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New Civic Activism in Ukraine: Building Society from Scratch?

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Abstract

Since Euromaidan, civil society in Ukraine faces new challenges and a new role in society. Volunteer work, donations and civic activism have increased vis-à-vis the humanitarian crisis and the war in Eastern Ukraine in an unprecedented dimension. Civil society's takeover of state responsibilities depicts the compensation of state failure. But it is questionable whether the post-Euromaidan civil society contributes to Ukraine's democratization process. Based on two case studies, in this article I examine new issues civil society in Ukraine deals with, what forms the basis of a new quality of civic activism and participation. Further, I describe structures, activities and interrelations of this new Ukrainian volunteer movement, with the aim to discuss its ambivalent role in fragile democratization.

Key Words: civil society; democratization; volunteer movement; Euromaidan; Ukraine, trust networks.



Introduction

Euromaidan, or the “Revolution of Dignity”, marked a watershed for Ukrainian civil society and scholars alike. Until that event, civil engagement, self-organization and societal solidarity were considered low in the post-soviet space.¹ At the same time, the existing organized civil society was described as elitist, artificial, and donor-driven.² But since the nation-wide protests of 2013–2014, civil society in Ukraine grew to an unprecedented dimension. The huge and unexpected

1 David Ost, “The Decline of Civil Society After ‘Post-Communism,’” in *The New Politics of European Civil Society*, ed. Ulrike Liebert and Hans-Jörg Trenz, Routledge Studies on Democratizing Europe (London; New York: Routledge Chapman & Hall, 2011).

2 Sarah E. Mendelson and John K. Glenn, eds., *The Power and Limits of NGOs: A Critical Look at Building Democracy in Eastern Europe and Eurasia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Sarah L. Henderson, “Selling Civil Society,” *Comparative Political Studies* 35, no. 2 (2002); Armine Ishkanian, “Democracy Promotion and Civil Society,” in *Global Civil Society: Communicative Power and Democracy*, 2007/8, ed. Helmut Anheier, Marlies Glasius and Mary Kaldor (London: Sage Publications, 2007), 2007/8; Kateryna Pishchikova, *Promoting Democracy in Postcommunist Ukraine: The Contradictory Outcomes of US Aid to Women’s NGOs* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2010); Orysia Lutsevych, “How to Finish a Revolution: Civil Society and Democracy in Georgia, Moldova and

mobilization and the impressive self-organization efforts around the Euromaidan protests seemed to clearly falsify the perception of a weak civil society. After protests had ended in late February 2014, civic initiatives, whose members participated in the Euromaidan and its self-organization, expanded their work related to issues such as self-defense, advocacy, fund-raising or counter-propaganda in the Euromaidan's aftermath. Particularly during Ukraine's political and societal reorganization in spring 2014, these groups played a key role in maintaining basic state functions. Civil society contributed substantially to bypassing the inner-Ukrainian power vacuum after the Yanukovych regime collapsed.³ Furthermore, a remarkable number of civic actors who were central figures in the protests switched to the political sphere. The number of activists or journalists who became members of parliament or entered the administration in order to insert Euromaidan's ideals into politics increased.⁴

However, the question arises as to whether the grown civic engagement denotes a qualitative difference in Ukrainian civil society and its potential contribution to democratization and social change. Post-Euromaidan civic activism might either be a temporal phenomenon or a structural novelty, indicating a sustainable development towards broader societal commitment to participation and politics.

The research question raised here is twofold: Did civil society in Ukraine undergo distinctive quantitative and qualitative changes since Euromaidan, and if so, to what extent may these new developments in civil society contribute to democratization in Ukraine? To answer this question, I will analyze recent developments of Ukrainian civil society in two case studies and illustrate new formations of civil society. In analyzing these qualitative changes, I refer to Charles Tilly's concept of democratization, focusing on civil society's contribution to the building of new trust networks, the insulation of inequalities from public politics, and to the reduction of autonomous power centers.⁵ The aim of the article is to provide deeper insights of characteristics, roots and networks of new civic movements in Ukraine as a part of the post-Euromaidan civil society.

The article proceeds as follows. In section 2, I discuss civil society's role in democratization processes and present the theoretical and analytical framework of my analysis. In section 3, I give some background information on the historical evolution of civil society in Ukraine until 2013 and on its changes since Euromaidan. In section 4, two empirical case studies on recent civil society phenomena will exemplify characteristics and democratic potential of recent civic activism in Ukraine.

Ukraine," Chatham House: Independent thinking on international affairs, accessed January 14, 2013, <http://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/papers/view/188407>.

3 Stefan Meister, "Quo vadis Ukraine? Die Neuerfindung des Ukrainischen Staates," accessed June 19, 2016, <http://www.laender-analysen.de/ukraine/pdf/UkraineAnalysen142.pdf>.

4 Susann Worschech, "Euromaidan goes Parliament: Wer sind 'die neuen' ParlamentskandidatInnen?," accessed December 24, 2017, <http://www.laender-analysen.de/ukraine/pdf/UkraineAnalysen138.pdf>.

5 Charles Tilly, *Democracy*, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 74ff.

Theoretical and Analytical Framework

At a first glance, the relationship between democracy and civil society seems to be simple: “Democratic government is strengthened, not weakened, when it faces a vigorous civil society.”⁶ A strong and vibrant civil society is “characterized by a social infrastructure of dense networks of face-to-face relationships that cross-cut existing social cleavages such as race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation and gender.”⁷ But what exactly is civil society? Sharp definitions of organizational patterns of civic activism bear the risk of excluding newly emerging forms. Therefore, civil society is often only defined as a public sphere or space,⁸ or it is conceptualized with respect to its functions. In this study, I refer to civic networks rather than to formal NGOs, and I will focus on civil society’s functions in democratization.

Democratization can be understood as an interactive process of ongoing negotiation of power relations.⁹ Civil society’s role is a permanent brokerage between various power spheres of political center and periphery. This role is related to two distinctive functions of civil society that can be drawn from political philosophy.¹⁰ First, in a republican perspective, civil society is a social realm of democratic socialization where discourse takes place and contributes to the internalization of democratic values and the education of new democratic leaders. Tocqueville denominated this function ‘school of democracy’.¹¹ This perspective also emphasizes the development of abstract trust and solidarity, what is referred to as bridging social capital.¹² Second, in a liberal perspective, civil society is a defender of citizens’ rights and freedoms. It is a corrective power vis-à-vis potentially authoritarian political structures and a ‘watchdog’ of democratic principles and practices.¹³ Both functions can be assigned to different phases of ongoing transformation processes.¹⁴ The analytically distinguishable phases became heavily blurred in Ukraine, where democratization appeared to resemble a fuzzy back-and-forth process

6 Robert D. Putnam, Robert Leonardi and Raffaella Y. Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, New edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 182.

7 Bob Edwards, Michael W. Foley and Mario Diani, *Beyond Tocqueville: Civil Society and the Social Capital Debate in Comparative Perspective* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2001), 17.

8 Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge, Mass. [u.a.]: MIT-Press, 1992).

9 Geoffrey Pridham, *The Dynamics of Democratization: A Comparative Approach* (London, New York: Continuum, 2000), 5.

10 Irene Hahn-Fuhr and Susann Worschech, “External Democracy Promotion and Divided Civil Society—the Missing Link,” in *Civil Society and Democracy Promotion*, ed. Timm Beichelt et al., *Challenges to Democracy in the 21st Century* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 15ff.

