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Mass Protests from a Spatial Perspective

Discontent and Urban Public Space in Kyiv, Minsk, and Moscow

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Front page:

Protesters in front of Maidan, 22 January 2019

Photo: Arve Hansen

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<div align="right">Arve Hansen, Oslo, November 2019</div>

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Abstract

Mass protests have been an important part of the political environment in Eastern Europe for more than a century. Since the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917, people have turned to urban spaces to make their opinions heard and to demand change, with varying degrees of success. This was most notably the case during the 1960s; and from the beginning of the end of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, through a wave of what are commonly referred to as colour revolutions in the 2000s, to the Ukrainian Euromaidan revolution of 2013–2014. Contention in urban spaces continues to affect politics in the region. How are such mass protests affected by the urban public space in which they occur?

Based on a contextualisation of protest space and a review of the academic literature on protests and urban space, this article-based thesis identifies a gap in the literature and then goes on to describe the development of a theoretical model to analyse city spaces, based on the use of theories from political science, urban planning, and sociology. The approach consists of a mapping of the causal mechanisms between spatial elements, the political environment, and their combined effect on protests. This mapping is applied to three case studies—a prestudy of Kyiv, a transitional study of Minsk and the main test-study of Moscow—written for three different academic journals at three different periods in the study's development.

In addition to the spatial perspective model, this thesis provides new insights as to how the interactions in space occur, and demonstrates how geography can create limitations and opportunities in a large variety of ways. It also contributes a language and a typology for use in the studies of opposition movements and collective actions.

Keywords: Collective action; Colour revolution; Demonstration; Geography; Mass protests; Political environment; Public space; Urban contention; Urbanism.

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Abbreviations

CAT   Collective Action Theory

DOC   Dynamics Of Contention

OWS   Occupy Wall Street

POS   Political Opportunity Structure theory

PRT   Prospect-Refuge Theory

PT   Process Tracing

RMP   Resource Mobilisation Perspective

ROC   Repertoire Of Contention

RSCPR   Russian Space: Concepts, Practices, Representations

SCM   Structural-Cognitive Model

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A note on language

This thesis describes events, people, and places mainly from three Eastern Slavic countries: Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia. Each of these countries uses the Cyrillic script and has its own national language, as well as linguistic variations encompassing proper nouns: yet, for historical reasons, Russian has become the lingua franca of the region. The long history of Russian hegemony and long periods of russification have also led to the widespread international adoption of Russian forms for Ukrainian and Belarusian proper nouns. For these reasons, the Ukrainian capital is usually known as *Kiev* (from Rus. *Киев*), rather than *Kyiv* (from Ukr. *Київ*). Likewise, the Belarusian president is known as *Lukashenko* (Rus.: *Лукашенко*), not *Lukashènka* (Bel.: *Лукашенка*); while the conflict region in Eastern Ukraine is known as *Donbass* (Russian: *Донбасс*), not *Donbas* (Ukrainian: *Донбас*). Conversely, some proper nouns are known by their national variants, as is the case with the current Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyi (Ukr.: *Володимир Зеленський*), not *Vladimir Zelenskii* (Rus.: *Владимир Зеленский*), and *Hrodna* for the town in Western Belarus (Bel.: *Гродна*), rather than *Grodno* (Rus.: *Гродно*).

Scholars are often advised to use the transliterations most predominant in English, as these are most recognisable to the majority of readers. Yet such a language policy often leads to inconsistencies, and readers asking why some proper nouns are based on the Russian forms while others are not. As far as I can see, there are only two solutions to this problem. Either the scholar consistently and exclusively transliterates from the relevant Russian forms; or, conversely, they transliterate all proper nouns from the local languages. The former solution is often used because it is more consistent with the predominant name forms in English. (Another reason might be that most scholars within the field have a level of proficiency in Russian, but limited knowledge of the other two languages). The choice of Russian could additionally be justified by the large prevalence of Russophone speakers in all three countries. Although there is a precedent for the former solution in East Slavic area studies, the latter is not unheard-of, and scholars such as the Canadian historian David R. Marples (2004) and the British political scientist Taras Kuzio (2005) use the national variants of proper nouns.

I have chosen the latter option. Thus, the transliterations of proper nouns found in this thesis reflect their national origins. The reader will also encounter proper nouns that are less frequently used, such as *Kyiv* and *Lukashènka* (rather than *Kiev* and *Lukashenko*). However, I have retained the familiar variants of some terms and proper nouns in order to avoid confusion (e.g.

Kievan Rus', not *Kievskaia Rus'* from Rus. *Киевская Русь*; or *Kyïvs'ka Rus'* from Ukr. *Київська Русь*).

I have used the ALA-LC Romanisation tables from The Library of Congress for all Ukrainian, Belarusian, and Russian words, with some exceptions. Whilst letters such as *ï, ǐ, ė, ë, ǔ* are unobtrusive and easy to integrate, I have avoided confusing typographic ligatures, such as $\widehat{ie}$ for the Russian *e* and the Ukrainian *є*, $\widehat{ts}$ for the letter *ц*, $\widehat{iu}$ for *ю*, and $\widehat{ia}$ for *я*. Thus, the previous Ukrainian president is spelled *Ianukovych*, not *ÎAnukovych*. Similarly, I have kept some internationally recognised variants that are too omnipresent to change: for example, the former Russian president is *Boris Yeltsin* rather than *Ieltsin* (or, with ligatures, *ÎElt͡sin*).

Three journals – three styles

Since this is an article-based thesis consisting of these introductory chapters and three articles written for three different academic journals, there are some significant linguistic and stylistic differences between them. Most notably, the first article (Hansen, 2016) is written in Norwegian, while the latter two (Hansen, 2017; 2019) are written in English. All three journals follow different style manuals for translation and transliteration.

Moreover, articles 1 and 2 were published in journals with a high proportion of Slavist readers, and thus use the Romanised forms of original-language place names. Conversely, article 3 is submitted to a journal with a significant portion of non-Slavist readers, and place names are therefore translated into English (e.g. Swamp Square, not *Bolotnaia ploshchad'*). For consistency's sake, I will use the translated forms of place names in these introductory chapters (i.e. October Square, not *Kastryhnitskaia*). A notable exception is Maidan (Ukr.: *square*), which is used both instead of the longer original (*Maidan Nezalezhnosti*) and the translation (Independence Square), the reason being that Maidan has become a widely recognised word in the West, even among non-Slavists.

For the reader's convenience, the first article is translated from Norwegian into English, following the same style manual as article 3. When referred to in these introductory chapters, the first number in parentheses is from the Norwegian article, while the second is from the English translation (e.g. Hansen, 2016, p. 120/3).

All translations are my own unless stated otherwise.

1 Starting point

> Went to Kyiv […] metro still closed […] Got around the police blockades easily. […] I returned to the Maidan. Still felt like a safe place.

Kyiv, 20th February 2014

This excerpt is from one of the numerous field notes I made during the final days of the Ukrainian revolution (2013–2014). I was studying the events in Kyiv for a research project in East Slavic area studies (Hansen, 2015), and went to the iconic site of the protests, Maidan (Independence Square), to observe the scene after the latest clashes between police and protesters. The contention in Kyiv had started three months earlier in response to the government's sudden U-turn away from EU integration, and it had rapidly changed into a broad movement against the incumbent president Ianukovych. The conflict escalated into violence and, by this point, many people had been killed.

I arrived at Maidan for the second time that day at approximately four or five o'clock in the afternoon. At the time, rumour had it that 780 protesters had been killed over the previous 24 hours.[1] The city was in a state of shock, and there was much uncertainty as to what would happen next. Yet, for some reason, I felt quite safe where I was standing.

I knew Maidan well: the entrances and exits, the many tunnels underneath, the seemingly random monuments mixed with intrusive advertising boards, kiosks, and architecture from all periods of Ukraine's Soviet and post-Soviet past. Many times over the previous three months, I had wondered why this particular space had become the symbol of protest in Ukraine. Now, during these final days of the revolution, it was evident that the authorities had been unable to clear the square and stop protesters (or curious people like me) from entering it, despite numerous road blocks and a heavy riot police presence. Strangely, I also noticed that, even though everything was uncertain and no one knew whether the authorities would launch another attack, it didn't feel particularly frightening to be where I was standing. If anything, I figured, I could always find a way out.

It became apparent to me then that Maidan was a very suitable place for protest, although I could not define precisely why.

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[1] The Ukrainian Ministry of Health later announced that the actual number of those killed was 82 ("Informatsia pro postrazhdalykh," 2014).

Figure 1: Maidan, Kyiv, 20th February 2014. Photo: Arve Hansen

Maidan is merely one of several examples of a town square that has turned into a location of great political significance. Actions and events spring immediately to mind at the mere mention of the Bastille, Red Square, Taksim or Tahrir. We associate these places with the making of history: places where revolutions have been started, dictators ousted, or rebellions crushed.

Central urban spaces can thus create powerful imagery, and we intuitively understand that space has importance. Yet how are massive collective actions, such as the latest Ukrainian revolution, affected by urban public space? Or, to put it another way, how does urban space facilitate and/or inhibit public protests? These questions led me to the current study.

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This article-based thesis describes the development of a spatial perspective on mass protests, a model which has been applied to three case studies: Kyiv, Minsk, and Moscow. It consists of seven introductory chapters and three articles, two of which have been published (Hansen, 2016, 2017) and one more submitted for publication (Hansen, 2019). These and a translation of the first article (from Norwegian into English) are attached to this document (see appendices 1, 2, 3, and 4).

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Chapter 2 opens with a contextualisation of space and its central position in human society since the prehistoric era. It outlines a history of contention in urban public spaces, and explains why public spaces in the East Slavic region form the topic of this thesis.

Having established that urban public space has both a historic and a contemporary relevance, chapter 3 provides a systematic review, in two sections, of the existing research on protests and space. The first section (3.1) includes general theories within sociology and political science, and research on the specific conditions necessary for a collective action or revolution to occur. The second (3.2) looks at the various research on public (philosophy), physical (architecture, urban planning, geography), and contested space (urbanism). In the third section (3.3), an existing gap in the available research is identified. Even if connections between space and protest are identified in the research literature, and from a variety of perspectives, none of the publications surveyed provide a systematic and generalised approach to the analysis of this causal relationship.

Chapter 4 continues the discussion of chapter 3 by providing two key definitions of mass protests (4.1) and urban public space (4.2), before stating the primary and secondary research questions of this thesis in full (4.3).

The theorising and development of the spatial perspective, from the conception of an idea to a complete theoretical model, are described in chapter 5. This includes the theory and approaches to theorising applied during the various stages of the model's development (5.1), and some of the ethical considerations taken into account during the process (5.2), as well as my main reservation about developing a theory with a focus on geography. From this starting point, the development of the model is traced from its beginnings (5.4) through different stages of theorising and testing (5.5) to a description of the causal chains between urban space and mass protests employed in the final model (5.6). The project's three research articles were written in parallel with the model's development, and thus also reflect the various stages of the process. The first article is described as a prestudy (5.5.1), the second as a transitional study (5.5.3), and the third as the main study, demonstrating how the spatial perspective can be applied in its current form (5.7).

The causal mechanisms described in chapter five are explicated in chapter 6, including the model's independent (6.1), intermediary (6.2), and dependent variables (6.3).

Chapter 7 provides a final demonstration of the spatial perspective as applied to Republic Square (*Place de la République*), Paris, during a demonstration there on 6 January 2019 by the

Yellow Vests (Fr.: *Mouvement des gilets jaunes*). The case study is used to demonstrate how the research questions outlined in chapter 4 have been answered, and forms the basis for arguing that the model can be used as a tool and a language to discuss spaces of contention and to provide new insights into the study of social movements and mass protests. Following a brief review of the contents, findings, and utility of this thesis, I then suggest a few ways in which the spatial perspective can be developed further.

2 Space in context

Human beings are cognitive creatures. We experience the world around us through our external sensory input, such as touch, smell, and sight, which our brains interpret based on our experiences, memory, and thoughts. One fundamental aspect of the experienced world is space and, consciously or subconsciously, we never stop interpreting the physical environment around us. This does not imply that we are necessarily aware of how this analysis is done, or even that it is being done in the first place. We often are unable to appreciate the full extent and impact of it or to explain how it works to a third party. Nevertheless, we are instinctively aware of our surroundings, sense their uses, opportunities, dangers, and risks, and adapt our behaviour accordingly.[2]

This keen sense of place has probably played a vital part in the survival of our species. When our early hominid ancestors, millions of years ago, entered new ground, instincts would be activated to provide information about the possibilities and dangers that particular space might provide. Exploring a new location, an individual would be sensitive to whether the space made them feel relaxed and safe, or alert and uneasy.

Over time, as the human capacity for social interaction evolved, space would come to be perceived not just as a place that might provide food and a chance to eat (or, conversely, a threat of being attacked and eaten), but also as a location for the increasingly complex social interactions between individuals within a group. Thus, the instinctive human perception of space would come to include information about other people and about the social interactions and relations occurring in that space. A newly arrived individual would, for example, soon sense whether this was a place to eat, relax, converse, and mate, or to be on its guard against other individuals in the group. It would know—with little conscious effort—where its allies and friends were, find the possible exits, sense whether it belonged in the group, and locate itself strategically according to its position in the social hierarchy: whether funny, loud, and boastful at the centre of the group, or reserved, quiet, and humble near one of the exits. Individuals who were oblivious to such social space would probably end up as outcasts, or worse, killed.

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[2] This way of thinking about human nature has its roots back in the *cognitive turn* of the mid 1950s. At this time, sciences such as psychology, linguistics, and anthropology began distancing themselves from the traditional way of looking at the mind and body as separate entities; and the new *cognitive sciences* moved towards a more integrated interpretation of the human mind, which sees most aspects of the human body (and possibly the environment in which it moves) as interrelated (Miller, 2003; Núñez & Cooperrider, 2013; Thagard, 2018).

According to the Australian anthropologist Terrence Twomey (2014), our discovery and domestication of fire hundreds of thousands, perhaps even over a million years ago (Gowlett, 2016) probably facilitated the evolution of human cooperation. Twomey explains how making a fire and keeping it going was a costly endeavour, yet the result was a good from which all the individuals in a group could greatly benefit. Hence, the domestication of fire would stimulate cooperation (Twomey, 2014). We could therefore imagine that, for groups of hunter-gatherers in prehistoric times, the campfire would become one of the first dedicated spaces for social interaction. Here, people would flock together not only to eat and sleep in the relative safety from predators, insects, and cold weather, but also to process past events, discuss gains and risks, and make a plan of action for the day to come.

After the Neolithic Revolution of approximately 10 000 BCE, humans gradually started to live in fixed settlements and the new agricultural technology laid the foundation for explosive population growth (Bellwood & Oxenham, 2008). In the new and increasingly urban setting, the locations of social interaction and planning would probably move from the campfire into urban spaces, such as marketplaces, town squares, or other focal points of growing villages and cities. We can find archaeological evidence from the Bronze and Iron ages, for instance, which indicate that social and deliberative spaces were valued to such an extent that they were formalised as various forms of political institutions. Popular assemblies in urban space could be found in the Ancient Greek *Agora* (Anc. Greek.: ἀγορά), the Roman *Forum Romanum*, and the Slavic *Veche* (Rus.: вече); or, conversely, in the outskirts of settlements, such as the Scandinavian *Thing* (Icel.: þing).

However, urban spaces have some significant limitations as formal places of deliberation and public administration. Notably, the central plaza of a large city may not have enough physical space available for all people to attend, and large groups of people are often at risk of being affected by demagoguery. For these and other reasons, in most societies, public organisation moved into the remit of formal political institutions. Yet the cities' urban spaces have remained as necessary parts of the landscape, needed in order for people to move from one place to another. Additionally, they function as places for trade, recreation, and social interaction. Urban spaces are often the location of joyful activities such as festivals and public entertainments, but also, sometimes, of floggings and executions. Some rulers might use the city's focal point to display their might, too—for instance, in the form of army drills and parades. Moreover, although the majority of formal decisions now occur in buildings, the potential use value of

urban space for people to discuss, deliberate, and decide on a course of action has not gone away.

Throughout human history, people have tended to congregate in central places in times of trouble. Such gatherings sometimes occur on the initiative of rulers to collectively find a solution to a shared problem (such as how to respond to an imminent invasion or the death of a prince). Yet, every so often, the ruling elites are themselves perceived as the problem, and the urban squares and marketplaces might be seized by the people and turned into arenas of opposition.

Figure 2: Althing, Iceland (Icel.: Alþingi). The country's form of popular assembly was first located on Thingvellir (the Assembly Fields, Icel.: Þingvellir)/Lögberg in the tenth century CE. Photo: Andrei Rogatchevski.

2.1 Complexities of urban contention

Urban contention has a large number of aspects, and several of these are discussed in the next chapter. But there are three ways to look at and categorise urban collective actions that should be mentioned here to provide the reader with a sense of the complexity of the phenomenon: 1) the various forms of urban contention, 2) the motivations people have for action: and, 3) the local, regional, and global tendencies or waves of contention of which the collective action is part.

2.1.1 Form

One form of urban contention is the violent mob, wholly or partially controlled by powerful individuals such as politicians, religious leaders, and oligarchs. The mob has often been used as a tool to incite violence in cities against political opponents and so change the political landscape. In the Ancient Roman Republic, for example, groups of discontented plebeians often became an important force in the frequent (and often violent) transitions of power (Brunt, 1966). Another example might be the *veche* (popular assembly) of the Medieval East Slavic Novgorod Republic (1136–1478), where the crowd were often more powerful than their prince. Historical chronicles recount how the Novgorodians, under heavy influence from wealthy boyars, sometimes removed ineffective leaders by force (Paul, 2008; Evtuhov, Goldfrank, Hughes & Stites, 2004, pp. 88–89).

Urban contention can also be seen in the uncontrolled violent crowd which, under pressure, stands up to the ruling elites and overthrows them in violent riots, uprisings, and revolutions. The French Revolution (1789–1799) is a particularly prominent example because it shows how space can both foster discontent and provide a suitable environment for insurgencies.[3]

Conversely, urban discontent can manifest as nonviolent protests, such as the 1913 Women's Suffrage Parade on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C. (Lumsden, 2000), or the 1919 May Fourth Movement at Tiananmen Square in Beijing (Wasserstrom, 2005).

2.1.2 Motivation

Another way to look at urban contention is by considering the motivation for the action. The US is a fitting example to illustrate that urban contention can have a wide range of different motives, ranging from a wish to improve living conditions, e.g. the Great Railroad Strike of 1877 (DeMichele, 2008), to the many movements against wars and military interventions (see for example the protests against the war in Vietnam ["Vietnam Veterans," 2019], and in Iraq [Chan, 2003]). Cities in the US have also seen multiple protests for the equal rights of oppressed groups in society, such as the 1969 Stonewall Riots and the birth of the Gay Rights Movement (Kuhn, 2011), the feminist movements of the 1970s (Spain, 2016), and the more recent Black Lives Matter protests (Karduni, 2017); collective actions aimed at causing harm, such as

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[3] The revolution erupted in 1789 with the storming of the Bastille, a symbol of monarchical oppression, and was fuelled by the poverty and sickness created in the overcrowded and unsanitary districts of Paris. Moreover, the insurgency was possible in no small part due to barricades raised in the city's narrow and easily defendable streets and alleys (Doyle, 1989, pp. 178-191; Traugott, 1993; Wilde, 2018).

racially motivated violence in Southern US cities (Olzak, 1990); religiously inspired protests, such as the Washington for Jesus rally in 1980 (Flippen, 2011, pp. 1–23), and social movements against economic inequality, such as the 2011 Occupy Wall Street protest movement (Gillham, Edwards & Noakes, 2013).

2.1.3 Waves

A third approach to urban discontent is to see it as waves that come and go, sweeping through periods in history, changing power structures and the layout of societies. A large number of such waves of contention have occurred throughout history in cities across the globe. In Eastern Europe, for example, we can identify at least four waves, shown here together with their political aftermath:

1917

Eastern Europe did not become part of the three European waves of revolution of the 1820s, 1830s and 1840s that followed in the aftermath of the French Revolution. But the radical new ideas of European thinkers, combined with the grievances of war and deep inequality in society, turned into a series of urban uprisings in the Russian Empire and eventually into the October Revolution of 1917. The Soviet Union was created in the aftermath of this revolution.[4]

1950s and 1960s

The second wave of urban discontent in Eastern Europe started during the period of thaw introduced by Nikita Khrushchev in the aftermath of Stalin's death in 1953. A series of mass protests against poor standards of living and political repressions broke out in the streets and squares of major cities in the Eastern Bloc. Notably, uprisings and demonstrations occurred in 1953 on Leipziger Straße in Berlin (Ostermann & Byrne, 2001, pp. 163–165), in 1956 on Adam Mickiewicz Square in Poznań (Grzelczak, n.d., pp. 98–101) and on Kossuth Lajos Square in

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[4] At its peak, in the 1960s and 70s, the Soviet Union covered a sixth of the planet's landmass, controlled the world's largest nuclear arsenal, and dominated the Warsaw Pact military alliance. This alliance was created as a counterweight to NATO in May 1955 and consisted of the 15 Soviet Republics in the USSR as well as Albania (until 1968), Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Romania. This group of republics and countries is referred to as the Eastern Bloc.

Budapest, also in 1956.[5] The public spaces of cities in several of the Warsaw Pact countries also featured in the worldwide protest movements of 1968, four years after the thaw ended.[6]

1985 to 1991

From the second half of the 1980s, triggered by the 1986 *glasnost* (transparency/openness) and *perestroika* (restructuring) reform policies, urban protests started to appear in the Eastern Bloc. In the Baltics, for example, protesters actively used music in what would later be known as the Singing Revolution of 1987–1991 (Smidchens, 2014). Opponents of the Soviet regime organised numerous concerts in city centres and formed a human chain between the three capitals, Tallinn, Riga, and Vilnius, to demonstrate their unity in their discontent with the USSR (2014, p. 249). These actions inspired similar protests, notably in Ukraine (Hansen, Rogatchevski, Steinholt & Wickström, 2019, pp. 36–37). Between 1989 and 1991, the Warsaw Pact gradually fell apart as series of both nonviolent and violent anti-communist revolutions occurred in capital cities across the Eastern Bloc. Notable events include masses of East Germans tearing down the Berlin Wall in November 1989, and the failed military coup of August 1991, which was partly stopped by the masses of people who went out into the public spaces of Moscow and other Russian cities (Marples, 2004, p. 84). The Soviet Union was dissolved later that same year.

2000s

Following a somewhat chaotic decade in the 1990s,[7] a new wave of social movements and mass protests hit the Balkans, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia in the 2000s (see fig. 3). Inspired by

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[5] The Hungarian student protests turned into a revolution and triggered a Soviet military intervention the same year, resulting in "more than 3,000 dead and 13,000 injured as well as over 4,000 destroyed buildings. Actual losses were probably higher" (Hoensch, 1984, p. 219).

[6] 1968 is a year famous for the amount of urban protests worldwide. In the West, public spaces were occupied by demonstrators in London, Madrid, Mexico, Paris, Rome, West Berlin and numerous other cities; and the social movements of that year showed that even seemingly stable democracies can burst into protests, riots, and even revolutions (see Kurlansky, 2005.). While people in the West were largely protesting in the name of equality and socialism, the protests in the East demanded political freedoms and increased autonomy from the Soviet Union. When the Kremlin ordered the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 to stop the Prague government's new reform programme, thousands of Prague-dwellers took to the streets to protest. A number of demonstrations in support of the Czechoslovaks appeared in cities across the Soviet Union, too, including at Red Square in Moscow (Wojnowski, 2018, p. 85; Bichof, Karner & Ruggenthaler, 2010; Kondrashova, 2018).

[7] In Eastern Europe, the 1990s are often known by the Russian term *Likhie devianostye*, which can be translated into English as the Wild Nineties. The period got this label due to the chaos that followed the Soviet Union's collapse. The 15 newly born post-Soviet states had to reorient their economic models towards a new reality and create new political systems while struggling with severe scarcity of consumer goods and social security, explosive crime rates, rampant corruption, and uncontrolled privatisation. At the same time, wars and uprisings for independence broke out frequently in the Caucasus (notably in Abkhazia, Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and South-Ossetia) and in the Transnistria Region of Moldova, triggering several, often unpopular, military interventions by Russia and other countries. Just when the economic situation started to recover, the 1997 financial crisis in Asia hit the former Soviet Union hard, particularly Russia and its trade partners

the Eastern European protests of the late 1980s, the demonstrators used nonviolent means to occupy central public squares in capital cities. The protests were often triggered by election fraud, and they demanded (and often achieved) the resignation of the elites that had managed to hold on to power after the breakup of the Eastern Bloc. The social movements of the 2000s are usually known as colour revolutions, with reference to the bright colours and symbols employed by the protesters. Although not in the former Soviet Union, the Yugoslavian Bulldozer Revolution, which overthrew President Slobodan Milošević in 2000, is often regarded as the first of the colour revolutions (e.g. by Tucker, 2005).

Year	Country	Focal point	Name(s)	Result
2003	Georgia	In front of the Parliament (Tbilisi)	Rose Revolution	Resignation of President Shevardnadze, new parliamentary elections.
2003–2004	Armenia	Freedom Square (Yerevan)	2003–2004 Armenian Protests	Forceful removal of protesters, legal retributions against protesters and protest organisers.
2004–2005	Ukraine	Independence Square (Kyiv)	Orange Revolution	New presidential elections.
2005	Kyrgyzstan	Ala-Too Square (Bishkek)	Tulip Revolution	Resignation of President Akayev, new presidential elections.
2005	Azerbaijan	Gelebe/Galaba Square (Baku)	2005 Azerbaijani Protests	Some concessions. "[O]fficial results for 7 or 8 of 125 parliamentary seats [were] annulled." (Chivers, 2005)
2006	Belarus	October Square (Minsk)	Kalinoŭskyi Square/Jeans Revolution	Forceful removal of the protest camp, legal retributions against protesters and protest organisers.
2008	Armenia	Freedom Square (Yerevan)	2008 Armenian Protests	Forceful removal of the protest camp, protesters killed, legal retributions against protesters and protest organisers.
2009	Moldova	Great National Assembly Square (Chișinău)	Twitter Revolution	New parliamentary elections, resignation of President Voronin.

Figure 3: Notable protests and colour revolutions in post-Soviet states in the 2000s.

Ukraine and Belarus. It should be noted that the Russian authorities support the use of the term *Likhie devianostye*, as it focuses on the negative aspects of the unstable decade between the Soviet Union (stability) and Putin (new stability), although for many Eastern Europeans, the decade was seen as one of freedom and possibilities rather than anarchy (see for example Rusin, 2016; Boldyrev, 2018; Osipov-Gipsh, 2019)

The above three categories (form, motivation, waves) are not intended to be exhaustive, but to illustrate that "urban contention" is a multifaceted term with historic and contemporary relevance to most regions in the world. The following section serves two purposes: 1) to provide a justification for choosing Kyiv, Minsk, and Moscow as case studies for the three articles in this study; and 2) to show that space and protests are important factors which have affected, and continue to affect, the political situation in the East Slavic area.

2.2 Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia

Since this study is limited by a number of factors, such as time, funding, and space available, the project has been narrowed down geographically. These introductory chapters and the three article case studies are limited to the capital cities of Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia for three main reasons. Firstly, the three countries have many similarities. Secondly, despite these similarities, there are some interesting differences between the respective national opposition movements. Finally, two outside factors have pushed me to select these cases. [8] I shall return to these shortly.

Furthermore, each case study has also been geographically limited to one or two urban public spaces, as the word limitations provided by the journal article format rarely allow for more. The choices and delimitations for each case study are discussed more thoroughly in each of the three articles.

Similarities

Kyiv, Minsk, and Moscow are the capital cities of the countries often referred to as the *Slavic Triangle* (see e.g. Godin, 2014), a term originating from the countries' shared history. The territories of Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia each cover parts of Kievan Rus' (approx. 882–1240), the Tsardom of Russia (1547–1722), and the Russian Empire (1722–1917), and they were all signatories to the Treaty of the Creation of the USSR in 1922, which was dissolved in 1991 by the collective decision of the three heads of state. In post-Soviet times, the three countries have struggled with many of the same obstacles: a brutal transition from planned to market economy, widespread corruption, autocratic leadership, popular discontent, etc. Moreover, there are strong ethnic, linguistic, cultural, political, architectural, economic, and criminal similarities and bonds between the three countries.

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[8] The justification for the choice of the article-based thesis format is explained in section 5.1.

Differences

However, the differences between the three countries are significant, too. Ukraine was one of the countries upended by a revolution in the 2000s, as the Orange Revolution of 2004–2005 resulted in regime change. Conversely, Belarus and Russia avoided becoming part of the wave of colour revolutions.[9] This tendency repeated itself in the 2010s, as protests in Minsk and Moscow at the start of the decade all ended badly for the protesters,[10] whilst the latest Ukrainian revolution of 2013–2014, centred on Maidan in downtown Kyiv, led to regime change for the second time in nine years.[11] Today, protests continue to exert an influence on local and regional politics.[12]

Moreover, whereas the opposition in Kyiv has Maidan as an urban space designated for protest, the opposition in Minsk has very limited access to the city's urban spaces; and in Moscow, although the authorities do allow protests, they carefully select which spaces to sanction for such actions, most probably to restrict the impact of the protests.

Outside factors

This study forms part of a research group studying Russian space (broadly understood to include Belarus and Ukraine).[13] I have also lived in each country for an extended period of time

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[9] In Russia in 2000, the presidency changed from the unpopular, ageing and sickly Boris Yeltsin to the comparatively young, reasonably sober and physically very fit Vladimir Putin, who for several reasons enjoyed high levels of popularity well into the mid-to-late 2000s (Hansen, 2019, pp. 9–10). In Belarus, too, the economy had been growing since the early 2000s, and mass protests were mostly ideological (driven by Belarusian nationalists) or constitutional (against the policies of President Aliaksandr Lukashėnka). Yet none of these protests resulted in a colour revolution (Hansen, 2017, pp. 37–38).

[10] The 2006 protests in Minsk and the 2011–2012 protest movement in Moscow were suppressed so harshly that the opposition of both countries was effectively disabled for several years to come (Hansen, 2017, p. 43; Hansen, 2019, pp. 1–2). In both cases, the protesters were met with violence, hundreds of demonstrators were arrested, and the leaders of the opposition received long prison sentences.

[11] The revolution has greatly affected both regional and global power politics. Russia has accused the EU and US of orchestrating what they perceive to be a coup d'état, and the Ukrainian revolution became Russia's pretext for occupying the Crimean Peninsula and supporting the separatist movements in the Donbas region in Eastern Ukraine. Thus, the revolution indirectly became one of the triggering events for the deteriorating relations between Russia and the West today.

[12] Since 2014, protests in Ukraine have for the most part been aimed at the policies of President Petro Poroshenko (2013–2019) and President Volodymyr Zelenskyi (since 2019). In Belarus, little has changed, and protests are usually suppressed in much the same manner as before. In Russia, following the annexation of Crimea, a surge in patriotic sentiment led to members of the opposition being labelled traitors, and discontent has remained at low levels. Since 2016, there has been an upswing in public protests in the country. A variety of economic and social problems have motivated hundreds of thousands of Russians to participate in numerous collective actions in cities across the country (Hansen, 2019, p. 10).

[13] The research group RSCPR (Russian Space: Concepts, Practices, Representations) "is engaged in a multidisciplinary study of Russian attitudes to their own and other people's/nations' spaces […] which can provide insights into the interdependence of Russian space and Russian identity, both at an individual and a state policy level" ("Russian Space," n.d.). Ukraine and Belarus are often (and especially in Russia) perceived as integral parts of a "Russian" world.

(in Belarus, 2006–2010; in Ukraine, the first half of 2011 and 2013–2017; in Russia, 2011–2013). I thus have first-hand knowledge of, and a network of friends and acquaintances in, each of the three cities.

2.3 Relevance

Since prehistoric times, people have related by necessity to the intricacies of physical and social space, to the associations and emotions such spaces evoke, as well as to the possibilities and obstacles they provide. Even though our environment has changed, our basic human instincts are still active and, as in the prehistoric era, people congregate to discuss, deliberate, interact, and—in times of trouble—struggle together to find a solution to the problem.

The small selection of collective actions mentioned in this chapter demonstrates that urban mass protest can be a means of changing society, used by people across the world. With the spread of social media, waves of protest can expand with increased speed, and the Internet has facilitated the extension of protest movements, such as the colour revolutions, the Arab Spring, the Occupy movement, and the Yellow Vests. However, although the Internet is available in and used by the majority of the world's population, people still use physical space in order to protest. This is because the presence of a group of people assembled at a focal point of the city serves a number of purposes that are rarely served by collective online action. A physical protest shows that there is discontent in the city, and that people are willing to sacrifice time and effort to come out in support of their cause.

I do not wish to undermine the power of the Internet as a tool for mobilising people to protest. Social media outlets clearly have several qualities suitable for facilitating and/or organising mass protest (see for example Herasimenka, 2016). Yet, for a collective action to be effective, it more often than not needs some form of physical manifestation. Urban protests occur where people are concentrated, and so are often hard to ignore. On one hand, citizens are forced to react to the protests as they obstruct movement and demand attention, and some might be inspired to join in. On the other, the authorities are also forced to react, and their reaction (whether by way of official statements, violence, or both) might further spread the news of discontent. Mass protest also represents a form of threat to the authorities. It might mean that people expect the authorities to change their ways, or else they will not vote for those in power again; and it might discourage others from doing so, too. It can also be a threat of violence, as a large group of discontented people has the potential of turning into a mob and removing the authorities by force.

Consequently, urban public space has both a historic and a contemporary relevance, and the ways in which people perceive and use space, especially at times of contention, still have an impact on local, regional, and global politics and society today.

How are mass protests affected by geographical urban space in modern cities? To answer this question, it is first of all necessary to consult the research literature to see whether such a spatial perspective exists. If not, how should such a model be structured?

3 Mapping the field

The previous chapter outlined some key aspects of space and contention. Historical and contemporary examples were cited to illustrate the important psychological and practical effects of urban space on mass actions.

The aim of the current chapter is to provide a more detailed overview of academic publications concerned with space and/or protests. Starting from this proposition, two key questions may be asked: 1) What academic literature recognises and/or relates to the links between space and protests?; and 2) What approaches and concepts can be integrated into a theoretical model which examines the causal relationship between space and protest? To facilitate reading, the body of research literature is split into three main sections: literature on protests (3.1), literature on various types of space (3.2), and then a section that sums up the findings of this chapter and outlines a gap in the research literature (3.3).

3.1 Protests

Protest is a broad subject that has been approached by scholars from a range of academic disciplines. If theories on social movements are included, the amount of literature on protests becomes even greater. A good starting point to make sense of these broad categories is sociology, which is naturally concerned with the act of protest.

In *Theories of Political Protest and Social Movements* by the German sociologist Karl-Dieter Opp (2009), six major theoretical perspectives on protests and social movements are defined and criticised. These are collective action theory (CAT), resource mobilisation perspective (RMP), political opportunity structure theory (POS), identity theory, framing perspective, and dynamics of contention approach (DOC). Opp describes these theories particularly with a view to the degree in which they present macro (i.e. structural) and micro (i.e. psychological) perspectives on social movements and protests, and how these are interlinked. His main point of critique is that the existing theoretical frameworks do not properly combine macro and micro factors in their attempts to explain protests (2009, p. 349). Opp's proposed solution is a synthesis of the major theoretical approaches, which he calls the structure-cognitive model (SCM).[14]

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[14] Opp's structure-cognitive model has itself been criticised for being too theoretical, to the point that it is hard to put into use in practice (DeCesare, 2013, p. 521).

Opp analyses these models in detail, but not one of them is shown by his analysis to give specific consideration to the spatial element of protest. I would argue that all seven models, for various reasons, would benefit from applying a spatial perspective of this type.[15] The model that comes closest in nature to a such a perspective is POS theory.

The aim of POS theory, as it was first developed by the US political scientist Peter Eisinger (1973), is to understand the behaviour of protests and to calculate the chance of success of protests and social movements. To do this, the theoretical model relies on the thorough examination of the political environment (i.e. the context within which politics take place). If significant changes occur to the POS (i.e. to the factors and conditions of the political environment), reasons and opportunities for political action are created. POS theory thus strives to identify various factors in the political environment and to prove each factor's causal effect on the chances of a given action occurring and/or succeeding. What constitutes "success" needs to be defined empirically by the researcher (Opp, 2009, p. 162).

One part of Opp's (2009) extensive critique of this theory is that it is virtually impossible to identify all factors in the political environment (or find the 'correct' ones), and thus hard to calculate the "chances of success". Opp also argues that the theory is poorly defined and not clearly distinct from RMP and RCT, and he questions why POS theory emphasises changes in the political environment rather than just opportunities (pp. 167–171; 177–178). However, in his view, the utility of the model is that it demonstrates how the political environment may affect protest behaviour. POS could also be used to identify factors in the political environment that inhibit and/or facilitate protests, even if the causal effect of each factor is difficult to assess. (pp. 200–201.)

The political environment is relevant to a theoretical model on space and protest for two reasons: 1) As I argue throughout this thesis, geographical space can significantly contribute to the emergence, realisation, and impact of protests, and it should thus be considered as one of the factors in the political environment. 2) In order to understand the causal relationship between space and protests, it is necessary to identify not only the effects of space, but also the other factors and conditions that have an effect on protests (the importance of mapping such rival theories is explained more thoroughly in chapter 5, 5.6). The following three subsections

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[15] CAT, for example, emphasises the expected number of participants in a collective action as important for people's willingness to protest (Opp, 2009, p. 62). Thus it is natural that a square where protests have been successful in the past will produce more incentives to protest than another, less successful square. Space is also relevant to *identity theory*, which highlights negotiations and in-group interactions (Opp, 2009, pp. 207–208)— aspects which can be affected by the protesters' physical location.

survey research literature that contributes to our understanding of protest, with a particular view to spatial and non-spatial factors in the political environment that make contentious politics successful or unsuccessful.

3.1.1 Repertoires

The term *repertoire of contention* (ROC) was initially coined by the US sociologist Charles Tilly. The concept is used as an analytical tool by sociologists and political scientists to identify tendencies in contentious politics and to explain why people choose to act the way they do. Strategies utilised during contentious collective actions are often repeated, and social groups develop traditions for methods of protest over time, affected by social, political, and cultural factors. Such repertoires include oft-repeated forms of contentious action (e.g. sit-ins, riots, and protests), and the participants' preferred tools of choice, which develop and change over time (Tarrow, 1993). [16] The activists' choice of urban space often becomes a part of such repertoires, and an analysis of a given space should therefore also consider whether or not it is included in any ROCs (see history of protest as a spatial element, 6.1.1).

The Italian scholars Donatella della Porta and Mario Diani have written extensively on the ROCs of social movements. In one of their books, *Social Movements: An Introduction* (della Porta & Diani, 2006), the two authors use various theoretical approaches, such as ROC, RMP, and POS, to approach social movements[17] on three levels of analysis—micro levels (e.g. feelings, identity, beliefs, values, etc.), meso levels (the organisation, and the social networks the movements are comprised of), and macro levels (i.e. structural factors, such as economy, political system, etc.)—and the relationship between these three levels (see figure 5 for a graphical representation). Particularly relevant to this thesis is the authors' overview of the literature on the policing of protests (see policeability/defensibility as a spatial quality, 6.2.1), to which della Porta has made significant contributions (della Porta & Reiter, 1998; della Porta, 2013; della Porta, Peterson & Reiter, 2006).

Della Porta & Diani (2006, p. 197) elaborate on the act of policing protests and identify three prevailing policing strategies: coercive strategies (i.e. the use of physical force); persuasive strategies (attempts to control events through contact with activists and organisers); and

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[16] For example the pragmatic use of music in social movements (see Hansen et al., 2019, pp. 36–38, on music in Ukrainian repertoires of contention).

[17] Diani defines social movements as "a distinct social process, consisting of the mechanisms through which actors engaged in collective action: are involved in conflictual relations with clearly identified opponents; are linked by dense informal networks; [and] share a distinct collective identity." (della Porta & Diani, 2006, p. 20–22). This definition may include protests.

informative strategies (which consist of "widespread information-gathering as a preventive feature in protest control"). While choice of strategy on the part of the police has a great impact on the outcome of protests, it is not clear which of the two first strategies is most efficient in controlling events. The authors do note a tendency of coercive (repressive) strategies increasing the risk of escalation, and thus also the proportion of radical protesters.[18]

In addition to the police, della Porta & Diani (2006) identify other actors in opposition to or allied with the social movements, and whose structural makeup, strength, weaknesses, and other characteristics also function as POSs. These might be institutional, such as government agencies, political parties, trade unions, foundations, religious institutions, etc. Other important actors are provocateurs, used to incite violence and legitimate coercive strategies, and social countermovements that arise "as a reaction to the successes obtained by social movements", develop in parallel to the social movements, and often use similar strategies to those of the movements they oppose (2006, p. 2011). [19]

Containment and kettling

Some of the literature on the policing of protest is particularly concerned with the strategic aspects that space provides, both for protesters and police (e.g. Whelan & Molnar, 2018, pp. 123–153; Noakes & Gillham, 2006; McCarthy & McPhail, 2006). Gillham, Edwards & Noakes (2013), for example, have analysed the mass contentious actions during the 2011 Occupy Wall Street protests (OWS) in New York City, and argue that OWS created a transition to a new form of police ROC, marked by a decrease in persuasive and increase in coercive strategies. During the contestations over public space in New York (notably over Zuccotti Park in Lower Manhattan), the authors argue, the police started using 'strategic incapacitation'. This is a multi-method approach to the policing of protest, which includes informative strategies to survey and infiltrate the movement beforehand and the creation of zones in which different groups are contained and kept apart from each other (e.g. different protest and no-protest zones; zones for the media; and a separate zone for the financial elite).

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[18] Other factors, such as the nature of the police's use of force (soft or brutal); whether the police's actions are perceived by activists as legal or illegal; the police's attitude to the protesters (often either "good" or "bad"); and their level of tolerance towards activists' conduct, are also discussed.

[19] An example of this is the counterrevolutionary, pro-governmental protests, known as Antimaidan, which appeared in Ukraine as a reaction to the Euromaidan protests against president Viktor Ianukovych (2013–2014). The two movements were opposed to one another, and both movements adopted elements of the other's ROCs. See for example Antimaidan's use of music (Hansen et al., 2019, pp. 47–50, 52–53) and urban space (Hansen, 2015, pp. 62–64).

