institute of History of Ukraine* building (4 Hrushevskoho St.), located at the firing line, has been used as a medical aid unit since the beginning of the clashes on Jan. 19; *Trade Unions Building* (2 Independence Square) was among the first buildings seized by protesters on Dec. 1, it promptly became EuroMaidan headquarters, hosting a press office, hostel, kitchen, meeting hall, a medical aid unit and self-defence headquarters; *Ukrainian Parliamentary Library Building* (1 Hrushevskoho St.) was handed over to protesters by its employees, it is used as a second medical aid unit for those fighting at the front lines; *Zhovtnevy Palace* (1 Instytutska St.) has been occupied by protesters since Dec. 1 and serves as official headquarters of EuroMaidan self-defence units and a medical aid unit, protesters say the building was taken over peacefully

whole is portrayed as a kind of ongoing state of siege (see map from KyivPost 31.01.2014: 2 below) whereas the atmosphere was dominated by deep suspicion due to various ambiguous signals of the government: On January 29, the parliament passed an amnesty law, which stipulated that detained protesters would be released and freed from prosecution if EuroMaidan activists vacate occupied government buildings within 15 days. From the government's perspective, the law on amnesty represented an "effective step towards a compromise" (see GovUkr 31.01.2014c). At the same time, hired thugs continued to attack and terrorise protesters (see KyivPost 31.01.2014: 4). In the same contradictory way, the government announced that a "promising infrastructure project" of Ukraine and Russia on the construction of a transport crossing through the Kerch Strait[62] had been approved (see GovUkr 31.01.2014b). However, simultaneously, Russia restarted trade sanctions against Ukraine and put its bailout package on hold, a fact that remained unmentioned in government communication (see KyivPost 31.01.2014: 12).

The analysed INGO reports of late January/ early February basically focused on three issues: First, the latest amnesty law is seen as an illegitimate strategic trick that puts "the Ukrainian state on a par with pirates and terrorists who use hostages as a tool to influence the situation" since the destiny of citizens that had been arrested on an uncertain legal basis (i.e. detained protesters) was linked to the behaviour of other citizens that are accused of having committed different crimes (i.e. activists in occupied public buildings) (see UHHRU 31.01.2014). Second, the story of Dmytro Burlatov, the leader of AutoMaidan who vanished for 8 days without a trace, was extensively referred to as a textbook example of brutal state repression, as interviews and reports from Amnesty International illustrate:

> "Soaked in blood, covered in cuts and bruises and his clothes stained, he spoke of his ordeal, saying, 'I was crucified. My hands were pierced. They cut my ear. They cut my face. There is no spot on my body that is not injured'." (AI 31.01.2014; 3.02.2014)

Third, INGO reports in this period deal with the topic of far-right and anti-Semitic factions present on Maidan. Thereby, the statements openly disagree with an increasing number of accounts from the government and foreign (particularly Russian) media according to which there is a connection between an alleged increase in anti-Semitism and the Maidan protests (UHHRU 3.02.2014). As highlighted by the UHHRU, based on the data from systematic monitoring of xenophobia over many years, there was a consistently low level of anti-Semitic incidents in the context of EuroMaidan.[63] Furthermore,

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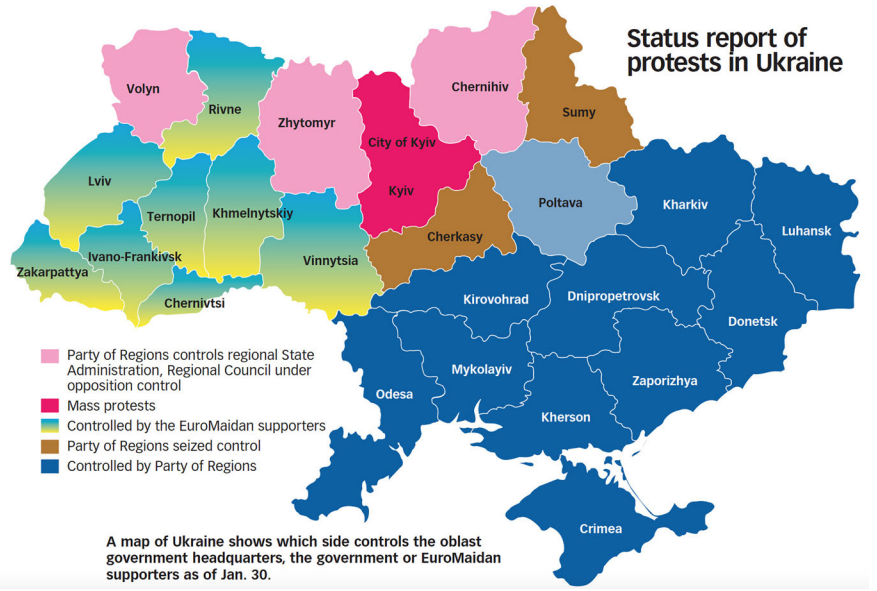
and the staff are allowed inside; *Kyiv City State Administration Building* (36 Khreshchatyk St.) was the first one seized by demonstrators on Dec. 1 and their original headquarters, now the building is mostly used as a hostel and canteen for protesters, it also houses a medical aid unit and a press centre with a big screen where protesters watch the latest news, two psychologists are on duty on the second floor.

62 The Kerch Strait connects the Black Sea in the south with the Sea of Azov in the north. The strait between Crimea in the west and the Russian Taman Peninsula in the east is 3 to15 kilometres wide.

63 Indeed, as the UHHRU admits, there were radical nationalist groups who joined the protest movement. However, as compared to EuroMaidan's majority, these groups were marginal and numerically weak (see UHHRU 3.02.2014).

the UHHRU tells evidence that there is a systematic propaganda campaign in progress "aimed at discrediting the political opposition and participants of the civic protests by spreading false information about a wave of extremism […] supposedly caused by Euro-Maidan" (UHHRU 3.02.2014).[64]

Figure 9: "Status report of protests in Ukraine"



(KyivPost 31.01.2014: 2)

In contrast to the debates mattering to EuroMaidan protesters, the media and INGOs, the analysed government statements in early February state an easing of the situation and, at the same time, increasingly focus on the economic dimension of the crisis in Ukraine:

> "There are no confrontations on the streets. There are peaceful protests without any restriction from the side of the power. In general, the degree of conflict has been reducing and the executive power has to support the process of stabilization. The Government works to reduce the negative impact of the political situation on the economy. Unfortunately, we could not completely avoid such effects (GovUkr 5.02.2014a)

Here, the statements particularly refer to the credit ratings of Ukraine on international capital markets that are expected to deteriorate with every extra day of protests on Maidan and thus with ongoing political instability. Nevertheless, against all odds, the government announced good news as well, including the revocation of the recent sanctions concerning customs clearance of goods imposed by Russia (see GovUkr

64 For this, see also UkrN (4.02.2014) and KyivPost (7.02.2014: 9).

6.02.2014a). In sum, as protesters released parts of the streets and the city hall, for the government the negotiation process with the opposition still represented a promising way of tackling the crisis, despite right-wing groups acting as spoilers here and there (see GovUkr 7.02.2014).

Drawing on the topic of economic development, the analysed media reports present a clear interpretation of the situation: As the economic activity is hampered throughout the country and the national currency has lost nearly ten percent of its value since the beginning of the protests on November 21, the protracted crisis obviously began to harm the economy. According to media accounts, Russia took advantage of the situation and conditioned the continuation of its bailout package and the imposition of the trade sanctions on the formation of an even Kremlin-friendlier government (see KyivPost 7.02.2014: 1, 5). Indeed, relating to the Russian influence on Ukraine's crisis, there is growing evidence that

> "[T]he Kremlin propaganda machine is working in tandem with President Viktor Yanucovych's administration in discrediting and smearing EuroMaidan protesters." (KyivPost 7.02.2014: 4)

In this context, the government's credibility reached a new low-point: As foreign minister Kozhara, for example, casted doubt on whether the kidnapping and torture story of the Automaidan leader Bulatov (see above) was true, this was considered as a cynical provocation on EuroMaidan. Also, the government released statements according to which EuroMaidan harbours "a bunch of gun-toting revolutionaries bent on spreading violence and damage to property", as the methods (e.g. "revolution" graffiti) and targets (to be found on EuroMaidan's boycott list) would prove (see KyivPost 7.02.2014: 4). Yet, according to the media, evidence suggests that these incidences were state-sponsored measures to discredit EuroMaidan or, in other words, to spread "terror against its own people".

To hold against state propaganda, EuroMaidan professionalised its communication, as detailed media accounts on the "public relations department" of EuroMaidan outline: Operating in the protester-occupied Trade Unions building (since January), EuroMaidan's volunteers press relations group, "Euromaidan PR", not only released information about the protests and helped foreign media to connect to with people on the ground but also combatted

> "[…] messages filtered through the many government-controlled news organizations in Ukraine and Russia, and others disseminated by foreign media that have focused their attentions on the more radical side of the protest movement, spreading messages that it is dominated by anti-Semitic, far-right groups." (KyivPost 7.02.2014: 3)

Though, against the background of polling data gathered in late January and early February, a slim majority of the Ukrainian population still supported protests against

the government[65] whereas only a quarter expressed hope for a political solution (see KyivPost 7.02.2014: 5). From civil society opposition's perspective, EuroMaidan voices and the leaders of the political opposition parties had little new to say unless claiming regime change (by early elections), constitutional change (by returning to the 2004 constitution) and an end to the persecution of activists (see MMIC 10.02.2014). In this atmosphere, as the protests on Maidan intensified again but without any immediate chance to implement concrete claims, EuroMaidan protesters increasingly articulated a common feeling of having reached a crucial phase, as exemplarily illustrated in the following statement:

> "With an economy that is spiraling out of control, and with political forces both in Parliament and on the street at an impasse, an 'end-game' of some sort must be coming. But personally, I have doubts that this end-game will be peaceful." (MMIC 10.02.2014)

The visit of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Nils Muiznieks, to Ukraine (February 5 to 10) could not change this impression. On the contrary, since the government portrayed the Commissioners statements as a support for its course[66], protesters on Maidan became even more determined in preparing themselves for the "end game" (see e.g. MMIC 11.02.2014).

On February 12, the first detained activists were released within the framework of the new amnesty law.[67] According to its statements, the government was convinced of having kept its side of the bargain and, therefore, firmly claimed the immediate unblocking of streets and government buildings. In effort to ease the confrontation, it also declared to be willing and able to continue the negotiation process and to stabilise the political and economic situation with the help of all means available (see GovUkr 12.02.2014a). However, despite this rather positive tone, two crucial issues marked the beginning of a new "escalation of tensions" (see GovUkr 12.02.2014e): First, while detained protesters still had to wait for their release (until streets and building would be unblocked), policemen and those responsible for violent police operations on Maidan were directly rehabilitated. Second, EuroMaidan sources provided unmistakable evidence referring to Berkut snipers deployed to Maidan to target protesters. As the analysed media show, both observations are connected to once again increasing protests on Maidan, including the construction of new barricades and the formation of new self-defence units among

65 In this context, voices from civil society opposition also underlined that EuroMaidan as a "mass movement of civil disobedience" enjoyed a qualitatively broad support in population and thus mirrored the Ukrainian society concerning its political, cultural, or religious orientations (see UkrN 11.02.2014a).

66 See GovUkr (11.02.2014c): "The Government shares the largest part of approaches to settlement of the political crisis in Ukraine contained in the [Commissioner's] Conclusions."

67 However, the ruling party's majority still refused to appoint a parliamentary commission to investigate the disproportionate use of force during the preceding months, despite there was an increasing number of accounts from different (social) media and INGO sources that presented well-founded evidence (see e.g. AI 11.02.2014).

the protesters.[68] Following the basic tenor of the media, at this point, a large part of the protesters reached the peak of a process of radicalisation, as the following quotes illustrate:

> "It's true that Maidan is radicalizing, but the reason is that the authorities aren't carrying out demands. Every day of delay means a more and more dangerous atmosphere on Maidan (Andriy Parubiy, leader of "Maidan Self-Defense", KyivPost 14.02.2014: 9).

> "I am preparing my people for a possible war. During wartime, the law enforcement system can hardly work. And this chaos is caused by Maidan." (Evgeny Zhilin, leader of a pro-government protest faction, KyivPost 14.02.2014: 9).

Indeed, as the analysed statements from EuroMaidan sources confirm, the climate for negotiations increasingly deteriorates. While opposition party leader refused the offer to participate in a new government and also declared that they definitely would not vacate Maidan, delegates of the second All-Ukrainian EuroMaidan Forum held in Odesa bluntly articulated the predominant attitude in civil society opposition as follows:

> "We consider these occupied buildings as areas free from the criminal dictatorship of Yanukovych. Our objective is to liberate all of Ukraine from this criminal regime." (MMIC 16.02.2014)

Other statements invoke an overdue awakening of the Ukrainian society, which has finally, with the help of EuroMaidan, worked up the courage to face and fight the post-Soviet "terrorist" state power (see UkrN 16.02.2014). Furthermore, against the background of Russia's renewed bailout aid for Ukraine ("cementing its influence") and regarding an increasing readiness to use violence on the government's side (e.g. concerning Ukraine's interior ministers who reportedly proposed to use flamethrowers against protesters), the protests again experienced a spreading throughout the country, particularly in Russia-leaning eastern Ukraine (see MMIC 17.02.2014b; 18.02.2014b). At the same time, after the talks between the president and the opposition (involving Western diplomats) failed again, the events on February 18 unfolded rapidly, as observations from different civil society sources clearly illustrate[69]:

- new wave of protests claiming resignation of the president and the government, new elections and return to 2004 constitution;
- opposition draft law on return to the 2004 Constitution refused by the ruling party majority in parliament, then call for blocking of parliament;
- intensification of violence on Maidan: throwing of stones and Molotov cocktails (on both sides), use of flash grenades by the police;

68 In fact, at a mass rally on February 9 already, opposition party leaders had already called for a nationwide expansion of self-defence units, which would guard protesters in Kyiv and other cities. At this point, a large part of the protesters put the plan into practise (see KyivPost 14.02.2014: 9).

69 See particularly MMIC (18.02.2014b, c) and UkrN (17.02.2014a, 17.02.2014b, 18.02.2014).

- torching of Party of Regions headquarters, Trade Unions building
- (again) occupation of public buildings (in order to establish medical care);
- far-right faction calls for using firearms (in case of attempts to clear the buildings);
- reports about Titushki using life ammunition, robbing houses and people in the streets as well as coordinating their activities with police;
- ongoing violence against journalists;
- call for a general mobilisation in western Ukraine;
- lockdown of the capital (quasi 'state of emergency'), blocking of all roads;
- several police officers shot dead;
- shutdown of Poroshenko's TV channel;
- security forces crackdown on Maidan;
- burning barricades on Maidan;
- some police units solidarising with protesters
- about 25 people dead and 500 people heavily wounded by grenades, rubber, and live ammunition.

According to government statements, the "outburst of violence and lawlessness" turned out to be a crossing of (red) lines by "radicals" and "extremists" from the opposition, who have nothing in mind but seizing power, even "at the cost of people's blood" (see GovUkr 18.02.2014b). Therefore, based on the government's assessment of the events, security forces had no choice but to restore law and order "by all means within the legislation":

> "The so-called protesters have been attacking the public authorities' buildings, committing arsons, causing grievous bodily harm to law enforcement officials, using firearms and urging upon other citizens to assist them. These illegal activities threaten the lives and safety of citizens of Ukraine and the constitutional order in the country." (Acting Prime Minister Arbuzov, GovUkr 18.02.2014a)

> "There is chaos started in Kyiv. At this the opposition leaders appear producers of these crimes. […] We warn hot irresponsible heads of the opposition – the authorities possess the forces capable to establish order." (GovUkr 18.02.2014b)

After the president and the government expressed their condolences to those died in the confrontation (protesters, law enforcement officers) the next day, the opposition once again was declared responsible for the escalation, that not only led to the sacrifice of human life and to the destruction of state and citizen's property but also discredited the country within the international community, foreign investors and trading partners (see GovUkr 19.02.2014a, c). In view of the people shot dead, the government statements highlight that security forces had not used firearms during the preceding "liquidation of riots". Vice versa, as corresponding evidence (i.e. used weapons left behind) could be seized afterwards, the protesters had used firearms to attack law enforcement officers (see GovUkr 19.02.2014b). Consequently, the government started to adopt measures to prevent further theft of weapons, ammunition and other military equipment by strengthening the protection of military facilities (see GovUkr 19.02.2014e). Nevertheless, since "the President of Ukraine has clearly stated that he considers negotiations

the most effective way of settling the conflict and restore social harmony", the president and opposition leaders resumed negotiations and agreed on a ceasefire, including that protests on Maidan were permitted to continue in a peaceful way (see GovUkr 19.02.2014f).

At the same time, while different party offices and national intelligence service bases all over the country were torched, rumours about an intervention of the Ukrainian military in Kiev went around on Maidan.[70] In fact, the national intelligence service indeed announced "anti-terrorist measures across the country" since Ukraine was seriously threatened by "extremists".[71] Relating to the expression of regret, the attribution of responsibility and the proposals to get out the deadlock, statements from EuroMaidan sources at this point are mirroring government statements, as the following commentary exemplarily summarises:

> "There are no circumstances that can legitimise or justify such scenes. We extend our deepest condolences to the victims and their families. We condemn in the strongest terms the use of violence as a way to solve a political and institutional crisis. It is the political leadership of the country that has a responsibility to ensure the necessary protection of fundamental rights and freedoms. We call on all sides to immediately put an end to the violence and engage into a meaningful dialogue, responding to the democratic aspirations of the Ukrainian people." (MMIC 19.02.2014b)

Based on the analysed statements from civil society opposition of the next day (February 20), the following topics were the most referred to: First, even though the situation was not (yet) seen as a civil war, it was expected that the conflict would further escalate into violence due to miscalculation from both sides leading to an impasse. Second, despite certain fatalism, the protesters called upon the EU and the US to impose political and economic sanctions on government members and the president (see MMIC 20.02.2014c). Third, the analysed documents suggest that the dissent between the (moderate) political opposition parties and EuroMaidan activists became more and more apparent. While the former still believes in a chance to compromise the latter expects a mounting bloodshed ("the regime will finish what it started"; see 20.02.2014b).[72] Indeed, against the backdrop of snipers who continued to target protesters on Maidan and regarding the official firing order against "extremists" issued by the interior minister, the activists' hope for a stable ceasefire agreement and for any other substantial agreement with the government (e.g. concerning changing the constitution) faded quickly. Finally, voices from civil society opposition brought up their observations of increasingly obvious cracks in

70 The government immediately denied information about the deployment of the military to disperse the protesters on Kiev (see GovUkr 19.02.2014e).

71 This information took an even more agitating effect as the involvement of a Russian member of parliament who worked for the Russian national intelligence service in Kiev became known (see MMIC 19.02.2014a).

72 In this context, statements also mention that the Greek Orthodox Church decided to withdraw confidence from the government due to the massive and disproportionate use of force against protesters.

the regime: Therefore, the "doves faction" (particularly influential oligarchs) overtly criticised the government and pled for de-escalating strategies. Beyond that, several MPs left the parliamentary group of the ruling party and, together with the opposition parties' MPs, voted for a termination of the countrywide "anti-terrorist operations" (see MMIC 20.02.2014b).

