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У ЧОМУ ПРИЧИНИ НЕВДАЧ ПОМАРАНЧЕВОЇ РЕВОЛЮЦІЇ?

У статті аналізуються причини невиконання обіцянок лідерів Помаранчевої революції щодо реформ в Україні. Підкреслюючи вплив стосунків у трикутнику ЄС – Україна – Росія, автор у той же час наголошує на первинності впливу внутрішніх чинників.

Ключові слова: Помаранчева революція, демократизація, ЄС – Україна, Україна – Росія.

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CONTENTIOUS POLITICS AND REPERTOIRE OF CONTENTION IN UKRAINE: THE CASE OF EUROMAIDAN

The article introduces the paradigm of contentious politics to study the Euromaidan events in Ukraine, describing the mechanisms of contention politics in the events of November 2013 – February 2014. Special attention is paid to the repertoire of contention, which remained rigid during 1991–2013, but has evolved after January 19, 2014 due to structural reasons.

Keywords: contention, collective action, protest, Euromaidan.

The political turmoil quivering Ukraine in November 2013 – February 2014 is defined by observers and participants in different ways: as a “protest” [2; 23], a “revolution” [5; 22], a “riot” [4; 6], an “insurgency” [1; 3; 10] etc. All those qualifications tend to be misleading, because application of a particular notion depends on political partisanship of its author. Moreover, conceptions like “revolution” or “insurgency” imply that political process they describe is highly abnormal. Both propensity to define the events in Ukraine subjectively and their perceived anomalous features contribute to dramatic interpretations. Society considers the situation in Ukraine as exceptional, catastrophic, and cataclysmic: there are numerous predictions of upcoming civil war,

intervention, or even suggesting Ukraine to be a “failed state” [2].

In this article, I argue that a coherent comprehension of the events in Ukraine in November 2013 – February 2014, also known as the “Euromaidan”, requires introducing of a value-free notion. Hereafter I argue that introducing the notion of “contentious politics” will provide a more accurate explanation of the events.

The article begins by exploring the theoretical foundations of the contentious politics’ paradigm. Secondly, preference of this paradigm in analysis the Euromaidan events is demonstrated. Thirdly, I study the repertoire of contention in Ukraine in historical perspective in order to explain its evolution in January 2014.

Theoretical perspective

The notion of contentious politics is relatively new in social science. It was introduced by Ch. Tilly [20] and acquired scholarly attention being used by S. Tarrow [18], M. Lichbach [13], D. Meyer [15], and J. Ulfelder [24]. In early 2000s, a theoretical opus magnum had been published [14], where the paradigm of contentious politics was fully conceptualized.

Contentious politics is a political process opposite to conventional politics. The latter depends on particular political system and varies from free elections and referendums within democratic regimes to non-competitive elections within authoritarian regimes. In any case, conventional politics is routinized: it happens regularly and within institutional boundaries.

In any given society conventional politics is more advantageous to some social groups at the expense of others. Disadvantaged groups have fewer opportunities to influence upon political process: their elective franchise may be restricted as that of black inhabitants of SAR during the apartheid; they may be a minority, never able to be politically powerful, as Native Americans in the U.S.; or they may represent a popular sector not deserving to have any political influence according to official position, as in the case of the military rule in Brazil (1964–1985).

Once a social group perceives that it is unable to have impact upon the political process, it turns to contentious politics. Rather clumsily, it is defined as “episodic, public, collective interaction among makers of claims and their objects when (a) at least one government is a claimant, an object of claims, or a party to the claims and (b) the claims would, if realized, affect the interests of at least one of the claimants” [14, p. 5]. Hereafter I use the notion “contentious politics” to describe *collective actions, performed by social actors aiming to change the structural environment by extra-institutional means*. In other words, contentious politics is non-routine political participation transcending institutional boundaries.

Though being non-routine, contentious politics is nevertheless as normal as conventional politics: the former supplements the latter in those domains, where institutional modus operandi does not work. For example, contentious politics signalizes about the problems the conventional politics tends to ignore; it helps disadvantaged social groups to protect their interests; it enables the popular sector to influence upon elite decisions the way it is not able to within institutional boundaries. Figuratively,

contentious politics is a sword of the weak, opposed to forms of passive resistance discussed by Scott [16], serving the weak as a shield.