A more confrontational form of containing people that should be mentioned specifically is *kettling*. The British sociologist Hilary Pilkington defines kettling as

> […] a police strategy of surrounding demonstrators at a protest in order to contain them in a particular place. The police argue it is necessary as a preventative measure to avoid violence or disorder during demonstrations, […] protest groups have argued that it is deployed to deliberately frustrate demonstrators or as a means of ascertaining personal details and photographs of protestors. (Pilkington, 2012)

Kettling should thus be defined as a coercive strategy that could be used to suppress demonstrations with physical force, escalate the conflict (by bringing the "kettle" to a boil), and/or arrest a maximum number of demonstrators.

The police's ability to carry out such containment and/or 'kettling' is to a large extent affected by the urban space. See, for example, the difficulties Ukrainian police had in containing Maidan in 2014 (Hansen, 2015, p. 36), or how easy it was for the Russian police to kettle the March of Millions gathered on Swamp Square in 2012 (Hansen, 2019, p. 2).

3.1.2 Nonviolent contention

Thus far, the topic of this chapter has been two general approaches to understanding a broad spectrum of activities defined as social movements and protests, as well as their counteractivities. The next two subsections examine research literature aiming to identify more specific conditions and factors that determine whether or not protests occur and what makes them successful. The topic of this subsection is literature on nonviolent contentious actions, whilst the topic of the next is works about what are usually called colour revolutions (3.1.3), including the Western, Russian, Belarusian, and Ukrainian perspectives on the phenomenon. Despite their nonviolent methods, the colour revolutions are kept as a separate category from nonviolent contention. This is because colour revolutions are perceived by some scholars and governments as covert warfare, and as a deliberate pretext to violence (see 3.1.3, below).

In research literature on nonviolent resistance and social movements, one of the earliest attempts to provide a systematic overview and analysis of nonviolent was the US political scientist Gene Sharp's frequently cited 1973 book *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*. The three-volume book provides the reader with a theory of political power (vol. 1); descriptions of 198 methods of nonviolent protest and persuasion (such as 'fraternising' and 'student strike') (vol. 2); and a practical guide for developing, employing, and defending nonviolent campaigns (vol. 3). (Sharp, 1973). Sharp's three volumes have formed the basis of many theories of contentious

action. For instance, Ackerman & Kruegler (1994) condensed Sharp's 198 methods into 12 principles of strategic nonviolent action. More recently, the key player behind the *Resistance!* (Scb.: 'Otpor!') student movement in Serbia (1998–2000), Srdja Popovic, together with Andrej Milivojevic and Slobodan Djinovic—two other prominent members of the opposition to Slobodan Milošević—published the book *Nonviolent Struggle: 50 Crucial Points* (2006), based on Sharp's 1973 work.

Popovic, Milivojevic & Djinovic (2006) is a practical step-by-step guide for protesters, divided into three parts: "Before You Start", "Starting Out", and "Running the Nonviolent Campaign." Presented as an easy-to-read and richly illustrated textbook, it provides potential protest organisers with practical exercises, suggestions, and case study examples to analyse (mainly from the Serbian Bulldozer Revolution of 2000). In 2015, Popovic wrote *Blueprint for Revolution*, another book on the same topic (Popovic & Miller, 2015). Both books emphasise strength in numbers and diversity among protesters as decisive for the outcome of protests.

One of the most systematic analyses of nonviolent actions to date is provided by the US political scientists Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan (2011). The authors build on statistical analysis of 323 major violent and nonviolent resistance campaigns between 1900 and 2006 and four qualitative case studies, in addition to the works of other scholars, such as Sharp (1973) and Ackerman & Kruegler (1994), who are discussed above. The authors argue that nonviolent campaigns are nearly twice as likely to be successful than violent campaigns, and they emphasise the ability of campaign organisers to mobilise large and diverse segments of the population as a key condition for success (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011). In a TEDx talk, Chenoweth states that the critical mass of any resistance campaign, violent or nonviolent, is as little as 3.5 % of the total population (whichever the country), stressing that nonviolent actions are much more likely to mobilise a sufficient proportion of the population (Chenoweth, 2013).

A key element in virtually all existing studies on nonviolent collective actions is emphasis on the number of participants. What is surprising is that, although the majority of the research also underline the importance of planning and of developing strategies, tactics, and methods, there are almost no references to physical space, which is often of major importance to these practical aspects of collective action.

3.1.3 Colour revolutions

We now turn to publications concerned with the colour revolutions. As described in the previous chapter, a wave of colour revolutions ousted autocratic leaders and changed the

political landscape of Eastern Europe and Central Asia in the 2000s (2.1.3).[20] The often unforeseen protest movements and their influence on protests in other parts of the world gave rise to a host of explanations of why colour revolutions intermittently occur, and under which conditions they achieve regime change. This literature is particularly relevant to this thesis, since a majority of the colour revolutions were carried out as static occupations of central urban spaces, and it should therefore be possible to assess whether space is considered a factor by leading scholars within the field. Moreover, because the factors identified in the literature are based on collective actions in the post-Soviet region, they should be particularly suitable as a tool for describing the political environment of the case studies in this thesis.

Among the more influential publications on the subject is the US political scientist Michael McFaul's article "Transitions from Postcommunism" (2005). Basing his argument on similarities between colour revolutions in Serbia (2000), Georgia (2003), and Ukraine (2004), McFaul presents seven basic factors he deems necessary for a colour revolution to occur:

> 1) a semi-autocratic rather than fully autocratic regime; 2) an unpopular incumbent; 3) a united and organized opposition; 4) an ability quickly to drive home the point that voting results were falsified, 5) enough independent media to inform citizens about the falsified vote, 6) a political opposition capable of mobilizing tens of thousands or more demonstrators to protest electoral fraud, and 7) divisions among the regime's coercive forces. (McFaul, 2005, p. 7)

McFaul thus emphasises internal macro and meso factors more than micro factors such as the motivation and psychology of the protesters. Space is also left out of the equation, although one could imagine that the protesters' choice of space affects the sixth factor. Furthermore, McFaul discusses and eventually downplays other macro factors, such as economic trauma, ethnic tension, and Western support for democratisation and/or the protesters.

Several political scientists have followed McFaul's approach in order to explain the absence or presence of colour revolutions (e.g. Marples, 2006, on Belarus), which shows that there is room for such an approach. Others have strived to nuance or change McFaul's factors, among them the British political scientist Taras Kuzio (2008), who has increased the overall number of factors to nine and included micro and macro factors:

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[20] In political sciences, *waves of democracy* is a term coined by Samuel Huntington in 1991. The term covers those periods in history during which a large number of countries become more democratic. Huntington writes of three such waves: the nineteenth century, post-World War II, and from the mid-1970s (Huntington, 1991). Colour revolutions are often perceived as a fourth wave of democratisation (e.g. by McFaul, 2002).

[1] [A] competitive- (i.e. semi-) authoritarian state facilitating space for the democratic opposition; [2] "return to Europe" civic nationalism that assists in mobilizing civil society; [3] a preceding political crisis that weakened the regime's legitimacy; [4] a pro-democratic capital city; [5] unpopular ruling elites; [6] a charismatic candidate; [7] a united opposition; [8] mobilized youths; and [9] regionalism and foreign intervention (Russia or the EU). (Kuzio, 2008, p. 98)

Contrary to McFaul (2005) and Kuzio (2008), the US political scientist Scott Radnitz identifies the level of economic disparity as the vital condition. Drawing on successful (Georgia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan) and unsuccessful colour revolutions (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan), he argues that colour revolutions only occur in countries where cooperation exists between activists and capitalists (i.e. financial supporters of the protests) (Radnitz, 2010).

The problem of McFaul (2005), Kuzio (2008), Radnitz (2010), and others who create lists of such "minimum requirements" for colour revolutions to occur is that collective actions of a large magnitude—which colour revolutions surely are—are immensely complex events. They comprise a large number of aspects, and any attempt to generalise such events to a set number of factors will inevitably exclude important aspects. See for example Tucker (2007), where the author criticises the existing literature on colour revolutions (among them McFaul) for being overly elite-based and downplaying the role of the masses who participated in the colour revolutions. Tucker uses CAT to explain how major electoral fraud provides people with a focal point and a window of opportunity for mass collective action, arguing that, from the moment the falsified results are announced to the moment they are implemented, people have an extra incentive to protest.[21]

Tucker's (2007) emphasis on the masses of people is corroborated by the book *The Colour Revolutions in the Former Soviet Republics: Successes and Failures*, edited by the Irish political scientists Donnacha Ó Beacháin and Abel Polese (2010). In this book, 12 post-Soviet countries (Georgia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Russia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan) are compared in order to identify

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[21] The article reviews the existing literature on colour revolutions and identifies two main approaches to their origin. The first approach emphasises "the lure of the West", either as a political goal of the protesters or (as it is often portrayed in Russia) as Western attempts to weaken Russian influence in the region by provoking upheavals in its Near Abroad (Rus.: *blizhnee zarubezh'e*, a term used in Russia for post-Soviet countries). The second approach examines the nature of the opposition movements (i.e. their ability to organise, mobilise people, access resources, etc.) (Tucker, 2007, p. 539). The observation that elections are used as focal points for democratic opposition in authoritarian regimes is further developed and nuanced in a statistical analysis of regime transitions in the post-communist region by Bunce & Wolchik (2010).

reasons for the occurrence of colour revolutions. In each of the 12 case studies, five factors are examined: 1) regime type; 2) the degree of unity in the opposition; 3) external influences; 4) the strength of civil society; and 5) the people (i.e. how they organise and act, and how they relate to the other actors in society). The latter two factors are highlighted as particularly important (2010, p. 9).

Beacháin & Polese (2010) contradict the view of Canadian political scientist Lucan Way (2008), who mainly highlights macro factors such as the protesters' geopolitical connections with the West and the structural makeup of the state, rather than internal micro factors such as the motivation and innovations of the protest movements. Way argues that scholars tend to put too much weight on the number of protesters in collective actions, illustrating this point by referring to the relatively small numbers of protesters in the Georgian (2003) and Kyrgyz (2005) revolutions. He asserts that the protesters' external connections often are of greater importance. Just as McFaul and Kuzio, Way uses macro-level explanations for the fall of autocratic regimes:

> Authoritarian stability is most affected by: 1) the strength of a country's ties to the West; and 2) the strength of the incumbent regime's autocratic party or state. (Way, 2008, p. 60)

Thus far, looking at the body of academic literature on colour revolutions in the West, no concrete references to space are evident. Regarding the factors deemed necessary for a colour revolution to occur, we can conclude that there are several and contradicting views on the phenomenon. Three major categories of factors can be identified: 1) micro factors, such as the protesters' motivation and strategic innovation; 2) meso factors, such as the organisational structure of the ruling elite and the opposition; and 3) macro factors, such as the economy and political system.

Additionally, we can add a fourth category, which consists of publications that see colour revolutions as a result of external (i.e. foreign) influences. Beacháin & Polese (2010) have identified two types of this kind of international support: 1) Western, in the form of guidance and training for NGOs and observers; and 2) the mutual "economic, political, military and diplomatic support to besieged autocrats […]" shown by other autocratic leaders in the region. The Kremlin in particular is highlighted as a key supporter of autocratic leaders. Even if external support receives considerable attention in academic literature and in media discourse, the editors go on to underline that domestic factors, such as a well-developed civil society and motivated people, are important factors for colour revolutions to occur (Beacháin & Polese, 2010).

Popular revolutions or (geo-)political technologies? [22]

The leading politicians of Russia and Belarus, Vladimir Putin and Aliaksandr Lukashėnka, both perceive colour revolutions as affected by the latter category (external influence). In the aftermath of the Euromaidan revolution in Ukraine (2013–2014), which led to the ousting of Russia-leaning president Viktor Ianukovych, Putin called colour revolutions a form of extremism and "a geopolitical instrument for changing spheres of influence ("Putin poobeshchal," 2014). Lukashėnka has also blamed Western powers for attempting to topple the Belarusian state (Nersesov, 2017), although in an earlier interview with Russian media outlets in 2016 he did state that, if the standard of living is high in Belarus and Russia, no destructive colour revolutions will occur ("Lukashėnka: Pry narmal'nykh," 2016). Thus, Lukashėnka also recognises the third (macro-) category.

Russian academic publications on the subject often voice views similar to those of the political leadership. The Russian political scientist Andrei Manoĭlo, for instance, sees only external factors. He defines colour revolutions as

> [...] [political] technologies for the implementation of coups d'état and external control of the political situation in a country in conditions of artificially created political instability, during which the pressure on the government is exerted in the form of political intimidation, [by] using a youth protest movement as an instrument of such an intimidation. (Manoĭlo, 2015)

Manoĭlo (2015) presents colour revolutions as a tool created by Anglo-Saxons in the US (among them Gene Sharp, 1973), who have used it as a hybrid weapon in unfriendly countries: in Eastern Europe during the 2000s; in the Middle East from 2011; and in Ukraine in 2014 (the latter is presented as a "dress rehearsal" for destroying Russia with the same 'soft power' weaponry). Manoĭlo also identifies five distinct phases that colour revolutions go through: 1) A network of organised protest movements in the target country is created; 2) Upon a signal, often after an orchestrated event, the network of people simultaneously goes out on the streets in major cities in the country; 3) Activists in the network of cells turn into catalysts of 'singing protests'[23] in order to engage large sections of the population; 4) The protesters gather in large

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[22] The British political scientist Andrew Wilson (2011) provides the following definition of political technology: "[...] a term largely unfamiliar in the West—[it] is the euphemism commonly used in the former Soviet states for what is by now a highly developed industry of political manipulation".

[23] Manoĭlo is probably referring to the Singing Revolution in the Baltics, particularly in Estonia (1987–1991), against Soviet hegemony; or to the festive qualities of the Orange Revolution and Euromaidan in Ukraine (2004–2005 and 2013–2014); on the latter see Hansen et al. (2019, pp. 33–83).

public spaces in order to create a crowd mentality, through which new values and imperatives are given. Here, the people are reprogrammed, in much of the same way as "Protestant totalitarian sects" brainwash their followers; 5) On behalf of the crowd, ultimatums are sent to those in power under the threat of mass riots and, occasionally, physical extermination. The power holders are either swept away or a rebellion or civil war begins, followed by a military intervention. (Manoĭlo, 2015)

Certainly, some approaches to colour revolutions in Russia are less radical than Manoĭlo's (see for example Barsamov, 2006), and some see geopolitical factors as less important (notably the political scientist Valeriĭ Soloveĭ, 2016[24]), yet variations of Manoĭlo's perspective appear to be numerically the most prominent, and can be found in several publications by other Russian political scientists and sociologists (e.g. Iel'chaninov, 2007; Naumov, 2016). In Russian media outlets, the understanding of colour revolutions as a geopolitical tool and a threat to the sovereignty of the Russian Federation is often all too obvious (see for example "Nurgaliev zaiavil," 2019; "'Im nuzhen vash mozg'," 2019; "Na Ukraine vorovali," 2019).

This Cold War frame of mind stems from Russia being perceived (and perceiving itself) as the natural successor to the Soviet Union—the main adversary of the West during the Cold War. The rivalry between these two power blocks was not only fought out in proxy wars; the two also supported protest movements and insurgents in order to damage each other's spheres of influence across the world, and especially in the former European colonies of Asia, South America, and Africa (Kanet, 2006, p. 337; Powelson, 2003). The dissent in the Eastern Bloc that eventually led to the collapse of the Soviet Union could be seen as part of this warfare. Hence, given that a new wave of colour revolutions occurred at the same time and place as the EU and NATO were expanding—into areas seen by Russia as *their* sphere of influence—Russia's hostility to mass protests becomes more understandable.

One outcome of the wave of colour revolutions is that autocratic countries have started to perceive nonviolent protest as a serious threat. Since the stakes are so high, the autocrats are readier to suppress political dissent with harassment, increased surveillance, and violence (Beacháin & Polese, 2010, p. 238). Moreover, in Russia and Belarus, pro-governmental youth organisations have formed to counterweight foreign influence on the youth (Matchanka, 2014;

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[24] Soloveĭ is one of the most prominent academics in the Russian opposition. Although not explicitly dealing with colour revolutions, in his book *Revolution* (*Революция*) (2016) he describes seven conditions for a revolution to occur, focusing mainly on micro factors such as the protesters' moral strength, their readiness to face obstacles, and their inner psychology (Soloveĭ, 2016, pp. 298–306).

Hemment, 2012; Atwal & Bacon, 2012). This effort to combat mass demonstrations has been reinforced since the recent Ukrainian revolution, and colour revolutions are accordingly defined by the military as a threat to national sovereignty, and increasingly defined as 'acts of war'.[25]

The problem with a single focus on foreign influence is that it disregards the other micro-to-macro factors and presumes that external influences alone are enough to create a popular uprising or nonviolent revolution. Ukrainian views on colour revolutions are, perhaps unsurprisingly, often more nuanced than the views held by their Russian counterparts. For example, in the Ukrainian political scientist Oleksandr Romaniuk's (2005) assessment of the phenomenon in Yugoslavia (2000), Georgia (2003), Ukraine (2004), and Kyrgyzstan (2005), internal factors—such as the decay of the political elite, a worsening of democratic standards, the poor standard of living, and a growing desire for political change among the general population—are seen as the foundation for discontent, which, triggered by election fraud, turned into colour revolutions. Romaniuk adds, however, that all the opposition forces have received moral and sometimes material support from Western democracies (2005, p. 24).

3.1.4 Non-spatial factors

At the start of this chapter, two questions were outlined: 1) Which academic literature recognises and/or relates to the links between space and protests? 2) Which approaches and concepts can be integrated into a theoretical model examining the causal relationship between space and protest?

Regarding the former question, there is a tendency in several academic disciplines around protest to overlook spatial factors. For example, in the literature on nonviolent contention, tactical innovation is often emphasised as important; but few if any references are made to the possibilities space provides for such innovation. A spatial perspective is also missing from the literature on colour revolutions, despite the fact that most of these mass actions have utilised a similar form of static spatial occupation.

One exception to this tendency, of course, is Manoïlo (2015), who asserts that urban spaces are used to brainwash the people gathered in them. Another (perhaps more realistic) exception is the research on the repertoires of policing, which includes and accounts for space. Even so, compared to the countless examples in history of urban spaces that have played a role in contentious actions, there clearly must be a gap in the literature on protest. In the following

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[25] See for example the harsh language used by Belarusian and Russian officials during the Third Moscow Conference on International Security in May 2014 (Cordesman, 2014; "O voennykh aspektak, 2014").

section, the search for literature to fill this gap will continue as the focus moves from academic literature on protest to academic literature on space.

Regarding the latter question, several concepts and theories can be integrated into a theoretical model on space and protest. POS theory is particularly relevant, as it emphasises the importance of the political environment, which can be used to account for and examine variables with an effect on protests. However, as noted above, it is difficult to map all factors. This problem becomes particularly apparent when a comparison is made to the wide range of arguments identified in the literature on colour revolutions.

In order to gain a better understanding of factors that may or may not be of significance in the political environment, these are visualised in the two figures provided below. The first (fig. 4) is a proposed list of micro, meso, and macro factors in the political environment. The second is a diagram in which the three levels are placed next to each other, alongside external influences (such as support for leaders or NGOs) and events (e.g. election fraud), which are added as possible outside effects (fig. 5).

Micro	Meso	Macro
Goals	Culture	Political system
Identity, feelings, beliefs, values	Organisations, networks	Economy
Innovation, originality	Communities	Formal organisations
Strategies, tactics, methods	Groups	Etc.
Etc.	Police structures	
	Political parties	
	Etc.	

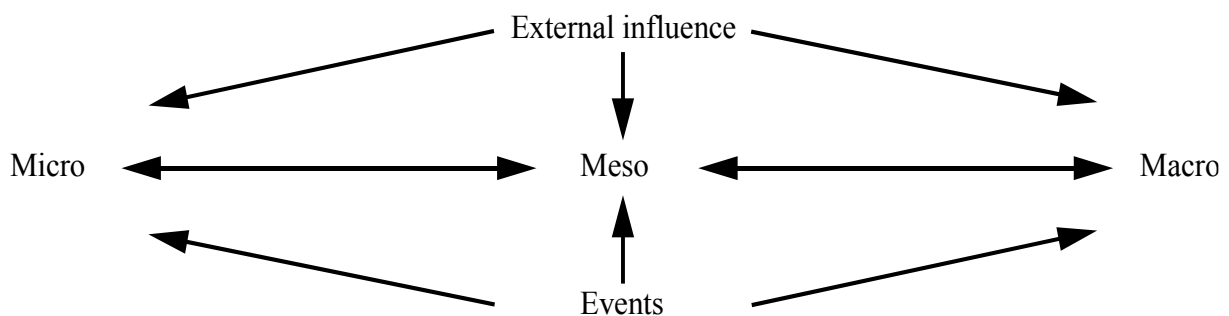Figure 4: Micro, meso, and macro factors

Figure 5: The political environment

3.2 Space

Having identified some of the main perspectives in the literature on protest, it is necessary to give an overview of the research literature on space and its function in society. This literature,

of course, consists of many publications; yet only a small proportion of them is directly related to the two questions stated at the beginning of this chapter. Additionally, I have concentrated on a selection of the literature that can be used to formulate an understanding of what constitutes the nature of space.

This section starts with metaphysical and philosophical space (3.2.1). Here, discussions and understandings of space found in Arendtian and Habermasian texts are defined in reverse chronological order of development (from the least physical [Habermas] to the most physical [Arendt]), followed by various Marxian perspectives, including the terms "public space" and "the right to the city". The next subsection (3.2.2) concerns more physical and concrete approaches found in architecture, urban planning, and human geography. This account is followed by an overview of the prospect-refuge theory, as found in landscape architecture. The final subsection (3.2.3) specifically deals with studies of protest locations. It should be noted that these three categories are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive, but serve as guidelines within a larger body of literature.

3.2.1 Public space

In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962/1989), the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas introduces the term "public sphere". According to Habermas, a weakening of totalitarian institutions, such as feudalism and the state church, in Western Europe in the eighteenth century enabled more representative forms of government to appear. At this time, a growing middle class had the time and energy to participate in discussions about how the public should be managed, and the public sphere became the transition point between public and private life. Habermas describes the public sphere as an ideal and abstract neutral place for which societies must strive. In this ideal place, people conduct their deliberations, and all opinions are equally valuable; there is also an absence of hierarchy. Habermas refers to coffee houses and salons as early examples of this sphere, and sees mass media as an important tool in the creation of public discourses. The threat, argues Habermas, comes from the powerful organisations that aim to control the discourse which occurs in the public sphere.

The German-American philosopher Hannah Arendt also stresses the importance of the public sphere in democratic societies, but in her works—and especially in *The Human Condition* (1958/1998)—the physicality of such spaces is strongly emphasised. The political scientists Maurizio Passerin d'Entrèves and Ursula Vogel (2005) elaborate on this physicality:

> [One] feature stressed by Arendt has to do with the spatial quality of public life, with the fact that political activities are located in a public space where citizens are able to meet one another, exchange their opinions and debate their differences, and search for some collective solution to their problems. Politics, for Arendt, is a matter of people sharing a common world and a common space of appearance so that public concerns can emerge and be articulated from different perspectives. In her view, it is not enough to have a collection of private individuals voting separately and anonymously according to their private opinions. Rather, these individuals must be able to see and talk to one another in public, so that their differences as well as their commonalities can emerge and become the subject of democratic debate. (d'Entrèves & Vogel, 2005, p. 9)

In other words, opinions are formed, and meaningful exchanges of opinions and debates occur, in physical space; thus, the presence of a location where people can meet, talk, act, and deliberate is vital for the existence and proper functioning of public life and politics. (For more on Arendt's focus on geography, see Howell, 1993, pp. 313–316.)

In the book *Democracy and Public Space* (2012), the Dutch political scientist John R. Parkinson takes this argument further. Like Habermas and Arendt, he perceives a well-functioning public space as a premise for working democracy. He identifies four ways in which physical space can be considered public: It 1) "is openly accessible"; and/or 2) "uses common resources"; and/or 3) "has common effects; and/or 4) "is used for the performance of public roles." (2012, p. 61). Parkinson's definition of public space is thus broad enough to include political institutions, and he argues that the layout and structure of such public spaces affect the ways we interact (Parkinson looks specifically at the layout of parliaments and other political institutions, but also town squares). This type of perspective is concurrent with the prevailing view within the field of political geography (see for example Jones, Jones & Woods, 2004; Van Deusen, 2004; and Agnew & Muscarà, 2012), but I have found no political geographers who have developed a way to examine the causal relationship between urban space and contentious politics.

"Public space" and "the right to the city"

Political philosophy is used to explain not only why space is *necessary* for discussions and debate to occur, but also why urban space is *contested*. Such discussions about the nature of spatial contestation often take a Marxian perspective. In Marxian economic philosophy, social class struggle is sometimes seen spatially, which can generate questions such as "Who owns the city?" and "Who has the right to use it?"

The French philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre raises these questions in two of his influential books on the subject, *Writings on Cities* (Lefebvre, 1996) and *The Urban Revolution* (Lefebvre, 1970/2003). In the former, Lefebvre discusses the capitalist accumulation of money in urban centres and how this has led to the exclusion of certain groups (ethnic or national minorities, people of certain ages, the disabled, etc.). Lefebvre establishes that all urban inhabitants have the right to use the city they live in and to participate in its creation, and he urges people to reclaim their rights over the city. In the latter book, Lefebvre describes the development and nature of the city, from the Neolithic revolution to his own day. He examines how capitalism has shaped urban space, globally, nationally, and locally. According to Lefebvre, world society is gradually (i.e., at the time of publication in 1970) going through complete urbanisation. By this he means that no part of the world exists in total independence of the urban centres (Lefebvre, 1970/2003; see also Lefebvre, 1974/1991).

The term "right to the city" has been further developed by at least two other Marxian scholars: the British economic geographer David Harvey and the US geographer Don Mitchell. Harvey explores the relations between capital, politics, and the people (see for example Harvey, 1989; 2008; 2012), and develops Lefebvre's arguments about the increasing social and economic injustice in urban centres.

Mitchell also considers inequality in urban space. He is concerned with how contestations occur in space and about space (see for example Mitchell, 1998); how wealth is produced and distributed in a city (Staeheli & Mitchell, 2008); and the exclusiveness of urban public space, e.g. gated communities and how some groups, particularly the homeless, are left with fewer rights to the public space than others (Mitchell, 2011; 2016). Mitchell's recurrent argument is that space is contested by different layers of the population, who constantly negotiate and argue about how it should be used and by whom. This contestation contributes significantly to the Lefebvrian concept of production of space (i.e. how space is given meaning by the acts occurring in it). (See 3.2.3, for more on the production of space).

Public space is thus not only contested in itself, but is a contested term with a wide range of viewpoints and definitions. Interpretations of public space range from the metaphysical to the physical and include informal meeting places, such as cafés and chat rooms, formal institutions, such as parliament buildings, and urban space, such as town squares and parks. In an attempt to create a unified understanding of the concept, the US professor of public administration Charles Goodsell (2003) identifies six defining characteristics of public space, from a variety of academic disciplines:

[1] Generic definition of public space: A space-time continuum for connected and interactive political discourse. [2] Place-bound public space: The above consisting of face-to-face interaction in a single physical location. [3] Electronic public space: The above achieved at dispersed geographic locations through information technology. [4] Extended public space: The above when broadcast by television, radio, Internet, or other means. [5] Pure definition of democratic public space: The above when open to all, unrestricted as to conduct, and unconditional as to participation. [6] Practical definition of democratic public space: The above when public access is encouraged, the status of state authority is muted, barriers between governors and governed are minimized, staging is arranged by the people as well as officials, and conditions conducive to deliberation are fostered. (Goodsell, 2003, 370)

The public space discussed in this thesis is naturally positioned within Goodsell's second, place-bound definition. The specific definition of public space will be developed in the next chapter (4.2).

3.2.2 Physical space

Now that we have discerned the importance of public space as the location of discussion and deliberation, as well as the place where contestations occur and meaning is created, it is time to move on to the physical aspects of space. Architecture, urban planning, urbanism, and human geography are four academic disciplines naturally concerned with physical (urban) space, and key studies from each of these can be related to collective action.

Urban planning, architecture, and urban geography

Goodsell (2003) provides some assessment of the relevant literature in architecture and urban planning. He writes, for instance, that the relationship between political power and people is often expressed in architecture, and "a common theme is how the design and symbols of physical space reinforce political power" (p. 365). Referring to his own and others' studies of buildings and official institutions, he explains how such places seek to evoke certain feelings, such as that of authority, monumentality, or—in the case of court rooms—legitimacy and equality (2003, pp. 365–366). (For a similar view, see Bismarck, 2014.)

In urban planning, public spaces are often seen as places for social interaction and, as in architecture, there is much focus on the perception of space. Additionally, urban planners tend to focus on the utility of spaces, and how the right planning can increase their usage. Some

urbanists also frame such usage in a historical context (see US geographer and urbanist Edward Soja, 2010).

The US urban theorist Kevin Lynch has influenced writing on urban planning for more than half a century. For his book *The Image of the City* (1960), Lynch conducted interviews with citizens about their daily travels in, and interactions with, public space. He asked the respondents to describe and draw the spaces they went through, what they remember from them, and what feelings they evoked. Lynch used the information he collected to identify five elements of urban space that dominate people's mental perception of it: nodes (places of destination or transition points); paths (the connections to and between nodes, e.g. roads and walkways); landmarks (reference points, such as monuments and buildings); districts (areas of the city with distinct characteristics); and edges (boundaries and obstacles that hinder movement, e.g. walls and shorelines). (See chapter 6: 6.1.1, 6.1.2, and 6.1.3.)

Groups of scholars, architects, and urban planners are also concerned with identifying what makes spaces inclusive and practical to use. The Feeling of Place project (Nielsen, 2017), for example, is an examination of public spaces in Southwark, London, to establish why people respond well to certain places and not to others. The researchers asked respondents in London what they felt about the spaces they were in, using 13 feelings as a framework to evaluate the positive vs. negative value of the spaces.[26] As a result, nine key themes were identified that affect how people relate to space in everyday life: 1) people's awareness of what is in the space; 2) its history and social life; 3) the presence of nature; 4) its level of accessibility for some or for all people; 5) whether or not people are visiting or living in the place; 6) how welcome people feel there; 7) the scale of buildings and activities in the space (as stated by the authors: "Locations with tall towers […] made people feel less happy and were seen as less pleasant than places with lower scale houses. Planting and activities on street level helped people feel that the […] place [was] more pleasant.", p. 13); 8) complexity and confusion; and 9) changes occurring in the space (Nielsen, 2017).

Similarly, the Project for Public Spaces—a cross-disciplinary platform for the promotion of sustainable urban spaces—has identified 10 principles for a successful (i.e. much-used) square:

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[26] Happy/unhappy; relaxed/tense; excited/bored; welcome/not welcome; strong/low sense of belonging; familiar/unfamiliar; pleasant/unpleasant; want to approach/avoid; interesting/uninteresting; complex/simple; crowded/empty; understandable/confusing; not stressful/stressful. (Nielsen, 2017, p. 5). However, this method can be criticised for oversimplifying space, as aspects such as 'crowded' have been marked with a positive value, while 'empty' is negative. Arguably, a crowded place might be perceived by some (or in some circumstances) as less positive than an empty space.

1) it has a strong image and identity; 2) there are attractions and destinations on or around the square; 3) there is a presence of amenities, such as benches; 4) it has a flexible design, including 5) different designs for different seasons; 6) it is easy to access, preferably on foot; 7) there is a good balance between the outer (i.e. surrounding buildings, roads, amenities) and inner (centre) square; 8) its paths (roads, streets, walkways) reach out "like an octopus"; 9) it is well managed by people who are familiar with the square; and 10) it has diverse sources of funding ("10 principles", 2005.)

The principles identified in the two projects outlined above provide valuable clues as to what variables create pleasant, accessible, and visible space, which are three important aspects of urban protests (see chapter 6). Yet even though the vast majority of architects perceive and utilise the feelings that space and buildings evoke, and urban planners look at the various usages of public space, neither discipline is explicitly concerned with how these qualities affect collective action. A few notable exceptions should be mentioned. One is the US landscape architect Jeffrey Hou, who has edited two books on the subject: *Insurgent Public Space: Guerrilla Urbanism and the Remaking of Contemporary Cities* (Hou, 2010) and *City Unsilenced: Urban Resistance and Public Space in the Age of Shrinking Democracy* (Hou & Knierbein, 2017).

In the former book, the authors (including anthropologists, geographers, architects, urban planners, and artists) aim to understand the role of public space in the constant changes cities undergo, as well as various attempts to create and control public space: "[P]ublic space has been an important facet of cities and urban culture […] [Urban spaces] provide opportunities for gathering, socialising, recreation, festivals, as well as protests and demonstrations" (Hou, 2010, p. 2). In the authors' view, the city is constantly changing, both physically and in the ways it is perceived and used: city space can be contested, change meaning, be appropriated, made available or unavailable to some or all groups, new meanings can be attributed to it, and so on.

In the latter book, co-edited with the Austrian landscape architect Sabine Knierbein, the authors put contestations in urban space into the context of neoliberal economic globalisation. As with other scholars, such as Don Mitchell (3.2.1), David Harvey (3.2.1), and the US architect and urbanist Paul Knox (2011), they see urban development as driven by global investors who gentrify urban centres and increase local and global inequalities (Hou & Knierbein, 2017, p. 6). The authors call this tendency "shrinking democracy". This means that, when public space is increasingly controlled by private and commercial actors, its alternative use as an outlet for

public discontent against authorities (see chapter 2) is reduced (hence, the utility of space as a safety valve in societies is shrinking).

There is also an emerging interest within human geography and architecture in the physicality, organisation, and structure of protest camps; see for example the British human geographer Adam Ramadan on the occupation of Tahrir Square during the Arab Spring in Egypt. He argues that the protest camp is a public space which functions as a vehicle for political change (Ramadan, 2013). Another prominent example is the anthology *Protest Camps in International Context* (Brown, Feigenbaum, Frenzel & McCurdy, 2017), which sees camps as a form of organisation. The authors examine the symbolic value, logistics, and possibilities provided by protest camps across the world, while analysing what the editors call four 'infrastructures': media infrastructures, action infrastructures, organisation infrastructures, and re-creation infrastructures. These studies thus emphasise that static protests are important, and that they are reliant on accessibility and transport networks in order to function properly (see spatial qualities as a variable in chapter 6, 6.2.1).

Prospect-refuge theory

Before moving on to studies concerned with particular spaces of protest, one final theoretical approach with a spatial focus should be mentioned: namely, prospect-refuge theory (PRT). PRT was first developed by the British geographer Jay Appleton in *The Experience of Landscape* (1975), in which he explored the aesthetics of open spaces and the forms of landscape people tend to respond well to. According to this theory, which sees human preferences as an evolutionary trait for survival, people feel safe, and thus prefer to stay, in spaces where they can observe the surrounding area and perceive approaching threats or prey (=prospect), but are not themselves easily observed or attacked (=refuge). A high-up position, a narrow space in the shade looking out onto a wider area, or a place by an edge (such as a river, wall or steep mountain) are all preferable to a space without edges or with few exits (such as a narrow mountain pass), where one can easily be spotted or dangers can converge from several directions.

PRT is also applied to urban environments (see for example Fisher & Nasar, 1992; Ramanujam, 2007), in which confined and confusing spaces with few exits—such as a narrow and sparsely lit alleyway, or an underground car park—feel uncomfortable while a wide, properly lit street with plenty of exits, or the space in the shade of a grove in a lush park, feel pleasant. The theory has been criticised for not always being applicable to an urban context, where the need for refuge is arguably less psychologically important than in a natural setting (see for example

Dosen & Oswald, 2016). But this reservation to the theory might not apply in a contentious context, as instincts for personal safety are probably more acute in these situations than in day-to-day life.

3.2.3 Contested spaces

Having reviewed leading theories of protest in the first section of this chapter; and the various theories about the nature of political and physical urban space in the previous two subsections, I will now turn to case studies of specific spaces, which have been used to explore and illustrate the theories and concepts identified in this chapter (i.e. works specifically concerned with the location of contestation).

The case study literature on contested spaces can be divided into two main groups: 1) publications describing how contentious actions have shaped people's perception of urban space, and 2) publications looking at the effects locations have on contention. As with other categories provided in this chapter, these two groups may not be absolute, and some of the literature discusses both: how contention in urban space shapes people's perception of space, and, at the same time, how space provides people with the conditions of and possibilities for contention. See for example Karl Schlögel's book *Moscow, 1937*, in which Moscow is described both as the setting for the terror and traumas of the Stalin Purges (1936–1938), and as changed by the omnipresence of informants, paranoia, deportations, and executions during that time (Schlögel, 2012).

In the first group, urban space is often regarded as a dependent variable. People's perception of space is fluent and constantly changing, affected by the contestations about and within the space.[27] The "production of space" is often a key concept used to understand whole urban areas. See for example: Smith & Mitchell (2018) on how the space in New York City has been produced by the contestations that occurred in the city throughout its history: Yacobi (2004) on the contestations of urban space in 'mixed' Palestinian/Israeli cities; or McCann (1999) on how civic space in Lexington has changed due to spatial (and racial) policies. The "production of space" concept can also be applied to individual spaces, such as a single square or park. See for instance Van Deusen (2002) on the production of Clinton Square, New York.

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[27] This being said, other actions—such as public festivals, trade, criminal acts, military parades, and sporting events—might also affect the perception of urban space, as well as who uses the space: e.g. is it public, private, commercial, or official.

The scholars in the second group often perceive space more as an independent variable that wholly or partially affects people's possibilities of protest. This includes studies of the symbolic characteristics of urban space, e.g. Örs (2014) on Gezi park and Taksim Square as a public space, and how the attempts by the Turkish authorities to change this symbolic value by redesigning their physical layout triggered the 2014 multifaceted pro-democracy protests in cities across the country. A further example is Gunning & Baron (2014), who not only describe the where, when, who, and whys of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution in Tahrir Square, but also how the square became a shared symbolic focal point for a range of protest movements.

Conversely, several scholars highlight the importance of the physical characteristics of space, such as layout, size, or location. See for example Lee (2009), who argues that Tiananmen Square was chosen by the May Fourth Movement in 1919 because of its physical features and availability, even though it had far less symbolic value than other public spaces. Or Salmenkari, 2009, who puts the emphasis on location in her comparison of protest places in Buenos Aires and Seoul, finding that "the majority of protests take place at sites of political authority, places that appeal to the public, places connected with a grievance, and symbolically meaningful places." (p. 256) She also points out that historical and symbolic sites are often interpreted differently and might not have the same reinforcing nature for all (protest) groups (p. 257).

Some underscore social features and the traditions around using a space: e.g. Zaazaa (2009) on the cultural, social, and historical significance of Tahrir Square. He argues that, since the central space is in the political centre of Cairo, heavily trafficked and used by thousands of people every day, demonstrations in the square immediately gather local and national attention.

Finally, some see a combination of the three: such as Hatuka & Kallus (2008), who in their study of Rabin Square in Tel Aviv recognise several ways in which the square's social, symbolic, and physical attributes affect protests, albeit with a focus on the physical. All three of these aspects of space (perceived/symbolic, social, and physical) have been introduced as categories in the theoretical model (6.1).

3.3 The gap

In the previous two sections, I set out to survey research literature which identifies the links between space and protests and how the two relate to each other. However, as the section on protest shows, there is a profound lack of literature making this connection with space, as almost none of the theories examined here have any reference to it; and the few that do (e.g. repertoires of contention) are limited in scope and do not provide a detailed account of the causal

relationship between space and protest. Although the connection between the two has been identified in the research literature considered in the second section (on space), and from a variety of viewpoints (such as to the location for discussions, deliberations, and contestations), this literature, too, lacks a generalised approach to assess the use value of space.

This lack of a spatial perspective on political action has been highlighted, among others, by Parkinson (2012, pp. 6–7). Moreover, two chapters in the anthology *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements* (della Porta & Diani, 2015) address this lack within the studies of social movements: chapter 12 (urban dynamics and social movements) and chapter 24 (geography and social movements).

In the former chapter, the authors attempt to define urban movements, the conditions under which they occur, and various forms of urban movements. The authors use POS theory to identify why urban movements appear in some spaces and not in others; and, like David Harvey, Don Mitchell, and other Marxian economists (3.2.1), the scholars focus on economic and political elements in the political environment rather than on pure geography (Andretta, Piazza & Subirants, 2015). In the latter chapter, the British political scientist and geographer Paul Routledge starts by identifying the lack of geography in theories on social movements, and continues by outlining several ways in which urban space is significant. These include: the various associations and feelings people have towards space; the inequalities of society that are reflected in space; how space can provide different POSs for different people in different spaces; the scale of space in which social movements occur; and how these scales might provide "a range of opportunities and constraints" (Routledge, 2015, p. 386). Still, none of these two chapters suggest an approach to analyse the relationship between protesters and the protest space they inhabit.

In his monograph *Space Invaders: Radical Geographies of Protest* (2017), Routledge's focus has moved from social movements to protests, and is thus much closer to the spatial perspective sought in this thesis. Routledge discusses the acts of planning and realising mass protests from a spatial perspective, and he examines various ways in which people can utilise urban space to their advantage. This includes: 1) identifying and using local spatial qualities in an optimised manner; 2) considering the pros and cons of utilising static and mobile methods of action; 3) using the selected space to create a shared culture with which the protesters can identify; and 4) selecting methods of increasing an action's media exposure, both offline and online. The book is illustrated with examples of spatial strategies from contentious actions across the world, to inspire innovation among prospective protesters.

What the book does not have, however, is a generalised approach to how one can assess the use value, constraints, and limitations that urban spaces provide for mass protest. This shows that there is clearly a lack of generalised spatial perspectives in the literature on protest.

The second aim of this chapter was to find approaches and concepts that can be integrated into a generalised spatial perspective of this type. This question yielded more results, as several of the various findings, approaches, variables, and systems can be identified as valuable for a theoretical model on the causal relationship between space and protest. See for example POS theory and the concept of political environment (3.1), which are integrated into the model in chapter 5 (5.6) and 6 (6.2.2); or see the account of prospect-refuge theory (3.2.2) in chapter 3.