In one of the last official statements, the president called for a truce and promised to continue fair negotiations with opposition leaders. In parallel, the government made another try to appease the population and thus declared "ministries and departments are operating to ensure life support of the country in the complex political situation" (see GovUkr 20.02.2014). At same time, however, reports about violence and chaos in many parts of the country[73] and about heavy clashes and a massive increase of the death toll on Maidan spread like wildfire. On February 21, KyivPost headlined as follows:

> "Bloodlust – At least 75 killed in week of carnage – Ukraine spins out of control as death toll mounts. […] Ukraine's Health Ministry said that at least 75 people had been confirmed dead as a result of clashes this week – 26 on Feb. 18–19 and at least 49 on Feb. 20. […] Most of them were protesters. But at least 13 of these victims were police officers." (KyivPost 21.02.2014: 1, 4)

According to the analysed media coverage, both sides immediately blamed each other "for igniting the deadly conflict": On the one hand, protesters armed with improvised weapons, Molotov cocktails, stones and shields were accused of attacking police positions, torching police vehicles, firing at police with live ammunition and capturing officers as "prisoners of war". On the other hand, security forces were accused of using improvised explosive devices packed with nails and of firing at unarmed protesters with shotguns and automatic rifles. Furthermore, based on media accounts, as protesters were shot in head, neck, heart or lungs, there was every indication that snipers deliberately targeted protesters with great precision from ambush. Finally, based on volunteer doctors' experiences on Maidan, the police did not allow treating protesters immediately. Other eyewitness reports cited in the media and INGO reports put it straight:

> "It felt like real war" (AI 21.01.2014)

> "Central Kyiv became a war zone just after breakfast time on Feb. 20, shattering a truce reached the night before by embattled President Viktor Yanukovych and opposition leaders. Either police and protesters weren't listening, or they had different orders. It remained unclear late on Feb. 20 who drew first blood on the country's bloodiest day in its post-Soviet history." (KyivPost 21.02.2014: 3)

Though, as further media reports suggested, the breakup of the authorities accelerated: Although the president and opposition party leaders agreed on an ultimate

73 According to statements of the national intelligence service, "insurgents" looted military arms depots throughout the country.

compromise[74], the parliament unilaterally passed resolutions on the return to the 2004 constitution, on the unconditional amnesty of all detained protesters and on the dismissal of interior minister Zakharchenko. Finally, on February 22, after Yanucovych had been ousted from office by another parliamentary resolution, all armed groups on Maidan and in Ukraine as a whole agreed to lay down arms.

5.3 The Temporality of Maidan

> "The temporal dimension is constituted by the fact that the difference between before and after, which can be experienced in all events, […] is extended into the past and the future." (Luhmann 1995: 77–78)

Communication about the Maidan protests includes specific delineations and characterisations of the present. Thereby, the present or, more precisely, the experiencing of the present from different observing perspectives is structured and ordered according to varying differentiations of before and after. This chapter highlights the central tags of Maidan's temporal dimension based on the text corpus. The following sections show the development of communication in a temporal dimension with a view to three conflict phases and, in addition, on the basis of three separate presentations of sources group coding. In doing so, it becomes evident how certain aspects of the past are actualised at a given moment of the conflict's present and, accordingly, how plans and ideas about the future are condensed in the here and now of the conflict.

In phase I, right from the beginning on November 21, the Maidan protests were associated with the "Orange Revolution" of 2004, since they started on the eve of its ninth anniversary.[75] As mentioned earlier, the media straightaway offered comparisons of both "revolutions", saying things that EuroMaidan (with at least 100.000 protesters on November 24) represents "the largest public demonstration since the Orange Revolution" (Kyiv Post 29.11.2013: 1). In this context, the media as well as civil society statements left no doubt about the "orange" and thus revolutionary character of EuroMaidan which was described as a country-wide mass movement that included the whole society in its aspiration to continue the path of European integration. Thereby, the Orange Revolution was not only referred to as a simple historical benchmark to illustrate the size and the quality of the protest activities. Rather, EuroMaidan was interpreted as a follow-up of

74 This compromise was mediated by high rank diplomats form Germany, Poland and France and included the immediate return to the constitution of 2004 and prompt new elections.

75 On November 22, 2004, the so-called "Orange Revolution" began. In the collective memory of Ukrainians, the Orange Revolution, initiated by supporters of presidential candidate Viktor Yushchenko who were wearing orange as a party symbol, stands for a national strike and a series of mass demonstrations that emerged after the presidential elections were observed as being influenced by voter intimidation and electoral fraud on both sides. The bloodless Orange Revolution lasted for more than two months. In the end, the protesters achieved a revote ordered by the Supreme Court of Ukraine, in which Viktor Yanukovych was declared the winner (see e.g. Kappeler 2014).

the Orange Revolution, thus suggesting that both protest movements are interconnected phenomena:

> "For many people, this decision not only represents the end of Ukraine's European aspirations. It is also highly symbolic: Nine years ago, to the day, on November 22, 2004, Ukrainians gathered on Maidan in Kiev, which became the venue of the Orange Revolution, to fight for justice. On this square, Ukrainians made their European history. Today again, they are there to fight for their European future." (UkrN 24.11.2013)

> "We cannot leave it that way, because we lost the victory in 2004." (Statement of a protester on Maidan, interviews by KyivPost 29.11.2013: 5)

However, in the week before the third Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius (28–29 November), the revolutionary impetus remained limited to the idea that the Ukrainian government could still decide to sign the Association Agreement with the EU in Vilnius – supposing that EuroMaidan's pressure on the streets remains high or increases even more.

Although some statements point to the fact that the government tried to renounce any interpretation of the suspension of the Association Agreement as "historical", later, it picked up the topic under the impression of the EuroMaidan movement that became increasingly popular:

> "I have not seen any tragedy, absolutely, and there is no 'historicity' in this moment if we come back to this issue in six months." (Prime Minister Mykola Azarov, GovUkr 23.11.2013c)

> "I'm sure this is a historic moment for our country. No one promised that it would be easy, nobody imagined that it will pass imperceptibly. So today we are going to discuss the issue, which has allowed finding a way out." (First Vice Prime Minister Serhiy Arbuzov, GovUkr 28.11.2013c)

Other "historical" references that were associated with the claims of EuroMaidan in the days before Vilnius include the idea of understanding the situation between the EU and Ukraine (i.e. the status quo without signing the AA) as one of two entities actually belonging together but separated by "a second Berlin Wall" that should (and could) be teared down (see UkrN 24.11.2013). In this sense, Ukraine is once again presented as a truly European country that started on its way to peacefully overcome an unjust border between Ukraine and Europe, understood as a residue of the "Iron Curtain" in present time.

To sum up, whereas the government's pointedly unemotional account of the present ("no historicity in this moment", GovUkr 23.11.2013c) is shaped by economically determined plans and expectations about the near future,

> "In the negotiations with the EU or Customs Union Ukraine is guided exceptionally by the interests of citizens and have a pragmatic approach. […] And now we have no right to take hasty decisions that conflict with the interests of the national economics or industry. […] in negotiations with these trade and economic blocks everyone had

> realized that Ukraine would protect its producers. […] We will become a strong partner, it is an issue to be solved in the near future. (GovUkr 25.11.2013e)

communication in the context of EuroMaidan merges historically charged ideas about a necessary sequel of the Orange Revolution and the overcoming of Europe's ongoing political, economical and social division ("second Berlin Wall") into the idea of an exceptional window of opportunity that sould be used to politically "fight for a European future" (UkrN 24.11.2013). Yet, when it became known that the government definitely did not sign the Association Agreement at the summit of Vilnius and, one day later (on November 30), police units tried to dissolve EuroMaidan by using extensive physical force for the first time, the here and now of the conflict for all observers changed dramatically.

Ukrainian authorities: "No historicity in this moment"

According to the analysed text corpus, all observers frequently hinted at the Orange Revolution as a historical example that is in some way or other linked to the Maidan protests. However, contrary to the positive meaning attributed in documents from civil society opposition, official statements refer to the Orange Revolution as a rather dark chapter in recent Ukrainian history that should not serve as a model for the current situation. At this point, the government's key message is to prevent the scenario of 2004 by all means since those "revolutionary events" led to massive economic turbulences, such as price increases and a weakening of the currency. And after all, Ukraine in 2013 is believed to be a "completely different country" than in 2004, i.e. a more European one where such methods have been overcome (see e.g. GovUkr 3.12.2013e, f). While after the first violent crackdown the protests increased in size, the government's negative comments on the ongoing comparisons of the Maidan protests with the Orange Revolution even heated up in phase II:

> "For ten years, this is the third attempt to seize power illegally. First attempt is the orange Maidan, the second – the illegal dissolution of the parliament. Today we have the third attempt. And every time a violation of the Constitution and the law led to serious consequences for Ukraine. It rejected us on the path of development. Do you want it? The people of Ukraine do not want it! I firmly declare that the Government will not allow such catastrophic scenarios!" (GovUkr 4.12.2013a)[76]

Nonetheless, in contrast to its negative representation of the Orange Revolution in the past, the government signals an intention to draft a positive scenario of the future. While reminding all political forces in Ukraine of their responsibility for a peaceful development and for shaping the "fate of the nation", the government makes an effort to de-

76 Based on the government's assessment here, there was a second attempt "to seize power illegally". This hint refers to the dissolution of the parliament in April 2007, when former president Viktor Yushchenko (one of the leaders during the Orange Revolution) dissolved the democratically elected parliament, which was dominated by the Party of Regions (due to number of MPs who had changed over to the other camp right after the elections and thus unexpectedly created a majority that was able to change the constitution).

scribe a "third way" for Ukraine's future. On the one hand, it repeatedly confirms the way towards European integration. On the other hand, the government's official communication points to the imperative of concluding a "new strategic partnership" with the Russian Federation (see e.g. GovUkr 4.12.2013d; 7.12.2013c). In this regard, the new initiatives of approaching Russia are rhetorically linked to a critique of EuroMaidan that, in this view, revitalises a negative aspect of the Russian legacy in Ukraine: EuroMaidan is accused of invoking the ghosts of the past by favouring the unbounded rule of the people in a revived form of Soviet councils that are both ineffective and not representative for the whole population:

> "With all sincere respect for the people who peacefully express their position on Maidan, you cannot realize that they are not the whole Ukraine. The axiom is that the meetings cannot run the state. When the Bolsheviks had used this method of management in the last century, it, as known, finished poorly." (GovUkr 11.12.2013a)

Thus, by distancing itself from EuroMaidan's dubious experiments with ambiguous ending, the government presents itself as being the only force able to act and to offer concrete ways out of the politically volatile and economically precarious situation. In this sense, the "Russia-Ukraine-deal" is presented as a future-oriented achievement:

> "Yesterday a truly historical event took place: in the course of the negotiations the Presidents of Ukraine and the Russian Federation managed to reach extremely significant arrangements […] that open good prospects for Ukraine for the following years and give an opportunity for the Government to approve today a budget of social, I emphasize, and economic development of the country, being impossible by this time." (GovUkr 18.12.2013a)

In Phase III, the government's account of the Maidan protests was no longer only characterised by (economically) justifying the suspension of the AA process but also by publicly backing up its decision to conclude a number new cooperation projects and strategic partnerships with Russia. In its end-of-year reviews, the government thus defended its decisions and plans as measures to regain the stability and unity of the country:

> "Restoration of full partnership with Russia averted the worst scenario for our economy. […] Now there is no doubt in financial stability of Ukraine. […] Today more than ever we need to feel that we are a single nation, single state. We have a common goal – we want to live in an independent and prosperous country." (GovUkr 31.12.2013a)

As far as further future plans are concerned, the analysed government statements at the turn of the year are limited to the announcement of long-term plans and measures, e.g. concerning the "the radical modernization" of the economy or measures to develop the infrastructure. At the same time, concrete propositions to surmount the perceived danger of "sinking in a political infighting" in 2014 are rather rare (see GovUkr 9.02.2014a).

In sum, phases III and IV are marked by a certain defensiveness and inaptitude to react to the events (apart from blaming civil society opposition for the situation) in terms

of a coherent policy. Instead, the statements convey the impression that the government is caught in the short-term nature of the crisis. For instance, while violence reached an unprecedented level and the first lives were lost on Maidan, government communication, seemingly unimpressed, addressed ameliorating economic data and the successful reconditioning of energy supply during the severe winter season. Beyond that, some statements involve comments on highly symbolic historical dates that formed a marked contrast to the actual situation. Referring to the Day of Unification and Freedom on January 22, for example, which, in normal circumstances, is meant to celebrate Ukraine's short-lived pre-Soviet independence[77], the authorities confirm their determined intention to fight anarchy, chaos and the danger of division caused by the protests on Maidan (see GovUkr 22.01.2014a). In the same vein, in the very last episode of the conflict, when rumours about a possible suppression of EuroMaidan with the assistance of the military persisted among the protesters, the government marks the day of commemoration of participants of war and honours the courage and "real patriotism" of Ukraine's former USSR troops (see GovUkr 15.02.2014).

Civil Society Opposition: "Everything is interconnected"

According to the analysed documents from different sources that are attributed to civil society opposition, references to the Orange Revolution run like a golden thread through the statements. From phase II on, however, beyond the mere observation that EuroMaidan represents the largest demonstration since the Orange Revolution mobilising millions of citizens in the whole country, the comparison between the two increasingly gets integrated into a comprehensive narrative that describes EuroMaidan as a logically necessary episode in Ukrainian history.

In an obvious effort to expose its self-attributed historical meaning, EuroMaidan is thus portrayed as the chance of a lifetime to break with the Soviet and post-Soviet past, which is characterised by a "cycle of fierce competition and revenge politics" or, generally speaking, by a winner-takes-it-all-thinking that produced "tough and determined political street fighters" (like president Yanuvovych) and therefore seriously harmed the Ukrainian society already torn between east and west (see e.g. MMIC 4.12.2013b). When a group of Maidan protesters destroyed the statue of Lenin at the top of Shevchenko Boulevard in Kiev on December 8, this historical burden again forged ahead in the here and now of the conflict on Maidan.[78] Another highly symbolic association that was in the 'revolutionary air' of phase II referred to a well-known episode in European history:

> "Let us remember the student movement of 1968. Were there any concrete immediate economic and political consequences? According to historians, there were rather failures. Only today, we understand the true value of those events: the world was no

77 On January 22, 1919, the two predecessors of the modern Ukrainian state (Ukrainian People's Republic and West Ukrainian People's Republic) adopted an agreement of unification, the "Act Zluky" (unification act), in Kiev (see Kappeler 2014: 165–187).

78 See e.g. MMIC (9.12.2013). Further comments say that the dismantling of the granite statue of Lenin by the protesters also recalled the scene of "the symbolic fall of Saddam's statue in Baghdad in 2003" (see MMIC 24.12.2013a).

> longer as it was before. A few students from Sorbonne changed reality. Repression continued, but authorities fell apart. One could breathe more freely. In this atmosphere, a new kind of people emerged." (UkrN 9.12.2013)

Based on the profound social transformation of European societies from 1968 on, EuroMaidan activists in the same vein claim to do away with the "paralysing post-Soviet shadow" and to mentally free the Ukrainian society (and, as a model, other post-Soviet societies) from paternalistic structures. Thereby, EuroMaidan is depicted as one event in a chain of events triggered by the Velvet Revolution in 1989[79], beginning with Ukraine's struggle for independence in 1990/1991, continuing with the Orange Revolution in 2004 and now, with EuroMaidan, completing the "civilising breakthrough from Eurasia to Europe" (UkrN 12.12.2013).[80] In this context, from the perspective of those activists who witnessed both the Orange Revolution and EuroMaidan, the latter is characterised as less party political, more relaxed and open-minded. Yet, the atmosphere was described as carnivalesque and as a kind of artistical happening. At the same time, against the background of a less consolidated political system and a more fragmented government in 2004, the Orange Revolution was outlined as being more party politically dominated and thus planned in a more professional and long-term way (see UkrN 12.12.2013).

As the Russia-Ukraine-deal was concluded (phase III), the opponents of a rapprochement with Russia on Maidan tightened the tone by referring to the historical origins of the "unnaturally divided Ukrainian society":

> "East Ukraine was once as nationalistic and Ukrainian-speaking as Western Ukraine is today. The dramatic transformation of the area was a result of ethnic cleansing. In 1932, a famine engineered by Stalin killed up to an estimated 10 million people, mostly in East Ukraine. Beginning in 1933, the Soviets replaced them with millions of deported Russians." (MMIC 17.12.2013e)

As 2013 was the 80th commemoration of the Ukrainian "Holodomor" (i.e. "genocide by hunger") and part of the Ukrainian political elite and particularly Russian authorities still refused to term the events of 1932/1933 a "genocide" and "ethnic cleansing", voices from EuroMaidan picked up the issue to state that EuroMaidan also represents a symbol against Russia's great power politics and thus marks "the frontline of liberal democ-

79 This hint to the beginning of the breakdown of the "Eastern bloc" in what was then Czechoslovakia is supplemented by references to the Hungarian crisis in 1956 in other commentaries: "In October in Budapest, as in Kiev, there were peaceful protests and demonstrations against the harshness and severity of the Russian-controlled government. The Hungarian people wanted to turn toward the West, but their government, like the Ukraine, at Moscow's urging, turned loose the police to forcibly end the demonstrations. By the beginning of November, it was clear that Moscow would do whatever it took to make certain that Hungary remained within their sphere. When the Hungarian police couldn't achieve that result, Russian tanks and troops were sent to do the job." (MMIC 22.12.2012)

80 Other accounts point out that EuroMaidan is also reminiscent of the events in 2000/2001 when under the slogan "Ukraine without Kuchma" thousands of Ukrainians protested for the resignation of then president Leonid Kuchma who was accused of having ordered repressive measures against journalists (see e.g. UkrN 26.12.2013; MMIC 4.01.2014a).

racy".[81] In this context of a perceived cold-war-like competitive relationship between the West and Russia, a "civil war or an official breakup of the country" is seen as a "very real possibility" (see MMIC 17.12.2013e; 18.12.2013b).[82] To complete these far-reaching warnings, the Maidan protests were sporadically dubbed "Ukraine's version of the Arab Spring". However, as the respective statements clarify, unlike the "unfortunate counterparts in the Arab world", the people of Euromaidan, at this point, are believed to have a "decent chance" of inducing real change, not only concerning the political elite but also the political system and society as a whole (see e.g. MMIC 16.12.2013b; UkrN 6.02.2014c). Here, once again, the Orange Revolution is portrayed as an earlier chapter of the same future-oriented story:

> "What we saw in the Orange Revolution, and what we are seeing now, is a fight for the very soul of Ukraine. […] At issue were not really the minutiae of a trade deal and matters of political and economic reform but something far more profound. The question is whether Ukraine will end years of balancing between the EU and Russia and definitively throw in its lot with the countries to its west, or whether it will return to a Moscow-led order, in which it resumes its traditional role of Russia's little brother." (MMIC 24.12.2013a)

As the "anti-protest laws" were adopted (phase IV), statements from civil society opposition show an emerging disillusionment given the ambitious claims of EuroMaidan. Since Ukraine's independence, there had never been a bigger step backwards concerning the rights and freedoms of Ukrainian citizens:

> "This is a devolvement of absolute power to the president and his henchmen and thus no less than a relapse into the times before 1989. [This is] dictatorship, totalitarianism, and an open declaration of war." (UkrN 17.01.2014)

In this context, several reports retrospectively deal with the development of Ukraine since its independence and try to explain how it could come to this. Thereby, the situation is explained by referring to an overall inability to transcend the Soviet legacy: lack of experience in democratic processes, a languishing Soviet-style economy, a Soviet-formed elite that persistently dominates the political elite as well as bureaucracies, and, all in all, favourable conditions for a small group of oligarchs to enrich themselves at the expense of the state and the Ukrainian people (see e.g. MMIC 21.01.2014a). Consequently, for those political leaders, the main objective is to stay in power by all available means:

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81 In a detailed article published by MMIC (21.12.2013c), the Ukrainian history from the 17th century on to the present is represented as a history "on the edge of empires" characterised by various divisions of the state territory and changing external rule. Ultimately, the article suggests that, due to EuroMaidan, there is finally a chance to overcome this virtual determinism of history.