11 Alexis de Tocqueville, *Über die Demokratie in Amerika*, ed. J. P. Mayer (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2014 [1835]).

12 Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, 7th ed. (New York, NY [u.a.]: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

13 Charles Taylor, “Die Beschwörung der Civil Society,” in *Europa und die Civil Society*, ed. Krzysztof Michalski, *Castelgandolfo-Gespräche 1989* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1991).

14 Wolfgang Merkel and Hans-Jürgen Puhle, *Von der Diktatur zur Demokratie*, 1st ed. (VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1999).

in the last two decades. It remains unclear when and how civic initiatives with a socializing or, respectively, a watchdog orientation may contribute to that process.

Charles Tilly proposed a processual and relational perspective to conceptualize democratization as a set of processes changing the relations between a state and its citizens. Tilly argues that the degree of democracy can be measured by the extent to which the state behaves in conformity to the expressed demands of its citizens. Therefore, the quality of interaction between state and citizens, which can be called political inclusiveness, lies at the core of his concept. Following Tilly,

[...] a regime is democratic to the degree that political relations between the state and its citizens feature broad, equal, protected and mutually binding consultation. Democratization means net movement toward broader, more equal, more protected, and more binding consultation.¹⁵

The democratic status of a regime can be determined by these four dimensions that characterize the state-citizen-interaction: comprehensive involvement of citizens (*Breadth*), decoupling of political participation from categorical inequality (*Equality*), reduction of political arbitrariness towards citizens (*Protection*), and mutual liability in terms of transparency and rule of law (*Consultation*). Democratization and De-democratization are indicated by increases or decreases within these four dimensions of state-citizen-relations. Further, Tilly argues that the *processes* promoting democratization, hence the increase within all four dimensions, are (1) integration of trust networks into public politics; (2) insulation of public politics from categorical inequality, and (3) transformation of nonstate power.¹⁶

If civil society is expected to contribute to democratization, where can that contribution be located in Tilly's concept? Being conceptualized as an intermediate sphere,¹⁷ civil society is part of a relational concept—it may be a broker or transmitter between state actors and citizens, for example. The democratizing functions of civil society can be directed towards the three processes. Building trust networks could be expected from civil society actors who focus on socializing functions and social capital. Decoupling politics from categorical inequality such as class or gender, or the dissolution of nonstate power centers would require the activities of a watchdog civil society.

The analysis of post-Euromaidan civil society's contribution to Ukraine's democratization therefore focuses on the following analytical questions, based on Tilly's model:

- First, does civil society contribute to the *integration of trust networks into public politics*, e. g. by dissolving or transforming formerly segregated trust networks, or by creating politically connected trust networks? Indicators would be (a) the lively cooperation of civil society organizations and activists among themselves; (b) the transfer of networks from pre-Euromaidan or Euromaidan activism to recent activism, (c) an increased share

¹⁵ Tilly, *Democracy*, 13f.

¹⁶ Tilly, *Democracy*, 74ff.

¹⁷ Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory*, Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought (Cambridge, Mass. [u.a.]: MIT-Press, 1992), ix.

of volunteers in civil society, or (d) increased cooperation of civil society with the political, administrative or parliamentary sphere.

- Second, does civil society help to *insulate public politics from categorical inequalities* by either propelling an equalization of categories, or by buffering politics from the operation of those politics? Indicators would be (a) advocacy activism for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups of citizens, or (b) a heterogeneous composition of civic organizations initiatives, or coalitions (concerning, for example, social or regional backgrounds of participants).
- Third, does civil society support the *transformation of non-state power*, e. g. by broadening political participation, equalizing the access to political resources and opportunities outside the state, or furthering an inhibition of autonomous and/or arbitrary coercive power both within and outside the state? Indicators would be (a) brokering and connecting non-state power groups such as militias with state power structures to facilitate coalition building or cooptation of the militia by the state, (b) raising public voice for transparency in politics and traceability of information and resource flows, or (c) broadening public control over formerly closed or autonomous sectors of the state, the economy, or the military.

Based on my proposed synthesis of Tilly's democratization concept and civil society's functions in democratization, it is now possible to examine the political relevance of civil society before and after Euromaidan. In the next section, I will portray Ukraine's civil society and its particular strength and weakness in a broader perspective. I will also touch upon specific ambivalences civil society faces since Euromaidan. I will then turn to two paradigmatic cases of post-Euromaidan civic activism to illustrate new facets of civil society in Ukraine. These are humanitarian assistance for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and civic support for the Ukrainian armed forces.

Case studies can be understood as an "intensive study of a single unit with the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units."¹⁸ The case selection has to remain faithful to the double function of case study research which means to describe the single phenomenon itself, but also to illustrate a broader set of units. Therefore, in this study, I will analyze two cases of civil society phenomena that only emerged in a particular historical situation—the Euromaidan and the subsequent violent conflict in Eastern Ukraine and Crimea. Both cases are worth being portrayed in detail, but they also illustrate some 'new facets' of Ukrainian civil society with respect to organizational forms, political and societal embeddedness and ambitions.

18 John Gerring, "What is a Case Study and What is It Good for?," *American Political Science Review* 98, no. 02 (2004): 342, doi:10.1017/S 0003055404001182.

From Perestroika to Euromaidan: Historical Pathways and Ambivalences of Civil Society in Ukraine

Strong Protests, Weak Structures

Civil society in Ukraine has always been an ambivalent phenomenon. When Marc Howard published his famous analysis of the weakness of civil society in post-socialist Europe,¹⁹ he might have overlooked the dynamic development of civil society in Ukraine, which tells a story of specific weaknesses, but also of specific strengths.²⁰ As early as in the 1960s and 1970s, the Ukrainian dissident movement evolved as a reaction to Soviet russification campaigns, radical press censorship and anti-Ukrainian cleansing. Main targets of the different dissident groups were political demands of further De-Stalinization, cultural demands such as the preservation of Ukrainian language and culture, and the legalization of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. In the mid-1970s, dissident groups unified and formed the Ukrainian Helsinki Committee, which evolved into a small but influential circle of independent thinkers. Although suppression and persecution of dissidents by the Soviet regime increased after the mid-1970s, a broader Ukrainian civil society movement grew in the 1980s around the Chernobyl catastrophe, Perestroika and Glasnost. The strength of Ukrainian civil society is not only reflected in this durable dissident movement, but also in the fact that among political prisoners in the Soviet Union, Ukrainians were over-represented and often served disproportionately high sentences. The exceptional mobilization capacity of Ukrainian civil society is exemplified in frequently emerging street protests: from the Donbas miners' strikes in 1989 and the organization of a human chain from Kyiv to Lviv in January 1990 to the movement *Ukraine without Kuchma* in the early 2000s and the protests of the *Orange Revolution* in late 2004, to name only a few.

What, then, about its weakness? The historical view reveals a civil society that shows continued engagement in terms of protest and campaigning, but civic actors did not succeed in translating these efforts into larger structures of influencing and programming policies and decision-making processes. Similar to other East European countries, the dissident and opposition groups united in 1989/1990 and formed the movement *Rukh*. Still, *Rukh* never became an influential and popular political force, such as the Polish *Solidarność*. The same must be stated for the *Orange Revolution*: while the civic movement managed to bring hundreds of thousands to the streets, defying the November cold for weeks, it failed to change elites and to bring new, democratic leaders into relevant positions. Furthermore, professionalization and organizational

19 Marc Morjé Howard, *The Weakness of Civil Society in Post-Communist Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2003).

