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# Civil society, youth and societal mobilization in democratic revolutions

Taras Kuzio\*

*George Washington University, Washington, DC, USA*

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## Abstract

Youth have played an important role in mobilizing support for democratic revolutions during elections that have facilitated regime change. In Serbia (2000), Georgia (2003) and Ukraine (2004) youth led the way in organizing democratic coalitions among hitherto warring opposition parties that the authorities had successfully divided and ruled over. In the three countries used as case studies, youth dominated civil society and election monitoring NGOs. The article outlines a five fold framework and discusses the issues that help understand the role of youth in democratic revolutions as well as those essential conditions that lead to success. Regime change only proved successful during certain time period, in our case *electoral revolutions* when the authorities were at their weakest. *Organization* of youth groups led to the creation of *Otpor* (Serbia), *Kmara* (Georgia) and *Pora* (Ukraine) and provided the youth movements with structure and purpose. The *training* of these organized youth NGOs became a third important condition for success and often was undertaken with Western technical and financial assistance. The choice of *strategies* to be employed during elections was an important fourth feature. In the three country case studies, discussed in this article, *the response of the authorities* proved to be ineffective, weak and counter-productive.

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*Keywords:* Ukraine; Serbia; Georgia; Electoral revolution; Organization; Training; Strategy; Authorities response; Youth NGOs; *Pora*; *Otpor*; *Kmara*

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\* Institute for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies, 1957 E Street NW, Suite 412, Washington, DC 20052, USA. Tel.: +1 202 994 7914; fax: +1 202 994 5436.

*E-mail address:* [tkuzio@gwu.edu](mailto:tkuzio@gwu.edu)

In the pre-revolutionary era, young people had dominated the civil societies of many post-communist states, including countries which experienced democratic revolutions in Serbia (2000), Georgia (2003), Ukraine (2004) and Kyrgyzstan (2005). Most members of post-communist civil society NGOs were under 35 and it was they who provided huge numbers of activists and volunteers. One Orange Revolution activist recalled how: “this was a real extreme, underground, creative youth movement. People sat in offices all day not for money or because they were forced to, but because simply this was the place to be cool” (Ukrayinska Pravda, January 26, 2006). Similarly, in Serbia a “sophisticated market campaign” of posters, badges and tee shirts led to a “political youth cult”. Identifying with *Otpor* (Resistance) became “cool” and “*Otpor* made it fashionable to be against Milosevic”, one *Otpor* activist said (Collin, 2001, p. 208).

Young people have played a central role in all democratic revolutions going back to the Philippines people’s power protests in the mid-1980s to Nepal in 2006. Democratic revolutions in Serbia (2000), Georgia (2003), and Ukraine (2004), the three countries under investigation in this article, would not have taken place without the energy of young people. Youth NGOs in Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine were crucial in three inter-related areas. First, they assisted in the mobilization of protestors. Second, they provided logistical support to the protests. Third, they were often the first wave of protestors (McFaul, 2005, p. 13; Pora, 2005; Demes and Forbrig, 2006; Kaskiv, 2005a,b; Kuzio, 2005a,b; Way, 2005).

In Ukraine, those in the age group up to 30 years old were three times more likely to join the Orange Revolution than other age categories (Stepanenko, 2005, p. 21). The two key social groups that made the Orange Revolution a success were youth and private businessmen (Reznik, 2005). Young people participate in revolutions because they have less to lose. Few have mortgages, families or careers to be concerned about losing if they joined the opposition, youth NGOs or the revolution. As their supporters grew, young people became less afraid of attending meetings and rallies as higher educational institutions could not expel all of them.

Young women played an important role in breaking down distrust between law enforcement and the revolutionaries. *Otpor* organized young women to march ahead of men as the police would be far less likely to attack them and, if they did, the ensuing footage of blood-stained girls would work to the advantage of the opposition. In Kyiv, teenage girls led the way in giving flowers to *spetsnaz* (police task forces) *Berkut* policemen posted in the cold weather outside the presidential administration. Their fraternization with the *Berkut* reduced chances of the non-violent protests becoming violent, which they had three years earlier in March 2001.

For many young people the theft of their vote in a crucial election was not simply election fraud but the theft of their future, which still lay ahead. Dmytro Potekhin, head of Ukraine’s *Znayu* (I Know!) youth NGO, said, “this was a case in which something very personal was being stolen from us — our right to vote” (Slivka, 2004). In Serbia and Ukraine this sense of anger was made more urgent because Milosevic and Kuchma were both seen as criminals. Annual opinion polls by the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences from 1994 to 2005 found that “organized crime, mafia” was perceived by Ukrainians as the most influential group in Ukrainian society (Panina, 2005). The imposition of a successor who had a criminal past therefore came as a double affront.

A young volunteer who ferried protestors to Kyiv for free asked, “How could they dare try to impose such a bandit on us? We will never accept it” (Daily Telegraph, November 28, 2004). Young Ukrainians especially refused to accept election fraud that led to the imposition of a “criminal” candidate as the successor to Kuchma.

The strategies deployed by Serbia’s *Otpor*, Georgia’s *Kmara* (Enough) and Ukraine’s *Pora* (It’s Time) were strikingly similar. They targeted urban youth who traditionally had been politically apathetic. Politics had to be made to be “cool”. Young people were targeted because they made good volunteers and came into contact with a greater number of people each day than the older generation. The majority of the volunteers in *Otpor*, *Kmara* and *Pora* were students. *Otpor* was established by 15 Belgrade University students in 1998 who were, “Sick of the endless compromises, defeats and endemic apathy ...” (Collin, 2001, p. 175). Students made up over 95 percent of members of *Pora* established in *Pora* cells in 20 universities throughout Ukraine. In Serbia, *Otpor* grew out of the Student Union of Serbia (SUS) and became a mass movement during the 2000 elections.

The article provides a five-point framework to understand the different aspects of the revolutionary process that took place in the three case studies covered in this article (Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine). Competitive authoritarian regimes are most vulnerable during a specific time, like election cycles, and regime change in Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine took place during *electoral revolutions*. *Organization* of young people in *Otpor*, *Kmara* and *Pora* was an important second condition in preparing to confront election fraud. Youth NGOs were able to overcome divisions and quarrels that plagued older generations and assisted in the creation of unified democratic opposition blocs. The third section deals with the importance of pre-revolutionary *training*. In the three countries discussed, the democratic revolutions were preceded by acute socio-economic and political crises when the opposition had failed in their attempts at removing the incumbents from power (see D’Anieri, in this issue). The fourth section surveys the *strategies* employed by youth NGOs during the elections and democratic revolutions. This includes such strategies as an adroit use of humour and the provision of carnival-music festival atmospheres. The fifth section covers the *authorities’ response* that targeted youth NGOs with repression and counter-propaganda.