Additionally, in section 3.2, several contradicting understandings of what space is were identified. In the next chapter, I shall present my own definition of space and protest, to a large extent based on the literature presented in this chapter. In the subsequent chapters 5 and 6, I will explain how a spatial perspective on mass protest can be articulated, and how it can contribute to filling the research gap.

4 Definitions and research questions

The previous chapter concluded by identifying a gap in the research literature on urban mass protest. Before moving to the development and layout of a theoretical model to fill this gap, the aim of this chapter is to define some key concepts and delimitations. It starts with two sections that provide definitions and delimitations of mass protests (4.1) and urban public space (4.2); followed by a statement of the major research question and a series of secondary research questions (4.3).[28]

4.1 What is a mass protest?

According to Karl-Dieter Opp, a protest might be defined as "[a] joint (i.e. collective) action of individuals aimed at achieving their goal or goals by influencing decisions of a target" (Opp, 2009, p. 38). I have used this definition because it incorporates elements of key sociological perspectives on protest (3.1). The 'target' of the protests might be institutions or people. However, in this thesis and in the three case studies it analyses (Hansen, 2016; 2017, 2019), the main targets of the mass protests are governmental authorities. The 'goal or goals' of the protesters have previously been identified as change of regime, policy, or discourse (I elaborate on the goals of protest in Hansen, 2019, p. 8).

Opp's definition is still not specific enough, as it does not include a sense of scale. The word 'mass' has therefore been added to convey that the action is carried out by a large number of people.[29] Even with the inclusion of this additional word, a large number of individuals joined in action in order to achieve a goal can protest in a number of ways that would put them outside the scope of this project (e.g. using petitions, Internet actions, boycotts, graffiti, or civil disobedience). For the purpose of this thesis, "mass protests" are limited to the physical act of protesting in urban public space. I concentrate on static protests in the form of encampments and spatial occupation, rather than on mobile protests, such as marches.[30] The current study is also limited to protests 'on foot', thus excluding (the usually mobile) protests based on the use

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[28] Please note that there might be some inconsistencies between the definitions, terms and concepts in these chapters and in their three accompanying articles. This is because the spatial perspective has evolved over time, and each of the articles represents the model at its different stages of development, before these concrete definitions were reached (see chapter 5).

[29] In one of the definitions provided by the Merriam Webster dictionary, 'mass' is described as "a large body of persons in a group" and "the great body of the people as contrasted with the elite—often used in plural" (Mass, n.d.)

[30] Since mobile demonstrations often are a tactical part of an encampment protest (e.g. reacting to events by staging demonstrations), the question of how spaces affect demonstrations demands separate attention (see 6.2.1 for mobility as a spatial quality).

of vehicles, such as cars, bicycles, and trucks.[31] The reason for these delimitations is that, in the East Slavic region, static encampments on foot are the most prominent form of mass displays of discontent, and thus the one I had access to.

For the sake of simplicity, I have also tried to avoid the inclusion of violent protests such as riots and revolts, although some of the mass protests described here turned violent (notably Euromaidan). The reason for this exclusion is that, once a mass event turns violent, its nature is radically transformed; and the dynamics between demonstrators, law enforcement agencies, and urban space significantly change.

We thus arrive at the following definition of the mass protests examined in this thesis:

> Mass collective actions by pedestrians, engaged in static occupation of urban public space and intending to change society by influencing the decisions of a target by nonviolent means.

Mass protests and social movements

Another concept closely related to mass protests is that of social movements, which are often discussed in the same literature as protests. The difference between the two terms is that, while social movements develop over time (and the focus of social movement studies is often on the causes that create the movement, or on its values, identity, and connections), mass protests are independent events or actions that either erupt suddenly or are part of a bigger (social) movement for change. (A more elaborate definition of urban social movements can be found in Andretta, Piazza & Subirats, 2015.)

4.2 What is urban public space?

In order to succinctly define urban public space, it is first necessary to examine the term word-for-word. Of the three, 'urban' is the easiest part to deal with. According to the dictionary, 'urban' relates to, is characteristic of, or constitutes a city (Urban, n.d.). In other words, it describes something in, or of, a city.

However, the next two parts ,'public' and 'space', are more difficult to define, as the two terms cover a broad variety of complex things. The Merriam Webster dictionary, for example, offers 7 and 10 categories of definitions respectively for each of the two categories. Based on these entries, we can deduce that 'public' refers to a collection or representation of the people or

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[31] Such as the truck drivers' strikes in Russia ("Dal'noboĭshchiki 27 marta," 2017), or Automaidan in Ukraine (Kuzik, 2014).

citizens of a community or society; or to something happening where it is easily perceived by, or relating to, the population. 'Space' covers an even wider range of phenomena, with distance between points or obstacles as the common denominator. For the purposes of this research project, definitions 2a ("a limited extent in one, two, or three dimensions: [distance, area, volume]") and 2b ("an extent set apart or available") are the closest in nature to the geographical space under examination. (Public, n.d.; Space, n.d.)

Urban space and public space

When combined with 'urban', 'space' becomes 'an extent set apart in a city environment'; or, in other words, 'outdoor open areas between buildings', such as squares, parks, streets, and walkways.

So what, then, is 'urban public space'? Let us leave 'urban' aside for the moment and take a look at the contested term 'public space' first. Based on the literature on public space (3.2.1) and a discussion I participated in during a lecture by the US geographer Don Mitchell,[32] we can identify six questions that can be asked in order to define whether or not a space is public:

1) Who the space is for: is it for the people or their representatives, or for someone or something else?

2) To whom it is available: do all citizens/inhabitants/individuals/groups have equal access to it, or are they equally represented in it?

3) Who controls it: is it owned by a collective entity, such as a state or a city council?

4) What happens in it: is the space used for communication, interactions and contentious actions, such as protests?

5) How it is perceived: is it perceived as a place for all, representative of all, and/or used by all?

6) What it is used for/what it might become: is it where people's perception of the public is shaped and/or embodied? (Ukrainian national identity has, for instance, to a large extent been shaped by events on Maidan, and most Ukrainians are aware of the potential it has in society.)

Conversely, public space can be defined by what it is not. For instance, public space is not commercial or private space; it is not space reserved for only one or some groups (such as a

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[32] The lecture was part of the University of Oslo Summer School "Public Space: People, Power, and Political Economy" in 2018.

gated community); it is not dominated by commercial interests or political control (in the form of heavy-handed policing or intrusive surveillance); and it is not perceived as exclusive.

To sum up, public space is a place which, ideally, is equally accessible and open to the whole general population. In order for something to be a truly public space, it must be accessible to everyone, including all individuals, minorities, political and non-political groups, organisations, and so on. This access must also be granted on an equal basis, as outlined by Habermas (3.2.1).

Urban public space

When we add 'urban' to the definition of public space above, we get the following (geographically oriented) definition:

> Urban public space is an outdoor open area between buildings in a city environment, equally accessible and open to everyone in the general population.[33]

Yet since all urban spaces are regulated in some way and, more often than not, are at least partially influenced by commercial, institutional, or political interests, it is possible that no urban public space in this ideal form exists. Even so, the six questions outlined above provide us with a tool for assessing to what degree an urban space is public. Therefore, we might add 'which in its ideal form is' before 'equally accessible and open to everyone in the general population', to underline that this is an idealisation and not necessary a reflection of reality.

In these chapters, the term 'urban public space' (often referred to simply as 'public space') is applied both in a general sense, i.e. to mean all the area between buildings in a city (for instance, the urban public space of Moscow); and a specific sense, for geographically defined areas of the city space (such as Swamp Square).

4.3 Research questions

Chapter 2 outlined the historical and contemporary context around the act of urban contention. Chapter 3 then related this to the various research publications on the topic, where a gap in the existing research was also defined. Now that the components of the research question have been defined in this chapter, the context is fully developed, and we can return to the research question as stated in the introduction:

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[33] Conversely, Goodsell's *place-bound public space* definition could be used: "In this […] *space* all persons present are within direct visual and audible range. Their mutual contact is face-to-face, within a reasonable distance. Probably this form of public space is the most efficient in terms of achieving true connection and inter-activity. This is the kind of public space, contemplated by the urban planners for their plazas and the architectural analysts in their ceremonial rooms" (Goodsell, 2003, p. 370).

How are mass protests affected by urban public space?

It can now be expanded by using the definitions developed in this chapter:

How are mass collective actions by pedestrians, engaged in static occupation of an urban public space and aimed at changing society by influencing the decisions of a target by nonviolent means, affected by this urban public space (i.e. outdoor open areas between buildings in a city environment, which in its ideal form is equally accessible and open to everyone in the general population)?

The question can also be expressed as a causality figure (in which the arrow signifies effect):

Urban public space (independent variable) → Mass protests (dependent variable)

This opens up several secondary questions, which naturally need to be answered, in full or in part, in order to properly answer the main research question:

1) What should a theoretical model exploring the causal connections between urban public space and mass protests look like?
2) What variables does urban public space include?
3) What variables do mass protests include?
4) What other variables can be identified in the causal chain between urban space and mass protests?
5) How can these variables be mapped and measured?

These questions are the subject of the discussion in the next chapters on theory development (chapter 5) and on the variables of the theoretical model and the methods used to find them (chapter 6). The main research question is answered generally in chapter 7, and specifically in each of the three articles. These include versions of this main research question: "How is the oppositional activity in Ukraine/Belarus/Russia affected by the urban public space in Kyiv/Minsk/Moscow?"

5 Theorising and development

This chapter traces the development of the spatial perspective from idea to current model, and provides an overview of the three accompanying articles. It starts by defining some of the processes that brought the model to its current stage of development, including the approaches applied when theorising, and key qualitative methods (5.1). This is followed by a description of two ethical dilemmas and concerns encountered during the planning and execution of this research, as well as their practical solutions (5.2); and a discussion of a major pitfall of geographical determinism that I have aimed to avoid (5.3).

The fourth section (5.4) recounts how the idea for this project was initially conceived and the outline of a relevant research gap was identified, followed by a statement of the initial goals for this research project. The theorising process is explicated in the fifth section (5.5), where the background for, and the purpose and development of, the first two articles are discussed (i.e. article 1, the prestudy, and article 2, the transitional study, in subsections 5.5.1 and 5.5.3, respectively). The sixth section discusses the development of the spatial perspective (5.6), followed by a seventh section (5.7) on the testing of the model in article 3. The chapter ends with a section on the few minor changes added to the model following the main test study (5.8).

5.1 Approaches to theorising

In the article "Theorizing in sociology and social science: turning to the context of discovery" the Swedish sociologist Richard Swedberg (2012) discusses the process of developing theories within social sciences. Drawing heavily on the Austrian-British philosopher Karl R. Popper and the German philosopher Hans Reichenbach, Swedberg identifies three elements of theory development: *theorising*, *theory*, and *testing of the theory*. According to Swedberg, in social sciences—which tend to be overly focused on theory and methodology—there is a lack of emphasis on the first (theorising) element (p. 4).

Swedberg divides the research process in social sciences into two phases: the prestudy, which includes theorising and an early discovery of a phenomenon; and the main study, including drawing up and executing the research design and writing up the results. The first phase is the subject of Swedberg's article.

Swedberg attempts to lay out some basic rules for the creative act of theorising (see fig. 6). He divides these into two parts: "observation" (part I, p. 11) and "naming, conceptualisation, using

analogies, metaphors, and types, developing a tentative theory, including an explanation" (part II, p. 14).

In the first part, Swedberg argues, one should not necessarily start theorising in a structured or scientific manner: "[…] one can proceed in whatever way that leads to something interesting—and that means *any way*" (p. 6). By starting with facts, observing these with the use of heuristic methods, and only then developing a theory to explain the facts, the likelihood of creating original research is, according to the author, much higher. He also recommends avoiding reading too many secondary works early on (p. 13).

In the second part, Swedberg suggests that the researcher should take the observed facts and give a proper name to the theory; conceptualise; flesh out the theory; give explanations, and so on. The theorising process, he argues, would also benefit from including a prestudy before the main study. (p. 10)

Rule # 1 Observe—and Choose Something Interesting

You can only theorize on the basis of observation. Anything that can stimulate to a full view of the phenomenon should be used, from sturdy scientific facts to art in various forms. "*Don't think but look!*" (Wittgenstein)

Rule # 2 Name and Formulate the Central Concept

Give a name to what you observe and try to formulate a central concept based on it. Here as elsewhere abduction (Pierce) is the key.

Rule # 3 Build Out the Theory

Give body to the central concept by outlining the structure, pattern or organization of the phenomenon. Use analogies, metaphors, comparisons—and all in a heuristic way to get a better grip on the phenomenon under study.

Rule # 4 Complete the Tentative Theory, including the Explanation

Formulate or model a full tentative theory of the phenomenon, with special emphasis on the explanation that constitutes the natural end of the theorizing process.

(Swedberg, 2012, p. 17)

Figure 6: Swedberg's basic rules of theorising.

Applying Swedberg's theory

My theorising with regard to the spatial perspective has, with few exceptions, followed the approach promoted by Swedberg's (2012) article, which will be used below to illustrate the conceptualisation process.

The first part of the approach—conception of the initial idea and observations—began, as I describe below (5.4), while doing field work in Ukraine for my master's thesis, and the idea that space is important was developed in the first article for the current thesis (5.5.1), which became what Swedberg's approach calls "a prestudy". In accordance with Swedberg's approach, my theorising was not limited by an excessive focus on the existing secondary works and theoretical approaches developed by other scholars. My background in area studies gave me the advantage of intimate knowledge of the case studies, while the absence of "theoretical baggage" left me open to theorise freely.

It is my view, however, that any new theory or approach benefits from being scrutinised at all stages of development and from feedback, suggestions, and critique. Receiving this feedback throughout the process was particularly important for the development of this spatial perspective, since I had little previous knowledge in architecture, urbanism, or sociology (subjects that might be perceived as better fits for a project such as this). Moreover, having ongoing feedback helped me to avoid writing about a gap in the literature that does not exist, or omitting important literature from my articles.

For these reasons, I endeavoured to present my project in as many settings as I could find, to as large and as varied an audience as possible. Over the entire process of the project's development, I gave talks at conferences, seminars, and as guest lectures in Great Britain, Norway, Sweden, Ukraine, and Russia. This produced a great number of critical comments, thoughts, suggestions, and recommendations, some of which were integrated into my theoretical model. Moreover, *Mass Protests from a Spatial Perspective: Discontent and Urban Public Space in Kyiv, Minsk, and Moscow* is written as an article-based thesis. The benefit of this format is that the two published articles have been reviewed by anonymous peers within various research fields (and, as an added bonus, gave me a continuous set of deadlines to meet, which propelled me onwards). Finally, I have had the opportunity to present the project to scholars of different disciplines by taking part in a diverse choice of PhD coursework options in Tromsø (UiT) and Oslo (UiO). Particularly valuable in this respect were the two summer school courses at the University of Oslo: "Case Study Research Methods" (2016) by the US political scientist Andrew Bennett, and "Public Space: People, Power, and Political Economy"

(2018) by Don Mitchell (mentioned above), which allowed me to present the project to leading scholars from two highly relevant fields.[34]

I used the second part of Swedberg's approach, which includes "naming, conceptualisation, using analogies, metaphors, and types, developing a tentative theory, including an explanation" (2012, p. 14), when working on the second article (5.5.3). Arguably, the second article could also be characterised as a prestudy, because it forms part of the theorising process and was written in preparation for a more thorough study of Moscow in article 3, on which the theory is tested. However, since article 2 could neither be described as the result of unstructured theorising (i.e. a prestudy) nor as a study with a fully developed theoretical model (i.e. a main study), I chose to call it a transitional study.

The next three subsections describe three main qualitative methods used during the development and execution of this study: field work (5.1.1), the use of respondents (5.1.2), and mapping (5.1.3).

5.1.1 Field work

Field work for this project was conducted in five cities: Kyiv, Minsk, Chișinău, Moscow, and Paris. The advantage of conducting field work is that the researcher builds an immediate relationship to, and understanding of, the location analysed and events observed: cognitive reference points are created. By being physically present, the researcher might also observe details that are harder to find in maps, conversations, or in academic literature. The main limitations are that field work is time consuming and might not always be practically possible. Moreover, when observing a protest, a researcher cannot be in more than one place at a given time. So, while the information gathered might be detailed, the scope might also be somewhat restricted. The advantages nevertheless greatly outweigh the limitations.

Although much of the data for the first article was already collected during field work in Kyiv for my M.A. thesis (Hansen, 2015), additional field work on Maidan and observations of demonstrations in the city was carried out in late 2015 and early 2016. This field work was done in order to check various aspects of the square and assist the theorising process.

Since I have previously lived in Minsk, I had a good knowledge of the public spaces in the city. Nonetheless, to refresh my memory of the two urban spaces I planned to write about for the second article (October Square and Independence Square), I combined a personal trip to the

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[34] See the section on process tracing (5.6), below, and the section on public space (3.2.1), above.

city in late 2015 with observations of the two squares as well as some of the nearby urban spaces. In order to avoid overstepping any legal boundaries created by holding a tourist visa, I did not observe protests, approach possible respondents, or conduct interviews while in the city. The interviews were conducted at a later point using communication technologies (see 5.1.2).

When a series of mass protests erupted in Moldova in 2015–2016, I decided to travel to Chișinău in August 2016 to conduct preliminary field work there. The aim was to check a) whether the city space could become a separate case study for this thesis, and b) what could be learned about space and mass protests by observing contention in the city. In Chișinău, as in Kyiv, I already knew which specific urban space should be analysed before I arrived. For reasons I explain below, my field work was concentrated on mapping the Great National Assembly Square (*Piața Marii Adunări Naționale*), although I also observed other urban spaces nearby. I witnessed one small protest against the president at Great National Assembly Square during the Independence Day celebrations on 26 August 2016. I also visited museums in order to better understand the city and the country's history, and conducted interviews. For reasons I also explain below, the city did not become a full case study (in article form), but my observations of its urban space, and of contention and policing of protests in the space and city, contributed to the development of the spatial perspective model. (See 5.5.1 for more on Chișinău and its contribution to this development.)

The most structured form of field work was carried out in Moscow in June 2017, as the theoretical model and accompanying methodological approach were almost fully developed at this point. My field work in Moscow had four goals. The first was to get a general feel for the city and what it is like to move around in, and use, its urban public spaces. I did this mainly by walking around the city on foot[35] and using the underground system. The second goal was to collect data from various squares, parks, and other urban public spaces with a tradition of protest or proximity to the country's political institutions. The third and fourth goals were to observe mass protests in the city and how the authorities prepared for and reacted to them. I had several opportunities to do both.[36] I did not, however, have the opportunity to observe any protests or

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[35] I walked around Boulevard Ring and most main streets within it, notably Tverskaia Street. I also spent a great deal of time in the area around the Kremlin (Borovitskaia Square, Aleksandrovskii Garden, Manège Square, Red Square, Theater Square/Revolution Square, Chinatown). I walked around most of the western parts of Swamp Island (west of Greater River Mouth Bridge), and the four main streets between Rampart Street and Swamp Island (Greater Iakimanka Street, Greater Glade Street, Greater Ordynka Street, Piatnitskaia Street). Additionally, I walked to other places of interest, such as Academician Sakharov Avenue, the area around the Russian White House (government building), and the Arbat district.

[36] At the time, a mass rally against President Putin was planned for Russia Day, June 12, 2017, which was sanctioned to be held at Sakharov Avenue. The night before the action, I observed the massive preparations

policing strategies on Swamp Square, the urban space ultimately chosen as a case study for article 3. My data collection included photographing, drawing, and keeping a journal where I recorded data about spatial elements (explained in subsection 6.1).

In Paris field work was conducted on 5 and 6 January 2019, during two of the demonstrations by the Yellow Vests social movement. The aim of this field work was threefold: 1) since Paris has a long and well-known history of urban contention, I wanted to see how various repertoires of contention and policing involved the city; 2) I also wanted to test whether the spatial perspective model could be applied to protests I knew little about, in a city I had never been to before; and 3) I wanted to test whether a Western protest could provide any new insights that could be added to the spatial perspective. I observed the Yellow Vests on 5 January outside Musée d'Orsay, where they were stopped by a wall of riot police on their way to the National Assembly, and the clashes that ensued. The next day, I observed a smaller and more peaceful demonstration on Republic Square (*Place de la République*), where the Yellow Vests' first women's march congregated before they gradually marched towards Champs-Élysées (more on this in chapter 7).

5.1.2 Respondents

A significant part of the qualitative data set used for this thesis comes from 30 interviews conducted with protest participants, politicians and protest organisers, observers, and experts. (See appendix 5.) This subsection includes 1) a discussion of the benefits and limitations of using interviews; 2) an account of the use of respondents for each of the case studies; and 3) an outline of the main interview structure.

The interviews generated invaluable data for understanding not only specific protest events and how specific urban public spaces are shaped, perceived, and used, but also how protesters and organisers relate to space when planning and carrying out collective actions. In addition, observers and political scientists have contributed with accounts of events from the sidelines. From these interviews and conversations, I have identified several variables of space and

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beforehand, including the construction of physical obstacles in a large perimeter around the Avenue and the setting up of block posts with metal detectors and police command posts. Immediately before the action, the opposition leaders announced that the protest would be held at unsanctioned Pushkin Square instead, and that they would march on Tverskaia Street. This led me to observe how quickly the police efficiently blocked off the whole area around Tverskaia, dividing its southern parts from Pushkinskaia Square. During the action, the police successfully diverted the protesters (and their energy) away from the announced place of action by enforcing one-way movement in a large number of streets. Being on the southern part of the police blockades, I spent more than an hour trying to get around to the other side, ultimately without success. The next day I observed a small protest against police brutality outside the State Duma (Federal Assembly, lower house).

protest, as well as the goals of protesters. I achieved a nuanced understanding of the mindset of protesters and protest organisers, and tested some of my hypotheses on them. Hence, my theorising has benefitted a great deal from interviews and conversations. The limitations of qualitative interviewing are mainly related to the time and effort it takes to prepare, conduct, and process them. Interviews, especially in semi- to fully authoritarian states, also require some significant ethical decisions (5.2).

The interviews used in article 1 on Maidan were conducted for my M.A. thesis in 2014. The interviews did not have a unified layout, covered a variety of topics, and consisted, with few exceptions, of open-ended questions. The in-depth interviews were with four participants in Euromaidan (three Ukrainian and one Belarusian), and two observers of the revolution (one Ukrainian and one Norwegian). I also had a large number of conversations in and around the protest camp at Maidan in the course of events, with both protesters and observers, and a number of pilot interviews and unstructured conversations (some of which are included in appendix 5). Since most of the interviews included questions about the respondent's subjective understanding of Maidan and about the square's function in Ukrainian society, they gave me enough material to act as a basis for the arguments presented in article 1 about the function and symbolic value of the square.

For the research on Great National Assembly Square, I carried out six interviews with three political scientists (one Moldovan, one East European, and one Scandinavian), one observer (from Scandinavia), and two interviews with one protest organiser/activist. The interviews were semi-structured around a number of open-ended questions, adapted to each individual interviewee, about the situation in the country, the various political actions that had already occurred, and the Great National Assembly Square. Some questions were based on Lynch's (1960) methodology for mapping people's perception of urban space (see the outline of the interview structure, as stated below; and 3.2.2 on Lynch). I also had a number of informal and unstructured conversations with protesters and other people I met while in the city.

For article 2 on October Square and Independence Square in Minsk, I interviewed five respondents who had participated in protests, three politicians/protest organisers, and one observer. All were Belarusians. These interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions about the political situation in the country, their activism or actions they have witnessed, and about the city and the two specific urban spaces. At the end of the interviews I would often include my own thoughts and hypotheses about the role of space in general and about the effect of the two squares on the 2006 and 2010 protests in particular. This frequently

generated new discussions, as the interviewees were often sceptical of my hypotheses. But, as they had "warmed up" with their own accounts of past events and entered a spatial mindset by describing the two squares to me, several new aspects of space and the effects of space on protests were identified in discussion. One significant variable in the interview process was the location in which the interviews were conducted. Whilst most of the interviews for Maidan and Great National Assembly Square were conducted face-to-face (in parks and cafes), all the interviews about the squares in Minsk were dependent on communication technology (video calls, telephone, and e-mail) (see Hansen, 2017, pp. 35–36).

For article 3 on Swamp Square in Moscow, I decided not to interview respondents for two main reasons. One was ethical, relating to the safety of my respondents (5.2); another practical, relating to the planned layout of the third article (5.7). Before I decided not to carry out interviews, I conducted one pilot interview, but the data generated from this was not used in the article. Not including interviews had several consequences, most importantly a smaller qualitative data set. I would also potentially miss important information about events and aspects of Swamp Square, and would not be able to fully map the perceived (i.e. subjective, see 6.1.1) elements of the urban space or to test all of my hypotheses about Swamp Square. To add to the data set, I sent out a Google Forms questionnaire on a social media platform I use on and off.[37] The survey mainly consisted of questions about how citizens of Moscow and other people with knowledge of Moscow perceived the city, and one open question about the effect Moscow has on public actions, such as demonstrations and parades. The object of the survey was to map the perceived and social elements of the city (6.1.1 and 6.1.3), and see what ideas people had about spatial effects. Although the questionnaire generated 154 responses of varying quality and length, and the answers presented a number of viewpoints about the effects of space (ranging from "I have never thought about that" or "we have no space to demonstrate in" to "[Moscow affects protests] as a bucket of water on quarks"), these were not included in the article, as the scientific value of the survey was questionable. Instead, my research (based on field work, mapping, and academic literature) was complemented with informal conversations about my hypotheses with colleagues and acquaintances with a knowledge of the city.

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[37] YouTube (Hansen, n.d.). At the time of writing, the channel has 23,500 subscribers (mostly Russophone and Ukrainophone). YouTube does not provide information about the number of Muscovite subscribers, but 49.8 % of the channel's views are from Russia.

I decided not to carry out any conversations or qualitative interviews with respondents on Republic Square in Paris, as I have little command of French. Besides, my time in the city was greatly limited.

The main interview structure

All interviews started with my telling the respondent about the project, what it was for, and their rights as a respondent. Most importantly, I asked the respondents whether they consented to my use of the information they provided (this point is further elaborated in subsection 5.2.1). The respondents were then asked to share with me their

1) description of the political situation in the country today;
2) account of actions they had attended or observed.

Once they had spoken about these actions in their own words, I would ask about goals, important events, and impact, in order to obtain

3) a description of the physical space where the action occurred;
4) a description of the social space (i.e. who uses the space, at what time and for which purposes);
5) a description of the perceived space (i.e. the respondents' subjective opinion about the space).

If any elements (physical, social, or perceived) were left out, I would sometimes prompt the respondents with questions like "What exits were available to you during the protest?".

6) Often, I would present some of my findings to the respondents and ask them to comment on them. These questions often stimulated a whole new discussion about the importance of space, the impact of which the respondents initially downplayed almost without exception, yet which often produced new insights.[38]

The semi-structuring of the interviews was due to my not knowing exactly what I was looking for at first; most of the variables were not yet identified at this stage, and the independent variables had not yet been thoroughly defined. My aim was to get the respondents themselves to tell me about the protest in the space and to identify the variables they found important, before looking into the specific spatial elements and qualities.

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[38] See for example this excerpt from the conversation with a respondent by the name of Paŭliuk: "Come to think about it, [we associate the square…] with the authorities, with failed desires, dreams, [...] yes, and with disappointment." (Hansen, 2017, p. 43).

5.1.3 Mapping

The maps used for this project were created using the vector programming tool Adobe Illustrator CS6 and based on a wide range of sources, including: online mapping services, such as OpenStreetMap, Google Maps, and Yandex Maps; field notes and drawings; research literature; news articles; Wikipedia; and protest sites, groups, and channels on social media platforms (mainly Facebook and YouTube). All the case studies have benefitted from the use of mapping as a tool at four stages of development:

As preparation for field work. Mapping was of great assistance to me while creating a list of points of interest and routes to walk while in the city (although, once on site, I often deviated from these lists and routes for various reasons). In Minsk and Chişinău I knew exactly which spaces to analyse, and in Paris I had a general idea (Republic Square, Champs-Élysées, and Bastille Square), but mapping these spaces identified districts, spots, and objects I marked as interesting. Mapping was especially important for the study of Moscow, as I had only a few initial ideas about which within-case studies to include in article 3.

During field work. Digital or hand-drawn maps were used on location in all the spaces analysed as part of the field diary. In the diary, notes about elements and other aspects of urban spaces were continually added for later reference.

During analysis. The mapping of cities and urban spaces facilitated the process of examining sites, as maps can function both as visual guides to places and events and as reference points while writing the analysis.

Presenting the results. The developed maps also functioned as illustrations for paper presentations and in the articles. The unnecessary parts of the maps were removed in order to leave only the relevant points; the reader should, if I have done my job properly, be presented with a simplified illustration of the points I make about the space under consideration.

5.2 Ethical considerations

Researching mass protests in authoritarian countries is no easy matter and requires a number of practical and ethical decisions. This study is no exception, and two key dilemmas had to be resolved. The first concern is how to handle respondents with proper care, respecting their rights and protecting them from potential repercussions. The second is related to the possible misuse of my research.

The decisions I have made are based on The National (Norwegian) Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities' "Guidelines for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences, Humanities, Law and Theology" (NESH, 2016). Although all the committee's guidelines have been read through and form the ethical foundation for this study, chapters B "Respect for individuals" and C "Respect for groups and institutions" are of particular importance.

5.2.1 Interview ethics

While preparing for and carrying out the interviews, as well as processing them, the rights and safety of the respondents were always my highest priority. An account of how the interviews were conducted in this regard is provided below. This is followed by a discussion about gaining access to Russia and one practical implication of being open about my work.

Pre-interview

Before the interviews, I did my best to inform the respondents about my project, where I worked, how the respondents' information would be handled and where it would be published. They were also informed that, up until the moment of publication, they had the right to review their answers or withdraw them altogether, and that I would not question their decision to do so.

I informed the interviewees in advance that they would be given pseudonyms. Exceptions were made for some of the elite interviewees (politicians, observers, and experts), who participated as public figures; they were explicitly informed that I would attach their names to their answers. None of the respondents thus informed had any objections to being referred to by name, and no one withdrew their participation. This is probably because elites—and particularly high-profile politicians—already have a visible and well-known political standpoint. Leaders of the opposition talk to foreign media and researchers on a regular basis, and this project would not worsen their situation in any notable way. Moreover, the extra publicity such a study might produce can be beneficial for a politician or opposition leader.

It must be noted, however, that even though some public figures were identified, I have omitted any irrelevant or personally sensitive information I may have acquired during these interviews.

If, for some reason, I was unable to inform the respondents of some or all of these aspects in advance of the interview, these were explained at the start of the interview itself and the

respondents were given the opportunity to take some time to think this over and, if they wished, to discontinue the interview.

Interview

At the start of each interview, I once again informed each respondent about the project and their rights as a respondent, and asked them if they consented to participate. I told them how the interviews would be conducted and about their rights to withdraw from participation at any moment without needing to provide a reason for doing so. I also informed them how their personal and sensitive information would be handled afterwards.

Post-interview

The interviews were processed by myself alone, and personally sensitive information that could be used to identify the respondents was stored on a password-protected external hard drive accessible only by me. The information was not stored for any longer than strictly necessary. At the time of writing, all personal and potentially sensitive information has been permanently deleted.

Russia

Gaining access to the countries in which I intended to conduct field work usually did not pose any practical problems. Both Ukraine and Moldova have a visa-free regime for citizens of EEA countries; the visit to Minsk, a city I know very well, was (as stated above, 5.1.1) limited to observations; and France is located in the EU. By contrast, I did not have the same access to Russia, as travel to the country requires a visa. Nor did I have the same previous knowledge of Moscow as of Minsk and Kyiv, since I had only visited the city for shorter periods.

I wanted to be open about my work in Russia, especially as I was co-organising a seminar at the Norwegian University Centre in St. Petersburg on the centenary of the October Revolution, where I wanted to talk about my project. The decision had some practical implications, however, and I was determined to act with extra caution in case the Russian authorities took an interest in my work. I could no longer be absolutely sure that conversations and interviews with respondents would not come to the attention of the authorities and so put respondents in a difficult situation. For this reason, as well as the practical reasons explained in section 5.7, I concentrated on the development of the theoretical aspects of the spatial perspective, which by that time had become more important than the qualitative interviews.

5.2.2 Practical utility

When presenting this project, I have often been confronted with the potential consequences and misuses of my thesis. One critical argument has been that my study could be used by authoritarian leaders to design public spaces in such a way as to ease the suppression of mass protests. Another has been that my research could be used by radical groupings and violent mobs in order to overthrow peaceful governments and stable democracies.

I believe such criticism to be naïve.

The short answer to the first argument is that my research probably does not provide authorities or police strategists with any new knowledge of importance. In all three case studies, I have shown examples of authorities using space in order to limit public protests (Hansen, 2016, p. 128/11; 2017, pp. 50–51, 53; 2019, pp. 18–20). It is only natural that law enforcement agents sit down before a planned march or protest to discuss the possibilities and limitations that various spaces provide and how to avoid damages, minimise injuries, etc. What I might have done, however, is provide them with updated language to discuss such space more efficiently. Moreover, taking the long view, rebuilding a city so as to avoid protest would require great time and effort. It is, of course, a possibility which cannot be excluded; but I highly doubt that any future dictator would look at my dissertation and design a city full of Swamp and October squares.

My response to the second argument is similar. Although protesters may not think about spatial features in the same way as the police do, my research shows that protesters are aware of their surroundings and instinctively know which possibilities and/or obstacles they might encounter. My contribution is making these observations available for academic study.

5.3 Geographical determinism

Before I proceed to delineate the process of conceptualising and theorising the spatial perspective model, I must mention my main reservation. Often, when examining the causal effects of geography, it is easy to become caught up in the geographical context, finding cause only in geography and disregarding other factors. Few if any illustrate this problem of deterministic argumentation better than the British journalist Tim Marshall who, in his book *Prisoners of Geography* (2015), demonstrates how the researcher can be trapped by the geographical argument.

In the book, the world is presented as a geopolitical battleground, a zero-sum game for resources and strategic positions between superpowers. Yet, even though most of Marshall's ten geopolitical case studies arguably *are* affected by geography, it is by far not the only factor in international relations, and Marshall often exaggerates its importance. An example of this is his case study of Russia. In his assessment of the country's geography, Marshall states that Russia's foreign policy has, historically and presently, been determined by the country's lack of warm-water ports as well as the lack of a prominent mountain range between Russia and the rest of Europe. Viewed in isolation, these statements probably hold true; but the argumentation disregards a number of other factors, such as the effectiveness of rulers, religion, random events, etc.

Marshall proceeds to explain the Russo-Ukrainian conflict on the basis of this same geographical argument. He presents the conflict largely as a result of, firstly, Crimea and the Black Sea Fleet's strategic importance for Russia; and, secondly, NATO and EU meddling in Russia's sphere of influence. Therefore, Russia's invasion of Ukraine was allegedly the only viable option open to Putin, and the crisis was near-inevitable. Moreover, Marshall's argument is supported by oft-repeated simplifications of two complex and multifaceted countries. Ukraine, for instance, is presented as a country with two clearly definable regions (shaped, of course, by geography), a pro-European West and a pro-Russian East, even though this is far from the case;[39] the whole formal political opposition to Yanukovych is called "anti-Russian", although the majority of it (represented by the UDAR and Fatherland political parties) was decidedly not so; and Ukrainians are depicted as pawns in a geopolitical chess game, without a will of their own.

The upshot of this argumentation is that geography and geopolitical interests are indeed to blame for the Ukrainian crisis. But such a one-dimensional macro perspective cannot possibly explain by itself Russia's interventions in Ukraine. At the least, the claim should not be made without first examining alternative/complementary explanations of the conflict.

Having read Marshall's book,[40] I became very aware of the dangers of such a deterministic argumentation; and I decided early in the theorising process not to become yet another prisoner of geography. This is one of the reasons why the importance of the political environment is emphasised in this study (5.6).

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[39] See for instance Barrington and Herron (2004) and Onuch & Hale (2018).

[40] I feel obliged to add that I thoroughly enjoyed the book. Despite its oversimplifications, it was easy to read, informative and witty.

5.4 Conception

In the introduction to this thesis, I described one of the many moments during Euromaidan when I experienced first-hand the value of using Maidan for protests. During the events in Kyiv, I observed that the square was not only an ideological platform, as the place where Ukrainians demand more democracy and civil rights. The architecture, history, and geography of the square also reinforced the protesters, both practically and symbolically. This realisation made me want to investigate this phenomenon closer, to pinpoint the characteristics that made Maidan so special.

5.4.1 M.A. thesis

Although I have presented this as an eureka moment, more development was needed before I could start theorising. I had travelled to Kyiv in June 2013 because I wanted to write my Master's thesis about some of the contention in the region, which had fascinated me ever since I first moved to Belarus in 2006. Mass protests were frequent when I lived in Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia, but their means, methods, and results were often different.

By chance, I arrived in Kyiv five months before Euromaidan began, and I was able to witness the 2013–2014 revolution from its early beginning through to its political aftermath. Fascinated by the events that were unfolding in the Ukrainian capital, I decided in December 2013 to change the topic of my M.A. thesis to an examination of the driving forces of Euromaidan.

In the introductory chapter to that thesis, I wanted to address the space where the revolution occurred and explain some of its historic and socio-political significance. The reason for this was threefold. 1) The protesters made many references to Maidan. The protest was called *Euromaidan* (Ukr. *ievromaidan*: *ievro* [Europe] + *maidan*), and the protesters were *maidanovtsy* (*maidan* + *ovtsy* [people of]). A group of mobile protesters in cars contributed to the protests, and this was called *Avtomaidan* (*avto* [automobile] + *maidan*). And the pro-governmental countermovement was called *Antimaidan*, and often used derogatory terms for the *maidanovtsy*, such as *maidaunovtsy* (*maidan* + *daun*, for the medical condition Down's syndrome). 2) The protesters talked about the square with reverence, as if it were a physical manifestation of an ideal democratic institution. Several of my respondents perceived Maidan as a modern form of medieval public assemblies, such as the Old Slavic *Viche* or the Old Norse *Thing*. 3) Some of the physical characteristics of the square indicated that it was suitable, not only as a symbol, but also as a strategic location for protests.

In order to better understand the importance of Maidan, I turned my attention to concepts in political philosophy, such as Habermas's *public sphere* and Arendt's *public space*, and to architecture and urban planning (Kevin Lynch, 1960); but I did not find a satisfactory explanation for the success of Maidan Square as a protest space. At the same time, while working on the other (main) parts of the master's thesis, I realised that the chapter on Maidan was growing and threatening to become the main subject of the thesis. For this reason, I narrowed down the chapter and put some of my findings aside for a future project.

5.4.2 PhD proposal

From the first project draft, one of my main aims has been to examine the power of space, while at the same time researching the opposition in a region I know well and am very much intrigued by. The three countries (Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia) have—despite a similar historic and political background—very different forms of opposition, and the three capital cities are quite different from each other. Starting from this proposition, the original research questions were stated in the research proposal as follows:

> Are there urban spaces [similar to Maidan Square] in Russia and Belarus, in which the population can express their discontent? If so, where are these spaces located, what characterises them, how do they function [as public spaces] or why do they not function?[41]

These initial questions are not far removed from the current research question:

> How are mass protests affected by urban public space?

The difference is that the current question is more generalised, while the original questions were embedded within each of the case studies, expressed (with some variations) in the following, condensed manner:

> How is the opposition in Ukraine/Belarus/Russia affected by the urban public space in Kyiv/Minsk/Moscow?

The initial hypothesis, formulated in the research proposal was that…

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[41] From the research proposal (in Norwegian): "Finnes det tilsvarende rom i Russland og Hviterussland hvor befolkningen kan uttrykke sin misnøye? Hvor er i så fall disse, hva kjennetegner dem, hvordan fungerer de eller hvorfor fungerer de ikke? Dette ph.d-prosjektet tar sikte på å kartlegge, analysere og sammenligne offentlige byrom som brukes, eller inviterer til å brukes, til protester i Moskva, Minsk og Kyiv."

[…] not only reprehensible social, political, and economic conditions need to be present for larger demonstrations to occur, gain momentum/popular support, and persevere for a long time. The access to a symbolic gathering place that possesses a variety of practical and physical properties is probably a necessary condition, too.[42]

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Based on the methods, ethical considerations, and reservation described above, the next four sections describe how the initial hypothesis developed into a full-fledged theoretical model, from the various stages of theorising (5.5), through a development of a causality model (5.6), to the main study of Moscow (5.7), ending with the adjustments made to the theory after the main study (5.8).

5.5 Theorising

Starting from the initial hypothesis stated above, I had to conduct some initial examinations of the effects of urban public space on oppositional activity in order to identify the phenomenon's variables. The best option, by my estimation, was to perform a prestudy of Maidan Square, which I knew very well as a place with positive spatial characteristics.

5.5.1 Prestudy

Without much previous theoretical knowledge from urbanism, architecture, or sociology, I set out to describe Maidan Nezalezhnosti's effect on mass protests. Interestingly, even though spaces of contention had been discussed in a variety of cases (3.2), I could not find a theory that addressed why some locations were more suitable for protest than others. For this reason, I used Kevin Lynch's (1960) theories of urban planning (3.2.2) as a loose frame of reference to identify some key physical and social features of the square. This framework formed the basis for discussing the value of these features. The lack of a strict theoretical framework allowed me to cast my net wide and identify as many explanations as possible as to why Maidan had become Ukraine's preferred urban public space for mass protest.

The field work and interviews conducted in Kyiv during and after Euromaidan contributed considerably to my theorising and to my assessment of how the square was perceived in Ukraine. I also looked into academic literature on the square's history, daily uses, layout, and

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[42] "Min hypotese er at det ikke bare er kritikkverdige sosiale, politiske og økonomiske forhold som må være tilstede for at større demonstrasjoner skal oppstå, få moment/oppslutning og vare lenge. Tilgjengeligheten av et symbolsk samlingssted som innehar en rekke praktiske og fysiske egenskaper er antageligvis også et nødvendig forhold."

position, as well as its local and regional significance, and found that there were several reasons for the special significance and symbolic value of the square: Maidan's history, architecture, symbolic monuments, landmarks, and location all signify that it is a central part of Ukrainian history and represents a majority of the population. Its current and previous names[43] imply a revolutionary quality that can be perceived as a protest against Russian hegemony. Its visibility in the centre of the city, in a location of local, regional, and geopolitical significance (political, religious, and cultural), attracts national and international attention to protests, including media coverage. Additionally, it is easily defendable, hard to supress with normal policing strategies, and easy to get to and get away from. In Ukraine, Maidan is perceived as a safety valve in a corrupt and dysfunctional political system: the only place where the actions of the people are viewed as having a real impact on politics.