20 See Andreas Kappeler, *Kleine Geschichte der Ukraine*, Orig.-Ausg., 3., Überarb. und Aktualisierte Aufl, Beck'sche Reihe 1059 (München: Beck, 2009), 242ff; Mykhaylo Banakh, *Die Relevanz der Zivilgesellschaft bei den Postkommunistischen Transformationsprozessen in Osteuropäischen Ländern: Das Beispiel der Spät- und Postsowjetischen Ukraine 1986–2009*, Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society 121 (Stuttgart: ibidem, 2013), 765.

structuring of civil society organizations intensified civil society's focus on its own development rather than on political changes.^{21 22}

Therefore, I argue, Ukrainian civil society has neither been purely weak nor strong—it rather shows enormous strength in campaigning and mobilizing, but a severe lack of durable structures to support a political, economic and cultural transformation. Ukraine's history is full of revolutionary moments, but no persistent democratic movement has emerged so far. Obviously, civil society managed to create a durable network of activists since many of those who took part in the Orange Revolution found themselves on the streets again during Euromaidan. But these civic networks were not adequately linked to society at large or to politics before Euromaidan, so that civil society did not succeed in broadening power structures significantly. The research question on the democratizing potential of post-Euromaidan civil society must be seen before this background of a both strong and weak Ukrainian civil society.

Ambivalences of Post-Revolutionary Civil Society

Was Euromaidan finally the point when the moment turned into a movement? The impressive self-organization and participation of the Ukrainian population at Euromaidan allowed for this conjecture in the first instance. However, after initial euphoria and few moments of cheering, disillusionment appeared among external observers of Ukrainian civil society and democratization. Civic engagement in the area of supporting IDPs showed the new strength of civil society, but revealed a massive failure of the Ukrainian government in a serious humanitarian crisis. Rapidly established paramilitary units definitely saved Ukraine in an extraordinary vulnerable situation, but their emergence also questioned the state monopoly on the use of force—one cornerstone of modern statehood.

Starting from Euromaidan, civil society obviously had gained more confidence in its own capacity. Volunteering increased, and civic organizations enjoyed higher public regard than before Euromaidan.²³ Civil society became more interconnected with society at large.²⁴ A new Ukrainian public sphere evolved through and since Euromaidan, with a growing extent of

21 Irene Hahn-Fuhr and Susann Worschech, "External Democracy Promotion and Divided Civil Society—the Missing Link," in *Civil Society and Democracy Promotion*, ed. Timm Beichelt et al., Challenges to democracy in the 21st century (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

22 Orysia Lutsevych, "How to Finish a Revolution: Civil Society and Democracy in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine," Chatham House: Independent thinking on international affairs, accessed January 14, 2013, <http://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/papers/view/188407>.

23 United States Agency for International Development, "The 2015 CSO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia: –UKRAINE–" United States Agency for International Development, accessed December 24, 2017, <http://ccc-tck.org.ua/eng/download/library/63/>.

24 Susan Stewart, "Zivilgesellschaft in Russland und der Ukraine. Divergierende Kontexte und ihre Implikationen," accessed December 24, 2017, http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/studien/2016S_04_stw.pdf.

democratic opinion building and decision making.²⁵ Ideally, this general public does not only control the exertion of political power ex post, it even programs politics, as Habermas notes.²⁶

However, considerable skepticism appeared as civil society's new strength also implies some potential obstacles to democratic development. As the war goes on, Ukraine still finds itself in a patriotically charged situation where nationalistic groups could develop into an uncivil society and influence the re-negotiation of political values in favor of reduced pluralism.²⁷ Civil society's provision of help to IDPs in 2014 and 2015 partly substituted the (dysfunctional) state, what could help to legitimize the government's release of responsibility in this respect.²⁸ Further, civic initiatives themselves risk becoming instrumentalized or even corrupted by interest groups such as oligarchic networks. Additionally, civic actors who took over state responsibilities in the crisis could be reluctant later on to hand back competences.²⁹

These particular risks represent the contrary of Tilly's concept of political inclusiveness and therefore underline the relevance of analyzing civil society's contribution to trust networks, reduction of inequalities, and dissolution of autonomous power centers. It would not be serious to try to evaluate the political inclusiveness of Ukraine's civil society at large, but an inspection of quantitative and qualitative novelty of civic activism will illustrate the potential of post-Euromaidan civil society to be more than a democratic moment.

Empirical Analysis: Civic Activism since Euromaidan

Quantitative Changes and New Support

In 2016, the Ukrainian civic organization *Counterpart Creative Center (CCC)* published their third report on civil society in Ukraine.³⁰ The report presents an overview of figures, activities, issues, resources and needs of civil society in Ukraine, ranging from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), religious or charity organizations to condominiums and credit unions. The number of registered civil society organizations (CSOs) in Ukraine lies at around 250,000, whereas NGOs made up the largest share, counting between 70,000 and 75,000 organizations. They are referred

25 Rosaria Puglisi, "A People's Army: Civil Society as a Security Actor in Post-Maidan Ukraine," IAI Working Papers, accessed December 24, 2017, <http://www.iai.it/en/publicazioni/peoples-army>.

26 Jürgen Habermas, *Faktizität und Geltung: Beiträge zur Diskurstheorie des Rechts und des demokratischen Rechtsstaats* ([Frankfurt am Main]: Suhrkamp, 1992), 767.

27 Cas Mudde and Petr Kopecky, *Uncivil Society? Contentious Politics in Post-Communist Europe* (London; New York: Routledge Chapman & Hall, 2002).

28 Christopher Dunnett, "How Volunteers Created A 'Second State' Inside Ukraine," accessed December 24, 2017, <https://medium.com/@Hromadske/how-volunteers-created-a-second-state-inside-ukraine-ebefb5d82e1c>.

29 Mikhail Minakov, "Corrupting Civil Society in Post-Maidan Ukraine?," Carnegie Moscow Center, accessed May 31, 2016, <http://carnegie.ru/2015/04/11/corrupting-civil-society-in-post-maidan-ukraine/ikbg>.

30 Lyubov Palyvoda, O. Vinnikov, and V. Kupriy, "Defining Civil Society for Ukraine: Research Report" (2016).

to as public organizations that are voluntary organizations at their core, consisting of natural persons and serving public interests. Among these are, for example, think tanks, human rights associations, youth/women's/children's organizations, and advocacy groups for disabled people, war veterans or environmental issues.

Main activities of all CSOs are advocacy and provision of consulting and information services. One general problem for CSOs is meeting the needs of their respective target groups. Their advocacy ability is improving since Euromaidan, as civil society is consistently promoting and defending reforms in Ukraine, forcing both the Parliament and Government of Ukraine to implement them. However, the authors underline that organized civil society lags behind informal movements and initiatives that manage to better respond to societal and political incidents.³¹

Public opinion towards CSOs improved, as did public support for charitable and volunteer activities. According to the USAID³² 2015 CSO Sustainability Index for Ukraine, civic activism in 2014 and 2015 measured 13 and 9 percent of the population, respectively, and was still higher than in 2009. Public support for CSOs with resources decreased after its peak in 2014. Further, only one percent of the informal initiatives that were formed as a result of the Euromaidan protests became formal organizations.³³

The quantitative dimension of the Ukrainian volunteer movement is more difficult to describe. Figures on how many individuals and organizations provide general humanitarian support range from 14,500 individuals and 2,500 organizations³⁴ to 75,000 individuals and 750 groups,³⁵ and up to 750,000 individuals and 100 groups with more than 100 members each.³⁶ A definite increase in civic engagement can be identified with regard to donations. According to the World Giving Index, 38% of Ukrainian respondents to the survey reported that they donated to charity organizations in 2014. Numbers for 2015 and 2016 remain equally high (26 resp. 29%), while in 2012 and 2013, only 8 resp. 9% reported that they supported charity organizations financially.³⁷ Associated with the rise of donations is the Ukrainian society's trust in volunteers: according to a poll conducted by the renowned Razumkov Center in Kyiv in 2016, 63.7% of Ukrainians trust volunteers, while official institutions such as local governments and the President of Ukraine

31 Lyubov Palyvoda, O. Vinnikov, and V. Kupriy, "Defining Civil Society for Ukraine: Research Report" (2016), 27.

32 United States Agency for International Development.

33 United States Agency for International Development, "The 2015 CSO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia: –UKRAINE–" United States Agency for International Development, accessed December 24, 2017, <http://ccc-tck.org.ua/eng/download/library/63/>.