### **Electoral revolutions**

Serbia differed from Georgia and Ukraine in that Milosevic could not, after being indicted for war crimes in Kosovo and Bosnia, convince the West that he would hold free and fair elections. In Georgia and Ukraine both leaders still sought to keep channels open to the West, particularly to the US. Both countries multi-vector foreign policies sought to balance relations with a hegemonic Russia by good relations with the US and NATO, with whom both countries participated in the Partnership for Peace program. Shevardnadze was also concerned at maintaining his reputation and integrity as the Soviet Foreign Minister under Mikhail Gorbachev who had refused to sanction military interventions in central Europe. In 2003, Kuchma sent

the third largest military contingent to support US-led coalition forces in Iraq (the largest non-NATO member contingent) during the low ebb in Ukraine's relations with the West. Only a year earlier the US had accused Kuchma of authorizing the sale of "Kolchuga" military radars to Iraq in summer 2000.

Ukraine has a long-standing and respected election monitoring NGO staffed by young people, the Committee of Voters of Ukraine (<http://cvu.org.ua>). The assistance of the Committee of Voters (KVU) is invaluable for OSCE long-term observers who spend two months in Ukraine's regions prior to election day. The KVU has played an important role in organizing election monitoring and liaison with local OSCE observers and with the OSCE and Council of Europe headquarters in Kyiv. In Serbia, the Center for Free Elections and Democracy NGO played a similar role to the KVU.

The KVU have also assisted in coordinating election monitoring with the European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO). In the 2004 elections ENEMO sent 700–1000 monitors in rounds two and three (<http://enemo.org.ua>). ENEMO attends many election in post-communist states from which their monitors are drawn. In this sense they are able to counter the views of the CIS Election Observation Mission (CIS EOM) established to give an alternative viewpoint to that of the OSCE.

Ukraine's youth election-monitoring groups organized two coalitions. The New Choice coalition brought together many well-known youth and election monitoring NGOs and was supported by the Europe XXI Foundation (<http://europexxi.org.ua>). New Choice grew out of the Civic Monitoring Committee that was active in the 2002 elections, and was one of the first examples of re-energized young activism. The Freedom of Choice coalition brought together 300 NGOs active in civil society and election monitoring (<http://coalition.org.ua>) and published a news web site (<http://hotline.net.ua>). The Freedom of Choice coalition included the "yellow" wing of *Pora*.

Youth election-monitoring groups were involved in a wide range of activities in an attempt to counter violations and get out the youth vote. Youth groups launched legal cases against the common practice of state officials campaigning on the job for Yanukovych. Kherson oblast governor, Serhiy Dovhan, was forced to defend his agitation to vote for Yanukovych but was soon removed after the case became widely publicized.

In both Serbia and Ukraine, youth divided their tactics in two ways. "Get out the vote" campaigns were organized by one set of NGOs, following a pattern set in the 1998 Slovak elections. This type of NGO activity is not unusual in mature democracies and often targets those sectors of society most disinclined to vote, such as young people and uneducated voters.

A second tactic, closely related to the get out the vote campaigns, was to undertake "black operations" against corrupt officials who were suspected of being organizers of fraud in the upcoming elections. Both wings of this youth NGO strategy ("white" and "black operations") prepared to defend voters democratic choice through post-election protests. This made Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine different to Slovakia. In Slovakia the "get out the vote" campaign dominated NGOs activity

as the authorities were not expected to resort to election fraud and would accept the election result.

In Ukraine, “white operations” were led by the youth election-monitoring group *Znayu!* (I know) that provided positive information on the elections, educated election monitors, and attempted to block election fraud (<http://znayu.org.ua>). *Chysta Ukrayina* (Clean Ukraine) and student groups also took part in the “get out the vote” campaign (<http://chysto.com> and <http://studenty.org.ua>). “Get out the vote” and information strategies complimented “black operations” by *Pora* to publicize corruption by election officials who were suspected of attempting to take bribes in return for falsifying the election results.

## Organization

Serbia and Georgia produced united *Otpor* and *Kmara* NGOs whereas *Pora* in Ukraine was comprised of a “yellow” and “black” wing, named after the colour of their symbols. Both wings of *Pora* were established in spring 2004, although only “black” *Pora* had laid the groundwork in 2002–2003. *Otpor* was led by people born in the 1970s but the bulk of its rank and file members were born in the 1980s. *Otpor*, therefore, incorporated both the 1970s and 1980s generations or what constituted in Ukraine two wings of *Pora*. The former, the 1970s generation, remembered the Josip Broz Tito era while the latter only remembered war and economic collapse during the Slobodan Milosevic regime. In Georgia, veterans of earlier protests based at the Liberty Institute NGO functioned as *Kmara*’s mother organization. As in Serbia, younger activists were brought into civil society activity by veterans involved in earlier civil society campaigns that had failed to meet their objectives.

*Kmara* and “black” *Pora* both had symbols similar to *Otpor*’s; and *Kmara*’s clenched fist was an exact replica of *Otpor*’s. In Ukraine, *Pora* decided against using a clenched fist as this was believed to be too provocative. Instead, a clock was used showing how it was time for Kuchma to leave the office. Indeed, “black” *Pora* focused on the need to remove “Kuchmizm” from Ukraine.

*Otpor*, *Kmara* and “black” *Pora* had horizontal, leaderless structures working autonomously in decentralized networks with no leaders. “yellow” *Pora* was different. Vladyslav Kaskiv was the leader of “yellow” *Pora* and the Freedom of Choice coalition. Both wings of *Pora* and *Otpor* stressed underground, guerrilla style organization, a strategy that harped back to World War II Serbian partisans and Ukrainian nationalist guerrillas. In Georgia, such tactics could not be used as Georgia did not have a historical tradition of nationalist partisans. *Kmara* succeeded in exaggerating the size of their NGO’s members by astute use of propaganda and street actions (Kandelaki, 2005).

*Kmara* and “black” *Pora* copied *Otpor*’s tactics which were, in turn, taken from Western theories of non-violent resistance. The Belgrade-based Center for Non-violent Resistance provided non-violent training to Belarus’s *Zubr* (Bison), *Kmara* and “black” *Pora*. “Yellow” *Pora* trained and operated independently of these three

NGOs. Serbia's *Otpor* circulated Serbian-language versions of Gene Sharp's classic text on non-violent resistance, which has since been translated into Georgian, Belarusian and Ukrainian (Sharp, 1973; Ackerman and Duval, 2000; Karatnycky and Ackerman, 2005, <http://aeinstein.org>, <http://nonviolent-conflict.org>).

Robert Helvey, a retired US Army colonel worked closely with Sharp and assisted in training *Otpor* through the help of the US-based International Republican Institute. Advice centered on analyzing the sources of power within Serbian society, winning support within the government, the psychological effect of fear and methods of overcoming it, psychological methods to improve public views of *Otpor*, crisis management and how to avoid unnecessary risks. Sharp's work proved so influential that *Otpor* praised it as, "an astoundingly effective blueprint for confronting a brutal regime" (Whither the Bulldozer, August 2001).