82 To counter this atmosphere and to promote the unity of the Ukrainian people, as some statements indicate, EuroMaidan activists deliberately reanimated slogans of the Orange Revolution: 'East and West together!' or 'Away with the bandits!' (see UkrN 22.01.2014).

> "In 2004, Yanucovych spoke a sacramental dictum: 'Once in power, nobody will be able to oust us!' On this maxim, from 2010 on, they began to establish a completely authoritarian regime – seemingly democratic for the West, but de facto dictatorial for the Ukrainian people." (UkrN 25.01.2014c)

Based on that, the articulated expectations about the near future at this point definitely implied that it would only be a matter of time before the authorities fall. Indeed, in its post-Soviet history, the Ukrainian society slowly but surely developed a moderate mode of political conflict settlement, drawing on peaceful mass protests and civil disobedience.[83] However, against the background of systematic repression and excessive violence against EuroMaidan protesters, the previously still existing optimistic hopes for a *peaceful* way of regime change were ultimately challenged, especially when the protests turned deadly during its last days.[84]

The Media and INGOs: Reporting on the unprecedented

The observation of EuroMaidan within the framework of the analysed media coverage and INGO reports includes various short-term foci. Here, too, the obvious superordinate comparison to the Orange Revolution and other key events in Ukrainian history played a central role.

After the first violent crackdown on Maidan protests (phase II), media reports frequently used interviews with "experts" and "affected people" to capture the complex situation:

> "Police has never attacked peaceful demonstrators at such a large scale with so many people hospitalized. […] There were fights between protesters in 2001, during the Ukraine 'Without Kuchma protests', but not one-sided attacks like this morning on such a big scale." (Interview with "human rights activist" Yevhen Zakharov, KyivPost 6.12.2013: 8)

> "'What happened (on Nov. 30), it was bloody and unprovoked,' says Oleh Rybachuk, one of the most visible members of civil society on EuroMaidan, referring to the violent police breakup of peaceful protesters that night which sent dozens of people to the hospital." (KyivPost 13.12.2013: 14)

To pin down the events within a broader scope, the media also tried to explain the ongoing situation with reference to Ukraine's history since its independence. In this context, even though the share of supporters of "Ukraine's European vector" was higher than ever before (particularly in comparison to the Orange Revolution; see e.g. ICG 2.01.2014),

83 According to the analysed sources, against all adverse conditions, Ukrainian civil society as such indeed developed in a positive way since its independence, because there are manifold confident and independent political parties and non-governmental organisations with pro-European mindsets. Therefore, a development towards a Belarussian-style autocracy is presented as implausible (see e.g. UkrN 25.01.2014a, 6.02.2014c).

84 See MMIC (21.01.2014d) and UkrN (24.01.2014b, c; 13.02.2014; 16.02.2014; 18.02.2014).

Ukraine's political, economic and cultural independence from Russia was still seen as unfulfilled. In this sense, 'Ukraine without Kuchma' in 2000/2001 and the Orange Revolution in 2004 were represented as "missed chances" since none of the political forces really took the opportunity to break with the past and to bring about true societal change (see The Ukrainian Week 3.12.2013: 8–10). Thus, the "lost years" under Yanucovych only represent the latest (albeit the worst) episode of a long record of growing cronyism and increasingly undermined democratic mechanisms fostered by parties of all colours (see The Ukrainian Week 3.12.2013: 6–7). Against this background, media coverage particularly emphasises one of the main differences between EuroMaidan and other mass protests in recent Ukrainian history: Right from the beginning, EuroMaidan deliberately decoupled from political parties and their symbols and thus presented itself as a new and unspoiled political force in Ukrainian society (see e.g. KyivPost 6.12.2013: 3).

As the protests on Maidan mounted when the details about the government's "Russia-Ukraine-deal" came to light in little slices, Media accounts more and more often address a certain heroic cult that developed around EuroMaidan:

> "Heroes are born during momentous times and EuroMaidan is no exception. Some of the heroic deeds inspired the whole nation, while other simply kept their companions warm with a cup of coffee and a chat. There is already a book and a documentary in the works about outstanding EuroMaidan personalities." (KyivPost 20.12.2013: 1)

Reports emerging from this context include personal stories that draw on highly symbolic historical elements. For instance, KyivPost reported about "the bell-ringer" of St. Michael's Cathedral, Ivan Sydor, who started to ring the bells of St. Michael's to alarm the sleeping city and call for help when riot police started to attack protesters camps on Maidan in the night of December 11. Pointing out the singularity of this measure, the bell ringer stated:

> "The last time St. Michael's sounded an alarm was in 1240, when Kyiv was under seizure from the Mongols. It was also a December, and the Mongols came to the Lyadski Gates, located in the place of modern Independence Square." (KyivPost 20.12.2013: 10)

Further examples include "the old man", Oleksiy Kushnirchuk, a highly motivated protester at the age of 85, whose sister had been killed by security officers in Soviet times and who wants to show his anger about the government's plans to approach the CU, which he perceives as "a new Soviet Union" (KyivPost 20.12.2013: 10).

As the Russia-Ukraine-deal was concluded and the protests on Maidan gained in size and quality (phase III), media reports more and more openly and frequently speculated about the prospects of the "Yanucovych regime". Thereby, different future scenarios are

simulated with reference to the experiences of the past[85], particularly concerning the electoral fraud in 2004 that induced the Orange Revolution:

> "If the EuroMaidan is neutralized and assistance is provided by Vladimir Putin, Viktor Yanukovych will prepare a wide range of tools to stay in power. […] So the upcoming presidential campaign [for the 2015 elections] may differ from that of 2004 in the following aspects: those in power may change the election law and amend the Constitution, dilute the votes of the opposition electorate, and bribe voters with 'fat Russian cash'." (The Ukrainian Week 23.12.2013: 10)

Even in mid-January 2014, when the protests on Maidan again achieved an unprecedented level in the light of the adoption of the "anti-protest laws", those future scenarios still see a realistic chance for Yanucovych "to win an honest election next year" since the political opposition is presented as being too fragmented to pose a serious danger in presidential elections (see e.g. KyivPost 17.02.2014: 4).

In sum, media coverage in phase IV is marked by the contrast between ongoing initiatives of crisis talks (president, opposition leaders) and dramatically increasing tension and confrontation. On January 22, media articles particularly refer to Ukraine's Unity Day, which turned out to be a day of civil unrest and a part of "the biggest test of Ukraine's post-Soviet integrity" (see The Ukrainian Week 30.01.2014: 10). On January 24, given the first deaths on Maidan, the KyivPost cites one of the prominent rallying cries among protesters on its cover page: "Give me liberty or give me death!"[86]

Furthermore, in a both rhetorically and actually violent atmosphere, Yanucovych is talked up as a head of state that is primarily motivated by revenge, despite all initiatives for starting a dialogue with the broader opposition:

> "Actually, Yanukovych is seeking violence as a way of pay back, revenge for his 2004 failure. He will keep talking about dialogue, but there are no democratic institutions for a dialogue in Ukraine as he usurped power back in 2010. What he is looking for is not compromise, but a way to excuse the use of state violence for his personal trauma." (The Ukrainian Week 30.01.2014: 14)

In the same vein, the media reported on "special contributions" to EuroMaidan, such as a widely shared video of protest scenes produced by activists and accompanied by Charlie Chaplin's final speech in *The Great Dictator* (1940) and therefore insinuating that Yanucovych's regime, at least since the first lives were lost, could be equated with an inhuman dictatorship:

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85 In this regard, INGO accounts invoke exemplary scenarios such as the storming of the Winter Palace in the context of the October Revolution of 1917 or the revolutionary events on Tahrir Square in Egypt in 2011. However, most of these historically inspired scenarios were overruled since the general framework is seen as completely different (see UHHRU 27.12.2013).

86 The KyivPost (24.01.2014: 1) itself recalls that this dictum traces back to Patrick Henry (1736–1799), a prominent figure of the American War of Independence and Governor of Virginia.

> "Don't give yourselves to these unnatural men – machine men with machine minds and machine hearts! You are not machines! You are not cattle! You are men! You have a love of humanity in your hearts! You don't hate! Only the unloved hate, the unloved and the unnatural. Soldiers! Don't fight for slavery! Fight for liberty!" (Charly Chaplin in *The Great Dictator*, cited in KyivPost 7.02.2014: 5)[87]

As the protests turned increasingly violent and deadly, media articles more and more frequently used the metaphor of a closing window of opportunity. Thereby, under the pressure of events that followed in quick succession, external actors (particularly the EU and European countries) were called on to immediately intervene and prevent "the murder of a democratic country" which would also be "EU's own suicide" (see The Ukrainian Week 30.01.2014: 21). Yet, this request remained disregarded. Instead, the "scenario of threatening bloodshed and a new ruin" approached.[88] Right before the breakup of the government and Yanucovych's fleeing from Ukraine, media reports ultimately stated that February 20 represented the bloodiest day in Ukraine's post- Soviet history (see e.g. KyivPost 21.02.2014).

Figure 10: Cover Page

(KyivPost 24.01.2014)

87 In this issue, KyivPost published the complete text of Charly Chaplin's speech.

88 In an article also published by MMIC (17.02.2014a), *Transparency International* delineates an imminent future scenario characterised by "continuous strife, civil war, and complete loss of independence" (recalling a "terrible" period of Ukrainian history in the 17th and 18th century) if Ukrainian society and authorities not choose to resolve the crisis soon by returning to the constitution of 2004.

5.4 The Social Dimension: Selfs and Others on Maidan

As demonstrated in previous chapters (5.2/5.3), within the discursive arena that is reflected by the text corpus conflict topics and themes get differentiated from non-conflict ones (factual dimension). Likewise, the here and now of the conflict gets differentiated from non-conflicting parts of the past and the future (temporal dimension). Considering the evolution of the Maidan protests as a conflict system in its social dimension means approaching the text corpus providing that conflict identities are constituted within communication itself and thus undergo change. Recalling Luhmann (1984: 426–436; see chapter 4.1), identities are understood as stable structures of expectation appearing in reference to four layers: persons, roles, programmes, and norms. The synopsis section (chapter 5.5) draws on these layers in greater detail. In preparation for this, the following sections examine how discursive addresses get differentiated and repeatedly actualised.

Phase I (Nov 21 – Dec 30)

When on November 21 civil society activists and journalists met at Maidan to express their incomprehension of the government's decision to suspend the Association Agreement with the EU, they were already referring and responding to a loosely defined common identity. Indeed, this was not just a simple reflex against government decisions articulated out of a vaguely definable civil society. Since the frame of "EuroMaidan" had already been set with the help of social media, there was a common denominator for those rejecting the government's decision and thus a common identity (and a communicative counterpart) as a party to an objective political contradiction. However, even though the Maidan protests considerably increased in the first few days and "EuroMaidan" specified its arguments and positions (in a virtual process of self-understanding; see themes and topics in 5.3.), government statements literally addressed "EuroMaidan" not until November 27:

> "I'd like to address to citizens who are on streets, like now, to express their support to the course of European integration. After all, this is the main content of the actions that take place in the last days – what certain political forces would like to turn into conflict with the authorities. It is pointedly that the participants of EuroMaidan are trying to distance themselves from politicians. We've seen as people literally physically 'bypass' opposition politicians, leave them aside from their declaration of will." (Prime Minister Mykola Azarov, GovUkr 27.11.2013a, italics added)

As the above-cited statement suggests, after 6 days of mass protests that exceeded the Orange Revolution early on, the government rhetorically recognised EuroMaidan as a more or less legitimate political factor, if not as a political force in Ukrainian politics.[89] On the other hand, however, the situation of a mass movement that grew extremely quickly

89 In the first days of EuroMaidan, the government rather ignored the unprecedented size and quality of the mass protests in the first place. Later, the protests were even interpreted as an expression of support for the course of the government: "In whole the situation is stable and calm. […] The fact

and is backed up by a wide range of civil society branches seems to engender a certain discomfort within the authorities. Since EuroMaidan (at least in the early phase) had no leadership or management structure an institutionalised communicative counterpart was lacking. In this context, the government makes recourse to an auxiliary structure by insinuating that the opposition (that is obviously far more predictable than any anonymous leader of EuroMaidan) tried to instrumentalise EuroMaidan:

> "Unfortunately, some opposition politicians do not leave attempts to convert the peaceful demonstration of will into crew-to-crew clashes. Law enforcement bodies should stop such attempts immediately." (GovUkr 27.11.2013a)

At this point, it should be stated that, based on the analysed documents from different civil society sources, the Ukrainian political opposition parties played a minor role as a communicative address during the Maidan protests as a whole. Although their leading figures were indeed present on Maidan and tried to influence the protest dynamics, they had never been perceived as protest leaders. Rather, they simply reacted to the moves on Maidan:

> "Euromaidan, ultimately a people's convention in its form and essence, [is] an exclusively peaceful, tremendously massive assembly of active citizens, representatives of non-governmental organizations, youth and students. It [is] a democratic Maidan that stood under the Ukrainian national and European banners and had done its best to keep distance from politicians of all colors." (MMIC 30.11.2013)

To gather the process of emerging identities in conflict, media coverage acted as an important projection surface since it particularly observed the changing nature of (indirect) communication between members of the government and the activists of EuroMaidan (e.g. via interviews). Now, a common feature of the analysed media reports is that the political contradiction that stepped forward through the government's unexpected behaviour was straightaway observed as the expression of a deep historical cleavage in Ukraine's society and thus portrayed in a clear-cut way of reproducing corresponding parties to the standpoints:

> "A historical frontier between the world of established values, self-improvement, discipline and development, and the world of complete unpredictability, paternalism, hierarchies, absolute power and absolute inert obedience, and irrational insecurities that can take decades and centuries to cure." (The Ukrainian Week 22.11.2013: 6)

> Being in the centre of a clash between civilizations of the East and the West, Ukraine is both a detonator and an object to that clash. In many aspects, its upcoming choice is crucial to itself – and Europe's future." (The Ukrainian Week 22.11.2013: 24)

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that people have taken these events so seriously proves that we are doing everything right. To a large extent, they are supporting our course. (GovUkr 26.11.2013e)

In the aftermath of the summit in Vilnius, further media articles and headlines like "Betrayal of Hopes" (KyivPost 29.11.2013: 1) or "Ukraine's big moment turns into major bust" (KyivPost 29.11.2013: 7) continued to draw on this major division of Ukraine's society and, hence, fostered the actualisation and (re-) production of pointed positions which, in turn, served as a starting points for dramatic speculations:

> "The polarization within Ukraine between Europhiles and Russophiles will intensify and major civil disturbances are now quite possible." (KyivPost 29.11.2013: 5)

Phase II (Nov 30 – Dec 17)

In the light of the first violent crackdown on Maidan on November 30, the analysed media did not neglect to point to further polarisations in Ukrainian society. Here, the finding is that, beyond the traditional linguistic divide between Russian and Ukrainian speaking parts of the population, many other "cracks in the nation" are beginning to show (see The Ukrainian Week 3.12.2013: 8–11; KyivPost 6.12.2013: 1–3):

- a deep crisis of confidence between the political opposition parties and civil society[90];
- an open infighting between various groups of interest within the ruling party (particularly between the camps of different oligarchs);
- an institutional dispute between those who try to strengthen the parliament's rights and others who want to maintain a president-centred political system;
- and finally, a confrontation between the political opposition and the government while both are "stuck in their bubbles" of winner-takes-it-all-scenarios.

Referring to the last point, the analysis of the government statements in phase II shows that the government represents itself as a legitimate guardian of law and order which was illegitimately challenged by "provocateurs" and "alarmists" who try to invoke a political and economic crisis for no reason. Although expressing understanding and regret concerning the massive use of force by law enforcement agencies and showing the government as ready to engage in dialogue and compromise, the statements mainly document the authorities' overall rejection of EuroMaidan as being an anonymous and uncontrollable mass infiltrated by criminals, saboteurs, radicals, extremists, and, most important, by "immoral politicians hiding behind parliamentary immunity" (GovUkr 4.12.2013a).[91] Moreover, members of the political opposition are presented as craving for power and instrumentalising the Maidan protests for discrediting the government and pursuing their personal power ambitions. In sum, based on the government's communication, EuroMaidan, at this point, not only constituted a temporary challenge for the rule of law

90 As, for example, the KyivPost (6.12.2013: 3) states, "Over the past week as the political crisis became critical, leaders of the opposition were accused of failing to lead and come up with a workable plan, frequently failing to be at the epicentre of events and formulating a coherent set of demands." Therefore, to a great extent, the protests are presented as being both against the (former) "Orange government" (i.e. the political opposition) and the "White-and-Blue" (i.e. the actual Party of Regions government).

91 See particularly GovUkr (3.12.2013d; 3.12.2013g; 4.12.2013a; 5.12.2013e).

(e.g. concerning the protesters' defiance of the legal ban of demonstrations) but also a concrete danger for Ukraine's stability and national security since the functioning of the systems of life support, the operation of state administration and economic activities were directly threatened.[92] Consequently, the government's suggestions to deal with the situation (e.g. concerning the investigation of the use of force on Maidan) did not include addressing possible interlocutors from EuroMaidan but establishing a "trilateral format" with those understood as full-value representatives: the authorities, the opposition and the international community (see GovUkr 11.12.2013d).

Based on the analysis of documents from civil society sources in phase II, two key developments can be retained: First, referring to various self-descriptions of participants and supporters, the expectations of what EuroMaidan is and should be (i.e. its programme and norms) became increasingly articulated. Hereby, the self-image of EuroMaidan as an expression of an independent civil society that considers itself as a separate entity besides the government and the political opposition parties played a major role. Further elements of EuroMaidan's emerging identity included the programme of overcoming the above-mentioned cleavages in view of a common future backed by a young and progressive generation.[93] What can also be found in the statements is the idea that EuroMaidan represents both a full-fledged 'revolution' and a political force able to act. As such, it feels a heavy responsibility for the whole country, as the following declaration of 100 leading EuroMaidan figures exemplarily shows:

> "We, the representatives of civil society Ukraine, recognising our responsibility to our descendants, […] having no doubt that further confrontation and escalation of the conflict threatens independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and may lead to social and economic collapse." (MMIC 10.12.2013e)

As a part of EuroMaidan's self-image, the statements also implicate references concerning the constitution of its main counterpart: In this context, Yanucovych is portrayed as the personification of an authoritarian and kleptocratic regime that jeopardises Ukraine'e independence by emulating a Russian-style political system and fostering societal cleavages and clientelism. However, according to a number of self-critical commentaries, the president only represents the figurehead of an already existing "corrupt and economically dependent police state" that had been tolerated and promoted by a "majoritarian mentality of indifference and passivity".[94]

Second, another important development on the part of EuroMaidan consists in the growing awareness of being dependent, to a certain extent, on the political opposition parties to bring about real change. On the one hand, indeed, negative attitudes towards all opposition politicians were widely shared among protesters on Maidan and their role in negotiations with the authorities were Argus-eyed. In fact, the protesters' motivation was virtually independent from appeals of political party leaders, as the DIF poll among protesters shows:

92 See GovUkr (7.12.2013c; 9.12.2013c; 11.12.2013a; 11.12.2013e).

93 See e.g. MMIC (4.12.2013b; 9.12.2013) and UkrN (16.12.2014).

94 See MMIC (12.12.2013a; 12.12.2013d; 13.12.2013) and UkrN (12.12.2013; 16.12.2014).

Table 10: Extract from "Maidan 2013: Survey among Maidan Participants"

What made you come out to the Maidan?	
Viktor Yanukovych's refusal to sign the Association Agreement with the EU	53.5
Brutal beating of demonstrators at the Maidan on November 30 night, repressions	69.6
Opposition leaders' appeals	5.4
Desire to change authorities in the country	39.1
Desire to change life in Ukraine	49.9

(Own table according to DIF 10.12.2013)

Furthermore, 92 % of the protesters on Maidan declared not to be a member of any party, organisation, or movement. On the other hand, the protest movement gradually realised the necessity to mandate and thus to empower either leaders of the political parties or non-political civil society leaders in order to be able to effectively influence the proceedings.[95] Therefore, within the framework of roundtable negotiations, EuroMaidan protesters ascribed themselves the role of an attentive guard who urges both the authorities and opposition parties to consider EuroMaidan's claims and, as the above-mentioned poll also shows, who would (at least 72.4 % of respondents) stay on Maidan "as long as necessary".[96]

Phase III (Dec 17 – Jan 16)

When the Russia-Ukraine-deal was concluded, EuroMaidan activists felt vindicated with their speculations and fears: Based on the analysed statements, the virtual feelings towards the Russian regime pulling the strings in the background changed to the very concrete impression of a Russian president Putin who, once again, succeeded in coercing Ukraine to stay in Russia's sphere of influence (see e.g. MMIC 22.12.2013). At the same time, from civil society's perspective, the existing cracks within Ukraine's ruling party and the regime became more and more articulated. In this context, Ukraine's oligarch class is observed as being split in at least three factions: one that supports the status quo, one that supports the Russia-Ukraine-deal and a third one that truly supports EuroMaidan and European integration (see MMIC 23.12.2013c). As advocates of the latter openly stated,

95 This point is also repeatedly referred to in the analysed media: "Without politicians, the speeches of civil activists were doomed to fail and disdain from those in power. [Therefore] political and civil Maidans announced that they pursued a common goal." (The Ukrianian Week 3.12.2013: 11)

96 See MMIC (5.12.2013a; 9.12.2013; 10.12.2013d; 12.12.2013a; 16.12.2013b) and UkrN (16.12.2013). In the analysed media reports, this point is repeatedly picked up later on (see e.g. The Ukrainian Week 23.12.2013: 5): "Maidan is not a mere demonstration. It is a long-term action. […] Maidan will remain the factor of Ukrainian politics in the memory of Ukraine and international community, if not in the minds of those in power."

