

Negotiating Protest Spaces on the Maidan: A Gender Perspective

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***Abstract:** The paper discusses the gendered use of space during the 2013–14 Maidan protests in Ukraine. While women were certainly present at the Maidan, the space they occupied was often regimented by the male protesters. Many women adopted traditional feminine roles of cooks, cleaners and peaceful messengers and were often perceived by their fellow-protesters as well as the general public as helpers of the male protesters rather than revolutionaries in their own right. At the same time, many female protesters managed to go beyond the physical and ideological boundaries of the Maidan, both in the process of overtly challenging the patriarchal order and while obeying its rules. The paper assesses the various ways in which women occupied the protest space, how they interacted with the often hostile spaces outside of the Maidan, and how they contributed to the construction of the meaning of the Maidan as a place of revolution. The paper also assesses whether the active participation of women in the protest movements foreshadows their liberation.*

I saw online that Hrushevs'kyi Street was burning and that the situation had reached its peak. The next day I told my mother that I was on my way to college. I packed some clothes, booked my flight on the way, popped in to the Labour Party office and told them that I wasn't sure how long I was leaving for, when I would be back or if I would be back at all, stopped by my college and told them that I might need a gap year, because I had to leave, and left. I left a very long letter for my mother saying "mum, I love you very much, I am sorry I did this, I hope you forgive me one day, but I cannot stay here when my country is going through such events. I don't want my children or grandchildren to ask me one day where I was [during the