In Ukraine two wings of *Pora* were a product of generational differences and different tactics. "Black" *Pora* incorporated Western traditions of non-violent resistance diffused through *Otpor*, *Zubr* and *Kmara*. "Yellow" *Pora* sought to find more specifically Ukrainian approaches to creating a youth NGO. At the same time, both *Poras* understood the need for non-violent strategies following the violent March 2001 riots in Kyiv. Mykhailo Svystovych, a founder of "black" *Pora* and the <http://maidan.org.ua> web site, was present during the 2001 riots and learnt lessons from them:

And, only after two weeks did it become clear that a portion of people were frightened by potential repression and another part by hooligan actions. That was when we recalled *Otpor* and its successful non-violent movement. And in April 2001 the first *Otpor* members arrived in Ukraine (Ukrayinska Pravda, March 9, 2006).

The riots were provoked by extreme right nationalist provocateurs, working together with the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU). The public fall out led to the collapse of public support for the anti-Kuchma protests (Lutsenko, 2005). The authorities sentenced twenty members of UNA (Ukrainian National Assembly) providing them with ammunition to attack the opposition as "extremists". Throughout the 2004 elections the authorities staged numerous provocations in an attempt at inciting a violent counter-attack in what Russian political technologists working for the Yanukovych campaign described as "directed chaos" (Kuzio, 2005c). The opposition refused to rise to the bait and the Orange Revolution ended without violence (Kuzio, in press).

"Yellow" *Pora* was led by "professional radicals" of earlier campaigns going back to Ukraine's drive for independence and student hunger strike in 1990–1991 (Zerkalo Nedeli, December 11–17, 2004). Based in Kyiv, it was also closer to the Yushchenko election camp and his Our Ukraine bloc. The Freedom of Choice coalition had planned to establish Wave of Freedom as a "get out the vote" NGO, drawing inspiration from Slovakia's Campaign Ok 98. Pavol Demes, German Marshal Fund director in Slovakia and an activist from the 1998 Slovak elections, had close ties to "yellow" *Pora*. The planned Wave of Freedom NGO was renamed as *Pora*, copying the already launched "black" *Pora* and thereby creating confusion with the

existence of two *Pora* organizations (<http://kuchmizm.info>, <http://pora.org.ua>). The “get out the vote” message was taken over by the *Znayu* NGO.

“Black” *Pora* was led by western Ukrainian students who had played a role in the anti-Kuchma protests of 2000–2001. They were younger, more active and better organized in Ukraine’s regions. In 2001 the youth NGO *Za Pravdu* (For Truth) united different youth groups under the umbrella of the opposition Committee of National Salvation, the political body that had grown out of the Ukraine Without Kuchma! protests. Two smaller NGOs, *Opir Molodi* (Youth Resistance) and *Sprotyv* (Resistance) were spin offs of the *Za Pravdu* (For Truth) NGO.

*Pora* was organized in 2002–2003 from these hard-core activists spread over different youth NGOs. They also participated in supporting the democratic opposition in the 2002 parliamentary elections and the 2002–2003 Arise Ukraine! protests. In 2001–2002 they established links with Serbia’s *Otpor* that then trained the “black” wing of *Pora*. Mykhailo Svistovych, editor of the <http://maidan.org.ua> website that had also grown out of the Ukraine Without Kuchma movement, provided key links to *Otpor* and became one of “black” *Pora*’s founders.

Both *Otpor* and “black” *Pora* worked independently of the Vojislav Kostunica and Yushchenko campaigns. “Yellow” *Pora* was again different, working closely with the Yushchenko campaign in the 2004 elections and never attempted to prove its impartiality to the extent that *Otpor* and “black” *Pora* undertook to. “Yellow” *Pora* established an election bloc with the pro-Yushchenko Reform and Orders Party to contest the 2006 parliamentary elections. “Black” *Pora* refused to re-form as a political party. Both *Otpor*’s and “yellow” *Pora*’s attempts at entering the Serbian and Ukrainian parliaments failed.

In 2002–2003, Dutch, British and Polish foundations provided assistance for training seminars in 23 oblasts organized and coordinated by <http://maidan.org.ua>. *Otpor*, *Kmara* and *Zubr* (Bison) activists assisted the training seminars. “Black” *Pora*’s main financial support came from domestic sources and West European foundations. This made “black” *Pora* very different to *Otpor* which could not rely on domestic sources for funding as the Serbian middle classes had been decimated by war, economic mismanagement and international economic blockade (Gordy, 1999; Krnjevic-Miskovic, 2001, p. 103; Thompson and Kuntz, 2004). *Otpor* received a large injection of US funds after Milosevic was indicted at the Hague for Kosovo crimes in 1999 and NATO’s bombing campaign. The US did not provide funds for *Otpor*’s partner in Ukraine, “black” *Pora*, while *Kmara* obtained its funds from the Soros Foundation, rather than from the US government (Fairbanks, 2004, p. 115).

“Yellow” *Pora* had greater access to domestic and international funds. Vladyslav Kaskiv, leader of “yellow” *Pora*, denied receiving funding from abroad (2000, January 21, 2005). However, they were able to tap into Western funds sent to the Freedom of Choice Coalition, a bloc of NGOs created to combat election fraud. Freedom House helped train the Coalition’s election monitors at a Crimean camp in August 2004. Freedom of Choice volunteers often doubled as “yellow” *Pora* activists.

“Black” *Pora*’s first activity was in March 2004 when it posted leaflets throughout Ukraine calling upon Ukrainians to remove “Kuchmizm” from Ukraine. One

month later a second group, “yellow” *Pora*, emerged as a component of the Freedom of Choice Coalition. “Yellow” *Pora* underwent baptism by fire in the April 2004 mayoral election in the Trans-Carpathian town of Mukachevo. Although Yushchenko’s candidate won the election the authorities declared their candidate victorious. They then dispatched organized crime enforcers (“skinheads”) to intimidate and beat up officials and destroy evidence of election fraud.

Both wings of *Pora* played a crucial role in providing a dedicated, hard-core group of young activists who erected a tent city in Kyiv immediately after round two of the election on November 21, 2004. These hard-core *Pora* activists, together with other youth NGOs, helped mobilize millions of Ukrainians in Kyiv and the provinces to participate in the Orange Revolution. The same was true of *Otpor* in Serbia.

## Training

During preceding political crises the opposition’s attempts in Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine at removing incumbents from power invariably had failed leading to introspection within opposition movements as to the need to change tactics. After numerous failed attempts by the Serbian opposition in the 1990s, the Serbs were beginning to lose faith in their ability to change the country’s leadership. *Otpor* played a central role in revitalizing this apathy and feeling of lack of efficacy by, “shaking people out of their slumber” (Ilić, 2001). In Georgia, *Kmara* also faced the task of combating widespread political apathy among Georgians living in the provinces and among young people (Kandelaki, 2005).