The first case study thus served to open up the field and identify some key categories in the relationship between space and protest. It confirmed that, in the Ukrainian context, my initial hypothesis was—at the very least—not wrong. Urban public space had a positive impact on contentious actions in the city, and my findings indicated that the spatial qualities of the square contributed to the success of Euromaidan. Moreover, since there seemed to be few theoretical approaches to the analysis of protest spaces, it led to the realisation that a new theoretical model was required if I was to take the analysis of urban space to the level I wanted.

5.5.2 Formulating a theory

The knowledge I gained from the prestudy led me to what Swedberg's terminology (2012) identifies as the second part of theorising: "naming, conceptualisation, using analogies, metaphors, and types, developing a tentative theory, including an explanation" (p. 14). Swedberg argues that naming, if possible, should be descriptive but simple, and he urges caution in inventing new words and expressions (pp. 19–20). I chose to name my model "a spatial perspective on mass protests" because this describes the essence of what I am trying to do—looking at mass protests from the viewpoint of space—and also employs accessible, clear, and consistent language.

Swedberg proposes a wide range of heuristic methods to conceptualise and "flesh out" the theory, to help the researcher understand the phenomenon he or she is studying. (Swedberg, 2012, pp. 23–24) I used analogies, such as comparing public space to democratic and/or

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[43] October Revolution Square, 1977–1991; Maidan Nezalezhnosti, since 1991.

representative institutions, or, in the case of an occupation protest, as a separate society. Another of Swedberg's suggested methods is testing explanations using counterfactual arguments. To take one example: a square with many entrances (such as Maidan) is arguably hard to control by the authorities. The counterfactual argument would be that a square with *few* entrances would by default be *easy* to control by the authorities.

Categorisation and typologies also emerged as efficient tools of theorising. Based on data from field work and interviews, 18 new elements with particular relevance to mass protests were added to Lynch's (1960) original five, and these were divided into three categories: perceived, social, and physical elements (see fig. 7). By naming the different parts of urban space and dividing them into categories, it became easier to discuss space based on its variations, but also to identify how different spaces contain many of the same or similar elements (floor, exits, entrances etc.). Categorisation was especially fruitful when combined with the counterfactual tool of "ideal types" (Swedberg, 2012, p. 25). What might be considered a perfect space for protests? What might be considered a functional space for displaying the might of the authorities, while also discouraging protests? This method highlights the use value of the different elements and categories of public spaces. Observing protests in Kyiv and Chișinău also led to the discovery that non-physical elements—such as the history of a space, people's relation to the space, its traditions and day-to-day usage, and so on—can affect protests, and should therefore also form part of the theory.

Perceived elements	Social elements	Physical elements
History	Paths	Location
Ideological symbols	Nodes	Size
Buildings	Buildings	Shape
Landmarks	Landmarks	Entrances
Monuments	Districts	Exits
History of protests	Traditions	Walls
	Official use	Floor
		Objects
		Obstacles
		Edges
		Public works
		Focal points

Figure 7: Elements of the city, from article 2 (Hansen, 2017, p. 36).

Following this unstructured conceptualising, the updated theoretical model consisted of mapping the spatial elements which, if properly identified and examined, would be a good

foundation for discussing the space's value as a protest location. Once this was combined with field work, interviews, and academic literature on history and past collective actions, I would be able to create a fuller picture of the possibilities and limitations that a given space provides.

5.5.3 Transitional study

In order to test my post-Kyivan spatial perspective, I needed a second case study. I had already planned a study of public space in Minsk, but it so happened that in 2016, while I was conceptualising and developing my model, mass protests flared up in the Moldovan capital Chișinău.[44] Still living in Kyiv, I decided to travel to Chișinău in August 2016 to establish whether the urban public space of Chișinău would make a suitable second case study.

Chișinău

There seemed to be many similarities between the Ukrainian and Moldovan cases. The international media had dubbed the social movement in the city "the Moldovan Maidan" ("'Maidan' pașnic la Chișinău," 2015; "Moldova\'s [sic] Maidan," 2016), partly because of the similarities with the initial Euromaidan protests in Kyiv in 2013 and partly because in Chișinău, too, the protesters occupied a central square. In 2015, they had established an encampment on Great National Assembly Square (*Piața Marii Adunări Naționale*), and parts of the opposition were working on organising a similar event in 2016. Both Moldova and Ukraine are post-Soviet countries with a history of widespread corruption. Both had experienced a colour revolution in the 2000s (Ukraine in 2004, Moldova in 2009), the aftermath of which still affected both countries. Both had a square in their capital cities where there was a tradition of mass protest. And Russian is spoken by a large minority in both countries, too.

However, when I arrived in Chișinău in August 2016, it immediately became clear to me that this would be a more difficult case study than Kyiv. First of all, even though many Moldovans speak English, Russian, or Ukrainian to a sufficient level, I encountered several Moldovans (especially young ones) who did not know or did not want to speak the two latter languages, while speaking very basic English. As I do not speak Romanian, I would not have access to a significant part of the population. Secondly, while Chișinău is a small city of approximately 686,000 inhabitants ("Populația și," n.d.), Kyiv is a metropolis with 2.9 million registered citizens ("Chysel'nist' naselennia," 2019). (The actual number of inhabitants is probably a great

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[44] These were part of a continuing protest movement against corruption in one of Europe's poorest countries. The protests of 2015–2016 were triggered by the disappearance of 1 billion USD from Moldovan banks, and were largely directed against the oligarch Vladimir Plahotniuc (see Całus, 2016).

deal higher ["Naselennia Kyïvs'koï ahlomeratsiï," 2019].) Additionally, although the centres of both cities were badly damaged during the Second World War and rebuilt as examples of Stalinist Soviet classist architecture, the architecture of the remaining parts of Chișinău differed a great deal from the architecture of Kyiv (topography, size of buildings, width of streets, layout, etc.). Thirdly, in Moldova, the culture (both traditional and popular) also came in no small degree from neighbouring Romania, which differs from Slavic, and especially Russian, culture. Fourthly, while Moldova is no more ethnically diverse than Ukraine, the tensions between Moldovans, Romanians, Russians, Ukrainians, and Gagauzians have been a bigger part of the political picture than ethnic tensions in Ukraine (at least up until 2014). Moldova has an unresolved conflict (from 1992) between Russia-supported separatists in the Transnistria Region in the East and an autonomous Gagauzian territory in the South, which in 2014 held a non-binding referendum in favour of declaring independence if Moldova joins the EU. Last but not least, there is a large social movement among Moldovans identifying themselves as ethnically Romanian, which calls for Moldova to unite with neighbouring Romania.

Although the goal of my second article was to create an approach that, in theory, would be applicable to all cities, it would complicate the theorising process and make comparison more difficult and speculative if I did not have a thorough knowledge and full command of my research material. I therefore decided to leave Great National Assembly Square and Chișinău as a possible case study for a later point. Nonetheless, I used the time allotted in Moldova to practice mapping the central square; learning about Moldova's political, cultural, and architectural history; conducting interviews; and talking to people I met about the situation in the country and their views about life, which, as stated repeatedly in this chapter, assisted me in theorising about space and protests in general.

Minsk

Leaving Chișinău aside, I turned my attention to Minsk, where I already had a network of friends and contacts. As I explored in chapter two, Minsk and Kyiv have many similarities (2.2), which make the differences stand out even more. While Ukraine's two revolutions of 2004–2005 and 2013–2014 were successful, the two attempted Belarusian colour revolutions of 2006 and 2010 were violently suppressed, and virtually no mass protest in Minsk has achieved any political impact during Aliaksandr Lukashėnka's 25-year reign. Moreover, the Belarusian opposition did not have a single preferred protest space. This could be attributed to the fact that Minsk was built post-WWII as a model Soviet city, with wide avenues, massive

buildings and open spaces—a style that Belarus' only president so far, Lukashėnka, has continued to endorse.

Based on the methods described above (5.1.1–5.1.3), I analysed two urban public spaces, October Square and Independence Square, which were used during Minsk's two failed Belarusian colour revolutions. This case study showed that the three categories (6.1) had (almost universally) a negative impact on mass protests in the city, and that there is little room for protests in Lukashėnka's meticulously controlled and highly Sovietised space. Finally, the article demonstrated that there was room and possible utility for my approach, even in places less suitable for protest, and that a spatial perspective could provide new insights into the difficulties facing the Belarusian opposition today.

5.6 Causal chains

At this point, the spatial perspective had developed from the observation of an idea into a hypothesis about the importance of urban public space, which had then been tested on a prestudy, developed into a tentative theory, and applied to a second case study.

Importantly, the transitional study identified some structural weaknesses in the model. It is one thing to provide a detailed description of a city and its spaces and then, in relation to previous actions, to discuss how protesters and protest organisers perceive the said space. An approach like this might give a good indication of the practical (dis-)advantages of a square. To prove a causality relation or effect is another matter. The model required a theory that linked the independent variable (urban public space) to the dependent variable (mass protests).

I therefore turned to process tracing (PT). Inspired by the methods used in criminology, PT was developed by the US political scientists Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey Checkel to study causality in political sciences and international relations. PT systematically traces causal mechanisms by finding and examining evidence for every observable point within causal chains between independent and dependent variables. Key pieces of evidence are described and analysed in order to prove (or falsify) a correlation between the variables of case studies. Additionally, PT recommends that all parts of a causality relationship are tested thoroughly and suggests using a mix of different methods, depending on the case study at hand. (Bennett & Checkel, 2015)

In *Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines*, Beach & Pedersen (2013) criticise the lack of a unified way to implement the PT approach, and provide a set of guidelines to overcome this limitation. They identify three main uses of process tracing, of which theory-

testing PT and theory-building PT are of particular relevance to this thesis. On one hand, theory-testing PT starts with a phenomenon and the mechanisms which propose to explain it, and examines case studies in order to find evidence supporting or undermining the hypotheses in the theory (pp. 14–16). Theory building PT, on the other hand, starts from the other side, with the case studies, and uses evidence to generate hypotheses for the mechanisms that create a phenomenon. In turn, these hypotheses are used to create a theory (pp. 16–18). Both approaches are adopted in my spatial perspective model.

From this point onwards, I expanded and regrouped the independent variables (i.e. the spatial elements).[45] I also found that the spatial elements could be assessed on the basis of the spatial qualities they formed. By analysing past events in Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova, I identified seven such spatial qualities: accessibility, mobility, defensibility/policeability, sense of safety, visibility, symbolic value, and motivation.

The dependent variables could in turn be subdivided into more practical units. I found that all mass protests have a preparation phase, an execution phase, and some level of impact. This could be used as a tool for assessing three areas potentially affected by urban public space: the emergence, realisation, and impact of mass protests.

Another key element of process tracing is that one should be equally thorough with all theories applied to a target phenomenon. Proving or falsifying one's own hypotheses is not considered more important than proving or disproving other people's hypotheses. These hypotheses are, essentially, other factors that may or may not affect the dependent variable. To identify such factors and other explanations of why protests sometimes occur and have great impact, I looked for explanations in academic literature on specific case studies, as well as the general conditions that could be found in the relevant literature on sociology and on colour revolutions (3.1).

For the model to work, it had to examine not only how spatial qualities affect the emergence, realisation, and impact of mass protests, but also the impact of space on other factors. For example, in the case of Belarus, research literature often finds that the sense of national identity within the country is prevalently weak (e.g. Törnquist-Plewa, 2001, p. 81; Rudling, 2008). Rather than dismissing this as a rival hypothesis to explain the low impact of previous mass protests, the Belarusian identity—which to a large extent is based on Belarus's Soviet past and

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[45] Three elements (emotions, feelings, associations) were added to the perceived elements and put in a separate subcategory, based on methodology (6.1.1); one element was removed (obstacles); one was added (open/empty space), and one element changed name (from traditions to traditional use). These changes were made in order to clarify the independent variables.

Lukashėnkian present—could be examined with a view to how it is reinforced by the city's perceived elements (6.1.1). The Soviet monumentality of the city creates an urban space that confirms the grandeur and immortality of the stable status quo, and might lessen people's motivation to go out and join a protest.

Because such spatial and non-spatial factors might have a correlative effect on mass protests, the factors have been grouped together as the collective term "political environment"; a term originating in POS theory. See subsection 3.1.4 for an overview of the political environment.

The model is illustrated with two figures. Figure 8 (below) is a (theoretical) diagram of the causality, while figure 9 (next chapter) explains how the causality (methodologically) can be found. The figures demonstrate that the combined effect of spatial qualities (shaped by the spatial elements) and other factors in the political environment can significantly affect urban mass protests.
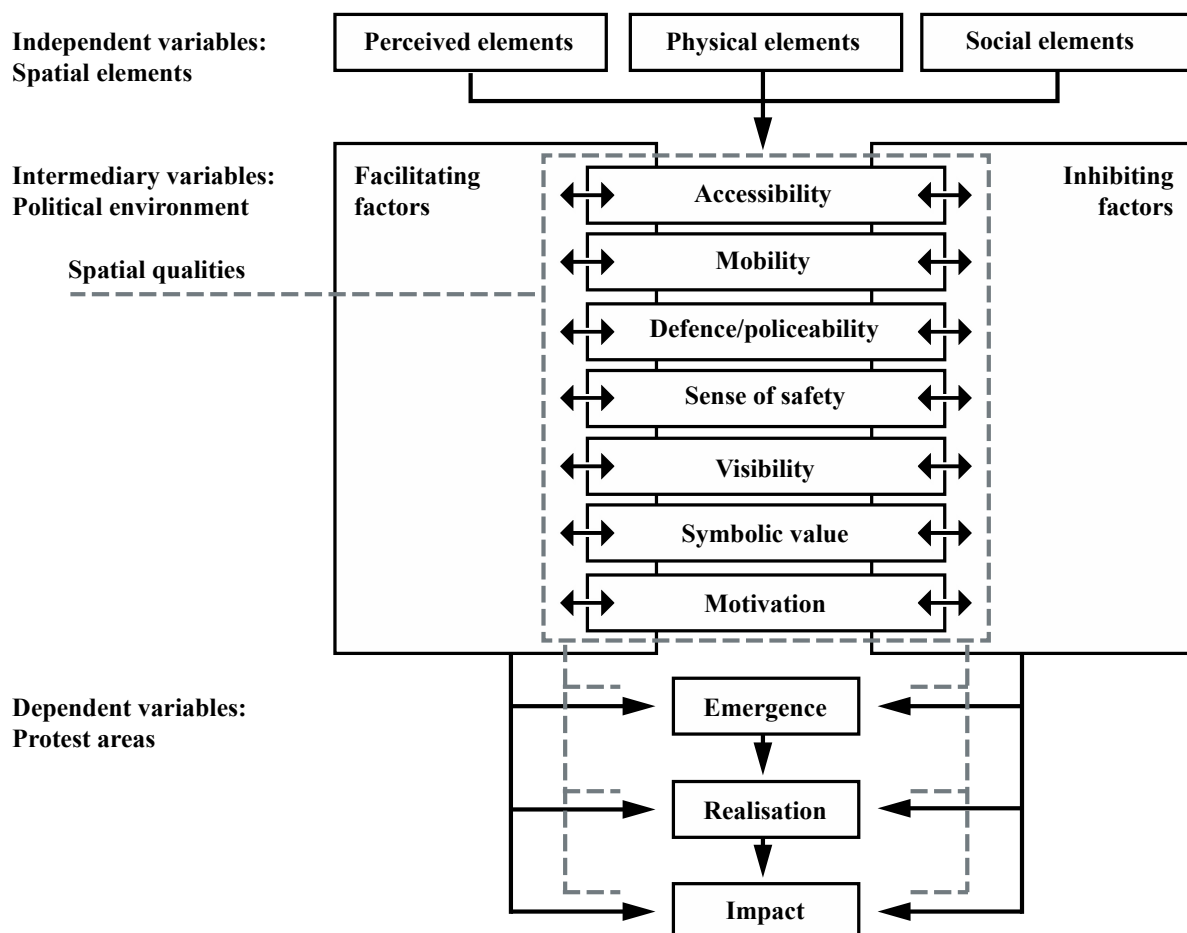

Figure 8: Causality diagram. Arrows (→) signify effect.

5.7 Main study

The third step of theory building consists of testing the model to see how it works when applied to a case study. In addition to the similarities and differences between Moscow, Kyiv and Minsk (see 2.2), the Russian capital was chosen because it is a metropolis consisting of a wide range of different spaces. Moreover, while Maidan is a space almost universally suited for protest, and October and Independence squares in Minsk almost universally unsuited, there are multiple urban public spaces in Moscow that have a history of protest, with varied outcomes.

The article on Moscow became more of a theoretical paper than the previous two articles, as the object of the study was not only to see how space in the city creates opportunities and obstacles for the Russian opposition (which had been done in the transitional study), but primarily to test the more complex theoretical model and argue that the spatial perspective is useful as a methodological tool. An argumentation of this type needs plenty of room. It was therefore necessary either to apply the model to only one urban space, or to discard most descriptions from the within-case studies conducted. The former option seemed the most logical, as the argumentation needed examples in order to be effective, and so the article was divided in two parts: one theoretical, which describes the model; and another practical, in which the model is applied.

Swamp Square was chosen from five possible within-case studies (Manège Square, Triumph Square, Pushkin Square, Sakharov Avenue, and Swamp Square), all urban spaces in proximity to the political centre, or—as is the case with the latter two—spaces which were previously sanctioned by the authorities for mass demonstrations. Because of its location, Swamp Square was chosen for the March of Millions collective action during the *For free elections* protest wave in Russia in 2011–2012, which would have negative consequences for the Russian opposition for years to come. My major reservation about choosing this within-case study was that, like the two squares in Minsk, it provided almost universally negative spatial qualities. Yet, compared to the two squares in Minsk, it was negative for a different set of reasons[46] and, since my goal was to study an urban space that had been significant for the outcome of previous protests, Swamp Square emerged as an obvious choice. Additionally, both to make space for

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[46] A major difference is that while October Square and Independence Square in Minsk are wide-open spaces, with little room for the protesters to move or hide, Swamp Square is claustrophobic since it is closed on all sides and offers only limited visibility.

the theory and for practical/ethical reasons (5.2.1), I decided not to use respondents for the third case study.

The case study of Swamp Square demonstrates that the square's physical, perceived, and social spatial elements form qualities that might discourage people from starting or joining an action in said square. Swamp Square has a negative symbolic value, is not particularly visible in spite of its central location, and its layout greatly affects the protesters' room to manoeuvre (amongst other things). The spatial qualities of Swamp Square create obstacles to the realisation of protest, and the space does little to increase the impact of the protest on national politics or society.

On a more general level, the case study shows that the spatial perspective could be used as a tool for assessing the use value of urban public space for mass protest, and that it can provide new insights into the understanding of the political and spatial contention in the city. It can also provide a practical "wrapping" for descriptions of how political control is asserted.

5.8 Post-test theorising

Some minor tweaks to the theoretical model were added following the main study of Moscow, and these require comment.

Firstly, the causal connections in the model are more fully explained in section 5.6 and in chapter 6 than in the article itself. Secondly, the spatial qualities have been expanded with a proposed list of elements and other qualities thought to have a hypothetical impact, as well as some key questions that can be asked in order to assess various spatial qualities (6.2.1). Thirdly, the methodological structure of figure 9 has been added to clarify the process of identifying points in the causality chain. Fourthly, a list of micro, meso, and macro factors which may or may not influence protests, and an overview of the political environment (fig. 4 and 5, respectively), have been added to systematise the non-spatial factors in the political environment. And fifthly, the causal mechanisms described in figure 8 have been updated with a separate line between the spatial qualities and the protest areas. This is to emphasise that these qualities may have a direct impact on protests regardless of the other factors in the political environment (e.g. the size of an urban space).

6   Variables and methodology

The previous chapter provided a description of the theorising process, including an overview of the three case studies and an explication of the spatial perspective. This chapter proceeds to a detailed elaboration of the variables in the model. The independent variables are described in section 6.1, the intermediary variables in section 6.2, and the dependent variables in section 6.3, in addition to the specific methods used to gather information about the variables.

Figure 9 outlines the methodology used to trace the causal relationship between urban public space and mass protests.

A	Urban public space can be observed, and a variety of qualitative methods can produce empirical data for describing single elements and categories of elements.	
B	When spatial elements are seen in combination, certain spatial qualities can be induced on the basis of logical reasoning.	
C	Based on the spatial qualities, three main types of hypotheses can be made:	
	1	Hypotheses about the effect of spatial qualities on three protest areas (emergence, realisation, impact).
	2	Hypotheses about the correlation between spatial qualities and non-spatial intermediary variables in the political environment – i.e., how they affect each other.
	3	Hypotheses about the cumulative effect (of spatial qualities and non-spatial intermediary variables in the political environment) on three protest areas.
D	The hypotheses may be confirmed or disproved by:	
	1	Observation
	2	Interviews
	3	Research literature
E	Finally, all other non-spatial factors should be examined with a view to their effect (independent of space) on the three protest areas.	

Figure 9: Methodology.

6.1 Independent variables

The independent variables need to be reintroduced in their current form, since their categorisations have changed several times during their development. Notably, figure 7, which

is used in article 2 (2017, p. 36) differs from figure 10, below (from article 3, 2019, p. 5) (5.6fn. for an accurate description of the changes made).

Perceived (subjective) elements		Physical elements	Social elements
Measurable:	Abstract:	Measurable:	Measurable:
History	Emotions	Location	Traditional use
Ideological symbols	Feelings	Size	Official use
Buildings	Associations	Shape	Districts
Monuments		Entrances	Paths
History of protests		Exits	Nodes
Landmarks		Walls	
		Floor	
		Objects	
		Edges	
		Public works	
		Focal points	
		Open/empty space	

Figure 10: Independent variables.

To facilitate the gathering of data and the analysis itself, the elements have been divided into three categories which are described in the following three subsections, together with the main methods used to gather information about them. It should be noted that the definitions of these elements may occasionally be fleeting and overlapping. This is especially true for the perceived elements, which are mostly cognitive in nature. However, the purpose of identifying and describing the elements is not to create a definite categorisation of separate elements, but to provide a detailed enough data set for a systematised induction of spatial qualities.

6.1.1 Perceived elements

The first category of elements contains the non-physical objects of urban public space that are experienced subjectively. Some of the perceived elements come in physical forms, such as monuments and buildings. When the physicality of such perceived elements is discussed, they are categorised as physical elements, such as objects and walls (see corresponding elements below, 6.1.2).

The perceived elements have been divided into two subcategories based on the methods that can best be utilised to map them. While the first category contains measurable elements that can be found by reading research literature and by analysing their meaning and possible impact, the second subcategory involves personal emotions, feelings, and associations (i.e. mental

connections)—elements that can only be found qualitatively in conversations and interviews with protesters and organisers, or in research literature and museum exhibitions based on such qualitative sources.

Perceived elements should also be examined with a view to who perceives them. Two groups might, for example, relate to a symbol in widely different ways (see for example Thornton, 1996, on the perception of the Confederate flag in the Southern US). The researcher's own subjective perception (through field work) of a space might be added as a complementary source. Although data of this type might not provide an accurate representation of how the space is perceived by the general population, it can form the basis of discussion with respondents.

History includes the circumstances in which an urban public space first came to be; who created it and for what purpose; who has used it and for what purposes since; previous names of the space; what destructions or reconstructions have occurred in it and in its proximity.

Ideological symbols might appear in the form of monuments or buildings with special significance, but could also include abstractions about the status of a place or an object: for example, the Bastille in July 1789, or the abstract notion of Maidan as a popular assembly.

The **buildings** in a space can, as explained in subsection 3.2.2, express power. Who owns the buildings in and around the space, what they signify and what feelings the architecture invokes might all be meaningful in order to understand how they are perceived by the various actors in society.

The potential power of **monuments** lies in their ability to evoke feelings and emotions, in much the same way as architecture. But monuments are also references to points in history or historical persons, and they often have a pragmatic (i.e. unifying) purpose. This might, however, not always be the only effect. See, for example, how the Independence Monument in Kyiv is referred to by nicknames such as "the pole" (Hansen, 2016, p. 123/6).

The **history of protests** is closely related to the history element. It is singled out as a separate element because it contains important information about the history and repertoires of contention (or lack thereof) in a given space. Which protests have occurred in the space and in the city? What was the result of previous protests? What are the traditional repertoires of contention and repertoires of policing here (3.1.1), and what changes have they undergone?

Kevin Lynch defines **landmarks** as points of reference that people do not enter. "Some landmarks are typically seen from many angles and distances, over the tops of smaller elements,

and used as radial references. […] Other landmarks are primarily local, being visible only in restricted localities and from certain approaches." Thus, Lynch differentiates between major landmarks, such as towers and tall monuments, and smaller landmarks, such as "signs, store fronts, trees […]". (Lynch, 1960, p. 48)

Emotions and **feelings** represent two complex and interconnected elements that may be generated by space. While there is no clearly defined difference between the two, the former is usually seen as instinctive and the latter as a combination of emotions and thoughts (i.e. processed emotions). Both can trigger physical and psychological reactions and influence people's behaviour.

Finally, space often comes with a single **association** or sets thereof. These associations might be connected with past events, monuments, architecture, social and physical elements (see next subsections), etc.

6.1.2 Physical elements

In contrast to the first, the second category of elements is tangible and fully measurable. The most important method for gathering data about physical elements is mapping (5.1.3), from which a great deal can be learned about an urban space. Field work should also be part of the examination, in order to fully describe the physical elements involved; and interviews could be added to gain information not easily mapped or found during field work. A respondent can, for example, inform the researcher of alternative entrances that are not visible, or easily located by the uninitiated.

The **location** of an urban space is to a large degree defined by its distance from practical or symbolic points of interest, including proximity to political institutions (see for example Lee, 2009 on the location of Tiananmen Square), to physical manifestations of whom or what the protests are directed against (e.g. Wall Street during OWS), and to nodes (6.1.3).

The **size** and **shape** of urban space are important for a number of practical reasons, including walking distances, the number of people that can fit into the space simultaneously, their overview of the space, and how visible they are within it.

Entrances and **exits** are often the same thing, but are kept as separate categories because they might facilitate one-way movement only (e.g. a police blockade which only allows for movement in one direction).

Walls are a form of tall edges that potentially limit movement. The shape and layout of the walls can affect a number of qualities, including visibility, sense of safety, policing, etc.

The urban **floor** might consist of various materials (cobblestone, asphalt, grass), colours, obstacles (fences, signs, kiosks), heights, etc. The floor affects the overall feel of a place, might hinder or enhance movement, produce noise (e.g. traffic on cobblestones), or become improvised weaponry (cobblestones again).

Virtually all **objects** in an urban space may have an effect on crowds, and should therefore be examined. For instance, kiosks, benches, signs, and fountains, which might appear as obstacles, platforms for addressing a crowd, etc. The element is included in this list because it is important to map, or at least consider, everything.

According to Lynch, **edges** are "linear elements not used or considered as paths […]." They include, but are not limited to, "railroad cuts, edges of development, walls", water fronts, rivers, and façades. They "may be barriers, more or less penetrable […], or they may be seams, lines along which two regions are related and joined together." (1960, p. 47).

Public works are infrastructure, resources, public buildings, services, and utilities, "constructed for public use or enjoyment especially when financed and owned by the government" (Public works, n.d.). Electricity, sewage, schools, tram rails etc. are included in this category. This element may be of importance for the maintenance of a protest that continues for weeks or months.

Focal points can be defined as "a center of activity, attraction, or attention" (Focus, n.d.): in other words, the most prominent elements (e.g. landmarks, monuments, and buildings) that attract a viewer's attention. Examples include the Independence Monument in Kyiv (Hansen, 2016, p. 123/6) or the Palace of the Republic in Minsk (Hansen, 2017, pp. 41–42)

Finally, **open/empty spaces** might be important, too, as they can be used both for movement and to contain people or vehicles. Therefore, they should also be mapped with regard to size, shape, etc.

6.1.3 Social elements

The third category consists of various uses of space, and the social elements are based on the architectural and urbanistic literature reviewed in subsection 3.2.2. The collection of data on social elements is mainly based on field work and mapping, but the data can be checked and improved by presenting and discussing findings with respondents.

Traditional use describes the traditions connected with the usage of a space by the public (i.e. the citizens). This includes daily and cultural uses and interactions (e.g. shopping, dates, tourism, rites and rituals, etc.), whether recurrent (such as ice skating, yoga or parkour) or sporadic (e.g. unofficial fairs and flash mobs). The difference between traditional use and history (perceived element) is that, while history represents the past, traditional use is in the present. This element also includes who uses particular bits of space and when.

Official use is similar to traditional use, since it also describes the daily, recurrent or sporadic uses of the space. The difference is that the latter is arranged by local, regional, or national authorities. Examples are festivals, religious celebrations, parades, etc. The data can be complemented by official sources (e.g. government websites).

Districts are described by Lynch as "medium-to-large sections of the city, conceived of as having two-dimensional extent, which [one] mentally enters 'inside of,' and which are recognizable as having some common, identifying character" (Lynch, 1960, p. 47). Different districts are used by different people at different times, and the perception of an urban public space in a district might be affected by the general feel of said district and vice versa.

Paths are "the channels along which [one] customarily, occasionally, or potentially moves. These may be streets, walkways, transit lines, […]" (Lynch, 1960, p. 47). This element shows how people move in relation to the space.

Nodes are "points, the strategic spots in a city into which an observer can enter, and which are the intensive foci to and from which he is traveling" (Lynch, 1960, p. 47). Nodes therefore include transportation hubs; meeting places; places were paths start, stop, or cross; places of interest, and so on.

The three latter elements (districts, paths, nodes) all have a great potential effect on protests, particularly on their visibility. In a contentious setting, the users of the district within which the space is located will have a greater chance of noticing a mass action; the same applies to the people who use paths on or along the protesters' space. The visibility is even greater when a number of paths end or intersect on the space, and thus constitute nodes. Compare, for instance, the visibility of Manège Square and Swamp Square in Moscow. The former is located in a district frequented by large amounts of people, in proximity to a number of paths, several of which intersect and end (as nodes) on Manège Square itself. Conversely, the latter is in a sparsely used district with few paths nearby and with virtually no nodes of importance (Hansen, 2019, pp. 16).

6.2 Intermediary variables

The second level of causality consists of the intermediary variables, which include both spatial qualities and non-spatial factors in the political environment.

6.2.1 Spatial qualities

The spatial qualities can be found by means of inductive reasoning. Some of the qualities are testable (e.g. accessibility and visibility), while others are less concrete (e.g. symbolic value and motivation). Here, the object of reasoning is to create a sense of the facilitating and/or inhibiting factors collectively provided by spatial elements.

The following list is retrieved from article 3 (Hansen, 2019, pp. 6–7), and has been expanded with a proposed list of elements and other qualities of hypothetical impact, as well as some key questions that can be asked in order to assess various spatial qualities.

"**Accessibility** affects several aspects of a protest, such as getting to a location, furnishing protesters with necessary supplies, and the possibility for people to join the protest spontaneously." (p. 6)

- Accessibility may be affected by physical elements (location, entrances, walls, objects, edges, public works) and social elements (paths, nodes).
- Questions to pose: How easy is it to get to the space? How is it controlled and by whom? Is it public (i.e. open to all)?

"**Mobility** is closely related to accessibility, yet it includes the protesters' ability to move and be flexible, once they are on location. Some tactics, such as demonstrations starting from a space occupied by protesters, is harder to organise if the public space has few exits, many obstacles or can be easily surrounded by police forces." (p. 6)

- Mobility may be affected by physical elements (location, shape, entrances, exits, walls, objects, edges, public works), social elements (paths, nodes), and accessibility.
- Questions to pose: How easy is it to move from the space to other places? Are there many possibilities for movement? What means of transportation are available?

"The level of difficulty in **defending** and/or **policing** a space is important for the realisation of protests in societies where protests are either unsanctioned or have a high probability of being met with hostility, provocations, violence, and/or arrests." (p. 7)

- Defensibility/policeability may be affected by physical elements (size, shape, entrances, exits, walls, floor, objects, edges, open/empty space), and spatial qualities (accessibility, mobility, motivation).

- Questions to pose: How vulnerable is the space to police tactics? Is the space easy to surround and 'kettle'? How easy or difficult is it to block movement to the space (i.e. are there many roads that need to be blocked)? Are there any physical obstacles that would stop police vehicles or inhibit police movement? How are coercive, persuasive, and informative policing strategies (3.1.1) affected by the space?

"The **sense of safety** is shaped by the physical layout of space (see for example Dosen & Oswald, 2016, on the prospect refuge theory), as well as the protesters' actual ability to defend themselves (e.g. against heavy-handed policing)." (p. 7)

- Sense of safety may be affected by perceived elements (history of protests, emotions, feelings, associations), physical elements (location, size, shape, entrances, exits, walls, objects, edges, open/empty space) and spatial qualities (defensibility/policeability, mobility, visibility (internal).

- Questions to pose: Does the space induce feelings of protection and/or refuge (3.2.2)? Does the space provide protesters with opportunities to get away if they are met with provocation or violence?

"**Visibility** is, on the one hand, the protesters' ability to be seen externally, by the public, by the authorities, by national and international observers and audiences (including media outlets). Visibility might thus affect the number of outside people who notice and observe the action. On the other hand, visibility is internal. It is the protesters' ability to see what is going on around them, and it affects their coordination and communication within the protest camp." (p. 7)

- Visibility may be affected by perceived elements (monuments, landmarks), physical elements (all), social elements (all), and spatial qualities (accessibility, mobility).

- Questions to pose: How noticeable are protests in the space, by whom are they noticeable, and in which parts of the city? How much can protesters see within the space? How much can they perceive of what is going on outside the space?

"Several elements influence the **symbolic value** of a space, ranging from the physical (e.g. its proximity to the institutions targeted) to the social (whether the protesters are occupying a space commonly used by others), and to the perceived (such as the history of a space, and the outcome of previous collective actions)." (p. 7)

– Symbolic value may be affected by perceived elements (all), and a physical element (location).

– Questions to pose: What does the space mean, and for which sections of the public? How important is the space?

"Finally, **motivation** is perhaps the most important of the spatial qualities, since it has a direct impact on the number of participants of a collective action and their belief in the potential of achieving their goals (I elaborate on the goals of protests in Hansen, 2019, pp. 7–8). This quality is shaped both by physical and perceived elements, as well as other spatial qualities (e.g. sense of safety – if it feels safe, the chances of going out to protest might be higher)." (p. 7)

– Motivation may be affected by perceived elements (all), social elements (all), and spatial qualities (defensibility/policeability, sense of safety, visibility, symbolic value).

– Questions to pose: Are people more or less willing to join in when the protest is taking place in this particular space?

6.2.2 The political environment

The political environment is understood as "a generic term used variously in the literature of political science to refer to, among other things, aspects of formal political structure, the climate of governmental responsiveness, social structure, and social stability" (Eisinger, 1973, p. 11). In other words, it is the context of and location in which contention (might) occur, and it comprises a wide range of factors and conditions. The methods for identifying such factors may differ from study to study. However, for research on a post-Soviet region such as this, McFaul's (2005) seven conditions (or a similar type of checklist) is a good starting point (see 3.1.3 and 3.1.4). It should nevertheless be complemented by case-specific research literature.

Having identified the presence or absence of factors in the political environment, two questions can be asked about their correlative effect: 1) How do these factors affect the spatial qualities? and 2) How do the spatial qualities affect the factors?

This correlative effect can be illustrated by an example from article 2 (Hansen, 2017). McFaul states that a necessary condition for a colour revolution to occur is that there must be a modicum of independent media. In Minsk, where virtually all media outlets are controlled by the government, this condition is not present (p. 54); which, according to McFaul, diminishes the chances of a colour revolution occurring. Additionally, the visibility of Minsk's two main protest squares is limited, which enhances the effect of McFaul's condition, since protests in areas with little visibility are more dependent on mass media to get their message out.

6.3 Dependent variables

The third level of analysis brings in the systematic creation of hypotheses about the political environment's impact on three areas of mass protests, as well as the testing of these hypotheses. The testing includes observation and/or interviews with protesters, protest organisers, and observers.

6.3.1 Emergence

"Emergence" means the protesters and protest organisers' ability to "organise and implement an action" (Hansen, 2019, p. 8). This includes planning, informing, and mobilising people to protest. This crucial part of protest is probably more affected by non-spatial factors in the political environment (such as intolerable living standards or the presence of widespread election fraud) than by spatial qualities, and should therefore be identified by other means (e.g. sociological: POS, CAT, RMP, etc.). Space should nonetheless be considered as a contributing factor. As demonstrated in all three articles, spatial qualities such as *motivation* and *sense of safety* may encourage (2016, p. 130–132/13–14) or discourage people from protesting (2017, pp. 36–37, 44; 2019, p. 18).

The optimal way of testing whether the spatial qualities affect the emergence of protest would be to conduct qualitative interviews with a large number of protesters, during or right after a protest. However, this may not always be practically possible.

6.3.2 Realisation

"Realisation" is understood here as "the protesters' ability to execute their planned action (their level of communication, coordination, and organisation, how they are resisting aggressive policing, and so on)" (Hansen, 2019, p. 8). This area of protest is affected by all the spatial qualities and may greatly facilitate and/or inhibit protest. Nevertheless, non-spatial independent variables may also have an effect here, and these should be analysed as well.

Hypotheses formed about the spatial qualities are best confirmed by direct observation of protests in the space, but research literature, video footage, and/or interviews with participants or observers of an action might also provide data to corroborate or contradict these hypotheses.

6.3.3 Impact

"Impact" means the protesters' "ability to be seen and to use this visibility effectively in order to change public discourse, policy, or leadership." These three points flow directly from the

protesters' goals, which I identified through my qualitative interviews with members of the opposition in Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, and Russia. Based on these conversations, the goals of virtually all mass protests relate to change: change of public discourse, change of policy, or change of regime. These goals are interrelated and overlapping, and one goal often evolves into another (Hansen, 2019, pp. 7–8).

Three spatial qualities have a direct influence on a protest's impact: namely visibility, defensibility/policeability, and symbolic value. External visibility naturally affects the number of people who notice the protest; as does defensibility, especially in authoritarian regimes where the length of time people stand and protest (and thus get noticed) is greatly affected by their ability to withstand coercive policing strategies. Finally, the symbolic value of the space may influence impact, which is why most protest organisers prefer to protest outside political institutions (e.g. Manège Square in Moscow) or in urban spaces with a history of successful protest (Triumph Square), rather than a secluded space with an unimpressive name (Swamp Square).

As with emergence and realisation, impact too may be influenced by other, non-spatial factors in the political environment, such as popular support of the regime, levels of control over the media, etc. These factors may be identified with the help of sociological methods (e.g. POS theory), and possibly also discourse analysis.

7 To Paris and beyond

Found the protesters on [*Place de la République…*]. Police [try to] control the streets [leading] to [Champs-Élysées] [,] separate the protesters in groups. Protesters [still] managed to communicate and regroup […]. Getting closer and closer to the city centre.

Paris, 6th January 2019

Urban public space is not just open areas between buildings. It is where interactions, recreation, deliberations, and contention occur, and these are vital for the functioning of our political systems. How these spaces are shaped, what they contain, how they are used, and how they are subjectively perceived—by the people, by the authorities, and by observers—affect our political systems and influence society in several ways.

This project is not the first to highlight geography as important for mass protest. A long history of urban contention bears witness to the power of space, and a range of academic disciplines explains this importance from different points of view. But what effects exactly do urban spaces have on mass protests? And how can these effects be measured? The aim of this article-based thesis has been to develop a theoretical model for assessing the limitations and possibilities urban public spaces provide, for the first time, in a structured and generalised way. The three articles, which supply case studies from the East Slavic region, illustrate and contribute to the development of this model:

The prestudy of Kyiv was written to open up the field and establish the effects Maidan—a space with a history of successful mass protests—has on contention in the city and country. Maidan supplies protesters with visibility, room enough for tens of thousands of protesters, and a powerful symbolic significance—whether the protest is against corruption, election fraud, or against a Russian-leaning president. The square is easily accessible and creates flexibility and mobility. If there is a sufficient number of protesters, Maidan provides them with a sense of safety, since it is difficult for the police to control, clear, or hinder movement to the square. To put the findings of the first article in terms of my current theoretical framework, Maidan's spatial elements produce favourable conditions for the protesters, and these, despite some unfavourable conditions in the political environment, laid the foundation for the success of Euromaidan and other protests before it. (Hansen, 2016)

The transitional study adds a new dimension to the understanding of how and why demonstrations might fail, as it investigates the widely different space of Minsk. The already marginalised opposition in Belarus is affected negatively by the capital's urban space. The architecture of the city symbolises the greatness and success of the Soviet Union and President Lukashėnka, and the only two squares near the political centre with enough room for thousands of protesters are not much frequented, easy to police, and hard to defend. They do not offer much in terms of accessibility, communication, or movement. These aspects are limiting in an already autocratic society in which law enforcement agencies and the media are directly controlled from the top down. Minsk is thus a negative case study, which shows that the elements of the city's two main squares produce spatial conditions that, combined with the repressive factors in the political environment, greatly limit the possibilities for the opposition in the city to express itself in the form of mass protests (Hansen, 2017).

The main test-study takes the theoretical model a step further and explicates the structure of the causal mechanisms between urban space and mass protests in Moscow, followed by a case study of Swamp Square, to which the spatial perspective is applied in its current form. While Moscow has many urban public spaces, several of which provide room for thousands of people and are located in the middle of, and in proximity to, the political centre, the Russian authorities have chosen a different tactic than their Belarusian colleagues to diminish the emergence, realisation, and impact of urban protests. Protests critical of the regime are permitted to manifest in urban spaces with poor spatial qualities, such as the distant Sakharov Avenue or the secluded Swamp Square. Swamp Square provides the police with full control over the protesters, which are effectively at the authorities' mercy. Protests here are largely invisible and have little room for movement and a very negative symbolic value. The third article thus shows that the spatial elements of Swamp Square in Moscow produce negative spatial qualities that hinder protests from emerging, realising their potential, and having an impact (Hansen, 2019).