34 "In Ukraine, 14,500 Volunteers Regularly Help the Army", accessed May 9, 2017, <http://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news/27039296.html>.

35 "Volunteer Movement of Ukraine in Figures and Facts (Infographics)", accessed May 9, 2017, <http://www.segodnya.ua/ukraine/volonterskoe-dvizhenie-ukrainy-v-cifrah-i-faktah-infografika-576300.html>.

36 "Ukraine Doesn't Have a Warlord Problem", accessed May 9, 2017, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/03/26/ukraine-doesnt-have-a-warlord-problem-russia-donbas/>.

37 See the World Giving Index 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017; accessed October 26, 2017, <https://www.cafonline.org/about-us/publications>.

only gain trust ratings of 37.5% resp. 24.3%.³⁸³⁹ These figures underline the increased importance of volunteering in Ukraine. Therefore, analyzing the post-Euromaidan civil society should first and foremost focus on this phenomenon: volunteering.

The SOS Organizations: Assistance and Lobbying for Internally Displaced Persons

One of the most apparent new volunteering realms stems from the need to provide care, accommodation, integration and judicial assistance to those who fled from Russia's annexation of Crimea and the occupation of parts of the Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts. Quickly after these violent events and the internal expulsion from the affected regions, relevant IDP self-help groups emerged. The most visible civic initiatives are the several SOS organizations that form the core of a support and advocacy movement for IDPs in Ukraine.

The first SOS organization was *Euromaidan SOS*.⁴⁰ This organization evolved on November 30, 2013, after protesting students had been beaten severely by the police on Kyiv's Independence Square in the very first phase of the Euromaidan uprising. Activists from the Kyiv-based NGO *Center for Civil Liberties* opened a hotline for victims and volunteer lawyers to provide the protesters with legal aid and defense. It developed quickly into a powerful volunteer organization to protect human rights, particularly in the context of freedom of assembly. Following this example, in March 2014, *Donbas SOS* was founded as a volunteer organization to help people in the armed conflict area in Eastern Ukraine. *Donbas SOS* provided administrative help to people who left or plan to leave the occupied territories in Eastern Ukraine, including information on safe ways to leave, help for accommodation, legal and psychological assistance. It further engaged in human rights monitoring.⁴¹ Also in 2014, *Vostok SOS (East SOS)* was founded as a project in Kyiv by civic activists who formerly worked in civic organizations in Luhansk and Crimea. Kostantyn Reutsky and Volodymyr Shcherbachenko, who had been activists and founders of the Luhansk-based human rights center *Postup (Step or Progress)*, started the project together with activists from the *Crimean Human Rights Center Diya (Action)*. Activists and staff of both organizations had to leave their locations in Luhansk and Symferopol in spring 2014 because of Russian aggression in both regions. They moved to Kyiv, where *Vostok SOS* engaged in humanitarian aid, integration support and legal advice for IDPs from Eastern Ukraine.⁴²⁴³ Following a similar path, *Crimea SOS* was established as a project by Oleksandra Dvoretzka and other activists from the *Crimean Human Rights Center Diya (Action)*. *Crimea SOS* turned into an organization in March 2015, one year after the occupation of the peninsula.⁴⁴

38 "Almost Saints. The Stories of Ukrainian Volunteers", accessed May 9, 2017, <http://euromaidanpress.com/2016/12/06/ukrainian-volunteers-military/>.

39 "Ukrainian Trust the Volunteers, People in Uniform and the Church, accessed May 9, 2017, http://ukr.lb.ua/society/2016/05/12/335037_ukraintsi_doviryayut_volonteram.html.

40 "Euromaidan SOS—Who We Are", accessed May 9, 2017, <http://euromaidansos.org/en/who-we-are>.

41 "Donbass SOS", accessed May 9, 2017, http://donbasssos.org/main_ua/.

42 "About the Project Vostok-SOS", accessed May 9, 2017, <http://vostok-sos.org/about-project/>.

43 "Human Rights Center Postup", accessed May 9, 2017, <http://postup.lg.ua/projects/current>.

44 "Crimea SOS", accessed May 9, 2017, <http://krymsos.com/>.

Another telling example of civil society network activities is the *House of Free People*,⁴⁵ a joint project of *Vostok SOS* and *Crimea SOS* together with the NGOs *New Donbas* and the *Center for Employment of Free People*.^{46,47} The *House of Free People* was a service center in Kyiv for IDPs and victims of the annexation of Crimea and the violent conflict in Eastern Ukraine. It was established in 2015 as a contact point for IDPs, pooling services, volunteer work and information. Its uniqueness also stems from a planned long-term cooperation of the four NGOs, combining service provision and advocacy for improved legal situation of IDPs. This NGO coalition can be considered a novel result of the obvious necessity for civil society activists to cooperate intensely and sustainably. Unfortunately, due to a lack of further funding, the project ended after two years.

One main change aspect of the IDP-related work is the broad societal basis it stands on. Several human rights organizations broadened their forms of assistance, facilitating access for people to engage on a voluntary basis and provide humanitarian aid for IDPs. While the work of human rights groups before Euromaidan affected only few people—usually activists or journalists mainly working and living in metropolitan areas—the work with and for IDPs formed a basis for broadened civic engagement, which brought together activists and volunteers from different societal spheres. It can be assumed that the unique situation of a forced displacement of about 1.7 million Ukrainians from Crimea and the Eastern regions of Ukraine⁴⁸ prepared the ground for remarkably low-threshold opportunities for participation and engagement in Ukraine.

Army Support Groups

A qualitative and quantitative novelty in Ukrainian civil society and volunteer movements were the activities to support the Ukrainian army's fight in the armed conflict area in Eastern Ukraine. One reason why the so-called separatists in Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts were able to capture parts of Ukraine so efficiently and successfully was certainly the devastating state of the Ukrainian military. Longstanding fraud and corruption within the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense, in particular during the presidency of the Yanukovich administration, had led to a sparsely equipped and hardly operational army.⁴⁹ When faced with the annexation of Crimea and the beginning war in Eastern Ukraine, public attention shifted towards the needs of the army. Many of those who had formed the self-defense units for Euromaidan, the so-called Hundreds

45 "House of Free People Opens in Kyiv to Help Refugees from Crimea, Donbas", accessed May 9, 2017, <https://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/ukraine-politics/house-of-free-people-opens-in-kyiv-to-help-refugees-from-crimea-donbas-396032.html>.