Learning from past failures is taken on board in a greater way by the more impatient younger generation. *Otpor*, *Kmara* and *Pora* set examples to the older generation by uniting a broad range of political views within youth NGOs. Their elders continued to fail to unite into opposition blocs during parliamentary elections and failed to field a single candidate in presidential elections. The authorities divide and rule the opposition, eroding some parties while co-opting others with lucrative government or diplomatic positions.

Youth NGOs are usually the first to clamor for opposition parties to unite in the face of a common threat, either of Milosevic winning another election after being indicted for crimes in Kosovo and Bosnia or of Kuchma installing his successor, Yanukovch. In Georgia and Kyrgyzstan democratic revolutions took place during parliamentary elections where voter’s protests were initially brought on by election fraud that then spiraled into demands for Eduard Shevardnadze and Askar Akayev to leave office. Opposition parties and *Kmara* had initially intended to use the example of 2003 parliamentary elections to mobilize in preparation for the 2005 presidential elections when Shevardnadze was to step down after two terms in office. The use of blatant election fraud, especially in Ajaria, Shevardnadze’s refusal to compromise and public anger all combined to lead to the earlier than expected Rose Revolution. In all four cases there was a widespread feeling that the incumbent and the regime he had put in place needed to be changed.



Serbian democratic opposition leaders had failed to mount a serious challenge to Milošević throughout the 1990s. Various democratic coalitions had been formed during elections and protests but none of them could match the breadth of the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS) 18-party coalition established in the 2000 election, the successor to the Alliance for Change and Together coalitions. The only democratic party outside DOS was Vuk Drasković's Serbian Renewal Movement. The failure of the 1996–1997 protests in Serbia galvanized Belgrade's students to create *Otpor* in 1998 (Collin, 2001, p. 175).

In Ukraine the opposition united in the second round around Yushchenko's candidacy with the Communists the only party refusing to join. *Otpor* played a greater role than *Pora* in pressuring the opposition to unite in crucial elections. Until spring 2000, Serbia's political opposition had proven itself unable to offer a serious alternative and a threat to the Milošević regime (Ilić, 2001). Youth NGOs aligned with united opposition alliances proved unstoppable in Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine.

The creation of a united opposition was not the only required factor for a successful democratic revolution. There was also a need for a deep preceding crisis during which youth NGOs and parties could train, receive outside support and learn from their mistakes. Serbia experienced thirteen years of rule by Milošević during which he had destroyed the most liberal of communist regimes, Yugoslavia, where standards of living had been relatively high for a communist state. By the 2000 elections many Serbs had reached the conclusion that they had enough of Milošević, who had destroyed their own country and lost nationalistic wars in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo.

Georgia was similar to Serbia in being a post-war country. Shevardnadze had come to power in a *coup d'état* after President Zviad Gamsakhurdia had launched disastrous wars to withdraw autonomous status from Abkhazia and South Ossetia that he had then lost to Russian-backed separatists. Shevardnadze had presided over a stagnating and corrupt failed state and proved unable to re-take two territories beyond central control. In a third—Ajaria—the local elites were permitted, like Donetsk in Ukraine, to act as though it was their personal fiefdom provided they did not threaten to secede (King, 2001; Miller, 2004; Fairbanks, 2004).

There would have not been an Orange Revolution in Ukraine without the preceding Kuchmagate crisis, when a tape was released in parliament allegedly showing President Kuchma having authorized violence against opposition journalist Heorhiy Gongadze. The Kuchmagate crisis and subsequent protests did not lead to Kuchma's downfall. Nevertheless, they severely undermined the legitimacy of the ruling elites, discredited Kuchma, and created a hard core group of activists ready to participate in the 2002 and 2004 elections. Most importantly, they awakened the traditionally apathetic young people from their political lethargy.

"Black" *Pora* activists defined the anti-Kuchma protests as Ukraine's "1905", because they failed to unseat Kuchma, while Ukraine's "1917" (Orange Revolution) successfully prevented Kuchma's chosen successor, Yanukovich, from coming to power. The 2000 movement "Ukraine without Kuchma", during which young people created their own NGOs that evolved into *Pora*, was the "first rehearsal". The follow up Arise Ukraine! protests, "showed leadership ability to magnetize and

guide large numbers of people”. These two rehearsals, Interior Minister Yuriy Lutsenko believes, “made the Maidan possible” (Zerkalo Nedeli, December 11–17, 2004).

Protests in Ukraine after November 2000 elections had a profound effect on young people who, like the generation before them, dreamt and worked towards living in a “normal” European country. During the anti-Kuchma protests a revolution did not take place, but a profound change did take place in people’s hearts and minds, a young activist, Volodymyr Chemerys, argued. This was especially among young people. Accusations against Kuchma meant he could no longer “stand above the political process” and claim to be the nation’s leader. Ukrainians withdrew their support from Kuchma whose ratings plummeted and trust in state institutions reached an all-time low. “Internally Ukraine is already without Kuchma”, Chemerys concluded. A revolutionary situation failed to materialize in 2002 during the Arise Ukraine! protests and only arose in 2004 during the Orange Revolution (Ukrayinska Pravda, December 13, 2002).

Since the 1980s a new post-communist generation has grown up in Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine which is less affected by, and tolerant of, communist and Soviet political culture. In Serbia the left was destroyed under Milosevic when he transformed the Socialist Party into an extreme nationalist party. In Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine the young post-communist generation emerged as a civil society force first in Serbia after the 1996 protests and then in Georgia and Ukraine during the 2000–2004 elections.

“Generation Orange” was a new phenomenon for Ukraine. “Kuchma never feared my generation. However, he forgot that we would have children and these children never knew the KGB”, Andre Kurkov said (Gruda, 2004). “Generation Orange” has traveled abroad to work, for holidays or on scholarships, and has access to a globalized world through satellite television and the internet. “Generation Orange” knew there were alternatives to a Ukraine ruled by Kuchma’s anointed successor, Yanukovych.

## Strategies

### *Globalization and modern communication*

Young people use modern communications to a greater extent than other generations and modern communications are often introduced into households by its younger members. These “e-revolutionaries” drew on the latest technology and communications to circumvent the authorities. The “info-age revolution” meant that a “*coup d’état* without violence” was possible (Durden-Smith, 2005).

In Serbia the internet took off during the 1999 NATO bombardment. But, by the 2000 elections and revolution the internet was still a low-used medium. The bombing of Kosovo did lead to a massive surge in cell phones as parents bought them for their children. Cell phones were useful in ensuring rapid communication between different areas of the country and NGOs. They were used for mass messages. During the

elections the texts would be mass mailed and the recipients would be asked to send them on further.