In sum, urban public space can affect mass protests in a variety of ways.

For reasons explained in chapter 2 (2.2), this study has been limited to a single geographic and cultural region. How does the model fare when it is applied to a case study in another political environment? In the following section, the primary and secondary research questions outlined in chapter 4 (4.3) are presented in the form of a pilot study, in order to show how the theory can be practically applied to a case study outside the former Soviet Union. This pilot study is not intended to be a full study, but to demonstrate the potential of the spatial perspective for further

studies in different and wider contexts. Therefore, some of the methods have not been fully applied and others only in a limited extent.

After this practical demonstration, I provide a summary of the contents of this thesis and its findings, followed by a discussion of the utility of the spatial perspective model and a few suggestions for how it can be developed further.

7.1 Republic Square and the Yellow Vests

As outlined in chapter 2, the urban conditions of late-eighteenth-century Paris fostered discontent, and gave the revolutionaries of the time the chance to gain upper hand in their struggle against the monarchy by barricading the narrow streets (2.1.1). Several troublesome decades later, after many upheavals, insurgencies, riots, and revolutions, Paris was radically renovated in a grandiose reform project (1853–1870), supervised by the prefect Georges-Eugène Haussmann. One consequence of Hausmann's project was that several conditions for urban discontent disappeared, along with many opportunities supplied to insurgents by the previous shape of the city. A new underground sewer system and large, illuminated open spaces were effective means to battle disease and criminality, while plenty of new open squares and straight wide avenues provided troops with enough room for manoeuvre and made new weaponry such as muskets and cannons effective against crowds of urban rioters.

A century and a half later, in November 2018, contention arose in the city once more. A social movement known as the Yellow Vests (Fr.: *Mouvement des gilets jaunes*) organised several mass actions against the government in urban centres in France, and new protests were planned in the capital for 5 and 6 January 2019. This provided a good opportunity for me to visit the city to see how the spatial environment of this "birthplace" of urban contention affects protests in the twenty-first century.

Applying the model

In chapter four (4.3) the primary research question for this thesis is stated as follows:

> How are mass protests affected by urban public space?

In order to analyse the spatial conditions of Paris, this question can be adjusted and narrowed down significantly by focusing only on Republic Square (Fr.: *Place de la République*) and the collective action by the Yellow Vests I observed there on 6 January 2019. This should provide sufficient data for testing the spatial perspective by asking:

> How was the French Yellow Vests' action of 6 January 2019 affected by the spatial
> features of Republic Square, Paris?

To answer such a question, a theoretical framework is needed, which leads to the following secondary research question:

1. What should a theoretical model exploring the causal connections between urban public space and mass protests look like?

A spatial perspective on protest in Paris needs to explore the causal links between space (the independent variable) and protest (the dependent variable). As discussed in chapter 5, there are pitfalls in geographical determination that should be avoided (5.3). For this reason, other factors in the political environment in Paris and France must also be identified and analysed in order to establish their effects on protest. (A more thorough answer to this secondary research question is elaborated in chapter 5). This proposed model leads to four new secondary questions:

2. What variables does Republic Square include?

First of all, Republic Square has symbolic and historic value, and it produces various feelings, emotions, memories, and associations, which people can relate to and may be affected by. (For a detailed description of perceived elements, see chapter 6, 6.1.1.) This specific urban space contains several symbols related to the French Republic, including its name, history, and central monument.

Republic Square was given its current name during Hausmann's post-revolutionary and radical city development in 1879, which included this particular square. The Monument to the French Republic (Fr.: *Le monument à la République*), the centrepiece of the square, consists of a 9.5-metre-tall figure of a woman in bronze standing on a 15.5-metre-high pedestal in marble (Didier, n.d.). The woman is Marianne, the symbolic figure used by revolutionaries during the French Revolution, who is seen as a symbol and an embodiment of the French Republic ("Marianne", 2014). Other notable symbols are the national motto—Liberty, Equality, Fraternity (Fr.: *Liberté, égalité, fraternité*)—represented in three smaller statues, along with a bronze lion symbolising universal suffrage; a bronze ballot box for democracy; and a series of bronze reliefs from important events in the history of the revolution and in the life of the French Republic (Didier, n.d.). Thus, the monument evokes a wide range of associations, most of which are directly or indirectly revolutionary and related to women.

The actions of protesters, police, and commercial interests (in the form of a pink van, see below) on 5 and 6 January bear witness to a strong sense of repertoires of contention in Paris. One of these ROCs includes Republic Square itself, which has been used for numerous mass actions in its history of protest (6.1.1). Demonstrations in Paris often start at the symbolic Bastille Square (Fr.: *Place de la Bastille*) and march up to the larger (and no less symbolic) Republic Square.[47]

Figure 11: Republic Square, Paris. Photo: Google Maps.

Secondly, Republic Square consists of a range of physical elements. (For a detailed description of physical elements, see 6.1.2.) It is located on the intersection between several main avenues, about 2 km from the Louvre Museum. After a major redesign in 2013, it went from a heavily trafficked roundabout to Paris' largest pedestrian square (it is approximately 120 by 300 metres) (Frearson, 2014). It is rectangular, surrounded by roads on all four sides (although the traffic on its north-eastern side is regulated to low levels), and with entrances and exits in all directions. Except for the monument as the focal point in the middle, a few lines of trees—generously spaced—a café in the north-western corner and an abundance of benches, there are few objects on the square, which generally feels open. The central monument is the square's only massive structure.

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[47] Notably during the mass protests on the verge of revolution in May 1968 (Keller, 2018), as well several more recent actions. For instance, the protests against the Israeli offensive in Gaza in 2014 (Rose, 2014); it was here the "I am Charlie" (Fr.: *Je suis Charlie*) demonstrations occurred in 2015 (Fage, 2015), and the Standing Up All Night (Fr.: *Nuit Debout*) protests in 2016 (Harsin, 2018); etc.

Thirdly, Republic Square has daily, official, and traditional uses. (For a detailed description of social elements, see 6.1.3.) Although I have not observed or researched the space at great length, the square seems to be popular amongst Parisians, including people out strolling, young skateboarders, and tourists. The latter group is probably attracted by the points of interest in the vicinity of the public space.[48] It is situated along several paths for pedestrians, cars, and public transportation, and five metro lines stop underneath at Republic Metro Station (Fr.: *Republique*).

3.   What variables does the Yellow Vests' action of 6 January 2019 include?

Any protest consists of a context, set of actors, and three protest areas: emergence (6.3.1), realisation (6.3.2), and impact (6.3.3). The protest in Republic Square on 6 January 2019 must be viewed in the wider context of the Yellow Vests movement (ongoing at the time of writing). When they first erupted in November 2018, the protests were mostly rural and involved people with lower education levels and low-paying jobs, but they quickly turned into a broader movement against unwanted taxation, unpopular laws, the French establishment, globalism, and President Emmanuel Macron. The protesters wore yellow emergency reflective vests, which are required in all cars in France, and usually occupied central, affluent areas of urban centres in the country (Chamorel, 2019, pp. 50–52).

The demonstration in question was held the day after violent clashes between protesters and police during the Yellow Vests' ACT VIII.[49] It was the movement's first women's march, intended to show a human face to the inequalities of French society and demonstrate that the violent events of the previous day were not representative of the whole movement ("Hundreds" 2019). The protesters had gathered earlier that day on Bastille Square, from where they marched to Republic Square, where I caught up with them. When I arrived, speeches and appeals were being directed against the French establishment. After a while, the women marched, singing and playing drums, towards Champs-Élysées (one of the main shopping streets). The protests were followed closely by the police and a pink van, which specialised in selling food, snacks,

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[48] In the words of a local guide: "Three neighbourhoods converge [on the square] – the youthful Canal Saint-Martin, the historic yet hip Upper Marais and the trendy 11th arrondissement [administrative district], which is brimming with some of Paris's best restaurants […]" (Monaco, 2019).

[49] I observed the Yellow Vests on 5 January outside Musée d'Orsay where they were stopped by echelons of riot police on their way to the National Assembly, as well as the clashes that ensued. This was the eighth mass protest in Paris since the social movement against economic inequality began seven weeks earlier (although numerous supportive protests, such as the one of 6 January, were organised throughout urban centres in France).

beverages, and other necessities to the protesters, perhaps responding to the regularity of such contentious actions in the city.[50]

Since their initial action, the women's marches have become a regular occurrence in Paris and other cities. Judging by the media coverage of the protests, the women's march 6 January received far more positive coverage that the other acts by the movement. Cf. *France 24*'s coverage of the actions of 5 ("Quelques accrochages durant," 2019) and 6 January 2019 ("Hundreds of female," 2019). Therefore, the protest had some level of impact.

Figure 12: The pink van, Paris, 5th January 2019. Photo: Arve Hansen

4. What other variables can be identified in the causal chain between Republic Square and the Yellow Vests' action of 6 January 2019?

A monument, tree, or node does not have a great effect on mass protests when considered individually. It is when they are combined their qualities appear and influence protests. We can identify seven such spatial qualities: accessibility, mobility, defensibility/policeability, sense of safety, visibility, symbolic value, and motivation (see chapter 6, 6.2.1).

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[50] I had observed the same van several times during the street fighting the previous day, usually located right behind the protesters and often dangerously close to the clashes. The people operating the van seemed, however, unfazed and familiar with working in such an environment.

Considering the travel nodes on and under the square, and its many entrances and exits, we can safely assume that the square has high levels of accessibility and mobility. These qualities improve the square's already high visibility due to its openness and central location in Paris, nearby travel nodes and paths, and the much-frequented districts in the area. The only hindrance to visibility is the monument, which is so wide and massive that speakers who use it as a platform for addressing the crowds can only be visible to the people on one side of the square at a time.

In situations of confrontation, the square will probably have some of the same qualities as Independence Square in Minsk, which benefits the Belarusian law enforcement agencies (Hansen, 2017, pp. 51–53). The main roads encircling Republic square on three sides naturally concentrate people in the area around the monument, which leaves the protesters open to policing manoeuvres from three sides. Nonetheless, in contrast to Independence Square, there is enough mobility in Republic Square that the sense of safety remains high. There is virtually always an exit available, so it is relatively easy to avoid being kettled by the police.

The symbolic value of Republic Square is difficult to overestimate. As a large open square in the city centre, with historical and allegorical symbols that most French can relate to—including a history of protest —the square is associated with a feeling of "people power". It is likely that the square has an even a stronger symbolic value for women, as their role in demanding and achieving revolutionary change is emphasised by the monument to Marianne (some of the women on 6 January 2019 wore red Phrygian caps, related to the French Revolution, apparently to reinforce this association). The mainly positive qualities of Republic Square probably have a motivating effect on prospective protesters.

Protests may also be affected by other micro, meso, and macro factors in the political environment, as well as by events and external influences. Therefore, non-spatial independent and intermediary variables (i.e. combined with space) should also be identified. (For a detailed description of intermediary variables, see chapter 6, 6.2.)

A quick investigation into the research literature has resulted in some examples of macro factors, such as economic inequalities, a non-inclusive establishment (Baulaigue, 2018), and an increase in anti-protest legislation in the wake of the January 2015 terrorist attacks (Harsin, 2018, pp. 1822–1823); meso factors, such as a nationwide network of protest groups, and media outlets critical to the protests (Chamorel, 2019, pp. 54–55); and micro factors, such as the goal of the protesters to oust President Emmanuel Macron ("Yellow Vests plan," 2019), or the lack of a shared purpose and direction (Chamorel, 2019, p. 55). Taxation on diesel and Macron's

"blunt and provocative public statements" (Chamorel, 2019, pp. 50–51) have been identified as some of the main triggering events that started the protests and kept them going. Regarding external influences, the protesters may have been inspired by global protest waves, such as the Arab Spring, Occupy, and others. Even Russian interference has been suggested by the French government as a possible factor in the emergence of the Yellow Vests (Matlack & Williams, 2018), a claim routinely denied by the Kremlin ("La Russie nie," 2018).

5.   How can these variables be mapped and measured?

The best way to identify the effects a given space has on protest is by observing protests in the space first-hand (see chapter 5, 5.1.1). Although my time in the square was limited, I had the opportunity to observe the protesters and their interactions with the urban space and law enforcement agencies, as well as to write a few notes about the square and its most prominent elements.

Interviews with participants, organisers, and other observers (see chapter 5, 5.1.2), as well as the use of research literature and other sources (such as video footage and news articles), can provide detailed and alternative descriptions of the space. For this demonstration of the spatial perspective model, I did not conduct any interviews and have consulted only a limited amount of research literature and news articles.

To facilitate analysis, mapping should be utilised at all four stages of development (preparation, field work, analysis, presentation – see chapter 5, 5.1.3). Mapping was done in preparation for the study of Paris and during field work, but not as a part of the analysis or of this presentation. A satellite photo of the square is provided to compensate for the lack of maps (fig. 11).

Based on the data collected using these methods, the above spatial qualities have been induced by logical reasoning. Three types of hypotheses can then be made: 1) the effect of the spatial qualities on the emergence, realisation and impact of protests; 2) the correlation between spatial qualities and non-spatial variables; and 3) their cumulative effect on protests. These hypotheses can be confirmed or disproved by interviews and observations. To control for spatial determinism, the effect of other independent variables in the political environment should also be examined. See chapter 5 (5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.1.3, 5.6) and chapter 6 for more on the model's methodology.

The high level of motivation as a spatial quality probably encourages the emergence of protests on Republic Square. It is, at the very least, hard to imagine a situation in which people might be discouraged by the thought of protesting in this location, least of all women protesting for

inclusivity and social change. Additionally, as far as I have been able to detect, the realisation of the women's march was not hampered by holding their action at this square, either. They were able to enter the urban space, hold their action, and leave, despite the police attempting to impede their movement towards the city centre (more on this below, 7.3). Moreover, the impact of the protesters, visible as they were on a square symbolising the French people and the power of women and at an intersection of paths, roads, and districts, did not diminish the effect of the protests.

Regarding the second and third types of hypothesis, some can be made on the basis of the limited data set available. Here are a few examples:

1) The protesters' choice of space, in the form of a highly affluent urban area, is in contrast to the poor and (initially) rural protest movement, thus highlighting the inequalities they are fighting against.

2) If the media, as the protesters have implied (Chamorel, 2019, pp. 54–55), has a negative attitude to the movement and regularly focuses too much on violence, it might be harder to create this type of impression of protests that take place in the middle of the city where more people can see what is (really) going on.

3) Several recent protests and revolutions have been started on central squares across the world, in Baghdad, Cairo, Istanbul, Tehran, and Tripoli—therefore, if a protest is held on one of the largest squares in Paris, the threat of revolution might seem more plausible (and thus result in concessions and/or increased violence).

This account is first and foremost intended as an illustration. Since it is based on limited data and only selected parts of the method are applied, it remains speculative in its current form. It could be researched further in a full analysis, including maps and detailed descriptions of the variables of the urban space and in the political environment. It could include more hypotheses, and interviews with protesters, organisers, experts, and observers. Nonetheless, even at this initial level it generates discussion of overall key issues and, if compared to other sources of information and used actively in interviews, it might be possible to attain a detailed understanding of the square and the possibilities and limitations it provides.

7.2 Summary and conclusions

The seven chapters of this thesis have traced the development of a theoretical model that provides a spatial perspective on mass protests. It started with the initial question that motivated me to study the potentials of Maidan (see chapter 1, and chapter 5, 5.4), and viewed the recent

Ukrainian revolution in the context of other contemporary and historic tendencies of urban contention (chapter 2). A mapping of research literature on protest and space showed that there is no systematic approach available to analyse protest spaces (chapter 3). After defining key concepts, such as mass protests and urban public space, the aim of developing such a theory in this thesis was clarified (chapter 4). This was followed by a description of the theorising processes; the methods and considerations used in the development; how causal inference between space and protest can be made; and the testing of the theory (chapter 5). The variables in the spatial perspective model, along with the methods used for identifying them, were then explicated (chapter 6). Finally, key elements of the spatial perspective were applied to a pilot study of Paris (chapter 7).

Let us return to the full research question stated in chapter 4 (4.3):

> How are mass collective actions by pedestrians, engaged in static occupation of an urban public space and aimed at changing society by influencing the decisions of a target by nonviolent means, affected by this urban public space (i.e. outdoor open areas between buildings in a city environment, which in its ideal form is equally accessible and open to everyone in the general population)?

When factors and conditions in the political environment produce discontent to such an extent that people are prepared to protest, these protests might be affected by urban space in a number of ways.

Initially, prospective protesters and organisers look to the urban public space available to them and, whether consciously or not, assess spaces by: their proximity to the political centre or other target institutions; how visible protests located there would be; whether protesters would be safe or vulnerable; whether there would be room to move; and what symbolic value that space might supply to the protesters. They would ask one key question: will our protest in this space have an impact? And the answer to this question might motivate them to or discourage them from protest.

When discontent starts to manifest itself in an urban space, protesters are affected by the square or park into which they have ventured. The walls and entrances, landmarks and monuments, and the people passing and crossing the urban space, all might have an effect on the people congregated there. Protesters have practical needs, such as communication within the camp and getting necessary supplies to it; they want to be seen and heard by the public and by those against whom their protest is aimed. They would want to keep motivation up, and hinder

attempts to stop them from carrying out their protest. At the same time, they would be affected by instincts, such as the need for safety; by memories of past events; and by thoughts about the symbolic value of their action.

Once the demonstration of discontent has ended, the goal or goals of the protesters may or may not have been achieved. And this result may have been affected by the length of time the protesters managed to stay in their space of contention; how visible their protest was to the general public and to the authorities; and whether their action was enhanced by the symbolic value of the space.

To conclude, the three areas of protest—emergence, realisation, and impact—might be considerably affected by the spatial qualities produced by urban public space.

7.2.1 "So what?"

After presenting my research project and preliminary results from Kyiv and Minsk to a group of scholars at the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy in November 2016, one established researcher in the audience commented (paraphrased):

> You might very well be right that space has affected such actions. Space might, as you say, have an influence on protests […] but so might weather [long pause…]. So what?

The answer to such a blunt question is that in order to analyse an event, all aspects of it need to be examined for their potential effect. Urban public space has greatly affected protests in Kyiv, had a considerable impact on protests in Minsk and Moscow, and the pilot study above (7.1) indicates that protests in Paris are also affected to a large extent by public space. If we omit space from analyses of collective actions, we do not acquire a full picture, and this reductionism entails a risk of misinterpretation—even if only potentially.

The questioner might have been aware of such instances, however; and, yes, it is not difficult to find examples of protesters being stopped or helped by space, but the researcher probably wanted to know whether the spatial perspective could be put into practical use. What could a spatial perspective be used for? Is it just an interesting thought experiment, or can it be used as a tool for researchers, protesters, or police?

I firmly believe that the spatial perspective model can be of assistance to researchers within sociology, political science, urbanism, jurisprudence, and more. It contributes to our general understanding of protest: a complex issue that should be analysed from all perspectives, including the spatial one. The model can be used as a tool for assessing one of many factors

that may or may not be significant in the occurrence and outcome of a collective action. Considering the many static protests that have occurred and made an impact on world politics in the last two decades alone, the importance of a spatial perspective becomes even more evident.

The pilot study, used as an illustration above, shows that the model does not have to be applied in its most detailed form in order to contribute to our understanding of a given location. It could be developed further to produce a more accurate picture of why this space is chosen, what it means to the protesters and to Parisians, and what effect it has on the emergence, realisation, and impact of protests. Conversely, the analysis could be kept to a minimum, and the results included in a larger study of the Yellow Vests. It could also be part of a study of the city (because any study of Paris should, in one form or another, include urban contention).

In other words, the model can be applied in its entirety or selectively. It contributes a language that can be used to discuss space by researchers, who may not necessarily focus on the spatial features of protests, but may need to describe the scene of an action or some important spatial quality. The model can also have some utility for protesters and police, although I doubt that the perspective itself will teach them anything new. Local inhabitants tend to have more intimate knowledge of their cities and its potentials than any generalised theoretical model ever will. But the language this model supplies to researchers may help protesters, police, and observers to more adequately discuss unfolding events and their consequences.

Finally, much can be learned about a society, its level of democracy, and relations between power holders and ordinary people by looking at the contention in, and the control of, city space. We do not inhibit space randomly, and space is not arbitrary. Understanding the social line of space is necessary in order to describe society and its ongoing processes. The model can thus be used as a framework in order to establish whether there is space available for protesters. Or, put another way, whether the ideal form of urban public space as described in chapter 4 exists in the city (4.2).

Take for instance Kyiv, which has Maidan, a symbolic and accessible urban public space with an important role as a safety valve in Ukrainian society. If, after two popular revolutions and a number of mass protests, people still feel the need to use this safety value—to demonstrate, to make demands, and to repeat the threat of "a new Maidan" (i.e. mass protest, Hansen, 2016, pp. 131–132/13–14)—it shows that the Ukrainian democratic system is far from perfect.

The urban spaces of Minsk and how they are governed bear witness to fundamental problems in the Belarusian political system. An oft-repeated label for Belarus is "Europe's last dictatorship", coined by former US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Whether this label is correct or not, looking at the empty but clean streets and monumental buildings of Minsk and its absence of public protest, one might be led to think that Rice was right.

In Moscow, too, urban space bears witness to the authoritarian nature of the regime. Although protests do occur in the Russian capital and often attract thousands of people, they are usually repressed with violence and arrests. Nothing demonstrates the Russian authorities' power over the capital city more effectively than their ability to empty the city centre of people in celebration of Putin's third re-election as president in 2012.

7.2.2 Limitations

The causal model proposed in these chapters still has room for development. More empirical tests can be applied, and the variables in the model can probably be elaborated and expanded. It might also benefit from being applied to urban public spaces with clear positive *and* negative spatial qualities, as this would demonstrate that spatial elements can produce different qualities with various effects on various areas of protest.

Except for the work done in Chișinău and Paris, the thesis has been limited geographically to the East Slavic region, and would thus benefit from being applied to more case studies in other regions of the world, where new variables and causal connections might be identified.

The theory would probably also benefit from further exploring the relationship between actors, events, and space. Whereas this thesis has focused mainly on the viewpoints of single groups of protesters, limited to one or two collective actions, interesting results might be found by a spatial perspective applied to a variety of urban protests in a single urban space over a long period of time. For instance, an analysis of how Republic Square has affected protests between 1968 and 2019.

7.3 Moving on

When the women's march in Paris moved away from Republic Square on their way to the city centre, my observations were technically finished. The limitations I had set for this study dictated that I focus on static demonstrations and occupations. Moving marches such as this were not part of my study (4.1). But, spurred by curiosity, I decided to move along with the protesters.

The epigraph in the introduction to this chapter is from my field notes made when observing the protesters that day. The police obviously had orders to stop or delay the women marching to the city centre, and they repeatedly attempted to block the demonstrators' movement. Despite a large police presence—possibly as large as the protest group itself—the authorities had a hard time trying to keep the protesters out of the area around Champs-Élysées. Their strategy was to have two police forces: one in the rear, following the protesters, and one more mobile, which attempted to predict where the women would go and quickly block the streets before they got there. Sometimes, if they saw fit, they would run through the protesters at a weak spot in the crowd and divide them into separate groups. But the protesters would always locate their co-protesters, regroup somewhere, and continue their march.

Figure 13: Yellow Vests, Paris, 6th January 2019. Photo: Arve Hansen

Moving protests are a bigger part of the repertoire of contention in Paris than in Kyiv, Minsk, and Moscow. Why? By looking at the women's march of 6 January 2019, we can create an hypothesis that the avenues of Paris, which lack the common European grid street plan (see fig. 11), made the protesters' movement unpredictable and difficult to control. However, in order to check this hypothesis, a greater study is needed that maps all the ways urban space affects mobile protests. But the events in Paris show that the spatial perspective model can (and should) be developed further to include mobile protests, too. What, then, about violent protests? Or

protests in vehicles? Or, conversely, non-contentious actions such as public celebrations? Perhaps the perspective can teach us something about events far back in history, too?

There are several possibilities, but one thing is certain: urban contention is not going to disappear any time soon.

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Appendix 1: Article 1a

Hansen, A. (2016). Majdan Nezalezjnosti: symbolikk og funksjon. *Nordisk Østforum*, *30*(2). https://doi.org/10.17585/nof.v30.424

Majdan Nezalezjnosti: symbolikk og funksjon

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Abstract

Much has been said and written about the Ukrainian revolution of 2013–14, yet research on Maidan Nezalezhnosti, the protests' most iconic location, has thus far been rather limited. This article analyses the history, attributes and symbolism of this particular city space. What function does Maidan have in the Ukrainian society? In the cause of my fieldwork in Kyiv 2013–15 on the recent revolution, I found that Maidan has many features that make it a particularly suitable site for protests. In the current article I argue that several factors related to the square's physical space, from its location between the religious, historical and political centres of Ukraine, to its proximity to important landmarks, as well as its infrastructure, shape, architecture, and size, make Maidan both a symbolic and a practical space to occupy for people demanding change. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union Maidan has acquired a special significance for Ukrainians. The name of the square itself could be interpreted as a protest against Russia, and the many protests and three revolutions on Maidan have given it a particular revolutionary meaning. I argue that Maidan functions as a socio-political safety valve – a place people turn to and turn up at to demand change when the formal political institutions fail to deliver.

Keywords: City space, Independence square, Maidan, protests, revolution, Ukraine

I sentrum av den ukrainske hovedstaden Kyiv ligger Majdan Nezalezjnosti – Uavhengighetsplassen – et av Kyivs større byrom.[1] Majdan fikk mye oppmerksomhet under Euromajdan-protestene vinteren 2013–14 som etter tre dramatiske måneder endte med minst 82 drepte demonstranter (Helseministeriet i Ukraina 2014) og et maktskifte i landet. Protestene ble også opptakten til krisen på Krimhalvøya og krigen i Donbas. Så langt har krigen krevet over 9100 menneskeliv (UN News Centre 2015), mens 1,38 millioner er internt fordrevet (UNHCR 2015a) og 1,1 millioner har flyktet fra landet (UNHCR 2015b: 2).

I mitt feltarbeid i Kyiv mellom november 2013 og mai 2015, hvor jeg undersøkte drivkreftene bak protestene, var det flere ting som tydet på at Uavhengighetsplassen

hadde en viktig symbolsk betydning for ukrainere. Det tydeligste eksempelet på dette var at protestene tok *Euromajdan* som navn – en kombinasjon av ordene *Europa* og *Majdan*. Men det er kanskje enda mer illustrerende at opprørspolitiets første angrep på demonstrantene i Kyiv, som fant sted natt til 30. november 2013 og førte til at mange ukrainere begynte å støtte protestene (Hansen 2015: 44–45), ble omtalt som *Angrepet på Majdan* (Rozhin Majdanu).[2] Det var også interessant å se at Majdan som begrep ikke var låst til det fysiske byrommet på Uavhengighetsplassen, men ble en samlebetegnelse for alle områdene okkupert av de protesterende: Det dukket opp såkalte lokale majdan-er også i andre ukrainske byer. En respondent, lokalhistorikeren *Serhij*, beskriver Majdan som noe bevegelig: «Etter angrepet på Majdan (…) [dukket det opp] et morsomt uttrykk: 'Majdan har flyttet til Mykhajlivskaplassen' (…) det vil si at Majdan ikke er knyttet til plassen, den er allerede en protestaksjon. Det er ikke viktig hvor den er.»[3]

Selv om mye av den internasjonale oppmerksomheten nå har flyttet fra Kyiv til Donbas, blir Majdan fremdeles diskutert i Ukraina. I forbindelse med president- og parlamentsvalgene i 2014 og før lokalvalget i oktober 2015, truet opposisjonelle partier og grupperinger med «å gå ut på Majdan» om Porosjenko-administrasjonen ikke får slutt på krigen og fart på reformvirksomheten. Myndighetene har på sin side prøvd å vise at symbolikken rundt Majdan er viktig for dem, og arrangerte sommeren 2015 en stor arkitektkonkurranse for å rekonstruere byrommet, med store midler stilt til rådighet – til tross for en vaklende økonomi (Terra Dignitas 2015). Blant annet ble det diskutert hvordan minnesmerket for Euromajdan og de falne demonstrantene skal se ut.

For å forstå de omveltningene som foregikk i Kyiv i februar 2014 og dermed bakgrunnen for de begivenhetene som nå utspiller seg i landet, er det nødvendig å se nærmere på hva Majdan betyr for ukrainere. Hva er det som gjør at protester oppstår på Uavhengighetsplassen? Hva symboliserer Majdan? Hvilke funksjoner har plassen i det ukrainske samfunnet?

Jeg har av plasshensyn begrenset artikkelen til å handle om protester i Kyiv, og sammenhengen mellom dem og byrommet de oftest arrangeres i. Jeg vil derfor ikke analysere andre byrom, eller å gå inn på de enkelte protestaksjonenes struktur eller organisering.

Denne artikkelen er inndelt i tre deler: Først ser jeg på Uavhengighetsplassens fysiske utforming, posisjon, lokalhistorie og daglig bruk. Deretter diskuterer jeg symbolikken knyttet til Majdan. Til slutt diskuterer jeg hvilke funksjoner Majdan har i det ukrainske samfunnet i dag.

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[2] *Rozhin* kan oversettes med *spredning*, *bortjaging*, *rydding*, *storming* eller *angrep*. Siden en plass verken kan spres eller jages bort, «Ryddingen av Majdan» ikke fanger alvorlighetsgraden av det som skjedde, og «Stormingen av Majdan» ble brukt om politiets storming av plassen 18.–19. februar 2014, har jeg valgt å omtale hendelsen som et angrep.

[3] «Posle razgona Majdana (…) byla takaja fraza smesjnaja: 'Majdan peremestilsja na Mikhajlovskuju plosjtsjad (…) polutsjajetsia, sjto Majdan ne privjazan k plosjtsjadi – eto uzje protestnaja aktsija. Ne vazjno gde on.»

Jeg argumenterer for at Uavhengighetsplassen har blitt et naturlig sted å protestere, som til tross for et par ulemper, egner seg godt for store folkemengder. Samtidig har Majdan en spesiell symbolsk betydning som *folkets plass* – et sted assosiert med flere revolusjoner og det eneste stedet folket føler de har direkte innflytelse på landets politikk. Mine funn støtter ideen om at Majdan i dag fungerer som en sosio-politisk sikkerhetsventil i et dysfunksjonelt og korrupt politisk system.

Metoder og teori

I analysen av Majdans fysiske utforming har jeg basert meg på egne observasjoner i Kyiv mellom november 2013 og juli 2015.[4] Det teoretiske grunnlaget for analysen har vært Lynch' (1960) teorier om byers funksjonalitet og betydning.[5] I løpet av revolusjonen utførte jeg 23 befaringer på Majdan, og jeg fikk kontakt med mange mennesker. Av disse valgte jeg ut seks respondenter til syv semistrukturerte dybdeintervjuer. I denne artikkelen benytter jeg meg av utdrag fra disse intervjuene.[6] Siden jeg har hatt to lengre opphold i Kyiv (fra januar til juni 2011, og fra juli 2013 til desember 2015) og jevnlig reist til byen (fra mai 2007), har jeg også mange personlige erfaringer fra byen. Disse refererer jeg til som egne erfaringer.

I forskningslitteraturen finnes det inngående analyser av forholdet mellom demokrati, protester og enkelte byrom (se Parkinson 2012). Mer konkret har Occupy-bevegelsens forhold til okkuperte byrom i vestlige byer blitt analysert (Hammond 2013); parken som ble okkupert av Gezi-park-protestene i Istanbul i 2013 har blitt drøftet (Göle 2013a, 2013b; Inceoglu 2014, 2015; Örs 2014); og det samme gjelder flere av protestene i byrom under Den arabiske våren fra 2011 (se for eksempel Lopes de Souza & Lipietz 2011), protestene på Den himmelske freds plass i 1989 (Hershkovitz 1993; Lee 2009), og så videre. Det er imidlertid gjort få analyser av byrom i forbindelse med protester i Kyiv. Mens det har vært analyser av Uavhengighetsplassens utforming og historie, som Hrysjtsjenkos (2013) drøfting av byrommets post-sovjetiske forandringer, verk om byens historie og arbeider om Euromajdan protestene i et historisk perspektiv (som henholdsvis Cybriwsky 2014a og Cybriwsky 2014b), så er det såvidt meg bekjent ingen som inngående har diskutert forholdet mellom Majdans form, historie, symbolikk og funksjon.

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[4]Jeg har benyttet meg av mye av det samme kvalitative kildematerialet som i min masteravhandling om Euromajdan (Hansen 2015).

[5]Lynch legger blant annet vekt på menneskers vanlige og mulige bevegelsesmønstre (*paths*); landemerker og punkter mennesker skal til, relaterer til eller drar gjennom (*landmarks* og *nodes*); ting som hindrer bevegelse (*edges*); og områder i byen med distinkt karakter (*districts*). Her er ikke disse termene brukt direkte, men de ligger likevel til grunn for analysen.

[6]Av hensyn til respondentenes sikkerhet er navnene deres anonymisert og oppført i teksten i *kursiv*. Det gjelder imidlertid ikke den ukrainske fotojournalisten Oleksandr Klymenko, som har ønsket å framstå med fullt navn.

Byrommets posisjon og utforming

Ukrainas hovedstad ligger sentralt i landet, mellom Polen i vest (440 km fra Kyiv) og Russland i øst (300 km). Selv om det er større avstander til områder som Donbas og Krimhalvøya (henholdsvis 600 og 550 km) enn til for eksempel Hviterussland (95 km), gjør infrastruktur som vei, tog og elva Dnipro Kyiv til en mer sentral by enn noen annen i landet.

Ifølge legendene ble Kyiv grunnlagt i år 482, og Kievriket regnes som det historiske grunnlaget for de tre moderne nasjonene Ukraina, Hviterussland og Russland. Det var i Kyiv Kievriket i år 988 først skal ha bli kristnet, og byen er dermed viktig for flere ortodokse kirker.[7] Noen av den ortodokse kristendommens mest hellige bygninger, blant annet Sofiakatedralen og grotteklosteret Kyjevo-Petsjerska Lavra, er plassert i byen. I tillegg til å være et viktig historisk og religiøst sentrum, finner man i Kyiv mange av Ukrainas viktigste politiske institusjoner, samt noen av landets eldste og mest prestisjefylte universiteter.

Uavhengighetsplassen ligger midt i Kyiv, mellom tre bakketopper, høyt oppe på den vestre (høyre) bredden av Dnipro. Seks små gater (Borysa Hrintsjenka, Provulok Tarasa Sjevtsjenka, Sofijivska, Mala Zjytomyrska, Mykhajlivska og Kostjolna) løper opp fra plassens nordvestre del (heretter NV-delen) mot byens historiske og religiøse sentrum på Starokyjivska og Zamokva-høydene. Fra den sydøstre delen av plassen (heretter SØ-delen) peker to gater (Instytutska og Arkhitektora Horodetskoho) oppover mot det politiske sentrum på Petsjerskhøyden. Her oppe ligger President-tadministrasjonen, Verkhovna rada (parlamentet), Regjeringsbygget, Sentralbanken og flere partiers hovedkontorer. Den 1,3 kilometer lange hovedgaten Khresjtsjatyk går gjennom Uavhengighetsplassen på sin vei mellom Europaplassen i nordøst og Bessarabskyj i sør. Uavhengighetsplassen er stor, omtrent 370 meter lang og mellom 110 og 200 meter bred (avhengig av hvor og hvordan man måler). Khresjtsjatyk, med sine åtte kjørefelt og 60 meters bredde, fortau inkludert, er også en naturlig del av byrommet. Samlet kan plassen og gaten derfor romme hundretusenvis av mennesker. I området rundt Uavhengighetsplassen ligger det mange møtesteder, blant annet flere parker, store byrom og utdanningsinstitusjoner.

Plass og byhistorie

En måte å se Kyivs utvikling gjennom tidene er gjennom sentrumsplassens mange navn. Det var først på 1700-tallet området der Uavhengighetsplassen nå ligger ble bygget ut, men det var også her Ljadskyjporten – en av middelalderbyens tre innganger lå. Gjennom denne porten skal mongolene ha invadert Kyiv i 1240 og markert slutten på Kievriket. Fra midten av 1800-tallet vokste byen kraftig. Den lille

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[7]Spesielt viktig er byen for: Den russisk-ortodokse kirke; Den ukrainsk-ortodokse kirke, som har hovedsete i Kyiv, men er underlagt Moskvapatriarkatet; Den ukrainsk-ortodokse kirke med eget patriarkat i Kyiv; Den ukrainske gresk-katolske kirke (denne er offisielt katolsk, men følger det bysantinske ritus); og Den ukrainske autokefale ortodokse kirke.

Bilde 1: Majdan sett ovenfra. 1: Fagforeningenes hus. 2: Hotell Ukraina. 3: Oktoberpalasset. 4: Ukrajinskyj dim. 5: Byadministrasjonen. 6: Sikkerhetstjenesten (SBU). 7: Sofiakatedralen. 8: Gullporten. 9. Nasjonalbanken. 10: Konservatoriet. 11: Operaen. Illustrasjon: Arve Hansen.

plassen ble først kalt *Khresjtsjatykplassen* i 1869 etter den tettbygde handelsgaten. Da bydumaen ble bygget i 1876 skiftet plassen navn til *Dumaplassen* (GUOKS u.d.).

Etter bolsjevikenes maktovertagelse i 1919 forandret plassens navn seg mange ganger. Først ble den hetende *Sovjetunionens plass*, og fra 1935 ble den kalt *Kalininplassen* etter den sovjetiske politikeren Mikhail Kalinin. Mellom 1941 og 1943 ble plassen kalt *Nittende septembers plass*, etter datoen for Nazi-Tysklands okkupasjon av byen, og da byen ble gjenerobret av den røde hær ble plassen igjen hetende Kalininplassen (GUOKS u.d.).

I forbindelse med Oktoberrevolusjonens 60-årsjubileum i 1977 ble byrommet renovert og fikk navnet *Oktoberplassen*. NV-delen som tidligere hadde vært godt trafikkert og som hadde mange fysiske hindringer, ble omstrukturert til et grønt, åpent parkområde med mindre trafikk og med gode muligheter for større folke-samlinger. I enden av SØ-delen ble det bygget et stort granittmonument til Lenin og Oktoberrevolusjonen (Hrysjtsjenko 2013: 86). Etter Sovjetunionens fall i 1991 skiftet plassen navn til *Uavhengighetsplassen*, som den fortsatt heter i dag.

Byrommets fasader viser også noen av forandringene byen har gått gjennom. Kun Oktoberpalasset (nå et kunstsenter) – på toppen av en stor gressbakke i østenden av plassen – og Konservatoriet står igjen fra før andre verdenskrig. Mangelen på bygninger fra før krigen vitner om ødeleggelsene byen og folket opplevde i krigsårene.

Etter krigen gjenoppbygde Stalin byen i sovjetisk klassisistisk stil ved hjelp av krigsfangers slavearbeid: Khresjtsjatyk ble til et bredt sovjetprospekt og Kalininplassen ble byens sentrale torg – dumaen hadde brent ned under krigen og ble ikke gjenoppbygget. Bygningene langs Khresjtsjatyk og på NV-delen av Kalininplassen ble alle bygget i gul naturstein med samme, majestetiske design (sarkastisk kalt *Stalins bløtkake*[-stil] av byens borgere).[8]

Stalins død i 1953 førte imidlertid til en brå stans i denne arkitektoniske nyklassisismen. Khrusjtsjov forkastet de grandiose planene og fullførte gjenoppbyggingen i en svært forenklet form. Hotell Moskva (fra 2001 Hotell Ukraina) er et godt eksempel på denne forenklingen. Hotellet som står på toppen av bakken i enden av SØ-delen var ment å bygges som en av Stalins *vysotki* (skyskrapere), men ble hurtig gjort ferdig, lavere enn planlagt og uten den klassiske dekoren. Plassens to største bygninger, Postbygget og Fagforeningenes hus, står også stilmessig i kontrast til hverandre. Postbygget er bygget i tradisjonell sovjetisk klassisisme, mens Fagforeningenes hus er postmoderne, toppet av et 24 meter høyt klokketårn – med digitale visere.

Etter Sovjetunionens fall gikk Kyiv gjennom en brå overgang til kapitalisme. På toppen av alle Uavhengighetsplassens bygninger er det nå store lysreklamer. Før Fagforeningenes hus ble totalskadd under Euromajdan, var nesten hele dets fasade dekket av enorme reklameplakater. På bakkeplan har banker, fastfood-kjeder og kiosker tatt over bybildet.

I løpet av vinteren 2000–01 startet en storstilt rekonstruksjon av byrommet, og et kjøpesenter ble bygget på Uavhengighetsplassen. Kjøpesenteret er to etasjer dypt og strekker seg under hele NV-delen. En seks meter høy glasskuppel i enden av plassen fører lys ned til senteret. I den andre, sørøstlige, enden av plassen, står en enorm speilglassfasade i tre etasjer. Det er kjøpesenterets andre del, plassert foran Hotell Ukraina. Kjøpesenteret ble sterkt kritisert for å skjemme Majdans utseende, og selv utbyggeren, Hari Korohodskyj, uttalte i 2007 at han var enig i kritikken (*Fokus* 2007). Parallelt med byggingen av kjøpesenteret ble det satt opp mange nye monumenter som framstiller Ukrainas historiske og mytiske figurer. Dette var en del av president Leonid Kutsjmas nasjonaliseringsprosjekt for å samle landet om en ny felles historieframstilling.

Hrysjtsjenko har skrevet om rekonstrueringen av byrommet og om hvordan plassen gikk fra å være et grønt samlingspunkt til et grått og uframkommelig område som har mistet mye av sin sjarm. Det er betegnende for måten Kutsjmas nasjonaliseringsprosjekt ikke ble spesielt populært i befolkningen, at Uavhengighetsmonumentet – byrommets mest kjente landemerke – ofte bare nevnes med tilnavn som «Stolpen», «Damen med kvisten» eller «Batman» (Hrysjtsjenko 2013: 86–87).

Daglig bruk

Majdans byrom – tross dets noe uryddige utforming – blir i det daglige brukt av svært mange mennesker. Khresjtsjatyk fungerer som den naturlige bilveien mellom

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[8]Fra ekskursjon med firmaet *Interesnyj Kiev*, 27. juli 2013.