> "Everyone wants clarity. […] The fact that peaceful people went to peaceful protests shows that Ukraine is a free, democratic country. No one will take Ukraine from that path. And that is really great." (Rinat Akhmetov, MMIC 17.12.2013c)

In addition to the one or other renegade oligarch[97], voices from EuroMaidan particularly referred to the many small and medium-size businesses that also sponsor EuroMaidan, for example by directly providing help to maintain the protest infrastructure or by publicly criticising the government and declaring their support for the protesters. In this context, the emergence of a "socially responsible economy" was observed and articulated as a relevant factor in conflict.[98]

Given the analysis of the media coverage in phase III, it can be stated that the media, too, exhaustively addressed the latent infighting between "the hawks" and "the doves" within the ruling Party of Regions, which became manifest. In this context, the massive use of force against protesters on Maidan (especially on November 30 and December 11) is presented as a consequence of the confrontation between different groups of influence within the authorities, or, more precisely, as the hawks' attempt to get the upper hand by strikingly showing the state's monopoly on legitimate violence (see e.g. The Ukrainian Week 23.12.2013: 12–13). In short, according to media reports, the hawks, at this point, were expected to launch new waves of violence and repression in any form (e.g. persecution, interrogation, intimidation and mudslinging) in order to evoke fear among the protesters. However, the purport of media coverage remains unmistakeable about the attitudes both on Maidan and in the population at large:

> "But the experience of effective joint action will not vanish. People have savoured freedom, courage, responsibility and trust for each other. Communities of proactive citizens have to respond with local Maidans to every violation of human rights or abuse of power. No functionary or representative of the regime should now feel impudent." (The Ukrainian Week 23.12.2013: 5)[99]

In parallel to this unprecedented level of determinism on the protesters' side advanced in media accounts, the analysed statements from civil society sources in phase III are suggesting that EuroMaidan indeed entered a critical stage of defining its self-understanding. As mentioned earlier, the common refusal of the Russia-Ukraine-deal derided as

97 After the violent crackdown on protesters on Maidan and in the occupied administration building of the city of Kiev on December 11, Rinat Akhmetov (head of System Capital Management Group, Ukraine's leading financial and industrial firm, particularly in mining and steel), Dmytro Firtash (head of Group DF, leading in chemical industries and natural gas) and Viktor Pinchuk (head of Interpipe Group, one of Ukraine' leading pipe, wheel and steel producers) publicly distanced themselves from the government for the first time (see e.g. The Ukrainian Week 23.12.2013: 12).

98 See e.g. UkrN (19.12.2013); later on, towards the end of EuroMaidan, see MMIC (14.02.2014).

99 This assessment mirrors a number of documents from civil society opposition. Thus, comments under the header of "Ukraine's revolution of dignity", for example, emphasise that Ukrainians, at last, picked up courage and willingness to take control of their own destiny (see MMIC 27.12.2013c). In the same vein, INGO reports state that EuroMaidan represents an incomparable "civic mobilization" urging for institutionalised ways of political participation (see e.g. UHHRU 27.12.2013).

"Putin-Yanucovych-anti-Western-pact" again boosted the motivation and the consensus among the protesters (see MMIC 31.12.2013d). By the turn of the year, statements increasingly articulate the urge that EuroMaidan should institutionalise and thus equip itself with comprehensive organisational structures in order to be able to accomplish its objectives:

> "The task at hand is to spread the values of the Maidan beyond Ukraine's capital, and to prepare capacity that will ensure a free and fair vote in March 2015. Clearly, this task requires some form of organizational structure that is of a national scale." (MMIC 1.01.2014)

In an effort to distance itself from the political (party) establishment, EuroMaidan reluctantly started to set up organisational structures. Therefore, within the framework of the "All-Ukrainian Assembly Maidan", leading figures of EuroMaidan established a governing body including political and "non-political" actors. Against the background of a widespread scepticism towards functionaries, this provisional structure was not only meant to represent the voice of camping Maidan protesters and to coordinate their demands and activities with Ukraine's numerous real civil society organizations and opposition political parties. Also, the council was meant as a measure to build "institutional trust" in a society that broadly distrusted social institutions and to back the "identity revolution" that had been in progress (see MMIC 1.01.2014). In fact, societal support for EuroMaidan became increasingly broad and diversified, as e.g. a viral video message by more than 50 Ukrainians from all walks of life addressed to president Yanucovych shows:

> "The future of Ukraine lies in our hands, not in yours. We are Europeans. We will be in the EU. With you or without you." (MMIC 3.01.2014b)

Even though the younger generation, particularly the students' movements, proved to be the strongest protest driver (see MMIC 4.01.2014a), the sphere of EuroMaidan's highly motivated supporters became increasingly broader, including, for example, religious leaders who began to openly participate in the protests:

> "Dear Ukrainians, ignore the corruption of the information, with which they want to discourage us and use to make us fight amongst one another, they want to once again return us into the state of being a helpless grey biomass. We are free, strong and happy. We have our faith and our personal dignity. We are – unique and virtuous. We – shall overcome!" (MMIC 5.01.2014a)[100]

In sum, based on the analysis of statements from EuroMaidan voices in phase III, it can be stated that EuroMaidan's process of self-understanding resulted in a twofold insight: First, in a self-and external perception, EuroMaidan represented the embodiment of an unprecedented level of civil society mobilisation if not the awakening of civil society in post-Soviet Ukraine at all. Second, from a pragmatic perspective, to position it-

100 Common statement of a mufti of the Spiritual Admistration of Muslims of Ukraine and a representative of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Maidan.

self as an efficacious political force distinct from the government and traditional opposition parties, EuroMaidan protesters realised that at least some basic organisational strutures were needed; the "All-Ukrainian Assembly Maidan" mentioned above and the "All-Ukrainian Euromaidan Forums" that followed in mid-January in Kharkiv (for a chronicle see MMIC 14.01.2014a) and in mid-February in Odesa represented attempts to do so.

Regarding the emergence of EuroMaidan as an increasingly "institutionalised" revolution claiming political heft, the authorities, at this point, reacted in two different ways. According to the analysed statements, first, EuroMaidan was officially portrayed as an important impulse that, by "national roundtable talks, political disputes, and honest dialogue", helped to debate and to confirm the government's plans to establish "a balance between the East and West without giving up our national interests", as president Yanucovych summarised in his New Year's address (see MMIC 3.01.2014b). Second, once again, political opposition parties are blamed for their alleged efforts to "hijack" Maidan protests for the sake of their own power ambitions. In this context, EuroMaidan is partly portrayed as an "illegal and immoral revolution" since it not only blocks state functions and thus deprives the population of indispensable assistance but also because even children are used for their purposes:

> "So-called leaders of the Maidan forgot, the moral manifesto of Dostoevsky: 'No revolution is worth the tear of a child'? I'd like to ask all parents in Ukraine whether you want such immoral orders, as on Maidan for your children." (GovUkr 15.01.2014a)

Phase IV (Jan 16 – Feb 22)

The adoption of the "anti-protest laws" was accompanied by a tightening of the official rhetoric towards protests on Maidan. While insinuating that the leaders of the political opposition were in cahoots with leading figures of EuroMaidan, voices from the ruling Party of Regions denounced protest leaders as being "criminal" and "immoral". Thereby, apart from EuroMaidan's defiance towards the government's law enforcement measures, its lack of respect for religious authorities played an important role, especially concerning the calls to protest on the Day of the Baptism of the Lord (January 19), which is a central feast day in the Orthodox Churches. Furthermore, according to the analysed documents, protesters were portrayed as ruthless and violent revolutionaries who emerged from an atmosphere of hysteria and hate created by "stage directors" on the sideline. However, at this point, the latter were accused of having lost control over the mass that now shows the "beastly grin of extremism" (see UkrN 20.01.2014b). In sum, it can be stated that the government repeatedly confirmed the allegation that the political opposition was directly responsible for the "escalation of violence and the devastating consequences for the country". In addition, it once again attributed itself the role of a defender of the constitutional order and the stability of the country, which is – and that is the first time since the beginning of the protests – depicted as being threatened by "pogrom and terrorists" (see GovUkr 22.01.2014a).

> "There is a coup d'etat attempt in Ukraine. And all who support this coup must explicitly say: yes, we are for overthrow the legitimate authority in Ukraine and not to hide behind the peaceful protesters." (Prime Minister Mykola Azarov, GovUkr 23.01.2014e)

Nevertheless, while the language continued in a rather confrontative mode, the analysed government statements still include some passages documenting the willingness to hold a constructive dialogue with those political forces and those politicians "who are not spoilers and do not destabilize the situation" (see GovUkr 22.01.2014a, g).

Based on the analysis of documents from civil society opposition, the government's call for dialogue went unheard in the light of the adopted anti-protest laws. From EuroMaidan's perspective, president Yanucovych, ultimately, not only furnished the evidence for being "ignorant, primitive and, concerning his worldview and perception, literally bestial" but also for being a puppet in Putin's hands (UkrN 20.01.2014c). In this sense, the anti-protest laws with all the methods of repression were outlined as carrying a blatantly obvious Russian thumbprint.[101] Against this background, the protesters' anger was of course directed at the authorities that allowed the Russian political and economic elite to gain extensive influence over Ukraine (see UkrN 22.01.2014). At the same time, the protesters articulated their frustration about EuroMaidan's inability to take responsibility and to develop a successful leadership of the movement while the people's freedom was on the verge of being sold out.

> "People are tired of politicians' flowery words, claiming to know how to save the country […]. We don't have a way back. Either we will win, or they will put us in jail." (MMIC 21.01.2014c)

Indeed, in view of two months long mass protests without any concrete success (compared to the declared goals), the analysed statements show signs of a certain atmosphere of demoralisation both on the protesters' side and even among police forces (see e.g. MMIC 21.01.2014d). In this atmosphere, the belief in solutions based on roundtable talks dramatically faded:

> "Those roundtables during the past two months are nothing but grotesque imitations that convinced the people of that fact that the government only understands a language of violence. That's why a part of the population proceeded to violent resistance." (UkrN 25.01.2014c)

As the first deaths of protesters became known on January 22 and, in the same breath, the violent escalation was portrayed (by government sources and some international

101 As some INGO reports about the anti-protest laws suggest, the Ukrainian and Russian legal texts in this field have a great deal in common, e.g. particularly with regards to "dangerous activities" of civic organisation or the asserted need for continuous censorship of the Internet (see e.g. UUHRU 20.01.2014a). Media reports, too, extensively address the closeness of Ukrainian and Russian legislation. Referring to the raised budget for inner security and the newly adopted rights and instruments of security forces, the media shows gallows humour: "Welcome to the new police state. We call it Little Russia." (Kyiv Post 17.01.2014: 5)

media accounts) as being invoked by nationalist and far-right elements on Maidan, the protesters' anger was boosted and immediately focussed on the supposed "Russian hand" behind the events (see UkrN 24.01.2014c, 25.01.2014a, 27.01.2014a). At the same time, influential oligarchs (like e.g. Rinat Akhmetov) raised their hand to offer commiserations and regret concerning the victims of violence (as the government also did a few days later; see GovUkr 29.01.2014e) and to express their perceived responsibility as business leaders to speak up in crisis:

> "Business cannot keep silent when people are killed, a real danger of breakup of the country emerges, when a political crisis can lead to a deep economic recession and thus inevitably result in lower standards of living. […] Any use of force and weapons is unacceptable. With this scenario there will be no winners in Ukraine, only victims and losers. […] The only solution is to move from street riots and attempts to curb them to constructive negotiations and results." (UkrN 25.01.2014b)

At least since these statements, observers from civil society opposition highlighted that, at this point, the different power groups within the ruling regime, particularly oligarchs divided into doves and hawks began to fall apart whereas the hawks were definitely believed to prevail in view of the massive use of force against protesters and the possible imposition of martial law (see MMIC 29.01.2014a). Therefore, from EuroMaidan's perspective, the parties to the conflict were cleat-cut: On one side of the frontline, which is physically symbolised by the barricades in Kiev, those who defend themselves, their country, and their European future,

> "[…] some with Molotov cocktails, some with knitting needles, some with baseball bats, some with texts published on the Internet, some with photos documenting the atrocities." (MMIC 29.01.2014c)

On the other side of the frontline: the "tyrant and his group of criminals" (backed by a pro-Russian economic and political lobby) who were the first to shed blood of innocent people and thus are not only expected to continue to use violence against their own people but also to threaten Europe as a whole. Based on that, "the protests will not continue in a peaceful way" (see e.g. UkrN 30.01.2014b).

Since the first deaths of protesters on Maidan, media coverage left no doubt about the "dramatic new escalation of violence" and its initiators.[102] Thereby, media reports, too, made use of metaphorically characterising parties to the conflict "on this side" and "on that side" of the barricades:

102 As the KyivPost (24.01.2014: 5) stated, there was unmistakable evidence of state-sanctioned snipers firing at EuroMaidan activists from the roofs of buildings flanking Maidan square.

Table 11: Parties to the conflict displayed by media accounts in late January

"On this side" (EuroMaidan)	"On that side" (Government)
people believing in a state as "a guarantee and instrument for natural rights of the people" "people who prefer to earn their living without fear, grow, develop and travel the world, and most importantly be independent from the whims of their domestic or foreign rulers" "people on this side of the barricade will not forgive a conspirancy against themselves, from this government or any other that will replace it" (The Ukrainian Week 31.01.2014: 16) people who "want to make sure that the country allows all its diversity, and that they coexist in a peaceful manner regulated by an efficient, clear and applicable set of rules" (KyivPost 31.01.2014: 5)	"a corporation of personal enrichment" "people who deny market economy, competition and free market and prefer to live on violence and robbery" (The Ukrainian Week 30.01.2014: 16) people who tolerate "hired thugs to clear protesters off the streets and terrorize peaceful demonstrators" "a few handfuls of radicals and facists from western Ukraine" are used are alleged as a pretext to justify violence against all protesters people who "grumble that the government is doing to little to crack down on the protesters" (KyivPost 31.01.2014: 4–5)

(Own table)

According to the sparse government statements in early February, EuroMaidan was increasingly dominated and controlled by far-right extremists.[103] Seen from this angle, both security forces and peaceful protesters became victims of atrocities committed by a mob, which had been incited by militant nationalists and, at this point, got out of control.[104] At the same time, however, EuroMaidan activists gathered more and more evidence that proved the excessive use of violence by security forces and Titushki against unarmed protesters: Eyewitness reports and videos document many cases of beatings, torture, targeted shootings, taking away clothes at sub-zero temperatures, kidnappings from hospital, destruction of properties, and intimidation of family members (see UkrN 6.02.2014a). Based on the analysed documents, the protesters' widely shared feeling of being a victim of state power at any time increasingly led to an emotional dissociation and even to a hate-filled devaluation of the state as a whole and particularly towards security forces on Maidan:

> "Those guys are aliens! They are not ours. They have some sort of strange accent. And they don't behave as they should at home. And after all, they are freaks. People like that don't grow up here." (UkrN 7.02.2014b)

103 As, for example, the KyivPost (7.02.2014: 2) notes, this assessment was not only articulated by pro-government actors and Russian media but also by Western journalists. However, later on, in an obvious effort to counter the widespread rumour of the "Right Sector" taking control of Maidan, EuroMaidan sources published reports about Ukrainian Jews holding leading positions on Maidan, e.g. within self-defence units that were responsible for the reinforcement and defence of the barricades (see e.g. UkrN 13.02.2014).

104 See e.g. GovUkr (4.02.2014d). In this context, official sources drew attention to the "dangerous and difficult" job of security forces who suffered a great number of injured police officers since the beginning of the protests on Maidan (see UkrN 6.02.2014a).

From EuroMaidan's perspective, the atmosphere on Maidan in mid-February dramatically changed from frustration and despair to a scenario of increasing tension and confrontation, as self-reflexive comments show:

> "The situation on Maidan is pretty tense. People wish to take vengeance for the victims and, even more important, they are tired of the opposition's failure to act. All these hotheads are full of illusions about real fighting and thus cannot imagine the possible consequences." (UkrN 13.02.2014)

Against this background of uncertainty about how the majority of protesters and security forces would get out the standoff, media accounts made an effort to present an overview of the complex situation, including, for example, a characterisation of the many factions that evolved from Maidan up to this point (see table 12).

Table 12: Overview on factions/subgroups on Maidan in mid-February

	Name	Goal	Method	Strength/Weakness
anti-government	**Right Sector**	creation of a "true" Ukraine	ready to lead revolution and to die for it	prepared to use force against government
	"Spilna Sprava" (Common Cause)	complete change of power	takeover of government buildings	highly able to set others in motion; set up as a civic group to support small and medium businesses; became one of the most militant protest units
	Maidan Self-Defense	defend the protests and their bases	paramilitary defense units that patrol the perimeter	highly organized, rigid structure, but accused of using weapons; sprang up after Dec 1, when protests in Ukraine grew massive
	Afghan veterans	defend the protesters	paramilitary defense and guerilla warfare-style tactics if needed	small group but well-organized

	Student movements	total change of power, reform of education sector	networking, legal proposals	mobile and agile, but lacking experience to transform ideas into change; a crucial part of EuroMaidan during its first, most romantic stage
	Public Sector of EuroMaidan	public protests that lead to comprehensive changes	information campaigns, creation of strategies	bright, but small and divided group with no common vision; many types of activists that coordinated protests since Nov 21
pro-government	**Berkut ("Golden Eagles"), riot-control police**	protect government buildings and quell public protests when ordered	truncheons, shields, water cannons and guns	best of all tactical forces, but often heavy-handed; revered by the pro-government side, despised by many on the other; Ukraine's elite riot police force, the best and fiercest of those who made it through military training
	Interior Ministry special troops	protect government buildings and quell public protests when ordered	truncheons, shields	strong as a group, weak on their own; not to be confused with the Berkut
	Titushki	destabilize demonstrations, attack anti-government protesters	brute force, beatings, kidnappings	endorsed by the government and Russia, not smart
	Ukrainian Front	federalization of Ukraine, push back internationalists and radicals	unclear	endorsed by the government and Russia; created in Kharkiv on Jan 29 as an attempt by government forces to push back against what they perceive as a neo-Nazi threat from western Ukraine

(Own table based on KyivPost 14.02.2014: 2–5)

Given this broad range of subgroups on Maidan[105], the last attempts of roundtable talks between the government and representatives of the different groups present on Maidan faced enormous challenges. Though, they resulted in at least some partial achievements: While some of the buildings and streets were cleared, detained protesters were granted amnesty. However, the leaders of the political opposition parties still rejected the offer to participate in a new government.