As a form of active resistance, contentious politics comprehends a broad set of activities which vary significantly: some are non-violent (processions), others are more ambivalent (sit-ins and occupations), and there are violent activities – street clashes and acts of extremism. The activities compose a continuum with no impenetrable boundaries: social actors, engaged in contentious politics, resort to those activities which they believe to be the most effective. Thus, when mass-rallies and non-violent occupations yield little results, actors turn to violent actions.

McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly were especially interested in discerning some robust mechanisms of contentious politics – relatively common processes which take place despite cultural and societal differences. Among such recurring patterns are: mobilization, category formation, certification or decertification of actors, radicalization, and the diffusion of contention [14, p. 13]. Various mechanisms sequences lead contentious politics through different trajectories: for example if radicalization happens before the diffusion, the outcome will be other than in the case when the diffusion precedes the radicalization.

Finally, given the structural reasons for grievance, contentious politics is not a single outburst of contention. Rather, it is a sequence of episodes, sometimes described as “waves” [11] united by a common reason, though disjointed chronologically. The episodes cumulate in a cycle of contention. The relation between the cycle and the waves was creatively described by Gitlin as “the years of hope and the days of rage” [9]. A contentious politics’ episode is started by a trigger – a critical event that impels social actors to transcend the routine politics. Still, triggers are nothing but superficial incentives to act: the real reason for turning towards contentious politics is a structural problem that makes conventional politics unacceptable for some social groups.

From a tactical point of view, contentious politics has its “repertoire of contention”. The notion, introduced by Tilly, describes the “intersection of accumulated experience of social actors with the strategies of the authority [aiming to control the contention]” [19, p. 99]. The combination of *experience*, i.e. the knowledge of what could be done, and *deterrence*, i.e. the space for action left by the government, constitutes a range of means available to social actors conducting contentious politics.

Repertoire of contention constantly evolves in two ways. Firstly, due to changes in experience and deterrence, *some innovations are introduced*. For example, people learn how to make Molotov cocktails. Secondly, due to selection of the best tactics made by social actors *some elements are retained*. For example, if people find out that fraternizing with the army helps to gain more sympathy, which contributes to success of contentious politics, they will use the same technique during the following episodes of the cycle of contention. The elements are selected according to their effectiveness: means making an opponent more compliant are likely to be used again. Thus, an *opponents' sensitivity* to tactics of contention is an important feature, which determines whether a repertoire of contention will or will not evolve.

Analyzing combinations of innovation and persistence, Tilly distinguishes four repertoires of contention: "In the case of *no repertoire*, the previous familiarity of a performance does not affect the subsequent likelihood of its appearance. If past familiarity increases the likelihood of subsequent performance in a more or less linear manner... let us call that situation a 'weak repertoire.' If familiar performances receive strong preference but some unfamiliar performances also occur in the form of innovations, we are dealing with a flexible repertoire, which we can also call 'strong.' If nothing but very familiar performances ever appear despite changing circumstances, the repertoire is called rigid" [21, p. 39–40].

Euromaidan as contentious politics

The social turmoil in Ukraine becomes more intelligible if analyzed through the contentious politics paradigm. The events are dramatic, but they are far from being catastrophic and correspond to general patterns of contentious politics.

The basic reason for broad social mobilization was the fail of political institutions to bring desirable results to large societal groups. There were three different triggers of Euromaidan, and each of them signalized about the fail of conventional politics.

1) A small group of people went to the streets on November 21, 2013 having found out that the Association Agreement with the EU was not to be signed. Those people were disappointed by the Ukrainian leadership that had neglected an opportunity to join the European community.

2) Much more people were driven in the streets by the police brutality on November 30, 2013. Those people were outraged by the fact that Ukrainian government deployed unjustifiable

violence against a peaceful demonstration. They demanded to punish the officials who had abused the authority. Those claims were ignored by law enforcement agencies and the contentious politics persisted and involved new participants.

3) The third trigger mobilized people concerned with unconstitutional enactment of bills on 16 January 2014, which criminalized protest activities. The bills passed with procedural violations which undermined significantly the credibility of conventional politics. Facing the problem, concerned citizens tried to change the structural environment by extra-institutional means.