Cell phones also played a useful role as camera phones. Evidence of fraud was collected by students in Ukraine who filmed professors illegally ordering them how to vote. This film was made available to download from the internet and used as evidence in court prosecutions during which the authorities were accused of rigging the election results.

Georgia and Ukraine proved to be different to Serbia where the internet played a less important role (Prytula, 2006). The internet had sufficiently developed in Georgia and Ukraine to ensure that this medium played an important role in their revolutions. Ukraine has been described as the world's first "internet revolution". The internet opened up possibilities for private chat rooms to discuss tactics and strategy, e-mail, bloggers, and hosting NGO web sites.

Modern technology was also used in promoting reports by independent television stations, such as Rustavi-2 in Georgia and Channel 5 and Era in Ukraine (<http://rustavi2.com.ge>, <http://5tv.com.ua>, <http://eratv.com.ua>). Large television screens provided 24-hour news and commentary by Channel 5 during the Orange Revolution. US scholars and policy makers could be interviewed in the Voice of America office in Washington and then be broadcast live on Channel 5 and on the Maidan.

### *Humor and ridicule*

Fear of instability, civil war and extremism were potent weapons in damping political activism and atomizing the Serbian and Ukrainian populations (Collin, 2001, pp. 191–192). Humor and ridicule were crucial in undermining fear of the authorities with young people playing a central role in promoting them. Ridicule and humor broke down fear of the authorities which had played an important role in de-mobilizing the middle aged and older generations and creating widespread apathy. Older Serbs, Georgians and Ukrainians felt they could do nothing to change their situations.

Fear had also been ingrained from the Soviet era in Ukraine because of a past history of periodic cycles of repression, a factor especially prevalent in Ukraine leading to the common refrain "*Moya khata z krayu*" (literally "My house is on the outskirts" but meaning "I'm staying out"). *Otpor* activists, "hoped to resuscitate Serbia with demonstrations of individual courage. The idea was to deprive the regime of the fear that had become its greatest weapon and thereby withdraw the consent of Serbia's governed" (Whither the Bulldozer, August 2001).

*Otpor* was one of the first to ridicule the Serbian authorities. Such ridicule could draw on the most unlikely of influences, such as the British 1970s comedy series, Monty Python's Flying Circus. Monty Python was useful in providing "silly, provocative humor" (Markovic, 2005). Monty Python provided, "allegorical, absurdist performance art", one *Otpor* activist recalled (Collin, 2001, p. 177).

In Georgia, the humorous message propagated by *Kmara* also poked fun of the regime. In one street action, similar to those by *Otpor* and *Pora* in Serbia and Ukraine, *Kmara* displayed large banners on streets where passers by could take photos of themselves flushing Shevardnadze and his government down the toilet. Other

street actions included mock funerals when the government presented its new economic program. Such actions, “produced a group of young people with an extremely high degree of motivation, courage and ‘quality activism’”, capable of mobilizing broad swathes of Georgian society (Kandelaki, 2005).

The most elaborate campaign that drew upon humor was in Ukraine and the choice of official candidate—Yanukovych—made the use of humor easy and enjoyable (Chornuhuza, 2005; Yanuykdotyi. Politicheskiye anekdotyi). With young NGOs and the opposition dominating the internet, this forum became a major location for a wide range of humor and ridicule against the authorities. Internet web sites, “savaged Yanukovych with high road criticism and low road ridicule, inflicting a political death of a thousand cuts” (Kyj, 2006, p. 79).

That Yanukovych was intellectually challenged could be readily seen by his inability to speak either literary Russian or Ukrainian. His official CV submitted to the Central Election Commission was signed by “Professor” at a fictitious Western scholarly institution. “Professor Yanukovych” became the butt of jokes throughout the 2004 elections and Orange Revolution. Yanukovych’s intellectual challenge led to the emergence of an entire sub-culture within youth NGOs and web sites directed against him.

Yanukovych’s intellectual challenge was also ridiculed because of his frequent use of criminal slang and his illiteracy. A 13-series internet film (‘Operation ProFFessor’) was produced consisting of excerpts of popular Soviet comedies with voices performed by impersonators of well known politicians dubbed over the characters. The series was a massive hit.

Yanukovych collapsed after being hit by an egg on a visit to Ivano-Frankivsk after the attempted poisoning of Yushchenko. The incident, filmed by independent Channel 5 Television, became a smash hit, downloadable from numerous web sites and re-played ridiculing the “tough man Yanukovych”. Yanukovych had been primed before traveling to Ivano-Frankivsk that he was to be hit by a blank bullet in an attempt at portraying Yushchenko’s supporters as “terrorists”, a precursor to similar accusations against youth NGOs the following month. Immediately after Yanukovych was struck by an egg the authorities’ political machine went into high gear blaming the “terrorist” attack on Yushchenko’s “nationalist” supporters.

Dmytro Romaniuk, the student who threw the egg before the blank could be fired, was a typical product of the gradual politicization of young people during the 2004 elections. Romaniuk was disinterested in politics until he threw the egg that made him an instant celebrity. At the last minute he had decided to purchase two eggs because he was angry at how the local authorities were pretending that Yanukovych had great support in his home town in Western Ukraine. After the egg incident he was arrested and accused of “terrorism”, steps that made him an instant local and national celebrity. He joined the Student Brotherhood who elected him to be its deputy head. “With many friends I took part in the Orange Revolution in the Khreshchatyk”, Romaniuk recalled (Ukrayina Moloda, December 23, 2004).

A traveling “Political Theatre” mocked Yanukovych over his presumed fear of eggs using a traveling artificial egg. *Pora* released chickens outside the Cabinet of Ministers building in Kyiv where Yanukovych had his offices. Web sites appeared that included a rapidly growing number of egg jokes. There were many series of

egg cartoons “Merry Eggs” (*Veseli Yaytsa*) in which two funny eggs sang songs and joked. “Boorish Egg” and “Jolly Eggs” games and cartoons were developed on-line (<http://eggs.net.ua>, <http://ham.com.ua>).

Yanukovych’s criminal past also provided a great deal of ammunition for humor. On weekends *Pora* members dressed in prison uniform and campaigned for Yanukovych on Kyiv’s main thoroughfare. Passers by were told that “prisoners” had been let out for the weekend to campaign for one of their own (Yanukovych). If there was a Yanukovych election stand the *Pora* members would stand next to it and chant “Yanukovych!, Yanukovych!”. Yanukovych was depicted in numerous cartoons as a former “*zek*” (prisoner) or “bandit”, accusations made easier by his origins in Donetsk, a region with the highest rate of criminality in Ukraine. A play on his name, “Yanucharii” (Janissaries), was made popular through posters and cartoons.