> "A roundtable with gangsters? We've done that one. The trouble is that not a single demand was taken seriously. While we lost time with negotiations, the government took the opportunity to kidnap, torture, and arrest people." (UkrN 18.02.2014)

Accordingly, right before the death toll on Maidan skyrocketed, the protesters definitely relinquished all hope that the situation could be settled in a peaceful way.

5.5 Synopsis: The Fabric of Escalating Moves

> "The fact dimension, the temporal dimension, and the social dimension cannot appear in isolation. They must be combined. They can be analyzed separately, but in every real intented meaning, they appear together." (Luhmann 1995: 86)

According to Luhmann's dimensions of meaning, the preceding chapters presented three paths of preliminarily reading the conflict development within the context of the Maidan protests. Now, the many hypotheses of different ranges that have been iteratively gained during case study research and then cast in form of the chapters above are brought together in a synoptical view. Hence, the following chapters highlight critical elements of conflict development, i.e. *escalating moves* (A-F) consisting of *structural couplings* and *normative shifts*, and, linked to that, the gradual formation of firm conflict identities against the background of a world societal grounding of contradictions.[106]

5.5.1 The Conflict's Groundwork (Phase I, Nov 21 – Nov 30)

As it has been shown, right from the beginning of the Maidan protests in late November 2013, 'EuroMaidan' appears as a key discursive reference within the analysed communication. Independent of the discursive working levels set up in the case study work plan, EuroMaidan represents a frequent buzzword in the whole text corpus and thus displays high connectivity. During phase one, EuroMaidan evolves into a veritable signifier for

105 Although playing a certain role on Maidan, groups affiliated to the three political opposition parties were omitted in the figure above for reasons of clarity.

106 Please note: The synopsis chapters of both case studies (5.5/6.5) use a number of tables and charts of contrasting grey colour compared to the main text body. These tables indeed refer to and pick up elements of the continuous text, but they do not necessarily contain duplications of it. In other words, they are to be considered as substantial parts of the reflecting interpretation part of this case study's analysis.

different discursive 'construction sites'. In doing so, economic considerations (e.g. addressing the pros and cons of being a part of the European market) get straightforwardly linked to political communication that suggests understanding the foreign policy decision not to sign the AA with the EU as a question of either Ukraine's eastern or western orientation and thus as a question of diverging power claims (as the government statement below exemplarily exposes):

> "We trade with Russia in approximately similar volumes as with Europe. Hence, we cannot lose someone of them. If an enterprise working with Russia stops, people will remain without work. And it will become our problem. For this reason we spare no effort today so that not to have disagreement with Russia and to maintain absolutely transparent relations with the European Union." (First Vice Prime Minister Serhiy Arbuzov; GovUkr 27.11.2013h)

In this way, the economic language about the logic of the market, e.g. concerning Ukraine's competitiveness with regard to certain goods, gets collectively translated into a political one, i.e. dealing with perceptions of a changing domestic and, at the same time, regional/international balance of power:

> "Ukraine could not withstand the economic pressure and blackmail. It was threatened with restricted imports of its goods to Russia, particularly from companies in Eastern Ukraine, which accommodates the greater share of its industry and employs hundreds of thousands of people." (MMIC 22.11.2013b)

Hence, communication that has previously exhibited *either* a political *or* economic mode of observation now gets understandable in a broader and common communicative spectrum. This becomes apparent regarding the main thematic focus of the first phase (see exemplary text passages above): What used to be interpreted as a one-side balance of trade concerning Ukraine's standing in world economy (i.e. close economic relations between Eastern Ukraine and Russia) is then also seen as an instrument to exercise influence and power. In short, the relationship between both systems, the economic and the political one, takes the shape of a structural coupling and thus further develops the structures of the conflict system by broadening its communicative basis.

Behind these dynamics, there are offers of meaning, which show a world societal framing. As the term EuroMaidan itself epitomises, competing modes of differentiation find their expressions in the discourse: On the one hand, overlooking the different discursive working levels and the respective groups of text data sources, there are references to *Euro*Maidan on many sides. They suggest understanding European integration and EU as a more or less desirable or, at least, relevant socio-political superstructure that is able to produce collectively binding beneficial decisions and, therefore, to exercise political power in parallel to the nation state (see exemplary text passages from government and civil society actors below; italics added).

> "We need to take the final steps that will lead our country to a higher level of relations with the EU. […] The *positive effects of integration* the country can feel when

> our economy will interact with European economies. [This] will help ensure *European standards of life* of our citizens." (GovUkr 18.11.2013)
>
> "Citizens of Ukraine […] fight for their European future in a united Europe. […] They need attention and support of the *European citizens* who already enjoy those *European values*." (UkrN 24.11.2013)
>
> "Just the President and the Government of Ukraine have decisively turned the political course towards practical implementation of *criteria of European Union membership* […]. [T]he work on approaching Ukraine to the *European standards* hasn't stopped a day." (Prime Minister Mykola Azarov, GovUkr 27.11.2013c)

On the other hand, Euro*Maidan* is attributed to be the incarnation of Ukraine's sovereignty. In this regard, Kiev's "Independence Square" does not only serve as a popular physical venue. Rather, it is widely referred to as a virtual symbol of Ukraine's self-determination and national identity. As it has been presented in the context of the conflict's temporal dimension (see chapter 5.3), referring to the Ukrainian nation state as the ultimate arena of political events is particularly highlighted by the historical example of the Orange Revolution of 2004, which gets immediately cited in the discourse. In this context, the Orange Revolution is romanticised as a rising up of nationally oriented Ukrainian citizens against post-Soviet (but still Soviet-minded) elites in order to enforce a just implementation of their interests (i.e. the recognition of the people as sovereign, especially with regard to democratic elections). In this sense, Euro*Maidan* is discursively addressed as a follow-up of the Orange Revolution and thus as part of Ukraine's pursuit of national self-determination and emancipation from geopolitical patronisation:

> "Ukrainians gathered on Maidan in Kiev, which became the venue of the Orange Revolution, to fight for justice. On this square, Ukrainians made their history. Today again, they are there to fight for their European future." (UkrN 24.11.2013)

However, in turn, this interpretation gets contradicted with reference to the political, economic, and social turbulences unleashed by revolutions in Ukrainian history, which are presented as rather negative incidences that sustainably harmed the nation's security and independence. Therefore, in this episode, EuroMaidan gets picked up in a (at least) double meaning. Between these poles of a capricious discourse, a perception of unpredictability and uncertainty gains ground. In doing so, once again, the Orange Revolution appears as a landmark raised to sort what is happening at that moment:

> "It is hard to see how long people will stay in the streets for political speeches and concerts. One big difference – and disadvantage – for protesters is that this is different from the 2004 Orange Revolution, when a clear goal was achieved. The rigged election that year was overturned by the Supreme Court. A new election was held. Most people (except Yanukovych and his supporters) accepted the result of the rerun election. This time, however, the goal – an EU-Ukraine association

agreement – doesn't have a strict timeline or deadline. So now what?" (KyivPost 29.11.2013: 4)

To sum up, in phase I, the gradual emergence of overlapping contradictions is observed within the discourse. Following these articulated contradictions, the differentiation of the conflict system's dimensions of meaning can be illustrated (see table 13).

Table 13: Dimensions of the conflict system/phase I

Dimension	**Poles of Contradiction**		
factual	deepening relations with Russia	versus	explicitly orienting Ukraine towards Europe
	conforming to binary geopolitical condition		national emancipation and independence
temporal	Orange Revolution as historical failure and source of long term instability		EuroMaidan as necessary follow-up of Orange Revolution
social	post-Soviet elites		newly developing civil society

(Own table)

As these contradictions get discursively visible, they simultaneously ground the gradual formation of conflict identities that begin to show up on different interconnected layers (see chapter 4.1 for this study's concept of identity based on Luhmann),

- as different *persons* and (their respective) *roles* (e.g. "anti-government protester", "pro-European activist", "civil society campaigner", "decision makers", "office holders", etc.);
- as different *programmes* of action (e.g. demonstrating for EU association; defending civil society; defending the status quo; etc.);
- and as different *norms* (e.g. democratic participation; political and social change; political stability and security).

Contradictions and conflict identities are thus two sides of the same coin. In sum, based on the case study's analysis of the text corpus, the conflict system's development in phase I is characterised by escalating move A. As summarised above, this move consists of a structural coupling of the economic and the political narrative of contradiction.

Moreover, it consists of a normative shift, which takes place when the quasi-fusion of economic communication (e.g. on market opening and visa exemption) and political communication (e.g. on democratic/authoritarian models of society) broadens the conflict discourse and thus leads to the effect that a broader range of persons feel directly included, i.e. addressed as relevant to the conflict (e.g. as consumers *and* voters *and* travellers). Against the background of the emerging politico-economic conflict discourse

perceived as a kind of cross-sector arena, non-partisan civil society gets observed as a separate political force able and willing to articulate itself and to shape Ukraine's future. In this context, the discursive processing of this phenomenon shows a world societal horizon of communication on both discursive working levels. When focussing on political frameworks of orientation as point of departure, there are two clusters of statements: For one thing, statements that promote the idea of national independence and self-determination (discursively condensed in "-Maidan") and underline the essential role of the nation state as the principal category of political (self-) observation. At the same time, there are other statements that show a decidedly "post-national" view of politics (discursively condensed in "Euro-"), which includes the idea of collectively binding decisions based on a canon of supranational modern (European) values and norms (including freedom of expression, individualism, free trade etc.). Ergo, the discourse features competing modes of observation and, thus, competing principles of differentiation that generate new offers of meaning, new potential of contradiction and, as a result, increasing connectivity within a growing conflict system.

5.5.2 Revolution, Legality, and the Use of Force (Phase II, Nov 30 – Dec 17)

As stated earlier, the beginning of phase II is marked by the observation (shared all over the discourse) of the first physically violent actions that include a large quantity of persons:

> "Video footage shows Berkut officers beating protestors and in some cases pursuing men and women in order to beat them. About 35 people have so far been charged with hooliganism under the Administrative Code and dozens of people are being treated for their injuries. […] someone decided that enough was enough and the protests had to end." (AI 30.11.2013)

> "On Nov. 30, all the evidence shows that police were the instigators of a deliberate and violent crackdown on 400 or so demonstrators. Eyewitnesses and video showed indiscriminate beatings. […] As for Dec. 1, [somebody] commandeered a bulldozer and three Molotov cocktails at police." (KyivPost 6.12.2013: 4)

Overlooking phase II, two escalating moves were identified: The origins of the first one, escalating move B, can already be observed in phase I. However, its true discursive impact comes to light only in the aftermath of the violent incidences of November 30 and December 1. As the analysis of the text corpus suggests, here, a new structural coupling begins to develop: the politico-economic conflict narrative, which has been pre-formative with regard to the formation of fractions and initial conflict identities during phase I (see above), now gets expanded by integration of communication from a legal context. In this sense, it can be stated that incidences are now increasingly observed with "legal glasses". For example, whereas civil society actors point to the "unlawful, brutal and unsparing use of force" in order to "squash Ukrainian citizens' right of peaceful assembly and speech" (MMIC 2.12.2013b), government officials apologise for "the actions of law enforcement agencies" by referring to the "illegal actions" of protesters that "violate not only the Con-

stitution of Ukraine but also the Criminal Code" (GovUkr 3.12.2013d).[107] At the same time, media coverage of EuroMaidan highlights that protesters demand the president's resignation since "impeachment is not an option as the procedure is not even clearly outlined in legislation." (KyivPost 6.12.2013: 3) In addition, in the middle of phase II, a newly published poll provides an insight into the motivations of protesters (DIF 10.12.2018; see in detail chapter 5.4). Therein, 69.6 percent of the protesters state that the most important motivation to come out protesting on Maidan is again linked to legal considerations: a disproportionate use of force on Nov 30/ Dec 1 and, in relation to that, an unlawful repression of protesters and the Ukrainian people in general since the beginning of the protests. So, based on the analysis of the text corpus, it can be stated that the legal mode of observation becomes very common.

This points towards new contradictions, which, in turn, include world societal references. Regarding the observation of the "unlawful use of force", this gets particularly clear. Throughout the text corpus in phase II there is evidence that the use of force is not only perceived as breach of national law; even government sources agree that the police's code of conduct was violated on Nov 30/Dec 1. However, the incidences are also assessed against the background of a legal system that overlies the national one: the global human rights regime. In this way, the unlawful use of force gets also interpreted as a "human rights violation" (MMIC 2.12.2013b). In this view, the incidences are not seen as covered by the state's monopoly on the use of force anymore but as a violation of globally anchored rights. As a consequence, in this phase, (new) human rights initiatives enter the stage and defend the principles of proportionality, freedom of assembly and expression backed up by global argumentation.[108] Moreover, a number of references to the "International Human Rights Day" (Dec 10) within the discourse suggest that the international legal framework represents an important reference point.

The expansion of the conflict discourse by the legal dimension is associated with a normative shift that takes place in parallel. As it became apparent, in phase II, the "project EuroMaidan" is increasingly described in terms of a "real revolution", i.e. the idea that EuroMaidan lines up with prior important revolutions in Ukraine (and world history) and thus represents a special window of opportunity for realising true change.[109] Against

107 Furthermore, government officials state that despite all "flaws and mistakes in the work of government" all protest actions have to be performed within "the constitutional legal field". Therefore, the seizure of administrative and public buildings has to be rated as "a criminal offense". (GovUkr 3.12.2013g, 4.12.2013d)

108 See for example "EuromaidanSOS" mentioned earlier (in chapter 5.2). However, besides new human rights initiatives, already existing organisations, such as the "Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union", got a fresh impetus during phase II. "The Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union considers that last night Yanukovych's regime openly positioned itself in confrontation to Ukraine's civil society. The events of the last weeks have showed that the ruling regime has lost any link with the people, and they can remain in power after this last night only through the use of lies and violence." (UHHRU 1.12.2013)

109 See e.g. the representation of the "march of the millions" on Dec 8, 2013: Claiming the resignation of the president gets discursively linked to the dismantling of the granite statue of Lenin, a symbolic gesture that underlines the refusal of Ukraine's shared history with Russia and recalls the fall of Saddam Hussein's statue in Baghdad in 2003 (KyivPost 13.12.2013: 4). Further historical comparisons include the Orange Revolution (2004), Ukraine's struggle for independence after the Fall of

this background, the conflict discourse not only circles around removing the authorities (president, government) or, in other words, around personal changes *within* the political system. It is also about a fundamental change *of* the political system based on a "change of people's minds and their reality" (UkrN 9.12.2013). Hence, battles on the street about the control over public buildings (e.g. in form of civil disobedience, blocking of streets, occupation of buildings on one side and "robust" police operations on the other side) represent more than just ritualistic cat-and-mouse games between protesters and security forces. Protagonists on all sides are characterised as being convinced about the authentic nature of this battle that is fought in a historic mission in the name of the whole country.

In the course of this, contradictions of the concept of revolution itself come to light. Thereby, the articulated necessity of a revolutionary change of regime and political system or a "civilising breakthrough from Eurasia to Europe" (UkrN 12.12.2013) encounters the idea of revolution interpreted as "illegal seizure of power" that contradicts not only the rule of law and other democratic standards but also, ultimately, the "European way" (GovUkr 3.12.2013f). In sum, in phase II, a first normative shift lies in the fact that the state of conflict is no more collectively understood as a short-term phenomenon but as a genuine revolution including the ambition, or, from the opposite point of view, the threat of systemic change.[110]

Escalating move C that could also be detected in phase II consists of a structural coupling between a subsystem of political communication that understands power and sovereignty to be primarily based on nation states and an overlapping subsystem of political communication dealing with power as a result of global spheres of influence, or, in other words, power dynamics in world society. While phase I is still marked by communication that attributes collectively binding decisions on existing contradictions to Ukrainian politics, phase II can be characterised by references including the idea that the real power over Ukraine's future way lies beyond the traditional protagonists of Ukrainian politics, more precisely, in the global political sphere.

In this context, many passages point out that certain protest strategies, especially concerning the blocking of state institutions, cannot be subsumed under democratic measures based on the European model (see e.g. GovUkr 3.12.2013c). Moreover, it is stated that Ukraine, at that time, is exposed to both western (i.e. European and/or American, e.g. concerning NATO[111]) and eastern (i.e. Russian) efforts of political inclusion. Accordingly, a more or less exclusive decision in favour of the one or other alliance is expected to have direct consequences on the global balance of power (see e.g. The Ukrainian Week 3.12.2013: 6). Against this background, (after having stopped the AA

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the Wall (1990/1991), the Velvet Revolution in former Chzechoslovakia (1989) and even the movement of 1968 (UkrN 9.12.2013, 12.12.2013). At the same time, however, the dangers of a head over heels revolution and "radical democracy" are addressed by referring to the "Bolshevik experience" (GovUkr 11.12.2013a).

110 At this point, representatives of the political opposition parties, i.e. existing players within the former political system, begin to articulate themselves as "representatives of civil society" (see also chapter 5.2/phase II).

111 In this context, for example, civil society sources cite statements of NATO's foreign ministers meeting. Therein, Ukraine is attributed an important role in international security and is thus promised to be supported as an ally in difficult times (see e.g. MMIC 5.12.2013a).

with the EU) opening negotiations about a new economic partnership between Russia and Ukraine[112] just the day new violence was collectively observed on Maidan (11 Dec) induced a new perception: the power of organising and structuring the process does no longer rest on Maidan, which is believed to be the embodiment of negotiating Ukraine's destiny, but now gets in danger of becoming a great power matter. At the same time, in reference to the increasingly polarising mass protests either pro or anti-government, the situation is discursively framed as a "point of no return", while different sides not only articulate their fear of losing security and stability but also, ultimately, of losing the integrity of Ukraine as such and the ability to pull the strings.[113] To sum up, it can be stated that political communication here, i.e. communication about who is attributed the power of shaping the further course of conflict, refers to two opponent sides that are clearly associated with two opposed external forces.

The structural coupling described above comes along with changing structures of expectation, or, in short, with a normative shift. Against the background of growing contradictions (see overview below), conflict identities in the discourse increasingly show a global benchmark. More precisely, roles are increasingly defined by positioning themselves in relation to a global balance of power that is perceived as getting out of balance. In this sense, conflict identities consolidate: "Russophiles" versus "Europhiles". Both are mutually attributed to represent the majority whereas the respective counterpart only represents a minority.[114] Thereby, straight through the discourse, the question of gaining and maintaining power is primarily interpreted within a winner-takes-it-all scenario.[115] Hence, the polarisation between EuroMaidan protesters (perceived as agents of the West) and president/ government supporters (perceived as agents of the East) gets more and more manifest and comprehensive.

Within the scope of already existing societal cleavages, persons and their roles now become even more firmly associated with specific programmes in relation to the ongoing conflict. Following this, based on the linguistic and geographic divide between Russian speaking (eastern) parts of the population and Ukrainian speaking (central and western) parts, the former are portrayed as supporting a pro-Russian orientation of Ukraine whereas the latter are presented as supporting a western pro-European orientation.[116]

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112 According to media reports and respective government reactions, this partnership was prepared days before (and concluded on Dec 17, which marks the end of phase II): "Unfortunately, today in the media, in speeches of opposition politicians, there are distributed openly false information and provocative assessments about the content of the meeting of heads of the States of Russia and Ukraine that took place in Sochi yesterday." (GovUkr 7.12.2013a)

113 Both in government and in civil society sources, the intention to prevent a state of emergency, which is associated with an economic collapse and some sort of external takeover, is present (see e.g. MMIC 16.12.2013a; GovUkr 18.12.2013a).