The robust mechanisms of contentious politics are clearly observable in the Euromaidan case. The cascade *mobilization* helped to enlarge the contentious politics constituency: each next trigger animated significantly larger social groups. That, what started as a demonstration in the capital, grew up to occupy actions all over the country. The *diffusion of contention* is also undeniable in cases of civic occupations of Ukrainian Regional State Administrations (January – February 2014) and popular storms of ammunition depots in some regions after February 18.

Mobilized social actors have constructed a collective identity opposing the righteous people and the corrupt regime. The *category formation* was reinforced by ongoing confrontation with the police and reported brutalities, committed by law-enforcement agencies like kidnapping of activists or torturing of prisoners. The collective action was represented by activists as a struggle for personal honor and civic liberties against the depraved politicians.

The mechanism of *radicalization* of contentious actions deserves the attention. Each next trigger modified methods of contentious collective action: there is an evolution from a non-violent demonstration after the first trigger, to barricade-building after the second trigger, and finally to permanent confrontation with the police after the third trigger. The radicalization reached its apogee after the lethal police assault against the radical factions on February 18, which significantly intensified the conflict and led to armed struggle and casualties from both sides.

Finally, during November 2013 – February 2014 several political actors were *(de)certified*. The most prominent case is that of the leaders of political opposition, V. Klychko, O. Tiahnybok and A. Yatseniuk. The mass rally of November 21, 2013 was initially inaugurated as a civic initiative. Still, the politicians appreciated the energy of civic discontent and headed the contentious actions as its

leaders and messengers. During this period, the mass rallies were generally held with oppositional parties' banners and the trio represented the citizens during negotiations with the regime. The situation changed significantly after January 19, 2014 when the trio and their instructions were ignored by more radical actors. From that moment V. Klychko, O. Tiahnybok and A. Yatseniuk were constantly losing their influence, being humiliated and blamed for inaction. Thus, they were decertified as mouthpiece of the contentious politics. The loss of credit by the oppositional trio was doubled by the gain of credit by a minority group "The Right Sector". It grew to be a recognized political actor after organizing and taking responsibility for the violent clashes with the police.

Repertoire of Contention in Ukraine

The events of the late February were the most bloody anti-government collective action since 1991. I argue that both the radicalization and its dramatic outcomes had structural reasons, namely the ineffectiveness of non-violent repertoire, perceived by contentious claimers in January 2014. A brief study of repertoire of contention in Ukraine during 1991–2013 is provided to support the thesis.

Ukraine inherited its contentious collective action from the USSR. Being a typical "late riser within the [glasnost] mobilizational cycle" [8, p. 117], it experienced episodes of social mobilization at the end of 1980s. For example, on January 21, 1990 up to 3 million people composed a human chain symbolically uniting Ukraine. The society remained active over the year 1990, and in October a student hunger strike, accompanied with mass rallies at the Independence Square in Kyiv, compelled the republican parliament to discharge the ultra-reactionary prime-minister V. Masol, to allow plural elections, and not to re-sign the union treaty, which meant that Ukraine intended to quit the Soviet Union. The turmoil spread over the republic in the year 1991: miners from the industrial eastern regions conducted strikes supporting the secession. Finally, on August 24 the republican parliament, yet again pushed by a mass rally, issued the Declaration of the Independence.

I define the period of 1990–1991 as the *1st wave of contention* in Ukraine. During the *1st wave* the basic elements of repertoire of contention were created, i.e. broad popular mobilization, mass rallies on central squares, non-violent demonstrations, and civic processions. This tactics proved to be effective instrument of stimulating desirable changes in political process.

The *2nd wave of contention* surged in the early 2000s, during the rule of the President L. Kuchma, who cut the powers of the legislature, put his cronies at the key-positions both in government and state-machine, and introduced censorship in mass media. Democratic forces organized a permanent mass rally "Ukraine without Kuchma", which made the society more sensitive towards eventual authoritarian drift. Kuchma's second presidential term came to an end in 2004, but he intended to maintain the control over the country by means of a successor. The role was prearranged for V. Yanukovich. In case of eventual electoral defeat, a "creative vote theft" [26, p. 134] was designed to assure his victory. The fraud had been openly used, so when the victory of Yanukovich was announced, concerned citizens gathered on the Independence Square in Kyiv. People continuously occupied it for a month, diversifying the contentious collective action by non-violent processions and demonstrations in front of key governmental buildings. Finally, the Supreme Court announced the result of elections to be indecisive and appointed new elections, lost by V. Yanukovich.