— А де ж братва?..  
 — Не хвилюйтесь. Скоро будуть — на виборчих дільницях агі-  
 тують за свого...

Мал. А. Василенка.

A cartoon printed in the mass circulation *Silski Visti* (December 23, 2004), a newspaper sympathetic to the Socialist Party, included two prison guards talking to each other outside an empty prison cell. One asked the other, “Where are the brothers

(reference to criminal brotherhoods)?” His fellow officer replied, “Don’t worry. They will soon return as they have just gone to campaign for their own ...” (that is Yanukovych).

### *Music and carnivals*

Traditional music, concerts and carnivals have been used by nationalist and regional groups throughout Europe to raise national consciousness and politically mobilize voters. Regions in the Celtic fringe—Wales, Ireland, Scotland, Cornwall and Brittany—have revived traditional music festivals to raise national awareness. Such festivals have played an important role in re-connecting to young people, traditionally the most integrated generation in the globalized English-speaking world (Gemie, 2005).

Democratic revolutions in Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine took place in late autumn or winter. Young people are more hardy to cold weather and more capable of living in tent camps or roughing it on sofa’s or floors. Assisting them in staying for long periods of time and roughing the accommodation was an adroit use of music and carnival atmosphere. The most well known youth bands played for free for weeks to large crowds.

In Serbia the music scene was confused as the nationalist authorities had attempted to influence young people through their promotion of turbo-folk, a mix of patriotic folk and modern rave music (Gordy, 1999). *Otpor* had to be more adroit in its use of patriotic motives in music as nationalism had been monopolized and discredited by the Milosevic regime. Nevertheless, “healthy” nationalism, as one *Otpor* activist described it, did play a role inside the NGO (Collin, 2001, p. 200). Instead, they mocked the post-Tito Socialist-nationalist regime with dark humor and playing on totalitarian motifs. The inspiration for this Serbian opposition music was New Slovenian Art and bands such as Labiach, a play on the German name for Ljubljana. Yugoslav rock from the 1980s touched on nostalgia for an era which was peaceful, prosperous and the state took care of its citizens.

Politics and music were deliberately mixed together. The Millennium concert was preceded by a four minute film on recent Serbian and Yugoslav history. After the film the 10,000 strong crowds were advised to go home as there was nothing to celebrate with a concert (Collin, 2001, p. 177). The “*Vremie je*” (Its Time) rock concert tour with the independent B2-92 radio station featured the best Yugoslav bands in 25 cities throughout Serbia and reaching 150,000 young people (Collin, 2001, p. 208).

In Georgia, young artists, poets and musicians toured the country supporting change and calling on students in regional universities to join the Rose Revolution. In Ukraine the opposition could draw on patriotic music as the authorities could be readily portrayed as disinterested in national interests and the rights of citizens. Ukraine’s Orange Revolution was a symbiosis of “political meeting and rock festival” (Klid, 2006, p. 2). Ukraine’s best known and modern bands played for Yushchenko while traditional bands and singers from Russia played for Yanukovych.

The hymn of the Orange Revolution was written by the hitherto unknown Ivano-Frankivsk hip hop band *Grandzioly*. Their song “We are many, we cannot

be defeated” became a rallying cry in the Orange Revolution and was downloaded 1.5 million times from the internet. The elite Kyiv Mohyla Academy, the location of Yushchenko’s press center, coined the slogan. The “spirit of the opposition lives in the yards” of the Academy and “its students make up *Pora’s* avant guard”, one “yellow” *Pora* activist recalled (Polyukhovych, 2004). *Otpor’s* slogans were typically more forthright: *Gotov Je* (He’s Finished), “Kill Yourself Slobodan and Save Serbia” and “To The Hague, to the Hague, get Slobodan to the Hague”.

Another *Pora* activist remembered, “From 2000 we studied the experience of non-violent revolution in different countries — and one of these factors contributing to these changes was carnival” (Ukrayinska Pravda, November 22, 2005). Young people creatively thought up ways to distribute information. Vendors selling music CDs would provide free copies of other CDs with windows media player files showing “How the authorities are undertaking free elections”.

*Okean Yelzy*, one of Ukraine’s most popular bands, was typical of the apolitical Ukrainians who became politicized during the elections and Orange Revolution. *Okean Yelzy* singer Sviatoslav Vakarchuk was made an adviser to President Yushchenko. *Okean Yelzy* played on the Maidan throughout the Orange revolution and one of their new songs gave hope to the protestors that “spring” was very close at hand. “Spring” was a euphemism for the victory of Yushchenko. As in Serbia, Ukrainian well known sports personalities, such as Vitali and Vladimir Klichko brother boxers, who were icons for young people, often appeared on the Maidan. During the 2006 elections the Klichkos headed the *Pora-Reforms and Order* election bloc.

Orange Revolution music, which was continually played on the Maidan either by live bands or through music CDs, also touched upon Ukraine’s national identity and the choice they were making at that moment in history. As with the name of Yushchenko’s bloc, Our Ukraine, many songs mobilized Ukrainians to demand the return of what was understood as their stolen country. This is “Our Ukraine” which had been taken over by a small group of usurpers; it was time for the country to be returned to its rightful owners, Ukraine’s citizens. These usurpers were depicted as a *de facto* foreign occupation army supported by Russia.

Orange Revolution songs also demanded that Ukrainians did not contemplate passivity as the stakes were too high. Some songs, such as *Okean Yelzy’s* song “*Vstavay!*” (Arise!) openly called for an uprising. Although written before the elections, became popular during the Orange Revolution. Songs such as “*Ukrayina*” by the well known band *Mandry* called upon Ukrainians to look at their ancestors who were looking down upon them at this critical time. The option of staying passive was morally wrong as too many Ukrainian intellectuals had already suffered and died in the former USSR. The insinuation was that with the election of Yanukovych their Ukraine, from a nationally conscious point of view, would be irrevocably lost. Other Orange Revolution music called upon Ukrainians to rush to Kyiv to defend this “sacred” city from a Yanukovych victory. Everybody should travel to Kyiv as soon as they could by any means possible.

Music also played a role in humor. During the separatist congress held on December 2, 2004 after round two, Ludmilla Yanukovych, the wife of a presidential hopeful, accused the organizers of the Yushchenko tent city of distributing oranges injected with narcotics to force protestors to stay there. She also claimed that *valenki*

(fur knee length boots) had been sent free of charge by the US, a hint that the CIA was behind the Orange Revolution. Satirical songs immediately appeared that poured ridicule on these claims by inter-lacing her comments with other words. The tent city began to hang up *valenki* with “MADE IN USA” scrawled on them.

