

Democratic Centralization and Institutional Development in Ukraine from the *Maidans* of 2004 and 2014: A Holistic Interpretation

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Abstract: *Employing the institutionalization framework of Douglass North, this expository paper attempts to look forward from the changes that have occurred in Ukrainian society and politics since the anti-government protests of 2004 and 2013/14 and more recently. The paper sketches Ukraine's recent social transformations against the Soviet traditionalist legacy, and selected state reforms. The evidence shows that since spring 2014 the country experienced significant consolidation of civil society in government-controlled regions and has made some improvements to state institutions. Concurrently, broader inclusion of citizens within politics has constituted an empirical case where strengthened civil society has helped to manage social tensions, and sets the stage for a democratic centralization of citizen rights.*

Keywords: Ukraine, Euromaidan, civil society, conflict management, institutions

Introduction

Post-2014 *Euromaidan* Ukraine needs interpretation. A number of authors such as Marples and Mills (2015), Hale and Orttung (2016), German and Karagiannis (2017), Falsini (2018), and Oleinik (2018) have provided good accounts of recent events in Ukraine. However, an effort to gain a better understanding of where the country might be heading seems timely. The purpose of this paper is to illustrate two themes; the first is the growth of what could be called democratic centralization and the other is institutional