The collective action of the *2nd wave* reinforced the repertoire of contention, constituted during the *1st wave*: once again broad mobilization, mass rallies, sit-ins, permanent occupations of public spaces and demonstrations in front of administrative buildings proved to be effective means of contentious politics. Within some 10 years non-violent forms of contention were effective twice. For this reason, when in autumn 2013 the *3rd wave of contention* surged, the well-known methods were used by citizens: the most active demonstrators left their desks, occupied the Independence Square, and held the ground days and nights, while more individually constraint individuals joined them after labor hours.

I identify the repertoire of contention, dominating in Ukraine during 1990–2013 as a rigid one: despite changing structural environment, contentious actors used familiar tactics without introducing significant innovations. The rigidity had positive and negative consequences. On the one hand, claimers refined their skills in rapid mass mobilization and exercised the contentious repertoire with more *experience*. On the other hand, the repertoire became rather predictable and ineffective. The confrontation during November–January 2013 confirmed that the level of *regime sensitivity* to protest tactics was considerably low: officials ignored the contentious politics, being undisturbed by people in the streets. The chief shortcoming of the contentious repertoire was its invariability: claimers recurred predominantly to "methods of protest", failing to effectively use

“methods of noncooperation” and those of “non-violent intervention” as distinguished by G. Sharp [17]. Consequently, contentious actors were not able to combine moral, political, and economical pressure over the regime-élites in order to provoke the élite-fractioning.

Moreover, the power-holders decided to administer the coup de grace by increasing the level of *deterrence*. The new legislation of January 16, 2014 introduced a vaguely defined notion of extremist activity; re-criminalized defamation of policemen and judges; criminalized blocking of administrative buildings; established administrative sanctions for moving in a column of more than 5 vehicles as well as for installation of tents or stages during mass rallies [12]. Thus, the new legislation outlawed many components of the repertoire of contention, considerably hindering the use of the rest.

Facing ineffectiveness of the non-violent repertoire and the increase of deterrence level, the radical faction among the claimers resorted to violent confrontation with the police. They used the tactics virtually absent in contentious repertoire of mass protest in contemporary Ukraine, i.e. Molotov cocktails and self-defense units. Despite numerous human casualties, the innovation turned to be very effective: the shock of violent confrontations destroyed the ruling élites’ cohesion. As a result, the

Azarov’s cabinet was dismantled; the business-élites overtly criticized Yanukovich, and the Party of Regions endured scission and member outflow. Finally, as a result of élite reconfiguration, the decisions conceived as unrealistic at the beginning of the 3rd wave (namely re-introduction of the Constitution of 2004 and discharge of Y. Tymoshenko) were adopted.

Through the article I aimed to prove that contentious politics is by no means abnormal: it is used when conventional politics ceases to represent social interests. The 3rd wave of contention in Ukraine produced numerous civic initiatives and civic cooperation. They may be first steps towards building effective institutions, accountable to the people. The absence of such institutions was the reason of the cycle of contention, which animated contentious politics against the late Soviet regime, the uncompleted authoritarian regime of L. Kuchma, and centralized regime of V. Yanukovich. But the 3rd wave of contention was marked by effective innovation of repertoire of contention – the introduction of violence. Given the mimetic nature of repertoires, the violence may resurge in cases of contentious politics. Thus, the regime which will succeed that of V. Yanukovich should make efforts to maximize the effectiveness and credibility of conventional politics.

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Гомза І. А.

ПОЛІТИКА НЕЗГОДИ І РЕПЕРТУАР ПОЛІТИКИ НЕЗГОДИ В УКРАЇНІ НА ПРИКЛАДІ ЄВРОМАЙДАНУ

Стаття впроваджує парадигму політики незгоди для вивчення подій, відомих під назвою Євромайдан. Зокрема, описано механізми політики незгоди під час подій листопада 2013 р. – лютого 2014 р. Особливу увагу приділено репертуару політики незгоди, який відповідно до історичного аналізу залишався жорстким протягом 1991–2013 рр., але змінився після 16 лютого 2014 р. внаслідок структурних причин.

Ключові слова: незгода, протест, колективна дія, Євромайдан.

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