Bilde 2: Uavhengighetsmonumentet (eller Stolpen). Statuen er 62 meter høy og forestiller Berehynia – beskytteren, en kvinnelig ånd fra slavisk mytologi. Foto: Pedro J Pacheco CC BY-SA 4.0.

Bilde 3: Kyiv innenfor Ringveien. 1: Uavhengighetsplassen. 2: Kontraktova Plosjtsja. 3: Hovedtog-stasjonen 4: Kyivs nasjonale universitet. 5: Grotteklosteret Kyjevo-Petsjerska Lavra. Illustrasjon: Arve Hansen.

flere viktige innfartsruter: Naberezjne – som går langs Dnipro på høyre bredd; Bulvar Tarasa Sjevtsjenka – en forlengelse av Prospekt Peremohy som er en viktig trafikkåre fra de vestlige delene av Kyiv til sentrum; og Lesi Ukrajinky som via Basejna går fra sydøst til sentrum. Alle er brede, tett trafikkerte veier. Instytutska, som krysser Khresjtsjatyk og går over til Mykhajlivska er også godt trafikkert og er en viktig vei for å komme fra det politiske sentrum og ut i byen.

Kyiv har tre t-banelinjer. Under Uavhengighetsplassen ligger overgangen mellom Uavhengighetsplassen stasjon på den røde linjen og Khresjtsjatyk stasjon på den blå linjen. Det er også kort gangavstand til Zoloti vorota stasjon («Gullporten») på den grønne linjen. Både buss, minibuss og trolleybuss har ruter over Uavhengighetsplas-sen, og det er omtrent 3,5 km til jernbanens sentralstasjon.

Det er også mange fotgjengere som benytter seg av byrommet. Uavhengighets-monumentet har blitt et av områdets naturlige møtesteder for folk, enten man skal spasere i en av parkene i sentrum eller shoppe i et av Kyivs stadig voksende antall kjøpesentre. Det ligger også mange kafeer, restauranter og uteplasser i området som tiltrekker seg mengder med mennesker i løpet av dagen og kvelden. I helga stenges Khresjtsjatyk for biltrafikk og blir gågate, og den fylles ofte med iskremkiosker, gatemusikanter, gjøglere og mye annet, hele veien mellom Majdan og Bessarabskyj. Blant turister er plassen et av Kyivs mest besøkte steder, ikke bare på grunn av dens

historie, beliggenhet og arrangementer, men også fordi mange av byens hoteller er plassert på og rundt Majdan.

Siden byrommet er stort og sentralt plassert blir det også brukt i sammenheng med festivaler, konserter og offisielle merkedager. På Arbeidernes internasjonale kampdag (1. mai), Seiersdagen over Nazi-Tyskland (9. mai) og Uavhengighetsdagen (24. august) foregår det opptog og militære parader, og 1. desember hvert år settes det opp en stor nyttårsgran på plassen.

Protestplass

Rent praktisk er det mange fordeler ved å bruke Uavhengighetsplassen til protester og demonstrasjoner. De mange parkene, store byrommene og utdanningsinstitusjonene i kort gangavstand fra plassen, gjør at demonstrasjoner kan arrangeres samtidig på flere steder i byen og senere føres ned til Majdan når de er store nok til å fylle plassen. Parken foran Sjevtsjenko-universitetet, Kontraktova-plassen og St. Mikhailsplassen har ofte blitt brukt på denne måten, blant annet under den såkalte Revolusjonen på granitten i 1990 (se nedenfor), Oransjerevolusjonen i 2004–05 og Euromajdan i 2013–14.

Uavhengighetsplassen har blitt et naturlig møtested for forskjellige grupperinger og organisasjoner både fordi den rommer mange mennesker, og fordi det er kort avstand til det politiske sentrum. En protestleir på Majdan kan raskt organisere aksjoner for å reagere på politikernes handlinger. Under Euromajdan, for å ta et eksempel, reagerte demonstrantene på nye lover og at aktivister ble fengslet ved å arrangere demonstrasjoner foran blant annet Verkhovna rada og bydomstolen.

Siden mange mennesker av forskjellige grunner bruker Uavhengighetsplassen, blir en protest raskt lagt merke til og kan potensielt vokse fort. Kyivs posisjon som politisk sentrum og byens religiøse og historiske betydning langt utenfor landegrensene gjør at en protest her snart får mye oppmerksomhet. Samtidig er de mange platåene over SØ-delen praktiske utkikkspunkter hvor medier og andre som ønsker å ta bilder av protestene får god oversikt over det som foregår på Majdan.

Det er likevel noen ulemper for protester i byrommet. Plassens ti innganger og store størrelse gjør det lett for demonstranter å komme seg dit, men gjør også området sårbart for angrep fra politi og andre sikkerhetsmyndigheter. Dette gjelder hovedsakelig små demonstrasjoner. Store folkemengder har derimot vist seg svært vanskelig å rydde bort. Selv da militære kjøretøy og skarpe våpen ble brukt i februar 2014 klarte ikke myndighetene å rydde mer enn en brøkdel av Euromajdan.

Noe som imidlertid utgjør en utfordring for store protester er alle de fysiske hindringene som dukket opp på plassen etter rekonstrueringen av byrommet i 2000. NV-delens mange gjerder, fontener og benker hindrer ferdsel på tvers av plassen, og gjør at mennesker der både har lite handlerom og begrenset oversikt over det som foregår. SØ-delen er mer åpen, men Uavhengighetsmonumentet står i veien for at plassens naturlige fokalpunkt kan brukes til å sette opp en scene så alle kan se den. Derfor settes ofte protestenes scene tett opp mot Khresjtsjatyk, vendt mot SØ-delen og pressefotografenes utkikkspunkter, og med ryggen til NV-delen.

Ulempene oppveies likevel av fordelene ved å arrangere protester på Uavhengighetsplassen. Og det er sannsynlig at plassens fysiske egnethet har vært en viktig faktor for at store protester der har blitt en suksess (blant annet Oransjerevolusjonen i 2004–05 og Euromajdan i 2013–14). De fysiske egenskapene forklarer imidlertid ikke alene hvorfor Majdan har blitt et så sterkt symbol i Ukraina eller hvilken funksjon Majdan har i samfunnet.

Byrommets symbolikk

Majdan Nezalezjnosti består av to ord: *majdan* og *uavhengighet*. Ordet majdan ble en del av det ukrainske språket under det mongolske åket fra midten av 1200-tallet, og stammer fra det middelpersiske og arabiske ordet ميـدان (mæjdān [persisk], midān [arabisk]). Majdan betyr plass eller arena på middelpersisk; og størrelse, sfære eller sted for spill på arabisk (majdan 1989). På ukrainsk har man to ord for torg/åpent byrom: majdan og plosjtsja. En majdan er i motsetning til en plosjtsja en større arena med mange innløpende gater (Vasjanovytsj 2011).

Ordet majdan finnes ikke på russisk, hvor man kun har ordet plosjtsjad. Etter at Sovjetunionen kollapset i 1991 og Ukraina erklærte seg uavhengig, skiftet Oktoberrevolusjonens *plass* (plosjtsja) navn til Uavhengighets*majdan*. Det nye navnet symboliserer derfor ikke bare at Ukraina er et selvstendig land, men vektlegger samtidig at landet ikke er russisk.

I tillegg til navnet på plassen, som er et symbol på ukrainernes selvstendighet, er det noe folkelig med Majdan. I det tilsynelatende rotet man finner på Uavhengighetsplassen, bestående av monumenter, bygninger i forskjellige stiler, enorme reklamebannere og mye annet, er det mulig å finne symboler på store deler av byens og landets historie. I tillegg fungerer Fagforeningenes hus – den store hjørnesteinen på NV-delen av plassen – som et symbol på kampen for arbeidernes rettigheter. Ukrainas kulturelle liv er representert med Kunstsenteret og Konservatoriet på den andre siden. At Majdan ligger nedenfor de religiøse og politiske institusjonene, men likevel regnes som sentrum av Kyiv og Ukraina, forsterker betydningen av at Majdan tilhører folket.

25 år med protest

Den første store protesten i dette konkrete byrommet foregikk på Oktoberrevolusjonens plass i oktober 1990. Ukraina var som mange andre sovjetrepublikker herjet av dårlig økonomi, korrupsjon og utbredt varemangel, samt følgene av Tsjernobyl-katastrofen i 1986. Gorbatsjovs perestrojka- og glasnost-reformer hadde gjort protester mulig, og to studentorganisasjoner fra Kyiv og Lviv organiserte en sultestreik på granitten foran Lenin-monumentet, kalt Revolusjonen på granitten (heretter Granittrevolusjonen). Studentene krevde blant annet at Ukraina skulle melde seg ut av Sovjetunionen, omvalg i parlamentet og at vernepliktige skulle slippe å tjenestegjøre i konfliktområder som Afghanistan eller Nagorno-Karabakh. Protestene som startet med noen hundre studenter vokste seg snart store, og da gruvearbeidere

fra Donbas sluttet seg til protestene begynte myndighetene å reagere. Det viktigste Granittrevolusjonen oppnådde, etter 16 dagers sultestreik, var at Oleksandr Donij, lederen for studentorganisasjonen i Kyiv, fikk direktesendt taletid i Verkhovna rada, hvor han gjentok demonstrantenes krav, og vernepliktige ble lovet å få tjenestegjøre i Ukraina (Divaki production 2011).

Sovjetunionen opphørte å eksistere ett år etter Granittrevolusjonen. Likevel ble ikke alt bedre med den nye uavhengigheten. En brå overgang til det kapitalistiske systemet, ukontrollert privatisering og noen forhastede økonomiske beslutninger førte til inflasjon og varemangel (Morrison 1993: 686). I kjølvannet av den økonomiske krisen fulgte økt korrupsjon og kriminalitet. Tre rivaliserende oligark-klaner (Kyiv-klanen, Dnipropetrovsk-klanen og Donetsk-klanen) etablerte seg på 1990-tallet, og disse var ofte i en økonomisk, og i mange tilfeller også voldelig, konflikt med hverandre (Matuszak 2012: 13–15).

Ukrainas andre president, Leonid Kutsjma, fikk stoppet det økonomiske kaoset som hadde herjet under president Leonid Kravtsjuk. I løpet av sin første president-periode (1994–1999) stabiliserte han økonomien, fikk innført landets første grunnlov og oppnådde en stor vekst i middelklassen. I Kutsjmas andre periode (1999–2005) stoppet imidlertid den positive utviklingen, og oligarkene fikk mer makt enn før. Korrupsjonen steg og presidenten økte sensuren i massemediene (Dyczok 2006; Hansen 2015: 15–16).

I år 2000 kom president Kutsjma i sentrum av en stor skandale: Tre uker etter at den regimekritiske journalisten Heorhij Gongadze ble funnet torturert og halshugget i en skog utenfor Kyiv, ble lydopptak fra presidentens telefon lekket av presidentens tidligere livvakt, Mykola Melnytsjenko. Opptakene skal ha vist at presidenten blant annet beordret drapet på Gongadze, at han drev med valgfusk og korrupsjon og at han stod bak en rekke andre kriminelle handlinger (Kuzio 2007: 42). Den såkalte *kassettskandalen* utløste «Ukraina uten Kutsjma»-protestene vinteren 2000–01, hvor tusenvis av demonstranter krevde presidentens avgang. Protestene slo seg først ned på Majdan, men den store ombyggingen av plassen, som er nevnt ovenfor, ble et påskudd for å tvinge protestleiren vekk fra Majdan. Demonstrantene ble nødt til å flytte til parken foran Sjevtsjenko-universitetet, hvor de ble i nesten tre måneder før teltleiren brutalt ble fjernet av opprørspolitiet i mars 2001. Cybriwsky (2014a: 167) hevder at myndighetene brukte arbeidene på Majdan den vinteren både for å fjerne protestene og for å bygge om plassen så den ble mindre egnet for store protester.

Til tross for de nye hindrene ble Uavhengighetsplassen likevel åstedet for Oransjerevolusjonen i 2004–05. Etter en dramatisk valgkamp mellom Kutsjmas kandidat, Viktor Janukovytsj, og tidligere statsbanksjef Viktor Jusjtsjenko, ble førstnevnte erklært som vinner. Jusjtsjenko hadde blitt forgiftet under valgkampen, men overlevde, og det var mange rapporter om valgfusk (Wilson 2005: 70–121). Den til da største protesten i Ukraina ble ledet av Jusjtsjenko og Julia Tymosjenko. Etter to måneder på Majdan, med til tider hundretusenvis av demonstranter, gikk myndighetene med på å endre grunnloven og en ny valgrunde. Jusjtsjenko vant det nye valget.

Bilde 4: Oransjerevolusjonen på Uavhengighetsplassen 2004. Foto: Oleksandr Klymenko.

Jusjtsjenko hadde gått til valg på å få gjennom reformer, fjerne korrupsjonen og løfte økonomien, men Jusjtsjenko og den nye politiske ledelsen ble en stor skuffelse. Presidenten slet med å få gjennomført de varslede reformene og klarte verken å samarbeide med parlamentet eller med Tymosjenko. Sistnevntes kritikk mot Jusjtsjenko ble stadig mer høyrøstet, og de to ble snart politiske fiender. I 2010, fem år etter at Jusjtsjenko ble president, hadde han fått til lite. Korrupsjonen hadde steget og verdien på den ukrainske hryvnjaen hadde falt med 38% i forhold til dollaren (*BBC* 2009), fremdeles stod drapet på Gongadze uoppklart og oligarkene hadde stadig minst like mye makt. I presidentvalget i 2010 stilte Janukovytsj på nytt og vant mot Tymosjenko med 48,95% mot 45,47% av stemmene. Jusjtsjenko gikk ut etter første runde med kun 5,5% oppslutning (Kireev 2007).

Janukovytsj fikk snart kritikk fra mange hold. Han ble anklaget for å føre en unasjonal politikk (Kuzio 2012; *Zik* 2010), for å gjøre det vanskelig for små bedrifter (Hansen 2015: 19), for at korrupsjon og kriminalitet økte, og for en forverring i menneskerettighetssituasjonen (Zakharov 2014: 13–28, 161–173). Mange protester mot myndighetene ble arrangert på Majdan. Noen av de største var «Skattemajdan» i 2010, mot en økning av statens kontroll over små og mellomstore bedrifter; «Frihet til Julija»-demonstrasjonene (*Juli voli*) i 2011, mot den strafferettslige forfølgelsen av Janukovytsj' rival Julija Tymosjenko; og Vradijivka-protestene, som etter en bortføring og brutal gjengvoldtekt av en kvinne i den lille byen Vradijivka, var rettet mot embetsmenn i rettssystemet – anklaget av demonstrantene for å beskytte en av de mistenkte politimennene (Hansen 2015: 19–20).

Euromajdan var altså kun den siste av flere protester mot Janukovytsj og en av svært mange protester som har foregått på Majdan siden Ukraina ble selvstendig. Protestene beskrevet ovenfor omfatter bare noen av de mest kjente av disse, og det har blitt en form for tradisjon å gå ut på Majdan når man ønsker å protestere mot myndighetene.[9] Siden Majdan samtidig kan assosieres med fire revolusjoner, har plassen også en revolusjonær symbolikk. Granittrevolusjonen, Oransjerevolusjonen og Euromajdan foregikk på Majdan, mens Oktoberrevolusjonen var navnet på plassen fram til 1991. Fotojournalisten Oleksandr Klymenko mener at navnet på Oktoberrevolusjonens plass var en av grunnene til at studentene i 1990 valgte den som åsted for Granittrevolusjonen. Den revolusjonære symbolikken har ikke blitt svakere etter at så mange demonstranter døde i sammenstøtene i februar 2014. De drepte demonstrantene presenteres i Ukraina som helter, samlet er de en del av «Himmelhundringen» (*Nebesnja sotnja*) – et symbol på ukraineres vilje til å dø for forandringer i landet.

Majdan er selvfølgelig ikke det eneste byrommet som kan brukes til protester i storbyen Kyiv. Byrommene på Sofiaplassen og St. Mikhailsplassen kan samlet romme mange mennesker. Sjevtsjenkoparken foran universitetet med samme navn har stor symbolsk verdi fordi dikteren Taras Sjevtsjenko (1814–61) regnes som en av Ukrainas viktigste opposisjonelle skikkelser. Parlamentsplassen foran Verkhovna rada ligger sentralt i forhold til politiske institusjoner. Alle disse byrommene kan og blir ofte brukt til demonstrasjoner, men som nevnt ovenfor benyttes disse i mindre grad og ofte i forbindelse med større protester på Majdan. Utforming og beliggenhet er nok en viktig grunn til at de ikke blir brukt så ofte (Hansen 2015: 37–38), men at Majdan har fått en bredere symbolsk verdi er nok enda viktigere.

Funksjon

Så hvilke funksjoner har Majdan for det ukrainske samfunnet? Mange av respondentene mine forteller at de oppfatter Majdan som en viktig del av det politiske systemet. *Hanna*, en aktiv internettaktivist, mener at Majdan oppstod som en reaksjon på korrupsjonen i det politiske systemet, og nå har blitt en bevegelse for å bli kvitt denne:

> Vår politikk er så til de grader korrumpert at Majdan har blitt en nødvendighet. (…) Majdan det er en spontan aksjon, protest, refleks (…). Men etterhvert oppstod et felles mål: å bli helt kvitt det korrupte systemet. Man kan si at dette er en sosial bevegelse mot korrupsjon eller gjenferdet etter Sovjetunionen.[10]

Når jeg spør respondentene hvilken funksjon de mener Majdan har, sammenligner flere av dem Majdan med forskjellige politiske institusjoner. Både fotojourna-

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[9] I løpet av mine to bostedsopphold i Kyiv og hyppige reiser til byen har det tilsynelatende «alltid» foregått eller vært planlagt protester på Uavhengighetsplassen.

[10] Nasja polityka nastilky korumpovana, (…) sjtsjo nam prosto neobkhidnyj Majdan. (…) Majdan – tse spontanna aktsija, protest, refleks (…). Ale zhodom zjavylas spilna meta – povnistju zminyty korumpovanu systemu. Mozjna skazaty, sjtsjo tse sotsialnyj rukh proty koruptsiji abo pryzraku Radjanskoho Sojuzu.

listen Oleksandr Klymenko og lokalhistorikeren *Serhij*, som begge har sett flere protester på plassen gjennom tidene; og *Stanislau* – en hviterussisk aktivist som kom for å støtte Euromajdan, kaller plassen for en form for folkeparlament hvor man drar for å ordne opp i problemer. *Serhij* sammenligner Majdan med to former for folkestyrte forsamlinger:

> (…) ordet Majdan har bare blitt betydningen på en eller annen form for aksjon med mange mennesker. Som en form for det gammelrussiske fenomenet *vitsje*. Eller som det norske ordet *ting*. Det vil si en folkesamling som tar en eller annen viktig avgjørelse [mine uthevinger].[11]

Den amerikanske historieprofessoren Timothy Snyder trekker på sin side en parallell fra Majdan til den greske agoraen:

> (…) a maidan now means in Ukrainian what the Greek word agora means in English: not just a marketplace where people happen to meet, but a place where they deliberately meet, precisely in order to deliberate, to speak, and to create a political society (Snyder 2014).

Flere andre, blant annet den ukrainske journalisten og bloggeren Volodymyr Zolotorjov, legger også vekt på Majdan som et sted for diskusjon: «Majdan, det er sosial trening for felles handling og felles kommunikasjon. Ukrainere lærer seg å bli et samfunn, samhandle og kommunisere»[12] (Zolotorjov 2013).

Det er selvfølgelig mulig å stille kritiske spørsmål ved påstandene om at Majdan er som et *ting* eller en *agora*. Under Euromajdan ble den politiske situasjonen og hva som må gjøres selvfølgelig diskutert av de ulike grupperingene, men likevel var det få tegn under mine befaringer på at Majdan var et sted hvor diskusjon sto i sentrum. Det var ikke åpent for at myndighetene eller andre meningsmotstandere kunne delta i debattene på Majdan, og de frammøtte var som regel enige om hva og hvem de var mot, selv om det til tider var uenighet om virkemidlene. Dermed virket Majdan mer som et sted for aksjon enn for demokratisk diskusjon.

Likevel er det her kanskje mindre relevant å spørre i hvilken grad Majdan fungerer som et folkeparlament, og viktigere å spørre hvilken funksjon Majdan har i Ukraina. For hvis det eksisterer et sted man stadig går for å aksjonere mot myndighetene, så har det en viktig funksjon: Protester dukker opp på Majdan når det er stor misnøye med en sak og ukrainere ikke er fornøyd med hvordan myndighetene behandler saken. Derfor er det mulig å se på Majdans funksjon som en form for sikkerhetsventil for det ukrainske samfunnet. Et sted ukrainere føler de har mulighet til å påvirke politikken direkte, om presset blir for stort.

Alle kan okkupere Majdan, og forskjellige grupper og sjikt av befolkningen har startet protester på plassen. Under Granittrevolusjonen i 1990 og Euromajdan i

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[11] (…) slovo Majdan prosto stalo oznatsjat imenno kakuju-to mnogoljudnuju aktsiju. Kak tipa drevnorusskoje javlenije *vetsje*. Ili podobnoje k norvezjskomu slovu *ting*. To jest eto narodnoje sobranije, kotoroje prinimajet kakoje-to resjenije vazjnoje.

[12] «Majdan – eto sotsialnaja praktika vzaimo-dejstvija, so-obsjtsjenija. Ukraintsy utsjatsja byt obsjtsjestvom, vzaimo-dejstvovat i so-obsjtsjatsia» (sic).

2013–14 var det studenter som startet protestene, men protester har også blitt startet av politikere, som under Oransjerevolusjonen i 2004–05; forretningsmenn, som under Skattemajdan i 2010; og mennesker fra lokale tettsteder, som under Vradijivka-protestene i 2013. Det er imidlertid appelleringsevnen til den konkrete saken som avgjør om andre grupper av samfunnet slår seg til og, som de sier i Ukraina, «en ny Majdan begynner» (*novyj Majdan potsjynaetsia*).

Konklusjoner

Jeg spurte innledningsvis hva det er som gjør Uavhengighetsplassen til Ukrainas protestplass, hva plassen symboliserer, og hvilken funksjon Majdan har.

Protester har lenge vært en del av det politiske bildet i Ukraina. I løpet av minst 25 år med sosial misnøye og 30 år med økonomiske problemer, har tilliten til de politiske institusjonene i landet blitt svekket. Korrupsjon og kriminalitet i landets lille elite har ført til at mange ukrainere oppfatter politikere som representanter kun for sine egne interesser – ikke folkets. Skuffelsene etter Oransjerevolusjonen har ført til at denne oppfatningen gjelder alle politikere, enten de er i parlamentet eller en del av opposisjonen. Når folket mener politikerne gjør en dårlig jobb med å ivareta deres interesser, trekker de ut på Uavhengighetsplassen. Til tross for forsøk på starten av 2000-tallet på å gjøre byrommet mindre tilgjengelig for store folkemengder, har området likevel blitt stedet folk samles for å protestere.

Uavhengighetsplassen er fysisk godt egnet som protestplass. Den ligger strategisk plassert mellom andre møtesteder i byen, noe som gjør at demonstrasjoner kan arrangeres på flere steder samtidig og føres ned til Majdan, og den er kort vei fra politisk sentrum på Petsjersk-høyden. Det samlede byrommet på Majdan og Khresjtsjatyk er også stort og åpner for at store folkemengder kan demonstrere samtidig. De mange innfartsårene og plassinngangene gjør at det er lett å komme seg til Majdan, og myndighetene sliter med å kontrollere hva som foregår der. Plassens konstruksjon gjør at det er svært vanskelig å rydde folk vekk fra plassen, om de har fått anledning til å slå seg ned.

Uavhengighetsplassen er også symbolsk og kulturelt egnet for protester. Navnet symboliserer en avstand til Russland, da begge ordene *majdan* og *uavhengighet* knyttes til uavhengigheten i 1991. Plassens posisjon er nedenfor de politiske, religiøse og historiske sentrene, men likevel sentrum av byen. Det gjør at byrommet har en spesiell folkenær symbolikk. Symbolikken forsterkes av Arbeiderforeningenes hus, de kulturelle bygningene, og all lokalhistorien – i form av bygninger og monumenter. Siden Majdan samtidig assosieres med fire vellykkede revolusjoner, hvorav tre kan kobles direkte til plassen, minnes byen og landets borgere om mulighetene et slikt byrom gir dem.

Det er til Majdan ukrainere drar for å bli hørt når politikken ikke fungerer, og Majdan kan ses på som en form for sikkerhetsventil – et sted hvor folket kan gå ut og kaste ledelsen, om de går for langt vekk fra folkets ønske. At det har vært så mange protester på Majdan sier både noe om hvor viktig denne sikkerhetsventilen er, og hvor vanskelig det er å reformere det ukrainske samfunnet. Målet med de fleste

protestene har vært å fjerne det korrupte lederskapet, men det er ikke gitt at en ny ledelse fører til et nytt og reformert samfunn.

Ukrainas nåværende politiske ledelse kjenner betydningen av Majdan. Politikerne fikk posisjonene sine etter at president- og parlamentsvalgene i 2014 hadde blitt framskyndt på grunn av revolusjonen. Når så Porosjenko-administrasjonen blir truet med en ny Majdan vet de hva det kan bety. I et klima herjet av krig og ustabilitet, men samtidig mange reformer, vil det være interessant å se hvordan Majdan vil bli brukt i tiden framover.

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Appendix 2: Article 1b

Maidan Nezalezhnosti: Symbolic Value and Function

Unpublished translation of Article 1

Maidan Nezalezhnosti: Symbolic Value and Function[#]

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Abstract

Much has been said and written about the Ukrainian revolution of 2013–14, yet research on Maidan Nezalezhnosti, the protests' most iconic location, has so far been rather limited. This article analyses the history, attributes and symbolism of this particular city space. What function does Maidan have in Ukrainian society? In the course of my fieldwork in Kyiv 2013–15 on the recent revolution, I have found that Maidan has many features that make it a particularly suitable site for protests. In the current article I argue that several factors related to the square's physical space, from its location between the religious, historical and political centres of Ukraine, to its proximity to important landmarks, as well as its infrastructure, shape, architecture, and size, make Maidan both a symbolic and a practical space to occupy for people demanding change. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union Maidan has acquired a special significance for Ukrainians. The name of the square itself could be interpreted as a protest against Russia, and the many protests and three revolutions on Maidan have given it a particular revolutionary meaning. I argue that Maidan functions as a socio-political safety valve – a place people turn to and turn up at to demand change when the formal political institutions fail to deliver.

Keywords: City space, Independence Square, Maidan, protests, revolution, Ukraine

In the centre of the Ukrainian capital Kyiv lies Maidan Nezalezhnosti – Independence Square – one of Kyiv's larger open urban spaces.[1] In the winter of 2013–14, Maidan attracted much attention during the Euromaidan protests, which after three dramatic months saw at least 82 demonstrators killed (Ukrainian Ministry of Health, 2014) and a political power shift in the country. The protests also became a prelude to the crisis on the Crimean Peninsula and the War in Donbas. Thus far, the war has claimed more than 9100 human lives (UN News Centre, 2015), 1,38 million people are internally displaced (UNHCR, 2015a), and 1,1 million people have fled the country (UNHCR, 2015b, p. 2).

During my fieldwork in Kyiv from November 2013 to May 2015, which examined the driving forces behind the protests, I noted several aspects indicating Independence Square's important symbolic meaning for Ukrainians. The most prominent example is that the protests took the name of *Euromaidan* – a combination of the words *Europe* and *Maidan*. Yet it is perhaps even more illustrative that the first attack by the riot police on the demonstrations in Kyiv was referred to in Ukraine as the Attack on Maidan (Rozhin Maidanu).[2] The attack took place during the night of 30

[#] This is a translation of "Majdan Nezalezjnosti: symbolikk og funksjon" (Hansen, 2016) from Norwegian into English. It was translated by the author in 2019, in order to be used as an attachment to his doctoral thesis *Mass Protests from a Spatial Perspective: Discontent and Urban Public Space in Kyiv, Minsk, and Moscow*.

[1] In this article, I use the Ukrainian forms of Ukrainian proper nouns (Kyiv, Donbas, Ianukovych), not the Russian ones (Kiev, Donbass, Ianukovich). All proper nouns are Romanised in accordance with the Library of Congress system (2011; 2012).

[2] *Rozhin* could be translated as scattering, driving away, dispersal, storming, or attacking. Yet since the context is a square, neither scattering nor driving away fit as a translation; the "dispersal of Maidan" does not capture the serious nature of the

November 2013 and led to a surge of popular support for the protests amongst Ukrainians (Hansen, 2015, p. 44–45). It was also interesting to see that Maidan as a concept was not limited to the physical space of Independence Square alone but also became a generic term for the areas occupied by the protesters as so-called *maidan-y* appeared in other Ukrainian cities. A respondent, the local historian *Serhii*, describes Maidan as something mobile: "After the attack on Maidan […] a funny expression [appeared]: 'Maidan has moved to Mykhailivs'ka Square' […] that is, Maidan is not attached to the space, it is already an act of protest. It is not important where it is."[3]

Even though significant parts of the international attention moved from Kyiv to Donbas, Maidan is still a subject for discussions in Ukraine. In connection with the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2014, and before the local elections in October 2015, oppositional parties and other groupings threatened to "go to Maidan" if the Poroshenko administration did not end the war and speed up the reform process. The authorities have, in turn, attempted to show that the symbolic value of Maidan is important to them, and during the summer of 2015, a large-scale architectural competition to reconstruct the city space was launched, with large funds made available – a faltering economy notwithstanding (Terra Dignitas, 2015). Among other things, it was discussed what the memorial to Euromaidan and the fallen demonstrators should look like.

In order to understand the turmoil which occurred in Kyiv in February 2014, and thus the background for the events which are unfolding in the country at present, it is necessary to look more closely at what Maidan signifies for Ukrainians. Why do protests appear on Independence Square? What does Maidan symbolise? Which functions does the square have in Ukrainian society?

Due to space constraints, I have limited this article to protests in Kyiv and the correlation between them and the city space in which they most frequently were arranged. Thus, I do not analyse other urban spaces, or examine the structures or organisation of individual protest actions.

This article is divided into three parts: The first looks at the physical layout, position, local history, and daily use of Independence Square. The second discusses the symbolic meanings associated with Maidan. Finally, I discuss the functions of Maidan in Ukrainian society today.

I argue that Independence Square has become a natural place to carry out protests, and despite a couple of disadvantages, it is well suited for larger crowds. Also, Maidan has a special symbolic significance as *the people's square* – a location associated with several revolutions and the only place where people feel they have a direct influence on the country's politics. My findings support the idea that Maidan today functions as a socio-political safety valve in a dysfunctional and corrupt political system.

Methods and theory

The current analysis of the physical layout of Maidan is based on my own observations in Kyiv between November 2013 and July 2015.[4] The theoretical framework for the analysis is derived from

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event; and the "storming of Maidan" has been used for the police action of 18 and 19 February 2014. I have chosen to define the incident as an attack.

[3] «Posle razgona Maidana […] byla takaia fraza smeshnaia: 'Maidan peremestilsia na Mikhailovs'kuiu ploshchad' […] poluchaetsia, chto Maidan ne priviazan k ploshchadi – eto uzhe protestnaia aktsiia. Nevazhno, gde on.»

[4] I have used much of the same qualitative source material as in my master's thesis on Euromaidan (Hansen, 2015).

Lynch's (1960) theories about the functionality and significance of cities.[5] During the revolution I made 23 field trips to the Maidan, and established contact with numerous people. From these I chose six respondents for seven semi-structured in-depth interviews. Excerpts from these interviews are used in this article.[6] Since I have had two longer stays in Kyiv (from January to June 2011, and from July 2013 to December 2015), and travelled regularly to the city (from May 2007), I have also had many experiences of my own in the city. I refer to these as personal experiences.

In research literature, there exist in-depth analyses of the relationship between democracy, protests, and individual urban spaces (see Parkinson, 2012). More specifically, the Occupy movement's relations to occupied space in cities in the West have been analysed (Hammond, 2013); the space occupied by the Gezi Park protests in Istanbul in 2013 has been thoroughly discussed (Göle, 2013a, 2013b; Inceoglu, 2014, 2015; Örs, 2014); and the same applies to several protests in urban space during the Arab Spring from 2011 (see, for example, Lopes de Souza & Lipietz, 2011), the protests on Tiananmen Square in 1989 (Hershkovitz, 1993; Lee, 2009) and so on. However, few analyses of urban space in connection with the protests in Kyiv have been conducted. Whilst analyses have been made of the layout and history of Independence Square – such as the discussion of the urban space's post-Soviet transformations (Hryshchenko, 2013), publications about the history of the city, and about the Euromaidan protests in a historical perspective (Cybriwsky, 2014a and Cybriwsky, 2014b, respectively) – there are, as far as I am aware, no in-depth discussions to be found about the relationship between the layout, symbolic value, and function of Maidan.

The Position and Layout of the Urban Space

The capital of Ukraine is centrally located in the country, between Poland in the west (440 km from Kyiv) and Russia in the east (300 km). Kyiv is more central than any other city in the country, even if there are greater distances to regions, such as Donbas and Crimea (600 km and 550 km, respectively), than for example to Belarus (95 km). This is due to the country's infrastructure, such as roads, railways, and the river Dnipro.

According to legend, Kyiv was founded in year 482, and is considered the historical basis for the three modern nations, Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia. It was in Kyiv that Kievan Rus' converted to Christianity in 988, and the city therefore remains important for several orthodox churches.[7] Some of the holiest buildings of Orthodox Christianity, among them Saint Sophia's Cathedral and the cave monastery Kyievo-Pechers'ka lavra, are located in the city. In addition to being an important historic and religious centre, several of Ukraine's most important political institutions can be found in Kyiv, as well as some of the country's oldest and most prestigious universities.

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[5] Lynch emphasises, among other things, people's regular and possible patterns of movement (*paths*); landmarks and points, which people go to or through, and/or relate to (*landmarks* and *nodes*); things that hinder movement (*edges*); and areas in the city with distinct characteristics (*districts*). The terms are not used in this text directly, but they still form the basis of my analysis.

[6] For the sake of respondents' security, their names are pseudonymized and listed in the text in italics. This does not apply, however, to Ukrainian photojournalist Oleksandr Klymenko, who wanted to appear under his full name.

[7] The city is particularly important for: The Russian Orthodox Church; the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, whose leadership is located in Kyiv, even though it is a subject of the Moscow Patriarchate; the Ukrainian Orthodox Church with its own patriarchate in Kyiv; the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Catholic Church (this is officially Catholic, yet follows the same Byzantine Rite as the orthodox believers do); and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church.

Independence Square is located in the middle of Kyiv, between three hills, high up on the western (right) bank of Dnipro. Six small streets (Borysa Hrinchenka, Provulok Tarasa Shevchenka, Sofiivs'ka, Mala Zhytomyrs'ka, Mykhailivs'ka, and Kostiolna) stretch upwards from the north-western part of the square (henceforth, the NW part) towards the city's historical and religious centre on Starokyivs'ka and Zamkova hills. From the south-eastern part of the square (henceforth, the SE part) two streets (Instytuts'ka and Arkhitektora Horodets'koho) point towards the political centre on Pechers'k Hill. Up here, the Presidential Administration, Verkhovna Rada (the Parliament), the House of Government, the Central Bank, and several party headquarters are located. The 1,3 km long main street, Khreshchatyk Avenue, crosses Independence Square on its way between European Square in the north-east and Bessarabs'ka Square in the south. Independence Square is large, about 370 meters long and between 110 and 200 meters wide (depending on how and where it is measured). Khreshchatyk Avenue, with its eight lanes and 60-meter width, pavements included, is also an intrinsic part of the urban space. Overall, on the square and avenue, there is plenty of room for hundreds of thousands of people. In the area around Independence Square there are several meeting places, amongst them parks, large squares, and educational institutions.

Spatial and urban history

One way of observing Kyiv's development through the ages is through the many names of the central square. Only in the middle of the eighteenth century was the area developed where Independence Square is presently located; although *Liads'ki Gate* – one of the city's three entrances in the middle ages – was situated in the area, too. The Mongols allegedly invaded Kyiv through this gate in 1240, marking the end of Kievan Rus'. From the middle of the nineteenth century the city grew rapidly. The small square was first named *Khreshchatyk Square* in 1869 after the densely built commercial street. When the city Duma was built in 1876, the name of the square changed to *Duma Square* (GUOKS, n.d.).

After the Bolsheviks came to power in 1919, the square changed names several times. First, it became *Soviet Union Square*, and from 1935 *Kalinin Square*, after the Soviet politician, Mikhail Kalinin. Between 1941 and 1943 the square was re-named *Nineteenth September Square*, after the date when Nazi Germany first occupied the city. And when the city was reclaimed by the Red Army, it became Kalinin Square once more (GUOKS, n.d.).

Before the 60th anniversary of the October Revolution in 1977, the urban space was renovated and received the name *October Revolution Square*. The NW part, which until then had been heavily trafficked and had many physical obstacles, was converted into an open, green area with park-like qualities, with less traffic and plenty of opportunities for large crowds to gather. At the end of the SE part a large monument in memory of Lenin and the October Revolution was raised (Hryshchenko, 2013, p. 86). After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, the square changed its name to *Independence Square*, a name it still possesses today.

The façades of the urban space also show some of the transitions the city has gone through. Only the October Palace (now an art centre) at the top of a large grass hill in the eastern end of the square, and the Conservatoire are left from before World War II. The lack of buildings from before the war bears witness to the destruction the city and the people went through during the war years.

After the war, Stalin redeveloped the city in Soviet classicist style with the help of the forced slave labour of POWs: Khreshchatyk became a wide Soviet avenue, and Kalinin Square became the city's central square. The Duma had burned to the ground during the war and was not re-erected. The buildings along Khreshchatyk Avenue and in the NW part of Kalinin Square were all built with a yellow type of natural rock, with similar majestic design (sarcastically called *Stalin Cream Cake* [-style] by the city's inhabitants).[8]

Figure 1: Maidan from above. 1: Trade Unions Building. 2: Hotel Ukraine. 3: October Palace. 4: Ukraiins'kyi dim. 5: City Administration. 6: Security Agency (SBU). 7: Saint Sophia's Cathedral. 8: Golden Gate. 9: Central Bank. 10: Conservatoire. 11: Opera House.

The death of Stalin in 1953 led to an abrupt end to this architectural neoclassicism, however. Khrushchev rejected the grandiose plans and completed the reconstruction in a much simplified form. Hotel Moscow (from 2001, Hotel Ukraine), illustrates this simplification well. The hotel, which stands on the top of the hill in the end of the square's SE part, was meant to be built as one of the Stalin *vysotki* (skyscrapers), but was quickly finished, lower than planned, and without a classicist decor. The two largest buildings on the square, the Central Post Office and the Trade Unions Building, are stylistically in contrast with each other. The Central Post Office is built in a traditional Soviet classicist style, while the Trade Unions Building is postmodern structure, topped by a 24 meter high digital clock tower.

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[8] From an excursion with the firm Interesnyi Kiev, 27 July 2013.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, Kyiv went through a rapid transition to capitalism. Today, there are large illuminated advertising billboards on top of all the buildings on Independence Square. Before the Trade Unions building was completely destroyed during Euromaidan, its façade was covered by enormous advertising posters. On the ground level, banks, fast food restaurants, and kiosks now dominate the cityscape.

During the winter of 2000-01, a redevelopment of urban space began on a grand scale, and a shopping mall was built on Independence Square. The shopping mall is two floors deep and stretches underneath the whole NW part. A six-meter-tall glass dome at the end of the square sheds light down into the mall. In the other, south-eastern end of the square, there is an enormous mirror glass façade, which is three floors high. This is the second part of the shopping mall, located in front of Hotel Ukraine. The shopping mall was strongly criticised for damaging the appearance of Maidan, and even the developer, Hari Korohodskyi, stated in 2007 that he agreed with the criticism (*Fokus*, 2007). Parallel to the construction of the shopping mall, numerous new monuments were raised, which portray Ukrainian historical and mythical figures. This was part of a nationalization project by Leonid Kuchma, aimed to unify the country around a shared historical memory.

Hryshchenko has written about the reconstruction of the urban space and relays how the square went from being a green point for gatherings into a grey and inaccessible area, which has lost much of its charm. Indicative of how the nationalization project of Kuchma never became very popular with the wider population, is the fact that the Independence Monument – the city's most famous landmark – is often referred to by nicknames, such as "the pole," "the lady with the twig," or "Batman" (Hryshchenko, 2013, pp. 86-87).

Daily use

Despite a somewhat messy layout, the urban space of Maidan is used by a vast number of people every day. Khreshchatyk functions as the natural thoroughfare between several important roads: Naberezhne – which goes along Dnipro on its right bank; Bul'var Tarasa Shevchenka – a prolongment of Prospekt Peremohy, which is an important traffic artery from the western parts of Kyiv to the city centre; and Lesi Ukrainky, which goes through Baseina, from the south east to the centre. All of these are wide, heavily trafficked roads. Instytuts'ka, which crosses Khreshchatyk and leads further to Mykhailivs'ka, is well trafficked, too, and is an important path from the political centre out into the city.

Kyiv has three rapid transit circuits. The interchange between Independence Square Station on the red circuit and Khreshchatyk Station on the blue circuit is situated underneath Independence Square. There is also a short walking distance to Zoloti vorota Station ("Golden Gate") on the green circuit. Buses, minibuses and trolleybuses have routes crossing Independence Square, and the main railway station is approximately 3,5 kilometres away.

Figure 2: The Independence Monument (or the Pole). The statue is 62 meter tall and portrays Berehynia – the protector, a female spirit from Slavic mythology. Photo: Pedro J Pacheco CC BY-SA 4.0.

Figure 3: Kyiv within Ring Road. 1: Independence Square. 2: Kontraktova ploshcha. 3: Main railway station. 4: Kyiv National University. 5: Cave Monastery Kyievo-Pechers'ka lavra. Illustration: Arve Hansen.

Many pedestrians use the urban space, too. The Independence Monument has become one of the natural meeting places for people in the area, whether they want to stroll in one of the parks in the city centre or go shopping in one of Kyiv's increasing number of shopping malls. There is also a multitude of cafes, restaurants and nightclubs in the area which attract crowds of people during the day and evening. During the weekends, Khreshchatyk is closed for traffic and becomes a pedestrian zone, which fills up with ice cream parlours, street musicians, entertainers and much else, all the way between Maidan and Bessarabs'kyi. For tourists, the square is one of Kyiv's most frequented places, not just due to its history, location, and events, but also because several of the city's hotels are located on and around Maidan.