46 "Activists: Over a year "House of Free People" Held 900 Joint Events for IDPs and Is Currently Looking for Room to Expand", accessed May 9, 2017, <http://uacrisis.org/de/46346-ukrainian-budinok-vilnih-lyudej>.

47 Ben Long: "As Volunteerism Grows in Ukraine, a New National Identity Emerges", accessed May 9, 2017, <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/frontlines/january-february-2017/volunteerism-grows-ukraine-new-national>.

48 Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre: "Ukraine Country Information 2015", accessed May 9, 2017, <http://www.internal-displacement.org/database/country/?iso3=UKR>.

49 Oleg Friesen, "'Heimatfront' — Die Ukrainische Volontärsbewegung," Forschungsstelle Osteuropa Bremen, accessed December 24, 2017, <http://www.laender-analysen.de/ukraine/pdf/UkraineAnalyse171.pdf>.

(*Sotnya* in Ukrainian), voluntarily went to fight for Ukraine in spring 2014. Parallel, a civic-military volunteer infrastructure evolved, when active citizens joined forces to provide support to Ukrainian combatants in the East. It can be assumed that among the above-mentioned numbers on the volunteer movement, those supporting the army of Ukraine make up a high share.

According to different media and civil society sources, nearly 20 organizations can be counted as the most active ones who supported the army in the years 2014–2015 (see Table 1).^{50 51 52 53} Among them, *Come Back Alive* (*Vernys Zhyvym*), *National Home Front* (*Narodnyi Tyl*), *Wings of Phoenix* (*Kryla Feniksa*), *Army SOS* (*Armia SOS*) and *The People's Project* (*Narodnyi Proekt*) appear to be the most prominent initiatives. The structure and activities of the most prominent groups are described in detail by Kateryna Zarembo (in this volume). However, my analysis focuses less on single characteristics, but on roots, linkages and embeddedness of initiatives at different levels—prominent groups as well as grass-roots.

TABLE 1: UKRAINIAN NGOS AND INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT THE UKRAINIAN ARMED FORCES⁵⁴

NAME	MAIN ACTIVITIES IN 2014–2015	WEB ADDRESS
All-Ukrainian Union Patriot	Provision of medical equipment & protective gear, clothes & food for Ukrainian combat units; information plus legal & psychological support for soldiers and their relatives	https://www.facebook.com/groups/PatriotGO/
Army SOS	Provision of protective gear & non-lethal equipment for Ukrainian combat units	https://www.facebook.com/groups/armia.sos/?ref=nf_target&fref=nf
ATO sister of Mercy	Provision of medical equipment & assistance, field amenities, clothes & food to Ukrainian combat units	http://www.sister-mercy.com.ua , https://www.facebook.com/Sistermerci/
Come back alive	Provision of medical equipment, protective gear, field amenities & non-lethal equipment for Ukrainian combat units	https://www.facebook.com/groups/backandalive/ , http://www.savelife.in.ua

50 “Verified Ways to Help Ukraine”, accessed May 9, 2017, <http://euromaidanpress.com/2014/07/04/verified-ways-to-help-the-ukrainian-army/#arvlbdata>.

51 Anna Grygorash: “The Most Significant Volunteer Initiatives of the Year”, accessed May 9, 2017, <http://www.theinsider.ua/lifestyle/geroyam-slava-samy-znachimye-volonterskie-initsiatyvy-goda/>.

52 Volodymyr Malynka, Olga German: “Volunteers of the War”, accessed May 9, 2017, <http://gazeta.dt.ua/socium/volonteri-viyni-.html>.

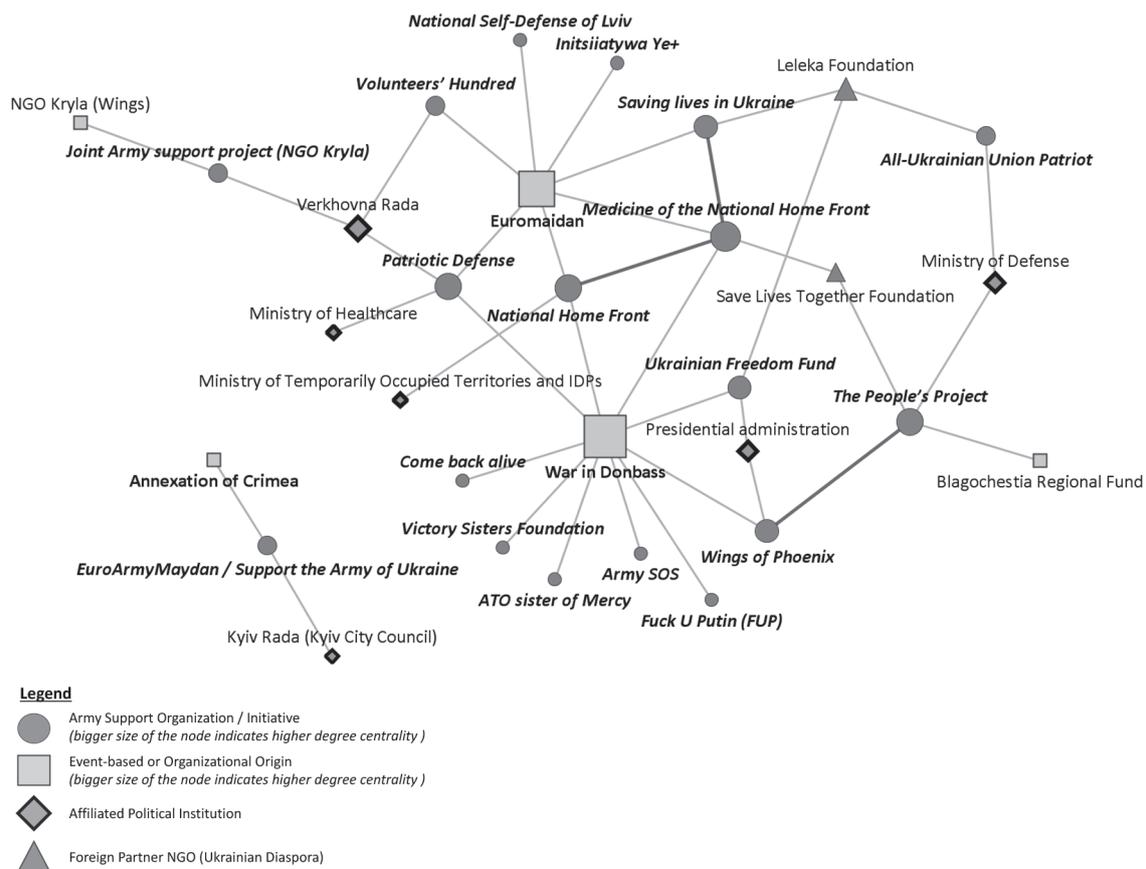
53 Anastasiia Ryngys: “Back-Office of the Army. How Alternative Back Services Work”, accessed May 9, 2017, http://www.pravda.com.ua/cdn/cdi/2015year/back_office/.

54 Source: Most information on the NGOs is taken from the overview page “Verified Ways to Help Ukraine”, accessed May 9, 2017, see FN 46. This list was the central basis for further research in online articles and other web resources conducted by the author.