114 To illustrate this point see exemplarily The Ukrainian Week (3.12.2013: 11) or GovUkr (13.12.2013b).

115 Picking up the widespread "sink or swim interpretation" of the situation, the KyivPost (6.12.2013: 3), for example, states: "The two sides are becoming increasingly entrenched in their positions and in a very high stakes game where the room for compromise is narrowing."

116 See government reports on the provenance and quantity of protesters in Kiev, which were also published by civil society actors and the media: "Today, the number of guests from Ukraine's regions on the streets of the capital was unprecedented. Independence Square was filled with Ukrainian-speaking westerners: people who have travelled to Kyiv from Lviv, Ternopil, Ivano-Frankivsk, and

In line with this, the younger generation, by a majority, is supposed to fight for western ideas of democracy whereas the older generations are represented as being defenders of an autocratic system based on reactionary Soviet values. Accordingly, the divide between the power holders and their beneficiaries and those being excluded from the political, economic and cultural elite is portrayed as quasi absolute (see e.g. KyivPost 13.12.2013: 4). Therefore, the normative shift is constituted by the fact that the existing multitude of motivations and interests among protesters on Maidan and even within the pro-government fraction gets more and more transformed into a simplified set of two adversaries, i.e. two discursively formed and closed conflict identities, which correspond to two main global spheres of influence Ukraine is seen to be exposed to.

In sum, in phase II, both escalating moves (B, C) represent manifestations of the observed contradictions in the discourse. With that said, the differentiation of the conflict system's dimensions of meaning advances (see overview below[117]):

Table 14: Dimensions of the conflict system/phase I+II

Dimension	Phase	Poles of Contradiction		
factual	II	commitment to national law and order, national security, law enforcement	versus	obligation to respect international legal frameworks, especially human rights
		revolution as illegal act, source of instability		revolution as positive change of system, social progress
		national political decision-making as consequence of changes in global balance of power		political decision-making as part of exclusively national affairs
	I	deepening relations with Russia		explicitly orienting Ukraine towards Europe
		conforming to (binary) geopolitical condition		national emancipation and independence

smaller cities in the west of the country to support the Euromaidan. Meanwhile, just outside the barricades, groups of Russian-speaking young men from Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia and other eastern cities roamed the streets, often making fun of the Euromaidan slogans." (MMIC 15.12.2013a; see also KyivPost 6.12.2013: 1; MMIC 14.12.2013)

117 Phase I's overview was taken over for the one of phase II; so it is done for the following charts. Newer entries can be found at the top of each dimension's culumns in bold (see the respective Roman numeral for the phase).

Dimension	Phase	Poles of Contradiction		
temporal	II	Maidan protests as follow-up of historical extremisms	versus	EuroMaidan as world-historical mission of freedom
	I	Orange Revolution as historical failure and source of long term instability		EuroMaidan as necessary follow-up of Orange Revolution
social	II	allocation of political power as winner-takes-it-all scenario		allocation of political power as parallel representation of different ideas and interests
		societal cleavages as source of danger		society as integration of continuing differences
	I	post-Soviet elites		(newly developing) civil society

(Own table)

Within the context of these developing multidimensional contradictions, observations referring to violence become increasingly common in the conflict discourse. Even though violence of security forces against protestors on Nov 30/Dec 1, which has been observed for the first time, is portrayed as deliberate and concerted in some spontaneous commentaries, there is a range of accounts suggesting that all sides, to are certain extent, were taken by surprise by this kind of violence. At the same time, the violent events in question can be seen as structurally formative: the process of conflict identity formation in phase II clearly refers to this "precedential case". In this way, the programme of one side (persons who are attributed to the roles of office holders, Russophiles, easterners, older generations etc.) consists of defending the status quo, which is perceived as a legal and legitimate distribution of political decision-making power. Moreover, this side gets increasingly convinced that revolutions can be equated with illegal actions leading to long term instability and insecurity. From this point of view, to maintain or produce public order, it is both legally and morally required to enforce law and order by force against those who threaten it.[118]

In contrast, the programme of the other side (persons who are attributed to the roles of civil society campaigners, pro-European activists etc.) develops from activating civil society as a political actor of change into something different: Now, political actions of

118 See exemplarily KyivPost (6.12.2013: 4): In reaction to the accusation of having executed disproportionate use of force against protesters, government officials blame "provocateurs for everything from the disorder that led to the police crackdown on Nov 30 to the violence during the Dec 1 demonstrations to the subsequent takeover of Kyiv City Hall. Azarov [the Prime Minister] throws the word around as if calling something 'a provocation' entitles the authorities to do whatever they want."

the government and physical measures of security forces are assessed as illegal and illegitimate assaults[119], which have to be countered by resistance and defence including physical violence, such as blocking of streets, occupation of buildings, damage to properties and civil disobedience against security forces. Hence, increasingly closed conflict identities go hand in hand with a beginning legitimisation of violence in the discourse, which includes more and more confrontational elements, such as the threat of violence or the characterisation of the situation as a "war" (italics added):

> "We stretch out our hand. If we find a fist, I say frankly – *we have enough forces*." (Prime Minister Mykola Azarov, GovUkr 3.12.2013e)

> "About the stand-off scenario: This *war of attrition* is one that the regime will lose." (MMIC 9.12.2013)

Indeed, increasing references to violence in the discourse are intimately linked to the observation of physical violence between protestors and security forces, which comes on the heels, as the incidences of Dec 11 show. As the analysis of the text corpus in phase II suggests, using and facing violent means has become a part of the collective structure of expectation. Thus, from both sides, further violent clashes are estimated as being likely or even inevitable.[120] Furthermore, against the background of an ongoing and already mixed-up economic and legal conflict narrative[121], the conclusion of a new deal between Russia and Ukraine that seems to create a fait accompli regarding Ukraine's orientation in the global political environment encounters the presence of the more than just hypothetical violence option in the discourse.

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119 In this context, the observation of irregularities (e.g. vote buying) during the parliamentary by-elections on December 15 when 4 of 5 seats were won by Yanucovych allies and the suspension of any cooperation talks on the part of the European Commission as well play an important role in the discourse (see exemplarily MMIC 17.12.2013b).

120 The following passages (coded as pointers of "increasing confrontation" and "use of force") are exemplary: "We condemn all acts of provocation, which pose a threat to life and health." (GovUkr 16.12.2013e). "[This is] a sign of extreme danger. On the one hand, there are thousands of political tourists in Ukraine's capital – some here voluntarily, to make a statement; others bussed in by Ukraine's political parties. On the other hand, the Ministry of the Interior has mobilized its forces (regular police, crowd control troops, "Berkut" riot-police) throughout the country and has brought all possible manpower to the capital. The situation is tense […] the inevitable: a bloody crackdown. […] A crackdown on the current protests will inevitably only result in more demonstrators descending on Kyiv. Indeed, each time the regime has resorted to violence during the past few weeks, the scale of civil disobedience has expanded." (MMIC 15.12.2013a)

121 Key points of this ongoing narrative in phase II include: the possible negative impact of a reduction in exports to Russia, particularly on the state budget and on the nation's political stability in general (GovUkr 4.12.2014a; GovUkr 11.12.2013a); the qualification of Ukraine's economic system as a deepening "crony capitalism" (see KyivPost 13.12.2013: 4); (il)legal actions of security forces as protectors of law and order and political/economic stability (GovUkr 7.12.2013c); considerations about constitutional ways of inducing the president's resignation against the background of breaches both in political and economic affairs (MMIC 9.12.2013; KyivPost 13.12.2013: 4).

5.5.3 From Deals to Laws (Phase III, Dec 17 – Jan 16)

In due consideration of all insights into the communicative expansion of the conflict discourse so far, in phase III, one escalating move (D) was brought to light by the examination of the text corpus. It consists of a structural coupling that develops between two political subsystems of communication that are already linked up to the conflict system: one focuses on the traditional roles in a national political framework. In this context, the guiding distinction is the one between government and political opposition parties, or, in other words, between power holders and those challenging their position as institutional counterparts. As it has been made obvious by the analysis of phase I and II, EuroMaidan, right from the start, has been interpreted as a challenge of the government by political opposition parties who are imputed to initiate and control the protests as a campaign to seize power.[122] For this reason, the fact that there was a *non-partisan* civil society articulating its ambitions to participate in shaping Ukraine's future has been a blind spot in large parts of the government's and media's observations.

However, this political subsystem of communication, which assumes a simplified role allocation of office holders versus their direct challengers and processes power as the ability to take collectively binding decisions now gets combined with a different subsystem of political communication. In this regard, as outlined earlier in reference to world societal communicative systems, political power gets further addressed not only as the ability to generate followers by taking formal decisions but, beyond that, the ability to communicate in an enduring and binding manner and with a certain impact on the big picture.[123] This can be illustrated with the example of the "national roundtable" that was initiated during phase II and continues in phase III: In the light of intensifying protests, all "political forces", defined as government, political parties *and* representatives of EuroMaidan were invited to join the roundtable in order to find a way towards dialogue and compromise. Even though there are discursive references highlighting the autonomy of the participants, especially concerning the independence between EuroMaidan representatives and political parties, the roundtable brings the analytical observation that political communication about how to organise Ukraine's future extends its range and, at this point, obviously includes and values civil society actors as a relevant societal address for the first time. In this sense, the roundtable represents a burning glass of the conflict discourse, where two perspectives of political communication get translatable and understandable or, in other words, structurally coupled: One side orients itself towards an idea of power based on the interplay of, in the narrower sense, political actors and their counterparts within the framework of state institutions; the other side attributes the potential of political impact, in principle, to a broad range of societal roles influencing the political process at times.

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122 On this, see an exemplary statement of Prime Minister Azarov (GovUkr 20.12.2013b): "Our largest problem is not that we don't prepare relevant draft laws, but that we have a peculiar opposition who [sic] prefer most construction of barricades in the center of Kyiv instead of work in the Parliament."

123 See particularly Albert and Steinmetz (2007: 20–27) and chapter 3.2 for detailed considerations about "the political" in world society.

Based on that, in phase III, the structural coupling between both subsystems of political communication passes through the next step of development. Although political communication still shows both above-mentioned modes of observation, it gets again more and more marked by a tendency to subsume any communication under the simplified guiding distinction of two roles: pro-government (i.e. the actual power holders) versus all the others (i.e. institutional challengers of the power holders).[124] This also mirrors in a normative shift, which is part of a further consolidation of conflict identities. More precisely, phase III's normative shift is about an increasing elimination of diversity: On the one hand, the multiplicity of objectives, ideas, interests, currents, fractions etc. that came up with the broad diversity of Maidan protesters is understood as an asset or even as the true force of the protest movement: As its high level of communicative connectivity shows, EuroMaidan is indeed seen as a inclusive cross cleavage shelter of oppositional forces.

On the other hand, against the background of a growing dualist polarisation in conflict development, the value of diversity noticeably disappears in favour of an idea of strength through unity, on both sides. Seen from this angle, phase III can also be interpreted as a phase of alliance building.[125] At its beginning, the "Russia-Ukraine-deal" – an agreement, which is not only referred to as a compilation of interstate cooperation projects but also as a binding document aiming at establishing irreversible unity in a wide range of long-term political questions concerning economy and security matters.[126] Later on in phase III, a similar process can be observed on the "other side":

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124 On both discursive working levels, this dichotomy gets more and more anchored, particularly including the insinuation that opposition parties are directly cooperating with the Maidan protesters in order to subvert predetermined democratic processes. In this context, as Yanucovych personally states, the only legal chance of the opposition parties "to challenge his authority is scheduled for 2015, when the presidential elections take place" (president Yanucovych, cited in KyivPost 20.12.2013: 2). This addressing resonates in the discourse, as statements from within the ranks of Maidan protesters show that the juxtaposition of EuroMaidan *plus* political opposition parties (as union) versus government is picked up. In this sense, for example, the conditions for a transition of power "by the power of the people" are discussed in terms of organisational capacity and fragmentation of both sides (see exemplarily UkrN 26.12.2013). The media, in the same vein, reproduce the two-sides-scenario by referring to the opposition's key challenges: the mounting of a successful international lobbying campaign (a stated and ongoing objective of EuroMaidan) and, at the same time, the courtship to win political support via elections (an obvious objective of the political opposition parties in the light of the flopped by-elections on December 15 (KyivPost 20.12.2013: 4).

125 Following the alliances idea, it can be stated (e.g. according to an IR-neorealist interpretation) that the newly established "internal" alliance between political opposition parties and EuroMaidan protesters constitutes a reaction to the "external" alliance in form of the Russia-Ukraine-deal concluded shortly before (see chapter 5.2/Phase III).

126 See e.g. The Ukrainian Week (23.12.2013: 4). As it became apparent, in the aftermath of the "Russia-Ukraine-deal", different ideas, opinions and plans that indeed existed among the government supporters (see exemplarily differentiation between the "hawks" and "doves" roles above) are increasingly hard to find in the text corpus. Instead, a growing number of statements suggest that roles change and persons switch sides respectively. See exemplarily Rinat Akhmetov's (an "oligarch" loyal to the government up to that point) statement on the Maidan protests (MMIC 17.12.2013c): "The fact that peaceful people went to peaceful protests shows that Ukraine is a free, democratic country. No one will take Ukraine from that path."

In late December, it not only becomes apparent that political opposition parties and EuroMaidan representatives forge a new alliance, which has been declared unpreferred hitherto. Also, according to the analysed statements, the future of EuroMaidan is discursively linked to the idea of including the political opposition parties and forming a nationwide platform that provides an alternative political structure. Referred to as "All-Ukraine EuroMaidan Forum" (see chapter 5.2./ phase III), communication, at this point, indeed starts to circle around this new hot spot of ideas, interests, strategies and, therefore, to form a new political authority.

The formation of these new alliances in phase III takes place against a discursive background that gradually develops and can be characterised as a collective perception of political, economic, and social uncertainty and instability.[127] The widely shared feeling of being confronted with an unfair counterpart, both from a government and a Maidan protesters perspective, thus reinforces the impression of closing conflict identities. Thereby, persons get ascribed to increasingly distinct roles while respective programmes get simplified: On the one hand, people from a diversified range of civil society initiatives protesting on Maidan get summarily addressed as a single and coherent political force (i.e. role) pursuing a quite simple plan: seizing power (i.e. programme). On the other hand, persons more or less loosely associated with the government up to that point (i.e. government members, Party of Regions members and voters, security forces and other civil servants) are seen as unambiguous supporters of Yanucovych and all government actions (i.e. role) pursuing a quite simple plan, too: staying in power at all costs (i.e. programme).[128] As the analysis of the text corpus reveals, the instigation to speak up with one voice and thus to boost the respective group's unity (at the expense of its inner diversity) frequently appears in the discourse. So, picking up the hawks and doves metaphor, for example, governments statements invoke the unity of the country behind a legitimate, strong and caring government (see e.g. GovUkr 31.12.2013a; GovUkr 16.01.2014h). Statements from Maidan, too, place special emphasis on the extraordinary

127 In this context, according to government statements, the Russia-Ukraine-deal was indispensable to end "the sell-out of the nation's interests" and to stop the present economic and political instability "other political forces" are responsible for (GovUkr 18.12.2013a/b). One source of uncertainty on civil society's side (apart from the government's unpredictability) forges ahead in reference to the western support showing "many political and cultural shortcomings" and being perceived as vague and insufficient since the EU does not clearly distance itself from Yanucovych and prefers to think about possible "win-win-Situations" (MMIC 18.12.2013b). Uncertainty was also expressed in media statements underlining the observed differences between EuroMaidan and the Orange Revolution: "The confrontation looks much like a re-run of the Orange Revolution of 2004 – only this time there seem to be no credible opposition leaders, no clear strategy by the demonstrators and no easy solution to Ukraine's long-term problems. […] The big worry is that whoever takes over, Ukraine will continue to be caught between Russia and the EU, and the country will remain internally divided and without strong leadership." (The Ukrainian Week 23.12.2013: 18–19)

128 On this, the following passages are exemplary: Based on government documents in phase III, Maidan is presented as producing one-sided and biased "information noise" while the protests would only represent "a fragment on the map of the country" (GovUkr 25.12.2013a). In contrast, according to the Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union, the government and its supporters are seen as part of a "clannish and oligarchic" system depriving the people of "freedom, national dignity and constitutional rights" (UHHRU 27.12.2013).

solidarity within the protest movement and the idea that "the collective body dominates over the individual" (MMIC 4.01.2014a).[129] With regard to this increasingly oversimplified representation of the conflict as a confrontation of two conflict parties, a self-reinforcing character of communication can be noted.

To sum up, it is stated that the poles of the discourse's contradictions further develop and thus widen the field in which escalating move D emerges. Linked to the conflict system's dimensions of meaning, this can be represented as follows (see following overview; further elucidations below):

Table 15: Dimensions of the conflict system/phase I+II+III

Dimension	Phase	Poles of Contradiction		
factual	III	civil society commitment with the objective to remove power holders	versus	civil society activities as part of a profound and self-determined societal transformation
		civil disobedience and blockings as subversion of state authority and attack against sovereignty		blocking of public institutions and services as legitimate democratic instruments of protest[130]
	II	commitment to national law and order, national security, law enforcement		obligation to respect international legal frameworks, especially human rights
		revolution as illegal act, source of instability		revolution as positive change of system, social progress
		national political decision-making as consequence of changes in global balance of power		political decision-making as part of exclusively national affairs

129 Though, at this point, the publication of a new poll paints a finer picture of what is supposed to be an indicator of conflict identities (DIF 27.12.2013): 48 percent of Ukrainians would vote for EU association in a referendum; 36 percent would vote against EU association; at the same time, 47 percent are in favour of the Russia-Ukraine-deal and 28 percent are critical of this agreement. In addition, as for example statements from EuroMaidan supporters reveal, protests continue to oscillate between emotionally nationalistic elements (singing of national anthem, nationalistic mottos, domination of the colours of the national flag), "liberal" elements (slogans promoting ideas of human rights and democracy, European flags) and the vanishing of national and social barriers (integration of Crimean Tatars, liberal Jewish and Russian intellectuals as well as business people and "oligarchs") (MMIC 4.01.2014a).

130 For an overview on protests means and methods of different protest groups on Maidan see again chapter 5.4/figure "Overview on Factions/Subgroups on Maidan in mid-February"/column on "Method".

Dimension	Phase	Poles of Contradiction		
factual	I	deepening relations with Russia	versus	explicitly orienting Ukraine towards Europe
		conforming to (binary) geopolitical condition		national emancipation and independence
temporal	III	"restauration" of good old (and broadly based) partnership with Russia		overcoming the west-east-division of Ukraine; resist Russian domination in "Ukrainian Arab Spring"
		working towards prosperous future alongside Russia		remembering the dark side of the Russian past
	II	Maidan protests as follow-up of historical extremisms		EuroMaidan as world-historical mission of freedom
	I	Orange Revolution as historical failure and source of long-term instability		EuroMaidan as necessary follow-up of Orange Revolution
social	III	reinventing the political in an "identity revolution"		working with/ within the existing political structures and culture
	II	allocation of political power as winner-takes-it-all scenario		allocation of political power as parallel representation of different ideas and interests
		societal cleavages as source of danger		society as integration of continuing differences
	I	post-Soviet elites		(newly developing) civil society

(Own table)

Considering the foregoing remarks (on escalating move D, its world societal references, the strengthening of conflict identities against the background of the discourse's poles of contradiction), the discursive processing of violence can be illustrated on the basis of the following two spots: Firstly, at the beginning of phase III, the analysis conveys an impression of how violence becomes a focal point of discursive contestation. Taking the law on the amnesty of detained Maidan protesters, which was adopted by the government majority in parliament at the beginning of phase III, as an example: As outlined above, this law was not only meant to grant amnesty for detained Maidan protesters from civil society but also for those members of the police and security forces that had been accused of disproportionate use of force against protesters on Nov 30 and Dec 11. Based on the analysis of the text corpus, this was perceived as if all participants, i.e. security

forces *and* protesters, had resorted to violence in the same disproportionate way. As a result, the political opposition parties decided to quit the round table talks. In this way, the equal treatment of police violence and protest actions provokes a range of statements on how the state monopoly on violence should be implemented or limited. Therefore, at this point, the conflict discourse corresponds to an intensifying negotiation process: subversion of state authority vs. protest as a kind of democratic right of resistance.