Since the urban space is large and centrally located, it is also used in the context of festivals, concerts, and on commemorative days. Rallies and military parades are arranged on Labour Day (1 May), Victory Day (9 May), and Independence Day (24 August). On 1 December every year, a large New Year's spruce is built on the square.

Protest Space

There are many practical advantages of using Independence Square for protests and demonstrations. The large number of parks, large urban spaces, and educational institutions within short walking distance from the square make it possible to arrange simultaneous rallies in several places in the city,

and later lead them down to Maidan when they are large enough to fill the square. The park in front of Shevchenko University, Kontraktova Square, as well as St. Mykhail Square, have often been used this way, e.g. during the so-called Revolution on the Granite in 1990 (see below), the Orange Revolution in 2004-05, and Euromaidan in 2013-14.

Independence Square has become a natural meeting place for different groupings and organizations, because it has enough room for a large number of people, and because it is a short distance from the political centre. A protest encampment at Maidan could quickly organise responses to politicians' actions. During Euromaidan, for example, the demonstrators reacted to new laws and the imprisonment of activists by arranging demonstrations in front of, among other places, Verkhovna Rada and the city courthouse.

Since Independence Square is used by a large number of people, a protest there will quickly be noticed and could potentially grow fast. The position of Kyiv as the centre of politics, and the city's religious and historical importance, far beyond the country's borders, provide suitable conditions for attracting attention. Additionally, the many plateaus over the SE part provide the media and others who wish to take photos of the protests a good overview over what is going on at Maidan.

Even so, there still are some disadvantages for protests in the urban space. The ten entrances to the square and its large size make it easy for demonstrators to access the square, but it also makes the area vulnerable to attacks from police and other law enforcement agencies. This is mainly true for smaller demonstrations. Conversely, large crowds of people have shown themselves particularly difficult to remove. Even when military vehicles and firearms were employed in February 2014, the government did not manage to clear more than a fraction of Euromaidan.

What constitutes a real challenge for large protests, however, are all the physical obstacles which appeared on the square after the reconstruction of the urban space in 2000. The many fences, fountains, and benches in the NW part prevent movement across the square and reduce the room for mobility and outward visibility for the people there. The SE part is more open, but the Independence Monument hinders the utility of the square's natural focal point as a space for a stage where everyone could see it. For this reason, the protesters often put up their stage close to Khreshchatyk Avenue, facing the SE part and the press's vantage points, with its back facing the NW part.

Even so, the disadvantages are outweighed by the advantages of arranging protests at Independence Square. It is very likely that the square's physical suitability has been an important factor for the successful outcome of large protests there (among others, the Orange Revolution in 2004–05, and Euromaidan in 2013–14). The physical qualities do not, however, by themselves explain why Maidan has become such a powerful symbol in Ukraine. Nor does it explain what functions Maidan has in Ukrainian society.

The Symbolic Value of the Urban Space

Maidan Nezalezhnosti consists of two words: *maidan* and *independence*. The word maidan became part of the Ukrainian language during the Mongol Yoke from the middle of the thirteenth century, and it derives from the Middle-Persian and Arabic word ميدان (meydân [Persian], midān [Arabic]). Maidan means space or arena in Middle-Persian; and volume, sphere, or a place for games in Arabic

(maidan, 1989). In Ukrainian there are two words for square/open urban space: *maidan* and *ploshcha*. A maidan is, unlike a *ploshcha*, a larger arena with many entrances (Vasianovych, 2011).

The word maidan does not exist in Russian, which only knows one word, *ploshchad'*. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, and Ukraine's declaration of independence, the October Revolution *Square* (ploshcha) changed name to Independence *Maidan*. The new name thus not only symbolises Ukraine's independence but also emphasises that the country is not Russian.

In addition to the name of the square, which symbolises Ukrainian independence, there is something quite commonplace about Maidan. In the apparent mess one finds at Independence Square, which consists of monuments, buildings in a variety of architectural styles, enormous advertising boards and much else, it is possible to find symbolic markers of the city's and the country's history. Additionally, the Trade Unions Building – the large cornerstone structure in the NW part of the square – serves as a symbol of the fight for labour rights. The cultural life of Ukraine is represented on the other side, through the Art Centre and the Conservatoire. Maidan's position below the religious and political institutions is still regarded as the centre of the city, which reinforces the sense of Maidan belonging to the people.

25 Years of Protest

The first mass protest in this specific urban space (then known as October Revolution Square) took place in October 1990. Ukraine was, as many other Soviet republics, ravaged by a faltering economy, corruption, and widespread lack of goods, in addition to the consequences of the Chornobyl Catastrophe in 1986. Gorbachev's perestroika and glasnost' reform projects had opened up for protests, and two student organisations from Kyiv and Lviv staged a hunger strike on the granite in front of the Lenin Monument. This was called Revolution on the Granite (henceforth the Granite Revolution). The students demanded, among other things, Ukraine's exit from the Soviet Union, a parliamentary re-election, and that conscripts should not be required to serve in hot spots, such as in Afghanistan or Nagorno-Karabakh. The protests, which begun with a few hundred students, soon grew large, and when miners from the Donbas region joined them, the authorities began to react. The biggest achievement of the Granite Revolution, after 16 days of hunger strike, was that the leader of the Kyivan student organisation, Oleksandr Donii, was granted speaking time in the Verkhovna Rada. During the live broadcast, he repeated the protesters' demands. Conscripts were also promised that they would serve in Ukraine (Divaki production, 2011).

One year after the Granite Revolution, the Soviet Union ceased to exist, but the newly won independence did not mean that everything suddenly improved. A rapid transition to a capitalist system, uncontrolled privatisation, and some premature economic decisions led to inflation and shortages of goods (Morrison, 1993, p. 686). In the wake of the economic crisis followed increases in corruption and crime. Three rival oligarch clans (the Kyiv clan, the Dnipropetrovsk clan, and the Donetsk clan) were established during the 1990s, and these remained in economic, but quite often also violent, conflict with each other (Matuszak, 2012, pp. 13-15).

The second president in Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, was able to stop the economic chaos that had ravaged the country during President Leonid Kravchuk's term. In the course of his first presidential term (1994–1999), Kuchma stabilised the economy, introduced the country's first

constitution, and oversaw a large growth of the middle class. In Kuchma's second period (1999-2005), however, the positive development ended, and the oligarchs increased their power. Corruption swelled, and the president increased the censorship of the mass media (Dyczok, 2006; Hansen, 2015, pp. 15-16).

In 2000, Kuchma became the centre of a huge scandal. Three weeks after Heorhii Gongadze, a journalist critical of the regime, was found tortured and beheaded in a forest outside Kyiv, sound recordings from the president's telephone were leaked by the president's former bodyguard, Mykola Mel'nychenko. The recordings allegedly confirmed that the president, among other things, ordered the killing of Gongadze, and that he was behind election fraud, corruption and numerous other criminal acts (Kuzio, 2007, p. 42). The so-called *Cassette Scandal* triggered the *Ukraine Without Kuchma* protests in the winter of 2000-01, during which thousands of demonstrators demanded the president's resignation. The protesters first settled at Maidan, yet the substantial redevelopment of the square, mentioned above, became a pretext for pushing the protest camp away from Maidan. The demonstrators had to move to the park in front of the Shevchenko University, where they stayed for almost three months, until the encampment of tents was brutally removed by riot police in March 2001. Cybriwsky (2014a, p. 167) asserts that the authorities used the work on Maidan that winter in order to remove the protests and to reconstruct the square in order to make it less suitable for protests.

Despite these new obstacles, Independence Square became the venue for the Orange Revolution in 2004-05. After a dramatic election campaign between Kuchma's preferred candidate, Viktor Ianukovych, former PM, and Governor of the Central Bank, Viktor Iushchenko, the former was declared the winner. Iushchenko had been poisoned during the election campaign but survived, and there were many reports of election fraud (Wilson, 2005, pp. 70–121). The biggest protest in Ukraine up until that point was led by Iushchenko and Iuliia Tymoshenko. After two months at Maidan, which at times was populated by hundreds of thousands of demonstrators, the authorities agreed to change the constitution and to hold new elections. Iushchenko won the new elections.

Iushchenko had pledged during his campaign to reform the country, eliminate corruption, and improve the economy, but he and the new economic elite turned out to be a big disappointment. The president struggled with the implementation of the reforms and could not cooperate with either the parliament or Tymoshenko. The latter's critique against Iushchenko became increasingly vociferous, and the two soon became political enemies. In 2010, five years after Iushchenko had been elected president, he achieved little. Corruption soared, the value of the Ukrainian Hryvnia fell by 38% in relation to the dollar (*BBC*, 2009), the murder of Gongadze still stood unsolved, and the oligarchs had at least as much power as before. In the presidential elections of 2010, Ianukovych returned as a candidate and won against Tymoshenko with 48,95% against 45,47% of the votes. Iushchenko lost the race in the first round with a mere 5,5 % support (Kireev, 2007)

Ianukovych was soon criticised from many sides. He was accused of conducting un-national politics (Kuzio, 2012; *Zik*, 2010), of enhancing the obstacles for small businesses (Hansen, 2015, p. 19), for the increased levels of corruption and crime, and for weakening the position of human rights in the society (Zakharov, 2014, pp. 13-28, 161-173). Several protests against the authorities were arranged on Maidan. Some of the biggest were the Tax Maidan in 2010, against an increase in the government's control over small- and medium-sized businesses; the Freedom for Iuliia

demonstrations (*Iuli voliu*) in 2011, against the criminal prosecution aimed at Tymoshenko (Ianukovych' rival); and the Vradiivka protests, directed against legal officials, accused by the demonstrators of protecting one of the police officers suspected of involvement in an abduction and brutal gang rape of a woman in a little town called Vradiivka (Hansen, 2015, pp. 19-20).

Figure 4: Orange Revolution at Independence Square 2004. Photo: Oleksandr Klymenko.

Euromaidan was therefore only the last of several protests against Ianukovych, and one of a large number of protests which have occurred at Maidan since Ukraine achieved independence. The protests described above include only some of the most widely known protest actions, and a tradition of going to Maidan when one wants to protest against the authorities has been firmly established.[9] Because Maidan can simultaneously be associated with four revolutions, the space also has a revolutionary symbolic value. The Granite Revolution, the Orange Revolution, and Euromaidan took place at Maidan, while the October Revolution was the name of the square until 1991. The photojournalist Oleksandr Klymenko believes that the name of the October Revolution Square was one of the reasons why students chose it as their location for the Granite Revolution in 1990. This revolutionary symbolic value has not weakened after a large number of demonstrators died in the clashes in February 2014. The killed demonstrators are now presented in Ukraine as heroes, collectively known as the Heavenly Hundred (*Nebesnia sotnia*) – a symbol of Ukrainians' willingness to die for changes in the country.

Maidan is, of course, not the only urban space which can be used for protests in central Kyiv. The urban spaces on Sophia Square and St. Mykhail Square can, as a whole, accommodate many

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[9] During my two periods of living in Kyiv and frequent trips to the city, there have apparently "always" been or been planned protests on Independence Square.

people. Shevchenko Park in front of the university of the same name has a great symbolic value because the poet Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861) is considered one of the most important figures for the opposition. Parliament Square in front of Verkhovna Rada is centrally located in proximity to various political institutions. All these urban spaces can and have been used for demonstrations, yet, as mentioned above, they are used to a lesser extent and often in the context of bigger demonstrations at Maidan. Their layout and locations are probably important reasons for why they have not been used as often as Maidan (Hansen, 2015, pp. 37-38), although the heavy symbolic value of Maidan probably is an even more important reason.

Function

What functions, then, does Maidan have in Ukrainian society? Many of my respondents state that they perceive Maidan as a vital part of the political system. *Hanna*, an Internet activist, believes that Maidan has occurred as a reaction to the corruption in the political system, and has now turned into a movement to get rid of it:

> Our politics is corrupt on such a level […] that Maidan has become a necessity for us. […] Maidan is a spontaneous reaction, a protest, a reflex […]. Yet, subsequently, a shared goal appeared: to completely change the corrupt system. You could say that this is a social movement against corruption, or against the ghost of the Soviet Union.[10]

When my respondents were asked what function they believe Maidan has, several of them compared Maidan with various political institutions. Both the photojournalist Oleksandr Klymenko and the local historian *Serhii* (who have seen a number of protests on the square over time), as well as *Stanislaŭ* (a Belarusian activist who came to support Euromaidan), call the space a form of people's parliament, where one goes to resolve problems. *Serhii* compares Maidan with two forms of popular assemblies:

> […] the word Maidan has simply begun to mean some kind of mass action. As a type of the Old Russian phenomenon *viche*. Or like the Norwegian word *ting*. In other words, this is a popular assembly which takes some kind of important decision [italics applied by the author].[11]

The American history professor Timothy Snyder draws a similar parallel to the Greek Agora:

> […] a maidan now means in Ukrainian what the Greek word agora means in English: not just a marketplace where people happen to meet, but a place where they deliberately meet, precisely in order to deliberate, to speak, and to create a political society (Snyder 2014).

Several others, including the Ukrainian journalist and blogger Volodymyr Zolotoriov, also emphasise Maidan's role as a place for discussion: "Maidan is social training for collective action and joint communication. Ukrainians are learning to become a society, act collectively and communicate together."[12]

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[10] Nasha polityka nastilky korumpovana, [...] shcho nam prosto neobkhidnyi Maidan. [...] Maidan – tse spontanna aktsia, protest, refleks [...]. Ale zhodom ziavylas' spil'na meta – povnistiu zminyty korumpovanu systemu. Mozhna skazaty, shcho tse sotialnyi rukh proty koruptsii abo pryzraku Radianskoho Soiuzu.
[11] [...] slovo Maidan prosto stalo oznachat' imenno kakuiu-to mnogoliudnuiu aktsiiu. Kak tipa drevnerusskoe iavlenie veche. Ili podobnoe k norvezhskomu slovu ting. To est' eto narodnoe sobranie, kotoroe prinimaet kakoe-to reshenie vazhnoe.
[12] Maidan – eto sotsialnaia praktika vzaimo-deistviia, so-obshcheniia. Ukraintsy uchatsia byt' obshchestvom, vzaimo-deistvovat' i so-obshchat'sia» [sic].

It is, of course, possible to questions claims about Maidan being a *ting* or an *agora*. During Euromaidan, questions about the political situation and what was to be done were naturally discussed by the various groupings, yet there were few signs during my field work that Majdan was a place where discussion was the central element. The government and people of other opinions were not given access to the debates at Maidan, and the attendees usually were in broad agreement about what and whom they were against, even if they occasionally disagreed about the methods. Therefore, Maidan was more of a space for action than a democratic institution.

It might, however, be less relevant to ask whether or not Maidan functioned as a people's assembly, and more important to ask which functions Maidan has in Ukraine. Since a location exists where people often go in order to act against the authorities, it also achieves an important function: Protests appear at Maidan when there is great discontent with an issue, and Ukrainians are not satisfied with how the authorities deal with that issue. It is thus possible to see Maidan's top function as a form of safety valve for Ukrainian society – a place where Ukrainians sense they have a real possibility of affecting the politics directly if the pressure becomes too high.

Anyone can occupy Maidan, and different groups and segments of the population have started protests on the square. During the Granite Revolution in 1990 and Euromaidan in 2013–14, students initiated the protests, yet protests have also been started by politicians, as during the Orange Revolution in 2004-05; by businessmen, as during the Tax Maidan in 2010; and by people from minor towns, as during the Vradiivka protests in 2013. It is, however, the appeal of a current issue which decides if other groups in society join in and, as they say in Ukraine, "a new Maidan begins" (*novyi Maidan pochynaetsia*).

Conclusions

I asked initially what it is that makes Independence Square *the* protest space of Ukraine, what is the symbolic value of the square, and what functions Maidan has in Ukrainian society.

For a long time, protests have been part of the political landscape in Ukraine. During the 25 years or so of social discontent and 30 years of economic hardship, the trust in the country's political institutions has worn thin. Corruption and crime amidst the country's small elite have led to many Ukrainians perceiving politicians as representatives only of their own personal interests – not the interests of the people. The disappointment that followed the Orange Revolution contributed to the perception that all politicians are like this, whether or not they are in the opposition. When people believe that politicians are doing a poor job of protecting their interests, they go out to Independence Square. Despite attempts at the start of this century to make the urban space less suitable for large crowds, the area still remains the place where people gather to protest.

Independence Square is physically well suited as a protest space. It is strategically located between several key meeting places in the city, which facilitates the possibility of arranging demonstrations at several places in the city simultaneously and lead them down to the Maidan, and it is only a short distance from the political centre on the Pechersk Hill. The collective urban space of Maidan and Khreshchatyk Avenue is also big and allows huge crowds to demonstrate at the same time. Many main roads and entrances to the square make it easy to get to Maidan, and the authorities

have a hard time controlling actions on the square. The square's layout makes it very difficult to clear people off it if they have first had the opportunity to set up camp there.

Independence Square is also well suited for protests from a symbolic and cultural viewpoint. The square's name symbolises a distance from Russia, as both words *maidan* and *independence* are interlinked with the independence of 1991. The square is located lower than Kyiv's central political, religious and historical landmarks, yet still in the centre of the city. This creates a peculiar symbolic value as a people's space. The symbolic value is enhanced by the Trade Unions' Building, the cultural buildings, and all the local history in the shape of buildings and monuments. Maidan is simultaneously associated with four successful revolutions, three of which are directly connected with the square, hence the city and country dwellers are reminded of the possibilities afforded to them by such an urban space.

It is to Maidan that Ukrainians go to be heard when their political institutions fail, and Maidan can be seen as a kind of safety valve – a place where people congregate to reject their rulers if those deviate too far from the people's wish. The sheer number of protests at Maidan bears witness to how important this safety valve is, and how difficult it is to reform Ukrainian society. The goal of most protests has been to remove the corrupt leadership, yet it is not a given that a new leadership will bring in a new and reformed society.

The current political leadership of Ukraine knows the significance of Maidan. The politicians got their positions after the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2014 had been expedited, owing to the revolution. Therefore, when the Poroshenko administration is threatened with a new Maidan, it knows the implications very well. In a climate ravaged by war and instability, but also by several reforms, it will be interesting to see how Maidan will be used in the times ahead.

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Appendix 3: Article 2

Hansen, A. (2017). Public space in the Soviet city: A spatial perspective on mass protests in Minsk. *Nordlit*, (39), 33-57. http://doi.org/10.7557/13.4202

PUBLIC SPACE IN THE SOVIET CITY:
A SPATIAL PERSPECTIVE ON MASS PROTESTS IN MINSK

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Abstract

In many capitals, the central public square is the place where people go en masse when they wish to voice their discontent. The squares used for such collective actions are diverse. Each square has its unique combination of symbols and history; they are used in different ways by the public; and they often have distinct physical characteristics. Yet, in social sciences, when determining what makes collective actions successful, space is often overlooked.

In this article, I present an approach for analysing public space in relation to mass protests. I then apply this approach to the Belarusian capital Minsk, where virtually no protests have been successful during the post-Soviet period. In what ways are mass protests in Minsk affected by the perceived (symbolic), social and physical elements of the city's public spaces? I examine the centre of Minsk in general, and analyse two central squares in particular. The article is based mainly on qualitative, semi-structured interviews with protesters, observers and opposition leaders; research literature; and on my own fieldwork and experiences from living in Minsk.

I conclude that space is contributing to the difficulties facing the Belarusian opposition in several ways. 1) The perceived elements of Minsk and the two main squares do not have a preferable symbolic value to the opposition. 2) The social elements of the city show that the political centre is avoided by the public, thus making protests less noticeable. 3) This latter point is important, given that the physical elements of the squares makes policing particularly easy and swift. The physical elements of the squares also limit the protesters' communication, movement and flexibility. I argue that a spatial perspective should be included in research on collective actions.

Keywords

Belarus; Minsk; Collective action; Colour revolution; Demonstration; Kevin Lynch; Independence square; October square; Protest; Public space

In the concept of democracy, the *square* has a central position. Historically, when people started to live in urban societies, the town square often became the natural meeting place – a space in which people deliberate, make policies and decide on a course of action. We find examples of this on the ancient Greek *agora*, the medieval Scandinavian *ting*, and the Slavic *vecha*.

In our day and age, most of the decision-making has moved from the town square into political institutions, and the squares have been given other uses, such as for recreation and celebration. Yet, ever so often, people return to the square's original function. We have, to mention just a few recent examples, seen people gather on and occupy several squares in modern history: from the Tiananmen in 1989; to the squares of many post-Soviet cities during the wave of 'colour revolutions' in the 2000s. We saw massive

uprisings starting on squares throughout the Arab world from 2010; and from 2011, there were Occupy-protests in many large cities in the West. In Kyiv, protests in the winter of 2013-14 led to a regime change in Ukraine, for the second time in less than a decade.

Belarusians, as well, have taken to the central squares of Minsk to protest against Aliaksandr Ryhoravich Lukashėnka,[1] the country's only president since 1994. Most notably, thousands of Belarusians went to the Kastrychnitskaia square in 2006, and to Kastrychnitskaia and Nezalezhnastsi squares in 2010. However, these and many other similar actions have quickly been supressed by the authorities.

The success and failure of mass protests

In social sciences, several theories are offered to account for what makes collective action (un)successful. The sociologist Susan Olzak (1989) describes the factors used to analyse events, such as a mass protest or a revolution: the duration of the event, the number of participants, and the presence or lack of violence. The importance of such factors has been the subject of much discussion in the research literature.[2]

During the wave of colour revolutions in the early 2000s, new research was made on the conditions of why some of these protests had led to a regime change. Political scientist Michael McFaul (2005) lists seven external conditions necessary for a colour revolution to occur.[3] Others analyse the internal conditions, such as the political scientist Joshua Tucker (2007), who focuses on motivation, and argues that electoral fraud was a main trigger for all the colour revolutions.

Yet, one aspect of mass protests has not been thoroughly analysed, namely, that of public space. In what ways does public space affect collective actions?

A spatial perspective

Public space is diverse. From one city to another, the characteristics of urban public space differ greatly. Firstly, every square has its own unique history, traditions, ideological symbols; secondly, spaces are used differently, based on their connection and proximity to infrastructure, buildings, landmarks, and so on; thirdly, there are physical differences such as shape and size, elevations, monuments, layout, entrances, and much more.

In the research relating urban public space with mass protests, authors are mostly concerned with either urban spaces of protest in general, or the uniqueness of some urban space in particular. The former usually leads to a discussion of modern political philosophy, referring to Habermas's *public sphere* – the space in which people meet to talk and deliberate; to Arendt's more physically oriented *public space*; or to Lefebvre's

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[1] In Belarus, there are three written languages: Russian and Belarusian, both of which are official languages, and the classic Belarusian Tarashkevitsa. The name of the president could be transliterated as *Aleksandr Lukashenko* (Russian); *Aliaksandr Lukashėnka* (Belarusian); and *Aliaksandar Lukashėnka* (Belarusian Tarashkevitsa). I use the official Belarusian (*Aliaksandr*) for proper nouns, in accordance with the American Library Association & Library of Congress ALA-LC Romanization table.

[2] See for example Chenoweth & Stephan (2011) on nonviolent resistance.

[3] 1) The regime has to be semi-autocratic, rather than fully autocratic; 2) there has to be an unpopular incumbent; 3) the opposition needs to be united and organised; 4) there must be independent electoral-monitoring capabilities available; 5) there must be a modicum of independent media; 6) the opposition must have the capacity to mobilize significant numbers of protesters; 7) and there must be a split among the "guys with guns." In other words, the opposition must have some support in the state apparatus.

right to the city.[4] Discussions also tend to centre on aspects, such as privatization and/or exclusion of space for some parts of the public (i.e. homeless people, youth, drug users).[5] The latter appears in literature that analyses the uniqueness of certain public spaces, which focuses on one or several attributes of a public space.[6]

What I believe to be missing in the literature, however, is a general approach on *how* to analyse public spaces, and evaluate how they enable (or fail to enable) public protest. My current research project, which this article forms part of, aims to establish and develop such an approach.[7] The aim is to demonstrate that space is, potentially, an important condition for collective action. This is the context for my following analysis of the public space of Minsk, which asks in what ways the central squares in the Belarusian capital do affect the course and nature of mass protests, and how Minsk's central squares do facilitate and/or inhibit protest.

Research question, approach, methodology

In an earlier study, I applied the architectural theory of Lynch (1960) to describe how people in Kyiv relate to the Maidan square (Hansen 2016). This approach is identifying and describing the different 'elements of the city' (paths, nodes, landmarks, edges and districts), and using interviews to find out how these elements affect the day to day life in the city: how people employ landmarks to navigate the city, what paths they take, and so on. For the current article, I have expanded on Lynch's theory in order to better suit a perspective on mass protests. I have added several new elements and divided these into three categories: perceived elements, social elements and physical elements.[8] In what way are these perceived, social and physical elements affecting stationary mass protests in Minsk?

Between October 2015 and March 2017, I had many conversations and discussions with Belarusians from my extended circle of contacts (I elaborate on this below). From amongst these, I chose 9 observers, organisers and protesters for eleven qualitative interviews.[9] The interviews were conducted in Russian and Belarusian via Skype,

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[4] See Goodsell (2003); Frenzel, Feigenbaum & McCurdy (2013); Göle (2013); Harvey (2012). Also relevant is Howell (1993) on historical geography; and Parkinson (2012) on public space, political institutions and democracy.

[5] See Kohn (2013); Mitchell (1995); Mitchell (2017); Köksal (2012).

[6] See for instance Örs (2013) on the history and symbolic importance of the Taksim square in Istanbul; Hansen (2016) on the Maidan square's perceived role as a safety valve in the Ukrainian society; Gillham et al. (2013) on the policing of Occupy protests; Ramadan (2013) on the importance of Tahrir square in Egypt; Lee (2009) on the making of Tiananmen square a political space.

[7] My background is in Slavonic area studies, and my PhD project, which analyses three post-Soviet capitals, Kyiv, Minsk and Moscow, is interdisciplinary, straddling cultural studies and social sciences. In a wider context, my PhD project is part of the research group RSCPR (Russian Space: Concepts, Practices, Representations) at UiT – the Arctic University of Norway.

[8] These elements have been identified in my previous publications (Hansen 2015; 2016) and during my work on this article. Although I have tried to make this list as complete as possible, the list can never become exhaustive. During my work on Kyiv and Minsk, I discovered new elements, and I expect more will emerge in subsequent case studies.

[9] I interviewed one Belarusian journalist (Vital'); five Belarusians who participated in protest actions (Dzmitry, Katsiaryna [twice], Piatro, Yaraslaŭ [twice], Paŭliuk [who is also a member of the LGBT-movement]); and three politicians (Stanislaŭ Shushkevich, Belarus' first head of state and presidential candidate in 1994; Aliaksandr Milinkevich, the joint opposition's presidential candidate in 2006; and Mikola Statkevich, a presidential candidate in 2010). The names of all respondents, except the politicians,

telephone, and email. [10] All the interviews, except the email correspondence with Milinkevich, were in the form of semi-structured conversations with open-ended questions. I asked the respondents to tell me about the general situation in Belarus; Minsk and its spaces of protests; and about particular protests (mainly the mass actions of 2006 and 2010). I paid a particular attention to instances when the elements of the city were mentioned, then prompted the respondents with questions, such as *"How accessible was Kastrychnitskaia square for you in 2006?"*

Perceived elements	Social elements	Physical elements
History	Paths	Location
Ideological symbols	Nodes	Size
Buildings	Buildings	Shape
Landmarks	Landmarks	Entrances
Monuments	Districts	Exits
History of protests	Traditions	Walls
	Official use	Floor
		Objects
		Obstacles
		Edges
		Public works
		Focal points

Figure 1 The elements of the city

In addition to the interviews, the current article is based on a recent fieldwork in Minsk;[11] research literature on the politics of Belarus, the history and architecture of the city; cinema and television documentaries;[12] my own experience of living in Minsk;[13] and from working with the Belarusian opposition in Kyiv and Vilnius. [14]

I use these data to describe the city and the elements of its main squares, and I identify instances where the elements of the squares have affected the opposition's conduct. I argue that Minsk is a particularly difficult place to protest in because: 1) the city represents Lukashėnka and his success, as well as the mainstream and official view of history; and at the same time, alienates the pro-European opposition; 2) the two main squares (Kastrychnitskaia and Nezalezhnastsi) are places most people tend to avoid,

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have been altered. The interviews are referred to by the respondent's surname or pseudonym either in-text or in brackets. The number of respondents is limited because this article is part of a bigger project including several cities. Nevertheless, I believe that my selection of an observer, politicians and protesters is sufficient to map how space is perceived in Minsk.

[10] The interviews were conducted online or by phone, to minimize the risk of our contact being noticed by the government, potentially leading to repressions. The interviews were audio-recorded only after getting permission from the respondents beforehand.

[11] The fieldwork was conducted in October and November 2015.

[12] Obyknovennyĭ prezident (Khashchevatskiĭ 1996); Lekcja Białoruskiego (Dembinski 2006); Ploshcha (Khashchevatskiĭ 2007); Belarusskaia mechta (Kibal'chich 2011); Banda (Mikhaĭloŭskaia 2015).

[13] As a language student in Belarus in 2006–10.

[14] During my internship at the Norwegian embassy in Ukraine (2011), I worked with many young people from the Belarusian opposition in Ukraine and Lithuania. They had been expelled from Belarusian universities for participating in the protests of 2006, and given funding by the Nordic Council of Ministers to continue their education in Ukraine and Lithuania.

making protests there hardly visible; 3) the squares give little shelter or safety to protesters, it is hard to communicate with each other there, and they are easily controlled from the outside.

Belarusian protests, from Glasnost' to Lukashėnka

The first major protests in Belarus in the 1980s were enabled by Gorbachev's reform policies. The main concerns for protesters at the time were the effects of the Chernobyl disaster (1986); rising economic difficulties; and the question of independence – fuelled by the discovery of one of Stalin's killing fields in the Kurapaty forest on the outskirts of Minsk (Marples, 1994). Protests continued during the post-Soviet 1990s. More often than not they were concerned with economic problems and food shortages.

The current regime in Belarus is by and large personified by Aliaksandr Lukashėnka – commonly referred to in the West as 'the last dictator in Europe', a phrase coined by Condoleezza Rice in 2005 (Nielsen 2012). Lukashėnka won the first Belarusian presidential elections in 1994 with more than 80 per cent of the votes (Vardomatskiĭ 1995, 49). Initially he was regarded as an alternative to five other candidates who represented to the Belarusian electorate either inexperience or corruption, or both.[15] Soon, however, new reasons for protest occurred. During Lukashėnka's first term in office (1994–2001), one of these was the reintroduction of Soviet symbols, as well as the president's increasing authoritarianism and suppression of the political opposition.

It took Lukashėnka ten years to consolidate his presidency: in two referendums in 1995 and 1996, he increased presidential powers and weakened the parliament (Wilson 2011, 168–86). Meanwhile certain political and ideological opponents disappeared or died under unclear circumstances (Bennett 2011, 70; Mikhaĭloŭskaia 2015). Protests against Lukashėnka increased as colour revolutions against authoritarian leaders spread through a number of post-Soviet countries. Large protests were staged against a proposed union with Russia, which was never realised (Statkevich); and in 2004, people protested against a referendum that removed the two-term limit on the presidential rule. Significantly, large numbers of people went out to protest against the alleged fraud in the presidential elections of March 2006 and December 2010, attempting to achieve a Belarusian colour revolution. Both attempts were brutally suppressed by the authorities.

David Marples (2006) points out that Belarus in 2006 was lacking every single of McFaul's (2005) conditions (see above), arguing that the president had a firm grip on the official ideology, and had been able to maintain his popularity in large segments of the population through his control over media, through his repressions of political opponents, and by maintaining close relations to Russia (Marples 2006). To this, Barbara Törnquist-Plewa (2001) adds the (most) successful Russification under the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, and a weak Belarusian identity. By playing on the post-Soviet nostalgia of Belarusian citizens, Lukashėnka has built an official national myth on the Soviet past of his country, which emphasises the special position of Belarusians in the narratives of the

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[15] Of his main opponents, campaigning for the presidency its worth mentioning three: 1) The prime minister Viacheslaŭ Kebich, who represented the status quo. 2) Zianon Pazniak, who represented the nationalist new political force, while promising a radical Belarusification of the society and government. 3) The former head of state, Stanislaŭ Shushkevich, who was representing the more conservative new political force. Initially a very popular person, he lost because of the accusations of corruption (Shushkevich).

Soviet Union and World War II (known in the former Soviet Union as the Great Patriotic War). Lukashėnka's Soviet-oriented and pro-Russian worldview has pushed the majority of the opposition into the pro-European camp. Yet in spite of its common contempt of Lukashėnka and its shared pro-European values, the opposition shows little unity, answering to its description by Törnquist-Plewa as "weak and fragmented" (2001, 81). My own experience from working with members of the Belarusian opposition confirms this view.[16]

Since spring 2011, Belarus has faced mounting economic problems. The combination of a nationalised and planned economy, combined with poor decision-making (Romanchuk, 2011) and a weakened Russian rouble (from 2014), has led to several devaluations of the Belarusian rouble and to shortages of goods. In early 2017, protests erupted in many Belarusian cities against the economic hardship and the introduction of a new law 'on social parasites', which taxes the unemployed. However, since March 25, when a large demonstration in Minsk was supressed by riot police and opposition leaders arrested, protests have, for now, ceased. (Bylina 2017)

My respondents repeat many of the observations presented in research literature regarding the situation in Belarus, such as: authority-controlled media and a Belarusian mentality similar to that of a Soviet citizen who values short-term stability over freedom. Statkevich agrees with Tucker (2007) that only presidential elections have the potential to unite the opposition and motivate large numbers of people to take to the streets: "A small chance appears at the night of the presidential elections [...]. Belarusians are a rational people, very rational. If there's no chance, why take the risk?"[17] To this, my respondents are prone to add that Lukashėnka has built a police state, which cannot be overthrown by a popular protest or revolution. "Here, the secret service KGB, a large police apparatus and the possibility to use internal troops work well to suppress any public actions."[18] (Paŭliuk). Several of my respondents also emphasise differences in national character between Belarusians and Ukrainians: "We don't have the same mentality as Ukrainians. They are good at it." (Yaraslaŭ). "Maidan is the national character of Ukrainians, not Belarusians." (Piatro). "Our national identity is the same as [the identity] of people in Eastern-Ukraine [...]"[19]

Thus, there are many current arguments which, combined, offer plausible explanations of why the Belarusian opposition has failed to achieve success. Nevertheless, I wish to add space as another relevant factor in this picture. In the following section, I shall turn to the first group of elements of the city, and look into how these also affect the opposition's possibilities.

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[16] In spring 2011, after the violent crackdown of protests in December 2010, I arranged a meeting at the European Humanitarian University in Vilnius. The meeting was attended by staff members of the Norwegian embassy in Ukraine and the Nordic Council of Ministers, as well as Belarusian students studying in Kyiv and Vilnius. The different opposition groupings as represented by the students, appeared to be aggressively opposing each other, and showed few signs of unity between them.

[17] "Маленький шанс придвигает ночь президентских выборов [...]. Белорусы – рациональный народ, очень рациональный. Если нету шанса, зачем рисковать?"

[18] "Здесь хорошо работают спецслужбы КГБ, большой аппарат милиции и возможность использовать внутренние войска для подавления любых публичных акций"

[19] "У нас нет такого менталитета, как у украинцев. У них это хорошо получается." (Yaraslaŭ). "Майдан является национальным характером украинцев, не белорусов." (Piatro). "У нас нацыянальная ідэнтычнасць, як у людзей ва ўсходніх абласцях Украіны [...]" (Dzmitry).

Perceived elements

Minsk is well known for looking 'Soviet' and a first-time visitor is struck by just how much of Soviet architecture has been preserved. The city is characterised by wide avenues, Stalinist architectural style, prominent red stars and Soviet slogans, huge squares and monuments to the 1945 victory.

There are several reasons why Minsk was infused with such a Soviet identity, but perhaps the most significant relates to the Great Patriotic War, which reduced the city to rubble. This enabled Soviet architects to rebuild Minsk as an example of what the socialist experiment could achieve (Bohn 2013, 6). With the building boom of the 1940s and 1950s, the infrastructure was developed further, with industry, educational institutions and more. Only a small proportion of the city's original inhabitants returned to Minsk after the war, while Russians and rural Belarusians moved in. This contributed to a Russification of the city. In addition to the monumental celebration of Communist heroes, such as Lenin, Dzerzhinsky and Kalinin, the War became an important theme of the public spaces of Minsk – not least after it was granted the status of a hero city in 1974 (Bohn 2013, 30). Analysing the memory of the war, Per Anders Rudling states that "in no other country does the war occupy such a central place in the national historiography as it does in Lukashenka's Belarus." (2008, 57). 10 per cent of the toponymy of major streets, parks and squares in the city centre relate to the War, in addition to 60 per cent related to other Soviet events and persons (Titarenko 2008, 38). These names often replaced the ethnic ones (i.e. from the significant pre-war population of Jews and Tatars).

The city's historic markers went through a similar 'cleansing'. In an article on the phenomenon of Minsk, Larissa Titarenko and Anna Shirokanova describe how a majority of symbolic markers were either destroyed during the fighting or removed by Soviet architects. Prominent examples of this are the levelling of Zamchyshcha (Castle Hill), where a wooden castle long had stood as a distinctive landmark, and the river Niamiha, now laid in pipes underground. (Titarenko & Shirokanova 2011, 31) The latter is especially noteworthy, since Minsk's first appearance in a historical text is in the Primary chronicle for the year 1067, which reports a battle near Minsk on the river Niamiha (Cross & Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, 145–46). The river Svislach has since taken Niamiha's place and is now the main waterway of Minsk.

Most of the capital city's official institutions are placed along the 15 km-long and eight lane-wide Praspekt Nezalezhnastsi (henceforth Independence avenue). The avenue runs from Nezalezhnastsi square (Independence square) in the western part of the city centre to the city's border in the northeast, crossing four more squares after Nezalezhnastsi. The first of these is Kastrychnitskaia (October square), then the avenue bridges the river Svislach, becomes a roundabout when it crosses the square Peramohi (Victory square), passes the third, Iakuba Kolasa, and cuts through Kalinina (see fig. 2).
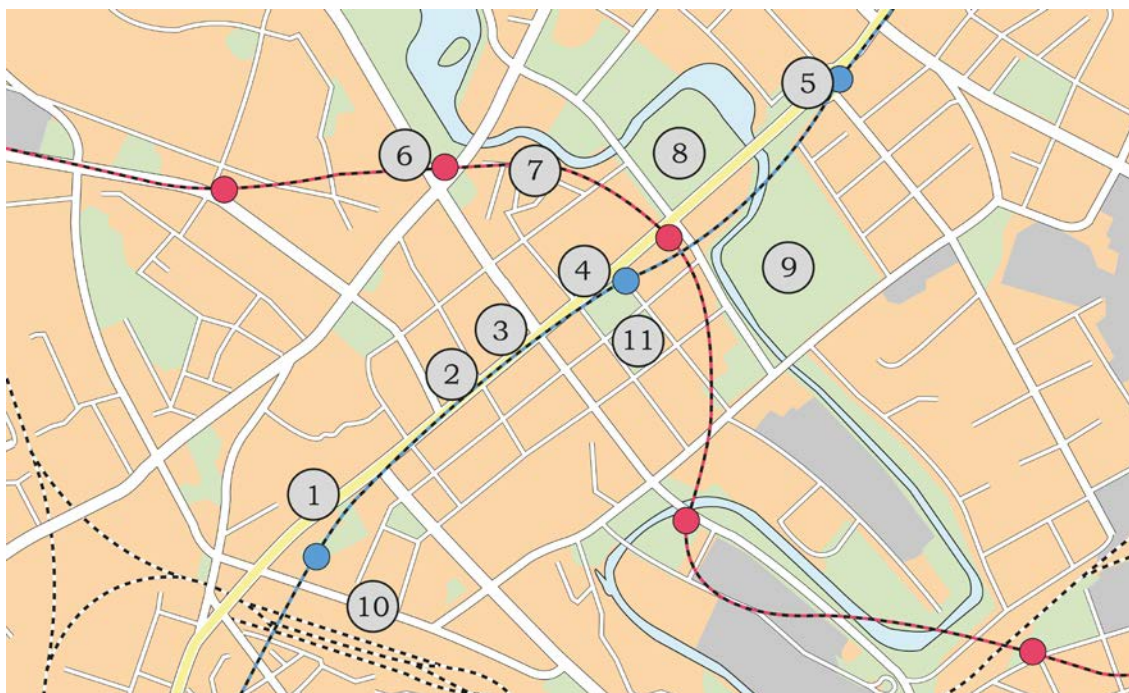
Figure 2 Minsk City Centre: Yellow: Independence Avenue; 1) Nezalezhnastsi; 2) KGB; 3) GUM Shopping centre; 4) Kastrychnitskaia; 5) Peramohi; 6) Niamiha; 7) Zybitskaia; 8) Park Ianki Kupaly; 9) Gorkyi park; 10) Train station; 11) Presidential Administration. Illustration: Arve Hansen

Since Lukashėnka came to power, a number of new monumental building projects have been launched. At Kastrychnitskaia, the unfinished Palace of the Republic had stood untouched since 1984, when economic problems put a halt to the project. In 2001, after 17 years as a construction site, the building was completed and the square reopened. Even more grandiose projects include the National Library (2006), the Stalitsa shopping centre on Nezalezhnastsi square (2006), and the new museum to the Great Patriotic War (2014), to mention but a few. These building projects are similar to the Soviet brutalist monumental style. It could be said that the Lukashėnkian architecture carries on the Soviet tradition of aiming to represent the success and prosperity of the country's leadership.

Nevertheless, capitalism has also made its mark with the introduction of advertising and brand names. Yet, compared to neighbouring capitals, such as Kyiv, Riga or Vilnius, Minsk has escaped the extremes of post-Soviet marketing. Sarna (2008) describes the current authorities' attempt to make Minsk a 'glamourous heaven', by removing everything unsanctioned and disorderly, such as intrusive advertising boards, garbage … and even political dissent. In other post-Soviet countries, Minsk enjoys a reputation as a clean and orderly city.