EuroArmyMaidan / Support the Army of Ukraine	Provision of medical equipment & assistance, protective equipment, field amenities for Ukrainian combat units	https://www.facebook.com/groups/fondeam/
Fuck U Putin (FUP)	Private fundraising (mainly for Army SOS)	https://www.facebook.com/FUPutin?fref=ts , http://www.fuckuputin.com/
Iniatsiyya Ye+	Fundraising & provision of medical equipment/assistance for Ukrainian combat units	https://www.facebook.com/helpEplus/
Joint Army support project (NGO Kryla)	Provision of light military equipment to Unit A0224 in Donetsk oblast	https://www.facebook.com/kryla.org.ua , http://kryla.org.ua/
Medicine of the National Home Front	Provision of medical equipment and assistance for Ukrainian combat units	https://www.facebook.com/MedicineoftheNationalHomeFront/
National Self-Defense of Lviv	Provision non-lethal/protective equipment, medical equipment, food & clothing, field amenities for Ukrainian combat units and civilians in the war zone	https://www.facebook.com/lviv.samooborona
National Home Front	Provision of different kinds of non-lethal/protective equipment for Ukrainian combat units	http://nt.org.ua/
Patriotic Defense	Provision of medical equipment, assistance, trainings for Ukrainian combat units	http://patriotdefence.org/
Saving lives in Ukraine	Fundraising, provision of medical equipment & assistance for Ukrainian combat units	https://www.facebook.com/pg/SavingLivesinUkraine/about/?ref=page_internal
The People's Project	Fundraising/crowdfunding platform for projects (army assistance, healthcare, social welfare)	http://www.peoplesproject.com
Ukrainian Freedom Fund	Provision of non-lethal/protective equipment for Ukrainian combat units, fundraising	https://www.facebook.com/ukrfreedomfund , http://ukrfreedomfund.org
Victory Sisters Foundation	Provision with camouflage gear and field amenities for Ukrainian combat units	https://www.facebook.com/VictorySisters.foundation/timeline , http://victoryua.com/
Volunteers' Hundred	Provision of protective gear & non-lethal equipment, medical equipment, field amenities for Ukrainian combat units	https://www.facebook.com/atovs
Wings of Phoenix	Provision of protective gear & non-lethal equipment, medical equipment & assistance for Ukrainian combat units, repairing buildings used by the army	http://wings-phoenix.org.ua/ https://www.facebook.com/wings.phoenix.foundation

What are the characteristics of these groups that can be attributed to the building of new trust networks, the isolation of public politics from inequality, and the dissolution of autonomous power centers? To answer this question, it is instructive to trace the roots, history and activities of the initiatives listed in Table 1. Figure 1 shows the embeddedness of the initiatives, including the events or organizations they stemmed from (visualized as squares), their internal cooperation, their links to political institutions (visualized as diamonds) and support groups from the Ukrainian Diaspora (visualized as triangles).

Figure 1. Networks of Army Support Civic Initiatives in Ukraine. Visualization with Visone.⁵⁵



The first point to mention is the low level of cooperation among the initiatives themselves. Only few of the initiatives form coalitions; usually, the army support groups are connected to other realms of (civil) society or politics, or they operate more or less isolated. But this 'isolation' can also be interpreted as a broader embeddedness of initiatives in societal networks: rather than forming a 'NGO-elite', the groups show heterogeneous patterns of connectedness.

The multimodal network graphic shows two main clusters which denominate the origin of the groups: Most of them were founded as an immediate reaction to the starting war in Eastern Ukraine, but some also stem from participation in respectively defense of the Euromaidan protests. Two organizations are rooted in NGOs that date from pre-Euromaidan times: The Joint Army Support Project is run by the NGO *Kryla (Wings)*, a volunteer association from Dnipro (with

⁵⁵ Visone project team, *Visone: Analysis and visualization of social networks* (2001–2014), <http://visone.info>.

a second office in Kyiv), which existed since 2008. The crowdfunding platform *The People's Project* is run by the Mykolaiv charitable fund *Blagochestia Regional Fund*, founded in 2008. Until the war in Eastern Ukraine, both were local organizations, focusing on various charitable and social issues such as assisting disabled children. In 2014, both broadened their focus and included summer camps for children from the armed conflict area in Eastern Ukraine, civil-military trainings for youth and the provision of light military equipment to army units in Donetsk oblast. *Kryla* also cooperated with two karate federations to provide military equipment to their members fighting in the East. This cooperation owes to *Kryla's* leader Denys Dzenzerskyi, member of Ukraine's parliament, the *Verkhovna Rada*, since 2012, who is himself a karate black belt holder, and president of one of the karate federations.⁵⁶

Apart from *Kryla* and the *Joint Army Support Project*, six other organizations are more or less densely connected to high-level political institutions. *Patriotic Defense*, *Wings of Phoenix*, *Volunteers' Hundred*, the *All-Ukrainian Union Patriot*, *EuroArmy Maidan*, *National Home Front* and its sub-project *Medicine of the National Home Front* shared personnel with political and administrative institutions in Ukraine. Although these overlaps must not be understood as a more or less formal cooperation, they provide an approach to information and power structures via informal networks. These links indicate at least a certain social or symbolic capital of the better connected and densely embedded organizations.

The *National Home Front* and its sub-organization *Medicine of the National Home Front* were co-founded and led by Heorhii Tuka, a former IT specialist at Telekom Ukraine who was injured by anti-riot police at Euromaidan in February 2014.⁵⁷ Tuka became a member of parliament in 2014, and was appointed governor of Luhansk oblast by President Poroshenko in July 2015 (see Valentyna Romanova's article in this volume). In April 2016, he became the Deputy Minister in the newly created Ministry of the Temporarily Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons.⁵⁸⁵⁹

Likewise, *Patriotic Defense* is linked to the ministerial level of Ukrainian politics.⁶⁰ The NGO's founder, Uliana Suprun is a US-born physician of Ukrainian descent. She moved to Kyiv in autumn 2013 along with her husband Marco Suprun, who became the acting director of *Patriotic Defense*. Uliana Suprun was an active volunteer for the medical services at Euromaidan and later became a consultant to the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Public Health.⁶¹ After she received Ukrainian citizenship in 2015, she was appointed acting Minister of Healthcare in July 2016.⁶² Additionally, she is well-connected within the Ukrainian diaspora worldwide.⁶³

56 "Denys Dzenzersky", accessed May 9, 2017, <http://www.dzenzersky.com/>.

57 "George Tuka", accessed May 9, 2017, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Tuka.

58 "Narodnyi Tyl", accessed May 9, 2017, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narodny_Tyl.

59 "Medical Narodnyi Tyl" (in Ukrainian), accessed May 9, 2017, <http://nt.org.ua/nalbufin/>.

60 "Patriot Defense: Our Team", accessed May 9, 2017, <http://patriotdefence.org/en/our-team/>.

61 "Suprun Uliana Nadia", accessed May 9, 2017, https://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Супрун_Уляна_Надія.

62 "Ukrainian Cabinet appoints Uliana Suprun as Acting Health Minister", accessed May 9, 2017, <http://www.ukrweekly.com/uwwp/ukrainian-cabinet-appoints-ulana-suprun-as-acting-health-minister/>.

63 "Project: Patriot Defense", accessed May 9, 2017, <http://www.ukrainianworldcongress.org/index.php/id/670>.

The NGO *All-Ukrainian Union Patriot* is linked to the government through its leading member Oleksii Gridin who serves as advisor to the Minister of Defense.