The spectrum of this negotiation process and its consequences can be illustrated by means of two example threads within the discourse: Tetyana Chornovol, opposition activist and journalist, who was assaulted after having published a critical article (see also chapter 5.2/phase III), becomes a much-cited example case of illegitimate state violence. The Chernovol case thus provides a defining moment that deeply shapes structures of expectation in the discourse on violence: at that point, the protests again pick up pace since more and more people realise that they could easily find themselves in a similar situation. A second example thread deals with the Holodomor, the Ukrainian "genocide by hunger" of 1932/1933 (see also chapter 5.3). References to this crucial historical trauma in Ukraine's Soviet times now get discursively linked to a refusal of the Russia-Ukraine-deal. According to respective statements, now, under the watchful eyes of global public, the time has come "to define the own, independent space" and "to control the own destiny" (MMIC 23.12.2013c) in order to prevent new dependencies that may bring back a situation in which people are exposed to extreme state-sponsored violence, such as ethnic cleansing or genocide.

Secondly, overlooking the repeated observation and discursive reproduction of physical violence in the conflict system so far, communication further on draws on martial or even war-like vocabulary: At the beginning of phase III already, civil society sources speak of "legions of riot police, dismantling barricades, clashing with protesters and trying to take back the occupied City Hall", whereas "the centre of Kiev looks like a war camp [...] bracing for the another crackdown." (MMIC 18.12.2013a). Other statements from international organisation picked up in civil society publications refer to Maidan as the "frontline of liberal democracy" that compels any observer to adopt party, of course without being able to forsee which side will carry off the victory (MMIC 18.12.2013b).[131] Voices from the media and INGOs take the same line when characterising the incidences on Nov 30 and Dec 11 as "blood shed" (UHHRU 27.12.2013), declaring an eventual orientation to the east as an "existential threat" or stating that for Russia, having lost the Cold War, "no price is too high to keep Ukraine in Russia's orbit" (The Ukrainian Week 23.12.2013: 23).

To sum up this overview on phase III, it can be stated that the discourse circles around the interpretation of the conflict's status and the legitimacy of roles and means of the still evolving conflict identities. In this context, the text corpus exhibits a number of passages that existentialise the situation, for example by qualifying the conflict as a "fight for the very soul of Ukraine" (MMIC 24.12.2013a). Thereby, protagonists from civil society are attributed the mission of "totally legitimising and finalising an identity revolution" (MMIC

131 This once again recalls the maelstrom metaphor according to which, sooner or later, a conflict forces its environment to take some kind of (communicative) stance towards the conflict (see chapter 4.3).

1.01.2014) that has already catched a majority of Ukrainians' hearts and minds.[132] In reaction, passages from government sources downplay the severity of the conflict by blaming "opposition actuators for *artificial* tension in society and public incitement to unlawful acts" (GovUkr 13.01.2014d; italics added). Hence, the protest movement which was initiated by civil society actors is not only denied to raise its voice in the political process but also its legitimsation as a relevant societal factor as such (KyivPost 17.01.2014: 5). In this sense, the much-cited words of Prime Minister Azarov,

> "There is no social conflict in Ukraine, there is artificial political confrontation." (GovUkr 15.01.2014c),

make not only clear that the Maidan protests, lasting for more than six weeks at that time, lack any kind of substance and basis. Also, according to government sources, in view of the violent experiences so far, "illegal and immoral actions" in the context of the protests (civil disobedience, blockings, strikes etc.) have broken the destiny of many people and "can still break the destiny of many others" (GovUkr 15.01.2014a; 16.01.2014h).

While passing over to the last phase, phase IV, references to the system of law get new conciseness within the conflict discourse. In this context, the alliance between civil society actors and the political opposition upholds their longstanding demands: the orderly punishment of those who are responsible for the disproportionate use of violence towards protesters, including the dismissal of the Interior Minister and the resignation of the president (see e.g. KyivPost 17.01.2014: 2). These demands are flanked by the political opposition's blocking of the parliament by absence, which is presented as a legitimate constitutional right (see chapter 5.2/phase III). In turn, government statements underline a self-understanding that refers to a distinct concept of the state of law: the president and the government embody the authority and sovereignty of the state and thus represent the entirety of the citizens. Against this background, any threat to the very existence of the state – that is how the opposition's absence in parliament and the Maidan protests in general are repeatedly classified in these sources – must be fought off by all available means. From this perspective, it is logically consistent to drive forth legal regulations limiting the citizens' liberties and legalising repressive measures. This marks the beginning of phase IV, when the "anti-protest laws" were adopted.

5.5.4 Breakup Right on the Doorstep (Phase IV, Jan 16 – Feb 22)

At the beginning of phase IV, there is a number of references to the legislative package officially called "Procedural Laws on Additional Measures for Protecting Security of the

132 In this context, some statements reflect on the very mental nature of the ongoing identity revolution. Therefore, the identity revolution is characterised as being way more than a mere political revolution leading to a removal of the power holders. Rather, it is presented as a fundamental collective transformation of Ukrainians who, by this process, get the chance to become new political citizens (MMIC 1.01.2014) against the background of a European geopolitical reality (MMIC 4.01.2014a). Media statements, too, pick up the idea of an ongoing societal transformation whereupon EuroMaidan "has captured the attention of the world and returned a feeling of pride to many Ukrainians." (KyivPost 17.01.2014: 2).

Citizens", which gets immediately and pointedly dubbed "anti-protest laws" in civil society and political opposition sources and "anti-extremist laws" in government statements respectively. Exemplarily, with a view to opposition parties boycotting the parliament, there is talk of those who "continue to work against Ukraine" (GovUkr 15.01.2014a). On the other hand, those government officials and supporters who promote the law package are accused of "suspending fundamental constitutional rights" and of installing an "absolute mandate to arbitrarily crack down on justice, the press, NGOs and citizens" which leads Ukraine into a "perfect dictatorial regime" (UkrN 17.01.2014).

Overlooking phase IV, two escalating moves could be identified. First, escalating move E stands for a marked change in view of political and medial communication since both get linked up in a new quality.[133] As statements from the text corpus show, mass media communication gets increasingly referred to under political, i.e. power-related auspices. Already in phase III and particularly in the course of phase IV, there is a range of references suggesting that conflict parties' communication veritably coopts the media. Both in government and civil society sources reciprocal accusations can be found implying that the conflict is fuelled by purposeful disinformation.[134] In this context, it is demonstrated that one of the key political modes of observation, i.e. the distinction and indication of power holders and their respective counterparts, not only finds its neutral expression in media communication. Also, through the way of reporting, the analysed media favour a specific reading of the situation and thus affect the perceived distribution of power in conflict. In this context, for example, media coverage not only immediately adopts a colloquial and provoking expression – "anti-protest laws" – but also, on its own terms, suggests interpreting the law package as a "serious attack on human rights in Ukraine" and thus as illegitimate (see KyivPost 17.01.2014: 4). On this, government statements make reference by accusing the media of engaging in demagoguery by fuelling fears and instrumentalising people (see GovUkr 20.02.2014a). Seen from the perspective of mass media, in turn, it can be stated here that political communication increasingly addresses the subsystem of mass media and actors attributed to it. The case of Tetyana Chornovol again is exemplary (see chapter 5.2./phase III): a journalist gets addressed (in this case assaulted) as a political activist at the same time. In the same way, media companies and institutions get hacked, taken over or even closed (see MMIC 31.12.2013b). In other words, the ultimate communication of political power, i.e. repressive violence, is not only observed and articulated by the media but also gets fully "translated" into and understandable as conflict communication within the subsystem of mass media itself when certain persons and their roles, such as journalists

133 At this point, it is recalled that mass media communication, as it was introduced within the context of the methodological considerations above, already constitutes a part of the conflict discourse and thus of the conflict system, since communication from politics and mass media is naturally and permanently coupled (see particularly chapter 4.2).

134 To give two striking examples: Voices from the government complain about the medial reception of a working visit of the Ukrainian and Russian head of government according to which the conditions of an alleged Moscow-induced accession of Ukraine to the CU were determined (see GovUkr 24.12.2013b); in the same way, accounts from the civil society section complain about allegations from the government's side including the idea that the EU allegedly insists on introducing same-sex marriages as a precondition for the AA (see MMIC 15.12.2013a).

and reporters working for media companies, get attributed to a specific side of the conflict (i.e. the anti-government camp) by force.

With this, a normative shift – the second pillar of escalating move E – takes place and further affects the consolidation of conflict identities in phase IV. In view of the abovementioned identity layers, it can be stated that relevant persons and their roles, particularly those associated with the media change their programme: While, in preceding conflict phases, the analysed mass media communication suggests that media players have been observed and have been observing themselves as a rather neutral 'third party' claiming to focus on information of common news value, the perception of the media in phase IV changes. Now, based on (self-) ascriptions in the conflict discourse, media representatives become ultimately observed as acting entities within the conflict system.[135] This ultimately cements a virulent normative claim within the conflict system that can be reduced to the following message that not only addresses mass media but also, in principle, the whole conflict environment: Whoever comments on the conflict finds oneself in a situation in which the expectation to take one conflict party's side is perceived as very strong.

Escalating move F, the last one that could be identified in the investigation period, is composed of a structural coupling that brings political and legal communication to a different level. Thereby, the new connecting link between the two lies in a changing observation of violence. Building on legal communication, it can be stated that there is a newly established national legal basis (either understood as "anti-protest laws" or "anti-extremist laws", depending on the conflict party), which legalises and legitimises a large-scale use of force, even retroactively, as for example the dispute about the regulations on amnesty for both security forces *and* protesters shows. At the same time, there is an internationalised human rights discourse referred to by insinuating that the violation of human rights in Ukraine justifies a veritable political revolution whereby the use of force cannot be fully excluded.[136] So, both legal strands from the conflict discourse show that the increasing use of force has become compatible within the inner logic of the legal system of communication itself.[137] These considerations, in turn, match with political

135 As the analysis of media coverage shows, particularly from February 2014 on, reports are increasingly marked by referring to the government in a way that positions the media itself in opposition to an all too Russian-friendly government. In this sense, (negative) *commentaries* more and more supersede *reports* on government action. In KyivPost (7.02.2014: 4), for example, Yanukovych's administration is openly accused of "working in tandem with the Kremlin propaganda", of spreading rumours (e.g. on armed militants trained on the territory of the US embassy), and of "discrediting and smearing EuroMaidan protestors". Moreover, the government is characterised as "incompetent and malicious".

136 This becomes particularly apparent within the context of the "All-Ukraine Euromaidan Forum" where the recognition of human rights was declared as "fundamentally important for the further development of the Ukrainian society" (MMIC 21.01.2014a; see chapter 5.2/phase III). Furthermore, statements from civil society make clear that Ukraine is in a "battle for regime/system change", which, against the background of everyday mass violence, is first and foremost about Ukrainian's dignity and, at this point, radicalises (MMIC 20.01.2014a).

137 In this sense, on the one hand, a number of passages suggest that the alleged injustice committed by the regime (e.g. concerning corruption, abstraction of funds, wilful misrepresentation concerning the AA plans, culminating in plans of a coup d'état by re-joining the Russian Federation) jus-

communication, which also circles around observing and describing a new quality of violence in conflict. Here, shaping laws that legalise and thus normalise the use of force is regarded as means to maintain the political status quo, i.e. the position of the power holders. This entails deeply structuring effects on expectations within the conflict system. Thereby, the intensified use of force, formally backed up by the new law package, evolves into a kind of everybody's means of choice – be it to assert (see government) or challenge (see civil society) political power claims. In other words, the collective observation of the (excessive) use of force serves as a common discursive target corridor, where political and legal communication, once again, get translatable for each other on a new level.

The structural coupling outlined above comes along with a last and crucial normative shift of the conflict discourse. In essence, this shift is about entrenching conflict identities between which persons, roles and programmes are unambiguously attributed. Based on the text corpus, the relationship between the conflict parties, i.e. between pro- and anti-government activists, is characterised by reciprocal contempt. For both conflict parties, the use of organised collective violence seems to remain the only means to ultimately communicate political power claims. This is the result of a discursive development whereby, in the present and last decisive step of conflict escalation, adversaries become enemies that are determined to fight each other with all means at hand. In this context, there is significant discursive evidence within the discursive characterisations of the other from both sides' perspectives that can be read as legitimisation of imminent and unequivocal actions, including the use of force in a less restricted way (see table 16).

Table 16: Common normative reference frames

government source	**common normative reference frame (selected key points)**			**civil society source**
protest leaders are "criminal", "immoral", "inciting vengeance", "fuelling hatred", "losing control", causing "chain reaction of aggression" (UkrN 20.01.2014b[138])	→	adversaries as criminals to be held accountable	←	"president is accountable for bloodshed" and a situation "on the brink of civil war", "violation of constitution" (UkrN 22.01.2014c)

tifies resistance by force (UkrN 20.01.2014c). On the other hand, other sources bring forward that Ukraine's critical situation (public buildings blocked, security forces threatened by protesters using Molotov cocktails etc.) was invoked by the Maidan protests. This is seen as a serious breach of law or even as coup d'etat, too, which has to be averted by all available means (GovUkr 22.01.2014a; GovUkr 23.01.2014e).

138 Nota bene: Even though UkrN 20.01.2018b refers to a statement attributed to the "Party of Regions", i.e. the governing party of president Yanucovych, it was (re-) published within the context of civil society oppositions' volunteer community resources.

government source		common normative reference frame (selected key points)		civil society source
protesters are "ruthless and violent revolutionaries"; "insane and unrestrained supporters attacking security forces"; "extremist actions"; "Euromaidan-bandits" (UkrN 20.01.2014b)	→	the other: carrying out illegitimate and illegal actions basic principles get violated (by the other)	←	"undeclared war against revolution of the younger generation", e.g. by "forced disappearance", "death squads"; "extremist" government responsible for "crimes against humanity" (UkrN 23.01.2014a)
"Extremists are trying to rape all Ukraine, constitutional order and legality." (GovUkr 22.01.2014a)	→	adversaries as enemies of the people/ of Ukraine itself Ukrainian state, nation and society at stake	←	"keep fighting for freedom" to prevent "dictatorship"; "people have crossed the line of peaceful protests"; "no way back" (MMIC 21.01.2014c)
determined "to fight anarchy, chaos, and the danger of division caused by Maidan protests" (GovUkr 22.01.2014a)				
"cynical and amoral terrorists preparing a coup d'etat" (GovUkr 23.01.2014c)	→	point of no return reached danger of civil war	←	"government only understands a language of violence" (UkrN 25.01.2014c)
"seizure of state institutions by radicals" (GovUkr 27.01.2014a)				"fruitless protests" entailing "radicalisation" of protesters (UkrN 24.01.2014a)
				"Give me liberty or give me death!"[139]

(Own table)

Based on the analysis of the text corpus, the observation of violence in phase IV is embedded in communication that mainly centres around blaming, distancing, and degrading. Hence, discursive threads dealing with the *delegitimisation* of violence used by the other side and, respectively, the *legitimisation* of the own side's use of force draw on the same communicative reservoir that has been opened up between the poles of contradiction in the conflict discourse before (see recapitulating overview in table 17).

139 This statement became one of the prominent rallying cries among Maidan protesters after the first deaths caused by live ammunition during battles with police forces (see e.g. KyivPost 24.01.2014).

Table 17: Dimenions of the conflict system I-IV

Dimension	Phase	Poles of Contradiction		
factual	IV	continuing non-violent protests (including blockings, civil disobedience etc.)	versus	extending protest means and methods/enforcing democracy & liberty with violent strategies
		defending state sovereignty based on a monopoly on the use of force without limits		ongoing transformation of state sovereignty/the people's sovereignty and society as a whole
	III	civil society commitment with the objective to seize power		civil society activities as part of a profound and self-determined societal transformation
		civil disobedience and blockings as subversion of state authority and attack against sovereignty		blocking of public institutions and services as democratic instruments of protest
	II	commitment to national law and order, national security, law enforcement		obligation to respect international legal frameworks, especially human rights
		revolution as illegal act, source of instability		revolution as positive change of system, social progress
		national political decision-making as consequence of changes in global balance of power		political decision-making as part of exclusively national affairs
	I	deepening relations with Russia		explicitly orienting Ukraine towards Europe
		conforming to (binary) geopolitical condition		national emancipation and independence

Dimension	Phase	Poles of Contradiction		
temporal	IV	invoking unity and patriotism	versus	invoking a common European identity
		relapse into Soviet times: politically, economically, socially		blundering into an uncertain western future: politically, economically, socially
	III	"restauration" of full partnership with Russia		overcoming the west-east-division of Ukraine; resist Russian domination in "Ukrainian Arab Spring"
		working towards prosperous future alongside Russia		remembering the dark side of the Russian past
	II	Maidan protests as follow-up of historical extremisms		EuroMaidan as world-historical mission of freedom
	I	Orange Revolution as historical failure and source of long-term instability		EuroMaidan as necessary follow-up of Orange Revolution
social	IV	the other: an enemy threatening the existence of the self to be fought against		holding up values of understanding, rapprochement and cooperation
	III	reinventing the political in an "identity revolution"		working with/ within the existing political structures
	II	allocation of political power as winner-takes-it-all scenario		allocation of political power as parallel representation of different ideas and interests
		societal cleavages as source of danger		society as integration of continuing differences
	I	post-Soviet elites		(newly developing) civil society

(Own tabe)

In the course of this, it becomes obvious how the discursive framework further developed and extended its range through the successive escalating moves. The following paragraphs highlight selected aspects of phase IV's very last part, which is shaped by a quick succession of conflict experiences.

A degrading discourse

> "God knows I never hated anyone, but now I do and I do so hard."[140]

In this very last part of phase IV, statements confirming a maximal emotional distance and degrading attitudes towards the other are among the most common.[141] Conflict identities, as they have been evolving in the preceding phases, now clearly include images of "the enemy" within which the characterisation of the other as an "alien" beyond the scope of one's own norms gets possible.[142] As mentioned earlier in this chapter, in this way, dissidents become per se qualified as enemies unable and unwilling to negotiate compromise and, therefore, as legitimate aims of the own violent actions. In this regard, for example, the representation of Yanucovych as "marauding criminal" and "bandit" is seconded only by his demonisation as "Hitler" and more or less implicit instructions: "Would it not have been better to shot Hitler like a mad dog without waiting to see 1945?" (UkrN 11.02.2014a; see also MMIC 17.02.2014b). Vice versa, Maidan protesters are wholesale discredited as anti-democratic extremists whose only goal is to "gain the ruler's chairs at the cost of people's blood." (GovUkr 18.02.2014b)[143] To counter this threat, the government, on its part, confirms to do all that is necessary to gain control of the chaos in Kiev (see also UkrN 19.02.2014a).