### Authorities' response

During the 2003 Georgian and 2004 Ukrainian elections the authorities came to increasingly fear *Otpor*, *Kmara* and *Pora*, even though their numbers and influence were often exaggerated. Ukrainian authorities feared the diffusion of Serbian and Georgian revolutionary know-how (Bunce and Wolchik, in this issue). During the 2004 elections, Aleksandar Marich, a founder of *Otpor*, was detained at Kyiv's Borispol airport and deported. Marich had a multi-entry visa and had spent most of the previous two months in Ukraine, but official fear of *Otpor* bringing the “Serbian-Georgian scenario” into Ukraine led to his deportation from Ukraine.

Democratic diffusion through Western assistance was understood by the Serbian, Georgian and Ukrainian authorities as “subversion”. One week before the October 2004 crackdown on Ukrainian youth NGOs, the pro-presidential camp had called upon the National Security and Defense Council to take tougher action against opposition plans to undertake mass civil disobedience (Ukrayinska Pravda, October 7, 2004). Valeriy Pustovoitenko, head of the coordinating council of political parties supporting Yanukovych, warned that, “certain forces are preparing for disturbances on election night in all of Ukraine's regions” (Ukrayinska Pravda, October 13, 2004).

The reason for the rising tension was that the Ukrainian authorities' repeated claim that they were organizing free and fair elections was at odds with reality. Ukrainian youth NGOs were alerted to the authorities' plans for election fraud after the April 2004 mayoral elections in Mukachevo. These elections were the first occasion when one wing of *Pora* had taken an active role. The presidential election campaign was not conducted in a free and fair manner.

After Yushchenko was poisoned in September 2004, the opposition camp reached the conclusion that the authorities would never let them win. As in Mukachevo, the opposition could win the election but the authorities would declare their own candidate to be elected. It was therefore rational for the opposition and civil society to prepare to defend their vote and counter election fraud in a non-violent manner. Youth NGOs played a central role in these preparations, as did training assistance from *Otpor* and *Kmara*.

Opposition and civic groups attempted to ensure as few violations as possible on election day, given the proclivity of law enforcement bodies and election officials to support the authorities. Yushchenko's campaign also issued a statement that the authorities were losing control of the situation and were not confident of Yanukovych's victory, making them nervous and thereby rely to an even greater extent on election fraud. Presidential adviser Mikhail Pogrebinsky admitted, “We have a situation whereby the bigger part of the authorities' team does not believe in their success”. He added that there was a widespread, “feeling that the authorities will lose” (glavred.info, October 6, 2004).



During Ukraine's 2004 presidential election the authorities became increasingly nervous about the increased activity of youth NGOs monitoring the election. This culminated in an onslaught against youth NGOs in October 2004 that included a large number of intimidation tactics and targeted violence. As in Serbia, these tactics failed and backfired, only serving to attract larger numbers of members.

Different youth NGOs had complained that the SBU (*Sluzhba Bezpeky Ukrainy* or Security Service of Ukraine) had questioned their members regarding opposition's preparation for an alleged coup. President Kuchma had repeatedly warned throughout the 2004 elections that the authorities would not tolerate a "Georgian-style" revolution. Both wings of *Pora* were especially targeted because the authorities labeled them "extremists" and "terrorists", as *Otpor* had been in Serbia. Both *Pora* and *Otpor* were denounced as "fascist" and "terrorist" structures beholden to American paymasters. The Serb authorities introduced new anti-terrorist legislation to counter *Otpor* which they described as "hooligans, terrorists and paramilitaries" (Collin, 2001, p. 179). Such charges failed to find fertile ground in Serbia but had considerable resonance in russophone Eastern Ukraine. This was a component of the anti-Yushchenko campaign that depicted him as an American stooge and "nationalist extremist".

*Otpor* and *Pora* were perceived as radical by the Serbian and Ukrainian authorities because their young members were not cowed by fear. Ukrainian authorities remained fixated on the possibility that the 2004 election would trigger a repeat of the Serbian and Georgian revolutions in Ukraine, which they believed were instigated by the US. To counter *Pora's* success, the authorities created an anti-*Pora* organization, *Dosyt'* (Enough) which proved to be a flop (<http://maidan.org.ua>, November 10, 2004, *Ukrayinska Pravda*, November 12, 2004).

During a search of *Pora's* Kyiv office, witnessed by opposition parliamentary deputies, the police found nothing incriminating except anti-Yanukovych leaflets. But during a second search, with only the police present, a bomb was allegedly found. The Prosecutor General then launched a criminal case accusing *Pora* leaders of "terrorism" and "destabilization of the situation in the country". *Pora* was accused of being an illegal "military formation—a terrorist group" (*Ukrayinska Pravda*, October 16, 2004). The Prosecutor General's office attempted to link the alleged bomb to the August 2004 terrorist act in a Kyiv market which it had originally blamed on political parties allied to Our Ukraine.

A widespread media campaign linked *Pora* to Our Ukraine, and thus its presidential candidate Yushchenko, whom the authorities were desperate to portray as an "extremist" in media outlets that specialized in blackening the opposition (<http://temnik.com.ua>, October 18 and 19, 2004).

Such tactics were part of an overall strategy advised by Russian political technologists on how to destabilize Ukraine and pit the "pro-Russian" Yanukovych against the "nationalist" Yushchenko. It was more difficult for the Serbian authorities to describe Kostunica as an "extremist" as he held moderate nationalist views and had eschewed politics until the 2000 elections. In Georgia the authorities never resorted to the same extreme measures as in Ukraine in trying to discredit opposition parties. The Georgian elections were dominated by competition between two Georgian and Ajarian parties of power, on the one hand, and the opposition.

“Yellow” *Pora* issued a rebuttal to charges of “terrorism” in which they described themselves as the “vanguard of peaceful opposition”. They called upon all of their activists and Ukrainian citizens to “legally, peacefully, and in a non-violent manner defend constitutional rights and freedoms in Ukraine” (<http://pora.org.ua>, October 18, 2004). This statement reflected a desire, as in Serbia and Georgia, to use non-violent tactics.

What most perturbed the authorities was that Yushchenko had overwhelming support among the educated younger generation, those most likely to be mobilized and active in civil society. In Serbia and Ukraine the authorities usually paid people, including students, to attend rallies on behalf of their candidates, a step that often backfired. On September 29, 2004 Ukrainian students paid to join a Kyiv rally responded “Yes!” to a call from Yanukovych’s campaign activists when asked if they desired “Free and Fair Elections”. But when asked “And you will vote for Yanukovych?” they replied “No!” on live television. The organizers abruptly ended the rally.

Student Wave organized a mass student rally on October 16, 2004 in Kyiv that brought 30,000 students from across Ukraine in support of Yushchenko. The rally began with a free concert in central Kyiv featuring Ukraine’s two best known rock bands. As with all student rallies, it was intended to mobilize students behind demands for a free and fair election and provide concrete advice to students on how to resist pressure and intimidation from the authorities. According to the organizers, “The authorities are not happy of the level of support of the people’s candidate, Viktor Yushchenko, among students” (<http://yuschenko.com.ua>, October 12, 2004).