The NGO *Wings of Phoenix* was founded in March 2014 by Yurii Biriukov, a private entrepreneur from Mykolaiv who volunteered for the Euromaidan medical services.⁶⁴ Besides providing humanitarian and medical support through the NGO, Biriukov also financed the repair of buildings used by the army, and funded the purchase of new military cargo planes. Since 2014, Biriukov is adviser to the President of Ukraine and to the Minister of Defense, while his NGO is headed by his wife Tetiana Biriukova.⁶⁵ Critics say that the NGOs is an oligarch's project that may help to whitewash corruption and oligarchic power.⁶⁶

The *Ukrainian Freedom Fund*, set up in 2014 by Ukrainian and international business people, stands for civil society ties into politics and economy alike.⁶⁷ Co-founder Olha Bosak worked with international companies and in the Yushchenko administration, based on her active involvement in the Orange Revolution.⁶⁸ The Atlantic Group Limited is a company to which several of the *Freedom Fund's* managers are affiliated with; the *Fund's* Co-founder Andy Bain has worked with them since the early 1990s.⁶⁹ The *Ukrainian Freedom Fund* is well connected on the international level as with the US-based fundraising organization Leleka Foundation.⁷⁰

Volunteers' Hundred and *Support the Army of Ukraine* both had founders who joined politics in 2014. *Support the Army of Ukraine* had been founded via Facebook under the title *EuroArmyMaidan* as an initiative to support Ukrainian soldiers during the first days of the Russian invasion in Crimea. Since then, the initiative has grown up to 6,000 members and a wide network of volunteers.⁷¹ Anna Sandalova, founder of the initiative, became a Kyiv City Council member in 2014.⁷² The founder of *Volunteers' Hundred* Olena Masoryna became a member of parliament in 2014.⁷³

Many army-support NGOs were rooted in the Euromaidan. The *Volunteers' Hundred* took their name after Euromaidan self-defense units. *Initsiiatyva Ye+* stemmed from a group of activists who organized the transport of injured protesters to safe places around Euromaidan

64 "Biriukov; Yurii Sergeevych", accessed May 9, 2017, [https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Бирюков,_Юрий_Сергеевич_\(предприниматель\)](https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Бирюков,_Юрий_Сергеевич_(предприниматель)).

65 "Phoenix Wings: Who Are We?", accessed May 9, 2017, <http://wings-phoenix.org.ua/en>.

66 Oleg Friesen, "Heimatfront" — Die ukrainische Volontärsbewegung," Forschungsstelle Osteuropa Bremen, <http://www.laender-analysen.de/ukraine/pdf/UkraineAnalyse171.pdf>.

67 "Ukrainian Freedom Fund", accessed May 9, 2017, <http://ukrfreedomfund.org/en>.

68 "Olha Bosak Management Consulting: About Owner", accessed May 9, 2017, <http://en.olhabosak.com/owner/>.

69 "Atlantic Group", accessed May 9, 2017, <http://www.atlanticgrouplimited.com>.

70 "Leleka Foundation: About Leleka", accessed May 9, 2017, <http://leleka.care/>.

71 "Fond Pidtrimai Armiu Ukrainy", accessed May 9, 2017, <http://ukrarmy.org/>.

72 "Heroes of Our Time. Anna Sandalova and the Initiative 'Help the Army of Ukraine'", accessed May 9, 2017, <https://focus.ua/society/302861/>.

73 Oleg Friesen, "Heimatfront" — Die ukrainische Volontärsbewegung," Forschungsstelle Osteuropa Bremen, accessed December 24, 2017, <http://www.laender-analysen.de/ukraine/pdf/UkraineAnalyse171.pdf>.

and the distribution of food and drugs at Euromaidan. *People's Self-Defense of Lviv*, which is the largest volunteer group outside Kyiv, helped Euromaidan activists to get to Kyiv for the protests, and organized the protection of the Lviv Euromaidan from violence.⁷⁴⁷⁵ In cooperation with *MedAutoMaidan*, a civic group that provided medical support for Euromaidan protestors, the initiative *Saving Lives in Ukraine* raised donations and medical supplies for the Ukrainian army.⁷⁶⁷⁷ The NGO *ATO Sister of Mercy*, rooted in the defense of the Kharkiv Euromaidan protests, collected medical equipment, first aid items and other field equipment, such as tents, gas stoves, sleeping mats, balaclava headgear, but also cigarettes or children's drawings, and delivered them to army units in Donbas.⁷⁸⁷⁹

Some organizations appear grassroots-like, obviously lacking systematic interweaving with the political or economic sphere. The highly regarded NGO *Come Back Alive*, founded in May 2014 by the IT specialist Vitalii Deineha from Kyiv, focused on fundraising and providing the Ukrainian army with night-vision devices.⁸⁰ On their homepage, the organization clearly refers to the grass-roots level by stating they are "normal Ukrainians, who are not indifferent. We were coders, designers, journalists. War changed everything."⁸¹ They underline having no sponsors or patrons and receiving only individual donations. Complete accounting, listing every single donation, is openly accessible in the Internet.⁸²

Another reputable grassroots-group, the *Victory Sisters Foundation*, supported army units with military equipment ranging from protection gear to high-tech aerial reconnaissance devices and non-military items such as books.⁸³ They also produced Ghillie Suits, specific camouflage clothing designed to resemble the surrounding environment. These suits were manufactured daily in the afternoons by (mainly female) volunteers in downtown Kyiv.⁸⁴

74 "Narodna Samoobrona Lvivshchyny", accessed May 9, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/lviv.samooborona/>.

75 Oleg Friesen, "'Heimatfront' — Die ukrainische Volontärsbewegung," Forschungsstelle Osteuropa Bremen, <http://www.laender-analysen.de/ukraine/pdf/UkraineAnalysen171.pdf>.

76 "Saving Lives in Ukraine", accessed May 9, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/SavingLivesinUkraine>.

77 Christopher Dunnett, "How Volunteers Created A 'Second State' Inside Ukraine," accessed December 24, 2017, <https://medium.com/@Hromadske/how-volunteers-created-a-second-state-inside-ukraine-ebefb5d82e1c>.

78 "ATO Sister of Mercy", accessed May 9, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/Sistermerci/posts/1687348181481269>.

79 "Sister-Mercy: Help the Wounded in the Anti-Terrorist Operation!", accessed May 9, 2017, <http://www.sister-mercy.com.ua>.

80 "Povernys Zhyvym", accessed Ma 9, 2017, <http://www.savelife.in.ua>, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/backandalive/>.

81 Source: <http://www.savelife.in.ua/about.html>, accessed May 9, 2017, translation by the author.

82 <https://onedrive.live.com/view.aspx?resid=B0264747CBB7E393!2111&ithint=file%2cxlsx&app=Excel&authkey=!AGykGIgjzdiOdiI>, accessed May 9, 2017.

83 "Sestry peremohy", accessed May 9, 2017, <http://victoryua.com>.

84 "Batalion 'Kikimora'", accessed May 9, 2017, <http://victoryua.com/projects/батальон-кикимора/>.

The project *Fuck U Putin* was a mixture of fundraising, lifestyle, protest merchandising, and small-scale social entrepreneurship. *Fuck U Putin* created and sold bracelets, T-shirts, bumper stickers and cups in their online shop. An (unknown!) share of every purchase was donated to *Army SOS*. *Fuck U Putin* claimed to be “more than just sentiment”, trying to keep up the protest and freedom spirit of Euromaidan woven into T-Shirts and strung on armlets.⁸⁵

Discussion

In section 2, democratization was conceptualized as an increase of political inclusiveness, promoted through changes in the societal areas of trust networks, inequalities, and autonomous power centers. Do the presented case studies provide indicators for such changes?