In contrast, the conflict identity of the self on both sides is downright presented as positive.[144] In this context, it is particularly remarkable that statements, referring to different levels of lawfulness, suggest a necessary differentiation between "formal legitimacy", for example based on consent and support of the population, which is presented to be similarly high on both sides, and "moral legitimacy", which is assessed to be certainly greater on the own side (see e.g. UkrN 11.02.2014b). Following this and with reference to the rising death toll on Maidan, talionic statements expressing wishes "to take vengeance for the victims" become more and more common (see e.g. UkrN 13.02.2014):

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140 Statement by Inna Taran, 18-year-old protester, interviewed by KyivPost (24.01.2014: 14). Taran was among those beaten on November 30. After being assaulted she had to undergo surgery to remove parts of one of her kidneys, due to severe beating.

141 At the same time, based on poll data, it can be stated that the stand-off situation and thus the obvious failure of the strategies has a demoralising effect both on protesters' side and among police forces (see MMIC 21.01.2014d).

142 See exemplarily UkrN 9.02.2014b (brackets added): "Those guys [i.e. security forces] are aliens. They are not ours."

143 As already expounded earlier (see chapter 5.2/phase III), demonising rhetoric also becomes obvious in government statements and media accounts that focus on the danger of an imminent "fascist revolt" prepared by the "Right Sector" within the protest movement (see e.g. KyivPost 7.02.2014: 2).

144 With regard to anti-government protesters, for example, a number of statements acknowledge the "complete absence of barbarism", "vandalism" and "sacking". Also, EuroMaidan protesters are presented as having a "sense of responsibility" and not having lost their "human face" despite all aggression from the other side (see e.g. UkrN 13.02.2014). Voices from the government, in turn, never tire highlighting that the authorities provide assistance during disorders caused by the other side and do everything possible to ensure the proper functioning of the country, which is, according to these accounts, not involved in the conflict for the most part (see e.g. GovUkr 19.02.2014a).

> "May you see in your dreams every night those people who died because of you. […] Live in fear – the payback for all that you have done is coming." (UHHRU 20.02.2014)

Other statements suggest that the spiral of hatred, vengeance and bloodlust gets increasingly inclusive since any trust in the authorities "committing crimes against humanity" and violating international law has been lost and, despite the high death toll, violent change ultimately including the elimination of the enemy becomes more and more acceptable (see e.g. KyivPost 21.02.2014: 4–5).

A militarising discourse: "Fighting at the front lines"

Another aspect of phase IV's final stage, here labelled as increasingly "militarising", pays attention to a marked discursive trait: Many statements concerning the incidences on Maidan from different sources collectively convey the impression that the protests directly compare with war-related events, e.g. by setting the tone of a "reporting from the front lines". The KyivPost (31.01.2014: 3), for example, publishes a "visual guide to EuroMaidan" that offers an overview map of Kiev's city centre with detailed depictions of the protesters' infrastructure, including "self-defence headquarters", "medical aid units", and different rings of barricades. This kind of coverage gives the impression that any report comes about under the spell of a quick succession of events and includes sensational words and images underlining the idea of directly reporting from the firing lines. This impression is even strengthened by drawing the attention to the "occupation" of private and public buildings (e.g. Trade Union Building, Kyiv City State Administration etc.), which takes place under threat and use of violent means and is presented as necessary (see chapter 5.2./ phase IV).

Against the background of a conflict situation perceived as fateful, it can be stated that there is a firm conviction on all sides that "the protests will *not* continue in a peaceful way" (UkrN 30.01.2014b; italics added). In this context, there is talk of "12.000 armed combatants" being "deployed" on Maidan: On the one hand, these combatants consider themselves as "peacemakers", like the UN blue helmets, who just react to illegitimate assaults of the security forces. On the other hand, one can find many hotheads in the ranks of the combatants who plan to "revenge the victims' blood" (UkrN 13.02.2014; KyivPost 14.02.2014: 12). The idea of a final battle without compromise further develops: conflict parties set mutual deadlines (e.g. concerning the release of prisoners or the unblocking of buildings); plans of a nationwide expansion of self-defence units become known[145]; rumours about an imminent declaration of martial law as well as government statements proclaiming that security forces are sufficiently equipped to "liquidate" the criminal and illegal protests on Maidan (GovUkr 18.02.2014a/b). Taken together, the situation is per-

145 On this, the formation of "all-female self-defense units" is particularly highlighted by KyivPost (14.02.2014: 13).

ceived as "tensed to the utmost" and "likely leading to a new and even more powerful explosion of public anger with unforeseeable consequences." (UkrN 18.02.2014)[146]

An all-encompassing discourse: Of investment climates, human rights and hegemons

A brief retrospect: Escalating move A in phase I represents the starting point of an ever-growing conflict discourse. Here, political and economic communication of contradictions get translatable and understandable, or, in short, structurally coupled. In the further sequence of escalating moves in the following conflict phases, there are two variants of structural couplings: Either the formation of new structural couplings, for example when legal communication links up to the existing politico-economic conflict narrative (escalating move B); or, the transition of latently existing ones, for example when political communication gets widened by an explicit global dimension (escalating move C). In this course of this, the conflict discourse's communicative reservoir steadily grows. At the end of the escalation process, as observed within the present study and the respective investigation period, conflict communication still feeds on this broad reservoir, which is made obvious in the following.

Even in the latest phase of conflict escalation, which is characterised by the fast pace of violent events, there are parallel discursive threads in which the pros and cons of an economic opening to the east (CU/Russia) or to the west (AA/EU) are still pointedly contrasted. On the one hand, statements on economic key figures and factors take up communication from a world economic framework (and thus from a facet of world society): currency stability, economic growth, investment climate, travelling without visa. On the other hand, economic decisions are observed under power political auspices, as for example attaching conditions to bail-out packages in favour of decisions on region-specific trade liberalisation or imposing economic sanctions show.[147] In the same way, the contradiction between the principles of a functionally differentiated world economy (e.g. division of labour) and a political system of world society gradually leaving behind a purely segmentary differentiation (e.g. attributing power strictly and solely to nations states which are by the way all alike in their organisation of government and opposition) particularly shows up within the debate on the role of oligarchs. References from the conflict discourse dealing with oligarchs do not only blur the lines between political and economic aspects but also reveal hierarchical descriptions of a social order that imply communicative patterns of stratificatory differentiation in world society.[148] As represented

146 Against the background of a situation that "felt like real war" (AI 21.02.2014) and a spectacular descent into violence with 75 deaths in the following two days (February 19 and 20), only a day later the conflict situation is characterised as the result of a huge "miscalculation from both sides" (MMIC 20.02.2014b) that can lead into a "full-blown breakdown of society" (KyivPost 21.02.2014).

147 On "Russian trade sanctions" and "market opening" see KyivPost (31.01.2014) and UkrN (7.02.2014a). Another example relates to currency stability, the role of savers and the National Bank (see KyivPost 7.02.2014, 14.02.2014: 4; GovUkr 12.02.2014a, 14.02.2014a, 19.02.2014a).

148 As mentioned earlier, forms of stratificatory differentiation, e.g. becoming manifest in hierarchical social structures or hegemonic power orders, compete with forms of functional differentiation, e.g. in subsystems of politics, economy etc., and segmentary differentiation, e.g. in form of nation states as like-units (for details see chapter 3.1).

in the conflict discourse, the "oligarchic system" is constituted by a certain class of people concentrating economic power (i.e. a small group of Ukrainian business leaders chairing international consortia) and influencing policy decisions (i.e. either by holding an office themselves or acting as a string-puller on the sidelines[149]) in order to be successful under the conditions of a increasingly liberalising world market (e.g. by pressing for a consolidation of Ukraine's credit status in the globalised financial system).[150]

As it has been demonstrated, the expansion of the politico-economic discourse by the legal dimension (escalating move B), too, has a lasting discursive impact. Apart from the above-mentioned statements on degrading and militarising, in the last part of phase IV, notably two clusters of statements step forward: First, those statements that again take up the issue of human rights and their violation from both sides. Exemplarily, it is stated that protecting "basic human justice and dignity" (KyivPost 7.02.2014: 3) and "transforming Ukraine into a democratic nation that respects the rule of law and human rights" (KyivPost 14.02.2014: 1) is not only necessary but can be implemented, in case of need, by force. Otherwise, in case of a failure of the Maidan protests, a defeat of a "Europe of human rights" is expected (UkrN 17.02.2014a). A second cluster of statements also refers to a kind of worldwide communication, more precisely to geopolitical constellations of power. This becomes evident when voices from civil society claim that Ukraine needs to finally emancipate itself from "Russia, the traditional hegemon" (MMIC 17.02.2014); when the government announces (just after having concluded the Russia-Ukraine-deal) its plans to work towards a "constructive partnership of Ukraine with NATO" (GovUkr 12.02.2014g); and when Maidan protesters, with reference to the Holodomor in 1932/1933, reject any politics of non-intervention from the EU or the USA and call for solidarity "against the danger from the east" (UkrN 18.02.2014; see also 19.02.2014a).

Finally, both of the above mentioned clusters of communication – the manifold references to human rights as a facet of legal communication in world society as well as the much-cited self-determination ideal vs. global power constellations recalling a changing self-observation of power in political communication – may serve to once again highlight a basic principle of this analysis: Since there are different modes of differentiation at work, world society's subsystems of communication provide reservoirs of contradictions; developing conflict systems draw on these reservoirs as they span a communicative field in which contradictions become articulated, understandable, processable and connectable.

149 President Yanucovych himself is also labelled as an oligarch. However, the most cited are Rinat Akhmetov, Dmytro Firtash and Viktor Pinchuk mentioned earlier (see chapter 5.4/phase III; for the "changeover" of those three to the EuroMaidan side see also UkrN 10.02.2014).

150 To put in back in systems theoretical terms: These features attributed to the "oligarchic system" illustrate contradictions between a functionally differentiated world society, an idea of power imagined as nationally bound, and a hierarchical orientation of world economy and thus world society.

5.6 Summary

The analytical narrative on the Maidan protests in Ukraine 2013/2014 presented here offers a reconstruction of a process of conflict escalation which builds on three dimensions of meaning in the discourse (factual, temporal, social) and identifies major moments of conflict development (escalating moves). The case study does *not* claim to offer an absolute timeline and a causal explanation of events on Maidan but gives an insight into the collective creation and experiencing of a conflict based on documented text-based communication that had been published within the period of investigation.

Following the multi-step analysis introduced in the work plan (chapter 4.4), the process of conflict escalation was observed along four phases. The golden thread of the conflict discourse is represented by a succession of six escalating moves (A-F). Recapitulating the salient key words, the following table offers an overview on the results of the case study on the Maidan protests in terms of phases, escalating moves, the world societal background of communication and observations of violence appearing in the respective context.

Now, recalling the basic research question of this study – How do conflicts escalate? – this analytical narrative can be understood as a possible answer to the question of how the Maidan protests escalated. Based on the results of the present case study, it escalated as a succession of escalating moves identified while observing the discourse as representation of an evolving conflict system. As demonstrated, the analysed conflict system continuously irritates its environment, incorporates communication, and draws on a communicative reservoir that is filled with contradictions ensuing from competing modes of differentiation between and within world society's subsystems. Thereby, new communication gets not only simply added to an existing spectre of the conflict discourse but, by importing further contradictions, opens up avenues for new ramifications of the discourse. Each conflict phase shows specific observations of (il)legitimate violence (see extreme right column in table above) which can be seen as embedded interim results of the discourse and, at the same time, as constitutive elements of its further progression.

In an overall view, the present analytical narrative (including all tables, e.g. on poles of contradiction) consists of a multitude of analytical observations derived from the text corpus or, in other words, of iteratively gained hypotheses on the process of conflict escalation in the context of the Maidan protests from November 21 to February 22 in 2013/2014. The following sections present a most condensed answer to the research question on the basis of this study; they are drastically reduced in case study details and represent the essence of the second-order observation perspective adopted here; and, they are to be understood as a kind of reading aid to go through the table above.

The Maidan protests in Ukraine 2013/2014 escalate in a discursive environment where new forms of attributing political power, especially supranational integration within the context of the EU, encounter strong ideas of national emancipation and self-determination. In phase I (Nov 21–30), the first and significant discursive effects of this are made explicit within a cluster of communication referred to as escalating move A: Therein, economic considerations about being integrated into a larger European market and thus about increasing revenue prospects as a stakeholder meet competing forms of (self-) ob-

Table 18: Overview escalating moves (Ukraine)

turning point event	phase	escalating move			'world societal communication' spelled out in terms of…	key observations of (il)legitimate violence
			structural coupling	**normative shift**		
Nov 21: suspension of AA	I	A	economic considerations (market integration) connect to competing political power claims (east vs. west; integration vs. emancipation)	emergence of civil society as an alternative political force	economic communication referring to a (world) market logic; communication referring to changing (self-) observations as to political power	
Nov 30: 'cleaning' of Maidan by force	II	B	legal considerations on the use of force get articulated and connected to politico-economic communication	ambivalent meaning of revolution accentuated: systemic change as an existential threat	different frames of reference in legal communication: national state law vs. human rights	legal use of force to enforce law vs. disproportionate use of force surprising overreaction precedential case blocking and occupation of buildings, civil disobedience threats and skirmishes
		C	two ideas of political power get outspoken: Ukraine as architect of its fortune vs. Ukraine at the mercy of global powers	increasing simplification/ focus on two adversarial positions: pro-government/ Russia vs. pro-civil society opposition/EU	political communication oscillating between inviolability of sovereign nation states and attribution of political power within global spheres of influence	

turning point event	phase	escalating move			'world societal communication' spelled out in terms of...	key observations of (il)legitimate violence
			structural coupling	**normative shift**		
Dec 17: Russia-Ukraine-deal	III	D	political communication in traditional national roles models (government vs. opposition) complemented by civil society sector	increasing elimination of diversity; dualist polarisation of conflict identities at the expense of nuanced positions	political communication processing the attribution of political power besided traditional roles and entities	limits of the use of force as means of political power rhetorics creating an existential and war-like atmosphere
Jan 16: adoption of anti-protest-laws (to Feb 22: breakup of government)	IV	E	new quality of connection between medial and political communication	mass media communication observed as political communication in conflict	seen in tightening connection to political communication	adversaries as enemies degrading, demonisation of the other rhetoric militarisation violent incidences reached point of no return danger of civil war use of force as general means of choice
		F	new overlap between legal and political commmunication as to legitimacy of intensified use of force	entrenching conflict identities: determination to fight against 'the enemy' with all means at hand	densification of communication: human rights violations, right to (violent) resistance, (violent) influence of global power constellations and/or economic liberalisation	

(Own table)

servation in political communication that observe legitimate political power in Ukraine as caught between a binary geopolitical condition and the idea of national self-determination (see in detail chapter 5.5.1). As these observations get articulated, understandable and thus able to be contradicted (i.e. structurally coupled), the conflict discourse begins to span along the axes of overlapping political alternatives: east versus west and (supranational) integration versus (national) emancipation. In this phase of intensified debate about how political power is attributed within new frames of reference, the rather traditional division between the Ukrainian government and opposition shifts in favour of an alternative holder of political authority referred to as civil society. With this, the discourse carries out a normative shift that will be continued in phase III later on.

Building on this, in phase II (Nov 30 – Dec 17), two clusters of communication could be identified that pointedly show the further development of the conflict discourse: With escalating move B, the politico-economic conflict tale unfolded in phase I now connects (i.e. structurally couples) to legal considerations on the use of force; this is observed as being triggered by the "cleaning of Maidan by force" on Nov 30/Dec 1 which is characterised as the first violent event since the begin of the protests and thus as a "precedential case" of an "overreaction". The analysis of communication does not only show alternative frames of reference within legal communication (national state law vs. human rights); it does also highlight (self-)observations pointing to the (il)legality of political forms of action (street protests, civil disobedience etc.) and the reactions to them from security forces; also, the occurrences presented are located within a historically charged and ambivalent context of "revolution" between freedom/democracy and chaos/human losses (see details in chapter 5.5.2). In addition, with reference to escalating move C, two ideas of how to understand Ukraine's political capabilities get articulated, understandable and thus able to be further on contradicted (i.e. structurally coupled): on the one hand, political decision-making is presented as an autonomous national process based on sovereign domestic preferences; on the other hand, national political decision-making is observed as being restricted by a certain global balance of power or spheres of influence respectively. Within this cluster of contradicting communication along the axes illustrated earlier relating to escalating move A (east vs. west; integration vs. emancipation), the formation of mutually exclusive conflict identities ("Russophiles" vs. "Europhiles") gets a further boost (normative shift). Observations referring to violence in phase II are particularly focused on the (dis-) proportionate use of force either applied to maintain law and order or to protest against a certain policy. In the course of this, positions articulated on this issue increasingly see themselves as adversarial; violence against things and people, be it in terms of protest means or reactions to the same, are more and more qualified as acceptable or even necessary.

In phase III (Dec 17-Jan 16), the conflict discourse can largely be characterised by communication on what is to be considered as a legitimate political force that holds power and authority and should be recognised in the political process. Hence, within the context of escalating move D, (self-) observations including the idea of political power holders reflecting the exclusive result of a 'traditional' allocation of power between government and opposition (within state institutions, especially the parliament) encounter other ones that wish to open up the political process for a, in principle, broad range of societal actors able to communicate in an enduring and binding manner. At the same time,

the articulation of these positions and the processing of their inherent contradiction in communication (i.e. structural coupling) is accompanied by an increasing elimination of diversity (see chapter 5.5.3). In this phase, the normative shift of the discourse does not only consist in a gradual disappearance of the broad diversity of objectives, ideas, interests, currents etc. of protests on Maidan under the label of "anti-government"; there are also observations referring to "alliance-building" that are perceived as a dualist polarisation: the declaration of Ukrainian political parties and Maidan protesters to work together; the new initiative of the Ukrainian and Russian government to closely cooperate within the context of the "Russia-Ukraine-deal". Observations of violence in phase III essentially refer to the limits of the use of force as a legitimate means of political communication; they circle around experiences of individual victims of violence (e.g. Tetyana Chornovol, opposition activist and journalist) but also covers barricades, blockings, clashings and the use of force against security forces. The common underlying issue is represented in the question of the extent to which those endowed with political power, be it an authority fearing the subversion of the state or civil society activists claiming their right to resistance, see themselves entitled to use force as an ultimate form of political communication. Thereby, presented as ultimate limits to the use of force, references to historical experiences (e.g. Holodomor) mix up with war-like rhetoric (e.g. "blood shed", "war camps") and martial future scenarios (e.g. "existential threat", "fight for the very soul").

Finally, in phase IV (Jan 16-Feb 22), two escalating moves can be identified. First, referred to as escalating move E, one cluster of communication deals with a new quality of connection between political and medial communication. More precisely, as pieces of mass media coverage get explicitly addressed as communication of power claims supporting either one side or the other and as they are, on their own terms, understood and articulated as such (e.g. as to "anti-protest laws" or "purposeful disinformation instrumentalizing people"), political and medial communication reach a new level of structural coupling (for details see the first sections of chapter 5.5.4). While, in preceding conflict phases, mass media did not observe themselves and had not been observed as relevant addresses within the conflict system, now, media companies get observed as acting entities in conflict; this constitutes a further normative shift of the discourse. Beyond that, escalating move F refers to a second cluster of communication in phase IV in which the structural coupling of legal and political communication is brought to a different level. In this sense, the "anti-protest laws" represent the basic point of reference for legal communication on the legitimate use of force and organised violence in armed conflict (as e.g. concerning a state of emergency/threat to state order or concerning a certain right to resistance against dictatorship); this matches with political communication in which observations of an increasingly excessive use of force (by all sides) look at violence as a normalising means of political power claims. Against this background, the conflict discourse carries out a last and crucial normative shift; based on sequences of blaming, distancing, degrading, demonisation and militarisation, it is about entrenching conflict identities (pro- vs. anti-government) that perceive each other as enemies determined to fight with all means at hand. Therefore, observations of (il)legitimate violence in this very last phase clearly show a generalisation of violence as standard means of communication (see details in last part of 5.5.4).