The training and functions of Ukrainian police *spetsnaz* units were televised with the intention of instilling fear against undertaking election protests. Kuchma had warned against revolution and street protests during a deliberately timed visit to a Crimean BARS *spetsnaz* unit in August 2004. The unit had belonged to one of the best National Guard units until it was dismantled and transferred to the Interior Ministry in 2000. During the Orange Revolution the Crimean BARS unit guarded the presidential administration, leading to rumors that Russian *spetsnaz* units were in Kyiv. Oleksandr Milenin, Deputy Minister of Interior and head of Kyiv’s police, leaked the existence of a new “ninja” police unit “trained in special measures” (*Financial Times*, October 19, 2004). Milenin also claimed that “new means” had “been approved by the health ministry” and were available to suppress protests, making him confident that “There won’t be any revolution here” in Ukraine.

Ultimately, these threats to use force failed as Kuchma could not rely on the military, SBU or parts of the Interior Ministry who defected in the Orange Revolution to Yushchenko (Kuzio, *in press*). The use of non-violent tactics by both wings of Ukrainian *Pora*, *Otpor* in Serbia and *Kmara* in Georgia proved better at undermining the security forces than the violent tactics used by some elements of the opposition in Kyiv in March 2001.

Another related aspect of the authorities’ response in both Serbia and Ukraine was an unprecedented rise in anti-Americanism (UKRAINE, 2004; Kuzio, 2004a). This aspect of the authorities’ response proved to be less pronounced in Georgia, although Shevardnadze and other senior Georgian officials did denounce George Soros’s

funding of the Liberty Institute NGO. The Georgian Young Lawyers Association, Open Society-Georgia Foundation and International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy were also important NGOs. But, the main target of official attacks was on alleged links between *Kmara* and the Russian intelligence services. Shevardnadze had narrowly missed two assassination attempts that were assumed to have been organized by Russia and two separatist regions were under *de facto* Russian control. This made the Georgian authorities more nervous of Russia than the USA.

In Serbia the inflaming of anti-Americanism was not surprising as NATO had bombed Serbia in 1999 to force it to halt its ethnic cleansing of Kosovo. Anti-Americanism was a staple of Milosevic's xenophobic view of the outside world, pitting "little Serbia" against the US, NATO and the West. *Otpor* was routinely denounced as an "agent of American imperialism" (Ilić, 2001).

In Ukraine, anti-Americanism was a new and contradictory phenomenon associated with Kuchma's second term in office after he re-oriented Ukraine to Russia in the wake of the Kuchmagate crisis. Anti-Americanism was promoted at the same time as Ukraine outlined a desire for NATO membership (2002), had sent a large military contingent to Iraq (2003) and changed its military doctrine to include a desire for NATO and EU membership (2004). This was during the same period when anti-Americanism was used as part of an election strategy to blacken Yushchenko (Kuzio, 2004b).

The aspect of the anti-American campaign that concerns this study is the attempts to link domestic NGOs to Western (especially the US) governments. This alleged link reflected the deeply ingrained Soviet political culture evident in the pro-Kuchma centrist camp and Communists. In the former USSR, Soviet propaganda regularly denounced domestic dissidents as allegedly possessing links to Western intelligence. Such links were brought out in Russia in December 2005 when it linked Russian NGOs to British intelligence. The new Russian law on NGOs is imbued with this Soviet era culture that attempts to portray NGOs as imported, unnatural, un-Russian implants. Similar legislation and regime propaganda is evident in Belarus.

In Georgia and Ukraine the alleged American connection was made through direct US and Western support to civil society and NGOs, as well as through training assistance provided by Serbian *Otpor* activists. *Otpor* had been instrumental in assisting in the establishment of the Belarusian youth *Zubr* NGO in February 2001 with the aim of it taking a leading role in that year's September presidential elections. In Ukraine, *Otpor* activists had begun to train Ukrainian young NGO activists in 2002–2003. Following the Rose Revolution of November 2003, Georgian *Kmara* activists also became active in training Ukrainians. During the Orange Revolution, Georgian and Belarusian flags were conspicuously the largest of all foreign flags.

## Conclusion

This article has shown how in Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine there were striking similarities in how young people played a decisive role in their democratic revolutions. The five factors that this article focused on to provide a cross-country

comparative study are electoral revolutions, organization, training, strategies and the authorities response. All three revolutions in Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine followed similar paths of eschewing violence and upholding non-violent tactics, the ideas for which drew upon earlier successful examples of people power and Western theories. These three case studies in turn, drew upon the diffusion of ideas and strategies employed earlier in other post-communist states (Bunce and Wolchik, in this issue). Non-violent tactics adopted by youth NGOs, together with the presence of large numbers of people on the streets, proved to be crucial in undermining the competitive regimes in Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine. These strategies also dissuaded the regimes from using violence to suppress protests (see Way et al., in this issue).

Hale and D'Anieri in this issue devoted to democratic revolutions focus upon elites and, particularly, splits in ruling elites as leading to regime fragmentation. There is little doubt that in Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine, divisions within the ruling elites worked towards a democratic revolution. Elites brought with them resources (finances, media outlets, institutions, international ties) that were crucial to the success of the opposition. Oligarchs are typically untrustworthy allies of the executive in elections and crises.

A focus on elites should not lead to an ignoring of the election and revolutionary process from the bottom up where young people play a central role. In Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine the new post-communist young generation and civil society NGOs played a disproportionate role in overcoming widespread fear and apathy and in mobilizing millions of people to participate in the democratic revolutions. Their selfless actions provided an example to older generations that empowered them with the view that “We have the power to change things”. Young people also proved instrumental in setting aside their personal differences and successfully pushing political parties to unite into opposition coalitions.

Since these three democratic revolutions have taken place, followed by Kyrgyzstan in 2005, authoritarian elites in the CIS have understood the importance of youth and civil society to democratic change (Herd, 2005). In Russia and Belarus the introduction of legislation to control NGOs has been introduced since the success of these four democratic revolutions. Anti-Western youth NGOs in Russia and Belarus have also been launched by the regimes to counter local manifestations of *Otpor*, *Khmara* and *Pora*.

### Web sites

<http://www.5tv.com.ua>  
<http://www.aeinstein.org>  
<http://www.dif.org.ua>  
<http://www.eggs.net.ua>  
<http://www.eratv.com.ua>  
<http://www.glavred.info>  
<http://www.ham.com.ua>  
<http://www.helsinki.org.yu>  
<http://www.kuchmizm.info.org>

<http://www.maidan.org.ua>  
<http://www.nonviolent-conflict.org>  
<http://www.pora.org.ua>  
<http://www.pravda.com.ua>  
<http://www.rustavi2.com.ge>  
<http://www.temnik.com.ua>  
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