Trust Networks

In both cases, transformation and creation of trust networks were obvious. Two army support groups and all IDP groups were rooted in pre-Euromaidan-NGOs, what indicates a transfer of social and human capital to a new situation, including the adaption of issues and tasks. Euromaidan itself functioned as a crucial platform for the creation of trust networks leading to the establishment of initiatives and NGOs. Coalitions among IDP groups—for instance, the “*House of Free People*”—underline the building of new trust networks.

Equally relevant are trust networks protruding into the political and societal sphere. The increased participation of volunteers both in IDP and army support groups is remarkable. Some grassroots-level army support initiatives were among the most renowned organizations. Yet, the relatively high share of links into the political sphere indicate the increase of trust networks as well. In the best case, more stable ties between civic and political actors could help reducing distrust and antagonism between both spheres, thus overcoming pre-Euromaidan cleavages between activists and politics and integrating Euromaidan’s political ideas into politics.

Isolation of Categorical Inequalities

Characteristics indicating that categorical inequalities such as class, gender or social background become less translated into public politics are strengthened advocacy activities, as well as increasing heterogeneity within civil society initiatives. As the analyzed groups were not primarily advocacy-oriented, but service-oriented initiatives, this aspect could not be expected to be too strong. But it should be noted that the sharp distinction between ‘watchdogs’ and ‘schools of democracy’ is mainly an analytical one; empirically, both functions often overlap. Both IDP and army support groups became active in a situation of urgent needs of their target groups. IDP organizations did not only provide humanitarian aid, but also advocacy and public claims for better state support in terms of housing, employment services, or education. Since a good share of them stemmed from human rights organizations, they were well prepared for advocacy and human rights monitoring concerning the IDP situation. The army support groups focused mainly

85 “FUP. More than Just Sentiment”, accessed May 9, 2017, <http://www.fuckuputin.com/>.

on direct support with resources, and less on advocacy—what would however be necessary, given the disastrous situation of the armed forces in 2014 and the still inadequate aftercare for veterans. However, some of the groups did provide legal advice, and based on their links into politics, they may even transfer the demands and needs of soldiers and their families into politics.

The initiatives' internal heterogeneity could not be evaluated here due to missing data on this issue. However, it can be assumed that the more grassroots-based an initiative is, the more heterogeneous it may be in its internal composition, leading to a broadened participation of citizens irrespective of their attributional characteristics. The *Victory Sisters Foundation* provides with their sewing meetings a low-threshold opportunity for anyone to get active, and these meetings could work as a platform for raising other issues, potentially promoting further activism. However, human rights organizations can be expected to be more attractive for lawyers or other academics, what could render these organizations more homogenous.

Autonomous Power Centers

Did the case studies show whether these groups help to dissolve autonomous power centers? Indicators were transferring autonomous power centers into state structures, raising public voice for transparency, and asserting public control over formerly autonomous power centers.

The most problematic examples of autonomous power centers are militia and battalions who refuse to subordinate themselves to civic control. It seems that the volunteers supporting the Ukrainian army could at best be neutral here—in the case study, all of them provided support to the Ukrainian army, but it cannot be excluded that they supported volunteer battalions operating outside the regular army during the beginning of the conflict. However, it is subject to further research whether the support groups even actively contributed to the incorporation of the battalions into the state military.

Concerning transparency, it is striking that in particular the army support groups were themselves very aware of transparency. Many of them even published their complete accounting and financial charts including every single donation online. Thereby, they set an example and potentially asserted normative pressure on military and state administrations to put the issue of transparency on their agendas. However, in their portrayed work, they did not openly demand more transparency and accountability.

Finally, do IDP and army support groups contribute to public control on former or potential autonomous power centers? Based on the groups' close cooperation with state institutions, and increased connectedness of representatives of different social and political realms, state institutions found themselves within a broader public sphere, gaining more public attention than before Euromaidan. Since a larger share of the general public engaged for IDPs, humanitarian issues and army support, more people were involved in debates and processes. Yet, it is questionable whether in military and humanitarian crises, a critical perspective can be maintained or is even appreciated. In particular, support for and popularity of the army could also bear a legitimization process for military forces that may encourage the latter to reject critical public control.

Conclusion

The aim of this article was to describe the key characteristics of post-Euromaidan civil society in Ukraine, and to analyze to what extent it contributes to democratization in Ukraine. Both cases underline that civil society in Ukraine adjusted itself to new demands and issues, so that IDP and army assistance mark two crucial subjects of activism. However, more important is the high share of volunteering and broad participation, as was exemplified by the data provided above.

Regarding civil society's contribution to democratization, building of trust networks appears the most promising aspect. Civic networks stemming from civic activism at Euromaidan and before proved to be a springboard for broadened participation. The promotion of further cooperation could therefore contribute to the building of bridging social capital,⁸⁶ thus counteracting societal disintegration and supporting the establishment of a more sustainable generalized trust. Civil society could help overcome social cleavages, for example when volunteers with different social, educational, or regional backgrounds work together to support citizen fellows with different backgrounds. Consequently, the Tocquevillean function of civil society—democratic socialization and building social capital—appears to be the dominant modus of civil society at least within the realms of IDP and army assistance

However, the watchdog function of civil society seems rather weak in both cases. This is not a too big surprise since the cases comprised groups who are not explicitly 'watchdogs'—rather the contrary. However, at least one IDP organization is based on a human rights NGO, and some army support groups also provide legal assistance to soldiers and their relatives. For example, the SOS organizations also insisted on better social, housing and integration assistance by the Ukrainian state, although it is questionable to what extent civic actors are able to lay claims vis-à-vis the government to respond to the humanitarian needs of the displaced people. The analysis of civil society's influence on the reduction of inequalities and the transformation of autonomous power centers demonstrated ambivalent results. The contributions can be assumed to be small or neutral, in the best case. The democratizing function of civil society as a watchdog of democratic rule obviously recedes into the background when humanitarian crises and military defense are paramount.

To sum up, since Euromaidan, civil society managed to build and broaden trust networks in Ukraine in a formerly unknown dimension. A high share of volunteering and participation is an important precondition for democratization. But, as Tilly notes, equality, protection, and reliability are equally important features of state-citizen-consultations. Diminishing inequalities in the access to politics and excluding autonomous power centers from political influence will remain important tasks of the Ukrainian civil society.

Looking ahead, certain ambivalences for democratization and civil society appear. First, as disappointment and exhaustion among volunteers may rise constantly, confidence in state capabilities and enthusiasm for civic engagement may decrease rapidly. A free-of-charge outsourcing of central state tasks to civil society may rise political disenchantment among those who are investing their time, energy and resources in activism and mutual support. Second, trust

86 Robert D. Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," *Journal of Democracy* 6, no. 1 (1995).

networks, born in a situation of societal and political emergency, are highly emotionally charged and issue-centered. It is questionable whether military networks and emergency relief groups may translate their activities and networks towards civilian, non-martial issues one day. The transfer of crisis-centered volunteer networks into long-term policy-oriented civilian society may turn out to be complicated. Third, given the huge reputation of the volunteer movement among the Ukrainian society, activist groups themselves may evolve into autonomous power centers, as was the case for some military volunteer units. A self-confident civil society may produce veto players whose legitimacy stems from reputation instead of democratic procedures, thus probably hindering democratic development.

This article illuminates a prominent fraction of Ukraine's new civil society, but the picture remains incomplete. What can be drawn from the two cases is that at present, the political impact of post-Euromaidan civil society lies first and foremost in compensating state failure than in contributing to democratization. The purposeful democratization of the political sphere from within will remain a relevant future task of civil society in Ukraine.

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