Still, protests do occasionally occur in the city, and especially two central squares have been used by the opposition for mass protests: Kastrychnitskaia and Nezalezhnastsi (I explain why below). In the following two sections, I shall look more closely at the perceived elements of these two squares.

Figure 3 The National Library. Photo: Wikimedia, Julian Nitzsche

The perceived elements of Kastrychnitskaia (October square)

Kastrychnitskaia is named after the Bolshevik revolution of 1917. It is the most geographically central square in Minsk, and between 1949 and 1984, it was named Tsentral'naia (Central square), intended as the heart of the city (Bohn 2013, 49). Kastrychnitskaia and Minsk's position in the world is marked on the square's only monument, a tiny pyramid, called the 0-km sign, which shows distances from Minsk to other major cities of the world.

The centrepiece on the square is the Palace of the Republic, where officially sanctioned concerts and receptions of foreign delegations are held. This is also where Lukashėnka has been inaugurated four times since 2001 (the 1994 inauguration took place in the House of Government) (Naviny 2015). The palace is perceived as a monument to the success and economic stability achieved during Lukashėnka's first term in office, and Milinkevich calls it "almost a sacred place for the authorities".[20] The city's inhabitants like to call it *the giant sarcophagus*, because of its brutal but simplistic design – reminiscent of a giant coffin. Piatro confirms that the uneasiness of the metaphor is appropriate: "The Palace of the Republic evokes a feeling of horror. It's a sarcophagus that blocks the view to [Verkhni Horad]".[21]

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[20] "амаль сакральнае месца для ўлады"
[21] "Дворец Республики вызывает чувство ужаса. Это Саркофаг, который закрывает вид на [Верхний город]"

After the presidential elections in March 2006, on the appeal of Aliaksandr Milinkevich, people went to Kastrychnitskaia in large numbers with the slogan "Freedom, Truth, Justice"[22] (Milinkevich) to protest against alleged election fraud. In the West, the protests are known as the Denim revolution.[23] In Minsk, however, the protesters tried to change Kastrychnitskaia's association from Lukashėnka and the October revolution, to something more ideologically appealing. They started to call the square *Ploshcha Kalinoŭskaha*, after Kastus' Kalinoŭski – a key person in the 1863 January Uprising against the Russian Empire.

Figure 4 Palace of the Republic on Kastrychnitskaia. Photo: Colourbox.com/Grisha

Usually, though, the square is simply called 'Ploshcha', which is Belarusian for 'square'. By choosing a Belarusian word, the protesters distance themselves from the largely Russophone leadership. At present, when members of the opposition say "We'll start the Ploshcha," or "go out to the Ploshcha", they mean starting a large protest at Kastrychnitskaia, and the way the opposition uses the word is similar to how Ukrainians use the word 'maidan' (Ukr.: 'square') (Hansen 2016, 119).

> 'Ploshcha' that's because of Maidan. In the beginning we called it Maidan, but Belarusian media has successfully used Maidan to scare everyone. Both in 2004 and later in 2013 […]. For many people it has a negative association, therefore

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[22] "Свабода, Праўда, Справядлівасць"

[23] Wilson explains that the Belarusian 'colour revolution' was given the symbol of denim, because "it would be difficult for the repressive local police to victimise people for wearing it." Wilson then criticises the symbol for being too common (2011, 211). Judging by my respondents, the name Denim revolution is rarely used.

we didn't call it Maidan. But at the same time we wanted to come up with something of our own. […] The most simple solution was 'Ploshcha'. [24] (Piatro)

Despite these attempts of appropriating the space and change the association from the Bolshevik October revolution to a people's revolt against Russia, the Ploshcha of 2006 did not turn out like the Ukrainian Maidan of 2004, and the protests ended with massive arrests. According to Milinkevich, following the protests, 1500 people lost their jobs, 1200 were sent to jail and 500 students were expelled from their higher education institutions. Today, none of my respondents seems to have been associating the square with revolution. When I asked about their feelings for Kastrychnitskaia, several spoke of disappointment and failure. "[Kastrychnitskaia] is associated with the authorities, with failed desires, dreams, […] yes, and with disappointment." [25] (Paŭliuk)

The perceived elements of Nezalezhnastsi (Independence square)

The next mass protests in Minsk happened on December 19, 2010, after yet another re-election of Lukashėnka. Triggered by claims of election fraud, the opposition announced a new "Ploshcha" and marched to Kastrychnitskaia, where tens of thousands of people gathered. After staying at Kastrychnitskaia for a couple of hours, the protesters then decided to move the protest down to Nezalezhnastsi to protest outside the House of Government. [26] On the way to Nezalezhnastsi, the crowd grew, and several of my respondents claim that the whole kilometre of Independence Avenue linking the two squares was filled with people.

One attraction for the opposition is the square's symbolic name – *Independence square*, which could be interpreted as independence from Russia and Lukashėnka. The Catholic *Church of Saints Simon and Helena*, commonly known as *The Red Church*, could also be considered as an ideological symbol, especially for the Polish and Catholic minorities in Belarus. Yet, the perceived elements of Nezalezhnastsi are problematic. Despite its 1991 renaming from Lenin Square to Independence Square, Lenin is still present as a 7-meter-tall statue looming in front of the House of Government. A bust of the Bolshevik leader also decorates one of the entrances to the metro station, which is still called the Lenin Square Station (Stantsyia Ploshcha Lenina). My respondent Paŭliuk perceives the square as a constant struggle for independence from Lenin, more than anything else. Even as a place for political protests, the square has lost much of its value after Lukashėnka stripped the national assembly of political power. "The parliament [in the House of Government] is considered to be in the pocket [of Lukashėnka]. They just wait for the president's

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[24] 'Плошча' – это потому что Майдан. В начале называли Майдан, но Майданом успешно в белорусской медиа всех запугали. И тогда в 2004 и потом в 2013 […]. Для многих это имело негативную ассоциацию, поэтому Майданом не называли. Но при этом хотели что-то свое придумать. […] Самое простое это было 'Плошча'.

[25] "[Октябрьская] ассоциируется с властью, с неудавшимися желаниями, мечтами, […] да, и с разочарованием."

[26] None of my respondents could give a concrete answer why. Several of them talked about going to protest outside the Central Electoral Commission in the House of Government, next to Nezalezhnastsi (Piatro, Yaraslaŭ, Katsiaryna), "where evil is being done" / "там дзе робіцца зло" (Katsiaryna). Statkevich suggested that marches are more effective than stationary protests. Dzmitry and Milinkevich talked about the possibility that KGB planted the idea among the protesters, so that they could carry out the well-planned police operation at Nezalezhnastsi and remove the political opposition, once and for all (see below).

orders." [27] (Piatro). In addition to this, the Ploshcha of 2010 was even more brutally supressed than the Ploshcha of 2006, adding failed protests to the associations citizens of Minsk have with the square.

Figure 5 Nezalezhnastsi (Independence square). CC-BY-3.0 Wikimedia, Alexander Groshev

Minsk's two main squares of protest, Kastrychnitskaia and Nezalezhnastsi, are associated by the city's inhabitants with the success of Lukashėnka, and with failed protests. The opposition's attempted appropriation of Kastrychnitskaia by changing the name of the square has not been successful; and Nezalezhnastsi still represent Lenin and Belarus's Communist past, while the House of Government is not seen as the place where real power is positioned.

In sum, the perceived elements of Minsk are seeking to reinforce the authorities' official version of history and Belarusian identity. The vast majority of the city's main features represent Lukashėnka and the Soviet past. Be it the architecture; the reputation as a clean city; or the many monuments to ideologically 'correct' people and events. As such, the city does not represent a particularly inviting place for the pro-European opposition, whose meetings easily appear alien and misplaced amongst the glamour of the socialist city, surrounded by the evidence of Lukashėnka's apparent success.

Social elements

Even though Minsk, as the perceived elements above demonstrate, might offer an uninviting environment for the opposition, people have turned to protest several times. I now turn to look at the social elements of the city and its protest spaces, in order to assess their visibility. My respondents all agree, that once you're out to protest, your main objective is to be seen and heard. "We're going to the square to show that we exist. […]

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[27] "[…] Парламент [в Доме правительства] считается карманным. Просто ждут указов президента"

That we are many, that we do not agree with what is happening in the country."[28] (Dzmitry). This statement is typical for the respondents, but in a country where the media are controlled by the government, it is difficult to be seen, by authorities, by media and by fellow citizens. Therefore, the visibility of a location becomes decisive.

The political centre

The importance of being seen by the political authorities dictates what areas are suitable for a political mass protest. To be in, or in proximity to, the political centre is regarded as a necessity. There is also symbolic value to be gained from occupying a space close to where political decisions are being made. This helps demonstrators express that the space belongs to them as well; that they represent the people; and that the political institutions are not doing their job.

On this basis, it is not surprising that the largest political protests have centred in the vicinity of Independence Avenue, on Kastrychnitskaia and Nezalezhnastsi squares. The House of Government is situated on Nezalezhnastsi; and Kastrychnitskaia is close to the presidential administration. When asked why protests have been held at these particular squares, my respondents unanimously agree: "[Kastrychnitskaia] is just a central square, on which the administration of Lukashènka is located."[29] (Dzmitry)

The closest alternative to Kastrychnitskaia and Nezalezhnastsi is Svabody (Freedom) square, about 200 meters to the northeast of Kastrychnitskaia. Freedom Square has been used several times by opposition leaders for protests, despite obvious shortcomings:

> Freedom square is an uneven space […] It is inaptly named, not square at all, with very little open space for mass gathering, and no focal point. People tend to collect on the pavements, steps and pathways and continually threaten to spill onto the roads […]. (Bennett 2011, 233)

However, according to Milinkevich and Statkevich, two elements of the square still make it a suitable space for protest: "Protests occur on this Square when their organisers do not expect that there will be a large number of participants. In addition, it has a very attractive name."[30] (Milinkevich). "Firstly, it has its symbolic value. Secondly, it is smaller than Kastrychnitskaia. Because we don't [always] see that there's a chance that tens of thousands of people would come."[31] (Statkevich). Svabody is therefore mainly suited for smaller protests.

Still, it is possible to imagine other alternatives to Kastrychnitskaia and Nezalezhnastsi. There are several large squares located along Independence Avenue: Peramohi (Victory), Iakuba Kolasa and Kalinina. Some of these have a certain history of protest, but only Peramohi is in proximity of the political centre. However, Peramohi is archetypically Soviet, and can easily be blocked off from the political centre by closing the bridge over Svislach. Pryvakzal'naia in front of the main railway station has also been mentioned as

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[28] "Мы збіраемся на плошчы, каб паказаць, што мы ёсць. […] Што нас шмат, што мы не згодныя з тым, што адбываецца ў краіне."

[29] "[Кастрычніцкая –] гэта проста цэнтральная плошча, на якой размешчана адміністрацыя Лукашэнка."

[30] "На гэтай Плошчы адбываюцца пратэсты калі іх арганізатары не спадзяюцца, што будзе вялікая колькасць удзельнікаў. Акрамя таго, яна мае вельмі прывабную назву."

[31] "Во-первых, есть своя символика. А во-вторых, она меньше, чем Октябрьская [Кастрычніцкая]. Потому что мы не [всегда] видим, что есть возможность, что придут десятки тысяч человек."

an alternative, but my respondents tend to talk of it as a place to gather before marching to the city centre. Being a lush and green city with several large parks, Minsk could potentially offer its green lungs as meeting places for large crowds. What makes parks less suitable for protests are trees and other objects which limit visibility and mobility. This leaves only a few public spaces suitable for mass protests. As my respondent Piatro states, "There are not many open public spaces. There are not many options for gatherings: Nezalezhnastsi […], Freedom square […], yet Kastrychnitskaia is considered the main square of Minsk."[32]

The people's centre

As we have seen, there are good reasons why political mass protests tend to be held at Kastrychnitskaia or Nezalezhnastsi, in plain view of the ruling power. To what extent, then, are actions at these two squares visible to ordinary people? When out walking, citizens tend to use the city's green areas or stroll along Svislach river, rather than along the avenues or across the large, empty squares of the city centre. The popular café district is also concentrated in a secluded area on Zybitskaia street, down by Svislach, and in the Verkhni Horad district – a reconstructed part of the old town between Internationalists street and the Niamiha region. Only commercial businesses have some proximity to the squares (Stalitsa shopping centre is under Nezalezhnastsi, the GUM warehouse two blocks from Kastrychnitskaia). Yet shopping is not limited to these areas.

Intended or not, the political centre, especially the area around Kastrychnitskaia, has become a district where people pass through only occasionally. Yaraslaŭ sees the city centre as "[…] a place you won't go without an especially good reason. It's a nonspace."[33] Everything interesting, Katsiaryna confirms, is going on a safe distance from the political centre:

> On central squares in Vilnius and in Kyiv there are some festivals, some fairs, people gather there. […] They have stuff happening but we've only had something similar a couple of years. That is on the Karl Marx street, and it is so small, mobility is small […]. To get to Kupalaŭskaia (metro), to Kastrychnitskaia square is far. And there is nothing going on there. (Katsiaryna)[34]

My respondents state that their aim is to be seen, by the people and by the authorities. However, in a society with very little free media and a political centre that most people tend to avoid, the visibility of political protest is limited. Still, the largest protests in post-Soviet Minsk have been held in the political centre, at Kastrychnitskaia and Nezalezhnastsi squares. I shall now take a closer look at the social elements of these two squares. How have they been used for protests? How are they used in the everyday?

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[32] "Не так много мест открытого публичного пространства. Собраться вариантов немного: Независимости […], Свободы […], но Октябрьская считается главной площадью Минска."

[33] "[…] место, куда без особой причины не идут. Это ничейное пространство."

[34] У Вільнюсе і ў Кіеве на цэнтральных плошчах праходзяць нейкія фэстывалі, нейкія кірмашы, там людзі збіраюцца. […] У іх праводзяцца нейкія штукі, а ў нас толькі пару гадоў праводзіцца нешта падобнае. Гэта на вуліцы Карла Маркса і яна такая маленькая, рух маленькі […]. Дабрацца да Купалаўскай, да Кастрычніцкай плошчы там далёка. І там нічога не праводзіцца.

The social elements of Nezalezhnastsi

Belarus' first head of state, Stanisłaŭ Shushkevich explains that up until the end of the 1990s, protests usually occurred outside the House of Government. One of the opposition leaders, Mikola Statkevich, on the other hand, claims that they arranged protests all over Minsk during the 1990s, not only on Nezalezhnastsi, but he agrees that many of the largest protests were on that square.

Some of Nezalezhnastsi's social elements might be perceived as those increasing visibility. Several paths cross Nezalezhnastsi or are in close proximity to it. Public transportation (trolleybuses, buses, and metro) is on and under it (the Lenin square metro station) and the main railway station is only 550 meters away; and several avenues and streets from the eastern and southern parts of the city meet next to where Independence Avenue begins. Students are also travelling daily to the Belarusian State Pedagogical University and to six of the Belarusian State University's faculties, located on and around Nezalezhnastsi. Hotel 'Minsk' and important landmarks – such as the House of Government, the Lenin statue and the *Church of Saints Simon and Helena* – are popular places to visit for tourists. This makes the square more visible than Kastrychnitskaia.

However, although Nezalezhnastsi is a node for travel, it is only so for some people, such as students and tourists, less so for the ordinary inhabitants of Minsk. On the surface of the square, there are large flowerbeds, benches and fountains, but people don't tend to spontaneously gather there. Reasons for this may be the large walking distances involved, the fact that little recreational infrastructure is found and no protection from the elements (sun, rain, snow etc.) is offered. Between 2002 and 2006, Nezalezhnastsi was closed to the public, while Stalitsa – a huge 75 000 m^2, three storey shopping centre was constructed beneath the square. Although it now attracts some shoppers, it has not quite become the popular attraction its size suggests it was meant to be.

Nezalezhnastsi might therefore be characterised as a place where several paths meet, but as a node only for some people. Thus it offers less visibility than the opposition ideally would want.

The social elements of Kastrychnitskaia

In 2006, by the completion of Nezalezhnastsi's reconstruction, the preferred space for protests had moved one kilometre up the Independence avenue to Kastrychnitskaia square. This was made possible by the reopening of Kastrychnitskaia in 2001, but the main reason was probably Lukashėnka's moving into the former Communist party headquarters on the Karl Marx street shortly after becoming president, arguably because it was the tallest and most central point in the capital.

The square functions as a node for travel. Cars drive past it on the highly trafficked Independence avenue, and Minsk's two metro lines have their transit point under Kastrychnitskaia. Still, people rarely stop at the square, merely pass by beneath any event on the surface above.

The buildings on Kastrychnitskaia include the Palace of the Republic, the Palace of Culture; a construction site where the museum to the Great Patriotic War stood until

2014;[35] and a business centre. Across Independence Avenue, between Kastrychnitskaia and the presidential administration, lies Aliaksandraŭski skver, one of Minsk's oldest parks, dating from the 19th Century. In the area, there are several institutions of high culture: the Ianka Kupala National Theatre, the Music academy, the Palace of Culture and the House of Officers – now mainly used as a concert house. Some concerts are also arranged in the Palace of the Republic. The common denominator for virtually all the buildings on and around the square is that they are government-controlled.

Even though Kastrychnitskaia is large, central, and surrounded by several buildings of high culture, it is not widely used by people. It is a place where, except the 'giant sarcophagus' itself, there is nothing to look at, virtually nothing going on and nowhere to sit. [36] There are some cafés and a Belarusian language club in the Palace, but, as mentioned above, people prefer the cafes on Zybitskaia street.

On this basis, Kastrychnitskaia could be considered part of a small number of paths, rather than a node. Despite its central location, it is underused. Respondents describe it as empty, Soviet and cold, and less visible than Nezalezhnastsi.

To sum up, people tend to avoid the central parts of Minsk, along Independence avenue, where most of the political institutions are situated; and even though both of the two protest squares, Kastrychnitskaia and Nezalezhnastsi, are parts of the paths some people make, they are rarely used as nodes, i.e. few people are travelling to get there specifically. On this basis it can be concluded that the social elements of Minsk is not particularly helpful for putting protests in the spotlight.

Physical elements

In this final section I shall look at the physical elements of the two squares, Kastrychnitskaia and Nezalezhnastsi. I argue that the physical attributes of these squares have contributed to the failure of the mass protests in 2006 and 2010.

Kastrychnitskaia and Ploshcha 2006

As shown above, Kastrychnitskaia is a large square. 22000 of its approximately 27400 m^2 occupy an open, rectangular space in front of the Palace of the Republic. The square has two narrow openings to Internationalists street on either side of the Palace; the left side is bordered by Engels Street; the right, by two buildings and a construction site; and the fourth side, by Independence Avenue. The spaces on the left and right sides of the Palace are narrow, partly because of a parking lot on the left and a pool of fountains on the right. The virtually impenetrable facades on the left and the right sides limit movement on the square to Internationalists Street and Independence Avenue.[37]

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[35] It has now moved to the Victors' avenue (Praspekt Peramozhtsaŭ), and it is unclear what will take its place. One of the proposed projects is an administrative office centre in a traditional imperial style, similar to the style of the Palace of Culture (Onliner, 2016).

[36] A few times, while living in Minsk, I agreed to meet people by the 0-km sign. I vividly recall how boring the square seemed as a meeting place, especially if my friends were late.

[37] It is unclear if there are entrances to Kastrychnitskaia on the square's right. None of my respondents could say if there are ways to enter the square from this side. Yaraslaŭ recollects a tall fence between the buildings.

Milinkevich lists three reasons for why the protesters chose Kastrychnitskaia for their Ploshcha in 2006: "It is central, on it most of the authorities' festive events […] and in addition, it could fit up to 50 thousand citizens."[38]
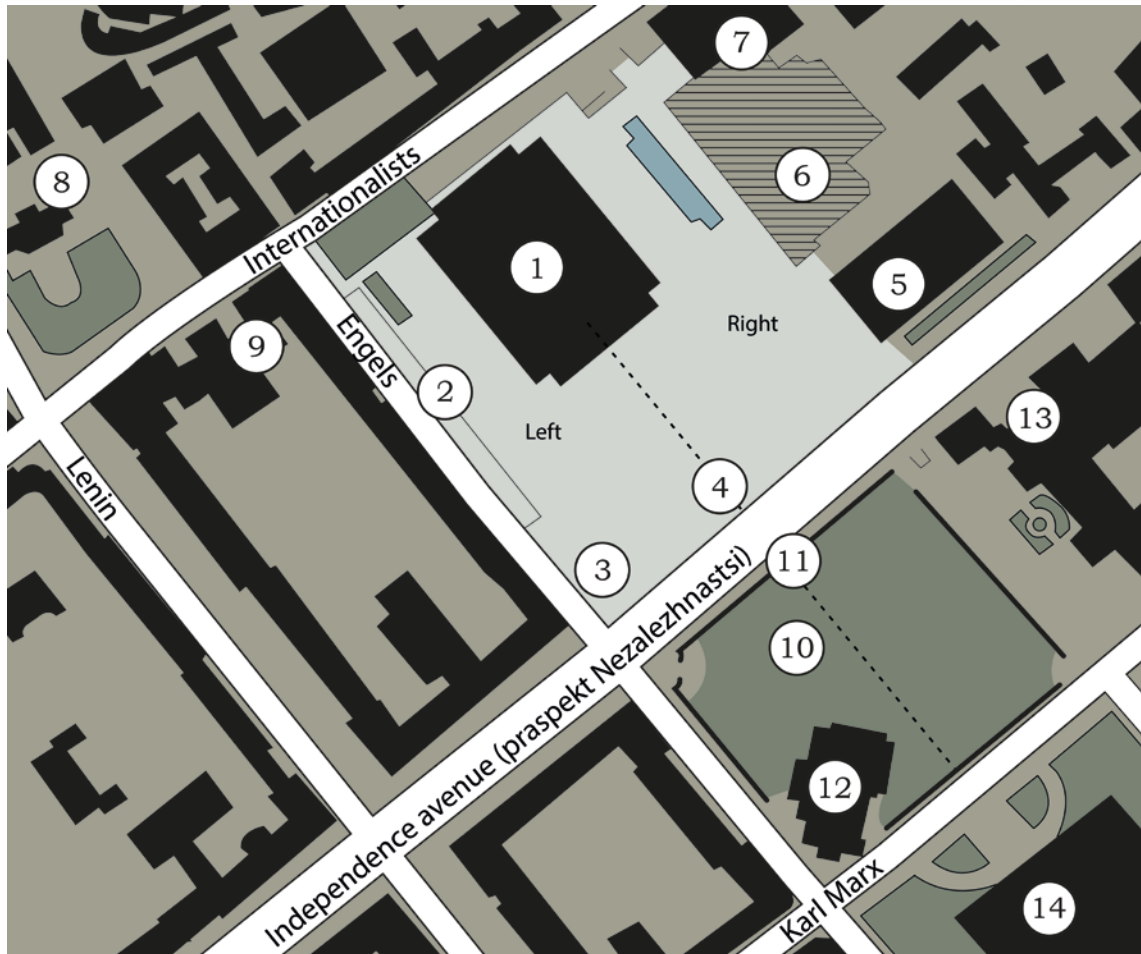

Figure 6 Kastrychnitskaia (October square): 1) Palace of the republic; 2) Parking; 3) Screen; 4) 0-km sign; 5) Palace of Culture; 6) Construction site; 7) Business centre; 8) Svabody (Freedom square); 9) Music academy; 10) Aliaksandraŭski skver; 11) Tribune; 12) Ianki Kupaly National Theatre; 13) House of Officers; 14) Presidential Administration. Illustration: Arve Hansen.

Because Kastrychnitskaia is empty of landmarks, there are few natural focal points. If one wants to address a crowd, the most central elevation points are a few steps up the stairs surrounding the Palace, between the massive columns of the building. This vantage point not only excludes the audience on the square's right and left side, it also puts the speaker symbolically in the shadow of Lukashėnka's success. Probably because of this, the opposition decided to speak to the crowds from between the columns of the Palace of Culture instead (Khashchevatskiĭ, 2007), with similar problems of lateral visibility.

The Soviet architects had considered this lack of a focal point, and in 1957 they made an elevated tribune in the wall on Aliaksandraŭski skver, from which officials could address the people on Kastrychnitskaia on official occasions. Yet the tribune is only

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[38] "[Яна] цэнтральная, на ёй адбываецца большасць святочных уладных мерапрыемстваў […] і да таго ж там магло змясціцца да 50 тысяч грамадзян."

accessible through locked gates, and as will soon become apparent, the authorities can easily block access to the entire park.

Communication on Kastrychnitskaia is further hampered by a large screen, which faces the square from one of its corners. The screen usually shows one of the official news channels, and the loudspeakers are powerful enough to potentially drown out any challenge to the official propaganda. (Yaraslaŭ)
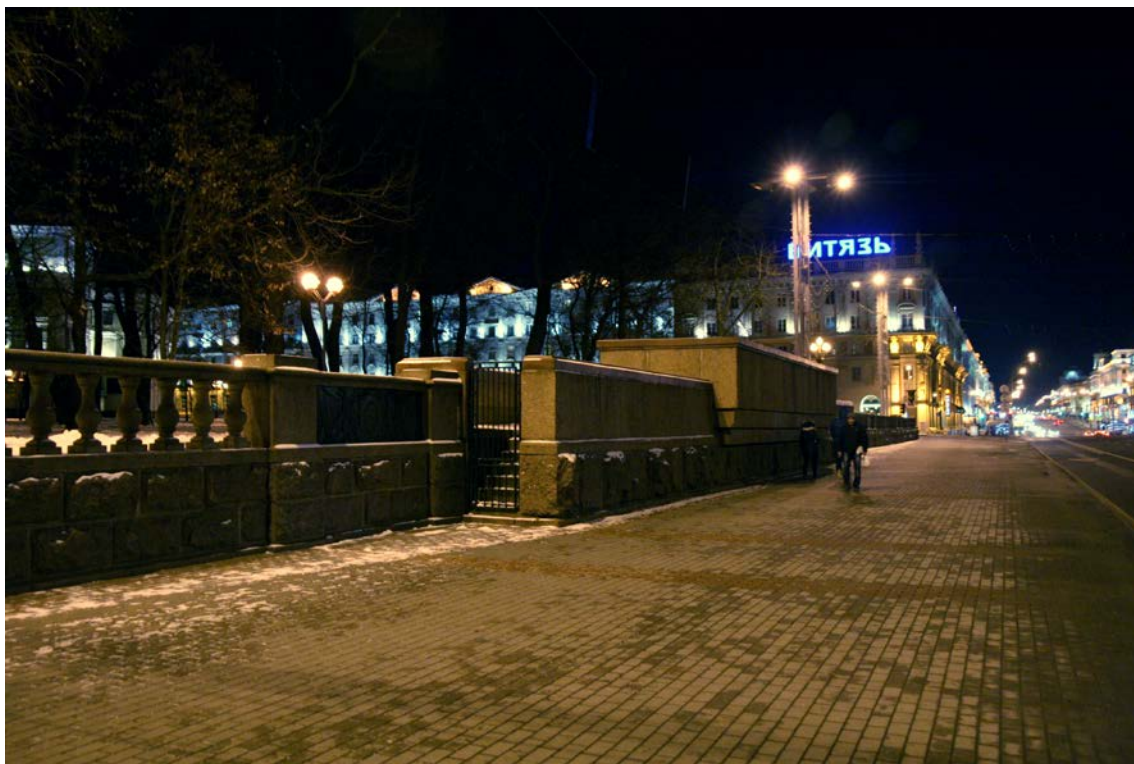

Figure 7 The Wall on Aliaksandraŭski. Photo: Anonymous

Milinkevich goes on to explain that the main reason for protesting at Kastrychnitskaia was its proximity to the president. One might expect, then, that protesters occupying Kastrychnitskaia would take the opportunity to demonstrate outside the presidential administration. However, such intentions face significant obstacles, the first of these being to cross the eight lanes of Independence Avenue. Next, the natural choice would be to walk straight through Aliaksandraŭski to the presidential administration. A convenient location to expand to, if protests outgrew the space on Kastrychnitskaia, Aliaksandraŭski is, however, closed off by its surrounding stone fence and the park's few entrances can be easily blocked by a few police officers. This in effect turns the park into an obstacle for the masses. An alternative path to the presidential administration is found on the right side of Aliaksandraŭski, but this path runs up several flights of stairs to a narrow strip of space between the walls of Aliaksandraŭski and the House of Officers. This makes the alternative route easily controlled as well. The only remaining option is to go via Engels Street, a predictable route which law enforcement personnel would easily be capable, and well prepared, to close off.

> One evening [in 2006] the organisers led the crowd in the direction of the
> presidential administration [...]. Just as we got to the theatre, they turned us back

[…]. They were defending the administration well. Everybody felt the truncheons[39] (Paŭliuk)

Dzmitry (switching to Russian) recounts a similar situation in 2004: "We went there on the Engels street. We got to the corner of the administration, but buses with special forces had already arrived. They started to beat us, to detain, to thrash."[40]

On the other side of the Palace of the Republic, police could control movement by blocking the two ends of Internationalists' Street. This area is well suited for police manoeuvres such as 'kettling' (surrounding) of the protesters, and limiting their movement to Independence Avenue. In 2006, police controlled all the sides surrounding the protests, and could stop and arrest people going to and from the protest camp. "They quite successfully blocked the square. They did not allow cars to stop, and they prevented people from bringing food."[41] (Piatro). During the night of March 24, riot police were deployed to the square, quickly removing the tents and arresting the protesters.

Nezalezhnastsi and Ploshcha 2010

As a protest space, Nezalezhnastsi has some assets worth mentioning. It is easy to get to, larger than Kastrychnitskaia (approximately 40000 m^2) and is surrounded by a few buildings of symbolic value to the protesters, such as The Red Church and the university. Still, the descriptions my respondents, as well as other observers, give of the square are less encouraging:

> [Nezalezhnastsi] in Minsk, Belarus's sad capital, is one of the most terrifying public spaces in Europe. It is nothing but concrete, steel, glass and fearsome horizons – no benches, shelter, or anything for people who might wish to do something so normal as to assemble and speak together. Where anything vertical rises from the ground, it bears a video camera, ensuring that any gathering can be observed by the Belarusian KGB. (Snyder, 2010)

Although Snyder might be mistaken about the benches (the square has quite a few), Nezalezhnastsi is indeed little more than hard surfaces and "fearsome horizons". Statkevich also talks about the practical problems with the square after the 2006 reconstruction:

> There is no single area there. There are separate places, disturbed by these domes. There are many of them and citizens of Minsk jokingly call the square *the Industrial Greenhouse*. It is possible to fit tens of thousands of people there, but it will be a little separated area.[42]

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[39] "Один вечер [в 2006 г.] организаторы повели толпу в направлении администрации президента […]. Как только дошли до театра, всех там развернули […]. Администрацию защищали очень хорошо. Дубинками получили все."

[40] "Мы ходили туда […] по Энгельса. Мы дошли до угла администрации, но туда уже подъехали автобусы со спецназовцами. Они нас начали бить, задерживать, молотить."

[41] "Довольно успешно блокировали площади. Не позволяли машинам останавливаться и запретили людям приносить еду"

[42] "Единого большого пространства там нет, там есть отдельные места, разбитые этими куполами там. Их очень много и минчане называют в шутку эту площадь парниковый комбинат. Там можно разместить десятки тысяч людей, но это будет немного разбитое пространство."
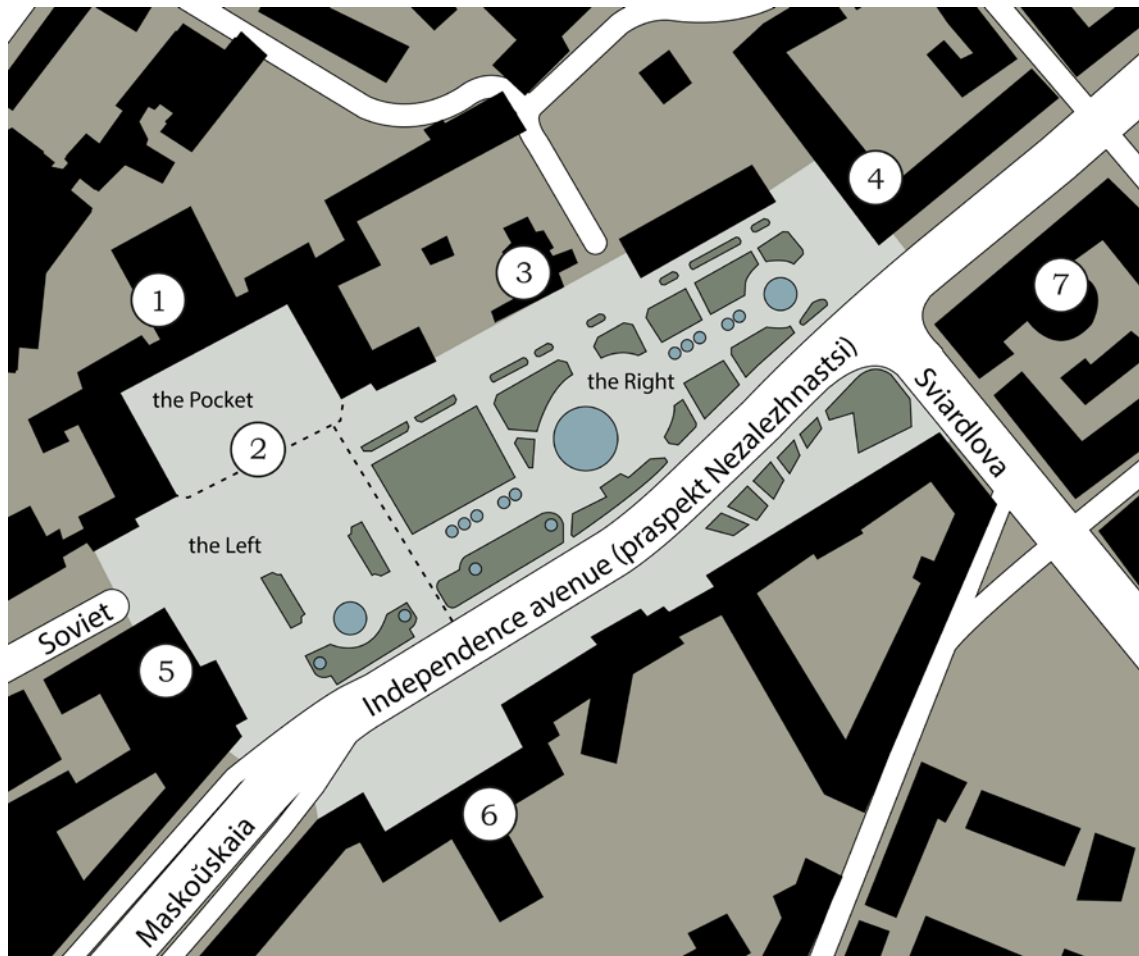
Figure 8 Nezalezhnastsi (Independence square): 1) House of Government; 2) Lenin monument; 3) Church of Saints Simon and Helena; 4) Hotel Minsk; 5) Belarusian State Pedagogical University; 6) Belarusian State University; 7) Post Office. Illustration: Arve Hansen

For the sake of clarity, in figure 8, I have divided the square into three main parts: The Left: The rectangular shaped space between the Lenin statue and Independence avenue. This is quite open, apart from a few flowerbeds and a glass dome in one end. The Right: The space between The Left and Hotel Minsk. This part is the biggest, but is crowded by flowerbeds, glass domes, benches and fountains. The Pocket: The small square behind Lenin, between the walls of the House of Government.

As Nezalezhnastsi is a long space with numerous obstacles and virtually without elevations, the problem of the absence of a good focal point applies here, too. For people on the Left, Lenin is a natural place to look at, but it is not as visible for people on the Right. On the Right, only the Church of Saints Simon and Helena offers a good focal point, but the many objects obstructing the view would divide spectators into separate clusters.

In 2010, the opposition leaders therefore chose the former option and spoke from the Lenin statue's platform – dwarfed by the giant Lenin and with the House of Government towering behind them.

Figure 9 House of Government. CC-BY-3.0 Photo: Wikimedia, Alexander Groshev

After an alleged provocation, the riot police went in to clear the square. According to Vital', the square was cleared in 7 minutes, despite the amounts of protesters assembled there; according to Paŭliuk, it took only 5 minutes. Perhaps less prone to exaggeration, Statkevich claims it took considerably longer, perhaps 30 or 40 minutes. Even so, this can hardly be described as a difficult or a long-lasting police operation. The group of people, gathered in the Pocket and on the Lenin statue's platform, quickly became trapped by police who came in from Soviet Street and blocked off the only exit. The rest of the protesters on the Left and the Right were also soon 'kettled in' by police between Independence avenue and the buildings to the north:

> The first part cordoned off the whole square in a ring. They ran on the perimeter of the avenue […]. We saw that everything up to Hotel Minsk was cordoned off. They just chased us and parted us in groups in rings, and threw us into buses.[43] (Katsiaryna)

Thus, the riot police used the square's architecture to efficiently and brutally put an end to the second Belarusian Ploshcha. It will appear, then, that both Kastrychnitskaia and Nezalezhnastsi are easily surrounded and controlled, despite their differences in size and shape. In this manner, the physical elements of Minsk itself constitute a major challenge for public demonstrations and their organisers.

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[43] "Першая частка ўзяла ўсю плошчу в ацапленне кальцо. Яні беглі па перыметру праспекту […]. Мы пабачалі, што да гатэля 'Мінск' усё ацэплена. Нас проста гналі і людзей разбіралі на групы ў такія кольцы, і закідвалі ў аўтобусы."

Conclusions

In the introduction, I stated that space is a potentially important condition for collective action, and my aim for this article was to demonstrate this by applying a spatial perspective on mass protests in Minsk.

Belarus is an autocratic country, and the opposition is faced with many obstacles, such as state controlled media, a weak national identity and a large security apparatus willing to use force to repress protests. Still, people have on occasions dared into the public space of Minsk in large numbers to protest against their current leadership, notably the opposition went to the streets in large numbers in 2006 and 2010. When analysing the success or failure of such collective actions, in addition to asking what external and internal conditions are present, I argue that we should also be looking at the protests from a spatial perspective: "What space are the protesters using?", "Why?" and "How are protests affected by this space?" By asking these questions in the case of Minsk, we see that the Belarusian opposition is faced with considerable spatial obstacles:

The opposition does not have much room to choose from; only two squares are large enough to contain tens of thousands of protesters and, at the same time, be in proximity to the political centre. However, these two squares, Kastrychnitskaia and Nezalezhnastsi, are presenting obstacles to the opposition and enhancing the strategies used by Lukashėnka to stay in power. 1) The perceived elements of Minsk as well as the two protests squares are associated with the Soviet Union, Lukashėnka's success and the disappointment of failed protests, and thus do not have a preferable symbolic value to the largely pro-European opposition. 2) Additionally, the social elements of the city divide the city into political space (on and in proximity to Independence Avenue) and public space (where the citizens' nodes are). In a society where the media are controlled by the state, protests might thus go unnoticed by large segments of the population. 3) This latter point is especially important, given that the physical elements of the squares makes policing particularly easy and swift, reducing the duration of the protests and lessening the possibility of people learning about them – not to mention reaching the city centre in time before the protests are over. The physical elements of the squares also limit the protesters' communication, movement and flexibility.

I therefore conclude that a spatial perspective should be included in research on collective actions, because it might, as in the case of Minsk, be an additional contributory condition for their success or failure.

The spatial perspective would benefit from being further tested on cases, where mass protests have had a variety of outcomes. Preferably, the next step would be to analyse a city with a similar history, culture or architecture as Minsk, such as Moscow or Chişinău.

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Appendix 4: Article 3

Hansen, A. (2019). *A Spatial Perspective on Mass Protests: Moscow's Swamp Square and the March of Millions*.

Manuscript submitted for publication.

Appendix 5: Interviews

Full name or *pseudonym*	For the study of	Date	Form of communication	Language
Hanna	Maidan (M.A.)	April 2014	Face-to-face	Ukrainian
Klymenko, Oleksandr	Maidan (M.A.) (twice)	January and June 2014	Face-to-face	Russian
Løken, Håkon	Maidan (M.A.)	April 2014	Face-to-face	Norwegian
Nadia	Maidan (M.A.)	June 2014	Face-to-face	Russian
Stanislaŭ	Maidan (M.A.)	June 2014	Face-to-face	Russian
Serhii	Maidan (M.A.)	March 2014	Face-to-face	Russian
Oleksii	Maidan (M.A.)	January and June 2014	Several conversations	Ukrainian
Zorjan, Kis	Maidan (M.A.)	Mar 2015	E-mail	Ukrainian
Hoff, Harald	Maidan (M.A.)	Dec 2013 and Jan 2014	Several conversations	Norwegian
Nordbø, Arnfinn	Maidan (M.A.)	Dec 2013	Skype	Norwegian
"The maior"	Maidan (M.A.)	Jan 2014	Face-to-face	Russian
Bohdan	Maidan (M.A.)	Mar 2014	Face-to-face	Ukrainian
Scandinavian political scientist	Chişinău	Mar 2016	Telephone	Scandinavian

Name	Location	Date	Method	Language
Vital'	Minsk	Mar 2016	Skype	Russian
East European political scientist	Chişinău	Mar 2016	E-mail	English
Scandinavian political scientist	For lit. recommendations	Jul 2016	Telephone	Norwegian
Plingau, Dinu	Chişinău (twice)	Aug 2016	Face-to-face	Russian
Moldovan political scientist	Chişinău	Aug 2016	Face-to-face	English
Scandinavian observer	Chişinău	Aug 2016	Face-to-face	Scandinavian
Piatro	Minsk	Sep 2016	Skype	Russian
Katsiaryna	Minsk (twice)	Oct 2016	Skype	Belarusian
Dzmitry	Minsk	Oct 2016	Skype	Belarusian
Aliaksandr Milinkevich	Minsk	Oct 2016	E-mail	Belarusian
Stanislaŭ Shushkevich	Minsk	Oct 2016	Telephone	Russian
Paŭliuk	Minsk	Nov 2016	Skype	Russian
Yaraslaŭ	Minsk (twice)	Nov and Dec 2016	Skype	Russian
Mikola Statkevich	Minsk	Nov 2016	Skype	Russian
Natasha	Moscow	Oct 2017	Telephone	Russian